



Progoff™ Criminal Justice Newsletter

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Dale Raben & Jessica Haas, Co-Editors

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Jon Progoff, Director

Dear Friend:

Welcome to the first issue of the *Progoff*™ Criminal Justice Newsletter, in which we highlight major rehabilitation initiatives in the criminal justice system.

As of July 1, 2005, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's mission changed, placing much greater emphasis upon rehabilitation rather than concentrating on punishment. New programs are being created, attitudes are changing, and opportunities for helping inmates and society have greatly brightened.

Educational psychologist Dr. Harvey Shrum discusses his experience using the *Intensive Journal*®

method at Folsom State Prison to rehabilitate inmates. His documentation of the results in his research article is an important milestone.

Marcella Hardt, a workshop leader, shares her insights (on page 3) about the changes that can occur in inmates based upon her extensive experience in conducting our program.

I believe that the *Intensive Journal*® program can serve a useful role in helping to rehabilitate people throughout the criminal justice system in California and elsewhere. I welcome your comments.

Jonathan Progoff

An Interview with Harvey Shrum, Ed.D.

by Jessica Haas

Educational psychologist Dr. Harvey Shrum is a reentry coordinator and instructor at Folsom State Prison, and has been working with the Intensive Journal program since 1992. He shares his experiences and insights about the value of the Intensive Journal method in the rehabilitation process.

J.H.: Please describe your role in the prison system.

H.S.: I have worked in the prison system for over 27 years, including 17 years at Folsom State Prison. I am the reentry coordinator, coordinating and leading workshops, and facilitating getting men ready for parole. I am also a consultant to CA Dept. of Corrections & Rehabilitation (CDC&R) on reentry problems.

J.H.: How did you become interested in the Intensive Journal program and how did it relate to your work?

H.S.: I had been using Dr. Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy at Folsom State Prison to find meaning and to counter inmates' depression. Logotherapy emphasizes that all life has meaning, and strives to motivate humans to live and discover that meaning—something which Frankl believed all humans have the ability to do. In 1991-92, I began looking for a simple instrument to help inmates deal with the somatic and

psychic dimensions to complement the noetic, or intellectual and rational, dimension of Logotherapy.

I was referred to Marcella Hardt who conducts *Intensive Journal* workshops in my area; I could readily see through my own experience that the *Intensive Journal* method could also help humans find meaning for themselves. Also, both Dr. Progoff and Dr. Frankl emphasized human potential and the need to access and unfold this potential. (Editor's note: Dr. Shrum's position on Logotherapy is his own and is not affiliated with Dialogue House. For more information on Dr. Frankl's Logotherapy, visit <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logotherapy>.)

J.H.: Do you think the Intensive Journal program has benefitted the inmates? If so, what changes do you see, and what aspects of the method make them possible?

H.S.: Yes, the *Intensive Journal* program has benefitted inmates. The *Steppingstones* exercise is cont. on p. 2

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Pilot Program for Incarcerated Youth Offenders

Dialogue House will be conducting a pilot *Intensive Journal* program as part of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDC&R). The introductory program will be offered to participants in Incarcerated Youth Offenders (IYO) Program, at Valley State Prison for Women in Chowchilla. The IYO program's purpose is to provide a smoother transition for participants back into society after incarceration and thereby reduce the rate of recidivism.

The IYO Program is funded by the United States Department of Education to promote literacy and other life skills, as well as vocational skills. Participants aged 18-25 are enrolled in job training courses and college courses working toward a vocational education certificate or AA or BA degree. Employment counseling and job placement services are also available to offenders. IYO Program participants must possess high school diplomas or GED equivalent, be eligible for parole before their 26th birthdays, and have five years or less of incarceration to serve.

Research Supports Program's Effectiveness in Rehabilitation

- ❖ "Through [the *Intensive Journal* method's] non-judgmental, non-analytical nature, it gives the writer a mirroring capability that increases the energy, power, and effectiveness of the process over time. This experience has an empowering effect upon the *Intensive Journal* writer."
- ❖ "In the ten years since its introduction at Folsom State Prison, not one inmate who had completed at least the introductory *Intensive Journal* workshop returned to prison."
- ❖ "Without therapeutic intervention shortly after these events, they [inmates] became at greater risk for antisocial behavior, low-self-esteem, depression, low educational attainment, underemployment, substance abuse, mental illness, and suicidal ideation. The *Intensive Journal* program helped them to deal with their issues in a safe, supporting environment."
- ❖ "The *Intensive Journal* method also holds great promise in rehabilitating inmates as well as preventing young people from taking the path that often leads to addictions and incarceration. It is...conducive in fostering self-improvement,...fostering/developing vocational interests, in increasing awareness and healing of health, addictions, and relationships. It...improves writing and communication skills, enhances relationships with family, and achieves breakthroughs in issues and decision-making."

