



Students (and icebreaker warriors) from Gogebic Community College Copper Country Campus CJC 102 class- Spring 2014

# Corrections Icebreakers: *THE BOUCHARD 101*

Joe Bouchard | For the International Association of Corrections Training  
Professionals | July 1, 2014

## What is the *Bouchard 101*

Believe it or not, there is a universal topic. Everyone, no matter their background, age, or level of friendliness, can talk about the weather. Even so, some locales feature weather with minimal variation. Others have a tumultuous diversity.

In my home state of Michigan, weather is an exciting topic. As the saying goes, *if you don't like the weather in Michigan, stick around for a few minutes. It will change.*

What a difference a day makes. One day, the snow was melting with a vengeance. By mid-afternoon, the driveway of the house pictured below went from ice to mud. (See BEFORE picture). Then, within a 24 hour period, 16 inches of wet and heavy snow fell (see 24 HOURS LATER photo below).



BEFORE



24 HOURS LATER

Training is like weather in Michigan: What a difference a day makes. A corrections facilitator or professor in criminal justice may be faced with eager students one day. The next day may feature silent, immovable, bored 'participants'. Also, change in one set of students can occasionally come at a quick, unpredictable pace.

When I consider the apathetic classroom, I think of a car stuck in the snow. One knows that it can eventually move, but it needs to be released from the snow. One has to apply the proper icebreakers before the car can get going. The same is true of the silent class.



Alas, we cannot change the weather. However, we can modify the classroom. One way that I like to stack the cards in my favor when I am in the role of instructor is by using icebreakers and classroom exercises. These can turn the duller topics into chat-worthy endeavors. Icebreakers can move participants from apathy to involvement. From there, the instructor may have to harness new, exciting energy.

This book features 101 corrections and/or criminal justice based classroom exercises. They were all written by me for the International Association of Corrections Training Professionals. One or two have been adapted by me, but given a corrections touch. In the first part of this book are the newest icebreakers that I have penned. I have field tested these on my students at Gogebic Community College. The rest of the book is comprised of works I created for IACTP in various icebreaker books from 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2013.

Those who know me are aware that I love writing and conducting icebreakers. I truly hope that you enjoy the *Bouchard 101*. May all of your training endeavors be pleasant and enlightening.

Very sincerely,

*Joe Bouchard*

## 2014 IACTP Icebreakers: The Bouchard 101

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Current association contact information can be found at [www.iactp.org](http://www.iactp.org).



Thanks especially to:



**Bridgette, Robyn, & Julie**

How long did it take to write this book? Maybe it was just a few months of finishing up the 2014 icebreakers. Still, one could say it was seven years, the starting date being the publishing of the first icebreaker book for IACTP. Going back further, it is fair to say that it took fifteen years from stem to stern. That was the time that I developed my first icebreaker for one of the college classes that I taught for Gogebic Community College.

Was it fifteen weeks or fifteen years? In the end, it doesn't matter! What is important is the continuous support I have from Bridgette, Robyn and Julie. Thanks for the input, troubleshooting, dry runs, and encouragement.

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New  
Bouchard  
Icebreakers  
(2014)

## All pens are not created equal

Sometimes, there are small hazards right under our noses. What we ignore can hurt us. As corrections professionals, we need to be aware of that little things can mean a lot.

Consider the common pen. It is almost camouflaged in its ubiquity. But is it just a writing instrument? Or is it? Let the class decide for themselves.



1. Break the class into groups of three or four.
2. One person per team shall be designated as the spokesperson.
3. Have all people present place every writing implement in their possession in a pile in a central location in the room.
4. Make the announcement that it is everyone's responsibility to remember which pen is theirs and to take it at the end of the exercise.
5. EXTRA EXERCISE STEP: At the end of the exercise, as an additional point of discussion, you can ask participants to comment on any issues in retrieving the pens. Prior to the exercise out of earshot of others, the facilitator can appoint an

- observer to watch for dynamics and actions when people take back their pens. This should be done on the sly, otherwise, there may be an inadvertent introduction of the Hawthorne Effect.
- 6 As the facilitator, you should add a few small ‘safety’ or ‘segregation’ pens in that pile. These look different from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Generally, they are less than four inches long. Some are flexible and some are rigid.
  - 7 In turn, have each group look at the pens for a minute. They are to do this without any instructions.

After all groups have had that time to look, Tell them to take five minutes to answer the following questions in written form. Do not forget to give each team a ‘segregation’ pen to make notes.

*How can someone harm you with these pens? In other words, what sorts of weapons can one make with the pens?*

*Which pen is the most dangerous?*

*Should prisoners have pens? If not, are there litigation issues?*

*Why are some pens so short?*

*If prisoners are allowed to have pens, how would an agency regulate them?*

- 8 A worksheet with these questions follows these numbered instructions. Please make as many copies as you wish and distribute when using this exercise.
- 9 OPTION: Another option is to allow participants to craft weapons from the pens.
- 10 Have each team report their findings.

What did your class come up with? Was there mention of a blowgun from the barrel? Was ink used to smear on the security camera’s lens? Or was the pen used as a stinger, sticker, or poker?

Certainly, there is much more to a pen than ink. Sometimes we forget about the spring, metal mechanisms, and the malleable plastic. The pen might not always be mightier than a sword, but is it sure easier to hide. This exercise is useful in reminding corrections veterans of the many unintended utilities in common items. This may help increase vigilance.

# All pens are not created equal worksheet

## Lists of questions:

1. How can someone harm you with these pens? In other words, what sorts of weapons can one make with the pens?
2. Which pen is the most dangerous?
3. Should prisoners have pens? If not, are there litigation issues?
4. Why are some pens so short?
5. If prisoners are allowed to have pens, how would an agency regulate them?

## Ask a veteran

Meeting with a new class is never the same twice. The many variables possible in just the personal dynamics can be dizzying. This may not necessarily thwart the seasoned trainer.

Still, a trainer has to have an introduction prior to tackling the scheduled curriculum. Otherwise, the trainer's expertise and credentials are not announced for the benefit of the participants. Traditionally, a trainer will engage with a self-introduction. This does not have to be the only way.

To stack odd in one's favor, one can use veterans as a manner of introduction.

This does not mean that facilitators will use a veteran of the armed forces. Veteran in this case refers to someone who has attended one of the trainer's presentations or courses previous to the current class.

It is simply a matter of letting caution go to the four winds. Looking at a roster of students, the facilitator may have someone who was previously in class. If this is so, the facilitator can direct all veterans that they will do the following:

1. Gather veterans in a room away from the non-veteran students.
2. Tell them that they will give an introduction of the speaker/trainer
3. Inform them that the tone and length and facts included are up to them.
4. Tell the veterans to appoint a spokesperson to deliver the information to the newer students.
5. If the veterans seem a bit unsure with the broad options available to them, you might redirect them with stricter guidelines.
6. Instruct them that they may use internet if available to fact check.
7. The instructor gives them a ten minute deadline.
8. While waiting for them to return for the introduction, the facilitator can start conversations with the group of non-veterans for the sake of familiarity.
9. The instructor sits back and watches group dynamics while the veterans introduce him or her.
10. Facilitator conducts a post mortem on how the introduction was put together.

How will this go? That depends on the confidence, sense of humor, and mood of the veterans. It may be a total surprise. It is up to the facilitator to take that chance.

Do you trust former students to remember much about your style? All situations are different. This depends on time since you taught them, your impact, and the memories of the veterans.

Will you need to fill in the blanks afterwards? Without a doubt, you will need to do this, unless there is a case of someone with a photographic memory in play.

This is an exercise that can knock the students off their square right at the start. It may inspire an atmosphere of good communications. It also points out to the other students who has experienced a class by this instructor. In fact, the instructor can point this out as possible resources for other students.

I believe that the exercise can end with the instructor declaring that all students in class and now officially veterans. This defuses a two-tiered effect of favoritism. In other words, all students should be made to feel that they are part of the class and that no special distinctions shall be held.

So, do you need help with a different sort of introduction? Ask a Veteran.

## Catch more flies with honey than vinegar

Everyone does it. We just might not know it as it happens. All of us engage in the art of persuasion. It is human nature to want to get one's way. So, persuasion is a very natural thing to do.

Think of the many ways that we try to influence others. We beg, compliment, bully, and spin yarns to make others believe in our cause of the moment. If this does not sound bad enough, we see this every day in the corrections setting.

This exercise is designed for pre-professionals and veterans in corrections alike. The former group deserves an introduction to manipulation and the latter benefits from a refresher.

This icebreaker is very simple and requires few tools. All one needs is a board and markers. The facilitator begins with a blank grid of 3 columns and six lines.


1. Leave the top line empty for now.
2. Start with a word or two about manipulation: "in order to get what we want, we might not be so honest. Prisoners have many ways to persuade or dissuade staff. How do they do this? What are some of the ways that offenders have tried to work staff? In other words, what tricks have been attempted on you?"
3. Fill in a few examples on the grid. You may give a short story with each idea. "Once, a prisoner asked me if I lost weight and said that I looked fit. Almost after his words evaporated in the air, he asked me for a free photocopy of his legal document. It was not the most persuasive or smooth style. But, that is an example of how a prisoner may divert your attention before asking for something that he does not have coming."



4. Still leaving the top line open, place all positive ways of persuasion in the left column. This is the Honey to catch flies. Place all negative ways of persuasion (Dissuasion?) in the middle column. This is the Vinegar column. The right column will be "Other". These might not be such an easy column to fill, but it should exist in case of a difficult to place manner of manipulation.
5. Your examples might look like the following.

Have you lost weight?	You don't know what you are doing. Policy says that you owe me this...	Blank, clinical stare
You are too smart to be working here.	I am going to write a grievance on you if you do not do this for me.	Erratic friendliness. Happy and warm to staff on one day and blatantly ignoring staff on another day.

6. Ask the class to fill out the list of manipulation tactics. Again, positive or honey in the right column, Negative or vinegar in the middle column and neutral, hard to place concepts in the middle column. Do not alert class of this, just let them offer ideas.
7. After all of the spaces are filled in, ask the class what each column has in common.
8. Open up the floor on which is more effective in catching flies or staff – honey, vinegar, or other. Play the devil's advocate if the class does not come up with the answer as conditional. Honey works better on some while vinegar works better on others.

Not all prisoners will manipulate staff. However, there are some real masters of the con in the ranks of the incarcerated. When fully executed, a subtle manipulation scheme can flower into a situation where staff become compromised. This can lead to inappropriate relationships and introduction of contraband. Vast breaches in security can start with a little honey or vinegar. It behooves staff to know the many ways of persuasion.

## Celebrities Gone Wild

Just as the sun rises in the east each day, there is an immutable pattern that we cannot ignore. Celebrities *will* get in trouble. Still, despite what some see as the predictable self-destruction, not all famous persons become incarcerated. Yet, there is a lot of attention poured over the airwaves by the media when certain celebrities fall from grace. Can corrections professionals and students benefit from this phenomenon through training?

Instructors can make a PowerPoint presentation whose contents are mug shot images of arrested celebrities. There is a veritable smorgasbord of famous mug shots to be seen online. They are there for the taking (with proper citations, of course).

Set up the animation on the slideshow so that the photograph is displayed first and that the name will appear with the click of the mouse button. Ask the class to identify the person in the mug shot. Once the class has had a chance to answer, click the mouse to reveal the identity.

You should have about twenty different celebrities presented in this way. Again, online choices are vast, so there is no worry about a lack of material. Here are some tips for selection:

- Mix old with new. For example, in 2014, Justin Bieber is a new entry to this dubious group. Charlie Sheen is an older entry. The variety is good, as it will touch more elements of the audience.
- Infamous works, too. For example, Tonya Harding was not initially as famous as she would become after the clubbing incident on Nancy Kerrigan.
- Do not limit it to Hollywood personalities. Sports figures are well represented in this niche.
- Throw in a tough one every now and again. For example, younger audiences might not know comedian George Carlin from his mug shot.

After the slide show, pass a work sheet to each person. You can also break the class into teams for a quicker turn around. (See sample work sheet following the descriptive part of this exercise.) The work sheet lists each celebrity that was shown on the slideshow along with two questions.

- a. What is his or her claim to fame?
- b. What is the crime?

Some of the answers may have already been discussed during the PowerPoint presentation. I believe that the facilitator should allow this, as one might hear interesting theories and gossip about the celebrity in question. The observant participants will have these answers filed away and ready to write on the work sheet.

Another option is to have participants answer these questions through the internet at a later time.

This exercise can inspire discussions on equity of treatment, burdens of celebrity offenders on an institution and staff, the psychology of fame, and the necessity of protective custody.

Love them, hate them, or shrouded in cultivated indifference, corrections professionals have to occasionally answer the unique challenges posed by celebrity offenders. And when a famous person is on the wrong side of the law, corrections almost always receives more attention from the public than usual.

**CELEBRITIES GONE WILD****WORK SHEET**

1. Nick Nolte
  - a. What is his or her claim to fame?
  - b. What is the crime?
2. Robert Downey Jr.
  - a. What is his or her claim to fame?
  - b. What is the crime?
3. Bruno Mars
  - a. What is his or her claim to fame?
  - b. What is the crime?
4. Amanda Bynes
  - a. What is his or her claim to fame?
  - b. What is the crime?
5. Tonya Harding
  - a. What is his or her claim to fame?
  - b. What is the crime?
6. Snooki
  - a. What is his or her claim to fame?
  - b. What is the crime?
7. Charlie Sheen
  - a. What is his or her claim to fame?
  - b. What is the crime?
8. Billy Joe Armstrong
  - a. What is his or her claim to fame?
  - b. What is the crime?
9. Anna Nicole Smith
  - a. What is his or her claim to fame?
  - b. What is the crime?
10. George Carlin
  - a. What is his or her claim to fame?

- b. What is the crime?
- 11. Justin Bieber
  - a. What is his or her claim to fame?
  - b. What is the crime?
- 12. Ozzy Osbourne
  - a. What is his or her claim to fame?
  - b. What is the crime?
- 13. Tim Allen
  - a. What is his or her claim to fame?
  - b. What is the crime?
- 14. Jack Kervorkian
  - a. What is his or her claim to fame?
  - b. What is the crime?
- 15. Paris Hilton
  - a. What is his or her claim to fame?
  - b. What is the crime?
- 16. Don Vito
  - a. What is his or her claim to fame?
  - b. What is the crime?
- 17. Lindsey Lohan
  - a. What is his or her claim to fame?
  - b. What is the crime?
- 18. Michael Jackson
  - a. What is his or her claim to fame?
  - b. What is the crime?
- 19. Vince Vaughn
  - a. What is his or her claim to fame?
  - b. What is the crime?
- 20. Rick Springfield
  - a. What is his or her claim to fame?
  - b. What is the crime?

## Give me a break

Saying hello in a group of people is difficult for many people. When we introduce ourselves, we sometimes become self-conscious. Often, we get too involved in saying things perfectly. During introductions, we should really take time to learn about others in the classroom. Also, odd questions can help ease any introduction anxieties and set a more creative tone for a class.

It is as easy as using a four part formula for introduction. The facilitator goes first and, in turn, everyone in the room has the floor long enough to answer address the following:

1. Name
2. Years in corrections
3. Title
4. 4th element.

In “Give me a Break”, the fourth element is “What is the best Spring Break destination?” The facilitator should tell the class that you need not to have actually been to the place. Just tell us what you think is the best Spring Break destination



You do not have to be in corrections to participate in this exercise. Criminals Justice and Corrections College Instructors can share this icebreaker with students. It is just a matter of changing elements number 2 and 3.

2. Change *Years in corrections* to *Years in higher education*
3. Change *Title* to *Reason for taking this class*

This is a good icebreaker to conduct in the winter, as many in cooler climes are dreaming of a warmer retreat for relaxation or just to thaw out. It may even bring a story or two from participants. Time permitting, this should be allowed, as it further breaks ice.

## Good days, bad days

In formula based introduction icebreakers, the first three elements are basic information bits: name, position, and how many years of service. Element number four is the conversation point.

Sometimes, breaking the ice can be achieved well by requesting two opposing ideas. This is easily done by using a formula based introduction icebreaker. In this case, you ask what the self-introducing person considers a good day (4a) and what they consider a bad day (4b).

The instructor will write or project this on a board.

1. Name
2. Position (or minor in college if this is a Criminal Justice class of pre-professionals)
3. Years in corrections agency (or as student)
4. My idea of a good day is...(4a), My idea of a bad day is...(4b)

The instructor will play the first round:

My name is Joe.

I am a corrections librarian.

I have 21 years of service to the agency.

A good day always starts with a cup of coffee. A bad day is when I cannot get everything done that I need to do.

In turn, have each person introduce themselves with these four elements. Have a recorder capture these on a marker board or by other means. The lists should be visible for the class. The good and bad should be in columns for a comparison. Once completed, have the class look for themes.

The formula based introduction icebreaker is a useful tool because of its versatility. The first three elements are standard and can remain the same for many other uses. The fourth element requires a bit of imagination. The fourth element allows us to learn a bit more about the people in class. The sky is the limit with the replaceable fourth element. With this particular icebreaker, we can learn and express what comprises a good day and a bad day.



## Hey! Don't Read My Mail: Persuasion in a letter

Human nature pushes us to get what we want. It is as simple as that, no matter if one is behind the walls or on the streets. Is it manipulation or is it persuasion? It depends on the end of if one is on.

It can profit correction professionals to look at the eyes persuasion through the eyes of a child. Below is a letter which was modified from an actual note. This is from an 11 year old kid who is trying to persuade the mother not to take away a sleep over privilege.

Mom,

*I am so sorry that my math grade dropped. I did my best. I was busy helping someone in science class. I am having a hard time in school because people keep calling me four eyes. I don't like it. You are taking away the wrong thing from me for punishment. I would be hurt more if you took my TV. Also, Susie is moving away and we need a sleep over. I will never see her when she moves and she is the only friend who is nice to me.*

*I am so sorry. Can you let that be my punishment? I will do dishes instead of no sleep overs. Circle yes or no if that is OK.*

*Yes*

*No*

*When you have time, come to my room and look at my foot. It has a blister and I am hurt. OWIE!*

*Love, your favorite Daughter, JENNY ☺*

This letter is printed below so that you can copy it for your own use in class.

1. Read this letter aloud to the class.
2. Divide the class in groups of three or four.
3. Give each team a copy of the letter.
4. Have them discuss persuasion/manipulation methods employed by the child in the letter.
5. One person in the group will write each tactic found.
6. One person will report out after the exercise has gone on for 10 minutes.

Here are some of the tactics used:

- “I am sorry” – remorse
- I was helping someone else – altruism, helpfulness, selflessness
- “People keep calling me four eyes” – Elicit sympathy
- “You are taking the wrong thing away from me to punish me” – diversion and feigned helpfulness
- Susie is moving away and is the only one to understand me - Elicit sympathy
- I will do dishes instead – helpful offering of alternative, doing chores as penance.
- Yes or no – offering a “choice”
- Owie! Blister – I am hurt, feel sorry for me.
- Love, your favorite daughter – light humor and evoking feelings of love.

This is a perfect segue exercise for manipulation and the art of the con modules. Very early on, we find ways to sway the opinions and actions of others. This exercise helps us dissect ways that others try to do so to us. This is a fantastic skill to have in the corrections profession.

Mom,

I am so sorry that my math grade dropped. I did my best. I was busy helping someone in science class. I am having a hard time in school because people keep calling me four eyes. I don't like it. You are taking away the wrong thing from me for punishment. I would be hurt more if you took my TV. Also, Susie is moving away and we need a sleep over. I will never see her when she moves and she is the only friend who is nice to me.

I am so sorry. Can you let that be my punishment? I will do dishes instead of no sleep overs. Circle yes or no if that is OK.

Yes

No

When you have time, come to my room and look at my foot. It has a blister and I am hurt. OWIE!

Love, your favorite Daughter, JENNY ☺

## Who are you to test me?

Experience is a great teacher. Consider the exciting act of riding a roller coaster. One can read about the angles, speed, and duration of a ride. One can hear about the wind, the rush of adrenaline, and the anticipation of getting in the car and the point of no return. Still, nothing rivals experiencing the actual ride.

The same is true in corrections. I find that the most potent lesson that I can deliver to pre-professionals is in a tour of a facility. Certainly, I can marshal creative words to form descriptive and accurate stories of how it is 'on the inside'. Students can read the works of corrections experts that I suggest or that they find. But there is no substitute for the experience of an actual tour. A student could learn more in five minutes 'inside' than from a whole semester of lecture.

Relative to a tour, when is the best time for instructors to solicit questions about the workings of a prison or jail? Certainly, you should answer students' questions as they arise. Here are some thoughts:

1. Asking questions during a tour can be useful. That may harvest a few concepts on the fly, as new situations pop up before students' eyes.
2. Even better, is when the instructor prompts discussion just after the tour. That is, ask questions when students are no longer in the secure perimeter. This allows students a feeling of accomplishment (just like one gets off the roller coaster) and removes the psychological block of anxiety.
3. However, the instructor can get great questions from the students if he or she tells students to think about what they saw and write the questions for later.

With that in mind, there is another learning opportunity. Just as a tour will prompt the opportunity for students to ask the right questions, encouraging students to test their classmates will help them ask the right questions *in an effective way*.

When the class is assembled in a classroom after a tour or a demonstration, the instructor will divide the class into groups of 3. The class is instructed that each team will create a test about the tour or demonstration. Their classmates will take the test that they create. Naturally, each team will not take their own test, but will take all test prepared by other teams of classmates.

Give the students what you think are necessary parameters. Remember your own teaching style when setting these limits. Some instructors make a well-defined, limited teaching experience while others have students run free with creativity. So, each instructor has the option of a highly structured exercise, a high-scope paradigm (do as thou wilt sort of exercise), or anything in between. Consider the needs and personalities of your students.

Here are some notes for the process and some limits or suggestions you may offer to student as they craft their tests for their cohorts:

5. What types of questions will you ask? Will they be true or false or multiple choice? Will the questions be formed in the style of fill-in-the-blank or essay? Will there be a mixture of all styles?
6. How difficult will the tests be, keeping in mind that this is an opportunity to learn, not to stump the other team. Remember to notion of fair play versus revenge.
7. The instructor *may* encourage one trick question per test.
8. How many questions would be a good number? The instructor may leave this to the teams or impose a limit. I believe that five or ten questions may work best.
9. Assign a Recorder for each team with neat hand writing or someone who can type the quiz in a computer lab. Once the tests are created, the instructor will copy the necessary amount for distribution.
10. Have each team appoint a Corrector, someone who will go over the tests when they have been taken.
11. The instructor will appoint a Floater who will observe how the tests were created and what the other teams thought about the test. The Floater observes and reports. The Floater does not advise the teams.
12. Have teams meet in different areas to minimize espionage. There they will create the tests.
13. Remind everyone to stick to the topic (tour, demonstration) and to create the test on important points. It is about learning. The exercise is not designed to simply create a whole sheet of trick questions.
14. Copy and distribute tests and let student take them.
15. In turn, the Corrector reads the correct answers.
16. The instructor prompts the Floater to discuss nuances of the tests and encourages the teams to chime in about the process.

Asking the right question is important. Sometimes we do not ask the right question in the right way. “Who are you to test me?” is a way to place students in the shoes of the instructor and to develop empathy for fellow test takers.

## What's in the box?

A colleague of mine in a corrections agency in a Western state and found a one pound bag full of tobacco. “One whole pound!” she told me. “It wasn't hiding, it had just been tossed up there.” They figured that it was worth \$2,500 dollars inside. Good catch. Contraband control levels the playing field and keeps all inside safer.



Part of the success in that venture was to look for something, even though it may not be there. In the spirit of this coupled with the inspiration of an Early Childhood Education Professional that I know, I ask the question “What's in the box?”

This requires imagination on the part of the facilitator. Essentially, inside a box is placed an item. The box is sealed and teams have to guess what is inside.

The class is divided into teams. Teams work together lifting and shaking the box and writing observations. The observations are written, so other teams cannot easily commit espionage.

When a few minutes have elapsed, each team reports out what they know about the item by shaking and holding the box. This could be weight, shape, density, etc. Then each team is given the opportunity to guess.

If there is no correct guess, teams used their shared observations to brainstorm the answer.

This can be done with a variety of boxes. There does not have to be just one box in play for the exercise.

Here are a few objects to use:

- Brick
- Ream of paper
- A dollar bill
- Marbles
- Pens

Here are a few tips to throw an occasional curveball:

- Pack heavy items in bubble wrap
- Place a few items inside like a water bottle and a wooden block
- Lace nothing in the box – after all, there are times that offenders will pose false leads
- Put in an item with a scent - like a napkin soaked in pickle juice
- Place something unusual - like a feather

Contraband control is a never-ending proposition. It is frustrating at times. We do not always get all of the clues. “What’s in the box can put corrections staff in a good mindset to solve some of our daily riddles.

## You think that it's funny, but it's not

Let's face it, when there is scarcity, people will sink to unexpected means of obtaining and retaining things. I have heard of some prisoners who smuggled cigarettes under the sole of their shoes in order to make a sale. The 'customer' may or may not know that the product is a foot cigarette.

Below is an article that addresses some of the unorthodox ways that prisoners use fasteners of all kinds to secure contraband.



Some of it is practical and not so shocking. Others involve what many consider disgusting human fluids. But all have been used in order to circumvent the investigations of corrections professionals duty-bound to mitigate contraband threats in the facility.

This is a very simple icebreaker.

1. Break the class into groups of four or five;
2. Have them select a scribe to write the answers;
3. Have the group select a spokesperson to read the results;
4. Select a floater to observe group dynamics;
5. Distribute the "Fastener Quiz";
6. Tell the groups something like this: "Prisoners will often use what they have to conceal contraband. Sometimes, these are very shocking and disgusting manners of concealment. With that in mind, please discuss the following questions and answer to the best of your ability. You may draw on experience or theorize."



## Fastener quiz

1. What sorts of ways do prisoners hide contraband?
2. What items that prisoners can legitimately obtain from the store can be used to fasten a note under a desk?
3. What human secretions can be used to adhere a razor blade between two pages in a book?
4. Can human secretions be monitored or eliminated in a prison setting?
5. How can we stop trade in contraband?
6. What is the most disgusting means of concealment that you have seen or hear of?

The discussion may take some interesting paths. Below is an article that may be used as reference to this topic.

### *Fastening agents*

*When we think of contraband, we usually focus on the end product. Illicit goods such as spud juice, shanks, and stingers often come to mind. But what about the items that shape the final tradable commodity? What about the tools?*

*Let's not focus on traditional tools like screwdrivers, hammers, and pliers. While those are all potentially dangerous for obvious reasons, let us instead ponder something that seems less dangerous: fasteners and adhesives.*

*We can classify items that help in the distribution and manufacturing of contraband as secondary contraband. They are not end products, or primary contraband (like a razor melted into a pen barrel or a lock in a sock).*

*Secondary contraband is used to progress a contraband scheme makes them potentially perilous. Fastening agents fall into the category of secondary contraband. One can think of them as contraband's little helpers.*

*Sometimes, we forget about fastening agents. While they are not necessarily contraband in and of themselves, they are tools that assist in concealment and, therefore, increase danger in the*

*corrections setting. Anything that bonds something to a surface is a fastening agent.*

*Fasteners come in many forms, and are divided into four general categories:*

***1. Fasteners obtained from an official source***

*These are legal items that can be used as adhesives: Toothpaste, soap, deodorant, envelope flaps, adhesive bandages, and sticky deodorant labels can all be used to fasten one object to another.*

***2. Naturally produced glues***

*These are all disgusting and potentially infectious: Saliva, mucus, and semen. Of course, they are impossible to forbid, as they are naturally generated.*

***3. Illicit fastener group***

*These are fasteners that inmates can't legally obtain: Velcro and all types of glue, clear tape, and the champion fastener -- duct tape.*

***4. Construction materials***

*A common, yet overlooked adhesive is caulk or "window gunk." This is the insulating, sticky material that bonds a pane of glass to a window frame. Window gunk is easily obtained: Every cell and pod that has a window is likely to have a large store of this evenly divided along the frame.*

*The most common use I have seen for this window gunk is page adhesion. Contrabandists use this to carefully conceal keys to codes, hit lists, by-laws, love letters and betting slips between pages. These*

*are difficult to detect in a large book with many pages. Also, the neater the job is done, the more elusive it is.*

*Granted, a betting slip or a love note does not rank as high on the danger scale as a shank or narcotics. Still, instructions for a hit or a riot can easily be overlooked because of the neat application of window gunk in an unexpected place.*

*These items, in and of themselves, are not necessarily dangerous. Their danger comes from their ability to aid concealment – inmates can use adhesives to keep notes, instructions and other correspondence hidden from staff eyes.*

*The fasteners in groups one and two are particularly efficient at hiding correspondence between book pages, under meal carts, and under furniture. It takes just one dangerous note to incite a riot or plan an escape. Whatever the origin, fastening agents can be used to stow weapons under tables.*

*Let's look at two cases of fasteners from group three.*

*Velcro – I have heard of staff who altered their work clothes with Velcro to facilitate easy undressing for illicit inmate relationships. Of course, the sexual contact is just the tip of the iceberg; after they'd had sex, inmates had leverage for manipulating the compromised staff member into smuggling contraband and doing other favors.*

*Duct tape – Duct tape, whether it's given to an inmate by an officer or smuggled in by another method, is a potential source of*

*great power for inmates. With duct tape, inmates can construct false walls or floors in mobile food carts by cutting a piece of cardboard or fabric to size and taping themselves into the cart. Once the cart has been moved to an area closer to the outside, they escape.*

*How do we stop the trade in contraband fasteners?*

*I do not believe that we can completely halt the trade in contraband fasteners. Like the trade in other types of contraband, fasteners will always exist in prisons and jails.*

*Rather than focusing on stopping the trade completely, we should accept that the best we can do is reduce it and its ill impacts.*

*In the meantime, we must:*

- Continue thorough and frequent searches of all who enter the secure perimeter*
- Treat everyone who enters like they may be carrying contraband (either on purpose or inadvertently), regardless of good reputation or friendship*
- Conduct random searches of all areas of control to keep contrabandists on their toes*

*Offenders come and go, but the goals of contrabandists are pretty much constant: To use goods and services to enhance their power and personal comfort while incarcerated. This is often achieved with the use of unauthorized fasteners.*

*Handy household tips can be quite valuable inside a correctional facility. Many prisoners who endeavor to trade goods, services and information know this and use every item they can to their advantage.*

*I am sure that a book that lists 1,001 uses for common items would be a formidable (if not subtle) weapon in the hands of a contrabandist. It is amazing how seemingly useless items have a utility beyond what they appear. Window gunk falls neatly into this category.*

Love it or hate it, contraband control is crucial to maintaining order in our facilities. This keeps safe staff, offenders and the public. Some of the means used to conceal illicit goods are disgusting. But, the more we explore these tactics, the safer we will be.



## You have a boo-boo?

In any correctional setting, we cannot afford to take anything for granted. Small things can be gathered in abundance over time and transformed into something for which it was not intended. Think of a common staple and one rubber band. There is nothing too sinister there. However, with 20 rubber bands and as many staples, one can make a mace enhanced with small metal spikes and a flexible, stretch handle.

What about when there seems to be a valid need for something? What do you do when an inmate asks for something sounds reasonable? What do you do when you are asked for a rubber band? In most circumstances, you should give the offender a band aid.



Given that premise, let us suppose that over time, an enterprising and persistent inmate saved up twenty unused band aids. What, apart from applying them to a wound, would he or she do with them?

1. Break the class into teams of four or five;
2. Give one team member twenty adhesive bandages;
3. Have the groups talk about what they could use them for;
4. Have the groups review proper band aid distribution;
5. Have one person report out to the entire class;
6. Have a person on hand to write the answers on a smart board, white board or flip chart.

Here are a few answers that you might find:

- Adhere notes or shanks to the floor facing side of a table or shelf
- To disable a lock
- To camouflage cigarettes in a band aid box
- To trade for other contraband

It may be that an offender has a real need for a band aid. It is probably best to ask the inmate to show you the cut before you give a band aid. Yet, it remains that little things mean a lot. And getting a class to talk about the little things can help raise contraband control awareness.



## Would that really happen?

Movies are not necessarily reality. Television show will not always reflect how things are in the living world. Quite simply, entertainment outlets have to spice up the real world in order to retain viewers. Of course, documentaries may have a bit more reality, though not necessarily the whole truth. But that is a bit different from a sitcom or a fictionalized account in a movie.

Have you ever, as a corrections professional, viewed a movie or show about a prison or jail and cringed? Have you ever said to someone with whom you are watching this, “That would never happen”? That is one of the consequences of working in the corrections profession: We know what goes on.

These errors are sometime glaring and sometimes subtle. For example, “why are there no weapons found in this episode?” one might task.



There are shows and movies from which to choose: Prison Break, The Shawshank Redemption, The Green Mile, The Jericho Mile, Orange is the New Black, and most sitcom with a jail scene. One only need to type in prison movies or jail scenes in an internet search engine or YouTube for ideas.

For this exercise:

1. The instructor selects a clip or episode of a corrections clip in popular media;
2. The instructor tells the class to jot down parts of the clip that seem incorrect or implausible;

3. If this is a college class for corrections pre-professionals, have the class write parts that they are unsure of regarding accuracy;
4. After the clip, break pre-professionals into discussion groups. Have the group elect a leader to report on perceptions and portrayals.
5. If this is a class of seasoned professionals, the attitudes about portrayals of offenders and staff can be discussed;
6. With professionals, have them suggest the most authentic prison/jail shows;
7. With professionals, have them suggest the least authentic, most degrading prison/jail shows.

The popular media is not always accurate. Still, perception can be reality. Sometimes we fight an uphill battle to maintain respectability in the work world. This is an exercise that can help us understand how others view the profession.

Sometimes we have to ask ourselves “Would that really happen?”

## Time to take off the gloves

Because we are trained to think of everything as potentially infectious, universal precautions are important in our profession. Like teachers and health care staff, corrections professionals work in a petri dish. Can you conceive of corrections without latex gloves?

Many students with no experience inside might not even consider the risks involved in this environment of infection. But, it is up to correctional trainers and professors everywhere to impress upon them the thin barrier between them and harmful infection. There is no way to overemphasize that gloves are critical tools.

Did you ever notice that seasoned staff do almost everything in latex gloves? I now that this is not impossible. But it does take a bit of practice. It is like the first time you used a mouse – you were almost certainly clumsy, but you go used to it.

1. To start “Time to take off the gloves” select four people from the class.
2. Give each of them a pair of latex gloves.
3. All will don their gloves and perform the task appointed to them. The object is to do increasingly difficult tasks with the gloves on.
4. Appoint a judge, a pinnacle of integrity who can award points. If a glove wearer gets a hole in any part of their glove they are disqualified.
5. The person with the most points can select a small items from the box of dubious prizes as selected and compiled by any good instructor. This can be comprised of fake dog poo, plastic snakes, and the like.

Here is a sample of tasks done while gloved along with suggested point values:

- 1 point – write your name
- 2 points – zip up your coat
- 3 points – button your shirt
- 4 points – tie your shoe
- 5 points – pick up a hand full of thumb tacks without piercing the glove
- 6 points - untie a knot
- 7 points – make an origami swan
- 8 points – hammer in a nail
- 9 points - Extract the nail with the claw
- 10 points – Deal and play a hand of poker
- 11 points – counting dollar bills

In case of a tie, winner takes it all, as judged by the impartial judge - shuffle a deck of cards.



After the prize is selected, this is a great time to segue into hygiene in the corrections setting.

Those on the line take gloves for granted. Students and pre-professionals need to understand the importance of universal precautions.

## Priorities

When the toilet paper roll is empty, you change it. When the refrigerator is empty, you go shopping. Some things are easily identified as urgent.

But, it is not always so simple. Some work days feature an exhausting collection of tasks. No matter how hard you try, the jobs keep piling up.

When this happens, prioritization works wonders. Jobs that have to be done immediately get shoved to the top of the to-do list. Less urgent jobs are relegated lower. This is not rocket science. It is common sense. But do we all think in the same terms? Would we execute the tasks in the same way? Here is a way to find out:

1. List twenty different tasks for a corrections work day. See below for sample task list,
2. Note, the lower the number, the higher the priority. Number 1 means that the job must be done first, for example;
3. There are no ties. There can be no duplicate numbers. If two tasks are close in urgency, they must still be ranked;
4. Distribute a list to all in class;
5. Giving five minutes, allow each person to rank them individually;
6. After the five allotted minutes, split the class into groups of four or five;
7. Giving five more minutes, let these groups come to a consensus on the list of tasks;
8. Select a person to observe the group and note dynamics. This gives data about how we work together. It also may produce an interesting Hawthorne effect;
9. Have one person per group discuss the priorities;
10. The facilitator can ask each group these questions: “Which is the top priority?” “Which is least important and why?” “Which task was the biggest point of contention?” “Which task was easiest to prioritize?”
11. Have the observer report any group dynamics high and low points.

### Priorities worksheet

Rank the following tasks in order of importance by listing a number in the box to the left of the task. The lower the number, the higher the priority. For example, number 1 means that the job must be done first. There can be no ties. There can be no duplicate numbers. If two tasks are close in urgency, they must still be ranked with different numbers.

- Check the fire extinguishers for charge.
- Look at racks in ovens for missing metal.
- Monitor telephone calls for STG activities.
- Call home to ask about weekend plans.
- Ask supervisor for a day off.
- Write a minor misconduct for passing in the dining hall.
- Report to duress that was just reported on the radio.
- Review log book to get a feel for how things have been in the last week.
- Do a round on your wing.
- Get a new pen, as yours is running out.
- Taunt supervisor about mediocre performance of his or her favorite sports team.
- Calculate how many weeks before you can legitimately retire.
- Ask a normally positive offender who now looks sullen if he is OK.
- Call up front to see if there is any overtime available for the next day.
- Complete an accident report. A prisoner has a bleeding thumb.
- A prisoner says that he wants to harm himself.
- Your partner wants to show you photos of his Vegas vacation.
- A prisoner claims that he needs protection because he fears rape from a specific individual or group.
- Chow lines are about to start and you have a feeling that the dining hall must be searched before prisoners arrive.
- Your shift is over and you have to get to the time clock.

There is no denying it: Prioritization makes the work day easier. No two tasks are exactly alike, but they may have similar rankings in importance. In corrections, the imminence of a task must often be made in a lightning-fast manner.

