

2017

The Transformation Project: Program Update 2015-2016

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Transformation Project



Program Update

2015-2016

Prepared by the Nebraska Center for Justice
Research

FROM THE COORDINATOR: LAURA SCHOENROCK

In 2014 Nebraska took a giant step toward fixing pervasive issues plaguing agencies throughout the justice system culminating in a prison system that was bursting at the seams. The state enlisted the services of the Council of State Governments (CSG), a national organization dedicated to helping state governments problem-solve and develop policies for the common good. Over the next several years, the CSG worked to help Nebraska usher in policies that would begin to shape justice reinvestment in the state.

Along with the CSG's initial assessment procedures, the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) asked the group to do an additional review of its institutional programming. The report, released in June of 2016, drove home what many of us who had been working to implement programming within the Department had already experienced: not enough staff to run programs and not enough assessment procedures and training in place to ensure programs are running well. The report also detailed a number of recommendations for NDCS, which included providing more efficient and effective programming. We were delighted to see the effort we had given to specific areas of Transformation Project curriculum and implementation matched perfectly with the CSG's recommendations.

By working to address multiple criminogenic needs at once, building proficiency by integrating graduated skills practice and utilizing gender and youth specific curriculum, Transformation Project is ahead of the curve when it comes to comprehensive prison programming. Our attention to incorporating fidelity measures is also right on target to help overcome some of the issues faced by corrections systems as they work to implement programming. This is reassuring as we develop a program that fits the needs of Nebraska and meets high national standards.

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“Wherever I go, it’s [Transformation Project] helping me.”
-Restrictive Housing Participant

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Transformation Project (TP) is more than a prisoner reentry program. While the program does address criminogenic needs that are crucial for a successful reentry, the program goes deeper than simply asking “where will you live” and “where will you work.” Transformation Project seeks to initiate lasting behavior change.

The program incorporates an evidenced-based intervention, Motivational Interviewing (MI), which allows participants to examine their own values and beliefs in order to identify their own motivation for change. Weaving MI principals into all of the process measures for the program creates an encouraging foundation for change to occur.

TP participants learn what the change process looks like by observing the lives of real people who have made lasting personal transformations to overcome extraordinary circumstances, much like those the participants themselves have experienced. The program blends real-life, gender- and age- specific stories with graduated skills practice in order to increase participants’ prosocial behavior during incarceration and is tracked through various behavioral outcome measures.



TP participants not only identify motivations to change, they utilize examples of what change can look like, practice techniques to promote change, and develop skills in realistic goal setting. TP participants learn how to take the vision they have of their future and break the process down into manageable pieces that can be accomplished during incarceration. Creating personalized action plans sets program participants up for success in the institution and beyond.

VISION, MISSION & GOALS

Our Vision

The vision of Transformation Project is to create a prison system where inmates are committed to values, attitudes, and behaviors they believe will help them successfully transition through incarceration and reentry.

Short Term Goal

Create a Foundation For Change

Process Measures

Facility Readiness Tool
MI Training
Program Training
Facilitator Readiness Tool
Facilitator Observation
Participant Debrief Surveys
Participant Final Action Plans
Coordinator Interviews
Facilitator Surveys

Intermediate Goal

Increase Participants' Pro Social Behavior

Examples of Outcome Measures

Number of Visits Number
of Hours Worked Number
of Misconducts
Importance Survey

Long Term Goal

Reduce Recidivism

Our Mission

Transformation Project facilitates prisoners in developing a foundation for learning and motivation to change through a process of self-reflection and goal setting.

PROGRAM UPDATE

In July of 2016, the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services issued a new Administrative Regulation regarding the use of restrictive housing to comply with Nebraska Administrative Code, Title 72, that ensures restrictive housing will be used as a last resort and in the least restrictive way possible that will still ensure safety and security.

