
Compare and Contrast the Main Features of Rehabilitation Approaches

When referring to rehabilitation in the criminal justice field, specific definitions of what 'rehabilitation' means can vary. Pycroft and Clift (2012) question whether to 'rehabilitate' someone in relation to criminality is to eliminate criminal and problematic behaviours or if another definition may be the process of an individual being re-integrated back into society. Additionally, Priestley and Vanstone (2010: 1) cite Forsyth (1987) when defining rehabilitation, calling it a process concerning 'the restoration of the individual's reputation and status as a citizen'. Definitions aside, the aim of rehabilitation in the criminal justice sector is to reduce crime by rehabilitating those who create it, where contrasting approaches to rehabilitation have developed over decades.

Over time, research into prisons' effectiveness to reform offenders through direct punishment began to be questioned, where probation was introduced to help manage offenders throughout custody and upon release into the community. "To start with, probation was associated with releasing offenders under recognisance to be of good behaviour" (Robinson and Crow, 2009: 24). Following this, rehabilitation strategies evolved alongside probation, where many methods such as drug therapy and programmes were introduced as a means of deterring offenders from crime. Several justifications for rehabilitation in the criminal justice field emerged, the most influential being the utilitarian justification that believes transforming offender's into law-abiding citizens is best for society, communities and victims. This final rationale links closely to today's risk focussed approach to rehabilitation, focussing on public protection, and reducing reoffending. 'The risk management approach to offender assessment and rehabilitation dominates the way correctional programmes are delivered throughout the western world' (Casey et al. 2013: 38).

Beck (1992) analysed the concept of a 'risk society', arguing that in modernised society, humans are subject to more risk factors such as increased crime levels. He argues that because this increase in risk is mainly 'manufactured' risks by humans, patterns can therefore be analysed and predicted, because they are a product of human activity. Thus the idea was formulated for a risk-based approach to managing criminality. Casey et al. (2013) discuss the risk-focussed approach to rehabilitation, explaining how matching an individual's level of risk to the level of interventions required formulates a 'resources follows risk' approach to managing criminality. As Bonta and Andrews (2007: 5) state; 'the risk principle states that offender recidivism can be reduced if the level of treatment services provided to the offender is proportional to the offender's risk to re-offend'. This concept is known as the 'Risk-Need-

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Responsivity' (RNR) model. The 'risk' element is to match the level of services to the level of risk of the offender. The 'need' refers to the targeted interventions associated with criminal behaviour. Finally, the 'responsivity' element specifies that interventions should match offender's abilities, characteristics and learning styles (Casey et al., 2013).

The RNR model has been incredibly influential in the management of offenders in society, where risk assessments and interventions have developed because of the principles outlined in the model (Bonta and Andrews, 2007). The RNR model's successes in offender rehabilitation stem from its intensive treatment approach for high-risk offenders, which target criminogenic needs, resulting in reduced recidivism rates (Ward and Maruna, 2007). This risk-based approach to rehabilitation has been embedded into the criminal justice field and has had some positive impact on reducing crime and criminality. In addition, Bonta and Andrews (2007:1) state that 'the criminal behaviour of offenders can be predicted in a reliable, practical and useful manner' due to the RNR model's ability to forecast potential future offending patterns. However, the model has been criticised for its single-view approach to rehabilitation whereby offenders appear to have little or no say in the goals imposed on them. This arguably one-sided method prevents offenders from taking ownership of their own journey away from criminality and is said to potentially create barriers between the individual and the criminal justice worker through the formulation of the 'us and them' perspective. Nevertheless, Ward and Maruna (2007: 96) state that 'the empirical support for the RNR model is impressive and certainly suggests that offenders treated according to its major principles are more likely to desist from committing further offences'.

A social re-integrative approach to offender rehabilitation comes in the form of the 'Good Lives Model' (GLM). Unlike the public protection focus of the RNR model, the Good Lives Model (GLM) 'has a primary interest in enhancing offender well-being' (Casey et al. 2013: 37). GLM focuses on the strengths of offenders and responds to their needs, abilities and interests, whilst emphasising the importance of allowing these individuals to help formulate their own goals, as the idea of what they believe to be a 'good life' is established (Casey et al. 2013). The GLM uses the presumption that all human beings want to achieve goals and therefore offenders should be given effective support in order to rehabilitate them and help them to reach their goals (Lösel, 2015).