## Banana Bread Waiver

There are few things that are more effective in breaking the ice than food. In fact, cooperation and opening up is probably facilitated more by a promise of leaving training early. Yet, we cannot always allow participants to leave early. We can, however, use food as an incentive to participate. In this exercise, we nourish as we instruct and lead students on a discovery about liability.



What follows is an extremely simple icebreaker:

1. Secretly appoint an observer. She or he will note reactions as the icebreaker unfolds.
2. The facilitator unveils a snack. In this case, it is ample banana bread, sliced, with a side of butter, and complete with paper plates, napkins, and coffee.
3. Timing is important. Perhaps 10:30 a.m. is a good time to spring this on the class, as it is closer to an approaching lunch than it is to the breakfast that was hours ago. In a later class or at night, pizza may be a better option.
4. Take some bread yourself and encourage the class to partake. Remember that eating (just like leaving) is a chain reaction. The group may require extra encouragement if they are not too comfortable. But when one starts, others will follow.

5. Not all will have to partake for this to have an effect. If you wait for all to get a slice of bread, you may never get started. There is almost always one shy person in the group.
6. When a few bites have been consumed, pass around a sign-up sheet.
7. Tell the students that this is a waiver and by signing they will not be responsible for any ill effects of the banana bread in the event that it makes them sick.
8. For added punch, you might demand that they sign the document.
9. Allow students to react to the latest development.
10. Assure students that this was just a test, and that the banana bread is perfectly OK to consume. You may wish to take a bite of affirmation at this point. There is no need for a waiver. This was just part of the exercise.
11. Have the observer report the reactions to the class after a few minutes. This is to be done in a subtle, non-accusatory way, taking care not to point fingers at any of the reactions.
12. Segue into the liability module.



By the way, the treat does not have to be banana bread and coffee. It can be anything that one desires. It is best, I believe, to apply the K.I.S.S. principle - *Keep It Simple, Stupid!* (Thanks to aircraft engineer Kelly Johnson for the K.I.S.S. principle.) If one goes overboard on the snack, it could overshadow the exercise. But, for each classroom, there is an instructor with different ideas.

In our profession, we have to do things correctly. Liability is always a concern. The banana bread waiver is a delicious and instructive segue into the important topic of liability.



## Reverse FISO (Forced Impromptu Speech Opportunity)

For some people, it is easy to give a speech if you have material prepared. But, you really put it all on the line when you are given a topic and told to present on it. You have no choice in the matter. You will talk on what is drawn randomly from a hat.

For those who normally are not afraid of public speaking, the impromptu speech can send waves of trepidation through one's mind. But, it is one thing for an instructor delegate this task to students and not face that fear themselves.



Are you willing to take the risk? How quickly can you think on your feet as an instructor? How willing are you to let students turn the tables on you? Are you secure enough with your speaking abilities to let students take control of the class? If so, then you are a good candidate for reverse FISO or Forced Impromptu Speech Opportunity.

This is a variation on the FISO icebreaker that appeared in the 2009 icebreaker book for IACTP and is featured on page 145 of this book. Here is an excerpt from that exercise:

*“A few years ago, a version of the following exercise was conducted in a leadership academy which I attended. I don't think that anyone knows the origin of this exercise, as it is lost in antiquity. But it is an excellent complement to any communications module. I have since used the forced impromptu speech opportunity (FISO) in corrections classes that I teach for Gogebic Community College. And, when it is all said and done, participants seem to enjoy FISO more than one would think.”*

*There are very few necessary materials for FISO. Really, one just needs one or two scraps of paper for each person present. The instructor must write one interesting (or strange) topic on each slip of paper. The slips are then folded and placed into a bucket or hat. Each student will select a topic and give a one minute speech.”*

In Reverse FISO, it is not the Instructor that forms the topics. Students break up into teams and decide what instructor will do a 1 minute speech on. Break students into teams of four or five and have them compile five different topics for a speech. The topics can be serious or unusual. It is up to the students.

Reverse FISO benefits students because they have an opportunity to think of creative or odd topics for the instructor to speak on. In the guide of putting the Instructor on the spot, this is a way for students to get those creative juices flowing. If you run a contentious or challenging class, you may face some topics designed to stump you.

Instructors benefit because they step down from control and show a more human side. If this icebreaker serves as segue into a module on how to give a speech, students can critique the Instructor.

## Top ten ways to commit professional suicide

Staff retention is important in corrections. Training corrections personnel correctly and thoroughly is expensive, but worthwhile. A crucial element of all corrections training is how to behave professionally.

In this very simple icebreaker:

1. Break students into groups of four or five;
2. Have them select a scribe and a spokesperson;
3. Students will compile 10 behaviors that will likely result in a person being terminated from employment;
4. Students will report out after ten minutes of discussion.
5. Then the instructor shows the following PowerPoint or a modified version.

10 ways to commit professional suicide in corrections

- An unabashed guide to doing the right thing
- Do the right thing?
- Most training tells us what to do
- This focuses on what NOT to do
- Why talk about this?
- Most of us operate with integrity without incentive
- Pride, upbringing and building for the future usually ensure our actions are true
- Even the “policeman at the elbow” is a good reason

- Bouchard's 100 day rule
- Corrections is generally ignored by the public
- 99 days go by with no bad news for the public
- Day 100 brings scandal – corrections is scrutinized
  
- It may be reactive and seem unfair, but it is reality
- Scandal costs corrections
  
- Bad press promotes distrust
- ...bad image
- ...a piggish agency that runs on money
- ...safety issues
- ...rise in sick, stress and annual leave
  
- Here are the 10 ways to commit professional suicide:
  - 1. Go into business
  - Start an illicit trading arrangement with the prison population
  - Weapons and drug commerce is an efficient way to engage in your own professional euthanasia.
  
  - 2. COMPLAIN
  - Loudly protest about your negative perception of your immediate supervisor.
  - Point out what you believe are all of the ineptitudes.
  - By challenging authority on every small decision, you can hasten your separation

3. DISRESPECT

- Practice the art of disrespect toward prisoners.
- Don't forget to belittle religion.
- Hurl condescending tones and phrases.
- Ask offenders what crimes they committed.
- This will not only help you lose your job, it also targets you as an unsafe element, a loose cannon

 4. Condescend

- Let your peers know that you think that you are superior to them in every way.
- Act as though you have no peers and that everyone is beneath you.
- Your grandeur attitude will guarantee your isolation and make you a prime target for manipulation by clever prisoners.

 5. HARASS

- Learn your department's discrimination /harassment policy and act contrary to it.
- It is illegal
- You may be disciplined, fired, or even incarcerated.

 6. LIBIDINIOUS

- Let your libido control you.
- Engaging in sexual contact with offenders can place an indelible label of "convict lover" on an individual.
- It is grounds for discipline and felony charges.
- What better way to commit professional suicide than appearing on the other side of the bars?

7. EMOTE Be governed by your emotions. When you remove the professional filters for your passions, you speed up your demise. Examples - mindless grousing, irrational arguing with offenders and colleagues, uncontrollable anger, and general immaturity in the line of duty. 8. DEFY Wage an illogical but tenacious battle against the entire chain of command. Be as demanding and threatening as possible toward your warden. This will place you in a position where you are under constant scrutiny. And in such cases, supervisory discretion is more likely to go against you. 9. ABUSE SICK TIME Make yourself a model of undependability. Use sick leave in an obvious pattern such as Mondays and Fridays. Call in sick to all holidays and Super Bowl Sunday. You don't even have to like football. The goal is to cultivate disrespect. 10 PREVARICATE Tell unbelievable lies. If your objective is to commit professional suicide, why not sacrifice your reputation as well? The very unscrupulous and mendacious type can grease the wheels of the rumor mill, assassinating the characters of innocent colleagues. We are good as a whole However, some will fall

- They sometimes make a loud thud heard by our stakeholders – the public
- How do we save colleagues from themselves?

(Before you reveal the rest of the slide, ask students for solutions)

- Peer coaching
- Watch
- Inform supervisor
  
- Remember the brass ring – security for staff, offenders, and prisoners
- Avoid being the bad apple on day 100
- Learn from these 10 negative examples
- Foster a safe and pleasant environment
- Be aware of the 10 ways to commit professional suicide

We all make honest mistakes. However, some staff will purposely engage in bad behavior in the course of their duties. This quick icebreaker is designed to help mitigate that small percentage of corrections staff who do not always do the right thing. This will help keep us all honest and increase safety for staff, offenders, and the public.

# **ICE BREAKERS**

# **101**

# **(2007)**



## At the Movies

Please note that IACTP is not advocating any violation of copyright laws. Ensure copyright permission is granted before showing any movie clip.

Those who work inside know that a real prison is not like those depicted in popular culture. Though we can earn our annual wage in a single, hair-raising incident, the pace is not so rapid or as colorful as in the movies. Yet, the popular media have used corrections settings and modified them to meet their dramatic purposes. Why, then, can't we use the popular media to train our staff? In this icebreaker, we use parts of movies to warm us up for training and reinforce some corrections lessons.

Not much is needed for the "At the Movies" icebreaker. The trainer has to have a VCR or DVD player, a monitor, a marker board, selected movies, pens and paper, and a little imagination.

**Option One** – Methods of intimidation. This is a good exercise to run prior to any module that deals with set-ups and manipulation.

The movie Pulp Fiction is selected here. For those who are not familiar with the film, it includes a scene where one quiet hit man (played by John Travolta) and a more obtrusive hit man (Samuel L. Jackson) with many different styles of intimidation, are in an apartment retrieving property taken from their employer. While Travolta's character is searching the kitchen, Jackson's character displays a wide range of disturbing interpersonal skills. His manner of dealing with people basically scares the recipients to tears.

Before rolling the clip, the trainer says:

*“Intimidation is defined as the act of discouraging, coercing, or inhibiting by threat. It is Latin for ‘to make timid.’ This is a widely used means for people to get what they want. In corrections, we see it all of the time. It is important for us to recognize that there are many forms of intimidation. We are going to run a five minute scene from the movie Pulp Fiction. Both of the actors that play the hit men employ different styles of coercion by threat. List the styles used.”*

Each time that I have conducted this exercise with criminal justice students (Corrections 101), different answers are offered. That is because the scene is rich with so many tactics. There is posturing, pregnant silences, elevated voice tones, whimsical questioning abruptly assassinated with torrents of loud profanity, eerie eye contact, invasion of personal space, insults, weapon brandishing, and condescension. At the conclusion of the clip, the instructor asks which methods were used and lists them on the board for reference. Trainers can direct attention to the compiled answers and poll the participants with a variety of questions.

- Which method is used most on staff?
- Which of these have you never seen?
- Which seems to be the most effective?
- Which method is used most by prisoners on new staff?
- Have you ever used any of these tactics to gain leverage?

**Note:** This film clip may be considered too graphic and contains copious profanity. However, none of it is anything that one cannot hear in a prison. Before showing any possibly controversial video clips, double check with your chain of command. Discretion, ever the friend to the wise trainer, should be used in the movie selection. If Pulp Fiction is deemed too gritty and profane, there are many other options. Here are a few that also have a heavy factor of intimidation.

- *Biloxi Blues*. It is 1945 in Biloxi, Mississippi. Christopher Walken plays a somewhat mentally imbalanced drill instructor with a quirky cadence. His character scares the wisecracking, stammering buck private played by Mathew Broderick.
- *An Officer and a Gentleman*. Louis Gossett, Jr. makes many demoralizing moves as recruits (including Richard Gere) try to survive basic training.
- *Silence of the Lambs*. A convicted killer who also happens to be a gifted psychiatrist (Anthony Hopkins) adeptly and subtly mentally intimidates a newbie CIA agent (Jodie Foster). He applies this psychological coercion only as necessary to get quid pro quo information.

Any movie that has any element of intimidation can be used effectively. One can even use non-dramatic parts of movies such as “A Christmas Story”, which features child bullies. The point is, the movie has to depict intimidation by one of the characters.

**Option 2** – Review of the prisoner disciplinary process.

The instructor says,

“Understanding the prisoner disciplinary process is key in maintaining order in correctional institutions. But fair use of misconduct reports is moot if we do not witness and recognize infractions.

Then the instructor may ask for types of charges that staff write on prisoner misconducts and lists them on the board. Examples will pour from the audience, such as assault, insolence, out of place, destruction of property, sexual misconduct, escape, etc. A one sentence summary of each charge should be given as a review.

With the list on the board, the instructor says,

“We are going to show you a film where someone escapes from a holding cell (Charlton Heston in the sci-fi classic Planet of the Apes) and wreaks havoc outside of the facility. List all of the misconducts that the escapee incurs in this ten minute clip.”

Since this is a fast moving clip, students can also verbally announce the charges as they happen. Not all students will agree on all points, so it is wise for the instructor to keep the remote control in hand. Of course, for best instruction, disagreements should be discussed in the framework of Departmental definitions.

Of course, the original Planet of the Apes is just an example. Anything with quick action and misconducts is what the trainer should seek. Western movies with a bar room brawl would work well. Music videos can also be used. In fact, one could also creatively employ a quick segment from Sesame Street.

### **Option 3 – What did you see?**

This is a variation of option two. The difference is, we are not looking for ticket-able offenses, but for minute details. The trainer could offer hints prior to starting the film such as, “Pay attention to numbers” or “Watch the hands carefully”.

Let’s take the classic situation comedy The Odd Couple as our example. The plot is not so important in this lesson as in options one and two. Any transition scene has views of New York City. A few seconds of that can be shown to the students. The instructor then asks, “What was the number on the front of the bus?”, “How many yellow cabs were there?”, or “What color was Tony Randall’s tie?”

The clips should be very brief in this option, perhaps thirty seconds or less. Once the first clip is played, the trainer can run a few more. Differences in observations can be discussed. This also serves to illustrate that people see different details, even with the same scene. Not all witnesses will have a uniform recollection of events. It is also up to the trainer to point out that the post-exercise discussion suggests that some memories are borrowed from the testimony of others.

Here are some tips to use for all of the options.

- Beware of something too profane, violent, or obscene. Though they may have a large impacting lesson, the offense that results may not be worth the lesson. It could be construed as harassment. Seek permission and use common sense.
- Always review the clip before class.
- Note where the clip begins and cue it up to avoid delay during the class.
- Remember that this is a quick icebreaker, not a film festival. So, before you tap the budget to build a formidable film library, remember that it is corrections training, not Cannes.
- Don't focus too much on the movie plot. Only a quick synopsis is necessary. Over-explaining cuts into valuable instruction time.
- Be prepared to replay movie segments to settle bets and to cool tempers. There will be disagreements in more vocal groups.
- Play only what is necessary. Be ready to disengage when tenacious movie buffs plead their cases.
- Every group will have a movie critic. Be ready to deflect the hecklers.
- Select a few students after training to assess the ice breaker. Seek suggestions for other movies that make a point. Sometimes, suggestions will come before they are sought.
- The bluntness or subtlety of all of this is in the capable hands of each individual instructor.
- Popular movies are the background to our lives. Since most attach memories to movies, the lessons may stick with more popular selections.

- But, don't overlook the power of quirk cult classics to drive home the point. Obscure gems may still make the case.

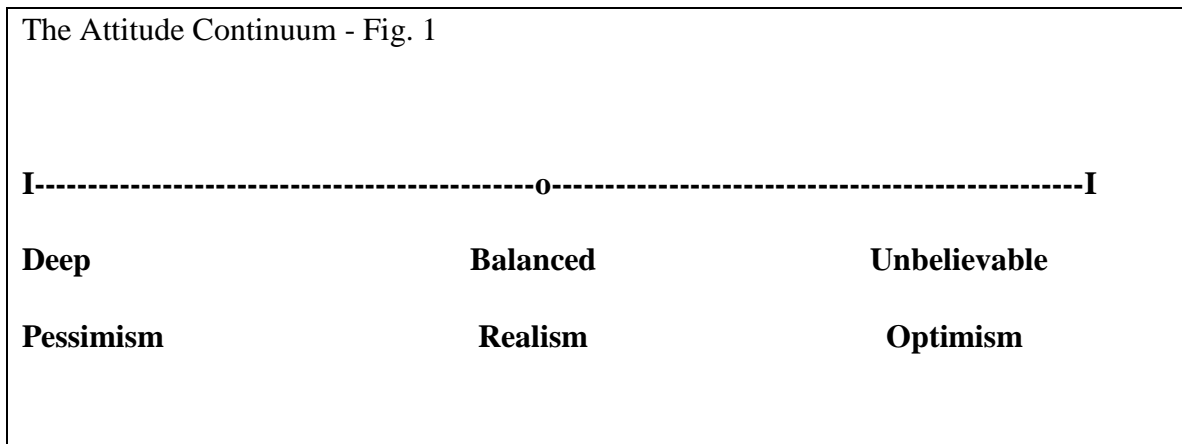
Considering how much Hollywood borrows from our corrections experiences, it makes sense to sample what Hollywood has to offer. So, take your trainees to the movies. Elucidate while you entertain.

## The Attitude Continuum Exercise

There are few things more depressing to presenters than lethargic, disinterested audiences. Therefore, an effective icebreaker is important. Not only does it serve to set the tone of the presentation, but it also engages the participants. But, wouldn't an exercise that identifies shy persons, mavericks, apathetics, charismatics, and all of those in between be of more utility? Wouldn't trainers benefit from using a tool which not only breaks the ice but also gauges audience perceptions of them?

This is where the attitude continuum comes in. This is a presenter-centered activity that requires very little extra materials. All that is needed is a board and some markers. The most important element in this instruction is the presenter using a continuum and concept as props.

The trainer would start by drawing this continuum on the board. (See Fig. 1)



Of course, the size of the continuum can be tailored drawn to fit the viewing needs of the audience and the room size. There is more flexibility in larger continuums. It is up to each

trainer to decide if increments are to be marked on the continuum. But the goal is not to conduct a scientific survey. The idea is to break ice.

Now, with the audience for the large part curious, the time comes for the introductory remarks. I usually say words to this effect:

"When considering attitudes, there are three general categories of people. They are the deeply pessimistic and the unbelievably optimistic.

The deeply pessimistic is situated at the far-left end of the continuum. This group represents the cynics on steroids. To them, there is the potential for evil in everyone. A sunny day does not mean enjoyment. It means sunburn.

At the far right end is the haven for the unbelievably optimistic. To them, positive energy is everywhere. Everything and everyone is good, in their collective estimation. From the worst circumstances come positive benefits. To the optimist, a dog bite serves as a positive warning for the future. To this group of unbridled happiness beings, the dog actually rendered a favor to the victim through the attack by promoting caution.

The third group is the largest in terms of board space and in the general population. It consists of everyone in between the two extremes. Ask yourself this question: Where am I, in general, on the attitude continuum?"

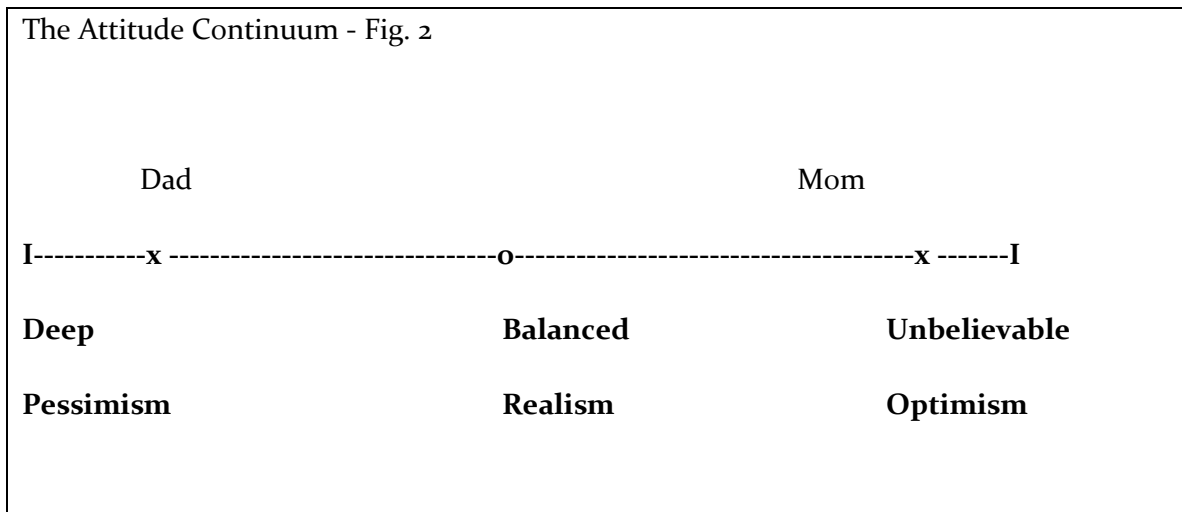
If there is time and the audience seems to need a final nudge into participation, I permit myself to get a little personal. This is where I might bring my parents' characters into



discussion. Then I allow participants to theorize where I might fit on the continuum, based on their observations and a synthesis of my parents' positions.

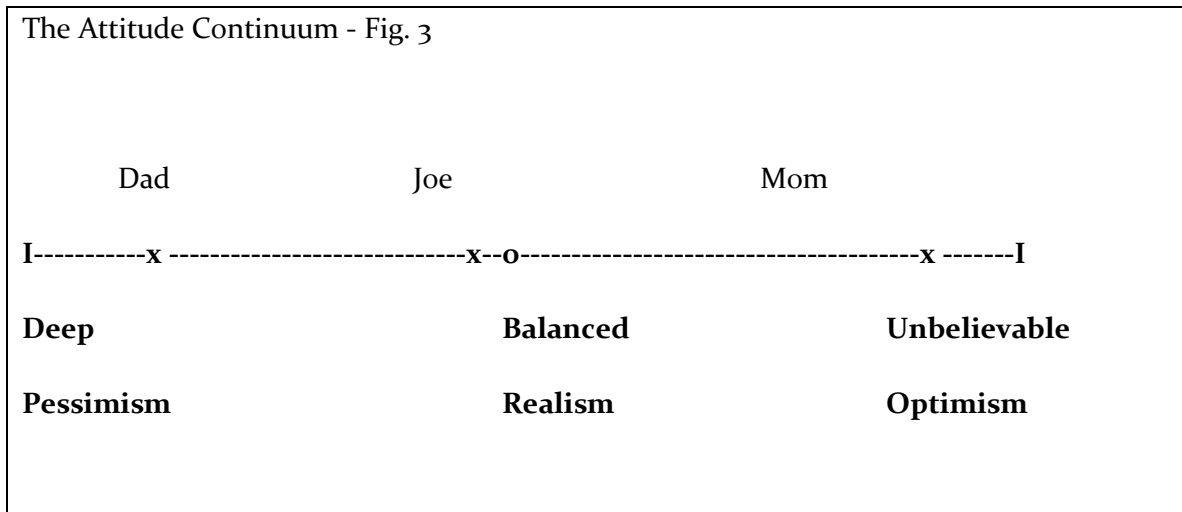
First, I draw in attendees with a description of my father's general attitude. That former United States Marine Corps Sergeant adheres to his long-term credo that one half of the world is meant to victimize the other half. Then, I place an 'X' just above the continuum, closer to pessimism than optimism.

Next, I explain my mother as a bright optimist prior to her seven medical operations that she endured in the last decade. I ask, "With all of that adversity, where do you suppose that my mother is now on the continuum?" I have not yet had a group that gave a unanimous, initial answer. Some believe that she would sink in to cynicism due to events. Others might reason that once one is an idealist, one is always an idealist. Whatever the reasoning, the latter group is the correct answer. Currently, as in the past, she is very near unbelievable optimism, perhaps even more toward the right. So, I present the session with this diagram on the board. (See Fig. 2)



Then I mention that since the audience has known me for at least five minutes, they can, based on direct observation and my reported family history, place me on the continuum. Despite the fact that I am usually just to the left of center, this question usually ushers in

many different theories. But this is where the autobiography ends. It is time to survey the audience.



The three marks on the board (see Fig. 3) may remain as anchors. The trainer can ask a sample or all participants where they would place themselves on the continuum. There will certainly be some quick answers, and some will give lengthy explanations, as well. But, this is where the presenter will start to see the different personalities shine through the normally stony faces that many wear to training.

Although I have not yet had an argument erupt over this exercise, I have seen some opposing factions manifest. In general, most attitude continuums ultimately have the bulk of participants clustered in the middle. When the self-reported data is gathered, it is good to discuss the clusters and apparent trends.

There are many purposes for this icebreaker. Some of them are:

- To allow the trainer to get a feel for the audience and develop a spontaneous presentation strategy. One could modify teaching mode to adapt to cynics or Pollyannas.
- It is a way to identify salient audience members. While looking for standouts, you might be able to defuse a potential heckler.

- It draws out some of the borderline shy audience members.
- It allows trainers to study group dynamics.
- This is not a thorough psychological assessment. Rather, it is a self-report participation exercise. It is like gauging someone's makeup based only on a handshake. People have many motives to misrepresent themselves (perhaps this is my mild cynicism talking). But, the deeper truth is not as important as the real meaning of the continuum - breathing a little life into an otherwise apathetic group.
- The audience is not stupid. Whatever answer an individual offers is their own. Do not modify answers with the dictatorship of the marker. There is really no right or wrong answer.
- Events will temper results. For example, a sample taken on the afternoon of 09/10/2001 would likely be further to the right of a survey conducted in the afternoon of 09/11/2001.
- Prepare yourself to be dissected and questioned.
- Be poised to assertively end the icebreaker. Sometimes it is almost too effective at engaging people.
- This can be used for any length of program. Of course, the abbreviated icebreaker is best for short sessions. I tend to use the extended version of this as described above when I teach Introduction to Corrections or Psychology classes. My reasoning is that if I am to spend a sixteen-week semester with the same group of students, I want to know a little about them.

Most readers, being seasoned corrections trainers, will fall near the left of center. But, if you are to the extreme right, you would have an unbridled faith in this icebreaker. If you are to the far left and doubt the utility of the above, why not challenge yourself and try this exercise? Wherever you are located on the attitude continuum, if you conduct it well, it is an effective icebreaker.

□

## **Building the Communications Puzzle:**

### **Reinforce the Importance of Good Communications**

All successful institutions have healthy communications grapevines. And one of the most important lessons in corrections, without a doubt, is that accurate intelligence gathering and sharing has immense value in our field. When different shifts, custody and programs, and even different institutions share information, overall facility security is ultimately enhanced.

So, how does an instructor instill that message? This can be done by using tangible examples of exchange of shared information. Content is better learned if it is accompanied by a good memory cue. That is where the puzzle comes in.

Metaphorically speaking, the mysteries that we are faced with every day on the job are like jigsaw puzzles. Just as we assign meaning to fragments of incoming information, we also bring together the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. The skeleton, or the edge pieces of the puzzle, is the easiest to put together. Then come the parts with the most obvious shapes, sizes, or appearance. After that, one by one, comes the fitting of each unobtrusive piece into the picture.

Conceptually, assembling a jigsaw puzzle it is no different than figuring the dynamics and specifics of a smuggling enterprise. Like puzzle parts, the information is considered and fitted into the larger picture, one element at a time – from the known to the unknown.

**Option one: Same apparent scheme, different particulars**

This is based on the notion that there are two similar events happening in any institution. But they are not identical. At this time, the trainer should provide a concrete illustration.

*It is discovered that there are two different attempts by certain prisoner groups to dominate a gym call out by coordinating written requests.*

This can be conceptually simulated by using two puzzles with the same picture, but not with the same puzzle pieces.

**Equipment needed:** two puzzles with the same picture, but with differently cut pieces. These should ideally be a puzzle with 10-25 pieces.

**Duration:** about five minutes.

Participants are told to assemble the puzzle with the pieces they have. They are not told, however, that two interior pieces from puzzle A are switched with two interior pieces from puzzle B. It is up to the instructor to nudge an information exchange between builders of puzzle A and puzzle B.

**Principle lesson:** The instructor explains that, just like the puzzles, sometimes two different events that we investigate are not exactly alike, but similar enough for information parts to be inadvertently interchanged.

**Option two: Three independent investigations**

The teacher paints this picture:

*Imagine a huge tobacco smuggling scheme where the commodity, which is forbidden in segregation units, creates a vast market. This makes individual prisoners or the group that controls the illicit commerce more powerful and, therefore, more dangerous to staff. The library staff is conducting its own investigation of how prisoners attempt to use law books as trading vehicles. Food services is researching how segregation food trays are being utilized to move tobacco into forbidden areas. Inspectors are working with case managers to secure samples of unsigned correspondence outlining the plan. The problem is, none of the three groups are compiling and forwarding their information to other parties.*

**Equipment needed:** one puzzle. This should ideally be 100 pieces.

**Duration:** about ten minutes.

Three people or three small teams are given roughly 1/3 each of the same puzzle. The pieces will be roughly divided and distributed from a completely assembled puzzle, but the pieces will not be together when they are given. That is, each independent investigator or investigation team will be able to put together all pieces provided. However, they will not be able to assemble a full picture.. The three individuals or teams will work away from each other and encouraged to finish before the other team, fostering a spirit of competition.

After a five minute period, someone will be “volunteered” to act as a liaison. That person will inform the others that they may share resources. The puzzles will eventually be brought together and solved by 3 independent investigation teams acting as one.

**Principle lesson:** The instructor explains that three competing teams will not yield the results of one team united. Some investigations extend beyond the observations, resources, talents, and work of a small team. Information sharing is crucial. Communication of findings helps to bridge the knowledge gaps and creates a fuller picture. Teams should share results to promote a safer environment.

### **Option Three: Missing Information**

The instructor tells of a scenario in which –

*A staff person overhears a very clear threat on one prisoner by another over gambling debts. The wager empire is strong, and very covert. It is so successful that the chief bookie is able to hire silent thugs to maintain control over the illegal entrepreneurial exercise.*

**Equipment needed:** This should ideally have 3 puzzles with about 25 pieces.

**Duration:** about ten minutes

One interior piece from each of the three puzzles is covertly spirited to a participating student, or retained by the trainer. As the puzzles are assembled, it becomes obvious to the assemblers that there is a missing piece. The instructor then allows the investigation teams to make inquiries of others about the missing pieces. They are prompted to make very

specific queries about the size, shape, and color schemes of the piece. If they are descriptive enough, the piece can be rendered by the holding party.

**Principle lesson:** The instructor explains that sometimes an investigation cannot become complete until the hidden information is uncovered. Sometimes we must seek that last crucial piece. Many times we fail to simply ask others what they might have seen or heard concerning the matter. Crucial information nuggets, like missing puzzle pieces, can be found if one asks colleagues.

Some considerations:

- Mix custody, programs, and administration to foster extra-area cooperation.
- This set of icebreakers is most useful when preceding any module on communications or investigation.
- Try to acquire non-controversial puzzles. Make sure that they are nondenominational and are unlikely to offend anyone.
- Aim to select participants who appear to have decent senses of humor. Do not humiliate participants with taunts.
- Of course, puzzles that feature less than 100 pieces are generally geared toward children. Therefore, there will be many childlike themes. The low number of pieces is selected for convenience of the exercise and to accommodate time constraints. It is not intended to be condescending to participants. In fact, in some cases, the whimsical themes may engage student and lighten the mood. This could promote more broken ice.
- If you intentionally select difficult puzzles, you will waste time and frustrate trainees. The idea is to buttress the notion of shared communications. The exercises are instructive. The aim is to teach about the many subtleties of sharing information. It is not a professional puzzle building competition.
- If the trainer feels compelled to buy a suggestive, double-meaning puzzle, there may be a loss of control. For example, if a class is faced with building a picture of



a cartoon rat or an animated donkey, one should be prepared for the sometimes cruel humor that come with those topics.

If we do not share observations and information, we suffer as a vocation. While there is not always an immediate manifestation of a disadvantage, information apathy eventually debilitates the whole. Many departments offer training in how to strengthen information exchange between staff. But this can be further emphasized with these seemingly simple puzzle exercises. This icebreaker runs deeper than a diversion to work one's fine motor skills. They reinforce the importance of sharing information.

## Contraband Corner

“Would anyone care for a mint? I will pass this tin around. Please, take one!”

What could be more disarming than a trainer officer distributing breath mints or candy to an audience? It is a welcoming gesture and a way to suppress coughs. But can it serve as a doorway into the nefarious art of shank making.

To start the contraband corner icebreaker, instructors will need:

- the scenario (see below)
- a working definition of contraband
- one small metal container of mints for every four participants. These can be found in any convenience store. Chewing tobacco containers with metal lids may also be used for this activity.
- one sock or piece of cloth for every four participants
- one weapon crafted from a sock and metal container of mints
- a flip chart and markers

First, refer the students to your contraband policy for a working definition. If your facility does not have a contraband policy, this definition may be used:

*Contraband is any illegal good. It is something that is not permitted in the facility. It is anything prohibited by law, rule, or policy. It is someone else's property, purloined or borrowed, or authorized property in excessive amounts. Contraband can be permitted items that have been altered without permission.*

(from page 1 of Wake up and smell the contraband: A Guide to Improving Prison Safety. (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) Horsham PA: LRP Publications, 2005, by Joseph Bouchard.)

Once you have given students the conceptual framework of the problem, make it more tangible. Hand out the scenario and read aloud.

*“One of your co-workers is a hazard. You believe that no one can be so negligent by accident. Over the years, he has misplaced many items in his office: lighters, local tourist maps, transfer bulletins, and his personal cell phone.*

*He once left his work keys on the counter while prisoners were in the building. One time, he left his office door open and was conducting personal business on the telephone. He gave his home telephone number over the phone as well as one of his credit card numbers - and within earshot of the prisoners in his area of control. Despite warnings and discipline, his reign of dangerous mistakes continue.*

*Today, he asks you why you stole his breath mints from his desk. (That is another of what many consider to be his flaws: He never takes responsibility for his lack of security and is abrasive and accusatory.) Explaining that you did not take his mints, you offer to help search for them. You ask for a description.*

*“You know,” he snarls in a tone of impatience, “they are such and such brand – the kind in the little metal box about two inches by three inches!”*

*“He has topped himself in idiocy,” you think to yourself. “Some one will get hurt because of him.!”*

*You know that there is very likely a dangerous and pliable fist full of metal floating around the facility. Of course, you call control center and expect that there will be another facility shutdown originating from this colleague’s negligence.*

*During the search, you think in terms of how that object could be fashioned into a weapon. You imagine how easy it would be to create a weapon from that mint box. Your blood chills as you ponder the possibilities...”*

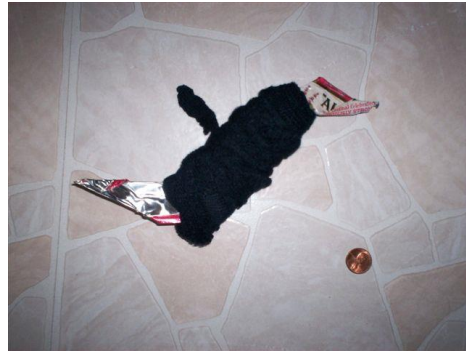
Divide the audience into groups of four. Tell participants that they represent a group of prisoners who obtained the small, metal container from the negligent staff member. Someone managed to get it to the housing unit, through the shutdowns, without detection by staff. Give one sock and one small metal container of mints to each group of four. Tell them to make a weapon out of the sock and the very bendable metal. Here are the rules:

- This must be done within fifteen minutes, as that is when the next staff rounds are scheduled
- Students can use any other materials, but these items must be things allowable in the prisoner property policy
- Be careful. If you do not issue warnings, someone may cut their finger while working on the weapon.

While the groups are making the weapons, stroll around the room. Look at group dynamics, ingenuity, and imagination at work. You may also try to imagine which students benefit from this sort of hands-on learning.

When the fifteen minutes have expired, each group will explain the methodology and results of the exercise. Notice different ways that the same material can be fashioned into contraband of different dimensions. You can even open discussion of how each weapon could specifically be used to hurt staff. Flip charts can be used to help illustrate methods.

Then, pass your version of the weapon around. Of course, as a trainer, you have the advantage of more time and thought for your weapon. I was able, for example, to make an ordinary mint tin and sock into a two-bladed fist knife. (See photo.) Note that the center of the weapon is bound in a shredded sock for a better grip.



You can lead your audience in a discussion about the merits and flaws of each weapon. With the flip chart, you can also conduct a quick contraband control survey. Solicit a volunteer to record answers on the flip chart while you ask the students these questions:

Is contraband a problem in your facility?

What is the most common contraband item?

What is the strangest contraband item you have ever heard of?

What is the most dangerous bootleg you have seen?

What are some ways to slow the flow of contraband?

This is an excellent way to get participants in the mode of security awareness and is a good lead-in to such modules.

We cannot forget that there are many cautions to this icebreaker:

- Get permission from the chain of command and the inspector to conduct this icebreaker;
- Manifest or document the metal and weapons in and out of the training room. It is extra work, but it is consistent with the lesson of security first;
- Keep an eye on the prisoner porters in the building;
- Emphasize to students that they must be extremely careful. It is wise to have a first aid kit on hand.

Remember: one person's trash is another's treasure. What you throw away or misplace can be used against you or your colleagues. This is an age-old concept in corrections. But it is an important one. You may never look at a metal mint container in the same way again!

## The Glory-Grabber Survey

It is very human to long for credit for a job well done. Yet, all of us are not the same. Motivations vary. Most of us simply want credit for our efforts – no more, no less. And then, there is the Glory Grabber. They are wired to crave credit, even if they did not do the work. What can we learn from Glory Grabbers?

These are basic instructions to use the glory-grabber continuum as an icebreaker. I have found this to be a particularly effective segue into modules on teamwork.

