

Miscellaneous Sheet

Vermont has a mentor-based program. It has greatly decreased the rate of recidivism for sex offenders and violent offenders, i.e., 86% and 80% respectively.

Oregon has a faith-based program. It has shown great promise in reducing recidivism.

Anecdotal reports demonstrate that family involvement prior to and after the end of incarceration decrease recidivism.

Our program attempts to integrate faith-based, family-based, and mentor-based initiatives into one program. The hope is that the combination of interventions will result in even greater decreases in recidivism than each initiative alone.

Our Plan of Action has three components. They are Year One, Year Two, and common ground. During Year One, we focus on placing our fellow citizens on a glide path to a viable career and a stable future. During Year Two, we “raise the bar.” We point out how much the individual has accomplished in one year. We ask them what else they might accomplish in five or ten years. We challenge them to a higher calling. Our program seeks common ground. There is such divisiveness in our society based on politics, race, religion, gender, and sexuality. We seek common ground between all people of good will. We need to maximize all available resources.

The basis of our program is incremental and progressive change. When we drive a car twenty miles or walk five miles, we make thousands of adjustments. When we leave the front door, we are almost 100% successful with these tasks. For more complex tasks, i.e., regular exercise, healthy eating, weight management, and learning, we “click our fingers,” and think we can get it done. It doesn’t work too well. If we copy the approach for simple behaviors and apply it to more complex ones, we can be more successful with these interventions. In the European Journal of Social Psychology, Phillippa Lally and colleagues found it takes 66 days to form a new habit.

The first thirty to sixty days after incarceration are most critical to prevent recidivism. This sixty-day period represents a significant challenge to decreasing recidivism, but it also represents a wonderful opportunity to form positive behaviors or habits. Our program is designed to integrate all available resources in a sixty-day window.