



Improving Behaviors with a Swift, Certain, Fair Model

Testing a Swift, Certain, Fair model in a women's facility

Agency: Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PADOC) State Correctional Institution (SCI) Cambridge Springs

Trial Duration: 01/02/17–06/30/17

Pracademic*: Captain Kevin Ace and Unit Manager Jamie Rodriguez

Context

Discipline within prisons can be inconsistent and seem arbitrary. Misbehaviors might not be addressed for days or weeks and often there are no formal criteria for determining the type of discipline given for each violation.

Key Finding

SCF appears to be an effective method for improving behavior among incarcerated women.

*BetaGov trains agency personnel to become research-savvy "Pracademics" who lead trials.

Background

The Swift, Certain, Fair (SCF) model has been used to address inconsistencies and delays in responding to misbehaviors. This model used a misbehavior/sanction grid to link violations with sanctions. The model emphasizes clearly articulated behaviors to be monitored closely, with misbehaviors resulting in immediate sanctions. The benefits of the SCF approach have been documented in probation settings, and are now being tested in lock-down facilities. SCI-Cambridge Springs tested the effectiveness of an SCF model for improving prison management and behavior among incarcerated women.

Trial Design

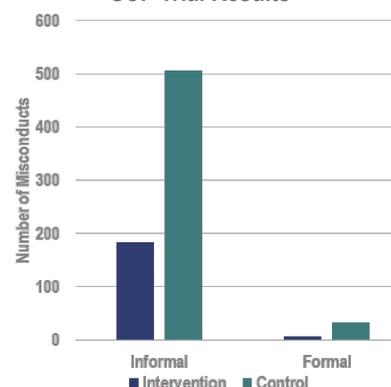
Individuals housed in general population were randomly assigned by unit to either the intervention condition (SCF, n=126) or the control condition (business-as-usual, n=126). The facility targeted the most frequently occurring low level "informal" misconducts for the SCF condition. These were considered "infractions" rather than informal misconducts and were subject to SCF sanctions. In analyses, however, these infractions were combined with the non-targeted informal misconducts to be comparable to the informal misconducts and

warnings in the control condition. The trial was implemented for six months.

Results

Data collection was incomplete for the first two months of the trial, so these results reflect outcomes beginning in March. Informal misconducts decreased over time for both groups, but the number of misconducts was about 60% lower for the intervention group than the control group ($p < 0.01$). Additionally, the intervention group committed 6 formal (more serious) misconducts compared with 32 in the control group ($p < 0.05$).

SCF Trial Results



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