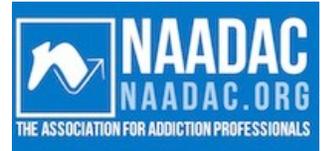


Questions Asked During Live Webinar Broadcast on 04/20/2016



The question about what percentage of people who have substance abuse issues are incarcerated seemed incorrect, was it to mean what percentage of people incarcerated have substance abuse issues? It wasn't to mean that half of everyone with substance abuse issues are incarcerated right?

A:

Low end estimates of people in the corrections system with a substance use disorder are 50%. That number has been measured as high as 75%, so the range is between 50-75%.

Who is the author of New Jack 2002?

A:

New Jack was written by Ted Conover. It was published in 2000, not 2002, as my slide suggested (deepest apologies). Mr. Conover is a journalist who worked as a corrections officer in Sing Sing prison in NY for one year.

Please explain intensive supervised parole and how it differs from just being on parole.

A:

Intensive Supervised Parole (ISP) is different from regular parole in that the monitoring and contact with the parole officer is much more intense. As such, the ISP officer has a smaller caseload than a typical parole officer.

A side note, I am of the opinion that parole officers and probation officers often have too high a caseload. The high caseloads can contribute to a lack of knowledge about the people they are monitoring and can also lead to professional burnout.

Please explain again what PTI means

A:

Pre-trial intervention (PTI) is offered up to first time offenders (almost always non-violent, though a very small percentage of domestic abuse cases end up here). The name of it differs from state to state, but the basic concept is that it lasts from six months to three years and may require the participant to attend counseling, pay a fine, do community service and check-in with a probation officer. If all of the requirements are met and the participant has not received any new charges, then the program is completed and the arrest record is expunged. It is effective at keeping people out of jail and prison, saving money and allowing someone to turn their life around without the albatross of a legal charge following them around.

Why do you think the recidivism rate among ex-offenders is so high and what needs to be done to reduce it?

A:

Depending on what measures you use, the United States spends between 50 to 100 billion to incarcerate individuals each year. For that investment, the US sees a 53% male recidivism rate and a 39% female recidivism rate (within 3 years). Clearly, what the US is doing is not working. It has become so obvious that both Democratic and Republican politicians are now calling for criminal justice reforms.

Within jails and prisons, I believe that it would be beneficial to provide counseling, education and job training. While those services cost money up front, they would save billions of dollars in the long run. Some corrections programs offer these programs, but most do not. No politician is going to get elected or re-elected on a platform of offering better services to prisoners...yet. One of the key issues here is that the US is more reactive than proactive, meaning that we would rather spend money trying to fix a problem than prevent it.

Once someone leaves jail or prison, they are usually horrifically unprepared to reintegrate into society. As discussed in the webinar, I think that safe, stable housing is the most significant factor. After that, education (or job training) and counseling are very important. And many studies have shown over the years that a job will reduce recidivism. A job keeps people busy, pays bills and helps them feel purposeful.