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seasons greetings mca members

DEB ANDERSON
MCA President
Minnesota Department of Corrections

As we come to the close of 2012, I would like to take this opportunity to share the successes of our organization this past year. The organization remains strong and members continue to step forward to fill volunteer positions and committees that make MCA one of the most respected professional corrections associations in the state.

In January, Debbie Beltz was hired as the new Administrative Manager for MCA. Debbie Beltz served MCA in one capacity or another for a number of years and has brought to the organization a strong commitment and desire to see MCA's success. Debbie closely worked with the board of directors, the executive board and all the committees throughout the year. The return to an administrative manager has strengthened the "personal touch" for which MCA has been known. This is evidenced in the new MCA website – it is "user friendly" and current.

With the dissolution of the contract with Nonprofit Solutions (NS), a significant change occurred in our budgeting and accounting processes. The MCA Treasurer has taken a more active role in managing the accounts and working with an accountant. This year's budget was monitored very closely by Treasurer Dayna Burmeister and the executive board. Our budget remained stable and we saw marginal increases in our bottom line. With the financial situation improving, we are confident we will continue to deliver and improve upon the services our members value most.

During the past year, MCA also saw an increase in membership. Mark Groves, sole member of the Membership Committee, is to be commended for his unceasing dedication, commitment and aspiration for the growth of MCA. Mark Groves also provided small workshops throughout the year as a member benefit. The workshops received many accolades. If you have not done so already, I encourage current and former members to renew your memberships!

This year's MCA Annual Fall Training returned to Duluth, Minnesota. The Fall Institute chair, Monique Drier along with their subcommittee chairs provided an excellent variety of training opportunities for all who attended. The Education and Training Committee delivered an excellent training event in March 2012. They are currently planning a spring event for 2013 – please check the website for the upcoming training. The Juvenile and Adult Legislative Committee chairs along with their members have been working this past year on the platforms and agendas for the upcoming legislative session. Their passion in making sure our legislature understands evidence-based practices and sound correctional policy and decisions should be applauded. Cal Saari, the Legislative Liaison, kept the board apprised of legislative activity, provided members a legislative session at the MCA Annual Fall Training and co-hosted the Capital Hill event last spring. The Student Services committee facilitated the student fair this past spring in St. Cloud. The chair and committee members continue to see the importance of recruitment to the field of corrections. The Technology Committee increased its member size and continued to educate the board and members on technology advancements.

The final board meeting will be held on December 13, 2012 at the Department of Corrections in St. Paul. It has been a pleasure and honor to serve as the MCA President this year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the board members and committee members who worked hard during the year for this organization. Many members like you step up and do great work for the organization. Thank you for all the hard work and commitment to the organization.

I look forward to continuing on the board as the chair of the Awards Committee in 2013. MCA will continue to improve and grow under the direction of the incoming President Karen Determan and the newly elected executive board with President Elect Monique Drier, Vice President Mark Groves, Treasurer Dayna Burmeister and Secretary Laura Anderson. Each of these individuals are capable leaders and corrections professionals. They will serve the organization well and provide the leadership necessary to improve the services MCA has to offer its members.

MCA is the largest professional corrections association in Minnesota and one of the oldest in the nation. It is only through your continued participation as a member and volunteer that we will continue to grow and provide services that assist members with career development.

Happy Holidays!

legislative update

CAL SAARI
MCA Legislative Liaison

With the latest issue of the Forum newsletter coming out in early December, this is a great opportunity to wish each and every one of you a Happy Holiday Season! May you all find time in our busy schedules to share the blessing of the Christmas holidays with your families and all close to you.

As the New Year enters, we prepare for the opening of the 88th Session of the Minnesota Legislature on January 8th. The DFL party leadership has been very busy since the election by re-structuring the Committee format and looking at Committee assignments for all Legislators. As you know, with the change in party leadership, there will be a complete change in assignments. We now know who will chair the Committees and await the decision of the Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk and Speaker of the House Paul Thissen on who will sit on each Committee. Committee memberships will be shared with you as soon as they become available to us.

