





Direct Supervision Jails

The Role of the Administrator



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Foreword

Since the National Institute of Corrections first introduced the direct supervision principles to jails in the early 1980s, there has been much focus on the role of the detention officer and, to a somewhat lesser degree, the role of the firstline supervisor. This focus was warranted because their roles in a direct supervision jail changed significantly from their roles in a traditional jail. Far less attention has been given to the role of the jail administrator, whose leadership, demonstrated commitment, and vigilant oversight are critical not only to implementing direct supervision, but also—and probably more challenging—to sustaining it over time. This guide brings much-needed attention to the role of the administrator and describes the most fundamental areas in which the administrator’s leadership, guidance, decisions, and actions are essential to the success of direct supervision.

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The development of this document was also directly informed by the experience of the authors: David Bogard as a direct supervision jail administrator, Virginia A. Hutchinson as chief of the NIC Jails Division and an accreditation and training manager for a direct supervision jail, and Vicci Persons as a manager in a direct supervision jail and former staff member of the NIC Jails Division.

Introduction

This guide is for direct supervision jail administrators. A direct supervision jail is designed and operates based on the eight direct supervision principles listed in exhibit 1–1. A direct supervision jail implements these eight principles through both the facility’s design and its operations, as illustrated in the examples below.

The Principles Reflected in Design and Operations

Design

General population housing units feature an officer’s station or desk inside the dayroom so officers can interact with and manage inmates without physical barriers between them. The housing units contain fixtures and furnishings that convey an expectation of positive behavior and create a “normalized,” though secure, environment.

General population inmates, as defined in this guide, include those whom officers can manage with little or no risk to staff or other inmates. They follow rules and get along with fellow inmates. Usually, they represent 90 to 95 percent of the inmate population. The general population excludes inmates whom the jail must segregate because they pose a high security risk or who have special needs that cannot be met in general population units.

EXHIBIT 1–1

Direct Supervision Principles

1. Effective control.
2. Effective supervision.
3. Competent staff.
4. Safety of staff and inmates.
5. Manageable and cost-effective operations.
6. Effective communication.
7. Classification and orientation.
8. Justice and fairness.

Note: See appendix A for a more indepth description of the direct supervision principles.

Note that in smaller jails—generally, those with fewer than 100 beds—there may be certain general population subgroups, such as women, who are housed in units of 8, 10, or 12 inmates. In this case, stationing an officer continuously in a dayroom is unlikely, because this could impose a fiscal burden that many smaller jurisdictions are unable to bear. Instead, the officer provides supervision by moving among these smaller units. However, if the jail houses most of its general population inmates in a direct supervision unit managed by a single officer, that jail would be considered a direct supervision jail.

Operations

The housing unit officer's primary role is to manage inmate behavior, thus ensuring that the unit is safe, secure, and orderly. The officer interacts with inmates continuously to convey and reinforce expectations for positive behavior, provide incentives for positive behavior, and hold individual inmates accountable for negative behavior. The officer is familiar with and addresses the behaviors and needs of individual inmates, is the primary source of information for inmates, and is a role model for positive behavior. The officer is the authority in the housing unit and does not share that authority with inmates.

Although the housing unit officer is the primary manager of inmate behavior, jail operations and the roles of other staff also align with the goal of managing inmates to achieve positive behavior. For example, a direct supervision jail's hiring criteria, staff training, performance appraisal system, approach to inmate classification, housing plan, and inmate programs and services are designed to support the inmate management strategy.

The Principles in the Administrator's Role

All staff in a direct supervision jail have specific roles in ensuring that they fully and correctly implement direct supervision. There has been much discussion of the role of line staff and firstline supervisors, but experts have published little information about the administrator's role in the direct supervision jail. This lack of information should not be perceived as an indication that the administrator's role is minor. In fact, the administrator has the most critical role in implementing the direct supervision principles, fully integrating them into operations, and sustaining them over time.

It is only through the administrator's leadership that staff can successfully apply the direct supervision principles. This guide explores the administrator's role in implementing and sustaining direct supervision in the following key areas:

- Providing leadership.
- Recruiting, hiring, and promoting staff.
- Training staff.
- Supervising staff.
- Determining the number of inmates one officer can supervise effectively.
- Rotating housing unit staff assignments.
- Ensuring that officers interact with inmates.
- Addressing the isolation of the housing unit officer.
- Making decisions using the direct supervision principles.
- Assessing direct supervision operations.

By employing the suggestions in this guide, an administrator can contribute greatly to ensuring that officers integrate the direct supervision principles fully into all aspects of jail operations and use them as the basis for management and operational decisions.

Conclusion

Note that this guide, while focusing on the administrator's role in a direct supervision jail, is not a primer on direct supervision or jail administration in general. The authors assume that the reader is familiar with the direct supervision principles and the basics of jail administration. The intent of this guide is to highlight issues pertinent to direct supervision in various areas of jail administration.

The Jail Administrator's Leadership Role

The foundation of the jail administrator's leadership role in direct supervision is the administrator's commitment, based on a thorough understanding of the direct supervision principles and their implications for operations and decisionmaking. The jail administrator should clearly and continually demonstrate this commitment both inside the jail, to staff and inmates, and outside the jail, to local officials and community members. The administrator demonstrates commitment through what he or she says and does and the decisions that he or she makes. The administrator must be a highly visible leader and role model in support of direct supervision.

The Jail Administrator's Leadership Role Inside the Jail

The administrator must make being in the jail, observing operations, speaking with staff and inmates, and generally keeping a finger on the pulse of the jail a priority. The administrator should formally and informally support staff efforts that conform to the direct supervision principles. Staff usually respond positively to the administrator's regular presence in the jail and appreciate reinforcement for their work. The jail administrator also should be alert to indicators that staff are not implementing the principles effectively, then seek out the reasons for this and plan corrective action. Although all managers and supervisors also should be

required to monitor the implementation of the principles, this is not something that an administrator should simply delegate. Direct supervision cannot be implemented and maintained without the administrator's constant evaluation, attention, and leadership.

Successful leaders must know where they want to lead their staff (direct supervision) and how to get the staff's support. Not visibly and consistently demonstrating a commitment to direct supervision prevents the full and successful implementation of the direct supervision principles. Staff support will be minimal to nonexistent. Many staff are likely to question the effectiveness of direct supervision, especially if their work experience has been in a more traditional jail or if their exposure to jails primarily has come from a misrepresentation of corrections in the media. As one direct supervision jail administrator put it:¹

Achieving staff buy-in is just more difficult in a direct supervision jail. In some cases, it is because staff are coming from an old linear or podular remote facility and that is what they know and are comfortable with. In other cases, it is because direct supervision is just counterintuitive to many folks' notion of what jail is or should be like. And then there is the "fear factor," whereby staff are anxious about being locked up with 50 or 60 inmates

¹ Some quotes in the document come from responses to surveys sent to direct supervision jail administrators. To protect the participants' confidentiality, their names have been omitted.

without the safety of bulletproof glass separating them from the inmates.

Staff need to see that the jail administrator thinks about jail operations within the context of direct supervision. For example, the jail administrator must keep direct supervision in mind when making decisions on policies and operational procedures (e.g., How might the decision support or undermine direct supervision?). Also, decisions made in response to incidents must be made in the context of the direct supervision principles.

The jail administrator also demonstrates commitment to direct supervision by ensuring that:

- Staff appraisal and reward systems support the implementation of the principles.
- Staff receive adequate resources for training, allowing them to fully and successfully implement the principles in all aspects of their work.
- The system of staff supervision supports and holds staff accountable for implementing the direct supervision principles.
- The recruiting, hiring, and screening processes are structured to identify applicants who will thrive in a direct supervision environment.

Strong leadership is also critical when a jurisdiction decides to build a direct supervision jail. Moving staff from a traditional jail setting to direct supervision often creates fear and anxiety for staff at all levels and in all functions. During this transition, it is particularly important for the jail administrator to be accessible to staff, hear their concerns, keep them updated on the transition, talk with them about direct supervision—explaining how and why it works—and assure them that they will receive the tools and training that will allow them to succeed in a direct supervision setting.

Although the jail administrator is the primary leader in this transition, there should be staff advocates for direct supervision available who can support the administrator's leadership.

The jail administrator can do this by involving representatives from all levels of staff and all jail functions in the planning process. The jail administrator should also be aware of informal staff leaders, since their influence is often significant. The administrator's efforts should target getting staff "on board," including involving them in transition planning and having them observe operations and talk with staff and inmates about successfully operating direct supervision jails. Care must be taken in selecting jails to be used as introductions to direct supervision to ensure that they fully embrace and demonstrate the concepts the administrator desires.

The Jail Administrator's Leadership Role Outside the Jail

Not only should the administrator be a visible presence in the jail, but the administrator should also actively educate and seek the support of local officials and the community. Every jail administrator should help educate local officials and community members about the jail, because the public's misconceptions of the role, operations, complexity, and resource needs of the jail usually translate into inadequate support for jail operations. The direct supervision jail administrator, however, has an additional challenge. Direct supervision jails may be perceived by officials and the community as "soft on inmates" or providing a "luxurious" environment for inmates.

To address this challenge, the administrator needs to inform and educate local officials and the community about:

- The role of the jail in the local criminal justice system.
- The nature and complexity of jail operations.
- The role of direct supervision in establishing control of the jail, actively managing inmate behavior, and achieving safety and security for inmates, staff, and the public.
- The improvement in the work environment for staff.

Only through such educational efforts will local officials and the community have a basis for supporting the jail generally and direct supervision specifically. The jail administrator may want to:

- Speak at schools, community service agencies, and meetings of religious congregations and civic organizations.
- Invite members of the jail's funding authority to tour the jail or hold periodic meetings at the jail.
- Organize open houses for families of staff to tour the jail, so they can gain a better understanding of direct supervision and relay that to friends and neighbors.
- Develop an informational flier about the jail and the benefits of direct supervision, including improvements in inmate behavior, safety and security, staff work environment, and potential or actual cost savings.

The benefits of educating officials and the public sometimes surprise jail practitioners. The sheriff of one jail administrator asked him to address a community group known as the Committee of 100—the 100 most influential citizens in the community—about the new direct supervision jail under construction in his county. He said:

So, here I am in front of a dinner group that numerically far exceeded its name, anxious about the response to my speech about "Direct Supervision: Inmate Accountability, Responsibility and Self-Sufficiency." I emphasized that there was nothing particularly soft about the management of the direct supervision jail, and that it actually served as a tool to enhance control and individual accountability. I explained that television and nicer surroundings were used as a control tool, and when inmates messed up, they were sent to other areas of the facility that were far more Spartan. They ate it up! Much to my surprise, these elected officials and otherwise influential citizens were fascinated by what we were doing, expressed no reservations whatsoever

during the question and answer period, and gave me perhaps the best reaction I've ever received in the realm of public speaking. This support remained with us throughout the construction process and continues to this day.

Another jail administrator, leading a tour through a newly opened direct supervision jail, recalled:

We invited the public, local officials, and the press to our open house for the new direct supervision jail. I was assigned to escort the press corps and found myself being somewhat apologetic about the relatively nice features such as extensive natural light, bright colors, carpeting, wood doors, and the like. After approximately a half-hour of my justifications and rationalizations, the reporter from the main newspaper confronted me. Her response to my justifications was that she saw nothing particularly nice about the place. She was freaked out by the omnipresent cameras, by the fact that we couldn't pass through a door without pressing an intercom and having an officer remotely unlock the door, by the heavy steel doors that I pulled shut as we moved through them, and essentially by all of the security features that I took for granted. She strongly suggested that I had no need to apologize for the facility being soft!

It is important for the jail administrator to educate and obtain the ongoing support of the community and local officials when the direct supervision jail is operational. It is also essential to obtain this support while planning for the jail. Just as staff involvement in the planning process is key to getting staff support, community involvement increases the likelihood of public support for the new direct supervision jail.

Some communities create citizen advisory boards to actively involve the public throughout the jail planning and design processes. Advisory

board members tour operating direct supervision jails in other jurisdictions and meet with staff, inmates, and public officials in those communities. During these tours, board members are persuaded that direct supervision makes sense, and, in many cases, they return to their communities as advocates of the concept.

One community planning a new regional direct supervision jail organized such a citizen advisory board at the outset. Although consultants committed to direct supervision advised this group, the citizens themselves, as a result of their tours, made the decision to go with direct supervision. They were instrumental in the success of the bond referendum to construct the new jail. The public viewed these individuals as fellow taxpayers and not just as a collection of “experts.” During design meetings, it was the citizens who often argued for strict adherence to design features that support the direct supervision principles.

Another method administrators use frequently to develop support for the direct supervision jail is having the public spend a night in jail. Many jails have sponsored an event that allowed community members and local officials to spend a night in a new direct supervision facility just before the actual opening. The event allays any notion that the jail is too lenient. In fact, attendees usually react viscerally to such features as narrow steel bunks, the lack of privacy when using toilets, and the faceless voices emanating from the public address system and door intercoms.

The support of local officials and the community is essential to an adequately funded and well-operated jail. Getting this support requires leadership and ongoing effort from the jail administrator. Because direct supervision is a new concept for many communities and runs counter to traditional notions of what a jail should be, the jail administrator may have to be especially assertive and deliberate in his or her efforts to educate local officials and community members. Where jail administrators have taken the initiative to do this, they have found the benefits well worth the effort.

The Jail Administrator and the Agency’s Chief Executive Officer

One of the most important local officials who needs to be educated about direct supervision is the chief executive officer (CEO) of the agency that oversees the jail. Jail administrators should ensure the CEO is well educated about direct supervision, regardless of whether the jail is a function of the county sheriff, the local police, or tribal, county, or city government. The full understanding and support of the CEO is critical to implementing and maintaining direct supervision. If the CEO is an elected official, such as a sheriff, the CEO will have political considerations about the jail. Often, an elected official will come under fire if the citizens perceive the jail as “too soft.” In these cases, the official must be prepared to respond. When an elected official presents a budget request, the official must be versed in jail operations generally and direct supervision specifically to justify budget requests for the jail effectively.

One challenge many direct supervision jail administrators face is a change in the CEO, often because of an election. If the new CEO is a sheriff, for example, the sheriff may have campaigned with a promise to “get tough on criminals” and may see the direct supervision jail as potentially undermining the political stance used to win the election. The administrator should quickly educate the new CEO about the jail after the CEO takes office. Efforts to educate the CEO, whether or not the CEO is newly elected, may include the following:

- Providing the CEO with resource materials on direct supervision.
- Identifying opportunities for the CEO to attend training or symposia on direct supervision.
- Explaining that direct supervision, fully and properly implemented, is highly effective in controlling and managing inmate behavior, and thereby enhances safety and security.
- Arranging for the CEO to meet other sheriffs who have embraced direct supervision,

especially those who have had experience with more traditional jails and can speak to the difference direct supervision makes.

- Sharing performance measures with the CEO. These may include measures of levels of vandalism, escape, suicide, and assaults. If the measures show operational efficiencies and effectiveness, the CEO might be reluctant to change the jail's operating philosophy.
- Encouraging the CEO to speak with jail staff about their experience with direct supervision.
- Explaining clearly the full implications—especially those related to safety and security—of the CEO's proposed policy changes that might undermine direct supervision.

Through efforts such as these, the jail administrator is more likely to get the CEO's advocacy and support for direct supervision.

Conclusion

The jail administrator has a pivotal leadership role in implementing and maintaining direct supervision. The administrator must clearly demonstrate commitment to direct supervision and reflect it in all of his or her actions and decisions, with direct supervision principles providing the conceptual framework for these actions and decisions.

Recruiting, Hiring, and Promoting Staff

Recruiting, hiring, and promoting staff are some of the most important responsibilities the jail administrator has in managing the direct supervision jail. The administrator must develop performance standards that support direct supervision for each category of staff; identify related knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs); and recruit, hire, or promote staff who have the KSAs to meet performance standards.

Identifying the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Required for Each Position

In the direct supervision jail, staff—especially those who work directly with inmates—must have knowledge, skills, and abilities that support the implementation of the direct supervision principles. Administrators must identify and clearly document these KSAs as the basis for all recruiting, hiring, and promotion efforts.

This section looks at two job positions: detention officer and firstline supervisor. The KSAs listed in this section are those that are critical to direct supervision, but the list is not exhaustive. This section does not list the general KSAs essential to a given position in any type of jail.

