

PENNSYLVANIA ADULT CORRECTIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTES (PACT)

**Law Enforcement and Corrections Services
Office of Continuing Education and Community Services
College of Human Development
The Pennsylvania State University**

THE ROLES OF THE PROBATION AND PAROLE OFFICER (7502)

A Training Module for Trainers of Personnel

in the Administration of Justice

Designed as Part of the Statewide Training

Program for County Probation and State Parole Personnel

by

CHARLES L. NEWMAN, PROJECT DIRECTOR

STANLEY S. GOEHRING, TRAINING SUPERVISOR

ELLEN S. PIERCE, STAFF ASSISTANT

Supported by a Grant from the Pennsylvania

Governor's Justice Commission #DS-451-73A

June, 1975

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A FOREWORD TO THE INSTRUCTOR

The training module, "The Roles of Probation and Parole Officers" was developed into a course outline from materials originally presented at the Pennsylvania Adult Correctional Training (P.A.C.T.) XXI project.

A series of modules has been developed all having the common goals of providing participants with the following:

1. An understanding of the administration of justice as a system, the interdependence of its elements, and the implications of their role performance for the successful operation of the system;
2. An understanding of the goals of the system and the role-relevancy of universally applicable principles, concepts, and procedures in providing protection for the community and rehabilitative services to the offender;
3. An understanding of the ways in which they may improve role performance consistent with the system's needs for increased understanding, co-operation, coordination, and improved service capabilities.

This training module on probation and parole officers roles can be used independently as a short course of several hours' duration or it can be incorporated into the full series which P.A.C.T. has produced.

In order that each module be utilized to its fullest potential, the trainer or instructor first should have a sound background, preferably with field experience in the area in which he will be instructing. Secondly, he should have in-depth knowledge of the bibliographical material listed at the end of the training module, as well as other literature sources. With this basic preparation, the trainer can be in a position to employ the training module as a "road map" for the direction and substance of the course. Throughout the preparation and presentation of the course, the trainer should keep in mind the general objectives of the course as set forth at the outset of the outline.

As the course is presented, each heading and subheading should be treated by the instructor as a theme for expansion. The headings are meant only to provide the structure to the trainer, who should then build on them, expanding and enlarging as the needs of the class are demonstrated and his time and ability permit. Many examples and illustrations should be provided to the class. An abundance of case materials and other examples carefully prepared by the instructor is essential. It is the illustrative material that concretize concepts and enhance learning. The trainer should draw upon his own professional experience as well as the bibliographical material for much of this expansion. Obviously, the trainer should capitalize on the experiences of his class in order to make the material more viable.

While the trainer is preparing for the course, certain chapters and sections of the readings will suggest themselves to him as so basic or important that he will want to assign them to the class. Therefore, the bibliography will serve two purposes: preparation of material for the instructor, and training material for the class. No attempt was made on the part of those developing the training modules to dictate what, if any, the class assignment should be. The trainer will know his class and its needs better than anyone else, and should have full discretionary power on assignments, drawing from the bibliographical references or any other sources which he deems relevant.

We wish to express our appreciation to Professors William Parsonage and Frederick Hussey of the Pennsylvania State University for their suggestions and review in the development of this module.

THE ROLES OF THE PROBATION AND PAROLE OFFICER

- Course Objectives:
- (1) To define and clarify the professional roles of the probation and parole officer;
 - (2) To explore the areas of knowledge with which an officer should be thoroughly familiar for effective administration of his duties;
 - (3) To acquaint the layman with fundamental differences between probation and parole;
 - (4) To eliminate misconceptions about the roles of probation and parole officers.

I. Basic premises underlying probation and parole concepts

A. Professional goals

1. To promote desirable conduct that ultimately should become a part of the habitual actions of the parolee/probationer
2. To counsel the parolee/probationer about how he may attain desired goals that are consonant with himself as well as society
3. To protect society

B. Probation and Parole defined

1. Parole - the selective release of prisoners from institutions prior to expiration of sentence, and provision for supervision which includes control and guidance within the community
2. Probation - a form of sentence which gives an offender or delinquent restrained freedom under conditions prescribed by the court and under the supervision of a probation officer

C. Fundamental differences between probation and parole

1. Parole - used after a prison term has been partially served; administered by an institution or authority; closely tied to institutions