In addition to detailing the specific levels of confinement, the AR laid out specific processes for transitioning individuals through restrictive housing and back to general population. An individualized behavior/programming plan is to be developed for anyone placed on Long-Term Restrictive Housing. Plans are established with input from the individual and include goals, actions to take to reach those goals and incentives for meeting goals.

A specialized programming schedule is included in each behavior/programming plan in order to help individuals meet their goals.

Transformation Project has become a programming staple recommended and included in almost all Long-Term Restrictive Housing plans for individuals at the Nebraska State Penitentiary, Lincoln Correctional Center, and Tecumseh State Correctional institution.

Currently the program is being adapted for the specific needs of women and youth housed in Long-Term Restrictive Housing.

***“I look at situations that could cause problems
and try to avoid them.”***

- Restrictive Housing Participant

PROGRAM UPDATE

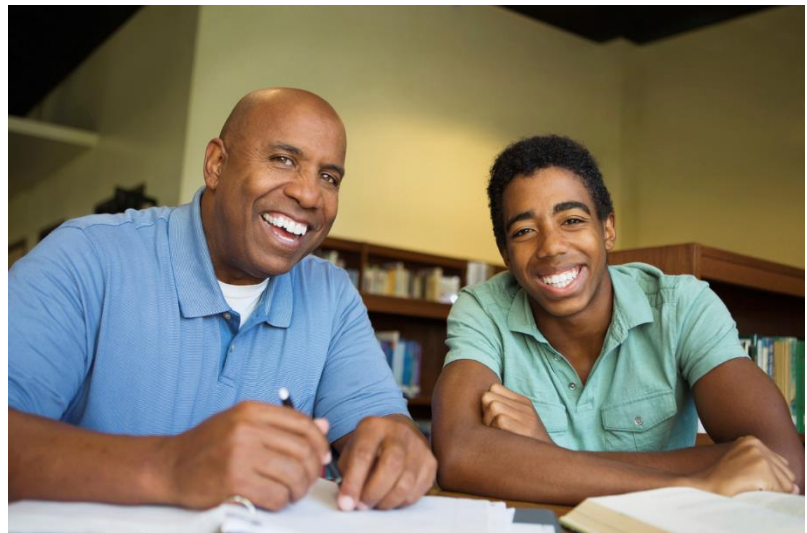
Implementation

As a part of the 2016 Council of State Governments NDCS programming review, it was recommended that NDCS work to ensure programs are implemented with quality and fidelity standards. Understanding that facilities experience unique barriers when it comes to implementing programming, a consulting firm was utilized to develop a Facility Readiness Assessment to accurately evaluate each facility's strengths and weaknesses when it comes to executing programming effectively. Category One Consulting (C1C) was selected to develop, deploy, and analyze the Facility Readiness Assessment. C1C is committed to helping nonprofit agencies maximize their impact. They use research, analytics, and evidence-based practices to develop, implement, and evaluate the most effective practices regarding people and programs. For more information about C1C please visit www.category1consulting.com.

The assessment was designed to understand staff attitudes and perceptions across 14 domains related to facility readiness. It was deployed at both the women's and youth facilities. The key findings are provided below:

Facility Readiness Assessment: Common Themes Among Women's and Youth Facilities

- Most pressing for the implementation of Transformation Project is that most staff do not currently make the connection between past exposure to trauma and current exhibited behaviors.
- Many participants indicated it may be a challenge to get staff support for additional inmate programs.
- Staff would like to have a larger voice when it comes to programming at the facility and receive more communication about programming.
- Staff would like to have more access to training.
- Staff who are involved with TP are more engaged.



TRAINING



Transformation Project facilitators are required to have training in Motivational Interviewing, a communication style that engages one's own personal motivation for change. In 2016 UNO offered three MI training sessions reaching over sixty NDCS staff.

To address limitations in implementation readiness identified by the Facility Readiness Assessment conducted by Category 1 Consulting, UNO provided Trauma Informed Care training for over sixty staff at the Nebraska Correctional Youth Facility. Sharon Wise, a trauma survivor and expert in trauma informed care, conducted the training.



