

ALTERNATIVE CUSTODY PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH

JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF ALBERTA
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The spiralling rates of incarceration of young offenders have sparked the development of alternative forms of custody and control for this population. Wilderness camps, boot camps and work camps are three forms of alternative custody programs for youths.

Boot camp prisons, or shock incarceration, have flourished in the United States for several years and have recently been realized in Canada. Boot camps have four common features which distinguish them from other forms of incarceration. Boot camps take on a military camp atmosphere, require offenders to participate in military drills, separate offenders in the program from other prison inmates and are considered an alternative to long custodial terms in prison (Mackenzie, 1990).

The goals of boot camp programs can be classified into three major areas: system level goals, individual level goals and public relation goals (Mackenzie, 1990). System level goals involve a reduction in prison crowding. Individual level goals involve changes in the offenders who participate in boot camp programs. Public relation goals include improving the public image of corrections and the belief that boot camps are a politically acceptable form of sanction.

A number of preliminary evaluative studies have been conducted on boot camp programs. The studies have addressed recidivism rates, completion rates, cost savings and changes in offender attitudes. Studies on re-offending reveal that boot camp participants have similar or even higher recidivism rates compared to offenders in regular prison environments (Sechrest, 1989; Hill, 1996). Another finding of evaluations of boot camp programs is the portion of offenders who complete the program. One study indicated that only about one half of the offenders selected for these programs complete them (Sechrest, 1989). Many evaluations of boot camps have examined the issue of cost savings. An evaluation of an Alabama boot camp revealed that the cost per offender in 1990 was \$5,461, compared to \$10,554 to house a juvenile offender in a regular correctional facility (White, as cited in Burns & Vito, 1995, p. 65). Studies conducted on the attitudes of the offender while attending a boot camp reveal that offenders become more prosocial, act more respectfully, told the truth more and used appropriate manners (Mackenzie & Shaw, 1990; Bourque, Cronin, Pearson, Felker, Han, & Hill, 1996).

Many concerns have been raised regarding boot camp prisons. Boot camps produce a "net widening" effect in that some of the offenders would have been on probation were it not for the existence of the boot camp (Burns & Vito, 1995). The area of greatest concern over boot camps relates to the use of the military style. The military style that is adopted by boot camp programs is based on an exaggerated, outdated system of military training that has been rejected by the military itself (Morash & Rucker, 1990; Simon, 1995).

The Ontario boot camp program, known as Project Turnaround, can accommodate up to 50 male juvenile offenders who have received a youth court disposition of open custody or probation following a custodial sentence (Company selected..., 1997). The program is a highly regimented, 16 hours a day program that addresses issues such as academics, life skills, literacy training and problem solving but the main focus of the program is on physical fitness and hard work (Company selected..., 1997).

In 1994 the Manitoba government and the Department of Corrections transformed their existing policies regarding young offenders committed to secure custody facilities. Today,

all Manitoba young offenders in secure custody are required to participate in programs and a life style that closely resembles that of a disciplined boot camp.

Wilderness camps have operated in the United States for several years and similar to the boot camp phenomena, wilderness camps are forming in Canada. The wilderness camps discussed in the paper include the STEP program in Florida, VisionQuest and the Hope Centre Wilderness Camp in Texas.

Some evaluations of wilderness camps have found recidivism rates to be lower for youths who participated in wilderness camps than for youths who did not participate. Others, however, found the rates to be similar to each other (Winterdyk & Griffiths, 1984). Due to methodological problems, there is no conclusive evidence that these programs are effective in reducing recidivism or changing lifestyles.

Some concerns have been raised regarding the use of wilderness camps. One concern relates to the use of confrontational tactics to deal with misbehaviour. The VisionQuest program uses "intense verbal confrontations" between staff and youth as a treatment method (Lower recidivism rate..., 1988, p. 6). Another limitation concerns the failure of a wilderness camp to specify a conceptual or theoretical basis for the program. A guiding theoretical framework is necessary to understand how wilderness camps can address the factors assumed to cause delinquency.

Work camps programs target high-risk offenders who do not possess job skills and attempt to enhance practical skills, develop interpersonal skills, minimize prisonization and ensure that work is not merely punishment (Gendreau & Ross, 1987).

