

Journal of Applied Juvenile Justice Services

Ensuring a Professional Workforce for Confinement Facilities Serving Youth

Pamela A. Clark, MSW, LSW, CYC-P
National Center for Youth in Confinement

The information contained in this article is excerpted from Chapter 4, “Developing and Maintaining a Professional Workforce for Confinement Facilities Serving Youth” of the Desktop Guide to Quality Practice for Working with Youth in Confinement (www.desktopguide.info). We hope you that after reading this excerpt you may choose to read the chapter in its entirety, which contains more detailed information on topics addressed here, as well as information related to Maintaining and Growing the Workforce and Building Future Leaders.

Custody work in a correctional confinement setting is not typically considered a high-status or prestigious career. However, as long as there are youth and adults in confinement, it will be an important and necessary field of work. Given the significant physical, emotional, social, and psychological development that occurs during childhood and adolescence, the quality, expertise and professionalism of staff working with youth in confinement are critically important.

Professionalism

The words “professional” and “professionalism” are used frequently when describing a variety of jobs, especially those that deal with difficult situations or clients. In some cases, these words are used to convey a sense of appreciation for exceptional job performance—for example, “The staff displayed a high level of professionalism throughout the emergency.” Individuals often use the term “professional” to reflect pride in their job—for example, “Despite the low status and unpopular working hours, institutional staff members are true professionals.”

According to Webster’s Dictionary (2013), professionalism is “the conduct, aims, or qualities that characterize or mark a profession or a professional person.” Webster (2013) further defines a professional as “someone who has a lot of experience or skill in a particular job or activity: someone who does a job that requires special training, education, or skill.”

Who is a Professional?

How would someone know a professional staff working in a confinement facility serving youth if they saw one, and how would they know if that staff were appropriate to work with youth in confinement? Staff working with youth in confinement, as with all criminal and juvenile justice staff, have dual roles: a public safety and accountability role that involves appropriately

managing the behavior of youth, and if we are to effectively move young people out of the justice system, a rehabilitation and youth development role.

A 2012 Report Brief from the National Research Council of the National Academies, entitled *Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach* (2013), supports this commitment to dual roles when it says,

The overarching goal of the juvenile justice system is to support the positive social development of youths who become involved in the system, and thereby assure the safety of communities. The specific aims of juvenile courts and affiliated agencies are to hold youths accountable for wrongdoing, prevent further offending, and treat youths fairly. All three of these aims are compatible with a developmental approach to juvenile justice.

This task of supporting the above-referenced “positive social development of youths” constitutes youth work as defined by the Association of Child and Youth Care Practice, Inc.:

The Association of Child and Youth Care Practice and Child and Youth Care Certification Board say that “Professional [child and youth care] practitioners **promote the optimal development** of children, youth and their families in a variety of settings, such as early care and education, community-based child and youth development programs, parent education and family support, school-based programs, community mental health, group homes, residential centers, day and residential treatment, early intervention, home-based care and treatment, psychiatric centers, rehabilitation programs, pediatric health care, **and juvenile justice programs.**”ⁱ

The Corrections Today article, “The 21st Century Juvenile Justice Workforce” (Howe, 2007), also discusses this role duality of correctional custodian and youth development practitioner, and the fact that it is often frustrating, particularly for entry-level juvenile and adult confinement facility staff serving youth.

For entry-level employees, role duality can be especially frustrating because they see inconsistency within the organization or because they do not see their colleagues as supportive. For example, corrections-minded individuals may not perceive their treatment-minded colleagues as supportive in maintaining safety and holding youths accountable for the behavior, while treatment-minded workers may feel that corrections-minded workers treat [youth] too much like adult offenders...the attempt to blend these two mindsets is a source of frustration for juvenile justice workers.” (p 35)

In a 1983 Michigan Juvenile Detention Association Annual Conference, Dr. Ernest Shelleyⁱⁱ identified the following list of important qualities and characteristics for staff working with youth in a confinement setting:

- Optimism; the ability to see the positive, no matter how small, in a situation or person
- A deep belief in the potential of a person to change
- The ability to recognize change, no matter how small when it comes
- A deep respect for the sacredness of personhood—the belief that every person has value

- The ability to care deeply about others
- A good team player

These are qualities of attitude that must accompany whatever aptitude staff working with youth must bring to the job.

Is This a Profession?

