

Day Reporting Centers As An Effective Correctional Sanction

David W. Diggs

Abstract

Day Reporting Centers are an intermediate sanction being used to help manage offenders in Florida's overburdened criminal justice systems. Tight state and local budgets preclude additional prison/jail space in numbers sufficient to alleviate overcrowding. This paper examined the use of Day Reporting Centers through a review of the literature and an examination of the operation of a Day Reporting Center in Orange County, Florida. It was determined that this sanction fulfills three separate and distinct purposes: 1) enhanced supervision and decreased liberty of the offender; 2) treatment of the offenders' problems; 3) reduced crowding in Florida's incarceratory facilities (Parent, 1990).

Introduction

The United States of America currently has the highest per capita rate of incarceration of any country in the world (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1992). Prison and jail overcrowding is also a prevalent problem on the local and state levels in Florida. Currently, state prison facilities have a capacity of 48,881 inmates and are so overcrowded that inmates are being released after serving less than one-third of the original sentence (Florida Department of Corrections, 1992). Additionally, there was a daily average of 34,307 inmates in Florida's county detention facilities during the month of February 1993 (Florida Department of Corrections, 1993).

Considering the growing prison populations, court-ordered capacity limits on jails and prisons, and tight government budgets, it is no wonder that there is a need for correctional innovation and a renewed interest in community-based corrections programs (Larivee, 1990).

Day Reporting Centers

Intermediate sanction programs are innovations that serve as a step between the security and punishment of prisons and jails and the supervision without the security offered in probation and parole. Such programs as intensive supervision, house arrest, and electronic monitoring are becoming accepted alternatives to incarceration. Day Reporting Centers are another intermediate sanction that is gaining popularity.

In a February 1992 article written for the IARCA Journal, Ronald P. Corbett drew attention to the changing political philosophies of the past four decades and their impact on correctional programming:

Corrections since mid-century can be seen as having passed through two eras - a rehabilitation era during the 1950s and 60s, characterized by an unbridled faith in social work-type interventions with offenders; and later (1975-90), a punishment era, characterized by an emphasis on control and custody. Both models were found wanting: the first from a lack of empirical support for the effectiveness of the traditional forms of treatment, and the

second from the prohibitive costs of the “bricks and mortar approach for so little apparent long-term gain. In short, an exclusive focus on either goal proved fruitless (Corbett, 1992, p. 26).

It is this failure of policies, the punitive, as well as the rehabilitative philosophies, that created the need for intermediate sanctions such as Day Reporting. Day Reporting allows for aspects of both the punitive and rehabilitative theories. In short, it offers the punishment of confinement combined with the rehabilitative effects of allowing the offender to continue employment and receive treatment. Day Reporting is more a concept than a model. It is used for a number of purposes and differing populations and is operated by a variety of government and/or private agencies. In spite of their lack of uniformity, all Day Reporting Centers (DRC) can be defined as a highly structured non-residential program utilizing supervision sanctions, and services coordinated from a central focus (Curtin, 1990, p. 8). Examining the similarities and differences in Day Reporting Centers in both England and America illustrates the flexibility, cost effectiveness, and potential for expanded use of this concept.

History of Day Reporting Centers

Day Reporting Centers started in Great Britain in the early 1970s as an alternative to incarceration for older petty criminals who were chronic offenders (Larivee, 1990). The British Home Office asked Parliament to create the day treatment centers in 1972. At the same time, there was an independent movement by local probation agencies to open centers to provide group services (Parent, 1990). George Mair, the principal research officer of the Home Office Research and Planning Unit, traced the spread of day centers in England and Wales to prison overcrowding in the United Kingdom and the interest of probation officials in a group setting. Probation officers were frustrated with the inability to effectively manage the behavior probationers in a traditional setting and were anxious to try working with groups of offenders (Mair, 1990). The Criminal Justice Act of 1982 formalized the existence of day treatment centers, and by the mid 1980s there were more than 80 centers in England and Wales. These programs differ greatly in staffing, target populations, hours of operation, and programs and services (Mair, 1990).

