

CONTROL AND SUPERVISION IN CORRECTIONS



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This text was compiled on 09/23/2026

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1: TYPES AND LEVELS OF PRISONS, AND RANK STRUCTURE

Learning Objectives

- Understand how prisons in the United States are organized by jurisdiction, including state, federal, and private systems.
- Identify and explain the different prison security levels and how they relate to inmate supervision and risk.
- Analyze the role of inmate classification and intake processes in determining appropriate facility placement.
- Describe the chain of command within correctional facilities and the responsibilities of key leadership positions.

1.1: Types of Prison

1.2: Levels of Prisons

1.3: Rank Structure

1.4: Chapter Summary

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1.1: Types of Prison

Prisons in the United States can be categorized by jurisdiction, and the by intensity of their supervision. By jurisdiction, we are referring to who manages the prisons. A prison warden is generally considered the managerial face of the institution. However, a prison warden and the prison itself is usually within a much larger organizational structure, typically defined at the state level. There are a few jurisdictions at other levels that manage or operate prisons. This includes the federal government, which runs its own prison system (Bureau of Prisons), but also jurisdictions below or different from the state level, such as major cities like New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Washington D.C. Puerto Rico also has a prison, as does the U.S. territory of the Virgin Islands.

State Prisons

Typically, the organizational structure that manages state prisons is called the “Department of Corrections,” and is run by a director or Secretary, who is usually appointed by the state governor. For example, in Pennsylvania, we have the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, with George Little as the current head (Secretary) of this organization (2021-present). The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections currently oversees 23 State Correctional Institutions (or SCIs). While Eastern State Penitentiary is no longer in operation, the oldest working SCI – Huntingdon – opened in 1889, and followed the model of the Elmira Reformatory in New York. More information about the PDOC’s SCIs can be found [here](#).

Federal Prisons

The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) was established in the early 1930s as a result of the need to house an increasing number of individuals convicted of federal crimes. There were already some federal prisons in place prior to this time, but it was not until 1930 that the U.S. Congress passed legislation to create the BOP, housing it under the justice department. Sanford Bates became the first Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, based on his long-standing work as an organizer and leader at Elmira Reformatory in New York. As more federal legislation was passed, the need for more prisons became apparent.

Today, the BOP has 109 prisons, along with numerous additional facilities (camps) adjoining at these locations. There are also military prisons, alternative facilities, reentry centers, and training centers that are managed by the BOP. The federal prisons are separated into six region: the Mid-Atlantic Region, the North Central Region, the Northeast Region, the Southeast Region, the South-Central Region, and the Western Region.

Within these regions are regional directors, which is similar to state-level directors of departments of corrections. Below is a detailed map of the regions of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. As is depicted, there are several different types of facilities within each region. A central office is also designated for each of the six regions.

1.2: Levels of Prisons

Each of these jurisdictions of prisons also has varying degrees of intensity or seriousness. These are often considered prison levels or classifications. Depending on the State, the BOP, or even the private sector, it is usually associated with the seriousness of the offenders that are housed within these institutions. For example, many States have three classification levels: minimum, medium, and maximum. Some States have a fourth level called super-maximum. Others call this close, or administrative level. The BOP has five levels, minimum, low, medium, high, and unclassified. Although not a true designation, and would be considered an unclassified, administrative control, ADX Florence is a United States Penitentiary (USP) that would be counted as a super-max. It houses the most dangerous individuals at the Federal level. Although not in operation today, Alcatraz was probably the most famous Federal USP (also considered a super-max at one point). It too housed the most dangerous federal inmates.

Other States use a simple number designator to assign prison intensity, such as Level I, Level II, Level III, Level IV, and sometimes Level V. While still, other States incorporate a Camp to their list of designations, indicating a specific purpose within the low level, such as a Fire Camp. These types of camps are dedicated to fighting fires. In all, there are some basic concepts to point out for each type:

Minimum – These prisons usually have dorm-style housing, typically for only non-violent offenders, with shorter sentences (or sentence lengths left after downgrading). The fencing or perimeters of these types of facilities are usually low levels. The BOP generally refers to these as camps.

Low – These types of prisons are similar to minimums, to include some kind of dormitory-style housing. However, there are normally more serious or disruptive offenders in these types of prisons. The fencing around the perimeter of these is generally higher, and maybe even a double fence. Offenders are typically in these institutions for longer periods.

Medium – Here, there is a transition from dorm-style housing to cells. Normally, there are two persons in a cell, but not always. The perimeter is usually a high fence, and may even have barbed wire, or there are large walls surrounding the institution. Freedom of movement within the institution is reduced and seen as a privilege. Inmates here typically serve longer sentences and include violent convictions.

High or Maximum – Similar to medium, but most of these offenders have violent convictions, and longer sentences, including life. Many of these individuals will spend most of their day in a cell, and more often than not, these are single occupancy.

Super-Max or Administrative Control – Depending on what the mission is for that particular prison, the prisoners in these institutions could be vastly different. For instance, if it is a facility that is designated for mental health, it would not operate the same as one that is a supermax. The super-max facilities would have individuals in their cells for almost all of every day. Many services would come to them at their cell, and instead of them going somewhere (i.e., sick call), the cells would almost all be single occupancy. Visitation of these inmates would be much more regimented and monitored. Most of these individuals are also classified as extreme threats to the successful operations of the prison and are long-term inmates (LWOP – life without the possibility of Parole).

Intake Centers – An intake center can be part of an institution, running alongside the normal operations of an institution. The purpose of an intake center is to classify the offenders coming from the various courts in the jurisdiction, post felony conviction. The offender has an initial classification, where they are getting assigned to one of the jurisdiction's prisons, based on a point system for that agency. This assessment looks at priors, prior and current violence, escape risk, and potential self-harm. For example, Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Oregon is their intake of prison. It also is the women's prison for Oregon. Inmates come to CCCF and are assessed, then shipped off to one of the other institutions in Oregon (or placed in a level there if female). Inmates will gain later classifications at their destination prison, in terms of work assignments, mental health status, cell assignments, and other items.²

²Burke, A., Carter, D., Fedorek, B. et al. (2019)

1.3: Rank Structure

Management versus Leadership

Many people use the term leadership interchangeably with management, but the two terms are actually quite different. The term management implies someone has been given a position, and through that position or title, they have the power to guide others. Leadership, on the other hand, does not require specific titles. Consider the last group project you worked on for school. It was likely that someone took on the leadership role for this project, such as coordinating schedules, emailing the team, and so forth. This person did not have a formal title but led the group anyway. This is an example of leadership. To be successful at our jobs, we must show leadership skills. These leadership skills can come from our emotional intelligence skills—for example, self-awareness, self-management, relationship management, and social awareness. All emotional intelligence skills are needed to be a successful leader. For example, if you are the informal leader for your group project and feel frustrated with response times, you must have the ability to be aware of this emotion and manage it by not yelling at your team member when you see them!

Getting the team to work better together requires social awareness skills, or the ability to understand how actions of one team member may affect another. Finally, relationship management is necessary to manage group conflict and maintain good relationships with your team. As you can see, leadership encompasses all of the emotional intelligence skills we have been discussing throughout the book. Do you think leadership comes naturally to some and not to others?

Whether or not there is a “natural leader,” born with a combination of talents and traits that enable a person to lead others, has been a subject of debate across time. In a modern context, we have come to recognize that leadership comes in many forms and representations. Once it was thought that someone with presence of mind, innate intelligence, and an engaging personality was destined for leadership, but modern research and experience show us otherwise. Just as a successful heart surgeon has a series of skill sets, so does a dynamic leader. A television producer must both direct and provide space for talent to create, balancing control with confidence and trust. This awareness of various leadership styles serves our discussion as groups and teams often have leaders, and they may not always be the person who holds the title, status, or role.

Leaders take on the role because they are appointed, elected, or emerge into the role. The group members play an important role in this process. An appointed leader is designated by an authority to serve in that capacity, irrespective of the thoughts or wishes of the group. They may serve as the leader and accomplish all the designated tasks, but if the group does not accept their role as leader, it can prove to be a challenge. As Bruce Tuckman (1965) notes, “storming” occurs as group members come to know each other and communicate more freely, and an appointed leader who lacks the endorsement of the group may experience challenges to his or her authority.

A democratic leader is elected or chosen by the group but may also face serious challenges. If individual group members or constituent groups feel neglected or ignored, they may assert that the democratic leader does not represent their interests. The democratic leader involves the group in the decision-making process and ensures group ownership of the resulting decisions and actions as a result. Open and free discussions are representative of this process, and the democratic leader acknowledges this diversity of opinion.

An emergent leader contrasts the first two paths to the role by growing into the role, often out of necessity. The appointed leader may know little about the topic or content, and group members will naturally look to the senior member with the most experience for leadership. If the democratic leader fails to bring the group together or does not represent the whole group, subgroups may form, each with an informal leader serving as spokesperson.³

Chain of Command

Correctional facilities rely on a structured chain of command to maintain safety, security, and effective daily operations. Each leadership position, from front-line supervisors to executive administrators, plays a distinct role in overseeing staff, managing inmate populations, and enforcing institutional policies. Understanding the responsibilities of correctional sergeants, lieutenants, captains, deputy wardens, and wardens provides insight into how authority and accountability are distributed within a correctional setting to ensure order and compliance.

Correctional Sergeants are first-line supervisors who directly oversee correctional officers and inmate housing units or work areas.

They ensure officers are performing duties properly, enforce institutional rules and procedures, conduct security checks, and respond to incidents such as disturbances or emergencies. Sergeants also handle routine reports, provide guidance and training to staff, and act as the primary link between line officers and higher-ranking supervisors.

Correctional Lieutenants supervise multiple sergeants and are responsible for managing entire shifts or major sections of the facility. They coordinate daily operations, assign staff posts, review reports, and ensure policies and safety procedures are consistently followed. Lieutenants often lead investigations into incidents, handle disciplinary matters, and make critical decisions during emergencies, serving as a key operational leader within the chain of command.

Correctional Captains oversee broad areas of facility operations, such as housing units, security divisions, or specialized programs. They supervise lieutenants, develop and implement operational procedures, and ensure compliance with institutional policies and regulations. Captains play a major role in strategic planning, staff management, and responding to high-level security concerns, often acting as the command authority during significant incidents.

The Deputy Warden assists in the overall administration of the correctional facility, working closely with the warden to manage both operations and support services. Responsibilities include overseeing staffing, budgeting, inmate programs, training, and policy implementation. The deputy warden ensures coordination between departments, monitors compliance with legal and regulatory standards, and may act on behalf of the warden in their absence.

The Warden is the chief executive officer of the correctional facility and holds ultimate responsibility for its operation. This includes setting policies, managing budgets, overseeing staff and inmate welfare, ensuring security, and maintaining compliance with laws and regulations. The warden provides leadership and direction for the entire institution, represents the facility to external agencies, and is accountable for maintaining a safe, secure, and orderly environment.⁴

³Westmaas, L. (2022)

⁴Cartwright, G. (2026) (2026)

1.4: Chapter Summary

Prisons in the United States are structured according to both jurisdiction and level of supervision, shaping how they are managed and the types of inmates they house. Jurisdiction refers to the authority responsible for operating the facility, which may include state governments through Departments of Corrections, the federal government through the Bureau of Prisons, or, in some cases, local jurisdictions and private corporations that contract with government agencies. Within these systems, prisons are further classified by security level—such as minimum, low, medium, maximum, and supermax—based on factors like inmate risk, criminal history, and sentence length. Lower-level facilities typically house nonviolent offenders with fewer restrictions and more freedom of movement, while higher-level institutions impose stricter controls, increased security measures, and greater confinement for more dangerous individuals. Additionally, specialized facilities like intake centers assess and classify inmates upon entry to determine appropriate placement. Together, these layers of jurisdiction and classification create a complex correctional system designed to balance security, rehabilitation, and efficient management of diverse inmate populations.

KEY TERMS

Jurisdiction

Department of Corrections

Federal Bureau of Prisons

Private Prisons

Security Levels

Supermax

Inmate Classification

Intake Centers

Chain of Command

Warden

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How does jurisdiction influence the management and operation of prisons in the United States?
2. Compare and contrast state prisons, federal prisons, and private prisons in terms of structure, purpose, and accountability.
3. Explain the different prison security levels and how they impact inmate management and daily operations.
4. Discuss the role of inmate classification systems in maintaining safety and efficiency within correctional facilities.
5. Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of private prisons in the United States.
6. How does the chain of command within a correctional facility contribute to maintaining order and security?

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2: EVOLUTION OF CORRECTIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Learning Objectives

- Understand the history of corrections in the U.S.
- Identify different types of punishment and their purposes
- Explain how correctional policies affect society

2.1: Stages of Correctional Development

2.1.1: The Penitentiary Era (1790s–1860s)

2.1.2: The Reformatory (1860s–1930s)

2.1.3: Twentieth Century Corrections (1930–Present)

2.2: Sentencing

2.3: Chapter Summary

2.1: Stages of Correctional Development

The history of American corrections spans distinct eras, each characterized by evolving philosophies and unique approaches to managing offenders. These eras reflect the shifts in societal attitudes, legislative changes, and advancements in correctional theory and practice. From the early penitentiary systems of the 18th and 19th centuries that emphasized solitary confinement and reflection to the rehabilitative efforts of the mid-20th century that focused on education and treatment, the landscape of corrections has continuously advanced. The emergence of the tough on crime approach in the late 20th century that centered on punishment and deterrence marked another significant era that cast remarkable influence and lasting impacts on corrections and society. Today, the growing recognition of the need for evidence-based practices, restorative justice principles, and alternatives to incarceration is shaping the current era of corrections. Studying these distinct eras allows us to understand the zeitgeists that have formed the political dynamics of the time, thus providing valuable insight into the complexities of the American criminal justice system as a whole. This knowledge enables us to better inform policies that facilitate more meaningful outcomes for both offenders and society.

2.1.1: The Penitentiary Era (1790s–1860s)

During the American Colonial period, corrections were heavily influenced by the English penal styles and punishment practices (Blomberg & Lucken, 2010). Despite England's long history of using incarceration as a form of punishment, it was rarely employed for punitive purposes in Colonial America. This was primarily due to the small population of Europeans residing in Colonial America during the early colonial period, so minute a population that it would not fill a single modern-day college football stadium. Early colonialists lived in little isolated settlements with insufficient resources to incarcerate lawbreakers. Therefore, formal punishments, such as banishment and corporal punishment, which included whipping, branding, and mutilation, as well as capital punishment, were common practices.

After the American Revolutionary War, the newly formed America was determined to establish itself as a civilized society (Blomberg & Lucken, 2010). During the early 1800s, two competing penitentiary systems emerged: the Pennsylvania system and the Auburn system. The Pennsylvania system mandated that inmates remain silent and reside in their individual cells at all times (Kann, 2005). Advocates of this system argued that the time of isolation allowed inmates time to reflect on their transgression and repent. They also contended that maintaining inmates' isolation minimized the need for discipline, thereby requiring minimal training for guards (Rothman, 1990). In contrast, the Auburn system only separated inmates overnight. However, this system enforced silence at all times, and during the daytime, inmates congregated for work, prayer, and meals. Supporters of the Auburn System claimed that its use of congregate work and smaller cells was more practical, cost-effective, and humane.

The Pennsylvania (Eastern) System

In the late 1780s, Benjamin Rush, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, alongside the Philadelphia Society and the Religious Society of Friends (also known as Quakers), advocated for more humane and rehabilitative approaches to punishment, favoring incarceration over corporal or capital punishment (Eastern State Penitentiary Task Force of the Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia, Marianna Thomas Architects, 1994). By 1790, their efforts proved successful as Philadelphia legislators supported funding to transform the Walnut St. Jail into the first U.S. penitentiary. The penitentiary was designed to isolate each inmate, providing a space for reflection and penitence, hence the name “penitentiary,” derived from the Latin word meaning “repentance” or “penance.” However, the penitentiary quickly became overpopulated; this led to the approval of the construction of two new state prisons: Western State Penitentiary in Pittsburgh and Eastern State Penitentiary near Philadelphia.

Western State Penitentiary in Pittsburgh was opened in 1826, but its poor architectural design necessitated its demolition and subsequent reconstruction in 1833 (Barnes, 1927). Eastern State Penitentiary, which opened in 1829 in Cherry Hill just outside of Philadelphia, became the model for the Pennsylvania system, sometimes referred to as the Eastern system. The penological approach of the Pennsylvania system was centered on many Quaker principles, particularly hard work and rehabilitation through repentance. The Pennsylvania system introduced the practice of “silence and separation,” where inmates lived and worked in isolation and were required to remain silent at all times. The prison was designed in a radiating fashion, resembling a wagon wheel.

Robert Vaux, a member of the Philadelphia Society and a key contributor to the planning of the penitentiary, provided five core principles of the Pennsylvania system (as cited in Eastern State Penitentiary Historical Structures Report, Eastern State Penitentiary Task Force of the Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia, Marianna Thomas Architects, 1994, pp. 18–19):

1. Prisoners should be treated not vengefully but in ways designed to convince them that through hard and selective forms of suffering they could change their lives.
2. To prevent the prison from being a corrupting influence, solitary confinement of all inmates should be practiced.
3. In his seclusion, the offender was to have an opportunity to reflect on his transgressions so that he might repent.
4. Solitary confinement is a punishing discipline because man is by nature a social being.
5. Solitary confinement is economical because prisoners do not need long periods of time to benefit from the penitential experience, fewer keepers are required, and the costs of clothing are reduced. The strong faith in reformation coupled with deterrence is evident.

While supporters of the Pennsylvania system were vocal about its success, within a few years, reports emerged of excessive punishment that resulted in serious injury, prisoner deaths, embezzlement, and sexual improprieties with female inmates (Thibaut, 1982). Additionally, there were concerns regarding inmate mental illness stemming from the use of solitary confinement. Ultimately, the Pennsylvania system, with its emphasis on isolation and silence, fell out of favor by the end of the 19th century due

to its high cost and the negative effects of inmate isolation.

The Auburn (New York) System

The Auburn Penitentiary in Auburn, New York, opened in 1818. Unlike the isolation and silent approach of the Pennsylvania system, the Auburn Penitentiary adopted a slightly different approach. It utilized a congregate approach. While inmates still slept in isolation and were expected to maintain silence, they worked together, attended mandatory prayer services together, and ate together during the day (Foucault, 1975/1977).

One significant difference between the Auburn Penitentiary and the Eastern State Penitentiary lies in their architectural design. Instead of employing the more expensive 12' by 7.5' single-cell radial design, Auburn Penitentiary arranged 7' by 4' cells back-to-back in the center of a large building that was five tiers high. Additionally, there were designated areas for large groups of inmates to congregate for work, dining, and recreation. Unlike the Pennsylvania system where inmates both worked and slept in their large single cells, the Auburn system was designed so that inmates used their small cells solely for sleeping and spent their waking hours in other areas of the prison. This design necessitated strict scheduling, enforced through corporal punishment or even solitary confinement. Auburn's use of solitary confinement quickly came under scrutiny and was discontinued in 1822 after multiple reports of mental illness and high suicide rates among inmates subjected to solitary confinement (Eastern State Penitentiary Task Force of the Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia, Marianna Thomas Architects, 1994).

The founders of both the Auburn and Pennsylvania penitentiaries preached that convict labor would aid in reformation and even deterrence (Pillsbury, 1989). However, the penitentiary goals set forth by the founders (punishment, reformation, and social control) became compromised as administrators attempted to heighten the prisons' self-sustainability and profit. Soon thereafter, prisons became more remunerative, using prison employment as a mechanism of control and profit, not reform. (Maier, 2018, p. 11)

In the early years of the penitentiary, the public account system was employed. In this work system, inmates performed unpaid labor by manufacturing goods in the prison that could be sold on the open market, with the revenue returning to the state. However, this shift toward the market economy had negative repercussions for businesses and workingmen, who voiced concerns about their inability to compete with free prison labor (Pillsbury, 1989). Consequently, by the late 19th century, states began transitioning away from this approach, opting instead for the more profitable contract system. In contrast to having penitentiary administrators exclusively oversee inmate labor and manufacturing, the contract system enabled private companies to pay a set fee to use prisoners for labor within the confines of the penitentiaries. These manufacturing operations were entirely supervised and managed by these private contractors.

2.1.2: The Reformatory (1860s–1930s)

The aftermath of the American Civil War marked a crucial juncture in the evolution of penological practices in the North as well (Blomberg & Lucken, 2010). During this period, Enoch Wines and Theodore Dwight conducted a comprehensive examination of American penitentiaries from 1867 to 1869. Their investigation uncovered egregious practices, including instances of torture, decrepit infrastructure, and appalling living conditions within correctional facilities (Pisciotta, 1994). The findings of their report were discussed at the 1870 National Congress in Cincinnati, precipitating urgent calls for reform. In response, the Congress formulated a set of foundational principles to guide the transformation of penitentiaries (for further details, see Declaration Principles). The principles outlined in the declaration emphasized the paramount importance of rehabilitation and reformation in the treatment of offenders, reflecting a growing recognition of the need for humane and effective approaches to criminal justice (Wines, 1873). In addition to the establishment of fundamental principles for penitentiary reform, the American Prison Association was formed. This organization, later renamed the American Correctional Association in 1954, became instrumental in advocating for progressive reforms in the correctional system.

The Elmira Reformatory

The two most significant events in the early reformatory movement in the US were the National Congress meeting in Cincinnati in 1870 and the opening of the Elmira Reformatory in New York in 1876 (Putney & Putney, 1962). Zebulon Brockway, Elmira's first superintendent, modeled the new adult reformatory on (a) the principles established at the 1870 Cincinnati meeting, (b) the work of leading scholars of the time, and (c) Alexander Maconochie's mark system. The mark system revolved around the concept of indeterminate sentencing, where inmates would earn marks for good behavior, thereby gradually leading to increased responsibilities and freedoms.

Brockway adhered to the late 19th century positivism movement in criminology. This philosophy posited that much criminal behavior was hereditary and therefore genetic. Nonetheless, Brockway implemented a system where every inmate entering the reformatory underwent evaluation to determine their individual rehabilitation needs. He emphasized the importance of socializing offenders through treatment programs, such as schooling and vocational training. However, reflecting the prevailing beliefs of the time regarding criminality, many inmates, particularly Black individuals, were perceived as genetically predisposed to criminal behavior—beliefs that subsequent research and advancements in criminology have widely discredited (Young, 2011).

Brockway created a basic three-grade classification process for inmates. Upon entry, all inmates would be assigned to grade two. Those who accumulated enough good behavior merits would then transition to grade one, which granted them special dining and conversation privileges. Conversely, inmates who exhibited bad behavior would receive demerits and eventually be placed in grade three, resulting in a loss of privileges and separation from grade one and two inmates (Putney & Putney, 1962). Once an inmate accrued sufficient good behavior merits, they could apply for parole, which was then reviewed by the parole board and either accepted or denied.

By actively marketing and promoting the new penological approach, Brockway contributed considerably to the adoption of reformatories across the country (Pisciotta, 1994). By the 1890s, many states in the North and West began constructing reformatories modeled after Elmira. However, by the mid-1890s, Elmira Reformatory faced issues of overcrowding, and reports of abuse of mentally disabled inmates emerged. Consequently, Brockway lost political support, ultimately leading to his resignation in 1900.

2.1.3: Twentieth Century Corrections (1930–Present)

During the 1920s, another major transformation took place in the field of corrections as psychology and rehabilitation became central to penological reform. Instead of solely emphasizing punitive punishment, there was a growing focus on addressing offenders' psychological or physiological issues. This approach, known as the medical model, advocated for the creation of individual treatment plans for each inmate and facilitated the involvement of professionals in guiding inmates' rehabilitation toward becoming productive, law-abiding citizens. This rehabilitative approach aligned well with indeterminate sentencing policies and parole practices, leading to widespread adoption of this approach by the federal government and 46 of the 48 states by 1925 (Friedman, 1993).

In the 1940s and 1950s, the medical model and rehabilitative approaches dominated penological philosophies. During the 1950s, the newly named American Correctional Association recommended that prisons should be utilized as correctional centers rather than prisons or penitentiaries. However, the arbitrary and discriminatory nature of indeterminate sentencing policies and parole release during this period resulted in increasing prison sentence lengths rather than their reduction (Rotman, 1995). Furthermore, several therapeutic and counseling approaches encountered obstacles due to inadequate program implementation and the involvement of unqualified staff. For instance, counseling sessions were often led by correctional officers who lacked the necessary qualifications for therapeutic treatment (Blomberg & Lucking, 2010).

By the 1960s, support for individual treatment and rehabilitation correctional approaches began to wane. Following the scathing 1967 report by the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, which highlighted the futile and degrading environment in U.S. prisons, it became evident that a new approach to corrections was necessary (Rotman, 1995). In addition to concerns about the improbability of achieving complete rehabilitation through isolating inmates from society, rising crime rates and prison overpopulation began to emerge as important issues. To address some of the shortcomings of the medical model, prisons initiated a transition in their rehabilitation philosophy to a community corrections approach.

At the onset of the criminal justice process, the community corrections approach prioritized diverting offenders to community programs and parole to mitigate stigmatization and overly punitive punishments. Meanwhile, during the subsequent stages of the criminal justice process, the community corrections strategy focused on the reintegration of inmates. This involved promoting vocational training and higher education programs within prisons, which garnered public support as crucial tools for easing inmates' successful reintegration into society.

The correctional system also began to implement more intermediate sanctions, such as halfway houses, work release programs, and house arrest, for individuals who committed less serious crimes. Prior to the adoption of these intermediate sanctions, the criminal justice system was constrained to an "all-or-nothing" approach, forced to choose between incarcerating the offender or issuing no punishment whatsoever. Although one of the primary goals of intermediate sanctions was to lower the prison population, it inadvertently led to an increase, placing substantial strain on the correctional system.

By the 1980s, rising crime rates, popular punitivism, political factors, and concerns over discrimination and subjectivity inherent in indeterminate sentencing and parole boards prompted a shift in penological approach from the community corrections model to the crime control approach. In 1982, President Ronald Reagan declared a war on crime, advocating for the US to combat this perceived threat with overly punitive sanctions, the elimination of indeterminate sentences, the implementation of mandatory minimums, and the construction of more prisons.

The emerging penological crime control approach, grounded in incapacitation, deterrence, and retribution philosophies, dismissed rehabilitative efforts as ineffective and deemed them an inefficient allocation of fiscal resources. While U.S. incarceration rates remained stable at around 100 per 100,000 between 1920 and 1970, by 1980 the rate had risen to 221 per 100,000; by 2008, it had soared to 762 per 100,000 (Western & Pettit, 2010). Problematically, this approach contributed to the issue of mass incarceration, resulting in a 700% increase over a 40-year span. Figure 9.9 below demonstrates this drastic increase in incarcerations rates among both federal and state prisons between 1978 and 2009.

The surge in incarceration rates in the US during the early 21st century presented considerable difficulties: roughly 1 in every 100 American adults were incarcerated in either jail or prison by 2008 (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2008). Despite accounting for only about 5% of the global population during this period, the US accounted for a staggering 25% of the world's prison population (Committee on Causes and Consequences of High Rates of Incarceration et al., 2014). The rapid increase in incarceration rates led to enormous problems, including prison overcrowding, which forced states to embark on the construction of more prisons. The rising costs associated with constructing new prison facilities and accommodating the growing inmate population began to

strain state resources. State expenditures on corrections skyrocketed by 257% between 1982 (amounting to \$15 billion) and 2010 (reaching \$53.5 billion) (Kyckelhahn, 2012). However, the onset of the Great Recession in 2008 compelled states to make deep budget cuts, with reductions in corrections spending becoming a primary focus. Additionally, factors such as declining crime rates and a shift away from excessively punitive drug sentencing also contributed to the decrease in corrections expenditures by 2010.⁵

⁵Maier, W., Maier, K., Overby, W. and Edwards, T. (2021)

2.2: Sentencing

Substantive criminal laws define what behaviors are crimes, but the same laws also stipulate the permissible punishments for different crimes. All three branches of government impact criminal punishment. One of the most important duties of a judge is to impose a sentence, which means determining the appropriate punishment for an offender upon conviction. Thus, punishing offenders is a judicial function. At the same time, because of a trend toward mandatory sentencing (discussed in the following chapters), much of the discretion in sentencing has been removed from judges and placed on the prosecutors who decide the charges a defendant will face. As such, punishing offenders may rightly be considered an executive function. Finally, the lengths of sentences and types of punishment that attach to the various crimes are a product of the legislative process. In the last 30 years, through ballot measures, propositions, referendum, and initiatives, the people (the general public through voting) have also played a large role in deciding the types and lengths of punishment.

Sentencing Philosophies

Criminal sentences range widely – from confinement sanctions (ex. incarceration in prisons and jails), community sanctions (ex. probation), and monetary sanctions (ex. fines) to physical sanctions (ex. capital punishment) and civil sanctions (ex. civil commitment for violent sexual incarceration in boot camps). Different kinds of sentences, and sentencing mechanisms, typically align to different sentencing or punishment philosophies. Throughout this chapter, we should consider what kind of sentencing/punishment philosophy – or understanding of offenders, their offense, and the purpose of punishment – is expressed through different types of sentencing. There are 5 broad philosophies, which often operate concurrently in a given sentence:

1. Retribution – sentences that seek to impose suffering on the defendant as compensation for the suffering they have caused
2. Incapacitation – sentences that seek to prevent a specific offender from re-offending by imposing practical limitations on their movement or body.
3. Rehabilitation – sentences that seek to address and “fix” aspects of the offender that contributed to their criminality
4. Deterrence – sentences that seek to prevent others from offending by threatening a severe punishment if caught
5. Restoration – sentences that attempt to reconcile the offender, victim, and larger community through practices that emphasize mutual healing

As noted above, one sentence, or sentencing actor, might combine many of the above philosophies. Consider an individual sentenced to 25 years in prison for second-degree homicide. Facing a quarter-century of incarceration is certain to cause the offender suffering, and that period of confinement will also prevent them from harming others outside the prison (incapacitation). While incarcerated, the offender may be offered extensive counseling, treatment for mental illness or substance use disorders, and educational or vocational training – all methods of rehabilitation. Moreover, those who learn of this severe sentence may be effectively deterred from committing a similar crime. Sentences of incarceration are not known for promoting restorative justice – although there are some exceptions (see the news story below.) Although people question the efficacy of prison, regarding it as little more than a factory for producing future criminals, incarceration can protect society from dangerous offenders. In other words, it is, by definition, effective at incapacitation, but studies show that it is much less effective at rehabilitation. In fact, serving time in prison often reinforces criminal risk factors.