The field of corrections in the United States has been moving toward recognition as a profession.ⁱⁱⁱ For example, there is a pathway in higher education – criminal justice – that includes specific course work and certificate programs, also available through field-specific professional associations, for those interested in working in a correctional setting.^{iv} Criminal justice degree programs range from two-year associates to doctoral degrees. However, if you look at the course requirements for most any of these programs, you will rarely find courses or content specifically related to juvenile justice. In support of this, the previously referred to Corrections Today article on “The 21st Century Juvenile Justice Workforce” says,

Many juvenile justice positions now require a bachelor’s degree. However, degrees in the social sciences or social work do not prepare candidates for the public safety aspect of the job, and programs in criminal justice do not address the youth development role of the juvenile justice worker. In both cases, it is possible to complete a degree without ever taking a course specifically related to juvenile justice; such courses may not even be offered for interested students. As a result, students may leave college without considering juvenile justice as an option, without an understanding of what the work entails or with the idea that juvenile justice is simply a stepping-stone to a career in adult corrections.

Further evidence of the lack of recognition of juvenile detention and juvenile corrections as a profession is the absence of any listing for either of these in the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Handbook.^v In this resource there are listings for Correctional Officers, and Probation Officers and Correctional Treatment Specialists, both of which refer broadly to work with “offenders.” This, despite the fact that the needs of youthful “offenders” and the staff who work with them are vastly different from those of adult offenders and staff working with that population.

Leaders in the field of juvenile justice must work to ensure that preparation of the correctional workforce serving youth in both juvenile and adult confinement facilities includes at least foundational knowledge related to the principles and practices of positive and healthy youth development, which has implications for both higher education, and training and professional development programs.

Hiring Professional Staff

The recruitment, selection, training, and development of staff are all influenced by the philosophy held by facility administration, the court, and policymakers and funders within a given jurisdiction. This philosophy is often directly expressed by the words used in both the job title and the job description.

So, what's in a job title? While for employers job titles are typically used to categorize positions and define the hierarchy within the organization, for job applicants they are used in a very different manner that should be understood by employers. Many job applicants, at least initially identify jobs for which they wish to apply based on the job title. Applicants may conduct a database search or look through the newspaper for jobs according to the job title. There are many different job titles used for staff working with youth in confinement, and this difference can affect who may be attracted to and apply for the job. For facilities seeking to hire staff to work with youth in juvenile confinement facilities, Detention Officer or Correctional Officer is inadequate in terms of helping candidates understand the work they will be asked to do.

For staff working with youth in adult confinement facilities, the issue of job title may be more complex and yet would seem to be even more important. A staff member working in an adult confinement facility is typically referred to as a "Correctional Officer," stereotypically understood to fill a more custodial role. While adult facilities may not find it practical to use a different job title for staff working with confined youth, the development of separate and distinctly different mission and value statements for these workers could serve as reminders of the importance and value of the positive youth development function of their job. Having designated staff that has received specialized training in working with youth is also important for an adult confinement facility serving youth.

Job Description

Job descriptions serve a number of purposes that include providing information for use in developing job interview questions and employee performance evaluations, helping employees understand what is expected of them, and providing a basis for both disciplinary action and employee recognition.

To write an effective and informative job description, facility management should first gather relevant information about the job. The facility administrator and/or managers/supervisors may write the first draft of the job description. However, it is important to gather and incorporate input on this draft from those already doing the job, particularly those who do the job well. This input will help to ensure the content is accurate and relevant and that nothing important is left out. A well-written job description says that you understand the job and what it takes to do the job well, which requires that job descriptions include information about both job function, which is the "what" (Christy, 1989) and characteristics of effectiveness that are the "how" of working with youth in confinement (Roush and Hudzik, 1994).

Recruitment

Recruitment is about more than just getting people to apply for the job. It is about ensuring that the people who do apply are the ones the organization or facility is looking for and needs. Good recruitment starts with two things: an accurate job description, and more importantly employee retention, understanding what it will take to keep quality staff after they are hired. Employee turnover is costly in ways that go far beyond financial investments in training and orientation. The negative impact on organizational culture, programming for youth and the morale of both staff and youth is often much more significant than any financial losses.

Facilities are often required to first post all job openings through internal networks, e.g. county or state government systems, before looking outside the facility for candidates. The most common methods of external recruitment have historically been newspaper classified advertisements and job/career fairs, both of which can lead to a stack of resumes from individuals who are not a good fit for the job. The methods needed for recruiting in today's multi-generational workforce vary dramatically. Knowing and understanding the differences in how and to what each generation responds is important to effective recruitment of staff.