The first Day Reporting Center in America was opened in 1986 by the Hampden County, Massachusetts, Sheriff's Department. The center was used as an early release program for selected county jail inmates (Curtin, 1990). This and other early American Day Reporting Centers drew upon more than 10 years of experience in British centers. There were also day treatment programs for juvenile offenders and deinstitutionalized mental patients, these programs contributed to the accumulated knowledge of the concept. Additionally, Day Reporting was similar to a living out release option used by the Federal Bureau of Prisons that allowed inmates to spend prison-time at home, after they had finished a residential phase of treatment at community correction centers (Parent, 1990).

Day Reporting Center Operation

Offenders who are committed to Day Reporting Centers live at home and report to the center on a regular, often daily, basis. While at the center, the participant submits an

itinerary that details his/her daily travels, destinations, and purposes. This schedule allows the supervision staff to monitor and control the client's behavior and becomes a valuable tool for teaching responsibility to offenders. Clients are normally required to call in several times a day, and center staff call clients to verify their whereabouts. While at the center, the participants may be required to submit to drug testing and participate in counseling, education, and vocational placement assistance. Offenders are normally required to be employed in the community or attending school full-time (Larivee, 1990).

Day Reporting Centers are a fairly recent innovation in community corrections programs, but like intensive supervision, house arrest, and other intermediate sanctions, they borrow from elements of more traditional correctional programming (Larivee, 1990). Office visits, client interaction in a group setting, drug screening and treatment, and field work are all components that have been used in probation and parole for years.

Like their British forerunners, American Day Reporting Centers are organized and operated in a variety of ways. The centers differ by the offenders selected, selection criteria, operating agencies, services offered, and violation policies. Even the goals of the centers differ (Parent, 1990).

In a 1990 study for the U.S. Department of Justice, Dale G. Parent examined 14 Day Reporting Centers operating in the country at that time. Parent identified a number of the operational variables of Day Reporting Centers and summarized them, as shown in Table 1.

Day Reporting can be adapted to a number of different populations. DRCs are utilized to offer enhanced treatment and supervision to probationers or sentenced offenders not on probation; to monitor early released inmates from jail or prison; to monitor arrested persons prior to trial; as a halfway-out step for inmates who have shown progress in community corrections or work-release centers; and as a halfway-in step for offenders who are in violation of probation or parole (Curtin, 1990).

Whatever the population selected, Day Reporting allows the treatment and supervision of arrested individuals and convicted offenders in a setting that is more secure than ordinary probation but less inhibiting and less expensive than incarceration. In performing this task, DRCs fulfill three separate and distinct purposes: 1) enhanced supervision and decreased liberty of the offender; 2) treatment of offenders' problems; and 3) reduced crowding of incarceratory facilities (Parent, 1990). Corbett (1990) said that this multiplicity of purpose serves to satisfy a variety of goals in differing correctional philosophies. The reduction of offender mobility and liberty supports a punishment philosophy and may act as a specific deterrent to future criminal activity. These restrictions also allow for a certain amount of incapacitation and, therefore, protection of the public. The ability to offer offenders needed treatment assists in their correction or rehabilitation. Lastly, Day Reporting is significantly cheaper to operate than correctional institutions, allowing for greater cost effectiveness (Corbett, 1990).

Differences in eligibility criteria relate to a variety of factors, including the following: orientation of the agency operating the center, available population of offenders, support of elected officials and judges, and political climate of the community. Some programs place limits on the type of offender they will accept, usually rejecting violent offenders. Other eligibility variables include the offender's gender, legal status, treatment needs, prior record, and residential stability.

