

## JAILS IN AMERICA: A REPORT ON PODULAR DIRECT SUPERVISION (version 2)

1. THE NARRATOR: Jails in America. All too often they conjure up images of violence and danger. Negative stereotypes about American jails are prevalent. Most are grounded in actual history. Yet today many jails challenge these stereotypes as they have evolved in response to case law, professional standards and demand for safer and better managed jails.
2. MS. SCHILLING: I believe the mission of jails today is to have a facility that the community recognizes as safe and secure that is also constitutionally correct, that provides for safe and humane treatment for the inmates and for the staff.
3. THE NARRATOR: As they've pursued this mission, American jails have tried a variety of design and management methods with varying degrees of success.
4. THE NARRATOR: Today there are three basic types of jails in the U.S., linear intermittent surveillance, podular remote surveillance and podular direct supervision. This terminology describes both the type of building design and resulting inmate supervision strategy employed in the jail.
5. Let's look at these jail types and examine the characteristics of each. In linear intermittent surveillance jails, linear means that cells are lined up in rows at right angles to a staff corridor. Intermittent surveillance means that staff observe inmates only at certain intervals, usually every thirty minutes or so. Staff conduct this intermittent surveillance from a secure corridor that is separated from the inmate cell blocks by bars. A single assumption drives the design and operation of the traditional linear intermittent jail. That assumption is that most inmates will be violent and destructive. This philosophy is evident throughout the linear jail in the bars and steel mesh, in the high security locking mechanisms and costly vandal-resistant fixtures and furnishings, most of which are hard steel and bolted in place. Staff contact with inmates is minimal. This model emphasizes containment, not supervision
6. MR. ALLISON: The expectation that's generally expressed is one of distrust, is one that you're going to cause problems, you're going to act out physically, and we're prepared for that.
7. MS. DAHLBERG: I believe that when staff and inmates are separated by a barrier that they are objects to one another. I feel it's scary -- it's more scary to be separated from the inmates because you have no idea what's going on.
8. THE NARRATOR: Let's look again at the illustration of the traditional linear jail. In conducting intermittent surveillance, the officer's range of observation is limited to a single cell. Inmates in other cells are left essentially unsupervised. When they are left unsupervised, inmates take control of the cell blocks. Staff are left with control of hallways and control rooms.

9. MR. HJERMSTAD: You don't have an opportunity to view what's going on because you take maybe thirty seconds out of every half hour to view those people. That means that for twenty-nine and a half minutes of that half hour, you have no idea what's going on in that unit.
10. MR. PARRISH: When there's a vacuum, something or someone is going to fill it. And, generally speaking, it's the toughest inmate in the pod, the toughest inmate in the cell that takes the leadership role. And, quite frankly, in a traditional jail where the inmates have nine-tenths of the space, they have all the housing areas, and we as staff have the hallways and the control room, you have to question who's in charge anyway, them or us. Well, quite frankly, it's them. And all we do is respond to problems.
11. THE NARRATOR: In the 1970s a new type of jail design emerged. The design was intended to overcome some of the limitations of the linear jail. In this model, which came to be known as podular remote surveillance, podular design replaced the linear layout of the traditional jail. In this type of jail, inmates are housed in individual pods where the cells are arranged around a central common area or dayroom. The design also incorporates secure glass-enclosed control rooms from which an officer can see into one or more pods and monitor the activities of the inmates in those pods. In this model the officer generally remains in the control room for an entire shift, can continuously observe the inmates, but is physically separated from them by a glass barrier.
12. MS. SCHILLING: In podular remote, it's better than linear intermittent because at least part of the time you are observing the inmates. However, it's a disadvantage that you're not able to actually interact and communicate with the inmates. So you might be able to see sometimes what's going on, but without being able to be there and interact and hear what's going on, you don't always know exactly what you're seeing.
13. THE NARRATOR: The podular remote jail shares some important assumptions with the linear intermittent model. As a result, it also shares some of its limitations. First, it assumes that most inmates will be dangerous and destructive. The hard concrete floors, high security steel doors and fixed vandal-resistant furnishings create an environment that communicates an expectation of negative behavior. Communication between staff and inmates is typically conducted through intercoms. The officer's ability to hear what is going on in the pod is very limited. As a result, it is often difficult to detect problems before they reach a crisis level.
14. MR. PARRISH: Just because you can see something doesn't mean you can do anything about it, and you still have to call for assistance. And you can't be watching everything at all times because to be staff efficient the podular remote surveillance design routinely had one officer looking out over an array of pods, not just one.