This idea of offender rehabilitation contrasts with the incredibly risk-focussed approach to rehabilitation as outlined in the RNR model, as the GLM focuses its principles around social integration and wellbeing, as opposed to the 'correctional' ideology of the RNR approach.

Another social re-integrative model of offender rehabilitation is the distance theory. 'While there is no agreed theoretical or operational definition of desistance, most criminologists have associated desistance with both ceasing and refraining from offending' (Weaver and McNeill,

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2013: 37). Like the GLM, desistance theory takes the stance that by re-integrating offenders into society, giving the appropriate support and guidance to utilise and expand on their identified strengths, recidivism rates can be reduced. Desistance looks at both the individual's own strengths personally, as well as in relation to social networks, where a strategy can then be outlined to support their momentum and consistency to change (McNeill, 2006). Exploration of desistance in the field of criminal justice resulted in different styles of offender management emerging, resulting in strategies of rehabilitation such as improving offenders' self worth and giving their lives meaning. This consideration for individual needs is a strength of re-integrative approaches to rehabilitation, and it is a key focus that the RNR model lacks, as criticised by Ward and Maruna (2006: 56) who state that "there should be a respect for individual diversity and the complexity of human behaviour". Both desistance and the GLM incorporate the potential impact from external conditions that can contribute to individuals offending, developing strategies of overcoming these barriers, through the identification of relevant techniques such as cognitive behavioural therapy (Casey et al. 2013). As opposed to the RNR model of rehabilitation, the desistance theory offers a more integrated approach to offender management, where practitioners work closely with service users to develop their abilities and confidence to turn their lives around. 'Desistance itself is not an event (like being cured of a disease) but a process' (McNeill, 2006: 47); it is within this process of change that offender management comes into play.

However, when desistance theory is applied to rehabilitation practices, it becomes necessary to effectively identify the offender's place in the 'cycle of change'. This therefore comes with a risk, as identified by Weaver and McNeill (2013: 45) who state that 'interventions that fail to locate the offender properly in the desistance process will be at best misconceived and at worst damaging'. Despite this potential damage, the consideration of social and cultural factors is a clear strength of re-integrative theories, as the RNR model lacks this element when evaluating risk (Ward and Maruna, 2007). This shift towards rehabilitation via the diagnosis and treatment of 'problems' within offenders neglects the external factors that contribute to criminality, and fails to acknowledge whether these individuals have the ability to be 'corrected' as the RNR model hopes to achieve (Graham, 2016). This overemphasis on offenders' pasts leads to a preoccupation with 'undoing' previous issues and restoring individuals to 'normal' members of society. Instead, it is argued to be more beneficial to pay attention to non-criminogenic needs when rehabilitating offenders, as offenders may be more likely to engage with options that promote welfare and quality of life, rather than interventions focussed primarily on 'correctional' methods (Ward and Stewart, 2003 cited in Casey et al., 2013).

To conclude, despite re-integrative approaches appearing more humane and comprehensive than the RNR model, Farrall (2004) argues that it is not as simple as to identify ones strengths and presume these are the keys to preventing future offending. Furthermore, Polaschek (2012: 1) claims that 'the RNR model remains the only empirically validated guide for criminal justice

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interventions that aim to help offenders to depart from that system'. This statement clearly reflects the positive impacts that have arose from the implementation of this model of offender rehabilitation across the globe. Ward and Maruna (2007: 104) also reflect on the achievements of the RNR model stating that 'its application by correctional services throughout the world has resulted in reduced recidivism rates and safer communities'. This provides insight into why risk-based approaches to tackling offending within modern society have taken precedence and have provided the focus for rehabilitation within the criminal justice sphere today. Nevertheless, desistance theory has also played an important role in shaping the probation service and its policies, where the importance of social context and relationships are now considered (Weaver and McNeill, 2013). To conclude, despite the current public protection focus of rehabilitating offenders, a more comprehensive approach is beginning to be established. Here, concepts from both risk-based strategies and re-integrative theories, such as desistance theory, are being implemented through offender management today, showing significant impact from the research on approaches to rehabilitation.

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