

**E = MC<sup>2</sup>:**

***ENGAGING Inmates by Managing Conditions of Confinement***

*"He had discovered a great law of human action, without knowing it--namely, that in order to make a man or boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain. ...Work consists of whatever a body is obliged to do and that Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do."* Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

***How do we motivate inmates to engage in work activities and programs?***

I was recently asked this question by a county that is preparing to make the transition into a new jail. This reminded me of the importance of creating a setting in which inmates are constantly and consistently encouraged to improve their participation and performance.

Many jails have found that innovative, aggressive and coordinated management of inmates' conditions of confinements creates the environment in which inmates get involved.

It's a simple concept and it's not new. Correctional managers set policies about all aspects of inmates' lives-- their physical setting, opportunities, programs, and privileges. We have control over just about *everything* for inmates in our custody and care. This can be a burden, or an opportunity.

Some of the common conditions that are managed to reward inmate performance include:

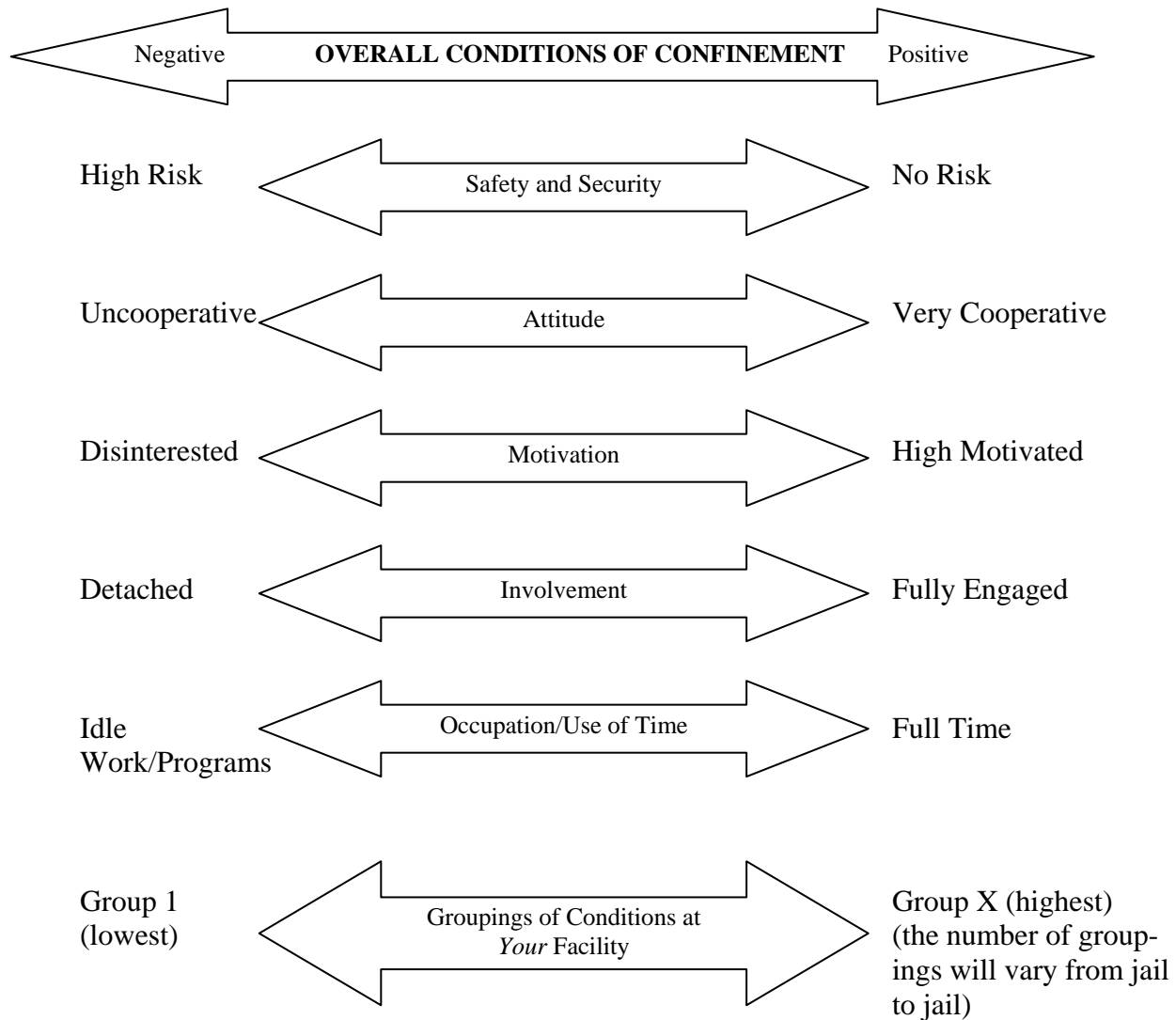
- \* improved housing conditions
- \* increased exercise and recreation opportunities
- \* expanded access to commissary
- \* more and better visiting opportunities