2. Probation - granted in lieu of a prison term; a judicial action of the court; closely tied to the court

D. Capabilities limited by factor of "time"

II. Historical development of positions in the fields of probation and parole in the United States

- A. 1841 - John Augustus volunteered his services to the court
 1. Put up bail for offenders
 2. Supplied offenders employment
- B. 1876 - Prisoners first released from Elmira Reformatory
 1. Introduced parole system
 2. Conditions for release comparable to present-day parole
- C. 1907 Act - Appointment of probation officers by court
 1. To be paid by public funds
 2. Qualification based on personal character
- D. 1910 - Federal Parole System established
 1. Parole Boards established at each institution
 2. Parolees to be supervised by federal probation officers
- E. 1912 - National Association of Probation Officers
 1. First national organization of probation officers
 2. Major role of stimulating service from within
- F. Report of 1922 - Recommendations made
 1. Appointment of full-time officers
 2. Officers should be more highly educated and have specialized training
- G. Report of 1936 - Called for appointment of supervisory officers for line probation officers

- H. 1939 National Conference on Parole
 - 1. Called for reevaluation of way prisoners are selected for parole
 - 2. Called for greater emphasis on the protection of society as opposed to individual reformation
 - 3. Called for greater emphasis on authoritarian control of released offenders
- I. 1940 - Corrections model included treatment of offender performed in bureaucracy
- J. Necessities for developing a relatively uniform nation-wide service
 - 1. Employ full-time officers
 - 2. Become a fully public service
 - 3. Training personnel

III. Background knowledge necessary for execution of officer's duties

- A. Laws
 - 1. Criminal Law*
 - 2. Courts system
 - 3. Machinery of law enforcement and the penal system
- B. Social Services
 - 1. What is available
 - 2. How to best utilize them
 - 3. Likely consequences of use (cooperation or non-cooperation, exchange theory, etc.)
- C. Personality Dynamics
 - 1. Normal and abnormal human development
 - 2. Group dynamics and dynamics of the individual
- D. Social Structure
 - 1. Attitudes

*See: Sol Rubin, The Law of Criminal Corrections, West Publ., Chapters 3, 6, 15, 1

2. Effects of social change

E. Self-knowledge

1. Prejudices, limitations, biases

2. Personal awareness of value systems of other social groups

IV. Desirable interpersonal and social skills of probation/parole officers

A. Ability to accept responsibility for authority

1. Be able to use authority firmly but with judgment and empathy

2. Know limits of authority

3. Be able to use authority in way that client can respect

B. Ability to work with aggressive persons

C. Ability to improve in performance

1. Be able to see one's own short-comings

2. Be able to change

D. Ability to form and sustain whole interpersonal relationships

1. Be able to identify with many types of people

2. Be able to be compassionate

3. Be able to communicate well with others

a. Clients, co-workers, other agencies

b. Develop communication skills

(1) Messages often sent non-verbally

(2) Everyone communicating something in own way

(3) Reasons why the communication process breaks down

(a) Physical or psychological failure to hear what is said

(b) Differing values blocking the understanding or acceptance of what is said

(c) Probing for deeper/hidden meanings when none exists

(d) Insensitivity

- (e) Not being alert enough
- (f) Using vocabulary not suited to receiver or vice versa
- (g) Being blinded by prejudices, predispositions, expectations, or personal background
- (h) Tendency to emphasize or focus on content to the exclusion of sensitivities

V. Roles of the parole officer

A. General areas of supervision

1. Case assistance - development and use of community resources (counseling, group work, referring services)
2. Control - observation, surveillance, arrest (when necessary)
3. Decision-making - matters effecting legal status of parolee
4. Interpretation - the purpose and processes of parole to prisoner
5. Maintenance of accurate case records
 - a. May be called for as evidence in court
 - b. Facilitate continuity in case of change of parole officer or agency
 - c. Basis for guidance of parole agency (i.e. determine time when prisoner is eligible for parole and his parolability)
 - d. Use in treatment and counseling process

B. Institutional parole officer

1. Serves as member of institution classification staff or committee
2. Serves as liaison between committee and parole board and parole field staff
3. Interprets board and parole department policy to institution staff and inmate population

4. Works closely with classification staff in developing pre-parole training program
5. Plays major part in initial orientation of prisoner and continues a counseling relationship during period of incarceration
6. Encourages maintenance of prisoner contact with family, community and former employer
7. Aids in developing parole plan for consideration by parole board when prisoner is ready for parole release
8. Participates in pre-release program to interpret parole program to new parolees
9. Sits in on parole hearings and interprets actions of board (if board does not do so) to prisoners denied parole
10. Completes pre-parole report prior to release of an offender from the institution