15. THE NARRATOR: As a result, many areas in the jail are not well supervised. This creates clearly defined spaces that can be controlled by the inmates.
16. THE NARRATOR: In the early 1980s a third jail design and management model emerged. It was based largely on concepts developed by the federal prison system in the early 1970s. In this model, known as podular direct supervision, podular housing unit design was retained, but the control room of the remote supervision jail was eliminated. And the officer was placed directly in the dayroom to continuously interact with inmates and to directly supervise and manage their behavior. The podular direct supervision model represents a dramatic departure from traditional assumptions about how best to achieve safety and security in a jail. Safety and security in the direct supervision jail are achieved not through the use of barriers and physical containment, but because the staff can now directly and continuously supervise and manage inmate behavior.
17. MR. HJERMSTAD: What we've learned through direct supervision is that if we put the staff people in with the inmates and actually supervise their behavior, we have less inmate to inmate assaults, less staff to inmate assaults, less vandalism, less damage to the property, and the jail. And it's been very effective in helping to control and supervise those inmates.
18. THE NARRATOR: In addition, the environment in a direct supervision jail is normalized with cost-effective commercial grade fixtures and furnishings which convey the message that normal or positive behavior is expected.
19. MR. HJERMSTAD: The environment of direct supervision jail is very indicative of the expectations. It's an open area, it's very quiet, it's very clean. The furniture is not bolted to the ground; it's moveable. The whole purpose of that is to set the expectation that this is a place that you are to keep clean, that you are to behave in and act normally, not act out and not act in a manner that is unacceptable to the norm.
20. THE NARRATOR: The combination of strong environmental influences and continuous direct supervision gives staff control of all areas of the jail. Officers become managers and leaders and hold inmates accountable for their actions and are better able to detect and prevent problems rather than reacting to them.
21. MS. SCHILLING: It's a totally different approach. The staff are the ones that control the inmates and that determine what behavior is appropriate and what behavior is not appropriate.
22. THE NARRATOR: Jails that have implemented this model have consistently reported benefits such as enhanced safety and security, full staff control of the jail, reduction in assaults, virtual elimination of dangerous contraband and vandalism, improved facility cleanliness, higher level of inmate compliance with facility rules, and reduction in construction and maintenance costs.

23. MS. SUVOY: The by-product of direct supervision is that we have very safe jails, they're well managed, the inmate population is under control, and they're very clean facilities.
24. MR. CALLISTO: There are a number of benefits. From an operational perspective, it is a far safer environment for the staff to work in. The staff members have control in the units. The units are clean, and generally pretty quiet.
25. MR. TANNEHILL: I think the biggest benefit for me is the fact that I am able to interact with the inmates. I'm able to see and hear how they're responding to each other, actually sometimes feel the tension level if it changes so that I'm able to address issues before they become problems. I feel that I'm more able to be proactive instead of reactive in the unit.
26. MR. FORD: I think the biggest benefit is that we have much more control over the inmates. They tend to behave better when they know they have consequences for their behavior...and it makes it safer for me.
27. THE NARRATOR: Podular direct supervision is based on a set of eight key principles. The staff has total control of the jail. Inmates are effectively supervised. Staff are competent in their jobs. The safety of the public, staff and inmates is protected. Operations are manageable and cost effective. There is effective communication between staff and inmates and among the staff itself. There are effective systems of inmate classification and orientation. And inmates are treated justly and fairly.
28. In direct supervision these principles are implemented using a combination of both facility design and specific inmate management strategies. Inmate management strategies are based on several things. Expect and set high standards for positive inmate behavior. Clearly define and communicate consequences for both positive and negative behavior. Hold inmates individually accountable for their actions. Treat inmates with respect. Meet the inmates' basic needs. Structure the environment so inmates perceive that it's in their best interest to comply with facility rules. And keep inmates productively occupied.
29. Let's see how these strategies are applied in direct supervision facilities. The booking area is the inmate's entry point into the jail and sets the tone for the inmate's stay. Inmates are first introduced to the direct supervision philosophy in booking.
30. Most inmates quickly learn that they are expected to behave positively and will benefit from this behavior. They also learn that there are immediate consequences for negative behavior. When the inmate first enters the booking area, his behavior determines where he will wait to be processed into the jail.
31. If his behavior is appropriate, he will go to an open waiting area adjacent to the staff work area. In the waiting area the inmate will find seating, a bathroom, a water fountain and a telephone he may use to notify family and friends of his arrest, all those items necessary to meet his basic needs, all in a normalized setting that assumes positive behavior.

