

Making A Difference



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Evidence Based Practice and DCS

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Do you ever wonder why we do things in the manner we do them? For many years we have approached processes along with our very interactions with inmates from whatever way we are used to or what “feels good”. Evidenced Based Practice refers to “what works” research on the proven practices for corrections which have proven effective in dozens of studies involving tens of thousands of inmates.

The changes towards Evidenced Based Practice are notable in the areas of Behavior Health and Parole Administration. Behavioral Health has focused specifically on treatment modalities for inmates who have mental health and/or substance abuse issues. Also significant progress with Evidence Based Practice can be noted in the clinical approach to treating sex offenders. In Parole Administration the use of graduated sanctions (invoking accountability commensurate with the degree seriousness for an offender’s behavior), case planning and addressing thinking change along with motivation.

Training in this area for institutional unit management staff began Friday, October 21st. The training focuses on background principal for Evidenced Based Practice within corrections and the criminal justice system. It also touches upon risk assessment, motivational interviewing and cognitive restructuring. These practices basically deal with influencing inmate thinking to achieve better outcomes (few misconduct reports, more program engagement, positive and professional interactions, a safer prison environment and enhance success for inmates serving life sentences as well as those transitioning back to the community.)

The challenges facing corrections and the criminal justice system are considerable. Employing strategic innovations that work effectively will enable staff to not only merely survive throughout these changes but thrive in safer facilities with less resistance from offenders.



Project Greenthumb Blossoming in 2011

By Jake Berst, Mental Health Practitioner - NCYF

NCYF's horticulture program, Project Greenthumb, began several years ago as a simple, hobby-type program. In 2011, Project Greenthumb has expanded its role in preparing NCYF's young inmates for life following incarceration.

Project Greenthumb is now a two-semester, multi-department, educational and vocational program. NCYF Community High School students who complete the program are able to earn credits toward their high school diploma. Additionally, the program empowers its participants with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to succeed upon return to the community. Project Greenthumb aims to do this through three components for learning.

The first component, classroom instruction, is led by one of NCYF Community High's teachers and Master Gardener, Jayne Murray. This component is designed to help the beginning gardening student acquire the needed knowledge and skills to positively contribute to Project Greenthumb. Course curriculum includes soil preparation, pest and disease control, landscape design, and basic knowledge of vegetables, annuals, perennials, trees, and shrubs.

The second component, personal reflection, is a mental health element facilitated by the NCYF Clinical Psychologist, Dr. Michael Luebbert, and is designed to assist students in identifying lessons learned from the gardening experience that are applicable to pro-social living in the community. Personal growth, delayed gratification, consequences, integrity, and being proactive are among the concepts addressed in this component. Dr. Luebbert challenges the inmates to live lives that greater resemble a garden than a "field of weeds."

The third and final component involves experiential hands-on lab where the students can apply their knowledge by planting, watering, weeding, harvesting, observing and planning in the NCYF flower and vegetable gardens.

A desire to expand Project Greenthumb's gardens and educational resources has long been present, however, funding has not always been available in past years. A proactive approach was taken in 2011 as Jake Berst, on behalf of Project Greenthumb, applied for and acquired the Midwest Adopt-A-School Garden Grant of \$1000. This money helped contribute to the expansion of the program's vegetable gardens, which now totals approximately 3700 square feet. Due to the purchase of landscaping timbers, many of the gardens are also now in raised-beds, which has helped combat past erosion and resulted in healthier plants. Project Greenthumb was also able to purchase a three-tier grow-lab cart through grant funding, which will allow the program to effectively start vegetable plants from seed, reducing the programs expenditures in future years. It was the goal of Project Greenthumb facilitators to utilize the grant funding to promote the sustainability of the program.

Other NCYF departments and programs have benefited from Project Greenthumb's expansion and maturation. Nearly all of Project Greenthumb's vegetable harvests are delivered to NCYF's kitchen, which provides NCYF's inmates with fresh and nutritious produce at no cost to the kitchen. Another of NCYF's educational programs, the ProStart Food Service class, was able to benefit from Project Greenthumb as it received the remainder of the vegetable harvest. ProStart students used the produce for the class's lab component, learning a variety of cooking techniques and how to prepare an array of meals with fresh ingredients. For example, ProStart students utilized an abundance of zucchini to prepare fried zucchini slices as well as sweet zucchini bread.

NCYF inmates who wish to become involved with Project Greenthumb must submit an application for the program and undergo a panel interview. An inmate's custody, misconduct report history, and overall institutional "citizenship" are given consideration for approval to the program.