Sentencing Mechanisms

The next four sections will explore 4 different kinds of sentencing mechanisms: indeterminate, determinate, sentencing guidelines, and mandatory minimums/sentencing enhancements. State and federal approaches to sentencing have shifted in response to prevailing criminal justice thinking and philosophies, with criminal codes often incorporating more than one single approach. These approaches endorse a spectrum of judicial discretion. Indeterminate sentences, at one end, are those that allow judges and parole boards the most discretion and authority. Determinate sentences, at the other end, allow little or no discretion. Currently, most states are following determinate sentencing coupled with sentencing guidelines, mandatory minimums and other sentencing enhancements.⁶

Determinate Sentencing Approach

Under determinate sentencing, judges have little discretion in sentencing. The legislature sets specific parameters on the

sentence (ex. 36 to 41 months), and the judge sets a fixed term of years (or months) within that time frame (ex. 38 months). Often, such sentencing laws allow the court to increase the term (beyond the given window) if it finds aggravating factors, and reduce the term (below the given window) if it finds mitigating factors. With determinate sentencing, the defendant knows immediately when he or she will be released. While determinate sentencing does not allow for parole, there may be some options for early release; namely, offenders may receive credit for time served while in pretrial detention, or “good time” credits for good behavior while incarcerated. The discretion that judges are allowed in initially setting the fixed term is what distinguishes determinate sentencing from definite sentencing.

As noted in the previous chapter, determinate sentencing grew largely out of growing disenchantment with indeterminate sentencing, and more broadly, the “rehabilitative ideal” in sentencing and incarceration. Multiple books and research papers published in the 1970s asserted that rehabilitative programs in prison simply weren’t working; moreover, indeterminate sentences created great disparities between offenders convicted of similar crimes, and further causes inmates unnecessary stress and anxiety. These critiques combined with growing concerns over crime, which were embraced by politicians promoting a “get tough” approach. Ironically, there is little evidence that the move toward determinate sentencing significantly improved sentencing inequities, or prisoner’ attitudes toward prison and their sentence. Yet this approach – in combination with “innovations” such as sentencing guidelines, mandatory minimums, and sentencing enhancements – continues to drive many states and federal sentencing.⁷

⁶Rutz-Burri, L., McLean, K. and Chauvin, C. (2024)

⁷Burke, A., Carter, D., Fedorek, B., et al. (2019)

2.3: Chapter Summary

The development of American corrections has progressed through several major stages shaped by changing social values and approaches to punishment. Early systems relied on harsh corporal and capital punishment, but the late 18th and early 19th centuries introduced the penitentiary era, emphasizing isolation and reflection through systems like Pennsylvania and Auburn. This evolved into the reformatory era after the Civil War, which focused on rehabilitation, education, and indeterminate sentencing. In the 20th century, the medical model further emphasized treatment and individualized care, though it later declined due to concerns about effectiveness and fairness. By the 1980s, a “tough on crime” approach prioritized punishment, deterrence, and incapacitation, leading to mass incarceration. Today, corrections are shifting again toward evidence-based practices, restorative justice, and alternatives to incarceration, reflecting a more balanced approach between punishment and rehabilitation.

KEY TERMS

Penitentiary Era

Pennsylvania System

Auburn System

Reformatory Movement

Indeterminate Sentencing

Medical Model

Community Corrections

Mass Incarceration

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Compare and contrast the Pennsylvania and Auburn systems, focusing on their philosophies, methods of inmate management, and overall effectiveness.
2. Explain the goals and key features of the Reformatory Movement, including the role of indeterminate sentencing and rehabilitation programs.
3. Discuss the rise and fall of the medical model in corrections, including its intended benefits and the reasons for its decline.
4. Analyze the shift to the “tough on crime” era in the 1980s, including its causes and its impact on incarceration rates and the correctional system.
5. Evaluate modern correctional approaches, such as evidence-based practices and restorative justice, and explain how they differ from earlier correctional philosophies.

3: LEADERSHIP THEORIES - LEADER FOCUSED

Learning Objectives

- Understand the main leadership theories
- Identify key traits and behaviors of effective leaders
- Explain how leaders influence and motivate others
- Compare different leadership styles
- Describe how leadership impacts organizations and people

3.1: Trait Theory

3.2: Behavioral Theory

3.2.1: The Ohio State University Studies

3.2.2: The University of Michigan Studies

3.3: Transformational Theory

3.3.1: Theoretical Background

3.3.2: Main Elements

3.3.3: Challenges of Transformational Leadership

3.3.4: Disadvantages of Transformational Leadership

3.3.5: Advantages of Transformational Leadership

3.4: Servant Leadership Theory

3.5: Chapter Summary

3.1: Trait Theory

During the early 1900s, scholars endeavored to understand leaders and leadership. They wanted to know, from an organizational perspective, what characteristics leaders hold in common in the hope that people with these characteristics could be identified, recruited, and placed in key organizational positions. This gave rise to early research efforts and to what is referred to as the trait approach to leadership. Prompted by the great man theory of leadership and the emerging interest in understanding what leadership is, researchers focused on the leader—Who is a leader? What are the distinguishing characteristics of the great and effective leaders? The great man theory of leadership holds that some people are born with a set of personal qualities that make truly great leaders. Mahatma Gandhi is often cited as a naturally great leader.

Leader Trait Research

Ralph Stogdill, while on the faculty at The Ohio State University, pioneered our modern (late 20th century) study of leadership. Scholars taking the trait approach attempted to identify physiological (appearance, height, and weight), demographic (age, education, and socioeconomic background), personality (dominance, self-confidence, and aggressiveness), intellectual (intelligence, decisiveness, judgment, and knowledge), task-related (achievement drive, initiative, and persistence), and social characteristics (sociability and cooperativeness) with leader emergence and leader effectiveness. After reviewing several hundred studies of leader traits, Stogdill in 1974 described the successful leader this way:

The [successful] leader is characterized by a strong drive for responsibility and task completion, vigor and persistence in pursuit of goals, venturesomeness and originality in problem solving, drive to exercise initiative in social situations, self-confidence and sense of personal identity, willingness to accept consequences of decision and action, readiness to absorb interpersonal stress, willingness to tolerate frustration and delay, ability to influence other person's behavior, and capacity to structure social interaction systems to the purpose at hand.

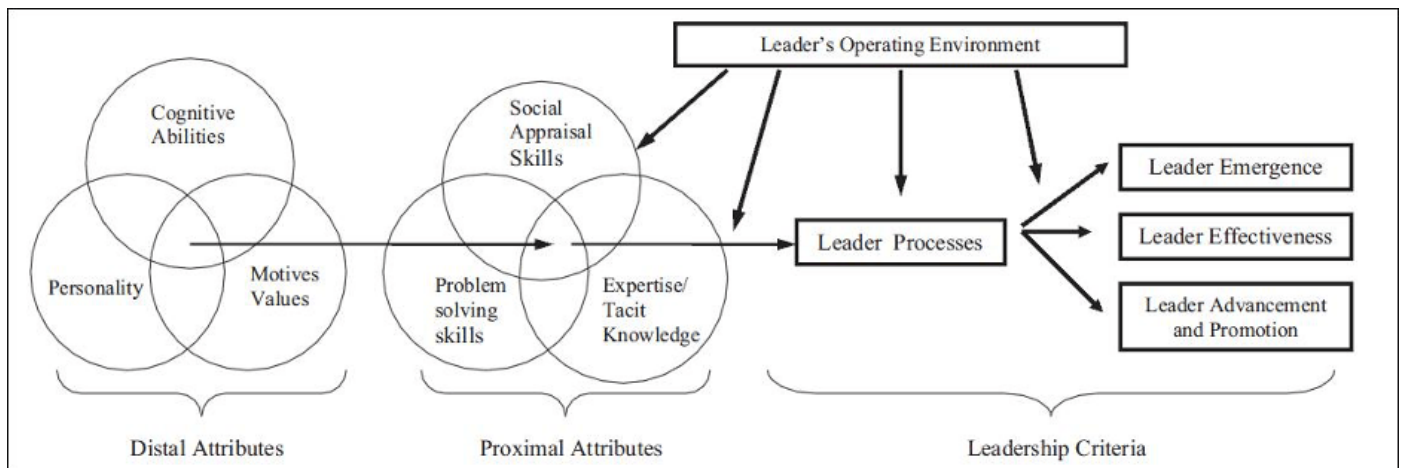
Looking at Trait Theory Today

So, if studying leadership traits isn't useful, why are we talking about it? Well, surprisingly, interest in the topic continues, supported by media and general public opinion. Think about how media describes business leaders like Mary Barra and Bill Gates. They're innovative. They make tough decisions. They're philanthropic. The media is constantly throwing their personality traits out there for us to digest.

Twelve percent of all the research published on the topic of leadership between 1990 and 2004 contains the keywords "personality" and "leadership." Interest persists, and new information has been uncovered. Researcher Steven J. Zaccaro pointed out that, even in Stogdill's argument against traits, his studies contained conclusions suggesting that individual differences can still predict leader effectiveness.

Remember that Cowley wrote that traits collectively lent themselves to leadership effectiveness. Taking a page from this book, Zaccaro and colleagues developed the trait-leadership model that attempted to address traits and their influence on a leader's effectiveness. The premise of the Trait-Leadership Model (Zaccaro, Kemp, Bader, 2004) is that (a) leadership emerges from the combined influence of multiple traits (integrated, rather than individual, traits) and (b) leader traits differ in their proximal influence on leadership.

Zaccaro's model looks like this:



This model comes with a list of leader traits, which Zaccaro reminds us are always not exhaustive. But traits based on his 2004 model include extraversion, agreeableness, openness, neuroticism, creativity, and others.

Two other models have emerged in recent trait leadership studies. The Leader Trait Emergency Effectiveness Model, created by researcher Timothy Judge and colleagues, combines behavioral genetics and evolutionary psychology theories of how traits are developed and puts them into a model that attempts to explain leader emergence and effectiveness. A second model, the Integrated Model of Leader Traits, Behaviors, and Effectiveness, created by D. S. Derue and colleagues, combines traits and behaviors in predicting leader effectiveness and tested the mediation effect of leader behaviors on the relationship between leader traits and effectiveness.

In spite of the increased focus of researchers on trait theory, it remains among the more criticized theories of leadership. Some argue it's too simplistic. Others criticize that it studies leadership effectiveness as it's perceived by followers, rather than actual leadership effectiveness. But we want to leave you with two thoughts on the trait approach before we move on:

Traits can predict leadership. Years ago, the evidence suggested otherwise, but the presence of proper framework for classifying and organizing traits now help us understand this better.

Traits do a better job of predicting the emergence of leaders and the appearance of leadership than they do distinguishing between effective and ineffective leadership.

Stogdill's comments encouraged researchers to look in other directions back in the late 1940s. If it's not the personality traits that predict effective leadership, perhaps it's the behavior of those leaders we should be studying. Let's take a look at the behavioral approach to leadership next.

The last three decades of the 20th century witnessed continued exploration of the relationship between traits and both leader emergence and leader effectiveness. Edwin Locke from the University of Maryland and a number of his research associates, in their recent review of the trait research, observed that successful leaders possess a set of core characteristics that are different from those of other people.[3] Although these core traits do not solely determine whether a person will be a leader—or a successful leader—they are seen as preconditions that endow people with leadership potential. Among the core traits identified are:

Drive—a high level of effort, including a strong desire for achievement as well as high levels of ambition, energy, tenacity, and initiative

Leadership motivation—an intense desire to lead others

Honesty and integrity—a commitment to the truth (nondeceit), where word and deed correspond

Self-confidence—an assurance in one's self, one's ideas, and one's ability

Cognitive ability—conceptually skilled, capable of exercising good judgment, having strong analytical abilities, possessing the capacity to think strategically and multidimensionally

Knowledge of the business—a high degree of understanding of the company, industry, and technical matters

Other traits—charisma, creativity/originality, and flexibility/adaptiveness

While leaders may be “people with the right stuff,” effective leadership requires more than simply possessing the correct set of motives and traits. Knowledge, skills, ability, vision, strategy, and effective vision implementation are all necessary for the person who has the “right stuff” to realize their leadership potential. According to Locke, people endowed with these traits engage in behaviors that are associated with leadership. As followers, people are attracted to and inclined to follow individuals who display, for example, honesty and integrity, self-confidence, and the motivation to lead.

Personality psychologists remind us that behavior is a result of an interaction between the person and the situation—that is, $\text{Behavior} = f[(\text{Person})(\text{Situation})]$. To this, psychologist Walter Mischel adds the important observation that personality tends to get expressed through an individual’s behavior in “weak” situations and to be suppressed in “strong” situations. A strong situation is one with strong behavioral norms and rules, strong incentives, clear expectations, and rewards for a particular behavior. Our characterization of the mechanistic organization with its well-defined hierarchy of authority, jobs, and standard operating procedures exemplifies a strong situation. The organic social system exemplifies a weak situation. From a leadership perspective, a person’s traits play a stronger role in their leader behavior and ultimately leader effectiveness when the situation permits the expression of their disposition. Thus, personality traits prominently shape leader behavior in weak situations.

Finally, about the validity of the “great person approach to leadership”: Evidence accumulated to date does not provide a strong base of support for the notion that leaders are born. Yet, the study of twins at the University of Minnesota opens the possibility that part of the answer might be found in our genes. Many personality traits and vocational interests (which might be related to one’s interest in assuming responsibility for others and the motivation to lead) have been found to be related to our “genetic dispositions” as well as to our life experiences. Each core trait recently identified by Locke and his associates traces a significant part of its existence to life experiences. Thus, a person is not born with self-confidence. Self-confidence is developed, honesty and integrity are a matter of personal choice, motivation to lead comes from within the individual and is within his control, and knowledge of the business can be acquired. While cognitive ability does in part find its origin in the genes, it still needs to be developed. Finally, drive, as a dispositional trait, may also have a genetic component, but it too can be self- and other-encouraged. It goes without saying that none of these ingredients are acquired overnight.⁸

⁸Alverson, K. (2018)

3.2: Behavioral Theory

The nearly four decades of research that focused on identifying the personal traits associated with the emergence of leaders and leader effectiveness resulted in two observations. First, leader traits are important—people who are endowed with the “right stuff” (drive, self-confidence, honesty, and integrity) are more likely to emerge as leaders and to be effective leaders than individuals who do not possess these characteristics. Second, traits are only a part of the story. Traits only account for part of why someone becomes a leader and why they are (or are not) effective leaders.

Still under the influence of the great man theory of leadership, researchers continued to focus on the leader in an effort to understand leadership—who emerges and what constitutes effective leadership. Researchers then began to reason that maybe the rest of the story could be understood by looking at what it is that leaders do. Thus, we now turn our attention to leader behaviors and the behavioral approaches to leadership.

It is now common to think of effective leadership in terms of what leaders do. CEOs and management consultants agree that effective leaders display trust in their employees, develop a vision, keep their cool, encourage risk, bring expertise into the work setting, invite dissent, and focus everyone’s attention on that which is important. William Arruda, in a Fortune article, noted that “organizations with strong coaching cultures report their revenue to be above average, compared to their peer group.” Sixty-five percent of employees “from strong coaching cultures rated themselves as highly engaged,” compared to 13 percent of employees worldwide.” Jonathan Anthony calls himself an intrapreneur and corporate disorganizer, because same-old, same-old comms practices are dying in front of our eyes. Apple founder Steve Jobs believed that the best leaders are coaches and team cheerleaders. Similar views have been frequently echoed by management consultant Tom Peters.

During the late 1940s, two major research programs—The Ohio State University and the University of Michigan leadership studies—were launched to explore leadership from a behavioral perspective.

3.2.1: The Ohio State University Studies

A group of Ohio State University researchers, under the direction of Ralph Stogdill, began an extensive and systematic series of studies to identify leader behaviors associated with effective group performance. Their results identified two major sets of leader behaviors: consideration and initiating structure.

Consideration is the “relationship-oriented” behavior of a leader. It is instrumental in creating and maintaining good relationships (that is, addressing the group’s maintenance needs) with organizational members. Consideration behaviors include being supportive and friendly, representing people’s interests, communicating openly with group members, recognizing them, respecting their ideas, and sharing concern for their feelings.

Initiating structure involves “task-oriented” leader behaviors. It is instrumental in the efficient use of resources to attain organizational goals, thereby addressing the group’s task needs. Initiating structure behaviors include scheduling work, deciding what is to be done (and how and when to do it), providing direction to organizational members, planning, coordinating, problem-solving, maintaining standards of performance, and encouraging the use of uniform procedures.

After consideration and initiating structure behaviors were first identified, many leaders believed that they had to behave one way or the other. If they initiated structure, they could not be considerate, and vice versa. It did not take long, however, to recognize that leaders can simultaneously display any combination of both behaviors.

The Ohio State studies are important because they identified two critical categories of behavior that distinguish one leader from another. Both consideration and initiating structure behavior can significantly impact work attitudes and behaviors. Unfortunately, the effects of consideration and initiating structure are not consistent from situation to situation. In some of the organizations studied, for example, high levels of initiating structure increased performance. In other organizations, the amount of initiating structure seemed to make little difference. Although most organizational members reported greater satisfaction when leaders acted considerately, consideration behavior appeared to have no clear effect on performance.

Initially, these mixed findings were disappointing to researchers and managers alike. It had been hoped that a profile of the most effective leader behaviors could be identified so that leaders could be trained in the best ways to behave. Research made clear, however, that there is no one best style of leader behavior for all situations.

3.2.2: The University of Michigan Studies

At about the same time that the Ohio State studies were underway, researchers at the University of Michigan also began to investigate leader behaviors. As at Ohio State, the Michigan researchers attempted to identify behavioral elements that differentiated effective from ineffective leaders.

The two types of leader behavior that stand out in these studies are job centered and organizational member centered. Job-centered behaviors are devoted to supervisory functions, such as planning, scheduling, coordinating work activities, and providing the resources needed for task performance. Employee-member-centered behaviors include consideration and support for organizational members. These dimensions of behavior, of course, correspond closely to the dimensions of initiating structure and consideration identified at Ohio State. The similarity of the findings from two independent groups of researchers added to their credibility. As the Ohio State researchers had done, the Michigan researchers also found that any combination of the two behaviors was possible.

The studies at Michigan are significant because they reinforce the importance of leader behavior. They also provide the basis for later theories that identify specific, effective matches of work situations and leader behaviors. Subsequent research at Michigan and elsewhere has found additional behaviors associated with effective leadership: support, work facilitation, goal emphasis, and interaction facilitation.

These four behaviors are important to the successful functioning of the group in that support and interaction facilitation contribute to the group's maintenance needs, and goal emphasis and work facilitation contribute to the group's task needs. The Michigan researchers also found that these four behaviors do not need to be brought to the group by the leader. In essence, the leader's real job is to set the tone and create the climate that ensure these critical behaviors are present.

The Leadership Grid®

Much of the credit for disseminating knowledge about important leader behaviors must go to Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton, who developed a method for classifying styles of leadership compatible with many of the ideas from the Ohio State and Michigan studies. In their classification scheme, concern for results (production) emphasizes output, cost effectiveness, and (in for-profit organizations) a concern for profits. Concern for people involves promoting working relationships and paying attention to issues of importance to group members. As shown in the Leadership Grid® any combination of these two leader concerns is possible, and five styles of leadership are highlighted here.

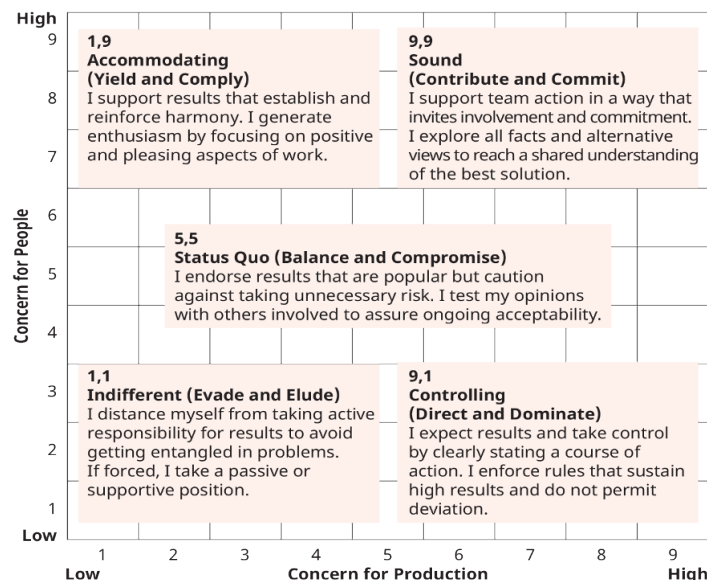


Figure 3.2.2.1: Exhibit of Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid® Source: Adapted from R. McKee and B. Carlson. 1999. The Power to Change, p.16.

Blake and Mouton contend that the sound (contribute and commit) leader (a high concern for results and people, or 9,9) style is universally the most effective. While the Leadership Grid® is appealing and well structured, research to date suggests that there is no universally effective style of leadership (9,9 or otherwise). There are, however, well-identified situations in which a 9,9 style is unlikely to be effective. Organizational members of high-involvement organizations who have mastered their job duties require little production-oriented leader behavior. Likewise, there is little time for people-oriented behavior during an emergency. Finally, evidence suggests that the “high-high” style may be effective when the situation calls for high levels of initiating structure. Under these conditions, the initiation of structure is more acceptable, favorably affecting follower satisfaction and performance, when the leader is also experienced as warm, supportive, and considerate.⁹

⁹Alverson, K. (2018)

3.3: Transformational Theory

Transformational leaders are generally referred to as visionaries, motivators, catalysts, futuristic and goal-oriented who work by invoking group respect, improved culture and shared vision by the group (Rolfe, 2011). Transformational leaders have got eight attributes which make them successful in their role. These attributes are self-knowledge, flexibility, expertise, vision, authenticity, charisma, ability to inspire the group members, shared leadership, and ability to motivate followers (Rolfe, 2011). All types of leadership have the core objective of making followers perform their duties and tasks beyond expectations. All leaders are expected to create a common vision, inspire followers, and provide a stable and reliable point of reference whenever need for change and challenges are encountered. Leaders usually adopt different leadership styles as they drive followers through situations, challenges, and routine practices. Leadership styles like transformational leadership focus on the relationship between the leaders and followers or workers and the influence on organizational performance and progress. The present corporate environment has become globalized and highly competitive, placing a lot of pressure on the leaders to perform and remain competitive. Transformational leaders work by stimulating and inspiring their followers to achieve the organization's desired success unlike transactional leaders who use rewards and penalties. Transformational leaders achieve this by paying attention to the needs and concerns of their followers in pursuit of current and future strategies in a way that challenges them to be innovative and thus challenging them to seek for new and better ways of doing things while remaining competitive.

Transformational leaders use the power of knowledge, expertise, and vision to influence and change their followers to become and do what they want (Gabbar, 2014). Therefore, transformational leaders seek to change their followers through different strategies and tools which include persuasion, mentoring and training for sustainable transformation. In their strategies, transformational leaders rarely use force of personality upon followers which is typical of charismatic leadership or the influence of rewards which is characteristic of transactional leadership in addition to the bargaining and negotiation strategies often adopted by transactional leaders (Gabbar, 2014).

Transformational leaders usually endear themselves with their followers, because they are often admired and emulated by their followers. Transformational leadership presents the most valuable form of leadership because followers are given an opportunity to change, transform and, in the process, develop themselves not just as blind followers, but participants and contributors at work who are duly prepared for that role. This adds value to followers and the organization as followers are developed leading to increased productivity (Germano, 2010). Therefore, to succeed in their transformational role, transformational leaders prepare followers for leadership roles to the point where followers are able to take on leadership roles and perform beyond established standards or goals of an organization. This implies that transformational leaders attempt and often succeed in uplifting capability of colleagues, subordinates, followers, and clients to a greater level of awareness and self-esteem. This brings about sustainable change in an organization, and that means such organizations will continue with their systems of performance and structures even when the leader leaves the organization. Transformational leadership is the most preferred leadership style whenever organizations undergo tremendous or complex changes like mergers and acquisitions, entry into new markets and environments, rapid change in business environment like entry of new and stiff competition that calls for new way of thinking and doing things.

The purpose of this study is to examine and review the transformational leadership style, identify leaders regarded as transformational both in business and politics and identify practical characteristics, applications and challenges encountered by these leaders, followers, and organizations under transformational leadership style. This paper presents an extensive literature review and case studies for transformational leadership (Givens, 2008).

3.3.1: Theoretical Background

Transformational leadership concept emerged 1970s and may be associated with the work of Downton (1973) and Burns (1978) who discussed the mechanism of influencing in leadership in contrast to the traditional transactional methods which were aligned with management (Kabeyi, 2018). The leadership focused on gaining followership and encouraging them to achieve the organizational common purpose. In his leadership model, James McGregor Burns proposed in his book called “Leadership” in 1978 that effectively market the origin of transformational leadership. The theory of transformational leadership was developed in the late 20th century by the work of Burns through his work in the field of political leadership. Before Burns’ development, more attention was usually made on leadership approaches to successful organizational transformation. Through Burns’ development, transformational leadership was identified as a leadership in which leaders and followers uplift one another to higher levels of motivation and morality for a given time in space. Therefore, transformational leaders raise followers from a lower level to a higher level of needs in line with Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (Kabeyi, 2018).

The work of James McGregor Burns was further improved by Bernard M. Bass in 1985 in the book entitled “leadership and performance beyond expectations” (Kabeyi, 2019). In this book, Bass explained how the transformational leaders psychologically affect the motivation and performance of workers. Therefore, transformational leaders can achieve organizational goals by motivating followers through raising their awareness about the importance of the expected results and by defining clearly how these results can be achieved. Bass recommended that leaders should encourage followers to go beyond self-interest for the good of the team or the organization they are serving (Khan, 2015). By so doing, transformational leadership creates corporate citizenship by promoting a sense of belonging to the organization by followers. Therefore, transformational leadership should inspire team spirit and respect for one another in a team or organization while placing the interests of the organization above their individual or personal interests. Bass was the first person to officially use the word “transformational leadership” in the place of transforming leadership (Khan, 2015).

In transformational leadership, followers are challenged to take greater ownership of assignments, as the leaders take time to understand their abilities which are then aligned with available tasks to improve the employee as well as organizational performance (Morton, 2011). These create a positive learning environment and culture at the workplace. Transformational leadership requires the leader and the entire team to identify challenges, available resources and develop a long-term vision for the team and to constantly engage all team members in the work process so as to perform to the best of their abilities and grow professionally and personally.

3.3.2: Main Elements

The transformational leadership theory has four main elements namely, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence together define a transformational leader whose main focus is to drive the organization towards a specific vision or future position.

Inspirational Motivation

Inspirational motivation of a transformational leader is used to promote the role of the leader in provision of challenge and meaning to followers in a way that motivates and inspires them in their work. In transformational leadership, the leader should carefully articulate the future state and vision of the organization to followers in a meaningful way (Odumeru, 2013).

This is an inspirational communication of messages that build confidence by delivering information that encourages workers to believe in the organization and its future outlook. Inspirational motivation refers to the leader's ability to inspire confidence, motivation, and a sense of purpose in the followers. It is the degree to which leaders articulate a vision that is appealing and inspiring to followers. The transformational leader must clearly articulate a clear vision for the future, communicate the expectations of the organization and show commitment to the laid down goals of the organization and the team. Other desirable behaviors of the transformational leader are continued optimism, enthusiasm, and ability to point out the positives and negatives without bias. Therefore, a transformational leader is a source of authority and motivation to achieve the desired organizational goals and acts as a reference point for followers in a transformation mission or undertaking by a team (Rolfe, 2011).

Leaders with inspirational motivation challenge followers with high standards of morality, communicate optimism about future goals, and provide meaning and sense to the tasks at hand or problems being addressed. However, to succeed, a transformational leader needs to have followers who have a strong sense of purpose. There is need for the transformational leader to motivate followers to action for what they believe in. It is this purpose and meaning that provides the energy that drives a group forward. The followers should also be willing to invest more effort in their tasks, be positive, be willing to be motivated and be optimistic about the outlook and believe in their own abilities and that of leadership to deliver the desired results (Kabeyi, 2020).

Transformational leadership should articulate an organizational vision in a manner that is appealing to the subordinates or followers. They do so to improve organizational effectiveness, by presenting optimism about the outlook because of the impending changes. Transformational leaders appreciate that change usually threatens workers and so should make effort to address their concerns by accepting feedback and addressing their concerns. Effective transformational leaders use various strategies like citing success stories on organizational transformation. These leaders address subordinates' concerns by inspiring them to see things differently which facilitates creativity and innovation (Sainidis, 2020).

Intellectual Stimulation

Intellectual stimulation, is ability to stimulate follower's efforts to be innovative and creative through questioning assumptions, doing things in a new way and reframing problems. Transformational leaders encourage creativity, shared learning and innovation. Transformational leadership encourages both leaders and followers to pursue their intellectual curiosity and apply their imaginations to come up with new ideas and solutions to problems (Savovic, 2017).

The purpose of intellectual simulation is to increase the workers' interest in assignments and create awareness of the various challenges at work and increase their ability to solve problems and encourage them to be creative and develop new ways of doing things. Intellectual stimulation refers to the degree to which a leader challenges prevailing assumption, takes risks and solicits followers' ideas about a task or challenge at hand. Unlike transactional leaders, transformational leaders value creativity and autonomy by their followers. Transformational leadership supports its followers by involving them in the decision-making process and stimulating their efforts to be as creative and innovative as possible to identify solutions to prevailing business challenges or institutional problems and situations. To this end, the transformational leader challenges assumptions and solicits ideas from followers without criticizing. The leader helps change the way followers think about an issue and frame problems and obstacles. The vision the leader conveys helps followers see the bigger picture and succeed in their effort. Transformational leaders stimulate and elicit creativity in the followers so that they can become independent thinkers. In this leadership style, learning is taken as a value while unexpected or emergency situations are taken as opportunities to learn and develop the team and leadership. Transformational leaders allow followers to question, think about issues, problems, and opportunities, and develop

better ways to perform their tasks. Intellectual stimulation from this discussion suggests that a transformational leader must be innovative, risk taker and remains positive about all situations and should not buckle on trial and encourages followers to remain focused, innovative, and creative.

Individualized Consideration

Individualized consideration appreciates the need for a leader to recognize the follower's individual needs and facilitate developmental support through interventions like coaching and mentoring. This makes a transformational leadership a supportive leadership which demonstrates consideration, acceptance, and concern for the needs and feelings of the followers. The behaviors of a supportive leader are effective management of emotions, listening carefully, showing concern for the follower's welfare and demonstrate evidence of caring, and demonstrate consideration for the feeling's followers, including providing sympathy.

Personal recognition involves giving employees direct incentives like praises and acknowledgement of their specific effort and input at work in realizing specific targets in a way that encourages learning and collaboration at work with colleagues. Individualized consideration also refers to the degree to which the leader personally attends to each follower's needs, acts as the mentor or coach to individual followers in a manner specific to their situations. As human beings, each follower or member of a given group has specific personal needs, personal interests, and group desires and expectations. Some followers are motivated by money, while others are motivated by change as others just excitement while in some cases, a combination of factors.

