

Crown counsel. The victim's views and needs should be ascertained and presented, after disclosure to the defence, to the sentencing judge. Wherever possible, victim-offender reconciliation services and, in more serious cases, alternative sentence planning services — both of which are discussed in Chapter Seven — should be engaged at the earliest opportunity to provide appropriate support to victims and to assist all parties in reaching or proposing sentencing dispositions responsive to the needs of both victims and offenders.

## **F. Offender Rehabilitation**

The Committee is aware that some (perhaps many) offenders will not easily accept responsibility for their offences. In some cases, their "criminal thinking" will be deeply ingrained and their denial of their own responsibility will be strong. In these and other cases, offenders' own needs may be so great that they may be unable to make any meaningful restitution or efforts to repair the harm done until they have been rehabilitated. (Many witnesses used the word "habilitation" rather than "rehabilitation" to draw attention to the deficiencies in some offenders' development. These are said to be so great as to require corrections to provide basic opportunities for personal, social, educational and vocational skill development. It is not so much a matter of restoring what has been lost, but of providing what the offender has never had.)

The sentencing and correctional processes must acknowledge this and provide opportunities for offender habilitation, not simply because (as some suggest) such offenders may have themselves been victims. In the absence of so doing, it is unlikely that these offenders will be able to acknowledge their own roles in their behaviour, demonstrate to their victims and the community their efforts to restore the social balance which was disrupted by their conduct, and change their subsequent attitudes and behaviour so as to avoid criminal conduct in the future.

The rehabilitation of offenders was recommended, generally in conjunction with other goals, by a number of witnesses as the purpose of sentencing. Some witnesses suggested it as a mechanism for protecting the public from recidivistic crime; for others it had "purer" humanistic origins.

Although it is generally recognized that prisons are not suitable for rehabilitating offenders, some courts continue to sentence offenders to imprisonment for rehabilitative purposes. It has become well understood in