Strategies that may be effective across generations include:

- Advertising through professional associations, such as state detention or corrections associations, and national associations such as the NPJS, CJCA, ACA, etc.
- Making everyone on staff at the facility a recruiter by asking for referrals from existing staff. These individuals know the job and what it requires.
- Using social/electronic media advertising. Sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook can be good sources for attracting what are referred to as "Millennial" staffers, those born between 1980 and 2000.
- Working with local media to get newspaper coverage of the positive work being done by staff and putting a face on the facility.
- Working with faculty and staff at community colleges and universities to secure student internships and volunteers to offer and/or support programming at the facility.
- Hosting an open house where members of the community and potential job seekers can tour the facility and participate in a presentation on its history and function in the community.
- Hanging on to job applications and resumes from former applicants. A past candidate that was not right for one position in the facility may be a good candidate for a different position that opens up later.

Many of these strategies are what Nicole Baker and Max Carrera (Corrections Today, 2007) call relationship-based recruitment, which suggests that facility administrators get out from behind their desks and seek out and talk with potential job seekers one-to-one or in groups. Work in a correctional confinement facility is not a traditional job or career, and as a result the work is not well understood by those seeking employment. Speaking directly with potential job seekers ensures the opportunity to address any questions and/or misunderstandings they may have about the job.

Selection

The process and time it may take to fill a staff vacancy will vary depending on factors such as whether hiring is done by a human resource department versus the facility administrator, whether hiring freezes may be in effect, and whether or not the workforce is unionized. In addition, there are many elements involved in the selection of staff. Facilities may use any one or all of these steps in the process of selection of staff.

Pre-employment Screenings-Some organizations conduct pre-employment screenings prior to scheduling or following an initial interview. These screenings can range anywhere from a simple pre-interview telephone contact to the use of brief pre-employment screening test, either

before or after the interview, that measures a candidate's basic work-related values,^{vi} or video scenarios that measure a candidate's overall suitability for working with juvenile offenders.^{vii}

Interviews-The interview process is typically considered a critical aspect in the selection of staff however there are differing opinions as to what should be the structure and what is the ultimate value of interviews. Interview questions should be connected to what is contained in the job description and will typically focus on the knowledge, skills and abilities someone has or can learn in order to be able to do the job, whatever that job may be.

However, most experts today agree that employers should be looking beyond knowledge, skills and abilities at whether candidates have the right "attitude" to make them a good fit for the organization. Mark Murphy, Chairman and CEO of Leadership IQ, in a study of 20,000 new hires over a three-year period, found that within 18 months 46% of new hires "failed (got fired, received poor performance reviews, or were written up)." According to Murphy, these results are fairly consistent with the results from other similar studies.

In his book, *Hiring for Attitude* (2012), Murphy says that, "a lack of skills or technical competence accounted for only 11% of new hire failures." The other 89% were failures grounded in attitude: Inability to accept and implement feedback (Coachability) 26%; Inability to understand and manage one's own emotions (Emotional Intelligence) 23%; Insufficient drive (17%); and Attitude and personality unsuited to the job or work environment (15%). In most cases, skills and abilities can be taught. Attitude cannot. Hiring someone who already has or can learn the skills and abilities needed to do the job well (aptitude), in combination with the right attitude, may go a long way in ensuring employee retention and ultimately reducing the costs of staff turnover.

In terms of hiring staff to work with youth, a key factor will be that person's general attitude toward youth and whether or not they believe young people are capable of changing.

References and Background Checks – Previous employment checks and references are additional tools used in the selection of new staff. Agency policies vary on this topic, and there is ongoing debate about the value of the information obtained from reference checks. Job candidates typically choose as personal references those individuals they know or believe will portray them in a positive light. Employment references are becoming more difficult to obtain and may be unreliable, as many employers are concerned about being sued for anything, negative or positive, they may say about a former employee. A written release of information that grants permission for the sharing of information about the candidate should always be obtained before contacting any reference.

Criminal background checks are used to determine how appropriate candidates may be for employment in a confinement setting, particularly in a facility that serves youth. Agency and jurisdictional requirements may vary. However, the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Standards (2012) require, before hiring any staff that may have contact with juveniles:

- The agency shall also perform a criminal background records check, and consult applicable child abuse registries, before enlisting the services of any contractor who may have contact with residents.