KSAs for the Detention Officer

Detention officers make up the largest percentage of jail staff. What critical characteristics

must an officer possess to be effective in a direct supervision jail? Most often, direct supervision jail administrators say officers must have “good people skills” and be skilled in interpersonal communication. While it is true, this description is too general to be the basis for sound recruiting and hiring decisions. There is, however, work to which direct supervision jail administrators can refer in identifying the specific KSAs required to be an effective detention officer.

In 1986, researchers collected data from four direct supervision jails and used it to analyze staff job performance.¹ Using a combination of interviews and written questionnaires, the researchers surveyed officers with more than a year of experience in direct supervision jails, officers whom supervisors identified as particularly effective in the performance of their jobs, and firstline supervisors. This approach allowed them to identify those dimensions most indicative of effective officer performance in a direct supervision jail. The seven dimensions are listed below.

1. **Managing the living unit to ensure a safe and humane environment:** The extent to which an officer uses observation and communication to maximize compliant inmate behavior and minimize the occurrence of disruptive inmate behavior in the living unit, communicates rules and expectations to

¹ Ben A. Menke, Linda L. Zupan, Nicholas P. Lovrich, and Don Manning, *Model Personnel Selection Process for Podular Direct Supervision New Generation Jails*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections, 1986).

inmates clearly, and responds immediately to all incidents of inmate misbehavior.

2. **Handling inmate discipline:** The extent to which an officer responds fairly and effectively when disciplining inmates for disruptive behavior or rule violations.
3. **Responding to inmate requests:** The extent to which an officer effectively responds to inmate requests and demands in a fair and balanced fashion and avoids inmate manipulation.
4. **Building positive rapport and personal credibility with inmates:** The extent to which an officer creates an environment of mutual respect by demonstrating consistency and a courteous manner.
5. **Supervising in a clear, well-organized, and attention-getting manner:** The extent to which an officer effectively organizes, supervises, and motivates inmates in their activities.
6. **Resolving inmate problems and conflicts:** The extent to which an officer provides guidance for solving inmate problems, recognizes the steps in resolving inmate conflicts, and deals with inmates in confrontational situations.
7. **Maintaining effective administration and staff relations:** The extent to which an officer knows facility rules and procedures and applies them consistently, coordinates activities with coworkers, supports the authority of staff members, and communicates with supervisors and other administrators.

In 1996, NIC developed a curriculum for housing unit officers on how to manage a direct supervision housing unit.² Dr. Thomas Reid and Vic Jacobsen authored that curriculum and identified 22 strategies a direct supervision housing officer must implement to manage a unit effectively. These strategies (paraphrased below) are the substance of indepth group and individual interviews with experienced direct supervision housing unit officers and their supervisors. They give jail administrators the

information they need to understand the role of the direct supervision housing unit officer. Appendix B includes the original direct supervision housing unit strategies used in direct supervision officer training.

1. **Think like a good supervisor.** In the direct supervision jail, the housing unit officer supervises inmates and, therefore, must think in terms of providing leadership, making decisions, solving problems, and managing behavior in the unit.
2. **Expect the best: The self-fulfilling prophecy.** Staff expectations of positive inmate behavior are key to direct supervision. All staff should convey positive expectations of inmate behavior, but because inmates interact most extensively with the housing unit officer, it is critical that the officer expect the best of the inmates. Officers who convey contempt for inmates or whose words or actions convey an expectation of negative behavior will not successfully manage inmate behavior.
3. **Set clear expectations with inmates.** The officer must clearly set, explain, and continually reinforce expectations for inmate behavior.
4. **Use positive reinforcement techniques.** The officer must know how to use positive reinforcement to encourage appropriate inmate behavior. This is often more effective in managing behavior than are criticism and threats of discipline.
5. **Hold inmates accountable for their behavior.** The officer must be willing and able to hold individual inmates accountable for meeting behavioral expectations. The officer must be continually aware of the behavior of individual inmates in the unit, be able to identify inappropriate behavior, and choose the method most effective in addressing that behavior.
6. **Treat inmates with respect and consideration: The Golden Rule.** The officer should treat inmates with the same respect and

² Thomas Reid and Vic Jacobsen, *How to Run a Direct Supervision Housing Unit: A Training Curriculum* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections, 2005).

consideration that the officer would like to receive from others. Inmates usually respond with respect and consideration toward officers who show respect and are considerate.

7. **Be just and fair.** Historically, experts identify inmates' perception of unfair treatment as a major factor in institutional disturbances. The housing unit officer should be consistent in his treatment of inmates, should not have or appear to have favorites, and should respond to requests and grievances promptly and according to policy.
8. **Rely on the least restrictive supervisory techniques necessary.** In making requests of inmates or addressing behavioral issues, the officer should use the least confrontational technique that is appropriate given all the circumstances to achieve the intended objective. In most cases, the officer will be successful using less restrictive techniques, but if not, an array of options is available if the officer must escalate the use of force.
9. **Manage the unit by walking and talking.** In a direct supervision housing unit, inmates should see conversation with the officer as desirable. The officer must create an environment in which it is the norm for inmates to converse with the officer. The officer must foster positive formal and informal communication with inmates, be easily accessible to inmates, and interact with inmates continually.
10. **Identify and address inmate concerns.** The officer must take time to deal with inmate concerns, make thoughtful judgments and decisions, or refer them to an appropriate resource.
11. **Be a source of information and services.** The housing unit officer is a primary source of information and services for inmates. Inmates are more likely to view officers who are effective in this role as valuable, dependable, and worthy of respect.
12. **Encourage inmates to take responsibility for themselves.** Although the officer is their primary source of information and services, inmates should not depend on the officer to

think through every decision for them. The officer should encourage inmates to make thoughtful choices (e.g., return to their cells rather than argue with another inmate), take responsibility for the choices they make, and do certain things for themselves (e.g., the officer can make forms available in a forms rack or store toilet paper and soap in an area accessible to the inmates so they do not have to ask for them).

13. **Plan and supervise unit activities.** In most jails, program staff provide structured activities for inmates outside the housing unit. The housing unit officer, though, should also plan, implement, and supervise in-unit activities to keep inmates productively occupied. Such activities may include board game or card game tournaments, art projects, or other activities that can reasonably take place within the housing unit.
14. **Develop and measure personal goals for the unit.** Housing unit officers should set goals for what they want to accomplish over time in the unit and develop criteria to measure achievement of those goals. Goals may relate to, for example, unit cleanliness, the level of inmate involvement in programs, and improvements in overall inmate behavior. The team of officers assigned to the unit for a given period should jointly develop their goals and the strategies to meet them.
15. **Apply policies and procedures appropriately to achieve unit objectives.** The housing officer must understand the jail's policies and procedures thoroughly and know their application in housing unit management. The officer should know when to exercise discretion within the context of policy and should apply all policies and procedures thoughtfully and with understanding of their intent.
16. **Keep the supervisor and coworkers informed.** Communication among staff is key to managing inmates and maintaining the jail's safety and security. The jail should have a system of communication among officers assigned to a unit, among officers on a shift, between officers and supervisors,

and among staff generally about inmate management issues. The housing unit officer must understand the importance of frequent and complete communication and should be able to convey information clearly, both orally and in writing.

- 17. Take the initiative: Just do it.** In most traditional jails, officers are discouraged from being creative or using much discretion, and they usually rely on supervisors to make many decisions related to supervising inmates. In a direct supervision jail, though, the housing unit officer is a supervisor. The officer must be able to take initiative and use discretion within existing policies and procedures to provide effective leadership in the unit, solve problems, make decisions, and manage inmate behavior.
- 18. Take calculated risks.** The housing unit officer, as a supervisor, must be able to analyze situations, consider options in addressing those situations, and pursue what appears to be the best option. The officer must consider options within the context of policy and procedure without compromising safety and security. However, if the option the officer chooses is not the most effective, the officer must then reanalyze the circumstances and take a calculated risk on another option.
- 19. Be creative.** Within the guidelines of policy and procedure, the officer should be creative and willing to try new approaches to manage the housing unit.
- 20. Be flexible.** Flexibility is essential to managing people effectively. The housing unit officer must be just and fair with all inmates, but must also be flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions in the housing unit.
- 21. Be a role model for the unit.** In a direct supervision housing unit, the officer sets the example for expected behavior. The officer needs not only to set high standards but also to model those standards in actions, language, and demeanor.
- 22. Be yourself.** This strategy requires the officer to have self-confidence. Inmates know when an officer is putting up a façade and

may view that officer as weak and not worthy of respect.

Using the 7 dimensions and the 22 strategies, the jail administrator can identify the essential KSAs required of a housing officer in a direct supervision jail. For example, the jail administrator may conclude that an effective housing unit officer must:

- Understand the principles of direct supervision and their implications for jail operations.
- Be flexible and creative.
- Be skilled in communication, planning, and organization.
- Know how to use positive motivation techniques.
- Take initiative.
- Interpret and apply written guidelines and use discretion to make decisions within those guidelines.
- Hold inmates accountable for their actions.
- Have self-confidence.
- Serve as an effective role model for inmates.
- Analyze situations and identify options for addressing them.
- Be a thoughtful problem-solver.
- Enjoy supervising people and managing behavior.

KSAs for the Firstline Supervisor

The role of the firstline supervisor in a direct supervision jail is critical to effective jail operations, but many times administrators give insufficient attention to this position—to the detriment of direct supervision operations. The supervisor has significant influence on the line detention staff and needs to fully understand the direct supervision principles, the role of the detention officer, and the supervisor's own role in supporting, supervising, and coaching detention officers. Unfortunately, many direct supervision jails have begun operation with firstline supervisors who do not understand the significant difference between their role in a direct

supervision jail and their role in a traditional jail. One jail administrator summarized his position as follows:

Firstline supervisors seem to have the most difficult time transitioning and adjusting to direct supervision. Supervisors who've worked in traditional linear or podular-remote surveillance jails are used to being decisionmakers and are used to working directly on resolving inmate complaints. The direct supervision model relies on ownership and leadership by line officers in housing pods. The role of the firstline supervisor shifts to an agent of support and conduit for communication between the officer and the watch commander or administration. Additionally, the new role shifts the supervisor from being a decisionmaker to being a decision evaluator and trainer.

Structurally, the role of the supervisor in direct supervision differs from that in a traditional jail. In a traditional jail, both staff and inmates expect supervisors to be the primary decisionmakers regarding inmate issues and concerns. Their reliance on a strict paramilitary model reinforces the idea that detention officers are to follow rules and orders, exercising little or no formal discretion. Standard operating procedures, which line officers routinely apply, cover most day-to-day inmate management decisions in the jail. When a matter falls outside the written dictates, or when inmates challenge the officer's decision, the officer then calls the shift supervisor—often at the rank of sergeant—and refers the matter for higher-level decision-making. In fact, inmates often say, “I want to see the sergeant,” as if it is the sergeant who holds the power. Moreover, consistent with the paramilitary model, when the sergeant is anxious about making decisions, the sergeant calls the lieutenant. Eventually, even captains and majors are called to participate in decisions.

The direct supervision firstline supervisor, on the other hand, makes far fewer inmate management decisions. Most decisions about

inmate management rest with the detention officer, unless a situation is so complex or grave that the officer needs to confer with the supervisor. This represents a significant change in the role of the firstline supervisor, as depicted in exhibit 3–1.

Given the role of the firstline supervisor in a direct supervision jail, the jail administrator may conclude that an effective supervisor must, for example:

- Understand the direct supervision principles and their operational implications.
- Understand the 22 strategies and the role of the detention officer in a direct supervision jail.
- Assess staff performance for adherence to direct supervision principles.
- Supervise and manage staff effectively through coaching, support, counseling, and discipline.
- Make decisions based on the analysis of a situation, the options available, and the implications of each option for being effective in the context of direct supervision.
- Act as an effective conduit of information between detention officers and jail administration.

KSAs of Other Staff in Direct Supervision Jails

The work and behavior of all staff—including those who work in medical and food service operations, inmate programs and services, and other noncustodial functions—need to support the implementation of direct supervision. The jail administrator must identify the specific ways that staff provide support, with related KSAs.

Developing Recruiting Tools for Direct Supervision Jails

Direct supervision jails should carefully design their recruiting tools to ensure that they attract applicants with the KSAs needed for the job, many of which differ from the KSAs required to work in a traditional jail. Too often, recruit-

Role of the Firstline Supervisor: Traditional Jails versus Direct Supervision Jails

| TRADITIONAL JAILS | DIRECT SUPERVISION JAILS |
|--|--|
| Makes decisions for staff rather than facilitating decisionmaking at the line level. | Facilitates decisionmaking at the line level. |
| Deals with inmates directly. | Anticipates institutional problems, allows the unit officer to manage the inmate population, and supports the officer’s decisions unless they clearly violate policy or procedure. |
| Handles inmate requests. | Reviews officer decisions and intervenes only when necessary, after allowing the unit officer the opportunity to handle inmate requests. |
| Solves problems. | Advises or coaches staff in problemsolving, as necessary. |
| Responds to grievances. | Encourages staff to manage inmate requests at their level to avoid grievance issues. If inmates still wish to pursue a formal grievance, the officer handles it according to policy and procedure. |
| Focuses primarily on the results of incidents and staff decisions rather than on factors that contribute to incidents and reasons for officer decisions. | Reviews and evaluates incidents and officers’ decisions to understand underlying factors. Analyzes incidents in the context of the direct supervision principles. |
| Issues directives to staff based on upper-level management decisions. | Conveys information from administration to staff and from staff to administration, ensuring a two-way flow of communication. |

Source: Adapted from Don Manning, Ben A. Menke, Linda L. Zupan, Mary K. Stohr-Gillmore, Michael W. Stohr-Gillmore, and Nicholas P. Lovrich, *Performance Appraisal in New Generation Jails: Model Performance Appraisal Processes and Forms and Training Materials for New Generation Jail Facilities* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections, 1988).

ing tools for direct supervision jails do not clearly reflect the reality of the job or fully describe the duties of the job announced. In fact, some advertisements for positions in direct supervision jails are indistinguishable from advertisements for the same types of positions in traditional jails.

For example, one newly opened direct supervision jail developed an eye-catching recruiting flier. The front of the flier invited the reader to be part of “the future of detention,” “join a professional group of men and women in a progressive, state-of-the-art jail,” and discover “a new, creative, and exciting direction in detention.” The front described a job that was interesting and challenging. The inside of the flier did not. In listing specific duties of the detention officer, it focused solely on laundry exchange, cell searches, monitoring meals, counting utensils in and out at mealtimes, and other necessary, but routine, duties. Nowhere did the flier talk about managing inmate behavior, defusing problems among inmates, interacting and communicating with inmates,

planning and organizing housing unit activities, and functioning as the leader within a housing unit. The front of the flier may have attracted one type of applicant and the inside another type entirely. The flier conveyed a superficial understanding of direct supervision jails as different from traditional jails and an inability to articulate fully the new role of the detention officer. This flier was not an effective recruiting tool for the new direct supervision jail.

Job postings and recruiting tools should accurately reflect job duties and should incorporate required KSAs—especially those that are critical to implementing the direct supervision principles. If not, the result will be the recruitment of a traditional jail applicant for a nontraditional jail.

Screening and Hiring for Direct Supervision Jails

Recruiting tools designed specifically for a position in a direct supervision jail will be more effective as screening instruments because

they were developed based on the KSAs required for a specific position. Good candidates for the job should have the required KSAs or the potential to acquire them through training and experience.

Just as organizations need to design recruiting tools for a specific job that reflect the direct supervision environment, they need to do the same for screening and hiring tools. Again, this is an area where many direct supervision jails—especially those that are new and were preceded by traditional jails—tend to screen based on criteria more applicable to traditional jails. For example, one agency that opened a new direct supervision jail continued to use its old interview questions. They asked candidates how they felt about having urine thrown on them or how they would deal with an inmate who spat on them, almost as if these were everyday occurrences. The jail had been open for several months and neither of these events had occurred in the new jail and did not happen often in the traditional jail. The agency neglected to revise the questions to meet the needs of the new jail.

Organizations can use a variety of tools, such as interviews, written examinations, and scenario analyses, for screening and hiring. However, organizations must construct these instruments carefully to target the KSAs and attitudes required of each position to be able to implement and support direct supervision effectively.