Shrum, Ed.D., Harvey (September, 2004). No Longer Theory: Correctional Practices That Work. *The Journal of Correctional Education*, 55(3), 225-235.

"An Interview with Harvey Shrum" cont. from p. 1

important to inmates and gives them the opportunity to list significant emotional events. The method's non-judgmental ways helps to anchor them in their work with the method, which is done with anonymity so they have the freedom to deal with it. The Socratic dialogues allow them to discover ultimate meaning in their lives as well as provide a release of powerful feelings. The compassion of the program leader, Marcella Hardt, also helps the incarcerated men to open up.

The workshop generates several other benefits. Some people who took medication for depression no longer have to take it. The men are less aggressive, resulting in fewer disciplinary writeups. The *Intensive Journal* method helps them deal with the painful aspects of their lives, rather than diverting it through inappropriate behavior.

Men are better able to stay focused on what they want to do next. In the prison, many men have not dealt with the unavoidable pain from childhood that clouds their minds. Through the *Intensive Journal* method, they are allowed to state as factual points in their lives the many painful events that occurred. It is not so important what happened to them but what they did with it; many turned to illegal drugs or focused on obtaining material things such as money. By putting the events down in writing, they can state "these are my roots" and "now I can deal with my present and future," which they have not done previously. The *Intensive Journal* allowed them to acknowledge the existence of this pain for the first time in years, to diffuse their anger.

I find that the men are more interested in mentoring other inmates. They tell their peers that the *Intensive Journal* method works and that it has changed their lives.

cont. on p. 4

An Interview with Marcella Hardt

by Dale Raben

Marcella Hardt, a certified leader of the Intensive Journal program for over 25 years, began her work in prison programs in 1993 with Dr. Harvey Shrum, an educational psychologist and pre-parole coordinator at Folsom State Prison. Marcella currently leads workshops at California State Prison in Sacramento, where she works with men serving life sentences. We interviewed Marcella about her experiences with the inmates.

D.R.: *How do you get the inmates to participate in the workshops?*

M.H.: I tell them what the potential of the *Intensive Journal* method is, but that it's up to them to participate. Once one of them reads what they've written, all of them want to read and I have to start watching my time! Once that door is cracked open, they feel safe and they feel that there's something for them to gain if they put themselves into it.

D.R.: *Do the inmates continue to use the Intensive Journal method after the workshops?*

M.H.: The inmates are given the option to put their workbooks in a safe after the workshop is over, but they all choose to keep their workbooks with them. When the men get in a really tight place, they tell me about using the method get out of it. They just know the workbook is there and that they can go to it any time and their own deeper self will speak to them.

D.R.: *Is the Intensive Journal method an effective tool for the prisoners?*

M.H.: Oh yes. Those prisoners are in there because they made very bad decisions out of anger. The structure of the *Intensive Journal* workbook provides them with a way to see, if only for a few moments, that there is something else inside them that wants to come out. For many of the men, it might just be about one realization that comes to them during a workshop. Once that door is opened, it can never be shut again. The *Intensive Journal* process gives them a way to channel their aggression.

D.R.: *Have you seen a change in the behavior of the inmates as a result of the Intensive Journal program? What are those changes?*

M.H.: It is remarkable to me to see the lifers respond the way they do. At that stage, they've given up in a lot of ways, but it's amazing to see what they start doing to help each other once they realize they're not an enemy to themselves, so others aren't enemies to them. They've done things to change their own environment, like starting music groups and poetry readings. It's very heartwarming when you see that connection beginning to happen. I realize it doesn't seem like the best investment when you're working

with lifers, but that's not true. To get a different atmosphere in the prison is very important. It's work they can do themselves, that no one can do for them.

D.R.: *Are there any exceptional individual cases of change you can tell us about?*

M.H.: Inmates tell me that the *Intensive Journal* program opened doors in themselves that had never been opened before. One man, a lifer in his 20s, shook my hand at the end of a workshop and, with tears in his eyes, told me he'll always remember that I introduced him to a tool where he could look inside and realize he actually liked the guy he saw. He realized he could be a unique individual and make choices about how he responds to his environment. His reaction was typical of many of the inmates who realized, "My life does count and I do need to hear what it's trying to say to me."

