Sentencing for Community Corrections

Goals and Social Construction of Criminal Sentences

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Sentencing Basics

- Laws guide sentencing. Judges must use sentencing laws when they pass a sentence.
- Criminal Laws Change over Time and Have Costs and Benefits
  - But no perfect policy or criminal sentence exists!
  - Sentencing laws are created by our elected officials. They can (and do) change with political pressure.

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Sentences are Socially Constructed

- Criminal sentences Judges can give are determined by laws – they don’t make them up!
- Sentencing laws are made by legislatures
- Legislatures are humans elected via the political process
- Political views change over time!!!
- Thus sentences are socially constructed

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“Goals” of Criminal Sentences

- Retribution
  - retribution vs. revenge or vengeance
- Incapacitation
- Deterrence
  - Specific and General Deterrence
- Rehabilitation
- Restoration

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Basic Sentencing Options

- Fines – monetary payment
- Imprisonment – “locked up”
  - Parole [let out early from prison]
- Probation – “restricted release”
- Death Penalty – “state sponsored execution”

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Summary

- Criminal Sentences have “goals” or “rationale” behind them
- Criminal Sentences are Socially Constructed!!!
- Know the Four Basic Types of Criminal Sentences

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