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Internship Experience

Student's Name

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Internship Experience

History and Background Literature

Valley Harvest Ministries is an agency started by a church that bears the same name to facilitate the prisoners with a quality outreach. The outreach makes prison a transformation center that releases inmates after they are done with their punishment in a better form. The products of the prison get to have a better outlook compared to what was taken to the same facility (Comiskey, 2007). The history of Valley Harvest Ministries started in the year 1966 in Dublin, Virginia, when people in the United States of America were introduced to the Pentecostal Holiness church. Later, the church moved to Oak grove place for a better settlement in the year 1977. The reason to move from their previous location was to find a more significant area that could call for expansion of the church and whole ministry in particular (Chomsky, 2007). However, the attributes and vision of the church grew more and more to create a better experience with the whole community. In the year 1990, the church and its ministries moved to more severe concerns of worship. Evangelism, restoration, and outreach to other parts of the community.

They identified another toggle to come out clearly and boldly to the community. The church in question offered different agencies where prison outreach ministry is one of the programs to help cater to prisoners as part of the United States community. Prison outreach ministry under this church has a mission to keep all the stakeholders on tone and serviced to one goal. The mission of the outreach is to reach the families associated with inmates to make sure they do not get traumatized over their loved ones behind bars (Comiskey, 2007). They provide moral support, spiritual guidance to the victims, and making them believe there is life after

prison. The mission also stands firm to standing in the Gap that inmates could if at home. In this regard, they provide the families with essentials during the Christmas holidays to make them feel the love from their incarcerated relatives. The ministry also went on couching inmates on better ways to lead their lives and avoid mishaps in life. Preaching of the gospel to them and introducing them to Christianity became the goal of the Agency. Checking on background of the same, outreach of the Agency has different dockets that require individuals to work for the people. For instance, they have a desk that receives calls from incarcerated families in case of a need from the same. Such a desk is fundamental because all issues are addressed from the same.

The outreach in question is mostly run by volunteers since it is more of a charitable organization. However, there are several areas of concern that require more than volunteering could do to make things run swifter. The Agency has several areas that require workers to meet the mission. Cooks, mentors, cleaners, preachers and transportation officers to drop the family's home after the parties to mentor them is done. The vision of the outreach agency is reaching more people into the Christianity kingdom through acts of mercy and gospel spread, raising a generation of laborers that value Christianity and the essence of human life of all things they encounter in life. The outreach ministry also follows an instance of creating small ministry groups and corporate worshipping experiences.

My Job Description and Expectation in the Agency

Having studied criminal justice for several years, I was now baked and ready to practice what I acquired in class to work for me in the field. One of the requirements my career took seriously is an internship on completion of the course to make sure that one has the correct grounds (Clayton et al., 2013). On the other hand, my course posted several areas in my mind

that I would put my knowledge in practice. While in school, I studied more about the criminal justice system, interdisciplinary approaches, sociology, administration, philosophy, and psychology to deal with different people from varied angles. I worked as an intern in a prison outreach ministry to make my practices happen and polish up in areas I was required to fine-tune. I did not meet the expectations I had for the job. Notably, I only found about 30% of what I had learned in class, which ran across interdisciplinary actions as well as psychology and sociology aspect while dealing with different characters. The job differed from what I expected. Little did I know that a prison outreach agency is not on the legal system but from the churches that support the government in creating an enabling environment for the inmates and their families. The job was more spiritual than legal as my course dictated.

I worked in the Agency as a mentor to the inmates and their families. My noble job was to make sure that all calls from the calls desk concerning spiritual guidance, career, motivation, emotional support, and role modeling were all addressed timely (Kerley et al., 2010). Working as an intern, I had a lot to contain myself and become flexible in every minute since clients differed. For instance, my job started every morning at eight, and from then, I would rarely get free time since the cases were all over, and expectations for better results were all on me. However, I found the job exciting and, at the same time, challenging because I was not used to the same. Before, I had not handled any cases where I would have an individual share with me their in-depth stories of their own (Kerley et al., 2010). On this note, some issues were touching and required a lot of support and strength to get work for feedback so that such families and prison individuals could settle in mind. The work was hard for me at first, but as time flew, I gained a routine of work and gained experience from the same.