Alberta's Shunda Creek Youth Corrections Camp is directed at repeat young offenders serving at least a 3 month sentence. The work camp combines counselling/educational and work programs to help young offenders develop a strong work ethic and life skills which are necessary to meet the demands of responsible living (Alberta Justice, 1995; Hill, 1996). The Aboriginal Young Offender Corrections Camp is an open custody work camp that combines educational programs with culture-specific programs. This program addresses issues that are of importance and relevance to Aboriginal people.

The current literature on boot camps, wilderness camps and work camps reveals that they do not demonstrate consistent results with respect to recidivism, they do not teach concrete work skills or positive attitudes toward work and they are considered abusive and damaging to young people.

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INTRODUCTION

The spiralling rates of incarceration of young offenders have sparked the development of alternate forms of control for this population. Along with the development of community corrections alternatives has been a move toward finding programs for young offenders that are custodial in nature but in which the youths are not housed in a standard correctional

facility. Wilderness camps, boot camps and work camps are three forms of sanction which are alternative custody programs for youth. This paper will describe each of these types of programs, provide information from evaluations of the programs and raise some issues and concerns about the programs.

BOOT CAMPS

The past decade has seen a proliferation of boot camp prisons in the United States, and this trend has spread into Canada. These camps are also routinely called shock incarceration. Boot camps have four common features which distinguish them from other alternative forms of custody:

- were considered an alternative to a longer term in prison;
- had a boot camp atmosphere, with strict rules and discipline;
- required offenders to participate in military drills and physical training; and,
- separated offenders in the program from other prison inmates. (MacKenzie, 1990, pp. 44-45)

There are many areas of program variability among the boot camps currently in operation in the United States. Areas in which programs might differ include: gender and age of clients, number of participants, average number of days served, voluntary entry, voluntary dropout, offence history of clients, placement authority, number of hours devoted to physical training, work, education and counselling.

Boot camps usually offer the offender the option to attend boot camp instead of serving a regular prison term that may last several years (Boot camps politically..., 1989). The amount of time an offender must do in boot camp varies greatly by program. In New York, for example, offenders must serve 180 days in boot camp in exchange for the sentence, which could be up to 10 years, to be reduced to time served plus the boot camp experience (Mackenzie & Piquero, 1994, p. 234). In contrast, other states only require a stay of between 3 and 6 months in boot camp to fulfil their sentence. Most boot camp programs are followed by a period of community supervision.

The popular image of boot camps portrays them as imposing strict and even cruel discipline, hard work and authoritarian control by a drill sergeant (Morash & Rucker, 1990). The primary "treatment tool" is teaching discipline through the use of military style, boot camp techniques. The difference between boot camps and regular prison can be seen in the following description of a typical boot camp dining hall:

Inmates march to the dining room entrance and stand at parade rest until the line moves forward...Upon being served their food, the inmates march forward,...making precise military turns until they come to the first empty table. They place their food on the table and stand at attention until enough inmates are present to fill the table, at which point staff give them a command to sit. The inmates respond in unison, "Sir, thank you, sir!" and take their seats. They eat in silence. When all at a table have finished eating, staff will give them permission to leave. The inmates rise in unison, march crisply to where they return their trays, and march to a line where they stand at parade rest until all have eaten. Upon command, they snap to attention and march to

their housing unit. (Boot camps politically..., 1989, p. 4)

In a survey of existing boot camp programs, commonalities among the programs were found in the use of strict discipline, physical training, drill and ceremony, military bearing and courtesy, physical labour and punishment for minor misconduct. However, some programs have included treatment programs in addition to the military style of control. Massachusetts's program, for example, includes substance abuse therapy, adult basic education and wellness and life skills training (Ransom & Mastrorilli, 1993). The staff in Massachusetts's program are called "drill instructors" and are expected to act as models, counsellors and agents of behaviour change through positive reinforcement and support.

Other states, such as South Carolina and Georgia, have structured their programs in such a way that very little time in the daily schedule is devoted to any type of therapeutic activity (Mackenzie, 1990). These camps place much more emphasis on developing a "work ethic" through attendance at work programs.