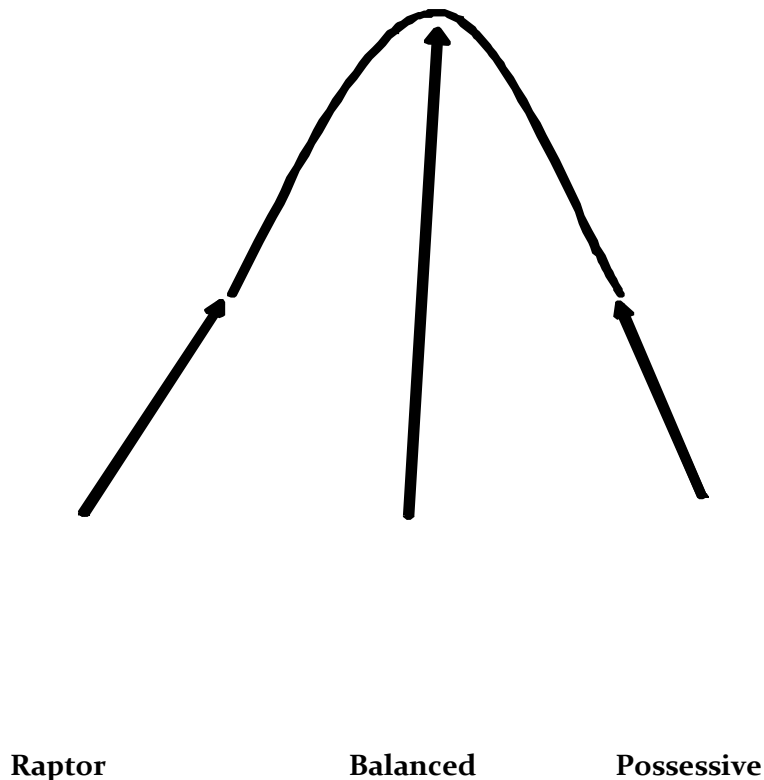
1. The concept of glory grabbers is explained as “someone who is more concerned about receiving credit for work than the final results of the work.” (See “How Glory-Grabbers Kill Corrections Committees” *The Corrections Professional* January 16, 2004, page 3.) Illustrate with examples.
2. The two archetypical Glory-Grabbers are introduced. They are the Raptor and the Possessive. **The Raptor** values quantity of credit received over quality of work performed. They would rather serve on 10 failed committees than one successful project. They are the type to fluff a resume. **The Possessive** is the ultimate solo artist who does not work well with others, resists collaboration and is obsessively territorial. They limit their success by depending only on their own labor and ideas. I have found it useful to illustrate with examples to differentiate the two archetypes.
3. Ask participants how these two varieties of glory-grabbers kill committees or group projects in their own ways.
4. After that illustration, present participants with the linear continuum. Note that there are only three elements on the continuum, Raptor, Balanced and Possessive. Raptor and Possessive in their purest forms are the ends. Every mixture of the two extremes outside of their purest form will be plotted closer to the middle. Most of us recognize ourselves as Balanced and not one of the extremes. (See figure 1 below.)

Figure 1 -- **The Glory Grabber Continuum**

Raptor-----Balanced-----Possessive

5. Mention that although the methods of the Raptor and Possessive seem diametrically opposed, they share the same goal - recognition. The continuum can also be depicted as an arc or a horse shoe (see figure 2). Think of a political continuum where Nazism and Stalinism are on opposite sides. But the ends of the horseshoe-shaped continuum could bend inward toward totalitarianism. This illustrates different methods to obtain the same goal.
6. At this point, I would plot myself on the continuum. I would explain that I used to be a 10 – the ultimate Possessive. I then state that I am a work in progress and have evolved into a 7 or 8. I always emphasize that I am honest when I hold this mirror to my face. (These sorts of confessionals are just my style of presenting these concepts.) Then I randomly choose participants to tell me where they fit into the scheme of things. I place a hash mark where directed.

Figure 2 -- **Glory-Grabber Continuum – Horse Shoe**



7. The clustering effect that results is a good discussion point.



8. Data can also be gathered by distributing a paper survey. It is a relatively short survey with just two sections to complete. First, is the quantitative data. The participants simply would mark their position on the continuum with an X. The continuum runs from 1 – 10 for ease in quantification. (See Figure 3). Next, participants are encouraged to write comments about the topic in the space provided.

Figure 3 -- The Glory Grabber Survey

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Raptor-----Balanced-----Possessive

I have used this icebreaker with a quite a bit of success. I suppose that I measure success by audience participation. Corrections personnel that have participated in this seem to enjoy telling which category they fall into.

It would be interesting to compare corrections professionals to other professions in this regard.

Glory Grabbers will be with us as long as human interaction exists. It behooves us to understand the motivations of others. Many misunderstandings and animosities are mitigated when we delve a little deeper than the surface impression. Another purpose of this exercise it to hold the mirror to oneself and ask, “Am I a Glory Grabber?”

## Mission Statement Analysis

Sometimes, an icebreaker can be a skull breaker as well. But that is not meant in a literal and sadistic sense. What we are talking about is creating a quick intellectual challenge for those in the classroom. Some may contend that it is not wise to demand too much from the audience when warming them up. However, this is not always true.

There are instances where we want to start a training session in an abstract manner. This is useful if the intent of the training is to tap into the analytical skills of the students. In the interest of initiating a conceptual mindset among participants, here is a way to raise the bar early in the training day.

### **Materials needed:**

- 1 marker board
- some markers
- scrap paper
- a real or invented mission statement

The trainer presents the classroom with a mission statement on the marker board.

### **Sample introductions**

Trainers can tailor an introduction to fit the mood of the audience, the basic climate of the department, or his or her own inclinations. Here are a few samples:

“Mission statements define an agency. They are the broad statements that show the reader how we intend to perform our jobs as a department. Our mission statement is found at the beginning of the very first policy directive. It is written on the board. Consider it. Is this something that represents what we do? What is good about it? What needs revision?”

**Or**

“Today you have a chance to change the department. You are given a copy of a mission statement, the statement that is the roadmap to our operations. It was written twenty years ago and is in need of revision. How would you as a policy maker change the words? What should remain as appropriate? Let’s look at the good and bad about this statement.”

**Or**

“The Director of your agency wants to make sweeping, positive changes in the culture of your workplace. As a start, the statement of purpose policy is coming under scrutiny. In making a revision, the Director must modify the mission statement and is seeking input. What ideas would you give to the Director?”

**Or**

“Let me ask you this: Did you ever notice that there are some people that do allot of complaining and never offer answers? They seem to have a problem for every

solution. But, most of us are willing to search for a better way of doing things. Let's suppose that we have a mission statement that is broken due to old age and complex language. How would you fix it?"

Students are then asked to consider the meaning of the words. They are instructed to list all the things about the mission statement that they would change. After a few minutes of silent analysis, students are to write down as many good things about the statement as possible.

Then, a recorder can volunteer or be appointed. With the trainer guiding the audience in questions, the recorder will compile ideas from the audience on a marker board. The items, of course, will be written in either a "pros" or "cons" column.

Group dynamics can be studied during the sharing of ideas. Sometimes, it is useful for a trainer to witness who the players are in the group; the talker, the thinker, the affirmer, the denier, the cynic, etc.

### **How to prompt participation**

Perhaps the audience is not forthcoming with voluntary answers at first. It is up to the trainer to facilitate a little discussion. Here are some questions to ask the class.

- What works well in this statement?
- Is the language too formal or too colloquial?
- Is the word order good or is it clumsy?
- If it seems too long, what can be eliminated from the word count without altering the meaning?
- Will it have longevity or is the wording time-specific?

It seems natural that criticism flows easier than praise for most people. When there is a lull in comments, ask the group what they dislike about the statement. This usually nets many more comments. When this is done, turn toward the merits of the statement. Balance the negative with the opposite side of the coin.

### **Pitfalls and solutions**

- The fleet will go only as fast as the slowest ship. Explain the ground rules so all will understand. Accept that this may not always be a fast-moving exercise.
- If you do not state what a mission statement is, you may have problems with people grasping the process. In your introduction, you may explain that *a mission statement is a statement that is a roadmap to our operations. Mission statements define an agency. They are the broad statements that show the reader how we intend to perform our jobs as a department.*
- Some people may not wish to participate. Take the load off of them by initially splitting the group into a few committees to look at the mission statement.
- Some may be put off by this group activity. You may obtain a few samples of mission statements and show students a few ways to dissect them.

### **Crafting your own sample statement**

You do not have to use your own department's statement. You may not have permission to scrutinize your own statement. It may not be under official scrutiny. But it is easy to create your own working mission statement.

- “Frankenstein” a sample from various bits of others found on websites. Do not limit yourself to corrections statements. Go also into the private sector
- Plant your own grammatical nightmares
- Place some spelling errors
- Put in a logic flaw

### **One sample mission statement**

Following is a mission statement that does not exist in real life. Its structure was derived from an existing statement and components came from others. You will not find this verbatim on any web site or in any state capitol. Trainers may use this, complete with its planted flaws, to inspire discussion. The mistakes are intentional. A simple spelling error may inspire an analytical avalanche.

*This agency, by using constitutionle standerds and correctional principals, will keep citizens of this state secured by cooperating with all aspects of law enforcement, and work with the sentencing courts, carrying out sentences given to convicted adult felons in a fiscally sound, benevolent manner.*

Some of the errors and other concerns are:

- “Consitiutionle” is misspelled.
- “Standerds” is also misspelled.
- The wrong “principals” is used.
- “State” could be capitalized.
- Word flow is inconsistent: tenses are mixed: secured, work, carrying.
- The statement is a 44 word long rambling paragraph. The intended reader has no time to rest. This could easily be broken down into two or three sentences.
- There are no catch phrases. This is not very memorable.

**Conclusion**

Mission statements are crucial building blocks in any agency's philosophy. Therefore, it is important for employees to consider them. And there are times that instructors need to get participants to think in a conceptual manner. The mission statement analysis exercise does this.

**MISSION STATEMENT EXERCISE WORKSHEET**

Consider the following mission statement:

*This agency, by using constitutionle standerds and correctional principals, will keep citizens of this state secured by cooperating with all aspects of law enforcement, and work with the sentencing courts, carrying out sentences given to convicted adult felons in a fiscally sound, benevolent manner.*

Using the spaces below, list what could be changed, with your rationale. Then list what is good about the statement along with rationale.

Changes needed and reason

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Positive parts and reason

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



## The Race to Find Contraband

Do you remember the first time that you did a word search? Was it in elementary school when you were given an assignment to complete one?

Often times, word searches are not so much work as they are a game. Wise educators know this. They take advantage of this method to drive home vocabulary words and other concepts. Word searches combine fine motor skills, logic, strategy, and visual activity.

Yet, while these activities provide fun, they are not frivolous or empty. Uncovering concealed words is a task that offers the reward of success. It is no wonder that a love of word searches follows us into our adult years.

In terms of training corrections staff, metaphorically speaking, completing a word search is like searching for contraband. You never know how easy or difficult the search will be until it is over.

Before this is dismissed as just another word search exercise, consider that this is a three-level analogy. This is designed to illustrate the different levels of information that one may obtain in any contraband search.

The three essential levels of the contraband search are **solo**, **with clues**, and **assisted**. Each phase is increasingly easier, building from the previous part. Armed with copies of a pre-made word search (figure 1), the instructor guides participants through three separate segments of the hunt that will surely break the ice.

**Phase 1 - The solo search**

The instructor explains that sometimes we search for things without any specific target, because we are not told what to search for. In cases such as these, we are literally clueless.

The instructor distributes the word search **without** the list of items to be found. The only clues offered at this point are that there are ten items and all of them could be considered contraband. The class will work independently for a few minutes.

**Note:** This is the most difficult stage. Therefore, there may some grouching at this point from the students. The complaints may center on the seeming simplicity of the exercise. Alternatively, others may protest when the search turns out to be more difficult than it initially appears. However, the creative and patient trainer will know how to handle these responses and move the lesson forward. As with many icebreakers, there is a method to the madness.

**Phase 2 – Working with clues**

There are other times that we have a notion of what we need to find. It may belabor the obvious, but when we know what we seek, we can develop different strategies to make the quest easier.

The instructor distributes the list of words to find (figure 2) in the word search (figure 1). Again, the class will work independently for a few minutes.

**Phase 3 Assisted**

The search for contraband becomes easier still when we collaborate. To finish this word search, solo participants are told to share resources.

A friendly competition to finish the puzzle may develop between teams. However, if not all words are found, the instructor could distribute the answer key (figure 3).

After that, the facilitator could offer a contraband war story or two from the institution's history. That will certainly break further ice as discussion and reminiscence develop. This is an excellent device to use when teaching such courses as custody awareness, teamwork, and contraband control.

The search for contraband is important for all facilities everywhere. From the smallest county lock-up to the largest maximum security prison, it impacts all corrections professionals. Contraband control is a deep subject, complete with many facets, concepts, and examples.

But the best way to start an educational journey into eliminating illicit goods in our facilities is with tangible examples. Something as simple as a word search presented in three different phases may help staff think of the search in different, more productive ways.

P	P	N	O	W	E	R	N	A	L	P	E	P	A	C	S	E	T	I	S
A	O	W	A	K	E	U	P	A	N	D	G	I	V	E	H	O	O	P	N
S	P	R	T	G	F	D	S	E	C	O	O	O	V	P	R	E	D	M	R
D	P	D	N	V	A	R	I	C	A	T	I	O	N	I	I	N	M	O	L
F	E	E	S	O	A	M	E	T	A	L	G	B	F	N	N	A	R	D	E
J	R	T	I	R	G	T	D	I	R	R	O	N	R	N	S	R	B	O	S
T	D	R	N	A	K	R	I	A	D	I	E	I	O	U	I	R	O	O	Z
D	K	O	E	K	A	C	A	D	N	P	A	T	E	M	O	U	S	S	E
C	N	I	E	N	T	A	T	P	I	A	G	A	T	B	O	U	N	C	D
C	A	T	N	E	W	Y	O	R	H	R	U	T	E	E	I	C	N	L	K
R	H	E	F	J	E	F	E	D	G	Y	M	J	Y	R	L	U	R	L	N
G	S	T	A	M	P	O	D	N	A	L	R	O	I	G	X	E	B	E	L
I	F	J	H	U	P	B	C	H	I	C	H	A	G	R	L	O	V	C	E
B	B	F	T	E	N	D	E	S	H	A	N	T	F	S	A	K	U	O	M
D	I	L	I	O	U	N	B	H	T	R	G	R	W	G	M	M	J	E	L

**Figure 1 - The contraband word search**

**Word List:**

Escape plan

Food

Love letter

Marijuana

Metal

Mirror

Pin number

Pornography

Shank

Stamp

<u>P</u>	P	N	O	W	E	R	<u>N</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>E</u>	T	I	S
A	<u>Q</u>	W	A	K	E	U	P	A	N	<u>D</u>	G	I	V	E	H	O	O	P	N
S	P	<u>R</u>	T	G	F	D	S	E	C	O	<u>Q</u>	O	V	<u>P</u>	R	E	D	M	<u>R</u>
D	P	D	<u>N</u>	V	A	R	I	C	A	T	I	<u>Q</u>	N	<u>I</u>	I	N	M	<u>Q</u>	L
F	E	E	S	<u>Q</u>	A	<u>M</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>L</u>	G	B	<u>F</u>	<u>N</u>	N	A	<u>R</u>	D	E
J	R	T	I	R	<u>G</u>	T	D	I	R	<u>R</u>	O	N	R	<u>N</u>	S	<u>R</u>	B	O	S
T	D	R	N	A	K	<u>R</u>	I	<u>A</u>	D	I	<u>E</u>	I	O	<u>U</u>	<u>I</u>	R	O	O	Z
D	<u>K</u>	O	E	K	A	C	<u>A</u>	D	<u>N</u>	P	A	<u>T</u>	E	<u>M</u>	O	U	S	S	E
C	<u>N</u>	I	E	N	T	A	T	<u>P</u>	I	<u>A</u>	G	A	<u>T</u>	<u>B</u>	O	U	N	C	D
C	<u>A</u>	T	N	E	W	Y	O	R	<u>H</u>	R	<u>U</u>	T	E	<u>E</u>	I	C	N	L	K
R	<u>H</u>	E	F	J	E	F	E	D	G	<u>Y</u>	M	<u>J</u>	Y	<u>R</u>	<u>L</u>	U	R	L	N
G	<u>S</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>P</u>	O	D	N	A	L	R	O	<u>I</u>	G	X	<u>E</u>	B	E	L
I	F	J	H	U	P	B	C	H	I	C	H	A	G	<u>R</u>	L	O	<u>V</u>	C	E
B	B	F	T	E	N	D	E	S	H	A	N	T	F	S	<u>A</u>	K	U	<u>Q</u>	M
D	I	L	I	O	U	N	B	H	T	R	G	R	W	G	M	<u>M</u>	J	E	<u>L</u>

Figure 2 - The solved contraband word search

## **Teamwork - The perfect partnership**

Division is everywhere. We do not always get along. And in corrections, this is more than just a disappointment. Fighting between colleagues means danger in the facilities.

All is not lost. The dangers that come with staff division are repaired with an atmosphere of teamwork.

What is teamwork? It is when at least two people work together for the same goal. For example, the goal can be to get from one place to another. Teamwork is achieved when one person drives the vehicle and another gives directions to the driver. Teamwork can be as simple as a two person team collaborating to change a flat tire. Or it can be as involved as a multi-year, multi-nation war effort.

Whether it is just two colleagues or hundreds of millions of people, teamwork can be defined in very few words: support, help, collaboration, joint effort, cooperation, solidarity, and assistance.

Think of a world without teamwork. Civilization as we know it would not exist. There would be no scientific advances. Language would be an individual thing. There would be no culture transmitted. The family unit would not exist in the sense that we are familiar with. It would be a dog eat dog world. The human race, if not wiped out, would be reduced to individual animals.

Corrections would be a mess without teamwork. The state inside our facilities would be complete anarchy. One of the common goals of corrections is to keep prisoners, staff and the public safe at all times. Helping one another in corrections is not just a nice gesture. It can mean the preservation of life.

A simple way to demonstrate teamwork is in the basic one on one interview. If you think about it, this is a two person team whose goal is to exchange information. Have one person ask the following questions and one person answers them. Allow the other participants to act as observers. Have them to note the dynamics and dual effort of the following:

- 1. Tell me about yourself.**
- 2. Tell me something about a past job.**
- 3. What is your best strength?**
- 4. Tell me about your weakness.**
- 5. Would you rather be a hammer or a nail?**
- 6. Why do you want this job?**
- 7. Do you have any problem working on weekends?**
- 8. Who is your hero?**
- 9. Where do you see yourself in five years?**
- 10. What one thing should I remember about you when you leave this interview?**

After the interview, it is important to ask the observers what they saw. Here are some sample questions:

- Was there a fair amount of give and take?
- Was there a teamwork atmosphere?
- Was there tension?
- Did the interviewer help the other person by explaining questions as needed?

Anti-team option - Of course, an anti-interview can be planned, as well. Prior to the module, you can pre-select two participants to purposely act in difficult ways toward each other. There are many possibilities, the angry interviewer, the bored interviewer, the passive-aggressive interviewee, etc. The sky is the limit. And this is an effective way to show the difference between good teamwork and horrible cooperation.

## The Telemarketer Icebreaker

In corrections, we often use our assertive persona. It is a way of dealing with constant conflict. And it is something that we do not fully employ on the outside. Of course, inside the walls we need various modes of abrupt blocking of what seem unreasonable requests and manipulation. Inmates use many methods of persuasion to enhance their comfort, to gain advantages, or to actually obtain what they are legitimately entitled to. The successful corrections professional learns to accept that as a vocational truth. We also adapt many different strategies to answer prisoner requests ranging from reasonable to ridiculous.

The telemarketer icebreaker is a good warm-up for any training designed to thwart manipulation. It is an exercise that allows us to discuss how to defuse someone with an interest in persistent influencing. It also permits us to look at how we react to pressure to accept or decline an idea (or product) at work versus how we operate at home.

Such an icebreaker has a broad appeal. Every one of us has had to find strategies in dismissing unwanted telephone solicitors. And it is a natural lead-in to the module that covers coping with difficult people.

The entire group will be broken up into teams of four or five members. The items needed are very basic. Each team will need:

- two large sheets of paper, or a marker board
- some markers

The most important element, as always, is a good trainer. First, that person has to present the scenario. Participants are told:



“You are at home enjoying some down time or a good meal. It happens that the answering machine is off. The phone rings and you answer. On the telephone is Chip, a telemarketer from Sellico, Inc. After Chip butchers your last name, he persistently offers you a product that you don't really want. A simple, "No thank you," does not deter our persistent entrepreneur.”

Two questions will be asked from this scenario. It is a two-step process of participation, divided into the ideal and the real. Question one asks for the *ideal*. Then question two begins the more creative brainstorming as we seek the *real*.

The first question goes to the groups for them to discuss. How do you disengage the sales pitch of the very eager Chip from Sellico Inc.? But it has to be done in a professional manner. The object is not to hurt the professional feelings of Chip, who after all has to make a living. So, each group has five minutes to come up with one answer to the question: ***What do you say to a tenacious telemarketer to conclude the conversation in a way that neither party is belittled?***

The answer to question one is written on the marker board or on paper. It has to be large enough for all of the participants to see. One person from each group is elected (or appointed) as the spokesperson. The spokesperson presents the professional answer to getting Chip off your phone line. Remember to tell the students that only one answer is needed for this question.

Then the second question goes to the groups for discussion. It is like the first. How do you disengage the sales pitch of the very eager Chip from Sellico Inc.? But this time, any method can be used. Anything goes with this. So, each group has ten minutes to come up with as many answers as they can to the question: ***How can you end a conversation with the telemarketer? There is no limit to what you can say.*** The trainer must mention at this

point that the answers do not have to be professional. (I am concerned with “the answers do not have to be professional??”) In fact, this is where the ingenuity of participants comes out. Ideas are discussed and written down. Each group spokesperson takes a turn to share the contributions of their group.

The icebreaker could end here or continue in a number of ways:

- The trainer could have someone tally the most common responses.
- The instructor could ask for patterns. Are the different tactics compiled easily grouped into broader categories such as rudeness, deflection, or politeness? Do any answers fit into detached professionalism, assertive confrontation, or turning the tables? Are there other categories than those listed? (See figure 1.)
- Participants can vote on the most effective idea and what they think is the most professional idea.
- Handouts such as the one below can be distributed. Students can take a test by completing the two right columns. The "is this professional" column addresses the first question that students tackled. The "does this work" column parallels the no-holds-barred method of question two. In instances where "it depends" is selected in either of those columns, this produces fodder for discussion.
- Each trainer has a choice as to how much disclaiming there will be on using telemarketers as scapegoats. The level of tying this into the module is at the instructor's discretion.
- Trainers can use a salient point discovered by participants as a segue into the module on dealing with difficult people.

Yes, dealing with difficult people is not pleasant. And, we share a common bond of persistent sales persons. Yet, this icebreaker uses these common and disagreeable experiences to illustrate the many ways we react to persuasion and manipulation both on and off work.

Figure 1 – The Telemarketer Grid

<b>Strategy - this is the broad idea</b>	<b>Tactic - specific example of strategy</b>	<b>Is this professional? (Circle one)</b>	<b>Does this work? (Circle one)</b>
Rudeness	"Go jump in the lake!"	Yes. No. It depends.	Yes. No. It depends.
Disengage	Hang up phone	Yes. No. It depends.	Yes. No. It depends.
Insert linguistic barrier	Talk in a foreign language	Yes. No. It depends.	Yes. No. It depends.
Confuse	Talk in gibberish or express yourself in disjointed phrases	Yes. No. It depends.	Yes. No. It depends.
Lie	My sister (or dog, or cat, or neighbor) has just gone into labor! I cannot talk now!"	Yes. No. It depends.	Yes. No. It depends.
Postpone	Put person on hold	Yes. No. It depends.	Yes. No. It depends.
Confrontation	"You called me! You seem to have more interest in this than I do!"	Yes. No. It depends.	Yes. No. It depends.
Insult	There are really too many options to list	Yes. No. It depends.	Yes. No. It depends.
Polite, empathetic	"I am truly uninterested. However, I imagine that this is not necessarily an easy job. Good luck to you today!"	Yes. No. It depends.	Yes. No. It depends.
Turn the tables	"Would you like an interruption in your rest time like this one?"	Yes. No. It depends.	Yes. No. It depends.

Potty humor	"I can't talk now. I have to use the bathroom."	Yes. No. It depends.	Yes. No. It depends.
Profanity	%*^\$*(&)(*\$^@!!	Yes. No. It depends.	Yes. No. It depends.
Deflect	"I am in the process of getting on the national 'DO NOT CALL' list."	Yes. No. It depends.	Yes. No. It depends.
Inquiry	"Do you really endorse the product?"	Yes. No. It depends.	Yes. No. It depends.

## "That" Punctuation Icebreaker

(This icebreaker is inspired by a scene from the movie "Charly" from Selmur Pictures)

Things are not always as they appear. And this icebreaker proves this to be true. Can you keep a group of people occupied for fifteen minutes by using two sheets of paper, 37 words, and one pen per team? Can a collection of three words repeated and arranged in a seemingly disorganized way inspire corrections professionals to work together in decryption? The "That" Punctuation Icebreaker is designed to do that and more.

To start this icebreaker, the trainer delivers the scenario:

During a routine search, staff find a strange message in the cell of a prisoner leader who advertises himself as a philosopher. He is also a bit of a trickster, taking pleasure in confusing staff whenever possible. The note reads...

"Do you think that you know how to separate ideas with punctuation? How well can you make a cohesive set of thoughts from a chaotic body of words?"

"Using the following group of words, place punctuation to make eight sentences. The words are in order. There is no need to subtract or add words. When completed properly, this should make a sensible group of sentences. Here are the words."

<p><b>that that is is that that is not is not is that not it is is that that is that that is not it is not is that that is not that that is it is not</b></p>
---

“Not to condescend too much, but I have provided a list of punctuation with the frequency that they appear in my note. I am sure that some of you will need no help on the capitalization.

Hints:

Punctuation	Time featured in word group
Comma ,	10
Period .	2
Question mark ?	3
Exclamation point !	3

“This could all mean nothing. But, then again, it could mean something. And what if it is something important? Are you up to the task to match wits with me?”

Participants should be told that all of the hints given by the prisoner are not false. Nothing is misleading. The words are in order. There is no need to add or to subtract words. There will be eight sentences that compose a sensible, cohesive message. The words are not gibberish when the punctuation is properly inserted.

After the class is divided into small teams of three or four individuals, the enigmatic note is distributed to all teams. (See **figure one - "That" punctuation exercise**).

The trainer allows the groups ten minutes to work on the puzzle. If at the end of ten minutes there is no apparent progress, the instructor may use the answer sheet and write the first three punctuated sentences on the board. Five more minutes can be granted to the teams to solve the puzzle based on the pattern just provided by the trainer. When the time has

expired, the spokesperson of each team delivers the finding of the group. Then the trainer passes out the correct answer for all to review. **(See answer below)**

In addition to an icebreaker, this exercise develops other skills and ideas:

- Sets working example of group dynamics and problem solving methods
- Shows how to clarify, aiding in business and misconduct writing
- Illustrates the idea that sometimes prisoners advertise messages as very important, but the message may actually be unimportant
- Indicates that sometimes puzzles are more simple than they initially seem. One just has to have a pattern established to clarify.
- It is a good decryption exercise, demonstrating how to work from the known to the unknown.
- Develops speaking and presentation skills

This icebreaker is a good segue into several different modules. Among them are: manipulation prevention, testing observation skills, following directions, and teambuilding workshops. Also, this icebreaker might appeal to institutional teachers and spark interest among the intellectual types among staff.

Truly, things are not always as they appear. What looks to be a jumbled collection of repeated words actually turns into a bit of philosophy. But the importance of this lies in introducing staff who would not normally work on problem solving together.

**"That" exercise answer sheet**

That, that is, is.

That, that is not, is not.

Is that not?

It is!

Is that, that is, that, that is not?

It is not!

Is that, that is not, that, that is?

It is not!



## Thinking with a Twisted Mind

“You have a twisted mind. But, that is a good thing.” That is not some cheesy line from a Jon Cryer B-movie. It is a vocational truism. And it is the basis of this icebreaker.

A good way to jump start a module on security awareness is to give the following introduction.

“Do you know someone who thinks with a twisted mind? I do not mean someone with a convoluted sense of morality. Nor, do I refer to a perversion of any sort or an unorthodox sense of humor. One can think with a twisted mind and become an effective part of security. In this case, I refer to the contraband hound.

Contraband hounds are important in corrections and in criminal justice because they can see beyond the normal uses of items and apply other practical uses. They sniff out illicit schemes. Like the television series MacGuyver, contraband hounds can conceive a working battery pack out of tape, radio wire, and toilet paper tube. Contraband hounds are present in all classifications in our profession. Please take a few minutes to take the following test.”

Once participants are thinking in this way, give each of them a 25 question test on contraband. All questions are true and false.

## Thinking with a twisted mind

### Contraband Knowledge Test

Please read and answer each question as True or False.

1. Some common plants on many prison yards can produce a sense of euphoria if ingested.
2. Sugar substitutes can burn.
3. Diapers are a way that some have moved narcotics into visiting rooms.
4. Hollowed candy bars can serve as a vessel for contraband.
5. “What color is your car?” also means “what color book will you put the contraband in?”
6. The hollowed book is not just a Hollywood cliché. It is a living demonstration of a ‘classic’ means of moving bootleg.
7. Mucus, semen and saliva (disgusting as it seems) can be used as adhesives. Utilizing any of those glues, one can hide a thin item between book pages and escape detection.
8. Soap also serves as an adhesive. So, a good-smelling book may mean there is contraband inside.
9. Heat and salt packets applied to some metals can act as a hardening agent.
10. Spud juice or institutional alcohol can be made from many more things than potato peelings.
11. Tic tac toe grids and dots serve as a basis for many coded languages.
12. Coded language is important in sustaining contraband empires.
13. There have been actual cases where snakes have been captured by inmates to intimidate their neighbors. This living contraband is seen by many as a formidable weapon.
14. Magician’s tricks such as the false back of a table have been used in escapes.
15. Aluminum light fixtures are the source of many prison made knives.

16. An empty eye dropper is dangerous and can actually spread infectious diseases.
17. Some prisoners will make loud diversions so quiet trades can be made away from the attention.
18. It is simple to conceal small amounts of drugs near the adhesive part of any envelope.
19. When prison made weapons are in motion, they look bigger and more dangerous than when they are stationary.
20. Black markers and white out can reassign property, alter documents and even assist in escapes.
21. Forming moistened newspaper with the hands, and time are ingredients in making an effective club.
22. By photocopying a gun and applying the photocopy to a piece of carved soap, a prisoner may take a hostage.
23. Soap sculptures made by inmates may not be just aesthetically pleasing. They can serve as a safe place for prisoners to hide valuables.
24. Sleight of hand is not only the mark of a good magician, it also aids contrabandists.
25. Insufficient postage and the return address of another prisoner is a way that some contrabandists fool staff into inadvertently moving bootleg.

**Note:** This is a very easy test to grade. All of the above are true. This may become evident to the test takers as they proceed. But the point is not to make a college level test. The goal is to get staff to think about ways some prisoners use every day items to violate rules and ultimately breach security.

In fact, the instructor and students may know of many of these methods. This can be demonstrated as the facilitator reads each of the 25 statements and ask participants if they have ever seen these contraband tricks. That is not just a way to loosen up the students. The discussion also is a way to share information between areas that may not normally converse.

**Note:** This icebreaker may be used in criminal justice classes. Students who have no experience in the field will benefit from some of these strange but true facts.

**Warning:** Keep this test away from all prisoners. Treat it as it were a transfer list. To be sure, prisoners may know the following concepts. But we do not need to make our facilities less safe by disseminating this collected knowledge.

Now more than ever, it is important to see the alternate use of seemingly innocent items. Our world has changed. In the last few years, we have been exposed to shoe bombers, cell phone detonators, and liquid explosives housed in cosmetic containers. In short, we need more corrections professionals to try to imagine motives and means of would-be contrabandists. In other words, we all need to think with a twisted mind. The security of staff, prisoners, and the public at large depend on it.

## **“Wait! There’s more!” A Look at Advertising**

Many outside forces are trying to manipulate you. They are incessant and reappear in different forms dozens of times each day. They purposefully endeavor to appeal to your emotions, security about yourself, and your ambitions. Their goal is to dictate what you do with your money and time.

Is this the devious labor of some sort of dictatorial society or a nefarious cult? No. It is the chief goal of the advertising industry. One of the aims of commercials is to persuade the public to gravitate to a product. Whether one thinks of this as a bad deed or a necessary lubricant for the wheels of commerce, it is alive and well.

In many ways, manipulative persons are like commercials. They try to get others to buy into their product or agenda so they can profit.

Corrections professionals can identify possible manipulators. This helps us to counter threats to ourselves and staff who may fall victim to those who would endeavor to orchestrate set ups. The greater our experience and awareness, the better we are at coping with exploitation that comes from handlers. In other words, through our experiences, we know how and when to deal with coercion. This may sound cynical, but it is part of our job.

The above is some food for thought for trainers who may use this ice breaker. However, the first thing the facilitator should do after some introductory remarks is to issue a disclaimer. It can be borrowed from the following.

*“We are in no way endorsing the following products. Nor do we seek to denigrate the products. It is not an exercise in product testing. We are, however, looking at the tactics that some commercials and infomercials use to sell their product.”*

With that said, the instructor could provide some visuals for the audience. While watching, the participants will write down phrases, strategies, tactics, and other means which advertisers utilize to maximize advertising effectiveness. The instructor has a few options for the visuals:

**Option 1** “Recorded commercials” – The facilitator can record portions of selected infomercials and play them for the class. This option will hold the fewest surprises since the instructor knows the content.

**Option 2** “Live” – Turn on the television in the class room and surf through the channels. Hunt for infomercials. This will only be as effective as the time of day and the channel capacity provided in the training room. Infomercials are often shown in the late night or early morning, though some are shown throughout the day. It is up to the instructor to check ahead. I actually tested this option on a class of college students enrolled in a corrections/criminal justice class. It was more effective than I could have hoped. After the first few commercials and a prompt from me, the class contributed many insightful comments.

**Option 3** “Homework” – Tell students in advance that they shall sample a few infomercials at home and record their observations about the phrases, strategies, tactics, and other means which advertisers used to sell products.

**Option 4 “Recall”** – The facilitator calls upon students to recall some of the most memorable characters of infomercial fame. This should spur discussion and others will add to it as the class warms up.

For whichever option is used, there should be a recorder capturing all remarks of the class. When those are compiled, the facilitator will ask questions based on his or her style of inquiry. Whatever the style, the questions will ultimately seek answers to this: “How are some prisoners like the infomercials? When a prisoner attempts to manipulate staff what are some of the methods used?” The recorder will write these down. After that task is complete, both lists are compared.

Here are some random observations on the tactics and phrases used by advertisers to sell products:

- Prey on weaknesses and insecurities
- Use a before and after shot
- Use testimonies from ordinary looking folk
- Employ celebrities to tout the fine aspects of the product. Some include Pam Dawber, Cher, Suzanne Sommers, Chuck Norris, Lindsay Wagner, Christie Brinkley, Davy Jones, Christopher Knight, Daisy Fuentes, original MTV V-J’s Roger Daltrey
- Call in the experts – Mom figure, owner of company, allergy specialist, working chefs, professional carpet cleaners
- Good for entire family
- Use a goofy husband who is a bit ham-handed with sensible wife to guide him. This is also seen in innocuous male and moderately attractive female duos. This combination is effective in selling ladders, vacuums, air filtering systems, computer learning systems. This preys on basic willingness of viewers to make friends with people on television who are not intimidating, may be endearingly flawed, and are attractive but not narcissistically so.

- Use a common denominator such as working parent who has little time in the day and can benefit by using time saving devices
- Pair a skeptic with someone who proves that the product works. Just like in a situation comedy, in a one-half hour period, everyone is satisfied
- Show how easy the product is to use
- *Wait! There's more!* Offer a “gift” for trying the product
- Accentuate the negative. Show how if you continue on the same path, you will remain miserable and unsatisfied
- Sex sells with some products – this is particularly true for exercise equipment, cosmetics, body enhancers, get rich schemes, and subtly in other products
- Challenge experts with a new product. For example, a professional painter with a brush performs slower than a novice with a paint spraying mechanism.
- Don't pay 3 payments of x amount, pay only 2!
- Show how similar products cost more, are harder to use, and will not give you as many benefits
- Urgency: *Call within 121 minutes for further savings. Call ME now!*
- Shipping is free
- The call is free
- Results are guaranteed

Further discussion could follow. This can be applied to the corrections profession. It is as simple as looking at the compiled list and asking, “Have you ever witnessed any similar manipulation in the workplace? The instructor should state that if the discussion leads to staff who manipulate, no names should be mentioned.

Certainly, advertisers need commercials to move products. Yet, it behooves us to look at commercials in a new light. This can be an exercise in thinking in terms of persuasion or manipulation.



I will not state that this is guaranteed to work. However, I will say that this is an excellent icebreaker to use to introduce a module which covers manipulation in corrections. You have nothing to lose and so much to gain! Try it now for free! No salesperson will call!

## **What Can Dr. Seuss Teach Us About Staff Division?**

What sort of trainer would use a children's book to teach a lesson? Is it possible to break the ice, establish trust, and impart a lesson while talking in rhymes? It may sound strange, but I have facilitated excellent classroom discussions and shattered tons of ice by reading Dr. Seuss books to adults.

Think back to your most eccentric, unusual teacher. Chances are that you may have a few to select from. You may remember that the individual had strange mannerisms, an interesting mode of speech, or other uncommon characteristics.

The instructor may also have been unusual in delivery of material. Unorthodox ways of instilling a lesson stick in your mind, whether you realize it or not. Sometimes the best lessons are given in an uncommon way. This is especially true when adult topics are covered by using children's literature.

Dr. Seuss is an icon of American literature. Though he started his career as a political cartoonist around World War II, Dr. Seuss is best known for his odd rhyming children's stories with simple, yet endearing illustrations. Just below the surface, though, is the message. Dr. Seuss wrote of human truisms and placed them in a strange wrapping.

Most Seuss books have a simple, yet strong lesson. For example, "Green Eggs and Ham" is really the story of a person resistant to change. "The Lorax" is a tale of wise use of resources. "Horton Hears a Who" depicts someone who remains true to a concept despite universal opposition.

How can this be applied to Corrections? Let's suppose that you are training a class on recognizing and repairing staff division. Further imagine that you will deal with the

horrible specter of cliques and their ill effects. The book that you need is called “The Sneeches”.

“The Sneeches” is a story about a group of beings who happen to have a star shape on their abdomens. They bear an elitist attitude over the sneeches without stars on their bellies. Those without stars have a deep inferiority complex when they look at those with stars. Enter the antagonist. A hustler-type comes into the story as a salesperson who can affix stars to sneeches who have no stars. This is done for a price, of course. When the elite group is faced with a level playing field, the antagonist presents a star-off machine. The elite group, eager to remain in primacy, opts for the new fad of distinction. This causes pandemonium in the sneech society and nets a big profit for the persuasive vendor. The con artist is always one step ahead of the cliques, anticipating their needs.

Does this sound like group-think in an institution? Isn't this all about manipulation that can lead to division?