Vision refers to shared values that are ideological in nature and that lead to internalization of organizational goals and objectives. Therefore, a vision is an idealized picture of the organizational future that is based on the organizational values and aspirations. Vision refers to the ability to clearly express and define the picture of the future position of the organization. The transformational leader should have ability to clearly present the future of the organization to all stakeholders.

Idealized Influence

Idealized influence calls for strong sense of ethical practice by leaders and a leadership e driven by the commitment to do what is right and just. Through idealized influence, transformational leaders should articulate their values and beliefs in whatever they do and should carefully evaluate the moral and ethical implications of their decisions and actions which should be admirable, respected, and trusted by the followers. In their leadership role, transformational leaders work as role models for high degree of ethical behavior and display a charismatic personality that influences other followers to want to be more like them. This implies that transformational leaders should be admired and emulated by their followers. Through idealized influence, transformational leaders should show willingness to take risks and adhere to a core set of values, convictions and ethical principles in their actions and conduct that are worth emulating by followers. It is through this concept of idealized influence that the leader builds trust with followers and the followers, in turn, develop confidence in their leadership. Transformational leadership provides role modelling for high ethical behavior, instills pride, gains respect and trust in the followers. As a development tool, transformational leadership has spread already in all sectors of western societies, including governmental organizations (Savovic, 2017).

3.3.3: Challenges of Transformational Leadership

Success Factors

Transformational leadership is capable of inspiring employees to transform and sustain small and growing organizations. This is done by showing and helping workers on how to fit into the organizational vision and strategies for future survival in a human and motivating manner. Transformational leaders empower their employees through training, increased responsibility, and role modeling. Whenever businesses encounter hardship and encounter turbulent times, quite often it is transformational leaders who can assist by use of high energy, enthusiasm, and passion to inspire and motivate employees through prevailing hardships. The transformational leaders must undertake the following to be successful.

Limitations of Transformational Leadership

Several negative consequences are associated with transformational leadership style. Though transformational in the outlook, some leaders have used their qualities to bring about negative change. As examples, Adolf Hitler of Germany and Saddam Hussein of Iraq are key transformational political leaders who ended up bringing a lot of death and destruction to their followers by plunging their followers into avoidable wars. This leadership is personalized leadership, which though transforming often focuses on personal interests rather than the interests of followers as opposed to authentic leadership which is more focused on collective good of followers. The leader's dependence syndrome is another shortcoming of transformational leadership. Transformational leaders may change the organizational environment such that they are relied on for everything in the organization. Therefore, transformational leaders should work hard to ensure sustainability even long after they exit the organizations through mentoring, training, and staff development through institutional and individualized capacity building.

3.3.4: Disadvantages of Transformational Leadership

The most important attribute of a transformational leader influence is charisma which is very effective if used appropriately, but can at the same time cause destruction if inappropriately used. Therefore, like all other leadership styles, transformational leadership has some drawbacks or challenges. This however does not imply that transformational leadership is worse compared to others.

Doing Things by Committee

The transformational approach in decision making makes employees feel that everything needs to be decided by a large group of people. This leads to some withdrawing and refusing to take part, while others get involved in constant conflict. In a small business, transformational leadership can work well because of the limited number of people, but in a large corporation, it works better when selected employees represent the others rather than trying to have everyone involved equally.

Transformational leadership is a complex idea arising from several different leadership theories making it difficult to learn or to teach. True transformational leadership is more of a personality trait than a leadership style. There is a great risk of transformational leaders abusing their position since often, these leaders are unchallenged by followers like the way Adolf Hitler worked and so is Osama bi Laden. These leaders can stridently execute a vision that is self-seeking and is not for the good of all or the organization. Therefore, the decision to adopt transformational leadership style needs wider consideration of the operating environment and prevailing circumstances, and the specific leader.

3.3.5: Advantages of Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is associated with significant benefits or advantages over other leadership styles. These benefits include.

Workers or employees always come and go, and when this happens, staff costs are involved in terms of hiring, training, and deployment. For this reason, transformational leadership seeks to retain staff and talent by creating a more engaged and freer environment. Employee retention is significantly enhanced in organizations practicing transformational leadership. The same applies to valued customers and other stakeholders which is key to a successful business transformation. Since transformational leaders satisfy both the company and own needs simultaneously, workers feel at home and hold on longer. This keeps staff turnover and related costs low for the organization.

Passion is inner self drive of an individual or rather self-motivation. Transformational leaders create excitement which is catchy to followers as they are seen by followers being happy and having a good time.

Transformational leadership creates an environment which encourages creativity and a culture of trying new ways of doing things. This makes workers more creative and innovative as they seek solutions to various organizational problems and challenges. Compared to transactional leadership which loads workers with already made decisions with the leaders solving all problems, it is easier for transformational leadership to promote collaboration between workers themselves and their leaders.

Transformational leadership aims to change a company's values to include high levels of fairness and justice. This leadership encourages good values and morals in conduct of business and work. This is about doing the right thing in the right way all the time whether one is under watch or not. Transformational leadership creates an open and ethical environment because the transformational leader who is also a role model is morally driven.

Impact of Transformational Leadership

Several studies have shown that there is significant relationship between the leadership that is exercised and organizational effectiveness. Similarly, there is significant relationship between leadership effectiveness and leadership behavior. This implies that with other factors held constant, the success of an organization is a function of the type of leadership in place.

Managers use different leadership behavior in performance of their roles which directly affects employees and thus their performance. Adequate use of leadership behavior often leads to higher employee satisfaction, employee commitment to work and organizational objectives, and improvement of their overall productivity. Therefore, effective use of leadership behavior improves the effectiveness of the leader and the organization.

In this context leadership outcomes refer to factors like group performance, realization of group goals, survival of the group, preparedness of the group, ability of the group to manage crises, satisfaction of subordinates with the leader, commitment to group goals by followers, psychological wellbeing, group members individual and group development, and retention of status of the leader in the group. On the other hand, organizational performance refers to the attainment of expected or desirable performance in terms of performance objectives and indicators. They include gross sales, profit margins, sales growth versus sales targets, net profits, productivity, unit production costs and many other quantitative and qualitative performance parameters.

Transformational leaders in business, are often experienced professionals and their leadership style is visible for all to see since the organizations and followers are made visible to the public. They are often remembered for turning around loss making organizations to profitability or transforming ideas and concepts to successful business enterprises. They are also adored by the people they interact with, i.e., followers, subordinates, and other company stakeholders. Through innovations and positive impact on followers and stakeholders, Michael Joseph is remembered and admired, and in fact at the end of his contract with Safaricom, he still retained as a non-executive director. In South Africa, Mandela remains an icon who ruled for just one term and left unlike other African leaders who have been clinging to power for many years. Mandela is fondly remembered as Madiba, by South Africans. For Michael Joseph, his success at Safaricom made him highly sought by his own organization and the public. For this reason, President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya saw him as the ultimate choice for leadership of Kenya Airways which was experiencing turbulence in operations making huge losses. In Kenya, his name features in social circles when people are talking about Safaricom, and Mpesa mobile money service. Therefore, successful transformational leaders tend to continue to influence their former organizations both directly and indirectly many years after they exit.

Conclusion

Transformational leaders are regarded as visionaries, catalysts, motivators, goal oriented and futuristic leaders who work by invoking improved culture, shared vision and group respect, by the followers. The eight attributes which make transformational leaders successful are self-knowledge, flexibility, vision, charisma, expertise, authenticity, and ability to inspire others and ability to motivate followers. This implies that transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms followers and treats them as full human beings. A transformational leader influences followers and moves them to accomplish beyond expectation.

Transformational leadership is the most preferred leadership style whenever organizations undergo tremendous or complex changes. Such changes include mergers and acquisitions, entry into new markets and environments, rapid change in business environment like entry of new and stiff competition that calls for new way of thinking and doing things. Transformational leadership has proved to be effective in delivering better outcomes by helping to enhance the work of followers and can be adequately described along five dimensions of vision, inspirational communication, intellectual stimulation, supportive leadership, and personal recognition. For successful transformational leadership, the leader must have a clear and inspirational vision for the organization and the team's future which should define the purpose of the organization and team members because it is relevant to the business and its mission. It may be necessary to incorporate the core values for followers and their capabilities and due regard to the limitations and weaknesses facing individual team members and the organization as a whole. Based on this, the transformational leaders will help followers to effectively contribute to the set vision for the organization through various support tools and systems like training, technology, and general empowerment. In the performance of the duty, a successful transformational leader has to motivate followers, set and work towards clear goals with high standards of performance and expectations, should be fair, honest, appreciate the team, for their individual, joint and team effort, encourage the employees to look at the greater good of the company and avoid self-interests to make followers challenge themselves and realize their best potential for the good of the team and organization.

Transformational leadership is said to be realized whenever a leader performs the duties effectively in a way that earns trust, respect, loyalty and appreciation from followers and stakeholders. Transformational leadership is leadership that causes change in individuals and social systems. Through their actions and behavior, transformational leaders create valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders themselves through influence and role modelling. Strategies used in the transformation include connection of the follower's sense of identity and self, to the vision, mission and the collective duty and aspirations of the organization; role modelling; challenging followers to take greater ownership for their work, and proper understanding the abilities and limitations of the followers as individuals and team and aligning them with tasks for optimal performance. By so doing, transformational leaders lead followers to levels they may never reach on their own.

Transformational leadership seems to be the most dynamic under various circumstances, as demonstrated by identified transformational leaders like Michael Joseph, Bill Gates, and others in private and public business, politics, and social life. A transformational leader is a coach, mentor, innovator, enterprising, and visionary and motivator and can be found in private and public sectors as entrepreneurs or executives as well as politicians. To perform their role successfully, transformational leaders should be ethical in conduct, be risk takers but make well informed and researched decisions not mere guesswork and are future and sustainability oriented in their decisions. The study concludes that, transformational leadership style has weaknesses and strengths, but recommends it as the best style for organizations to realize desired change while maintaining an outlook and sustainable progress and existence as opposed to short term intentions as in project management and transactional leadership whose goals are quick and externally imposed of influence by the leader through measures like rewards, force, and fixed targets. The success of a transformational leadership however depends on goodwill and cooperation between followers and leaders which may not be the case in all circumstances or prevailing internal and external environmental factors, thus the need to pursue other leadership styles or a combination.¹⁰

¹⁰Barasa, J. and Olanrewaju, A. (2024)

3.4: Servant Leadership Theory

Robert Greenleaf explored the concept of leading by serving others in 1970 with his essay *The Servant as Leader*. He went on to write a book in 1977 called *Servant Leader*. With this style of leadership, the leader moves from taking center stage to prioritizing serving others on the team.

Author Angelo Letizia defines servant leadership in his 2017 book *Using Servant Leadership: How to Reframe the Core Functions of Higher Education*.

What does it mean to serve another human being? How does one human being help another human being grow and develop? What exactly is growth, and how do we measure it? These questions all point to the phenomenon of servant leadership, which has emerged over the last forty years due chiefly to the writings of Robert Greenleaf. Greenleaf argued leadership could be conceived of as service to followers. For Greenleaf (2002), the most important test of servant leadership is “Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?” Greenleaf (2002) did not just view servant leadership as an individual phenomenon, however; he also called for the ideas of servant leadership to transform institutions.

The terms “servant” and “leader” are opposed in some sense; thus, the idea of servant leadership is paradoxical (SanFacon and Spears 2011; Spears 2004). Yet as SanFacon and Spears (2011) note, when opposites join, paradoxes ensue and can open our eyes to new, previously unknown ideas. The new possibility is a leader who serves (Spears 2004). As Greenleaf noted, servant leaders want to serve before they want to lead. In contrast, leaders who lead first may simply have a desire for power (Greenleaf 2002). Greenleaf called these leaders “leader- first,” and for them, leading comes before serving. Of course, as Greenleaf (2002) notes, in real life leaders usually fall into a number of complex gradations between these two concepts of leadership. Greenleaf’s voluminous work set in motion the ideas and research for servant leadership that spans until the present day.

This concept of leaders as servants is a big shift for most leadership paradigms. It also lines up with some of the philosophies and approaches of peer support.¹¹ Servant leadership goes beyond stewardship by requiring leaders to eschew personal accolades and devote themselves entirely to a greater cause. Greenleaf stated, “The essential quality that separates servant leaders from others is that they live by their conscience—the inward moral sense of what is right and wrong. That one quality is the difference between leadership that works and leadership—like servant leadership—that endures.” The following aspects are central to servant leadership:

1. Placing service before self-interest. The servant leader’s primary concern is helping others, not receiving recognition or financial reward.
2. Listening to others. Servant leaders recognize the importance of listening to the ideas and concerns of stakeholders; they never attempt to impose their will on others. This aspect allows servant leaders to strengthen relationships, understand group needs and dynamics, and effectively allocate resources to improve the group’s welfare.
3. Inspiring through trust. As we discussed earlier, ethical leaders must be trustworthy. It does not take much effort for servant leaders to be truthful because they usually have strong moral convictions.
4. Working toward feasible goals. Servant leaders realize that many problems cannot be solved by one person. They also tackle the most pressing issues facing their groups.
5. Helping others whenever possible. Servant leaders lend a helping hand when the opportunity arises. An example is the district manager of a fast-food chain who helps part-time employees flip burgers during a lunchtime rush hour. Another is the director of a business unit who observes that a team is short a member and needs help in meeting a deadline; the director joins the team for the afternoon to help meet the deadline.

Another way of understanding the distinguishing characteristics of servant leadership is offered by DeGraaf, Tilley, and Neal:

The main assumption is that true leadership should call us to serve a higher purpose, something beyond ourselves. One of the most important aspects of leadership is helping organizations and staff identify their higher purpose. The best test of the servant-leadership philosophy is whether or not customers and staff grow as persons! Do customers become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become “servants”? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit? Or, at least, not be further deprived? To achieve this higher purpose of public organizations, you, as a leader, must be passionate about your desire to improve your community and yourself.¹²

¹¹Cusick, J. (2022)

¹²Alverson, K. (2018)

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3.5: Chapter Summary

Trait, behavioral, transformational, and servant leadership theories each offer a different way of understanding what makes an effective leader. Trait theory, one of the earliest approaches, focuses on the personal characteristics' leaders possess, such as confidence, intelligence, drive, and integrity. Early researchers believed these traits could help identify natural leaders, and while traits can predict leadership potential and emergence, they do not fully explain why some leaders are more effective than others. Behavioral theory builds on this by shifting the focus from who leaders are to what they do, emphasizing observable actions like task-oriented behaviors (planning, organizing, directing work) and relationship-oriented behaviors (supporting, communicating, and motivating followers). However, research showed that no single leadership style works best in all situations, highlighting the limits of behavior alone.

Transformational leadership takes a more modern approach by emphasizing the leader's ability to inspire, motivate, and create meaningful change. Transformational leaders develop a strong vision, encourage innovation, and focus on developing their followers, often pushing them to exceed expectations and grow into leaders themselves. This style is especially effective in times of change or uncertainty because it builds commitment and fosters a shared purpose. In contrast, servant leadership centers on the idea that leaders should prioritize serving others first. Instead of seeking power or personal gain, servant leaders focus on the needs, growth, and well-being of their followers, building trust, encouraging collaboration, and promoting ethical behavior. Overall, these theories demonstrate that effective leadership is not based on one single factor but rather a combination of traits, behaviors, adaptability, inspiration, and a genuine commitment to supporting others.

KEY TERMS

Trait Theory

Behavioral Theory

Transformational Leadership

Servant Leadership

Consideration (relationship-oriented behavior)

Initiating Structure (task-oriented behavior)

Indeterminate Traits (leadership potential traits like drive and confidence)

Vision (shared future goal created by leaders)

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain Trait Theory and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses in predicting effective leadership.
2. Compare Trait Theory and Behavioral Theory, focusing on how each explains leadership effectiveness.
3. Discuss the key components of Behavioral Theory, including consideration and initiating structure, and their impact on leadership.
4. Analyze Transformational Leadership, including its main characteristics and how it influences followers and organizational success.
5. Explain Servant Leadership and evaluate its effectiveness, particularly in promoting ethical behavior and follower development.

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4: LEADERSHIP THEORIES - SITUATION AND RESULTS-FOCUSED

Learning Objectives

- Understand contingency, transactional, and situational leadership theories
- Identify how different leadership styles work in different situations
- Explain how leaders use strategies to influence performance and behavior

4.1: Contingency Theory

4.2: Transactional Theory

4.2.1: Characteristics of Transactional Leadership

4.3: Situational Leadership

4.4: Chapter Summary

4.1: Contingency Theory

One of the earliest, best-known, and most controversial situation-contingent leadership theories was set forth by Fred E. Fiedler from the University of Washington. This theory is known as the contingency theory of leadership. According to Fiedler, organizations attempting to achieve group effectiveness through leadership must assess the leader according to an underlying trait, assess the situation faced by the leader, and construct a proper match between the two.

The Leader's Trait

Leaders are asked about their least-preferred coworker (LPC), the person with whom they least like to work. The most popular interpretation of the LPC score is that it reflects a leader's underlying disposition toward others—for example: pleasant/unpleasant, cold/warm, friendly/unfriendly, and untrustworthy/trustworthy. (You can examine your own LPC score by completing the LPC self-assessment on the following page.)

Fiedler states that leaders with high LPC scores are relationship oriented—they need to develop and maintain close interpersonal relationships. They tend to evaluate their least-preferred coworkers in fairly favorable terms. Task accomplishment is a secondary need to this type of leader and becomes important only after the need for relationships is reasonably well satisfied. In contrast, leaders with low LPC scores tend to evaluate the individuals with whom they least like to work fairly negatively. They are task-oriented people, and only after tasks have been accomplished are low-LPC leaders likely to work on establishing good social and interpersonal relations.

The Situational Factor

Some situations favor leaders more than others do. To Fiedler, situational favorableness is the degree to which leaders have control and influence and therefore feel that they can determine the outcomes of a group interaction. Several years later, Fiedler changed his situational factor from situational favorability to situational control—where situational control essentially refers to the degree to which a leader can influence the group process. Three factors work together to determine how favorable a situation is to a leader. In order of importance, they are (1) leader-member relations—the degree of the group's acceptance of the leader, their ability to work well together, and members' level of loyalty to the leader; (2) task structure—the degree to which the task specifies a detailed, unambiguous goal and how to achieve it; and (3) position power—a leader's direct ability to influence group members. The situation is most favorable for a leader when the relationship between the leader and group members is good, when the task is highly structured, and when the leader's position power is strong.

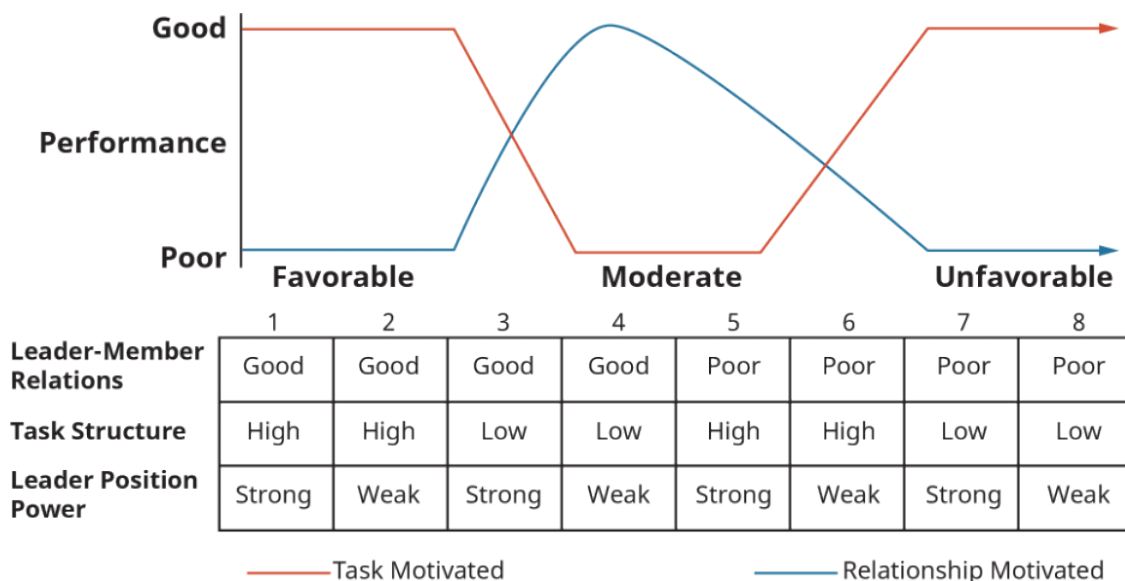


Figure 4.1.1: Fiedler's Contingency Model of Leader-Situation Matches Source: Adapted from F. E. Fiedler and M. M. Chemers. 1974. Leadership and effective management. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.

Leader-Situation Matches

Some combinations of leaders and situations work well; others do not. In search of the best combinations, Fiedler examined a large number of leadership situations. He argued that most leaders have a relatively unchangeable or dominant style, so organizations need to design job situations to fit the leader.

While the model has not been fully tested and tests have often produced mixed or contradictory findings, Fiedler's research indicates that relationship-oriented (high-LPC) leaders are much more effective under conditions of intermediate favorability than under either highly favorable or highly unfavorable situations. Fiedler attributes the success of relationship-oriented leaders in situations with intermediate favorability to the leader's nondirective, permissive attitude; a more directive attitude could lead to anxiety in followers, conflict in the group, and a lack of cooperation.

For highly favorable and unfavorable situations, task-oriented leaders (those with a low LPC) are very effective. As tasks are accomplished, a task-oriented leader allows the group to perform its highly structured tasks without imposing more task-directed behavior. The job gets done without the need for the leader's direction. Under unfavorable conditions, task-oriented behaviors, such as setting goals, detailing work methods, and guiding and controlling work behaviors, move the group toward task accomplishment.

As might be expected, leaders with mid-range LPC scores can be more effective in a wider range of situations than high- or low-LPC leaders. Under conditions of low favorability, for example, a middle-LPC leader can be task oriented to achieve performance, but show consideration for and allow organizational members to proceed on their own under conditions of high situational favorability.

Controversy over the Theory

Although Fiedler's theory often identifies appropriate leader-situation matches and has received broad support, it is not without critics. Some note that it characterizes leaders through reference to their attitudes or personality traits (LPC) while it explains the leader's effectiveness through their behaviors—those with a particular trait will behave in a particular fashion. The theory fails to make the connection between the least-preferred coworker attitude and subsequent behaviors. In addition, some tests of the model have produced mixed or contradictory findings.[9] Finally, what is the true meaning of the LPC score—exactly what is being revealed by a person who sees their least-preferred coworker in positive or negative terms? Robert J. House and Ram N. Aditya recently noted that, in spite of the criticisms, there has been substantial support for Fiedler's theory.¹³

¹³Alverson, K. (2018)

4.2: Transactional Theory

Transactional leadership (or transactional management) is a type of leadership style that focuses on the exchange of skills, knowledge, resources, or effort between leaders and their subordinates. This leadership style prioritizes individual interests and extrinsic motivation as means to obtain a desired outcome. It relies on a system of rewards and penalties for achievement or non-achievement of short-term goals.

Although James Downton is generally credited with coining the term "transactional leadership," James MacGregor Burns expanded upon the concept in his influential 1978 book *Leadership*.

[Transactional] leadership occurs when one person takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange of valued things. ... Their purposes are related, at least to the extent that the purposes stand within the bargaining process and can be advanced by maintaining that process. But beyond this the relationship does not go. The bargainers have no enduring purpose that holds them together.

—James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership*, (1978)

Transactional leadership is characterized by two primary factors: contingent rewards and management-by-exception. Contingent reward concerns the rewards that are granted in recognition of effort and good performance. Management-by-exception maintains the status quo, intervening only when subordinates do not meet acceptable performance levels or when corrective action is required to improve performance.

4.2.1: Characteristics of Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership is understood to possess two primary characteristics:

1. **Contingent rewards.** Leaders define expectations and identify appropriate rewards (e.g., bonuses, merits, or recognition). These rewards are given to subordinates on the condition that leadership expectations be met.
2. **Management-by-exception.** Leaders take discretionary actions as a response to (in)effective performance. Management-by-exception is exercised within a spectrum of two management subtypes: active management, in which leaders constantly survey subordinates to evaluate performance, anticipate problems, and course-correct before major problems occur; and passive management, wherein a leader assesses performance after the task has been completed and only once the problem is considered sufficiently serious.

The transactional leadership style is highly prevalent in modern society, and across many different contexts. For example, a political leader may wish to ensure voter loyalty; a social media influencer may desire to grow their followers; and a factory foreman may be charged with maintaining worker productivity. In all of these cases, transactional leadership can be thought of as a contractual relationship between a leader — who acts as a negotiator — and subordinates.

All transactions come at a cost. An effective transactional leader is able to identify the individualized needs of his or her subordinates, and will bargain with these needs in order to determine the necessary "price" to achieve a goal. In exchange, subordinates will expect their leader to reward them with appropriate compensation: for example, with tax cuts for voters, interesting content for social media followers, or salaries for factory workers. Transactional leadership depends upon transparency and fairness, but subordinates' well-being is not a primary concern for transactional leaders. Subordinates are paid in the exact terms of the (actual or metaphorical) contract; they "get what [they] deserve — no more, no less."

Transactional leaders prefer to work within the existing structure and the culture of the organization, opting to following precedent rather than implementing change. They emphasize practical and directive action, articulating specific measures of success with subordinates to focus group attention on the extrinsic motivators that are intended to guide their work behavior — as opposed to transformational leaders, who aim for their followers to achieve intrinsic motivation and job fulfillment.

Transactional leaders have a fine-tuned understanding of workers' motivations and the effort necessary to reach a desired goal, and clearly communicate the terms of the conditional reward to their subordinates. Transactional leadership can therefore fail if leaders fail to fulfill their end of the exchange. This leadership style works best in a context of specific goals and short-term circumstances.

The benefits of an ideal form of transactional leadership include:

- Rewards for individuals who are self-motivated and follow instructions
- Rapid achievement of short-term goals/gratifications
- Clearly defined rewards and penalties, with an emphasis on productivity
- Streamlined structure: ideal for environments where structure and systems need to be reproduced (e.g., high volume manufacturing)
- Alignment of ideals in large organizations
- Emphasis on transparency and fairness

Disadvantages of transactional leadership include:

- Rewards reserved for contributions that produce tangible or quantifiable outcomes
- Dependent on short-term, extrinsic motivation
- Lack of accommodation for individuals who innovate/demonstrate initiative (creativity is limited or non-existent)
- Impersonal work environment
- Little to no room for flexibility with goals and objectives
- Focus on quantitative output and short-term, baseline performance rather than quality and longevity
- Criticism only in the face of flailing performance results; little to no positive feedback

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Within the context of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, transactional leadership works at the basic levels of need satisfaction, where transformational leaders focus on the lower levels of the hierarchy. Transactional leaders use an exchange model, with rewards being given for good work or positive outcomes. Conversely, people with this leadership style also can punish poor work or negative outcomes, until the problem is corrected. One way that transactional leadership focuses on lower-level needs is by stressing specific task performance. Transactional leaders are effective in getting specific tasks completed by managing each portion individually.

Transactional leaders are concerned with processes rather than forward-thinking ideas. Transactional leaders are generally split into three dimensions: contingent reward, management-by-exception: active, and management-by-exception: passive. The type of leader who focuses on contingent reward, also known as contingent positive reinforcement, give rewards when the set goals are accomplished on-time, ahead of time, or to keep subordinates working at a good pace at different times throughout completion. Contingent rewards are also given when the employee engages in any desired behavior. Often, contingent punishments are handed down on a management-by-exception basis, in which the exception is something going wrong. Within management-by-exception, there are active and passive routes. Management-by-exception: active means that the leader continually monitors each subordinate's performance and takes immediate corrective action when something goes wrong. Management-by-exception: passive leaders do not monitor employee performance and wait for serious issues to come up before taking any corrective actions. In addition to the three dimensions of leadership above, another form of transactional leadership is recognized, the laissez-faire dimension. Laissez-faire leadership indicates a lack of leadership and a complete hands-off approach with employees.

With transactional leadership being applied to the lower-level needs and being more managerial in style, it is a foundation for transformational leadership which applies to higher-level needs.

Examples

Coaches of athletic teams provide one example of transactional leadership. These leaders motivate their followers by promoting the reward of winning the game.[15] They instil such a high level of commitment that their followers are willing to risk pain and injury to obtain the results that the leader is asking for.

Another example of transactional leadership is former US Senator from Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy, and his ruthless style of accusing people of being Soviet spies during the Cold War. By punishing for deviation from the rules and rewarding followers for bringing him accused communist infiltrators, McCarthy promoted results among followers. This leadership style is especially effective in crisis situations, and another example of this type of leadership was Charles de Gaulle. Through this type of reward and punishment he was able to become the leader of the free French in a crisis situation.¹⁴

¹⁴Wikipedia - Transactional leadership (unk)

4.3: Situational Leadership

According to Situational Leadership Theory, the most effective leaders are those that are able to adapt their style to the situation and look at cues such as the type of task, the nature of the group, and other factors that might contribute to getting the job done.

This theory suggests that no single leadership style is best. Instead, it depends on which type of leadership and strategies are best suited to the task. This situational model of leadership focuses on flexibility so that leaders are able to adapt according to the needs of their followers and the demands of the situation. Situational leadership theory is often referred to as the Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Theory, after its developers, Dr. Paul Hersey, author of “The Situational Leader,” and Kenneth Blanchard, author of “One-Minute Manager.”

Leadership Styles

Hersey and Blanchard suggested that there are four primary leadership styles:

- Telling (S1): In this leadership style, the leader tells people what to do and how to do it.
- Selling (S2): This style involves more back-and-forth between leaders and followers. Leaders “sell” their ideas and message to get group members to buy into the process.
- Participating (S3): In this approach, the leader offers less direction and allows members of the group to take a more active role in coming up with ideas and making decisions.
- Delegating (S4): This style is characterized by a less involved, hands-off approach to leadership. Group members tend to make most of the decisions and take most of the responsibility for what happens.

Maturity Levels

The right style of leadership depends greatly on the maturity level (i.e., the level of knowledge and competence) of the individuals or group.

Hersey and Blanchard's theory identifies four different levels of maturity, including:

- M1: Group members lack the knowledge, skills, and willingness to complete the task.
- M2: Group members are willing and enthusiastic, but lack the ability.
- M3: Group members have the skills and capability to complete the task, but are unwilling to take responsibility.
- M4: Group members are highly skilled and willing to complete the task.

Matching Styles and Levels

Leadership styles may be matched with maturity levels. The Hersey-Blanchard model suggests that the following leadership styles are the most appropriate for these maturity levels:

- Low Maturity (M1)—Telling (S1)
- Medium Maturity (M2)—Selling (S2)
- Medium Maturity (M3)—Participating (S3)
- High Maturity (M4)—Delegating (S4)

How it Works

A more “telling” style may be necessary at the beginning of a project when followers lack the responsibility or knowledge to work on their own. As subordinates become more experienced and knowledgeable, however, the leader may want to shift into a more delegating approach.

