

**Thank you.**

**Welcome, Chairman Wanzek, committee members, legislators viewing via livestream, guests, fellow staff, residents, and those watching elsewhere.**

**My name is David Roggenbuck and I have worked with the ND State Penitentiary for over 17 years. I have been an officer, a Sergeant, a Correctional Case Worker, and now a Correctional Case Manager. I am also a staff instructor, been a member of SORT and a current member of CNT.**



**In the fall of 2015, I was asked to be part of a team whose mission was to redesign the Administrative Segregation Unit, more commonly referred to as AS, to one that increases humanity by giving the people placed in the unit more productive time in and out of their cells, provide the opportunity to change, while maintaining the safety and security of the entire prison.**

**The AS unit was designed to separate problematic people from the rest of the population with the goal of improving safety.**

**It was realized that by simply segregating people, by isolating them from others, did not in fact make the prison safer.**



**Most people would deteriorate mentally and sometimes physically the longer they stayed isolated which in turn increased negative behaviors needing more use of force incidents resulting in longer isolation. Thus, creating a vicious cycle.**

**The only measure for progress was the absent of negative behaviors which was impossible for some resulting in isolation for years.**

**Not much effort was provided in teaching how to change the behaviors; expecting them to “know better”.**

**One resident explained to me that living in AS was like living in your bathroom 23**



**hours a day, go out to your dog's kennel for your 1 hour of recreation, and have someone you don't really know, bring your food to you in the bathroom you are living in.**

**Some may say that is price for committing the crime. I along with the NDDOCR say to that is this is still a human being that still needs to be cared for. They just don't go away after being locked up. This is someone's son, probably someone's brother, and more than likely, someone's father or even grandfather. How would you want someone close to you to be treated?**

**Our mission was to develop a system that addressed the need of the prison to be able to separate dangerous and**



**disruptive people but to also provide them with the skills to improve behaviors and to practice those skills in a safe environment for not only the staff working the unit but also for the person placed in the unit. We also looked at ways to increase out of cell time as well as making time in the cells more productive.**

**The unit was designed to immediately intervene by addressing the underlining issues resulting in the negative behaviors.**

**The new unit was aptly named the Behavior Intervention Unit or BIU for short.**



**How the process would work is BIU would receive a person, the placement committee would evaluate the need for placement and if placement is warranted, a behavioral health specialist evaluates the needs of the person to develop a plan for his eventual return to the rest of the prison population.**

**Skills would be targeted to address the person's placing behavior. The staff, especially the specialized trained officers working the unit, would discuss the skill with the person, model the skill, and have the person practice the skill through role play. The staff would provide immediate feedback on what went well and what could be improved.**



**Once the person has demonstrated proficiency in the targeted skills, he would be considered through a multi-disciplinary committee to move to a transition tier within the unit.**

**The transition tier is a step down for the person leaving segregation before fully returning to the rest of the prison population.**

**The person is no longer segregated or isolated from others and has the ability to attend some activities outside the unit.**

**This gives the person a chance to practice and hone the skills they have learned while interacting with residents and staff outside the unit.**



**When the person has demonstrated significant improvement in decision making thus reducing incidents of negative behavior, the person would return to the general population.**

**Should the person need to take a step back, a short stay in segregation with intensive skill development and practice is used with the goal of returning back to the transition tier as soon as appropriate.**

**This shift in philosophy could be viewed with this analogy: AS was a warehouse, where it would receive a piece of raw material, set that material aside on a shelf, hope it changed into something else, and send the product back out**





**after some time. As expected, the product would leave no better than when it first came in and most of the time, worse.**

**BIU could be considered a factory where we would get the same raw material in, but instead of setting it aside on a shelf, we would identify what needs to be done to improve the material, work to make the improvements, and send it out better than what we originally received.**

**Yes, there were some that had to go through the process multiple times but each time, they were taking new skills with them when they would leave.**

**Behave your in; behave your way out was the motto.**



**Because of the many changes within AS / BIU, the number of people segregated went from 104 at it's peak to 8 at it's lowest.**

**An interesting thing happened. Even though there were 96 less people in segregation, the number of violent incidents did not increase.**

**I have personally seen people who had assaulted multiple staff or other residents progress to living in preferred housing and look for ways to help others. Some are in attendance today.**

**This shows the high level of service the staff within BIU had with the people in their care. Because of their hard work**



**and efforts, along with the resident's willingness to change, they truly made the prison safer.**

**BIU could be seen as a prison within a prison and is a snapshot of the entire NDDOCR regarding the mission of transforming lives, influencing change, strengthening community**

**Unfortunately, due to current staff shortages, it has forced many to work multiple shifts, preform duties outside their normal job duties, and run units, like BIU short staffed, just so the institutions would function as normally as possible.**

**Coupled with the fact that prices for everyday items including the gas just to**



**get to work have almost or has doubled, the extra stress on the staff has resulted in the decline of the necessary level of service to be provided to those in our care.**

**In closing, the staff of the NDDOCR are the keystones to a safer North Dakota.**

**Without being able to recruit and retain quality and motivated staff to effectively provide those in our care the opportunity and help to change, no number of cells, fences, or towers will keep the people of North Dakota safe.**

**As it has been stated before, 97% of everyone sentenced to prison in North Dakota will be out one day. The questions I ask to you; how would you**



**want them to return to your town, your neighborhood, or next door to you; the same, worse, or better than when they were first sentenced? What would you rather the DOCR be? A warehouse or a factory?**

**So, I ask that you consider this when deciding what is best for the people of North Dakota because the people working within, living within, and being supervised by the NDDOCR are also people of North Dakota.**

**I look forward to answering your questions.**

**Now, I present to you Mr. Jonathan McKinney. A former resident of BIU who is now working alongside me as one of**



**the mentors for the Restoring Promise unit working with young adults to discuss how BIU has impacted him.**

**Thank you.**