If you have read this far, you are interested in knowing how this works. I have found it helpful to start with a pseudo-serious tone and with a suspenseful build-up for the students. For example:

*“Welcome to recognizing and repairing staff division. We will jump right into the lesson by looking at cliques in corrections. I performed a literature search and found the perfect book which describes the phenomenon. It is a classic work and was written by a prolific author. This person, I assume, is a PhD, as his name bears the title ‘Dr.’. He has sold millions of books, both here and abroad, and is translated into many languages. His work has touched generations and influenced many to write in his genre. His name is Dr. Seuss.”*

The book must be hidden when delivering this pompous introduction. In my experience, when it is revealed, the surprise is pleasant. Now the instructor reads the story in a loud, clear voice. Have fun with the story. Become overly demonstrative. Hold the book up high so all can see the pictures. This helps draw the audience into the story. Humor can shine through the reading of “The Sneeches”. I have never yet had an audience that was not entertained by the story.

After you have read the story, ask some questions of the audience. This is the chance for the lesson to be driven home. This is when ideas of group-think are explored. Other topics can be covered such as how prisoners manipulate staff (as the antagonist did in the story) and how group vanity leaves us exposed to handling. Here is a list of discussion questions:

1. Without naming names, have you ever witnessed elitist cliques in the workplace?
2. Do prisoners see when we do not get along?
3. Do some prisoners play staff against one another, like the antagonist did in the story?
4. What are the motivations of manipulators?
5. Why do people need to belong to cliques?

Here is a list of Dos:

- Have fun while reading. Gesticulate, show pictures, exaggerate your voice.
- Acquire your own copy of the book. It is a good idea at the end of the icebreaker to pass the book around for the class to sign. This not only offers the fun of writing in a book, but it is also a snapshot of participants. Additionally, you may net some useful comments from participants.
- Do encourage stories of parents reading Seuss books. This ties the lesson into a personal memory.
- Do solicit any other Seuss preferences. They may even be offered without your asking.

- Do ask if those with children or nieces and nephews have read these.
- Do encourage students to think of underlying messages planted by authors.
- Do remain serious about the meaning within the story. The format may be whimsical, but the message is ultimately solemn.
- Use the marker board for discussion comments.

Here is a list of Do Nots:

- Do not lose composure if someone walks out of your story time. Once (and only once, so far), while reading “The Sneeches”, someone walked into the presentation late, and walked out directly. By missing a proper introduction, someone could mistake the seminar on staff division as a meeting of children’s librarians.
- While it is a good idea to put on a show, do not condescend. A good trainer knows how to engage in self-deprecation in order to drive a point home without belittling the audience.
- Don’t worry if you stammer. Seuss is not easy read aloud, at times.
- This is not for everyone to use as a training tool. Some instructors are naturally dignified, and refuse to utilize useful lessons found in this format.

Everyone benefits from this. The audience is given a whimsical icebreaker that segues into the nature of cliques. And the lesson sticks, as it is delivered in an unorthodox way. The trainer also benefits by exercising an option that is a break from the usual reading from a manual. Time off from the normal can help recharge vocational batteries.

I honestly state that this is a fun and effective icebreaker. I have performed it in many places for different levels of custody. I have even rendered this to occupational groups outside of correction. I was even amazed to find that a group of serious psychology students found it memorable, entertaining, and useful.

So, in honor of Dr. Seuss, an American legend, I encourage you to give this icebreaker a try. I guarantee that you will never look at what appears to be simple literature in the same way.

## Who is your hero?

What do Alexander the Great, Mother Teresa, Superman, Lance Armstrong and Eleanor Roosevelt have in common? They are all easily regarded as heroes.

All of us need heroes. We look up to historical, living, and fictitious figures for their deeds and qualities. Our champions serve as inspirations. Their examples serve as goals for our conduct. What we admire reveals a bit about our inner workings. The attributes that we find inspiring are indicators of our expectations. I believe the following is true: Know your hero, know yourself.

Organizations are not that different from individuals. Members of a group or agency may have heroes in common. For example, the person who discovered a plan for a prisoner uprising and thwarted it is easily regarded as a facility idol.

This icebreaker works very well as a segue into a program on recognizing and repairing staff division. It is divided into three parts: group brainstorming of attributes, the hero survey, and group sharing.

### **Group brainstorming of attributes**

Start with the negative. Ask the class for a quality that they do not like in a colleague. To keep this exploration of the negative in the most positive context possible, the instructor should issue one delimiter. The negative quality should be delivered in a general manner. Participants should attack concepts, not individuals. That being said, the instructor can give an example, "I do not appreciate liars."

Each suggestion is written on a board for all to see. Depending on the size of the class, instructors can limit the numbers needed. In fact, an ominous number like 13 may be the perfect size, if there are a few extroverts in attendance. Since it is generally easier to be negative than positive, the list may be completed in a short time. But the point is to get the class to create the list.

Now it is time to repeat the process and create a list of the same number of positive attributes. With class participation, list the same number of good behaviors. The facilitator can once again start the brainstorming by announcing a favored behavior. For example, “Punctuality is number one on my list of positive behaviors.”

If there is trouble compiling positive attributes, refer to the negative list. Ask the audience if there are any on the negative list that they could place on the positive list as an antonym.

The lists are created primarily to get creative juices flowing. But they have another important use. The answers can serve as a universal testament of irritants and positive behaviors. Do not erase these answers. The material that you will cover in the presentation about staff dynamics may also be touched upon by students in the icebreaker. In effect, the participants support the contents of the presentation with their two lists. The lists can be referred to throughout the day, as they are covered in the presentation.

### **The hero survey**

Next comes a bit of a narrative. The goal is to introduce the concept of heroes to the group. I offer my standard introduction. Naturally, each trainer would deliver their own preferred introduction based on their experience and mood.



“We admire our heroes based on their attributes. Your hero may possess one or many of the qualities on our positive list. Positive attributes are the building blocks of those we respect.

Know your hero, know yourself. Who is a super person in your book? Is your hero from sports, music, the military, literature, or real life? Is your hero famous or a relative?

I, for example, admire prolific author Isaac Asimov because of his hard work and clear logic. I also admire Comedian George Carlin, but not for his profanity or his shocking delivery of ideas. Carlin is an icon to me because he has a unique ability to cut through the unnecessary camouflage of our language. And, like many, I admire my father. He is not famous, but he is very decisive and does not tolerate deception.”

How you deliver your introduction will likely have an influence on how much detail the participants will include in their answers to the survey.

This is a very short survey. It consists of only 3 questions. They are:

1. Who is your hero? (You may submit more than one answer, if you wish)
2. What do you admire about this person?
3. Have your heroes changed over the years? If so, why?

Learners may write additional comments on the reverse side of the survey.

**Group sharing**

With two opposing lists of attributes compiled, an overview of the trainer's heroes, and the survey completed, many will be willing to share their answers. You may be surprised by some responses. If nothing else, it helps open the lines of communication. Through sharing, formerly unconnected colleagues may learn that they have some things in common.

Again, the lists of attributes serve as recurring points of reference for the main presentation. The chief link that instructors can make during the sharing part is with heroes and the positive list of attributes. We all need heroes to serve as a focus of our aspiration. But our heroes link to our daily lives. By identifying what we admire and why, we reach a higher plane of understanding of what makes us tick. And knowing whom others admire (and why) helps us to understand them a bit better, as well.

## Wish List for Lunch partner

Many interviews, both for jobs and for celebrities, feature this question: “If you could eat lunch with anyone, living or dead, who would it be?” The answers given can reveal much about the interviewee and can break the persistent, tenacious ice that dogs corrections training.

When applied to corrections training, this exercise is an excellent way for participants to speak with authority on a subject they know well, their own personal opinions. It is also an excellent segue into a professionalism module which explores positive and negative attributes and characteristics that motivate admiration.

This icebreaker features very little in the way of materials (easel, paper and markers) and is an instructor/student driven undertaking. It is a six step process:

1. **Work on the negative** – Mention a bad quality to the audience. One could use ‘liar,’ for example. Give an example of how someone lied to you and the consequences of the action (immediate results and long term distrust, for example). Then obtain input from the audience. This should be easy, as it is less difficult to start with the negative than the positive. Have the scribe list 10 negative attributes on the easel paper.
2. **Seek the positive.** Offer the audience one positive attribute, ‘hard-working’ for example. Give an example of a hardworking individual and the consequences of the action (immediate results and long term productivity, for example). Then obtain input from the audience. Have the scribe list 10 negative attributes on the easel paper.

3. **Make a wish list for lunch partner** – You now have 20 attributes and a conceptual base built by the students. Tape the pages in a conspicuous place and move on to the main question: “If you could eat lunch with anyone, living or dead, who would it be?” The trainer would start with his or her own example. “I would like to eat lunch with Theodore Roosevelt because I am sure the stories that he would tell would be fascinating.” Then the choice of verbal or written solicitation is up to the Trainer. I prefer both, actually. In this case, I distribute the question on paper and when participants have finished, I solicit oral responses as a sharing exercise. Have a scribe record these on easel paper.

4. **Seek themes** – First ask why each person was selected. *What in particular is the reason that you’d enjoy lunch with whomever you selected?* Then the class, led by the instructor, looks for common themes. Ask these questions: *How many of your selected lunch partners are living? How many different periods of history are represented? What is the female to male ratio? Are there any military, political, sports, literary or celebrity personalities? Are there any relatives?*

5. **Compare** – the list of persons to eat lunch with to the positive and negative attributes list. Look for trends. How many of the personalities were selected that have traits listed on either compilation of attributes.

6. **Segue** – Using your own style, move into the professionalism module. For example, *Qualities and circumstances contribute to who we are and what we do. All of us are potential heroes and potential villains at work. How well we fit into our work life will depend on our qualities and actions. Let’s look at some fundamental considerations for our work personas in “Professionalism in Corrections.”*

There are a few cautions with this exercise:

- Opinions may be strong and sometimes obnoxious. Yet it is important to share information while keeping a lid on the class. A strong, tactful moderator is necessary.
- Keep the group on track, as it is easy to meander.
- Keep heckling between colleagues to a minimum.
- Each answer, no matter how much of a joke it may seem, must be taken seriously. If there is a joker in the group, record the answer. The serious responses will balance out the jokes.
- Do not push for answers from unwilling introverts. It is not always easy for everyone to share in front of a group.

The question, “If you could eat lunch with anyone, living or dead, who would it be?” seems simple on the face of it. Yet it allows us to offer glimpses of ourselves and lets us assess our motivations for admiration. And it is a great segue into professionalism modules. So, who would you most like to eat lunch with?



**ICE**  
**BREAKERS**  
**and More**  
**(2009)**

## ABC - Alphabet Soup

Everyone in corrections can relate to seemingly unsolvable mysteries. Our work life is peppered with unraveling correspondence with cryptic references that are sometimes an array of acronyms. The discernable content of some notes may indicate potential danger. Because of this, it seems that we occasionally dive into the alphabet soup whether we like it or not.

ABC - Alphabet Soup is a classroom exercise that hones the decryption skills of participants. It is a fast-moving endeavor that requires almost no material at all. It can be tailor-made for each group and is bound only by the limits of the writer.

The facilitator can start like this,

*“As corrections staff, we are constantly monitoring offender communication in order to maintain safety of staff, offenders and the public. Yet, how many times do we find a kite or written correspondence that we can’t quite understand? This is a daily occurrence.*

*“We all know that some of the meaning can be hidden by a series of initials and abbreviations. We have to, by necessity, sift through many different ideas to find meaning in communication between offenders. It is like trying to discover the meaning of randomly tumbling letters in a recently stirred bowl of alphabet soup.”*

The facilitator will then distribute a list of initials with a theme. This list should be created in advance. The list can be anything: sports

stars, historical figures, song titles from a specific musical group, etc. It is up to the facilitator to match the list to the audience.

For example, the list can be labeled “Science Fiction/Fantasy Movies” and contain different initials to spell out in short form the title of a science fiction or fantasy movie. Here is a shortened example:



## Science Fiction/Fantasy Movies Alphabet Soup

Find the full title of these science fiction/ fantasy movies from the initials provided:

L O T R

P O T A

T C O N

I R

The answers are *Lord of the Rings*, *Planet of the Apes*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and *I, Robot*.

When building the list, the facilitator should develop over twenty different initial entries on a puzzle. This can be assisted by an almanac, a brainstorming session, or the Internet. The important thing is to make a challenging puzzle that is not impossible. The best puzzles contain parts that jump off the page as obvious in retrospect. Also, items from different decades are represented to accommodate all puzzle solvers. (Please see the **Television Series Alphabet Soup** list on the next page that can be used or modified as each instructor who employs this exercise may wish.)

**The Teamwork Option –**

Distribute an alphabet soup list to each student. Give the class five minutes to work individually. Stop the clock after a few minutes. This gives participants a taste of the list, but should not permit enough time to solve the entire thing. The facilitator asks who has found the most. Then, the facilitator builds teams of four or five around some of the high scoring individuals. Individual successes are combined to demonstrate the power of collective effort over the work of a lone person. In other words, teams share their answers.

Of course, the winning team may have the reward of bragging rights or some toy. In the end, however, the efforts of all teams are shared for the benefit of all. That is the ideal in our vocation – shared knowledge for the benefit and safety of all.

## Television Series Alphabet Soup

Find the full title of these 33 popular television series using the initial provided:

MAY

HI

EIE

FT

CA

TR

ODAAAT

TS

MAM

WKRPICT

SS

AITF

TAAHM

GPUSMC

TO

SATC

TC

MPI

LAS

WTB

T B B T

L I T B

H I M Y M

P S

M V

C S I M

F

T G G

G T

T B B

U B

S N L

H D

**ANSWERS - Television Series Alphabet Soup**

Find the full title of these 33 popular television series using the initial provided:

M A Y	Mad about you
H I	Home Improvement
E I E	Eight Is Enough
F T	Family Ties
C A	Charlie's Angels
T R	Thirty Rock
O D A A T	One Day at a Time
T S	The Sopranos
M A M	Mork and Mindy
W K R P I C	WKRP in Cincinnati
S S	Still Standing
A I T F	All in the Family
T A A H M	Two and a Half Men
G P U S M C	Gomer Pyle USMC
T O	The Office
S A T C	Sex and the City
T C	Three's Company
M P I	Magnum P I
L A S	Laverne and Shirley

W T B	Who's the Boss?
T B B T	The Big Bang Theory
L I T B	Leave it to Beaver
H I M Y M	How I Met your Mother
P S	Perfect Strangers
M V	Miami Vice
C S I M	CSI Miami
F	Friends
T G G	The Golden Girls
G T	Good Times
T B B	The Brady Bunch
U B	Ugly Betty
S N L	Saturday Night Live
H D	Happy Days

## Absurd Words

This classroom exercise works well with a module on writing for the corrections profession.

Writer rule! There are those who can wrestle unmanageable concepts and put them into a logical and readable order. They transform the nebulous and confusing into sensible ideas that can be put into practice by everyone.

Yet, with the written word, we see so much of what can be labeled as nonsense:

*Bigfoot to run for Oregon Senate seat*

*Martians dog-napped my terrier*

*France declares national "Jerry Lewis Day"*

*Tiny aliens prank consumers by making crop circles  
in unopened peanut butter*

*Baby eats cinderblock – and lives!*

Headlines of this sort stare at us from the magazine racks in our local retailers. Editors have even been known to compile these “stories” in book form.

What use are these? Perhaps ninety-eight percent of us read them as a silly form of entertainment. The other two percent believe these to be true – which is certainly one’s personal prerogative.

In corrections, we can use these sorts of yarns to emphasize points to corrections staff who wish to write for the profession.

This exercise requires almost no materials. The facilitator needs just to select a tabloid-like tale and read it to the class, then ask a series of questions about its quality. Any trainer with an ounce of creativity (and, perhaps, a sardonic nature) can write their own. I created one and am providing it below as an example. In my experience, it is best to read the “news item” with a straight face and with a serious tone.

“Please listen carefully to the following. This is a news item that I have just come across. It may be of interest to you:

***Police in Roseville, Michigan, report a new problem in law enforcement. An older model car, which calls itself ‘Booick’, has enlisted the help of the ACLU to fight the winter parking ban on streets, claiming it is a violation of civil rights.***

***This all started when twenty-two year old Calvin England, inventor and entrepreneur, programmed intelligence into his rebuilt 1977 Buick Century. England says, “I have tried putting sentience into imports, Dodges and Fords. However, my best luck***



*comes with A-body models from General Motors built before 1984. They seem most receptive to this sort of enhancement.”*

*England, a student in the technology program at Macomb Community College, was surprised that his creation would take a political stand on certain issues. “Booick is generally easy going – rarely rebellious. He believes that the parking ban would restrict his movement unnecessarily. He indicated to me that an unfair curfew was being imposed on him. This is particularly silly, as Booick is over 30 years old.”*

*“The car is an intelligent being and deserves equal rights according to the law. It has the ability to think and to talk,” says Lucy Adam, attorney for the 1977 Buick Century. “It is the same as restricting a certain group of people from walking on a certain street at a pre-selected time. This is discrimination, plain and simple!”*

*Legal bills mount for the perplexed municipality and the populace is divided.*

*Veteran police Chief Rachel Campbell states that the enforcement of parking bans is crucial in maintaining snow-free roads in Roseville. “Without the ban, our plows could not clear the streets. It is a safety issue and no car should have the right to dictate which statutes we should follow.”*

*On the advice of attorney Lucy Adam, the Buick refused to comment.*

As you conclude, you may look around the classroom to gauge the mood of the participants. Ask them what they thought of the article. Invariably, I have had classrooms tell me things like: “That was horrible!” “That’s stupid!”

This is where the instructor needs to ask questions to show the value of this style of writing:

- ✚ Who is the intended audience?
- ✚ Was there a sense of authenticity?
- ✚ Did the author paint a believable background?
- ✚ Were the quotes in the article somewhat believable?
- ✚ Did the author alliterate or use other good writing techniques?
- ✚ Was the imagery descriptive?
- ✚ Is it memorable?

With those questions posed to the class, I have witnessed a collective look below the surface of a seemingly absurd set of words. One of the primary lessons is that there are many components that make great writing, even if the topic is of dubious nature.

Of course, this can be applied to corrections in general. The surface of anything does not represent the full story. So many components comprise the whole account.

## Anti-Socials

Let's face it, those who work in any segment of the criminal justice system need to know about criminal thinking. This is crucial vocational armor that takes the surprises out of many unusual behaviors that practitioners will witness in the field.

Is there a quick and easy way to get students talking about the many deviant behaviors? Can we make them more interested in the topic?

“The Anti-Socials” is a good introduction to anti-social thinking and behavior. The strategy is for the facilitator to set the stage for instruction in criminal cognition by:

- Defining anti-social
- Preparing participants to contribute with a story
- Compiling a list of famous ‘anti-socials’
- Comparing answers

### **Compatible with these modules:**

Criminal thinking

Staff relations

Discrimination/ harassment

Anatomy of a set-up

### **Duration:**

This exercise lasts as little as five or ten minutes. However, there is a real potential that the exercise can last much longer. Of course, this depends on the facilitator, the audience, and the general energy level.

### **Materials needed:**

## Definition of anti-social

### Markers

White board/sheets

Alternately, the answers can be compiled on the spot with a computer and projected on a screen.

## **DEFINE**

First, the facilitator asks the audience, “What does anti-social mean?” Then it is defined. In this case, I use The American Heritage Dictionary –

*“...opposed or hostile to the established social order; marked by or engaging in behavior that violates social mores.”*

## **PREPARE PARTICIPANTS**

Next, the facilitator can shift gears and illustrate this by telling a story of how children may behave in order to get what they want. I believe the stranger the story, the better for preparing the participants. This draws a parallel of anti-social thinking to some child behavior. Most modules would link those two concepts.

The trainer may have a vast store of stories to relate. The story I tell revolves around a child who wishes to get her sister in trouble. (Children in this story are 4 and 6). The younger of the two observes the 6-year-old’s behavior and reports to their mother. (In other words, she tattles). This is a classic case of sibling rivalry. After a while, the 4-year-old discovers that the mother is not administering any punishment. The 4-year-old then lies about the older sister’s behavior with hopes of gaining primacy in her mother’s eyes. (I reserve the full details, voice imitations, gesticulations, and other nuances of this story for the classroom.)

## **COMPILE**

The facilitator asks the simple question, “Can you name a famous anti-social?” With some encouragement, most trainers can get most audiences to come up with a baker’s dozen of anti-socials. Some suggestions may be groups of people and some may be actual individuals. Note: the facilitator should caution the participants not to use the name of anyone from the workplace, even if it is meant as a joke.

The facilitator records the answers for all to see or solicits/coerces a volunteer.

If the audience does not participate too well, here are some ideas that can be mentioned to get things moving: Hitler, Stalin, Ted Bundy, the Uni-bomber, terrorists, serial killers, human traffickers, con-artists, identity thieves.

## **COMPARE**

Ask the class what sorts of behaviors have been perpetrated by each group or individual.

This could segue nicely into the part of the module that defines the problem of anti-social thinking. I personally believe that it is useful to work from the negative (as it is so easy to point out) and work toward the positive solutions. Law abiding people and model citizens can gain an understanding of deviant behavior. One does not have to be a criminal to gain understanding in how criminals think. By taking a look at the “anti-socials,” participants are introduced into this and many other modules. And this just goes to prove that you don’t have to have a twisted mind in order to recognize twisted thinking. In fact, our success in the criminal justice field depends on that ability.

## Egg Hunt

Sometimes we can be motivated by something like a chocolate covered espresso bean. It is a unique incentive, delicious, and gives us a caffeine boost. Can an egg accomplish the same purpose?

The following exercise complements any module on security issues.

Almost everyone did it. We recall as children how we searched for eggs on a spring morning in our past. The thrill of the chase spurred us on to find these multi colored little gems. And the prize for most eggs found drove us to push forward diligently.

Isn't corrections like that, in a way? Aren't we inspired when we find some contraband? The successful search doesn't just keep our facilities safer. We are determined to find more on the heels of a successful discovery.

The facilitator of "Egg hunt" is given a unique opportunity to practice a poker face. When announcing this exercise to a classroom full of seasoned corrections veterans, it takes a strong will to refrain from smirking, laughing or smiling. In effect, the trainer must tell staff that they will search the room for brightly colored plastic eggs.



Items needed:

- Marker and marker board to tally score
- A few dozen plastic eggs. It is best that these be the sort of eggs that can be opened and snapped shut. This allows the trainer to conceal prizes or information within. These can be acquired at most retailers.
- Gag or small gifts to offer to the winning team.

The facilitator can use words like this to introduce the topic:

*“Right under our noses every day is a veritable treasure trove of contraband. Our facilities are chock full of illegal and unauthorized good that offenders barter for other goods and services. Some items hold very little value, such as staples, paper clips or candy. Others are very precious to offenders, such as cell phones, metal or tobacco.*

*“Yet, removal of contraband from the system is crucial for our safety. With each bit taken out of circulation, our workplace becomes less perilous. In essence, each plan ‘hatched’ from the bootleg items can be thwarted. The protective shell around such plans becomes ‘cracked,’ in a figurative sense.*

*“Let us suppose that the room is filled with contraband in the form of small plastic eggs. It is your job to find as many as you can. Your safety and that of your colleagues depend on your success.”*

Here are some suggested rules:

- 1) The instructor can develop a list of values for each egg color. For example, blue eggs can represent betting slips and are worth 10

- points. Red eggs can represent narcotics and can be worth 50 points, etc.
- 2) It is best to distribute this list to “Hiders” (those who will conceal the eggs) in order to make the value of the contraband correspondingly challenging to find.
  - 3) “Hiders” can also serve as “Observers” while the search is being conducted. “Observers” can report search strategies, dynamics and other aspects of the hunt after it is complete.
  - 4) If there aren't a variety of colors of eggs available, contraband type and point value can be printed on a slip of paper and concealed in each egg.
  - 5) To further generate a feeling of competition, teams can be selected or chosen by volunteer captains.
  - 6) Have the newly formed teams declare a team name to coalesce the groups and further build competition.

The eggs will be concealed by the hiders while the seekers are out of the room. Then the seekers come in and search. They are told that there is a time limit. Ten minutes may be a reasonable time.

Seekers will not be informed of how many eggs were hidden. This echoes how the search in a facility may unfold. We are never certain when the actual search is over. In fact, it really never is over.

It is important, however, that the hiders and facilitator know how many eggs were hidden. The total hidden compared to the actual number found is a tangible measure of success of the combined efforts of the teams. The underlying lesson of “We are all in it together” can be highlighted at the conclusion of the exercise.

Of course, the team that scores the highest point value wins the prize, as well as the distinction of being on the winning team.



There are many things that the Observers should look for during the course of the search. These things are to be reported to the class to drive contraband and safety lessons home. Some of these lessons are:

- ✚ Not all teams search in the same way. Sometimes a coordinated, efficient search will occur, while other strategies are more serendipitous;
- ✚ Some searches will be flexible and adapt successful styles. For example, if a particular area yields ample eggs, that area may be searched again;
- ✚ Loud taunts and bragging may erupt. Bold and emphatic expressions of search success are not easy to suppress with enthusiastic groups. It may be best to let this continue, as competition may increase, making for an interesting postmortem;
- ✚ Espionage may occur. Some team members may try to entice hidiers into giving hints or exact locations of eggs. This should not be forbidden, as it emulates the use of informers inside. Some would consider this as cheating. Others may deem this as utilizing resources.
- ✚ As observers report what they saw during the search, relating of past contraband control tales can be encouraged.

In the end, this is the most important lesson. It is not a matter of the success and credit of separate teams and individuals. The fact that contraband has been removed from the system and safety has been enhanced are the key points. Perhaps eggs can inspire safety, after all.

## Forced Impromptu Speech Opportunity

They come in many different forms. Ghosts, dogs, drowning, airplanes and evil clowns are a few examples. Our fears are varied.

Yet, some fears are very common. Whenever public speaking is concerned, many of us experience trepidation. And though it can range from mild discomfort to cascading flop sweat and a complete inability to articulate, it is fear, just the same.

A few years ago, a version of the following exercise was conducted in a leadership academy which I attended. I don't think that anyone knows the origin of this exercise, as it is lost in antiquity. But it is an excellent complement to any communications module. I have since used the forced impromptu speech opportunity (FISO) in corrections classes that I teach for Gogebic Community College. And, when it is all said and done, participants seem to enjoy FISO more than one would think.

There are very few necessary materials for FISO. Really, one just needs one or two scraps of paper for each person present. The instructor must write one interesting (or strange) topic on each slip of paper. See below for sample topics. The slips are then folded and placed into a bucket or hat.

Everyone in the audience selects a single piece of paper and is given five minutes to do one of the following things: 1. accept the topic and prepare to speak on it for a full minute, or 2. convince someone to switch topics with them. The latter serves the purpose of mingling, which can ease speech anxiety. It also gives the participant the feeling of some control over the process.

Participants are instructed that they will speak for one minute on a topic. It is not a problem if the speaker knows little to nothing about a topic. The point is to speak in front of an audience for one minute. The clock starts ticking when the speaker emits the very first articulation. In other words, the speaker cannot remain mute for a full minute then walk off the stage.

The facilitator will solicit a volunteer to start things off. The very first volunteer can be awarded a choice from the “Box of Dubious Awards,” a collection of cheap but funny prizes. This is offered to the first speaker after that speech is completed.

There will be a variety of styles from each group. I have witnessed speakers who ramble on in a longwinded way only to introduce the topic in the last few seconds. I have seen speakers turn into facilitators and ask the audience to give information. I have observed information-packed renderings. I have also seen what looks like open mike night at the comedy club. You may even experience the stage hog, one who will ignore the signal to stop and continue with the soliloquy. All of those are valid, so long as the speaker speaks for one minute.

There are so many ways that topics are handled. It is a great way to assess individual talents. It is also an interesting way to observe group dynamics.

Sometimes, it pays for the instructor to have an extra set of topics. It is not unheard of for participants to ask for additional speech time with new topics.

Here are some ideas to write on the topic slips. These fall into the serious side of things:

- ✚ The greatest American is...
- ✚ My favorite year is...
- ✚ Global warming...
- ✚ If I were in charge...
- ✚ Survival in the desert...
- ✚ How to travel in airplanes with less stress...
- ✚ Managing your money...
- ✚ The essentials of teamwork are...
- ✚ Why [blank] is my favorite holiday...
- ✚ Children are our future...

Remember that controversial topics can cause friction and may derail your class. Use discretion when selecting topics.

Here are some additional ideas to write on the topic slips. These fall into the strange side of things:

- ✚ What would your dog say if it could talk?
- ✚ What if humans were born with tails?
- ✚ Bigfoot and Chewbacca get into a fist fight
- ✚ If [insert cartoon character here] were in charge...
- ✚ Do parts of a salad get jealous of each other?
- ✚ Is it better to be a dish rag or rodent poison?
- ✚ What do lawns do when they hear the lawn mower?
- ✚ I really hate this commercial
- ✚ Why I wish I had two extra toes on each foot
- ✚ Monsters have these sorts of bad dreams...

There are so many ideas. And the instructor lets slip some personality in crafting these.



Even if you don't fear spiders, heights, or the reaper for that matter, public speaking is a very wide-spread phobia. But, in most cases, this can be overcome by practice. The FISO is an excellent way to gain such practice.

## Idiom Icebreaker

Idioms are phrases that are colorful. They enliven the language, making reading and conversation more interesting. The phrase “babble like a brook” is a colorful way to express the notion of a person who is enthusiastic yet somewhat incoherent.

Unfortunately, figures of speech, idioms, clichés, and even “normal” phrases will not always translate clearly from one language to another. For example, a literal translation of the Spanish “*todo el mundo*” means “all the world.” However, it really means “everybody.” There is a difference between “I have met the whole world” and “I have met everybody.” When translation is done well, it is more than just moving each word from one language to another. It really involves a translation of ideas.

Is it any wonder why we cannot always get our points across? Can you imagine how difficult English can be to those for whom it is not a primary language? Let’s take some time to put this to practice. Below is a list of clichés.

Question one for each cliché is: What does this really mean?

Question two for each cliché is: What could this mean if translated literally or word for word?

Work together to identify each figure of speech and what each could mean in a very literal sense. Note that there could be many different versions of the literal translation.

1. Cliché: **Baker's dozen**

What does it really mean?

**A little extra, specifically 13.** (This comes from an act of Parliament from 1266 regarding a standard of the weight of bread. To make sure standards were being met, bakers generally gave 13 loaves to vendors for every 12 that they purchased to sell to consumers.)

What could this mean if translated literally or word for word?

Any thing that a baker made in the amount of 12. Someone named Baker has 12 of one item.

2. Cliché: **A penny for your thoughts**

What does it really mean?

**What is on your mind?**

What could this mean if translated literally or word for word?

I will give you one cent if you tell me what you are thinking. I will purchase your thought (copyright) for the price of a penny.

3. Cliché: **I wouldn't touch it with a ten foot pole.**

What does it really mean?

**It is dangerous and I will avoid it.**

What could this mean if translated literally or word for word?

With a ten foot pole in my hand, I refuse to make contact with it.

4. Cliché: **Keep your shirt on!**

What does it really mean?

**Stay calm! Don't over react.**

What could this mean if translated literally or word for word?

Don't take off your shirt!

5. Cliché: **How now, brown cow?**

What does it really mean?

**What's up?**

What could this mean if translated literally or word for word?

You are addressing a cow that happens to be brown with the phrase, "How now." This makes no sense.

6. Cliché: **He cooked his goose.**

What does it really mean?

**He spoiled his plans.**



What could this mean if translated literally or word for word?

In the past, a person took his goose and prepared it over a fire, in an oven, boiled it, or prepared it in the kitchen for consumption.

7. Cliché: **Blood is thicker than water.**

What does it really mean?

**Relatives stick together.**

What could this mean if translated literally or word for word?

If you compare the thickness of water and blood, you will find that the water is thinner than the blood.

8. Cliché: **Like a bat out of hell**

What does it really mean?

**Quickly.**

What could this mean if translated literally or word for word?

A small flying rodent flew out of the area generally known as the bad part of the afterlife.

9. Cliché: **Albatross around her neck**

What does it really mean?

**A burden**

What could this mean if translated literally or word for word?

She has a large sea bird encircling her neck

10. Cliché: **Swallow your pride.**

What does it really mean?

**Accept what is happening, even though it is humiliating.**

What could this mean if translated literally or word for word?

Place something that you are proud of in your mouth and swallow it.

11. Cliché: **Eating out of my hand.**

What does it really mean?

**Being very cooperative.**

What could this mean if translated literally or word for word?

Someone places his or her mouth to your palm and consumes whatever food stuff is on the palm. In a more gruesome paradigm, someone opens your hand and eats whatever is inside of the hand.

12. Cliché: **Rotten to the core**

What does it really mean?

**This person is thoroughly untrustworthy or corrupt.**

What could this mean if translated literally or word for word?

A person's trunk is filled with decay. This assumes that the decay is limited to the trunk and does not extend to the extremities.

13. Cliché: **Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.**

What does it really mean?

**Take what is given to you without too much scrutiny**

What could this mean if translated literally or word for word?

If someone gives you a horse as a present, don't look inside of the mouth of the beast.

14. Cliché: **There is a fly in the ointment**

What does it really mean?

**There's an obstacle, a hitch in one's plans.**

What could this mean if translated literally or word for word?

I directly observed the presence of a fly in the ointment.

## 15. Cliché: A little bird told me.

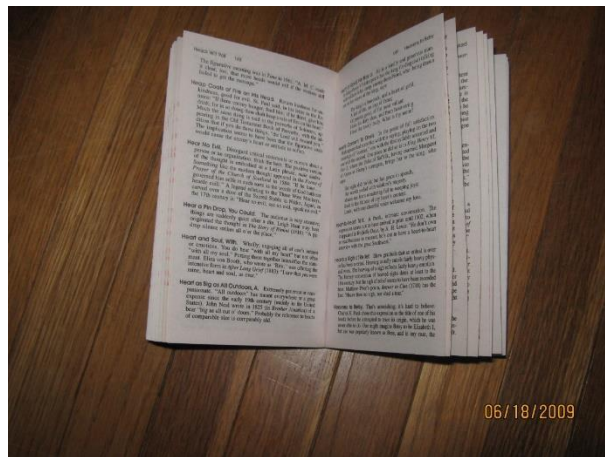
What does it really mean?

**I received information, but I will not divulge the source.**

What could this mean if translated literally or word for word?

A small flying creature relayed information directly to me. A listener could assume that the person understood the bird's original language or that the bird used English well enough to be understood.

(Cliches and explanations come from The Dictionary of Clichés by James Rogers Ballentine Books, New York: 1985)



## I Meant To Do That!

Our professor looked into the full classroom and assessed her students. She said, without a hint of merriment on her person, "Always remember this: Six equals sex."

Puzzled, many of us snickered. More of us did not comprehend. She went on to explain: "Your spell check on your computer is a wonderful thing. However, it does not check for content or logic. If you mean to type 'six' but type 'sex', the computer will not see 'sex' as out of place or misspelled."

I thought of this and the horrible consequences of that particular example. Let's imagine that I am writing a proposal. I may intend to solve the problem with six ideas. However, the reader would have a different picture in mind if I were to mistakenly write, "This challenge can be met with these **sex** ideas." I am a problem-solving writer, not some libidinous scribbler. So, you see, it pays to proofread.

I have allowed the computer's spell check to grasp my destiny by not heeding the six=sex lesson. There have been times that I created a PowerPoint presentation where I used the word 'illicit' rather 'elicit.' Polite audience members have informed me of my missteps.

Sometimes it is easy to turn the tables and to make an error on your part into a lesson. Once, I had committed a misspelling on a PowerPoint. When a playful audience member questioned my intellectual worth, I retorted, "That was a test of your observational skills. You passed! You found the error."

Imagine if errors were intentional in order to reinforce observational skills. This can be easily done in print or electronic form. The trainer needs only to make a short trivia handout or PowerPoint. Simply find 10 facts about the president, the United States, sports or any topic. This information can be acquired on the Internet or from an almanac. Place them in question form. On the PowerPoint presentation, make the next slide the answer to the question.

Example:

Q: Which state has the smallest area of land?

A: Rhode Island

But it is important to make intentional errors.

Modified example:

Q: Witch state has the smalest area of land?

A: Rode Island

Do not mention the errors to the class. It is a test of tact, patience and observation. The object is to see who breaks the ice. Once the first flaw is uncovered, the reluctant participants will be more willing to share their observations. It is a study in group dynamics, assertiveness, and grammar/spelling.

Now the cat is out of the bag. The participants know that you make errors. They may not know at this point if they were or were not honest mistakes. To take it a step further, the creative trainer could pass out a few paragraphs of a corrections related topic. Again, the errors are intentionally inserted. Each participant has two minutes to find as many errors as possible.

Here are a few points to remember:

- ✚ Don't worry about no one mentioning the errors. Corrections staff are observant and generally outspoken.
- ✚ Choose the trivia topic for the particular audience.
- ✚ Aim for subtle errors, not blatant.
- ✚ If it advances the lesson of observation, practice your poker face. Pretend that you are unaware of the errors.

So, if it true that six equals sex, we are always in need of practicing our observation and editing skills. The large amount of paperwork that our agencies generate demands our critical attention. This can be achieve through this simple exercise.

## Is It Just A Game? Uno Uncovered

Division is everywhere. We do not always get along. And in corrections, this is more than just a disappointment. Fighting between colleagues means danger in the facilities.

All is not lost. The dangers that come with staff division are repaired with an atmosphere of teamwork.

What is teamwork? It is when at least two people work together for the same goal. For example, the goal can be to get from one place to another. Teamwork is achieved when one person drives the vehicle and another gives directions to the driver. Teamwork can be as simple as a two person team collaborating to change a flat tire. Or it can be as involved as a multi-year, multi-nation war effort.

Whether it is just two colleagues or hundreds of millions of people, teamwork can be defined in very few words: support, help, collaboration, joint effort, cooperation, solidarity and assistance.

Think of a world without teamwork. Civilization as we know it would not exist. There would be no scientific advances. Language would be an individual thing. There would be no culture transmitted. The family unit would not exist in the sense that we are familiar with. It would be a dog eat dog world. The human race, if not wiped out, would be reduced to individual animals.

Corrections would be a mess without teamwork. The state inside our facilities would be complete anarchy. One of the common goals of



corrections is to keep offenders, staff and the public safe at all times. Helping one another in corrections is not just a nice gesture. It can mean the preservation of life.