PRESENTATIONS

Local

Laura Schoenrock, Transformation Project Program Coordinator, spoke to the UNO Golden Circle Lunch Bunch, a group of alumni, retired faculty and staff aged 65 and older who meet monthly for luncheons featuring campus speakers

"I look at situations that could cause problems and try to avoid them."

- Restrictive Housing Participant

State

H. Daniel Butler, Ph.D., former Transformation Project graduate student assistant, and Laura Schoenrock, Transformation Project Program Coordinator, presented at the Nebraska Justice Alliance conference during a special session dedicated specifically to the topic of restrictive housing.



National

Bob Houston, Senior Community Research Associate, UNO School of Criminology and Criminal Justice and Laura Schoenrock, Transformation Project Program Coordinator, presented a breakout session at the American Correctional Association Winter Conference in New Orleans called Transformation Project: Transitioning from Restrictive Housing to General Population and the Community Through Self Reflection and Goal Setting.

Dr. H. Daniel Butler presented a paper coauthored by Dr. Ryan Spohn and Starr Solomon, M.A. at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology in Washington D.C. entitled Programming in Administrative Segregation: An Evaluation of Transformation Project.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

In 2012, Transformation Project was adapted for use in restrictive housing. In restrictive housing, inmates engage in programming in their cell through written communication with the program facilitator. The curriculum consists of an orientation module and 12 self-study modules. The program facilitator provides inmates with written feedback, utilizing motivational interviewing techniques, on the modules in an effort to encourage further discussion of topics or ideas relevant to the program. This cognitive behavioral technique allows participants to determine their own goals and values, which is intended to help offenders identify their behavioral motivations. The program lasts approximately six months and targets issues that may better prepare inmates for reintegration into general population of the prison. This evaluation explores whether inmates who participated in Transformation Projective while in restrictive housing engaged in fewer misconducts and received more family visits six-months and one year after program participation. Short (i.e., six-months) and long-term (i.e., one year) effects of Transformation Project are evaluated across three facilities: Nebraska State Penitentiary (NSP), Lincoln Correctional Center (LCC), and Tecumseh State Correctional Institution (TSCI).

The comprehensive evaluation report can be found in the supplemental Appendix.

Evaluation Summary

- Three Facilities
 - Nebraska State Penitentiary (NSP)
 - Lincoln Correctional Center (LCC)
 - Tecumseh State Correctional Institution (TSCI)
- Participants
 - 621 Restrictive Housing inmates who participated in Transformation Project from 2012-2014
- Control Group
 - Randomly selected inmates who served time in disciplinary segregation between 2010-2011

Evaluation Findings

- Transformation Project participants experienced statistically significant declines in certain types of Misconducts at NSP, LCC, and TSCI
- Transformation Project participants received significantly more family visits at LCC

EVALUATION SUMMARY

Misconducts

NSP Transformation Project participants committed significantly fewer assaults and nonviolent misconducts at 12 months after final module completion. The NSP control group also experienced a statistically significant decline in assault and nonviolent misconducts. The findings for the control groups suggest misconducts were declining for all inmates, not just those who participated in Transformation Project.

