

Factors Limiting the Effectiveness of Prisoner Resocialization

Czynniki ograniczające skuteczność resocjalizacji więźniów

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes weaknesses in the rehabilitation process, with particular attention to the various barriers that limit its effectiveness under conditions of isolation. The author points to difficulties related to both individual and group-level change, which significantly affect the effectiveness of the actions taken by Prison Service staff. Despite intensive efforts, it is not always possible to prevent the continuation of criminal careers among some inmates.

The article seeks to identify key barriers that hinder the assessment of the corrective potential of the rehabilitation process and impede the prevention of recidivism. These include, among others, problems related to inmates' motivation to change, deficits in social competences, the negative influence of the penitentiary environment, and limitations resulting from the distinctive nature of custodial institutions. The author also discusses issues related to insufficient human resources and difficulties in implementing individualized rehabilitation plans that would take into account the unique needs of each inmate.

These considerations aim to contribute to a better understanding of the factors underlying the lack of expected change and to formulate recommendations for improving the quality of rehabilitation interventions, with particular emphasis on the importance of both group-based and individual activities in the rehabilitation process.

KEYWORDS

resocialization,
readaptation, crime
prevention, social
maladjustment,
individual change,
group change

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

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ABSTRAKT

Artykuł koncentruje się na analizie słabych stron procesu resocjalizacji, zwracając szczególną uwagę na bariery ograniczające jego skuteczność w warunkach izolacji. Autorka wskazuje na trudności związane ze zmianami zarówno indywidualnymi, jak i grupowymi, które znacząco wpływają na skuteczność działań podejmowanych przez pracowników Służby Więziennej. Pomimo intensywnych wysiłków nie zawsze udaje się zahamować rozwój kariery przestępczej części osadzonych.

W artykule podjęto próbę identyfikacji kluczowych barier utrudniających oszacowanie potencjału naprawczego procesu resocjalizacji i zapobiegania recydywie. Przeanalizowano między innymi problemy związane z motywacją osadzonych do zmiany, z deficytami kompetencji społecznych, wpływem negatywnego oddziaływania środowiska penitencjarnego oraz z ograniczeniami wynikającymi ze specyfiki instytucji izolacyjnej. Autorka omawia również aspekty związane z brakiem odpowiednich zasobów ludzkich oraz trudnościami we wdrażaniu indywidualnych planów resocjalizacji, uwzględniających indywidualne potrzeby każdego osadzonego.

Celem rozważań jest lepsze zrozumienie czynników determinujących brak oczekiwanej zmiany osadzonych oraz sformułowanie rekomendacji dotyczących poprawy jakości oddziaływań resocjalizacyjnych, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem znaczenia działań grupowych i indywidualnych w procesie resocjalizacji.

Introduction

Polish scholarship on penitentiary systems has long confronted substantial difficulties in analyzing and addressing the rehabilitation of socially maladjusted individuals in custodial settings. Barriers to effectively “correcting defective human adaptation to generally accepted social requirements” and to “adapting the environment to the specific needs of socially maladjusted people”¹ are frequently discussed in academic discourse and among correctional staff. Identifying these barriers is particularly important given the psychocorrective nature of rehabilitation, which is widely understood as a complex and demanding educational process—especially when applied to

1 Interpretation of social rehabilitation according to Jaworska (2012: 225 ff.).

adults whose personality structures are already relatively consolidated (Chojecka, Muskała 2021).

This complicates the identification of positive motivational strategies capable of encouraging incarcerated individuals to engage in prosocial activities and to make choices that support departure from maladaptive life patterns, referred to in the literature as a “reconstruction of value orientation” (Porowski 1985: 170). Changes in attitudes among incarcerated persons, both at the individual and group levels, represent a precondition for successful reentry and social reintegration. When the objectives of rehabilitation are not achieved, inmates remain unable to satisfy one of the most fundamental human needs: the need for belonging, as conceptualized in Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (2009).