Novice job candidates should not be expected to be sufficiently cognizant of effective direct supervision performance requirements or facility rules to be able to demonstrate the behaviors required of a position or articulate

them during an interview or examination. Nevertheless, there are ways of getting at a candidate's potential to model these types of behaviors. For example, to screen potential detention officers, interviewers could construct scenarios or vignettes of jail incidents and present them in narrative or video form. Interviewers could then ask candidates to comment on what they read or observed. The interviewers would evaluate their responses based on benchmarks ranging from excellent to poor. The interviewer can pose questions such as: "What do you think the officer did well in that scene?" or "What could the officer have done differently?"

Model Personnel Selection Process for Podular, Direct-Supervision New Generation Jails by Menke and colleagues³ provides benchmarked answers⁴ for each of the seven dimensions discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Exhibit 3-2 shows two examples.

Promoting Staff in Direct Supervision Jails

Promoting staff in a direct supervision jail requires the jail administrator to determine the competencies specific to the successful direct supervision supervisor. Simply because an officer is effective in managing a unit does not mean the officer is qualified to supervise staff in a direct supervision jail. Longevity as a detention officer is also not a valid criterion.

Use of carefully designed, realistic scenarios (best developed by working teams of line staff, supervisors, and administrators) can be excellent tools for testing potential supervisors. The scenarios should assess a candidate's understanding of the role of the supervisor and

³ Ben A. Menke, Linda L. Zupan, Nicholas P. Lovrich, and Don Manning, *Model Personnel Selection Process for Podular, Direct-Supervision New Generation Jails* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections, 1986).

⁴ A subsequent study focused exclusively on the situational interviewing process. It found that the situational interview questions used in the Menke study had content validity, meaning that they were created via a systematic job analysis and were judged as appropriate and related to effective job behaviors by a panel of direct supervision personnel. The questions were also, in fact, related to the performance measures being tested. The study also showed the long-term predictive validity of the situational interview process and questioning. See Mary K. Stohr-Gillmore, Michael W. Stohr-Gillmore, and Nanette Kistler, "Sifting the Gold From the Pebbles: Using Situational Interviews To Select Correctional Officers for New Generation Jails," Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, Washington, DC (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections, 1989).

Sample Dimension Benchmarks and Questions

| Dimension 1: Managing the Living Unit To Assure a Safe and Humane Environment | | |
|--|--------------|---|
| Question | Score | Response |
| On an inmate’s first day in your module, he fails to make his bed, which is in violation of the facility’s rules. What would you do? | 5 | Because it was the inmate’s first day in the module, I would explain the rule to the inmate, give him a verbal warning, document the violation, and ensure that he complies in the future. |
| | 3 | I would order the inmate to make his bed (interviewee gives no indication that he would explain the rule or the violation to the inmate). I would tell the inmate that I would let it pass this one time—after all, he is new to the module (interviewee gives no indication that he would explain the rule or the violation to the inmate). |
| | 1 | I would ignore the rule violation—after all, he is new to the module. I would punish him (interviewee indicates some excessive form of punishment, such as lockdown). |
| Dimension 2: Handling Inmate Discipline | | |
| Question | Score | Response |
| Inmates in the module you supervise are committing numerous minor rule violations. For example, they are not keeping the module clean; they are slow to get up in the morning, etc. How would you correct these minor violations? | 5 | I would hold a meeting with all inmates in the module and communicate my expectations. I would advise them of the consequences of continued problems. |
| | 3 | I would communicate my dissatisfaction with only a few inmates—they will pass the word on to other inmates. |
| | 1 | I would discipline all inmates in the module for these rule violations. |

Source: Adapted from Ben A. Menke, Linda L. Zupan, Nicholas P. Lovrich, and Don Manning, *Model Personnel Selection Process for Podular, Direct Supervision New Generation Jails* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections, 1986).

the relationship between the detention officer and the supervisor. They can help interviewers eliminate candidates who will overrule the officer’s decisions and undermine the officer’s ability to manage the housing unit. They can also help assess the extent to which the candidate can be comfortable being a manager rather than a decisionmaker, focusing on such core tasks as educating, coaching, supporting, leading, and motivating staff.

Conclusion

The importance of effective recruitment, hiring, and staff promotion are apparent, but organizations often overlook the unique challenges associated with hiring and promoting staff for a direct supervision jail. The direct supervision jail administrator must require the development of new standards for employment and promotion and ensure that tools for recruiting, screening, and hiring applicants reflect those standards.

Training Staff

Just as staff knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) specific to direct supervision must be incorporated into the recruiting and hiring processes, they must also be integrated into initial and ongoing staff training.

Often, in preparation for the opening of a new direct supervision jail, organizations train staff extensively in the direct supervision principles and, ideally, their specific operational implications. Over time, however, many of these jails allow training on direct supervision to wane. They may provide training to new staff only, and that training may be limited to a brief overview of direct supervision and an abbreviated presentation on interpersonal communication skills. This is not sufficient to ensure successful implementation of direct supervision. Training must reflect the full scope and dimensions of each position in the jail as they relate to the implementation of direct supervision.

In 1996, the National Institute of Corrections conducted audits of three direct supervision jails.¹ The auditors found that jail staff at all three sites were receiving quality training, although not necessarily on direct supervision principles and practices. They found that staff who had been involved in the initial move to the new direct supervision jail had received the most training in direct supervision. Staff hired later, however, received less training. The auditors deemed this training less effective than the

training the initial staff received. The auditors also pointed out concerns about training for supervisors, especially those who transferred to the facility laterally or who did not have experience as direct supervision officers. Overall, the auditors expressed concern that the sites were not giving ongoing training in direct supervision the priority it required. Recent audits conducted by the National Institute of Corrections indicate that this continues to be an issue for direct supervision jails.

Staff Positions and Related Training Topics

All staff need training, to varying degrees, specific to direct supervision. The type and extent of training needed relates directly to the direct supervision KSAs identified for each position. The sections below discuss several positions and selected KSAs related to these roles.

Training for the Detention Officer

Detention officers, especially housing unit officers, constitute the largest group of staff who require training. They are the front line in managing inmate behavior, running the housing unit, and implementing the direct supervision principles daily. Given the 7 dimensions of the officer's job and the 22 strategies for effectively managing a housing unit (see chapter 3 for a discussion of these dimensions and strategies), officers need extensive training to be successful.

¹ Jay Farbstein, Dennis Liebert, and Herbert Sigurdson, *Audits of Podular Direct-Supervision Jails* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections, 1996).

Following are sample training topics for housing unit officers:

- Understanding the implications of the direct supervision principles for jail design and operations.
- Communicating with inmates using interpersonal communication skills.
- Establishing and maintaining the officer's leadership role in the unit.
- Setting and conveying expectations of inmate behavior.
- Using incentives for positive inmate behavior.
- Using appropriate and effective consequences for negative inmate behavior.
- Using positive reinforcement techniques.
- Planning and supervising inmate activities in the unit.
- Developing and measuring goals for the housing unit.
- Being a role model.
- Managing conflict.
- Implementing behavioral coaching techniques.
- Analyzing incidents within the framework of the direct supervision principles.
- Making decisions within the framework of the direct supervision principles.

Training for the Firstline Supervisor (Security Staff)

As noted in chapter 3, organizations often give insufficient attention to the role of the firstline supervisor, and, as a result, insufficient training has been targeted to this group of staff. However, given the significant and direct influence the firstline supervisor has on detention officers, this position is key. Firstline supervisors need extensive training related to direct supervision. If they do not support direct supervision and all its operational implications, they can quickly and profoundly undermine its implementation. Below are sample training topics specific to direct supervision for firstline supervisors:

- Direct supervision principles and their implications for jail design and operations,
- The role of the housing unit officer.
- The role of the firstline supervisor in coaching and supporting housing unit officers in implementing direct supervision.
- Interpersonal communication skills.
- Role modeling.
- Operational assessment within the framework of the direct supervision principles.
- Operational indicators that housing officers are or are not implementing direct supervision effectively.
- Assessment of staff performance as it relates to implementing direct supervision.
- Decisionmaking within the framework of the direct supervision principles.
- Analysis of incidents within the framework of the direct supervision principles.

Jail administrators should ensure that firstline supervisors fully understand not only all aspects of the housing officer's role but also how to support the housing officer in this role. One jail administrator opening a new direct supervision jail developed a strategy to ensure that firstline supervisors understood the role of the detention officer. In 1988, Hillsborough County, FL, opened a new 384-bed direct supervision annex to its downtown linear-intermittent surveillance jail. In preparation for the opening, the administrator ensured that firstline supervisors received training in direct supervision principles, policies and procedures for the new jail, leadership, and management as well as an orientation to the new jail.

Although the facility ran well, the administration found that the firstline supervisors were having difficulty with their role in direct supervision, and officers perceived that supervisors were not allowing them to make decisions and manage their housing units as intended. Because the supervisors had never worked in direct supervision, the officers often went to their counterparts for advice, since they had

more firsthand experience in direct supervision than did their supervisors.

To remedy this, the jail administrator required more than 100 firstline supervisors to attend a 40-hour block of specialized training for detention officers. They were then required to serve a 56-day rotation as detention officers in a direct supervision housing unit. The jail administrator found this successful in helping firstline supervisors understand officers' responsibilities and related challenges. It also enabled the firstline supervisors to appreciate their role in relation to the officers better: that the officers managed the inmates and the supervisors, instead of intervening in or undermining the officers' decisions regarding inmate management, supported and coached the officers in fulfilling their responsibilities. Since that time, most staff promoted to supervisory positions in the Hillsborough County jail have had experience as housing officers. The jail administrator has not had to employ this particular training strategy again.

Another direct supervision jail administrator required supervisors to work 1 day a month as a housing unit officer to ensure that they did not forget the importance of allowing staff the autonomy required to make sound decisions in their housing units.

Training for the Jail Administrator

Many times, in discussions about staff training in direct supervision jails, organizations overlook training for the jail administrator. The jail administrator provides leadership and sets the philosophical direction for operations. Some interpret this to mean that the jail administrator does not need ongoing training and education in direct supervision. However, if the jail administrator does not have an in-depth understanding of the direct supervision principles and their operational implications, the administrator cannot provide effective leadership or ensure that the jail is operating according to the direction the administrator has set.

The jail administrator must thoroughly understand the philosophical underpinnings of direct

supervision and how they translate into operations. It is essential that the administrator stay current on research and publications on direct supervision. The administrator must visit other direct supervision jails, meet with other direct supervision jail administrators, and continually learn about strategies to implement and sustain operations that support direct supervision. Critical areas of training for the jail administrator include:

- The direct supervision principles and the implications of each principle for jail design and operations.
- The role of each category of staff in implementing and supporting direct supervision.
- Operational assessment within the framework of the direct supervision principles.
- Operational indicators that staff are or are not implementing direct supervision effectively.
- Assessment of staff performance as it relates to the implementation of direct supervision.
- Decisionmaking within the framework of the direct supervision principles.
- Analysis of incidents within the framework of the direct supervision principles.
- Role-modeling behaviors that align with direct supervision.

Training Support Service Staff

In this guide, support service staff include those who have regular contact with inmates, such as food service, medical service, and program staff. They also include staff who supervise inmate labor. These staff and their supervisors must understand how their work with inmates supports the direct supervision principles and the overall effort to manage inmate behavior. Below are some sample training topics for support service staff:

- Understanding the implications of the direct supervision principles for jail design and operations.
- Communicating with inmates using interpersonal communication skills.

- Setting and conveying expectations of inmate behavior.
- Using incentives for positive inmate behavior.
- Using appropriate and effective consequences for negative inmate behavior.
- Using positive reinforcement techniques.
- Being a role model.
- Managing conflict.
- Implementing behavioral coaching techniques.
- Analyzing incidents within the framework of the direct supervision principles.
- Making decisions within the framework of the direct supervision principles.

Training for Staff Who Have Minimal Contact With Inmates

Staff who have little to no contact with inmates should receive, at a minimum, an overview of the direct supervision principles and their operational implications. Also, these staff do not always understand the role and functions of jails and sometimes hold misconceptions based on media portrayals. Educating them about jails in general, and the difference between traditional and direct supervision jails specifically, may help.

Training for Volunteers

Volunteers should receive, at a minimum, an overview of the direct supervision principles and their operational implications. Because volunteers also may not understand the role and functions of jails, they should be educated about jails generally and the differences between traditional and direct supervision jails specifically. They also need to know how their work and interaction with inmates support the implementation of direct supervision.

Types of Training

Organizations should ensure that preservice, on-the-job, and inservice training for all staff integrate varying levels of training related to

direct supervision. Staff who have direct contact with inmates and those who supervise these staff should receive the most extensive training. Preservice training should cover the conceptual foundation for direct supervision, with examples of how the concepts are put into operation. It should also cover the roles of various staff in implementing these concepts. On-the-job training should provide specific information on how staff should incorporate the direct supervision principles in the day-to-day operation of the jail. Finally, when ongoing inservice training is determined to be the appropriate remedy, it should enhance staff skills and knowledge and address operational problems related to staff performance. Training, then, becomes a powerful tool for successfully implementing and sustaining direct supervision in the jail.

Many jails face severe resource limitations. Often, when officials reduce their detention budgets, staff training is one of the first areas cut. Not only does this create liability for the jail administrator, but it also severely undermines the potential success of the direct supervision jail. The jail administrator should explore a variety of training strategies that may help reduce the cost of training. Traditional classroom-based training is the most costly form of training—whether staff are sent offsite or trained at the jail itself. Administrators may combine classroom-based instruction with less costly options to achieve training goals. Such options might include on-the-job training, electronic training, review and discussion of informational videotapes, training minisessions during shift briefings, well-constructed and debriefed scenarios on inmate management, critiques of incidents based on the direct supervision principles, and use of curriculum packages such as the National Institute of Corrections' course on interpersonal communication skills and its course on how to run a direct supervision housing unit. The jail administrator might also consider developing a staff library of materials related to direct supervision.

Conclusion

To manage a direct supervision jail effectively and to ensure that the principles and supporting concepts of direct supervision are understood fully and manifested in operations, the direct supervision jail administrator must ensure that all staff receive the necessary training. Although the amount and types of training will vary according to job classification, it is

important that the administrator ensure staff are trained on a regular basis, with frequent updates and reminders. Failure to provide this level of training often leads to a deterioration of the implementation of direct supervision. By providing appropriate training at regular intervals, the jail administrator will do much to ensure that staff fully integrate direct supervision principles into jail operations.

Supervising Staff

Effective supervision of staff is critical to the full and successful implementation of the direct supervision principles. If supervisors at all levels do not reinforce direct supervision continually, staff may begin to perform their duties in a way that is contrary to the direct supervision principles—unbeknownst to either the supervisors or the administrator. This chapter explores four crucial components of implementing and sustaining direct supervision through staff supervision: (1) setting, conveying, and reinforcing clear expectations; (2) giving staff the resources and tools to meet expectations; (3) monitoring staff performance; and (4) holding staff accountable.

Set, Convey, and Reinforce Clear Expectations

The jail administrator must make it a priority to set, convey, and routinely reinforce clear expectations for implementing the direct supervision principles, with the roles of all staff defined. The administrator must then work closely with management and supervisory staff to ensure that they understand and support those expectations and are equipped to help staff fulfill them. Policies and procedures, training content, administrator behavior, and meeting discussions all help convey and reinforce expectations. In some cases, jail administrators have been creative in conveying their expectations by asking staff to craft posters, newsletters, and artwork that convey and reinforce

performance expectations related to direct supervision.

Give Staff the Resources and Tools To Meet Expectations

The jail administrator should carefully assess the resources and tools staff need to carry out expectations and should consider, at a minimum, the following areas:

Training

One of the most important tools staff will need is training, as outlined in chapter 4.

Equipment and Supplies

The administrator should consider the equipment and supplies all staff need to comply with expectations related to implementing the direct supervision principles. For example:

- If the administrator expects housing officers to manage inmate behavior by keeping inmates productively occupied, the officers will need access to basic supplies and equipment such as televisions, board games, writing paper and pens, art supplies, playing cards, and books. If the housing unit has an outdoor recreation area, the officers should be able to provide inmates with soccer balls, basketballs, handballs, or other equipment that gives the inmates something productive to do while in outdoor recreation.

- If the administrator expects housing officers to maintain a clean unit, the officers must have ready access to cleaning materials for the inmates.
- If the administrator expects housing officers to give inmates incentives and tangible rewards for positive behavior (such as popcorn and soda for winning a weekly competition for housing unit cleanliness), then those rewards must be available consistently.
- If the administrator expects staff to orient new inmates to the facility, all orientation tools must be available and in good condition.