C. Field Parole Officer

1. Makes investigations to supplement records of correctional institutions
2. Contacts prisoner's family
 - a. To discuss immediate and long-range problems resulting from incarceration
 - b. To inform and refer them to agencies where they can obtain services and assistance in meeting these problems
 - c. To lay the foundation for inmate's return and acceptance into community
3. Visits correctional institution to interview potential parolees and help them to maintain contact with the "outside" world
4. Provides supervision to parolee

2. Conducts a pre-sentence investigation after a trial has been held for the adult court after the offender has either pleaded or been found guilty to make recommendations to the court and determine eligibility for probation

E. Handles administrative duties

1. Office management
2. Supervision of probation officers
3. Compiles records on offenders
4. Caseload management

F. Supervises offenders

VII. Myths and consequences of perceived roles

A. Mythical roles

1. Employment agent
2. Vocational counselor
3. Marital Counselor
4. School Counselor
5. Psychoanalyst
6. Dream interpreter
7. Street corner watcher
8. Sheriff
9. "Father Confessor"
10. Moralist

B. Consequences of playing these roles

1. Takes time away from legitimate duties
2. Move away from organizational objectives
3. Changes relationship between client and officer

5. Acts as an integrator and referrer^{of} services
 - a. Informs parolee of community agencies and special services
 - b. Helps parolee to utilize these services
6. Has authority to arrest or cause arrest of parolee when there is cause to believe that the conditions of his parole have been violated
7. May recommend discharge to parole board when he feels parolee no longer needs supervision

VI. Roles of the probation officer

- A. Acts as a referrer and integrator of services
 1. Becomes thoroughly familiar with community agencies and social services
 2. Refers probationer to services
 3. Maintains good rapport with other agencies for consistent rendering and increased availability of community resources
- B. Act as a liaison
 1. Between the agency and the court
 2. Between the offender and the court (i.e. interpretation of court actions to the offender)
 3. Between court and community
 4. Between other agencies encountering the offender
 5. Between offender and community
- C. Acts as an expert in the constructive use of authority
- D. Investigates and reports on probationer as an officer of the court
 1. Prepares the preliminary report prior to the hearing
 - a. Informs court about juvenile offender
 - b. Recommends course of action

- a. Loss of professionalism
- b. Can cause dependence of client on officer
- 4. Results in inadequate counseling because of officer's lack of expertise
- 5. Results in a variety of incorrect expectations

VIII. Challenges facing corrections

- A. Making requirements for employment higher (education, training, experience, personal characteristics)
- B. Experimentation by local agencies
- C. Achieving maximum efficiency of performance and high quality output (i.e. raising caseload standards)
- D. Attaining uniform standards of procedure
- E. Combining probation and parole administratively

IX. Summary

- A. The probation/parole officers' role is primarily two fold: (1) he is a broker of services to his client; and (2) an expert in the constructive way to deal with authority
- B. The probation/parole officer should exert caution that he does not portray roles not relegated to him (i.e. Leave the marriage counseling to a marriage counselor; leave psychoanalyzing to the psychoanalyst; etc.)
- C. The probation/parole officer should be an efficient manager of time noting that his capabilities are hampered by this factor
- D. The primary goal of the probation/parole officer is to safely restore the offender to normal unsupervised membership in the community

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FILMS*

The Price of a Life (AFIC) 1967, 29 min., 31261. \$6.10

This film traces the entire probation process from the pre-sentence investigation of a 25-year old offender, who is on his way to becoming a habitual criminal, to the uneven history of case supervision, concluded by the means and methods by which probation can be strengthened with the more than 400,000 probationers now in the community.

The Revolving Door (AFIC) 1968, 30 min., 31337. \$6.10

The minor offender in a cycle of arrest-detention-trial-release. Scenes in lower court and jail; trails in groups; visiting, eating, and recreational conditions; need to reform the court's burdens and to provide presentencing information. Citizens aid in reform and group work.

Odds Against (AFIC) 32 min., 30975. \$6.60

Typical procedures in arrest, detention, trial, sentencing, imprisonment, and parole; best and worst in existing institutions and programs; essentiality of integration and coordination of efforts.

Boy in Court 1940, 11 min., #364.3

Shows the workings of Juvenile Court. Begins with "snatching" of a car by young delinquents and follows them to release of one years probation.

*Films available from Audio-Visual Services. The Pennsylvania State University, Six Willard Building, University Park, Pa. 16802. (Phone 814-865-6315). Prices refer to rental as of 1969.

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