The situational approach to leadership also avoids the pitfalls of the single-style approach by recognizing that there are many different ways of dealing with a problem and that leaders need to be able to assess a situation and the maturity levels of

subordinates in order to determine what approach will be the most effective at any given moment. Situational theories, therefore, give greater consideration to the complexity of dynamic social situations and the many individuals acting in different roles who will ultimately contribute to the outcome.¹⁵

¹⁵Group Dynamics (2016-2023)

4.4: Chapter Summary

Contingency theory, transactional leadership, and situational leadership are three important approaches that explain how leaders achieve effectiveness in different ways. Contingency theory, developed by Fred Fiedler, argues that a leader's style is mostly fixed and effectiveness depends on matching the right leader to the right situation, based on factors like leader-member relations, task structure, and position power; task-oriented leaders perform best in very favorable or unfavorable situations, while relationship-oriented leaders do better in moderately favorable ones. In contrast, transactional leadership focuses on exchanges between leaders and followers, using rewards and punishments to achieve short-term goals, emphasizing structure, performance, and clear expectations through methods like contingent rewards and management-by-exception. Situational leadership, developed by Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard, takes a more flexible approach, suggesting that leaders should adapt their style (telling, selling, participating, or delegating) based on the maturity and skill level of their followers. Together, these theories highlight different views of leadership: contingency theory emphasizes matching leaders to situations, transactional leadership focuses on performance and exchanges, and situational leadership stresses adaptability and responsiveness to follower needs.

KEY TERMS

Contingency Theory

Least-Preferred Coworker (LPC)

Task-Oriented Leader

Relationship-Oriented Leader

Transactional Leadership

Contingent Reward

Management-by-Exception

Situational Leadership Theory

Maturity Levels (M1–M4)

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is Contingency Theory and how does it work?
2. What is the difference between task-oriented and relationship-oriented leaders?
3. What is transactional leadership and how does it use rewards and punishments?
4. What is situational leadership and why is it flexible?
5. How are contingency, transactional, and situational leadership different?

5: LAWS AFFECTING CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Learning Objectives

- Explain the concept of duty of care in correctional settings
- Identify key California Penal Code sections related to health and safety
- Evaluate leadership responsibilities in managing institutional risk

[5.1: Penal Code Laws](#)

[5.2: Chapter Summary](#)

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5.1: Penal Code Laws

Introduction

Health and safety in correctional environments are not just operational concerns—they are legal obligations grounded in statutory law, professional standards, and constitutional rights. In California, the California Penal Code establishes key responsibilities for correctional staff and administrators in maintaining safe, secure, and humane facilities.

While the Penal Code primarily defines criminal behavior, it also creates a framework for custodial responsibility, inmate welfare, staff conduct, and institutional safety. These provisions intersect with the California Health and Safety Code, particularly in areas such as medical care, sanitation, and public health.

This chapter examines how correctional leaders apply these laws in practice and explores the broader implications for institutional operations, leadership, and public safety.

Duty of Care in Corrections

PC 4002 – Safekeeping of Prisoners

This section requires correctional staff to ensure individuals in custody are:

- Securely housed
- Protected from harm
- Maintained in safe conditions

Leadership Implication:

Failure to protect inmates from harm (e.g., assaults or unsafe housing) may result in negligence claims and civil liability.

PC 4011.5 – Medical Care

Mandates that incarcerated individuals receive necessary medical attention.

Operational Requirements:

- Access to healthcare professionals
- Emergency medical response
- Ongoing treatment

Critical Insight:

Failure to provide adequate care may constitute deliberate indifference, violating constitutional protections (*Estelle v. Gamble*, 1976).

Environmental Health & Facility Standards

PC 6030 – Minimum Jail Standards

Requires compliance with state standards for:

- Sanitation
- Ventilation and lighting
- Food service and hygiene

Leadership Role:

Ensuring compliance through inspections, staff accountability, and policy enforcement.

Drugs, Contraband, and Institutional Health Risks

PC 4573 & 4573.6 – Drug Control

Prohibit introducing and possessing controlled substances in correctional facilities.

Impacts:

- Reduces overdoses
- Limits disease transmission
- Improves institutional order

Leadership Challenge:

Balancing enforcement with treatment approaches for substance use disorders.

Violence Prevention and Weapon Control

PC 4502 – Weapons Possession

Prohibits inmate possession of weapons.

PC 4501 / 4501.5 – Assault by Prisoners

Criminalize violent acts against others, including staff.

Leadership Focus:

- De-escalation training
- Use-of-force policy
- Incident review systems

Mental Health and Psychological Safety

PC 4011.6 – Mental Health Treatment

Requires access to mental health services.

PC 1368–1370 – Competency Procedures

Address individuals unable to participate in legal proceedings due to mental illness.

Impact:

- Reduces suicide risk
- Improves institutional stability

Emergency Preparedness and Escape Risk

PC 4530 & 4532 – Escape Laws

Criminalize escape from custody.

Leadership Consideration:

Emergency situations require balancing:

- Evacuation needs
- Security risks

Staff Misconduct and Use of Force

PC 147 – Assault by Public Officer

PC 149 – Custodial Abuse

These laws prohibit excessive or unlawful use of force.

Leadership Role:

- Enforcing ethical standards
- Investigating misconduct
- Promoting accountability

Implications and Impacts for Correctional Leadership

Health and safety laws extend beyond compliance—they shape every aspect of correctional leadership and institutional performance.

Legal Implications

Failure to comply with the California Penal Code can result in:

- Civil Liability
- Negligence lawsuits
- Wrongful death claims
- Class-action litigation

Constitutional Violations

Violations of:

- 8th Amendment (cruel and unusual punishment)
- 14th Amendment (due process)

Key Standard:

- Deliberate indifference—when officials knowingly ignore serious risks (Farmer v. Brennan, 1994).

Organizational Consequences

- Federal oversight (consent decrees)
- Court-mandated reforms
- Increased audits

Operational Impacts:

- Staffing
- Increased need for officers and healthcare staff
- Risks of understaffing: violence, burnout, errors

Policies and Procedures:

- Expanded documentation
- Standardized protocols tied to legal defensibility

Training:

- Ongoing training in safety, medical response, and de-escalation

Institutional Safety Impacts

Violence Reduction

Enforcement of weapon and assault laws reduces:

- Inmate violence
- Staff injuries

Contraband Control:

- Lowers overdose risk
- Improves order

Mental Health Stability:

- Reduces suicides
- Prevents crises

Leadership and Organizational Culture

Professionalization:

- Shift from control-based to safety-based leadership models
- Ethical Climate

Strong enforcement of misconduct laws promotes:

- Accountability
- Transparency
- Public trust

Public Health and Community Impact:

- Correctional facilities directly impact community health.
- Disease Transmission
- Poor conditions can spread illness beyond facilities.

Risk Management Approach

Modern leaders must adopt proactive strategies:

- Data-driven decision-making
- Early risk identification
- Continuous audits
- Policy evaluation

Conclusion

Health and safety laws within the California Penal Code provide a critical legal framework for correctional leadership. These laws require leaders to:

- Protect individuals in custody
- Ensure access to care
- Maintain safe conditions
- Prevent violence and misconduct

Effective leadership requires translating legal mandates into daily operational practices, fostering a culture of safety, and proactively managing risk.¹⁶

¹⁶California Penal Code (2024), Cartwright, G. (2026) (2026), and Occupational Safety and Health Administration. (2023)

5.2: Chapter Summary

Health and safety in corrections are not optional practices but legally mandated responsibilities grounded in the California Penal Code and connected to broader public health laws such as the California Health and Safety Code. Key provisions establish a duty of care requiring correctional leaders to ensure safe housing, provide adequate medical and mental health services, maintain sanitary conditions, prevent violence and contraband, and uphold ethical staff conduct. Failure to meet these obligations can lead to civil liability, constitutional violations under standards like deliberate indifference, and significant organizational consequences. Beyond legal compliance, these laws shape daily operations, staffing, training, and institutional culture, emphasizing a shift toward proactive, risk-based leadership. Ultimately, effective correctional leadership depends on translating these legal requirements into consistent practices that protect individuals in custody, support staff safety, and promote overall institutional stability and public health.

KEY TERMS

Duty of Care

Deliberate Indifference

Negligence

Contraband

Use of Force

Institutional Safety

Risk Management

Custodial Responsibility

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How does duty of care influence correctional decision-making?
2. What are the consequences of failing to provide medical care?
3. How can leaders balance security and mental health needs?
4. What role does leadership play in preventing misconduct?
5. Why is a proactive risk management approach important?

6: PRISONER RIGHTS AND INMATE DISCIPLINE

Learning Objectives

- Identify the basic rights that prisoners still have under the Constitution, even while incarcerated.
- Explain how prison safety and security can limit inmate rights, based on cases like *Turner v. Safley* and *Hudson v. Palmer*.
- Describe key prisoner rights, including free speech, religion, access to courts, medical care, and protection from cruel and unusual punishment.
- Understand how inmate discipline works and the rights inmates have during disciplinary hearings, based on *Wolff v. McDonnell*.

6.1: Prisoner's Rights

6.2: Inmate Discipline

6.3: Chapter Summary

6.1: Prisoner's Rights

American courts were reluctant to get involved in prison affairs during most of the 19th century. Until the 1960s, the courts used a hands-off approach to dealing with corrections. Since, the court has recognized that “Prison walls do not form a barrier separating prison inmates from the protections of the Constitution” (Turner v. Safley, 1987). Prisoners do give up certain rights because of conviction, but not all of them. The high courts have established that prisoners retain certain constitutional rights. As the Court stated in Hudson v. Palmer (1984), “While prisoners enjoy many protections of the Constitution that are not fundamentally inconsistent with imprisonment itself or incompatible with the objectives of incarceration, imprisonment carries with it the circumscription or loss of many rights as being necessary to accommodate the institutional needs and objectives of prison facilities, particularly internal security and safety.” From this statement, it can be seen that institutional safety and security will usually trump inmate rights when the two collide in Court.

Political Rights

The phrase political right is used to refer to rights related to the participation in the democracy of the United States. Chief among these is the right to vote. The Constitution of the United States allows states to revoke a person's right to vote upon conviction, but does not require it. Several states revoke the right to vote while a person is incarcerated, but restore the right once the person is released from prison. A few states revoke the right to vote for life when a person is convicted of a felony. The right to vote cannot be denied to those who are pretrial detainees confined to jail or a misdemeanor. These individuals are usually given the right to vote by absentee ballot.

The Right to Free Speech and Assembly

The First Amendment right of prisoners to free speech is curtailed, but not eliminated. Prison administrators must justify restrictions on free speech rights. The rights to assemble is generally curtailed. As a rule, prison administrators can ban any inmate activity that is a risk to the security and safety of the institution.

The Right to Freedom of Religion

Generally, prisoners have the right to free exercise of their religious beliefs. These, however, can be curtailed when the health and safety of the institution are at risk. To be protected, the particular religious beliefs must be “sincerely held.” Prison officials may not, however, legally show preference for one religion over another. In practice, some religious customs have conflicted with prison policies, such as requiring work on religious holidays that forbid labor. These types of policies have been upheld by the courts.

The Right of Access to the Courts

The First Amendment guarantees the right “to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” For prisoners, this has translated to certain types of access to the courts. The two major categories of petitions that can be filed by prisoners are criminal appeals (often by habeas corpus petitions) and civil rights lawsuits. The right to petition the courts in these ways is referred to as the right of access to the courts. The court discusses this right at length in the case of Johnson v. Avery (1969).

Freedom from Retaliation

Inmates who file complaints, grievances, and lawsuits against prison staff have a constitutional right to be free from retaliation. The Supreme Court based this right on the logic that retaliation by prison staff hampers the exercise of protected constitutional rights. In practice, this right has been difficult for inmates to assert. Prison staff can often find legitimate reasons for taking action that was intended as retaliation.

Rights During Prison Disciplinary Proceedings

In the landmark case of *Wolff v. McDonnell* (1974), the Supreme Court defined the contours of prisoner rights during prison disciplinary proceedings. While not all due process rights due a criminal defendant were due the prisoner in a disciplinary proceeding, some rights were preserved. Among those rights were:

- Advance written notice of charges must be given to the disciplinary action inmate, no less than 24 hours before his appearance before the Adjustment Committee.
- There must be a written statement by the factfinders as to the evidence relied on and reasons for the disciplinary action.
- The inmate should be allowed to call witnesses and present documentary evidence in his defense if permitting him to do so will not jeopardize institutional safety or correctional goals.
- The inmate has no constitutional right to confrontation and cross-examination in prison disciplinary proceedings, such procedures in the current environment, where prison disruption remains a serious concern, being discretionary with the prison officials.
- Inmates have no right to retained or appointed counsel.

The Right to Privacy

The right to privacy is closely related to the law of search and seizure. In the landmark case of *Hudson v. Palmer* (1984), the Court determined that inmates do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy in their living quarters. In the Court's rationale, the needs of institutional security outweigh the inmate's right to privacy. The policy implication of this decision is that shakedowns may be conducted at the discretion of prison staff, and no evidence of wrongdoing is necessary to justify the search.

The Right to Be Free from Cruel and Unusual Punishment

The right to be free from cruel and unusual punishment as guaranteed by the Eighth Amendment to the United States Constitution. The amendment only applies to criminal punishments; it has no bearing on civil cases.

Conditions in prison must not involve the "wanton and unnecessary" infliction of pain. Prison conditions, taken alone or in combination, may deprive inmates of the "minimal civilized measure of life's necessities." If this happens, the Court will judge the conditions of confinement unconstitutional. Conditions that cannot be said to be cruel and unusual under "contemporary standards" are not unconstitutional. According to the Court, prison conditions that are "restrictive and even harsh," are part of the penalty that criminal offenders pay for their "offenses against society" (*Rhodes v. Chapman*, 1981).

In *Estelle v. Gamble* (1976), the court ruled that "Deliberate indifference by prison personnel to a prisoner's serious illness or injury constitutes cruel and unusual punishment contravening the Eighth Amendment."¹⁷

The Right to Adequate Nutrition

Numerous court cases have affirmed that prison conditions that deprive inmates of the "basic necessities of life" violate the 8th Amendment; thus, such cases have found that prisons must provide inmates with an adequate and varied diet, particularly if the prisoners are required to work. At the same time, the courts have denied prisoners' rights to specific diets (unless they are necessary for religious observance) and have identified few meals or foods that violate inmates' 8th Amendment rights (including the infamous Nutraloaf).

The Right to Medical Care

In several landmark cases, the U.S. Supreme Court has affirmed that penal institutions cannot show "deliberate indifference" to inmates' health but instead must provide necessary medical care; to ignore inmates' medical needs represents a violation of the 8th Amendment.^[2] More recently, the Court has recognized severe prison overcrowding as a violation of prisoners' 8th Amendment rights, if such prison conditions interfere with the delivery of necessary medical care. In their 2011 decision in *Brown v. Plata*, the Court mandated that California reduce state prison overcapacity to 137.5%, in order to meet their 8th Amendment obligations.¹⁸

¹⁷McKee, A. (unknown)

¹⁸Hamann, B., Chauvin, C., Scott, F. (2024)

6.2: Inmate Discipline

In American prisons, inmate discipline is an essential component of maintaining order, safety, and institutional control. Correctional systems rely on a range of disciplinary measures that vary in severity, from informal responses to serious sanctions that can affect an inmate's liberty and length of incarceration. These disciplinary practices are guided by constitutional requirements, particularly those established in *Wolff v. McDonnell*, which ensures that inmates receive basic due process protections when facing significant penalties. Together, these measures form a structured system designed not only to punish misconduct but also to deter future violations and encourage rehabilitation.

Informal Discipline

At the lowest level, informal discipline is used to address minor infractions quickly and efficiently. Correctional officers have discretion to issue verbal warnings, reprimands, or temporarily restrict privileges such as recreation or movement. This approach allows staff to correct behavior before it escalates into more serious misconduct, while also reducing the burden on the formal disciplinary system. Informal discipline is important because it provides immediate consequences without requiring extensive documentation or hearings. However, it is limited to minor violations, as more serious offenses require formal procedures to ensure fairness and accountability under the standards set by *Wolff v. McDonnell*.

Formal Discipline

When inmates commit more serious violations, prisons rely on formal disciplinary actions. This process begins with a written incident report and may lead to an investigation and disciplinary hearing. During the hearing, inmates are entitled to certain procedural protections, including advance notice of the charges, the opportunity to present evidence or call witnesses when it is safe to do so, and a written explanation of the decision. These safeguards are critical in preventing arbitrary or unjust punishment. Formal discipline ensures that correctional institutions operate within legal boundaries while maintaining order and accountability. The structured nature of this process reflects the importance of balancing institutional authority with inmate rights.¹⁹

Loss of Privileges

One of the most common sanctions imposed through both informal and formal discipline is the loss of privileges. Inmates may have their visitation rights, telephone access, commissary use, or participation in recreational and educational programs restricted. This type of punishment is flexible and can be tailored to the severity of the violation, making it a widely used tool for managing behavior. While less severe than isolation, the loss of privileges can still have a meaningful impact on inmates' daily lives and serves as an effective deterrent. Organizations such as the Prison Policy Initiative highlight how these sanctions are commonly used across correctional systems to maintain discipline without resorting to harsher penalties.²⁰

Disciplinary Segregation

For more serious or repeated misconduct, prisons may impose disciplinary segregation, also known as solitary confinement or placement in a Special Housing Unit (SHU). In this setting, inmates are typically confined to a cell for up to 23 hours a day, with limited social interaction and restricted access to programs and services. This form of discipline is intended to punish and deter severe rule violations, but it has also raised concerns due to its psychological effects. Because of its severity, courts require that inmates receive due process protections before being placed in segregation. Research and policy analysis from the Office of Justice Programs emphasize both its role in maintaining order and the importance of regulating its use.

Administrative Segregation

In contrast, administrative segregation is not intended as punishment but as a preventive measure used to ensure safety and security. Inmates may be placed in administrative segregation if they pose a threat to others, are at risk of being harmed, or are under investigation. Although the conditions may resemble disciplinary segregation, the purpose is fundamentally different.

Administrative segregation allows prison officials to manage high-risk situations and protect both staff and inmates. However, its use has also been scrutinized, particularly when inmates are held for extended periods without clear justification.²¹

Loss of Good Time Credits

Another significant disciplinary measure is the loss of good time credits, which directly affects the length of an inmate's sentence. Many correctional systems allow inmates to earn time off their sentence for good behavior, but these credits can be revoked as a penalty for misconduct. This sanction is particularly powerful because it extends the amount of time an inmate must remain incarcerated. As established in *Wolff v. McDonnell*, inmates must receive due process before good time credits can be taken away, reinforcing the principle that significant deprivations of liberty require procedural fairness.²²

Restitution and Fines

In addition to these sanctions, prisons may impose restitution or fines to hold inmates financially accountable for their actions. For example, inmates who damage property or incur costs due to misconduct may be required to reimburse the institution. These penalties are typically deducted from inmate trust accounts and serve to reinforce responsibility. The Prison Policy Initiative notes that financial sanctions, while less restrictive than other forms of discipline, still play an important role in promoting accountability within correctional systems.²³

Transfer or Reclassification

Transfer or reclassification is another tool used to manage inmate behavior. When inmates demonstrate repeated or serious misconduct, they may be moved to higher-security facilities or assigned a more restrictive custody level. This change often results in increased supervision and fewer privileges, significantly affecting the inmate's daily life. Although not always considered a direct punishment, transfer can function as a disciplinary measure by placing inmates in more controlled environments. It also helps ensure that individuals are housed according to their risk level, contributing to overall institutional safety.²⁴

Criminal Prosecution

For the most serious offenses, inmates may face criminal prosecution in addition to internal disciplinary actions. Acts such as assault, escape attempts, or drug trafficking within the facility can result in new criminal charges handled by external courts. If convicted, inmates may receive additional sentences, further extending their incarceration. The Office of Justice Programs explains that this dual system of discipline reinforces the seriousness of major violations and serves as a strong deterrent against dangerous behavior.²⁵

Behavioral Programs and Incentive-Based Discipline

Finally, modern correctional systems increasingly incorporate behavioral programs and incentive-based discipline as part of a broader approach to managing inmates. Rather than relying solely on punishment, these systems reward positive behavior with increased privileges, program access, or sentence reductions. Inmates may also be required to participate in anger management, substance abuse treatment, or educational programs to address the underlying causes of misconduct. This approach reflects a shift toward rehabilitation, emphasizing long-term behavior change and reduced recidivism. By combining punishment with incentives, correctional institutions aim to create a more stable and constructive environment.²⁶

In conclusion, inmate discipline in American prisons is a complex system that balances punishment, deterrence, and rehabilitation. From informal warnings to formal hearings, segregation, and even criminal prosecution, each type of discipline serves a specific purpose in maintaining order and safety. Guided by constitutional protections such as those established in **Wolff v. McDonnell**, these practices ensure that discipline is applied fairly while supporting the broader goals of the correctional system.

¹⁹Wikipedia - *Wolff v McDonald* (1974)

²⁰Wikipedia - Prison Policy Initiative (2001)

²¹U.S. DOJ (2026)

²²Wikipedia - Wolff v. McDonald (1974)

²³Wikipedia - Prison Policy Initiative (2001)

²⁴Wikipedia - Prison Policy Initiative (2001)

²⁵U.S. DOJ (2026)

²⁶U.S. DOJ (2026)

6.3: Chapter Summary

American courts mostly stayed out of prison matters during the 1800s and early 1900s, following a “hands-off” approach. This changed in the 1960s when courts began to recognize that prisoners still have some constitutional rights. In *Turner v. Safley*, the Court stated that inmates keep rights that do not conflict with prison safety and order, while *Hudson v. Palmer* explained that many rights can be limited to maintain security. Prisoners retain certain protections, such as limited free speech, freedom of religion, access to the courts (supported in *Johnson v. Avery*), and protection from retaliation, but they lose others like privacy. The Eighth Amendment also protects inmates from cruel and unusual punishment, with cases like *Estelle v. Gamble* requiring proper medical care and *Brown v. Plata* addressing overcrowding. In addition, *Wolff v. McDonnell* established basic due process rights in prison discipline, such as notice of charges and the chance to present evidence. To maintain order, prisons use a range of disciplinary actions, from simple warnings to formal punishments like loss of privileges, segregation, loss of good time credits, transfer, or even new criminal charges. Today, many prisons also use rehabilitation programs and incentives to encourage better behavior, aiming to balance punishment, safety, and long-term improvement.

KEY TERMS

Hands-off doctrine

Turner v. Safley

Wolff v. McDonnell

Eighth Amendment

Disciplinary Segregation

Good Time Credits

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did the shift from the hands-off doctrine to active court involvement change the balance between inmate rights and prison administration?
2. Explain how *Turner v. Safley* influences the way courts evaluate restrictions on prisoners’ constitutional rights.
3. Discuss the importance of due process in prison disciplinary proceedings as established in *Wolff v. McDonnell*.
4. Analyze how the Eighth Amendment applies to prison conditions, including medical care and overcrowding.
5. Compare and contrast informal and formal disciplinary methods used in prisons and their effectiveness in maintaining order.
6. Evaluate the use of disciplinary segregation and administrative segregation, including their purposes and potential impacts on inmates.
7. To what extent do modern rehabilitation programs and incentive-based discipline improve inmate behavior and reduce recidivism compared to traditional punitive approaches?

7: VISION, MISSION, VALUES, AND GOALS

Learning Objectives

- Understand the roles of vision, mission, goals, and values in an organization.
- Explain how vision and mission guide direction and purpose.
- Describe how SMART goals help turn ideas into clear actions.
- Recognize how values influence behavior, culture, and decision-making.

7.1: Vision

7.2: Mission

7.3: Goals

7.4: Values

7.5: Chapter Summary

7.1: Vision

A vision is a clear, forward-looking statement that describes what an organization or group aspires to achieve in the future, providing direction and purpose. It serves as a guiding image of success that helps align goals, decisions, and actions. For leaders, having a strong vision is essential because it inspires and motivates others, creates a sense of shared purpose, and helps navigate challenges by keeping everyone focused on long-term objectives. Without a clear vision, leaders may struggle to unify their team or make consistent decisions, while a well-defined vision builds commitment, drives progress, and encourages innovation.²⁷

“Good business leaders create a vision, articulate the vision, passionately own the vision, and relentlessly drive it to completion.”

–Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric

Many skills and abilities separate effective strategic leaders like Howard Schultz from poor strategic leaders. One of them is the ability to inspire employees to work hard to improve their organization's performance. Effective strategic leaders are able to convince employees to embrace lofty ambitions and move the organization forward. In contrast, poor strategic leaders struggle to rally their people and channel their collective energy in a positive direction.

As the quote from Jack Welch suggests, a vision is one key tool available to executives to inspire the people in an organization. An organization's vision describes what the organization hopes to become in the future. Well-constructed visions clearly articulate an organization's aspirations. Avon's vision is “to be the company that best understands and satisfies the product, service, and self-fulfillment needs of women—globally.” This brief but powerful statement emphasizes several aims that are important to Avon, including excellence in customer service, empowering women, and the intent to be a worldwide player. Like all good visions, Avon sets a high standard for employees to work collectively toward. Perhaps no vision captures high standards better than that of aluminum maker Alcoa. This firm's very ambitious vision is “to be the best company in the world—in the eyes of our customers, shareholders, communities and people.” By making clear their aspirations, Alcoa's executives hope to inspire employees to act in ways that help the firm become the best in the world.

The results of a survey of one thousand five hundred executives illustrate how the need to create an inspiring vision creates a tremendous challenge for executives. When asked to identify the most important characteristics of effective strategic leaders, 98 percent of the executives listed “a strong sense of vision” first. Meanwhile, 90 percent of the executives expressed serious doubts about their own ability to create a vision (Quigley, 1994). Not surprisingly, many organizations do not have formal visions. Many organizations that do have visions find that employees do not embrace and pursue the visions. Having a well-formulated vision employees embrace can therefore give an organization an edge over its rivals.²⁸

Company	Vision
Alcoa	To be the best company in the world—in the eyes of our customers, shareholders, communities and people.
Avon	To be the company that best understands and satisfies the product, service and self-fulfillment needs women—globally.
Chevron	To be the global energy company most admired for its people, partnership and performance.
Google	To develop a perfect search engine.
Kraft Foods	Helping people around the world eat and live better.
Proctor and Gamble	Be, and be recognized as, the best consumer products and services company in the world.

Table 1 The Big Picture: Organizational Vision. An organization's vision describes what the organization hopes to become in the future. Visions highlight the values and aspirations that lay at the heart of the organization. Although visions statements have the potential to inspire employees, customers, and other stakeholders, vision statements are relatively rare and good visions are even rarer. Some of the visions pursued by businesses today are in the table above.

²⁷Cartwright, G. (2026) (2026)

²⁸DesRoaches, K. (2022)

7.2: Mission

A mission statement is a concise explanation of an organization's core purpose, outlining what it does, who it serves, and how it delivers value on a daily basis. It focuses on the present by defining the organization's goals, values, and primary activities. For leaders, having a clear mission statement is important because it provides direction for decision-making, ensures consistency in actions, and helps communicate expectations to both team members and stakeholders. It also strengthens organizational identity, keeps everyone aligned with common objectives, and fosters accountability, allowing leaders to guide their teams more effectively toward achieving their overall vision.²⁹

In working to turnaround Starbucks, Howard Schultz sought to renew Starbucks's commitment to its mission statement: "to inspire and nurture the human spirit—one person, one cup and one neighborhood at a time." A mission such as Starbucks's states the reasons for an organization's existence. Well-written mission statements effectively capture an organization's identity and provide answers to the fundamental question "Who are we?" While a vision looks to the future, a mission captures the key elements of the organization's past and present.

Company	Mission Statement
Harley Davidson	We ride with our customers and apply this deep connection in every market we serve to create superior value for all of our stakeholders.
Internal Revenue Service	Provide America's taxpayers top-quality service by helping them understand and meet their tax responsibilities and enforce the law with integrity and fairness to all.
Starbucks	To inspire and nurture the human spirit – one person, one cup and one neighborhood at a time.
The Estée Lauder Company	Bringing the best to everyone we touch and being the best in everything we do.
Limited Brands	Limited Brands is committed to building a family of the world's best fashion brands offering captivating customer experiences that drive long-term loyalty and deliver sustained growth for our shareholders.
Fender Musical Instruments	We will exceed the expectations of music enthusiasts worldwide and create a community for individual expression by focusing on our people, products, and business excellence.

Table 2 Missions. While a vision describes what an organization desires to become in the future, an organization's mission is grounded in the past and present. A mission outlines the reasons for the organization's existence and explains what role it plays in society. A well-written mission statement captures the organization's identity and helps to answer the fundamental question of "Who are we?" As a practical matter, a mission statement explains to key stakeholders why they should support the organization.

The following examples illustrate the connections between organizations and the needs of their key stakeholders.

In order to prosper, organizations need support from their key stakeholders, such as employees, owners, suppliers, and customers. A mission statement should explain to stakeholders why they should support the organization by making clear what important role or purpose the organization plays in society. Google's mission, for example, is "to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful." Google pursued this mission in its early days by developing a very popular Internet search engine. The firm continues to serve its mission through various strategic actions, including offering its Internet browser Google Chrome to the online community, providing free e-mail via its Gmail service, and making books available online for browsing.

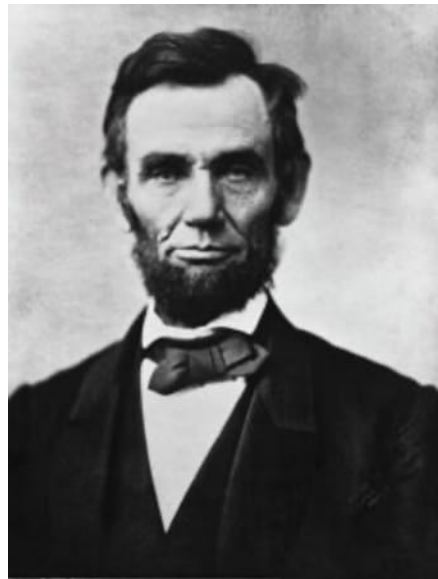


Figure 7.2.1: Wikipedia Commons is licensed [Public Domain](#)

One of Abraham Lincoln's best-known statements is that "a house divided against itself cannot stand." This provides a helpful way of thinking about the relationship between vision and mission. Executives ask for trouble if their organization's vision and mission are divided by emphasizing different domains. Some universities have fallen into this trap. Many large public universities were established in the late 1800s with missions that centered on educating citizens. As the twentieth century unfolded, however, creating scientific knowledge through research became increasingly important to these universities. Many university presidents responded by creating visions centered on building the scientific prestige of their schools. This created a dilemma for professors: should they devote most of their time and energy to teaching students (as the mission required) or on their research studies (as ambitious presidents demanded via their visions)? Some universities continue to struggle with this trade-off today and remain houses divided against themselves. In sum, an organization is more effective to the extent that its vision and its mission target employees' effort in the same direction.³⁰

²⁹Cartwright, G. (2026) (2026)

³⁰DesRoaches, K. (2022)

7.3: Goals

An organization's vision and mission offer a broad, overall sense of the organization's direction. To work toward achieving these overall aspirations, organizations also need to create goals—narrower aims that should provide clear and tangible guidance to employees as they perform their work on a daily basis. The most effective goals are those that are specific, measurable, aggressive, realistic, and time-bound. An easy way to remember these dimensions is to combine the first letter of each into one word: SMART. Employees are put in a good position to succeed to the extent that an organization's goals are SMART.