Administrative and security staff are consulted with as well prior to the acceptance of all Project Greenthumb participants.

In summary, 2011 has been a year of great success and growth for Project Greenthumb. The program has never received more interest among inmates and the resources in which to teach and guide these young men have never been more available. It is the goal that Project Greenthumb will continue to positively impact the lives of our inmates as well as the well-being of NCYF and the community. We intend to achieve this goal by remaining committed to providing our inmates with knowledge and experiences designed to strengthen pro-social attitudes so that they can return to society with the skills to make their lives and their communities more healthy and productive.

Diversity Bridge Builders

Anne Marie Kenny, M.O.L.

In my work as an intercultural and diversity consultant, I often get asked: Why are some people successful in bridging cultural differences and others are not? First of all, cultural diversity in the broader sense includes race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, disabilities, and so on. While all of these are important, from my research at NDCS, the current focus is with issues of race and gender.

The key ingredient to bridging cultural differences is *willingness*. Willing to listen to people who are different from me. Willing to admit that my perspective is not the only one. Willing to have more diversity among us. Willing to give everyone's voice equal weight. Willing to create an environment of inclusion, where all types of people feel included and not excluded. Our *behavior* and our *talk* begin with a *mindset* toward other cultures. Do we simply tolerate other cultural groups, or do we actually have an appreciation for them?



NDCS staff have attended the new In-Service Diversity and Inclusion course since July/August of this year. The training was based on research I conducted through a written survey that measures intercultural development. Many thanks to those of you who participated. I also walked around several facility grounds and talked with staff. It was impressive how open and willing people were to give me ideas about how the NDCS can be more inclusive. Your suggestions, along with the written survey results, helped me create the new course.

The course starts with a focus on Team Work. Effective teams have common goals and treat co-workers with equality and respect. The most effective and enjoyable teams will also have the capacity to value the cultural differences among themselves. A diverse and "representative" staff should have a variety of genders, races, age groups and religions, which flourish in a welcoming atmosphere.

Besides the training for all staff, the Executive Steering Committee (ESC) asked for intercultural development training, so they can better lead the organization in its ambitious diversity initiatives. My work with the ESC continues through next March. Please feel free to contact me at wholeworldllc@yahoo.com if you have any suggestions about the diversity and inclusion efforts of the NDCS. The department is making significant strides toward building the bridges to greater diversity and inclusion, and staff at all levels has expressed a desire to achieve these goals. Keep up the good work!

Inter-Agency Teamwork

Mickie Baum, Records Manager - NSP

The facility records managers from the DEC, NSP, NCYF, OCC, NCCW and several parole officers attended training on the DNA collection process provided by the State Patrol. The new collection kits were available, allowing everyone in attendance the opportunity to become familiar with the kits. The records managers will enter data in the CODIS Prelog which will be available on CJIS for inmates in the Departments custody. The data entry will replace the cards in the kits, printing a form with a bar code on it. The staff collecting the sample will sign and date the form, along with the inmate and will enable the State Patrol to have a faster turn around time in processing the sample. The CODIS Prelog will also alert the records managers if an inmate already has a sample on file, helping to control the duplicate samples that have been sent to the Patrol. Hopefully in the future the information that the records managers enter in the Corrections Tracking System will be able to automatically populate the CODIS Prelog system. The teamwork involved in the success of the DNA data bank from the data entry to the collection and processing of the sample, involve so many areas that we all should be proud of a job well done.

Why Coaching?

Inga Hookstra, Controller—Accounting

You may have heard the axiom: Everyone's a coach.

Coaching isn't really training. Command and control are generally inappropriate for coaching. So why coaching? What is the difference between coaching - leadership - management?

- ◆ **Leadership** - declaring a future and enrolling people into making that future happen.
- ◆ **Management** - coordinating people and materials to accomplish specific milestones/objectives, which will make the declared future happen.
- ◆ **Coaching** - facilitating people in their own commitment and enthusiasm to accomplish their objectives.

Leadership, Management, and Coaching all three may do the same things at times, but the context determines the outcome. Leaders and managers coach their players (staff) by switching attention from the activity to the player. With attention in this direction, they work with the player and the goals that the player is committed to accomplishing. When we tell players what to do, it not only strips their personal power, it robs the players of taking responsibility for the choice that was made.