In order to clearly illustrate a typical day at a boot camp, the following details are provided about the Oklahoma Regimented Inmate Discipline (RID) program:

Participants are subject to physical conditioning, rigid dress code, personal grooming and hygiene standards, limitations on personal property, structured leisure and recreation activities, rigid living area, cleanliness standards, early lockdown, minimized idleness and intensive programming.

A typical day for inmates in the RID program begins at 5:30 A.M. with wake-up call and proceeds on the following schedule: 6:00 A.M.

- physical conditioning; 6:45 A.M.
- work/program assignment or supervised recreation; 11:00 A.M.
- lunch; 12 noon
- cell inspection; 12:30 P.M.
- work/program assignment or supervised recreation; 3:30 P.M.
- physical conditioning; 4:30 P.M.
- dinner; 5:30 P.M.
- formation marching; 7:00 P.M.
- program participation or free time; and at 9:00 P.M.
- lights out (Crabtree & Douglas, 1985, pp. 38-39).

Goals

The goals of boot camp programs can be classified into three major areas: system level goals, individual level goals and public relation goals (MacKenzie, 1990). One system level goal is to reduce prison crowding; the shorter period of incarceration for those in boot camps gives hope for a reduction in the prison population (MacKenzie & Piquero, 1994). Another way in which the prison population may be reduced is the expectation that future criminal behaviour will be reduced in those experiencing boot camps (Mackenzie & Piquero, 1994). A second system level goal of boot camps is to reduce the financial costs of incarceration; financial savings are anticipated because offenders are not incarcerated for as long a period of time (MacKenzie, 1990).

Individual level goals involve changes in the offenders who participate in boot camp programs. One way in which offenders can change is to exhibit less negative behaviour such as criminal activity (MacKenzie, 1990). Another way in which offenders can change is to exhibit positive behaviour such as increased responsibility, maturity, self control, communication/self disclosure, accountability, motivation and improved attitudes toward authority. Other individual level goals which have been stated by existing boot camp programs are to provide inmates with a chance for re-evaluating their lives through working with others, learning to accept discipline, improving their self respect and ability to control behaviour and learning to seek realistic goals (Sechrest, 1989, p. 15).

Finally, some boot camp programs identify goals involving public relations. Examples of public relations goals include improving the public image of corrections and the belief that boot camps are a politically acceptable alternative which ensures public safety (MacKenzie, 1990).

Evaluation Results

There have been a number of preliminary evaluative studies done of boot camp programs. This section will describe the findings of these studies in relation to recidivism rates, completion rates and cost savings and changes in offender attitudes.

One of the goals of boot camps is to reduce prison crowding through a reduction in the rate of recidivism. However, a study conducted by Bourque, Han and Hill revealed that "the research to date has found little indication that time at the camps alters the criminal behaviour of graduates once they have been released" (Bourque, Han, & Hill, 1996, p. 7). Another study of a Florida program found that the return-to-prison rate for boot camp graduates was 5.59%, while the return-to-prison rate for offenders in regular prison was 7.75% (Sechrest, 1989, p. 16). The difference between these two recidivism rates was not found to be statistically significant. Evaluations of an Alabama boot camp program did not find any significant differences in the recidivism rates of program graduates and offenders who were on probation, who served regular prison terms and were paroled or offenders who had not been previously incarcerated (Burns & Vito, 1995). A final study looked at Cleveland's pilot program and found evidence that the boot camp participants actually had higher rates of recidivism than offenders confined in traditional juvenile correctional facilities (Peterson, 1996).

Another finding produced by evaluations of boot camp programs is the rate of offenders who complete the program. One study indicated that only about one half of the inmates selected for these programs complete them (Sechrest, 1989). A different study of a program in Louisiana indicated that about 40% of program participants withdraw voluntarily, usually during the first two weeks of the program (Boot camps politically..., 1989). Another study revealed that because so few young people actually complete the boot camp program, Arizona correction officials have sought legislation to end their boot camp program (Hill, 1996).