Specific	Coca-Cola is seeking to improve its water efficiency by a specific amount—20%. In contrast, goals such as “do your best” are vague, making it difficult to decide if a goal is actually reached.
Measurable	Water efficiency can be calculated, so Coca-Cola is able to track its progress relative to its 20% target. If progress is slow, more resources can be devoted to achieving the goal.
Aggressive	A series of research studies have established that performance is strongest when goals are challenging but attainable. Reaching a 20% improvement will require aggressive work by Coke, but the goal can be reached.
Realistic	If Coca Cola's water efficiency goal was 95% improvement, Coca Cola's employees would probably react with surprise. Reaching a goal must be feasible in order for employees to embrace it. Unrealistic goals make most people give up. And basing goals on impossible clichés, such as “give 110%” creates confusion.
Time-bound	Coca Cola is seeking to achieve its 20% improvement by 2012. Some universities, such as Texas Tech University, provide incentives, including preferred scheduling for students who sign contracts agreeing to graduate on a four-year schedule. Deadlines such as these are motivating and they create accountability.

Table 3 Creating SMART Goals. While missions and visions provide an overall sense of the organization's direction, goals are narrower aims that should provide clear and tangible guidance to employees. The most effective goals are those that are SMART (specific, measurable, aggressive, realistic, and time-bound). SMART goals help provide clarity, transparency, and accountability.

One SMART goal is Coca-Cola's aim to “by 2012, improve our water efficiency by 20%, compared with a 2004 baseline.”

A goal is specific if it is explicit rather than vague. In May 1961, President John F. Kennedy proposed a specific goal in a speech to the US Congress: “I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth (National Aeronautics and Space Administration).” Explicitness such as was offered in this goal is helpful because it targets people's energy. A few moments later, Kennedy made it clear that such targeting would be needed if this goal was to be reached. Going to the moon, he noted, would require “a major national commitment of scientific and technical manpower, materiel and facilities, and the possibility of their diversion from other important activities where they are already thinly spread.” While specific goals make it clear how efforts should be directed, vague goals such as “do your best” leave individuals unsure of how to proceed.

A goal is measurable to the extent that whether the goal is achieved can be quantified. President Kennedy's goal of reaching the moon by the end of the 1960s offered very simple and clear measurability: Either Americans would step on the moon by the end of 1969 or they would not. One of Coca-Cola's current goals is a 20 percent improvement to its water efficiency by 2012 relative to 2004 water usage. Because water efficiency is easily calculated, the company can chart its progress relative to the 20 percent target and devote more resources to reaching the goal if progress is slower than planned.

A goal is aggressive if achieving it presents a significant challenge to the organization. A series of research studies have demonstrated that performance is strongest when goals are challenging but attainable. Such goals force people to test and extend the limits of their abilities. This can result in reaching surprising heights. President Kennedy captured this theme in a speech in September 1962: “We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade...not because [it is] easy, but because [it is] hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills.”

In the case of Coca-Cola, reaching a 20% improvement will require a concerted effort, but the goal can be achieved. Meanwhile, easily achievable goals tend to undermine motivation and effort. Consider a situation in which you have done so well in a course that you only need a score of 60 percent on the final exam to earn an A for the course. Understandably, few students would study hard enough to score 90 percent or 100 percent on the final exam under these circumstances. Similarly, setting organizational goals that are easy to reach encourages employees to work just hard enough to reach the goals.

It is tempting to extend this thinking to conclude that setting nearly impossible goals would encourage even stronger effort and

performance than does setting aggressive goals. People tend to get discouraged and give up, however, when faced with goals that have little chance of being reached. If, for example, President Kennedy had set a time frame of one year to reach the moon, his goal would have attracted scorn. The country simply did not have the technology in place to reach such a goal. Indeed, Americans did not even orbit the moon until seven years after Kennedy's 1961 speech. Similarly, if Coca-Cola's water efficiency goal was 95 percent improvement, Coca-Cola's employees would probably not embrace it. Thus, goals must also be realistic, meaning that their achievement is feasible.

You have probably found that deadlines are motivating and that they help you structure your work time. The same is true for organizations, leading to the conclusion that goals should be time-bound through the creation of deadlines. Coca-Cola has set a deadline of 2012 for its water efficiency goal, for example. The deadline for President Kennedy's goal was the end of 1969. The goal was actually reached a few months early. On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong became the first human to step foot on the moon. Incredibly, the pursuit of a well-constructed goal had helped people reach the moon in just eight years.

The period after an important goal is reached is often overlooked but is critical. Will an organization rest on its laurels or will it take on new challenges? The US space program again provides an illustrative example. At the time of the first moon landing, Time magazine asked the leader of the team that built the moon rockets about the future of space exploration. "Given the same energy and dedication that took them to the moon," said Wernher von Braun, "Americans could land on Mars as early as 1982 (Time, 1969)." No new goal involving human visits to Mars was embraced, however, and human exploration of space was de-emphasized in favor of robotic adventurers. Nearly three decades after von Braun's proposed timeline for reaching Mars expired, President Barack Obama set in 2010 a goal of creating by 2025 a new space vehicle capable of taking humans beyond the moon and into deep space. This would be followed in the mid-2030s by a flight to orbit Mars as a prelude to landing on Mars (Amos, 2010). Time will tell whether these goals inspire the scientific community and the country in general.³¹

³¹DesRoaches, K. (2022)

7.4: Values

Values are the fundamental beliefs and principles that guide behavior, decision-making, and interactions within an organization or group. They reflect what is considered important, such as integrity, accountability, respect, or teamwork, and serve as a moral compass for both leaders and their teams. For leaders, having clearly defined values is important because they shape organizational culture, build trust, and ensure consistency in actions and decisions. Strong values help leaders set expectations, inspire ethical behavior, and create a positive environment where individuals feel guided and motivated, ultimately supporting long-term success and credibility.

Values refer to people's stable life goals, reflecting what is most important to them. Values are established throughout one's life as a result of accumulating life experiences, and values tend to be relatively stable (Lusk & Oliver, 1974; Rokeach, 1973). The values that are important to a person tend to affect the types of decisions they make, how they perceive their environment, and their actual behaviors. Moreover, a person is more likely to accept a job offer when the company possesses the values he or she cares about (Judge & Bretz, 1992; Ravlin & Meglino, 1987). Value attainment is one reason people stay in a company. When a job does not help them attain their values, they are likely to decide to leave if they are dissatisfied with the job (George & Jones, 1996).

What are the values people care about? As with personality dimensions, researchers have developed several frameworks, or typologies, of values. One of the particularly useful frameworks includes 10 values (Schwartz, 1992).

Values	Definitions
Achievement	The desire for personal success.
Benevolence	The desire to protect the well-being of people who are close to the person.
Conformity	Being motivated by being self-disciplined and obedient. Conforming to others.
Hedonism	The desire for pleasure in life.
Power	The desire for control over others, attaining power and prestige.
Security	Valuing safety and stability
Self-direction	The desire to be free and independent.
Stimulation	The desire for a stimulating and exciting life.
Tradition	Acceptance of social customs and traditional ideas in a society.
Universalism	The desire to protect the well-being of all people. Caring about social justice.

Table 4 Table Values included in Schwartz's (1992) Value Inventory

Values a person holds will affect their employment. For example, someone who values stimulation highly may seek jobs that involve fast action and high risk, such as firefighter, police officer, or emergency medicine. Someone who values achievement highly may be likely to become an entrepreneur or intrapreneur. And an individual who values benevolence and universalism may seek work in the nonprofit sector with a charitable organization or in a “helping profession,” such as nursing or social work. Like personality, values have implications for Organizing activities, such as assigning duties to specific jobs or developing the chain of command; employee values are likely to affect how employees respond to changes in the characteristics of their jobs.

In terms of work behaviors, a person is more likely to accept a job offer when the company possesses the values he or she cares about. A firm's values are often described in the company's mission and vision statements, an element of the Planning function (Judge & Bretz, 1992; Ravlin & Meglino, 1987). Value attainment is one reason people stay in a company. When a job does not help them attain their values, they are likely to decide to leave if they are also dissatisfied with the job (George & Jones, 1996).³²

³²Radtke, L. (2022)

7.5: Chapter Summary

Vision, mission, goals, and values work together to provide direction, purpose, and structure for an organization. A vision outlines what the organization hopes to become in the future and serves as a powerful tool for inspiring and motivating employees to work toward shared, long-term ambitions. A mission focuses on the present by defining the organization's purpose, what it does, and why it exists, helping clarify its identity to both employees and stakeholders. To move from broad ideas to action, organizations establish SMART goals that are specific, measurable, aggressive, realistic, and time-bound, ensuring clear expectations, accountability, and progress tracking. Values represent the core beliefs that guide behavior and decision-making, shaping organizational culture and influencing how employees act, what they prioritize, and whether they feel aligned with the organization. When vision, mission, goals, and values are clearly defined and aligned, they help leaders inspire commitment, guide consistent decision-making, and improve overall performance and long-term success.

KEY TERMS

Vision

Mission Statement

SMART Goals

Organizational Values

Strategic Leadership

Stakeholders

Organizational Culture

Goal Alignment

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain the differences between vision and mission, and discuss how each contributes to an organization's success.
2. Analyze the importance of having a clear and inspiring vision for effective leadership.
3. Describe the SMART goals framework and explain how it improves organizational performance.
4. Discuss how values influence employee behavior, decision-making, and organizational culture.
5. Evaluate why alignment between vision, mission, goals, and values is important for achieving long-term success.
6. Explain the role of leaders in communicating and implementing vision, mission, goals, and values within an organization.

8: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN LEADERSHIP

Learning Objectives

- Identify types of communication (verbal, nonverbal, and written).
- Recognize communication problems that can cause misunderstanding.
- Use simple strategies to communicate clearly and effectively.

8.1: Nonverbal Communication

8.2: Verbal Communication

8.3: Barriers to Understanding

8.4: Strategies to Help Improve Your Communication Skills

8.5: Written Communication

8.6: Chapter Summary

8.1: Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication refers to the transmission of messages without the use of words, relying instead on facial expressions, body language, gestures, posture, eye contact, tone of voice, and even physical distance. It plays a crucial role in how people interpret meaning, often reinforcing or contradicting what is spoken. For example, a person may say they are confident, but their slouched posture and lack of eye contact may suggest otherwise. Nonverbal cues can convey emotions, attitudes, and intentions more quickly and sometimes more honestly than verbal communication. They are also influenced by cultural norms, meaning that gestures or behaviors may have different meanings across societies. Overall, effective communication depends not only on what is said, but also on how it is expressed through nonverbal signals.³³

Body Language

In 2015, the “Boston bomber”, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, was sentenced to death. He and his brother had placed bombs near the finish line of the Boston Marathon, resulting in multiple deaths and injuries. At the trial, his involvement in setting the bombs was not at issue; he admitted his guilt. The question was if he would be sentenced to life in prison or to death. That decision rested with the jury and their perception of Tsarnaev. Character witnesses, family members, and bombing survivors testified. The defense tried to make the case that he was acting under the controlling influence of his older brother. The prosecution portrayed him as a heartless terrorist. A key factor for the jury was to evaluate Tsarnaev’s character. His body language during the trial was not helpful to the defense. He seemed uninvolved and bored. He showed no emotional reaction to the horrific scenes and stories from the bombing shown and narrated in court. He didn’t look at the jury or make eye contact with those on the witness stand. In mainstream US culture, an averted gaze could be interpreted as an admission of guilt and shame, while the lack of emotional response points to an absence of remorse. The jury was also shown a picture from a surveillance camera in jail in which Tsarnaev held up his middle finger in a gesture of defiance and hostility. The jury also was given the text of tweets Tsarnaev had sent, as well as the anti-US manifesto he had written on the side of the boat where he was captured. The messages no doubt condemned him in the eyes of the jury, but certainly his bearing in court contributed to the jury’s ultimate decision. Nonverbal signals rarely decide life or death, but they do play a central role in human communication. In this unit we will be examining how that plays out in cross-cultural communication.

The Nature of Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication can take many different forms and can vary significantly in its manifestations and usage across cultures. Its relation to verbal communication is complex. Verbal language is based on abstract symbols, arbitrarily designated to represent objects or concepts. There’s no inherent, logical connection between “cat” or (or the German Katze or Chinese猫) and the feline animal. We learn the significance of the symbols over time. In contrast, much of nonverbal communication involves signs or signals that are natural and often involuntary. Smiling or frowning, for example, are not learned behaviors but naturally occurring human actions. This is not the case for on all nonverbal communication; gestures for greetings or insults, for example, are symbolic and cultural. Verbal language can be analyzed and described by a set of rules. For nonverbal communication there are unwritten rules and conventions but no formal grammar or syntax. The rules for nonverbal communication are learned informally through socialization.

Gestures or facial expressions can send messages independent of language. In fact, in some contexts, those messages (i.e., anger, joy) can be transmitted more effectively by nonverbal means. That includes vocal qualities, such as the tone of voice or actions such as crying or laughing. Often nonverbal communication accompanies speech. In such cases, the relationship between the two can vary. Body language can reinforce or emphasize the verbal message – smiling, for example, while complementing someone. Gestures can also substitute for speech – nodding or shaking the head for yes or no. On occasion, nonverbal gestures might repeat verbal messages, as in giving directions, through pointing to the way to go.

Sometimes, a person’s nonverbal message might contradict what is said. A person appearing downcast might respond “Oh, nothing,” in response to the question “What’s the matter?”, but the body language may send a different signal. In such situations, the nonverbal action is likely to be perceived as the authentic message, not the stock verbal response. Nonverbal communication is seen as more honest and revealing in that it is often instinctive and unconscious. Recent research in nonverbal communication (Montepare 2003; Patterson, 2003) has demonstrated that some nonverbal behaviors fulfill universal human social needs and contribute to social cohesion and bonding. Widely used nonverbal behaviors can help identify in-group membership.

It is likely that most individuals would be surprised to learn how important nonverbal behavior is in conveying messages during conversations. The common perception is that what we are mostly paying attention to are the words being said. We tend to be unaware of the many other factors that can impact the nature of a verbal interaction. The relative importance of nonverbal codes varies with context and culture, but some estimates of what weight is conveyed by nonverbal versus verbal means gives a much higher percentage to nonverbal. Albert Mehrabian (1971) asserted that we develop our attitude towards the other person (like or dislike) overwhelmingly through nonverbal means. In fact, he claimed that 93% of that process happens nonverbally, through vocal tone and gestures (38% and 55% respectively), rather than through the literal meaning of the words (7%). The important role that nonverbals play in communicating across cultures is demonstrated in the fact that the study of intercultural communication originated with investigations into the “silent language” and “hidden dimensions” of time and space in communication (titles of seminal books by Edward Hall, 1959, 1966). One might question Mehrabian’s formula as it applies to individual conversations and particular cultures. One can imagine conversations, for example, in a doctor’s office or in a school, in which the essence of the communication and the affective impact are carried substantially by language. Given the importance and ubiquity of written digital messaging, contemporary communication is often electronically mediated and occurs with no nonverbal codes, except for emoji or embedded media.

Sending Signals Without Words

There are a number of human interactions which occur largely without the use of language or in which language plays a clearly secondary role. That’s the case in rituals, a clearly defined set of actions performed on particular occasions and having symbolic significance. Greetings and departures, for example, have rituals that are largely nonverbal, such as shaking hands or waving. These tend to vary across cultures. In Japan, for example, it is common to bow when greeting someone, with the nature of the bow (how deep and how long) being determined by the nature of the occasion and social connection of the persons involved. In some cultures, kissing on the cheek is the usual greeting, although how many times the kisses are exchanged and which sexes are included can vary. In other parts of the world there may be hugs and kisses, depending on the context and relationship. In Arab countries it is common to bow and touch the forehead and chest (the salaam) when meeting someone. The Wai is used in Thailand and in other Asian cultures, consisting of a bow with the palms pressed together. In other cultures, people rub noses, such as in the hongi, a traditional greeting of the Maori people in New Zealand. Knowledge of such rituals can be helpful in avoiding awkwardness in first encounters.

Nonverbal signals come not just from body movements such as handshaking or bowing but also through the presence (or absence) of personal objects or artifacts. Those may be articles of clothing, jewelry or accessories we wear or hold, or might be physical items surrounding us. Signals may be sent by more intangible means such as smell or sound. There may be a complex array of nonverbal factors at play, as in this example of nonverbal behavior at a military checkpoint:

A Sunni driver coming up to a security post he believes is under Shia control should not only have the right ID to hand, but should also push in a tape playing Shia religious songs and turn up the volume. He should hang a picture of Imam Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad and the most revered figure in the Shia faith, from the rear-view mirror. He might also slip on the large silver ring worn only by Shias, especially those considered to be descendants of the Prophet, and perhaps carry a “torba”, the round piece of clay that Shias often place on their foreheads when they bow down in prayer. These and other handy tips are given on the Iraqi Rabita website, designed to advise Sunnis on how to get through Shia checkpoints (Checkpoints, 2007).

The situation is not likely one most of us will ever encounter, but it dramatizes the importance of nonverbal codes in particular contexts. In such situations, nonverbals can play a significant role in easing tensions. On the other hand, inappropriate nonverbal behavior can easily have the opposite effect, exacerbating potential tensions and causing open conflict.

Personal Space

In some cultures, people like to keep their distance. The smell of roses seems universally positive. One of the actions which can affect the course of the conversation is for one or the other of the conversants to move closer or further away. Edward Hall (1966) pioneered the study of proxemics, the perception and use of physical space, including territoriality and personal space. Territoriality refers to the actual physical space, while personal space is perceptual or psychological – the kind of space bubble that we perceive around us. Following complaints from both Arab and US students in a North American university setting, O.M. Watson (1970) investigated the nonverbal behavior of the two groups. He found that the US students viewed the Arabs as pushy and rude, while the Arabs considered the US students to be distant and rude. He discovered that a substantial part of the problem were different conceptions of personal space, with the US students feeling the Arab students were invading their bubbles and the Arab students seeing the US students as unfriendly because they were keeping their distance. Hall (1966) developed a four-level classification of social distance. For the US, he defined intimate space, reserved for highly personal relationships,

as 9 to 18 inches (23 to 45 cm), and personal distance (“arm’s length”) at 1.5 to 4 feet (.5 to 1.2 m), the normal spacing for conversations. Social distance he established at between 4 and 12 feet (1.2 to 3.6 m), the spacing normal in casual gathering and work environments. Public distance he defined as being 12 feet (3.6 m) or longer, used for public speaking or large gatherings. Researchers have identified particular cultures as “high contact”, meaning that there is a preference for a closer proximity and a high degree of physical contact (Aiello, 1987). Examples frequently given are Arabs, Latin Americans, and southern Europeans, who all tend to use closer interaction distances than in so-called low contact cultures (USA, northern Europe, Australia). There are other factors besides regional culture which may affect personal distance, such as gender, age, ethnicity, or topic of conversation.

Personal distance is sometimes associated with smell. The study of smell in humans is called olfactics. In some cultures (in Africa and the Middle East, for example) there’s a preference for standing close enough to a person in conversation to be able to detect body odor. Odor is used in such cases to categorize people according to status, power, or social class. In many cultures wearing an expensive perfume or cologne can signal status and wealth. On the other hand, the smell of sweat or strong body odor is likely to suggest manual labor and lower social status. Some smells are associated with particular ethnic groups and may lead to prejudicial treatment. The smell of curry, linked to South Asians, has been used as a basis for discrimination, such as refusing to rent apartments to Indians or Pakistani (Jackson, 2014). Although some smells seem to be universally attractive (jasmine, lavender, roses) others may vary in how they are perceived across cultures. The smell of onions, for example, is considered unpleasant in many cultures, but the Dagon people of Mali find the smell attractive, even to the point of rubbing onions on their bodies (Neuliep, 2006).

Eye Contact

Eye contact is often included as a topic within proxemics as it tends to regulate interpersonal distance. Direct eye contact tends to shorten the sense of distance, while an averted gaze increases it. In many cultures, such as in many Asian countries, avoiding eye contact conveys respect. In some situations, making eye contact communicates that one is paying attention. Breaking off eye contact can be a signal of disinterest or even rudeness. Within the US, different ethnic groups have been found to follow different norms in the use of eye contact to regulate conversations. African-Americans maintain eye contact when speaking but avert their gaze when listening, but just the opposite is true for European Americans (LaFrance & Mayo, 1978). This distinction can lead to conflict:

Interethnic expectancy violations exist when African Americans expect the European Americans to look them in the eyes when speaking but instead receive “non-responsiveness” or “indifference” cues. European Americans, on the other hand, may view the direct eye gaze during speaking as “confrontational” or “aggressive” (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p.126).

In both pluralistic societies and in cross-cultural encounters, being mindful of variations in this area is important. Nora Dresser’s book, *Multicultural Matters* (2005), chronicles how Korean-American shopkeepers, who did not make eye contact with their customers, were perceived as disrespectful, something contributing to the open confrontation taking place in US urban centers between some Asians and African-Americans. In some contexts, in the US, such as in urban areas among teens and young adults, looking directly at someone can be seen as a provocation, reflected in the term “mad-dogging” (Remland et al., 2015).³⁴

³³Cartwright, G. (2026), G. (2026)

³⁴Godwin-Jones, R. (2023)

8.2: Verbal Communication

Verbal communication is the use of spoken or written words to convey information, ideas, and emotions. It includes everyday conversations, speeches, presentations, and written messages such as emails or reports. Effective verbal communication depends on clarity, tone, vocabulary, and organization of thoughts, allowing the sender to express meaning accurately and the receiver to understand it as intended. Tone of voice, word choice, and speaking style can influence how a message is perceived, making it important to match language to the audience and situation. Overall, verbal communication is essential for sharing knowledge, building relationships, and coordinating actions in both personal and professional settings.³⁵

Types of Verbal Communication

There are essentially two types of categories of verbal skills. Interpersonal and Leadership types. These two main categories can be divided into four sub-categories;

Intrapersonal – intrapersonal communication is a communicator's internal use of language or thought. It can be useful to envision intrapersonal communication occurring in the mind of the individual in a model which contains a sender, receiver, and feedback loop.

Interpersonal – interpersonal communication is the process by which people exchange information, feelings, and meaning through verbal and non-verbal messages: it is face-to-face communication. It is here where we see the proper application of using questions to seek clarity as well as the acting of switching. Switching can be broken down into two components. The first is referred to as conversational switching, where a speaker's attitude toward the topic is conveyed to the recipient. The second is referred to as situational switching where the speaker's attitude towards the audience is communicated.

Public – public communication happens when individuals and groups engage in dialogue in the public sphere in order to deliver a message to a specific audience. Public speaking events, newspaper editorials, and billboard advertisements are a few forms of public communication.

Leadership – is defined as inspiring and encouraging an individual or a group by systematic and meaningful sharing of information. It is here where we find elements of persuasion and negotiation being used by the speaker. Another form can be described as group talk. Group talk sees the speaker exchanging words like 'we' or 'us' for the singular forms 'I', 'you'. Employing this kind of communication is designed to make the group effective by being more inclusive and focused on the group's actions rather than upon particular individuals.

³⁵Cartwright, G. (2026)

8.3: Barriers to Understanding

As with all communication, there are obstacles to ensuring that what the speaker intends to communicate is actually understood and then enacted. The following is a list of some common barriers in verbal communication.

Encoding - Decoding

In basic terms, humans communicate through a process of encoding and decoding. The encoder is the person who develops and sends the message. As represented in Figure 1.1 below, the encoder must determine how the message will be received by the audience and make adjustments, so the message is received the way they want it to be received.

Encoding is the process of turning thoughts into communication. The encoder uses a 'medium' to send the message — a phone call, email, text message, face-to-face meeting, or another communication tool. The level of conscious thought that goes into encoding messages may vary. The encoder should also take into account any 'noise' that might interfere with their messages, such as other messages, distractions, or influences.

The audience then 'decodes', or interprets, the message for themselves. Decoding is the process of turning communication into thoughts. For example, you may realize you're hungry and encode the following message to send to your apprentice: "I'm hungry. Do you want to go for lunch soon?" As your apprentice receives the message, they decode your communication and turn it back into thoughts to make meaning.

Semantic Confusion, Jargon, and Slang

In the past when you have used language to make sense of your experiences and to take part in discussions, you no doubt came to see that language and verbal communication could work for you and sometimes against you. Language allowed you to communicate, but it also allowed you to miscommunicate and misunderstand.

In an article titled "The Miscommunication Gap," Susan Washburn lists several undesirable results of poor communication in business:

- Damaged relationships
- Loss of productivity
- Inefficiency and rework
- Conflict
- Missed opportunities
- Schedule slippage (delays, missed deadlines)
- Scope creep...or leap (gradual or sudden changes in an assignment that make it more complex and difficult than it was originally understood to be)
- Wasted resources
- Unclear or unmet requirements



1. Cliché – cultural references that often make no sense in other cultures. For example, “A cliché is something to avoid like the plague, for it is nothing but a tired old warhorse, and if the shoe were on the other foot, you too would have an ax to grind.”
2. Jargon – An occupation-specific language used by people in a given profession. Jargon does not necessarily imply formal education but instead focuses on the language people in a particular profession use to communicate with each other.
3. Slang – The use of existing or newly invented words to take the place of standard or traditional words with the intent of adding an unconventional, nonstandard, humorous, or rebellious effect. It differs from jargon in that it is used in informal contexts, among friends or members of a certain age group, rather than by professionals in a certain industry.
4. Euphemism – Involves substituting an acceptable word for an offensive, controversial, or unacceptable one that conveys the same or similar meaning.
5. Doublespeak – The deliberate use of words to disguise, obscure, or change meaning.
6. Offensive Language – Some language is offensive and has no place in the workplace. It may even be a violation of company policy.
7. Each of these six barriers to communication contributes to misunderstanding and miscommunication, intentionally or unintentionally. If you recognize one of them, you can address it right away.

8.4: Strategies to Help Improve Your Communication Skills

Preparation

When you have to communicate to others in the field or when you are tasked with going to the wholesaler, you must take some time to prepare what you are going to say. A simple starting place would be to think through what you are going to ask or say and then writing down some notes to help you if you can't remember the content of your message.

Choose Carefully

We have to remember to choose our words and sentences carefully. As we have already covered, there is a multitude of potential barriers to communication. Taking the time to prepare leads to the need to choose your words and phrases carefully so that the barriers can be minimized or neutralized altogether.

Clarity

The next step in improving your communication skills is to seek clarity. Both as the sender but more so as the receiver or listener. As the sender, it would be important to stop and ask the one who is listening if they have any questions or concerns about what you just said. As the listener, it is even more important to ask questions of the sender if there is any hint of doubt in your mind regarding what was just communicated.

Tone

Often the tone in our voice will communicate deeper meaning to what we are saying. Being aware of your emotions in the moment of communicating will help to minimize any interference that your tone may indicate. For example, one may begin to raise their voice as they talk about a specific method of performing a trade task. The receiver may interpret this as anger, anxiety, frustration, or contempt. When in fact the sender may simply be excited to share what they have learned or discovered and there is no intention of communicating the previously mentioned emotions.

Avoid Distractions

Avoiding distractions like technology or your immediate surroundings is imperative when communicating information. When one is distracted while trying to communicate, they can miss important pieces of the message, or negatively affect the level of importance of the topic being discussed. As the listener, it is even more imperative that you place your focus on the one sending you information rather than trying to divide your attention between the sender and your technology. If you are distracted while you are listening you may miss some important information that will make performing / completing your task efficiently and effectively.

Concise

Being concise in your communication means that you stick to the content of your message and minimize or eliminate any tangents that will distract the listener from what you are trying to say. Being concise will greatly help those listening to the message understand more clearly, and perhaps ask better questions so that the core of the message is clearly understood.³⁶

³⁶Carson, T. (2019)

8.5: Written Communication

In almost any career or area of business, written communication is a key to success. Effective writing can prevent wasted time, wasted effort, aggravation, and frustration. The way we communicate with others both inside of our business and on the outside goes a long way toward shaping the organization's image. If people feel they are listened to and able to get answers from the firm and its representatives, their opinion will be favorable. Skillful writing and an understanding of how people respond to words are central to accomplishing this goal.

How do we display skillful writing and a good understanding of how people respond to words? Following are some suggestions.

Do Sweat the Small Stuff

Let us begin with a college student's e-mail to a professor:

"i am confused as to why they are not due until 11/10 i mean the calender said that they was due then so thats i did them do i still get credit for them or do i need to due them over on one tape? please let me know thanks. also when are you grading the stuff that we have done?"

What's wrong with this e-mail? What do you observe that may act as a barrier to communication? Let's start with the lack of formality, including the fact that the student neglected to tell the professor his or her name, or which specific class the question referred to. Then there is the lack of adherence to basic vocabulary and syntax rules. And how about the lower case "i's" and the misspellings?

One significant barrier to effective written communication is failure to sweat the small stuff. Spelling errors and incorrect grammar may be considered details, but they reflect poorly on you and, in a business context, on your company. They imply either that you are not educated enough to know you've made mistakes or that you are too careless to bother correcting them. Making errors is human, but making a habit of producing error-filled written documents makes negative consequences far more likely to occur. When you write, you have a responsibility to self-edit and pay attention to detail. In the long run, correcting your mistakes before others see them will take less time and effort than trying to make up for mistakes after the fact.

Get the Target Meaning

How would you interpret this message?

"You must not let inventory buildup. You must monitor carrying costs and keep them under control. Ship any job lots of more than 25 to us at once."

Bypassing involves the misunderstanding that occurs when the receiver completely misses the source's intended meaning. Words mean different things to different people in different contexts. All that difference allows for both source and receiver to completely miss one another's intended goal.

Did you understand the message in the example? Let's find out. Jerry Sullivan, in his article *Bypassing in Managerial Communication* (Sullivan, Kameda, & Nobu, 1991), relates the story of Mr. Sato, a manager from Japan who is new to the United States. The message came from his superiors at Kumitomo America, a firm involved with printing machinery for the publishing business in Japan. Mr. Sato delegated the instructions (in English as shown above) to Ms. Brady, who quickly identified there were three lots in excess of twenty-five and arranged for prompt shipment.