Another lifer was a great inspiration to the program. Having no fear of what his fellow inmates would think, he was the first to read aloud from his workbook during the *Steppingstones* exercise, thus opening the door for others. He realized that the method helped him gain a broader perspective on his whole life and that life had a different meaning than what he had thought. He kept insisting that the program be made available for others because of what he'd received from it and was very sensitive to other inmates who realized they wanted to participate. He was the prime instigator of music groups and support groups in the prison. He got men of different ethnic backgrounds to play music together, which they had never dared to do before.

D.R.: *Overall, what is your assessment of the Intensive Journal program in the prison?*

M.H.: I have a sort of thrill that goes through me when I see what happens in these workshops and think, if the program can do this much for these prisoners, then what can it do for everyone else in the world? This is a tool where we're all hungry to get to the truth of ourselves. It makes the individual count. To see them giving each other big hugs at the workshops, without any words needing to be said, is so touching. They found meaning in their lives regardless of the little facts and details. ☺

J.H.: How involved are you in the workshops? Do you sit in? Do the inmates participate?

H.S.: In addition to scheduling and organizing the workshops, I oversee and participate in all of them. I have seen a change in attitude toward rehabilitation amongst inmates; they begin to understand that the workshop is for them. I help them keep their workbook material confidential; they can keep it locked up by someone they trust. During parts of the workshop where inmates are hesitant to read, I speak up and get it flowing. Sometimes, I explain the *Intensive Journal* exercise or principle in terms that inmates can more readily understand.

Inmates participate on a level equal to public workshops. Some inmates are more willing to read than others. All of the men take the method seriously; they volunteer to participate in workshops and no one has wanted to drop out. The education level ranges from third or fourth grade, with some inmates' reading level up to the college level. Some are more literate in Spanish and write in their native tongue. Even if the men have only limited writing skills, they can still obtain a good deal from the workshop.

J.H.: Do the inmates communicate with you about how the *Intensive Journal* program has helped them?

H.S.: Yes. I request that inmates give written feedback in which they evaluate their experience with the *Intensive Journal* program. I find that they value the workshops; inmates state that they have been renewed, that it has helped them get in touch with themselves, explore inner memories and search for direction. One inmate stated, "This is the best moment in prison; I discovered that I exist." They deal with painful issues; one inmate said he was better able to "confront the skeletons in my closet and defeat them." Another said that it helped him "deal with the pain that [he has] carried for years." The men recognize that the method helps "defeat racism and the petty B.S." that occurs in the prison.

J.H.: Has the *Intensive Journal* program helped to reduce the rate of recidivism, and if so, how did this occur?

H.S.: Yes. I have used the *Intensive Journal* method in conjunction with Logotherapy to help reduce the recidivism rate. 105 men on parole have participated in at least one *Intensive Journal* workshop. After a ten year followup, a zero percent rate of recidivism was found. The reason for this result is that the combination of the *Intensive Journal* method and Logotherapy deals with all three dimensions: the somatic, psychic and noetic. They deal with the whole person.

J.H.: Overall, what is your assessment of the *Intensive Journal* program in the criminal justice system?

H.S.: I believe the *Intensive Journal* method, in combination with Logotherapy, is one of the most cost-effective programs for addressing addiction, aggression and depression that lead to incarceration. It is the most viable method to rehabilitate incarcerated men, women, and juvenile delinquents.

J.H.: What are your hopes for the future of the *Intensive Journal* program in California prisons?

H.S.: I hope that the *Intensive Journal* method is introduced at all California women's prisons and perhaps half a dozen men's prisons. It should also be introduced in a limited way in the youth authority facility. As a pilot program, I would test its effectiveness in combination with Logotherapy, cognitive reality therapy, psychotherapy and medical therapy when it is needed.

Once it is proven to rehabilitate and reduce recidivism, then it should be expanded throughout the prison system. I believe that the *Intensive Journal* method should be introduced throughout the school systems as a means for preventing criminal acts rather than waiting until incarceration and instituting the rehabilitation process.

J.H.: What changes do you see happening in the criminal justice system in California, and what implications do you believe these changes have for the *Intensive Journal* program?

H.S.: On July 1, 2005, after 27 years of trying punishment unsuccessfully, the CDC&R they created a new mission: to emphasize rehabilitation programs.

As a state employee and consultant, I was asked to assist in helping rewrite the curriculum for both men and recently women's reentry programs. My recommendations have been for the *Intensive Journal* method and Logotherapy to be the key instruments in focusing on rehabilitation. I believe that the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has turned the corner for the better.

Contributions

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