Time

Time is another important consideration. To implement the direct supervision principles effectively, housing officers must interact with inmates continually and supervisors must visit the housing units frequently. Tasks that distract housing officers and supervisors from these essential duties should be reviewed to determine if they are necessary, if they can be performed overnight while the inmates are sleeping, if they can be performed by staff other than the housing officers and supervisors, or if they can be performed in a different way that decreases the time required.

Space

Space may also be required to meet certain expectations. If housing unit officers must counsel individual inmates on their behavior or classification staff must conduct interviews with new inmates to determine their suitability for general population housing, the administrator should allocate a private space for this.

Authority and Discretion

Staff must have the authority and discretion to achieve what is required of them. For example:

- Where staff are expected to make decisions and take action in their areas of responsibility, policies and the practices of management and supervisory staff need to support this.
- Where staff are encouraged to be flexible and creative within prescribed limits, policies and

practices should be assessed to ensure there are no deliberate or inadvertent obstacles.

- A basic concept in direct supervision has to do with anticipating and meeting inmates' basic needs. The jail administrator should ensure staff can address these needs. For example, if an inmate is too cold to sleep, the officer should have the authority to issue an extra blanket and notify maintenance staff to check air temperature and airflow in the inmate's room.

In traditional jails, decisionmaking rests mostly with supervisory staff, some of whom have difficulty allowing officers to be the primary decisionmakers in the housing units when they move to a direct supervision jail. Although the administrator may fully support giving staff the authority and discretion required to carry out their duties, the administrator must ensure there are no obstacles to the exercise of that authority and discretion.

Monitor Staff Performance

The administrator must ensure that management and supervisory staff actively support direct supervision in all aspects of their work and that they, in turn, ensure the same in the staff they supervise. The administrator can monitor performance through observation, discussions with staff, and reviews of minutes from supervisory and management staff meetings. The administrator can audit unit logs and supervisors' logs to determine how much time supervisors and managers spend in the housing units, the booking room, and program and service areas. The administrator can also review disciplinary decisions made by supervisors and staff performance appraisals completed by supervisors and managers. When the jail administrator sees indicators that direct supervision is not being properly implemented (e.g., inmate-on-inmate assaults rise, housing units are not clean, or inmates are disregarding rules), the administrator must analyze how not only line staff, but also supervisory and management staff, contribute to the problem.

Hold Staff Accountable

The jail administrator should ensure that staff appraisals reflect the performance standards and expectations set for all staff related to implementing direct supervision. Often, jails must use standardized agency, county, or jurisdictional forms that address general employee competencies but not competencies specific to direct supervision. However, administrators can usually include direct supervision performance expectations in the narrative written for more general appraisal categories. If performance expectations and standards are to be meaningful to staff, they must be reflected in performance appraisals.

Conclusion

To demonstrate a commitment to direct supervision effectively and ensure its successful implementation, the jail administrator must pay particular attention to the supervision of staff. Ongoing attention to setting and conveying expectations, ensuring that staff are equipped to meet expectations, monitoring staff performance, and holding staff accountable for meeting expectations is essential to preventing an operational drift away from direct supervision.

Determining the Number of Inmates One Officer Can Supervise Effectively

Since the first direct supervision local jail opened in 1981, beliefs about the number of inmates one officer can supervise effectively have changed considerably. In earlier direct supervision jails, housing units were designed based on the assumption that 1 officer could effectively supervise 32 inmates (Multnomah County, OR), 40 inmates (Manhattan House of Detention for Men, NY), 46 inmates (Contra Costa County, CA), or 48 inmates (Philadelphia Industrial Correctional Center, PA; Arlington County, VA; Hillsborough County, FL).

As jail practitioners gained more experience operating direct supervision jails, they learned that 1 officer could, in fact, supervise more than 48 general population inmates effectively, depending on certain factors (listed later in this chapter). As a result, jurisdictions began designing new direct supervision jails with an increasing number of beds per housing unit. By the year 2000, it was common to see housing units designed to hold 56, 64, or 72 inmates under the supervision of 1 officer. Jurisdictions based this change in design on the deliberate decisions of local officials and planned jail operations accordingly.

Crowding has also influenced the number of beds per housing unit. It has forced some jails to increase—sometimes to double—the number of beds in their housing units simply to accommodate the number of inmates they

must house, not because of a well-analyzed decision about how many inmates one officer can supervise effectively. How a jail chooses to manage its direct supervision housing units under crowded conditions has implications for the implementation of the direct supervision principles. An administrator should analyze all options for managing crowded housing units for their effect on the jail's ability to maintain the integrity of the direct supervision principles.

Finally, fiscal considerations have affected the number of inmates per housing unit under the supervision of one officer. As direct supervision jails demonstrate that they can operate in crowded conditions without major incidents, the argument for decreasing the number of beds per housing unit in an existing or newly planned jail falls on deaf ears.

Despite the reasons for increases in housing unit beds and the number of inmates under one officer's supervision, questions still remain: How many inmates can one officer supervise effectively, and how is that effectiveness measured? A fundamental assumption in direct supervision is that the key to safety and security is managing inmate behavior. The link between managing inmate behavior and safety and security has been demonstrated clearly through the experience of direct supervision jails since 1981. Although a variety of factors in the jail environment influence inmate behavior, the primary influence appears to be the

presence of a housing unit officer who actively supervises inmates through continuous interaction with them. The purpose of this interaction is to enable the officer to, for example:

- Become established as the undisputed leader in the unit.
- Know the individual inmates in the housing unit.
- Become familiar with group and individual inmate behavior patterns and identify changes that could signal a problem.
- Respond to requests and meet inmates' basic needs.
- Be a primary source of information to inmates.
- Uphold behavioral expectations and hold individual inmates accountable for their behavior.
- Provide counseling, coaching, and informal and formal incentives for positive behavior.
- Ensure that the housing unit is clean and well maintained.
- Identify and defuse potential conflicts among inmates.
- Identify inmates who may be depressed, suicidal, or in need of counseling services.

A direct supervision housing unit officer supervises inmates effectively if the officer carries out the activities listed above fully and competently. The purpose of direct supervision is not merely to distract a large group of inmates away from inappropriate behavior, but rather to actively supervise and manage inmates to ensure safety and security.

There is no formula for how many inmates one officer can supervise effectively, and what works in one jail may not in another. Also, the number of inmates assigned to one officer will vary within a given jail and will depend on a variety of factors, such as:

- **Number and types of administrative duties assigned to the officer:** Is the officer able

to focus primarily on interacting with and managing inmates, or do the officer's administrative duties significantly reduce the time for this?

- **Housing unit layout and sightlines:** Can the officer easily see all areas of the housing unit from any area of the dayroom?
- **Classification of inmates in the unit:** Do the inmates, as a whole, get along with each other and comply with facility rules? Or do the inmates present behavior problems or a threat to safety and security? Do the inmates have special needs that require significant attention?
- **Level of inmate movement in and out of the unit:** How much movement in and out of the unit (e.g., for programs and services) must the officer track? How much does this distract him or her from interacting with and managing the inmates?
- **Unit acoustics:** Are the acoustics poor? Is the unit very noisy, even with normal activity and conversation? Does this increase tension among inmates? Are conflicts among inmates more likely as a result? Does noise prevent the officer from hearing conversations or conflicts that require staff attention?
- **Dayroom size:** Have the number of beds in the unit been increased so that more inmates must use a dayroom designed for a much smaller population? Is the increase such that the number of inmates using the dayroom increases tension levels?
- **Officer capability:** How competent is the officer in managing inmate behavior? Is the officer particularly skilled at managing certain types of inmates?
- **Shift and level of inmate activity:** Inmate activity levels in the housing unit vary among shifts. Sometimes, during the day shift, many inmates are out for court appearances or to attend programs. At night, the activity level drops significantly. Some direct supervision jail administrators shut down every other housing post during the overnight shift, with

one officer making continuous security and inmate welfare checks for two housing units. Other direct supervision jail administrators believe this practice compromises the intent of direct supervision.

The jail administrator must weigh all these considerations when deciding how many inmates to place under one officer's supervision. This is a significant challenge, given crowding, budgetary constraints, and political pressures. The jail administrator will need to educate

the agency's chief executive officer, funding authority, community, and staff to garner support in the face of pressure to increase the number of inmates assigned to one officer. Otherwise, the number of inmates assigned to one officer may increase to a point at which the officer can no longer be effective, the jail cannot maintain the integrity of the direct supervision principles, and the jurisdiction jeopardizes the safety and security of the jail's staff, its inmates, and the surrounding community.

Rotating Housing Unit Staff Assignments

Rotation of assignments among housing unit officers is an oft-debated issue. Many jail administrators prefer to assign staff to a housing unit for at least 90 days to foster continuity of management, consistency of operations, and staff investment in the quality of housing unit operations. Other administrators fear assignments of 90 days or more are too long and increase the risk of staff becoming overly familiar or developing inappropriate relationships with inmates. Unions and staff may also request that jail administrators institute frequent rotations. When determining the length of officer assignment to the housing unit, the jail administrator should consider issues related to the effectiveness of direct supervision housing unit management, including those listed below.

Control of the Unit

One of the primary concepts of direct supervision is that the officer is in charge of the housing unit. The officer does not share control with the inmates. Frequent rotation may undermine the officer's ability to become established as the person in charge. Some officers have likened the experience of frequent rotation to that of the short-term substitute teacher. The teacher does not know the students in the class, is taken advantage of by them, and cannot establish control of the classroom.

Familiarity With Inmate Behavior Patterns and Needs

Consistency of staff assignment—assignment to a unit for at least 90 days—allows the housing officer to become familiar enough with the inmates to know their behavior patterns, potential problems, and needs. This gives the officer a solid basis for developing behavior management strategies. In this sense, “familiarity” does not connote development of an inappropriate relationship, but instead relates to the effectiveness of the professional relationship between the officer and the inmates—the supervisor-subordinate relationship.

Investment in Managing the Housing Unit

When officers know they will be assigned to a unit for 90 days or more, they are more likely to have an investment in the unit and actively address problems and manage behavior. Frequent rotations increase the likelihood that an officer may not address inmate misbehavior or inmate concerns because assignment to that unit may not occur again for several days. As a result, inmate behavior may deteriorate because officers are not holding inmates accountable for their behavior and are not consistently addressing inmate concerns. As inmate behavior deteriorates, so does the safety of the jail environment for staff, inmates, and, ultimately, the community.

Ability To Set and Achieve Goals for Housing Unit Management

When an administrator assigns an officer to a unit for 90 days or more, the officer can and should set longer term goals for the management of the housing unit—goals related to cleanliness, group or individual inmate behavior, inmate involvement in programs, or housing unit work projects. The officer can work with other officers assigned to the unit to set these goals, and all officers can collaborate to meet them. Each officer, then, has the support of other officers in managing the unit. Supervisors have an opportunity to review the goals and further support the officers. When the goals are achieved, supervisors may reward the officers and reinforce their good work.

Consistency of Operations

Jail officers often raise inconsistency of operations among shifts as an issue. When administrators also rotate officers frequently among housing units on a single shift, inconsistencies within a shift from day to day may also become an issue. Lack of consistency undermines inmate management and peer support among officers. It frustrates the inmates, who may feel they face constant and confusing changes in officers' expectations and management styles, and this may lead to anger and rebellion against what inmates may perceive

as arbitrary and unfair treatment. Although staff styles will always vary, depending on individual personalities, inmates conform to officer expectations better when these variances are kept to a minimum.

The Supervisor's Ability To Assess Officer Performance

When an officer is assigned to a unit for a longer period, the supervisor can better assess the officer's performance and progress in managing the unit. The supervisor is in a much better position to identify performance deficiencies and develop strategies to help the officer improve. The supervisor is also better positioned to discern the officer's strengths and use these to the advantage of housing unit management and overall jail operations.

Conclusion

The administrator should consider the length of assignments to housing units in terms of an officer's ability to work as team with other officers in the unit, achieve consistency of operations, and manage inmate behavior effectively. The administrator should educate staff about the purpose and benefits of assignment to a unit for at least 90 days and encourage housing unit teams to work actively toward realizing those benefits.

Ensuring That Officers Interact With Inmates

Effective supervision of inmates and management of their behavior depend on the housing officer's continual interaction with inmates. Many times, however, the direct supervision jail administrator finds that ensuring this interaction is a challenge. As one direct supervision jail administrator noted:¹

A significant challenge associated with the operation of a direct supervision jail is keeping housing pod officers engaged and interested in fully interacting with the inmates in his or her unit. This is especially true in housing units designed with large officers' workstations. It appears that a large workstation with a computer and other equipment becomes "the officer's turf" or a space that the officer feels compelled to protect.

In 1996, the National Institute of Corrections funded audits of three direct supervision jails.² Using a combination of questionnaires and interviews at each site, researchers evaluated the three facilities, which ranged in size from 140 to 1,600 beds, from a number of different perspectives. The researchers noted:³

To do their job most effectively, officers need to circulate throughout the housing

unit, closely observing and interacting with inmates. Whether they can do so depends on the facility's design and management. Design affects visibility and the location of equipment like telephones, computers, and controls. If these devices are at a fixed post, an officer could be required to stay there to operate them. Management affects the extent to which officers are instructed or encouraged to circulate among, observe, and communicate with inmates.

The audits found variances in the design of each facility as well as in the degree to which officers regularly circulated throughout the units.

Design Issues

Tasks Centered at the Officer's Workstation

Three of the most common tasks that tie the officer to the workstation are operating individual cell doors, responding to phone calls, and documenting unit activities. When the door control panel is at the officer's station, the officer may find that inmate requests to unlock cell doors are so frequent that the officer has difficulty getting away from the workstation.

¹ Some quotes in the document come from responses to surveys sent to direct supervision jail administrators. To protect the confidentiality of participants, their names have been omitted.

² Jay Farbstein, Dennis Liebert, and Herbert Sigurdson, *Audits of Podular Direct Supervision Jails* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections, 1996).

³ Ibid.

The placement of door control panels at the officer's desk is a frequently debated design issue.

In the 1980s, a direct supervision jail administrator in Bucks County, PA, concerned about officer interaction with inmates, disconnected the door control panels in the housing units and issued door keys to the housing officers. This forced the officers to move around the unit each time inmates needed to be let in or out of their rooms. In the 1990s, a West Coast jail provided a counter against the wall rather than a workstation for the officer. Doors had to be unlocked either manually by the officer or remotely by staff in central control.

Both these jails tried to remedy issues related to the officer's station after the jail's construction. Jurisdictions planning a new direct supervision jail should consider designing the officer's station in the housing unit to minimize the time the officer must spend there. Many currently operating jails, however, do have door control panels at the officer's station and may want to consider changes to the system or an addition to the system, such as the use of handheld remote control devices for operating cell doors.

If the jail administrator chooses to keep door control only at the officer's station, the administrator might meet with housing unit officers to discuss the feasibility of opening doors only at certain intervals. Housing unit rules might specify, for example, that cell doors will be opened on the half hour only for inmates who request this. Also, the team of officers working on all shifts in a housing unit might jointly decide on a schedule for opening cell doors, depending on shift workloads. The officer, then, is free from constantly unlocking doors at the station.

Officers also cite their need to respond to telephone calls as a reason they spend considerable time at the workstation. A widely available alternative is the portable telephone or combined portable telephone and radio that the officer can carry while circulating about the unit.

Documenting the numerous housing unit activities, such as inmate movement in and out of the unit, inmate welfare or status checks, meal delivery, and laundry exchange also requires officers to remain at their workstation. The jail administrator may want to purchase a handheld, mobile device on which officers can document these activities while moving about the unit. In some cases, the administrator can combine this function with a door control feature in one device.

Finally, the placement of computer terminals on the officer's desk can tie the officer to the workstation. Use of the computer may give the officer immediate access to information regarding frequently asked inmate questions about, for example, visitation schedules, upcoming court dates, and commissary balances. If so, it enhances the officer's role as an important and helpful source of information to the inmates. Although this is a benefit, the jail administrator must balance this by ensuring that having the computer is not another hindrance to the officer's ability to move about the unit and interact with inmates regularly. The jail administrator might want to encourage the housing unit officer team to consider scheduling time during each shift to look up information in response to inmate questions. The administrator may also consider installing kiosks in the dayrooms that inmates can use to look up information such as court dates, commissary lists, and account balances that inmates commonly request.