- The agency shall either conduct criminal background records checks at least every five years of current employees and contractors who may have contact with residents or have in place a system for otherwise capturing such information for current employees.
- The agency shall also ask all applicants and employees who may have contact with residents directly about previous misconduct described in paragraph (a)^{viii} of this section in written applications or interviews for hiring or promotions and in any interviews or written self- evaluations conducted as part of reviews of current employees. The agency shall also impose upon employees a continuing affirmative duty to disclose any such misconduct.^{ix}
- Material omissions regarding such misconduct, or the provision of materially false information, shall be grounds for termination.
- Unless prohibited by law, the agency shall provide information on substantiated allegations of sexual abuse or sexual harassment involving a former employee upon receiving a request from an institutional employer for whom such employee has applied to work.

Drug screening is also used to determine how appropriate candidates may be for employment. In addition to pre-employment drug screening, it is recommended that additional screening be done randomly at least annually, if not more frequently. Pre-employment health screening, including testing for tuberculosis, is also typically required.

The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidelines prohibit discriminatory practices in advertising, recruitment, application, hiring, and referrals.^x

Developing a Professional Workforce

Once the hiring process is complete, staff orientation and training are critical and should occur prior to staff being given responsibility for direct care and supervision of youth. Doing this helps to ensure that newly hired staff 1) have a general understanding of where to go and to whom to look for direction and support and 2) recognize the level of responsibility and decision-making that will be expected of them.

Orientation

The American Correctional Association (ACA), in its Mandatory Training Requirements for ACA certified facilities, regardless of whether these standards are for facilities serving youth or adults, says that, “All new staff members shall receive forty hours of orientation training prior to independent assignment,” and that “Orientation training should cover at a minimum the following areas:

- policy orientation
- organization of the parent agency and facility
- facility programs
- regulations of the parent agency and local facilities
- overview of the correctional field
- specific training directed toward specific sections and/or task-oriented assignments.”

While these standards may be mandatory only if a facility is seeking ACA certification, they are generally recognized by those in the juvenile justice community and provide a framework for the training and orientation of new staff in any facility.

Orientation should also be provided related to the organization's culture and to the facility's vision, values and mission. Every facility has its own unique culture, what is commonly referred to as institutional or organizational culture. A facility's culture is evident in its values and customs, and in the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of those working in the facility. It is observable, reflected in the way employees dress and behave in the workplace, and in the way they interact with one another, with the youth and families they serve and in the community. The facility's organizational culture should be reflected in its mission statement, which communicates how the organization does its work. This mission statement should be posted in the facility and easily accessible to staff, residents and their families.

New staff must understand clearly the organizational hierarchy or chain of command at the facility. This is the line of authority and responsibility through which orders or directives are approved and passed, permissions or authorizations are granted and grievances are processed. Depending on the type of confinement facility, the chain of command may come from officer rank, e.g., sergeant, lieutenant, etc. or by authority delegated to staff with specific job titles, e.g., intake officer, shift supervisor, etc. Without this information new staff members may inadvertently violate established protocols and have difficulty fitting into the facility's culture.

Training

The importance and value of staff training cannot be emphasized enough. Research shows the more education, training and experience an individual working in a juvenile confinement setting has, the more likely it is they will have good communication skills, be able to effectively implement behavior management programming, and encourage and reinforce positive program participation and behavioral outcomes of youth for whom they are responsible (Roush, 1996).

It is informative to look at the American Correctional Association (ACA), Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) and any relevant state or local training requirements for staff working in specific confinement settings.

Resources abound that offer training and technical assistance for confinement facilities serving youth.^{xi}

- The National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS), using OJJDP grant funds, developed two 40-hour training curricula for direct care staff working in juvenile detention and juvenile corrections facilities, and continues to produce training programs, the content of which can be tailored to meet specific facility and or system training needs.
- The Juvenile Justice Trainers Council (JJTC), formerly the Juvenile Justice Trainers Association and a founding member of the National Partnership for Juvenile Services, provides information, training and technical assistance for juvenile justice trainers.
- The Institute of Applied Juvenile Justice, formerly the National Center for Youth in Custody (NCYC), supports training and technical assistance for staff in facilities, both juvenile and adult, serving youth in confinement.
- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) provides support

through its National Training and Technical Assistance Center (NTTAC) to states, tribes, units of local government and organizations that support the justice system's response to juvenile delinquency and victimization.

