Does Social Stigmas Affect Criminal Rehabilitation?

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Abstract
There are many strategies to accessing and treating the criminogenic needs of offenders to help them rehabilitate and reintegrate back into society successfully. However criminals are often labeled and stigmatized by society as deviant outcast; viewed as irredeemable and irreparable lost causes. Can criminals be rehabilitated? Not just rehabilitated in the sense of the legal system's view, but in the views of their peers, families, and communities. It's important to realize the affects that societal views and attitudes about criminals have on offenders when they're trying to rehabilitate and reintegrate back into society. Rehabilitation of criminal offenders is a complicated and multifaceted issue that has many different approaches. For the purposes of this project the Punishment, Rehabilitation and Prevention Ideologies will be examined as well as the Restorative Justice model; while also evaluating social stigmas placed on offenders.

Key Concepts Defined
- Punishment Ideology-- sanctions applied to the offender, who is often viewed as a social antagonist
- Rehabilitation Ideology-- treatment and rehabilitation of offenders
- Prevention Ideology-- crime prevention through reducing criminal behavior
- Reintegration Model-- prevention of relapse and recidivism
- Stigma-- a mark of disgrace or infamy

Materials & Methods
- Corrections in America (Allen, Latessa and Ponder) Text Book
- Criminology and Justice Studies Course Material and Discussions
- Online Web Resources and Images

Results
Stigma Can Prevent Successful Reintegration Of Offenders.

Discussion
Social stigmas placed on criminals can prevent them from recovering and rehabilitating. Feeling ashamed and rejected can inadvertently cause them to revert back to criminal behaviors. When reintegrating back into their families and communities they need to feel a sense of achievement and confidence. Having support can make the difference of them being successful or failing. Stigmas erode confidence and creates barriers in treating offenders. Addressing their criminogenic risks and needs is only part of the solution. Offenders must be given opportunities in spite of their conviction and offender status. When society holds against them their past mistakes, it's hard to move past criminal thinking and behavior because it seems like the only option for survival and success. If a person can’t make it in a productively functioning environment they have to make it somewhere. Rehabilitating criminals goes far beyond punishment, treatment and reintegration ideologies. Social Constructs that stigmatize them need to challenged and changed. Social Support for rehabilitation is crucial for successful rehabilitation and reentry.

Limitations
These approaches are designed to effectively rehabilitate offenders while effectively reducing crime and recidivism rates. However they fail to acknowledge the affects of social stigmas and the hindrance they cause in the rehabilitation of offenders.

Conclusion
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