Most of the evaluations which have been done on boot camps have examined the issue of cost savings. Evaluations of both the Florida and New York programs have indicated that overall cost savings have been achieved (MacKenzie, 1990). An evaluation of an Alabama boot camp revealed that the cost per offender in 1990 was \$5,461, while the cost per

offender in a regular juvenile correctional facility was \$10,554 (White, as cited in Burns & Vito, 1995, p. 65).

Questions about the claims of cost savings also apply to claims about reductions in prison crowding. Until it is demonstrated that the population of offenders in boot camps is drawn from the prison-bound population, there will be no firm evidence that boot camps are achieving their goal of reducing prison crowding. In fact, if the number graduating each year from a boot camp program is compared to the total number of offenders in prison, it is clear that the numbers graduating from boot camps make up only a very small portion of the incarcerated population (MacKenzie, 1990, p. 49).

Most evaluations of "shock" programs have found that gains are usually short term unless follow-up care is available that covers a full range of services (Sechrest, 1989). Without the support of family and friends after release and without addressing social problems such as poor education, unemployment and poverty, the effects achieved by the boot camp experience will not last for any length of time.

An evaluation of the boot camp program in Louisiana found that before they even entered the program, offenders who stayed in the boot camp program for more than 85 days were more prosocial (as measured by the Jesness Inventory) than program dropouts and those incarcerated in regular prison (MacKenzie & Shaw, 1990). Offenders in the program also became even more prosocial during their time in the program. According to staff members at a Cleveland boot camp, offenders, over time, acted more respectfully, stayed out of trouble, kept commitments, maintained property and clothing, told the truth and used appropriate manners (Bourque, Cronin, Pearson, Felker, Han, & Hill, 1996). It is possible that this change would have occurred without any influence from the program or it may be that boot camp acted as a catalyst to accelerate the change. While this raises a question about the selection of inmates for the camp and how this might affect outcome results, it also indicates that boot camps may have some positive effects on a certain type of offender.

Issues and Concerns

Boot camp programs vary according to whether participation in the program is voluntary and whether participants can drop out of the program voluntarily (Mackenzie & Piquero, 1994). Some research suggests that voluntary participation is an important factor in producing positive changes in offenders (MacKenzie & Shaw, 1990; Mackenzie & Piquero, 1994).

Another concern about boot camps relates to the population of offenders who are sent to boot camps. As noted previously, there is concern about the population of offenders in boot camps being those who would otherwise be on probation were it not for the existence of the boot camp (Burns & Vito, 1995). This net-widening is less apt to occur if the department of corrections rather than the judge makes the decision to send the offender to boot camp, as this ensures that the boot camp offenders are those who were prison bound (MacKenzie, 1990). Many boot camp programs have contributed to net-widening by setting criteria for boot camp offenders as those believed most likely to be deterred - young, non-violent offenders who have not been confined before (Sechrest, 1989).

The area of greatest concern and controversy over boot camps relates to the use of the

military style. Most journalistic accounts of boot camp programs have portrayed an image of a relatively dehumanizing experience which is usually marked by hard, meaningless labour (Morash & Rucker, 1990; Hill, 1996). It is extremely troubling that the image of the people who are sent to boot camps is that they are deserving of dehumanizing treatment. It is worthy to note that the military style that is often adopted by boot camp programs is based on an exaggerated, outdated system of military training that has been rejected by the military itself (Morash & Rucker, 1990; Simon, 1995). Several components of this military model are problematic: traditional boot camps involved inconsistent philosophies, policies and procedures; traditional boot camp training fostered a "we-versus-they" attitude and the view that trainees were deserving of degrading treatment; and, traditional boot camps promoted an aggressive model of leadership and a conflict-dominated style of interaction (Morash & Rucker, 1990; Hill, 1996). Morash and Rucker make the following observation about the use of the military style:

The very idea of using physically and verbally aggressive tactics in an effort to "train" people to act in a prosocial manner is fraught with contradiction. The idea rests on the assumption that forceful control is to be valued. The other unstated assumption is that alternative methods for promoting prosocial behaviour, such as the development of empathy or a stake in conformity (e.g. through employment), are not equally valued. (Morash & Rucker, 1990, p. 214)

Other concerns about boot camp programs relate to the nature of the work performed. Some defend the hard work as justifiable due to its punitive and rehabilitative nature. However, the work has become more meaningless and less transferable as economic conditions and tight job markets demand that inmates not compete with outside labour markets (Morash & Rucker, 1990).