At the same time, empirical research points to the low effectiveness of correctional rehabilitation in shaping inmates’ identities, pointing to factors such as prisonization, deprivation of psychosocial needs, and immersion in deviant prison subcultures (e.g., Bernasiewicz, Łukasiewicz, Noszczyk-Bernasiewicz 2024; Kopczyńska-Wisz 2019; Machel 2006). Therefore, it is worth analyzing the reasons why many incarcerated individuals fail to benefit from the rehabilitation pathways offered in correctional institutions, which ultimately contributes to persistent recidivism.

Psychocorrective objectives of correctional rehabilitation

The commonly held rationale for custodial sentencing is based on the assumption embedded in legal norms that imprisonment can bring about changes in an incarcerated person’s personality that reduce or eliminate social maladjustment. These changes are expected to facilitate recognition of wrongdoing, evoke remorse, encourage restitution, and a decision to comply with the legal order (Rajewska de Mezer 2001). Achieving such outcomes presents a particular challenge when incarcerated individuals display entrenched patterns of irrational violence, purposeless aggression, and other antisocial behaviors that require intensive prevention and decisive intervention.

Accordingly, Article 67 § 2 of the Executive Penal Code emphasizes the need to select rehabilitation methods that, through individualized interventions—implemented under the statutory framework

and through a system of structured programming—support the achievement of educational and rehabilitative goals. These approaches are intended to take into account inmates’ psychological immaturity, limited life experience, and heightened susceptibility to negative social influences (Kalitowski et al. 2000). Given the interdisciplinary nature of correctional rehabilitation, the objectives of correctional education are pursued through several primary modes of intervention:

- Situational interventions, which involve structuring environments and experiences that discourage negative behaviors and reinforce constructive attitudes, for example, through appropriately designed systems of incentives and sanctions;
- interpersonal interventions, based on authority, credibility, and trust in the practitioner–client relationship;
- social interventions, focused on modeling prosocial attitudes through group processes and the institutional and social environment.

The above methods must be based on strengthening self-control and self-awareness, that is, on principles supporting self-directed learning and personal development (Pytka 2002: 7). A key objective is to help build among incarcerated individuals the conviction that a custodial sentence does not deprive them of future life prospects or of the possibility of functioning satisfactorily after release. Closely related to this is the need to raise awareness of the importance of strengthening self-confidence and trust in the effectiveness of rehabilitation, as well as overcoming the belief that incarceration necessarily condemns a person to permanent social marginalization.

This process also involves developing the capacity for social functioning and coexistence, as well as reducing or eliminating common tendencies toward alcohol abuse and substance dependence, which are criminogenic factors. Accordingly, correctional rehabilitation must include corrective measures whereby “correction” is understood as compensating for specific deficits and addressing limitations that burden incarcerated individuals. Such deficits usually include a lack of practical life skills, insufficient education, limited knowledge of prevailing social norms and principles, or an inability to understand and apply them (Adamczyk 2015).

As a result of these deficits, incarcerated individuals often struggle to make effective use of social support resources—commonly

described as the principle of “giving the fishing rod, not the fish”—and have difficulty independently solving personal problems and life dilemmas. They may also show reluctance to make use of available psychological services, legal assistance, or counseling programs. The objectives of rehabilitation in custodial settings are therefore particularly significant, as they underscore the necessity of change at both the individual and group levels. Special emphasis should be placed on strengthening individuals’ belief in the possibility of maintaining life prospects and effecting lasting improvements in their social situation following release.

Corrective interventions—understood as efforts to reduce deficits and build competencies—play a particularly important role in this process. At the same time, the development of social competencies is widely recognized as a key condition for successful individual change and group-based reintegration. Rehabilitation programming must also take into account complex issues such as addiction, which constitute significant criminogenic factors and require individual and group-based therapeutic and corrective approaches.

In discussions of the psychocorrective goals of rehabilitation, two basic objectives are commonly distinguished, differing in scope and effectiveness: a minimum goal and a maximum goal. The minimum goal refers to achieving a level of personal functioning that allows an individual to live in society without violating legal norms. While attainment of this goal reduces the risk of recidivism, it does not necessarily prevent violations of moral norms and may be insufficient to overcome stigmatization, thereby increasing the likelihood of reoffending. On the other hand, the maximum goal encompasses not only desistance from crime but also the capacity to organize one’s life in accordance with fundamental social standards, maintain distance from past deviant behavior, and strengthen prosocial attitudes (Kalinowska 2020).