The Senate Judiciary Committee will be chaired by Senator Ron Latz. Senator Latz served as last Session's minority party leader on this Committee and remains a long time member of this important Committee. The Judiciary Committee will be meeting Tuesdays and Thursdays in Senate Room 15 from Noon to 2:30 PM

The Senate Transportation and Public Safety Finance Division will be chaired by Senator Scott Dibble and will be meeting on Mondays and Wednesdays in Senate Room 15 from 3:00 - 5:30 PM.

On the House side, the House Public Safety Policy and Finance Committee will again be chaired by Rep. Michael Paymar and will be meeting on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in SOB Room 10 from 10:00 - 11:30 AM.

The Civil Law Committee will be led by Rep. John Lesch and will meet on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 8:15 to 9:45 AM in SOB Room 8 on Tuesdays and Room 200 on Wednesdays.

The House Judiciary Finance and Policy Committee is chaired by Rep. Deb Hilstrom will meet on Tuesdays and Wednesdays in SOB Room 10 from 2:15 to 3:45 PM.

A newly formed Committee, the Committee on Early Childhood and Youth Development Policy will be chaired by Rep. Joe Mullery, also will be meeting on Tuesdays and Wednesdays in SOB Room 5 from 4:00 to 5:30 PM.

I will make it a priority to personally meet with each of these Committee Chairs to share the MCA Legislative Agenda and discuss how we can best pursue the advancement of our agenda issues. We will also emphasize our efforts to encourage collaboration with our Corrections partners in order to present a clear position on those agreed upon issues. In that regard, MCA Legislative Committee Chair Mark Haase and I are busy working on a 2013 Capitol Day in Corrections program which is planned for mid-February. At this time it appears we have at least five other organizations committed to co-sponsoring this event. We are working to bring all Legislative Committee Chairs, as well as, Commissioner Roy and many lobbyists to this program to discuss the 2013 Session. Details will be released in the near future.

You can tell by the Committee schedules that we're going to be very busy as the Session begins. There are 44 new faces to meet and I believe 65 legislators who are in new positions this year, so it will be challenging to keep them all updated on our concerns. I look forward with a great deal of enthusiasm having the opportunity to represent our membership in working with the Legislature and I thank the Board of Directors for their encouragement and support. Members are welcome to contact me at any time with your issues, concerns or comments.

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wing flaps, bird seed, ego, and ebp

DEAN CAIN
President
RS Eden

New generations of leaders and policymakers often start out their moment in the sun by trying to contrast their performance with the failed performance of their predecessors. Such is the case in politics, business and even human services and corrections. The more we can make the old guard look ineffective, the lower the bar we need to reach to look successful. It's almost human nature. In fact, I have no doubt that my successor will find more things that are screwed up about the system developed under my leadership than things that are wonderful. But this tendency can be manipulative and is often fuzzy and distorted.

In 1972, when I essentially entered this field, I had occasion to spend some time with Dr. Albert Ellis, the architect of Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT), and followed Fritz Perls, of Gestalt Therapy fame. Ellis was fond of telling people to forget everything they ever learned about psychotherapy and boasting that he could solve any emotional problem in around 3 minutes. He liked to brag, in the vein of Muhammad Ali (who actually was as good as he said he was), that he was the greatest. An oversimplification of his theory, now dressed up as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, was that as we believe, so we emote. And changing beliefs changes emotions, changes behavioral response. He had 7 irrational beliefs he liked to talk about, and on one occasion, I observed him telling an audience that included at least 2 nuns, that there was an 8th irrational belief, "that God will take you up to heaven providing you kiss his a** here on earth". He loved to get a rise out of people to make his point. Perls on the other hand, liked to tell people that the only tools he needed to solve the most intimate interpersonal problems were a pack of cigarettes and a box of Kleenex. Both enjoyed contrasting their theories with those that came before them, and quite obviously neither of them lacked ego.

