states as vocational guidance and not the right training can disappoint prisoner’s expectations and increase recidivism. Blackburn 1993 argues that individual differences are ignored and prisoners are all categorised into one group. Prisoners can adapt very well to life outside prison and the experience inside prison isn’t the same for everyone. This depends on the length of sentence, type of institution and what they are coming out to (family).

An alternative to punishing offenders if to try and treat their behaviour. These both can go hand in hand as offenders may receive therapy while in prison to help them adapt to ‘normal’ life. Many criminals suffer from cognitive deficits, these are errors in their thinking patterns which lead to criminal behaviour. Some examples of cognitive deficits are self-control, self-perspective talking, being irrational and not being able to reason. During therapy offenders are prompted to reflect their own thoughts and recognise their deficits. They are then helped change their thinking and behaviour through new cognitive skills. This can be done through two programs, the enhanced thinking skills is where offenders go to 20 two hour sessions. They learn how to think before acting and consider their actions and all factors involved. Group sessions are used to help practice and understand their behaviour and what consequences it may have. Reasoning and rehabilitation is another program which involves groups of 6 to word through modules which are based on the assumption offenders lack social skills, values, and attitudes to behave socially acceptable. The effectiveness of the therapy depends on the completion on the course, Palmer et al 2007 found not only did offenders drop out of the program had higher re-conviction rates than those who completed it but also had a higher re-conviction rate than those who didn’t attend the course. This may be because those who didn’t finish the course have the most deviant thinking patterns and therefore the most in need of the therapy but less likely to benefit from it. Palmer et al 2008 suggests current therapies only seem effective with high risk to medium risk offenders. This is because low risk offenders don’t gain much benefit as they commit crimes which have other reasons behind them than thinking like high risk offenders.

The idea of a punishment is to stop undesired behaviour but it can also encourage desired behaviour through the use of token economy. This therapy has the aim to condition offenders through rewards to reinforce positive behaviour. This is done by rewarding desired behaviour in tokens which can be exchanged for privileges such as watching TV. For conditioning to be effective the tokens been to be given immediately and consistently for the desired behaviour. The punishment of isolation can be used to reduce the behaviour which is not desired. The aim on token economy is to shape behaviour into something desirable and the tokens are always accompanied with praise in the hope that praise will be enough to reinforce the desired behaviour without tokens. The effectiveness of token economy to eradicate a certain behaviour relies on the right use of it. Bassett and Blanchard 1977 found the effectiveness of token economy was removed when staff misused the system. But when used correctly it can encourage a behaviour much more than a punishment.

Token economy is limited to only treating behaviour and is not concerned about thought processed like cognitive therapy. This means that when the reward have been removed the individual may return to their pervious state of behaviour. But it could be argued that cognitive therapy is also not addressing the underlying cause of behaviour and just treating the symptoms. Unlike cognitive therapy programs token economy can be a demeaning was to earn rewards, however, counter to this it does reflect the nature of the social world and is a more ethical way of dealing with an undesirable behaviour than others.

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