

TRANSITION UPDATE

Hall County Department Of Corrections

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OFFICER OF THE MONTH

The selection of Officer of the Month was more difficult this month due to the fact that we received so many good nominations. To the Officers who took the time out of their busy shifts to recognize a fellow Officer we say thanks. To all Officers that come to work and ensure the safety of the public, the inmates and their fellow employees we all say thank you.

One year from this month Chief Construction and the other contractors should be completing their work and our work will be getting busier. As construction is completed we will begin to train and work in the new facility. When you get

your new 2007 calendar mark December as training time for the new facility.

The December Officer of the Month has been with the Department of Corrections for six and a half years. During that time this Officer has rarely used sick leave and has frequently volunteered for overtime, coming in on days off, coming in early and staying late. This Officer has also been tested in extremely difficult situations and has not only survived, but has returned strong and willing to work. This Officer has served in a leadership role and has done well. This Officer serves as a positive role



model for all Officers. The December Officer of the Month is Corrections Officer Diane Dombrowski. Thank you for your service and dedication to duty.

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IN TRANSITION

On December 11, 2006, Sergeant Wegner will begin orientation with Lee Miller. If you see them walking around say hello.

Emmett Arnett continues to mend from his shoulder surgery

and should return when his physical rehabilitation is complete.

To all of the Officers that received recognition at the Hall County Employee Recognition night on November 17, con-

gratulations. We would also like to thank the Hall County Board for the delicious meal and the recognition.

IPC-REVIEW

One year from now our new facility will almost be finished. We will be moving from a facility that was built to house 120 (or less) to one that is built to house 300. We will be moving from the philosophy called linear indirect supervision to direct supervision.

To accomplish this change we will need new tools and methods for dealing with inmates. One of these new tools will be IPC (Interpersonal Communication).

In October's newsletter we covered the

basics: sizing up the situation with position, posture, observation and listening, the skills that help you decide what action to take in any given situation.

In November we covered the add-ons: communicating with inmates by responding to what they are saying and asking questions. These skills are the key to finding out what is really going on in a situation.

In December we will be covering the application skills to help us manage the inmate in new and better ways.



THE APPLICATIONS

The application skills combine the basic and the add-on skills and are aimed at managing and controlling inmate behavior.

Not all the ways in which officers try to control inmates are good; some are actually dangerous and more than a few have proven disastrous. Many ineffective methods of management and control have been based on myths about correctional work. The problem with the majority of these is that they treat anything other than a show

of pure force as a sign of officer weakness, but with IPC skills we will have another method to use.

As soon as an officer begins to develop effective interpersonal management skills they begin to experience the real reward of being able to control situations with less tension, less force and a lot less risk to themselves. Every Officer needs specific yet constructive ways of managing and controlling inmate behavior. With the ap-

plications we will describe several methods of doing this.

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APPLICATIONS—HANDLING REQUESTS

Handling requests is the ability to manage inmate requests in a fair and effective manner. The skillful handling of requests helps build trust and reduce tension in the institution.

The first step to handling a request is to decide if it is a legitimate request. Before you respond



to any inmate request, you need to use your basic skills. Are they leveling with you, or are they running some kind of game? The Officer also needs to check out the situation in terms of rules and regulations.

The second step is responding with a reason for your decision.

The Officer can respond with “No I won’t do it because..., I’ll look into it because..., or Yes I’ll do it because...”. In each case the Officer bases the decision on the laws and regulations of the facility and communicates those reasons to the inmate. This type of communication should work with the reasonable 90%-95% of the inmate population.

APPLICATIONS—MAKING REQUESTS

Making requests is the ability to manage inmates by making specific requests of them. Making requests skillfully improves the chances that inmates will cooperate and more readily carry out your requests.

The first step to making requests is checking things out. By using your basic sizing-up skills and your responding skills if there's any tension in the air, you can make sure that whatever action you take in making your request will be effective.

The second step is to take appropriate

action. We make requests of inmates every day, but often it is how the request is made that makes the difference. Many Officers have found a polite request is more effective in getting an inmate to do what he is told. Taking action means selecting the best way to make the request. In taking action to get an inmate to do something, you have to be specific. You should identify what you want done and when.

What format you use for making a request will depend on the situation and the particular inmate. Of course, if an inmate

abuses the mild method, you are always free to move to a stronger position including a direct order.

The point of this is to get the job done—to have the inmate do what you want them to do.



APPLICATIONS—REINFORCING BEHAVIOR

Reinforcing behavior is the ability to administer negative and positive consequences effectively. Showing inmates the consequences—either positive or negative—of their actions will help you control behavior. In a jail setting, inmates often test to find out what the limits are and who is really in control. Many inmates want to know “How much can I mess up before someone stops me”. Once an inmate

knows who is in control, he will reduce his testing behavior.

It is important to apply consequences to negative behaviors in a firm, calm and consistent manner. It is equally important to reward good behavior. In fact, trouble can

sometimes get started simply because an Officer doesn't know how to keep things going as well as they have been going.

An effective Officer knows how inmates are handling things and reinforces positive behavior and deals with negative behavior

“...inmates often test to find out what the limits are and who is really in control.”

DIRECT SUPERVISION—POD OFFICER SKILLS

The second Pod Officer skill we will cover will be the ability to use good decision making skills. This skill involves making decisions both independently and with others.

The first step would be to identify the problem. This can be further broken down to also clarifying the problem and identifying the cause.

The second step would be to generate solutions. Using this step within a group setting would involve “brainstorming” to search for several possible solutions.

The third step would be solution selection and action planning. In this portion of the step you would first select one or more possible solutions. For each selection you will need to decide everything that must be

done in order to follow the action plan and then decide who does what by when and where. The final portion of this step would be the selection of a solution and action plan to implement.

After the implementation of the plan there will need to be an evaluation process. After a reasonable length of time plan for an evaluation of the solution.

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DIRECT SUPERVISION PHILOSOPHY

Direct supervision is more than simply placing Officers in with inmates. It is an overall philosophy of operation that constantly and consistently reinforces good behavior. In fact, in direct supervision, the creation of good behavior should be the basis of all decision making at all levels.

An important part of direct supervision philosophy is that we will provide the inmate with a new role in the jail setting: "Normal Adult". As a matter of fact, all planning and operations are based on the belief that most (90-95%) of the inmates, if given the appropriate situation can behave relatively normally. In direct supervision literature this inmate is referred to as situation normal.

We will then create a total environment that will support that expectation. We will create lots of incentives and rewards for

"good" behavior where it is overwhelmingly in the inmate's best interest to behave. They will have too much to lose.

In order to further support good behavior, we create a normalized environment to get a normalized response in inmates. This normalized environment includes a booking room with a waiting area as well as the general population housing units that have more normalized furnishings and fixtures.

For those who can't respond properly to the normalized environment, we will provide "old style" jail units as an incentive for good behavior.

Intake screening and classification are critical in identifying the 5-10% who do not respond appropriately to direct supervision.

Another key factor is to keep inmates

heavily involved in the pod and doing things for themselves.

Staff accessibility is a key factor that makes direct supervision work. However, the interesting thing is that staff can be posted in a unit, and yet by attitude and demeanor be inaccessible. Staff attitude and behavior, more than physical plant, determines the success of direct supervision.

To make direct supervision work, it is important to deal with inmates in a positive, non-judgmental manner.