As is evident from the foregoing discussion, psychocorrective goals in correctional rehabilitation involve raising awareness among incarcerated individuals—particularly younger ones—that everyone possesses the capacity to adapt, provided they actively develop and realize their own potential. This process enables them to adopt an approach to social reality in which situations are perceived as manageable and solvable instead of overwhelming or threatening. Central

to this is the cultivation of positive interests and constructive habits that create opportunities for personal development, promote a sense of self-confidence, reinforce belief in the value of one's actions, and enhance feelings of security. In this context, special attention should be paid to meeting psychological needs in ways that create genuine opportunities for role change, allowing incarcerated individuals to move beyond the position of passive recipients of rehabilitation programming and instead to become active participants capable of initiating, or at least cooperating in the implementation of, concrete projects and activities.

Another psychocorrective goal of rehabilitation interventions is to encourage incarcerated individuals to make better and more effective use of their free time. This aim underlies the growing interest in creative rehabilitation anchored in cognitive psychology, which is seen as offering opportunities to stimulate self-development and positive personality change. These approaches seek to motivate convicts to analyze and understand the sources of their maladaptive social attitudes, to recognize the legitimacy of others' reactions to their behavior, and to activate an internal desire for self-change—processes that are necessary for modifying key aspects of individual identity (Konopczyński 2014: 20ff.). Accordingly, another goal of correctional education is the consistent and explicit grounding of rehabilitation efforts in a clearly defined system of values that is compatible with prevailing social norms. Equally important is reinforcing the understanding that correctional institutions exist to support individuals deemed socially maladjusted as a result of violating social rules and norms by assisting them in overcoming difficulties and addressing life problems (Iwański 2017).

As Marek Konopczyński notes, because the strategic goal of rehabilitation is the transformation of an individual's identity, it is first necessary to modify existing life priorities—which is a relatively permanent change—and only then to initiate the process by prioritizing developmental and creative potentials (Konopczyński 2014: 23). In order to act effectively, we should be aware of barriers in rehabilitation interactions in order to eliminate the limitations they cause. This applies in particular to individuals serving long-term prison sentences, who often experience heightened psychological strain stemming not only from having committed a serious offense and from

fear related to criminal liability and court proceedings, but also from the prolonged duration of criminal trials and appeal processes. Individuals serving long sentences are often anxious about the prospect of release and fearful of what awaits them outside prison—whether they will be accepted by the community to which they must return, among other concerns.

An additional dimension of this issue arises from the fact that the psychophysical characteristics of some offenders, combined with the nature of their crimes, significantly limit the prospects for effective rehabilitation, particularly in the case of inmates serving life sentences. These circumstances pose serious challenges for prison staff. For this reason, it is worth examining the barriers present in both the planning and implementation of rehabilitation processes in order to enhance their effectiveness. While these barriers may take on institution-specific forms, it is nevertheless possible to identify factors that are common to all penitentiary institutions.

Barriers to the effectiveness of rehabilitation interventions

Analyzing barriers in rehabilitation processes is essential for both theory and correctional practice. Such analysis makes it possible to identify factors that hinder the achievement of educational and rehabilitative goals, as well as to design corrective measures that enhance the effectiveness of interventions. Although each correctional facility operates under specific conditions, it is possible to identify universal barriers that occur in most prisons and therefore require a systemic response. From the perspective of correctional practice, these barriers can be grouped into three main categories: institutional, personal, and structural.

Institutional barriers stem from the systemic and organizational constraints of prisons. These most commonly include outdated and non-functional infrastructure, chronic staff shortages, excessive overtime among correctional officers, prison overcrowding, and the demoralizing effects of excessive unstructured time combined with limited access to work opportunities during incarceration. Prison facilities themselves are often characterized by monotonous, gray environments that lack adequate sensory stimulation, which may impair cognitive functioning and reduce engagement in rehabilitative

activities. In addition, the poor technical condition of many facilities necessitates substantial financial investment. High costs associated with renovating aging buildings—many of which are protected as historical sites—repairing infrastructure, and adapting detention facilities to European standards for the execution of custodial sentences place significant strain on institutional resources and negatively affects rehabilitation efforts (Wójcik 2016: 43).

