

Chapter 2

Corrections Today: Evidence-Based Corrections and Professionalism

Evidence-Based Corrections (EBC)

Application of social scientific techniques to the study of correctional practices, programs, and procedures.

- To increase effectiveness and enhance the efficient use of available resources.

Cost-benefit analysis: Systematic process used to calculate the costs of a program relative to its benefits.

History of EBC

Mid-1990s: Separate efforts were made to identify crime and justice-related programs.

- Were effective and helped in assessing the methodological quality of each of the studies.

2005: University of California–Irvine announced the creation of its Center for Evidence-Based Corrections.

Evidence-Based Programs (EBP)

Evidence: Refers to scientific evidence, in any discussion of evidence-based programs.

How EBP is utilized in corrections.

- Law enforcement professionals apprehend the perpetrators.
- Correctional professionals process, monitor, and rehabilitate those individuals throughout their confinement.

Reach of Evidence-Based Studies in Corrections

Wider use of community corrections, reentry programs, and sentences that divert offenders from prison will:

- Serve the rehabilitative goals of society better than imprisonment.
- Likely lead to a reduction in corrections-related budgets.

Professionalism in Corrections ¹

Profession: An occupation granted high social status by virtue of the personal integrity of its members.

Characteristics of professionals.

- Spirit of public service and interest in the public good.
- Fair application of reason and use of intellect to solve problems.

Professionalism in Corrections ²

- Self-regulation through a set of internal guidelines.
- Continual self-appraisal and self-examination.
- Inner sense of professionalism.
- Adherence to the recognized ethical principles of one's profession.
- Commitment to lifelong learning and lifelong betterment within the profession.

Standards and Training¹

American Correctional Association's (ACA) Commission on Accreditation.

- Set specified standards for given positions within corrections.
- Identified essential training topics.
- Set specific numbers of hours for preservice and annual in-service training.
- Specified basic administrative policy support requirements for training programs.

Standards and Training ²

Training standards help ensure that the education is uniform.

Standards supplement training by:

- Setting minimum requirements for entry into the profession.
- Detailing expectations for those involved in the everyday life of correctional work.
- Establishing basic requirements for facilities, programs, and practices.

Skills and Knowledge Required for Correctional Officers

Essential traits.

- Accountability.
- Strong writing and effective presentational skills.
- Logical mind and the ability to solve problems.

Corrections professional: Dedicated person of high moral character and personal integrity who is employed in the field of corrections and takes professionalism to heart.

Standard-Setting Organizations¹

Professional associations: Organized groups of like-minded individuals who work to enhance the professional status of members of their occupational group.

They offer detailed sets of principles for correctional occupations and corrections administration.

Standard-Setting Organizations ²

Have developed standards to guide training and clarify what is expected of those working in corrections.

- Examples.
 - American Correctional Association.
 - American Probation and Parole Association.
 - American Jail Association.

Standard-Setting Organizations³

Certification: Credentialing process, usually involving testing and career development assessment.

- The process is used to formally recognize the skills, knowledge, and abilities of correctional personnel.

Education

- Component of true professionalism, in addition to basic job skills and job-specific training.
- Builds critical-thinking skills.
- Allows the application of theory and ethical principles to a multitude of situations.
- Provides insights into on-the-job difficulties.

Social Diversity in Corrections¹

Race.

- **Racism:** Social practices that allocate value to individuals solely because of their race.
- Racism can lead to inequities in hiring and promotion for those working in corrections.

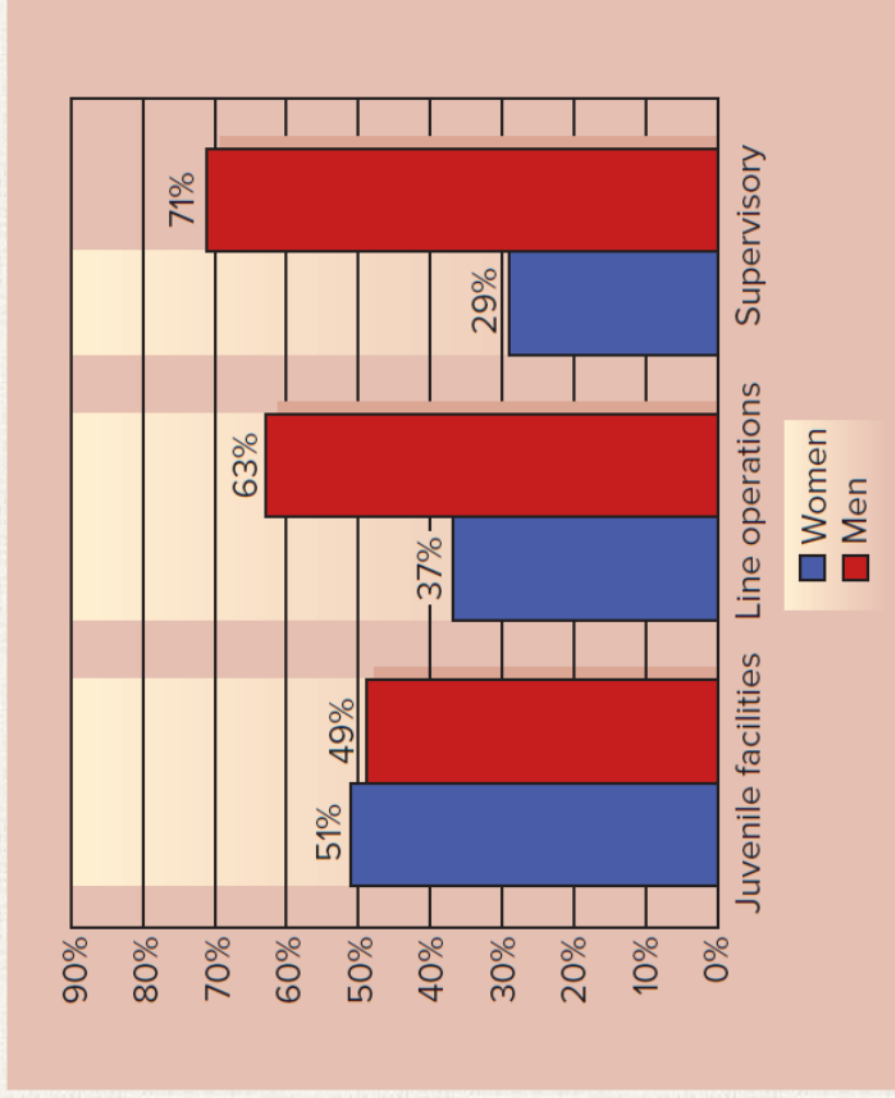
Ethnicity.

- Prison gangs built around ethnicity can lead to serious consequences.

Gender.

- Women working in corrections are underrepresented in supervisory positions.

Exhibit 2.2: Corrections Personnel by Gender and Rank



Sources: American Correctional Association and DiscoverCorrections.com.

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Social Diversity in Corrections²

- Impacts individual correctional clients.
- Determines correctional populations and trends.
- Affects the lives and interests of those working in the field of corrections.
- Change the structure and functioning of correctional institutions, facilities, and programs.