- The American Correctional Association (ACA) specifies an annual minimum number of training hours for each category of staff to occur at regular periods throughout employment in a facility. Compliance with ACA mandatory training standards is required in order to achieve and maintain ACA certification. The ACA offers a wide range of educational and training opportunities for adult correctional and juvenile justice staff.^{xii}
- The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) offers training and technical assistance for facilities seeking to develop their own training staff and through an inter-agency agreement with OJJDP provides leadership development programs for juvenile and adult corrections personnel.
- The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), signed into law on September 4, 2003, established the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission. This Commission proposed standards for the prevention, detection, and response to sexual misconduct in criminal and juvenile justice settings.
- In addition, most states have facility standards that include recommended or mandatory training requirements for staff working in confinement facilities.

Some jurisdictions have established training academies where curricula such as those mentioned above are taught with a requirement that newly hired staff complete this training either upon hire and before beginning a facility-specific assignment or sometime within the first year of employment.

All newly hired staff working in a confinement facility should be certified or be provided with training in the following:

- First Aid
- CPR
- Universal Precautions
- Suicide Prevention
- De-escalation and Crisis Intervention

Training in first aid, CPR, Universal Precautions, de-escalation and crisis intervention should be re-administered either annually or as prescribed by the entity that provides the certification.

Recordkeeping, the accurate and timely written documentation of both routine and special situations regarding residents, staff, and program activities is a critical job function for anyone working in a confinement setting. Reports become a permanent record of staff's actions in response to an incident, may be used in the course of an investigation, and help in documenting compliance with policies, procedures and standards. In consideration of this, training in the fundamentals of effective report writing should be provided to newly hired employees at the earliest opportunity.

Quality Assurance

While there are many roads to quality assurance, for the individual employee working with youth in a confinement setting, there are two primary resources available for this purpose—facility policy and procedure, and a professional code of ethics.

Policies and procedures are designed to address all major decisions, actions, concerns, and activities that take place within a facility. Understanding and adhering to a facility’s policies and procedures are a key element in assuring quality of work. However, given the often erratic and unpredictable behavior and decision-making of youth, it would be impossible to develop policy and procedure that would address every circumstance with which staff working with youth in a confinement setting may be faced. In these situations, staff discretion will be required. In addition to responding to the uncertainty of the behavior of youth, discretion may be required in response to staff concerns about such things as the use of restraints and isolation, and programming for youth with special needs. Discretion is best exercised within a framework or context for decision-making. Juvenile justice agencies should endeavor to provide such context as part of required training programs. In addition, such frameworks exist within a profession’s code of ethics.

While there are a number of codes of ethics or ethical codes of conduct from which to choose, e.g., the American Jail Association Code of Ethics, the International Corrections and Prison Association Ethical Code of Conduct, etc., the Desktop Guide will focus on two codes of ethics commonly referred to by staff working with youth in confinement—the National Partnership for Juvenile Services’ (NPJS) and the American Correctional Association’s (ACA) Code of Ethics.

Specialized practitioners working in a confinement setting, e.g., medical and mental health staff, may have a code of ethics meant to guide practice in those more specialized areas. Counseling staff may be guided by the American Counseling Association (ACA), the National Association of Social Work (NASW), the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) or the American Psychological Association (APA) Code of Ethics. The code by which counseling staff may be guided will depend on any number of factors that may include the practitioner’s educational background, the professional group through which the practitioner is licensed and the individual’s personal preference.

The American Nurses Association (ANA) and the American Medical Association (AMA) both have codes of ethics, however the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC)^{xiii}, says that while nurses in traditional medical settings may occasionally face ethical dilemmas, “In contrast, the correctional nurse may face ethical situations daily...about care delivery, caring and patient advocacy in planning and providing safe patient care.” The NCCHC encourages nurses to refer to the American Nurses Association’s Code of Ethics, which has specific scope and standards of practice for nursing in correctional settings.

Performance evaluations

The performance evaluation is just one step in an overall performance management system. This system includes 1) the development of position-specific job descriptions, 2) the identification of standards for performance related to the job description that can be rated; things like the amount and quality of work, effort or employee tasks necessary to reach a predetermined level of

performance, and 3) processes for addressing performance issues that may range from coaching to progressive discipline.

Writing a quality job description sets the stage for a quality performance evaluation as the criteria on which an employee's performance is evaluated should be directly related to the job functions outlined in the job description. In *The Job Description Handbook* (2008), Margie Mader-Clark says,

Because a good job description tells employees exactly what they are expected to accomplish, employees won't be able to argue later that you surprised them by using unexpected factors to measure their performance. And because every employee in the same position will be rated on the same performance factors, it will be more difficult for an employee to claim that you were unfairly harsh or imposed additional requirements on him or her—an argument that can form the basis for a discrimination lawsuit.

