

# Improving and Reducing the Use of Administrative Segregation: North Dakota's Approach

Colby Braun  
Warden, North Dakota State Penitentiary

Lisa Peterson, PhD  
Clinical Director, North Dakota Dept. of Corrections and Rehabilitation

# Historical Context

- Opened a 48-bed expansion to the Administrative Segregation Unit in 2014
  - Highest one-day count was 104 in fall of 2015
- Knowing the “why”
  - Changed name to Behavioral Intervention Unit in 2017
- How do you know when they are ready to leave?
- Reactive, versus proactive
- Separate, Assess, Equip

# System-Wide Reform

- 2011: Started training all staff in Motivational Interviewing and Cognitive-Behavioral technique
- 2012: Implemented Positive Behavior Reports
- Late 2015: Staff traveled to Norway to learn about the European criminal justice model
- 2015: Began an initiative to change the way we used our residential mental health unit
  - Provided staff specific guidelines and expectations for how to use motivational and cognitive-behavioral interventions
- 2016: First implementation of changes in administrative segregation

# Guiding Principles

- Housing of last resort, when risk to others and the orderly operations of the institution are too great to continue
- Dynamic security
  - Respectful, friendly relationships improve safety
- Recognize and acknowledge when residents are doing positive things
- Keep the length of stay as short as it can safely be
- Focus on what the person needs to achieve in order to move to a less restrictive setting

# Separate

- Focused placement criteria on a limited number of behaviors that pose the most risk to people and the orderly operations of the institution
  - Assault on a staff member or peer
  - Threat to an official or to a peer
  - Sexual assault on a staff member or peer
  - Possession of a weapon
  - Attempted murder or murder
  - Escape from a maximum or medium custody facility
  - Taking hostages
  - Arson
  - Trafficking/smuggling contraband into a maximum or medium custody facility
- Recently added three more behaviors, when “chronic” or severe
  - Fighting
  - Possession of gang-related material
  - Disobeying staff directive/Insolence to staff

# Assess

- Brief Jail Mental Health Screen completed by the Sargent upon admission
  - Referral for crisis services
  - Mental health follow-up within 72 hours
    - Determination of placement in BIU is contraindicated due to serious mental illness and recommend alternative housing plan
  - No follow-up
- Deputy Warden/Chief of Security review process
- Intervention Needs Assessment
  - Violence risk assessment
  - Identify motivation and goals
  - Referral for intensive individual services, general BIU program, or return to General Population housing

# Assess

	Oct. 17	Nov. 17	Dec. 17	Jan. 18	Feb. 18
Admitted to unit	42	22	52	29	34
Placed in BIU Program	4	8	6	5	7

	Oct. 17	Nov. 17	Dec. 17	Jan. 18	Feb. 18
Unit Count (Last day of month)	17	10	17	14	25