Six weeks later Mr. Sato received a second message:

"Why didn't you do what we told you? Your quarterly inventory report indicates you are carrying 40 lots which you were supposed to ship to Japan. You must not violate our instructions."

What's the problem? As Sullivan relates, it is an example of one word, or set of words, having more than one meaning (Sullivan, Kameda, & Nobu, 1991). According to Sullivan, in Japanese "more than x" includes the reference number twenty-five. In other words, Kumitomo wanted all lots with twenty-five or more to be shipped to Japan. Forty lots fit that description. Ms. Brady

interpreted the words as written, but the cultural context had a direct impact on the meaning and outcome.

You might want to defend Ms. Brady and understand the interpretation, but the lesson remains clear. Moreover, cultural expectations differ not only internationally, but also on many different dimensions from regional to interpersonal.

Someone raised in a rural environment in the Pacific Northwest may have a very different interpretation of meaning from someone from New York City. Take, for example, the word “downtown.” To the rural resident, downtown refers to the center or urban area of any big city. To a New Yorker, however, downtown may be a direction, not a place. One can go uptown or downtown, but when asked, “Where are you from?” the answer may refer to a borough (“I grew up in Manhattan”) or a neighborhood (“I’m from the East Village”).

This example involves two individuals who differ by geography, but we can further subdivide between people raised in the same state from two regions, two people of the opposite sex, or two people from different generations. The combinations are endless, as are the possibilities for bypassing. While you might think you understand, requesting feedback and asking for confirmation and clarification can help ensure that you get the target meaning.

Sullivan also notes that in stressful situations we often think in terms of either/or relationships, failing to recognize the stress itself. This kind of thinking can contribute to source/receiver error. In business, he notes that managers often incorrectly assume communication is easier than it is, and fail to anticipate miscommunication (Sullivan, Kameda, & Nobu, 1991).

As writers, we need to keep in mind that words are simply a means of communication, and that meanings are in people, not the words themselves. Knowing which words your audience understands and anticipating how they will interpret them will help you prevent bypassing.

Consider the Nonverbal Aspects of Your Message

Let’s return to the example at the beginning of this section of an e-mail from a student to an instructor. As we noted, the student neglected to identify himself or herself and tell the instructor which class the question referred to. Format is important, including headers, contact information, and an informative subject line.

This is just one example of how the nonverbal aspects of a message can get in the way of understanding. Other nonverbal expressions in your writing may include symbols, design, font, and the timing of delivering your message.

Suppose your supervisor has asked you to write to a group of clients announcing a new service or product that directly relates to a service or product that these clients have used over the years. What kind of communication will your document be? Will it be sent as an e-mail or will it be a formal letter printed on quality paper and sent by postal mail? Or will it be a tweet, or a targeted online ad that pops up when these particular clients access your company’s Web site? Each of these choices involves an aspect of written communication that is nonverbal. While the words may communicate a formal tone, the font may not. The paper chosen to represent your company influences the perception of it. An e-mail may indicate that it is less than formal and be easily deleted.

As another example, suppose you are a small business owner and have hired a new worker named Bryan. You need to provide written documentation of asking Bryan to fill out a set of forms that are required by law. Should you send an e-mail to Bryan’s home the night before he starts work, welcoming him aboard and attaching links to IRS form W-4 and Homeland Security form I-9? Or should you wait until he has been at work for a couple of hours, then bring him the forms in hard copy along with a printed memo stating that he needs to fill them out? There are no right or wrong answers, but you will use your judgment, being aware that these nonverbal expressions are part of the message that gets communicated along with your words.

Review, Reflect, and Revise

Do you review what you write? Do you reflect on whether it serves its purpose? Where does it miss the mark? If you can recognize it, then you have the opportunity to revise.

Writers are often under deadlines, and that can mean a rush job where not every last detail is reviewed. This means more mistakes, and there is always time to do it right the second time. Rather than go through the experience of seeing all the mistakes in your “final” product and rushing off to the next job, you may need to focus more on the task at hand and get it done correctly the first time. Go over each step, in detail, as you review.

A mental review of the task and your performance is often called reflection. Reflection is not procrastination. It involves looking at

the available information and, as you review the key points in your mind, making sure each detail is present and perfect. Reflection also allows for another opportunity to consider the key elements and their relationship to each other.

When you revise your document, you change one word for another, make subtle changes, and improve it. Don't revise simply to change the good work you've completed, but instead look at it from the perspective of the reader—for example, how could this be clearer to them? What would make it visually attractive while continuing to communicate the message? If you are limited to words only, then does each word serve the article or letter? No extras, but just about right.³⁷

³⁷Sullivan, J., Kameda, N., & Nobu, T. (1991)

8.6: Chapter Summary

Communication involves the use of verbal, nonverbal, and written methods to share information, ideas, and emotions effectively. Nonverbal communication includes body language, facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, tone of voice, personal space, and even factors like smell or appearance, all of which can strongly influence how messages are interpreted. These cues can reinforce, replace, or contradict spoken words and are often seen as more honest because they are less controlled. Nonverbal communication also varies across cultures, affecting behaviors like eye contact, physical distance, and greetings, which can sometimes lead to misunderstandings. Verbal communication focuses on the use of spoken and written language and includes different types such as intrapersonal (self-talk), interpersonal (face-to-face interaction), public (speaking to groups), and leadership communication (guiding and influencing others). However, communication is not always successful due to barriers such as encoding and decoding errors, jargon, slang, clichés, tone, distractions, and cultural differences, which can cause confusion or misinterpretation. To improve communication, individuals should prepare their messages, choose words carefully, aim for clarity, control their tone, avoid distractions, and be concise. In written communication, attention to detail, proper formatting, understanding the audience, and reviewing and revising messages are essential to prevent errors and ensure the intended meaning is clearly understood. Overall, effective communication depends on combining clear verbal messages, appropriate nonverbal cues, cultural awareness, and strong writing skills to reduce misunderstandings and improve interactions.

KEY TERMS

Nonverbal communication

Verbal communication

Body language

Encoding and decoding

Barriers to communication

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain the importance of nonverbal communication and how it can influence or contradict verbal messages in different situations.
2. Discuss the different types of verbal communication (intrapersonal, interpersonal, public, and leadership) and how each is used in real-life situations.
3. Analyze common barriers to effective communication and explain how they can lead to misunderstanding in personal or professional settings.
4. Describe strategies for improving communication skills and explain how they help ensure messages are clearly understood.

9: CRISIS INTERVENTION

Learning Objectives

- Explain what a crisis is and how crisis intervention helps individuals manage stress and prevent long-term harm.
- Describe how the APIC framework is used to support incarcerated individuals with mental disorders.
- Identify major issues in corrections, including mass incarceration, the War on Drugs, and the aging prison population.

9.1: Definitions

9.2: Inmates with Mental Disorders

9.3: Current Issues and Problems in Corrections

9.4: Chapter Summary

9.1: Definitions

A **crisis** can be defined as a critical event or period of significant change, which is perceived as a threat to an individual's or group's usual coping mechanisms, potentially causing psychological stress or emotional instability. This situation often requires urgent and immediate intervention. Crises can vary widely in their nature and impact, including personal events such as the loss of a loved one, job loss, or serious health diagnoses, as well as larger-scale events like natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or community violence. The key elements that characterize a crisis include:

- **A Triggering Event:** A specific incident or accumulation of events that disrupt the equilibrium of the individual or group, leading to a state of instability.
- **Perceived Threat:** The individual or group perceives the event as a significant threat to their wellbeing, which overwhelms their usual coping strategies and resources.
- **High Levels of Stress and Distress:** The crisis induces high levels of psychological stress and emotional distress, which can manifest in various ways, including anxiety, depression, confusion, or anger.

Crisis intervention addresses the urgent needs of individuals, groups, families, and communities facing acute stressors that challenge their capacity to cope.

Crisis intervention is defined as:

- “The brief ameliorative, rather than specifically curative, use of psychotherapy or counseling to aid individuals, families, and groups who have undergone a highly disruptive experience, such as an unexpected bereavement or a disaster. Crisis intervention may prevent more serious consequences of the experience, such as posttraumatic stress disorder...psychological intervention provided on a short-term, emergency basis for individuals experiencing mental health crises” (Source: [APA Dictionary of Psychology](#)).³⁸

³⁸Lewis, A. (2023)

9.2: Inmates with Mental Disorders

Many people in custody need care for mental disorders, and receiving that care is not only their right but also central to their ability to conform and succeed in custody. One of the best ways to think about caring for people in custody is to consider an objective identified throughout this text: the goal of guiding people out of more restrictive environments and into progressively less restrictive ones in ways that help them succeed. Providing thoughtful and effective care for mental disorders in custody is an important aspect of this work.

Actions that support the progress of a person in custody who experiences a mental disorder can take various forms depending on the individual and their circumstances. A person may be focused on transferring from a high-security facility to a lower-security one, from restrictive behavioral health housing to the general population, or from prison to the community. Regardless of the specifics, these transitions are steps toward increasing autonomy and successfully reducing restrictions. Ensuring that incarcerated people are successful in these steps is a positive outcome for the individual as well as for the system that realizes reductions in crime and the associated costs, including imprisonment (SAMHSA, 2017). The process of transitioning to release or to a less restrictive setting should start immediately after a person enters custody.

The federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) offers guidelines for supporting the transition of incarcerated people with mental disorders from jail or prison settings using the APIC framework, which includes the following actions:

- **ASSESS:** Assessing a person's needs and safety risks
- **PLAN:** Planning for the treatment and services a person needs
- **IDENTIFY:** Identifying suitable services and programs
- **COORDINATE:** Coordinating a transition plan to avoid gaps in service

Assessing Needs and Risks

Properly assessing the needs and risks of incarcerated people requires that facilities conduct universal screening as early as possible in the booking or intake process and again as necessary to ensure the detection of mental disorders. Screenings do not provide diagnostic information. Rather, they are sets of standard questions intended to flag or detect individuals who are at risk for a targeted problem, such as a mental disorder. Jurisdictions vary in how they perform screenings, depending on what resources and treatment options they have.

For example, at the Gwinnett County jail in Georgia, the jail staff screens every person for veteran status and for mental illness. At the same time, staff identify each person's needs (e.g., housing, treatment, employment, and education) and required safety precautions. Similarly, the Hancock County Justice Center in Ohio universally administers a screening instrument called the Global Appraisal of Individual Needs Short Screener (GAIN-SS), which consists of 23 questions. The screening looks for behavioral health issues as well as propensity for criminal behavior. The screening is designed to take just a few minutes to administer and can help find people who are more likely to have a mental disorder and need further assessment (Chestnut Health Systems, n.d.).

If a screened person is flagged "positive" for concerns, the facility should follow up with a more in-depth assessment that informs the facility about the services a person will need. In comparison to a screening, an assessment involves more in-depth questioning administered by a behavioral health professional. Assessments examine the nature and severity of a detected mental disorder. The assessment should also gather additional information, including demographics, the pathway to criminal involvement, strengths and protective factors, and the person's safety risks and needs.

At the Oregon Department of Corrections, all newcomers are evaluated during a central intake process that looks for the presence of mental disorders as well as criminal risk and other needs. (Oregon Department of Corrections, n.d.-b; Oregon Department of Corrections, n.d.-a). To look for mental disorders, Oregon uses a tool called the Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI). The PAI takes around 45 minutes and requires a fourth-grade reading level to complete, so some people do need alternative means of screening (Psychological Assessment Resources, n.d.; Oregon Department of Corrections, n.d.-a). Incarcerated people with elevated PAI scores or who are identified as having recent mental health problems, who are taking psychiatric medications, or who are engaging in suicidal behaviors will receive additional evaluations, including one-on-one interviews, to determine the next steps. According to the Oregon DOC, about 60% of incarcerated people qualify for one-on-one interviews to assess mental

disorders (Oregon Department of Corrections, n.d.-a).

Planning Treatment and Services

The second step under the APIC framework is planning: using information from assessments to plan care for people in custody. A key aspect of planning is collaboration between behavioral health and criminal justice professionals to determine what level of supervision and treatment an incarcerated person needs. The planning stage also includes taking immediate steps to stabilize people so that they can engage in treatment and avoid reoffending.

As with screenings and assessments, jurisdictions can approach planning in different ways. For example, some facilities hire mental health staff, while others work with outside agencies to help them develop and provide treatment for people in custody. Increased use of telehealth, which can include phone or video appointments as well as electronic exchange of medical records, increases access to mental health professionals in prisons and jails. Video calls are a cost- and time-effective way to make sure corrections staff are properly advised on how to help people be more successful in custody.

Planning may anticipate that treatment and services will be delivered in the general population or in specialized housing units. Plans may include treatment with different focuses, such as managing medication, providing education, or supporting employment. Some facilities direct people into programs with phases that allow a person to graduate from one phase to another, gaining access to additional privileges and lower levels of supervision. Planning will look very different for a person expected to spend 72 hours in jail than it will for a person anticipating a longer prison stay.

Regardless of specifics, the priority is that jails and prisons engage in planning and that those plans include proven-effective treatments that will help reduce a person's likelihood of reoffending. As we saw in our introductory example of Sedlis Dowdy, reoffending can and does occur within the correctional setting. Criminal reoffense, or simply problem behaviors in custody, are detrimental and can result in longer and more restrictive stays in custody. Proper planning, based on proper assessment, helps ensure that a person in custody has the treatment and tools to succeed.

Identifying Programs

The third step of the APIC framework is the identification of specific programs that fulfill the plans for the incarcerated person that were developed based on assessments. Programs can be identified within a facility or elsewhere for people who are moving on to other facilities (e.g., transferring from jail to prison). For people who are leaving custody, especially those with mental disorders who are being released from short stays in jail, identification of and direct connection with supportive programming are critical.

Lack of access to medication, housing, or food can force a person into a revolving cycle of jail admissions and releases. In contrast, identifying a program where a person can get their needs met can disrupt that cycle, which has an enormous benefit to individuals and the system. Ideally, a facility will directly connect the person with identified resources and provide a supported transition to the next service provider. This type of transition can be accomplished via a meeting, which can be virtual, or by providing the person with transportation to the new resource if it is in the community (SAMHSA, 2022b).

Coordinating Transition Plans

Facilities recognize that no long-term treatment progress can be made if, as soon as a person moves or is transferred, their services end or drastically change. The APIC framework thus concludes with the coordination of transition plans. Coordination includes sharing information (from earlier assessments or treatment) within the criminal justice system—between facilities or with community supervision staff. When information is shared, diagnoses and medication do not need to be reestablished, needs can be met more quickly, and people in custody are relieved of some self-advocacy needs.

Coordination also includes training and education. These elements promote collaboration between criminal justice professionals and treatment or mental health professionals. Correctional personnel can be more effective and empathetic when they understand how mental disorders present (Police Executive Research Forum, 2018). Likewise, behavioral health experts benefit from a better understanding of correctional issues and public safety concerns. For both sets of professionals, understanding more about what the other does can reduce the mistrust and tension that interfere with the teamwork needed to produce effective outcomes.

A variety of training approaches can be effective aspects of coordination. Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training can be used in

the corrections environment to support officers working in tandem with mental health professionals to help people with mental disorders. Trauma-informed training for corrections officers can also improve interactions between prison staff and incarcerated people, making the prison environment safer for everyone.

Trauma-informed, whether referring to care, training, or any approach to a problem, recognizes the impacts of trauma and how it may present in individuals. An officer's approach is adjusted so that trauma is addressed and the person involved is less likely to be re-traumatized in their interaction with the officer. Actions taken with a trauma-informed approach can include simple changes like carefully explaining what a pat-down will entail before it happens, reducing the anxiety of a person who may be expecting abuse (Stringer, 2019). Trauma-informed care as a critical element of community care after release is discussed more in Chapter 8 of this text. For an excellent resource and accessible information on trauma, consider exploring the website for Trauma Informed Oregon.

One specific and interesting example of instituting trauma-informed care in a prison setting is in Hawaii's Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC). In contrast to a traditional correctional setting, but consistent with Native Hawaiian cultural practices, the WCCC approach was guided by a belief in the transformative nature of a *pu'uhonua*, a Hawaiian term that means a protected site for healing. The WCCC initiative recognizes the significant role of trauma in most women's paths into the criminal justice system, which are often linked to childhood abuse. It also acknowledges the particular ways in which Native Hawaiian women who are incarcerated are impacted by trauma. Many women in prison are separated from their children, a circumstance that is devastating generally but has unique consequences for women in a culture that highly values family places and connections. This is in addition to historical trauma impacting Native Hawaiian women who are part of a severely oppressed larger group (Patterson et al., 2013). Hawaii's approach includes several days of intensive trauma-informed training for staff, treatment and service practitioners, and incarcerated individuals. The training includes identifying systemic sources of trauma; recognizing the psychological, physiological, neurobiological, and social effects of trauma; and avoiding further trauma caused by practices such as seclusion and restraint. For correctional staff, the training provides knowledge and develops skills to help them reduce the trauma and trauma-related problems of incarcerated people. For incarcerated women, the creation of the *pu'uhonua* reinforces trauma-informed principles by promoting empowerment and personal recovery and strengthening family and community relationships.

Importantly, the coordination aspect of APIC also includes supporting people in adhering to appropriate treatment and supervision. Generally, support for adherence involves supervision with incentives that encourage compliance and sanctions that promote safety. For example, in the Massachusetts state prison system, incarcerated people who are close to release are transferred to a lower security facility. They are assigned to staff who review service plans and help schedule appointments with parole officers or treatment providers. Completing the review is a condition of discharge, providing an incentive to be sure it happens. These same staff then continue to be available to people who have been discharged from custody and can be consulted for mentoring, crisis intervention, or referrals. Especially high-risk people (e.g., very violent records, gun charges) are linked with specially trained staff who stay even more closely involved by transporting clients to treatment appointments and supervision meetings. These connections are examples of coordination that keeps people on track.³⁹

³⁹Nichol, A. (2025)

9.3: Current Issues and Problems in Corrections

Concerns about safety and security play a major role in shaping how societies respond to crime and punishment. In the United States, fear of crime has strongly influenced public opinion and policy, often leading to stricter laws and harsher sentencing practices. Over time, these approaches have contributed to significant changes within the correctional system, including rising incarceration rates, tougher drug policies, and increased attention to gang activity. At the same time, new challenges have emerged, such as the growing population of aging inmates and the financial and ethical issues that come with it. Understanding these developments provides important insight into how punishment policies are formed and their broader impact on individuals, communities, and the criminal justice system.

Mass Incarceration

The section on punishment started with a discussion about feeling safe and secure in our homes. Feeling safe and secure in person and at home is arguably one of the most discussed feelings in our nation today. Our fear of crime influences how we think and act day to day. This has caused great fluctuation in the United States in regard to how we punish people who are convicted of violating the law. In part, punishment comes from the will of the people, which is then carried out by the legislative process, and converted into sentencing practices. However, has our desire to feel safe and secure been taken too far by policy? And, have these policies created even bigger problems for us as community members? Here is a comparison of the United States prison systems to other countries around the world.

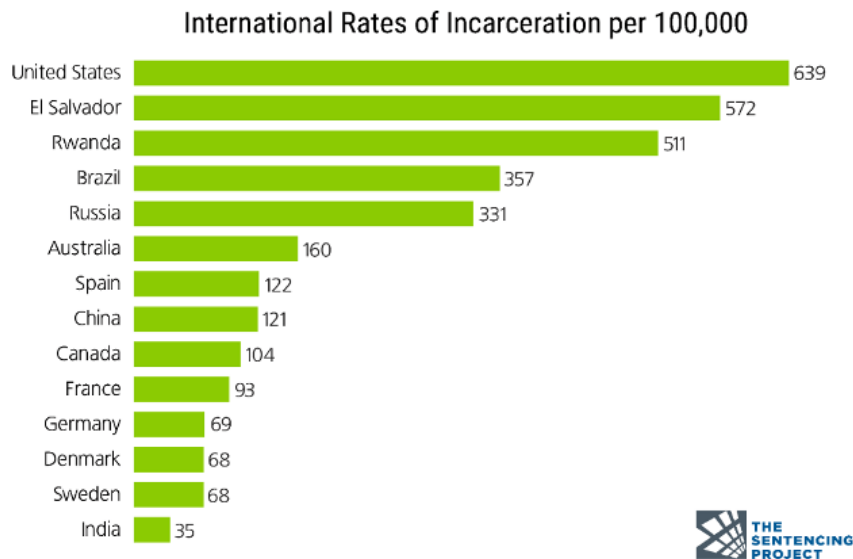


Figure 9.3.1: Source: The Sentencing Project

War on Drugs and Gangs

The war on drugs, initiated by President Nixon in 1971, was framed as an all-out war to eradicate drugs in the United States. The massive expenditures toward the ending of the drug epidemic also shifted our views on drug use. We became much more punitive towards drugs, treating it as more of a criminal justice issue rather than as a substance dependence issue. Good or bad, drug use was demonized in the public and media, which aided in the development of much tougher sanctions on drug use in America. The Drug Enforcement Agency was created in 1973 to provide another arm of the government to tackle the specific issue of drugs. By the 1980s, lengthy sentences for drug possession were also in place. One to five-year sentences for possession were increased to upwards of 25 years. There was also an increased focus on gangs, which were held responsible for the majority of the drug trade in the United States.

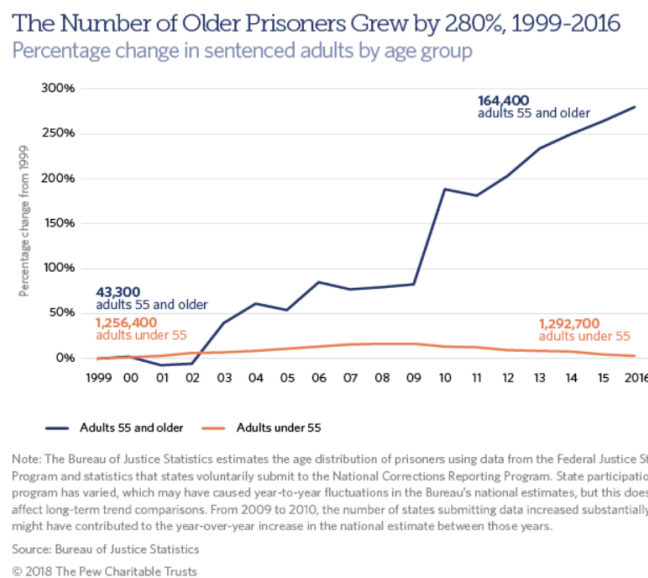
Gang activity in the United States was prevalent long before the enactment of the War on Drugs. However, once the linkage between our fear of crime and the drug trade by gangs became more pronounced due to the war on drugs, the conflict escalated.

While there are hundreds of different gangs in many neighborhoods and communities in the United States today, gangs in prison have converged into four main gangs, or what corrections call security threat groups (STGs). These four basic gangs include the Whites, the Blacks, the Southerners (Sureños, or EME), and the Northerners (Norteños). Not only are these STGs considered violent inside and outside of prison, but they are also actively involved in the continuing drug trade in the United States today, even behind bars. Many of the leaders of all gangs on the streets are held in one prison in California, at Pelican Bay State Prison.

Within the prisons in the United States, gangs actively recruit members, communicate with gangs on the streets, run the drug trade, and are also at war with each other over the power within the institutions from their perspective. There have been numerous documentaries on gangs in the United States and even mainstream films about gangs and gang life, both inside and out. A few notable examples of films to watch on this subject include *Felon* (2008), *Shot Caller* (2017), and *American Me* (1992).

Aging

One of the side effects of lengthier sentences is that the individuals in prison grow older. Thus, the number of individuals in prison over 55 years old has dramatically increased. As McKillop and Boucher relate in figure 9.16, based on BJS data, there has been a 280 percent increase in individuals aged 55 and older (2018).



Optionally, you may visit [Aging Prison Populations Drive Up Costs \[Website\]](#), which shows that there is a growing cost within this subpopulation. McKillop and Boucher relay that the cost of this group of individuals can be upwards of three times the cost of the normal incarcerated individual, roughly 30k to 100k per individual (Jones, 2018).

Beyond just the cost of incarcerated individuals, a more philosophical question has arisen in regard to how to treat them as they enter their last phase in life. Some have advocated for compassionate releases for individuals entering hospice care or requiring assisted living conditions. Others articulate that this is unfair to put the burden on the aging individual, as they have been incarcerated for long periods of time and have few self-support options available. You may learn more in a powerful documentary on this matter. Edgar Barends details these issues in the film *The Prison Terminal* (2013).⁴⁰

⁴⁰Suplee, R., Gonzalez, M., Arungwa, S., et al (2025)

9.4: Chapter Summary

A crisis is defined as a destabilizing event that overwhelms normal coping abilities, producing high stress and requiring immediate, short-term intervention to prevent long-term psychological harm. It explains that crisis intervention focuses on stabilizing individuals and reducing the risk of conditions like PTSD. In correctional settings, addressing mental disorders is essential for helping incarcerated individuals successfully transition to less restrictive environments and eventually reenter the community. The APIC framework (Assess, Plan, Identify, Coordinate) guides this process by emphasizing early screening for mental health needs, thorough assessments to determine risks and appropriate care, collaborative planning between justice and behavioral health professionals, and connecting individuals to effective treatment programs both inside facilities and in the community. Coordination ensures continuity of care during transfers or release, supported by training such as crisis intervention and trauma-informed approaches that improve interactions and outcomes. The passage also highlights broader systemic challenges, including mass incarceration driven by punitive policies, the War on Drugs increasing harsh sentencing and gang activity, and the rising population of elderly inmates, which creates significant financial, ethical, and healthcare challenges for correctional systems.

KEY TERMS

Crisis

Crisis intervention

APIC framework

Mental health screening

Risk assessment

Trauma-informed care

Mass incarceration

War on Drugs

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is a crisis, and why is immediate intervention important in preventing long-term psychological harm?
2. How does the APIC framework help support individuals with mental disorders in correctional settings?
3. Why is it important to provide mental health care to incarcerated individuals, and how does it impact their success?
4. Explain the role of trauma-informed care in corrections and how it improves interactions between staff and inmates.
5. How did the War on Drugs influence sentencing policies and contribute to current correctional challenges?
6. What challenges does the aging prison population create for the correctional system, and what solutions could address these issues?

10: INSTITUTIONAL SAFETY

Learning Objectives

- Describe how correctional officers detect drug use in prison.
- Explain how prison gangs affect behavior and control inside prisons.
- Compare different ways inmates are supervised and secured.

10.1: Drug Use in Prison

10.2: Gang Activity in Prison

10.3: Maintaining Security

10.4: Supervising Inmates

10.5: Chapter Summary

10.1: Drug Use in Prison

Correctional officers (COs) recognize drug use in prison through a highly detailed, multi-layered system that combines observation, behavioral analysis, intelligence gathering, physical searches, scientific testing, and ongoing monitoring of the institutional environment. Because drugs are deliberately concealed and constantly evolving in form and method of delivery, officers cannot rely on a single indicator. Instead, they must piece together multiple small signs over time, using both formal training and practical experience. Open-access research consistently shows that effective detection depends on integrating these strategies rather than depending on any one method alone.

One of the most important tools COs use is the identification of behavioral and physical indicators of drug use or withdrawal. Officers are trained to observe inmates continuously during daily activities such as meals, recreation, and movement throughout the facility. Signs of drug use can vary depending on the substance but often include:

- Slurred speech
- Lack of coordination
- Drowsiness
- Unusually high energy levels
- Appear disoriented
- Difficulty maintaining balance
- Rapid mood swings
- Irritability
- Aggression
- Depression
- Paranoia

Withdrawal symptoms can be equally telling, and they include:

- Sweating
- Shaking
- Nausea
- Anxiety
- Restlessness

Importantly, officers are trained not to rely on a single symptom but to look for patterns and consistency over time, since many of these signs could also be linked to mental health issues or medical conditions. Research from the National Institutes of Health highlights that the absence of a fully reliable reporting system in prisons makes staff observation one of the most critical components in identifying substance use.⁴¹

In addition to physical symptoms, COs carefully analyze changes in routine behavior and daily functioning, which are often early warning signs of drug involvement. Inmates who begin using drugs may withdraw from structured activities such as educational programs, work assignments, or counseling sessions. They may show a decline in motivation, increased absenteeism, or sudden disinterest in previously important routines. Officers also monitor hygiene and self-care; a noticeable deterioration in cleanliness, grooming, or health can signal substance abuse. Another key factor is changes in social relationships. Inmates involved in drug use often associate with specific groups, including known users, dealers, or gang-affiliated individuals. They may engage in increased bartering or trading, exchanging goods like food, clothing, or commissary items for drugs. According to the Office of Justice Programs, drug use in prisons is closely tied to the informal prison economy and social networks, meaning that shifts in relationships and trading behavior can reveal underlying drug activity.⁴²

A significant component of recognizing drug use is intelligence gathering and information sharing among correctional staff. COs rely on both formal and informal sources of information, including confidential informants, tips from inmates, and observations shared by other officers. This information is discussed during shift briefings, documented in incident reports, and used to track patterns over time. For example, if multiple officers report suspicious behavior involving the same individuals or housing units, this may indicate organized drug activity or trafficking. Officers also monitor gang dynamics, as gangs often play a role in distributing drugs facilities. Research available through ScienceDirect emphasizes the role of discretionary decision-making, meaning officers must interpret incomplete or indirect information and decide when intervention is necessary. This requires experience, situational awareness, and the ability to connect seemingly minor observations into a broader understanding of

potential drug activity.⁴³

Another critical method involves searches and the detection of contraband, which provide direct evidence of drug use or trafficking. COs conduct routine and random searches of cells, common areas, and inmates themselves. These searches may include pat-downs, strip searches, and inspections of personal property, bedding, and clothing. Officers are trained to identify creative concealment methods, such as hidden compartments in everyday items, altered books, or substances embedded in paper or fabric. Mail screening is particularly important, as drugs are often smuggled into facilities through letters or packages. Research published by the JAMA Network highlights the growing problem of synthetic drugs infused into paper, which can be torn into small pieces and consumed, making them difficult to detect through traditional searches. This has increased the need for specialized training and heightened awareness among correctional staff.

