PLASTICITY AND FUNCTIONAL RECOVERY

THE BRAIN'S ABILITY TO REWIRE ITSELF CAN SOMETIMES HAVE MALADAPTIVE BEHAVIOURAL CONSEQUENCES. PROLONGED DRUG USE, FOR INSTANCE, HAS BEEN SHOWN TO RESULT IN POORER COGNITIVE FUNCTIONING, AS WELL AS AN INCREASED RISK OF DEMENTIA IN LATER LIFE (MEDINA 2007). ALSO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHANTOM LIMB SYNDROME IN AMPUTEES (SOMOSSENSORY CORTEX).

FUNCTIONAL RECOVERY OF THE BRAIN AFTER TRAUMA – FOLLOWING PHYSICAL INJURY, OR OTHER FORMS OF TRAUMA, UNAFFECTED AREAS OF THE BRAIN ARE OFTEN ABLE TO ADAPT AND COMPENSATE FOR THOSE AREAS THAT ARE DAMAGED. THE FUNCTIONAL RECOVERY MAY OCCUR IN THE BRAIN AFTER TRAUMA IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF NEURAL PLASTICITY. HEALTHY BRAIN AREAS MAY TAKE OVER THE FUNCTIONS OF THOSE THAT ARE DAMAGED, DESTROYED OR EVEN MISSING. NEUROSCIENTISTS SUGGEST THAT THIS PROCESS CAN OCCUR QUICKLY AFTER TRAUMA (SPONTANEOUS RECOVERY) AND THEN SLOW DOWN AFTER SEVERAL WEEKS OR MONTHS. AT THIS POINT THE PATIENT MAY NEED REHABILITATIVE THERAPY TO FURTHER THEIR RECOVERY.

WHAT HAPPPENS IN THE BRAIN DURING RECOVERY?

THE BRAIN IS ABLE TO REWIRE AND REORGANISE ITSELF BY FORMING NEW SYNAPTIC CONNECTIONS CLOSE TO THE AREA OF DAMAGE (SIMILAR TO AVOIDING ROAD WORKS BY DRIVING A DIFFERENT ROUTE). SECONDARY NEURAL PATHWAYS THAT WOULD NOT TYPICALLY BE USED TO CARRY OUT CERTAIN FUNCTIONS ARE ACTIVATED OR UNMASKED TO ENABLE FUNCTIONING IN ORDER TO CONTINUE IN THE SAME WAY AS BEFORE. THIS PROCESS IS SUPPORTED BY A NUMBER OF STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN THE BRAIN, INCLUDING:

- AXONAL SPROUTING: THE GROWTH OF NEW NERVE ENDINGS WHICH CONNECT WITH OTHER UNDAMAGED NERVE CELLS TO FORM NEW NEURONAL PATHWAYS.
- REFORMATION OF BLOOD VESSELS.
- RECRUITMENT OF SIMILAR AREAS OF THE BRAIN ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE TO PERFORM TASKS.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION – UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS INVOLVED IN PLASTICITY AS CONTRIBUTED TO THE FIELD NEUROREHABILITATION. FOLLOWING ILLNESS OR INJURY TO THE BRAIN, SPONTANEOUS RECOVERY TENDS TO SLOW DOWN AFTER A NUMBER OF WEEKS SO FORMS OF PHYSICAL THERAPY MAY BE REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN IMPROVEMENTS IN FUNCTIONING. TECHNIQUES MAY INCLUDE MOVEMENT THERAPY AND ELECTRICAL STIMULATION OF THE BRAIN TO COUNTER THE DEFECTS IN MOTOR OR COGNITIVE FUNCTIONING THAT MAY BE EXPERIENCED FOLLOWING A STROKE FOR INSTANCE. THIS SHOWS THAT THE BRAIN MAY HAVE THE CAPACITY TO “FIX ITSELF” TO A POINT, THIS PROCESS REQUIRES FURTHER INTERVENTION IF IT IS TO BE COMPLETED SUCCESSFULLY.