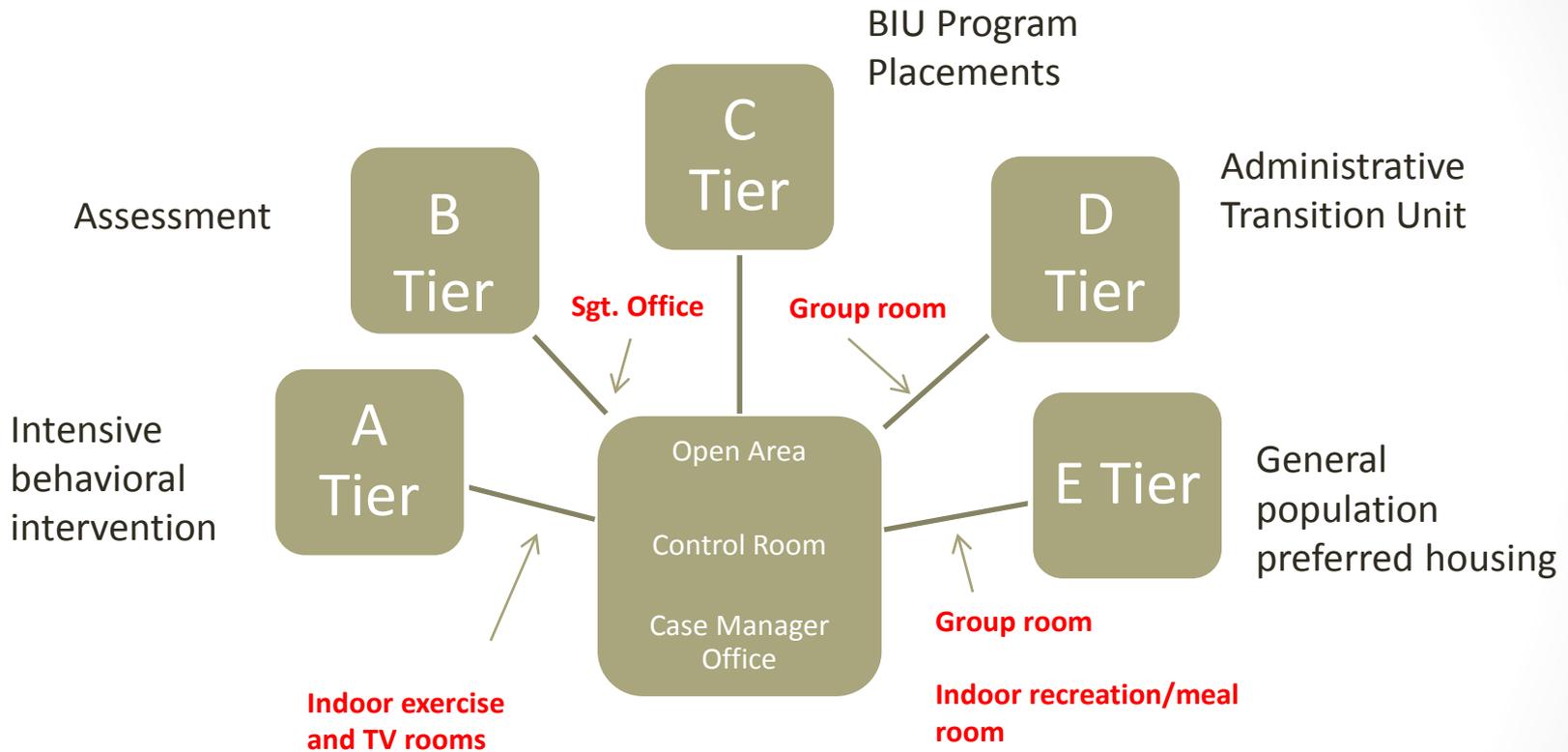
# Equip

- Focus on building positive relationships with staff
- Three times per week Cognitive-Behavioral skills group
- Use of verbal and tangible reinforcement
  - To increase interaction, encourage participation, improve motivation, and acknowledge the display of other targeted prosocial behaviors
- Skill practice with staff once per shift
- Increased out of cell time to practice social skills and reduce the negative impact of confinement
- “Behave your way in, behave your way out”

# Administrative Transition Unit

- Upon completion of success plan
- Ability to *demonstrate* ways to handle conflict without violence
- Attend twice weekly skills application group
- Continued coaching and staff interaction around skills practice as needed
- Increased access to general population
  - Lunchtime meal
  - GP recreation once per day

# Unit Structure



# BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION UNIT REPORT CARD

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION  
 DIVISION OF ADULT SERVICES  
 (04-2018)

## Group Attendance

<input type="checkbox"/> SMI	Monday	Tuesday	Wed	Thurs	Friday
	A (Attended); R (Refused); C (Cancelled)				

Inmate Name	Inmate Number	Date of Arrival	Release Date
-------------	---------------	-----------------	--------------

Placing Behavior

Status  Investigative Segregation  Disciplinary Segregation  Administrative Segregation  Administrative Transition Unit

Intervention Needs Assessment Referral  Yes  No Requested Date Completion Date

DATE	SHIFT	KEEPS TRAYS/THROWS TRAYS	DOESN'T ALLOW TRAY SLOT CLOSURE	COVERS FRONT WINDOW	DOESN'T COMPLY WITH STAFF DIRECTIVES	INTERACTS BY YELLING, NAME CALLING OR THREATS	ENGAGED IN CHECK IN WITH STAFF	NUMBER OF SKILL PRACTICES/ SKILL DEMO DONE	Target Behavior	Skill Practice/Skill Demonstration	COMMENTS	STAFF INITIALS
	AM						Yes No					

# Outcomes

Type of Seg.	Investigative	Disciplinary	BIU Program	Total Unit
Avg. # of days	5.55	7.63	18.97	32.14

\*Data from 01/01/17 to 04/30/18

Type of Seg.	Investigative	Disciplinary	BIU Program	Total Unit
Total # Stays Over 14 Days	30	38	60	128

\*Data from 01/01/17 to 04/30/18

# Outcomes

- Reduced uses of force
  - Average one per month from October 2017-February 2018
- Little to no use of Special Operations Response Team

*Since January 2016, **21%** of people who have completed the BIU program have been placed back into the program due to institutional recidivism.*

# Challenges

- Highest ever facility population in 2016-2017
- Increase in fighting behaviors in general population units following changes to administrative segregation
- Staff and resident perceptions
  - People still receive consequences for breaking rules or hurting others
  - No increase in severity of violence or assaults on staff with 60+ fewer people in segregated housing
- Shifting our sense of what actually improves safety in the long-term

# Recommendations

- Create a mass communications plan for staff early on in the process
- Empower correctional officers to be a part of the changes
- Collect and provide safety and outcome data from the beginning
- Approach change as a unified team
  - Encourage healthy conversation and debate
  - Provide a consistent, unified message

# Next Steps

- Implement the Risk of Administrative Segregation Tool
- Implement a 10 session cognitive-behavioral prevention group for those at moderate and high risk for serious institutional misconducts