

# International Recruitment and Training of Correctional and Community Corrections Officers

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**Abstract:** Correctional and community corrections officers require a wide range of knowledge and abilities to properly understand, manage, and address the uniqueness of their clients to achieve desired outcomes, such as reducing recidivism. This paper reviewed the recruitment profile and training curriculum of both institutional and community corrections officers in eight countries. In general, these countries focused on security and tactical characteristics instead of the dual safety-and-human perspective that helps achieve recidivism reductions. The paper concludes with the importance of strengthening education for these officers to create an organizational change that enhances the importance of achieving a *people profession's* perspective for these officers.

**Keywords:** corrections, community corrections, training, role, dual role.

## Introduction

Programs and practices conducted by professionals and officers in fields such as criminology, health care, education, social work, and psychology are typically designed to be *neutral* or *universal* and to target a *generic* population (Band-Winterstein & Freund, 2018; Calsyn *et al.*, 2012; Gallagher, 2013; Messing *et al.*, 2013; Shepherd & Anthony, 2018). However, no individual (officers or clients) is *generic* nor *neutral*. The attempt to neutralize policies and practices means that the unique experiences and needs of clients may not be fully addressed and this phenomenon may contribute to undesired outcomes.

The correctional system and its officers are not alien to this diversity challenge, but traditional practices are characterized by neutralized strategies on how individuals and their needs should be addressed by officers. Penal institutions tend to neutralize

individuals (Sykes, 1958) and correctional scholars argue that *how* we treat individuals has an impact (positive or negative) on reducing recidivism (Abdel-Salam & Sunde, 2018; S. King, 2009; Russo *et al.*, 2018). Moreover it is important to consider that *neutralized* approaches designed for a *generic* person may not achieve the desired outcomes, and there is a risk that non-tailored interventions may create new problems, such as trauma (Band-Winterstein & Freund, 2018; Gallagher, 2013; Lucea *et al.*, 2013), legal cynicism (Wright & Gifford, 2017), and condemnation behavior (Maruna & Toch, 2000).

## Goal

Considering that the profile and abilities correctional or community corrections officers will deeply impact the desired outcome of rehabilitation of criminally involved individuals, this paper explores the recruitment and training processes of these two types of officers in eight different countries: United States (U.S.), Canada, England, Norway, Spain, Chile, Colombia, and Australia. This group of countries allows the author to portrait an international and diverse perspective on this aspect.

## Prepared Officers for a Diverse Correctional Population

A correctional culture that places humanity and rehabilitation as a regular practice would have to focus and invest on how institutional and community correctional officers relate to the criminally-involved individuals they treat, how can officers address diverse behavior, know and rely on effective strategies, and achieve desired outcomes for those who they oversee (Ahalt *et al.*, 2020; Coyle & Fair, 2018; Grandpierre *et al.*, 2018). The challenge in the correctional system is that it supervises a wide variety of populations such as individuals with different socioeconomic backgrounds, people who might have a substance use disorder, who might have a mental health disorder, who might have a history of victimization, and even who might be from different countries.

The correctional policies and practices conducted by its officers are *standard* and *neutralized*, but the system mainly manages disadvantaged and diverse populations, and these *neutral* strategies may be inadvertently contributing to negative outcomes for inmates and probation/parolees, which result in a recycling mass incarceration process (Band-Winterstein & Freund, 2018; Gallagher, 2013; Kirmayer, 2012; Lucea *et al.*, 2013; Maruna & Toch, 2000; Wright & Gifford, 2017). Knowing the broad negative consequences of incarceration and considering that the individuals who experience it come from disadvantaged and culturally diverse groups, there is a need for a system with officers who aim to reduce disparities while achieving better outcomes (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2009; Knox, 2013; Shearer & King, 2004; ToersBijns, 2015).

The health care system is an important example of a field that has challenged the use of neutralized approaches by recognizing the unique needs and disparities among their diverse patients (Campinha-Bacote, 1999; Grandpierre *et al.*, 2018). In the 2000s, adopting a multicultural approach was embraced in the health care field as a strategy to improve poor medical outcomes and address health disparities (Saha *et al.*, 2008). This approach led to positive outcomes regarding health disparities and an improvement in outcomes.

Knox (2013) describes an interesting combination of the health system with the correctional system. The author explains that within a jail or a prison, individuals cannot choose their clinicians and clinicians cannot choose their patients, which may result in misunderstandings and potential conflict. Knox (2013) argues that to address this problem, building skills and multicultural strategies in clinicians may alleviate those differences and enhance treatment. To do so, the author emphasizes the importance of building: 1) self-awareness; 2) effective patient-centered communication (including making no assumptions, asking open-ended questions, active listening, empathy, and using non-judgmental words), and 3) awareness that cultural knowledge is dynamic and needs to be continuously developed to accurately understand the uniqueness of diverse populations.