Later, whole correctional programs were patterned after Transactional Analysis (T.A.). Eric Berne essentially took Freud's Id, Ego and Super Ego, and redefined them in contemporary terms. It was hailed as the evidence based practice of its time, with everyone being charged with becoming intimately familiar with I'm OK, You're OK, a book by Thomas Harris. Scores of corrections professional flocked to the federal prison in Marion, Illinois to participate in the Asklepiion Community, where they could learn its application and techniques.

An interesting phenomenon developed that seems to be duplicating itself today. People who had no idea what the disciplines entailed started throwing the jargon around. As recently as last summer, in my role of evaluating substance abuse programs for DHS, I reviewed a program whose literature stated that their philosophy was based upon the principals of REBT. In the debriefing I asked the staff how they implemented REBT. Not one of them could answer nor had any of them heard of Albert Ellis. They referred me to the CEO who wasn't there that day.

And while I can argue that REBT, Gestalt and T.A. remain in place today, they do so tweaked, under different names, with different people taking credit for them.

As a footnote, I might add that in the midst of all these new developments, there was widely circulated research from a man named Martinson, and others, which concluded that nothing worked. Martinson later changed his conclusion to "everything works", but not before things like Minnesota's Sentencing Guidelines were developed on the premise that the only thing that can be fairly applied and analyzed is punishment.

In the past couple of years, several new terms have arisen in the lexicon of those who seek to facilitate behavior change. One is Evidence Based Practices, or EBP. By itself, it's a fairly innocuous term that seems neutral in judgment. But often by implication, and even explicitly, it is used to suggest that whatever was done before was ineffective and not based upon evidence. In one instance I even heard it stated that, "we're depending on outcomes now, not just on what feels good".

I recently had occasion to sit through a seminar on EBP. In it, several interventions were used to contrast recidivism rates. I raised the question, "what does an intervention have to demonstrate to be legitimately classified as EBP? Does a 10% reduction in recidivism qualify? Is 9% too low?" The answer I got was, "it depends". The explanation was that reduction in recidivism needed to be evaluated by the cost of the intervention. For example, a \$1 million investment in an intervention that resulted in a 1% reduction in recidivism would probably not qualify. However the same \$1 million investment in an intervention that reduced recidivism by 90% obviously would. I opined that the definition then seemed to be somewhat subjective and relative, and that one agency could qualify something as evidence based and another might not reach the same conclusion. This was reluctantly agreed to. I have since learned that there actually are at least one set of criteria for what constitutes an Evidence Based Practice for corrections at least, but I question how many actually know what they consist of.

I then asked questions about the intervention cited as producing the largest reduction in recidivism, the Challenge Incarceration Program. For those unfamiliar with the program: 1) Inmates self-select to participate; 2) They put "skin in the game", essentially agreeing that if they fail to complete it, the time they spent in the program will not be recognized as part of their incarceration time; 3) They receive a significant reduction in their incarceration time if they do complete; 4) They participate in a highly regimented structure while in the program with enhanced responsibility and accountability; 5) They receive a great deal of attention and services,

including such things as a fluid, comprehensive assessment; motivational interviewing and cognitive behavioral therapy; 6) They are encouraged to develop a strong sense of camaraderie and responsibility for each other while in the program; 7) They are granted status based upon their participation and progress; 8) They have intensive supervision, services and support upon release; 9) Because of eligibility criteria, they are not high risk/high need offenders. I asked of which nine elements was the evidence based practice most responsible for the reduction in recidivism, the answer, again reluctantly, was no one knew.

Throughout history there have been those who attempt to define art as by the hard absolutes that define science. Science can influence art, it can't define it. Unanswered questions, even about what we are able to confidently determine, include the gregariousness and likeability of the service provider, what types of people choose to provide what types of services, how committed they are and how effectively the service provider and discipline engage the offender.