Overcrowding further restricts access to equipment and spaces used for rehabilitative and therapeutic programs, which can generate tensions between incarcerated individuals and correctional staff. In some cases, these tensions have contributed to legal disputes, including adverse judgments against Poland before the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. Overcrowding generates a range of negative consequences, including an increase in conflict among prisoners, which hinders the development of pro-social behavior among inmates and is felt particularly strongly by those serving long-term sentences.² A high number of people confined to a limited space causes prisoners to lose their sense of personal separateness, leading to violations of interpersonal boundaries. This, in turn, exposes egoistic attitudes among inmates, which generates discomfort and an accumulation of conflicts related to cooperation, obedience, and the performance of duties.

This situation translates into a reduced quality of work by Prison Service officers who, under conditions of overcrowding, are unable to properly fulfill their responsibilities, especially with regard to ongoing intervention in cases of irregularities. Overcrowding also makes it difficult to apply the principle of objective relevance essential to rehabilitation, which assumes that undertaken actions should translate into functioning outside prison walls. In practice, this means implementing activities that model practical solutions, behaviors, and situations that a convict may encounter after release, which is often impossible under overcrowded conditions. As a result, officers

2 The statutory minimum standard for the floor area of a residential cell in Poland is 3 m² per person. During its most recent inspection in 2004, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) identified several deficiencies in Polish prisons and detention centres, including overcrowding. The Committee also noted that the 3 m² standard is insufficient and recommended increasing it to 4 m² per person (Holđa 2009: 119–120).

are forced to limit their efforts to meeting inmates' basic needs and to rely on schematic simplifications, which prevents the implementation of the principle of individualization and the creation of an educational environment. The aim of such an environment is to assign and group prisoners in ways that minimize opportunities for mutual antisocial influence or aggression. The inability to implement these assumptions in practice violates the principle of professionalism—crucial to the rehabilitation process—which presupposes that penitentiary staff should support, not limit, rehabilitative efforts.

Another important institutional barrier concerns the professional preparation of correctional staff. Effective rehabilitation requires personnel who possess comprehensive theoretical and empirical knowledge and who, beyond formal education, demonstrate personality traits commonly expected of professionals working closely with others, especially with a population as demanding as prisoners. These qualities include empathy, strong communication skills, the ability to function under difficult and stressful conditions, patience, consistency, creativity, and a strong sense of responsibility. Responsibility is crucial for implementing one of the core principles of correctional practice: professional accountability. Performing assigned tasks without careful reflection on which methodological procedures are likely to be effective for a specific individual—and which individuals are likely to benefit from intensive intervention versus those for whom such measures may be ineffective—can lead to outcomes described in the literature as follows: “rehabilitation conducted under conditions of isolation is very often reduced to custodial service, while activities such as therapy, correction, or support recede into the background” (Migdał 2018).

Awareness of inmates' needs alone is insufficient. A lack of knowledge regarding appropriate methods, techniques, and tools for influencing socially maladjusted individuals, as well as imprecise identification of rehabilitation goals, leads to unsuccessful intervention (Bonta & Andrews 2023: 47ff.). For example, errors made at the diagnostic stage not only hinder the individualization of rehabilitation programming but may actively impede the rehabilitation process itself. As early as the 1980s, Brunon Holyst drew attention to deficiencies in staff competencies, noting that “shortcomings and errors in correctional rehabilitation policy include, among other things, inappropriate inmate classification and grouping. These practices fail to

recognize that behavior within a group depends on how authority and influence are distributed” (2012: 36). As these observations suggest, no method—regardless of its theoretical soundness—will be effective if implemented by personnel who lack substantive professional skills and the personal dispositions necessary for this work. Ultimately, the effectiveness of rehabilitation depends on the practitioner. Desired qualities include professional competence, moral integrity, authority resulting from fair and respectful treatment of all incarcerated individuals, and good physical and mental health (Iwański 2017). If the correctional professional responsible for rehabilitation is unable to individualize interventions, which is an essential condition for effectiveness, lacks experience with diverse case profiles, or cannot apply methods and tools flexibly in response to specific situations, effective rehabilitation cannot be achieved.