This exercise is a demonstration of the dynamics that can occur between two teams of two people. Both teams have the same goal of winning a prize. They compete at the simple card game called Uno. (Crazy Eights or War are games that can be substituted by using a standard deck of cards.) It is a four person game and everyone is seated across from their partner. Of course, in this simple card game, only one person can win the game. However, in this version, if your partner wins, you also win.



First you need to announce the prize. The facilitator can obtain a small prize. A candy bar is an example of an inexpensive prize that is still desirable.

Next, you explain the very simple rules to everyone from the rules card. This is a common game and is easily learned for those few who may never have played it previously.

Next, you explain to the non-players that they are to watch the players and assess how the teamwork unfolded.

Note: Uno is a card game produced by Mattel.

## Questions - Is It Just A Game? Uno Uncovered

Observers can be asked the following questions. Of course, the questions are not rigid. The observers may guide the course of the post mortem. And in many ways you will see additional teamwork among the observers. One comment, for example, can serve as a platform for the following assertions.

- ✚ Which team looked most united?
- ✚ Was there any obvious strategy?
- ✚ Was there table banter?
- ✚ Did you observe any signals between team members?
- ✚ Was there a sense of competition?
- ✚ What role did the prize play in this competition?

## Is It Snowing Where You Work?

“Hi! How are you? Where are you from?” Does this sound like a third rate comedian attempting to warm up a crowd? In reality, it is a little small talk that can help a speaker connect with a crowd.

This is a very simple icebreaker, one that can go well with any presentation or topic. It is particularly a good one to use in large groups from a diverse geographical area.



This is a facilitator-driven exercise that requires no materials. It is as simple as asking, “Is it snowing where you work?”

The facilitator may start in this manner and segue into the query: “My name is [*insert name here*] and I am from [*state or region*]. I am very glad to be at this conference talking to you about [*topic*]. When I left home, there was two feet of snow on the ground. Staff at the correctional facility at which I work need to use snow shoes to conduct fence checks.

“So, how is it where you work right now? Do you need snow shoes to make security rounds?”

On the face of it, this exercise seems to lack substance. However, the analytical trainer would derive much from this.

- ✚ This is a way to enliven audience members, as state pride may break inhibitions.
- ✚ It gives the facilitator a geographical anchor to use during the presentation or later in the conference.
- ✚ It allows facilitators to target the extroverts in the audience and also to see who may know whom.
- ✚ Naturally, this exercise does not need to be predicated on snow fall at ‘home.’ Facilitators from Southern states can apply their climate conditions to their introduction.
- ✚ Everyone is an expert on the weather. No one would be excluded from conversing on such an innocuous topic.
- ✚ Asking about the weather conditions at work offers that professional hook, something which is in the mind of those attending a professional conference.
- ✚ It gives the novice speaker an easy way to earn experience in ‘working a crowd.’
- ✚ There is a natural give and take between the speaker and the audience, something that is not always easy to obtain. Sharing is priceless for rapport.

Common experience and sharing about general topics help connect people. It is a simple technique that smooths the way for an excellent participant/facilitator relationship.

## Leader-Swap

**The following is a tactic that can be used in many team exercises. This illustrates the dynamics that arise from a change in leadership.**

It has been said that if one cuts off the head, the body will follow. But what happens when the heads are replaced? Banish all thoughts of Frankenstein and cranial transplants. Leadership changes all of the time in corrections.

Of course, this does not mean that change is always easy. It becomes more difficult when the team and the leader are moved from their zones of comfort.

Imagine that you work in optimal circumstances. Your co-workers support you, understand your strengths and weaknesses, and you know the dynamics in your area.

You are abruptly awakened from this idyllic scene and placed in a new setting with new people. It becomes more challenging. You realize that you are now leading people who hold their former supervisor in very high regard. They resent a new leader and your appearance is an intrusion.

This will be an uphill battle. How can you step into the capable shoes of your predecessor and lead the team into continued success?

Changing leaders just as a team coalesces often brings many interesting dynamics. I discovered this at the 2007 International Association of Correctional Training Personnel conference in Charleston, West Virginia. I was facilitating a course on classroom exercises for contraband control modules.

The particular exercise was “Contraband Corner” (from “Icebreaker 101”, page 22-25 – [www.IACTP.org](http://www.IACTP.org)). The object was to distribute “shank material” and allow the teams to make weapons. The class had to be divided into four teams. I chose four captains and placed each of them in one of the four corners of the room. The captains that I chose seemed to be the most extroverted members of the class.

The four captains selected team members in turn. As the teams filled out, the more boisterous of the team leaders taunted some other colleagues on opposing teams. The teams ended up with roughly the same members as were on previous teams. Left to themselves, the captains selected those with whom they had previously worked and with those that they were comfortable.

As the harassment continued, it seemed that this was done in the great spirit of rough verbal camaraderie that is common in corrections. Also, this class was comprised of seasoned correctional trainers. They knew how to have fun and how to engage in “fun” demoralization of opponents.

“If only I could send the captain of team number one to team number two”, I thought. She would be pulled from her zone of comfort and would be forced to work with someone who she openly insulted. And that person had reciprocated. It seemed that it would be interesting to watch. Then I realized as the facilitator, it was my duty to mix things up.

In a loud, steady tone of voice, I issued two orders. “Attention team captains! You will now face the center of the room. You are being reassigned. Move to the team on your left.”

Stunned silence met the echoes of my words. What followed were protests, invectives and grim laughter. I had succeeded in mixing the adversaries. Now I wondered how well they would work together.

In this instance, the results were amazing. Pseudo enemies became cooperative. Old enmities were forgotten. The teams, already set in a competitive mode, forged new ties.

In the post mortem, it seems that many of the participants realized this. Some stated that the goal of the exercise – to make a weapon out of trash – was more important than ego. This led to creativity through positive tension.

I have since used the tactic of leader-swap at other conferences and in college courses. I have found that the above results will not always follow. For example, a quiet group with no overt leader or antagonists will not always coalesce. Yet, it is a supreme opportunity to study the dynamics of people thrust into teams that they did not build.

Of course, this was just a classroom exercise. In the real world would this have worked as well?

It is common for a supervisor to be assigned to a new team. This could occur through a promotion or reassignment. And it is not always a comfortable fit.



Here are some thoughts on how to smooth the transition of a team in flux:

- Realize that the cooperation goes in two directions – from the leader to team members and vice versa.
- Leaders have to be flexible and able to apply different styles to various circumstances and work personas.
- Change is not always welcome and a period of transition may be rocky, at best. This is, however, a time to learn for all involved.
- We are not always placed in the team that we would prefer. Yet, awareness of a tangible goal tends to smooth the transition.
- Acknowledgement of how things were in previous teams can be helpful, if the leader is insightful. This helps the team move on and to assess strengths and weaknesses.
- No one would really grow as a professional without some contention.

Being reassigned to a new team is never easy. This is particularly true if you come from a dream team. Nevertheless, with the common goal of safety and security for all highlighted, the flexible leader can march with the team into success. The public and staff depend on this.

## Musical Stares

As kids, almost every one of us had staring contests. For the very few who have never done this, it is easily explained. A staring contest happens when two parties stare directly into each other's eyes. This is basically a battle of the wills. Sometimes, both potential starers agree to such a contest in advance. Other times, each party seems to catch the eye of the other simultaneously. Whatever the origin, the first person to look away loses.

In Michigan, one of the verb infinitives used as current slang is "to marquette." It means to stare unblinkingly at another person for the purpose of intimidation. Allow me to use it in a sentence: "Bouchard, are you marquetting me? Quit trying to stare me down!" Bouchard, the subject, seems to stare directly at another person who does not wish for a staring contest. Incidentally, marquetting is derived from Marquette Branch Prison, one of Michigan's oldest correctional institutions.

In the corrections profession, there is a lot of "marquetting" going on. This exercise is designed to test participants for when this happens. It is not designed to turn staff into non-communicative, intimidation machines. One could call this a physical training, of sorts. And this is an excellent segue into any communications module.

This exercise requires a CD or tape player and some music. Participants are placed in two lines facing each other. They partner up with the person directly across from them. The instructor starts by telling participants that they must stare directly at the person across from them while the music is playing. If anyone smiles, laughs, makes

a noise, or looks away, they are out. No party may touch the other. (No Touchie!)

The facilitator will keep a few students out of the lines and use them as observers. They keep those in the lines honest. They may dismiss those who laugh, smile, look away or make noises. The facilitator will decide if adversaries may make faces at one another as a demoralization tactic.

The instructor plays some music for a trial time of 30 seconds. When the music is shut off, the instructor says, "Break eye contact!" The lines will get smaller and smaller until there are just two starers left. The last person standing, the king or queen of marquetting, may select a prize from the "Dubious Box of Awards."

The choice of music is up to the instructor. Some of this could be silly music, child's music or zany sound effects. These can be incorporated into the lesson to break the serious mood of the starers and to test concentration.

After the exercise, it is crucial to tie the communication aspect into the physical part of the icebreaker. The facilitator can ask the participants the following questions:

1. What sort of offenders are prone to stare?
2. Is there more than one reason that an offender will stare?
3. Will staff sometimes engage in this staring contest?

4. Is it important for starers to have audiences when they do this?
5. Can escalation occur from a staring contest?
6. Is this ever used as a diversion?
7. What are the rules regarding this sort of behavior in your institution?

Of course, as professionals, we know that verbal communication is much better than intimidating stares. Yet, it does happen between offenders, between staff, and between staff and offenders. Every now and again, it is prudent to test these skills and to review the best ways to communicate well.

## My Robot Is Better Than Your Robot

For those of us who became adults before the year 2000, the future seemed special. Before it happened, we saw 2000 as the mark of innovations, great advances, and a world made easier by science. But most of us forgot that it is just a round number, made to seem significant by the expectations of others.

Looking back, our future was not what we thought it would be. While we have cell phone magic and computer wizardry, we so not have humaniform robots roaming among us undetected. (Or do we, conspiracy theorists?)

Still, it is human imagination and necessity that help bring innovative ideas into the realm of reality. And this is a good premise to use to tap the creativity of the minds of corrections staff. “My robot is better than your robot” can be set up in this way:

*“All of us operate to keep staff, offenders and the public safe. We do so through monitoring, observing, searching and by reading the signs and circumstances.*

*But we are not alone. We do have help from technology. Our security is enhanced by many means: smart fences, metal detectors, urinalyses and surveillance cameras. These technological assistants are with us in our constant battle to keep danger out of our facilities.*

*For this exercise, we split into groups of four. We are charged with the task of designing a perfect helper inside the prison. With this,*

*we are not replacing staff with automation, but creating a robot that assists us in our daily duties.*

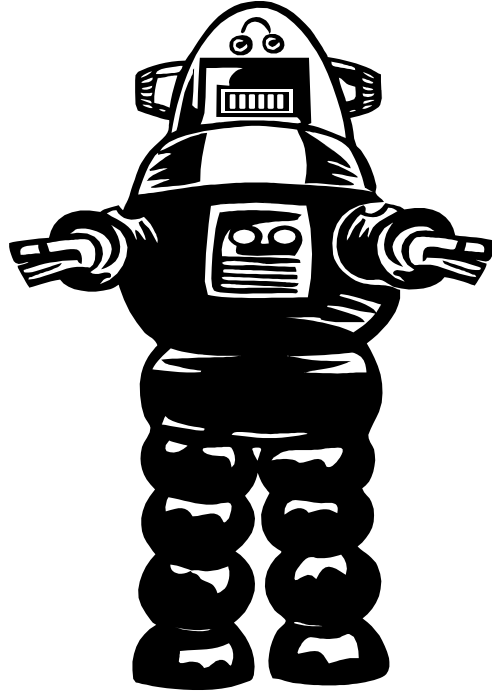
*You have 10 minutes to compile a list of attributes - powers, if you will - that you want technology to produce for a robotic helper. What will your robot do?"*

### **Part 1 – Compilation**

This is a simple stage where the teams make a list of what their robot would do in order to enhance security. You may set the number as you wish, though I suggest 10 different talents. If there is trouble in getting the groups going, here is a list of suggestions:

- ✚ Night vision cameras to record transactions under the cover of dark.
- ✚ Instant translation recording – the robot can be programmed to listen and report what was said in all common languages. A slang upgrade would be useful.
- ✚ Decryption to read coded correspondence.
- ✚ Handwriting comparison – this feature identifies anonymous writers from a database.
- ✚ Odor sensitivity – can detect and pinpoint odor of illicit goods.
- ✚ Crime mapping capabilities – Misconduct report data fed in by Hearings Officers that can be interpreted and presented as patterns for possible future misconducts.

Groups are given 10 minutes to compile at least 10 suggestions. Each group then report their wish list to the entire class.



I will insert a note on espionage. While I do not condone cheating, I see its value as a lesson. The facilitator of this exercise may notice that some groups ‘dip’ and spy on others for ideas. This can be permitted and heralded later as a lesson in discretion, trust and betrayal. Of course, in the end all ideas will be permitted to the whole group.

## **Part 2 – Research**

With all lists displayed, the facilitator will ask if any of the technologies suggested do actually exist in part or in whole. Those

currently available, though not necessarily in a robotic format, will be checked off. This shows the plausibility of each suggestion.

If there is internet access in the area, two participants can be assigned to search for such technology. If this option is utilized, the Internet researchers can report out to the rest of the class.

### **Part 3 – Testing**

Most good theories have fundamental flaws. For example, we can learn the security breach in a child-proofed home from the actions of a clever toddler. In other words, let the child safely field test the area. Just through testing, we can push the limits of security. Of course, all of this is speculative, as the corrections robot is not yet in operation. But we benefit in poking holes in the theories, imagining how a system can be circumvented.

True, the year 2000 was pretty much like the late 1990's. The world did not instantly transform into a brave new world of technological wonder. Developments came over time, gradually. And who better to assist in corrections development than corrections professionals?



## Paradise inside the Walls

Some classroom exercises which are very instructive can sometimes come out of left field. A strange concept that does not appear to have anything to do with corrections or criminal justice often takes the participants off guard. When you can bring the idea back to our vocation, it makes the lesson even more potent.

In “Paradise inside the walls,” participants will learn about contraband control and the inside economy. All that is needed are a few *pair of dice* (pun intended) and some gift wrapping.

The facilitator can place a pair of dice in a small box or a gift bag. If you want to go for a dramatic effect, you can gift wrap the dice in an elaborate manner. Whichever manner you employ, here is how to start:

*“I will need two volunteers from the audience. Any two will do. The first two people who come to the front of the classroom will be given a gift each. That gift is valued at **over one hundred dollars**. These presents are contained in these beautifully wrapped gift boxes. There is no catch. All that you need to do is come up here and claim your reward. Are there any volunteers?”*

To heighten the suspense, the facilitator may ask the audience to guess what may be inside the boxes.

When the gifts are unwrapped, the volunteers may feel disappointed at finding dice as a gift. If the volunteers do not display a good sense of humor when they receive the dice, you may offer them something else from a dubious box of prizes.

They may keep the dice if your budget and conscience permits. However, it is best to inform them that they should not take the dice inside the facility, as they may be contraband.

Now it is time to divulge the lesson.

*“Why did I call this a gift valued at over \$100.00? This was inspired by a colleague who informed me that a he found some contraband dice in an offender’s property. The offender claimed that he can, on a good day, take half of the table’s winnings and earn up to \$250.00. The offender placed a value of \$100.00 on each pair of dice.”*

You may ask the participants a few questions about this.

- ✚ How much would a pair of dice cost at a discount retailer?
- ✚ Do you think the dice are worth more or less than \$100.00?
- ✚ Is gambling a source of danger in your facility?
- ✚ Can little items mean big trouble inside the walls?

Then participants are given a list of common small items that can be easily acquired in any facility. The list can be developed by the facilitator or taken from the following list of small items.

- ✚ Staples
- ✚ Rubber band
- ✚ Apple
- ✚ Tape

- ✚ Pen
- ✚ Plastic wrapped tableware
- ✚ Salt
- ✚ Stamps
- ✚ Carbon paper

Then the class is divided into groups of four or five. They will spend 10 minutes ranking the potential dangers of each item and conceiving of the many different uses for each. Each group will also add other small items that are potentially valuable to contrabandists to the list. The group chooses a spokesperson to report.

Paradise for some offenders can be attained by establishing a gambling empire with a pair of dice. Paradise for staff is when contraband controls are in place and the facility becomes safer. This staff ideal is more possible when we start to think of the value and different uses of common items.

## Tower Building

I am not sure of the origin of this exercise, but it is an effective team building endeavor. All you will need is a roll of tape and twelve sheets of typing paper for each team. Divide the class into teams of no fewer than three per team.

**Options:** Team captains can be selected and they in turn can select their teams. However, the facilitator, once the teams are in place, can move the captains to another team to mix things up a bit.

When each team is assembled, distribute the materials and give guidelines.

- Each tower has to be at least six feet tall.
- It can only be made of the paper that was handed out and tape.
- Each team does not have to use all 12 pages, bonus points can be assigned to the team who uses fewer pieces of paper.
- You must have at least a five-minute designing period.
- The design can be as any team wishes except for the following
  - you must have a base at least eight inches tall; the base has to be free standing on the floor and cannot be taped to the floor or any other surface; the tower cannot be on a table and

counted as six feet tall from the ground – the tower will be measured from base to tip.

- The first tower that remains standing long enough to be measured wins.

## Questions

### Tower Building

- What sorts of dynamics were there?
- Did anyone take the lead in designing?
- Were there disagreements?
- Did the notion of building a tower with less material get in the way of a sturdy tower?
- Was there spying?
- Was there any jeering or demoralizing comments between teams?
- Did individual talents come to the fore?



## Trainer Says

A big part of how order and safety are maintained in our facilities is through staff's ability to deliver clear and concise instructions. Do we always understand this? Are we sometimes derailed by ambiguous statements? Are we thwarted by the nebulous expectations of others?

The way to check this may be through a child's game with which we are all familiar. The game is Simon Says. However, we borrow this classic and institutionalize it and call it Trainer Says.

Start by offering a prize. This can be based on your budget, sense of humor or inclinations. Often, "The Box of Dubious Prizes," a collection of cheap gag gifts, is a good place for the winner to select the award for top finisher. Also, chocolate or candy may work. The trainer can decide this. The point is to give the participants an incentive to play a child's game.

Solicit six volunteers or select the same number from your audience. The rest of the participants can serve as observers. If the class seems to be familiar with one another, have a quick vote on who should be the back up judge. This person can help the trainer make the difficult calls when there is doubt.

The rules are simple. Players will follow any order issued by the trainer, but only if the words "Trainer says" precedes the order. If, for

example, the facilitator says, “Touch your nose,” the player should not obey. This is because there was no mention of “Trainer says.”

A player can be dismissed from playing in one of two manners:

1. Obeying an order that is not preceded by “Trainer says.”
2. Disobeying an order that is preceded by “Trainer says.”

Here are some guidelines:

- ✚ Use reasonable orders that can be executed. Think of what would mirror the corrections workplace.
- ✚ Silly or impossible orders shall not be given. An example of this is “Trainer says, walk on your hands for five hours.”
- ✚ Orders should **not** be given for the purpose of heaping embarrassment on a player. This philosophy also mirrors the ideal in the corrections work place. For example, it is wrong to issue this order, “Trainer says, kiss the person on your right on the cheek.”
- ✚ Mildly embarrassing orders can be issued at the discretion of the trainer. For example, this could be a valid order for the scope of this exercise, “Trainer says, sing your name loudly.”
- ✚ A good example of a straight forward order is, “Trainer says, give me your identification card now.”
- ✚ It is a good idea to start the orders slowly and to increase speed.
- ✚ An effective way to illustrate how difficult this can be is to mix up valid orders with and without “Trainer says”
- ✚ Sometimes a non-verbal order can throw players. A purist would insist that offering your hand to shake is an order. If the player does this without a “Trainer says”, then that player could be ruled out.

The art of giving instruction sometimes presents us with challenges. But by honing our skills we learn how to speak clearer and more effectively.



## Ultimate Teambuilding Exercise: The Facility Search for Contraband

Consider this riddle:

*What am I? I have hundreds of eyes and at least one of them is always open. My many brains know most everything and recognize where to find answers to that which we do not know. I have the potential to save lives, property, and organizations. I have the ability to be everywhere. You won't recognize my voice, as it always changes. Without me, all will quickly fall into chaos.*

One can easily imagine some multi-headed organism, strange, omniscient, confident and omnipresent. Yet, this is not some being from the horror or science fiction genres. The answer to the riddle is the collective potential of all staff in your facility. In other words, it is Team Corrections.

It can be conceded that teamwork will not always erase all friction between work areas and individuals. However, its presence will always inspire an environment that is harmonious, safe and efficient.

Teamwork is one of the most important cohesive agents in corrections. It builds a broader perspective for all staff, develops professional empathy, and increases safety through cooperation. When positive collaboration becomes a stronger part of an institutional culture, there

results less harassment complaints and lowered stress leave. This sets the stage for security enhancement.

Flipping the coin, an absence of teamwork can spell disaster for any worksite. As teamwork erodes, there are the following effects:

- Factions increase and disunity becomes infectious.
- Harmful cliques that were broken will form anew to fill the vacuum left when the team mentality diminishes.
- There is less concentration on larger safety issues, while staff becomes focused on their own local concerns.
- Smaller decisions are implemented independently without consideration about their impact on larger operations.
- With diminishing regard towards the larger picture, the likelihood of staff division and manipulation by enterprising offenders increases.
- There is a de-emphasis on the safety aspect of the mission statement. This drain on security is due to infighting. In due course, this endangers staff, offenders and the general public.

Those are the chief reasons that team building in corrections is so important. Unfortunately, with the many challenges inherent in our vocation, we often unwittingly contribute to our workload with anti-team actions.

Training can go a long way in addressing this haunting specter. Modules that outline staff unity set the stage for the healing. The next step is to arrange useful illustrations with team building exercises. Tangible drills buttress the classroom learning.

There are many examples of team building exercises that point up the merits of cooperation. For example, some modules incorporate the use of rope climbing and trust, paper tower construction and even the use

of jigsaw puzzles. More elaborately, there is training that allows participants to design and build a bridge out of tooth picks and glue. Often, a competition between teams is fostered when the strength of the bridge is measured.

Certainly, all of those are effective. But are they always easy to arrange? Are the materials easily accessible? Can any of these be executed for the benefit of all staff in a facility simultaneously?

The answer to these questions is “yes” when we consider the ultimate team building exercise: the comprehensive facility search. The institutional shakedown is a way to illustrate tangible benefits of teamwork.

This is very easy to arrange. The class room is already set up, as it is the actual institution. There are no ropes to hang, no toothpicks and glue to buy, and no complicated instructions. It is simply a matter of sounding the siren, taking a count, and issuing a few fundamental instructions to staff.

The materials are easily accessible. When staff have donned their particular universal precautions, the search begins. Staff can be paired in a variety of ways. Perhaps, though, it is best to incorporate support staff to maximize resources. Partner support staff with custody staff. This sets a situation for custody-to-support-staff mentoring on the job.

The lessons for non-custody staff do not lie solely in the actual search. There are some backing activities, as well. Support staff can also record, relay messages of findings to supervisors, and write misconducts as necessary. And other functions that workers normally perform can be done by support staff. One of these is working in food

service. That would be a crucial function in the middle of a total lock down.

Inclusion of non-custody staff supports teamwork. This allows those who may rarely work in a housing unit to see the dynamics of the job. Also, custody staff that may have a strong anti-support staff bias may see the utility of their presence. It is an interaction between groups on the same team who have different function. In sum, it builds professional empathy.

This exercise directly benefits the facility. In the short term, it potentially removes dangerous items from the institution. In the longer term, this helps keep the playing field level in terms of individual and group power among offenders.

These are a few of the many suggestions to fit into your particular institution. They are based in common corrections common sense:

- Activate siren.
- Lock down the facility.
- Take a formal count.
- Turn off water to thwart flushing of small contraband.
- Arrange for non-custody staff to work with custody partners.
- Issue clear instructions about each person's function.
- Do not overlook some of the less obvious non-custody staff. The benefits of the exercise are increased as more staff are incorporated.
- Target a few items to look for in particular. Some of these foci could be narcotics, handwriting, specific correspondence and weapons.
- Include as many support staff as possible.
- Send follow-up reports of findings to all staff areas after the exercise is completed.

Cynics may pose a few questions. What can you really learn from making sandwiches or searching property? Is it ever worthwhile to lock down a facility just to train non-custody staff in contraband control? Will custody staff get anything out of this?

When we consider the potential good that this does the institution, skeptical questions can be dismissed. Mutual empathy between different classifications can be earned. Cross training is a valuable experience. Seeds for collegial future good are planted. Offenders are assured that staff are seriously engaged in the security of the institution. Inmates, staff and the public are safer with illicit elements removed from the prison.

Whatever team building exercise you choose, the improvement of morale, safety and operations efficiency is potentially great. But consider the benefits that can come from the ultimate team building exercise – the institutional search.



## Unexpected Suggestions before Your Eyes

Serendipity, sweet serendipity! Sometimes the best training tactics are learned on the fly. We don't always expect to find a new teaching tool while rendering a structured presentation.

Here is an example of a new training tactic that I discovered quite inadvertently. A few years ago, I was involved in a vision and values project for an entire agency. The Warden of the facility at which I worked asked me to present a two-hour class that highlighted the committee findings. I wrote the program, memorized the outline and presented it as a slide show.



At what I thought was the conclusion of the module, I allotted 10 minutes for questions and comments. The four core values that were presented (excellence, integrity, teamwork and inclusion) inspired many comments and suggestions. In fact, to capture the rich swell of participation, I needed to act fast.

With the LCD projector still connected to my computer, I called up a blank page. For all to see on the screen, I typed the title “Suggestions for the Vision & Values Action Committee.” Under that, I started a bullet point list.

Suggestions flowed magically when I told the participants that I was compiling this list to send to the central committee. I recorded all comments about the initiative– the complimentary and the not-so-complimentary. As I recorded each, I was able to ask each submitter to edit if I did not catch the idea quite as conceived. Before I saved the document, I asked if there were any other suggestions or edits.

There was a lull. Being a bit playful and seeing a comfortable audience, I typed in a new bullet point. “[A certain someone in the class room] will buy lunch for everyone after the presentation. Order whatever you want!!!” The good natured person in question took the ribbing in stride and even had another constructive suggestion. That led to more ideas from the class.

Making a list of suggestions is certainly nothing new. It has been done on chalk boards and flip charts for decades. However, if this is done in an email-able document on display for the entire class to view, there is more at stake for the participants. The document can eventually be sent to the intended parties and cc’d to all who participated in the compilation.

Postscript – I am aware that this is not an actual icebreaker. However, it is a tactic that can be used in conjunction with other exercises. I have used this method with great success at later dates in different presentations.

I learned that some groups can be inspired by the momentum of ideas that can be instantly reviewed by others present.

Also of note, the Vision & Values overview was scheduled for just under two hours with ten minutes for questions. But, the time ran over by a half hour. So the blank idea bank projected on the screen generated about forty additional moments of discussion and a long list of useful suggestions.

Ah, sweet serendipity!



## You Animal!

### An Anthropomorphic Look at Staff Relations

Parallels have been made between animal activities and human behavior. This is very apparent in stories such as fables from the Brothers Grimm. For example, the human-like wolf in many stories is a cunning predator.



This may be interesting in and of itself, but how does this tie in with training criminal justice professionals? Can the compilation of

expressions about human/animal parallels give us a better understanding of how to work together well in a prison setting?

With “You Animal!” we can do just that. This is a concept-driven, facilitator led exercise that requires very little in materials. This works well with modules that discuss staff relations and interactions.

First, the facilitator introduces the importance of staff unity:

*“Safety is absolutely crucial in our vocation. Anything that we can control that contributes to the security of staff, offenders and the public is a worthy endeavor.*

*“It is obvious that we do not always get along. That is part of the human condition. And it does not always infringe on safety. However, it is when our differences are blatantly noticeable to enterprising offenders and unscrupulous staff that we face the possibility of manipulation, uneven enforcement and a host of other perils.*

*“The costs of staff division includes, decreased productivity, increased sick leave, stress leave, animosities and harassment suits. This is a specter that shortens careers and diminishes professional potential.*

*“This is why it is so important to delve into this topic in any way that we can. The following exercise is meant to inspire unity by exploring different behavior that all of us engage in. In a sense, when we are doing some of these things, we are like animals.”*

### **The dysfunctional 13**

The trainer then compiles a list of dysfunctional behaviors by asking for a volunteer to name an attitude or action that can contribute to staff disunity. If this is a shy group, you may start the group off by listing your favorite dysfunction as number one. I would, for example write the word “lazy” as number one. It is important to let the group know that it is better to use a concept and to refrain from naming an individual.

Compile division-inspiring behaviors through the number 13. I like that number because it is an unlucky sounding number and not insurmountable. After the first few attitudes are on the board, many others will follow in quick fashion. It is natural to want to air grievances, so getting to 13 is not a problem. Keep that list on the board.

Then pass out the “You animal!” test. (See below.) Allow the participants a few minutes to complete it. Then go back to the dysfunctional 13 and determine if animals are alleged to have such attributes. For example, the suggested first dysfunction was “lazy.” And in the “You Animal!” test, the sloth is listed. The sloth is slow and deliberate. But humans see this as lazy. Thus, a sluggish co-worker may be called a sloth.

Another option to explore different behaviors is to apply the attributes and answers from the “You Animal!” test to corrections operations. Taking the sloth example once again, how can laziness contribute to

staff division inside a prison? How can this behavior impact every day operations?

Using animals as a base, we can simplify the sometimes puzzling behaviors that we commit every day. This is an anthropomorphic manner in which we can understand poor behavior without embarrassing confrontation. In fact, those on the edge of some dysfunctional behavior in the work place may recognize the animal in themselves and rectify that behavior.

## You Animal! Test

Next to each animal, please write a human behavior for which each is known. For example, Weasel – sneaky.

1. fox \_\_\_\_\_
2. wolf \_\_\_\_\_
3. eel \_\_\_\_\_
4. horse \_\_\_\_\_
5. dog \_\_\_\_\_
6. pig \_\_\_\_\_
7. sloth \_\_\_\_\_
8. snake \_\_\_\_\_
9. elephant \_\_\_\_\_
10. mule \_\_\_\_\_

Add more, if you can

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

1. fox      \_\_\_sly\_\_\_\_\_
2. wolf     \_\_\_predator\_\_\_\_\_
3. eel      \_\_\_evasive\_\_\_\_\_
4. horse    \_\_\_strong\_\_\_\_\_
5. dog      \_\_\_loyal\_\_\_\_\_
6. pig      \_\_\_greedy, filthy\_\_\_\_\_
7. sloth    \_\_\_sluggish, slow\_\_\_\_\_
8. snake    \_\_\_deceptive\_\_\_\_\_
9. elephant \_\_\_remarkable memory\_\_\_\_\_
10. mule    \_\_\_stubborn\_\_\_\_\_

Possible answers for "You animal!" test

# ICEBREAKERS

## III

(2011)

## Assertive or Aggressive Icebreaker

Most communications modules eventually come around to the question: “Where do you draw the line?” Specifically, when is someone standing up for themselves and when does that become bullying? The corrections profession requires that we act in a firm but fair manner. Though perception is in the eye of the beholder, we need to determine in general the difference between assertive and aggressive. What is firm? What is aggressive?

The following icebreaker needs no materials at all – just a facilitator who can tell short stories and a room full of participants.

First, ask the audience to define the words assertive and aggressive. Adopt and mix the varying answers then offer the following definitions if necessary.

**Assertive** - Inclined to bold or confident

**Aggressive** - Inclined to behave in an actively hostile fashion

Then ask participants the difference between these terms.

Next, inform the audience that you will tell a few quick tales and they must state whether the main character acted in an assertive or aggressive way. Here are a few examples:

1. **Bruce and Freddie**- Bruce had a younger sister with a boyfriend named Freddie. One day while Bruce was relaxing, Freddie came to the door and asked for his girlfriend, Bruce’s younger sister. Bruce said to Freddie, “I’ll let you wait here for her only if you walk to the store and buy me a bottle of pop and a pack of cigarettes.” Bruce posed this to Freddie while pointing rapidly in Freddie’s face. There was no hint of joking on Bruce’s face.

Was Bruce assertive or aggressive?

2. **Ellece in hospital** – A few years ago, my father was in and out of a small, regional hospital. As time wore on and our father’s health slowly worsened, my younger sister stayed at the hospital many long hours. She would ask many questions of staff about the recovery of the patient. When she was given conditional answers



(could, might, may), Ellece politely and persistently asked for more definitive answers (will, shall, must). Though always polite, Ellece asked the same question of many staff and frequently. She did so with unwavering eye contact. On more than one occasion, she asked the staff that she questioned, “Who is your supervisor?”

Was Ellece assertive or aggressive?

3. **Renee seats the mother of the bride** - Renee, the planner of a wedding shower, had to attend to many details. She was in charge of everything for a relative’s party that was starting within fifteen minutes. Last minute details were not coming together too well. As crunch time approached and things started to unravel, the mother of the bride politely poked Renee on the shoulder. Uncertain and not wishing to disrupt any plans, the mother of the bride asked Renee, “Where do I sit?” With a straight face, though through clenched teeth, Renee said, “Why don’t you sit there?” Renee pointed to a bathroom and directly to the toilet.

Was Renee assertive or aggressive?

The scenarios are endless. Facilitators may obtain background stories in many ways:

- Take stories from personal experiences;
- Conduct an internet search with ‘conflict’ and ‘stories’
- Look up moral dilemmas and modify as needed
- Poll students



Facilitators have a choice of using humor, uncomfortable situations, and inconclusive scenarios. I believe that it is best to start with a story that is blatantly aggressive and to work into less clear territory. In fact, the class may provide a good teaching opportunity if it is divided on whether a scenario is assertive or aggressive. This provides a live example of persuasion in action which could be discussed.

I created this icebreaker for a presentation for the Pennsylvania County Corrections Association on the topic of bullying in corrections. The stories were based on slightly

modified experiences in my life. The exercise went well, as most of the 100 professionals in attendance responded in some way. Thanks to Deputy Warden Simmons for inviting me to the Keystone State. Special thanks for the professionals who helped me field test this icebreaker.

## Car Wash Icebreaker

For corrections, times are tough and resources are scarce. Effective use of all tools available to us is crucial in attaining our mission of safety for the public, staff, and offenders. How can trainers impart the very important lesson of coordination to a classroom?

The answer is simple. All one need to do is apply a small, simple model. Enter the concept of washing cars.



How hard can a car wash be to coordinate? On the face of it, there is no problem. Of course, we have yet to introduce the human factor.

The facilitator instructs participant to suppose that they are going to be part of a volunteer car wash. In this scenario, cars will roll up in a line and each will be systematically processed like on an assembly line. The cars will be washed and dried by hand by four or more workers.

With the scene set, the instructor gets input. Without consulting neighbors, each person will write down a specific car part that they will volunteer to wash.

(In a modification of this, the instructor can provide a simple car chart like one would find on the damage section of a rental car agreement. Participants can simply mark an X on the specific car part that they will wash in the assembly line.)

Now the facilitator collects the answers and lists them on the board. There is bound to be overlapping responsibilities and areas that will not be attended. For example, one class may have three people volunteering to wash the grill. This is a one person job. In the

same sampling, there may be no volunteers to wash the hood, something that could be considered a two person job.

The facilitator will then ask if anyone in a crowded area will volunteer to move to a part of the car that has no washer. It all depends on the crowd, of course. But, the facilitator can expect to find resistance and possibly a “this is not my job” mentality.

The instructor can then ask if there are better ways to wash a car. Answers may vary. Not all car washes are alike. Some are automated, touch-less wonders. Others are do it yourself, coin fed varieties with a nozzle, brush and multiple settings that you control. And when you think of charity car washes, a hand wash is what generally comes to mind.

The instructor can point out that the same is true of agencies. No two function in quite the same manner. Common to most state agencies are field office, prison, and administrative functions. With preparation ahead of time, the instructor can compile agency distribution of staff between these three parts of the whole and have participants guess. In a car wash or in various corrections agencies, resources and division of labor are undoubtedly different, even if the mission is the same. Still, coordination is key in wise utilization of resources. And a simple icebreaker like this can illustrate the importance of preliminary planning.

## Change o' Heart

Teamwork is one of the most fundamental necessities in any job. In corrections, it is an imperative tool. Some wonder if teamwork is a matter skill or simple luck. Will pure skill always win over random choice? Or will luck triumph despite our set of abilities? What happens when both luck and skill are in the mix?

*Change o' Heart* is a simple, two-part game of skill and chance. And it costs very little to conduct.

The requirements for people in this exercise are:

- Two teams of two people. One person in each team will be blindfolded. The other will be a silent helper.
- One person will act as a judge. This person will watch the two teams work one at a time on each task. The judge will time each of the teams in declare a winner at the end. The judge, a person of great professional integrity, has the duty to add a minute for each instance in which either team operates outside of the rules.
- In addition, the audience may play the role of being useful by the facilitator; the audience will be encouraged to thwart the team for which they do not support through verbal banter or misinformation.

As for materials, you will need a total of 20 coins and two decks of cards. It does not matter that the denomination of the coins, as long as there are 20 coins.

The first part of this exercise starts with the skill set.

1. Flip a coin to see which team goes first. After all, you have 20 coins at hand.
2. Blindfold one person on the first team.
3. Roles of the participants: A silent helper can only write down whatever the blindfolded person directs. This could be the end answer or parts of an answer to be added later. Note: The silent helper shall not talk. The blindfolded person is to remain blind and the silent helper is to remain mute.
4. 10 coins are placed in front of the blindfolded team member. Timing starts when the judge says "go".
5. The blindfolded team member must, by feel, determine the value of all 10 coins. For more of a challenge, different size coins should be used. The silent helper may not talk, but can guide the hands of the blindfolded person to the coins. The

- silent helper will also write down any instructions or data given by the blindfolded team member.
6. You may allow people the audience to give advice to the blindfolded one. However, there's nothing against giving the wrong advice, as any "helper" from the audience may have a valid reason to thwart the team in question.
  7. The judge will call "time is up" when the answer is given.
  8. The second part of this exercise has to do with luck. Place a well-shuffled deck of cards in front of the blindfolded team member.
  9. The judge tells the blindfolded team member that he or she must draw a heart in order to stop the clock. This must be done one card at a time.
  10. When the heart is drawn, the clock stops. The next team repeats the steps of both parts of the activity and tries to beat the score.
  11. The facilitator will note the total time for both teams, the time it took to perform the coin part of the task, and the time it took to draw a heart – the luck part of this exercise.