Taking an aggressive, coordinated and proactive approach to the establishment of conditions of confinement can establish a setting in which inmates have constant encouragement to become involved with productive activities and demonstrative appropriate behavior.

Carefully determining conditions of confinement for the entire inmate population will ensure that:

1. Inmates experience steadily improved conditions of confinement as they earn their way up the continuum toward release
2. Inmates and staff will find consistency and fairness in daily operations

**Table 1: Conditions of Confinement Continuum**



### **3 Steps to Create C<sup>3</sup>: *Coordinated Conditions of Confinement***

Every jail already has some sort of "conditions of confinement" system in place, but many are inadequate because:

- \* conditions are inconsistently allocated to different types of inmates
- \* few elements are actually used as incentives
- \* elements are not used to their full potential

A quick three-step process can identify inconsistencies and opportunities:

1. Classify various types of inmates and housing units into distinct groupings that should have similar conditions of confinement

2. Select the specific conditions of confinement elements that you want to manage to motivate inmates
3. Assign variations of each selected element to each grouping of inmates

### **STEP 1: Classify Inmates Into Groupings**

Take a hard look at your inmate population and your facility. Identify inmates that should have the "worst" conditions of confinement (such as disciplinary segregation) and those that should have the "best" conditions (such as trusties).

Start to group various classifications of inmates together according to the level of conditions of confinement that they should receive. The number of groupings will depend on your facility mission, your classification system, and to some extent the extent to which your facility allows you to distinguish the treatment of different types of inmates.

To help frame your thinking, consider the diagram in Table 1. This may help to identify some of the key attributes that will distinguish one group of inmates from another. Add additional considerations to those identified in Table 1 based on your own policies and practices.

Table 2 offers a hypothetical sample of how a jail might identify six distinct groupings of inmates. Some jails might have fewer groupings (possible, but not likely) and some might be able to accommodate more groupings.

**Table 2: Sample of Groupings**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Housing Units/Classifications of Inmates</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1 "worst"	* Disciplinary Segregation (Male and Female)	Highest level of security Lowest level of privileges
2	* Pre-Classification	Inmates who have not yet been classified
3	* Maximum security inmates * Inmates in administrative segregation	
4 "average"	* Medium security inmates (male and female) * Protective Custody (male and female)	
5	* Minimum security inmates * Inmates in programs part-time * Inmates who work part-time	Inmates who are engaged in programs or work part-time
6 "best"	* Full-Time Workers (male and female) * Inmates in full-time programs (or in a combination of work and programs) * Inmates in release programs (work- or education release)	Inmates who are engaged in work and/or programs full time and who have earned the lowest security rating

Make a chart like the one in Table 2 for your own facility. After you have completed it, take a hard look at it to be sure that it is:

- \* realistic (can you distinguish conditions for the inmates in each grouping?)
- \* fair (are male and female inmates treated comparably?, are pretrial detainees not subjected to punitive situations?)

Make adjustments as needed to correct any problems that you identify.

### **Step 2: Select the Conditions Elements That You Want to Manage**

You already have policies and practices that vary the conditions of confinement for different types of inmates in your facility. These are a starting point for this step, but should not be the endpoint. Be creative and consider expanding the ways that you manage conditions of confinement in your jail.