Figure 13 NSP: Average Assault Misconducts-12 Months

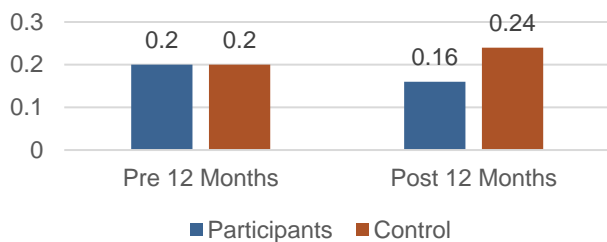
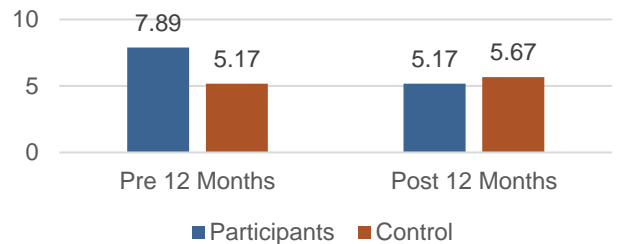
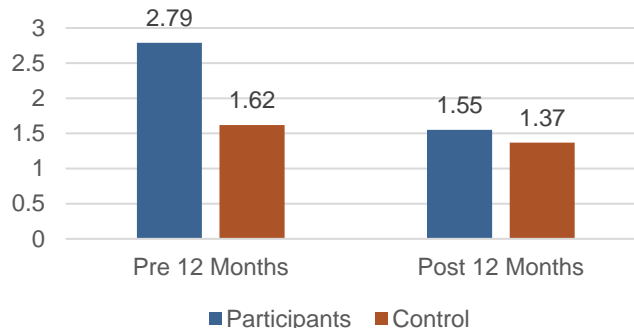


Figure 15 NSP: Average Nonviolent Misconducts-12 Months



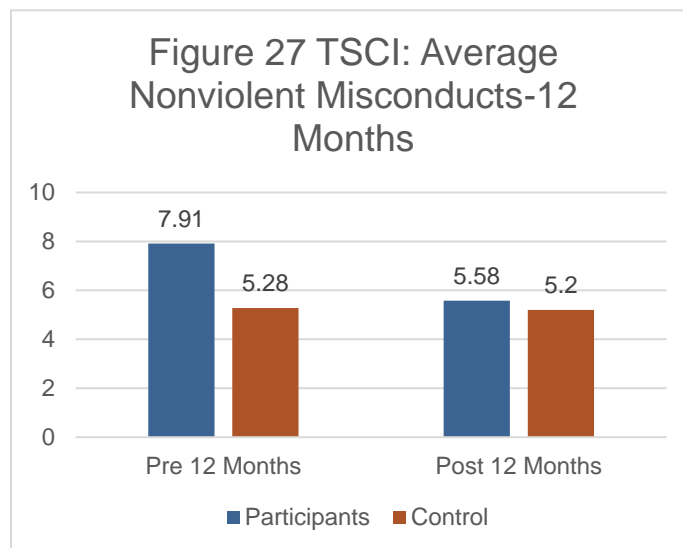
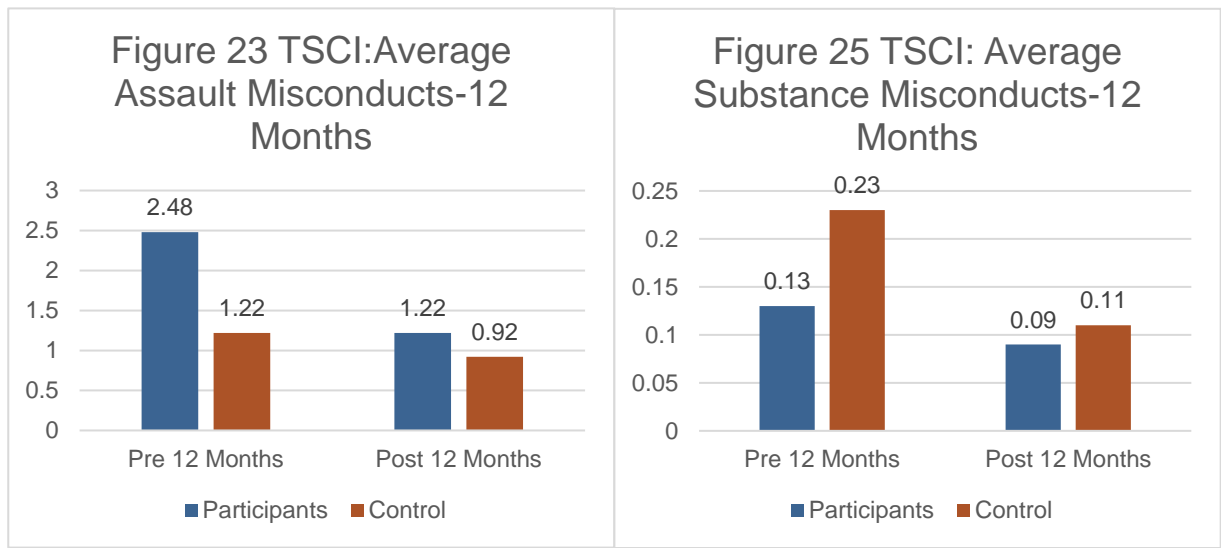
LCC Transformation Project participants experienced a statistically significant decline in assault misconducts 12 months after participation, however, the LCC control group also experienced declines in assault misconducts.

