

Prison Pups: Assessing the Effects of Dog Training Programs in Correctional Facilities. Britton, D. M., Button, A. *Journal of Family Social Work*, 9(4) 2005:79-95.

Abstract: During the past twenty-five years, the number of prison programs in which inmates train dogs has increased rapidly. There are no comprehensive data on the prevalence of such programs, but they are in existence in at least twenty U.S. states, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Italy. Though extremely popular among both administrators and inmates, we have only anecdotal accounts to assess the effects of dog training by inmates. Such programs appear to have the potential to break down barriers of fear and mistrust between staff and inmates; and there is also some evidence, again anecdotal, that they reduce recidivism and behavioral infractions among inmates. Literally no systematic studies exist, however. This research provides preliminary information from data collected in two Kansas prisons (a men's and a women's institution) in which inmates train assistance dogs and dogs made available for adoption by the general public. This paper focuses on the qualitative findings from the interviews conducted at the men's prison, and examines motivations for entering the program, challenges inmates face in their work, and the benefits they believe come in participating.