

***99 Days and a Get Up: A Guide to Success Following Release for Inmates and Their Loved Ones, Third Edition***, by Ned Rollo, Offender Preparation and Education Network Inc., 2002, 82 pp. Available in ACA's catalog.

During the past few years, there has been renewed interest in offenders' preparedness to return to the community after incarceration. This interest — conveyed under the term re-entry — reflects the recognition that each year, hundreds of thousands of inmates are released from institutions, often with very little support and even fewer services or opportunities to succeed in the free world. Many offenders are released without any form of parole or post-release supervision to follow. Fortunately, there is a rapidly growing commitment to address the myriad issues associated with offender re-entry. These activities are notable for their breadth and focus.

Recently, directors of state departments of correction convened for a special issues seminar on re-entry at ACA's 132nd Congress of Correction in August 2002 in Anaheim, Calif. The panels revealed that substantial efforts are now under way at the state level to retool correctional agencies' approaches to re-entry. The Urban Institute has hosted a series of re-entry roundtables for leaders, practitioners and policy-makers to assess the state of knowledge and to publish specialized reports on this topic, and more are planned. The U.S. Department of Justice, in concert with several other federal agencies, has provided \$100 million to target re-entry programming for serious, violent felony offenders. The National Institute of Corrections has begun a significant Transition From Prison project with funding to help a select number of states transform their systems governing re-entry.

Although re-entry is not new to the field of corrections, there is something significant about its current focus. It is the recognition that the success of the re-entry transition depends on linking a continuum of programs and services that are planned for at the start of admission to prison (if not at sentencing) through confinement, forward to discharge from parole or post-release supervision. It is a systemic focus that highlights the need to begin preparing

offenders to make the transition well in advance of their release, as well as following their return to the community. What this requires and how it might be accomplished most effectively must be answered, in no small measure, by understanding what offenders face upon release and what barriers and obstacles they must overcome — from the perspective of the offender.

All too often, conversations about re-entry omit the offenders' point of view. Those with responsibilities for shaping re-entry within their own organizations who wish to gain access to this perspective will benefit greatly by reading Ned Rollo's incisive and very readable monograph.

Rollo has been writing for and about those who have served time since 1979. He has published numerous manuals and guides for ex-offenders addressing employment, overcoming addiction and how to navigate through the criminal justice system. In the third edition of *99 Days and a Get Up*, Rollo dissects the social and emotional issues inmates face prior to and immediately following release. An ex-offender himself, Rollo has produced a manual for individuals in confinement who are willing to make pro-social choices and assume their fair share of responsibility for making it upon release. It is a book written for offenders with significant implications for correctional policy and programming.

The first third of the book discusses the various issues confronting inmates as they prepare for their eventual return to the free world. It offers a roadmap with numerous markers for offenders to consider as they plan ahead for their arrival home. Rollo argues that there is more to life on the outside than just staying out of prison. He notes, however, that doing so is fundamental to everything else an offender may accomplish. To this end, he advocates setting a long-term goal of five years of arrest-free living. He notes that ex-offenders who remain arrest-free for "60 moons" have a 97 percent chance of staying free forever.

Achieving this goal requires a good deal of preparation, patience and self-insight. According to the author, one of the most critical benchmarks facing offenders is the need to begin a process of "internal housekeeping" at 180 days

prior to release. The discussion that follows highlights the issues offenders should consider when taking a personal inventory of their preparedness, as well as the survival needs (e.g., budgeting, employment, housing, transportation, family) they must realistically address.

The next section covers the day of release and what follows immediately thereafter. For ex-inmates, this is a particularly unsettling period of time characterized by a bewildering smattering of conflicting emotions and needs. Rollo offers a sensitive and illuminating account of what offenders frequently experience and how they may exercise constructive and productive choices in rebuilding relationships, working through the requirements of parole or community-based supervision, surviving economically, dealing with rejection and setting realistic personal goals. In essence, he provides a rich accounting of how ex-offenders may "make it" by doing what it takes to get up and reconstruct a meaningful life in the free world.

The final section is written for offenders' family members and loved ones who provided support during incarceration. It serves as a vital reminder of the importance of involving the loved ones of those offenders who have waited for their return. Additionally, they are experiencing an emotionally turbulent period in their own lives in anticipation of their loved ones' release. They are also experiencing a disconcerting combination of uncertainty and optimism over what the future may hold.

Rollo's work offers a primer for offenders and ex-offenders written in a style that they understand. Additionally, *99 Days and a Get Up* can serve as a central component in prerelease and re-entry programming and training. As correctional policy-makers and practitioners go about the business of retooling their approach to re-entry, if they wish to understand what the transition home means and requires from the offenders' point of view, they can do no better than to read this instructive manual.

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