From the institutional correction perspective, one deputy warden from Arizona (Toers Bijns, 2015) observed that there is a need for correctional officers to possess better communication skills and a deeper understanding of different attitudes, traditions, and customs. “The warden argues that it is important to train correctional officers in multicultural strategies to be effective in overseeing and managing inmates from diverse backgrounds and achieve enhanced treatment (ToersBijns, 2015).” (ToersBijns, 2015).

Similarly, but from the community corrections perspective, Shearer and King (2004) discuss the relevance and need for a more tailored approach around probation. The authors argue that background differences in clients can lead to problems in the rapport needed between officers and criminally involved individuals. The authors mentioned that officers should be “culturally skilled helpers” who understand their own biases and prejudices, who are comfortable with the differences between themselves and their clients, and who are prepared to refer the client to another officer if necessary. Shearer and King (2004), as others have previously mentioned (Campinha-Bacote, 1999, 2002), argue that a tailored approach is a continuous and progressive process; it begins with awareness and ends with fully acquiring multicultural skills.

## Profile of Institutional and Community Correctional Officers

### *Institutional Correctional Officers*

Institutional correctional officers are essential actors and play a central role in jails and prisons (King, 2009). Their work is characterized by continuous contact with incarcerated

individuals and combines daily operations with adequate use of authority, discretion, effective communication, and responding to routine and unexpected situations (Abdel-Salam & Sunde, 2018; Russo *et al.*, 2018). Beyond the security and guardianship duties, the correctional officer's job is mainly a *people profession* (Russo *et al.*, 2018).

Andrews and Bonta (2010) argue for the importance of a human services environment where officers interact with inmates to facilitate change. The authors explain that a human service environment fosters growth in individuals that are not likely to be achieved in punishment environments. King (2009) interviewed Australian officers and found that, for the officers, correctional environments were characterized by a dynamic work, in which the human service was central in the discourses of Australian officers, and they did not perceive themselves solely as a guardian.

In the 1990s in South Korea, the officer's role mutated from solely guaranteeing security, order, and enforcing rules, to a human service role that expected officers to help and assist inmates to create an environment that facilitated and benefited rehabilitation and treatment (Moon & Maxwell, 2004). Lastly, in Greece, officers are expected to not solely maintain safety and discipline, but also to contribute to the quality and formation of social life within corrections, since the quality of the officers is associated with the quality of the outcomes (Giavrimis, 2012).

To fulfill casework, welfare, and a human service role, any justice worker must have a positive relationship with his/her client characterized by being non-judgmental, warm, and respectful (Allard *et al.*, 2003; Bracken, 2003). When looking at corrections, the quality of the officer-inmate relationship can play a determinant role in recidivism (negatively or positively, see Chamberlain *et al.*, 2018; Gleicher *et al.*, 2013; Kennealy *et al.*, 2012). In a positive relationship, the individual might be more willing to confide in and communicate with the officer; while negative interactions lead the individual to be less likely to share challenges which build distrust among the parties and leaves the inmate in a further disadvantaged position (Chamberlain *et al.*, 2018).

Knowing that the correctional officer's job should be people-oriented, one could expect that the profile of an officer in these institutions would reflect readiness and capability to positively interact with the diverse correctional populations. However, the worldwide trend seems to prove the opposite. Table 1 summarizes the recruitment requirements that reflect the expected profile of a correctional officer in eight different countries.

North America, South America, and Australia have a similar trend of recruiting correctional officers based on the person being an adult citizen, with a spotless criminal record, and the physical abilities to perform his/her job. Within Europe, there is variation regarding education: in Norway, educational requirements are higher than in any other country, while Spain and England have low standards.

Even if there are variations among the recruited officer profile and his/her desired skills, none of these countries clearly aim for a profile that includes abilities to understand *how* to interact with a diverse correctional population accurately and positively, nor to

Table 1: Recruitment Requirements of Profiles of Correctional Officers in Eight Countries

Location	North America		Europe		South America		Australia <sup>d</sup>
	U.S. <sup>2</sup>	Canada <sup>3</sup>	England <sup>4</sup>	Norway <sup>5</sup>	Spain <sup>6</sup>	Chile <sup>7</sup>	Colombia <sup>8</sup>
Basic Requirements	Maximum age: 36	Minimum age: 18	Minimum age: 18	Minimum age: 20 years Have a driver's license	Minimum age: 16	Be single. Minimum age: 18 Men must have their military service solved. Min and max height	Minimum age: 18 Have a driver license
Nationality	US citizen	Be a citizen or eligible to work in the country	Have the permission to work in England. Have been resident for at least 3 years (only for high security estate)	N/A	Spanish citizen	Chilean citizen	Be a citizen or a permanent resident visa
Education	Completion of a full 4-year course of study in any field, or at least 3 years of full-time work experience	Secondary school graduation diploma or equivalent. Emergency first aid, CPR and AED. Correctional officer training and assessment program.	Pass a 12-month probationary period.	Higher education	High school diploma	Middle school completion	Preemployment test results Trainee correctional officer pre-employment recruitment test
Security	Security and identity check	Completion of a clearance process.	Security and identity check Declare if they are a member of a group that does not fit with the prison service values	Spotless record	Have never been convicted for a crime of more than 3 years	Spotless record	Pass an ID and police check Background employer references