Experiences Related To My Studies

The criminal justice course entailed an inherent encounter with legal activities which differed from what I had while working as an intern in a prison outreach ministry. Little did I know that what the course was offering for me could be creatively used in a different setting? For instance, my course was all about the criminal justice system, interdisciplinary activities, psychology, sociology, political science, public administration, philosophy, and urban studies. To some, being a mentor in the prison outreach ministry offered me a chance to manipulate the aspect of interdisciplinary studies, psychology, public administration, and sociology. I was able to practice about 30 percent of my studies in school (Kerley et al., 2010). Having a social experience was an excellent stand to improve my creativity in handling different cases from the people of which they expected help from me after they are done giving their experiences. As a mentor in the organization, I was the main point man to making giving hope to families that had their first experiences of their people captured in the cells. Sometimes it was hard for them to cope with the situation, but as a matter of fact, anytime they addressed their issues, I covered them in the shortest time possible until they could accept it was not business as usual (Kerley et al., 2010). However, I was able to use my thinking and philosophies to make them know they would get back a more refined individual than the guy was admitted to prison. On the other hand, I became more spiritual.

Job Aspect Added To Personal Development

Self-confidence was one of the aspect added to my personal development since expectations of the job I got in the Prison outreach ministry, was utterly different from my previous imagination before I attended the internship. I worked in a completely different area away from what I studied in school. Since I was mandated to deliver to all clients by my supervisor, I had no option but to conform to the duty. I also changed my attitude towards people

management and administration (Kerley et al., 2010). I learned that all people are not the same, and a particular individual should be treated in their tailored manner. Human relations skills was another aspect that multiplied as impacted by dealing with different people from separate dwellings. Determination and competency carried the day for me since I carried a sweet stand to make everything happen as my supervisor would want. My goal was to leave a good mark in the institution where my handwork made me a more competent person, as it was driven by a determination to have the best. I also became more responsible since all activities concerning the mentor of the institution were directed to me.

Effects of the Job on the Career

My job as an intern in a prison outreach ministry added a distinctive aspect of my life and thinking capacities in different lines. However, the job positively affected my career because most of the aspects I added improved what was not teachable in class (Clayton et al., 2013). All the attributes that an individual needs in life cannot be just found in one setting, and this time is referring to the school I acquired my criminal justice career. Many experiences and working towards the goals set by an institution, automatically makes one an expert. Human relation skills in school were just taught the theory format, but the practical part was different. The job required a lot of human relation skills because being a mentor dealt with impacting the mind of the victim with good things allowing them to cope up with a hard time. My career was also affected in a way that I was not able to get criminal justice systems installed in place since the Agency was different from what I thought it could have been (Slade & Forrester, 2015). However, I gained the spiritual part of the ministry and found that people need to support one another in times of hardships because challenges are a lot from different settings of life. I also gained the guts to work extra harder to explore more in a way that I can serve the nation. My career from campus

was not the same after I did my internship because I gained more attributes than I could have done in another setting.

Discussions with the Supervisor and Clients

My work in the institution and how busy I could be was dictated by the number of calls reaching the desk so that I would address them in a way that a client got satisfied with the whole event. In some cases, the work was beyond me, and I kept consulting my supervisor for a go-ahead. Other cases comprised of older adults who used their local dialect to address me and of which I was not conversant. In such situations, my supervisor could give a hand to assist me in reducing the germ of the clients being attended (Slade & Forrester, 2015). I had discussions with the supervisor concerning the workability of the institution in a way that they could improve the activities of charity during regular days and not only considering festive seasons alone like during Christmas festivities. I also had an opportunity to talk with clients to motivate and inspire the families that have their members incarcerated in prison. I was keen to note that clients were happier after they are served because they obtained peace of mind. Their minds were traumatized, especially in cases where a father is incarcerated. The family was left with no hope of support. After talking and inspiring them on the same as prison outreach mentors, they acquired hope again. The levels of contact with clients were mostly social and spiritual to make sure that their minds are stable and connecting right. Conversations, as mentioned above, they included matters concerning the family.