32. MR. PARRISH: We have an open booking facility. It doesn't look like an ordinary booking area in that there are just a few holding cells and they're all glass based. And the main area of the booking room is just that, a big open room. And that's why we refer to it as open booking. It looks more like a bus station or an airport waiting area than it does a jail. And that really strikes a lot of people when they walk in there: This doesn't look like a jail, you know. But it sets the tone that we want. We have an expectation that inmates are going to behave when they come to our jail.
33. THE NARRATOR: Two processes critical for inmate management in direct supervision take place shortly after inmates are admitted to the jail, orientation and classification. Orienting new inmates to behavioral expectations is key to behavior management. This orientation takes place as soon as possible after new inmates enter the jail.
34. MR. PARRISH: When we say we have an expectation that people are going to behave when they come into our jail, it puts a certain burden on us to tell them what the expectations are. We give them an orientation on video that explains what's expected of them, what their cells are going to have to look like, what the rules are, and at the same time they're provided with a copy of the inmate handbook.
35. THE NARRATOR: The key here is that inmates know the rules and understand that they will be held accountable for complying with them. Effective classification is essential to inmate management in all jails. Classification determines inmate housing assignments and the level of supervision, services, programs and privileges they receive.
36. MS. SUVOY: Classification is a significant function of any jail, but more so in direct supervision because we really need to know who the inmate is and identify those inmates who can be safely housed in one of the direct supervision modules.
37. MR. ROBERTS: What we're looking for in classification is who can live in a large direct supervision housing area. We want to see how they behave once they arrive at our institution, how they start to follow the rules, how they obey the direction that we've given them.
38. THE NARRATOR: The atmosphere in the dayroom of a direct supervision pod is often surprising to the new inmate or jail visitor. The dayroom and cells are clean and orderly. The atmosphere is calm and generally quiet. This is not the atmosphere the American public has come to expect in its jails.
39. MR. ALLISON: I think that the first thing that happens to an inmate when they walk into a direct supervision facility is the openness and the lack of restraint shocks them.
40. MS. REINEKE: And their reaction to that is more positive.