Physical	North America		Europe		South America		Australia <sup>1</sup>
	Able to perform duties and free from diseases that prevent them.	Completion of a fitness test and a pre-employment medical exam.	Pass a health screening and fitness test	Pass a physical test	Pass a physical test	Pass a physical test	Pass a physical test

have experience or knowledge on this people-oriented job. This phenomenon reflects that correctional management do not actively and purposely search for applicants that will fit the *people profession*, that is rehabilitative-oriented, who can help reduce recidivism, and who can perform from a human service role to improve outcomes. In fact, the recruitment requirements of the correctional officer profile -in these eight countries- reflect the basic requirements for any job. There are no special skills, knowledge, or related experience a person would need to become a correctional officer.

This situation portrays a worrisome scenario in which, internationally, any person could be the guardian and guidance of a criminally involved person who has been deprived of their freedom, who will probably have a mental health disorder, a history of trauma and victimization, and who needs a skilled officer who understand their diverse needs while overseeing them. Instead, the correctional population is being supervised by a citizen, with basic education, who has no record, and passed a physical examination.

### Community Corrections Officers

Community corrections work is also characterized by providing a *people profession* to those who are under justice supervision. Both probation and parole officers' goal is to promote rehabilitation, treat criminally involved individuals, and facilitate care and needed services to these diverse populations while staying in or reentering society (Lutze, 2016; Seiter & West, 2003). Individuals under this type of supervision will face several issues such as finding housing, rebuilding family ties, looking and finding a job, entering drug abuse treatment, addressing supervision requirements, and dealing with surrounding disadvantaged contexts that might include criminal behavior (Chamberlain *et al.*, 2018; Seiter, 2002).

The role and impact of community corrections officers have been recognized for several decades (Seiter & West 2003). Surveyed officers from Canada and England mentioned four skills as essential to their work: 1) coping with offender emotions, 2) interpersonal communication, 3) interviewing skills, and 4) community resources. The authors also found that cross-cultural knowledge was considered an important skill (Bracken, 2003). Similar to institutional officers, the role of community officers are usually attached to supervision or casework, welfare, and human service (Allard *et al.*, 2003; Clear & Latessa, 1993; Gleicher *et al.*, 2013; Kennealy *et al.*, 2012; Seiter, 2002; Seiter & West, 2003). In fact, a community corrections officer with reduced capacities can negatively impact the successful reentry and life in the society of a client (Chamberlain *et al.*, 2018).

Different scholars have found that a dual-combined role of community officers has proven to be better (Gleicher *et al.*, 2013; Kennealy *et al.*, 2012; Paparozzi & Gendreau, 2005; Skeem & Manchak, 2008). Allard and colleagues (2003) label the dual role as *supportive surveillance* or *caring authority*, and surveyed officers in Australia found that most officers preferred to act under both roles since they did not perceive a conflict and always found a way to resolve any possible role tension. Just as with any other justice



officer, community officers must also have a good positive relationship with his/her client that is characterized by being non-judgmental, warm, and respectful, which can impact recidivism and outcomes (Allard *et al.*, 2003; Bracken, 2003; Chamberlain *et al.*, 2018; Gleicher *et al.*, 2013; Kennealy *et al.*, 2012).

As an example, Rex (1999) found that if criminally involved individuals had a positive and engaged relationship with their community officers characterized by adequate listening, respect, and freedom to speak, clients would feel more committed to changing negative behavior. Chamberlain and colleagues (2018) argue that one key ingredient to having positive relationships is to build rapport and trust; these will likely lead to good communication about which needs and services are key for the client to succeed, and having access and knowledge to those services is important for a positive reentry (Taxman, 2008).

As Gleicher and colleagues (2013) mention, criminally involved individuals are more likely to change their negative behavior when the person to who they report and relate to is willing to help instead of looking to “catch them” and punish them. Lastly, one of the five core correctional practices (CCP, see Dowden & Andrews, 2004) that is associated with reductions in recidivism is the interpersonal relationship factors that to achieve positive outcomes it is essential to have staff-client quality relationships that are open, respectful, caring, empathetic, competent and committed (Gleicher *et al.*, 2013; Kennealy *et al.*, 2012).

From this, one would expect that community correctional management would be recruiting officers who have a profile that will facilitate empathetic, respectful, and constructive relationships with their clients. In fact, the international trend seems to follow this logic. Table 2 summarizes the profile of community corrections officers in seven<sup>1</sup> countries.

Different from the correctional officer profile, the recruitment requirements for community officers in these countries have a profile that searches for an individual who is prepared to work with communities and comes from social work, psychology, or criminology background (or at least has some experience with vulnerable populations). The trend that it is possible to observe is a community officer that internationally is not solely concerned with the citizenship, physical, and security characteristics (compared to the correctional officers' profile), but it focuses on the knowledge and experience of the professional that will be guiding and overseeing complex cases.

