

Negative Self-Awareness and Its Effect on Crime

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Abstract : This paper hypothesizes that withdrawal from positive self-awareness, and the increase of counterfactual-thinking and self-handicapping can help provide ample justification for an individual before, during and/or after committing a crime. The understanding of who someone is, one's perspective on the world, and why they think the way they do is key to therapy in preventing recidivism. Developing habits to escape self-awareness, by using self-handicapping and counterfactual ideologies, may provide the necessary thinking patterns to decide disobeying the law is a worthy act to pursue. An increase in self-awareness is hypothesized to decrease the likelihood of recidivism, and ways of thinking that withdraw from self awareness can increase the likelihood of it. Especially for those who have been disadvantaged in life and disobeyed the law, self-handicapping and counterfactual thinking can also help to justify one's wrongdoing. The understanding of how a criminal views their disadvantages in the world, and one's thinking patterns are hypothesized to help one better understand the entire scope on why a crime was committed and thus reduce the likelihood of recidivism. Utilizing therapy for prisoners to increase self-awareness of both thought and action can lead to a healthy, happier life and reduce the likelihood of reoffending. By discussing the terms associated with self-awareness theory and other psychological topics such as self-handicapping, counterfactual thinking, this paper argues the actions towards increasing positive self-awareness can help decrease likelihood of recidivism. Adversely, hypothesizing that increasing the ways of thinking that withdraw one from self-awareness, through counterfactual thinking and self-handicapping, can inherently increase the likelihood of recidivism. Evaluating these findings to further understand the needed changes in correctional institutions is fundamental to reducing crime, benefiting the criminal, the victim(s) and their family, and the state.

Keywords : crime, self-awareness theory, correctional institutions, self-regulate, counterfactual thinking, recidivism

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