COs also rely heavily on environmental awareness and situational context to identify drug use. This includes noticing unusual odors, visible smoke, or chemical smells that may indicate substances being used or prepared. Officers pay attention to group behavior as well—if multiple inmates in the same area exhibit similar symptoms, this may suggest shared drug use or exposure to a contaminated substance. Sudden increases in medical emergencies, such as overdoses or unexplained illnesses, are also strong indicators of drug presence within a facility. In recent years, institutions have begun exploring innovative detection methods, such as wastewater-based epidemiology, which analyzes prison wastewater to detect traces of drugs and estimate overall usage levels.⁴⁴

In conclusion, recognizing drug use in prison is a complex and ongoing process that requires correctional officers to synthesize information from multiple sources. Through continuous observation, analysis of behavioral and social changes, intelligence gathering, thorough searches, scientific testing, and awareness of environmental cues, COs are able to detect and respond to drug activity. Safety and effective detection depend on a coordinated, experience-driven approach that evolves alongside changing drug trends within correctional environments.⁴⁵

⁴¹National Institutes of Health (ND)

⁴²Office of Justice Programs (ND)

⁴³Stevens, L., Schultz, W., and Patterson, A. (2024)

⁴⁴Kuai, D., Eneida Rivera Blanco, L., Krotulski, A., et al (2024)

⁴⁵Cartwright (2026)

10.2: Gang Activity in Prison

A prison gang is an inmate organization that operates within a prison system. It has a corporate entity and exists into perpetuity. Its membership is restrictive, mutually exclusive, and often requires a lifetime commitment. Prison officials and others in law enforcement use the euphemism "security threat group" (or "STG"). The purpose of this name is to remove any recognition or publicity that the term "gang" would connote when referring to people who have an interest in undermining the system

Convict Code and Informal Governance of Prisons

Before the rise of large, formal prison gangs, political scientists and researchers found that inmates had already organized around an understood "code" or set of norms. For example, political scientist Gresham Sykes in *The Society of Captives*, a study based on the New Jersey State Prison, claims that "conformity to, or deviation from, the inmate code is the major basis for classifying and describing the social relations of prisoners". Prisoners achieved a social equilibrium around unwritten rules. The code may include an understanding of prison slang, or prison yard and dining hall territory based on gang membership, rank, race, ethnicity, religion, or crimes committed, or it could simply be loyalty between inmates and against guards. Sykes writes that an inmate may "bind himself to his fellow captives with ties of mutual aid, loyalty, affection, and respect, firmly standing in opposition to the officials. "Hostility between wardens and prisoners, restrained freedom, and, some argue, the lack of access to heterosexual relationships shaped prison culture's social, environmental and political dynamics."

Rising Prison Populations and the Emergence of Formal Gangs

When researchers or political scientists actively discuss "classic prison gangs" they are referring to prison gangs in the United States of America; such gangs began to form in the mid-1960s. Around this time, across the United States prison system, the prison population increased markedly.

As prison populations grew, the informal convict code no longer sufficed to coordinate and protect inmates. The constant surge of prisoners coming into the system with no understanding of the status quo had disrupted the established equilibrium cohesion. And as demographics inside prisons changed drastically, small groups centered on ethnicity, race, and pre-prison alliances were disrupted. John Irwin states in his book, *Prisons in Turmoil*, that by 1970 "there [was] no longer a single, overarching convict culture."

Furthermore, as the prison population grew so did the consumer base for contraband items, not only drugs and weapons but also items that are legal outside of prison but are illegal to trade within prisons, such as money, alcohol, tattoos, etc. Several challenges arose that destabilized the socio-political system of self-enforced cooperation that had existed under the convict code. These new conditions posed complications to consumer-supplier relationships in the already distrustful environment of an underground economy. It became more and more difficult for independent individual suppliers to accommodate this increased demand. Under tight prison security and with limited means, these individual suppliers could only provide a limited amount of product. Their consumer base was too small for them to establish a "brand" or credibility themselves. New consumers would have to buy products of unknown quality and bear the risk of the supplier being an undercover informant and even the possibility that he would not deliver at all.

The ever-fluctuating inmate population also provided a dangerous market in which to operate. Individual suppliers had to protect themselves from possible murder and assault by consumers and other suppliers, as well as to ensure that their products would not be confiscated or stolen. They were vulnerable to those who delivered and carried the contraband into the prison, and they bore the risk of consumers not paying for the product, or (if operating on credit) not paying the loan. The consumers could also be informants.

In legal markets, governments mitigate such risks by means of contract enforcement and the upholding of property rights. Gangs may step into this role and fill the power vacuum. They vet and manage tax-paying supplier gangs within prisons, regulate transactions, and control violence in the marketplace and on the streets.

Prison gangs are effective in governing markets. They provide protection to their member suppliers more effectively than individual suppliers could do for themselves. They carry the credible threat of exercising violence - and even murder in case of theft or snitching - to ensure timely payments. They protect their members against competing suppliers. The size of prison gangs

and their scale of product supply also means that they have a broad scope of knowledge about their client base. They share information on informants or inmates who default on payments. This scope of supply also gains a reputation with consumers, who can then feel safe in being able to gauge the quality of product and credibility of suppliers.

A crucial difference between individual suppliers who operate under the convict code and prison gangs involves the time-frame in which they operate. Unlike individual suppliers who cycle in and out, prison gangs form long-term institutions, regardless of how often individual members enter or leave the system. There are always plenty of members to maintain the gang's functions – behind bars and on the streets. This means they have a solid incentive to provide a quality product to uphold a good reputation in the long run. Prison gangs have evolved into complex organizations with hierarchies and vote-based ranks and intricate coalitions with exclusive and often permanent memberships.

Alternative Factors and Explanations

Another approach to understanding prison gang development is based on observations of inmates in the Texas prison system. It provides a five-stage progression from an inmate's entrance to the prison to the formation of a prison gang. First an inmate enters the prison, alone and thus fearful until he finds a sense of belonging in a "clique of inmates." They band together without formal rules, leaders, or membership requirements. It then evolves into a "predatory group," creating exclusive requirements for membership and positioning itself against wardens, even assaulting them. Then, by engaging in illegal activities, they choose leaders to manage them. In its final stage, the group emerges as a prison gang.

A gendered approach to prison gangs offers two arguments focusing on the idea of male domination and the inmate's adherence to a hyper-masculine ideal. One argument claims that prison order is shaped by the inmates' desire or need for male domination, and the gang reconstructs this sense of power in prison. As inmates can no longer "subjugate women," they find other forms of domination, resorting to force and violence to control each other.

Another approach, discussed by Erving Goffman, maps out four steps of inmate adaptation. In the first step, the inmate undergoes a "situational withdrawal" or mental withdrawal from the institution. "The inmate withdraws apparent attention from everything except events immediately around his body." The second step is called "colonization" when the inmate tries to rationalize the institution as preferable to life on the outside. The third step, "conversion," is when "the inmate takes over the staff's view of himself and tries to act out the role of the perfect inmate." The fourth step, which prison gang members fit into, is called "the intransigent line," when the inmate refuses the authority of the institution and acts against it.

There are also two prominent sociological theories surrounding prison gangs and the order within prisons: Deprivation Theory and Importation Theory.

Deprivation Theory argues that social order within prisons arises due to the pain of imprisonment; studies focusing on this theory examine the experiences of prisoners and the nature of their confinement.

Importation Theory focuses instead on experiences prisoners had prior to incarceration. It explores the ways in which class, race, and drug culture outside the prison have shaped dynamics inside the prison.

Another approach to understanding prison gang development is offered in sociologist Brittany Friedman's *Carceral Apartheid*, which argues that what the state terms prison gangs originally emerged as prisoner organizations that were in fact social movements that consolidated cliques to protest state violence targeting certain racial groups, particularly during the height of the Civil Rights Movement; Friedman's work emphasizes how state agencies engage in criminalization, torture, and extralegal violence using white supremacists to create a governance regime of carceral apartheid that mirrors the outside world as a crucial environmental factor shaping the development of prisoner collective action.

Operations and Activities

The system of governance in prison gangs highlights the unusual mechanisms by which people (or groups of people) with no access to government institutions manage to facilitate exchange and establish property rights within their scope of influence. The emergence of informal governance systems within prison gangs runs parallel to successful systems of trade and control beyond bars. Skarbek (2011) uses the example of the illegal narcotics trade in Los Angeles to explain how an alternative system of governance behind bars can lead to successful socioeconomic organization. Focusing on the Mexican Mafia prison gang, Skarbek argues that the mafia holds substantial control within local jail systems which allows it to yield power over drug dealers on the streets. Drug dealers outside the prison walls anticipate future incarceration and thus future interaction with the mafia. Faced

with the threat of these future run-ins with the Mafia, drug dealers on the street comply with the current demands of prison gangs in order to secure their own future.

Since prison gangs gain a long-term profit if transactions in the illicit market run smoothly, they have the incentive to ensure that there is order and cohesion between suppliers and consumers.

Similar to stationary bandits that form governance out of anarchy in the model presented by economist Marcur Olson, prison gangs are actors who have the ability to extract resources from their population by providing services. They act to maximize their profit, not only by restraining the amount they extort, but by providing services that facilitate exchange and imposing "gang taxes." The Mexican Mafia, for example, increases its tax revenue by providing three types of services: protect street gang members while they are incarcerated, protect taxpaying drug dealers on the street, and settling of disputes.

In the process of maximizing profit, gangs may provide public goods to ensure smooth production, such as working to resolve gang disputes inside and outside of the prison.

Moreover, by holding the monopoly on violence in prisons, they pose a credible threat to street gangs, which they leverage to extort their profits. So, prison gangs can extort street gangs because they pose a credible threat to inmates in the county jail, and street gang members rationally anticipate spending time there. They effectively use incarcerated street gang members as hostages to force non-incarcerated gang members to pay. Furthermore, they can encourage street gangs to steal from and make war with other non-taxpaying street gangs.

However, prison gangs cannot extort drug dealers whom they cannot harm in jail; for American prison gangs, this usually means members of other races (the county jails segregate them based upon race). They also cannot extort taxes from people who do not anticipate incarceration because there is no threat of facing violence in prison. And they cannot tax those outside the jurisdiction of a jail controlled by the gang. Non-incarcerated prison gang members collect taxes and regulate fraud and imposters acting as tax collectors. Taxpayers also ensure that their money is going to the right hands because consequences otherwise would be severe.

Political scientist David Skarbek writes, "Like the stationary bandit, prison gangs provide governance institutions that allow illicit markets to flourish. They adjudicate disputes and protect property rights. They orchestrate violence so that it is relatively less disruptive. They do not do this because they are benevolent dictators but because they profit from doing so. In addition to governing prisons, gangs are also an important source of governance to the criminal world outside of prison. They wield tremendous power over street gangs, specifically those participating in the drug trade. Because of this power, governance from behind bars helps illicit markets to flourish on the streets."

The way that prison gangs consolidate and maintain power is also comparable to how actors behave in Charles Tilly's predatory theory of state-building model. Prison gangs engage in "war making," or monopolizing on force and occupying the power vacuum of state authority. They eliminate rivals (in the US mostly along racial lines) within their territories, and in doing so they carry out "state making." Gangs offer protection to their members, affiliates, and clients. They also extract or collect taxes from client gangs and those in the trade to maintain and expand their system.

Organization and Structure

Prison gangs work to recruit members with street smarts and loyalty, and they look for inmates who will be able to carry out the gangs' functions and exercise force when necessary. They also create a structure to monitor activities of members and regulate the behavior of existing members within the gangs to ensure internal cohesion.

To ensure that high quality, dedicated members are being recruited, many prison gangs rely on existing members to vouch for or refer new members into the group. To enter gangs, members often have to prove their loyalty through costly activity, often violent hazing or committing some crime such as theft. Gang members mark themselves as part of the gang with tattoos (or colors, on the streets) so that taxpayers know they are credible collectors and so that gangs can keep track of their members as they move in and out of prison.

Prison gangs maintain a hierarchy and have written and unwritten rules of conduct. They have constitutions to define expectations and to guide laws for those they govern as well as to direct the process for the creation of new rules. In terms of the hierarchy, at the top of most US prison gangs is a group of "shot callers" who are like major stakeholders that make the major decisions about operations. Having a single dictator-like shot caller is unusual. Checks and balances within prison gang organizations are lucrative; internally, there are ways to voice dissatisfaction towards any level of the organization. For example, when conflicts arise

or abuses occur where a higher-ranked gang member commits an offense against a lower-ranked member, an internal court-like body receives complaints and determines punishments. Actions are punished with violence. In many gangs, exit is not an option (or is a very costly one); many prison gangs require a lifetime membership.

Political scientist Ben Lessing differentiates between prison gangs that arise within the prison system, which he calls 'natives,' and those that were already formed outside, calling them 'imports'. He claims that norms and culture-like initiation rituals, rules about sex, and relations with guards and non-members are shaped by the direction of formation. Natives have a 'prison character' in their imagery, traits, and codes that they retain even when native gangs engage in operations beyond the prison system. On the other hand, import gangs arrive with a "strong group identity, behavioral norms, and often their publicly known histories and reputations." This gives these groups a stronger sense of solidarity and cohesion in prison, though they compensate in how well they navigate the system within prison. Imports have an advantage in their existing outside operations.

Discussing the organizational mechanism within prisoner gangs, Skarbek (2011) argues that both explicit and implicit rules govern behaviors within these groups. Explicit rules are those that are formally written and structured, while implicit rules are those that are based on the values and norms of each group. Though the use of implicit and explicit rules (to what degree and to address which situations) may vary from group to group, Skarbek maintains that since codifying all rules is costly, prison gangs rely in great part on the existence of implicit rules, with values and norms forming a foundation from where informal governance begins. Other social scientists such as Ellickson (1991), echo similar claims but with key distinctions. Ellickson states that close-knit groups rely heavily on specific norms and informal rules to achieve cooperation and to minimize transaction costs within governance institutions based on property rights. However, while Ellickson's work focuses on non-hierarchical examples, Skarbek's example considers a hierarchical system of prison gangs. Nevertheless, Skarbek maintains that norms that govern small communities can also govern illegal markets such as those operated by prison gangs.⁴⁶

⁴⁶Wikipedia – Prison Gangs

10.3: Maintaining Security

Prisons in the United States today are usually distinguished by custody levels. Super-maximum-security prisons are used to house the most violent and most escape prone inmates. These institutions are characterized by almost no inmate mobility within the facility, and fortress-like security measures. This type of facility is very expensive to build and operate. The first such prison was the notorious federal prison Alcatraz, built by the Federal Bureau of Prisons in 1934.

Maximum-security prisons are fortresses that house the most dangerous prisoners. Only 20% of the prisons in the United States are labeled as maximum security, but, because of their size, they hold about 33% of the inmates in custody. Because super-max prisons are relatively rare, maximum-security facilities hold the vast majority of America's dangerous convicts. These facilities are characterized by very low levels of inmate mobility, and extensive physical security measures. Tall walls and fences are common features, usually topped with razor wire. Watchtowers staffed by officers armed with rifles are common as well. Security lighting and video cameras are almost universal features.

States that use the death penalty usually place death row inside a maximum-security facility. These areas are usually segregated from the general population, and extra security measures are put in place. Death row is often regarded as a prison within a prison, often having different staff and procedures than the rest of the facility.

Medium-security prisons use a series of fences or walls to hold prisoners that, while still considered dangerous, are less of a threat than maximum-security prisoners. The physical security measures placed in these facilities is often as tight as for maximum-security institutions. The major difference is that medium-security facilities offer more inmate mobility, which translates into more treatment and work options. These institutions are most likely to engage inmates in industrial work, such as the printing of license plates for the State.

Minimum-security prisons are institutions that usually do not have walls and armed security. Prisoners housed in minimum-security prisons are considered to be nonviolent and represent a very small escape risk. Most of these institutions have far more programs for inmates, both inside the prison and outside in the community. Part of the difference in inmate rights and privileges stems from the fact that most inmates in minimum-security facilities are "short timers." In other words, they are scheduled for release soon. The idea is to make the often-problematic transition from prison to community go more smoothly. Inmates in these facilities may be assigned there initially, or they may have worked their way down from higher security levels through good behavior and an approaching release date.

Women are most often housed in **women's prisons**. These are distinguished along the same lines as male institutions. These institutions tend to be smaller than their male counterparts are, and there are far fewer of them. Women do not tend to be as violent as men are, and this is reflected in what they are incarcerated for. The majority of female inmates are incarcerated for drug offenses. Inmate turnover tends to be higher in women's prisons because they tend to receive shorter sentences.

A few states operate coeducational prisons where both male and female inmates live together. The reason for this is that administrators believe that a more normal social environment will better facilitate eventual reintegration of both sexes into society. The fear of predation by adult male offenders keeps most facilities segregated by gender.

In the recent past, the dramatic growth in prison populations led to the emergence of private prisons. Private organizations claimed that they could own and operate prisons more efficiently than government agencies can. The Corrections Corporation of America is the largest commercial operator of jails and prisons in the United States. The popularity of the idea has waned in recent years, mostly due to legal liability issues and a failure to realize the huge savings promised by the private corporations.⁴⁷

⁴⁷McKee, A., (2026)

10.4: Supervising Inmates

The evolution of inmate supervision in the American prison system reflects a broader shift from control-centered practices toward more interaction-based approaches aimed at improving institutional safety and rehabilitation. Traditionally, the indirect or “static security” model relied heavily on surveillance, physical barriers, and limited contact between correctional officers and incarcerated individuals, reinforcing distance and authority. In contrast, the development of direct supervision in the 1970s introduced a model that emphasizes continuous officer presence within housing units, increased communication, and the potential for more constructive relationships. While this newer approach has been associated with improved social interaction, reduced isolation, and enhanced opportunities for rehabilitation, it also introduces new challenges related to officer training, emotional labor, and institutional culture. As a result, the comparison between indirect and direct supervision highlights ongoing tensions between security, control, and the goal of fostering more humane and effective correctional environments.

Direct and Indirect Supervision

The indirect supervision or “static security” approach is the traditional model of supervision, where correctional officers govern through visual, intensive surveillance practices and physical barriers between staff and incarcerated people, such as a secure control room and deploying camera systems that capture and monitor prisoner behavior and movement (Wener, 2006). Developed in the 1970s, the direct supervision model has increasingly been implemented in North American correctional services to remedy the (especially social) obstacles posed by indirect supervision models, including opportunities to build and facilitate more positive interactions between officers and incarcerated people (Morin, 2016; Weinrath et al., 2016). Sometimes referred to as “new generation jails” (Bayens et al., 1997), correctional facilities incorporate direct supervision models to more substantively promote freedom of movement, expression, and greater independence among incarcerated people. The direct supervision model also promotes spaces to engage in leisurely activities (e.g., watching television, reading, accessing telephones), reduces feelings of isolation, improves the trajectory for incarcerated people meeting the goals of their correctional plan, and provides opportunities to interact meaningfully with correctional officers who are directly stationed within the pods (rather than positioned in control rooms or “bubbles” in indirect supervision models). Proponents assert the “new” model improves sociality among correctional staff and incarcerated people by fostering direct lines of empathetic communication and reciprocity—that is, frequent micro-interactions between incarcerated people and staff that are neither disciplinary nor administrative in nature, but rather are pro-social and rehabilitative (i.e., meeting incarcerated people’s needs in preparation for re-entry; Weinrath et al., 2016).

While prison space is, inevitably, imbued with diffuse, highly gendered, and strategic assertions and struggles for power, control, and status (Pyrooz and Becker, 2019; Ricciardelli et al., 2015), the direct supervision approach still aims to create a stronger therapeutic alliance between incarcerated people and correctional staff (Andrews et al., 2011)—despite the lack of training in therapeutic alliances and the related relationship building direct supervision requires. As Fusco et al. (2021) suggest, a therapeutic alliance allows for a mutually beneficial relationship between justice-involved individuals and those governing them. Currently, the lack of adequate mental health and counseling services available to incarcerated people has led to some correctional officers becoming obliged to fill mental health service gaps (Johnston and Ricciardelli, 2022); yet, building relationships conducive to sound mental health is not easily accomplished within indirect supervision settings due to the physical and emotional distance that such a model necessitates between officers and incarcerated people: “Prisons are intended to be cold and punitive places where offenders are continuously reminded that they are defective individuals whom society has shut away” (Ross et al., 2008: 470).

Furthermore, officers must—for safety, control, care, and protective reasons—be hyper-vigilant of the movements and behaviors of incarcerated people. Critical criminological research often insists this mandate will lead to “us versus them” mentalities and relations of distrust in prisons that prioritize rule-infringement enforcement and more impersonal relations (Ben-David et al., 1996), and consequently, leave incarcerated people to police and protect themselves (Dirga and Hasmanová Marhánková, 2014; Trammell, 2011).

There are, however, limitations to the use of direct supervision. For example, due to the constant contact with incarcerated people, there is early evidence to suggest correctional officers may be exposed to more frequent minor abuses by incarcerated people, such as disrespect or insubordination (Bayens et al., 1997). In addition, some staff may be uncomfortable with the increased levels of interaction with incarcerated people, leading to a higher demand for emotional labor and workplace exhaustion—factors that may precipitate officer burnout and turnover (Lambert et al., 2015). Given that direct supervision departs from interpretations of traditional supervision approaches, successful implementation requires a more intensive training curriculum, accompanied by clearly defined operational and management philosophies. Early studies showed partial implementations of direct supervision

were less effective, pointing to the need for correctional services to ascertain the feasibility of complete adoption of spatial and infrastructure requirements, consistent and comprehensive training of correctional officers, and endorsement by senior managers and administrators (Tartaro, 2002, 2003).

Arguably but importantly, Wener's (2006) study warned that part of the hesitation toward direct supervision may be rooted in the conservative social and political beliefs of some prison staff. While political values and beliefs of correctional staff are subject to constant change as is the case in free society (see, for example, Johnston et al., 2022), some staff, Wener (2006) argues, may hold pre-existing assumptions that direct supervision is "too soft" or conflicts with their ideas around the role of punishment in society. This finding uncovers how the successes of direct supervision may be rooted in its biggest challenge: the need for wholesale commitment to its philosophical and epistemological tenets.⁴⁸

⁴⁸Sibley, M., Ricciardelli, R., Johnston, M., and Mario, B. (2024)

10.5: Chapter Summary

The American prison system operates as a highly complex and structured environment where inmate supervision, institutional security, drug use, and gang activity are closely interconnected and constantly evolving. Correctional officers play a central role in maintaining order by using a combination of continuous observation, behavioral analysis, intelligence gathering, and contraband detection to identify drug use, which often manifests through physical symptoms, changes in routine, and shifts in social relationships. At the same time, prison gangs have emerged as powerful, organized entities that fill governance gaps within prisons, regulating illicit markets, enforcing rules, and maintaining control through violence and reputation, often extending their influence beyond prison walls. The level of institutional control is further shaped by custody classifications—ranging from supermax facilities with extreme restrictions to minimum-security prisons focused on rehabilitation—which determine inmate movement, programming, and supervision intensity. Additionally, the evolution from indirect supervision models, centered on surveillance and separation, to direct supervision approaches, which emphasize officer presence and interaction, reflects a broader shift toward balancing security with rehabilitation. However, this shift also introduces challenges such as increased demands on correctional staff, emotional labor, and the need for extensive training and institutional support. Overall, the system reflects an ongoing tension between control and reform, where formal correctional strategies must continuously adapt to informal inmate structures, emerging threats, and the goal of preparing individuals for reintegration into society.

KEY TERMS

Direct Supervision

Indirect Supervision (Static Security)

Correctional Officer (CO)

Prison Gangs / Security Threat Groups (STGs)

Contraband Detection

Inmate Behavior and Observation

Custody Levels (Supermax, Maximum, Medium, Minimum)

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How do correctional officers identify and respond to drug use in prison, and why is it important to use multiple methods rather than relying on one sign?
2. In what ways do prison gangs function as systems of control and governance within prisons? Provide examples.
3. Compare indirect supervision and direct supervision. Which do you think is more effective, and why?
4. How do different custody levels (supermax, maximum, medium, minimum) impact inmate behavior and prison management?
5. What challenges do correctional officers face in maintaining safety and order while also supporting rehabilitation? Explain using examples.

11: USE OF FORCE

Learning Objectives

- Explain correctional use-of-force
- Analyze the continuum of force options used in correctional institutions
- Evaluate how situational and cognitive factors influence use-of-force decisions
- Describe the procedures for documenting and reviewing use-of-force incidents

11.1: Introduction

11.2: Applicable Laws Governing Use of Force

11.3: Use of Force Options

11.4: Documenting Use of Force

11.5: Chapter Summary

11.1: Introduction

Use of force is arguably the most critical issue in contemporary policing, with recent high-profile use of force events leading to wide-spread calls for reform (Bennell et al., 2021) and street-level activism focused on changing the role of police in public safety (Cobbina, 2019). Colloquial discussions of police use of force typically revolve around whether an incident violates legal standards. Legal standards alone, however, provide an incomplete picture (Stoughton, Noble, and Alpert, 2020). For example, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to regulate police officer perceptions of imminent danger as it relates to the use of deadly force on two separate occasions, first in *Graham v. Connor* (1989) and then in *Kisela v. Hughes* (2018) (Sherman, 2020). In other words, situational factors that influence an officer's assessment of the need for force, as well as the officer's tactical responses to such factors, are not guided by court rulings (Garrett & Stoughton, 2018).

While agency policy and legislation constrain use of force to particular types of situations, police officers enjoy a great deal of discretion in most instances (Reiss 1980). Situational characteristics of police-civilian encounters are widely considered the most salient influence on police use of force (Bennell et al., 2021; Bolger, 2015). Prior research has consistently found that police-citizen encounters involving force typically extend across fairly lengthy time periods, which contradicts common narratives that police use of force decisions must be made in a “split-second” manner (Stoughton, 2014). During these extended periods, however, police officers must rapidly assess a series of dynamic situational factors, requiring the use of cognitive shortcuts that can influence later use of force decisions (Mears et al., 2017). As such, use of force is not a single decision, but the result of a series of interactions between an officer and a subject (Stoughton et al., 2020). In this regard, prior research has conceptualized use of force as a transactional event resulting from the interplay of officer and civilian actions (Terrill, 2005).

Situational factors, and the cognitive shortcuts they motivate, can ebb and flow throughout a police-civilian encounter, differentially influencing the likelihood of force at various points. In this regard, prior research has conceptualized use of force as a transactional event resulting from the interplay of officer and civilian actions (Binder and Scharf, 1980). Common data sources typically only allow for the cross-sectional analysis of use of force events, precluding the use of longitudinal methods that can sufficiently measure transactional events. With both police discretion and data limitations presenting challenges, researchers and practitioners have struggled to understand the situational factors that drive use of force events (Sherman, 2018). This shortcoming has continued to enable controversial use of force events that strain police and community relations.

The OODA Loop

The transactional nature of use of force is further informed by psychological perspectives that consider how humans process information. Scholars have noted the importance of the observe, orient, decide, and act (OODA) loop in understanding police use of force (Garrett and Stoughton, 2017; Stoughton et al., 2020). The OODA loop demonstrates that individuals actively and passively gather information (observe) before processing and interpreting that information to draw conclusions (orient). Individuals then determine how they will react to these conclusions (decide) before putting their decisions into motion (act). The OODA framework has been incorporated by researchers to analyze various aspects of legal analysis (Chestek, 2020), inclusive of police tactics during use of force events (Garrett and Stoughton, 2017).

The OODA loop complements prior perspectives by conceptualizing how situational factors may accelerate or decelerate the movement of police-civilian encounters from the information exchange phase to the final frame. For example, a driver quickly reaching for their glove box during a traffic stop forces an officer to speed up their decision making to quickly ascertain whether such behavior constitutes a significant threat worthy of force (Stoughton et al., 2020). The OODA loop can also be strategically applied in a manner that influences the decision making of other involved parties (Chestek, 2020). Officers can slow down the OODA loop by “creating time” in a manner that affords them the ability to consider a larger range of information before making a final decision (Garrett and Stoughton, 2017) or by informing civilians of BWC presence to potentially generate a civilizing effect (Patterson and White, 2021). Situational factors tangential to police and civilian behaviors can also influence the OODA loop, like the arrival of additional officers on scene which can generate a civilizing effect that may alter the subsequent behaviors of both the civilians and officers present (Bayley and Garofalo, 1989; Terrill, 2005).

The OODA loop may be an important step of the information exchange phase. Civilian physical antagonism immediately triggers a shift; however, some other forms of information exchange either can result in either an immediate shift to the final frame or may build to a tipping point before a shift is triggered—depending on various situational factors. During this build, actors may be repeatedly cycling through the OODA loop, each time coming to the conclusion not to use force until the last OODA loop that takes place at the point of shift to the final frame phase of the Binder and Scharf framework. Future research can conceptually

and empirically interrogate these ideas further—particularly the role of the OODA loop in each phase of the Binder and Scharf framework. In addition, dispatch may relay important information (e.g., potential injuries sustained by victim) to officers before they arrive on scene. Although technical aspects of the BWCs used by NPD prevented us from including the anticipation period in this study, future research may seek to unpack how the entry phase of the OODA loop is differentially impacted by the type of information received by officers prior to arrival on scene.⁴⁹

⁴⁹Piza, E., Connealy, N., Sytsma, V., and Chillar, V. (2022).

11.2: Applicable Laws Governing Use of Force

Criminal behavior within California prisons is governed by a structured legal and administrative framework outlined in Title 15 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), which is enforced by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. While incarceration is intended to confine individuals for prior offenses, it does not eliminate the possibility of new crimes being committed inside correctional institutions. In fact, the CCR establishes clear rules that not only define prohibited conduct but also create a pathway for serious violations to be referred for criminal prosecution. As a result, inmates who engage in criminal acts while incarcerated may face both internal disciplinary consequences and additional charges in state court.

Assault and Battery

One of the most prevalent and serious crimes committed in prison is assault, which includes both inmate-on-inmate violence and attacks on correctional staff. Under **CCR §3005** (Behavior) and **CCR §3315** (Serious Rule Violations), inmates are required to obey all laws, and any act of violence is considered a serious rule violation. Assaults can range from simple physical altercations to aggravated attacks involving weapons or resulting in significant bodily injury. When staff members are targeted, the offense is treated with heightened severity due to their status as peace officers. Incidents are typically documented through medical reports, staff observations, and Rules Violation Reports (RVRs), which serve as the foundation for both disciplinary action and potential referral for prosecution under **CCR §3323** (Referral for Prosecution). In many cases, these acts lead to felony charges that can significantly extend an inmate's sentence.

Weapons Possession or Manufacture

Another major category of in-prison crime involves the possession or manufacture of weapons. Inmates often create improvised weapons, commonly referred to as “shanks,” from everyday materials found within the facility. **CCR §3290** (Contraband) and **CCR §3315** (Serious Rule Violations) prohibit the possession of any item that can be used to inflict harm, whether manufactured or altered. These weapons are typically discovered during routine cell searches, metal detector screenings, or intelligence-driven investigations. The presence of such weapons is often linked to planned acts of violence or gang-related activity, making them a serious threat to institutional safety. When sufficient evidence exists, these cases may be prosecuted as felony offenses involving weapons within a penal institution.

Drug Possession and Trafficking

Drug-related offenses also represent a significant concern within correctional facilities. Under **CCR §3005** (Behavior), **CCR §3290** (Contraband), and **CCR §3315** (Serious Rule Violations), inmates are strictly prohibited from possessing, using, or distributing controlled substances. Despite these regulations, drugs continue to enter prisons through various means, including visitor smuggling, mail systems, and, in some cases, staff corruption. Once inside, drugs are often distributed through organized networks, frequently controlled by prison gangs. Detection methods include urinalysis testing, K-9 searches, mail inspections, and intelligence gathering authorized under **CCR §3268** (Investigation and Intelligence Gathering). When inmates are found to be involved in drug trafficking or possession with intent to distribute, their cases may be referred for prosecution, sometimes involving outside agencies such as the California Department of Justice. These offenses can lead to new felony charges and additional prison time.

