

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RELATED EXCERPTS
FROM THE
CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION INSPECTION COMMITTEE REPORT
ON THE
INSPECTION AND EVALUATION
OF THE
SOUTHERN OHIO CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

March 17, 2005

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Page 21. According to communication from inmates and observations regarding J complex, serious attention needs to be given to this particular area of the institution to **enforce the requirement to provide and maintain clean, sanitary cell conditions.**

Page 22. K-2 block was observed as in need of attention in regard to sanitary conditions... The cells were regarded as poorly ventilated and in need of **attention to improve both sanitation and lighting.**

Page 33. In the interests of safety and security, it is **strongly recommended that medicine balls be eliminated from SOCF due to their proven misuse to cause physical harm to others.**

Page 36. Based on the inspection of J-4, a thorough cleaning was needed...**Serious attention should be given to the sanitary conditions** of this unit by staff. The conditions indicate that **constant monitoring and supervision are needed to ensure that the block provides a safe, sanitary environment, as well as to ensure distribution of necessary cleaning supplies and provision of assistance as needed. Sanitary conditions of the cells should be given priority attention. An acceptable level of hygiene should be maintained in all cells throughout the institution, especially the mental health and segregation units.**

Page 59. In fact, one SOCF staff person relayed that the “majority of **slinger flingers**” reportedly 95% are in 4B lockdown, reportedly 65% are mentally ill, and such behavior reportedly occurs most frequently in the K2 and J2 slammer cells. With that, it is reasonable to **question the extent to which they are receiving the maximum resources of the mental health staff and programming available at SOCF.**

Page 60. At SOCF, whether by the mentally ill or the mentally healthy, throwing urine/feces is reportedly a method to “get back”, to react to reportedly hateful words or actions, and/or to express their anger, hatred and total disrespect of another, whether the target is a staff person or an inmate. **If it is true that the majority of bomb outs occur in the K2 and J2 slammer cells, consideration must be given to identifying what it is about the environment, including inmates and staff in the area, the place, placement, and cell conditions, which may contribute to the problem....**

One inmate who discussed the subject relayed that more should be done to **improve staff/inmate relations.** The inmate stated that **efforts to improve staff/inmate relations could decrease the tension that reportedly exists between the two, and thereby reduce the occurrence and reoccurrence of bomb outs. If in fact bomb outs are a reaction to hostile, hateful or provoking words or actions, staff are in a position to**

halt the offensive behavior or to perpetuate it. Serious, intensive staff training on how to prevent such behavior should be provided.

One SOCF staff person relayed that **bomb outs stem from boredom. Those in 4B lockdown have no jobs.** The current practice is to have general population 4A inmates work as porters in 4B. This has been cited as a problem by SOCF staff, in part because the inmates are reportedly constantly pressured to smuggle in contraband. In addition, according to SOCF staff, inmate porters reportedly do not want to go into the 4B blocks, so they reportedly spend as little time as possible in them. **Unless monitored and closely supervised by Officers assigned to the blocks, inmate porters may not be fulfilling their assigned duties with regard to cleaning the blocks, ensuring that inmates have what they need to clean their cells, and providing proper meal trays to the inmates...**

One SOCF staff person relayed that **getting rid of idleness is the key. It was felt that inmate boredom is the priority challenge at SOCF, not only in the lockdown 4B areas, but also in population where inmates reportedly have no meaningful jobs, and where education is limited to GED level.**

According to one staff person, the **post-riot, anti-inmate mentality coupled with boredom, leads to a combative, explosive environment on both sides, staff and inmate. Reportedly, it takes staff willingness to get a work program going at SOCF, such as mowing grass with a push mower, and/or growing vegetables inside the fence. Idleness and boredom in 4B lockdown is also reported by SOCF staff to be partly related to the extremely poor TV reception in the area, termed "the worst."**

Page 61. **Consideration should be given to providing positive programming over the TVs on the ranges. Library deficiencies were cited by one staff person as relevant to the boredom issue. Every effort should be provided to maximize the potential of the library to provide a meaningful use of lockdown time via reading. The number of inmate on staff assaults at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility merits priority concern, as well as a careful review to determine the causal factors, so that an effective prevention plan can be implemented.**

Page 69. **The largest number of use of force incidents were prompted by an inmate's refusal of a direct order. In such cases, it is not known the extent to which alternatives to force were first attempted to gain compliance. This would seem to be an area in which training in prevention of use of force incidents could assist in reducing the number of such use of force incidents, which is in the best interests of staff as well as inmates due to the injuries which can result to both...**

Based on SOCF data, of the 286 inmates involved in use of force incidents in 2004, 126 were on the mental health caseload, comprising 44% of the total. Data also shows that an additional 49 inmates involved in the use of force were on the mental health caseload in the past, and in nine instances, the inmate was placed on the caseload after the use of force incident. Therefore, a total of 184 inmates with a mental health history were

involved in a use of force incident, comprising 64.4% of the use of force incidents in 2004...

