

## Correctional Counseling and Rehabilitation, 10th ed.

### Chapter 2: Understanding the Special Challenges Faced by the Correctional Counselor

#### Introduction

Chapter 2 (Understanding the Special Challenges Faced by the Correctional Counselor in the Prison Setting) helps readers to better understand the world of corrections through the eyes of the correctional counselor. Particular attention is paid to such job stressors as prison overcrowding, excessive paperwork, involuntary clients, large caseloads, ways that justice-involved people behave to get their needs met through dysfunctional communication and behavior, and staff burnout. Readers are introduced to valuable strategies for coping with challenging environments and clients who are resistant to treatment. A discussion of ethics and standards of practice for counselors is crucial to anyone in the role of therapist or counselor.

#### Objectives

- The principles and techniques of correctional counseling
- Identifying the 12 types of client resistance towards treatment
- Overcoming resistance using the “3Rs” strategies
- The ethical dilemmas correctional counselors face
- Contextual demands of the correctional environment
- Preventing burnout through “The Ten Commandments for Prison Staff”

#### Key Terms

- burnout
- cognitive–behavioral interventions
- collateral information
- contextual demands
- crisis intervention
- dual/multiple relationships
- ethnocentrism
- “here and now” style
- interpersonal boundaries
- multicultural
- power and control
- redirection
- reframing
- reversal of responsibility
- special needs clients
- stereotype
- thinking errors

- treatment versus security dichotomy

### Online Learning Enhancements

In this YouTube video from “Transforming Criminal Justice for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” hosted by the Institute for Justice Research and Development, Lamont Carey promotes the idea, “Keep Your Hustle, but Change Your Product.” Mr. Carey uses spoken word to highlight the importance of strengths and transferable skills of formerly incarcerated people.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdaNTnpfUII>

### Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the importance of identifying and challenging antisocial thinking when counseling clients who are involved in the justice system.
2. Why do you think group counseling is the preferred modality in the treatment of system-impacted clients?
3. What are some of the ethical dilemmas facing the correctional counselor? How can they be successfully removed?
4. Discuss some of the contextual demands encountered by the correctional counselor that make the job more stressful.
5. Separate into five groups and assign one of the 5-Keys to each group from the 5-Key Model of Reentry seen in Figure 2.2. Each group should consider the specific obstacles that formerly incarcerated people face for their assigned Key and brainstorm possible solutions.

### True/False Questions

1. Most corrections departments require at least an associate degree in criminology/criminal justice or a social or behavioral science. *False*
2. Counselors who explore the client’s past for antecedents of current problems are likely to find the cause of the client’s behavior. *False*
3. One of the reasons group counseling is preferred is that peer group pressure and influence are inherently therapeutic. *True*
4. Challenging the thinking errors employed by clients is *not* an integral part of treatment. *False*
5. Clients that are outwardly compliant are not usually resistant to treatment. *False*
6. A client complimenting a counselor on her perfume and asking if her husband likes it is an example of the “ingratiation” tactic of power and control. *False*
7. It is imperative that counselors become adept at using direct methods of engaging clients in the counseling process. *False*
8. The “redirection” strategy of the “3Rs” of managing client resistance includes the technique of focusing on the client’s resistance and ignoring other group members’ reactions to the resistance. *False*

9. One of the most important elements in managing resistance is avoiding extended debates with people who are justice-involved. *True*
10. The premise that treatment and security are mutually in conflict is widely accepted. *False*
11. One ethical dilemma faced by correctional counselors is who the client is, i.e., whether the client is the institution or the individual. *True*
12. An example of when the ethical dilemma of dual/multiple relationships might arise is when a counselor is asked to participate in a search for contraband. *True*
13. By supplementing his or her training and experience, in areas pertinent to working with justice-involved individuals, a counselor can become something akin to all things to all people in terms of serving the full range of client needs and problems. *False*
14. Because confidentiality in the client-counselor relationship is essential, the counselor is not required to report to authorities when a client indicates the intent to harm someone. *False*
15. Working in a bureaucracy and handling excessive paperwork are two of the contextual demands that regularly confront the correctional counselor. *True*
16. Multicultural counseling is an approach that enables counselors to judge people based on assumed group characteristics. *False*
17. One recommendation for burnout prevention is that a counselor should maintain and exercise a healthy sense of humor. *True*
18. The average caseload for a correctional counselor may exceed 100 persons. *True*
19. Part of the correctional counselor's job is to provide crisis support for clients contemplating suicide. *True*
20. Despite repeated exposure to violence and witnessing antisocial behavior by clients, correctional workers do not experience a desensitizing effect or normalization at work. *False*

### Multiple-Choice Questions

1. The caliber of individuals who work as correctional counselors includes:
  - a. highly dedicated professionals.
  - b. those who take their work seriously.
  - c. those who just put in the hours for a paycheck.
  - d. all of the above. \*\*\*
2. Establishing a meaningful relationship with the client:
  - a. is important to establishing interpersonal boundaries.
  - b. is essential to successful counseling. \*\*\*
  - c. prevents the counselor from confronting the client with the irresponsible decisions that led to his or her incarceration.
  - d. none of the above.
3. Many counselors are reluctant to build personal involvement with clients because they:
  - a. have very little time to do so because of their heavy caseloads.
  - b. are aware that personal involvement with clients is unethical.
  - c. fear manipulation and exploitation from the clients.

