

Control Units

CURE Position:

1. Control Units and long-term lock-downs should be abolished. No prisoner should be confined in conditions of isolation and reduced sensory stimulation.
2. Mentally ill prisoners and those at risk of mental illness should be removed from control units. Psychologically-advanced programs should be developed for those who are mentally ill and emotionally disturbed.
3. Cognitive restructuring should be emphasized early in the prisoner's incarceration before severe problems develop.

The Problem:

1. In the past ten years, there has been a proliferation of Control Units. Prisoners in such settings are often locked down 23 hours a day. They are denied physical contact with other human beings, and have very limited verbal contact.
2. Isolation is devastating to the human (or animal) psyche. Such settings constitute cruel and inhumane treatment.
3. Transition to the free world is difficult for most prisoners. Prisoners leaving such facilities will have a more difficult time than the normal prisoner in adjusting to the free world.
4. The control unit facilities are expensive to operate. They consume resources which should be devoted to programming, therapy and education.
5. Spiritual, psychological and or physical breakdown can occur through:
 - Arbitrary placement not based on pre-established standards and procedures.
 - Years of isolation from both prison and outside communities while being housed in solitary or small group isolation.
 - Extremely limited access to services such as education, worship or vocational training.
 - A closed environment that facilitates physical abuse such as forced cell extraction, strap-downs, beatings after restraint, and sexual intimidation.