FUNCTIONAL RECOVERY TENDS TO REDUCE WITH AGE AS THE BRAIN HAS GREATER PROSPENITY FOR REORGANISATION IN CHILDHOOD AS IT IS CONSISTENTLY ADAPTING TO NEW EXPERIENCES AND LEARNING. HOWEVER, BEZZOLA (2012) FOUND THAT 40 HOURS OF GOLF TRAINING PRODUCED CHANGES IN THE NEURAL REPRESENTATION IN PARTICIPANTS AGED 40 – 60. USING FMRI SCANS RESEARCHERS OBSERVED REDUCED MOTOR CORTEX ACTIVITY IN NOVICE GOLFERS AND COMPARED IT TO A CONTROL GROUP. IT SHOWN THAT NEURAL PLASTICITY DOES CONTINUE THROUGHOUT THE LIFESPAN.

THE BRAIN WOULD APPEAR PLASTIC, METAPHORICALLY, IN THE SENSE THAT IT HAS THE ABILITY TO CHANGE THROUGHOUT LIFE. DURING INFANCY, THE BRAIN EXPERIENCES A RAPID GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF SYNAPTIC CONNECTIONS IT HAS. AS WE AGE, RARELY USED CONNECTIONS ARE DELETED AND NEWLY FORMED CONNECTIONS ARE STRENGTHENED – A PROCESS CALLED SYNAPTIC PRUNING. RECENT STUDIES SUGGEST THAT AT ANY TIME IN LIFE, EXISTING NEURAL CONNECTIONS CAN BE STRENGTHENED, OR NEW NEURAL CONNECTIONS CAN BE FORMED AS A RESULT OF LEARNING OR EXPERIENCE – PLASTICITY.


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PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS

THE HALO EFFECT –
DION (1972) “WHAT IS BEAUTIFUL, IS GOOD” POSITIVE STEREOTYPES OF ATTRACTIVE PEOPLE THAT INFLUENCE OUR JUDGEMENTS ON INDIVIDUALS (PERSONALITY, ETC.).

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCE
TOWHEY (1979) FOUND THAT SOME PEOPLE ARE LESS SENSITIVE TO PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS WHEN MAKING JUDGEMENTS OF PERSONALITY AND LIKABILITY.

SHACKELFORD AND LARSEN (1997) –
FOUND THAT PEOPLE WITH A SYMMETRICAL FACE ARE RATED AS MORE ATTRACTIVE (HONEST SIGNAL OF GENETIC FITNESS).
PEOPLE ARE ALSO ATTRACTION TO FACES WITH NEOTENOUS (BABYFACE) – TRIGGERING A PROTECTIVE OR CARING INSTINCT.

RESEARCH SUPPORT –
PALMER AND PETERSON (2012) FOUND THAT PHYSICALLY ATTRACTIVE PEOPLE ARE RATED AS MORE POTICALLY KNOWLEGABLE AND COMPETENT THAN UNATTRACTIVE PEOPLE.
THE HALO EFFECT IS FOUND TO APPLY IN MANY OTHER AREAS OF EVERYDAY LIFE, CONFIRMING IT IS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE FORMATION OF RELATIONSHIPS.

CULTURAL INFLUENCES –
FEINGOLD (1988) CARRIED OUT A META-ANALYSIS AND FOUND SIGNIFICANT CORRELATION IN RATINGS OF ATTRACTIVENESS BETWEEN ROMANTIC PARTNERS – SHOWS THE MATCHING HYPOTHESIS IS A REALISTIC APPROACH.

THE MATCHING HYPOTHESIS –
WALSTER (1966) STATES THAT PEOPLE CHOOSE PARTNERS WHO ARE ROUGHLY A SIMILAR LEVEL OF ATTRACTIVENESS. WE HAVE TO MAKE A REALISTIC JUDGEMENT OF OUR OWN PERSONAL VALUE TO A POTENTIAL PARTNER.
CBT (COGNITIVE BAHAVIOURAL THERAPY) –
AIMS TO CHALLENGE IRRATIONAL THOUGHTS
AND TEACH PATIENTS HOW TO COPE BETTER
WITH SYMPTOMS EG. HALLUCINATIONS AND
DELUSIONS, REDUCING ANXIETY.