- d. fear becoming overly emotionally involved with the clients. \*\*\*
- 4. Group counseling is a preferred mode of providing treatment because:
  - a. groups provide a wealth of new information gathered from interactions from other individuals.
  - b. Group members challenge each other with feedback.
  - c. peer group pressure and influence are inherently therapeutic.
  - d. all of the above. \*\*\*
- 5. Collateral information can be enlightening to a counselor because:
  - a. many justice-involved clients are masters of deceit.
  - b. collateral information can help present a comprehensive impression of the client.
  - c. Justice-involved clients tend to present themselves to their counselors in a favorable light.
  - d. all of the above. \*\*\*
- 6. Which of the following is *not* one of the “Dirty Dozen,” i.e., the power and control tactics exhibited by correctional clients?
  - a. sphere of influence
  - b. diversion
  - c. thinking errors\*\*\*
  - d. rumor clinic
- 7. Which of the following is a reason power struggles between counselors and clients are counterproductive?
  - a. clients will always emerge victorious from power struggles.\*\*\*
  - b. power struggles can impact the physical safety of the counselor.
  - c. power struggles tend to cause feelings of inferiority in clients.
  - d. none of the above.
- 8. The “3Rs” of managing client resistance to counseling are redirection, \_\_\_\_\_, and reversal of responsibility.
  - a. reinforcing
  - b. reframing\*\*\*
  - c. recrimination
  - d. raising consciousness
- 9. What can the counselor do to avoid extended debates with clients?
  - a. point out the thinking errors that led to the consequences.
  - b. terminate the counseling session for the time being.
  - c. point out the self-defeating nature of the clients’ behavior.\*\*\*
  - d. all of the above.
- 10. Some argue that ethical dilemmas naturally arise because:
  - a. of the dichotomy of practicality and safety.
  - b. counselors are often required to assume the role of a helper.
  - c. of the unavoidable conflict between rehabilitation and retribution.
  - d. of the unavoidable conflict between treatment and security. \*\*\*
- 11. A major ethical issue is seen in the counselor’s divided loyalties between:

- a. practical concerns and ideals.
  - b. institution and client. \*\*\*
  - c. theoretical concepts and practice.
  - d. all of the above.
- 12.** The performance of security-related tasks does not pose significant ethical problems unless:
- a. the counselor's tasks related to security distract him or her from counseling duties.
  - b. the security-related tasks negatively affect treatment of clients.
  - c. both a and b.
  - d. it can be demonstrated that clients would be jeopardized or exploited. \*\*\*
- 13.** Ethnocentrism involves:
- a. judging others based upon their beliefs.
  - b. judging others based upon our beliefs. \*\*\*
  - c. an attempt to be open to cultural diversity.
  - d. assisting others in feeling good about their racial and social backgrounds.
- 14.** Stereotyping others is:
- a. judging them based on objective research results.
  - b. judging them on assumed group characteristics. \*\*\*
  - c. an appropriate method of grouping clients.
  - d. none of the above.
- 15.** Which of the following is a good way for the correctional counselor to avoid problems related to ethnocentrism?
- a. assume a more ethnically sensitive approach. \*\*\*
  - b. adopt the approach of unicultural counseling.
  - c. learn to appreciate individuals as belonging to a larger group.
  - d. none of the above.
- 16.** What special needs do female clients often present to counselors?
- a. problems with their relationships with other clients.
  - b. problems with their relationships with their children.
  - c. problems caused by physical abuse in their past.
  - d. both b and c.\*\*\*
- 17.** Which of the following is one of the fastest-growing subpopulations of justice-involved individuals since the 1960s?
- a. people who are minority.
  - b. people who are recidivistic.
  - c. people who are poorly educated.
  - d. people who are mentally ill.\*\*\*
- 18.** Clients with "special needs" are those with:
- a. severe mental illnesses
  - b. developmental disabilities
  - c. substance abuse problems
  - d. all of the above\*\*\*

- 19.** In which of the following situations might a corrections counselor have to breach client confidentiality?
- a. when a client discloses their intention to escape the facility.
  - b. when a client discloses their intent to harm themselves.
  - c. when a client discloses the intent to harm a third party.
  - d. all of the above.\*\*\*
- 20.** Which of the following techniques reflects the strategy of “redirection” in the “3Rs”?
- a. Focus on client’s contribution to problem/conflict. \*\*\*
  - b. Place a positive spin on the resistance.
  - c. Ask challenging, open-ended questions.
  - d. Paraphrase resistance with attention to its underlying (criminal) meaning.