Figure 17 LCC: Average Assault Misconducts-12 Months



EVALUATION SUMMARY

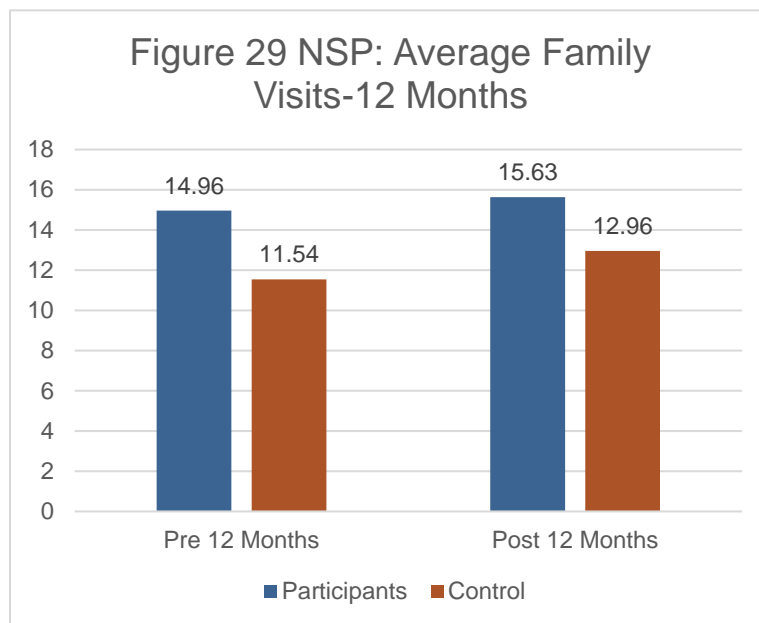
TSCI Transformation Project participants experienced significant reductions in assault and non-violent misconducts 12 months after final module completion. The TSCI control group also experienced declines in assault, drug/alcohol, and nonviolent misconducts during the evaluation period.



EVALUATION SUMMARY

Visits

NSP Transformation Project participants did not experience statistically significant increases in visits. However, LCC Transformation Project participants did experience statistically significant increases in family visits (e.g., parent, sibling, child). The LCC control group did not experience any significant increases in family visits. Transformation Project Participants at TSCI did not experience significant increases in family visits, while the TSCI control group did experience a significant increase in family visits during the evaluation period.



It is important to note that the relationship between programming and misconduct, as well as visits, in restrictive housing is complex. Time served in restrictive housing reduces the likelihood and opportunity for inmates to engage in misconduct and receive visits because they are restricted to a single cell for 23-hours-a-day.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