At this point, I should be clear, I have the greatest respect and support for those things being classified as evidence based, and we use them throughout our service delivery system. I have a strong appreciation for anything that reduces criminogenic behavior and maintains public safety. My questions are to determine whether EBP is a genuine measurement or simply a bandwagon buzz word to validate our work and make us look more effective than our predecessors.

There are three things I know about offenders:

- Most, when engaging in the lifestyle that allows them to offend, surround themselves with a social group that supports their decision to offend. Encapsulation goes so far that burglars hang out with burglars and heroin addicts look down their noses on meth heads (the exception is sex offenders; no one hangs out with them and they don't usually hang out with each other).
- Most leave prison intending to never come back. And those that aren't total morons recognize that means a change in lifestyle.
- One of the greatest triggers to relapse is isolation and loneliness. Good intentions are sabotaged by the knowledge that they always have a way to resolve loneliness and a social group that will welcome them back with open arms; those who shared their old lifestyle.

I once had a teacher/mentor who used the analogy of wing flaps and bird seed in evaluating behavior. He opined that while in prison, you can measure the number of wing flaps you get per pound of bird seed, but until you open the door, you have no idea whether or not you are dealing with an eagle or a chicken. Developing and entering a social/support group that acts like eagles, or at least places a value on flight, should be evaluated to determine whether or not it qualifies as evidence based. If, as I believe, it does, then we need to create more groups of eagles willing to take in new members, even or especially new members who have faltered in the past.

Because, to use another analogy, if one spends all of their time in a barbershop, and that is the only option available to them, sooner or later they'll get a haircut. Most people act their way into right thinking. They rarely think their way into right acting.

Those who have consumed the Kool-Aid about EBT believe that the social sciences are almost as scientific as chemistry. Even though many know little of which they speak. They will undoubtedly take issue with several of my observations and, in keeping with the points made in the first paragraph; mock them inwardly, and among their peers, as quaint.

I am of the opinion that there are many ways to get someone sober and law abiding. But it takes a community to keep them that way. Engaging the offender in a pro-social group and lifestyle, that accepts and supports them; and holds them accountable to pro-social values and behavior, within 48-72 hours of their release, may just be the most evidence based intervention of all.

a factor of one: an ideological view toward the art of labeling

MARK GROVES
MCA Membership Committee
Volunteers of America

Such a deal! The fine art of categorizing or labeling! This is the very area that separates the men from the boys. Just think what life would be like if we were unable to classify people, places and things? What a mess things would be. How on earth would we ever get anything accomplished if we were unable to categorize? Case in point: if I didn't know that my car is a mustard yellow, 1974 Ford Pinto, parked in the rooster parking lot just outside of DSW Shoes at Rosedale Mall, I would be roaming around out there for hours after the stores closed trying to find my car. Yikes!

Assumptions are all we've got to go on if we didn't have this handy-dandy classification system at our fingertips. Now, let's shift gears and see how this very same classification or, shall we say, labeling system if you will, is so invaluable in the human services, helping professions.

The Value of Labels

These labels provide us with clear descriptions of various diagnostic categories in order for us to diagnose, communicate about, study and treat the myriad of disorders we encounter on a daily basis (not to mention the third-party reimbursement issues). Labels not only tell us how the person operates, behaves or functions, but in what manner the behavior is expressed, from what interests and motivations the behavior is derived et al. Of course there could be variations, but they'll probably be minor; no need to bother with them because the majority of people so labeled will fit the label to a "T." In order to better serve our clientele, and society at large, we must narrow our focus and not fool around with customizing and individually designing treatment plans.