Trainers may throw a wrench into the works. For example, people may vote on which team will win. This should be done on paper in the absence of the four competing team members. Also, audience members can thwart the efforts of each blindfolded team member with false information. This should increase the suspense. After a winner is declared, the judge reveals the vote tally.

Another way that the trainer can guide the outcome is to literally stack the cards. One could remove all hearts from one of the decks. This may seem like dirty pool, but also illustrates differences and advantages we face a work life. It is up to the facilitator to decide to detract from the team likely to win in order to level the playing field or to increase the chances of likely winner. It may be that the facilitator has no inkling of who is likely to win. And therein lies the element of luck.

The facilitator can ask many questions about teamwork after these tasks are completed. Some of them are:

1. How well can a silent person and a blinded person work together?
2. How did the audience impact the outcome?
3. Did you see or feel frustration in the process?
4. What strategies did the second team learn from watching the first team?
5. Considering the no talk rule what would you have done differently if you were one of the participants in the activities?
6. What is more important for success – luck or skill?



Perhaps luck or individual skills do not wholly dictate the outcome as much as teamwork will. This is a good example of how people work together under adverse conditions. After all, in corrections we know that optimal circumstances are rare.

## Destruction or Misuse

It should come as no surprise that some prisoners will risk major misconducts reports written on them in order to achieve their goal of comfort. That is to say, most contraband traders are aware they may suffer a “ticket” by misusing or destroying state property. Still, they take the risk in order to reap the rewards.

There are many contraband trading vessels. Consider the law book – a ubiquitous part of any prison library. Many of which are over 1000 pages and have ample hiding places when one thinks about it.



This icebreaker is a hands-on contraband control endeavor.

1. The object is to learn as much as possible about the different ways that prisoners modify books in order to move contraband.
2. Divide the class into groups of four. All participants in each team will play the role of a prisoner trying to alter a book in order to move tobacco.
3. Each team will be given an old, used book. Optimally, this will be a law book that is no longer usable. Facilitators can find law books from the institutional librarian’s discards. Old books can also be obtained from garage sales, used bookstores, and from local library discards. My preference is for law books, as these are common in jails and prisons. Also, law books are generally over 1000 pages. There would be more places to hide contraband in such a large vessel.
4. For added authenticity, the facilitator can provide each team with a pile of pencil shavings and one business sized envelope or a blank sheet of paper. The objective can be specific to concealing “tobacco” and moving it with the law book/vessel.



5. Teams shall be instructed that they may only use items that a prisoner in that facility would legitimately possess. For example if the team elects to hollow out a portion of the book, they may only use a pen if prisoners are permitted to use pens in that facility. They may not use a pair of scissors that may be in the training room, as is likely that prisoners are not permitted to possess scissors.
6. For even more authenticity, the facilitator can appoint a person to “make rounds” and observe the progress. In similar exercises such as shank making from a metal candy container, I invoke the “3 feet rule”. I tell the participants up front that if I am not within 3 feet of anyone on the team, then I or the appointed rover are not able to observe what the team is doing.
7. I would further instruct that the team is to be discreet. When a rover is within range, the team may utilize ruses, diversions or deception. This is done to keep the observer from witnessing their progress.
8. Teams are given a reasonable amount of time to conceal the faux tobacco in the books. A period of 15 min. may work well for this purpose.
9. Observe the team and make notes. Ask these questions: Do some teams plan or talk it out? Or does the team dive right in? Are there members who are dominant on the team who will take all initiative? Or is team rather equally utilized?
10. At the end of the appointed time, each team will elect a spokesperson. Each spokesperson in turn will report how they could conceal the faux tobacco in the law book.
11. The rover or the facilitator can note on a whiteboard where each team concealed the tobacco.

Of course, as this exercise is used over the years, the facilitator will find common answers as to where tobacco can be hidden. Most will opt immediately for the pocket part or the binding. Others will try to make a hollow in an unobtrusive part of the book. Others still will try to construct a hidden pocket with the back pages in the back cover. The facilitator can tell the participants after the exercise places that they may have missed that are commonly occurring hiding spots. Of course, if one of the teams comes up with something that is not usually used as a hiding place, that should be noted as new and unique to the exercise.

As we know some prisoners are very clever in how they move contraband. And the law book is just one of many vessels. It pays for us to role-play and to try to think like a smuggler. With some pencil shavings, and envelope, discarded law books, and some ingenuity there is no telling what hiding places can be conceived. The end result is an awareness among staff that increases safety within the facility.

## Destination Intimidation: Is AI a Bully?

This is a four-part icebreaker/classroom exercise. It consists of:

Definition,

Story by facilitator,

Bully story from audience,

Finding solutions.

This icebreaker works well with communications training and harassment awareness modules. I have field-tested this particular icebreaker with impressive results from the audience when delivering my anti-bullying module called *Destination Intimidation*.

### **Part one: Definition**

To start, you share a definition of bullying. One is provided below. You may use that or, you may construct your own or produce a hybrid.

*Bullying - the act of intimidating others through posture, force, threat of force, blackmail, or other physical or psychological means. This is done in order for the intimidator to get his or her own way. It is any level of aggression used on others, subtle, blatant, or otherwise.*

### **Part two: Story by facilitator**

Once a definition of choice is laid out, you prepare the audience by telling the story. You may create a story, find one from your experience, or tap into the rich resources online. If you are good storyteller, this is a great icebreaker for you was a facilitator

This is a story that I tell.

Al loved to play baseball. His was a lifelong obsession with the Great American Pastime. As an adult, Al played in a Sunday morning softball league with people from the factory at which he worked. One Sunday, his team which was called the 12 pack, was locked in a close contest with their cross-town rival.



The event was heated. The score was tied. The chatter was deafening. Both teams jeered and hollered at one another. That was no exception when Al stepped to the plate. Al was a very short statured man, though athletically built. The first base man on the opposing team sought to use Al's short stature against him. He yelled, "C'mon little guy. Hit it to me if you can. Aww, ain't he cute? C'mon, little guy."

Al seemed impervious to the screaming. The first pitch was hurled. Al did not move his bat. The pitch was right down the middle. The umpire called out "Steeerike!" The shouting from the first baseman intensified and drawled in baby talk, "Whaza matter, little guy? Was that too fast for your little self? Slow it down for our little buddy."

Next, the pitcher lobbed a slow and easy pitch toward Al. Al, still as a statue, did not move. Like seconds before, the umpire cried, "strike!" This just made the first base man crazy. He could not shout enough short jokes, as he was in the spirit of the game and

competition. The first base man, incidentally, was very tall and very slim. In fact, he was nearly a foot taller than Al.

As the pitcher threw the next ball, Al, a right-handed batter, pointed his left foot directly at the first baseman. The pitch was perfect for Al to make a line drive directly at the knees of the first baseman. Al's current nemesis was in the middle of shouting something about Al being sawed off when the ball soared at him. This caused the first base man to flop around like the scarecrow from the Wizard of Oz. Al was fast and could have made it a triple. However he trotted slowly to the first base and tagged the bag. He looked up and down that the first baseman, shrugged, smirked, and then led off dangerously toward second.

Al eventually scored from first base. Throughout the rest of the game, the first baseman did not chatter so loudly. And the first base man was eerily silent whenever Al stepped up to the plate. The question is *who was a bully?* Was it Al or was it the first basement?

In one telling of the story, some participants have screamed out that Al is the bully. Of course, the answer is that both people in the story use force and intimidation in order to try to get their means. Both were bullies. On one instance, I feigned an indignant mood when the participant labeled Al as the counter-antagonist. I pointed out that he was my father. That is true and that's a little gem I share with the audience. Al also played semi-pro ball and never seemed to lose his taste for baseball.

### **Part three: Bully story from audience**

After you finish the story, ask if anyone has another bully story to relate. The only rule is that no real name should be used. This is because the story could be embarrassing and that someone else might know the perpetrator. A non-correction story is requested because otherwise the story may involve someone who knows someone in the classroom. You should be prepared for emotions to shift in a hurry. I usually tell the bully story in the lighthearted, amusing way. But a willing participant may render a heart wrenching story of humiliation and intimidation.

### **Part four: Finding solutions**

Poll the audience on ways to stop bullying. If the audience is shy, you can give one or two of the following to inspire participation. Here's are some ways that corrections professionals can stem the tide of bullying.

- Zero tolerance backed by administration,
- Positive peer leadership,
- Training and awareness,
- Do not sweep the problem under the rug,
- Communication,
- Be aware of staff dynamics,
- Provide positive examples,
- Expect accountability for all staff.

When the answers are compiled from the class, you could ask if all of these will work in all situations. Certainly, this is a loaded question. This is a way to remind participants that not all circumstances can be effectively addressed in the same way.

In the end, bullying and harassment is a very serious topic. Effective storytelling is a good way to inspire participation from audience members. Doing this will go a long way in delivering valuable information to corrections professionals.

## L P & C Argument Quiz

Listen up! And don't argue with me! I have a classroom exercise here that will stimulate discussion and set the stage for any communications module – the L P and C argument quiz.

You start by explaining the concept of the LP and C argument methods. In corrections, you will find that there are many argument tactics that others will use on you when they are not permitted to do as they will. I believe that the three chief ways that people argue with you are loud, persistent, and in the contrary manner this is LP and C for short.

**Loud** – Volume overrules reason. This is just like a sonic bulldozer. This is the shouter's favorite method.

**Persistent** – Wearing down the opposing party by asking the same question until the answer that the persistent seeks is delivered.

**Contrary** – A method of simple negation. This is taking the opposite position to frustrate the logic of the person trying to calmly explain why things are as they are.

With the LP & C argument concept explained, you then administer a quiz. The answer for each scenario is one of three things: loud argument style, persistent argument style, or the contrary argument style. You have plenty of choices when you administer the quiz.

- You may hand out as paper and each person takes a test like the one below.
- Or you can split the class and ask questions in the competition mode.
- One could even read aloud and let the participants answer in a freestyle method.
- Another option is an excellent opportunity for the visual learners. You can even film shorts vignettes of the questions.

Some of the questions were designed to feature more than one answer. It is up to you to tell the class upfront that there may be more than one answer. I, however, prefer for the class to discover this for themselves. In fact, if you put questions that will have just one answer upfront, as the class warms up they may discover in the middle of the questions that there could be two answers.

Yes, there are many ways argue. But the LP and C methods cover a lot of ground. I'm sure that there is no argument that when you employ this icebreaker, you'll see plenty of energy coming from the class.

1. Someone argues a point with you. You deny the request. The person then just jumps up your chain of command with the same question. What argument style is this?

**Persistent**

2. No matter which part of policy directive you read, your antagonist simply states that it is not true. What argument style is this?

**Contrary**

3. Every time you try to talk, your opponent talks over you. What argument style is this?

**Loud**

4. When you state the identity of the person who authorized change, the arguer states that the person has no authority. What argument style is this?

**Contrary**

5. The arguer repeatedly and loudly yells the word “no”. What argument style is this?

**Loud, Persistent, Constant**

6. Your opponent rephrases each of your points in negative terms. What argument style is this?

**Contrary**

7. In answer to your rationally stated justifications, your opponent starts shouting in rapid succession, even though the points he or she raises are not relevant. What argument style is this?

**Loud, Persistent**



8. Opponent uses an elevated tone of voice to spell out what sounds like a series of legal cases meant to harass and intimidate you. What argument style is this?

**Loud**

9. Your opponent asks the same question 5 minutes later, even though you've already answered it. What argument style is this?

**Persistent**

10. Your opponent e-mails the same query to you six months later, even though you already answered the question. What argument style is this?

**Persistent**

The LPC quiz without the answers follows. You may reproduce this page.

### L P and C Quiz

Please provide the best answer for the following questions. The arguments style will be Loud, Persistent, or Contrary

1. Someone argues a point with you. You deny the request. The person then just jumps up your chain of command with the same question. What argument style is this?
2. No matter which part of policy directive you read, your antagonist simply states that it is not true. What argument style is this?
3. Every time you try to talk, your opponent talks over you. What argument style is this?
4. When you state the identity of the person who authorized change, the arguer states that the person has no authority. What argument style is this?
5. The arguer repeatedly and loudly yells the word "no". What argument style is this?
6. Your opponent rephrases each of your points in negative terms. What argument style is this?
7. In answer to your rationally stated justifications, your opponent, starts shouting in rapid succession even though the points he or she raises are not relevant. What argument style is this?

8. Opponent uses an elevated tone of voice to spell out what sounds like a series of legal cases meant to harass and intimidate you. What argument style is this?
  
9. Your opponent asks the same question 5 minutes later, even though you've already answered it. What argument style is this?
  
10. Your opponent e-mails the same query to you six months later, even though you already answered the question. What argument style is this?

## Listing Rookie Mistakes

This icebreaker is an excellent classroom exercise to precede a staff conduct module. It also works well as a refresher to veterans on how it was to be a neophyte.

For this icebreaker, you might start with a story. I usually use one where my daughter committed the rookie mistake of hitting a deer during driver's training. It goes like this.



*Talk about hard lessons learned early! I know of a young driver who was almost done with the first portion of her drivers' education course. She passed a written test and was just a few miles shy of completing her supervised time behind the wheel.*

*Little did she know that a deer, oblivious to the laws of physics and the weight of a mid-sized sedan, would try to dodge the vehicle she was driving. Try is the operative word. Put else wise, in the closing moments of her education, she got into a car/deer accident.*

*She was shaken, but not hurt. All others in the car were also well. The deer, of course, was killed. It is difficult to react to the unpredictable elements of wildlife, other drivers, and driving conditions while learning how to operate a motor vehicle. Corrections*

*neophytes learning to operate in a jail or prison have a similar difficulty. Just like those of the young driver, rookie mistakes in our profession can cast a long shadow and can be dangerous.*

*With the many hazards in the strange world of corrections, it pays to be cautious. Seasoned corrections veterans are not exempted from making errors. Still, it behooves us to watch the progress of junior staff and to help them as we can. Part of that is recognizing their missteps. Informing rookies of their mistakes may help our new colleagues avoid future occurrences.*

Now with the story told, get the class to list classic neophyte blunders.

Appoint a recorder or write the answers yourself. Ask the class to list as classic newbie blunder.

Here are five classic examples:

Over friendly –people can overdo it on being jovial in the corrections setting. Whether this behavior is because of upbringing or is a coping mechanism for stress, it is dangerous. Friendliness can be mistaken for a counter–corrections persona, forcing staff away when the rookie is most in need of support. In addition, this can be misconstrued by offenders. Over friendly is under cautious.

Overbearing – wielding the new authority like the lock in a sock is threatening. Quite simply, it puts veteran staff and offenders on edge. There is a difference between being assertive and being an aggressively loose cannon. Overbearing is under cautious

Having favorites – uniformity of action is like oil in corrections’ engine. When taken away, the engine seizes up. Favoritism builds resentment and revenge. It fosters distrust. In addition, favoritism gives the offender/recipient leverage for future manipulation schemes.

Failure to ask questions – those too timid to inquire about proper procedure may put a foot in the legal or ethical quagmire. There many operating procedures and practices in place that may seem counterintuitive to new corrections staff. Still, they are developed for a reason. Still, new staff fail to ask crucial questions because they do not wish to appear naïve or inept. During training, questions are expected. Performing the wrong action, or even in action, may land the neophyte into deep trouble.

Overt fear – it can be granted that corrections is not a perfect fit for many. And being afraid on the first day inside is natural. In moderation, a little nervous tension is safer than the mindless chest thumping bravado. However, uncontrollable and noticeable fear sends the wrong signals. Other staff may label the newbies as cowardly and create distance. Prisoners will notice of fear and some will try to capitalize on it.

These and other road bumps make corrections one of the most challenging vocations there is. How do we ease transition for new staff? You can quiz the class on that, as well. Some answers may include the following:

- Training programs are of great assistance.
- Communicating that questions will be answered is also beneficial.
- A well-trained and mentored staff person adds to our overall safety.

Veteran staff have a duty to help newbies through the hazards. Perhaps patience is the best philosophy for veterans to adopt when training new staff. It is also useful for the veteran to look back on their first days inside the walls.

## Mixed Morality

Nobody's perfect, or so it is said. And it seems in corrections that the negative can receive more attention than the positive. Still, our professional integrity dictates that we do the right thing for the public. Unfortunately, every now and again, someone in our ranks will break the rules and attract public scrutiny.

Morality training and professionalism can come in at least two forms. You may see it as a primary module as you enter the department. Another manner in which morality/professional training is administered is in the wake of a scandal. Whether the training is proactive like the former or reactive like the latter is of less consequence than the main point: We must all do the right thing.



Then comes the exercise called “mixed morality”. This is a competition and question/answer exercise. It is very simple to perform this icebreaker. In addition, there are no props, no overt physical activities, and really no wrong answers, if you think about it.

1. The class is divided into two teams. The facilitator may wish to create the teams by grouping every other person on opposite sides of the room, by random selection, or letting teams assemble themselves. This is not important as long as there are two separate teams.
2. The teams will elect one person to answer morality questions. They will be told that they are to select an answer for the entire team on moral problems and dilemmas.

3. Armed with 10 questions (like the set that follows) the facilitator will ask the questions of both team captains.
4. Here is the wrench in the works: There are two possible answers, but each team will not know what the answers are. The facilitator will read only the question, leaving both answers unknown to each captain. The team that goes first may choose option one or option two. Both options will be blind, random answers. Therefore, the other remaining answer will go to the team that has not selected. The team captain will select only one or two and cannot justify or modify an answer after it is read.
5. Each team will start at zero. The answer that they select will be accompanied with a positive or negative number value. As questions go on, a scorekeeper will mark on the board the numeric value and add or subtract that from zero.
6. Another option is to ask these questions in a large room. Both team leaders will stand in the middle of the room. If their random selection for a moral question is positive, that team leader will step forward as many steps as directed. On the other hand, if the random selection for the moral question has a negative value, the person who selected (or was defaulted) that answer will step back as directed in the answer.
7. Move on to the second question. The team captain that selected the positive answer will get to select option one or option two for the next question.
8. Continue this through number 10.
9. The team with the highest score or the team that has stepped forward the furthest will be declared the winner.

Here is a sample test with blind/random options:

The instructor can start by saying,

*“Sometimes, circumstances will dictate how we choose to act. Not all decisions are clear and not all answers are easy. The team leader that wins coin toss will be given a question and asked to select option one or two. This is a blind answer – not an opinion or a reflection of how you would act. This is truly a matter of luck, as you may or may not necessarily agree with the content of the option. With each option comes a positive or negative score. Your choice might not be how you would react in real life. However, this is designed with a few wildcards to represent real-life circumstances that may alter your decision. Your opponent will, by default, be assigned the option that you did not choose. Whatever gets the highest point in each question will be permitted to have first selection of the options in the following question. There are 10 questions. The team that scores the highest is the winning team.”*

1. You are in a beautiful national park. There is no one for miles around. The gum that you started to chew as you left your car has lost all flavor resembles nothing



more than rubber. No one will see you and you assume that there are no trail cameras. Do you spit out your gum?

Option one:

You spit out your gum. No one will see you anyway. Your score is -1.

Option two:

Patience! You dispose of your gum in a receptacle designed for trash which is located at the trailhead. Your score is +1.

2. You witness a senior citizen place a candy bar in her purse. You are behind the would-be shoplifter in line at the cash register. You see by the form of payment for the other groceries that the senior has plenty of money. Do you report the crime?

Option one:

You whisper to the senior citizen that she forgot to pay for the candy bar in her purse. Your score is +1

Option two:

You mind your own business and don't worry about the cost to consumers. Your score is -1.

3. You see a semi-dead rabbit on a rural road. It appears that it had been run over by a vehicle and is living its last moments in agony. You have a shovel in your trunk. Do you put the creature out of its misery?

Option one:

Keep on driving and forget about it. It is just a casualty of nature. Your score is -1.

Option two:

You stop by the side of the road, retrieve the shovel from the trunk, and quickly and humanely sever the head from the body. Your score is +1.

4. In your corrections academy, you are taking the final exam for the criminal justice module. You are confident and are nearly done with the test. The person next to you is a devoted corrections professional as far as you can see. However, he is looking at your answer sheet and copying your answers. What do you do?

Option one:

You cover your answers. After all, it was up to him to study and you do not wish to jeopardize your chances of working in corrections through someone else's mistake. Your score is +1

Option two:

You play dumb. You allow the person to cheat and you pretend not to notice. Your score is -1.

5. You leave the restaurant and just before you reach your car you see on the pavement by your car an expensive but functioning handheld videogame. This is a videogame that you've always wanted to play. You see no one around. Do you walk into the restaurant and present it to the staff person behind the counter?

Option one:

You keep it. If the person was foolish enough to let it drop from their hand, it is their tough luck. Your score is -1

Option two:

Turn it into the staff person. It doesn't matter that you have to walk back inside the restaurant even though you have just left. You would want someone to do the same for you. Your score is +1.

6. You have just enough time to get to work. On the side of the road, you see a colleague with a flat tire. It looks like he is not doing too well in changing the flat. This colleague just happens to be a less than pleasant type. He's expressed that he really doesn't like you and doesn't care if you live or die. Though you may be late, do you help your colleague change the tire?

Option one:

You reap what you sow. Why should you do this guy a favor? Keep driving! The score is -1

Option two:

As painful as it is, stop and help. At least pull over and ask if he needs assistance. Your score is +1.

7. You are on vacation with your spouse. At the breakfast buffet in the hotel you realize that you have spare minutes to eat before going on your planned excursion. Your spouse gets the coffee across the room. You get a couple of muffins. They are the last two muffins – just enough for you two to eat breakfast. One of the muffins drops on the floor. A quick inspection, you see no dust. Still, you blow on the top of the muffin, hoping that your germs pose less of a threat than whatever was tracked in on the floor. Your spouse, diligently preparing coffee just the way you like, did not witness any of this. What do you do?

Option one:

You confess that you dropped one of the muffins. You explain that it looks clean enough and that you can both eat half of both muffins. Give the option of you eating the fallen muffin. The score is +1.

Option two:

Place the fallen muffin in front your spouse. Inwardly you reason that what you don't know won't hurt you. Your score is -1.

8. You purchase some candy for \$.75 with a \$10 bill. The cashier, believing that you paid with the \$20 bill, gives you \$19.25 for change. This is \$10 in your favor. What do you do?

Option one:

You have been shopping here for years. You've supported the store for over a decade. Will \$10 really hurt in the larger scheme of things? You do not report the error. Your score is -1.

Option two:

Your integrity is not worth \$10. You report the error. Your score is +1.

9. It is rush hour during lunch time at a fast food restaurant. Two different lines form and in a disorganized manner. You are standing right next to someone who has been in line longer than you. When cashier asked for the next person in line, you see that the person next to you does not move up. What do you do?

Option one:

According to the old saying, "the race is to the swift". Step up! If you snooze, you lose. Your score is -1.

Option two:

You simply tell the person that they are next in line. Your score is +1.

10. You contacted your cable network and canceled a premium channel. A month later, you notice that you still have the channel but have not been charged for. What do you do?

Option one:

You inform your cable company of their error. You want to receive what you have not paid for. This is +1.

Option two:

You reason that a multibillion-dollar cable company will not miss \$10 per month. Plus, you've always paid your bill on time. Your score is -1.

At the end of the exercise, the teams may actually be tied. It is truly a 50/50 proposition. That really doesn't matter. What's important is that not all decisions are cut and dry.

You can pose some of the following questions to the class if you have time to drive additional points home.

- Have any of these scenarios actually happened to you? If so, how did you act?
- Does having no money ever justify shoplifting?
- If the only law that existed was "might makes right" like in a post-apocalyptic world, would moral decisions be assessed differently than now?
- From whom did you learn right and wrong?
- Is it cheating if no one ever knows about it?

In the end, morality training can be a bit uncomfortable. Be that as it may, with an icebreaker like mixed morality, you can use interesting segues into these crucial modules.

## Modified Roundup - Contraband Trivia

When I was in High School, I had an innovative teacher. We will call him Mr. W. I did not think that I would enjoy Mr. W's biology class as I was interested primarily in social-sciences. However, his class became one that I looked forward to every day.

To Mr. W, learning could be a fun competition between two teams. He used trivia combined with simple games and called it Roundup. He had a list of questions that were ten points each. If a team answered a trivia question correctly, the team could gain an extra point with a non-question test such as throwing a ball into a waste basket or shooting rubber bands towards a target. If the team failed to answer the question correctly, the other team could answer and earn the points plus a bonus agility task. At the end of the day, whichever team won in points would win a small prize.

Thinking back all of these years, I realize that I remember some of the questions and answers in his game. The wise simplicity of trivia and repetition cannot be disputed. Adding the minor agility tasks complemented the intellectual part of the competition. This made for a nice balance.

Roundup can be easily modified to reinforce corrections lessons. All you have to do is create questions and assign various agility tasks.

You can develop different corrections questions from a variety of topics. They can be specific to your facility, your agency, or American corrections. You can create questions from areas such as international corrections with just a simple internet search. Infamous criminals is another good topic. Policy and procedure is a useful category to develop knowledge of how your particular facility operates. Additional information can be read by the instructor after each question is answered.

Bonus agility tests can be as simple as balancing a book on one's head for a minute or sinking a wad of paper into a coffee cup from twenty feet. One could even break ties in the game by seeing who can spin a quarter for the longest duration of time.



Below are some sample questions in a Jeopardy style that I created. They are from my favorite corrections topic – contraband control.

Category: Definitions

Answer	Any prohibited good
Question	What is contraband?
Additional information	Contraband can be excessive amounts of permitted items, borrowed property, or altered items.

Answer	Intuition – knowing that something is out of place.
Question	What is the X-factor?
Additional information	Sometimes things seem to be going too well. There seems to be a dry spell in finding bootleg. It may be that there is none to be found, though that is not likely. This will usually spark the x-factor or institutional intuition. Some may dismiss this as pattern analysis. Whatever the term, something may be afoot if it seems wrong.

Answer	Seeking contraband while not in the view of prisoners.
Question	What is the covert search?
Additional information	The covert or covered search is performed when you do not want offenders to know that you are searching in a specific area. This could precede a sting operation or be based on an informant letter.

Answer	Look at me search this area!
Question	What is an overt search?
Additional information	The overt search is a way to demonstrate to prisoners that you are shaking down an area and that they would likely lose any contraband that they attempt to hide there. In many ways, this is like making a round or a presence in an area that is not usually touched.

Answer	Written or oral transfer of information about a contraband issue.
Question	What is communications?
Additional information	At times, staff do not have the opportunity to pass observations on to the next shift, to other work areas, or to other facilities. This often leaves a piece of the information puzzle missing.

**Category: Where is it hidden?**

Answer	Magician trick – not really hidden
Question	What is sleight of hand?
Additional information	Be it the shell trick, diversions, or palming, the sleight of hand is responsible for more concealment than one would think.

Answer	A bitter pill for staff to swallow, a way for prisoners to hoard medication.
Question	What is cheeking?



Additional information	Some will also regurgitate the medication and use later – either for themselves or as a barter item.
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Answer	A popular way to ‘defeat’ staff in hiding tobacco and other items.
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Question	What is concealment of contraband under insole of shoes?
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Additional information	Who would smoke a contraband cigarette that has been placed under a foot for hours or days? It is a matter of supply and demand. Demand for such items would be high, therefore, anything goes.
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Answer	Oh, Baby! What a clever place to hide just about anything.
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Question	What is a diaper?
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Additional information	Of course, staff in visiting rooms have to follow policy and procedure to the letter when searching in this area. Our quest for safety for all, including the visiting public has to be practiced with professionalism, no matter how undesirable the task of searching a diaper.
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Answer	You have to hand it to them, this method is normally effective.
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Question	What is palming?
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Additional information	The hand is quicker than the eye. There is also the closed fist stance that some prisoners adopt when they are being searched.
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**Category: What do you make of this?**

Answer	A tattooist's dream as a receptacle for "liquid assets"
Question	What is an empty pill container?
Additional information	Ink pads also serve as a convenient place to store ink. Pens, though it seems obvious, also store ink.

Answer	The stock of quality greeting cards.
Question	What is a manila folder?
Additional information	Keep an eye on your folders before the Mother's Day rush. This is arguably the busiest card holiday in the offender year.

Answer	Unobtrusive, dangerous and a breath freshener. This is the bane of door locks.
Question	What is chewing gum?
Additional information	Chewing gum is more than a relaxing tool for mastication. It also acts as an adhering agent and a quick and effective way to jam locks. Staff who offer offenders gum might provide more hazards than they suppose.

Answer	Flammable and easy to hide. This kindling is a sweet find for arsonists.
Question	What are some artificial sweeteners?
Additional information	The paper of some artificial sweeteners also act as kindling. Offenders will experiment and find which is best for conflagrations. Staff should do the same in order to determine what is most dangerous.

Answer	Ubiquitous, flushable, and hygienically necessary.
Question	What is a roll of toilet paper?
Additional information	Prisoners have ample time on their hands to conceal small items in a roll of toilet paper.

The sky is the limit in the questions that you form and the tasks that you appoint. Thanks to Mr. W. and Roundup for the inspiration.

## Offensive ABC's

If you work long enough in corrections, you will develop an ability to read people with minimal clues. In fact, some of us can just look at an offender and guess their crime with an astonishing accuracy. Games like these sharpen observation skills and challenge our perceptions.

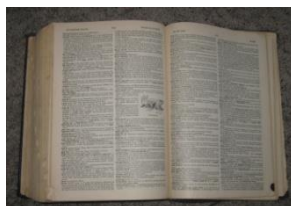
Here's a classroom exercise that is a review of the many offenses that we deal with regularly in our field. And it's a good segue exercise into a module on criminology. As criminal justice professionals, we are aware of the variety of offenses and the offending ABC's is way to review our knowledge.

To start, split the class into groups of four. Have each group appoint a team captain/spokesperson. Another in the group will serve as a recorder. For good measure and to inspire competition, each team will be given a few minutes to choose and then declare the team name.

Once the teams have settled, the facilitator states that the recorder can start immediately by writing the letters of the alphabet at the top left of the page and continuing down. The first line is A, the second line is B, and so forth. In other words, the recorder will write the alphabet down the left side of the page.

The team will then be given instructions to work together to list one official crime per letter. It's as simple as A is for arson, for example. The teams will be given 5 minutes. At the end of the 5 minutes each team captain comes to the front and announces the number of letters filled with a bona fide offense.

Here are some rules: No cheating. No espionage. No writing answers as they are read by other teams at the end of the exercise. Above all, no help from electronics or any law dictionary will be permitted.



The facilitator is the judge, jury and executioner and decides all. However the facilitator can be assisted by Internet or Black's Law Dictionary. Also, offenses must be commonly known as crimes. Stretching it is forbidden. For example X equals the xylophone theft or Y equals yak napping or Z equals zoo breaking. These should not be accepted.

The recorder will go to the board and for each team select a color and write the offense for each letter as they are read by the team captain. In that way a red team will have all their offenses in red, the blue team will have all of their offenses in blue.

In the event of a tie, each team will in turn be given a letter to name a crime not already listed. Of course, the facilitator's discretion is important here. Please note that one should not expect XYQ or Z to be filled in this exercise.

Just as in any other competition-based classroom exercise, the facilitator may use incentives. He or she may offer a prize like candy, gag gifts or something of that nature to the winning team.

I now offer a cheat sheet for facilitators here's a quick list of answers for the offensive ABC's. Of course, you'll see different answers with different crowds.

- A. arson
- B. battery
- C. criminal sexual conduct
- D. delinquency
- E. extortion
- F. forgery
- G. gross indecency
- H. homicide
- I. insurance fraud
- J. jaywalking
- K. kidnapping
- L. larceny
- M. manslaughter
- N. negligent homicide
- O. obscenity
- P. panhandling
- Q. nothing comes to mind
- R. robbery

- S. safe cracking
- T. tax evasion
- U. uttering and publishing
- V. vehicular homicide
- W. weapons possession
- X. no idea
- Y. not a clue
- Z. zoning ordinance violation.

On the face of it, Offensive ABC's is a quick fill in the blank team oriented exercise based on criminal offenses. However prior to going into the criminal justice module, the facilitator can make good use of the time watching how the team members operate. After all, this is part of what we do in corrections – watch people.

## More than One Way to Skin a Cat

No matter how you feel about animals – cats in particular, this classroom exercise does not advocate harming of living things in any way. Rather the title selected from a popular idiom. There are many ways to do something. In this case, it is how some offenders use different tactics in order to set staff up for manipulation.

In this scenario, staff members are the potentially skinned cats and unscrupulous offenders who endeavor to manipulate are those who use handling tactics. Part of human nature is the need to gain advantages over who you might consider your adversary. Let's face it; there are many ways to manipulate.

Below are 11 such ways. How many of these have you experienced?

Affirmation of decision

Appeal to fairness

Appeal to higher power

Challenge to the profession

Charges of discrimination

Disfavor

Favor

Flattery

Probe for leverage

Us versus them

Veiled threat

As always, corrections staff must be forever vigilant and aware of ruses and manipulation tactics. By doing this, we make our facility safer for staff, offenders, and the public. The Manipulating Matching test is a good prelude for any module on the anatomy of a set up or staff communications.



## Manipulation Matching Test

Please match the letter of the descriptive phrase below with the term. There is one letter per term.

- Affirmation of decision
- Appeal to fairness
- Appeal to higher power
- Challenge to the profession
- Charges of discrimination
- Disfavor
- Favor
- Flattery
- Probe for leverage
- Us versus them
- Veiled threat

In general, people simply like to hear good things about themselves. Some examples are, “It looks like you have lost weight, “or “you are the smartest staff person here.”

Suppose that a prisoner tells you that your program is the worst in the system in order appeal to your innovative spirit.

Some inmates, regardless of background, portray themselves as members of a persecuted group. “You treat all \_\_\_\_\_ prisoners better than non-\_\_\_\_\_ prisoners.” Race, ethnic groups, religious affiliations, weight, height, and sexual orientation are just a few topics used by this strategy.

“You did this favor for another inmate. Why didn’t you do it for me?”

An example of this is when a prisoner tells a staff person that “a person could get hurt acting like you do.”

“The Nazis said that they were just following orders – Just like you are saying. Are you religious? Would God approve of how you are treating me? I’ll bet that your mother did not raise you to be like this.”

Some inmates paint the administration as oppressors of prisoners and line staff.

A prisoner complements staff for making a good decision.

“Why are you so happy today? Did you get some lovin’? What’s wrong? Are things bad at home? Do you ever drink to take the pain off life?”

A prisoner tells you that he will write a letter to the warden explaining what an excellent employee you are.

An inmate threatens to write a letter of criticism concerning you to the warden.

## Answers to the Manipulation Matching Test

Affirmation of decision	H
Appeal to fairness	D
Appeal to higher power	F
Challenge to the profession	B
Charges of discrimination	C
Disfavor	K
Favor	J
Flattery	A
Probe for leverage	I
Us versus them	G
Veiled threat	E

## So, How about that Weather?

There's nothing quite as universal as discussion of the weather. As a topic, it is unrivaled in accessibility to all types of people. In fact, in modules that outline manipulation, the weather is considered one of the safest topics between offenders and staff.

That's pleasant information as far as that goes. But what use is discussion of meteorological topics for someone trying to enliven (or hone the skills of) a class full of corrections veterans? The weather can be made useful for this purpose by administering a corrections twist.

In corrections, we are trained to notice changes in the ordinary. We are also expected to look at a scene and to derive important details at a glance. This is in contrast to how we watch the weather report from the comfort of our home. Most of us tend to focus on our own local area, memorize the data, and move on. Details beyond the scope of our area are not really retained.

At times, we may devote more attention to upcoming storms and possible weather trends that may impact us. But that does not mean that we will absorb as many details as we can.

Enter the exercise called "so, how about that weather?"

This exercise requires:

- a television that will bring up a national weather channel,
- the moderator to give instructions,
- one person to serve as the tester,
- one person to service a recorder.

The idea is to flash 20 seconds of any national weather Channel on the screen while a weather map is displayed. This serves as the basis of a test of observation skills.

Before hand, the tester will be instructed to quickly jot down conditions at whatever locations he or she chooses during the 20 second duration that the weather map is on the

television screen. A range of 3 to 10 locations with their specific temperatures can be jotted down by the tester.

The moderator tells the participants to look at the map and gives no other explanation. The moderator will time 20 seconds and turn off the television at that time.



Then the moderator will explain that they have to give the temperature that was displayed on the map for specific locations as listed by the tester.

As the tester reveals the first location, the recorder will write that on the whiteboard or flipchart. The moderator will ask for the temperature and the recorder will write down all different answers offered.

The recorder will reveal the correct answers while the moderator talks a bit about the nature of quick observation when one is not ready to observe. After all, the first test was a surprise.

The moderator turns on the television for another 20 seconds. The recorder once again selects locations and records are temperatures. And once 20 seconds have expired and the television is turned off, the recorder will jot down the answers that the moderator solicits from participants.

Of course, the point is that once we know what to look for, our observation skills are sharper. With both sets of data compiled, the moderator can compare both of those for the class. She or he may ask questions such as,

For which tests were the answers most accurate? (It is likely that the participants produced more accurate answers for the second test rather than the first – everyone knew what to expect the second time around.)

Were you quick to agree with someone who is a known keen observer – even if it was contrary to your recollection?

Even though you thought you may have been correct, did you succumb to peer pressures as more people registered a popular but ultimately wrong answer?

When you weren't sure of a certain temperature of the location, did you use deduction? For example, would you have put Miami Florida at 68° during the morning in April because that is what you expect the conditions to reflect?

Would the international weather reports, such as from the southern hemisphere, then more difficult to guess due to the less familiar geography and change of season?

A large part of our job revolves around utilizing our observation skills. It is necessary to step out of comfort zones and to explore impromptu, uncommon scenarios in order to test the accuracy of our vigilance. And using something as mundane as the weather helps us to do this.

## Sock Puppets and Learning

This is a true story that led to inadvertent learning and unexpected classroom rapport. It occurred in the classroom of a college for which I teach. And when you hear the old saying that trainers learn from their students, I realize that it is true.

Let us go back to Gogebic Community College in 2010 during a lesson on contraband control for CJC 104 "Client relations in corrections".

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The stage was set. The class was divided into two competitive teams. Each team was provided with a sock and a small metal container filled with mints<sup>1</sup>

In a purposely vague manner, I told them that the sock and the tin of mints were all that they could use to construct a weapon (or weapons). They had fifteen minutes to complete their task.