Advice to Others about the Job

The job in a prison outreach ministry is more involving, entails focus and concentration. Also, creativity and innovation in the mind is another mandatory attribute that requires making a

worker to have in possession. A mentor job in a prison outreach ministry requires one to be hardy because one deals with people from different areas and of whom have different perspectives in life. Concentration and focus while attending a client is a mandatory aspect that any student looking forward to operating in such an area requires (Slade & Forrester, 2015). Creativity is another aspect that helps one answer the questions to clients intellectually. The vision of the Agency is to provide hope to clients who may feel that they are in a tunnel. However, this position is friendly and suitable for people that want to gain a high bid in self-confidence, determination, and overall competency of the workers. Students who may consider this course and their career of study is criminal justice, and I could not advise them to go for it because during an internship in comparison with jobs provided, approximately 30 percent coverage on the course.

Problems Observed

Every situation that has an array of advantages tend to have a dark side as well. In this regard, the prison outreach ministry I attended is that there are no reading materials that could impact the inmates through mentors. Another problem I observed is that this prison outreach ministry did not mostly deal with inmates themselves as the more significant advantages but their families at home. Another problem I observed is that inmates were impacted spiritually, but physically they had not been much catered by the outreach ministry. As much as we did mentorship of the people, also gaining physical skills could impact them more so that when they are done with their imprisonment, they start a new life when guided all around. However, the prison outreach managed to follow the rule of the thumb that controls the same. Besides, the problem is that most people that work there except the mentor, most people are volunteers, and they are not severe as to fulfill the rule of thumb controlling prison outreach ministry.

I would advise on improving the Agency to work more efficiently by making sure that I search for sponsors to increase the funding in a way that most workers are not volunteers to acknowledge the fulfillment of the required quality at the end. Following rules of the thumb that govern prison outreach ministry is a requirement to assure the United States government such a facility exists. The rules include never to assume anything, consideration of an individual's duties and responsibilities to the later. Also, focusing on the bigger picture, playing a leadership figure while delivering services and doing away with any dysfunctional teams in the facility. Another suggestion I would deliver is the consideration of more activities that impact skills to inmates not limited to spiritual and mentorship activities, which would make inmates more active and all-rounded.

Recommendations

I would recommend the prison outreach to better services to clients who include families and inmates themselves. The fact that this organization checks the wellbeing of such groups of people, the quality of services could be revisited to make the best for them. For instance, I would recommend that any worker in the institution undergo at least two weeks program on training about what takes place and expectations by the management from workers. My case was a bit weird because when I joined the institution and small orientation was done hurriedly by the supervisor in a way that all points did not sink in my head. During my days in operation, I encountered many problems since some information was missing. The recommendation of training new members of the working staff could improve the quality of services as well as rendering the best activities expected by the government. For instance, following the rule of thumb and the rules involved could be easy if taught to workers or volunteers. Quality cannot be compromised when workers know what is expected of them.

Another recommendation is the reduction of congestion since some sessions of mentoring depend on phone calls where the other mentor is involved. I would recommend the ministry to improve on the human resource to make the issues very easy to handle and mandate the satisfaction of the clients involved. For instance, the prison outreach ministry could search for more funders and sponsors that can add to the funds available to run the facility to employ another mentor. Having one mentor who has the mandate to attend all the individuals becomes an overworking activity. That dilapidates quality because when one works under pressure, quality may not be met. If another mentor is employed and on the other hand training is taken seriously by the Agency, then problems encountered could be eradicated very fast. I would slightly modify the way of working by making more time to be upon planning the activities with all the employees, volunteers to contribute in decision making to encourage teamwork in the long run (Slade & Forrester, 2015). Pieces of training after a month or a fortnight would help the Agency grow since workers and volunteers in a specific time would be given some time to recap on their mandates in the Agency and work according to the terms according to them. The Agency already reforms better in making sure that all the attended clients get satisfied and draw peace of mind from the Agency. With such aspects of excellent performance, training and teamwork would also deliver better results as compared to the current status.