Table 1
**Summary Data on Identified Day
Reporting Centers (June 29, 1990)**

Day Reporting Center	Date Opened	Operating Agency	Link to Residential Facility	Program Capacity	Ave Daily Pop	Ave Duration (in Days) ^a	Ave Contacts/Wk	Ave Hrs/Wk at Center
Metro DRC (MA)	12/87	Private, NP	None	50	27	42	42	8
Norfolk Co. DRC (MA)	3/88	Public	Work-Release Center	35	23	47	3, plus curfew	<1
Hampden Co. DRC (MA)	10/86	Public	Work-Release Center	70	90	85	50-80	4-5
Project COAP (MA)	3/88	Public	None	48	43	n/a	5-6	1.5
Watch (MN)	10/87	Private, NP	RCC	20	8	44	10	7.5
NAP (MN)	10/87	Private, NP	RCC	20	3	41	10	7.5
Genesis (MN)	1976	Private, NP	None	55	45	270-365	5	25
Hartford AIC (CT)	7/85	Private, NP	Transitional Living	150	120	110	4-5	12
Bridgeport AIC (CT)	4/89	Private, NP	Transitional Living	100	(b)	(b)	5	7.5
Project Ready (NJ)	1977	Private, NP	None	10	4	55	5	40 wk 1, then 5-40
TAP (WI)	4/89	Private, NP	RCC	38	28	180	5-7	15
ADS (WI)	1/85	Private, NP	RCC	100	100	90-180	5-7	15
Exodus Link (Ontario)	7/87	Private, FP	Transitional Living	50	50	highly variable	4	12
Genesis (NM)	12/87	Private, NP	None	50	30	180	7	6

NP = Not-for-Profit

FP = For-Profit

RCC = Residential Community Corrections

(a) Based on duration in program for all admitted, including those who complete the program successfully, and those who do not.

(b) Not Available-program had been operating only four months at the time of the site visit.

Program administrators must ensure that the selected population exists in sufficient quantity to allow for program feasibility. If the desired population is too small, or unavailable for placement, the administration is faced with changing its eligibility criteria and selecting a different segment of offenders, thereby redefining the mission of the Day Reporting Center (Parent, 1990).

In discussing the effects of differing eligibility criteria, researchers point out the possible deleterious and costly effects of using Day Reporting, or any correctional program or sanction, when a less severe and less expensive alternative would be effective. Effectually, this net widening strains the DRCs. John Larivee, Executive Director of the Crime and Justice Foundation which operates DRCs in Massachusetts, lists three reasons that can account for the net widening effect: unclear program goals, a mistaken belief that community corrections is soft on criminals, and lack of support from public officials (Larivee, 1990). Judges and other decision makers must be convinced of the effectiveness of DRCs and be willing to support them. If this support is not present, the center can expect continuing difficulty in securing participants, which may lead to taking inappropriate offenders who are easier to enroll rather than serving the appropriate population originally identified. Corbett warned against the possible misuse of DRCs to overtreat or widen the net, and the danger of overusing DRCs to maximize cost savings. This can lead to a loosening of standards and may damage programs that are required to accept clients who are dangers to the community or do not possess the motivation towards correction that is needed (Corbett, 1992).

A Day Reporting Center's mission is often dependent on the type of agency offering the DRC services. DRCs are operated by a wide range of government, public, and private agencies, including residential community corrections centers, work-release programs, jails, and treatment programs (Parent, 1990). These agencies obviously have different missions which, in turn, translate into diverse goals.

Day Reporting is frequently operated on the site of a residential corrections facility such as a halfway house or work-release facility. The advantage to this arrangement is that facility staff can use their normal downtime to perform Day Reporting duties. This sharing of staff between programs allows for a more cost-effective use of experienced, trained personnel.

Among the services commonly provided by Day Reporting Centers are support, treatment, or referral for treatment for such problems as substance abuse, mental health, education, vocational training, and job placement. In addition, most centers employ several tools of supervision to help monitor the offender's behavior. Most screen for use of intoxicants and illegal drugs and set curfews and controls over participant's whereabouts and associates. Field work is normally less stringent and less frequent than other intermediate sanctions such as house arrest. But employees still go into the community to monitor offender's travels and verify employment and schooling. In addition, court ordered fines, restitution, community service and family support are normally enforced by the center (Curtin, 1990).