Unfortunately, the job market for the unskilled labour of inmates once they are released is decreasing over time.

Ontario Boot Camp

In July, 1997, Ontario's first boot camp opened in Medonte Township. The program, known as Project Turnaround, employs approximately 40 staff members, including clinicians, youth workers, drill instructors and administrative staff (Company selected..., 1997). The program accommodates 32 male juvenile repeat offenders who have received a youth court disposition of open custody or probation following a custodial sentence (Company selected..., 1997).

Project Turnaround is a highly regimented, 16 hours a day program. The project addresses issues such as academics, life skills, literacy training and problem solving techniques but the main focus of the program is on physical fitness and hard work (Company selected..., 1997). Project Turnaround mirrors a strict military way of life and models boot camps in the United States.

Manitoba Secure Custody Program

In September, 1994, the Manitoba government and Department of Corrections transformed existing policies regarding young offenders committed to secure custody facilities. Under the new model, all young offenders in secure custody participate in programs and lifestyles that closely resemble the structure of boot camps. This model focuses on "rigorous confinement, austere conditions, defined expectations and consequences and highly structured activities" (Hill, 1996, p. 2).

Young offenders in all secure custody facilities are expected to participate in education and exercise programs. The education programs focus on developing the young person's interpersonal and problem solving skills as well as literacy and other academic skills. The exercise routine focuses on physical training for overall personal health (Personal communication, Community Youth Corrections staff member, July, 1997).

Proponents argue that Manitoba has undergone a positive transformation in the way it deals with its young offenders. Others, on the other hand, argue that Manitoba has created a boot camp atmosphere in secure custody facilities because they now adhere to strict and disciplined schedules in which young offenders are provided with only the basic necessities and must follow monotonous regimented routines.

Although Manitoba has not adopted a "true" militaristic atmosphere that is common to Ontario's Project Turnaround and other boot camps in the United States, it still promotes an atmosphere of strict authoritarian discipline. The result is an overemphasis on discipline and punishment and little by way of educational, psychological and social counselling.

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WILDERNESS CAMPS

Present day wilderness programs for young offenders evolved from two sources: forestry camps for youthful offenders and the Outward Bound model which was created in Wales during the second World War (Roberts, 1988). The wilderness model strips away the trappings of modern society and focuses on the essential needs of food and shelter, with the goal of fostering the development of self-confidence and socially acceptable coping mechanisms for the participants (Church Council on Justice and Corrections, 1996). There are many wilderness camps for youths across the United States.

While there is a lot of variation in the structure of modern wilderness camps, there are some commonalities shared by most programs:

- 1) Providing a well-organized program focussing on the mastery of difficult physical challenges.
- 2) Creating an opportunity for heightened self-respect among youths who have a history of repeated failures in school, difficulty in social relationships and problems with family members.

3) Using the outdoors and the reality of ensuring one's own survival as the setting for teaching academic subjects.

4) Learning how to work cooperatively with others to complete a task.
(Roberts, 1988, p. 3)

Most wilderness programs include several components or phases through which the youth must pass. The orientation phase involves the youth being introduced to expectations and requirements which must be met for successful completion of the program (Roberts, 1988; Castellano & Soderstrom, 1992). Following orientation is a series of increasingly difficult physical challenges such as rock climbing, canoeing and backpacking. There is also an educational component which relates to the camp experience, a "solo" in which each participant survives alone in the wilderness using the skills acquired during the program and the final event which is usually a marathon run (Castellano & Soderstrom, 1992).

Despite all the commonalities among wilderness camps, there can be quite a number of differences among them. Programs may differ in: the eligibility requirements for youth to participate, who administers the program (private non-profit, private for-profit or government), point of entry into the program (sent by judge, as a condition of release or voluntary after being sent to a detention facility), duration of the program, involvement of family members and type and frequency of counselling and aftercare (Roberts, 1988).