Use Table 3 as a "shopping list" to identify each condition of confinement element that you want to manage. This list is a *starting* point-- there are many additional ways that creative managers use conditions of confinement to improve inmate performance. In addition to the elements identified in Table 3, jails report rewarding inmate labor with such incentives as:

- \* allowing inmates to have radios in their cells (with headphones)
- \* not requiring inmates to pay room and board fees
- \* not requiring copayments for medical care
- \* giving inmates credit towards their court-ordered fines
- \* paying inmates for their labor (some jails also provide pay for program participation)

**Table 3: Shopping List of *Potential* Tools to Motivate Inmates**  
(identify those that you want to manage with an "X")

<b>Physical Conditions</b>	Cell occupancy (single, double, or dorm)
	Unit Size, Density (crowding)
	Fixtures (plumbing, doors) Finishes (carpet, etc.)
	Furnishings (fixed/moveable, institutional/residential)
	Inmate Control of lights
	Inmate control of cell access during day
<b>Daily Schedule/Security</b>	Lights Out
	Lock-Ins (times locked into cell for counts, etc.)
	Out-of-Cell Time
<b>Visiting</b>	Frequency of visits
	Length of Visits
	Type of Visiting (e.g. non-contact, contact)
<b>Exercise</b>	Frequency (of access)
	Length (of access)
	Activities Available
	Equipment Available

(Table 3, continued)

<b>Recreation</b>		Access to recreational materials
		Frequency of access
<b>Telephone</b>		Access (hours, length of calls, number of phones)
		Type of Calls Permitted
<b>Food</b>		Quality/Selection (e.g. Nutra-Loaf)
		Snacks/Juice Bar
		Dining conditions (cell/dayroom/dining room)
<b>Activity</b>		Work options and desirability of jobs
		Library access
		Computer access (in housing units)
		Location of activities (hsg unit, pod, central)
		Opportunities for co-ed activities
<b>Entertainment</b> <i>Television</i>		Hours TV is Available
		TV Content Allowed (e.g. educational, broadcast, cable)
<i>Movies</i>		Equipment (number of sets, type of sets)
		Availability of Movies/Videos
<i>Special Events</i>		Content Allowed (e.g. PG, PG-13, R)
		Access to Concerts/Performances/Special Events
<b>Commissary</b>		Frequency of Access to Commissary
		Selection Available
<b>Other Privileges</b>		Personal Property (more allowed, different types)
		Personalize Cell (able to hang pictures, etc.)
		Clothing (better clothing, option to use own clothes)
		Movement/Mobility within Facility (escort/unescorted)
		Extra Time Off of Sentence
		Furloughs/Temporary Release
<b>Other Incentives/Rewards</b> (use your imagination...)		

Complete Table 3 and step back and consider your work.:

- \* Have you identified all of the *existing* conditions elements that you manage?
- \* Have you identified some *new* elements that can be managed?
- \* Is it realistic to think that you can manage each element that is checked?

Consider passing the completed chart around among staff and ask for their ideas and concerns.

### **Step 3: Assign Specific Levels to Each of the Groupings**

For many managers, this step is the fun part: creating a comprehensive and proactive setting in which every inmate is given constant and consistent incentive to improve their performance.