The only other rule was that they had to conceal their work whenever I was within arm's length of their work area. As I "made rounds", the students were very creative in camouflaging, making distractions, and keeping me oblivious of their craftsmanship.

While making a round to the team that dubbed themselves "The Average Joes", I was knocked off my square (albeit briefly) by what I saw. One of the participants had used a marker (an unauthorized tool in this exercise) and drawn a Joe Bouchard puppet on one of the socks that I provided. It was unflattering, but amusing. In the many times that I have facilitated this exercise, I had never been "rewarded" with a sock puppet of myself. Live and learn.

The sock artist looked at me with an expression of amusement and challenge – clear provocation. What is an instructor to do? Did I risk losing face by letting this insolence go unchecked? Should I take control in a commanding way? Should I feign indignity to lighten the mood?

I simply looked the artist dead in the eyes and demanded with faux disapproval that the sock portrait should have a goatee. Without missing a beat, the artist's teammate implored that the puppet should also have hair.

It was a great teaching moment for me. A student's creativity pulled us into a spontaneous bit of levity. I believe this loosened the class a bit more and allowed for more creativity.

There is a fine balance in training between command and clownery. This condition is complicated by the various classroom personas that instructors adopt. I am sure that one can chart on a continuum the dogmatic and entertaining types of facilitators. And certainly, more instructors are plotted in the middle rather than on the extremes.

When things work out well, the facilitator recognizes creativity among the students and allows this to lead the class in other directions. Therefore, the instructor must be willing to give up a little control in order to let others instruct. Otherwise, the lesson is more of a two-dimensional lecture with unrealized possibilities.



The flip side of that is pandemonium. The instructor must be able to ride what may become a high powered sports car in the form of creativity run amok. And when participants are very creative, it is not unlike a white knuckle drive in a very powerful and dangerous vehicle.

This philosophy of balance has been with us since ancient times. Remember that Icarus was advised to take the middle road – not to fly too close to the sun, nor to have wings wetted down by the sea foam. Moderation is the key.

In addition, facilitators must be true to their natures. If you are more comfortable as a factual conduit of knowledge, that is the path you should take. If, on the other hand, you shine as an entertainer, that should be your teaching tactic.

And all of this is tempered by the nature of the training. Some topics are dry due to their content. That does not, however, lessen their importance in the scheme of things. Also, there are very serious topics and debriefings that should be presented in a straight forward, serious manner.

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Keep your eyes and minds open, trainers. In training, one never knows what funny, strange, or instructive things can occur. In addition to providing circumstances where pre-professionals in a college class could learn about contraband, there was more. I saw teamwork, camaraderie, quick improvisation, and humor. Plus, I have a sock puppet souvenir.

## The Parable of the Hummingbird and Raven

This is a story-based icebreaker. It is an excellent point of departure for a module on working with difficult colleagues.

It is a story of human concerns masked in the guise of talking birds. Basically, it is about someone who has great difficulty rolling with new changes.

Questions follow the story. All of them come back to addressing being stuck in the rut of routine.

To keep interest, a short PowerPoint might be a good tool. This can feature a picture of each character to correspond with the paragraph that the reader is on. For example, when reading a paragraph about the raven, an image of a raven can be on screen. The initial work for this would be worth it for keeping interest. Also, it makes the facilitator more familiar with the story.

I believe that this should be read aloud by the facilitator. Having the class read silently would lead to skimming and less comprehension. It helps to train the trainer. Also, the instructor can gauge the crowd as the story goes on.

At the end of the reading, questions one through ten are asked of the participants. In an active group, answers will inspire more answers. Sometimes, as we have all found, we need to prod the group a bit. A recorder can be appointed to mark answers on the board or flip chart.

Also, there may be animosity driven by the story if similar incidents occur in the facility. Therefore, the facilitator must be mindful of events. It is wise to state that participants should not attack individual but should talk about concepts.

Now it is story time...

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Sometimes, we perform a task so often that we can do it with our eyes closed. In fact, if not for change, we could cruise along in perpetuity in a blindfold. Yet, that is a perfect world. As reality teaches us, the world does not stand still for anyone.

Did you ever hear the one about the Hummingbird and the Raven? I think that it is a good story.

One day in late June, Raven sat on a railing overlooking a blooming garden. She was basking in the sun, reflecting on the past winter. As we all know, ravens stick around for the bad weather. They do not fly elsewhere during the hard times of the year.



Raven's solitude was shattered by the sickening thud of bone on a plate glass window. There she saw Hummingbird in avian agony, amid recently loosened feathers from the little bird's noggin. Hummingbird massaged his crown with his wingtips. Chirping in high pitched, impatient expletives, Hummingbird shook off his stupor.

Raven suppressed her smirk as much as she could. This was the first time that Raven saw Hummingbird since he had flown south to escape the bad weather. And it seemed to Raven that Hummingbird had not changed. He was still too busy to be careful.

“Who put that building there? I almost killed myself!” Hummingbird squeaked. “How am I supposed to get to the flowers with that thing in my way? I always used to fly this way. Now I am blocked!”

Raven said dryly, “It is for tools. What does it matter who put it there? It looks like you have to find a better way to the flowers.”

The rant continued: “It’s stupid! Why is it there? There is no rational reason to put a building in my way!”

“Still, it is there. Never mind the rationale,” drawled Raven.

“But I cross pollinate and help keep Spring and Summer diverse and beautiful. Without me, this would be a drab place. It may as well be winter. What do you want, a world of weeds? Don’t they know that my job is important?”

“Yeah, I am sure that everyone knows how important you are,” mocked Raven. “But the fact remains that you should have slowed down and assessed the scene. You could have been done with your job by now if you hadn’t stopped to complain.”

Defensively, Hummingbird squawked, “What do you know? All you do is scavenge off animals that are already dead. I am part of a living system. You are the reaper’s bird. And you have the luxury of flying around for your work. My path is very well defined – and now it is blocked!”

“Well, well,” croaked Raven, “It didn’t take you long to get personal with me. Quit ignoring the fact that YOU slammed your head into a solid object. I did not. If you are moving too fast to be safe, that is your problem. If you can’t adapt to new, immovable circumstances, how can anyone help you?”

Hummingbird glared at Raven, chirping in contempt. “Sanctimonious Raven! So proper, so righteous!”

As Raven flew carefully away to tend to the next carrion, she could not help thinking that Hummingbird would end up hurt or worse.

Raven was right. It was just two days later – right in the middle of the bird work week- that Hummingbird was found sporting x's for eyes. Did he die from a concussion? Was stress the main factor in his demise? Did he implode out of frustration? Was it his time to go? Did he forget about the new obstacle? Raven simply did not know.

She did know that though both of them had bird brains, one of them had survived the occupational hazard of change. Hummingbird's inability to relearn, adapt, and navigate around new obstacles were the chief factors in his death. Fellow birds had warned Hummingbird to slow down many times. Perhaps it was in his nature to operate in that way.

In the end, it may be a waste of time to wonder why we have to circumvent what we perceive as impediments. Instead, we need to assess, adapt, and act accordingly. Those three A's can help us to cope with a new paradigm and prevent us from banging our heads on a new, often intractable reality.

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Here are some questions to consider:

What was the hummingbird's problem?

Why did the hummingbird resort to insulting the raven when the raven was being honest?

Is it possible to work too fast in corrections – like the humming bird?

What are some of the consequences of working in a rut of routine?

To which character do you most relate – the hummingbird or the raven?

How do you deal with corrections' hummingbirds?

## The Parable of the Hungry Rat

This is another story-based icebreaker. It is an excellent point of departure for a module on working with difficult colleagues.

It is a story of human concerns masked in the guise of talking animals. Basically, it is about a line level employee who becomes a tyrant.

Ten questions follow the story. Five are about the characters of the story. These are followed with five questions related to the story, but more conceptual. All of them come back to addressing a tyrant/bully.

To keep interest, a short PowerPoint might be a good tool. This can feature a picture of each character to correspond with the paragraph that the reader is on. For example, when reading a paragraph about Connie the rat, an image of a rat can be on screen. The initial work for this would be worth it for keeping interest. Also, it makes the facilitator more familiar with the story.

I believe that this should be read aloud by the facilitator. Having the class read silently would lend to skimming and less comprehension. It helps to train the trainer. Also, the instructor can gauge the crowd as the story goes on.

At the end of the reading, questions one through ten are asked of the participants. In an active group, answers will inspire more answers. Sometimes, as we have all found, we need to prod the group a bit. A recorder can be appointed to mark answers on the board or flip chart.

Also, there may be animosity driven by the story if similar incidents occur in the facility. Therefore, the facilitator must be mindful of events. It is wise to state that participants should not attack individual but should talk about concepts.

Now it is story time...

No one is immune from the seductive Siren songs of power. Almost everyone in the workplace is likely to face a megalomaniacal monster. This is the person that dreams of authority and becomes drunk on it. It can be line staff or official supervision.

Sometimes we delegate power to someone who is very eager to perform a less than desirable task. When the task is complete, we sometimes have to pry the fingers off the position. In other words, when we appoint someone to do a difficult job, they may be reluctant to relinquish power.

This little story asks the question: What do you do when you empower a megalomaniac? Please suspend your knowledge of how animals actually act and interact in the wild. With a little anthropomorphism, I spin the parable of the hungry rat.

The Cast:

Alice – a hard working ferret – owner of a farm

Rudy – an insightful rabbit who has an infallible bovine-scatometer (BS detector)

Connie – a power hungry rat

Alice, a hard working ferret, ran a farm. She was successful in selling surplus produce to the local area. Alice liked her work and was happy, for the most part.

Rabbits were employed to keep the insects off of Alice's crops. The rabbits were very adept at keeping weeds away from the commodity. On paper, the rabbits did very well.

On occasion, they did not.

You see, most of the rabbits did not always work well because they were easily frightened. They tended to scatter or hide under one another when adversity struck. Outside forces sometimes shook their mettle. They found themselves unable to concentrate, for example, when they were spooked by coyotes that prowled around the perimeter. It was very disruptive.

It was unfortunate that Alice could not control the outside forces. She thought about it and implemented defensive training for the rabbits. Alice hired an expert (a clever fox) who trained the rabbits in un-pawed self defense. The training seemed to go well. Yet, on the first occasion when a coyote attacked a rabbit, the results were not optimal. The violent passing of three of the more audacious rabbits was a somber occasion.

Rudy, an outspoken and bright rabbit, told Alice and her colleagues that fighting was not in a rabbit's nature. The training, she said, was counter to rabbit psychology. One might as well expect a pig to walk on two legs - like some sort of Orwellian vision.

Determined for success of the farm, Alice tried some new training. A pensive owl lectured on the importance of self esteem to the rabbits. Predictably, the rabbits sat riveted to the words of the sagacious bird. Weeks later when a new round of harassment from the coyotes occurred, the rabbits fell apart. Fear overtook the feelings of empowerment instilled by the owl. The psychological training did not work.

Rudy reminded Alice that this group was not built for this sort of training. They needed protection from Alice in order to do their work. Frustrated, Alice said that she was too busy running things to protect the rabbits. Rudy rolled her eyes and went on with her work day.

Connie had a solution. She was a hard working rat who always seemed to keep her area orderly. However, she was known throughout the farm as bossy. On occasion, she would show her teeth and frighten her colleagues. In fact, all but Rudy would do her bidding when she snarled orders.

Connie asked Alice for power. In the wake of two expensive training fiascos, the ferret was at wit's end. She granted Connie the authority to act as a surrogate in the interest of the rabbits.



Connie did not have the tact of Alice. She was feared, whereas Alice was generally respected. In addition, Connie used fawning to stroke Alice's ego. She did not mean the compliments. They were merely a tool to get things to move her way. The beleaguered Alice did not see through Connie's sycophantic ways.

It was fear of Connie that kept the rabbits busy. Then, the test day came. Another round of coyote prowling commenced. Connie was on the fence, hurling invectives and brandishing her teeth. Surprised by the resistance, the bullying coyotes looked for easier prey. Connie was a star!

More coyote harassments came. They were deflected by Connie.

Unfortunately, Connie's actions were fueled by hostility and not by professionalism. After each trouncing of the coyotes, Connie was an unbearable tyrant on the farm. She was, no doubt, emboldened by each new success. The ends were admirable. The means were dubious.

Connie, never shy about reporting her achievements, trumpeted her victory over the coyotes to Alice. Relieved, Alice gave Connie what she directly asked for – more power. Grateful for the apparent rise in productivity, Connie was given carte blanche. From there, Connie's reign of terror intensified. Connie had barely acknowledged her rabbit peers as colleagues. Now they were merely subjects.

Rudy saw through the incident. She knew that Connie was successful. But in the retelling, Rudy noted that Connie elevated herself to mythical proportions. It was only Rudy who stood up to Connie's tactless, officious ways.

Alice was away often, a bit intoxicated by less responsibility. An imaginative, if not deluded ferret, Alice believed that all was working as it should.

The gardens became a mess, as the intimidation tactics used by Connie eventually froze the rabbits into inactivity. When Alice timidly asked about this, Connie said that with more power, she could get things in shape again.

Rudy, being a good observer, noted that Connie was getting power drunk and more offensive. Yet, Alice was blinded by the result over the means. Alice was now intimidated

by Connie, having given authority to a bully. Rudy pointed out to Alice that she has empowered a megalomaniac and that wresting the power from her would be like dislodging a deep rat's nest.

This parable is without an ending. I would be nice to say that Connie realized the error of her ways and dropped the bullying act. It would also be nice if Alice seized the reigns of the farm. Here are some questions to consider:

- What role does Rudy play in all of this?
- Should Alice have seen through Connie's false compliments?
- Do you view Alice as too weak or too busy?
- Can Alice get any credit for *trying* new training?
- Is Connie a horrible bully or an opportunist with aspirations?
- How do you keep in charge even when there is a nasty job that you would rather delegate?
- Are outside forces part of the stress of any job?
- Is the bottom line result more important than the process?
- Does training always work? Should it be tailored to fit the needs of the group?
- What do you do when you empower a megalomaniac? What are some of the consequences?

## The Predator Test

In corrections, we deal with a variety of personalities. Perhaps all the most challenging of these is the predator type. Therefore, is very likely that academies and annual updates may feature some training on predators. Here's a way to use something unexpected to draw parallels and to make predator training a bit more entertaining.

The facilitator may starts like this -

“Can anyone here defined predator in a few short words? (Pause for class participation and mark on board as answers are offered.) A good definition is someone who preys on the weaknesses of others for their own gain or gratification. Now, our agency's policy directive defines the predator as (fill in the blank with your own official definition of predator).

Still, how much do we know about predators? I suggest that we take this little test.”

The instructor can very easily find out natural predators and prey and put them in opposing columns and with those conduct a matching test. These are animal predators, not human. At the end of these directions is a sample test.

The point is to think about natural ways in a certain environment where there is pray and the Hunter. This is not some sort of Darwinian or Discovery Channel sort of exercise. Rather, it demonstrates a food chain of sorts. The object, of course, is not to reduce human behavior to that of animals. But the test does illustrate the ways of an institutional environment.

After the test is completed, one may even award the individual or the teams with the most answers correct a prize of some sort. The predator test can also be placed on a PowerPoint presentation and conducted as a Jeopardy quiz.

The instructor can ask teams to compile a list of human predators outside of an institutional setting. Give the class a few minutes to come up with five of these. Some examples include:

An unscrupulous mechanic who fleeces naïve consumers;  
Identity thieves;  
“Agents” who handle models and dupe them into posing in compromising positions;

Then the instructor asks the ways that offenders may victimize one another. Some answers are sexually, through intellectual coercion, and via groups. The quiz is a way to get a little class participation before launching into the official module on how to deal with predators of various types in the prison setting.

Sample predator test

Name the natural predator for the following animal:

Cobra  
Salmon  
Seal  
Mouse  
Rabbit  
Cat  
Deer  
Zebra  
Fly  
Capybara

Answers:

Mongoose  
Grizzly bear  
Orca, polar bear  
Owl, cat  
Dog, cat  
Dog, eagle  
Wolf  
Lion  
Spider  
Piranha

## There is a Word For It

Sometimes, a single word does not seem to fit. For example, I once used the word vex in place of harass in a charge of insolence. The word actually fit and was used properly. But it did not read well because it is not a common word. In fact, some colleagues checked up on me to see if I invented a word. They found it in the dictionary. But it was a matter of ridicule and eyebrow-raising. It simply did not fit.

What if convention was thrown to the four winds and we used less official language in our misconduct reports? The results would be hilarious on one hand and ineffective on the other. Potentially, all of these are legal documents. Misconduct writing is a serious matter.

What are some possible pitfalls? We could create misconduct reports that are too pompous, too archaic, too judgmental, or too far away from the facts. How do we reinforce good ticket writing skills?

You could start by considering a sentence from a generic misconduct report. Do not reveal the sentence yet. Ask the class for a verb. Have a recorder write the first ten verbs offered. You may jumpstart the shy group by reminding them that a verb is an action word. You can offer RUN as an example. From there, you might get a list such as EAT, POINT, LAUGH, etc.

Then you display a sentence from the misconduct on the board or on the computer screen. "At the above time and place, I directly observed..." The word to replace is "observed". Plug each of the words into the blank spot left by the vacated "observed".

"At the above time and place, I directly \_\_\_\_\_..."

The results can be strange or nonsensical. The point is to reinforce the idea that words should be useful and descriptive and accurate. In other words, they need to fit the tone of the misconduct.

From the same sentence, we could eliminate the adverb “directly” and replace it. Again, ask the class for an adverb, a word that describes how you do something. For example, I can run (verb). But how can I run (adverb)? I can run quickly, furiously, sloppily, etc. You may solicit answers such as LAZILY, HAPPILY, LOUDLY, POORLY, and so on.

Now plug the adverb into the sentence with the adverb “directly” omitted, “At the above time and place, I \_\_\_\_\_ observed...” Run through the adverbs offered by the class one by one by plugging them into the vacancy of “directly”.

In essence, this is like using the old road trip word game. Instead of filling in the blank on a script or short story, you use a generic misconduct reports as a framework. It teaches parts of the grammar, context, and verbal restraint. In short, it demonstrates how a misconduct report can be miswritten and how it ultimately should be written.

This can be done on a projected word document, on a PowerPoint slide or on a board or flip chart. The most practical and easiest way to do this is to reproduce a misconduct report, remove some words, and number the spots.

If the first word you removed was a noun, on a separate piece of paper it should say “1 . provide a noun”.

If the second word you removed was an adjective (a word that describes a noun), then the next line should read “2. Provide an adjective).

If the third word you removed was a number, on a separate piece of paper it should say “3 . provide a number”.

The instructor should search the internet or a bookstore for a short description of parts of language. This will help the instructor maintain authority and also settle any disputes over grammar.

It is clear that we all have to write within a certain style, vocabulary level, and tone. “There is a Word for it” shows us how bizarre a misconduct report can look and implores us not to follow those poor examples.

## This is Only a Test: Some Uses for Trainer Cells

Wouldn't it be great if good ideas could be implemented immediately? However, brainstorming must be filtered through institutional needs, resources, space, and time.

Still, one can dream. Just because an idea cannot be immediately put into play does not render it perpetually shelved. And creative thoughts are often modified and brought into every day practice, given time.

If time, space, and expense were no object, I would like to see this training exercise mandated at every correctional facility. It is called, "This is only a test". It is a practical, hands-on learning exhibit for contraband control.

Here's how it works. In the training error of each facility, there'll be built one each of the cell types used in the institution. In other words, if the facility in question has a segregation cell and minimum-security parts, each will be available as trainer cells in the training area. Optimally, these training cells are located outside the secure perimeter for user training and demonstration.

The chief reason for having a trainer cell is to educate staff on the many hiding places that offenders may utilize. They would serve as a useful tool to instruct pre-professionals of many different contraband concealment methods that one can find within the prisoner's area of control. The trainer cell also serves to hone the skills of experienced professionals.

Also, these trainer cells shall not be used by offenders, as issue of harassing searches can be dismissed. Trainer cells shall be stocked with goods and furniture that simulate a prisoner's presence and should be as realistic as possible.

The institutional training officer can place any contraband item in its hiding places prior to each search exercise. Of course, we all have different perspectives. Therefore, it is wise

to get other staff to help conceal the bootleg. And it is best to rotate staff in and out of that position in order to offer as many hiding scenarios as possible.

Whatever the hiding procedure, each training officer should note the nature and location of each item hidden. And in much the same way as a teacher will assess which questions are answered incorrectly, the trainer can determine which locations are typically left unsearched. This information will indicate points to be emphasized in future training.

In addition, the trainer cells can be used for emergency response team members. This is an excellent way to simulate cell rushes.

Thirdly, a trainer cell is a good demonstration for members of the public that may tour the facility. This would give those on tour a pretty good idea of the physical conditions in which offenders are housed. Liability is lessened in this case. Granted, I believe that criminal justice students and pre-professionals should also witness and experience the inside of a facility in order to gain understanding of what goes on. But in many cases, members of the public who may tour prisons would be able to gain enough of an understanding in a trainer cell.

I know that the idea is not strictly original. I believe that many worksites and academies employ dummy cells for training purposes in some form or another. But I wonder just how fully utilized these trainer cells are for contraband control exercises.

I believe that training in hands-on contraband control is essential for the safety of staff, offenders, and the public the construction expense and vocational payroll to run such an exercise is an investment in the future.



## Twisted Tales

Once upon a time there was a man who loved words. Unfortunately, he often used his words to make others feel bad. He would purposely use old, rare words of which few would be familiar.

His friends (decreasing by the day) and those that he worked with would ask him, "Why do you talk down to us?"

He would reply, "I'm not 'talking down to you' as you so ineptly assert, beloved cretin. I am merely expressing myself to a mental inferior through a state of condescension. Empty your drool cup, now!"

These are the type of people who get punched or sabotaged.

Perhaps you know someone like this. And I'm not talking about the normal, benevolent verbivore who just happens to like large words and a varied vocabulary. I'm talking about the pompous ass – the intellectual bully – that specializes in making others feel less intelligent by speaking down to them. He uses others like intellectual toilet paper.

All that almost sounds like an old folk tale where someone in the story does something bad and is punished by the end. These are simple cautionary tales that have been with us for centuries. They act as a moral compass and also as entertainment.

So let's mix big and obscure words gone wild with famous folktales or children's stories. This is a very good way to start a communications module. It is a test that is very simple to take. It is a fill in the blank quiz. Below you will find a brief description of a famous folktale or fairytale. However, the description is written in pompous phrases. Here is a list of 13 for good luck:

A troika of porcine siblings attempt to maintain status quo with their habitation whilst matching wits with a lupine figure. What is the name of this tale?

(The three little pigs)

Corpulent and gregarious, this crimson clad personification of benevolence distributes complementary favors on a perennial basis. Who is the name of this figure?

(Santa Clause)

A recluse residing in an area where deciduous foliage is prominent uses confections to lure a pair of immature versions of her species in order to engage in cannibalism. What is this tale?

(Hansel and Gretel)

Her most prominent feature was her integumentary system that seem to know no bounds. Who was this figure?

(Rapunzel)

Out of a sense of duty to his recent rescue from cryonics, this colossal bovine assists a Titan in defoliating much of the North American continent. Who is this?

(Babe the blue ox)

His mistake was that he fallaciously and repeatedly announced the presence of an Uber-canine. Unfortunately, for him his paranoia and his poor reputation led to his demise. Who is this person?

(The boy who cried wolf)

Due to the monarchs renegeing on the agreed-upon remittance for rodent removal, the next generation was kidnapped. Who is this person?

(The Pied Piper of Hamelin)

This extraterrestrial assimilated and donned a trichromatic ensemble in order to assist the criminal justice system. Who is this person?

(Superman)

She was oblivious to her next course of action due to her prolific nature. It is noted that her dwelling would be more comfortable for metatarsal. Who is this person?

(The old woman in the shoe)

She learned the tricky lesson of moderation from a trio of ursine antagonists. Who is this person?

(Goldilocks)

Miniscule and edible, this item tested the sensitivity of this hesitant dreamer. Who is this person?

(The princess and the pea)

She was redeemed from unfair physical labor, verbal abuse, and a general lack of camaraderie through the identification of footwear. Who is this person?

(Cinderella)

Of Mediterranean descent and constructed from vegetation, this figure gain mortality. Who is this figure?

(Pinocchio)

Above all from this we can learn that you can dazzle them with brilliance or baffle them with bull. There are so many different ways to say the same thing. And twisted tales is a great way to illustrate that point and to break the ice.

## Wanna Bet?

Corrections staff serve as role models. Though offenders do not necessarily want to admit it or may not even realize it on an obvious level, they look to us to do the right thing. It is also vocational fact that many offenders will point out when we do the wrong thing.

Per civil service rules and policy directives, gambling is prohibited among staff. However, “Wanna bet?” is a classroom exercise that uses the idea of gambling in order to introduce concepts of manipulation. We can learn a bit of psychology by applying a wager to a team-oriented icebreaker.

This is how works:

Very discreetly, give a roll of clear tape to a preselected person. For the icebreaker to work well, the facilitator must tell the selected person of the plan in advance. No other team is to know that the selected team will be given an undeclared advantage. If any other party knows of this, the exercise will likely not work.

Divide the class into teams of four.

Give each team a deck of 52 playing cards. If your budget does not allow, a local casino may donate as many deck as you need.

Announce that there will be a competition in the spirit of teamwork. Teams will compete to build a house of cards. You may allot 10 minutes to do so. The team that builds the tallest structure wins. If the house of cards falls, teams have an opportunity to rebuild as long as they do so without going over the time limit.



Remember the team that was specially selected to have tape. The tape will be used to build a secure structure that will not fall.

One of the team members on the specially selected team with the tape says something like, "Let's make this interesting. I bet you we can build higher." Of course, this line and the timing was fed in advance by the facilitator.

The facilitator permits this and keeps an eye on the dynamics of the room.

Competition is increased with just more than pride in one's team on the line. How the bet develops will, of course, depend on a variety of factors. But it is important that there is an incentive to build taller card houses than other teams.

With the unfair and unseen disadvantage of clear tape, one team should have a steady structure and should easily win the bet.

If the cheating team played well, they would have blocked off any spies with auxiliary team members. The other team would not have known that they had the advantage of tape. And that is part of the rooms that the facilitator must implore to the selected team members that they must sell. The tape advantage should go undetected until it is revealed at the end.

When all is said and done, the facilitator will announce that one team was purposely given an unfair advantage. This was done for very valid reason. This was to illustrate that there really is not a sure thing to bet upon.

The facilitator can ask a series of questions: Did something seem not quite right? Did anyone honestly suspect that there was tape in the room? If not, was there anything in retrospect that indicated that the team may have been cheating? Did any of this seem out of character? When the truth was announced, did you feel manipulated? How did inter-team dynamics change when the bet was proposed?

This scripted misdirection is an effective way to guide a group into a module about manipulation.

Naturally, if the facilitator is leading a particularly playful group, comments about the bet will resurface. If the group knows each other well enough, there will certainly be some rough verbal camaraderie. Therefore, the instructor must be on his or her toes and direct the group well. This means either guiding the group away from any argument or finding lessons within the ribbing.

Also, it is not out of the question for a group to later play a prank on the facilitator. It is simply a matter of professional pride and playful revenge. If you pulled one over on a whole group, they may try to pull one over on you.



So this icebreaker may not be for the less than playful instructor. However, if you are one who does not mind some scrapes and bruises on the ego and if you don't mind a little playing a classroom, "Wanna bet?" may be the perfect icebreaker to set the stage for a module on manipulation of staff.

## What a Horrible Way to Go!

Many of us in corrections develop a gallows sense of humor. Perhaps we do this in order to cope with the seriousness of the job. This can be deemed as a general stress reliever.

Is there way to proactively harness this and place it into an icebreaker? I believe so. This can be done with simple introductions. As you start a module, you may write on the board or display on the computer screen these words:

Name  
Current position  
Time in corrections  
The most horrible way to die is...

It is best to stack the words in four different lines for clarity. The facilitator simply states that everyone will give a very brief introduction of themselves. This will be done by stating your name and current position and the time that you have worked in corrections. The part that (ironically) enlivens participants is their opinion of the most horrible way to die.

In the spirit of teamwork and interest of instruction, the facilitator should go first. Mine would be like this:

Hi, my name is Joe.

I'm a corrections librarian.

I have been in corrections for 18 years.

I believe the most horrible way to die is being eaten by rats. Naturally the facilitator will set the tone.

My thought is that creativity can flow if there are few constraints. I believe that the shock value at the start of the session may spark more active participation later. Then let the group go one by one. Here are a few notes.

Remember that there's a fine line between bizarre, yet effective instruction and creepy answers.

There will be repeated answers. And this should be permitted. After all, if you think that drowning is a horrible fate, you should be able to agree with someone who answered that previously.

Be compassionate as needed. Someone may render a heart-wrenching true story of how a loved one recently passed a terrible manner. The mood of the room can shift in a millisecond.

Reel in the class and if things get too jovial. Remember the unique pull of gallows humor.

There may be a string of answers designed to disgust others. Be prepared for a gross out/shock contest.

Keep a sense of humor. Perhaps someone will list the most horrible way to die is "to be bored to death by this training".

Keep a lid on things. There may be some rough verbal camaraderie. Prepare for wild answers as the audience becomes more comfortable.

This is a true icebreaker. And nothing breaks the ice quite as easily sharing the universal fear of mortality. This can go well with an introduction to communications module. I also see this as a way to enliven (again ironically) and unarmed self-defense class. Perhaps one can use as a prelude to a retirement seminar.

Why not give this icebreaker try? After all, we only live once





## What Are You Talking About?

Our inability to understand transforms us into helpless actors on the stage, unable to read the cue cards. When we hear words and do not understand them, our audience is aware of this. That dilutes our effectiveness and lessens our professional credibility.

The slang that one hears in a correctional facility can be very vexing and confusing at times. This is true even for seasoned corrections professionals. The argot is dynamic, fluid, and decentralized. These are colloquialisms that are often morphed by intentional masking. (Do you know what this jargon says?)

Time does not stand still in language. What you learned in slang when you started may have become as dated as the more public terms such as “sweet” or “sick” or their older siblings “cool” and “groovy”.

No matter how tenuous or daunting this may be, we need to get a handle on the inside language. We need to realize the slippery and fleeting nature of slang words. What better way is there to accomplish this than through an icebreaking exercise?

This is what you’ll need – markers and a board or a flip chart. This can also be created on a slide show format projected on a screen. Of course, the flip chart works and is also a good platform for “What are you talking about?” It is adaptable and easily translated for any classroom or trainer inclination.

This is how it works. The class is split into two teams. The instructor may make a sub game out of this by appointing leaders to select their team members. The interesting part comes when the facilitator directs the team leaders to change teams when all players are in place. This builds an interesting competitive spirit. Another tactic to build friendly competition is to have teams choose their team names. The names that teams select can be very surprising.

The facilitator preselects twenty slang terms spoken currently or historically by inmates. The first term is displayed. And each team is given a chance to define the word. When both teams have guessed, the definition is displayed. The first team to correctly define the term scores a point.

There are many texts, articles, and internet sources that feature prison argot. Finding them will be easy. The difficulties may be in assessing the sources for timeliness and

choosing just twenty terms.

Of course, the old stand-by for trainers is the trumped up prize with very little value. Part of the fun in distributing candy bars or inexpensive gag gifts is the reactions from participants.

“What are you talking about?” works well with corrections students at the college level. We can use words that most corrections staff know for the college student versions.

It works well with corrections professionals. It is as simple as employing more obscure words in the presentation. Since the novice/college student version would be too easy for a group of corrections professionals, some of the common slang words can be substituted with less obvious selections. There is even an opportunity to review historical words for a bonus round.

There is no doubt that slang, like graffiti, is difficult to understand. Its fluidity will ensure that. However, corrections trainers do our profession a favor by featuring this sort of training. And pre-professionals benefit by having a little more understanding of the language before they enter into service for the public.

## You Potty Mouth! A Tribute to Toilet Trivia

We work in an environment where we hear an extraordinary amount of expletives every single day. Potty mouths and potty humor are rather prevalent in the corrections setting. Love it or hate it, it does not matter. It is one of those vocational realities that we face regardless of stance.

Every now and again, an incident arises in our profession where we are forced to re-examine the role of profanity in the workplace. Policy directives and civil service rules outline behavior expected of us. Therefore, at one time or another most trainers will facilitate a module on the elimination of profanity on the worksite.

I admit that the following is a very, very strange way to address this topic. But, as it is a touchy subject, perhaps a little bit of wry humor may aid in making the anti-swearing training more palatable.



The facilitator might say something like this:

“Because of recent incidents, the department has implemented some mandatory training that addresses the use of profanity. It is a very serious topic. And in many ways we are judged not by the many good deeds we do, but some of the few verbal mistakes that we perpetrate. So before we delve into this topic, you're going to take a few minutes and take a 10 question quiz. This, in fact, is the potty mouth quiz.”

Perhaps the class will expect an origin of swearing exam. Or maybe they may think it's a survey on their favorite expletive. But that's not it at all. The facilitator will distribute a 10 question quiz that relates directly to the toilet. Don't worry, there's nothing scatological here. It is a simple curveball thrown to take some of the gravity off of the serious topic of expected conduct. (see Toilet Trivia Test below)

It is a trainer's discretion to offer a prize for quickest done or most questions correct. Over the years I have collected cheap and chintzy items and offered them as rewards. The “winner” simply reaches into the “box of dubious prizes” as I like to call it and revels in the tacky glory. It is more about bragging rights. After all, not everyone gets a prize. Other inexpensive giveaways can include suckers, candy, or other snacks.

A friend of mine offered a suggestion for prize. She believes that the winner of the Toilet Trivia Test should be given a fresh, unused roll of toilet paper. Of course, it's best to know one's audience before offering such a practical, yet unusual reward for knowledge. And I certainly would not advocate this prize strategy for all groups.

This test can be recycled from the one provided below. Also, the enterprising and creative facilitator can create one. There are plenty of websites that speak to this topic.

I will grant you that this is not an icebreaker for the traditional, straight-laced instructor. However, experience tells me that something slightly out of left field such as this icebreaker goes a long way in taking the stigma out of a weighty, mandatory module.

It is up to the instructor, however, to apply the appropriate amount of dignity during the module. This icebreaker is merely a way to introduce an important topic in an unorthodox way. I actually field tested this exercise and the participants said it was fun.

Toilet Trivia Test

In which direction does the toilet water flow when the toilet is flushed in the northern hemisphere?

What is a standard toilet seat measurement?

In the United States what is the standard capacity of water in a standard toilet?

How many times per day does the average US family flush its toilet(s)?

What is the average number of toilets in United States household?

What material are toilet rings made?

Which historical figure is credited with having the first flushable toilet?

Who is erroneously credited with inventing the first flushable toilet?

What are the three most popular colors for toilets in the United Kingdom?

What is the proper way to hang toilet paper – with the paper draped over the roll or under the roll?

## Answers:

Generally counter clockwise. However, lots of water pressure will make the water flow straight down.

14" x 16" x ½". A padded seat will naturally be thicker.

1.6 gallons – the 1980 standard.

Five to five and ½ times per day. That's around 2,000 flushes per year.

Two.

Toilet rings are generally made of beeswax, though consumers may purchase synthetic varieties.

King Minos of Crete (circa 2800 B.C.) is credited with having the first water flushing toilet.

John Crapper has that dubious distinction.

White followed by pink then peach.

There is no official manner to hang toilet paper. This question is a historical source of bitter animosities.

## You Villain! Icebreaker

Here is a bad joke:

What did the over-weight polar bear say as he sat down hard?

Hi! I am the icebreaker!

This joke has inspired groans during its long life. And it points to the nature of bad starts. As any seasoned trainer knows, a failed opening line can knock one off one's square.

Sometimes the bad start is built into the makeup of the class. Imagine the discomfort of facilitating a module to a group composed of representatives from diverse agencies and occupations. The division in the class is palpable. In fact, the division is almost hostile. Never mind the topic. That is a bad beginning even before one has begun.

Not every class is like that. But if you have been training long enough, you will encounter such a scenario. How do you introduce the group to common ground and salvage what could otherwise be a tense class? The answer could lie in the You Villain! Icebreaker.

You Villain! is a way to get everyone in the room familiar with each other in a very short time. No props or markers are necessary. The facilitator simply starts like this:

“Good morning. Welcome to (title of the module). I am your instructor. Before we start learning about the topic at hand, we need to do some quick introductions.

I need each of you to state:

your name,

your agency,



time in the agency and

your occupation.

Then you need to tell me who you consider the worst villain in history or literature and why. I'll go first.

My name is Joe Bouchard. I work for the Department of corrections and have been employed here for 18 years. I am a librarian/trainer.

I believe that the most evil figure in literature is Sauron – the Dark Lord from Lord of the Rings because he wanted to cover the world in darkness and make slaves of the free people.”

You should not expect such obscure references. Still, you should not be surprised if you get some like that. The purpose is to let people be themselves and to see the similarities in others. As a facilitator, you can make quick mental notes about who was selected and perhaps incorporate that into your presentation.

There are a few caveats.

First, you need to be on your toes when someone mentions a colleague. Perhaps a good natured reminder is warranted. You can stipulate that naming colleagues is forbidden in this icebreaker.

Also, current political figures may be named. Be prepared to defuse an argument between the left and the right. This may be especially explosive during an election year.

If there is animus in the class, that could inspire silence. You must utilize all of your skills in order to break the ice. This could be by reading the audience and choosing a hopeful.

In the event of shy students, you could offer another villain as a point of departure. Some love to hate ‘em candidates are Hitler, Stalin, Genghis Kahn, and Satan.

A divided class can be a distraction for the facilitator. And the You Villain! Icebreaker may provide the common ground needed to break the ice. Use evil figures in history and literature to your advantage.



## Afterward – A Bonus Story

### Blazing and Training Dynamics – A Tribute to Terry Satterfield

There are some staff dynamics that look uncomfortable to the untrained eye. However, many seemingly contentious exchanges are really the expressions of respect. In other words, this is an instance of professional blazing meant in the best of ways.



Last year, one of my favorite out-of-state colleagues, Terry Satterfield, attended a presentation that I conducted about effective icebreakers and group activities. There were two good dynamics in this for me. First, this colleague is an accomplished trainer and would certainly offer good, constructive suggestions to me at the conclusion. Second, the person in question is my all-time favorite sparring partner. She is an incomparably adept blazer, playful and unyielding.

