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1/20/26 Quinten Yonkers #437655
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To the people of the Correctional Advisory Committee,

My name is Quinten Yonkers. I am 4 1/2 years into a 10 year prison sentence for a sex offense I committed, stemming from a sexual addiction I have had since I was about 14. I am 28 years old, I am a first-time offender, and I am hopefully going to be granted parole next month. I am writing this to address the myriad complaints I have had towards the "correctional" system in general, but specifically from the viewpoint of a person with a sex offense who had never previously known the world of incarceration, and who has met countless obstacles imposed by this system while trying to do the work on himself that brought him here in the first place.

I was in Bridgeport County for 15 months until I was sentenced in December of 2021. That entire time, there was no access whatsoever to any programs or forms of therapy in general. I could go on about the pathetic conditions we faced in there, from a total lack of air conditioning in the summer, to no electricity outlets in the cell (and thus us being disallowed from buying beard trimmers, fans, etc.) But the crucial element one needs, especially when facing a prison sentence while trying to work through a decades-long sexual addiction that he had no idea how to work through, is regular, specialized therapy. Without that, I was left to my own ways of trying to heal myself. I did this for those 15 months, as best as I could, but I still really had no idea if what I was doing - reading all about this problem, developing a fervent Buddhist practice, and talking in depth with (unqualified) family members - was the right way to do this. It definitely wasn't enough. Even then, I knew I should be in some therapy or programs daily, not so I wouldn't reoffend, but so I could unpack finally the depth of the remorse, shame, origins, and everything my problem and crime carried.

I then spent over two years in MacDougall. The single program offered for people with sex offenses met one session a week for 9 months. It was taught by two LCSW's who clearly did not know the material (and admitted as much), and the topics covered were, though helpful for people who had no prior concept of anything relating to the topics, incredibly basic. We read packets

and barely had discussions on the topics that had any merit. After the class ended (and even during it) I asked the facilitators if there was more we could do; maybe a continuing care or support group, because there were now no more sex-offense classes. I was told, in writing, that there was nothing more we could do, and that the administration didn't want to have facilitated support groups because they "would be more harmful due to having sex offenders congregate together", as if we'd just conspire how to reoffend or something. I was also told that the group I took was only meant to lay the foundation of understanding my problem, so that when I go home I could continue that type of work, not thinking anything about the fact that I'm supposed to use prison to rehabilitate, not wait until I'm back in society.

Because of this, after having gotten these responses from Dr. Cruz (the head of mental health) and other administration members, I asked to start therapy or counselling sessions (which prior I was told I couldn't do.) I was told again I had too low of a mental health level to regularly see a therapist or counselor (despite telling them that having seen different social workers a week after I'd write about needing to see them did nothing, especially when half of them didn't care about helping and none of them had any experience with sexual therapy. I finally was persistent enough in writing the administration and having my family call the facility, that they raised my mental health score so I'd be able to meet with Dr. Pieri "regularly" (which turned out to be one hour every month and a half). Despite her not having experience in sexual therapy, she really cared and was very helpful, but we met so infrequently that it was barely anything.

Once I came here to Brooklyn, the facility that was supposedly for people with sex offenses, I found out that there were again no more programs for sex offenders. The "mental health office" consisted (it doesn't exist anymore) of one woman who was completely apathetic, unexperienced, and unfit to do any counselling. I met with her once a week, despite her literally telling me "I don't know what to say about that" or just asking random questions about when I'm going home or how my brother was, until after our 6th meeting she told me I can't regularly see her, because six times is the max. I wrote to her after that to see her a few times per diem, but she never saw me other than once. Now, there's still no access to any form of therapy, and the basic programs, like VOICES, are so insubstantive and just unhelpful. I'm proud of myself for the amount of work I've done completely on my own, but as someone who's imprisoned for up to ten years for a sex offense, I should have access to multiple different programs pertinent to things like healthy sexuality,

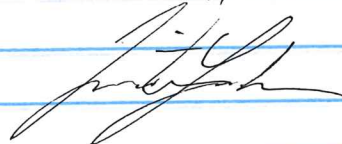
trauma healing, and even a 12-step program for sexual addiction, multiple times per week, taught by facilitators with proper credentials, experience, knowledge, and outright care for what they're doing. I have seen none of that - nothing that even comes close - in these past years.

Though the main reason for this letter is to explain the total lack of therapeutic help and care in the DOC, the other problems I've experienced are also unacceptable and embarrassing for a department that calls itself, in its mission statement "a global leader in rehabilitative incarceration". Our food (both from the chow hall and commissary) is unhealthy and void of nutritional value (i.e., the majority of the vegetables we're given is either dried peas, corn or carrot cubes) and is primarily simple carbs and low-grade soy protein. Our medical system is completely useless (I spent my two years at MacDougall fighting for an MRI for my chronic back pain, and went through five dentals of grievances until I moved here, and once I got here I was told to sign a form saying I would never complain about my pain to medical or else I'd get transferred).

Here at Brooklyn, we are not allowed to go outside for rec at all between late fall and early spring regardless of the weather. Our mattresses are completely inadequate, and cause us debilitating sciatic pain for months on end. And most significantly, there is no chance for better conditions, or even things like a choice for healthier food or more freedoms for good behavior - only consequences for bad behavior. I've had no disciplinary infractions, I'm a mentor in three programs, I've done probably 90% of programs available in DOC, and have worked so hard on my problem, yet I'm not allowed good time, or better living arrangements, or anything beneficial.

There's so much more I could write, and I plan on doing this type of advocacy work as a career when I'm released, but I'll leave it here. I hope this was helpful, and I appreciate all the work you seem to be doing on our behalf. Please reach out to me if you have any more questions, or if there is any other way I may be of service.

Thank you so much,
Sincerely,



Quinten Yonkers