**Table 4: Sample of Assignment of Specific Levels to Each Group**

Element to be Managed		Description of Specific Conditions/Privileges for Each Grouping of Inmates					
		Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6
Physical Conditions	Cell Occupancy	Single	Double	Dorm	Double	Double	Single
	Furnishings	Steel./fixed	Steel/fixed	Steel	Not steel Not fixed	Not steel Not fixed	Residential
	Inmate Allowed to Control Access to Cell- Daytime	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Sched./ Secure	Lights Out	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30
	Out-of-Cell Time	1 hr/day	4 hrs/day	6 hrs/day	10 hrs/day	12 hrs/day	16 hrs/day
Exercise	Number of times per day allowed	1	1	2	3	Exer.area open all day	Exer. area open all day
	Exercise equip. available	None	Basketball	Basketball	Basketball and Some Exer. quip.	Basketball and More Exer. equip.	Basketball and Most Exer. equip.
Tel- phone	Hours telephone available daily	None	1 hour	2 hours	4 hours	12 hours (dayroom)	16 hours (dayroom)
	Length of calls allowed	None	10 minutes	15 minutes	No limit	No limit	No limit
Food	Type of Food Available	Discipl. Menu	Basic Menu	Basic Menu	Enhanced Menu	Enhanced Menu	Enhanced Menu
	"Extra" Food	None	None	None	Evening Snack	Two Snacks/day	Three Snacks/day
	Dining Conditions	In Cell	In Cell	Dayroom	Dayroom	Dayroom	Separate Dining Area
Activity	Type of job available	None	None	House-keeping	Part-time Job only	Full-time Job	Full-time "preferred"
	Location of activities	None allowed	Cell Area	Housing Unit	Housing Unit	Centralized (group)	Centralized (group)
	Computer access (dayroom)	No	No	No	Yes-limited	Yes-more hours	Yes-most hours
Entertain- ment	Hours TV Available	None	Orientation Tapes only	Evenings 2 hours	Evenings 3 hours	Evenings 6 hours	Days and Evenings
	TV Content Allowed	None	Orientation Only	News and Education	Broadcast Only	Broadcast Some Cable	Broadcast Cable
	Movies/Videos Allowed?	No	No	No	1/week	2/week	3/week
Comm- issary	# Commissary Orders/Week	None	None	1	1	2	3
	Commissary Selection	None	None	Limited	Limited	Expanded	Expanded
Other Privileges	Personal Property Allowed	None	None	Limited (Basic)	Less Limited	More Allowed	Most Allowed
	Clothing	Uniform	Uniform	Uniform	Uniform	May wear personal	May wear personal
	Personalize Cell?	No	No	No	Two pictures	Pictures Posters	Pictures Posters
	Movement in Facility	Escorted	Escorted	Escorted	Some Unescorted	More Unescorted	All Unescorted
	Days off sentence per month	None	None	None	5 days/ month	10 days/ month	15 days/ month

Create a chart that is laid out like the one in Table 4, with a column for each of the "groupings" that you identified in Step 1. Enter a conditions element from Step 2 on each row of the chart and then work your way across the groupings making distinctions. Sometimes you will be able to make a distinction for each group, but more often you will have only two or three levels from which to choose.

**A Plea to Turn Off the TV...** This is the time to take a hard look at how you are using (or abusing) television in your facility. In many jails, visitors are often disappointed to walk into dayrooms to find inmates sitting around televisions. TV is a privilege, not a right. It can be aggressively regulated to create a setting in which inmates are more likely to become involved in programs and work. As long as inmates have the option to sit and watch TV, many will choose to do so. Consider regulating TV in the same way that parents do for their children: control the hours that TV is available and limit the content that can be viewed. Turn off the TV during daytime hours when inmates *should* be involved with work or programming. Ration TV viewing as a prized privilege to reward inmates who are cooperating. Some jail officials consider TV to be a management tool that keeps inmates occupied during long hours of idleness, but it makes more sense to "manage TV" rather than to "manage *with* TV."

Fill in the chart as a draft and then step back and take a close look at it, asking the following questions:

- \* Are there *consistent* improvements in conditions as an inmate moves from left to right on the chart? (look at each row from left to right)
- \* Are the *cumulative* conditions of confinement (the horizontal columns) appropriate for each group of inmates?
- \* Is it realistic to think that you can make all of the distinctions that are described in the chart?

After you have made initial revisions, pass the chart around among staff, contractors and volunteers and ask for their ideas. You may even want to sit down with some inmates to secure their reaction. Don't forget to ask reviewers to offer their comments about the groupings and possible additional elements to consider.

**Increasing Activities...** So you've turned off the TV, limited privileges and encouraged inmates to get involved with work and programs. Congratulations! But how do you meet the increased demand for activities and programs? Some jails have decided that they want to turn idleness into productivity by bringing work projects and activities to the inmates--often in the dayroom. It's increasingly common to find inmates working as teams in their dayrooms preparing mailings for government or non-profit groups, assembling materials for local schools, and participating in other types of work activities. *For more information* about expanding and improving your inmate work activities, contact: BJA Jail Work and Industry Center....

After you have secured a thorough review of the draft, make revisions and start the implementation process. Make periodic reviews and revisions. Consider this to be a work in progress that should be improved with experience.

The results--better motivated and "engaged" inmates--should be realized soon.

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