Some of the wilderness camp programs such as VisionQuest and Outward Bound are quite well known. In order to provide a clear view of how a wilderness program operates, several programs will be outlined in more detail. VisionQuest is a for-profit organization which operates several types of programs: group homes, wilderness camps, HomeQuest and Wagon Train (Roberts, 1988) in various locations across the United States. The duration of the wilderness camp program is 12 to 18 months; youths make a commitment before entering the program to abstain from alcohol, drugs and sex, to complete at least two "high impact" programs during their stay and to remain in the program until they are released. Youths take part in a "blind walk" in which they are blindfolded and a "solo" which requires each participant to spend 3 days alone with only minimal food and water.

The STEP program in Florida is run on the Outward Bound model. The Outward Bound programs operate on the philosophy that individual self-esteem grows with the successful completion of seemingly difficult tasks (Scott, 1985). Youths first undergo orientation in which they are introduced to the program and the method of treatment (based on reality therapy) they will receive during the 30-35 days of the program. The heart of the STEP program is the Outward Bound Course which involves a 350-mile canoe trip planned so that youths can gradually increase their skills, fitness and independence. Halfway through the trip the youth is sent out on "solo;" the intention of the solo is for the youth to see a new side of himself and of his relationship to the group as a whole. Staff give increasingly more responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the trip to the youths as they develop more skills.

Another example of a wilderness camp is the Hope Centre Wilderness Camp (HCWC) in Texas. HCWC is an organized network of four interdependent, small living groups composed of 12 members each (Clagett, 1989, p. 80). This camp is open to boys between the ages of 12 and 17 who are emotionally disturbed, "problem children" who may or may not be adjudicated delinquent. The boys live in tents which they construct themselves. Campers attend school on weekdays and attend religious service on Sunday which is

planned and conducted by the campers. The camp has several organized therapeutic programs including "homedays" (each youth goes home for four days during which time he must accomplish three pre-set goals), weekend cookouts (campers plan, cook and serve their own meals in their separate campsites rather than eating in the central facility) and techniques such as aftertalk, huddle-up and pow wow (opportunities for informal discussions, dispute resolutions and planning and evaluating events).

Two final programs of note are Camp Trapping in British Columbia and Project Dare in Ontario. These wilderness camps combine a challenging outdoor survival and cooperative living experience with counselling that attempts to raise self-esteem and strengthen self awareness and self confidence (Church Council on Justice and Corrections, 1996).

Goals

The stated goals of most wilderness camp programs are quite similar to each other. One goal is to meet the youths' need for adventure, excitement and challenge in a socially acceptable manner (Roberts, 1988). A second goal is to give youths an opportunity to develop self esteem and self reliance by successfully coping with the challenges of a therapeutic wilderness program (Roberts, 1988). Wilderness activities are designed to push the youths beyond their assumed capabilities, to help them solve their adolescent identity crisis and to develop in them a sense of their strengths and potential. Finally, one program identified the following set of goals:

- 1) to learn to feel comfortable as a member of a group;
- 2) to learn some techniques to deal with groups;
- 3) to learn some wilderness skills using the hands-on method, that is, learning by doing;
- 4) to help some of the adolescent clients learn of life-long leisure pursuits in hopes of filling their free time in productive ways. (Callahan, 1985, p. 32)

Evaluation Results

While there are many studies which have been done to evaluate wilderness camp programs, these evaluations have so many methodological flaws that the data is largely inconclusive (Castellano & Soderstrom, 1992). There have been numerous evaluations done of wilderness programs using recidivism rates as a measure of success. However, because each evaluation defines recidivism in a different way (e.g., new arrest, new conviction, or new sentence involving incarceration), it is difficult to compare the results of evaluations of different programs (Roberts, 1988). Differences in program structure and content also make comparisons among evaluations unreliable. Furthermore, studies using recidivism rates as a measure used different dates to test for recidivism; studies which used shorter time spans were more likely to report lower recidivism rates for youths completing the program. Finally, some studies did not have a control group of offenders who were not in the program in order to compare the recidivism rates for those who participated and those who did not. One of the programs described previously, HCWC, claims that 85% of youths who completed the program did not recidivate during the initial 6 months after completion (Clagett, 1989). However, this evaluation is flawed because the way in which

recidivism was measured was not defined and it did not include a control group for comparison.

