of interpersonal behaviors. The research described will indicate a very important aspect of a criminal individual’s functioning, his/her thinking and the factors which influence it. Additionally, the identification of key elements in the juvenile criminal’s cognitive system will allow for their modification and appropriate planning of the rehabilitation procedures, which, when combined with behavioral methods applied in rehabilitation institutions, will create a better chance for the desired change in the functioning of juveniles. This will then contribute to better fulfilment of social roles when they return to their environment and society. It is an established fact that only a small percentage of the juveniles’ family environment undergoes a positive change and it is rather the juveniles themselves who, having experienced various degrees of rehabilitation, are responsible for the change in their own behavior. The model of rehabilitation presupposes inclusion of the juvenile’s family environment in the process, thus resulting in a number of changes reinforcing the effects of the juvenile’s rehabilitation process. Practical experience, however, coupled with a lack of any coherent system of help for socially maladjusted children, shows that the changes in a juvenile’s family environment to which he/she returns are, in fact, minimal.

All the more, a cognitive change and adjustment in the way of thinking, as a permanent change, will, after a juvenile’s return, increase the chance of behavior which conforms to the accepted norms and rules of social functioning; a juvenile individual will be able to interpret the information he/she receives in a different manner, to select it appropriately and will not react to it in such a defensive way, with their level of understanding significantly improved. Any change in behavior must be preceded by a cognitive change.

References