Homicide

Homicide, though less common, represents the most serious form of criminal behavior within prison walls. Under **CCR §3005** (Behavior) and **CCR §3315** (Serious Rule Violations), any act resulting in the death of another inmate is treated as a major violation requiring immediate and thorough investigation. These incidents are often linked to gang activity, including ordered “hits” carried out as part of organized criminal operations. When a homicide occurs, the prison effectively becomes a secured crime scene, with evidence collection, witness interviews, and surveillance analysis conducted in coordination with outside law enforcement. Cases are referred for prosecution under **CCR §3323** (Referral for Prosecution), and convictions can result in life sentences without the possibility of parole or other severe penalties.

Escape and Escape Attempts

In addition to violent and drug-related crimes, inmates may also engage in escape attempts. These offenses are governed by **CCR §3005** (Behavior) and **CCR §3315** (Serious Rule Violations), and include both successful escapes and attempts, such as tampering with security systems or possessing escape tools. These incidents trigger immediate lockdowns and extensive investigations, often resulting in new felony charges even if the escape is unsuccessful.

Arson and Destruction of Property

Arson and property destruction pose significant risks to institutional safety, as fires or deliberate damage can endanger both staff and inmates. Under **CCR §3005** (Behavior) and **CCR §3315** (Serious Rule Violations), these acts are treated as major violations. Emergency responses, including fire suppression and evacuation procedures, are immediately initiated, and cases may be referred for criminal prosecution depending on the severity and intent.

Gang Activity and Conspiracy

Gang activity and conspiracy further complicate the landscape of prison crime. Under **CCR §3268** (Investigation and Intelligence Gathering) and **CCR §3315** (Serious Rule Violations), correctional staff are authorized to conduct intelligence operations to monitor and disrupt organized criminal behavior. Prison gangs such as the Mexican Mafia, Nuestra Familia, and Aryan Brotherhood often orchestrate violence, drug trafficking, and other illegal activities both inside and beyond prison walls. These organizations rely on communication networks, intimidation, and hierarchical structures to maintain control. Participation in gang-related activities can result in conspiracy charges and sentence enhancements, further increasing the legal consequences for involved inmates.

Contraband and Unauthorized Items

Finally, the possession of contraband—such as cell phones and unauthorized communication devices—also plays a role in facilitating criminal activity. **CCR §3290** (Contraband) prohibits such items, and their discovery often leads to further investigation into broader criminal conduct. While not always prosecuted as a standalone crime, contraband can enable inmates to coordinate illegal operations within and outside the prison.

In conclusion, the California Code of Regulations provides a comprehensive system for identifying, managing, and prosecuting crimes committed within prison. Through a combination of institutional discipline and external legal action, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation ensures that criminal behavior behind bars is addressed with seriousness and accountability. Inmates who commit new offenses while incarcerated face not only internal sanctions but also the possibility of extended sentences through the criminal justice system, reinforcing the principle that incarceration does not exempt individuals from further legal responsibility.⁵⁰

⁵⁰California Code of Regulations (2024)

11.3: Use of Force Options

The use of force within California prisons is governed by policies in Title 15 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) and departmental procedures established by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. These policies ensure that force is used only when necessary, and that it remains reasonable, controlled, and proportionate to the situation. Correctional staff are trained to apply the minimum level of force required to gain compliance, maintain order, and protect the safety of staff, inmates, and the institution.

Overview of Use of Force

Under CCR §3268.1 (Use of Force), correctional officers are authorized to use force in specific situations, such as preventing escape, defending themselves or others from harm, controlling or subduing an inmate who refuses lawful orders, stopping riots or disturbances, and enforcing institutional rules when necessary. Importantly, force is never to be used as punishment or retaliation. Each use of force must be justified, documented, and reviewed to ensure compliance with policy and legal standards.

Officer Presence and Verbal Commands

The lowest level of force begins with officer presence and verbal commands. In many cases, a correctional officer's authority and clear communication are enough to gain compliance without physical intervention. Officers issue direct, lawful orders and may use de-escalation techniques to calm a situation before it becomes physical. This approach emphasizes prevention and control through communication rather than force.

Physical Control and Hands-On Techniques

When verbal commands are ineffective, officers may escalate to physical control techniques. These include control holds, escort methods, and takedowns designed to restrain an inmate safely. The goal at this level is to gain compliance while minimizing injury to both staff and the inmate. These techniques require training and precision to ensure they are applied appropriately and effectively.

Chemical Agents

If an inmate becomes combative or poses an immediate threat, officers may use chemical agents such as pepper spray (OC spray). These tools are intended to temporarily incapacitate the individual, allowing staff to regain control of the situation. After deployment, inmates must receive medical evaluation and decontamination to ensure their safety and well-being.

Less-Lethal Weapons

Less-lethal weapons represent a higher level of force and may include batons, foam rounds, or 40mm launchers. These tools are used in situations involving active resistance or potential harm, such as group fights or assaults on staff. The purpose is to stop dangerous behavior quickly while avoiding the need for deadly force.

Electronic Devices

In some cases, electronic control devices such as Tasers may be used, depending on institutional policy and availability. These devices are designed to temporarily incapacitate a combative inmate, providing officers with a safer method to gain control in volatile situations. Their use is strictly regulated and typically reserved for situations where other methods are ineffective or unsafe.

Deadly Force

Deadly force is the highest and most serious level of force available to correctional staff. It typically involves the use of firearms and is authorized only in extreme circumstances, such as when there is an immediate threat of death or serious bodily injury, or during a highly dangerous escape attempt. The use of deadly force is heavily scrutinized and subject to strict legal and administrative review.

Reporting and Accountability

Every use of force incident must be thoroughly documented and reviewed. This includes medical evaluations for the inmate, detailed staff reports, and supervisory oversight. In some cases, incidents may be investigated further to determine whether the force used was appropriate. These procedures ensure accountability and help maintain transparency within the correctional system.

The use of force within the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation follows a structured continuum designed to balance safety with restraint. By progressing from verbal commands to higher levels of force, when necessary, correctional officers are able to respond effectively to threats while minimizing harm. This approach reinforces the principle that force is a last resort, used only to maintain security and protect lives within California's prison system.⁵¹

⁵¹California Code of Regulations (2024)

11.4: Documenting Use of Force

Documentation of use of force within the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is a highly structured process designed to ensure accountability, transparency, and legal compliance. Every incident involving force must be recorded in detail, reviewed by multiple levels of supervision, and evaluated to determine whether the force used was lawful, necessary, and consistent with policy. This documentation process is critical because it creates an official record that can be used for internal investigations, legal review, and potential criminal proceedings.

Immediate Reporting Requirements

Immediately after any use of force incident, involved staff are required to notify their supervisor and provide an initial verbal account of what occurred. Correctional officers must ensure that the scene is secured, inmates receive medical attention if needed, and any ongoing threat is neutralized. Once the situation is stabilized, staff begin preparing formal written documentation. This initial reporting phase is essential because it captures real-time details while the event is still fresh, reducing inconsistencies or missing information.

Written Staff Reports and Incident Documentation

The primary documentation tools include detailed staff reports and incident narratives, which describe the sequence of events leading up to, during, and after the use of force. Officers must document:

- The behavior that prompted the use of force
- The specific type of force used (verbal commands, restraints, chemical agents, etc.)
- The inmate's level of resistance or compliance
- Any injuries sustained by staff or inmates
- The justification for each escalation of force

These reports must be factual, objective, and free of opinion. Any deviation or inconsistency may trigger additional review or investigation.

Medical Evaluation and Injury Documentation

All inmates involved in a use of force incident must receive prompt medical evaluation. Medical staff document any injuries, complaints of pain, or signs of trauma. This medical record becomes part of the official incident file and is used to determine whether the force applied was proportionate. Staff injuries are also documented separately, including photographs and treatment records when applicable. This dual documentation helps ensure both inmate welfare and staff accountability are properly recorded.

Supervisor Review and Incident Assessment

After initial reports are completed, supervisors conduct a formal review of the incident. This includes evaluating whether the use of force complied with institutional policy and whether alternative de-escalation methods could have been used. Supervisors also compare staff statements, review video footage when available, and assess whether the level of force used matched the threat presented. Any discrepancies may result in corrective action, retraining, or further investigation.

Formal Investigations and Administrative Review

More serious incidents may be escalated to higher-level review teams or internal affairs units. These investigations examine whether the use of force violated policy or involved excessive or unnecessary actions. In some cases, incidents are referred for external review or criminal investigation, particularly if serious injury or misconduct is suspected. The investigative process ensures that accountability extends beyond immediate supervisors and includes institutional oversight.

Video and Evidence Documentation

Many facilities use surveillance cameras and body-worn recording devices to supplement written reports. Video evidence is reviewed alongside staff narratives to verify accuracy and provide an objective record of events. Physical evidence, such as chemical agent canisters or restraint equipment, may also be logged and preserved depending on the severity of the incident.

Overall, documenting use of force within CDCR custody settings is a multi-layered process that combines immediate reporting, detailed written accounts, medical documentation, supervisory review, and sometimes formal investigation. This structured system ensures that every use of force is carefully evaluated for necessity and compliance with policy. It also protects both staff and inmates by creating a transparent record that can be reviewed for accountability, training improvement, and legal scrutiny.⁵²

⁵²California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. (2024).

11.5: Chapter Summary

Use of force in the correctional setting is a complex, dynamic process shaped not only by legal standards but also by situational factors, officer discretion, and rapidly evolving interactions during encounters. It explains that courts and policies (including key Supreme Court rulings) set broad boundaries, but much of decision-making occurs in real time as officers assess perceived threats, behavior, and environmental conditions over extended encounters rather than true “split-second” moments. The analysis introduces the OODA loop (observe, orient, decide, act) to show how officers continuously process information, reassess risk, and adjust responses, sometimes accelerating or slowing decision-making depending on situational cues. In California prisons, inmate misconduct such as assault, weapons possession, drug activity, homicide, escape attempts, arson, gang involvement, and contraband violations is governed by the California Code of Regulations and CDCR policies, which combine internal discipline with potential criminal prosecution. The work further outlines the use-of-force continuum in correctional facilities, ranging from verbal commands and physical control to chemical agents, less-lethal tools, electronic devices, and deadly force, all governed by strict requirements for necessity, proportionality, and accountability. Finally, it emphasizes that every use-of-force incident is subject to extensive documentation and review—including staff reports, medical evaluations, supervisory oversight, video evidence analysis, and internal or external investigations—to ensure transparency, policy compliance, and institutional accountability.

KEY TERMS

Use of Force

Officer Discretion

Situational Factors

Transactional Model of Force

OODA Loop

Use-of-Force Continuum

California Code of Regulations (CCR)

Accountability Mechanisms

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How do legal standards shape, but not fully explain, police use of force decision-making?
2. In what ways do situational factors influence officer discretion during police-civilian encounters?
3. How does the transactional model improve understanding of use of force compared to traditional decision-making perspectives?
4. Explain the OODA loop and discuss how it applies to real-world policing or correctional use-of-force situations.
5. How does the use-of-force continuum structure decision-making in correctional facilities, and why is proportionality important?
6. Why are documentation and accountability processes essential in use-of-force incidents, and how do they impact legal and institutional outcomes?

12: THE ROLE OF PROBATION AND PAROLE OFFICERS

Learning Objectives

- Analyze the Dual Role of Probation Officers
- Evaluate the Impact of Supervision Levels on Outcomes
- Apply Probation Concepts to Real-World Scenarios
- Compare and Critically Assess Probation and Parole Systems

12.1: Probation

12.2: Parole

12.3: Chapter Summary

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12.1: Probation

Today, probation is a form of a “suspended” sentence, meaning that, instead of serving a certain period in jail or prison, an offender is allowed to serve that same period of supervision in the community. However, the sentence is only suspended subject to certain conditions that the offender must continue to meet; if they deviate from those conditions, they may be ordered to finish their sentence in jail or prison. Conditions of probation often include: reporting to a probation officer, submitting to random drug screens, not “consorting” with known felons, paying court costs and restitution, attending AA or NA courses, among other conditions. Probation lengths vary greatly, as do the conditions of probation placed on an individual. Almost all people on probation will have at least one condition of probation. Some have many conditions, depending on the seriousness and nature of their conviction. Juvenile probation departments were established within all states in the 1920s, and by the middle of the 1950s, all states also had adult probation.

Probation Officers

Probation officers usually work directly for the state or federal government, but they can also be directed through local or municipal agencies. Many counties will have a community justice level structure where probation offices operate. Within these offices, probation officers will be assigned cases (caseload) – probationers – that they will manage. The volume of cases in a probation officer’s caseload can vary from just a few clients (if they are high need/risk), to several hundred probationers. This depends on the jurisdiction, the structure of the local probation office, and the abilities of the probation officers themselves.

The role of the probation officer (PO) is complex, and sometimes contradictory. A PO’s primary function is to ensure the compliance of individuals with the conditions of their probation. This is done through check-ins, random drug screenings, and enforcement of other conditions that are placed on the probationers. Additionally, the PO may go out into the field to serve warrants, do home-checks for compliance, and even make arrests as needed.

At the same time, a probation officer is trying to help individuals on probation succeed. This is done by trying to help individuals get jobs, improve their education, or enter into substance or alcohol treatment programs (among other things). This is why the job of the PO is complex: they must be supportive, while also enforcing compliance. Recently, there has been a movement within probation to have probation officers act more like coaches than just disciplinarians, an approach that may be associated with less probation revocation and recidivism.

Another primary function of a probation officer is to complete PSI reports on individuals going through the court process. A PSI or Pre-Sentence Investigation report is a psycho-social investigation of a person headed to trial. It includes basic background information on the individual, such as their age, education, relationships, physical and mental health, employment, military service, social history, and substance abuse history. It also contains a detailed account of their current offense, witness or victim impact statements of the event, and prior offenses, which are tracked across numerous agencies. Finally, the PSI also has a section that is devoted to a plan or recommendations for supervision, created by the PO. This section may suggest the appropriate conditions of probation, if probation is to be granted. Judges use this information during sentencing discussions and hearings, and will usually follow the PSI’s recommendations (around 85% of the time). In this way, many of conditions of probation are prescribed by POs.

Important factors that inform whether an individual is sentenced to probation are contained within the PSI. If the offender is largely a “prosocial” person – has an education, a job, and a family – they would be considered as having significant ties to the community. These ties to the community could weaken or break if a person was incarcerated. Thus, providing a sanction that allows the offender to stay in the community is often the preferred approach, depending on the nature of the offense.

Individuals on Probation

As stated, there are several million people on probation, serving various lengths of probation, and under numerous conditions or condition types. Additionally, the convictions which place individuals on probation vary, to include misdemeanors and felonies. Probationers serve their probation at the state level, and there is even federal probation. As depicted below, it is easy to see how much probation is used in the United States.

Probation Success

There is mixed evidence concerning the effectiveness of probation. Recently, the Bureau of Justice Statistics listed the successful completion rate in 2020 at 43.4% – the lowest rate of successful completion since 2007. [1] There are a host of reasons associated with unsuccessful completion, including incarceration on a new sentence/charge, incarceration for the current sentence/charge, absconding (fleeing jurisdiction), discharge to a warrant or detainer, or even death. Probation represents a form of “tourniquet sentencing,” a model where the intensity of a sanction may be increased to force compliance. In this way, an individual on probation who is not adhering to their conditions may face a revocation hearing. This bench hearing may lead to an informal admonishment by a judge, an increase in the probationer restrictions or probation length, an increased level of control (moving from regular probation to intensive supervised probation), or even placement in a secure facility (jail, prison, or community corrections center), all depending on the particular infraction. Many individuals move from regular probation to ISP, in an effort to force compliance through increased monitoring.

Intensive Supervised Probation

Intensive Supervision Probation (ISP) began in the late 1950s in California. The basic premise of ISP is to allow POs to have smaller caseloads that they monitor more closely. ISP and standard probation models are similar, differing primarily by the frequency of contacts with POs, the increases in surveillance and monitoring, and usually the volume of conditions. Rather than meeting a PO once a month, a person on ISP would likely be meeting with their PO weekly, or even more frequently. Additionally, individuals on ISP normally submit to drug screens weekly. The increased conditions of supervision often include more substance abuse treatment, either in the form of AA, NA, or some other residential or outpatient substance use treatment program.

The popularity of ISP with policymakers and correctional authorities is evidenced by its rapid spread throughout the United States; yet some researchers have questioned its effectiveness. One of the largest studies of ISPs examined their effectiveness in reducing recidivism and saving costs. In a random sample of 14 cities, across 9 States, researchers evaluated the recidivism rates of ISP vs. “regular” probationers. Surprisingly, the study found higher rates of technical violations among individuals in ISP, while there were no significant differences in new arrests by probation type. Moreover, when looking at outcomes over 3 years, researchers found that recidivism rates were slightly higher within ISP (39%) compared to regular probation (33%). Neither model offered substantive cost savings. [2] Other studies have produced similar findings as to the effects of non-treatment-oriented ISPs. On the one hand, these results may reflect the greater “criminogenic needs” of individuals placed on ISP; indeed, this model is reserved for individuals who are believed to be at greater risk of recidivism. On the other hand, such findings critique the very premise of ISP – it should not be surprising that, the more you watch someone, the more you will find error.⁵³

⁵³Burke, A., Carter, D., Fedorek, B., et al. (2019)

12.2: Parole

Established in the United States in the early 19th century, the parole system allows for the conditional release of inmates before they complete their full prison sentences. The primary goal is to provide structured supervision and support to parolees, helping them transition from incarceration to a productive, law-abiding life within the community while ensuring public safety. Originating from the French word “parol,” meaning “word of honor,” the term highlights the principle of trust and responsibility that underpin the parole system.

Granting parole involves a thorough review by a parole board, which evaluates the inmate's behavior, rehabilitation progress, and readiness for release. Factors considered include the nature of the criminal offense, the inmate's conduct while incarcerated, participation in educational and rehabilitative programs during incarceration, and the potential risk to the public. If granted parole, the individual must adhere to specific conditions set by the parole board, such as maintaining employment, attending counseling sessions, and avoiding contact with certain individuals or locations.

The parole system also acts as a mechanism to alleviate prison overcrowding and reduce correctional costs. By permitting certain inmates to serve a portion of their sentence under community supervision, resources can be allocated more efficiently within the prison system. Despite its many benefits, however, the parole system is not without its challenges. High rates of recidivism remain a major concern, as many individuals on parole re-offend and return to incarceration. Studies have shown that a significant percentage of parolees are rearrested within a few years of their release (Durose & Antenangeli, 2021). This underscores the need for effective rehabilitation programs both during incarceration and after release, as well as the importance of robust support systems for parolees.

Parole in the US offers a pathway for reintegration into society and alleviates the burden on the prison system. However, this complex element of the criminal justice system requires ongoing efforts to deal with the challenges of recidivism and to provide assurances that parolees receive the necessary support to lead productive, law-abiding lives.

Origins of Parole: Alexander Maconochie

In March 1840, Captain Alexander Maconochie assumed the role of superintendent at the British penal colony on Norfolk Island, situated 877 miles east of the Australian coast in the Pacific Ocean (Barry, 1956). Maconochie approached his new position with a philosophy diametrically opposed to vindictive and cruel punishment. He believed that punitive measures harmed society, advocating instead for rehabilitation that instilled in wrongdoers a sense of responsibility and accountability for their actions. His goal was to equip them with the necessary skills to function as law-abiding citizens.

In Maconochie's system, inmates earned marks that allowed them to progress through stages, each granting increased responsibility and freedoms. While the concepts of the mark system and ticket-of-leave were not new ideas, Maconochie's innovative implementation and subsequent promotion of his mark system were pioneering. These efforts laid the foundation for the modern parole system, establishing Maconochie as its architect (Witmer, 1927).

While Maconochie implemented these ideas on Norfolk Island, his approach differs from modern parole systems, which focus on rehabilitating offenders and reintegrating them back into their original society. During Maconochie's tenure on Norfolk Island, very few, if any, offenders were ever returned to their original society in England (Barry, 1956).

In 1854, Sir Walter Crofton further advanced the concept of parole by successfully combining the mark system with a ticket-to-leave system in Ireland. Under Crofton's system, inmates earned marks as they progressed through three levels during their incarceration, ultimately earning their release under parole with requirements to check in with local authorities at regular intervals, often weekly or monthly, depending on their individual circumstances (Barry, 1956).

American prison reformers in the late 19th century, inspired by Crofton's model, advocated for the adoption of similar parole systems. Zebulon Brockway, the first superintendent of the Elmira Reformatory, introduced a new mark system that utilized an indeterminate sentencing model that included parole. In Brockway's system, inmates earned marks through participation in productive activities, such as work and attending school, and maintaining good behavior. These marks allowed them to move through stages that granted increasing freedoms, such as the privilege to send and receive mail or permission to talk during lunch. Once inmates had proceeded through all the stages, they would eventually be deemed rehabilitated enough to be released back into the public, with the requirement to check in monthly with the corrections parole officer to update them on their conduct,

living arrangements, and employment status. The adoption of parole quickly gained traction across the nation. By 1900, 20 states had implemented parole systems, and by 1925, the federal government and all but two states had established their own parole system (Friedman, 1994).

In the 1980s, a major departure occurred when the federal government and several states, including Washington, Arizona, and Minnesota, shifted away from indeterminate sentencing and discretionary parole (Hughes et al., 2001). In these jurisdictions, parole boards were eliminated, along with the traditional practices of indeterminate sentencing and discretionary parole. Instead, systems were restructured to focus on monitoring ex-offenders after release, overseen by community corrections officers, rather than traditional parole officers. Despite the change in titles, the roles and responsibilities of these officers remained largely similar, emphasizing supervision and support to facilitate the successful reintegration of individuals into society.

Parole Today

Modern parole in the US is a complicated system designed to balance the goals of rehabilitation, public safety, and accountability. It operates within a framework that has evolved substantially since its inception in the late 19th century, adapting to changing societal needs and criminal justice policies. Today, parole involves the conditional release of inmates from prison before the completion of their maximum sentence contingent on compliance with specific terms and conditions set by a parole board or supervising authority.

Parole supervision focuses on facilitating the reintegration of parolees into society, aiming to reduce recidivism and support successful reentry. Parole officers play a critical role in this process, providing case management services that include regular check-ins, home visits, and coordination with community resources. These officers monitor compliance with parole conditions, which may include maintaining employment, attending treatment programs, abstaining from drug and alcohol use, and adhering to curfews.

To determine the efficacy of modern parole, various metrics, including the rates of recidivism and the fulfillment of parole terms, are utilized. A 2021 study conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), illustrated in the figure above, found that 52.2% of parolees successfully completed their parole terms without reincarceration; 20.3% of parolees were incarcerated; 2.2% had another form of unsatisfactory exit other than incarceration; 3.9% either died or exited due to other reasons; and 23.3% had unknown or unreported exits from parole (Kaeble, 2023).

Clearly, there are both successes and failures in the American parole system. The large numbers of reincarcerations and unacceptable and unknown exits demonstrate the need for continued improvements to the parole system. Better support mechanisms, robust rehabilitation programs, and comprehensive post-release supervision will go a long way toward reducing recidivism and facilitating the successful reintegration of ex-offenders into society. Ascertaining the reasons behind the high rate of unknown or unreported exits will result in higher quality data and lead to finding more useful solutions for struggling parolees.

As with the probation process, the current trend toward the use of evidence-based practices in parole supervision (Duwe, 2017) is a positive one. Utilizing risk and needs assessments and specific criminogenic needs, parole officers can create individualized plans for parolees that will meet their needs and help minimize the chances of re-offending. Similarly, some states have also enacted reforms to enhance parole outcomes with an emphasis on rehabilitation versus punitive measures. These include graduated penalties for technical violations, thus giving parole officers the option to impose intermediate sanctions as opposed to immediate re-incarceration. Both goals of helping the parolee succeed in the rehabilitation process while appropriately addressing their noncompliance are thus met.

Overall, modern parole in the US is a dynamic system that seeks to promote successful reintegration, reduce recidivism, and ensure public safety. It requires continuous adaptation and improvement to address the evolving challenges within the criminal justice landscape, striving to balance the needs of individuals with the broader goals of societal protection.

Parole Officers

Parole officers play a critical role in the criminal justice system by supervising individuals released from prison under parole or supervised release conditions. Their responsibilities include protecting the public, aiding in the rehabilitation of parolees, and facilitating their successful reintegration into society. Parole or community corrections officers provide case management services, collaborating with public and private businesses, treatment providers, and educational institutions to assist parolees' transition back into society. This support is especially important considering the social, financial, and structural disadvantages faced by many recently released individuals.

Similarities exist between parole and probation officers, such as their shared objective of maintaining public safety and supporting offender rehabilitation. However, significant differences distinguish their roles. Probation officers oversee individuals sentenced to probation instead of incarceration, operating under court jurisdiction. In contrast, parole officers monitor individuals released early from prison under parole in jurisdictions with indeterminate sentencing or under supervised release in jurisdictions with determinate sentencing, working under correctional agencies or parole boards. Unlike probationers who fall under court jurisdiction, parolees are directly supervised by the correctional system or parole boards. This distinction means that while probationers have their restrictions and requirements set by a judge, parolees' conditions are determined by the parole board or department of corrections.

Parole officers work closely with individuals under their supervision to fulfill parole board-mandated conditions aimed at promoting lawful behavior and reducing the risk of recidivism. These conditions often include regular check-ins or home visits to monitor the parolee's activities and living conditions, participation in rehabilitative programs, and compliance with specific restrictions on activities and associations. Initially, parole officers conduct a thorough assessment of a parolee's risk and needs factors to create a personalized supervision plan that outlines rehabilitation goals and community safety concerns. They often share pertinent information with law enforcement agencies to ensure public safety. Parole officers also prepare detailed reports and offer testimony at parole hearings regarding the parolee's compliance and progress, which influences decisions on parole continuation, modification, and revocation based on behavior and progress. By balancing accountability with rehabilitation efforts, parole officers seek to reduce recidivism rates and promote successful community reintegration among individuals they supervise.

A key aspect of a parole officer's role is helping recently released individuals during their reintegration back into the community. This includes assisting them with finding employment, housing, and substance abuse treatment. This challenge is unique because of the strict and often harsh environment of prison life, which does not adequately prepare inmates for reentry into society. The failure to effectively rehabilitate and prepare inmates for release remains a persistent issue within the criminal justice system. Studies consistently indicate high recidivism rates among released inmates, with a substantial number returning to incarceration due to new offenses or technical violations. For instance, research analyzing recidivism rates across 34 states between 2012 and 2017 found that 63% of released inmates were rearrested within three years, and 71% were arrested within five years (Durose & Antenangeli, 2021). Additional findings from Durose & Antenangeli's research indicate that 46% of released inmates returned to prison for either technical violations or new crimes. These statistics underscore the vital role of parole officers in devising and implementing effective supervision strategies.

To enhance the likelihood of successful reintegration, it is imperative that the department of corrections develops a prerelease plan. This plan, in conjunction with the individual's most recent risk and needs assessment, helps determine the necessary supervision and support needed upon release. This important information is then disseminated to the parole or community corrections officers assigned to supervising the newly released individual. By establishing comprehensive planning and personalized support, parole officers can better facilitate a smoother transition from incarceration to community life and reduce the likelihood of recidivism among parolees.

Parole Rights

Before the 1970s, parole officers had broad discretion in deciding whether to send a parolee back to prison. However, the U.S. Supreme Court case *Morrissey v. Brewer* (1972) established that because revoking parole constitutes a loss of freedom, parolees are entitled to certain rights when facing the prospect of parole revocation and a return to prison. These rights apply even though parolees typically attend revocation hearings before a hearing officer rather than a judge.

During a revocation hearing, parolees are afforded rights comparable to those provided to probationers. These include:

- Written notice of alleged violations
- A preliminary hearing to assess probable cause
- Disclosure of evidence and the right to confront witnesses
- The opportunity to present witnesses and evidence in their defense
- A hearing before a neutral body
- Written documentation of the evidence used against them

Similar to probationers, parolees have diminished rights to privacy, particularly concerning searches and seizures of their person and residence. Unlike ordinary citizens, law enforcement needs only a reasonable suspicion to search parolees and their dwellings. Furthermore, in *Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole v. Scott* (1998), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the exclusionary rule does not apply to probationers or parolees. This means that improperly or illegally obtained evidence can

be used in a parole board revocation hearings, underlining the distinct legal standards governing probationers and parolees compared to the general population.⁵⁴

⁵⁴Maier, W., Maier, K., Overby, W. and Edwards, T. (2021)

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Probation is a form of suspended sentencing that allows offenders to remain in the community instead of serving time in jail or prison, as long as they comply with court-ordered conditions. These conditions often include reporting to a probation officer, drug testing, avoiding contact with known offenders, paying restitution, and participating in treatment or education programs. Probation lengths and requirements vary based on the severity of the offense and the individual's risk level, and failure to comply can result in revocation and incarceration. Probation is widely used across the United States at both the state and federal levels as an alternative to imprisonment, particularly for individuals with stronger community ties who are considered lower risk.

Probation officers play a central role in both supervising and supporting individuals on probation. Their responsibilities include monitoring compliance through check-ins, drug testing, and home visits, as well as assisting probationers with employment, education, and treatment services. A major duty is completing Pre-Sentence Investigation (PSI) reports, which provide judges with detailed background information and sentencing recommendations that often shape probation conditions. While probation success rates vary, research shows that many individuals struggle with compliance due to new offenses, technical violations, or absconding, leading to revocation or increased supervision such as Intensive Supervised Probation (ISP), which involves stricter monitoring and more frequent contact with officers.

KEY TERMS

Probation

Conditions of Probation

Probation Officer (PO)

Caseload

Pre-Sentence Investigation (PSI)

Revocation

Intensive Supervised Probation (ISP)

Parole

Recidivism

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain the purpose of probation as an alternative to incarceration and discuss how probation conditions are used to monitor and guide offender behavior in the community.
2. Analyze the dual role of probation officers as both enforcers of court conditions and providers of support services. How can these roles create challenges in practice?
3. Discuss the purpose and components of a Pre-Sentence Investigation (PSI) report. How does this report influence judicial decision-making in sentencing?
4. Compare and contrast probation and parole in terms of their purpose, supervision structure, and the populations they serve.
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of Intensive Supervised Probation (ISP). What are its intended goals, and what does research suggest about its outcomes?
6. Explain the concept of revocation in probation and parole. What behaviors can lead to revocation, and what consequences may follow?
7. Discuss the role of probation and parole officers in reducing recidivism. In what ways do supervision strategies and community resources impact offender reintegration?

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