

Background:

1 of 3

I came to prison with a 60yr bit for murder. I was 22 yrs. old with no education and from a family that was very poor. I'm now 46 yrs. old

Stress:

When seeing a 40'ft. wall that is gray and dull. Walking into one of the hardest prisons in Indiana. If that wasn't tough enough in intake I was told how young men like me are raped or killed within the first 2 yrs. of prison. The 3rd day in prison 3 men came at me telling me I had to pay, fight, or fuck. So I started swinging and that paid off. The next day a old school con with a 4 digit number (meaning he started in the 60's or 70's) and gave me the five rules for a convict doing time: 1. Mind your own business 2. Don't get into a dept you can't cover. 3. Keep your word 4. Don't Rat 5. Don't mess with the C/O's.

Coping with Stress:

I started working out to deal with the Mental Stress of always waiting for something to jump off. Not being around my family and being told when to eat and sleep. You are always being watched either by C/O's or other cons. The C/O's watch to see if your doing anything ~~that~~ breaks the rules and the Cons to see weakness. I watch as people get stabbed or killed over a spoon of weed or some tobacco.

Health Care:

Health care was a joke. The health dept. didn't get much funding so the Doctors and Nurses was sub-power

Health Care Con.

2 of 3

So most of the population had to fix themselves in any way they could. The state of Indiana didn't care much for Healthcare, just bars and walls.

Causes of Violence:

The main cause of violence in the I.D.O.C was over money or relationships. In 1997 Indiana took smoking out of prison thus a "Black market" plus drugs was also sought after. Many didn't follow the second rule, Don't get into dept you can't cover. Many men lost their lives over an oz of Tobacco. Gangs want blood or their money. As I said relationships can also be the center of violence.

If another person looks at or makes passes at another persons "Thing" that is a sure way to get stabbed. Breaking the first rule: Mind your own business.

Prison is an active War Zone, make no mistake about it. P.T.S.D is real I had two Bro's get out after 20 and kill themselves because it was to much.

It wasn't until 2000 that I changed because I got into it with some G's and got 50 staples and 45 stitches and almost died.

Education

After 2000 I understood how short life really is and got into G.E.D classes. It was time to get right. I got my G.E.D then a Vocational degree, and got accepted into Grace College got my A.S. and B.A and got 4 yrs knocked off my time. The sad thing was in 2010 they started taking college out of prison and in 2014

Education Cono:

3 of 3

Indiana took all but G.E.D, and couple of D.O.L's (Dept. of labor) out of prison plus started making new numbers do 75% to 85% of their time and giving out all day

Employment for "offenders"

I.D.O.C has taken most of the jobs out of prison, so people just sit around in 8x10 cells waiting for something to jump off. There are a couple of prison that still have PEN Products and that pays the best. There are Detail jobs, maintance, food service, and yard crew, Rec work. I'm a Dorm Rep and thats A pay (the best) and I make 40\$/month to buy everything I might need.

Visions of a better way to operate:

It's very hard on men that has done a lot of time. No court wants to be the person who let the murderer go early no matter what he or she has done to better their selves, the politics of "keep them in" should change.

Bring back college and other self help programs. Give people a chance to show they have changed their lives. People can and do change given the right tools like: (College, Job training, programs, and counseling) could make those changes ever lasting.

I will close with. When a person commits a crime he or she should have to pay for that. However, once the dept is paid the offending person should get their rights back. That is not the case, most offenders are seen in a bad light, not as a person ^{who} made a mistake. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully Charles E. Cooper II