Workstation Design

In some direct supervision jails, the workstation is designed to set it clearly apart from the dayroom, even though there are no barriers, such as security glass or doors, to separate it from the dayroom. For example, the workstation might be elevated to convey the message that it is the officer's space, off limits to inmates, and unapproachable without permission. There might be painted lines around the workstation to denote that the area inside the lines is off limits to inmates. A commonly cited rationale for these approaches is that they are the only way to prevent inmates from

wandering around the desk, looking at reports or other sensitive documentation, stealing items, or tampering with equipment.

This notion of the officer's private space is contrary to two fundamental concepts in direct supervision: that all areas of the unit belong to the officer and that the officer is in control of the unit.⁴ Elevated workstations, with or without "do not cross" lines painted around them, may inadvertently convey that the unit consists of the officer's space and the inmate's space. These workstations may also give license to the officer to retreat to "the officer's area" rather than circulate throughout the unit and interact with inmates.

To address concerns about controlling papers and equipment, the jail administrator should look closely at the design of the desk itself, ensuring that there are sufficient drawers in which to secure items quickly and rapid methods of securing door controls and computer terminals so the officer can leave the desk area as often as desired and needed. The jail administrator should also ensure that a unit rule prohibits inmates from hovering around the desk, looking at papers, and taking items. Breaking this rule will subject them to disciplinary procedures. The unit officer has the responsibility to ensure that inmates know and comply with the rule.

If the workstation is raised to the degree that it clearly removes the officer from the inmates, it may not be feasible to redesign and reconstruct the station. In this case, it is especially important that the officer minimize his or her time at the station, going there only when absolutely necessary.

Management Issues

The audits referenced earlier in this guide concluded that management must instruct and encourage officers to circulate among, observe, and communicate with inmates. Once administrators remove design impediments, they

may still find that officers spend more time at the workstation than they do interacting with inmates. This speaks to a variety of issues such as those listed below.

- **Does each officer understand that interacting with inmates is critical to safety, security, and success in managing inmate behavior?** The jail administrator should consider how clearly this role was portrayed during the recruiting and hiring process, how effectively the officer was trained, and how effectively the supervisor and others in the management hierarchy reinforce the nature of the officer's role.
- **Does each officer accept and want to fulfill this role?** If the officer does not want to fulfill the role, training will not modify the officer's behavior. The jail administrator might want to consider the officer's suitability for the job.
- **Does the officer have the necessary skills to interact effectively with inmates?** The jail administrator should consider the officer's aptitude for the role of officer and the effectiveness of the training the officer has received. The jail administrator should also consider whether the officer's supervisor provides the necessary support and coaching needed to help the officer interact effectively with inmates.
- **Does the officer have the tools to interact effectively with inmates and manage their behavior?** The jail administrator should consider whether the officer has the authority to manage inmate behavior and whether supervisors undermine the officer's authority by stepping in to make the decisions that the officer should make. The jail administrator might also ask whether the officer has a range of positive incentives to encourage positive behavior and whether the disciplinary process is clear, fair, and effective.
- **Do administrative tasks distract the officer from interacting with inmates?** The jail administrator should consider identifying all the tasks that officers must complete on all

⁴ Principle 1 states in part: "Staff in direct supervision jails firmly establish their authority over all space and activities in the facility, particularly inmate housing areas." Principle 2 states officers have authority commensurate with their responsibilities.

shifts while in the housing units and review these to determine whether: (1) the officers can accomplish them in a way that does not prevent them from interacting with inmates, (2) staff other than housing unit officers can complete the tasks, and (3) the tasks are necessary.

- **Is the importance of the officer's interaction with inmates consistently reinforced by all levels of management and the jail administrator?** The jail administrator should consider whether the supervisor:
 - Makes frequent visits to the unit to support and coach the officer in effective and continual interaction with inmates.
 - Is aware of the level and quality of interaction the officer has with the inmates and takes corrective action when necessary.

- Includes the level and quality of interaction between the officer and the inmates as a component of the officer's formal performance appraisal.
- Understands that all levels of management need to reinforce the importance of this interaction frequently and consistently.

Conclusion

When housing unit officers do not interact with inmates, a methodical examination of both design and management issues is likely to reveal a variety of reasons. The jail administrator can then develop and implement a strategy to address these reasons and, in doing so, demonstrate commitment to this critical component of direct supervision operations.

Addressing the Isolation of the Housing Unit Officer

Some direct supervision jail administrators have voiced concern about the isolation of housing unit officers from their peers, since they have little time to interact with their coworkers during a shift. Usually, one officer is assigned per housing unit, and the nature of the officer's work requires a focus entirely on the management of that unit. There is little time for formal or informal interaction among officers during a shift, and interaction with medical, food service, or program staff who come to the housing unit is usually brief. This, combined with the requirement that officers interact continually and extensively with inmates—whom they may be assigned to supervise for 60 days or more—sometimes raises the following questions:

- Does this increase the potential for staff to develop personal relationships with inmates?
- Does this create an environment where staff will identify too closely with inmates?

Staff Development of Personal Relationships With Inmates

There is sometimes concern about officers developing personal relationships—friendships or romantic, sexual relations—with inmates. Such relationships pose serious problems related to security, ethics, and overall operations. They compromise the officer's ability to carry out duties with full integrity. Furthermore, in all states, an officer who has a sexual relationship

with an inmate—consensual or not—is subject to criminal prosecution.

Staff development of personal relationships with inmates, however, is not an issue unique to direct supervision jails, nor has there been any research that shows there is a higher occurrence in direct supervision jails. Personal relationships between staff and inmates are a possibility in any jail. The precautions that jails need to take—in any type of jail—are integral to the screening and hiring process, policies and procedures, training, and supervision. The jail administrator should ensure that jails deliberately and thoughtfully apply such precautions so that:

- Persons who might have a propensity toward such relationships can be screened out during the hiring process.
- Policies, procedures, and the staff disciplinary process clearly address staff-inmate relations.
- Staff training programs thoroughly and consistently address the boundaries of an appropriate professional relationship between staff and inmates (supervisor to subordinate).
- Supervisors provide the supervision, coaching, and support needed to help staff identify the signs of a developing relationship and prevent such relationships from developing.
- Supervisors are trained on how to detect signs of a developing or fully formed personal

relationship between staff and inmates and the steps to take to address it.

- Inmates are oriented to the agency's policies on appropriate professional relationships between staff and inmates.

Staff Overidentification With Inmates

Staff overidentification with inmates raises another potential issue related to the isolation of housing unit officers. Overidentification has often been discussed in the context of the Stockholm Syndrome, which describes the behavior of kidnap victims who become sympathetic to their captors over time. The Stockholm Syndrome refers specifically to a hostage incident at a bank in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1973. After 6 days, several of the kidnap victims resisted authorities' attempts to rescue them. These victims also refused to testify against the perpetrators after the incident.

Research has not tested the hypothesis that the relative isolation of the housing unit officer from peers, combined with extensive interaction with inmates, creates a risk of Stockholm Syndrome or staff overidentification with inmates. Nonetheless, it is important that the jail administrator be aware of the issue and implement strategies to ensure that housing unit officers clearly see themselves as an integral part of at least three teams of staff:

- All staff who work in the jail.
- All staff on their shift.
- All staff assigned to their housing unit during a given rotation.

Not only will this mitigate the sense of isolation an officer might have, but it should also help staff work together to ensure that the jail operates effectively.

The Officer as Part of the All-Staff Team

The jail administrator can foster the sense of an all-staff team by:

- Conducting all-staff meetings periodically.
- Establishing off-duty, informal activities, such as annual picnics, to which the administrator invites all staff and which staff may also help plan.
- Establishing short- or long-term cross-unit staff teams or projects to accomplish certain tasks or functions.
- Establishing staff award ceremonies to which administrators invite all staff.
- Maintaining a staff bulletin board or newsletter that contains information on staff accomplishments that contribute to effective jail operations.
- Visiting the housing units and speaking with officers regularly about their concerns and contributions to achieving the jail's mission.
- Providing clear, frequent, and highly visible support for the mission of the jail—the accomplishment of which requires the concerted effort of all staff.

The Officer as Part of the Shift Team

Shift Briefings

Each shift should begin with a briefing conducted by the shift supervisor and attended by all staff on the shift. Generally, shift briefings last from 15 to 30 minutes and include a review of notable information provided by the previous shifts and general staff announcements. To ensure more of a sense that shift members work together to operate the jail, the shift supervisor should regularly incorporate time for staff to share their concerns and successes related to the management of their posts. All staff on a shift should be encouraged to feel as if they are part of the success of any individual staff member, and all staff should be encouraged to support others regarding their challenges and concerns about managing their posts.

If the jail does not have shift briefings, the jail administrator should devise another method of routinely sharing information and fostering a sense of teamwork among shift members. For

example, shift members may have a briefing meeting only once a week, but might share information electronically in a special briefing format on other days. The briefing format should allow the shift supervisor and all shift members to post information, ask questions, and make responses and comments—preferably in real time. Also, the shift supervisor might visit each post to provide briefing information to the staff. This, however, does not allow for interaction among shift members. The ability for shift members to interact as a team is crucial, and the jail administrator should explore alternatives if briefing meetings are not possible.

Interaction Between the Shift Supervisor and Staff

A core part of the shift supervisor's duties is to visit various posts throughout the shift. These visits are essential to the supervisor's knowledge of what is taking place throughout the jail, managing the shift, assessing staff performance, and providing coaching and support to individual staff. In addition, these visits are a key staff-to-staff interaction for the housing unit officer, and administrators should make supervisors aware of its importance. Also, unlike the housing unit officer, the supervisor is mobile throughout the jail. The supervisor is aware of activities and incidents in all areas of the jail and can share this information with the housing officer, helping the officer keep connected to overall jail operations and the shift team.

Breaks

The shift supervisor should ensure that officers take their meal breaks away from the housing unit, preferably in a common area, and

that two or more staff can take the meal break together. The shift supervisor should arrange for additional breaks to be taken away from the post, if possible.

The Officer as Part of the Housing Unit Team

If administrators do not rotate officers frequently among housing units, but instead assign them to units for a minimum of 60 days, officers can form intershift teams focused on the management of the housing unit. The jail administrator should consider the formal establishment of such teams—with team meetings at specified intervals—because they are highly valuable not only to individual officers but also to the quality of inmate management and jail operations. The formation of housing unit teams that meet regularly gives staff the opportunity to support one another and, within the limits of policy and procedure, develop team strategies to manage inmate behavior, plan for unit activities, set unit goals, and determine how to meet those goals. This team approach should also increase the level of consistency in operations among shifts.

Conclusion

To ensure the housing unit officer is not isolated from his or her coworkers, the jail administrator should develop formal and informal means for interaction among staff. This not only helps individual staff but also benefits overall jail operations as staff begin to see themselves as part of various teams working toward specific goals for the good of all staff and the jail.

Decisionmaking Using the Principles of Direct Supervision

Sound decisionmaking and leadership in a direct supervision jail require ongoing consideration of the direct supervision principles. All decisions the administrator makes have some effect on the implementation of direct supervision, including those related to, for example, budget requests, budget reductions, staffing, hiring, training, facility maintenance, and daily operations. Administrators should make decisions on all matters within the conceptual framework of direct supervision and with an examination of the implications of a decision on the perception and reality of direct supervision.

Consider the following scenario.

Two inmates in the recreation yard of a general population housing unit try to bully several others. An officer intervenes and orders the inmates to lockdown. The inmates shove and punch the officer. Days later, the union shop steward and president arrive in your office to express their concerns about the incident. They demand that something be done and tell you that the cause of the problem is both the direct supervision philosophy that places a single officer in direct contact with inmates and the jail's policy that allows inmates to be in the recreation yards at any time during the day. They want all inmates to have no more than the mandatory 1-hour-a-day out-of-cell time. Inmates otherwise should be locked down in their cells unless

they have a reason to be out, such as for a clinic appointment, visit, or class. To do anything else, they tell you, is to confirm the officers' suspicion that you don't care about them and that you are pro-inmate.

You are concerned about your staff, and you do not want the union to file a public grievance, so you decide to consider the union demands. You call in the security chief and discuss the options the union officials posed. On the surface, the union's demands make sense. However, as a jail administrator fully committed to direct supervision, you choose to examine the union's proposal in light of its implications for direct supervision. You raise the questions in exhibit 10-1 as a basis for decisionmaking.

Exploration of questions such as those in exhibit 10-1 should allow the jail administrator to focus on the underlying causes of the problem, rather than to react to the problem as the union staff presented it and possibly create even more problems. This exploration should lead to a more substantial and long-term solution and enable the jail administrator to avoid drastic measures that undermine direct supervision and, in the long term, could diminish safety and security in the jail.

Making decisions within the conceptual framework of direct supervision allows the administrator to demonstrate commitment to direct

Using Direct Supervision Principles to Guide Decisionmaking

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| <p>What factors might have contributed to the assaults?</p> | <p><i>Principle 7: Classification and orientation—Knowing with whom you are dealing</i> Had the inmates involved been properly assessed and classified?</p> <p><i>Principle 4: Safety of staff and inmates—Inmates’ response to unsafe surroundings</i> Were the inmates involved fearful about their own safety, and did they commit the assaults purposefully to be reclassified into segregation?</p> |
| <p>Did staff supervise and control the inmates effectively?</p> | <p><i>Principle 1: Effective control—Accountability for behavior</i></p> |
| <p>Did officers consistently hold inmates accountable for negative behavior, or did they allow inmate behavior to deteriorate over time?</p> | <p><i>Principle 1: Effective control—Accountability for behavior</i></p> |
| <p>What will be the implications of essentially punishing all inmates for the behavior of a few?</p> | <p><i>Principle 8: Justice and fairness—Consistent root cause of collective violence</i></p> |
| <p>What are the long-term implications of minimizing physical recreation for inmates and keeping them confined in their cells?</p> | <p><i>Principle 1: Effective control—Maximizing inmates’ self-control</i> Frequent recreation allows inmates to release their energy in a positive way Excessive confinement to a cell is likely to increase stress and frustration, which inmates may express in disruptive or violent behavior.</p> |
| <p>How often did management staff visit this housing unit?</p> | <p><i>Principle 2: Effective supervision—Frequent supervision by management</i> Such visits might have uncovered patterns of inmate or staff behavior that precipitated the assaults.</p> |
| <p>What assumptions about inmate behavior will the jail administrator’s decision convey to staff?</p> | <p><i>Principle 7: Classification and orientation—Assumption of rational behavior</i> Implementation of the union’s proposal would imply that the jail administrator believes that all inmates are likely to assault staff, and this may become a self-fulfilling prophecy for inmates. This contradicts principle 7.</p> |

supervision clearly and to model behavior and ways of thinking that the administrator wants staff to adopt. The administrator should require that all staff proposals for new or revised policies and procedures be accompanied by a rationale framed in the direct supervision principles and the implications for those principles. This is essential to fully integrating the direct supervision principles into jail operations.

The remainder of this chapter explores several issues that direct supervision jail administrators often confront.

Should I Establish a Jail-Based Emergency Response Team?

Within the direct supervision community, there has been debate over whether emergency response teams (ERTs) are consistent with

direct supervision principles and operations. ERTs come in various forms. In some jails, ERTs comprise staff who are not assigned to a specific post, but rather are available throughout the shift to respond to incidents or perform special assignments. In others, ERT staff have regular post assignments, but post operations are such that ERT staff can leave on short notice to respond to an incident. In either case, the jail decides to form a special team rather than follow a more traditional model that ensures all staff receive emergency-response training.

In this guide, the phrase “emergency response team” defines a team of carefully screened and selected staff who are specially trained to (1) use force as a last option and (2) respond to specific types of incidents or carry out special assignments, such as:

Emergency Response Teams

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Will the existence of an ERT affect staff and inmate safety?</p> | <p><i>Principle 4: Safety of staff and inmates—Inmates’ response to unsafe surroundings, Staff response to unsafe working conditions</i></p> <p>An ERT may possibly enhance safety. Fewer inmates may be injured if ERT staff are highly competent in the use (or avoidance) of force to make cell extractions or subdue minor disturbances. If inmates back down when simply faced with an ERT action, the jail can avoid inmate injuries altogether. Furthermore, an ERT may enhance staff safety because non-ERT staff are not expected to become involved in high-risk incidents for which they have not been adequately trained.</p> |
| <p>How does the existence of an ERT affect the officer’s role in the housing unit?</p> | <p><i>Principle 2: Effective supervision—Officer in control of unit, Unit officer’s leadership role</i></p> <p>Inmates and staff may perceive that the officer does not have ultimate authority over the unit if the officer frequently relies on the ERT when inmates do not comply with an order or when the officer must search an inmate’s cell. Because the housing officer’s role is critical to the success of direct supervision, the perception that the officer is in control of the unit should not be jeopardized.</p> |
| <p>What message does the presence of an ERT convey to inmates about behavioral expectations?</p> | <p><i>Principle 7: Classification and orientation—Assumption of rational behavior</i></p> <p>The assumption of rational behavior is fundamental to direct supervision. The presence of an ERT may convey the message to inmates that staff expect them to behave badly and that preparations are in place for this—in much the same way that fixtures, furnishings, and the design of traditional jails convey the expectation that inmates will behave badly.</p> |

- Housing unit disturbance control
- Cell extractions
- Unit or cell shakedowns
- High-risk prisoner transport

Although ERTs may also deal with other types of incidents or assignments, such as high-risk hospital duty, bomb threats, hostage situations, natural and man-made disasters, and major disturbances, it is only the four assignments listed above that are the focus of this discussion and the subject of debate.