An additional difficulty frequently noted in the literature concerns the significant distance between correctional facilities and prisoners’ places of residence, which often makes regular contact with family members difficult or, in some cases, impossible. As a result, incarcerated individuals experience heightened frustration, which creates yet another barrier to achieving intended rehabilitative outcomes. In particular, it may undermine motivation to undertake any work that fulfills an important corrective and re-adaptive function—namely, the development and consolidation of skills necessary for lawful self-sufficiency after release (Łuczak 2016: 105–114).

Conversely, when incarcerated individuals come from family environments affected by unemployment, alcohol abuse, drug dependence, prostitution, or other forms of social dysfunction, family contact may itself hinder effective rehabilitation. In such cases, these relationships can reinforce feelings of hopelessness or skepticism about the possibility of functioning in society without addiction or criminal behavior. Moreover, awareness of the need to return to such environments often strengthens expectations of stigmatization and rejection in more socially integrated settings, which may increase the temptation to return to criminal activity.

The accumulation of these barriers, which delay or obstruct the achievement of rehabilitative goals, contributes to the phenomenon of prisonization. This process consists of the internalization of informal norms, language, and behavior patterns prevailing in the

correctional facility. These norms both officially sanctioned and enforced by inmate subcultures and informal hierarchies. Through assimilation and identification with other incarcerated individuals, prisoners may experience a reduction in the psychological burdens of imprisonment; however, adaptation is accompanied by an increasingly uncritical acceptance of criminal values. As a consequence, inmates become more prone to recidivism, which creates a serious obstacle to effective rehabilitation.

Personnel-related barriers concern the participants in the rehabilitation process themselves, particularly incarcerated individuals. In this area, a fundamental barrier is the limited availability of employment opportunities in correctional facilities, combined with prisoners' reluctance to pursue education or vocational training. As my previous research indicates, although external vocational examinations confirm the high quality of preparation among those who complete programs in prison-based schools, inmates engaged in any form of formal education account for only approximately 4.5% of the total incarcerated population in detention centers and prisons (Mydłowska 2019).

Personal barriers include the fact that individuals beginning a term of imprisonment usually enter custody with established personality traits, life experiences, a formed character, and a defined awareness of their relationship with the social environment from which they have been removed. Deprivation of liberty usually becomes a source of multiple frustrations—the inability to satisfy biological and psychological needs is tantamount to deprivation, which evokes a sense of injustice and negative emotions such as anger, hatred, fear, sadness, despair, and helplessness. These emotions generate conflict situations that adversely affect the psychophysical condition of inmates (Waligóra 1984).

If this is compounded by an insufficient number of therapeutic—resulting from staffing shortages as well as limited access to specialized interventions, such as addiction treatment—many core principles of rehabilitation are marginalized or effectively abandoned, including the principle of individualization. This situation frequently encourages participation in informal inmate groups and facilitates the spread of prison subculture. In such groups, beliefs are promoted that participation in rehabilitation programs is pointless, and that environments

guided by conventional norms such as diligence, honesty, truthfulness, and punctuality are associated with weakness or failure. In contrast, values perceived as worthy of “real men” are defined in terms of ruthlessness, aggression, insolence, and cunning, while indicators of prestige include the nature of the offense, length of incarceration, physical strength, and material resources (Kędzierski 2022).

Young incarcerated individuals are particularly vulnerable to these demoralizing influences. Under the pressure of more “experienced” and higher-status peers in the criminal milieu, they may be encouraged to disengage from institutional programs or even abscond from facilities. When combined with poorly organized educational provision or the absence of a supportive family environment to which a young person can return after release, these influences contribute to the consolidation of maladaptive and pathological attitudes (Bernasiewicz, Łukasiewicz, Noszczyk-Bernasiewicz 2024: 10). Special attention should therefore be paid to the risk of entrenching maladaptive behavioral patterns that undermine readiness for change at both the individual and group levels. A particularly serious problem is that values widely regarded as prosocial—such as honesty and industriousness—are rejected within prison subculture and replaced by norms based on aggression and domination, which may block constructive attitudinal change. Young convicts are especially susceptible to these influences, which reinforce negative group norms and the internalization of maladaptive individual attitudes.