Performance issues identified in the performance evaluation should never be a surprise to the employee, as these issues should have been recognized and addressed in advance of the regularly scheduled performance evaluation. When employees are provided with opportunities for ongoing feedback, e.g. weekly or monthly check-ins with supervisors concerns about performance can be addressed much more quickly. Once performance issues are identified, whenever reasonable to do so supervisors should invest in coaching, mentoring or other productive approaches to correcting employee performance. These approaches provide the employee with the opportunity to receive support and feedback and make progress on the issue, in which case formal disciplinary action may not be needed.

When and if formal disciplinary action is required, whenever reasonable a process of progressive discipline should be used. The goal of progressive discipline is to improve employee performance. While a process for progressive discipline is important, using this process is not appropriate in all cases. Some situations may be serious enough to require immediate termination.

While there is some controversy related to the value and importance of performance evaluations and the frequency with which they should be conducted, the American Correctional Association (ACA), in its standards on "Performance Evaluation of Probationary Staff and Annual Performance Rating for All Staff" says that, "Performance appraisals shall be implemented by the Director to encourage each staff member to evaluate his/her own work habits. Annual appraisals shall be required for all non-probationary staff."

Practitioner certification

Practitioner certification is gaining momentum across fields of practice and around the world, and the field of corrections is no exception. A number of professional associations, institutions of higher education and other organizations and groups offer various levels of certification ranging from entry or basic level to professional and advanced certification.

Webster's dictionary (2013) defines certification as "the act of making something official" and "official approval to do something professionally or legally." Certifications in the field

of corrections are primarily professional rather than legal. The following are a sampling of the professional certifications available to practitioners working in the field of corrections.

- The National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS) sponsors the Certified Juvenile Services Practitioner (CJSP) certification. Through this process the NPJS recognizes practitioners in the field who have achieved the levels of education, training, and experience necessary to indicate they have at least a basic understanding and knowledge of the field of juvenile justice and the work required in a juvenile confinement setting. Applications and the requirements for the CJSP certificate are available at the NPJS website.
- The American Correctional Association (ACA) offers four levels of corrections staff certification ranging from Certified Corrections Officer (CCO) to Certified Corrections Executive (CCE). In addition the ACA offers special certifications related to working with Security Threat Groups (STG), in Healthcare (three levels of certification) and a provisional certification (CCO/P) for those individuals who have yet to pass the CCO exam and may not have secured a full-time position in a corrections-related agency. Detailed information about ACA certifications is available at the American Correctional Association website.
- The National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) offers four different categories of the Certified Corrections Health Professional (CCHP) certification. Detailed information about NCCHC certifications is available at the National Commission for Correctional Health Care website.
- The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University has recently begun offering a Youth in Custody Certificate Program focused on assisting public and private sector leaders in juvenile justice, child welfare and other systems of care serving justice involved youth to affect systemic change and improved outcomes for youth in custody. Additional information about the Youth in Custody Certificate Program is available at the Center for Juvenile Justice Reforms' website.

A number of states now offer programs to certify youth workers across practice settings. State supported youth work certification programs range from basic to intermediate level certification and are available in states such as Indiana, Oregon, Texas, and Wisconsin.^{xiv}

Since 2008 a national certification for child and youth care professionals, the CYC-P (Child and Youth Care - Professional), has been available through the Child and Youth Care Certification Board. This national certification program, established by the Association for Child and Youth Care Practice (ACYCP) is an effort to increase quality standards and the effectiveness and safety of programs serving children, youth, and families across disciplines and practice settings in the United States.^{xv}

Practitioner certification provides benefits to both juvenile justice practitioners and the facilities and agencies in which they serve. Benefits of certification to practitioners include professional recognition of education, job-related training and experience, and the possibility of greater access to opportunities for employment and advancement. A benefit of certification to facility and agency administrators is assurance that employees or applicants for employment that are certified have at least a basic understanding and knowledge of the field of juvenile justice, the work

required in a juvenile confinement setting and/or youth work in general depending on the specific type of certification. Certification of staff may also provide facilities and agencies with some level of protection from liability.

Finally, certification provides increased motivation for employees to participate in training and professional development opportunities, as most practitioner certifications require ongoing training and membership in a job-related professional association for annual, biannual or other intervals of re-certification.