FAMILY THERAPY –
WORKS WITH THE PATIENT AND THEIR FAMILY TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION
(DOUBLE BLIND THEORY) WITHIN THE FAMILY AND REDUCE EXPRESSED
EMOTION (EE).

PHAROAH (2010) IDENTIFIES A RANGE OF STRATEGIES THAT FAMILY
THERAPISTS AIM TO IMPROVE WITHIN THE FAMILY:
• FORMING A THERAPUTIC ALLIANCE WITH ALL FAMILY MEMBERS
• REDUCING THE STRESS OF CARING FOR A RELATIVE WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA
• IMPROVING THE ABILITY TO SOLVE PROBLEMS
• REDUCTION OF ANGER AND GUILT WITHIN FAMILY
• ACHIEVING BALANCE BETWEEN CARE AND INDEPENDENCE
• IMPROVING BELIEFS ABOUT SCHIZOPHRENIA

TOKEN ECONEMY –
A SYSTEM OF REWARDS DESIGNED TO REINFORCE SOCIALY NORMAL
BEHAVIOUR AND SO HELP THE PATIENT RE-INTERGRATE BACK INTO SOCIETY.
TOKENS ARE GIVEN IMMEDIATELY IN EXCHANGE FOR REWARDS.

STUDIES OF CBT, FAMILY THERAPY AND TOKEN ECONOMIES HAVE
SHOWN MODEST EVIDENCE FOR BENEFITS OF PSYCH THERAPIES.

ETHICAL ISSUES INVOLVE CBT CHALLENGING
THE INDIVIDUALS FREEDOM OF THOUGHT.

TOKEN ECONOMIES ALSO DEPRIVE THE MORE
SEVERELY EFFECTED PATIENTS FROM SMALL
PLEASURES, MAKING THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE
WORSE THAN OTHERS IN SHORT TERM.

NO THERAPY CURES SCHIZOPHRENIA, THEY
SIMPLY HELP REDUCE SYMPTOMS OR COPING.
COGNITIVE EXPLANATIONS

LEVEL OF MORAL REASONING – KOLBERG (1973) PROPOSED THAT PEOPLE’S DECISIONS AND JUDGEMENTS ON ISSUES OF RIGHT AND WRONG CAN BE SUMMARISED IN A STAGE THEORY OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT. HE BASED HIS THEORY ON PEOPLE’S RESPONSES TO A SERIES OF MORAL DILEMNAS, SUCH AS THE HEINZ DILEMMA. MANY STUDIES HAVE SUGGESTED THAT CRIMINALS TEND TO SHOW A LOWER LEVEL OF MORAL REASONING THAN NON-CRIMINALS. USING HIS THEORY, KOLBERG FOUND THAT THE GROUP OF VIOLENT YOUTHS WERE SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER IN THEIR MORAL DEVELOPMENT THAN NON-VIOLENT YOUTHS EVEN ARE CONTROLLED FOR SOCIAL BACKGROUND.

MORAL REASONING EVIDENCE – PALMER AND HOLLON (1998) FOUND THAT THE DELINQUENT GROUP SHOWED LESS MATRUE MORAL REASONING THAN THE NON-Delinquent group. (BLACKBURN 1993) SUGGESTS THAT DELINQUENTS MAY SHOW POORER MORAL DEVELOPMENT DUE TO LACK OF ROLE PLAYING OPPORTUNITIES IN CHILDHOOD. SUCH OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP MORAL REASONING SHOULD THEREFORE BE PROVIDED.

