



Using 7 Habits to Change Lives

Civ. Kathy Wolter and Capt. William Anderson

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Brief History

Pursuant to Title 10 of the United States Code for the armed forces, specifically Chapter 48 Military Correctional Facilities, the United States Disciplinary Barracks (USDB) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, provides for the education, training, rehabilitation and welfare of those confined. To meet that mission, the facility utilized "7 Habits on the Inside," and the result was a highly positive impact both on the individual inmate and on the population as a whole.

There are other correctional facilities within the Department of Defense (DOD), but inmates with sentences of 10 years or greater are confined to USDB. As the only maximum-security prison for the military, USDB has inmates from all branches of the service: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard.

In common with the non-DOD facilities, USDB focuses much energy on rehabilitation. The vast majority of inmates will one day be released back into society to once again be our neighbors. The end goal is that each offender leaves with the mindset and tools enabling them to be productive and contributive with the decreased probability of reoffending.

The Chaplain Corps provides curriculum and training for chaplains and chaplain assistants for use in their areas of responsibilities to promote the spiritual health and resiliency of soldiers and their families. The curricula come from a variety of sources with a history and reputation of teaching sound financial principles, communication skills, team-building ideas, personal reflection, etc. As USDB is an Army-led unit, Army chaplains and chaplain assistants compose the Directorate of Pastoral Care (DPC). A resource of chaplains across the Army has been

Stephen M.R. Covey's "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families" (Stephen M.R. is another son of the late Stephen).

The 7 Habits on the Inside Rollout

In winter 2010, seven participants from DPC completed the 7 Habits program. The response from staff was so positive that it convinced the then-director, Chaplain Lt. Col. Mark Jones, that the materials and principles were extremely relevant for the inmate population.

The following June, a group of 25 leaders representing civilian and military staff completed the 7 Habits Signature Program. Ten staff members went on to complete training introducing them to "7 Habits on the Inside." This particular material was a collaborative effort with Jones and FranklinCovey.

Before the materials were taught to the inmates, the original seven from the family program served as a practice class where necessary modifications could be made to the materials and the flow of the program could be understood; the participants became core group facilitators. It was also determined that in order for the program to meet the criteria of success, it would be necessary for the initial inmate class to be composed of a cross-section of the population, and that the participants experience a genuine transformation. The initial classes would be composed of inmates serving long and relatively short sentences, those who attended chapel and those who didn't, and those with influence and those with none. Some of the most challenging inmates within USDB were also included.

The first class began in October 2011 and graduated 28 inmates. Within two years, 180 inmates- roughly one-third of the inmate population - graduated from the USDB program and another 160 inmates from the program at USDB's sister facility, the Midwest Joint Regional Corrections Facility, another facility in Ft. Leavenworth for inmates whose sentences are less than 10 years.

Since that time, on any given year, the average inmate population who has participated in the 7 Habits program is around 48 percent. Due to interest, there is a waiting list of approximately one year before an inmate can enroll in the class. Those in line for the class must remain free of disciplinary actions to be candidates in good standing.

Results

When an inmate is written a Disciplinary Report (DR) and it is determined that this misconduct needs to go before a board for potential punishment, we refer to it as a Disciplinary and Adjustment Board (D&A Board). It often results in a D&A Board conviction. This is based on our daily average of 420 inmates. We will share with you four graphs to explain the results:

Graph #1:

Bar #1 represents:

The total number of D&A Board convictions for that year which encompasses the whole population.

Bar #2 represents:

The number of 7 Habits graduates still in the facility at the end of the year.

Bar #3 represents:

The number of inmates that graduated from 7 Habits during that year that had incurred D&A Board convictions prior to graduating from 7 Habits.

Bar #4 represents:

The number of D&A Board convictions committed by that years' 7 Habits graduates prior to them graduating from 7 Habits.

Bar #5 represents:

The number of inmates that graduated from 7 Habits the previous years that had incurred D&A Board convictions after graduating from 7 Habits.

Bar #6 represents:

The number of D&A Board convictions committed by the previous years' 7 Habits graduates.

Graph #2

In Graph #2 you can see how this program has made a positive environmental change in the USDB.

In explanation, at the USDB when an inmate is written a Disciplinary Report (DR) and it is determined that this misconduct needs to go before a board for potential punishment, we refer to it as a Disciplinary and Adjustment Board (D&A Board). So when we speak of D&A Board convictions or board convictions, this is what we are referring to. Additionally, this is based on our daily average of 420 inmates.

Bar #1 represents:

The total number of D&A Board convictions for that year which encompasses the whole population.

Bar #2 represents:

The number of 7 Habits graduates still in the facility at the end of the year.

So, as you can see by the graph, the more 7 Habits graduates in the facility, the amount of institutional infractions decrease.

Graph #3

Additional reinforcement of how positive this program is also reflected in our recidivism rates. Of our 46 graduates released on Parole since 2011, only 3 have returned, and they were for technical violations. They did not re-offend. 64 graduates were released MSR, and only 8 have returned. We also have quite a few men that have taken on mentor roles, such as tutoring for different levels of education classes, briefing our new inmates (receptees) on what to expect when they are placed in GP, to include prison politics, representing the needs of their housing units by becoming members of the IAC, volunteering to help with the Suicide Watch Program, and assisting staff in facilitating treatment programs.

The success of the program has resulted in:

- Inmates taking accountability for their own lives
- Investing in a future outside of the facility
- Mending/enriching relationships between inmate and family
- Better decision making
- Fewer disciplinary reports
- Increased enrollment in academics
- Better communication inmate to inmate
- Better communication inmate to staff

Many students apply what they have learned when communicating with family members. Some have even encouraged their family members to read the book “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People” along with them while attending class. There is proof that the “Family Outreach Program” works if the individual puts in the effort needed to reap its benefits, and those on the outside can and will see a change.

Summary

In conclusion, the more 7 Habits graduates in the facility, the amount of institutional infractions decrease.