Exhibit 10-2 lists sample questions related to direct supervision that the jail administrator might want to consider in deciding whether to establish an ERT.

The jail administrator should identify and weigh all issues related to direct supervision when making decisions regarding an ERT. If the administrator decides to establish an ERT because of the potential benefits related to the first two questions in exhibit 10-2, the administrator will want to ensure that ERT missions and operations are framed in a way that does not

undermine the officer’s role in the unit or convey negative expectations of inmate behavior.

Perhaps in routine matters, such as large-scale unit searches, an ERT should support the housing unit officer, who might be more active in the searches, while ERT officers secure the unit and staff the desk. Careful consideration should also be given to the housing unit officer’s responsibility in the case of an inmate altercation. The housing unit officer should remain in control by being the person to lock down the unit, give verbal orders to stop fighting, identify the combatants, note their actions, and remove potential weapons nearby. It is essential that inmates continue to view the housing officer as an authoritative figure even in such difficult situations.

One direct supervision jail with an on-call ERT experienced the importance of this when inmates were overheard saying during a minor disturbance, “Don’t worry about those officers coming to get you out of the cell. They’re just ‘brown shirts’ (unit officers). They have to wait for the ‘black shirts’ (ERT) to do it for them.”

It may be advisable to have ERT officers wear the same uniforms as other officers (perhaps with a special patch or other subtle designation). The jail administrator might also want to consider integrating ERT officers into post assignments, even if they are assignments from which administrators can deploy them rapidly.

Some direct supervision jail administrators have established ERTs as a way of overcoming staff resistance to direct supervision. They believed staff would accept working directly with inmates more readily if they knew a specialized team would provide a rapid response if they were to get into trouble. Establishing an ERT for this reason can directly undermine direct supervision, since staff should understand that continual interaction with inmates, setting behavioral expectations for inmates, holding them accountable, meeting their basic needs, and treating them fairly are the real basis for safety and security in the jail.

Should I Use Closed-Circuit Television Monitors in the Housing Units?

Jail administrators consider the use of closed-circuit television (CCTV) in housing units generally for three purposes: (1) as a deterrent to inmate misbehavior, (2) as a means for central control or remote supervisors to view or call for a response to unit activities, and (3) as a means of recording incidents for investigative or prosecutorial purposes.

The use of CCTV cameras in direct supervision housing units is becoming more prevalent. Using CCTV cameras to record incidents may make sense in areas of high liability and can provide a sense of safety to housing unit officers. However, it is important to remember that appropriately classified and managed inmates who are properly housed in a general population housing unit should not present a high risk of misbehavior. Staff who rely on a central control officer to observe misbehavior may have a false, potentially dangerous, sense of security, since the central control officer

may have so many cameras to watch and other duties to attend to that the officer does not have much time to observe housing unit cameras. Jail administrators who opt to install CCTV cameras need to consider carefully what their purposes are and what they can reasonably accomplish (see exhibit 10-3), and ensure that staff are aware of both the uses and limitations of the cameras.

Should Staff Be Equipped with Pepper Spray and Conductive Electrical Devices?

Although it is always preferable that staff use interpersonal communication skills and avoid the use of force, there will be situations that require staff to use more than verbal directives. Administrators should address these situations in training and in policy and procedures. Many agencies employ a “use-of-force continuum” to govern what kinds of force they can use in specific situations. Over the past 10 to 15 years, jails have made efforts to provide officers with alternatives to hands-on use of force and to integrate those options into the use-of-force continuum.

Pepper spray is the most frequently used alternative, and many jail officials opt for its use to subdue and control violent inmates in volatile situations. While some jails authorize only supervisors or ERT officers to carry pepper spray, others have issued pepper spray to housing unit officers and trained them in its use. They have done so on the assumption that the use of pepper spray may decrease injuries to staff and inmates by avoiding the need for a higher level of force. More recently, drawing from the experience of law enforcement, some jail officials have also authorized the use of conductive electrical devices (CEDs), such as stun guns. These are hand-held weapons that can stun and immobilize a target from a few feet away with a jolt of up to 50,000 volts of electricity. From the perspective of direct supervision principles, administrators can consider both these use-of-force options together (see exhibit 10-4).

Closed-Circuit Television

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| <p>How might the use of closed-circuit television (CCTV) affect staff and inmate safety?</p> | <p><i>Principle 4: Safety of staff and inmates—Personal liability</i></p> <p>The presence of housing unit cameras may deter inmate or staff misbehavior. Staff in control rooms might see potentially dangerous behavior on the camera that the officer in the housing unit might miss. If the officer is in trouble, assistance might be more readily deployed if the control room staff can view the incident.</p> <p>On the other hand, placing CCTV in housing unit dayrooms could send a message to the officer that the administration does not really believe that direct supervision is safe for staff. Also, CCTV potentially can give the officer a false sense of security, since the cameras' reach will probably not allow central control staff to observe all areas of the housing unit. Finally, the addition of a large number of cameras focusing on the housing units may require central control staff to monitor an unwieldy bank of monitors, perhaps with longer rotations, compromising their ability to detect an incident or unsafe condition.</p> |
| <p>Can I hold inmates accountable for their actions more easily with the use of CCTV?</p> | <p><i>Principle 1: Effective control—Accountability for behavior</i></p> <p>CCTV might give staff the opportunity to record misbehavior. Administrators can then use the recordings to hold an inmate accountable in administrative or criminal proceedings.</p> |
| <p>How might the presence of CCTV affect the officer's role in the housing unit?</p> | <p><i>Principle 2: Effective supervision—Officer in control of unit</i></p> <p>Potentially, the presence of cameras could undermine the officer's control if inmates perceive that it is not the officer who is truly in charge, but rather another staff member or supervisor monitoring the unit from a remote location. The perception may be unjustified, but it may have negative consequences nonetheless.</p> |
| <p>Might the cameras send a message to inmates that they are expected to behave negatively?</p> | <p><i>Principle 7: Classification and orientation—Assumption of rational behavior</i></p> |
| <p>Can cameras compensate for a housing unit with poor sightlines?</p> | <p><i>Principle 1: Effective control—Easily surveillable areas</i></p> <p>If the housing unit has poor sightlines, administrators might compensate by placing CCTV monitors at the officer's workstation. However, this also gives the officer an excuse for remaining at a workstation and neglecting primary duties, including walking about the unit, interacting with inmates continually, and managing inmate behavior.</p> |

If the jail administrator authorizes the use of pepper spray or CEDs, the administrator should ensure that the highest quality training, supervision, and development of policies governing use of force serve as the basis for the decision. The administrator should also consider to whom these tools are issued and whether they should be visible to inmates. The jail administrator should also ensure that staff clearly understand that their primary goal is to manage inmate behavior effectively, not through force, but through extensive interaction and supervision.

Should the Jail Use Open Booking?

Open booking employs a “waiting room” design, whereby officers may seat well-

behaved, newly admitted arrestees in an open waiting area until they are processed. Arrestees in the waiting area are in full view and under the direct supervision of booking room staff. The waiting area often gives arrestees full access to pay phones, bathrooms, reading materials, and a television. Officers do not separate male and female arrestees; these inmates share the waiting area. Only those arrestees who are combative or whom officers must segregate for other reasons, such as contagious disease or the need for protection, are placed in a secure holding cell. Direct supervision jail administrators have found that most arrestees may remain in the open waiting area.

Open booking is, in fact, integral to direct supervision. It introduces arrestees to direct

Pepper Spray and Conductive Electrical Devices

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| <p>What effect might pepper spray and CEDs have on inmate and staff safety?</p> | <p><i>Principle 4: Safety of staff and inmates—Staff response to unsafe working conditions</i></p> <p>One could argue that pepper spray and CEDs offer the officer a protective option if an inmate attacks, and they provide an alternative to hands-on tactics when an officer needs to intervene in an inmate altercation. Having an officer employ an alternative to hands-on force could also potentially be safer for inmates. Similarly, the presence of either tool on the officer’s person may deter negative behavior and, therefore, enhance the safety of both inmates and staff.</p> <p>Conversely, pepper spray and CEDs are potentially dangerous weapons that inmates could take and use against an officer. Also, an inmate who gains control of these weapons could use them against other inmates. In this way, pepper spray and CEDs can present a significant safety risk.</p> <p>It is also worth noting that CEDs and pepper spray may present some serious health risks. However, current research is inconclusive, with strong anecdotal evidence of potential risk but limited scientific data. Before authorizing the use of either option, the jail administrator should research the current literature and studies on these tools thoroughly to understand their uses and risks.</p> |
| <p>If officers are issued pepper spray or CEDs, what effect might this have on their interaction with inmates?</p> | <p><i>Principle 2: Effective supervision—Techniques of effective supervision and leadership</i></p> <p><i>Principle 6: Effective communication—Communication skills training</i></p> <p>Access to pepper spray and CEDs may diminish the officers’ perception of the need to employ the most fundamental tools in managing inmate behavior: interpersonal communication skills, interaction with inmates, and effective supervision. If so, the officer’s access to pepper spray and CEDs could potentially undermine the effective implementation of direct supervision.</p> |
| <p>What message does the visibility of CEDs and pepper spray send to inmates?</p> | <p><i>Principle 7: Classification and orientation—Assumption of rational behavior</i></p> <p>The visibility of items such as pepper spray and CEDs may send a clear message to inmates that staff expect them to be assaultive, destructive, and violent. Such perceptions may foster the very behavior the jail wants to prevent, as it may create a negative, self-fulfilling prophecy.</p> |

supervision and sets the tone for an inmate’s stay in the jail. Some jail administrators, though, have questioned its necessity. For example, questions about open booking may arise during the design of a new direct supervision jail. In operating direct supervision jails, staff may propose modifications to the design and operations of the booking room that would undermine the intent and implementation of open booking.

Exhibit 10-5 discusses open booking and decisionmaking in the context of direct supervision. Because open booking is integral to direct supervision, this discussion will take a different format and simply list some of the direct supervision principles with a related discussion of open booking.

Open booking is so integral to direct supervision operations that it is hard to identify a legitimate counterargument. Although some might argue that jail staff know too little about inmates at this stage of detention to justify what may appear to be a relative lack of security and control, an examination of open booking in relation to the principles shows that it enhances security and control. The jail administrator should carefully review proposals not to build or to do away with open booking in light of direct supervision principles and the effect on the jail’s overall implementation of direct supervision.

Can I Review Incidents Using the Principles?

Not only can administrators review incidents in the context of the direct supervision principles,

Control and Operations

Principle 1: Effective control

Accountability for behavior—From the onset of the detention process, open booking allows arrestees to recognize that they will be accountable for their behavior and that there are rewards for positive behavior and negative implications for unacceptable behavior. Open booking also removes the anonymity associated with large, group holding cells and allows staff to hold arrestees individually accountable for their behavior.

Maximizing inmates' self control—Open booking provides both the opportunity and motivation for inmates to control their behavior. Incoming inmates prefer to wait in an open area, with easy access to television, restrooms, phones, and staff instead of having an officer lock them in a holding cell, possibly with others who may be assaultive. Inmates have an incentive to behave.

Principle 4: Safety of staff and inmates

Inmates' response to unsafe surroundings—Traditional booking holding cells, which are often crowded, can frequently lead inmates to negative behavior as in response to unsafe surroundings. Dangerous conditions may include staff's inability to see all areas of these cells, the mix of arrestees who have not yet been fully assessed for risk and need, the potential spread of disease, and the limited and very public hygiene facilities. It is no surprise that arrestee response to placement in group holding cells ranges from hostile behavior (as a defensive or offensive mechanism) to extreme withdrawal and fear. Also, suicide attempts frequently take place during this initial holding period. Finally, the locked holding cell places a barrier between staff and arrestees, making it difficult for staff to detect and prevent potential problems.

Open booking, in contrast, creates a calmer, safer environment for arrestees. Those in the waiting area—the majority of arrestees—are under the constant supervision of staff. Many new arrestees are fearful and view the staff presence as protection. The open areas separate well-behaved arrestees from other inmates and shield them from the negative behavior of those in holding cells. Furthermore, since those placed in holding cells are likely disruptive or dangerous to themselves or others, officers can place them on special watches to ensure their safety.

Principle 5: Manageable and cost-effective operations

Reduced construction and furnishings costs, wider range of architectural options—Open waiting areas are less costly to construct than traditional rows of secure cells. Similarly, the open space and use of commercial-level detailing and furnishings allow architects to introduce natural light, colors, finishes, and other features that make the space less oppressive for arrestees, and, equally important, for staff.

Anticipation of fundamental needs—Open booking anticipates and provides for the fundamental needs of inmates, including personal safety, physical needs (access to bathroom), needs related to reaching friends and relatives (telephone access), and needs to information (access to staff).

Principle 7: Classification and orientation

Assumption of rational behavior—The assumption of rational behavior is fundamental to direct supervision. With open booking, arrestees are introduced to the assumptions staff hold about inmate behavior. At the front door of the jail, arrestees are shown that rational behavior will earn them good treatment, respect, and a less onerous incarceration experience. Jail officials say, in effect, to the inmate, "We assume you will behave rationally and we will treat you accordingly. Only in the event that you opt for negative behavior will your experience in this facility be a negative one." Most arrestees understand the choice and fulfill the assumption of rational behavior, and what they experience in booking will likely carry through to their housing assignment as well. The design, fixtures, and furnishings of the waiting area in open booking—just as in the general population housing areas—should convey expectations of positive behavior.

Orientation—Orientation is an important element of the booking and admission process, since arrestees need to learn what jail staff expect of them. The design and philosophy of direct supervision is clearly conveyed through the open booking arrangement, thus enhancing the orientation process. Often, jails may use the television in the open waiting area to show orientation videos or informational scrolling banners that give information about the booking process, court processes, or general jail rules and information.

Maximum supervision during initial hours of confinement—Open booking allows for constant, unobstructed observation and supervision of arrestees in the open waiting area. It also allows staff to isolate inmates whose behavior or needs require segregation and to implement special watches for them.

they absolutely should. Doing so supports the full integration of the direct supervision principles into the jail's operations. Staff, supervisors, and administrators should employ a deliberate process of evaluating incidents within the framework of the direct supervision principles, and then make the necessary corrections. For example, if there is a disturbance in a housing unit, a traditional evaluation might focus on the following:

- The adequacy of the physical plant and its fixtures and furnishings to withstand a violent disturbance.
- The adequacy of the response to the incident (backup deployed, ability to lock inmates down, use-of-force options).
- Inmate behaviors that could have foretold the disturbance (in hindsight).
- The adequacy of sanctions for inmates involved in the disturbance.