KOLBERGS MODEL – CRIMINAL OFFENDERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE CLASSIFIED AT THE PRE-CONVENTIONAL LEVEL OF THE MODEL WHEREAS NON-CRIMINALS HAVE GENERALLY PROGRESSED TO THE CONVENTIONAL LEVEL AND BEYOND. THE PRE-CONVENTIONAL LEVEL IS CHARACTERISED BY A NEED TO AVOID PUNISHMENT AND GAIN REWARDS, AND IS ASSOCIATED WITH LESS MATURE, CHILD-LIKE REASONING . THUS, ADULTS AND ADOLESCENTS WHO REASON AT THIS LEVEL MAY CRIME IF THEY CAN GET AWAY WITH IT OR GAIN REWARDS COMMIT IN THE FORM OF MONEY OR INCREASED RESPECT. THIS ASSUMPTION IS SUPPORTED BY STUDIES WHICH SUGGEST THAT OFFENDERS ARE OFTEN MORE EGOCENTRIC (SELF-CENTRED) AND DISPLAY POORER SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE-TAKING SKILLS THAN NON-OFFENDER PEERS (CHANDLER 1973). INDIVIDUALS WHO REASON AT HIGHER LEVELS TEND TO SYMPATHISE MORE WITH THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS AND EXHIBIT MORE CONVENTIONAL BEHAVIOURS SUCH AS HONESTY, GENEROSITY AND NON-VIOLENCE.

COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS – CONSISTS OF ERRORS OR BIASES IN PEOPLES INFORMATION PROCESSING SYSTEM CHARACTERISED BY FAULTY THINKING. RESEARCH HAS LINKED THIS TO THE WAY IN WHICH CRIMINALS INTERPRET OTHER PEOPLES BEHAVIOUR AND JUSTIFY ACTIONS. TWO EXAMPLES OF COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS:

• HOSTILE ATTRIBUTION BIAS – THE TENDENCY TO JUDGE AMBIGUOUS SITUATIONS, OR THE ACTIONS OF OTHERS AS AGGRESSIVE AND CONFRONTATIONAL WHEN THEY MAY NOT BE (MISREADING NON-AGGRESSIVE CUES, DODGE & FRAMES 1982).
• MINIMILISATION – A TYPE OF DECEPTION THAT INVOLVES DOWNPLAYING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF AN EVENT OR EMOTION (COMMON STRATEGY WHEN DEALING WITH FEELINGS OF GUILT).

UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS HAS PROVEN BENEFICIAL IN THE TREATMENT OF CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR. THE REHABILITATION OF SEX OFFENDERS INVOLVES THE USE OF COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY (CBT) WHICH ENCOURAGES OFFENDERS TO ESTABLISH A LESS DISTORTED VIEW OF THEIR ACTIONS. STUDIES SUGGEST THAT REDUCED DENIAL AND MINIMALISATION IS HIGHLY CORRELATED WITH A REDUCED RISK OF REOFFENDING.

WHilst the cognitive approach is good at its description of the criminal mind, it is not successful when it is explaining it – NOT MUCH INSIGHT.

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES – THE LEVEL OF MORAL REASONING MAY DEPEND ON THE TYPE OF OFFENCE, THORNTON AND REID (1992) FOUND THAT INDIVIDUALS WHO COMMITTED CRIMES FOR FINANCE GAIN, SUCH AS ROBBERY, WERE MORE LIKELY TO SHOW PRE-CONVENTIONAL MORAL REASONING THAN THOSE CONVICTED OF IMPULSIVE CRIMES SUCH AS ASSAULT. LANGDON (2010) ARGUED THAT INTELLIGENCE MAY BE A BETTER PREDICTOR OF CRIMINALITY OF MORAL REASONING. THIS WOULD EXPLAIN THAT THOSE WITH VERY LOW LEVELS OF INTELLIGENCE ARE LESS LIKELY TO COMMIT CRIMES.
CUSTODIAL SENTENCING

THE AIMS OF CUSTODIAL SENTENCING –
Custodial sentencing involves convicted criminals spending their time in prison, or a similar closed institution such as a young offenders institute. There are four main aims for doing this:

1. DETERRENS – An unpleasant prison experience is designed to put off the individual from engaging in offending behaviour. Deterrence works on two levels: general deterrence aims to send a broad message to members of society that crime will not be tolerated whereas individual deterrence should prevent the individual from repeating the same crime in light of their experience. The view is based on the behaviourist idea of conditioning via punishment.

2. INCAPCITATION – The offender is taken out of society to prevent them from reoffending as a means of protecting the public, depending on the severity of the offence and nature of the offender.