41. **THE NARRATOR:** The housing unit is designed so that the officer is able to stand in any area of the dayroom and, with minimal movement, have an unobstructed view of the pod. More importantly, there are no barriers between the officer and the inmates, allowing the officer to move freely among them. The basic needs of the inmate are anticipated and provided for in general population housing. Inmates don't have to resort to negative behavior to meet these needs. They can easily communicate with family or friends through shared in-pod telephones which inmates pay to use. They are also permitted scheduled visitation, and generally have access to recreation and commissary services. The Housing Unit Officer is the key to the success of a direct supervision jail. The officer plays a critical role in supervising and managing inmate behavior to ensure a safe, secure, clean and orderly housing unit.
42. **MR. SCHWARTZ:** I see the role of the officer in direct supervision as being a manager, a housing manager, someone that's managing, supervising, directing the people that are assigned to his or her unit.
43. **MS. SCHILLING:** When we hire a direct supervision housing officer, we're looking for someone that has excellent communication skills. We're looking for someone that can be a good problem solver, somebody that is able to be a manager, that's able to be a supervisor and a leader.
44. **THE NARRATOR:** Because American jails have historically separated inmates from staff, many people new to the direct supervision model wonder if the staff really are safe in this setting.
45. **MS. REINEKE:** I feel safe in this environment. I feel that I'm in control of the environment just by virtue of my status and my stature within the unit. I'm looked to as the leader of the unit.
46. **MR. WHITFIELD:** I believe that the safety and security is enhanced by direct supervision because you're always there.
47. **MR. SCHWARTZ:** I firmly believe that direct supervision is a very safe setting for all of my staff.
48. **THE NARRATOR:** One key element to officer safety is holding inmates accountable for their behavior. This requires giving the officers the ability to manage minor disciplinary violations and to remove inmates from the housing unit if their behavior demonstrates an inability to follow the rules.
49. **MS. SUVOY:** It's critical that we hold inmates accountable because that accountability....the degree of accountability in the module is equally proportionate to the degree of control and safety in that module.
50. **MR. CALLISTO:** In a direct supervision environment you have zero tolerance of negative behavior. Every negative behavior is dealt with.

51. THE NARRATOR: A primary means of discipline in direct supervision jails is segregation of inmates from the general population. Experience has shown that only a small minority of inmates, approximately five to seven percent, must be placed in segregation housing for disciplinary reasons. Disciplinary segregation housing provides clear consequences for negative inmate behavior. The environment is stark. It contains traditional high security fixtures and furnishings. Inmates are usually locked into their cells for 23 out of 24 hours. Although their basic rights are protected, they receive no privileges such as television, educational or vocational programs, library services or commissary.
52. MR CALLISTO: Typically inmates that are a problem for direct supervision end up in 23-hour lockup and only have an hour of recreation and shower time for instance. So we really need to make sure that the facility offers a design that gives you an open direct supervision community environment for the general population and a very restricted environment to kind of hold the carrot and stick over the inmates that might want to consider presenting some problems.
53. THE NARRATOR: Inmate idleness has historically been a major source of problems in inmate management. Without productive activity, inmates often find destructive ways of occupying their time at significant cost to the jail and taxpayers.
54. To remedy this, inmate programs have become an integral part of the behavior management system in direct supervision.
55. MR. ALLISON: And what we're trying to say to inmates is we're not an empty vessel. We do not want to have a mission of ease, and that is that we return you no worse than you came. We want to have a value for our society that says we have put better inmates back out in our community. Direct supervision allowed us to do it; programming ultimately gets us to that end.
56. MR. HJERMSTAD: The program area of our jail is extremely important to the success and augments the direct supervision model. You must not have a lot of inmate down time for a couple of reasons. Inmates are much harder to manage when they have a lot of time on their hands to sit and think. They have to be kept active. That helps to manage those inmates. But the other side of the coin is you've got inmates' attention here once you've got them in jail. Why waste the opportunity to not try and do an assessment on these inmates, find out what their needs are, and then begin some sort of a program to create a person who is better suited for our society.
57. THE NARRATOR: Jails in the U.S. play a unique role in the American justice system. Growing inmate populations and increasing demand for more effective methods ensuring safety, security and cost-effective operation of American jails has led many communities to consider direct supervision as a viable alternative to traditional jail design and management methods. Jail staff and administrators in these communities provide valuable perspectives on direct supervision as a practical, economical, efficient system that works.

58. MR. ROBERTS: I find direct supervision to be far superior in the ability to manage and be in control of the jail.
59. MS. SCHILLING: Direct supervision works and it can work anywhere. It's really a philosophy, it's an attitude.
60. MR. SCHWARTZ: I personally have 20 years law enforcement, but I really sincerely believe in the direct supervision model.
61. MR. HJERMSTAD: All of us agree that this is the way of the future for corrections, and we ought to be part of that.
62. (End of tape)