Labels help us refer to those human attributes that generally determine one's individual or group position in the social hierarchy or scheme of things; the manner in which one can be perceived and treated by various institutions and members of the social order and, to some extent, the nature of the roles to which one is socialized within his or her peer group. Various court decisions have attempted to eliminate various discriminations; but such judicial and legislative actions has not (and probably cannot) eliminate the more subtle differentials in the way society should respond and treat these folks. The important point here is that these labels do not much describe the way the individual functions and behaves, but more significantly, the way in which the person should be treated.

All Men Are Created Equal

The national creed of the United States of America begins with: "all men are created equal." Our forefathers apparently were on to something when they drafted the constitution so let's run with that basic premise. We've entered the 21st century here folks so let's get on with business. Innumerable "brainiacs" put a lot of consideration and work into the DSM-IV-TR. There are enough categories in that hummer to classify absolutely everyone. Categorizing is decisively essential if any real advances are to be obtained. A label is enlightening—shall we say that it helps us take a refreshing look at the client? The human services professions have experienced great strides in the past fifty years so let's not do any backtracking here, okay?

Labels Provide Insight

Labels provide us with valuable insights that help us classify people into groups. Once we label someone, it will be easier for that person (and us) to gain a deeper understanding of themselves and thus, respond accordingly. What prevents some people from "real" change and growth is the absence of, or lack of awareness of, a timely, descriptive label. The reality here folks is that with various budget cuts and time constraints, etc., put upon us, we are just too limited in our capacity to respond to the diverse characteristics of the numbers of dysfunctional people who cross our thresholds. Besides, we serve best those that place the fewest demands on us. Once someone gets categorized, we can expedite their treatment and subsequent attitude and behavior change.

The Need for Universal Treatment Plans

If we try to gain an understanding of the underlying functional characteristics of individuals, we'll just get bogged down. Why gain a deeper understanding of the problems surrounding the individual? The development of relationships or insights is not what the doctor ordered. We just don't focus enough on equalizing treatment experiences. We should develop universal progress notes and just fill in the names, dates and keep the subjective responses to simple yes's and no's. This will free us up to service more clientele as well as eliminate those pesky variant rates of progress that some big-shot, know-it-alls are so gosh-darned concerned about.

An Illusion of Equity

If our clients do not begin from an equal position, then not providing equal treatment experiences or opportunities will likely retard their achievement. If equality doesn't exist, then, by gosh, we must create an illusion of equity because treatment is the key to anyone's success. Treatment must be measured in what one is given, not in what one needs.

Labeling buttonholes people and provides them with an invaluable sense of identity. Customizing and individualizing has proven to be quite costly (the government, insurance companies and other efficient problem-solvers have realized this and they've been taking the appropriate steps to correct this phenomenon). We're not discussing the Parade of Homes, Dream Home, here now, are we?

One-Size-Fits-All

Labeling also keeps us from being hamstrung by an antiquated system. This categorization system is especially useful with youth and different ethnic or cultural groups and patterns. You wouldn't believe the streamlining that takes place with these two populations when you embrace the universal: "one-size-fits-all" position. And oh, don't forget to provide your global assessment of the client's level of current functioning as well. This is especially useful when multiple labels are present.

In the final analysis, much depends on our ideologies of these tried-and-true labels and our universal acceptance of these categories. Once we gain a profound understanding of the convenience and easy applicability of labels, we can then begin to have a systematic translation of them in practice. Now . . . wouldn't that be sumthin'?

facial recognition technology

DAVID HEATH

MCA Technology Committee

Arrowhead Regional Corrections

Facial Recognition Technology has been around for quite a while in law enforcement and the military, and it is still being developed. It uses physical characteristics in every face to identify a person. Every face has numerous distinct characteristics like distance between the eyes, width of the nose, depth of the eye sockets, length of the jaw line, to name a few. All these things combined, can create a distinct one of a kind face print so to speak.

The FBI is currently working on the Next Generation Identification (NGI) program. This is a state of the art face recognition project, intended to serve as an upgrade to the current Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS). This technology will be used by law enforcement and homeland security to identify people. Photon X is a USA based company that was awarded a large military contract about a year ago to further develop this technology. One piece of this technology is called stand-off biometrics, which can be used to collect biometric data from a distance.