In sum, community corrections managers are recruiting an officer that is people-oriented and has the skills and education to understand the importance and be able to build positive relationships with their clients from the first day of the work.

<sup>1</sup> It is unusual for Latin American countries to have a fully functional community corrections system. In the two analyzed Latino countries in this paper, Chile and Colombia, the second is excluded in this analysis of the community correctional profile because there is no community corrections system, therefore, no role to fulfill these duties.



**Table 2: Summary of the Profiles of Community Correctional Officers in Eight Countries**

Location	North America		Europe		South America		Colombia	Australia <sup>10</sup>
	U.S. <sup>10</sup>	Canada <sup>11</sup>	England <sup>12</sup>	Norway <sup>13</sup>	Spain <sup>14</sup>	Chile <sup>15</sup>		
Basic Requirements	Maximum age: 37	Minimum age: N/A	Minimum age: N/A	Minimum age: N/A	Minimum age: N/A	Minimum age: N/A	This country does not have a community corrections system	Minimum age: N/A
Nationality	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		Citizen, resident, or work visa
Education	A bachelor's degree in social work, criminal justice, behavioral sciences, or a related field is usually required.  Requirements vary by jurisdiction.	Degree on social work, psychology, sociology, and criminology Experience; more than five years in a social services or correctional organization, in a role(s) that involves the formal assessment of human behavior and the application of structured interventions aimed at supporting the changing of human behavior. Possess strong verbal and written communication skills. Possess counselling and assessment skills Be able to establish and maintain client and stakeholder relationships.	Degree/ diploma of higher education or equivalent qualification.  Experience working with challenging individuals	POs are qualified social workers. This normally implies a three-year study. It is also possible to take a course of further education in social work, in cooperation with universities.	Depending on the assigned tasks, a different education and training is required: high school diploma for administrative tasks, bachelors' degree for counsellors, Social Insertion Centers coordinators, heads of Social Services.  The social workers must hold a university degree in social work and a masters' degree is required for psychologists and penitentiary lawyers	Possess a diploma in psychology or social work by an accredited university  A minimum of one-year work experience in Psychosocial intervention  Approve the of probation and intensive probation officer habilitation course with a grade higher than 5.5.	Undertake general ability and psychological suitability testing, to assess capabilities to be progressed to interview  Undertake an interview and written testing and be competitive in that process to be considered for employment  Receive satisfactory referee and employment checks	

Security	Background investigations and drug-testing. Individuals who are on the job must undergo 5-year reinvestigations and random drug-testing.	N/A	Security clearance	A conviction does not mean you cannot be a Probation Officer. But not disclosing one will put an end to your application.	Not have committed an intentional crime punishable by three or more years of imprisonment unless their sentence has been annulled or they have been rehabilitated).	Spotless record		Criminal record check and fingerprinting
Physical	Medical standards for job applicants as a pre-employment condition. Individuals who are on the job may be subject to medical assessment as a condition of continued employment.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A

## Training of Correctional and Community Correctional Officers

Institutional and community corrections officers must have a relationship with their clients characterized by high levels of support, patience, trust, willingness to listen, and open communication to have an effective relationship towards rehabilitation or other desired outcomes (Allard *et al.*, 2003; Bracken, 2003; Lambert & Barley, 2002). Delude and colleagues (2012) argue that the qualities of an effective and productive relationship are similar in psychology and corrections. As rapport, trust, helpfulness, and professionalism increased, recidivism decreased (Chamberlain *et al.*, 2018; DeLude *et al.*, 2012). However, no one can expect these officers to know and understand *how* to build these types of relationships intuitively. In fact, one would expect that if the recruited profile of these officers is not the best fit to handle and support a diverse population, the training provided to them should counterbalance the gaps of the new officers and provide them with the necessary tools and knowledge to build positive relationships and enhance the outcomes of correctional work. The following sections will describe the training processes and its key themes for both correctional and community correctional officers.

### Training of Correctional Officers

A way to professionalize and increase the quality of correctional work is through education, and the focus on evidence-based corrections emphasizes the need for a professional, educated, and experienced staff (Lutze, 2016). Considering the important role of correctional officers in the system and its outcome, it is important to have a high-quality workforce in corrections (Russo *et al.*, 2018). Russo and colleagues (2018) argue that to guarantee this quality there is a need to assess the impact of inadequate funding for training and have minimum standards that ensure an appropriate, consistent, relevant, and realistic training curriculum that emphasizes the development of future leaders. However, the traditional and current correctional education might not be providing the necessary skills an officer needs to conduct effectively his/her duties in prisons and jails (King, 2009; Lutze, 2016).