Example: You are coaching a girl's softball team of ten-year-olds. You gather the ten-year-olds together and say, "Okay, Emily, Tyler, Courtney, when you get up to the plate, swing at every pitch." All should go well, except the other team changes pitchers, and

these pitches are the wildest you have ever seen. These are the ones that barely make it to the plate or they take off in a direction no one could imagine. The players do exactly as instructed and swing at every pitch, all three striking out. Who is responsible?



Taking this into the business place it is the antiquated way of do-as-I-say style of management. That is why coaching skills are so valuable. Coaching is about the other person; the spotlight is on your player (staff).

Coaching Model

- ◆ *Attained Performance Level* is the level that the player has already achieved. The player does not need coaching in this area because the results at this level have already been achieved.
- ◆ *Intended Results Level* is what the player is committed to producing. The more clear the player is about the results that he or she would like to produce, the more value will be received from each coaching session.

Questions to ask at the beginning of every coaching relationship:

- ◆ What are the results to be produced? Results should be quantified as much as possible.
- ◆ What is the specific time frame to produce the intended results? Be specific.
- ◆ What obstacles can prohibit the player from producing the intended results? Real or imagined obstacles should be noted.
- ◆ What does the player have at stake, or what are the risks if the intended results are not produced?
- ◆ Is the player committed?
- ◆ Is the player supported by key people in his or her environment to produce the intended results?
- ◆ Who in the player's environment would like to see the project or player fail?

Coaching Dialogue - a conversational inquiry into any subject relevant to closing the distance between the player's current results and the intended results.

We should coach the dialogue in the pathway to the player's intended results. Look to the future, the intended results. Identify the obstacles; work with the player to clear the obstacles. Objective is to have the player get to a place of choice, intended outcomes. Ask open-ended questions so the player thinks again.

"I finally understood that to keep moving forward you not only have to look to the future, you have to inhabit the future."

George Rodriguez, Louisiana Artist

— The above article is based on *Coach Anyone About Anything* by Germaine Porche and Jed Niederer.

TSCI Continues to See Success in Educational Programs

Danny Hayes, PIO-TSCI

'Corrections in the Community' is a series of articles intended to highlight the efforts of inmates and correctional staff to make a difference in the community. If you have an example of how the Department makes a difference, please contact the Newsletter Editor, Ashley Alloway. Her information can be found below.

The Nebraska Department of Correctional Services and the Tecumseh State Correctional Institution (TSCI) continue to assist inmates housed inside facilities make strides toward becoming more productive members of the community. Two of the programs that have shown remarkable success at TSCI are the GED and Inside-Out Dads programs.

More than 175 offenders have obtained their GED at TSCI since 2002. This includes 109 GED graduates since 2007. The process that someone has to undertake for GED completion includes passing nationally standardized, individual tests in reading, science, social studies, writing and math. The students work may independently or take specific classes to prepare for the tests. Once the student receives a passing score in all five of the tests, they will receive their diploma.

Once a year, TSCI holds a GED graduation ceremony where the students are allowed to invite family members to be present. The students wear a cap and gown, walk down the aisle and are seated in front of the guests. A guest speaker is invited to speak about the significance of the accomplishment and the diplomas are awarded. The most recent graduation took place on August 30, 2011 to honor the 18 students that obtained their GED.

The Inside-Out Dads Program's success is dependent upon the dedication and cooperation from Christian Heritage, local volunteers and the department's education staff. The program focuses on teaching parenting skills and ways to reconnect or stay connected with children while incarcerated.

Participants meet twice a week for six weeks in order to receive their certificate. To date, there have been 144 graduates of the Inside-Out Dads program at TSCI. Topics concerning relationship building with children and the children's mother are the main focus of the class. Classes are facilitated by two local volunteers and a TSCI teacher.

There are follow-up classes for the parenting graduates once per month where the facilitator will focus on a pertinent topic in parenting. Offenders that complete the parenting class and meet certain criteria are allowed to have extended visits with their children once per month with consent from the mother or guardian. During these 3 hour visits, the fathers get to spend time with their children one on one.

Both of these programs have proven to be very beneficial to the offenders that have participated in them. They not only allow the offenders to stay connected with their family, but are teaching them skills that will be necessary for them to be successful upon their release.

"Making A Difference"

Nebraska Department of Correctional Services

If you have comments or suggestions, or would like to submit an article, please send them to:

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Articles must be formatted in Microsoft Word. Please include your name, position, and work area.

"No member of a crew is praised for the rugged individuality of his rowing."

Ralph Waldo Emerson