A review in the context of direct supervision would include these points, but also focus on issues such as the following:

- To what degree did staff have control over inmate behavior in the unit? What detracted from control? Were unit officers continually interacting with inmates, and were they aware of group and individual behavior patterns? (*Principle 1: Effective control—Total control*)
- Did staff hold inmates accountable by managing their behavior and dealing with them as individuals rather than as a group? (*Principle 1: Effective control—Accountability for behavior*)
- Was the number of inmates housed in the units appropriate for the supervision level? (*Principle 2: Effective supervision—Staff-to-inmate ratio*)
- Did the officer have the tools and opportunities to exercise a leadership role? (*Principle 2: Effective supervision—Officer in control of unit, Unit officer's leadership role*)
- Were supervisors making frequent rounds and ensuring that staff were properly supervising

inmates (and did the supervisors have the skills and knowledge of direct supervision to do so)? (*Principle 2: Effective supervision—Frequent supervision by management, Techniques of effective supervision and leadership*)

- Did line staff, supervisors, and top management receive the right kinds and amounts of direct supervision training before and after the facility opened? (*Principle 3: Competent staff—Effective training*)
- Were line officers assigned to the same posts for a fixed period to ensure consistency, continuity, and knowledge of the inmates and their behaviors? (*Principle 3: Competent staff—Effective leadership by management*)
- Did the jail provide safe and secure custody for the inmates, and did the inmates feel safe? (*Principle 4: Safety of staff and inmates—Mission and public expectations*)
- Was the incident a result of inmates acting out because of fear for their own safety? (*Principle 4: Safety of staff and inmates—Inmates' response to unsafe surroundings*)
- Were inmates' fundamental needs being met in the units? (*Principle 5: Manageable and cost-effective operations—Anticipation of fundamental needs*)
- Was there frequent communication between inmates and staff in the unit in which this incident occurred? (*Principle 6: Effective communication—Frequent inmate and staff communication*)
- Did the staff assigned to the unit communicate among themselves about inmate concerns, difficult-to-manage inmates, security issues, tension in the unit, and inmates who might have exerted influence over others? (*Principle 6: Effective communication—Communication among staff members*)
- Was the classification system effective? Did it retrieve information about the incident perpetrators that should have resulted in their placement in a section other than the general population? (*Principle 7: Classification and orientation—Knowing with whom you are dealing*)

- If information existed about the potential danger of the inmates involved in the disturbance, did the staff who had the information communicate it to the officers who supervised the inmates and to those officers' supervisors? *(Principle 7: Classification and orientation—Knowing with whom you are dealing)*
- Did the facility have formal grievance systems in place, and did inmates perceive the disciplinary systems to be fair? *(Principle 8: Justice and fairness—Mission and public policy, Consistent root cause of collective violence, and Formal administrative remedy (grievance) and disciplinary system)*

Conclusion

Full integration of direct supervision into jail operations requires the administrator to make decisions and review incidents within the

framework of the direct supervision principles. The administrator should not base decisions on a “knee jerk” response, the loudest voice, or even the most persuasive voice, but rather on a careful examination of the principles and the implications that a particular decision will have on the perception and reality of direct supervision.

Employing this type of process in reaching decisions will provide senior managers with a positive impression. Requiring all levels of staff to justify their decisions and recommendations gives them an opportunity to use the principles and understand their benefits, especially in terms of safety and security. The clear message staff receive is that the principles are not just words in a document. They are the foundation of the jail's operations.

Assessing Direct Supervision Operations and Outcomes

Many administrators of direct supervision jails find that, without strong oversight and constant vigilance, operations often revert to those of more traditional jails. Many times, it happens slowly and almost imperceptibly, a creeping away from direct supervision, until the jail is direct supervision in design only. Sometimes officers advocate—and get approval—for longer and more frequent lockdown periods for inmates, often with the rationale that it is necessary because inmates need this quiet time or so that officers can complete their work. Their work is, in fact, managing inmate behavior, which they cannot achieve if inmates are locked down much of the time. Other times, officers build a virtual fortress around their workstations, keeping inmates at bay and avoiding the interaction essential to managing inmates. Sometimes jails institute graduated privileges for inmates, requiring inmates to prove they are worthy of varying levels of privileges. This contradicts the assumption of rational behavior and the direct supervision practice of giving all general population inmates all privileges from the outset and removing privileges from individual inmates only when their behavior demonstrates they should lose them. Occasionally, firstline supervisors begin exerting authority in the housing units, undermining the authority of the officer.

These are but a few of the signs that operations are reverting to more traditional practices and

moving away from direct supervision. There are various theories as to why this happens. If many staff come from a linear intermittent-surveillance or podular remote-surveillance jail, they may have never really understood or supported direct supervision and so try to change operations to better suit what they think the jail should be. Alternatively, staff sometimes simply revert to old ways because they know them and are more comfortable with them. To prevent this from happening, the administrator must be fully aware of and continually assess jail operations.

Assessing Operations

All jail administrators should have a systematic method of assessing the operations in their jail to determine if the jail is operating according to legal mandates, codes, standards, and policies and procedures. However, the direct supervision jail administrator must be especially vigilant in ensuring ongoing implementation of the direct supervision principles, with all related operational implications—both obvious and subtle. This is part of the jail administrator's leadership responsibility and demonstrated commitment to direct supervision. The assessment provides the basis for corrective action and prevents backsliding into practices that undermine direct supervision. All levels of staff should be encouraged to be mindful of practices that support or contradict the direct supervision principles.

In 2004, the National Institute of Corrections published a self-audit instrument¹ that gives jail administrators information, instruction, and tools to assess the implementation of the direct supervision principles in their jail. This self-audit instrument translates the principles of direct supervision into measurable elements. Information on these elements is gathered from administrator, staff, and inmate surveys; staff and inmate interviews; and facility and document reviews. The audit instrument also includes instructions for evaluating audit results. Administrators can conduct the audit process as a one-time assessment or conduct it at regular intervals as part of an ongoing monitoring effort.

Assessing Outcomes

Direct supervision is an approach to jail design, management, and operations that intends to produce certain outcomes. Outcomes most often associated with direct supervision include:

- Lowered levels of vandalism and graffiti.
- Lowered levels of inmate-on-inmate assault.
- Lowered levels of inmate-on-staff assault.
- Lowered levels of dangerous contraband.
- Lowered levels of escape.
- Lowered levels of suicide.
- Improved sanitary conditions in all jail areas.
- Improved inmate compliance with jail rules.
- Enhanced sense of safety on the part of staff.
- Enhanced sense of safety on the part of inmates.

The jail administrator should assess not only how well staff are implementing direct supervision but also how fully the jail is realizing these benefits. If the administrator determines that the jail is not experiencing one or more benefits, the administrator can then assess the

reasons for this and take corrective action. To assess outcomes, the jail administrator should, at a minimum:

- Identify the outcomes (for example, inmates feel safe in the jail).
- Identify outcome indicators (for example, number of inmates placed into protective custody, total number of bed days spent in protective custody, the amount of dangerous contraband found in housing units, number of inmate groups formed for self-protection).
- For each indicator, identify the benchmark level.
- For each indicator, identify sources of information (for example, incident reports, grievances, records of inmate housing assignments).
- For each indicator, identify in what form the jail administrator will receive the information (Does the jail administrator want to see individual reports? Does the administrator want staff to compile information into a summary report?).
- Determine the frequency of outcome measurement (different outcomes might be measured at different intervals, depending on such factors as the span of time required to accumulate sufficient information or the criticality of the outcome).

The outcome assessment will enable the jail administrator to:

- Identify and analyze trends in outcome achievement over time.
- Set goals by setting increasingly higher benchmarks in some areas, pushing the jail to higher levels of performance.
- Identify areas that warrant further analysis and action.

It is important to note that administrators cannot always take assessment results at face value, and there may be more than one possi-

¹ Michael O'Toole, Raymond Nelson, Dennis Liebert, and Kristin Keller, *Self Audit Instrument for Administrators of Direct Supervision Jails: Based on the Measurable Elements of Direct Supervision*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections, 2004).

ble interpretation for a given result. For example, an indicator related to levels of vandalism may show that officers are charging fewer inmates for damage to their cells. This may connote success—that officers are in control of the housing units and are actively managing inmate behavior, but it could also mean they are not conducting cell searches or walk-throughs and are not finding damage as a result. In such a case, an administrator should examine the number of inmates charged for damage to their cells against reports of unit inspections conducted by staff other than the officers.

Conclusion

Although tools such as the self-audit instrument help the jail administrator determine the degree to which staff are implementing the direct supervision principles, the measurement of outcomes helps determine whether the jail is experiencing the expected benefits of direct supervision. The administrator who assesses both the implementation of direct supervision and the achievement of outcomes is well positioned to ensure that the jail operates as intended and to prevent backsliding into practices that undermine direct supervision and jeopardize the effective management of inmates—and ultimately, the safety and security of all.

Annotated Principles of Direct Supervision

Principle 1: Effective Control

Effective control of inmate behavior is fundamental to a correctional facility's operation. The control of inmate behavior in a direct supervision facility is achieved through the application of the following six subprinciples of this principle.

Total Control

Staff in direct supervision jails firmly establish their authority over all space and activities in the facility, particularly inmate housing areas. When staff control the inmates, rather than allowing inmates to control one another, both will be far safer. A fundamental precondition of direct supervision is that inmates who do not comply with the verbal instructions of staff be housed in a segregation unit.

Sound Perimeter Security

A direct supervision jail's physical security is concentrated on the perimeter. Sound perimeter security permits greater flexibility in the internal operations, permitting them to take place in a more normalized environment. To lessen the chances that perimeter security is breached, doors that unit staff control should not lead to a direct path of escape from the facility and frequent security inspections should be conducted to detect any damage or attempts to compromise the perimeter's structural integrity.

Population Divided into Manageable Groups

The size of inmate groups should not exceed that which can be effectively managed. When staff perceive that the size of the inmate group that they are supervising is not manageable, they will lack the confidence to function at their highest potential.

Easily Surveillable Areas

Unit officers can more effectively control inmates' behavior when they can easily observe their housing unit. This does not necessarily mean there is one point from which all areas of the unit are visible, but lines of sight should be unobstructed so that officers can see most areas by turning their head and all areas by taking a few steps. Not only should staff easily be able to view all areas under their supervision, but the inmates should also be able to see the entrances to their rooms easily from the dayrooms. This provides a quality known as "protectable space."

Reprinted from M.A. O'Toole, W.R. Nelson, D.R. Liebert, and K.D. Keller, "The Annotated Principles of Direct Supervision." In *Self-Audit Instrument for Administrators of Direct Supervision Jails* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections, 2004, pp. 2.1–2.8). www.nicic.org/pubs/2004/019640.pdf, accessed June 11, 2009.

Accountability For Behavior

Accountability for behavior is established through both inmate management techniques and structural design features. When inmates have a feeling of anonymity, they are emboldened to behave unacceptably. To remedy this condition, staff must deal with the inmates as individuals by making a concerted effort to address them by their names. Greater accountability for behavior can also be achieved by completing a cell inspection form when inmates are assigned to a new cell and holding them accountable for any subsequent damage. A facility design that incorporates the concept of space accountability, such as single cells and

dedicated space for one unit, further supports accountability for behavior.

Maximizing Inmates' Self-Control

Most inmates are very capable of exercising control over their behavior when provided the opportunity and the motivation. One example is the opportunity to retreat to an individual cell when tempted to display aggressive behavior. Hyperactive inmates are provided a chance to release their energy in the outdoor exercise area at any time of the day. Consistent enforcement of inmate rules by staff provides the necessary motivation for inmates to employ self-control.

Principle 2: Effective Supervision

Effective supervision of inmates is closely related to effective control, but more specifically refers to the interaction between the unit officer and the inmate. Effective supervision is a dynamic process the unit officer employs to manage inmate behavior, based on generally accepted behavior management techniques. To achieve effective supervision, the following five subprinciples of this principle must be in place.

Staff-to-Inmate Ratio

The number of inmates that a unit officer has to supervise will have a critical bearing on how effective this supervision will be. While fewer inmates are easier to supervise, fiscal reality dictates that an officer supervise as many inmates as reasonably possible. The collective experience with staffing ratios during the past 25 years is that one officer can effectively supervise 64 inmates and under special circumstances can effectively supervise 72. An additional finding is that one officer supervising 64 inmates is more effective than two officers supervising 100 inmates. Many variables affect the effective ratio of unit officers to inmates, such as the inmates' classification, the housing unit design, the officer's supervision skills, and the types of activities in the unit. Because of this, setting one ratio for all applications is unrealistic.

Officer in Control of Unit

A critical precondition to assigning a single officer to manage a housing unit is that the officers have sufficient authority commensurate with their responsibilities. Since officers will exercise their authority through verbal commands rather than physical force, there should be a mechanism to remove inmates who refuse to comply with officers' directions.

Unit Officer's Leadership Role

One of the major sources of inmate violence is the struggle for leadership when a leadership void exists. To prevent competition for leadership among inmates, the officer must fill the void. There is room for only one leader on a housing unit and that leader must always clearly be the officer. The officer must not share the leadership role with an inmate by placing one inmate in a subordinate role to another.

The officers' duties and the unit environment should be structured to support and emphasize their role as undisputed leader of the unit. Any inmate who competes for the leadership role must be dealt with effectively, even if that means removal from the housing unit.

Frequent Supervision by Management

Management must take an active role in ensuring that staff are successful in supervising inmates. Supervisors and administrators must maintain a high profile on the units to assure that staff are performing their duties correctly and according to established policy. The exercise of considerable independent authority by unit officers requires frequent monitoring

to ensure that this authority is not abused. Supervisors should give this attention in a supporting way, taking care not to undermine the unit officers' authority.

Techniques of Effective Supervision and Leadership

A considerable body of knowledge has been collected and verified concerning techniques of supervision and leadership in all forms of human endeavors. Most of these techniques are also applicable in a direct supervision facility. Mastery of these techniques will enable the officers to perform their duties skillfully and with a sense of professional competence.

Principle 3: Competent Staff

When a correctional facility emphasizes the management of inmate behavior, staff effectiveness is most critical. When successful operation depends on staff rather than technological devices or physical barriers, staff must be sufficiently competent to achieve these important objectives.

Recruiting Qualified Staff

The first requirement for assuring competent staff is to recruit staff with the qualifications necessary to perform the duties of a direct supervision unit officer. A candidate for this position should be able to relate effectively to people and to learn the skills required of this position and should have leadership potential. Qualified candidates do not have to be college graduates, but should be capable of being trained.

Effective Training

In addition to basic correctional officer training, the officer must be trained extensively in the following areas: the history, philosophy,

and principles of direct supervision; responsibilities and tasks specific to the unit officer's position; and techniques of effective supervision, leadership, and interpersonal communications.

Effective Leadership by Management

It is critical that supervisors and managers visit the units with sufficient frequency to assure that staff are functioning consistently with institutional policy. Policy should be adequately documented to provide a consistent structure that facilitates continuity among shifts and units. To maximize the benefits of direct supervision, management must engineer the role of the housing officer and structure the supervisors' visits to assure quality performance.

Principle 4: Safety of Staff and Inmates

Probably the greatest concern about being incarcerated or seeking employment in a detention facility is personal safety. It is imperative that jails ensure the safety of staff and inmates, as well as create the perception of safety, for the full benefits of direct supervision to be achieved. The following five subprinciples emphasize why this principle is so important.

Mission and Public Expectations

Despite the general fears associated with detention facilities in our society, there is a public expectation that inmates should be safe and that the staff who operate these facilities should not be exposed to undue hazards. The basic mission of a detention facility is to provide safe and secure custody of its wards until they are released.

Life Safety Codes

Prisons and jails have all too often been the scenes of tragic fires. The fatalities from these fires occurred primarily from smoke inhalation resulting from deficient evacuation plans and key control procedures. Any facility, regardless of architectural style or inmate management style, must comply with life safety codes.

Personal Liability

Millions of dollars have been paid in court-awarded damages to victims or their families as a result of personal injuries sustained in detention facilities because of preventable unsafe conditions. The facility administrator's obligation to protect prisoners has been clearly established in case law.

Inmates' Response to Unsafe Surroundings

Inmate response to unsafe surroundings is rather predictable—self-preservation. It is a basic human instinct. Inmates attempt to

enhance personal safety by acquiring defensive weapons, affiliating with a kindred group for common defense, presenting themselves as tough persons not to be messed with, or by purchasing security with cash or kind. Inmates often commit violent or destructive acts in order to be placed in administrative or punitive segregation, which they perceive to be safer than general population housing. The very acts that practitioners identify as the primary inmate management problems are often normal reactions to unsafe surroundings.

Staff Response to Unsafe Working Conditions

Staff's response to unsafe conditions is similar to the inmates' response, since self-preservation is a basic instinct that we all have in common. Staff often affiliate with unions to achieve safer working conditions. They avoid personal contact with inmates and avoid patrolling areas they perceive to be unsafe. All too frequently, staff avoid coming to work by using sick leave for stress-related disabilities or by simply abusing the sick leave system. They are also known to occasionally carry their own personal and prohibited weapons, and some have tried to buy personal safety from inmates by granting special favors. Housing units should be designed to maximize what is known as "protectable space" to reinforce the officers' safety as well as their perception of safety on the unit.