Correctional staff often report the limited effectiveness of various cultural and educational initiatives. This is largely attributable to the barriers discussed above, as well as to additional factors that inhibit incarcerated individuals’ participation in such activities. The vast majority of inmates take part in cultural programming only passively; active involvement is usually limited to those with specific interests or artistic talents. Use of prison libraries is relatively rare, with most inmates preferring to watch television or listen to radio broadcasts. In some facilities, closed-circuit television systems have been introduced to provide access to satellite programs. Physical activity is generally the most popular form of engagement among inmates; however, its development is significantly constrained by the specific conditions of correctional facilities, particularly architectural limitations that

restrict the construction of sports fields or the proper equipping of spaces designated for physical exercise (Hołyst 2012: 1365–1366).

The consequence of the above is another obstacle to achieving the intended rehabilitation outcomes: an excess of unstructured free time, which leads to frustration and destructive behavior. When inmates have too much idle time, they are more likely to engage in actions that violate prison rules. Failure to fill free time with productive activities makes it difficult to cultivate a work ethic, a sense of duty, and responsibility among inmates. It also deprives them of opportunities for consistent educational influence, for shaping attitudes and personality, for preventing further erosion of pro-social attitudes, and for counteracting the negative manifestations of prison subculture and the effects of long-term isolation (Dubiel 2009).

The problem is particularly acute in the case of inmates who, prior to incarceration, lacked positive models for spending their free time, have no ideas for organizing it constructively, and display independent, influence-resistant personality traits that foster indifference to prison norms and regulations. In this context, a lack of humility among inmates constitutes a particularly serious barrier to effective rehabilitation. This attitude is associated with an absence of guilt, undermines the function of punishment as a just response, and generates a sense of grievance that significantly impedes the rehabilitation process. As a result, the inmate rejects reflection on the consequences of their actions, avoids taking responsibility, and attributes blame to external factors.

Cognitive distortions are frequently observed among inmates and manifest in a distorted self-image, the minimization of harm caused by their own antisocial behavior, and, consequently, the transfer of responsibility for their actions onto others (Niewiadomska 2007). Such attitudes negatively affect both the individual and group dimensions of penitentiary interactions, preventing the effective initiation of cognitive and moral change. As responsibility is shifted to the social environment, individual reflection and readiness to take part in constructive rehabilitation activities are significantly reduced. At the group level, this phenomenon reinforces negative norms within the prison subculture, perpetuating maladaptive behavioral patterns and making it difficult to achieve lasting attitudinal changes conducive to social readaptation and reintegration.

When considering barriers to effective rehabilitation, it is impossible to overlook financial constraints, which may be classified as structural barriers. Public funding allocated to the operation of correctional facilities is insufficient to support many planned initiatives. Due to a persistent lack of resources for renovating aging buildings, maintenance needs often take priority, while rehabilitation programs are forced to operate within limited financial capacity. As a result, rehabilitation planning frequently requires compromises between the needs identified by correctional educators and actual financial resources.

Administrators of individual correctional facilities often attempt to secure additional funding or to arrange free support for incarcerated individuals through specialized external service providers. However, according to a report by the Supreme Audit Office of Poland (NIK),

support institutions most often provide only ad hoc assistance, which reinforces a sense of entitlement and does not contribute to changes in individuals' attitudes toward their own lives. [...] There is no system in place for monitoring the post-release paths of people leaving prison that would allow for the development of effective rehabilitation interventions. [...] Current regulations and the actual operational capacities of institutions—including formal and material constraints—do not permit comprehensive support for incarcerated individuals in the process of social reintegration. In addition, assistance is fragmented across multiple institutions and agencies, which often discourages inmates from taking action to change their attitudes and behaviors. (NIK 2015: 23–24)

An additional challenge in implementing rehabilitation initiatives is excessive bureaucratization. The administrative burden created by redundant documentation requirements affects not only administrative staff but also correctional practitioners. Examples include the duplication of records maintained both in individual case files and electronic management systems, as well as the obligation to produce extensive statistical reports and analyses for central authorities. These demands slow the implementation of interventions and, in some cases, lead to the abandonment of planned projects.