Page 70. It has been suggested that the CIIC conduct an **SOCF staff survey to seek broad input on identified problems or issues of concern**. However, SOCF staff are free to contact the CIIC by phone, letter, or in office visit at any time. The **survey suggestion is one that the SOCF Administration could and perhaps should more appropriately consider**. With the announcement of a new Warden's arrival on April 4, 2005, such staff input could be a valuable guide in determining priority directions.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES:

The Mentally Ill in 4B

The original concept of housing the mentally ill who are classified as level 4B together to maximize ease and frequency of access to mental health staff and to create an intensive mental health treatment unit and environment necessary to improve mental health and behavior, should be implemented. The four empty cellblocks make it possible to **move the J-4 concept to other secure blocks on K side to include levels of freedom, privilege and restrictions based on behavior and needs. Movement, confrontation, and use of force can be minimized by providing within the unit (s), a better, equally secure alternative to J-2 placement. Just as Protective Control units and other Residential Treatment Units in other Ohio prisons have successfully created their own segregation status cells, so also could the proposed Intensive Mental Health Treatment Unit create the same.**

Page 71. The former Psychiatric Residential Treatment Unit that existed at the Correctional Reception Center responded to the **need to work with the mentally ill** who were in Local Control in Ohio prisons, and **who demonstrated chronic inability to adjust due to their mental illness**. The Unit's mission was to assist the mentally ill in modifying their behavior and to address their mental health needs. **Misconduct was met with perseverance and concentrated efforts by treatment staff. Cooperation and compliance were not among the criteria for admission or retention.**

An inmate's average length of stay at SOCF is three to four years. Part of the SOCF mission is to promote inmates' positive adjustment, behavior and ability to return to a lower security level. Based on information provided in January 2005, **of the mentally ill, one inmate each has been at SOCF for 13 years, 12 years, 10 years and nine years. Four of the mentally ill inmates have been at SOCF for eight years. Three of the mentally ill have been at SOCF for seven years. Ten mentally ill have been at SOCF for six years, and five mentally ill inmates have been at SOCF for five years.**

The mental health staff are uniquely qualified to provide concentrated efforts to enable the 4B mentally ill to work their way to 4A and then to level three institutions. The fact that they are in 4B is an indication that they are not doing well.

The lock down environment and idleness, without the full benefit of the programs and staff interaction afforded to the RTU inmates, falls short of intensive mental health treatment and falls short of providing an environment conducive to good mental health.

A secure K side environment transformed into a Residential Treatment Unit with mental health driven levels of restriction and privilege, per ODRC policy, would accommodate security and treatment needs. Consolidation of the mentally ill in 4B status would make a major, positive impact on the total environment in the 4B blocks, for the benefit of security staff, treatment staff, and 4B inmates who are not mentally ill.

Staff/Inmate Relations

The transformation initiated by litigation that occurred at OSP in terms of staff/inmate relations, came about through a **decided change in communication and interaction between staff and inmates**. When it comes to human interaction, just as hostility begets hostility, and violence begets violence, respect begets respect. **Staff/inmate relations need to improve to provide a safe, secure environment for all. A concerted effort to address the reported SOCF problems and grievances in the Force/Supervision category will help to bring about the same transformation and benefits experienced at OSP in improving the work environment for staff. It can be done through the guidance, direction and vigilance of administrative and security supervisors.**

Page 72. **Training in Interpersonal Communications** was provided in March 2004 to security staff. Specifically, the training was targeted at working with the mentally ill. **Ongoing training in the area can only help to ensure the development of IPC skills, which are effective in all human interaction, not just with the mentally ill.**

4B Idleness/Sanitation

The isolation and idleness in 4B is believed to be a causal factor in the behavior problems among 4B inmates. Addressing the idleness therefore would serve security purposes. Currently, 4A population inmates serve as porters, delivering meal trays to 4B inmates, cleaning, and performing housekeeping duties. The number of 4A inmates needed for Food Services, coupled with the reduced inmate population, has reportedly resulted in reduced availability of 4A inmate participants in coveted vocational programs.

