

Progress Report: July 2024 (Updated September 2024)

I. Project Summary and Accomplishments

- Key Questions: How do staff select and implement interventions following Amend trainings? What impacts do interventions have?
- Data collection to date: Administrative data (initial analysis of SCCC staff overtime and sick day data + use of IMU data begun) + observations (training, interventions) + **908 paper surveys** (558 staff; 350 incarcerated) + **200 interviews** (136 staff; 64 incarcerated)
- Key Sites & Interventions:
 - Initial: SCCC Resource Team; WCCW Mobile Activity Team and Contact Officers
 - Diffusion: WSP Resource Team; MCCCW Contact Officers; Additional Interventions at all 4 sites (SCCC, WCCW, MCCCW, WSP)
- Key Takeaways:
 - WA remains a role model for transparency and accessibility, developing and evaluating creative initiatives.
 - Researchers, like staff, have worked to identify key sites and initiatives; parallel strong foundations for reform and evaluation now exist.
 - Initial indications of qualitative shifts in culture (receptiveness to Amend, investment in culture change program, initiative taking in designing and leading new programs) and quantitative shifts in frequency and duration of out-of-cell time.

II. Preliminary Findings: Accomplishments & Challenges (2022-2023)

Accomplishments:

- WADOC
 - Trainings: WA, Norway
 - Legislative funding
- Built environment changes at SCCC, WCCW, MCCW
- Resource Teams at SCCC and WSP
- Multiple other programs:
 - Cell-2-Cell
 - Advisory Councils
 - Change Agents
 - Mobile Activity Team

Challenges:

- COVID-19 & Understaffing
- Conceptualizing different outcomes AND different processes to get there (ground-up, staff-generated)
- Revising old policies to permit reform
- Communication
 - Who gets to participate
 - With incarcerated individuals
 - Between institutions
 - Around competing trainings

Even in the first year of interviews and observations, we documented (1) many “firsts” for incarcerated and staff (“*I haven’t sat on a couch in almost 20 years.*” – Resident, July 2023), (2) immense gratitude (“*Thanks again for what you guys are doing.*” – Resident, July 2023), and (3) staff describing improvements in their attitudes towards work significant enough that their families noticed, too (describing how Amend programs “*brings the stress levels down on the staff*” – Staff, July 2023).

III. Interim Findings: Institutionalizing Change (2023-2024)

- Administrative Data
 - Stafford Creek Correctional Center, IMU Resource Team Weekly Reports
 - Since August 2022: Worked with a total of 67 unique individuals
 - Average out-of-cell time: 127 minutes / person / week
 - **Out of cell time increased 50 percent** from first to second year of Resource Team work (from an average of 100 minutes to an average of 150 minutes / person / week in 2023-24)
 - Narratives of out-of-cell activities increasingly detailed and varied
 - Washington State Prison, IMU Resource Team Weekly Reports
 - In just one year, since September of 2023, worked with a total of 22 unique individuals
 - Average out-of-cell time: 110 minutes / person / week
 - Preliminarily analyzing staff overtime and sick time, but COVID-19 (coinciding with Amend programming launch) was an exogenous shock to the system; staff overtime and sick leave remain higher than pre-COVID
- Observational Data
 - Major physical contrasts since our team's work (2016-2020) evaluating solitary confinement reform:
 - IMUs were stark, empty units, where people complained about the absence of clocks. Now we see retrofitted spaces with chairs, couches, rugs, collaborative games, and even living plants.
 - Staff areas were similarly barren and run-down; we now see comfortable areas where staff can share a high-quality coffee, meet lactation needs, and, even, sleep comfortably between long shifts.
 - We have also seen gender-responsive space and programming reforms at women's prisons, especially planting of multiple new trees, gardens.
 - Increasing numbers of creative initiatives across DOC:
 - Peer-2-Peer (connecting incarcerated across states and nations)
 - Identifying and supporting incarcerated mentors within facilities
 - Taking incarcerated out of prison for normalization activities
 - Planning social events and spaces where staff and incarcerated interact, from game days to coffee hours
 - Increasing desire within and across facilities to access Amend programs and design Amend-inspired initiatives

IV. Next Steps

- Ongoing data collection: 1-2 more visits planned to SCCC, WCCW, MCCCW, and WSP within the next year
- Ongoing data analysis
 - Tracking reform efforts across DOC through documentation in reports, newsletters, memos, and trainings
 - Transcribing and analyzing 174+ interviews
 - Identifying and evaluating variables to measure staff and incarcerated well-being within administrative data
- Iterative feedback with staff and leadership