3. RETRIBUTION – Society is enacting revenge for the crime by making the offender suffer at the level that is appropriate for the seriousness of crime committed. This is based on the biblical notion of “AN EYE FOR AN EYE” in which the offender pays for their actions. Many people see prison as the best possible option as alternatives are critised as soft options.

4. REHABILITATION – This is based on reforming. Upon release, offenders should leave prison better adjusted and ready to take back their place within society. Prison should provide opportunities to develop skills and training or access treatment programmes for drug addiction in order to give the offender a chance to reflect upon their crime.

SUPPORT FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS –
BARTOL (1995) suggested that for many offenders, imprisonment can be brutal, demeaning and generally devastating. Suicide rates among offenders have tended to be over fifteen times higher than those of the general population. This would suggest that custodial sentencing is not effective in the rehabilitation of individuals, particularly those who are psychologically vulnerable.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINING AND TREATMENT –
The rehabilitation model is based on the argument that offenders may become better people during their time in imprisonment, with their new character being able to lead a crime-free life when reintroduced back into society. Many prisoners access education and training whilst in prison increasing the ability of finding employment. This suggests that prison may be worthwhile, however many prisoners lack the resources to provide this.

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES –
Although prison is psychologically challenging for many, it cannot be assumed that all offenders will react in the same way. Different prisons have different regimes so there is likely to be differences in experience. Those convicted may have pre-existing psychological difficulties at the time of conviction, and may explain the reasoning behind committing a crime in the first place. Therefore it is difficult to make general conclusions that are generalisable to the entire population of prisoners.

UNIVERSITIES FOR CRIME –
During time in prison, inmates may undergo an “education” as part of their sentence. Incarceration with hardened criminals may give younger inmates the opportunity to learn the “tricks of the trade” from more experienced offenders. This may undermine attempts to rehabilitate prisoners, making reoffending more likely.

THE PROBLEM OF RECIDIVISM –
Recidivism refers to reoffending, a tendency to relapse into a previous condition or mode of behaviour: a convicted criminal who reoffends. Although statistics vary in terms of the type of offence, the UK, alongside the US, has some of the highest rates of recidivism in the world.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS –
- STRESS AND DEPRESSION – Suicide rates are considerably higher in prison than the general population, as are incidents of self-mutilation and self-harm. The stress of the prison experience also increase risks of psychological disturbance following release.
- INSTITUTIONALISATION – Having adapted to the norms and routines of prison life, inmates may become accustomed to this and may no longer function on the outside.
- PRISONISATION – Refers to the way in which prisoners are socialised into adopting an “inmate code”. Behaviour that may be considered unacceptable in the outside world may be encouraged and rewarded inside the walls of the institution.

RATES AMONG OFFENDERS HAVE TENDED TO BE
AROUND FIFTEEN TIMES HIGHER THAN THOSE OF THE GENERAL POPULATION.
BEHAVIORIST PRINCIPLES –
IF WE TAKE ON THE BEHAVIORIST APPROACH, THAT ALL BEHAVIORS ARE LEARNED, IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO ASSUME THAT BEHAVIORS CAN TOO BE UNLEARNED. BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION PROGRAMMES ARE DESIGNED WITH THE AIM OF REINFORCING OBEDIENT BEHAVIOR IN OFFENDERS WHILST PUNISHING DISOBEDIENCE. THIS IS MADE POSSIBLE VIA THE USE OF TOKEN ECONOMY SYSTEMS.

CHANGING BEHAVIOUR –
AS WITH ALL BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION PROGRAMMES, THE DESIRABLE BEHAVIOUR IS ESTABLISHED, BROKEN DOWN INTO SMALL STEPS AND A BASELINE MEASURE IS ESTABLISHED. THE WHOLE PROGRAMME CAN BE OVERSEEN BY PRISON OFFICIALS WHO ARE ABLE TO MONITOR THE PROGRAMMES EFFECTIVENESS ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE PRISON AS A WHOLE, AS WELL AS ON BEHAVIOUR OF INDIVIDUAL OFFENDERS.