Since 1981 Johnson and Price argued that corrections should have human service training that focuses on 1) providing correctional officers with the skills and attitudes needed to work with diverse inmates, 2) on crisis intervention and interpersonal communication, 3) facilitate the understanding that inmates have unique life stories and are people with emotions and feelings, 4) can help reduce the stress and suffering of inmates, 5) should increase officer effectiveness, and 6) must be designed and implemented carefully to avoid issues (Johnson & Price, 1981).

In Australia, the correctional system recommends providing continuous and meaningful training and career development to correctional officers to help maintain

the shift from a control and incapacitation perspective, to a case management and rehabilitative system (O'Toole, 2000). Similarly, the European Penitentiary Rules state that the training of correctional officers is important to help them work more effectively and to improve the operation and administration of the institutions (Giavrimis, 2012).

Abdel-Salam and Sunde (2018) conducted a comparison between the training of officers in the U.S. and Norway and their findings show that in the U.S. the training is focused on tactical and procedural skills related to security, while in Norway (in addition to the basic security components) officers are trained on building positive relationships and rapport with inmates to relate to the individuals' rehabilitative needs. Furthermore, the authors found that in the U.S., a federal system, the time spent in training varies significantly from state to state (from some weeks to months) and there are no clear training standards. In Norway, a centralized system, there are universal goals and expectations about the correctional officers, which helps ensure a more standardized and common education for officers where all workers are expected to always act from a dual role (Abdel-Salam & Sunde, 2018).

Similarly, Bruhn and Nylander (2013) made a comparison of the correctional officers training in Norway and Sweden. The authors describe that the Norwegian training is university-oriented and aims toward the professionalization of staff, while the Swedish training is a 20-weeks vocational program that focuses on security and the functioning of correctional programming. Authors emphasized that the Norwegian system has been influenced by research and support from organizations that have a long-term perspective of the system, while the Swedish correctional system, the officers' role, and their training are shaped by politics and public debate that results in short-term decision-making (Bruhn & Nylander, 2013).

Considering the analysis from the worldwide profiles of correctional officers from Table 1, which showed a clear focus on security and supervision rather than on people-oriented skills, one could expect that the training of these officers would be strongly directed towards building fit officers for a people's profession. However, there is a clear worldwide pattern of focusing the training on security, tactical, management, and safety topics (Table 3 summarizes the key characteristics of the training provided to correctional officers worldwide).

Some countries include few communication skills courses in their curriculum but, again, the training around correctional officers ignores the importance and impact of building positive relationships between correctional officers and the diverse populations they will encounter, that will later help to decrease recidivism.

In sum, these eight countries recruit a non-people-oriented profile and they do not address the gaps of the rehabilitative role and building positive/constructive relationships through training.

Table 3: Summary of Training Delivered to Correctional officers in Eight Countries

Location	North America		Europe		South America		Australia <sup>16</sup>	
	United States <sup>17</sup>	Canada <sup>18</sup>	England <sup>19</sup>	Norway <sup>20</sup>	Spain <sup>21</sup>	Chile <sup>22</sup>	Colombia <sup>23</sup>	
Length	13 weeks	8 weeks	12 weeks	24 months	18 months	24 months	8 months	
Major Topics in Training Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Law Enforcement Orientation</li><li>• Community Relations</li><li>• Laws of Evidence</li><li>• Communications</li><li>• Investigation</li><li>• Arrest and Control</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Correctional system orientation</li><li>• Effective communication</li><li>• Inmate management and intervention techniques</li><li>• Inmate programs and services</li><li>• Workplace safety and security.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Health and safety</li><li>• Responsibilities to those in custody</li><li>• Communication and interpersonal skills</li><li>• Safer custody in custodial environments</li><li>• Offending behavior and methods for reducing re-offending</li><li>• Operating safely</li><li>• Operating securely</li><li>• Recording and reporting</li><li>• Use of force</li><li>• Searching individuals</li><li>• Escorting</li><li>• Pro-social behavior in working relationships with individuals</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Correctional Education</li><li>• Law</li><li>• Ethics and Professionalism</li><li>• Environmental work</li><li>• Safety</li><li>• Physical force</li><li>• Summer activities in training prison</li><li>• Practical / theoretical terms in training prison</li><li>• Duty</li><li>• Service in prisons by regional demand</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Internal rules of the prison</li><li>• Assistant corps</li><li>• Practices in functions of the corps of prison assistants in the prison centers</li><li>• State organization</li><li>• General administrative law.</li><li>• Equality between women and men</li><li>• Gender-based violence</li><li>• Personnel management and financial management</li><li>• Criminal law</li><li>• Prison law</li><li>• Human behavior</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prison safety</li><li>• Social reintegration</li><li>• Prison legislation and regulation</li><li>• Prison management and administration</li><li>• Personal and work development</li><li>• Work-shops</li><li>• Prison practices</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prison security</li><li>• Prison aptitudes</li><li>• Prison treatment</li><li>• Ethics and attention to the citizen</li><li>• Human rights</li><li>• Prison discipline</li><li>• Prison health</li><li>• Management</li><li>• Technology</li><li>• Psychology applied to prison</li><li>• Prison normativity</li><li>• Research in the prisons.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Roles and structures of the department</li><li>• Prisoner case management</li><li>• Personal security</li><li>• Prison security</li><li>• Records administration</li><li>• Report writing and Human relations.</li><li>• Roster work experience – 'on the job' training</li></ul>