Figure 31 LCC: Average Family Visits-12 Months

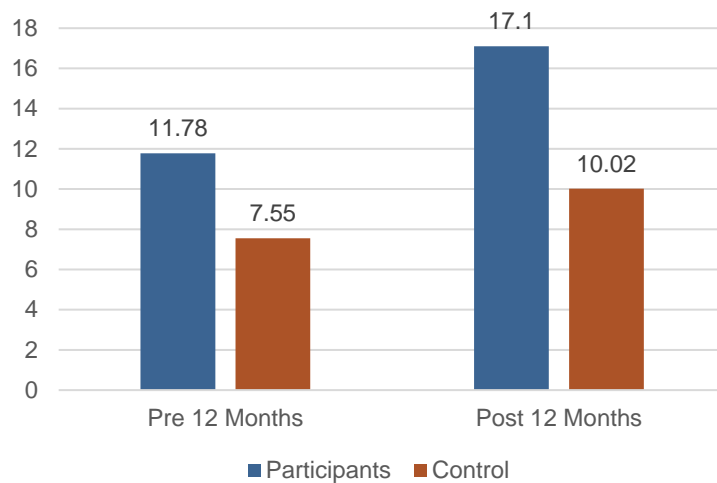
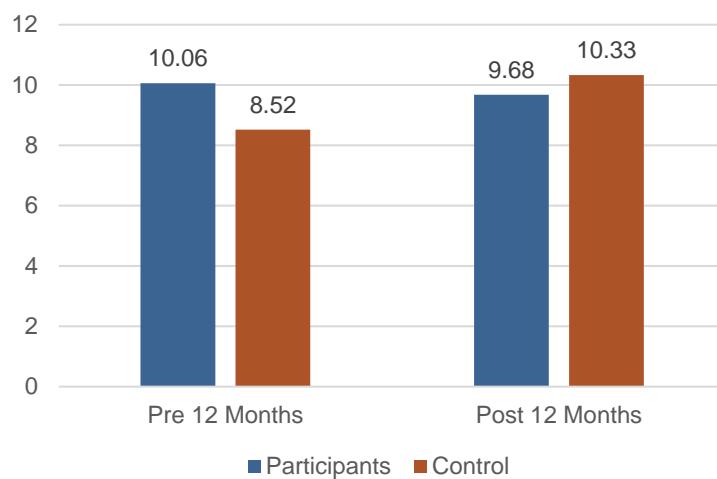
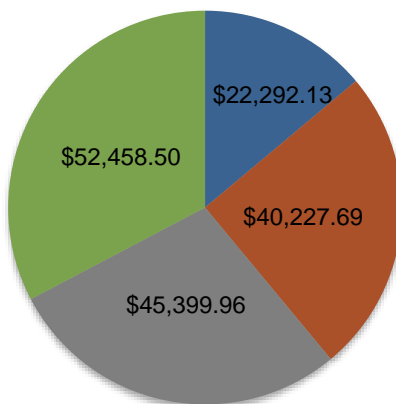


Figure 33 TSCI: Average Family Visits-12 Months



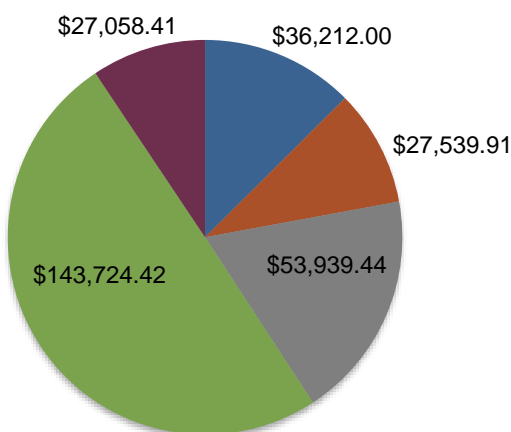
FINANCIAL SUMMARY

2015 Total Expenses by Population \$160,378.28



■ Total Operating
■ Total Men's Restrictive Housing Curriculum
■ Total Men's General Population Curriculum
■ Total Women's Curriculum

2016 Total Expenses by Population \$288,474.17



■ Total Operating
■ Total Men's Restrictive Housing Curriculum
■ Total Youth Curriculum
■ Total Men's General Population Curriculum
■ Total Women's Curriculum

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