EASY TO IMPLEMENT –
THE APPEAL OF BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION RESTS LARGELY UPON THE EASE WITH WHICH IT CAN BE ADMINISTERED. THERE IS NO NEED FOR ANY EXPERTISE OR SPECIALIST PROFESSIONALS AS THERE WOULD BE FOR OTHER FORMS OF TREATMENT. TOKEN ECONOMY SYSTEMS CAN BE IMPLEMENTED VIRTUALLY BY ANYONE IN ANY INSTITUTION AND ARE ALSO COST-EFFECTIVE AND EASY TO FOLLOW ONCE WORKABLE METHODS OF REINFORCEMENT HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED. HOWEVER, THE USE OF SUCH APPROACHES DEPEND ON THE CONSISTENT APPROACH OF PRISON STAFF.

TOKEN ECONOMY –
BASED ON OPERANT CONDITIONING, TOKEN ECONOMIES INVOLVES REINFORCING DESIRABLE BEHAVIOR WITH A TOKEN WHICH CAN BE LATER EXCHANGED FOR SOME FORM OF REWARD. WITHIN THE WALLS OF A PRISON, DESIRABLE BEHAVIOUR IS MOST LIKELY TO CONSIST OF AVOIDING CONFLICT AND FOLLOWING PRISON RULES. PRISONERS ARE GIVEN A TOKEN EACH TIME A DESIRABLE BEHAVIOUR IS PERFORMED, A SECONDARY REINFORCER AS THEY DERIVE THEIR VALUE FROM THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH A REWARD. REWARDS WILL VARY ACCORDING TO THE INSTITUTION, BUT MAY INCLUDE PHONE CALLS TO LOVED ONES OR TIME IN THE EXERCISE YARD/GYM. EACH OF THESE BEHAVIOUR REWARDS WILL BE MADE CLEAR BEFORE THE PROGRAMME IS IMPLEMENTED, AND IT WOULD ALSO BE EMPHASISED THAT NON-COMPLIANCE MAY RESULT IN THE TOKENS OR PRIVILEGES BEING WITHHELD OR REMOVED AS A FORM OF PUNISHMENT.

LITTLE REHABILITATIVE VALUE –
IN THE WORDS OF BLACKBURN (1995), BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION HAS LITTLE RETRIBUTIVE VALUE AND ANY POSITIVE CHANGES IN BEHAVIOUR THAT MAY OCCUR WITHIN THE PRISON ENVIRONMENT, MAY BE LOST ONCE THE OFFENDER IS REINTRODUCED INTO THE REAL WORLD AND SOCIETY. THE TOKEN ECONOMY SYSTEM IS AT ITS BEST WHEN ESTABLISHING APPROPRIATE CONDUCT WITHIN PRISON WITH RESPECT TO VERY SPECIFIC SET OF BEHAVIOURS, BUT PROGRESS IS UNLIKELY TO EXTEND BEYOND THE CUSTODIAL SETTING.

RESEARCH EXAMPLE –
HOBBES AND HOLT (1976) INTRODUCED A TOKEN ECONOMY PROGRAMME WITH GROUPS OF YOUNG DELINQUENTS ACROSS THREE BEHAVIOURAL UNITS (WITH A FOURTH ACTING AS A CONTROL). THEY OBSERVED A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR COMPARED TO THE NON-TOKEN ECONOMY GROUP. A SIMILAR EFFECT WAS FOUND WITH OFFENDERS IN AN ADULT PRISON (ALLYON 1979).

ETHICAL ISSUES –
THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION ARE REGARDED AS MINIPULATIVE AND DEHUMANISING BY SEVERAL COMMENTATORS (MOYA AND ACHTENBURG 1974). INSTITUTIONS USING TOKEN ECONOMY SYSTEMS STATE THAT PARTICIPATION IS OBBLIGATORY FOR ALL OFFENDERS RATHER THAN OPTIONAL. ALTHOUGH THE OFFENDER CAN DECIDE WHETHER TO COMPLY WITH THE SCHEME OR BREAK THE RULES, CRITICS HAVE SUGGESTED THAT A PROGRAMME THAT INVOLVES THE WITHDRAWAL OF PRIVILEGES SUCH AS CONTACT WITH LOVED ONES IS ETHICALLY QUESTIONABLE.