An evaluation of California's wilderness camps defined recidivism as any penal code violation. This study measured recidivism at both 12 and 24 months, for those who completed the program and those who did not complete the program (Palmer & Wedge, 1989). The results were that 54% of all youths who entered the program recidivated within 24 months; at 24 months, 60% of youths who completed the program recidivated, compared to an 88% recidivism rate for those who did not complete the program. This evaluation did not include a control group of youths who did not participate in the program.

Another study conducted by Palmer and Wedge (1989) found that certain types of camps had better rates of recidivism for certain types of offenders. Camps with smaller living unit capacity, lower percentage of capacity used, rooms rather than dorms, individual program assignment, more counselling and higher frequency of outside contacts and recreation had better recidivism rates for high-risk youths than did camps with single living units, uniform program assignment, relatively higher frequency of work activities and academic training and youths present at case reviews.

Several authors have conducted reviews of previous evaluation studies of wilderness camp programs. Some evaluations have found recidivism rates to be lower for youths who participated in wilderness camps than for youths who did not participate; others, however, found the rates to be similar to each other (Castellano & Soderstrom, 1992). Despite the number of evaluations that have been undertaken to measure the success of wilderness camp programs, there is no conclusive evidence that these programs are effective in reducing recidivism or changing lifestyles (Castellano & Soderstrom, 1992). What is clear, however, is the importance of follow-up supervision after the young person has completed a wilderness program. According to the National Crime Prevention Council, the "research indicates that intensive follow-up supervision enabling youth to pursue education, training, treatment and counselling back home are the key factors to whether or not a camp experience will be seen to be having a lasting positive impact" (as cited in Church Council on Justice and Corrections, 1996).

Issues and Concerns

One concern about wilderness programs that has been noted in the literature relates to the use of confrontational tactics to deal with misbehaviour. The VisionQuest program uses "intense verbal confrontations" between staff and youths as a treatment method (Lower recidivism rate..., 1988, p. 6). A confrontation may last up to 30 minutes and "generally begins with three or more staff surrounding a youth, one of them assuming a nose-to-nose/eye-to-eye stance squarely in front of the youth" (Lower recidivism rate..., 1988, p. 6). The verbal style is challenging and loud and if the youth tries to turn or back away, he is held in position to maintain eye contact. Supporters of VisionQuest have downplayed the confrontational aspects of the program, saying that these aspects do not tell the whole story.

A limitation of wilderness camp program evaluations concerns the failure to specify a conceptual or theoretical basis for the program (Winterdyk & Griffiths, 1984). Winterdyk

and Griffiths note that the delineation of a guiding theoretical framework is necessary to understand how wilderness camps can address the factors assumed to cause delinquency. Many studies of wilderness programs which use psychological evaluation measures assume that youths who are delinquent have poor self concepts, destructive attitudes and lack interpersonal skills. However, Winterdyk and Griffiths point out that it is questionable whether psychological measures can predict either delinquency or the role of wilderness camps in addressing delinquency.

Winterdyk and Griffiths (1984) have also raised several questions about the evaluations which have been undertaken with respect to wilderness camp programs. First, most evaluations are summative evaluations, which means that they provide information only after the activity is finished. However, these authors argue that summative evaluations of wilderness camps are not appropriate because wilderness camps are never really "finished" simply because a course ends; rather, there are constant changes, adaptations and modifications from course to course (Winterdyk & Griffiths, 1984). Some examples of these changes include staff turnover, new youths entering the program and seasonal changes in a program's curriculum.

A second problem with many evaluations of wilderness programs is that virtually none of them have attempted to define how the actual program components work to attain their intended results (Winterdyk & Griffiths, 1984, p. 41). Most evaluations are descriptive rather than explanatory and do not indicate how backpacking, for example, helps youths solve their "adolescent identity crisis." The final problem with evaluation research on wilderness camp programs is that the majority of studies did not use any form of follow-up measure or used only a short-term follow-up period such as 6 months (Winterdyk & Griffiths, 1984).

