



EP 8c

community aftercare programs have reduced the recidivism rate by as much as 50 percent (Pew Report, 2011). Recidivism refers to a criminal offender's return to criminal behavior after a period of correctional treatment. More than 40 percent of offenders return to prison within three years.

Probation, Parole, and Community Corrections

CASE EXAMPLE

Sixteen-year-old Daniel is on probation for breaking gunball machines outside stores and stealing the change. Daniel has a developmental disability; his IQ of 70 puts him in the category of mildly mentally retarded. He lives with his grandparents, who are elderly and have needed a lot of support in raising Daniel.

CASE EXAMPLE

Rolanda is 28 years old and has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder. She is on parole after serving a six-month sentence for writing bad checks. Rolanda was homeless before she was arrested. Her eight-year-old daughter lives with Rolanda's mother.

CASE EXAMPLE

Franklin is 40 years old and is on probation for possession of cocaine. As part of his probation agreement, he is currently staying in a halfway house that provides drug treatment services. Franklin had been unemployed for two years before his latest drug arrest. He has a wife and three children. He also has a prior conviction for spouse abuse.



EP 6b, 7a, 7c, 8

Case management and counseling are the primary services provided by social workers to people like Daniel, Rolanda, and Franklin who are on probation or parole or are participating in community corrections programs. Social workers may be hired by a state or county government as probation or parole officers or they may be assigned to work in conjunction with probation or parole officers. The term **community corrections** refers to punishments or sanctions that occur outside of secure correctional facilities in halfway houses, treatment programs, work or educational release programs, community service programs, and diversion programs (particularly for juvenile offenders) or when offenders are on furlough or under house arrest. Community corrections allow offenders to work and support their families while paying restitution and defraying program costs (Nays & Winfree, 1998).

The social worker/case manager who deals with probationers and parolees has 10 primary responsibilities.

1. *Engage the client in the helping process:* The social worker must be able to establish rapport with possibly resistant clients who come from diverse backgrounds and circumstances.
2. *Assess the needs of the client:* Daniel needs developmental disability services, educational and job resources, and independent living skills. Rolanda needs a place to live, access to medication for her bipolar disorder, and appropriate psychiatric treatment. Franklin needs job skills, employment resources, and perhaps some assistance in resolving family issues and problems.
3. *Develop a service plan:* The service plan must identify the strengths of the client and capitalize on them to help the client succeed. For example, Rolanda is bright but has little formal education. Her service plan might encourage and support attendance at an educational institution.
4. *Link the client with appropriate services:* The services needed in the discussed cases include batterer intervention, mental health treatment, employment services, substance abuse treatment, and developmental disability services.
5. *Coordinate with other case managers and helping professionals involved in the client's service plan:* Franklin's probation officer/case manager brokers services and provides court liaison, informal counseling, and guidance. The probation officer/case manager also coordinates the efforts of a substance abuse treatment case manager, a batterer's intervention case manager, and Franklin's therapist.
6. *Monitor the progress of the client:* The purpose of monitoring is to ensure that services are delivered and that the service plan is effectively implemented.
7. *Intervene with sanctions when necessary:* Sanctions can range from probation or parole revocation, to more intense supervision and restrictions on travel, to random drug testing (Healey, 1999).
8. *Advocate for the client when necessary:* Sometimes it is necessary to advocate for the client to the courts or to the client's employer. For example, Daniel was accused of stealing supplies at his new job as a janitor for a local school. His probation could have been revoked, but the case manager intervened on his behalf and helped sort out the situation with Daniel's employer and the police. It turned out that Daniel did not steal the supplies, but instead gave them to an unauthorized person who took advantage of his inexperience.
9. *Provide counseling and informal guidance:* Case managers are generally not expected to do therapy with their clients, but they do need well-developed clinical skills. Rolanda often discusses her feelings and thoughts with her case manager, who uses reflective listening and cognitive restructuring techniques to help Rolanda expand her self-awareness and enhance her decision-making ability.
10. *Evaluate the effectiveness of the service:* The case manager must be able to determine whether Daniel, Rolanda, and Franklin are experiencing positive outcomes from their service plans. If not, alternative plans have to be developed (Martin & Inciardi, 1993).