

Purposes of Punishment

Criminal Justice

The five stated aims of a sentence, and how far evidence supports each.

The aims conflict; a sentence rarely serves all five at once.

Aim	Mechanism	Evidence
Retribution	Deserved censure	A normative claim, not empirical
Deterrence	Fear of detection	Certainty beats severity
Incapacitation	Restraint while inside	Real, costly per crime saved
Rehabilitation	Change risk factors	Works best when RNR is followed
Reparation	Repair to the victim	High victim satisfaction

Educational reference. A sentence chosen for deterrence is not necessarily the sentence that reduces reoffending.