Table 2 Program Elements Provided by Day Reporting Centers										
	Job Seeking Skills	Job Placement	Life Skills Training	Group Counseling	Individual Counseling	Drug Use Tests	Recreation	Transition Housing	Education	
Metro DRC (MA)	Off	Off	On	On/Off	On/Off	On	N/A	N/A	Off	
Norfolk Co. (MA)	On/Off	Off	N/A	N/A	On	On	N/A	Off	Off	
Hampden Co. DRC (MA)	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	On	
Project COAP (MA)	Off	Off	N/A	On/Off	On	On	N/A	N/A	Off	
Watch (MN)	On	Off	N/A	N/A	On	On	Off	N/A	Off	
NAP (MN)	On/Off	On/Off	On	N/A	On	On	Off	N/A	Off	
Genesis (MN)	On	On/Off	On	On	On	On	On	Off	On	
Hartford AIC (CT)	On	N/A	N/A	On	On	On	On	On	N/A	
Bridgeport AIC (CT)	On	On	On	On	On	On	N/A	On	N/A	
Project Ready (NJ)	On	On	On	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Off	N/A	
TAP (WI)	On/Off	Off	On/Off	On/Off	On	On	N/A	N/A	On/Off	
ADS (WI)	On/Off	Off	On/Off	On/Off	On	On	N/A	N/A	On/Off	
Exodus Link (Ontario)	On/Off	On/Off	On	On/Off	Off	Off	On/Off	N/A	On	
Genesis (NM)	Off	Off	On	On	On	On	Off	N/A	Off	

On = provided on-site by DRC Staff
Off = provided off-site (referrals to other agencies)
On/Off = provided both on-site and off-site
N/A = not provided

Source: Parent, D.G. (1990). *Day reporting centers for criminal offenders: A descriptive analysis of existing programs*. National Institute of Justice, p. 8.

Besides these common supervision and treatment services, some centers also offer specialized services (see Table 2). Day Treatment Centers in England frequently provide recreation and social services to their clientele, making the DTC not just a place of supervision but also a sort of club where clientele can join with their peers, relax, and engage in socially acceptable pastimes. It is less common for American centers to provide such service, but some DRCs do provide recreational activities on-site or in the community. Emergency or transitional housing is also provided by some programs (Parent, 1990). It would seem that the provision of housing to DRC clients would violate one of the key tenets of Day Reporting and could serve to further blur the line

separating Day Reporting clients from residential services clients, or such programs as work-release. One program that serves female offenders provides on-site day care for their clientele (Parent, 1990).

The goals of the DRC and the philosophy of its parent agency will normally dictate the amount of flexibility in the center's violation policy. Centers that act as extensions of prisons or jails and espouse a philosophy of community protection will likely be less tolerant of program violation, such as drug use or losing employment. Programs that place a priority on the rehabilitation and treatment of participants will be more likely to exercise a range of disciplines for violations of rules, rather than simply depending on incarceration of the offender. Jail and prison overcrowding may also effect violation policy, since many DRCs operate to relieve overcrowding or were founded because of overcrowding. Larivee (1990) warned against falling in the "more is better" trap -- the more supervision, sanctions and services imposed on the offender, the better the program. This results in an expensive, rigid program that no offender can successfully complete and no agency can possibly deliver (p. 88).

Orange County's Experience

The Orange County, Florida, metropolitan area is one of the fastest growing sections of the country. Unfortunately, this growth has also led to growth in the jail population. Orange County has implemented a number of alternatives to incarceration to help control overcrowding. For a number of years, the jail system has had a traditional pretrial-release program which released selected offenders prior to their court obligations. The jail also administers a federally mandated Population Capacity Release Program. The Community Corrections Department of the Corrections Division has operated a Work-Release Center for more than 10 years. The 165-bed, minimum-security facility is primarily for sentenced county jail inmates, but it does serve a small population of pretrial inmates. In 1989, the Community Corrections Department opened the Community Surveillance Unit, an electronically monitored home-confinement program, which currently monitors 150 pretrial and sentenced county inmates.

The latest attempt to help control overcrowding and provide treatment and community reintegration for inmates is a Day Reporting Center for 25 offenders. The DRC operates out of the existing Work-Release Center and provides supervision and treatment to offenders who have been successfully complying with the Work-Release or Community Surveillance programs. Participants are required to physically check-in daily at the center and submit daily itineraries. Whereabouts are monitored by daily telephone calls and regular, random field checks. Clients are prohibited from using any illegal substances, and drug and alcohol testing are performed at the center. All participants must be employed or full-time students and must continue any treatment begun in Work-Release or Community Surveillance. Failure to follow program conditions can cause the DRC client to be returned to Work-Release, Community Surveillance, or jail. The Day Reporting Center, which opened in May 1991, is staffed by a Correctional Surveillance Officer who is assisted by Work-Release Center staff.