These systems will use physical biometrics, like facial, iris, and other biometric data in conjunction with the behavior metrics of an individual. For example, micro facial expressions a person might make when laughing or body posture and gait when walking. Eventually, a combination of these types of biometric systems will be able to pick an individual out of a crowded public place, with a very high degree of accuracy. Government systems will be expensive top notch and state of the art. As this technology is developed, less expensive facial recognition systems will filter down to the consumer markets. This filter down is already happening today.

In October of 2012, the Federal Trade Commission released a white paper for companies that use Facial Recognition technology. The paper advises ways companies should use this technology to correctly address privacy concerns from an unsuspecting public.

Some of these companies are using facial images to determine an individual's age and gender to deliver targeted advertising. They also have been adopted on social networks and mobile applications and are using the technology on digital billboards. Systems can identify anonymous individuals by comparing their captured facial picture against a database of facial images.

In social networking, there is an application built into Facebook to analyze each face in your photos and remember the name associated with each tag. Facebook was recently required to turn its facial recognition software off in Europe in September 2012. In July 2012, Senator Al Franken called a hearing to probe face book about its features such as default tag suggestions for photos, and the lack of information about the technology on the Facebook site.

Facebook was quick to say that people could opt-out of tools such as Facebook's tag suggestions, but emphasized the site as a whole was an "opt-in experience" as people choose to be on Facebook, because they want to share with each other. Franken counter that people should have to consciously opt-in, because of the sensitivity of the data. In other words, it should not be turned on by default. This will be an ongoing debate and the FTC best practices are just suggestions at this point. I believe we will see enforced regulations in the USA where this data will need more consumer permission to use it.

Face Deals by Red Pepper is an advertising agency is currently testing these waters. Still in its preliminary stages, the software has generated criticism from those who think this technology crosses the line. For others, Facedeals represents the next exciting step in customizable marketing.

If you opt into this service, Facedeals cameras will recognize your face when you pass by a store. The service will simultaneously check you into that location and offer you customized deals based upon your Facebook history, including products you "like." Then it will send you customized deals on your smart phone based on this information as you move from store to store.

There are some potential dangers with this technology. Facebook auto tagging basically allows potential strangers who see the picture to put a name to a face, for potentially gathering more information on an individual.

One researcher claims we can no longer disappear in a crowd, so to speak. Apparently, there are some 2.5 billion photos per month posted to Facebook and the odds are very good that you can be recognized. For most of us, there is already a photo of us online.

This being said, Facial Recognition technology has the potential to make the country a safer place by identifying criminals, but it also has some inherent privacy issues to be considered as a user of this technology. Listed below are a few links you can paste into your web browser if you want to read more...

Potential Danger Facial Recognition Web Links:

<http://parentingtodaykids.com/article/danger-facebooks-facial-recognition-technology/>

<http://nhne-pulse.org/facial-recognition-software-can-now-reveal-almost-everything-about-us/>

Information Web Links on Facial Recognition Technology:

http://www.photon-x.com/3D_Biometrics.html

<http://www.ftc.gov/opa/2012/10/facialrecognition.shtm>

<http://rt.com/usa/news/fbi-recognition-system-ngi-640/>

Thank you to everyone and all organizations who contributed articles to the FORUM during 2012!!!

Happy Holidays!!!!

about FORUM

FORUM is published six times a year by the Minnesota Corrections Association, a nonprofit professional association incorporated in Minnesota. Articles submitted by our membership do not express the views of MCA or the board of directors.

Articles may be submitted to the 2013 *FORUM* editor [Mark Groves at mark.groves@voamn.org](mailto:mark.groves@voamn.org). Articles should not be of the nature of a commercial solicitation of products or services; rather, they should be informative on topics of interest to MCA membership at large.

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