The Council of State Governments
Southern Legislative Conference
STAR Presentation

ADMINISTRATIVE SEGREGATION STEP DOWN PROGRAM
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
Administrative Segregation
Step-Down Program

Virginia Department of Corrections
Administrative Segregation Operational Strategy

Guided by Evidence-Based Practices
“Partnering Science with Corrections”
Administrative Segregation Defined:

- Offenders are assigned due to assaultive and disruptive behaviors at lower level facilities
- Escape histories
- Extremely violent and notorious crimes
- Managed with high security controls and locked in cells for 23 hours per day
- Due to security concerns, programming is very limited
Definition of Problem:

- National over-reliance on “locking up the problem”
- Perpetual assignment
- Social isolation
- Staff stress and burnout
- More expensive than general population
- Less prepared to reenter society
Project Goals:

- Develop a pathway for offenders to successfully step-down from administrative segregation to lower security levels in a way that:
  - maintains public, staff and offender safety
  - applies the principles of evidence-based practices

- Infuse research and evaluation into the operational design:
  - by setting observable and measurable standards as a means to ensure fidelity
  - assessing outcome effectiveness
  - evaluation and research together will support the executive staff in determining areas of strength and areas for adjustment
Results of Administrative Segregation Step Down Program:

Program Participation: 0 to 460

Offender Grievances: 23%

Prison Incidents: 56%

Offenders in Ad Seg: 58%
Guidelines for the redesigned strategy for administrative segregation are drawn from the science of Evidence Based Practices.

Changing facility culture requires addressing each of the three primary components that make up the prison culture which are:

- Facility Resources and Operating Procedures
- Offender Thinking and Behavior
- Staff Beliefs, Attitudes, Skills and Practices
Strategies Employed:

- Narrowing Assignment Criteria
- Staff Training
- Identify Long-term Offenders (Intensive Management - IM)
- Create a Program for Offenders to Earn Lower Classification (Special Management – SM)
Strategies Employed: Staff Training

- Effective Communication
- De-escalate Tensions
- Motivate Change
- Learning Teams
Strategies Employed: Programming

- Identify reasons contributing to Administrative Segregation behavior and create different programmatic and management strategies for each grouping to motivate change

  - Identify Long-term Offenders (*Intensive Management* - IM)
  - Create a Program for Offenders to Earn Lower Classification (*Special Management* - SM)
Identifying Long Term Offenders:

Intensive Management - IM

- Potential for extreme and deadly violence
  - History indicates willingness to carry out serious or deadly harm
  - Institutional charges with intent to seriously harm or kill staff or offenders

- Offenders with high escape risk

- High Profile or Notorious Crimes
Pathways to Lower Security:

Special Management - SM

- Frequent, recurring disciplinary violations at lower security levels resulting in harm to staff or offenders – without intent for serious harm or intent to kill
- Pattern of repeated disruptive behavior resulting in significant property damage
- Offenders who intentionally commit disciplinary violations with the goal of remaining segregated
- Interventions at lower security levels ineffective
Pathways to Lower Security:

Special Management – A Three Tiered System

- Increased Responsible Behavior
- Reduced Disciplinary Infractions
- Evidence-Based Programming

Incentives
Programming/Assessment:

COMPAS
computerized decision-support system for treatment planning and management

URICA
University of Rhode Island Change Assessment Scale
Stage-Readiness of Change

Case Plan and Management Path Selection

Criminal Thinking Scales
Introduced to develop a baseline of criminogenic thinking

TCU Criminogenic Scales
- Social functioning
- Motivation
- Engagement
- Psychological functioning
- Decision Making
Programming Objectives:

- Motivate offenders to participate in the step-down program which includes three areas of commitment by the offender:
  1. Program participation goals
  2. Disciplinary Violation goals
  3. Responsible behavior goals
     - Personal hygiene
     - Standing for count
     - Maintaining orderly living environment
     - Deportment; satisfactory rapport with staff & offenders

- Participation is voluntary

- Offenders who choose to participate in the step-down program earn increasing privileges and eligibility for classification reduction and transfer to lower security level facilities
Program is a Cognitive Behavioral Interactive Journaling Program

To assist offenders with addressing errors in thinking

Focuses on helping high-risk offenders live a life free of criminal activity, violence and drug use and emphasizes the importance of building a healthy support system.
Programming Phase 1:

- Therapeutic Modules
- Counselor & Treatment Officer Facilitation
- Challenge Series
- Interactive Journals

Controlled Movement to Program

Treatment Officer Facilitation
Programming Phase 2:

- Security Programming Chairs
- Establish Program Goals
Programming – Security Level 6:

- Phase 1 & 2
- Unrestrained
- Thinking for a Change

- Small Group Pod Recreation
- Group Chow
Programming Timeline:

SM - Phase I
• Therapeutic Modules

SM - Phase II
• Security Programming Chairs

Step Down
• Security Level 6
• Unrestrained
• Single Escort
• Small group recreation

General Population
• Level 4 or 5

Release
Diagram of the Segregation Step Down Program

ROSP Orientation

- SM - 0
  - SM – 1
    - SM – 2
      - Security Level 6
        - SIP, SAM, Re-entry
          - Security Level 5 - ROSP
            - Other Prisons
              - Statewide

- IM - 0
  - IM – 1
    - IM – 2
      - Security Level 6
        - Closed Pod
Creativity – Approach is unique in its basis on the science of Evidence Based Practices throughout entire institution

Effectiveness - Demonstrated success in reducing Administrative Segregation assignments by 58% with no significant costs to state

Impact – Staff and offender safety is increased. Producing safer communities for citizens as offenders become less criminal. Virginia’s recidivism rate has dropped from 26.1% in 2010 to 23.4% in 2013 which is the second lowest rate in the nation

Transferability – process is well defined in a manual for others to follow. Minimal costs. Virginia is working with other states to implement similar process
Results of Administrative Segregation Step Down Program:

- Program Participation: 0 to 460
- Offender Grievances: 23%
- Prison Incidents: 56%
- Offenders in Ad Seg: 58%