## Training of Community Corrections Officers

Community corrections officers should be trained to be able to achieve the desired outcome of successful reentry and/or avoid new criminal behavior from their clients. The meetings between clients and these officers should not be a simple report, but rather a time that can be used positively to impact and decrease recidivism (Gleicher *et al.*, 2013). DeLude and colleagues (2012) suggest it is imperative to focus on hiring community officers who are prepared to deliver the service, and conclude that justice managers and organizations should continue to explore training that facilitates the relationship between the officer and the client.

A positive relationship (characterized by care, warmth, and enthusiasm) combined with a procedural relationship (characterized by respect, fairness, and trust) is a protective factor against recidivism and training should be directed towards these characteristics and goals (Chamberlain *et al.*, 2018; Kennealy *et al.*, 2012). For example, community officers who received training in core correctional practices (CCP) saw that their clients were less likely to re-offend; therefore, training these officers in best practices helped them be better equipped to manage diverse clients and provide them a likely opportunity to succeed (Chadwick *et al.*, 2015).

Bonta and colleagues (2011) identified that training for community officers is not focused on the client-officer relationship and there is almost no research on how to apply risk-need-responsivity (RNR) principles to one-on-one supervision. Regardless, the evidence has shown that training in evidence-based principles of the RNR model can positively impact the officer-client relationship, which increased adherence to RNR results and decreased recidivism rates (Bonta *et al.*, 2011).

Gleicher and colleagues (2013) identified three effective training courses for community officers to achieve desired outcomes. First, the Strategic Training Initiative in Community Supervision (STICS) uses RNR principles to guide content and officer-client meetings (Bonta *et al.*, 2011; Bourgon & Gutierrez, 2012). Second, the Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS) aims to equip community officers with knowledge on translating RNR principles into reality and using CCP in meetings with their clients (Smith *et al.*, 2012). Third, the Staff Training Aimed at Reducing Re-Arrest (STARR) trains community officers in skills important to change behavior and reduce failure rates and recidivism (Robinson *et al.*, 2011). An example of the importance of adequate training is a study that found officers who received special training on sex offenders positively changed their attitudes and beliefs towards this population in order to improve their treatment (Craig, 2005).

Considering the analysis from Table 2 on the worldwide profiles of community officers which showed a focus on a people-oriented educational background, rather than on security or tactical skills, one could expect that the training of community

officers would maintain this framework and would further train them in key strategies or practices to improve the officer-client relationship to achieve better outcomes.

However, the trend is that the few available curriculum and courses (this data was complicated to gather and when available it lacked details) it was possible to observe some communication modules, but in most of the countries, the curriculum returned to security and management themes (see Table 4). This is problematic because the people-oriented individuals who were hired to conduct a people profession are then being trained back to a guardianship role and their advanced knowledge and skills to build positive relationships are not being strengthened.

### **Correctional Change through Recruiting and Education**

Correctional and community corrections officers interact repeatedly with their clients as part of their daily routine and duties. The relatively structured setting of jails/prisons and the follow-up meetings allow these officers the option of building empathetic, professional, and encouraging relationships with justice-involved individuals for the benefit of helping them address their needs. Even though these relationships are imperative to achieve the desired outcomes of the correctional system, officers are not being provided the necessary skills they need to fully help and support justice-involved individuals (King, 2009; Lutze, 2016).

The international trend analyzed in this paper shows that the officers' profiles and curriculums are not fully aimed towards human service nor a people's profession. Rather, there is a general strong focus on security and tactical skills for correctional officers, and even though the profile of the community officer is human-oriented, the curriculum trains them back to surveillance and management skills. The trend in most countries, except Norway, is to recruit a very general and basic profile to later train in management, law, and practical skills. The training does not focus on rehabilitative goals and will not enhance nor improve the chances of reducing future recidivism.

Scholars have identified that punishment-based strategies do not have a positive impact on incarcerated individuals' outcomes (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Gendreau *et al.*, 2000; Lowenkamp *et al.*, 2013). However, there is evidence that officers can be retrained to eliminate (or at least dramatically reduce) dehumanizing practices (Ahalt *et al.*, 2020). As some scholars identified, investing in this human service role addresses the uniqueness of the correctional population, while also generating institutional and public safety (Ahalt *et al.*, 2020; Bruhn & Nylander, 2013; Coyle & Fair, 2018). Therefore, a people's profession-orientate strategy that can contribute to build positive relationships, reduce disparities, and improve outcomes is an urgent and necessary response to adequately address the needs of the population and improve the desired outcomes of the system.



