

Case Studies in Corrections

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*Examples, Exercises, Discussion Points,
and Practitioner Interviews*

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*This book is dedicated to my beloved parents,
who believed in my abilities,
supported my interests, and
shared in the love and care of my children.*

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Preface

The primary purpose of this book is to offer supplemental material to assist in understanding basic content information on a variety of correctional topics including institutional and community corrections, adult and juvenile offender risks and needs, and administrative and management principles. Case studies, example reports, practitioner interviews, and an informational guide for career development are among the tools used to focus on the stated purpose.

Learning tools in the form of questions, discussion topics, and assignments are included at the end of each case study. The versatility of the potential use of these tools is a significant strength of this book. The way these tools can be used and their prospective value are at the discretion of the instructor. They can be used to evaluate the students' application of content learning, such as knowledge of terminology and understanding of definitions, familiarity with criminal justice topics, and awareness of current events. The tools are also an excellent means to assess students' critical thinking and other higher order learning abilities such as synthesis, integration, and comparing and contrasting. Some of the exercises require students to demonstrate their research skills. Many of the questions require students to provide a rationale or justification for an answer, encouraging students to state their opinions and support their ideas using integration of knowledge learned in other courses, content specific information, and additional readings and research such as information in government data bases. Some of the questions and topics can foster discussions of ethical issues and create venues for students to reflect on personal biases. All of the tools have the potential to increase the depth and breadth of learn-

ing along with awareness of social issues and local and national current events.

The learning tools included after each case can be used in multiple formats. For example, instructors can assign them as individual out-of-class homework, out-of-class group assignments, and in-class individual and group activities, as well as in-class debates, in or out-of-class research, and quiz or test questions.

The case studies and the learning tools provide an opportunity for students to become acquainted with correctional operations and interaction of the three basic components of the criminal justice system—policing, courts, and corrections. Although the case studies are fictional and were developed specifically for students to demonstrate their level of knowledge and skill development, the issues presented strike a chord of reality. The cases used in combination with the information gathered through the practitioner interviews and the career development guide provide students with a learning experience they do not routinely get from traditional classroom lecture styles used in many courses.

An additional benefit of the arrangement of the content of this book is its alignment with many introductory corrections texts. These texts commonly provide information about prisons and jails, probation and parole, alternative interventions such as drug and mental health courts, juvenile services, intermediate sanctions like work release and house arrest, and administration and management of correctional operations. Chapter Two on institutional corrections includes cases depicting a violent offender with prison adjustment problems, a young property offender with mental health issues incarcerated in the county jail, a drug offender residing in a half-way house program, an older violent offender with an extensive criminal background residing in a work release program after serving a lengthy prison sentence, a female offender residing in a county mental health facility, and a young male offender residing in a residential substance abuse treatment facility. Chapter Three on community corrections includes cases of an offender sentenced to probation for property and drug offenses, an offender serving prison time for a violent offense returning to the community on parole, an offender serving prison time for a sex offense returning to the

community on parole, a young man with mental health challenges convicted of property offenses attending a day treatment program, a young female offender convicted of drug crimes serving probation time under house arrest, and a young male offender sentenced to a drug court program. Chapter Four on juveniles and corrections includes cases involving various intervention services including a first offender program, family intervention services, a substance abuse program, detention facility placement, correction department facility placement, and aftercare services. Chapter Five on administration and management in corrections includes scenarios exploring a variety of topics focusing on budgetary constraints, adjusting caseloads, provision of inmate programs, human resources management, litigation, and accreditation.

Instructors can assign readings from the main text and use the cases from these four chapters to increase the depth and breadth of the students' understanding of applying book information to real life. The example reports commonly used in correctional operations, included in Chapter Six, provide even more opportunities for the instructor to integrate content with experiential learning. In combination, Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight provide information students can use to make decisions about careers in corrections, including factors to keep in mind when deciding if a career in corrections is a good fit.

Instructors can use this book in advanced courses in addition to introduction to corrections classes. The material is suitable for use in a course focused on career exploration. The higher order thinking skills required for many of the case study questions and assignments make it a good choice for upper division courses in correctional administration and management, juvenile delinquency, offender re-entry, and alternative sanctions, to name but a few. Instructors in related disciplines such as social work, sociology, and psychology may also find the book appropriate as a supplemental text.