The 4B blocks on the day of the inspection revealed a lack of attention to the need to provide a clean living environment. **Inmates in 4B could earn the privilege of a job assignment as porter. This would address the Officers' concerns regarding the pressure placed on 4A porters to smuggle contraband into the blocks.** Reportedly, the current porters do not want to go into the blocks, so they minimize the time spent in them, possibly neglecting their duties regarding cleaning and providing cleaning supplies to inmates who need to clean their cells. **With the potential inmate workers in 4B, there is no reason why they should not be as clean and sanitary as the 4A blocks.**

Block officers must be required to supervise the inmate porters, or as inmates have suggested, “cleaning crews,” and must insist upon the highest standard of cleanliness in the blocks. The condition of the blocks translates into the atmosphere and behavior in the block. Cleanliness can only serve good purposes. It has been said that where cleanliness is lacking in a housing area or block, other serious, though less visible problems are also likely to exist.

Efforts should be made to maximize the video program time, again to eliminate idleness. Rather than non-productive TV programs which reportedly have extremely poor reception, the range TVs could provide an array of positive self-improvement video programs. Rather than invest staff time to create programs for 4B inmates, it would seem beneficial to obtain the video programs already developed at OSP for the level five inmates. Expanded use of the program booths could provide secure space for supervised activities such as community service projects for schools, or therapeutic activities.

4A Idleness

Page 73. Some SOCF staff have expressed that a large part of the problem has to do with the extent to which inmates are in lockdown, even in 4A. **It reportedly will take staff’s understanding that work and other meaningful activities are good for security, a fact proven throughout prison history. Community service projects for 4A inmates should be expanded. Video and other positive programming should be maximized. Again, the programs developed and used at OSP can be equally beneficial to the SOCF inmates.**

4B Sexual Offenders and Slinger Flingers

As of December 6, 2004, there were 189 sex offenders in level four. **There is no sex offender program at SOCF, yet exposure or sexual imposition has been cited by staff and inmates as a source of frustration. Behavior modification programs should be designed to address targeted problem areas negatively impacting staff and other inmates, areas prone to provoke anger and violence. Sex offender programming should be provided in response to institutional need, not limited to convicted sex offenders, but also those whose misconduct in prison is sexual in nature. SOCF has never had a sex offender treatment program for even convicted sex offenders, in spite of the motivation for treatment and recognition of the need. There is no better way to alleviate idleness and make productive use of time, than by providing a meaningful behavior modification program designed to address offensive and violence producing behavior, which most definitely includes sexual misconduct and urine/feces throwers.**

Those termed “**slinger flingers**” are demonstrating behavior that is an expression of anger and hatred which provokes the same. OSP initially responded to the problem by using strips to seal the sides and bottoms of cell doors, and requiring inmates to stand in

the back of the cell, and to show their hands prior to approaching the cuff port opening. **However, the most important preventive solution was reportedly found in improvements in staff/inmate relations via communication skills that replaced hostility with respect.**

Mental health staff are the behavioral experts who are in the best position to design and implement a program of behavior modification for sexual offenders and slinger flingers at SOCF.

Slammer Cells

Slammer cells exist only at SOCF. **The extent to which they do or do not serve a legitimate institution need or actually provoke problems,** has been debated throughout SOCF history. **Strict criteria and guidelines for their use** have been met by allegations of chronic non-compliance with criteria for placement and length of placement, including but not limited to placement of the mentally ill. The findings on the analysis of location of use of force incidents clearly identify the slammer cells as trouble spots. **It is recommended that a serious review and careful appraisal of the use and existence of SOCF slammer cells be conducted, and that action be taken based on the findings.**

Grievance Procedure

Page 74. One staff person was questioned about the extent to which retaliation for filing grievances exists at SOCF. The staff person responded that there **is no reason for staff to be retaliatory, because they “know nothing will happen to them” as a result of any grievance. If true, it points to a flaw in the grievance procedure at SOCF. Inappropriate supervision,** for example, is the largest complaint category of reported concerns to the CIIC and the largest category of grievances at SOCF. **If such allegations are valid, but are not being addressed, the reason must be determined.** Such allegations are reported to be the most difficult to prove or validate. Perhaps that is why so many “not resolved” grievances result in findings of “insufficient evidence to support the claim.”

An effective grievance procedure can prevent costly litigation and violence. It is the peaceable, proper method to report a wrong and to seek the Inspector’s intervention rather than respond in anger. The inmate grievance procedure should be an important part of the solution to resolve identified issues of concern pertaining to staff/inmate relations.

The Inspector’s **thorough investigations and corrective action can complement the work of administrative and supervisory staff in bringing about improvements in communication skills, which promote respect, compliance and cooperation. By addressing the pattern of issues,** grievances should decrease in volume, enabling the Inspector to **increase responsiveness to interview requests and to increase block walkthroughs to make himself accessible to those unable or reluctant to use the grievance procedure.**