Table 4: Summary of Training Delivered to Community Corrections Officers in Eight Countries

Location	North America		Europe		South America		Australia <sup>24</sup>
	U.S. <sup>25</sup>	Canada <sup>26</sup>	England <sup>27</sup>	Norway <sup>28</sup>	Spain <sup>29</sup>	Chile <sup>30</sup>	Colombia
Length	6 weeks	2 weeks	15 or 20 weeks	N/A	N/A	N/A	15 weeks
Major Topics in Training Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigation</li> <li>Report writing</li> <li>Substance abuse and mental health treatment</li> <li>Firearms and safety</li> <li>Other areas that the chief finds appropriate, ranging from CPR, to diversity, to budgeting and contact administration, to retirement planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community personal safety training</li> <li>The community personal safety training for clerical staff</li> <li>The managing offenders with long-term supervision orders</li> <li>The managing community incidents course</li> <li>The supervising community professionals training</li> <li>The parole officer continuous development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The criminal justice system</li> <li>Crime &amp; criminal behavior</li> <li>Penal policy &amp; the punishment of offenders</li> <li>The rehabilitation of offenders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For probation workers the main activities lie in the organization of training in probation program-activity and other more general subjects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial training program: Course for every employee that will be working for the agency of penitentiary institutions.</li> <li>Training courses: New challenges and technological advances (new legislations, new treatment programs, etc.).</li> <li>Ongoing training courses: several updating courses are delivered depending on the specialty of the employee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Substitute sentences of probation</li> <li>Intensive probation</li> <li>"Nowadays, the training received by probation officers in Chile it's almost in-existent."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This country does not have a community corrections system</li> <li>Communicate effectively</li> <li>Prepare reports</li> <li>Maintain security.</li> <li>A Contribute to workplace Safety.</li> </ul>

Correctional systems worldwide cannot expect officers to instinctively know *how* to accurately interact with the clients, especially when there is a complicated combination of a dual human- and surveillance-role. Considering the importance of a positive, trustable, and approachable client-officer relationship in both correctional and community corrections context, there is an urgent need to train officers with case management abilities that facilitate the human service role of these officers and therefore the rehabilitative objective of the system. Better officer-inmate relationships allow officers to understand, manage, and address the disparities while improving desired outcomes.

## Conclusion

This paper aimed to identify if institutional and community corrections were recruiting and/or training their officers with a people profession's lens that facilitated officer-client relationship towards reducing recidivism. To do so, the author reviewed data from eight different countries and found that the profile recruited, and the curriculum offered to these officers had a strong focus on a surveillance role, instead of the dual safety-and-human perspective, which promotes recidivism reductions.

Worldwide these institutions are ignoring the importance and impact of these two *people professions* who deal daily with diverse populations since they are not being provided the knowledge, nor the strategies, to strengthen the officer-inmate interactions. Instead, the information they are receiving is fully directed towards supervision and control.

It is understandable that recruited profiles might be flexible since correctional work might be attached to the stigma the client suffers from society. However, there are several aspects needed to have an organization, such as the correctional system (both the institutional and the community), to adhere to a dual rehabilitative and security role. Education is one of the key aspects to begin an organizational change in the short-, medium-, and long-term. For this reason, curriculums worldwide should be revised and directed towards practical skills officers can rely on to provide adequate case management for their clients and their individual needs.

## Notes

1. For more information about Australia's requirements see <https://www.corrections.sa.gov.au/careers/Working-with-prisoners-and-offenders/roles/applying-to-be-a-correctional-officer>
2. For more information about the U.S. requirements see <https://www.bop.gov/jobs/positions/index.jsp?p=Correctional%20Officer>
3. For more information about Canada's requirements see [https://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/english/corr\\_serv/careers\\_in\\_corr/become\\_corr\\_off/COJobRequirements/cs\\_cojob\\_requirements.html](https://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/english/corr_serv/careers_in_corr/become_corr_off/COJobRequirements/cs_cojob_requirements.html)