Comments

Criminal justice course work fails to deliver some aspects that are found on the ground when it comes to internship and practical learning aspects. The course lacks human relations skills and spiritual guidance. I find that a criminal justice course can land you in a prison outreach ministry which needs spiritual guidance and aspects of theology to make the mentors familiar with the bible. Human relations skills are not taught in class, and from my experience as

an intern, I struggled to adapt to such an environment where I did not know the point of starting or that to end the story. As said earlier, the comments concerning the internship I would suggest proper orientation and training to any new workers to make sure that quality is delivered to the people and workers or interns do struggle much in finding what to do when the supervisor is away. My supervisor was not well attending since most times, he was away on duty, and most times, I communicated over the phone to enquire some information. I would suggest that supervision be done at least a three-quarter way of the internship period to make sure that quality is not compromised.

Overall Statement and Degree of Satisfaction

My overall experience in the facility was not top-notch, but I gained experience with the problems that inmates and their families go through. I was able to conform to the situation, guide, and encourage all the victims that passed through my service. As a criminal justice student earlier in school, I could have checked on another institution to make my experience in the course better than I exited the prison outreach ministry. However, I learned several things that were not in my course work while in school. For instance, as stated earlier, spiritual enrichment and study of different religions like reading the bible were not mandatory. But as a mentor to couch people and give them hope. Biblical language is imperative since most people are familiar with it, and they do get hope since they believe in divine power. Human relations skills and administration was also a great experience. My degree of satisfaction from the internship is seventy percent (70%) or seven out of 10 (7/10).

References

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- ⁶ Kerley, K. R., Bartkowski, J. P., Matthews, T. L., & Emond, T. L. (2010). From the sanctuary to the slammer: Exploring the narratives of evangelical prison ministry workers. *Sociological Spectrum*, 30(5), 504-525.
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Appendices

Appendix 1

While diversion programs have shown mixed results (Clayton et al., 2013), it is believed that linking persons who have a serious mental illness and criminal history with community-based treatment services will reduce police contact and criminal recidivism. Our approach in addressing this concern was to link citizenship-oriented community-based treatment with treatment for previously incarcerated individuals, which may have included jail diversion programming. The citizenship approach represents a view that important a role as jail diversion and other programs play in diverting people with mental illness from the criminal justice to mental health system, this shift is from one system to another and cannot address the community integration needs of this group (Clayton et al., 2013). The findings on which we report in this article derive from a second phase of analysis of a randomized controlled trial (RCT). In the RCT, individuals with a diagnosis of a serious mental illness and recent history of criminal justice involvement were randomized into either the citizenship intervention or treatment as usual. We hypothesized that individuals in the citizenship intervention would have more positive clinical and other outcomes than those in standard care, even after controlling for baseline sociodemographic and clinical characteristics.

Appendix 2

High-quality listening skills and compassion are known to be vital qualities in supporting the wellbeing of prisoners (Slade & Forrester, 2015), and in the study prison, the underlying culture of integration was identified as provided an important context for these qualities. This integrated approach influenced the suicide prevention approach, and it supports wider calls, made

elsewhere, that suicide precautions should not be punitive (Slade & Forrester, 2015).¹ As an example of this approach, segregation was infrequently used as a method of establishing control¹ in the study prison. In the study prison, the senior management team had identified suicide prevention as a key priority, and it factored centrally in strategic decisions. This indicates that the prioritization of suicide prevention, through management support for staff and prisoners and its integration within wider decision-making, can assist in improving staff clarity regarding their work priorities in a complex environment.

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