

The Chill Plan

Individualized crisis management plans to reduce misconducts among inmates at State Correctional Institution, Cambridge Springs

Agency: Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PADOC)
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Context

Over 73% of incarcerated women experience psychological distress or psychiatric disorders, and would benefit from crisis management plans to help them prepare for and manage stressful events.

Key Finding

Inmates with Chill Plans had fewer misconducts than inmates without Chill Plans.

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Background

Incarcerated women often enter prison with emotional and mental vulnerabilities which may be exacerbated by the prison experience. Anxiety can escalate to misbehavior, including assaults and other violence. Coping plans may assist inmates in managing their emotions and preventing mental crisis from occurring.

The "Chill Plan" was designed by staff at the Pennsylvania State Women's Correctional Institution at Cambridge Springs as a crisis prevention program and shared with the other state women's prison. This program empowers female inmates to preemptively manage their anxiety through personalized calming strategies with the end purpose of reducing misbehavior. When stressors heighten, inmates can invoke their plan before their emotions erupt.

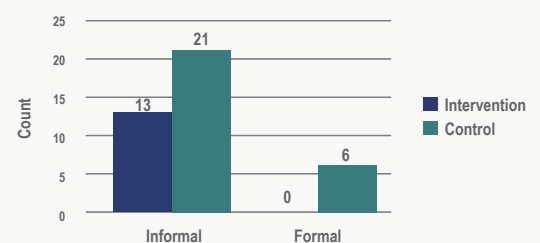
Trial Design

Two identical general population units were randomly assigned to the trial condition; women in Unit D3 (n=122) were offered participation in the Chill Plan, and women in Unit D2 (n=124) served as the control group.

Results and Implications

During the three-month trial period, 52 inmates enrolled in the Chill Plan. The Chill Plan group had better behavior compared to the control group ($p=0.02$) for both informal and formal misconducts. No data were captured on how many inmates actually invoked their Chill Plan to alleviate anxiety, but results suggest that just having the plan in place helps reduce misconducts.

Informal and Formal Misconduct Counts



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