4. For more information about UK's requirements see <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-prison-service/about/recruitment>
5. For more information about Norway's requirements see [https://krus.custompublish.com/getfile.php/2520650.2204.sdcwsybcvw/KRUS\\_ENGLISH\\_JAN2014.pdf](https://krus.custompublish.com/getfile.php/2520650.2204.sdcwsybcvw/KRUS_ENGLISH_JAN2014.pdf)
6. For more information about Spain's requirements see <http://www.interior.gob.es/web/servicios-al-ciudadano/oposiciones/cuerpos-de-instituciones-penitenciarias/cuerpo-de-ayudantes-de-instituciones-penitenciarias/requisitos>
7. For more information about Chile's requirements see [http://www.escueladegendarmeria.gob.cl/index\\_admision\\_ao.html](http://www.escueladegendarmeria.gob.cl/index_admision_ao.html)
8. For more information about Colombia's requirements <https://grupoguard.com/co/convocatorias/convocatorias-800-801-inpec/>
9. For more information about the Australian requirements see <http://www.careers.justice.nsw.gov.au/Pages/our-roles/corrections-careers/community-corrections-officer.aspx#:~:text=Applicants%20for%20the%20role%20of,hold%20time%20limited%20working%20visas>
10. For more information about the U.S. requirements see <https://www.bls.gov/OOH/community-and-social-service/probation-officers-and-correctional-treatment-specialists.htm#tab-4>
11. For more information about the Canada's requirements see [https://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/english/corr\\_serv/careers\\_in\\_corr/careers\\_pp\\_officer/careers\\_pp\\_officer.html](https://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/english/corr_serv/careers_in_corr/careers_pp_officer/careers_pp_officer.html)
12. For more information about the English requirements see <https://www.train-to-be-a-probation-officer.com/apply/>
13. For more information about the Norwegian requirements see <https://www.cep-probation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/2008Norway.pdf>
14. For more information about Spanish requirements see <https://rm.coe.int/information-about-the-training-of-the-prison-and-probation-staff-in-so/1680716583> OR <https://www.cep-probation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/probation-in-europeChapter-Spain-final.pdf>
15. For more information about the Chilean requirements see <https://www.leychile.cl/Consulta/m/mail?idNorma=16899&org=#:~:text=%2D%20E1%20delegado%20de%20libertad%20vigilada,de%20reinserci%C3%B3n%20social%20de%20la>
16. For more information about the Australian curriculum see <https://www.corrections.sa.gov.au/careers/Working-with-prisoners-and-offenders/correctional-officers/training>
17. Considering the variation among states, the state chosen to analyze was California. Also see (King, 2009).
18. For more information about the Canadian curriculum see [https://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/english/corr\\_serv/careers\\_in\\_corr/become\\_corr\\_off/COTraining/cs\\_cotraining.html](https://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/english/corr_serv/careers_in_corr/become_corr_off/COTraining/cs_cotraining.html)
19. For more information about the English curriculum see Justice Jobs website OR see [https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/565860/response/1357127/attach/5/Curriculum%20booklet%20v3.2.pdf?cookie\\_passthrough=1](https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/565860/response/1357127/attach/5/Curriculum%20booklet%20v3.2.pdf?cookie_passthrough=1)

20. For more information about the Norwegian curriculum see [https://krus.custompublish.com/getfile.php/2520650.2204.sdcwsybcvw/KRUS\\_ENGLISH\\_JAN2014.pdf](https://krus.custompublish.com/getfile.php/2520650.2204.sdcwsybcvw/KRUS_ENGLISH_JAN2014.pdf)
21. For more information about the Spanish curriculum see <http://www.interior.gob.es/web/servicios-al-ciudadano/oposiciones/cuerpos-de-instituciones-penitenciarias/cuerpo-de-ayudantes-de-instituciones-penitenciarias/proceso-de-seleccion-y-valoracion#curso%20selectivo%20y%20pr%C3%A1cticas>
22. For more information about the Chilean curriculum see [http://www.escueladegendarmeria.gob.cl/aspo\\_plan.html](http://www.escueladegendarmeria.gob.cl/aspo_plan.html)
23. For more information about the Colombian curriculum see <https://epn.inpec.gov.co/formacion-profesional/programas-academicos1>
24. For more details about the Australian curriculum see <https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/CSC30115> OR <https://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/careers/opportunities/community-corrections-officer.aspx>
25. For more details about the U.S. curriculum see <https://www.bls.gov/OOH/community-and-social-service/probation-officers-and-correctional-treatment-specialists.htm#tab-4>
26. For more details about the Canadian curriculum see [https://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/english/corr\\_serv/careers\\_in\\_corr/careers\\_pp\\_officer/careers\\_pp\\_officer.html](https://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/english/corr_serv/careers_in_corr/careers_pp_officer/careers_pp_officer.html) OR <https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/pa/ev-cco-394-2-84-c2/394-2-84-c2-B-eng.shtml>
27. For more information about the English curriculum see <https://www.traintobeaprobationofficer.com/becoming-a-probation-officer/>
28. For more information about the Norwegian curriculum see <https://www.cep-probation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/2008Norway.pdf> OR <https://www.kriminalomsorgen.no/jobb-i-kriminalomsorgen.237909.no.html>
29. For more information about the Spanish curriculum see <https://www.cep-probation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/probation-in-europeChapter-Spain-final.pdf> OR <https://pazciudadana.cl/biblioteca/documentos/el-rol-del-delegado-de-libertad-vigilada-experiencia-en-espana-e-inglaterra/>
30. For more information about the Chilean curriculum see <https://www.leychile.cl/Consulta/m/mail?idNorma=16899&org=#:~:text=%2D%20E1%20delegado%20de%20libertad%20vigilada,de%20reinserci%C3%B3n%20social%20de%20la> OR <https://pazciudadana.cl/biblioteca/documentos/el-rol-del-delegado-de-libertad-vigilada-experiencia-en-espana-e-inglaterra/>

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