Principle 5: Manageable and Cost-Effective Operations

One very practical consideration for any facility is that it be manageable and cost effective. Many jurisdictions are already spending more on detention than they consider proportionate to their tax base without achieving their correctional objectives. The effective application of the following six subprinciples will enable the facility to fulfill its mission and, at the same time, reduce costs and improve manageability.

Reduced Construction and Furnishing Costs

The initial cost savings in a direct supervision facility are those related to construction. The absence of vandal-proof and security-style furnishings, fixtures, and finishes throughout 90 percent of the facility is the major contributor to lower construction costs. Experience with commercial-grade material in direct supervision facilities since 1975 has demonstrated that administrators may confidently select less-costly alternatives to security/vandal-proof components without concern that replacement costs will cancel out initial savings.

Wider Range of Architectural Options

In a facility where inmate behavior is managed so that vandalism is minimal, the architect is free to select a wider range of materials to improve the facility's manageability. For example, good acoustics are critical to the daily operations of a detention facility. Good acoustical qualities facilitate officers' communication with inmates and enable them to hear radio communications clearly, and also aid in the detection of security breaches. The use of carpeting in the dayroom area is one way to improve acoustics. Carpeting also reduces slippage on wet floor surfaces, which is a major cause of staff injury. Wooden cell doors do not expand like steel doors in a fire and are less likely to impede safe evacuation. This option can be selected without concern that the doors will be defaced.

Reduced Vandalism

Operating costs can be dramatically reduced by curtailing vandalism. The virtual absence of graffiti and vandalism in a direct supervision

facility is achieved by making inmates accountable for their behavior and by promptly restoring any area that has been vandalized. Since graffiti and vandalism are two environmental indicators of the absence of control, it is important that they are not visible in a correctional facility.

Anticipation of Fundamental Needs

As indicated previously, much negative inmate behavior results from efforts to fulfill human needs. Proactive managers can use their knowledge of how human needs affect behavior to achieve the behavioral response they are seeking. They must engineer the dynamics of the living unit so that the fulfillment of the inmates' human needs can only be achieved through positive behavior. If inmates understand that most of their fundamental needs can be fulfilled in a general population housing unit, then they have a very important investment in remaining on the unit.

Sanitation and Orderliness

The activities involved in maintaining a clean and orderly unit are important devices for managing a direct supervision housing unit. These activities promote a healthy interaction between staff and inmates in which the inmates become conditioned to responding positively to the officer's directives. Equally important is the frequent opportunity provided for inmates to resist the officer's directives. These instances continually verify that the inmate is compliant enough to function on a direct supervision unit. The orderly state of the unit is also a constant visual reminder that the officer is actively controlling the unit. Competition among units for a prize awarded

to the cleanest can produce positive results in maintaining a high standard of sanitation and orderliness. The pursuit of high sanitary objectives also provides an important structured opportunity for officers to develop their leadership skills.

Opportunities for Reintegration

This sixth subprinciple, reintegration or redirection, has evolved since the original development of the principles of direct supervision. Rehabilitation to any degree has not

traditionally been a function of detention facilities, which hold primarily pretrial inmates. The rehabilitation of even sentenced offenders has been considered a questionable goal. In direct supervision facilities, however, there has been increased focus on developing rehabilitative programs and activities, because many of the day-to-day inmate management problems, which previously consumed much of the administrators' attention, have been significantly reduced.

Principle 6: Effective Communication

Effective communication is a critical ingredient in the operational strategy of all human enterprises. Jails are not exceptions, and management must be sensitive to the important impact of the three subprinciples of this principle.

Frequent Inmate and Staff Communication

Communication skills are essential to the officers' leadership position in the housing unit. Management, then, should structure the unit officer's duties so that frequent communication with all inmates is a requirement of the post and not merely left up to the initiative of the officer.

Communication Among Staff Members

Because individual officers are assigned to separate units, management must be especially careful to facilitate communications among staff members. Unit officers who work effectively with inmates sometimes find that the obstructions they encounter appear to be placed there by other staff members. This can

be prevented by establishing good channels of communication between shifts and among assignments. Arrange lunch breaks to be taken with other unit officers. Good communications can also be achieved through shift roll calls, timely and clear policy and procedure statements, post orders, and unit logs. Team meetings with unit officers have also been found effective in providing the necessary opportunities for staff communication.

Communication Skills Training

Staff should receive thorough training in interpersonal communication skills. The techniques of effective communication will greatly assist unit officers in achieving their objectives.

Principle 7: Classification and Orientation

The classification and orientation of inmates must be an integral part of the day-to-day operations of direct supervision facilities.

Knowing With Whom You Are Dealing

Officers must know with whom they are dealing and should have the benefit of as much information about each inmate as possible. While it is true that detention facilities often receive many prisoners about whom little information exists, they also receive many repeaters whose confinement records should detail, among other things, their behavior patterns in confinement.

Orientation

Inmates should be told during the admission process what is expected of them. For most people, a correctional facility is an unfamiliar environment, and a direct supervision facility is unique among correctional facilities. A carefully structured orientation program will save time and prevent misunderstandings. A videotaped orientation presentation in the languages frequently encountered among admitted inmates has proven extremely effective.

Assumption of Rational Behavior

Human behavior is amazingly responsive to expectations communicated. This has been demonstrated frequently in educational settings and has been the object of considerable research. When we convey to people the kind of behavior we expect from them, either verbally or nonverbally, their tendency is to respond to these cues.

Maximum Supervision During Initial Hours of Confinement

Special attention during the orientation period is indicated because the first 24 to 48 hours of confinement are a critical period in the detention process. The highest rate of suicide occurs during this time, accounting for nearly half the total jail suicides. Intensive supervision at this phase of the detention process and the prompt identification of inmates with self-destructive tendencies will contribute to a lower suicide rate.

Principle 8: Justice and Fairness

Justice is a fundamental aspect of correctional facility management. Because of the many implications of this issue for jail operations and its significance for jail management, it is regarded as an operational principle. The application of the following four subprinciples will help to achieve this concept.

Mission and Public Policy

A critical part of the mission of most detention facilities is the provision of just custody. This is in recognition of the fundamental obligation to comply with constitutional standards and other applicable codes and court decisions. Despite widespread public confusion regarding the role of the detention facility, there is a public expectation that inmates should be treated fairly and in accordance with the law.

Consistent Root Cause of Collective Violence

The level of violence in our society has reached such alarming proportions that two Presidential commissions have been appointed to study this phenomenon. After examining the history of collective violence in the United States, they were able to identify a set of root causes present in all of the many occurrences. One consistent root cause, which is particularly

relevant to the correctional setting, is that in every such event, the participants strongly felt that they had been treated unfairly. As a principle of inmate management, it is not sufficient for management to be just and fair; it is also vitally important that management's actions are perceived by the inmate population as just and fair.

Critical Leadership Quality

As referred to previously, the officer's role as the leader of the unit is important in exerting positive control over the inmate population. A critical quality of any leader is a keen sense of fairness that subordinates can consistently depend on. Any compromise of officers' reputation for fairness will seriously jeopardize their operational effectiveness.

Formal Administrative Remedy (Grievance) and Disciplinary System

There will always be cases where an inmate does not accept the officer's position. Regardless of the basis for the inmate's disagreement, a formal administrative procedure should exist to channel such disputes. A creditable third-party review not only is a good pressure release mechanism, but also serves as a monitoring system to ensure consistent equitable treatment. Disciplinary systems for dealing with inmate rule violators should be structured and fair.

Strategies for Managing a Direct Supervision Housing Unit

The following 22 strategies will help you succeed in managing a direct supervision housing unit. This list was developed from interviews with direct supervision officers. Please add to it as your skills, confidence, and competency increase.

1. Think like a good supervisor.

You are a supervisor of people the first day you enter a direct supervision housing unit. The inmates look to you for leadership, decisionmaking, problem solving, and positive reinforcement. If you think and perform like a good supervisor, you will be more successful at achieving your goals in the unit.

2. Expect the best: The self-fulfilling prophecy.

If you set and reinforce high expectations of inmates, they will perform at that level. People tend to behave as people expect them to behave. Expect the best, and they will rise to that level.

3. Set clear expectations with inmates.

Tell inmates what you expect of them. They usually receive a general orientation to the facility before being assigned to a housing unit. However, you must also orient each inmate specifically to your housing unit and your expectations of appropriate behavior. Because inmates test the boundaries you set, you should clearly explain your expectations to

new inmates and continuously reinforce them with everyone in the unit. Do not assume that inmates can guess what you want.

4. Use positive reinforcement techniques.

Everyone likes to hear when they do something right. Managing behavior through positive reinforcement is more effective than relying on criticism and threats of discipline. Most inmates rarely hear anything positive about themselves. When they do hear praise, they'll usually work hard to earn more of it. Take time to "catch them doing something right" and give them immediate reinforcement. Find a variety of ways to reinforce good behavior.

5. Hold inmates accountable for their behavior.

A critical element of managing behavior is holding inmates accountable for their actions. In traditional jails, this was more difficult to accomplish because staff and inmates were separated, staff observed inmates only periodically, and staff tended to view inmates as a group instead of as individuals. Too often,

Source: Thomas Reid and Vic Jacobsen, *How to Run a Direct Supervision Housing Unit: A Training Curriculum* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections, 2005)

staff permitted inmates to act “like inmates.” In direct supervision, you have the opportunity to hold individual inmates directly responsible, because you now have continuous contact and can connect specific behavior with individuals. You can then assign effective consequences when necessary.

6. Treat inmates with respect and consideration: The Golden Rule.

Treat inmates as you would want staff to treat you if you were in jail. Offer them respect and consideration. In turn, they will treat you with respect, and you will have fewer behavioral problems in the unit. Set the standard.

7. Be just and fair.

Nobody likes it when others treat them unfairly. You must be just and fair in all of your dealings with inmates. This is difficult since each inmate is different—you will like some more than others. Some will require more of your time; others very little of it. However, almost all of them will be watching to see if you treat everyone fairly or if you play favorites. Inmates who believe an officer is treating them unfairly become a management problem, and they can try to include others as part of the problem. Inmates’ perception of unfair treatment has historically been identified as a major factor in institutional disturbances. If you are just and fair in dealing with all inmates, you will find fewer management problems.

8. Rely on the least restrictive supervisory techniques necessary.

You cannot manage a unit by always using commands, orders, and discipline. Once you start at this level, you have nowhere to go but up. Force yourself always to start with low-level, nonconfrontational supervisory techniques. If you always begin at this level, you have all of your options available. Remember, most inmates in most circumstances will respond well to simple requests. You will be surprised at how well they work. The key is always to start at the least restrictive level—it will make your job much easier over time.

9. Manage the unit by walking and talking.

To run the unit effectively and manage behavior, you must be aware of what is happening in the unit. Since it may be difficult for inmates to initiate meaningful conversations with you, you must make yourself accessible, interact with them on an ongoing basis, and initiate and foster communication.

Your desk is there only for short-term paperwork; do not use it as a barrier between you and the inmates. Moving around the unit during your shift will help you be a successful supervisor. “Walking and talking” works well if you approach inmates in a casual manner and see this as an opportunity to learn about them and what is really going on in the unit. You will be less effective if you merely do “surveillance rounds” and play “gotcha.”

Do not assume that communication and interaction come easily; you must create the environment that facilitates good formal and informal communication. This means making yourself accessible and approachable and listening carefully as a regular way of doing business. Also approach inmates on a regular basis and give them the opportunity to talk. In a direct supervision housing unit, conversation with the officer should be the norm for inmate behavior.

10. Identify and address inmate concerns.

Take time to address inmate concerns. Make thoughtful judgments and help the inmates address their concerns directly or by referring to an appropriate resource. Remember to follow up. Remember that if an issue is important to an inmate, you should treat it as important whether you think it is or not. If you do not deal with inmates’ concerns, you will face a management problem as a result.

11. Be a source of information and services.

As the housing officer, you are a significant person in the inmates’ lives. You are their primary source for everything, including information and

services. This gives you great leverage over them, but it can also lead to problems if you do not fulfill this role. Learn where to get answers to often-asked questions and become aware of the services provided in the jail and the community.

Make sure inmates see you as a good resource; they will present fewer management problems in return.

12. Encourage inmates to take responsibility for themselves.

In direct supervision, it is important to get inmates to do things for themselves. They need to be involved in unit activities and goals as a group, but they must also take the initiative to address their own individual needs. Since inmates are not used to this, you may consciously have to delegate this responsibility to them. In old-style jails, officers generally did everything for the inmates and made them dependent on staff. In a direct supervision housing unit, officers must encourage inmates to make their own choices, be responsible, and do things for themselves.

13. Plan and supervise unit activities.

You have a vested interest in keeping the inmates productively occupied while they are in the unit. The program staff will provide some structured activity, but you need to take the time to plan, implement, and supervise activities in the unit to keep inmates occupied. It makes them easier to manage and makes your job easier in the long run. Be creative and plan things such as tournaments, projects, or other formal and informal activities. Define planning as part of your job.

14. Develop and measure personal goals for the unit.

As a direct supervision housing officer, you must think beyond your shift. Set goals for what you want to accomplish over time in the unit and develop criteria to measure your achievement. You will want to continue improving conditions and the “atmosphere” in the unit by setting reasonable goals, working

with inmates to achieve them, and then setting slightly higher goals. Important areas for goal setting may include improving sanitation, reducing noise levels, or reducing the number of inmate complaints or disputes.

15. Apply policies and procedures appropriately to achieve unit objectives.

Policies and procedures are an excellent management tool for housing officers. They define the minimum requirements for housing unit operations and help in decisionmaking. However, you should remember to apply those policies and procedures with discretion and thoughtfulness. Do not use them as an excuse to avoid your responsibility to manage the unit. Remember, most people do not appreciate having “the book” continually or rigidly applied to them.

16. Keep the supervisor and coworkers informed.

Nobody likes surprises. This is especially true of your supervisor and other officers who work in the unit. Keep them informed of your management strategies and unit activities. They may begin to adopt some of your strategies, provide you with helpful insights, and support what you are trying to accomplish. Finding ways to keep your colleagues informed should become a routine part of your job.

17. Take the initiative: Just do it.

Do not feel that you need to ask permission to do your job. If it's really your unit and you are really a leader, don't wait for decisions from above. You are there to make decisions. Take initiative, and try new things in your unit (within policy and procedure guidelines). This is very important: Inform your supervisor beforehand if you plan to try something substantially new.

18. Take calculated risks.

Officers take calculated risks all the time. This is especially true in a direct supervision unit. You may choose to give an assignment to an inmate who may seem not to be ready for it. You may decide to try some nontraditional

approaches to situations in the unit. While every effort may not be a stunning success, it is important that you weigh a given circumstance, make a reasonable decision, and occasionally take a chance as long as it does not compromise security and safety.

19. Be creative.

Try new things. There is more than one way to manage behavior and accomplish goals. Be creative and be willing to try new approaches.

Although policies and procedures establish guidelines, you still have a lot of latitude in how you can accomplish tasks in the unit. Do not be afraid to try new things, talk to other staff, and learn from others' triumphs and failures. The more you try, the more you will accomplish.

20. Be flexible.

You will find that one of your greatest management tools is the ability to be flexible as circumstances change. You must be just and fair with all the inmates and yet be flexible enough to adapt to the ever-changing conditions in the unit. Don't let yourself get into a rigid routine or set pattern so that your decisions and behavior suffer.

21. Be a role model for the unit.

In a direct supervision housing unit, you set the example for the behavior you want. The inmates will look to you for their behavioral cues. Not only do you need to set high standards, you must also model those standards in your actions, words, body language, and demeanor. Your challenge is to continue to be a positive role model, to be poised and confident, and to provide leadership in the unit even when you are having a bad day.

22. Be yourself.

The final principle of running a direct supervision housing unit is to be yourself. Inmates will know if you are putting up a façade or pretending to be something or someone you are not. Be honest about who you are, and inmates will find a way to adapt to your unique style. Inmates understand that each officer is different. Do not be afraid to add your own unique spin to housing unit management.

Summary

The 22 strategies above are a few of the guiding concepts that have worked in direct supervision housing units. They will work for you, too, if you give them a chance. Of course, not every inmate may respond positively to a management style based on these strategies, but most will. Once the majority of inmates present no management problems, you can focus more strategies on the few who do.

A positive inmate "culture" based on your influence as the housing unit supervisor will build upon itself. New inmates will come into the unit and become part of the prevailing environment. Other officers will want to know your secret for running a good housing unit. It is really no secret; it is a pattern and practice of effective supervisory skills.

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