CONCLUSION

As stated in the Foreword of the *Desktop Guide to Quality Practice for Working with Youth in Confinement*:

The public relies on the leadership and staff of more than 1,200 facilities—juvenile detention, juvenile corrections, and adult facilities that serve youth—for protection against juvenile offenders, for humane and constitutional conditions of incarceration, and for equipping youth with the skills to live peaceful and productive lives.

In order to achieve these goals, facility administrators must seek to identify and hire only the most well-qualified and educated individuals to work with youth in confinement. They must provide these individuals with a professional work environment in which they are given regular feedback on their job performance, as well as on the overall performance of the organization in which they serve. Facility administrators must also make certain that staff members have ongoing access to quality training and professional development and encouragement with professional organizations with which the employee can identify, e.g., NPJS, ACA, etc.. These investments not only support the achievement of the goals articulated above; they also serve to support future leadership for the field.

ⁱ Competencies for Professional Child and Youth Care Practitioners may be accessed at http://acycp.org/2010_Competerencies_for_Professional_CYW_Practitioners.pdf.

ⁱⁱ Ernest L.V. Shelley, Ph.D., is best remembered as a champion of volunteer services who served the correctional community in Michigan. He developed treatment programs for the Michigan Department of Corrections and concluded his professional career as the chair of the Department of Psychology at Olivet College in Olivet, Michigan. After retiring, Dr. Shelley remained active through volunteer service, speaking engagements, and his writing. He influenced many people in juvenile detention and corrections through his dynamic teachings and his affable personality. He was awarded posthumously the 1986 C.A. Zott Distinguished Service Award from the Michigan Juvenile Detention Association

ⁱⁱⁱ See the following sampling of websites related to corrections as a profession: <http://www.corrections.com/articles/25158>; <http://www.aca.org>; <http://www.icpa.ca>.

^{iv} Sampling of certification websites: <http://npjs.org/certified-juvenile-services-practitioner/>; <http://cjjr.georgetown.edu/certprogs/certificates.html>; <https://www.aca.org/certification/>; <http://corrections.eku.edu/youth-services-undergraduate-certificate>

^v <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/Protective-Service/Correctional-officers.htm>

^{vi} An example of this tool is the Step One Survey II from Profiles International, information about which may be found at <http://www.profilesinternational.com/products/step-one-survey-pre-employment-screening-test.php>.

^{vii} One example of video-based testing, currently being used at the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center is IMPACT offered by Ergometrics, which may be found at <http://www.ergometrics.org/impact.cfm>.

^{viii} (1) Has engaged in sexual abuse in a prison, jail, lockup, community confinement facility, juvenile facility, or other institution (as defined in 42 U.S.C. 1997); (2) Has been convicted of engaging or attempting to engage in sexual activity in the community facilitated by force, overt or implied threats of force, or coercion, or if the victim did not consent or was unable to consent or refuse; or (3) Has been civilly or administratively adjudicated to have engaged in the activity described in paragraph (a)(2) of this section.

^{ix} PREA Juvenile Facilities Standards - 115.317 Sections (a), (b) and (c).

(a) The agency shall not hire or promote anyone who may have contact with residents, and shall not enlist the services of any contractor who may have contact with residents, who—

(1) Has engaged in sexual abuse in a prison, jail, lockup, community confinement facility, juvenile facility, or other institution (as defined in 42 U.S.C. 1997);

(2) Has been convicted of engaging or attempting to engage in sexual activity in the community facilitated by force, overt or implied threats of force, or coercion, or if the victim did not consent or was unable to consent or refuse; or

(3) Has been civilly or administratively adjudicated to have engaged in the activity described in paragraph (a)(2) of this section.

(b) The agency shall consider any incidents of sexual harassment in determining whether to hire or promote anyone, or to enlist the services of any contractor, who may have contact with residents.

(c) Before hiring new employees who may have contact with residents, the agency shall:

(1) Perform a criminal background records check;

(2) Consult any child abuse registry maintained by the State or locality in which the employee would work; and

(3) Consistent with Federal, State, and local law, make its best efforts to contact all prior institutional employers for information on substantiated allegations of sexual abuse or any resignation during a pending investigation of an allegation of sexual abuse.

^x EEOC Prohibited Employment Policies/Practices may be found at <http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/practices/index.cfm>.