Current research indicates that wilderness camps may help a few individuals but, generally, they do not provide appropriate or "satisfying" justice (Church Council on Justice and Corrections, 1996). As a result of the scepticism, many camps, including the one in British Columbia, have recently been suspended pending an investigation (Church Council on Justice and Corrections, 1996).

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WORK CAMPS

Most of the literature dealing with work programs for offenders relates to programs in which offenders are released from a correctional facility during the day to work on a supervised project. Work release programs offer offenders the chance to participate in a structured form of release of a specified duration for work or community service outside the institution. The work is carried out under the supervision of corrections staff, and inmates must be classified medium or minimum security and be eligible for unescorted temporary absences to participate.

Work programs target high-risk offenders who are classified as medium or minimum

security and who are eligible for unescorted temporary absences. Research on work programs indicates that such programs should be targeted to higher-risk offenders who do not have job skills (Gendreau & Ross, 1987). Work programs should also enhance practical skills, develop interpersonal skills, minimize prisonization and ensure that work is not merely punishment (Gendreau & Ross, 1987, p. 380). Behaviour modification programs should be established so that youths are motivated to succeed. Finally, the work must be socially reinforcing, personally meaningful and well supervised.

Shunda Creek Youth Corrections Camp

In January, 1993, the Shunda Creek Youth Correction Camp for young offenders opened in Alberta (Alberta Justice, 1993). This camp operates year round and is directed at repeat young offenders serving at least a three month sentence. The camp employs eight correctional staff members, a substance abuse counsellor, a psychologist, a life skills trainer and an Aboriginal program coordinator (Alberta Justice, 1993).

The work camp combines counselling/education and work programs to help young offenders develop a strong work ethic and life skills which are necessary to meet the demands of responsible living in the future (Alberta Justice, 1993). The work program emphasizes physical fitness through manual labour. Some of the work projects include brush cleaning, wood chopping, campsite maintenance and trail maintenance and construction. The counselling/educational components teach life skills, employment search techniques, anger management, cultural awareness specifically for Aboriginals and substance abuse issues.

Currently, there is no follow-up data concerning recidivism rates of Shunda Creek participants (Personal communication, Alberta Justice staff member, July, 1997).

Aboriginal Young Offender Corrections Camp

The Aboriginal Young Offender Corrections Camp is an open custody work camp in Alberta that combines educational programs with culturally specific programs (Alberta Justice, 1995). This program addresses issues of concern and importance to Aboriginal people. According to the former minister responsible for Aboriginal programs, Mike Cardinal, the "Aboriginal young offender camp is significant because it's the first of its kind in this province and represents the dedicated efforts of the Bigstone Cree First Nation, Alberta Justice and Aboriginal Affairs" (Cardinal, as cited in Alberta Justice, 1995).

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The literature on boot camp programs demonstrates that they do not have lasting effects unless appropriate follow-up care is available and that they do not produce lower rates of recidivism for graduates of the program. According to Bill Sparks, acting Executive Director for the Ontario John Howard Society, "there have been plenty of studies showing boot camps have no better rates of recidivism than any other facility for young offenders" (Ontario readies first boot camp, 1997). Wilderness camps also demonstrate poor results with respect to recidivism. In addition, neither of these programs teaches either concrete work skills or positive attitudes toward work such as the value of contribution, which are main goals of work camps.

From the information about boot camps and work camps, concrete recommendations can be made about which elements are successful and which elements should be avoided. Work camps should avoid the use of the military style as it is open to abuse and teaches youths to deal with conflict in an aggressive and confrontational manner. There should be aftercare available which provides assistance in job searches and support in the community. The young offenders who attend work camps should be referred by the correctional placement authority rather than the judge in order to avoid possible net-widening. Finally, the research indicates that the work programs should be targeted to higher-risk offenders who do not have job skills. The most important aspect of the work camp relates to the nature of the work itself. Work programs must enhance practical skills, develop interpersonal skills, minimize prisonization and ensure that work is not merely punishment. Behavioural modification programs should be established so that youths are motivated to succeed. Finally, the work must be socially reinforcing, personally meaningful and well supervised.

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