



Living Inside Prison Walls: Adjustment Behavior By Victoria R. DeRosia

Journal:	Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education
Article Title:	<i>Living Inside Prison Walls: Adjustment Behavior By Victoria R. DeRosia</i>
Author(s):	<i>Reviewed by Albert E Wilkerson</i>
Volume and Issue Number:	<i>Vol. 1 No. 3</i>
Manuscript ID:	<i>13062</i>
Page Number:	<i>62</i>
Year:	<i>1999</i>

Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education is a refereed journal concerned with publishing scholarly and relevant articles on continuing education, professional development, and training in the field of social welfare. The aims of the journal are to advance the science of professional development and continuing social work education, to foster understanding among educators, practitioners, and researchers, and to promote discussion that represents a broad spectrum of interests in the field. The opinions expressed in this journal are solely those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the policy positions of The University of Texas at Austin's School of Social Work or its Center for Social Work Research.

Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education is published three times a year (Spring, Summer, and Winter) by the Center for Social Work Research at 1 University Station, D3500 Austin, TX 78712. Journal subscriptions are \$110. Our website at www.profdevjournal.org contains additional information regarding submission of publications and subscriptions.

Copyright © by The University of Texas at Austin's School of Social Work's Center for Social Work Research. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A.

ISSN: 1097-4911

URL: www.profdevjournal.org

Email: www.profdevjournal.org/contact

Living Inside Prison Walls: Adjustment Behavior

Victoria R. DeRosia. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998.

Victoria R. DeRosia's *Living Inside Prison Walls* is a presentation of her empirical study of "how advantaged offenders, as a subpopulation, adjust to prison."

The advantaged offender is defined as having a significantly higher level of education, income, and occupation, as compared with the bulk of the prison population. The advantaged offender also possesses a keener sense of self, a better overall personality integration, and a more meaningful social support network in one's family and community.

These attributes provide the advantaged offender the basis for a successful prison adjustment, using the coping strategies of high status offenders: "denial of criminality, conformity with institutional rules, and imagined superiority over other inmates" (p. 15).

Before reporting the specifics of the research protocols and findings of her study of the prison population in the facilities of the New York State Department of Correctional Services, DeRosia presents "A profile of the Prison Inmate" and an overview of current "Prison Life," relating to both the advantaged (upper social class) and the disadvantaged (lower social class) offenders. These two presentations are succinct updates, highlighting the present prison culture of the young, the violent, and the drug abusers. The author elaborates on this culture throughout the book, and she suggests that increased research on inmate behaviors is a key to better decision-making and planning, replacing the crisis management approach.

DeRosia provides in the first two chapters not only an orientation to life in prison and statistical profiles of offenders across the nation, but she offers a sharp reminder of the sheer magnitude of the total prison population, the constant expansion of prison facilities, and the many dysfunctional societal aspects which underlie deviant behavior in the United States.

Based upon the results of her study, DeRosia concludes with implications and recommendations for improving prison management and effectiveness. Among these are: a major overhaul of the antiquated prison rules and regimen; the arbitrary manner of rule enforcement within an already chaotic environment; a clarification and agreement concerning a philosophy of positive behavioral change; the need to recruit, select, and train corrections personnel; and an increased effort to ensure a productive and busy schedule particularly for the subpopulation of "advantaged offenders."

DeRosia's important study should stimulate a response to the challenges in both inservice training and continuing education for personnel at all levels within correctional systems.

Albert E. Wilkerson, DSW
School of Social Administration
Temple University