As a consequence, delays occur in the delivery of change-oriented activities at both the individual and group levels, which may ultimately result in the cancellation of certain rehabilitation initiatives. Correctional staff frequently report a lack of time for thorough

diagnostic assessments of the factors leading to criminal behavior, for the effective delivery of interventions, or for systematic evaluation of educational and rehabilitative programs. This concern is corroborated by the above-cited NIK report on the social reintegration of individuals serving long-term sentences, which found that as many as 44% of rehabilitation programs lacked any analysis of the effectiveness of correctional interventions or their impact on preparing incarcerated individuals for social reintegration (NIK 2015: 10–12, 32–33). These findings clearly indicate the need for systematic reform of administrative procedures and a reorientation toward substantive, evidence-based support for individual and group rehabilitation processes.

Summary

Assessing the effectiveness of a rehabilitation program is not a straightforward task. It requires answering the question of whether a given program adequately prepares individuals for social reintegration, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of various rehabilitation interventions in relation to an individual's responsiveness to specific forms of treatment. Nevertheless, as the above analysis demonstrates, it is possible to identify key problems that prevent the basic objectives of correctional rehabilitation under custodial conditions from being effectively achieved. Ensuring the durable abandonment of a criminal lifestyle requires consistent and systematic interventions capable of producing substantive change in incarcerated individuals that allow them to reinterpret their past from a different angle. Such interventions should help inmates recognize that there is no place for former patterns of behavior in their present lives and encourage them to explore new possibilities, broaden their thinking, and expand their cultural horizons as part of personal development. Changes in attitudes, both at the individual and group levels, depend on sustained and structured efforts that promote reflection and the reconstruction of value systems.

It is particularly important for socially maladjusted individuals to be activated in ways that foster autonomy and enable them to cope independently with problem situations. Ideally, rehabilitation would be implemented under conditions that allow regular and meaningful

contact between incarcerated individuals and people from outside correctional facilities—for example, through joint projects conducted in open settings and involving representatives of local communities, such as employees or volunteers of nongovernmental organizations. Such arrangements would make it possible to more fully realize the potential for both individual and group-level change. At the same time, the role of correctional staff must not be overlooked and requires particular attention. This issue has become increasingly important given the specific nature of correctional work, which is characterized by high levels of stress, emotional strain, and a heightened risk of occupational burnout. The literature emphasizes the need for comprehensive prevention strategies to effectively support the mental health of this professional group. A fundamental component of such strategies is the provision of broadly defined psychological support, implemented through on-site access to psychologists as well as regular individual and group consultations. These measures can facilitate reflective discussion of difficult professional and personal situations, help alleviate emotional tension, and promote constructive problem-solving.

It is also important to provide regular psychoeducational training aimed at developing competences in stress and aggression management. The literature points to the value of mindfulness-based techniques (Klon, Waszyńska 2020: 204–211), relaxation exercises, and interpersonal skills training, all of which can significantly enhance the psychological resilience of correctional staff. Another extremely important area of intervention involves improving working conditions, including both the physical reorganization of workspaces to support effective recovery and regeneration, and the rational planning of work schedules to reduce excessive overtime, which often leads to chronic fatigue. Organizational culture also plays a crucial role. Building an atmosphere of mutual trust and open communication, along with the introduction of regular mental health screenings for staff, facilitates early identification of stress-related difficulties and timely intervention in emerging crisis situations. In addition, appropriate support from management is vital. This support should be expressed through regular informational and reflective meetings as well as through recognition of employees' efforts and the implementation of systematic reward mechanisms. Taken together, these measures can strengthen correctional staff's sense of professional

value, enhance job satisfaction, and significantly reduce the risk of occupational burnout.

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