Although it is too soon to know the long-term effects Day Reporting will have on the offenders who have participated in the program, the following statistics demonstrate that the program is meeting its goal to offer cost-effective treatment and reintegration in the community for selected offenders without endangering the community.

As of January 31, 1993, 123 offenders had participated in the Day Reporting. The Program has a success rate of 82%, and only one client was rearrested while in the program. The new arrest was for a nonviolent misdemeanor. More than \$65,000 in supervision fees were collected from clients to help offset the cost of providing the DRC. A study of the clients who successfully finished the DRC program showed that 8% of them were rearrested after completing a DCR program. The amount of time between completing a DRC and rearrest averaged 7.5 months, with the shortest period being one month and the longest 17 months. Of the seven reoffenders, four were arrested for new misdemeanors and three for felony offenses, with an average 7.2 prior arrests. None of the seven were first-time offenders when accepted to the DRC. Six of the seven committed the same offense for which they were in the DRC program. This may indicate that these individuals' criminal behavior was deeply rooted and DRC was not able to significantly alter their criminal behavior. Future recidivism studies performed after a longer period of time will be needed to verify these results. Preliminary indications show that Orange County's Day Reporting Center is an effective alternative to incarceration. Day Reporting has helped relieve jail overcrowding, has provided treatment and supervision of the offender and has lowered costs.

Measures of Success

In evaluating the effectiveness of Day Reporting Centers, it is important to consider the accomplishment of treatment goals and cost efficiency as compared to incarceration, not just program success rates. English centers are operating effectively and are becoming a recognized aspect of probation supervision, evidenced by the continued spread of DTCs (Mair, 1990). American Centers in Massachusetts are reporting successful completion rates of 66% to 81% (Curtin, 1990). These programs are also successful in saving tax dollars that would have been needed for prison beds (Larivee, 1990). An important measure of success for any correctional program is the decreased recidivism of former participants. Unfortunately, Day Reporting is a relatively recent development in community corrections programming and recidivism studies have not been conducted or at least not published.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Until recidivism is studied more comprehensively, two measures of success can be used to analyze Day Reporting: cost effectiveness and protection of the community. In assessing cost effectiveness, it is critical that centers are compared to the cost of incarceration. It is, therefore, equally important that DRC clients be individuals who would otherwise be bound for incarceration. DRC, being an intermediate sanction that utilizes smaller caseloads that would be found in probation, will naturally not compare favorably to probation costs. If offenders who would have been sentenced to probation are instead selected to be supervised by Day Reporting, the end result is a costly widening of the net of social control. If, however, the offender was prison or jail bound, the effect is to modify the offender's behavior at less cost than is required for incarceration.

Of course, cost effectiveness is a secondary concern to the safety of the community. No program will last long, no matter the cost savings, if it seriously threatens the well-being of citizens. Community corrections is inherently political and its

very existence is dependent on the approval, or at least the tolerance, of the community. Since community protection is of paramount importance to corrections, a great deal of attention needs to be given to decide who is treated in the community. A violent offender and criminal whose crime was particularly notorious becomes a significant risk to the operation of day reporting.

If not the violent or serious offender, then which of the offenders who populate our institutions should be selected? Perhaps we should take advice from the original English centers. These first programs were operated for the petty criminal who was in danger of going to prison, not for the heinousness of their crimes, but rather from the sheer number of non-violent crimes they committed. Day Reporting should be reserved for the offender whose behavior has not been corrected by probation and who has evidenced a need for greater structure in treatment. This is the niche that Day Reporting would fill in a correctional continuum that endeavors to apply to proper amount of control and treatment to ensure the correction of the individual while protecting the community.

David W. Diggs currently serves as Manager of Orange County's Direct Supervision Department. This department is comprised of five separate facilities, housing 1,600 inmates and 290 administrative, clerical and certified staff. His thirteen years of corrections experience include service as correctional probation officer, classification specialist, work release center supervisor (Lieutenant), and assistant manager (Captain) of a community corrections department. In addition to graduating as a member of the Second Class of the Senior Leadership Program, he holds a degree in sociology and has done graduate study in social work.

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