^{xi} Websites for these organizations are as follows: <http://npjs.org>; <http://npjs.org/ncyc/>; <http://www.ojjdp.gov>; <http://www.aca.org/home2.asp>; <http://nicic.gov/Trainers>; <http://www.prearesourcecenter.org/about>

^{xii} For more information about American Correctional Association facility standards you may go to <http://www.aca.org/home2.asp>.

^{xiii} Additional information on the National Commission on Correctional Health Care may be found at <http://www.ncchc.org>.

^{xiv} This is not an exhaustive list of the states that certify or credential youth workers.

^{xv} Additional information about the national Child and Youth Care – Professional certification may be found at <http://cyccb.squarespace.com>.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pamela A. Clark, MSW, LSW, CYC-P works as an independent consultant and trainer and serves as a Program Associate with the National Center for Youth in Custody (NCYC).

From 1999–2008, Pam served as the Director of the Bartholomew County Youth Services Center, which operates an 18-bed secure detention program, a ten-bed emergency shelter program, day treatment programming, and juvenile home detention and electronic monitoring services.

Pam previously served as Executive Director to the Foundation for Youth of Bartholomew County, Inc., and the Bartholomew County Youth Advocacy Commission in Columbus, Indiana, and as a deputy sheriff with the Los Angeles County Sheriffs Department. She was a volunteer in both Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) and the U.S. Peace Corps, where she served as a paralegal with the Legal Aid Society of Lincoln, Inc. in Lincoln, Nebraska, and as a secondary school teacher, in Kenya, East Africa.

Since 2002, she has served as adjunct faculty with Indiana University teaching classes in juvenile justice and social work at Indiana University-Purdue University.

Pam has a bachelor's degree in psychology from William Woods College and a master's degree in social work (MSW) from Indiana University, and she is a Certified Youth Care-Professional (CYC-P). She is a member of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS), and the Association of Child and Youth Care Practice (ACYCP).

REFERENCES

- Adler, L., 2013. *The Essential Guide for Hiring and Getting Hired*. Workbench Media, Lexington, KY.
- American Correctional Association. (2010). *Core Jail Standards*. Alexandria, VA.
- American Correctional Association. (2003). *Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions* (4th ed.). Where?. Author.
- American Correctional Association. (????). *Standards for Juvenile Detention Facilities* (? ed.). Where?. Author.
- Baker, N. and Carrera, M. (2007). "Unlocking the Door to Relationship-based Corrections Recruitment." *Corrections Today* 69 (3): 36-38.
- Bonnie, R.J., Johnson, R.L., Chemers, B.M., and Schuck, J. Ed. (2012). *Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach*. The National Academies Press, Washington, D.C.
- "certification." 2013. *Merriam-Webster.com*. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/certification> (November 13, 2013).
- Competencies for Child and Youth Care Practitioners: Revised 2010*
http://acycp.org/2010_Competencies_for_Professional_CYW_Practitioners.pdf
- Howe, M., Clawson, E. and Larivee, J. (2007). "The 21st Century Juvenile Justice Workforce." *Corrections Today* 69 (1): 34-39.
- Lloyd, K. 2009. *Performance Appraisals & Phrases for Dummies*. Wiley Publishing, Inc. Hoboken, NJ.
- Mader-Clark, M. (2008). *The Job Description Handbook, 2nd ed.*, Nolo, Berkeley, CA.
- Murphy, M. (2012). *Hiring for Attitude: A Revolutionary Approach to Recruiting Star Performers with Both Tremendous Skills and Superb Attitude*. McGraw-Hill, New York.
- Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Standards. 2012.
- "profession." 2013. *Merriam-Webster.com*. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/profession> (November 13, 2013).
- "professional." 2013. *Merriam-Webster.com*. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/professional> (November 13, 2013).
- "professionalism." 2013. *Merriam-Webster.com*. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/professionalism> (November 13, 2013).
- Roush, D.W. (1996). *Juvenile Detention Training Needs Assessment: Research Report*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice.
- U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention. *Construction, Operations, and Staff Training for Juvenile Confinement Facilities*. By David W. Roush, and McMillen, M. NCJ 178928. Washington, D.C.: U.S. United States Government Printing Office, 2000.
- U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention. *Juvenile Detention Training Needs Assessment: Research Report*. By David W. Roush. NCJ 156833. Washington, D.C.: U.S. United States Government Printing Office, 1996.

U.S. Department of Justice, *Prison Rape Elimination Act: Juvenile Facility Standards*. Available at <http://www.prearesourcecenter.org/library/search?keys=juvenile+facility+standards&cat=All>. Accessed on November 12, 2013.