As a bit of background, whenever she and I meet on a one to one basis, we are quite civil and professional. However, when there is a crowd, one of us will slip the other and cry foul loudly. Those who know us understand that this is our twisted yet endearing manner of interaction. They know that if we are not play-fighting, one of us is ill or deadly tired.

Back to the icebreakers presentation –In what was an informal train the trainer session, she shot across my bow first as she introduced me. Feigning indignity, I continued in a hurt manner, milking the most out of the persona that I don during these conferences. She set the stage for a playful time. I trust her assessment of audiences and I followed suit.

And now I present the story within the story. One of the icebreakers that I demonstrated was an exercise in impromptu weapons making. I set the scenario: A staff person who is not security conscious loses a tin of breath mints inside the secure perimeter of a facility. I split the class into small groups and together they make a weapon out of the stock haphazardly left by the scenario's incautious staff person. As I made rounds, the participants were instructed to divert me and hide their shank making enterprise.

The four groups were progressing nicely. Each time I approached the group with Terry, I was greeted with fawning conversation meant to dissuade inspection. After what would be my last round, I heard the rapid foot fall against the conference room carpeting. I did not turn, as I suspected that my pal was trying to demoralize me. I should not have ignored her. I felt the sharpness of a skin puncture in my lower back. I was literally stabbed in the back by a colleague – my favorite sparring partner.

(Don't worry, Dear Reader. It was actually just a little poke, not anything to worry about. I barely felt it. Of course, in the spirit of teasing and camaraderie, I did the best acting of my life. I concluded my howls of pain and told all involved that it was really nothing.)

I will mention here that I always bring adhesive bandages to the training. I caution participants to be careful when handling the thin and pliable metal. After all, someone in this session might cut their palm or their phalanges. However, this was the first time that there was an actual puncture wound. How fitting that I would be a victim of my own exercise!

My "stab wound" has long since healed. I now reflect the professional relationship of me and my sparring partner. We were able to have some fun and take the other participants with us because we adhered to a few rules of blazing:

- We knew each other's limits;
- We did not hit below the belt;
- We let the content come through. The reciprocal teasing did not obscure the lesson;
- We gauged the audience;
- We understood that there was room for play. Not all audiences or venues or topics allow for play;
- We showed gestures of friendship as we parted.

You can be assured that this story is the absolute truth because of my unwavering devotion to professionalism. And let there be no doubt that I very much respect her work. Anytime with a mentor is a fantastic time, even if you incur your first physical wound during training from that person. Still, let there be no doubt that I can't wait to see her at the next conference and engage in rough verbal camaraderie.

Thanks for everything, Terry.

## Afterward – Another Bonus Story

### That's What Friends are for. - A Tribute to Michelle VanDusen

And as any veteran trainer can assert, you may learn a little something about yourself as educate others. That is one of the beauties about training – one never knows exactly what will happen. The point is: A trainer can plan and plan and have all of the best icebreakers up his or her sleeve. But all of that can be challenged and altered in an instant. At times, it is a very good thing. Here is an example taken from the pages of my training life...

That's what friends are for

There are moments in one's life that are AH! moments. That is to say, we take a quick second to look around and see that everything is in place and that all plans have come together in a harmonious intermingling. You know, AH!

In Nashville for ACA, I was presenting "You Animal! An anthropomorphic look at staff relations in corrections". Just as the crowd settled in, I had the AH! moment. I was elated because the flights went well, I was prepared to speak, handouts made it to the presentation, and all seats were filled.

And then she came along.

"She" was Michelle VanDusen. We have a five year history of feigning anger and meanness to each other. Michelle and I are sparring partners. (I know, Dear Reader. I seem to have a lot of sparring partners. It must be that my kind, endearing nature attracts these types.) It is the stress relieving way that we interact. Our feelings are never hurt. However, it is the job of one of us to knock the other off of the other's square. I am not sure who fired the first shot in this rough verbal camaraderie campaign. But, it exists. It is all in fun and none of it is unwanted. In fact, it is expected from both parties.

When I espied Michelle, the AH! turned into Uh-oh! What would she do? Would she embarrass me in front of all of these corrections colleagues from all over the country? Could I take that chance?

I knew that I was vulnerable. There was that mischievous twinkle in her eyes. The expression on her face matched a cat that swallowed the canary. Yet, this cat was trying to impose a straight-faced innocence over her apparent guilt.

Offering my right hand, donning my humble look and probably slipping my head in the noose, I asked for a truce. She agreed. It was almost too easy. Has the playful Michelle been stricken with collegial compassion? Was I in the clear? Or was she selling me a well-rehearsed lie?

A moment later, I formally began my presentation. As I spoke in earnest seriousness about the ill effects of staff division, I noticed that there were five –not just one – but five people in the audience wearing plastic Groucho Marx glasses with noses and fuzzy eyebrows and mustaches.

Let me be clear. These comically adorned people were five trusted souls.



Michelle lied to my face about the truce, involved others, timed it correctly, and delivered a resounding KO punch to my dignity.

And it was the funniest thing that could have happened. The audience loved it and everything loosened up. The presentation went very well, with a judicious mixture of levity and seriousness.

Michelle's joke made a positive impact, and it brought up a simple truth. You cannot be afraid to appear a bit foolish if it is in the name of illustrating a serious point. Staff division is a very significant problem in our vocation. Sometimes, it takes a whimsical approach to reinforce that message. Thanks so much, Michelle and co-conspirators!



# ICEBREAKERS IV

(2013)

## Bigfoot Trivia Training Exercise

Sometimes, it takes the unusual to break ice and engage minds. This is particularly true of necessary and sometimes dull topic like chain of evidence. Bigfoot Trivia is a fun, quirky exercise that segues nicely into a lecture on evidence. The question is: Can you, a corrections training professional, issue this icebreaker/segue exercise with a straight face?

It is well known that evidence is a very important part of criminal justice. This increases in importance as the generation of TV viewers raised on CSI push for more evidence in trials. In corrections, many prison disciplinary policies have the standard of preponderance of evidence. So, there are different levels of evidence to consider.

Some things are real and some things need more evidence to be considered real by everyone. Still, a solid belief in some things with minimal to no evidence is unshakeable in some people. The existence of Chupacabra, extraterrestrials, and the Loch Ness monster are just a few. Perhaps the titan of them all is Bigfoot.



Break into teams and have them take turns answering the following questions. If during a team's turn the team guesses the correct answer, they will earn one point. If they fail to respond correctly, the opposing team has the opportunity to earn two points with a correct answer.

### BIGFOOT TRIVIA

1. Bigfoot was sighted in what movie with John Lithgow?

**Harry and the Hendersons**

2. In Jack Black's fantasy scene in *Tenacious D and the Pick of Destiny*, which actor portrayed Sasquatch?

**John C. Reilly**

3. What was the name of the character of the smaller Bigfoot in the same movie played by Jack Black?

**Baby Sas**

4. Danny Bonacue and which Brady Bunch actor duked it out in a horrible Bigfoot movie on top of a mountain?

**Barry Williams**

5. According to bigfootfinder.com, Bigfoot was officially put on the endangered species list in what country?

**Russia**

6. According to bigfootfinder.com, how tall is the Bigfoot?

**Height: 6 ft. 6 in – 10 ft. tall (2 – 3 m)**

7. According to bigfootfinder.com **how much does the deep woods icon weigh?**

**Weight: 400 – 1000 lbs.**

8. In what year did Roger Patterson and Robert Gimlin reported that they had captured a purported Sasquatch on what is now an iconic film?

**1967**

9. In what state was the Patterson film take place? A bonus point for the correct location in the state.

**Bluff Creek, California**

10. True or false: A theory exist that attributes lack of hard evidence of Bigfoot's existence may to the creature's ability to slips in and out of dimensions.

**True**

11. Some Bigfoot proponents believe that Bigfoot could be a modern day version of which prehistoric animal?

**Gigantopithecus**

After this, with secret ballot, ask if students believe that Bigfoot is real. The choices can be “YES”, “No”, or “Not Sure”. From there, report the findings then segue into the evidence module provided by your agency.

Happy trails and keep your camera on the ready when you are in the woods.

### **But what did you actually see and hear?**

Years ago, I incorporated a diversion-based icebreaker/exercise to my regular line up for my Introduction to Corrections Class for Gogebic Community College. It is a memorable exercise and with a little preparation, it can serve as an important lesson for pre-professionals. It will definitely take novices out of their zones of comfort.



I would start in the very first day of a new semester by distributing a test. I usually hand out a general questionnaire about opinions on punishment and corrections. The contents of the tests are not necessarily important. In fact, the tests should be general and not too difficult. The test serves as the diversion.

1. Distribute the test and tell students to answer in their own opinion.  
Explain that this is a test to gauge their feelings about corrections and

- court issues before they receive instruction. Later in the semester, they can reflect on their answers and see if they modified as the class progressed.
2. Two people in class know this is a ruse. They are the instructor and the plant in the students. My plant in the class was usually my wife. She blends in well with the class and quietly awaits for her part.
  3. Prior, the plant is instructed to wait a minute or two to ask about question 13. When the plant sees that most are busy, she raises her hand and asks for clarification.
  4. The instructor feigns impatience and says something rude and condescending like, “Is English a second language for you?” The instructor says this to the plant while standing within arm’s reach.
  5. As instructed earlier, the plant would quickly stand up, yell “Jerk” or something stronger, and push the instructor.
  6. The instructor will stumble back, careful not to contact anyone else, and watch the heads of the class swivel.
  7. The instructor then says, “Turn your tests over and write down exactly what you OBSERVED and HEARD. This is a simulated confrontation – it is not real. Again, report only what you saw and heard. Do not make assumptions. Do not fill in blanks with conjecture.”
  8. In effect, this is the first misconduct report that they will write. After a minute or so, let your plant take a bow and lead a discussion on what was directly observed. Not differences in location, timing, and details.
  9. Apologize to the class for the ruse but explain that things can happen in an instant in corrections.

Acting ability and believability may impact the effectiveness of the exercise. In fact, if you are too believable, this may compromise student/instructor trust.

After the first time I tried this exercise, one student was very mad at me. Rather than writing her direct observations, she crafted an editorial about

how disrespectful I was to the student. I had to explain (again) that the person who I condescended was a plant and that the words I used were mutually agreed upon by both parties. Without a feigned provocation, the “assault” from the student would have been less believable. In a week or two, the student told me that she understood and appreciated the exercise.

In corrections, often the ultimate question is: What did you see and hear? This is an exercise that can help students develop a vigilance and hone a mind for little details. Their future vocational life may depend on it.



## **Can I ask you a few questions about the US Constitution?**

Few comprehensive corrections and criminal justice courses will omit material about constitutional rights. No matter how far we delve into any topic, the foundation of the constitution knowledge is paramount. That is why **Can I ask you a few questions about the US Constitution?** was created.

This is a very simple, multiple choice test about some of the contents of the constitution.

- First, break the class into teams.
- Distribute one copy per team of a short version of the constitution. This can be obtained from the internet or from the back of “Black’s Law Dictionary.”
- Instruct the team to appoint a leader. Alternately, the instructor can make the decision. The team leader is told that she/he has five minutes to act as a teacher of the material that the facilitator just distributed.
- At the end of five minutes, the facilitator orders that all notes be put away, including the constitutional hand out.
- The oral test consists of fifteen questions about constitution.
- This version features multiple choice questions.
- The facilitator increases the difficulty if she/he utilizes a fill in the blank format.
- An odd number of questions is used so there’s less likely to be a tie.
- The facilitator asks the first question. In rotation, the team selected by a coin toss answers. That team captain is responsible for providing the final answer for the team. If the answer is correct, the team scores one point. If the answer is incorrect, the opposing team can score two points with a correct answer. The next question goes to the second team.
- The team with the most points at the end wins.
- In the following test, four multiple choice answers are provided. The underlined answer is the correct answer. Some background is also provided.

## Constitution Test – selected Amendments

### 1. What is Amendment VI?

- a. Repealed in 1957
- b. Right to a fair trial speedy trial
- c. Under consideration by the current administration
- d. Freedom of

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed;

### 2. What does Amendment VIII deal with?

- a. Probation
- b. Parole
- c. Bail, fines, punishment
- d. Prison

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

### 3. Amendment II deals with what?

- a. Right to bear arms
- b. An English language republic
- c. Specifically self-defense in one's home
- d. The right to a speedy trial.

A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

### 4. What does Amendment I address?

- a. Peaceable redress grievances

- b. Freedoms, Petitions, Assembly
- c. None of the above
- d. A and B

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

**5. What does Amendment IV pertain to?**

- a. Search and arrest
- b. The O. J. Simpson double murder case
- c. All of the above
- d. None of the above

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

**6. What does Amendment V pertain to?**

- a. Prohibition of alcohol
- b. Rights in criminal cases
- c. Home and apartment rental
- d. Marriage

...nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb, nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

**7. What does Amendment III deal with?**

- a. Procedure to amend the Constitution
- b. Health care benefits
- c. Quartering of soldiers
- d. None of the above

No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

**8. What political entity was Amendment II originally written for?**

- a. French Canadian settlers
- b. Native Americans
- c. British Soldiers or Red Coats
- d. Hessian settlers

**9. What is Amendment 13 about?**

- a. Freedom of assembly
- b. The right to bear arms
- c. Prohibition of alcohol
- d. Abolition of slavery

Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

**10. In what year did Amendment 13, the abolition of slavery occur?**

- a. 1875
- b. 1865
- c. 1855
- d. 1902

**11. What does Amendment 18 do?**

- a. Legalization of marijuana
- b. Legalization of medical marijuana
- c. Prohibition of liquor
- d. Decriminalization of vice items

Section 1. After one year from the ratification of this article, the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.

**12. Amendment 16 put what into effect?**

- a. Stricter gun laws
- b. Looser gun control laws
- c. Compromise on gun laws
- d. Income taxes

**13. In what year did this occur?**

- a. 1903
- b. 1913
- c. 1923
- d. 1933

**14. Amendment 14 deals with what?**

- a. Citizenship and due process
- b. Search and seizure
- c. Abolishment of slavery
- d. Cruel and unusual punishment

Section 1. All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or

property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

15. Bonus question or tie breaker:

**On January 16, 1919, this Amendment was put into effect and was repealed by the Twenty-First, December 5, 1933. What is it?**

- a. 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment – Cruel and unusual punishment
- b. 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment – prohibition of alcohol
- c. 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment – Right to bear arms
- d. This is a trick question – we are not yet up to the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment

The words of our forbearers are important for our democracy. And a simple test is not meant to diminish any meaning. In fact, relearning these principles through the spirit of competition emphasizes the lesson. The facilitator that fosters this will help bring the lesson home and strengthen the foundation for corrections and criminal justice professionals.

## **Doughnut trivia**

Think about the perfection of a circle. It has no beginning and it has no end. It is the basis for an infinity sign. And, it can sometimes be delicious.

Doughnut trivia is a way to use simple pastries to get teams involved in a competition involving food. And it is a great way to segue into the concept of food as contraband.

Teams compete on doughnut trivia. The winning team gets to sample the doughnuts first. There are eleven questions to eliminate the possibility of a tie.

Break the class into teams and have them take turns answering the following questions. If during a team's turn the team guesses the correct answer, they will earn one point. If they fail to respond correctly, the opposing team has the opportunity to earn two points with a correct answer.



So grab a cup of coffee and dig in to the test.

#### DOUGHNUT TEST

Something as simple as a donut has a very complex history. How much do you know about these delicious breakfast (or any time) treat? Try your luck with the following.

1. Which ethnic group brought the doughnut to America?
2. What was the original name of the doughnut?



3. What kind of animal was involved in accidentally inventing the doughnut?
4. How did this allegedly happen?
5. In what year was doughnut billed as "the hit food of the Century of Progress"?
6. In what city did this happen?
7. What is the significance of Doughnut Dollies?
8. How big was the largest doughnut ever made?
9. Where was this giant doughnut made?
10. The world record for eating doughnuts occurred in 1981. How many doughnuts did the record holder consume in six minutes?
11. Which famous explorer and doughnut enthusiast took 100 barrels of donut flour, enough for two years' worth of donuts while exploring Polar Region?

## DOUGHNUT TEST ANSWERS

1. The doughnut, as we know and love, supposedly came to Manhattan (then New Amsterdam) by the Dutch.
2. "Oily cakes."
3. A cow.
4. So, the story goes, a cow kicked a pot full of boiling oil over onto some pastry mix, thus inventing the golden brown delight.
5. 1934
6. At the World's Fair in Chicago
7. During World War II, Red Cross women, known as Doughnut Dollies passed out hot doughnuts to the hard fighting soldiers.
8. The largest doughnut ever made was an American-style jelly doughnut weighing 1.7 tons (3739 lbs.), which was 4.9 m (16 ft.) in diameter and 40.6 (16in) high in the center. It was made in Utica, New York, USA on January 21, 1993
9. It was made in Utica, New York, USA on January 21, 1993.
10. According to the **Guinness Book of World Records**, the record for donut eating is held by a man named John Haight, who consumed 52 ounces of donuts (about 26 average donuts - or 20 Tom and Son's donuts) in just over six minutes in 1981.
11. On one of his expeditions, **Admiral Richard Byrd**, a noted donut-lover, took along 100 barrels of donut flour, enough for two years' worth of donuts.

From: [http://www.ottawadonuts.com/donut\\_facts.htm](http://www.ottawadonuts.com/donut_facts.htm) Accessed September 30, 2012

Winning team gets first crack at donuts. Of course, the smart instructor will bring enough for all in class, though they may be withheld in order to build suspense and competition.

The trivia section can segue into information about the contraband one can find in the kitchen area of a correctional facility. Use your own information or sample from the information below.

*Food service staff in correctional facilities have the awesome responsibility of ensuring that quality meals are prepared and delivered to hundreds of people. This happens three times a day, all year long – regardless of the state of equipment.*

*But, in this relentless preparation of meals for hundreds, there is a potential for profound danger. This comes in two basic forms, barter and weapons. Being aware of these two dangers, food service staff are important partners in contraband control efforts.*

***Food as barter.*** *Food and items acquired from the kitchen can be used as barter. Food can be used as contraband, mostly in the way of trade for other goods and services. Extra rations can be promised by prisoner workers in exchange for protection, sex, as a payoff for gambling, etc. There are also the raw materials in the kitchen that can be used to produce prison-made alcohol.*

***Kitchen weapons.*** *Materials to create weapons often originate from the kitchen. They can be made from discarded cans, altered equipment, and packaging. There are many other opportunities to acquire weapons. Staff patterns are scrutinized by enterprising prisoners to discern the perfect occasion to loosen unessential steel or plastic. If it moves, it will dislodge. If it dislodges, it is a weapon. The kitchen is not free of hazard.*

*Like other non-custody staff, food service staff perform three particular roles in contraband control. They feed the information machine, relate tales of contraband to newer staff, and monitor the work patterns of prisoners on assignment in the kitchen.*

## John's very bad day at work

This is an icebreaker built from an article that I wrote about contrabandists' motivations to smuggle. The article can serve as a base of information. After the instructor reads or distributes the information, the class breaks up into teams and takes a test. In it, scenarios will feature at least one of the following varieties of contrabandists:

1. Thrill seeker
2. Libidinous
3. Compromised

The article explains these three behaviors.

### **Background material –The TLC of smuggling**

*I believe that most corrections staff are honest and honorable. They act under dangerous conditions every day to fulfill the mission of safety for staff, prisoners, and the public. It is the epitome of public service. Corrections staff are the hidden heroes of the Criminal Justice System.*

*Unfortunately, not everyone is honest. From time to time, stories break in the news about staff who smuggle contraband inside the facility. Despite the nobility of the profession, 'dirty' staff are not absent from the equation.*

*When staff bring contraband into a facility, there are three chief dangers. First, a prisoner or a group of prisoners may become powerful and compromise security. The contraband item itself can be a source of direct or indirect power. Second, the staff person is a weak link who gives advantage*

*by overlooking misconduct. Third, once discovered, honest staff must reassess how much they had formerly trusted the smuggler. Trust between staff is a fundamental glue in corrections. When that bond is broken, we are less effective, as we spend more time scrutinizing each other than monitoring prisoners. Betrayal is a psychological hurdle that is difficult to get over.*

*I think that there are three main motivations for staff to smuggle. They are simple to remember with the letters TLC. They are the thrill seeker, the libidinous, and the compromised.*

*Thrill seeker –*

*Some people derive pleasure from deceiving others. The jolt that thrill seekers get from performing forbidden acts can be intoxicating and addictive. One of the most forbidden acts for corrections staff is to introduce contraband into the facility.*

*Libidinous -*

*Another forbidden act –an illegal act and cardinal corrections sin - is for staff to have sex with prisoners. Lust / 'love' is a way that some fall under the spell of the contrabandist. With that as a motivation, the relationship between smuggler and manipulator becomes one of puppet and puppet master.*

*Compromised -*

*When some staff are caught in a mistake, they conceal it. Often, in exchange for the false promise of not revealing the mistake, the enterprising prisoner asks staff to bring in a small, forbidden item. Eventually, they allow themselves to be manipulated into misconduct. Of course, the trap is sprung when the prisoner's demands increase in size and danger. Many staff-assisted escapes have root in a simple compromise.*

## Scenarios:

Name the contrabandist type for each scenario. All of these are about the very generic staff member named John. Mark **T** for thrill seeker, **L** for Libidinous, and **C** for compromised. There may be more than one right answer.

1. John is a corrections staff who has a gambling problem. He learned that he can make a quick buck by bringing in drugs for a gang member who arranges for distribution of the contraband and paying his mules. Once John get started, he cannot stop. One reason is that he likes the rush. Another reason that John continues to bring in narcotics is that the prisoner for whom he mules showed him a letter to the warden that he wrote in case John “gets cold feet”. T C
2. John is in love with an inmate and gets a rush from being almost caught in a sexual act. He will do anything to ensure the prisoner’s comfort, including bringing in tobacco and matches for his lover. T L
3. John hates authority and loves getting one over on them. He has no need for love or money, but gets an adrenal rush from giving candy to prisoners during the holidays. Staff start to wonder why there are so many M & M wrappers all over Delta Unit’s floor. T
4. John called a prisoner an asshole “as a joke”. The prisoner threatened to tell the inspector if John did not bring in some gum. After he did, the shopping list got bigger. Now john brings in pain killers and skittles and also has agreed to give fellatio to the prisoner on his command. C
5. John is bored at work. He cannot find any pleasure in any part of his chosen work. Then, quite by accident, he left his cell phone in his pocket and took it inside the secure perimeter. He felt very alive as he left the facility. Now he routinely brings in the cell phone for his own use. T
6. John is caught having sexual intercourse in a broom closet with a coworker. Both of them are married. A prisoner hears of this and threatens to write to John’s family unless he brings in credit card numbers and a cell phone and charger. T C

Note that one cannot tell John's rank, vocational niche, or time in the job. In other words, John can be anyone. Also note that all of these scenarios will end with John being compromised.

After these scenarios are discussed, the facilitator solicits from the class strategies on how to mitigate this sort of behavior and the collateral damage that comes from it. One can use the conclusion of the TLC article as a guide.

*In a perfect world, zero percent of staff smuggle. However, the world is not perfect. How can we help mitigate this?*

- *Staff should take routine searches of staff as routine.*
- *Understand the motivations to smuggle and look for tell-tale signs.*
- *Talk to your colleagues.*
- *Check yourself. Do not test the bounds of policy limits on items that can be taken inside.*
- *Refocus. Keep an eye on the mission statement when depression over betrayal rears its ugly and pervasive head.*
- *Do not isolate vulnerable staff. Otherwise, they are susceptible to smuggle.*

We will not always know who is about to compromise security. But understanding the motivations outlined in TLC is a start. Even so, our safety depends on keeping contraband out of our facilities. This is consistent with the role of hidden hero.

## Let's ramble!

Brevity is the soul of wit. If you try, you can keep it short. Here is a short exercise that demonstrates how extra words get in the way of a central message.

Do you know someone who rambles? They give too much information and have a difficulty in breaking down the basics.

K.I.S.S.: Keep it simple, stupid!

Get to the point.

These three sentences have two things in common. First, they encourage simplicity in conveying information. Second, they are short statements.

Conveying information is an art form. As such, a particular style of delivery might not be appreciated by all in the same way. And this is complicated further by the nature of the corrections profession. By and large, we develop and hone an attention to details.

This is a short exercise that shows how not to spread information.

1. The class is broken up into teams of three or four each. The teams are given a short, direct message.
2. Teams create a long and unnecessary message by padding with unnecessary details.



3. For best results, repeat with a few more statements. Students can learn the mistakes of ramble as they go on and from other teams.

Here is a sample list of direct statements to be used in this exercise:

1. There was a fire in the kitchen last week.
2. Smith had a knife.
3. Bill and Tom are beefing.
4. It will be sunny tomorrow.
5. I don't feel well today.

Using the last statement as a sample, here is a classic overuse of words and details to convey a simple thought.

“I woke with a pain in my rib. Over the last few weeks it spread from my spine to the front of my rib cage. Could it be that I am coughing too much? I find that medicine does not help. I have to breathe and the muscles cannot get a break as long as I cough. I am eating cough drops like candy. My breath smells like menthol. I should get to the doctor's office. I do have sick time. (Cough, cough, wince, ow!) See there? That is painful. I am losing sleep and I cannot work as well as I wish. In other words, I don't feel well today.”

Teams read their ramble statements in turn. It is up to the other teams to guess the central message.



Sometimes, we are like a speeding train on a ramble track, full speed and going on and on. The point is: Sometimes detail is necessary and sometimes it is not. This exercise is a great segue into how to write a misconduct report. This information can be covered from information or a module of the topic that you obtain from your agency's training office.

Dedicated to Al Bouchard – Thanks for the catchphrase.

## Lucky 11

Students break up into teams and are asked 11 questions from a previous lecture. The number 11 is chosen to lessen the likelihood of a tie. The beauty of this exercise is that the content is easily harvested from lecture notes.

Lucky 11 can be read as in a quiz show format or placed on a PowerPoint presentation.

What about the incentive? Bragging rights can be the prize. Also, the instructor can allow the winning team captain select a gift from the box of dubious prizes. Candy is also a good incentive.

# *LUCKY 11*

Lucky 11 serves as a review. Competition to heat things up and enlivens the material. But the nuances of teamwork can also be explored and discussed in a post mortem.

A simple example follows:

1. Parole is an inalienable right. No one can take it away once it is granted. FALSE
2. Morrison versus Densmore is the court case concerning due process and the parole revocation process. FALSE - it is Morresey v Brewer
3. Pardon is an executive act that legally excuses a convicted offender from criminal penalty. TRUE
4. Discretionary release – early release based on paroling authority’s assessment of eligibility. TRUE
5. Mandatory release – early release after a time specified by law. True
6. Parole is French in origin and was a way to get indentured servants transported for labor – many times to the colonies in Quebec. False
7. Sir Walter Crofton (Irish Prison Director) in 1854 was an important figure in forming parole concepts in the UK. TRUE
8. The MPRI Model involves improved decision making at critical decision points in the three phases – called: getting ready, going home and staying home. True
9. In 2005, 500,000 people were put on parole. Only 15000 (3%) returned for trv or technical rule violation. False – it was 20000 or 38%.

10. Parole in America came in 1837 via Mass. legislation. But it was not until 1876 in Elmira New York that a program officially came into being. Superintendent Brockway implemented what was called Upward Classification. TRUE

11. Parole has no strings attached and is not part of a sentence. The offender becomes a parolee is no longer under the Department of Corrections jurisdiction. False

## **Mr. Bobo: What is up with him?**

According to the old kid's song:

*Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, turn a- round!*

*Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, touch the ground!*

*Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, tie your shoe!*

*Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, that will do!*

In the corrections profession and in all segments of the criminal justice system, we could substitute these words:

*Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, full of drugs!*

*Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, stuffed for thugs!*

*Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, hide a gun!*

*Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, kill someone!*

With news stories about what TSA and Law Enforcement professionals find in seemingly innocuous items, it is no secret that stuffed animals are sometimes used as contraband vessels. Such is the world we live in.

In the interest of safety, I teach all of my criminal justice/corrections students at Gogebic Community College the principles of contraband

control. This exercise needs very little in terms of props or equipment. All that is necessary is a stuffed animal of any variety, paper, and pens.

To start, I recite the rhyme at the beginning of this description. My preference is to do so in a dry, serious tone. That makes for an unusual contrast when the stuffed animal is brought into plain sight. No matter which animal I use, I call it (him?) Mr. Bobo. (In the fledgling flight of this exercise, I used a stuffed Sneetch of Dr. Seuss fame.)

Then, I split the room into teams of three or four and pass Mr. Bobo to each team. Each team is given a minute or two to inspect Mr. Bobo. I tell the students that stuffed animals are a preferred way to smuggle items through air ports and into prison. I support this with a recent news story of that nature.



Then, each team is told to think like contrabandists and make a diagram of Mr. Bobo, outlining which contraband items can fit into each part of the stuffed animal. At this time, the instructor listens to the students as they compile a list. Students will report the types of contraband they imagine could be stashed in Mr. Bobo. You may hear things like drugs, weapons, cameras, bombs, candy, pop, pictures, cell phone, alcohol, knife, cigarettes, and razor blades. These should be listed on the board.

Then, students are instructed to turn over the diagram. You ask them “How can you detect contraband inside Mr. Bobo without destroying it or opening it? Some detection strategies that you might hear are: through smell, x-ray, visual inspection, metal detector, drug or cell phone sniffing dog, or even through feel of weight (does Mr. Bobo have an odd feel as though the stuffing is not distributed evenly?)



If you are conducting this exercise with corrections professionals rather than with criminal justice students, you could gather stories about contraband that has been found in the facility.

The exercise can be concluded with a review of policies and procedures that outline searches.

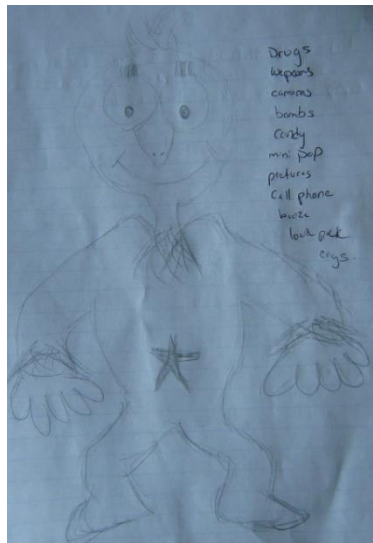
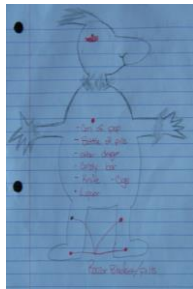
In a post mortem of this exercise, Gogebic students suggested the following:

1. Use two identical Mr. Bobos and stuff one of them to test student's non-invasive search skills. This is, in effect, the use of an experimental Mr. Bobo and a control Mr. Bobo.
2. Allow students to dissect Mr. Bobo. With this option, authenticity can be fostered by distributing latex gloves. Students should be advised that if they are not careful in the search, they might cut themselves on a shark concealed item.

Admittedly, "What's up with Mr. Bobo?" may seem a bit silly. But, the beauty is that it will be remembered because of the strangeness of working with a stuffed animal.

The exercise incorporates tactile learning with artistry, conceptual learning, teamwork, and public speaking. The best part of this is in the possibility that a student with this instruction may save lives someday.

Below are two selected diagrams created by students in Gogebic Community College's CJC 102 Off Campus class on September 19, 2012.



**Worksheet**

**What's up with Mr. Bobo?**



### **Never let them see you sweat**

It is important for corrections professionals to remember that there are many unintended utilities for common items. That is part of what makes it dangerous to work in a corrections setting. I realize that this is an obvious truth. But it is important to think of ways that items can be misused and look for them. What you discover may save the life of a colleague, prisoner, or member of the public.

Personal hygiene is very important for the health of staff and prisoners. This is especially true in the close quarters of a correctional facility. Still, there are many implications for contraband regarding common deodorant containers.

These items are used for moving and concealing contraband.

1. Students break up into teams and are given a deodorant underarm container. The instructor gives the teams ten minutes to list how this item can be misused.
2. Instructor gives the following information.
3. Students report their findings to class.

*Plastic deodorant containers are everywhere. When empty, they make a convenient place to hide things more or less in plain sight. For example, one of my colleagues made a discovery of a cell phone stored inside of a deodorant container. The phone was housed in the container right on top of a foot locker.*



*It may be that the container is more valuable on the unofficial market than the deodorant itself. It really is a simple matter to use, sell or discard the original product. Then, the plastic central screw core is removed from the container, leaving an empty cavity. The empty container can house so many things. Anything smaller than an MP3 player can fit into the vessel.*

*It should be noted that not all containers are the same. Some deodorant containers are made of clear plastic. Others are not. Like newer televisions that can be purchased by prisoners, those with clear plastic housings help staff in the search for contraband.*



*In addition, not all containers are the same size. One only has to think of the travel-sized containers that are less than half the size of a normal sized deodorant container.*

*Further differences are found where the deodorant is dispensed. Many containers feature a soft plastic platform on which the deodorant rises as the knob is turned. In this sort of container, the platform can act as a concealing lid below the cap once the central screw is removed. This adds one more step to the search. Other containers have the platform trapped under a grid – a place where the deodorant oozes out in a gel through holes in the top. With this, the contraband artist would really have to work with the plastic in order to use the inner lid as a concealer.*



*Of course, the deodorant need not be empty in order to conceal things. In fact, small items can be placed inside the solid deodorant. They can then be rolled down back into the container and concealed in an even more effective manner. Pictured below is a needle pressed into a deodorant stick. The needle is kept in place by the product and rolled into the container.*



*Let your imagination run wild with the chilling possibilities. Wires, money, razor blades, thumb drives, and needles are just a few things that could be hidden in the deodorant itself.*

*And we cannot forget the utility of adhesive labels on deodorant containers. Most deodorant labels are very effective as makeshift tape. Corrections veterans routinely see many notes and other contraband affixed to the bottom of carts and tables with deodorant labels.*



*I know that this is not a new concealment trick. But it is something that did not occur to me until I was made aware of it. That just goes to show that there are very few new tricks and corrections. They are just new to the individual corrections professional until they are discovered or taught. The more concealment schemes that you discover will aid in safety in your facility.*

Even the most seasoned corrections veterans may discover something new.

## Open Caption

Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words. And putting words to the picture is a worthwhile exercise. Open Caption is an exercise that uses unusual images to inspire creativity. And it is a good segue into communications modules.

1. Break the class into teams of three or four.
2. Have each group give themselves a name. Give them three minutes to do so. That should open the flow of creativity.
3. Have the teams select a spokesperson who will announce the names.
4. Give the teams four or five of the same pictures. But give them one at a time. The pictures should be unusual.
5. These can also be put on a PowerPoint presentation and shown on a screen or just paper images.
6. Tell the teams to list three funny captions for each image. (some images follow)
7. Give fifteen minutes for teams to list captions and present them to the class.

Here are some things to consider while facilitating this exercise:

- You could appoint an observer to monitor the group dynamics. A discussion of that could segue into a teamwork module.
- The comments may start slowly but could become wilder as the exercise progresses.
- Inhibitions may break too easily, if the group is extroverted and creative. Know your agency's harassment policy and keep within bounds. If necessary, state limits prior to the exercise.
- There are exciting groups and those that are low key. Facilitators may have to enliven or quench the groups as needed.
- You may face a variety of comedy themes. Be aware that scatology, bad puns, dirty jokes, and personal attacks are possible. Be prepared to defuse.
- This is a great way for team members to learn about others' thought processes.





(Note the Bigfoot in the window)

1. Is that you, Santa?
2. The three wise men?
3. A Peeping Tom is less common than a Bigfoot in this neighborhood.



1. Mike Tyson in a cat costume.
2. Wake up, Mommy!

3. I bet that I can hold her eyelid shut.



1. Bad table! I will hit you again!
2. Goin' once! Goin' twice! SOLD to the lady in the yellow hat!
3. Did anyone lose this shoe?



1. Who let go?
2. I am not a doctor but I play one on TV.
3. What if I were allergic to surgical masks?

Not all answers have to be comical gems. In fact, as humor is subjective, who is to say what is funny or not? The point is to get participants a bit out of their comfort zones and to create and act as a member of a team.

## Riddle of the footprints

Early one morning, I walked to the school building in the prison at which I work. I saw a single set of footprints in one half inch of snow that showed that someone had walked out of the building. I noticed that there was no set of corresponding footprints going towards the building. It was 0730 hours and I was puzzled that there was just one set of prints. Why was this?



With that told, there is an opportunity for an icebreaker.

First, show the class a photo of one set of footprints in the snow. The footprints must lead away from any building but towards the camera perspective. Alternately, this can be depicted by a simple drawing on the marker board.

Bring this scenario to the students. These are some of the facts:

1. One half inch of snow fell by 0730 hours.
2. There was no snow on the ground at 0700 hours.
3. Midnight shift ended and day shift started at 0700 hours.
4. Rounds are made of the building on all three shifts, usually, but not always at the beginning and end of the shift. This varies, and is not a certainty.
5. You did not hear count clear on the radio.

What are the possibilities?

Have the students break into groups and discuss how the many ways the prints could have been produced. Give them ten minutes to compile theories. Be prepared for participants to ask questions of clarification. It is up to you to fill in details or omit them as you see fit. What you allow or deny will impact their theories of why there was just one set of footprints.

When five of the ten minutes have passed, suggest to students to explore unlikely but possible ways that this may have happened. This is important, as it opens the minds to possible but not necessarily probable explanations.

As participants discuss possibilities, it is a good time for the facilitator to assess group dynamics and make a few notes.

When the discussion time has expired, have groups report out what they think could have happened. Let them state if the proposed solution is likely to have happen or just a slight possibility. Below are a few possibilities.

1. There was no snow on ground when person approached the building around 0700. There is only one set visible because the person left after the snow fell.
2. There was a back entrance to the building. The round was started on the other side of the building and concluded by walking away from the other side.
3. Someone was in the building all night and tracks to the building were covered.
4. Someone walked to the building after then snow fell building and carefully walked back on their own footsteps.
5. A prisoner may have hidden there and left the building between 0700 and 0729.

The facilitator can a few more questions: Is this an issue that warrants investigation? Has safety been compromised? The exercise can continue in another direction when the facilitator opens discussion on group dynamics. Here are some sample questions:

1. Was there a de facto leader?
2. Were there competing factions?
3. Was a particular idea that took the lead?
4. When odd but possible ideas were considered, was there a person who specialized in these?
5. Did dynamics change?
6. Was there anyone who did not feel he or she could contribute?

One set of footprints can spark a healthy discussion. It also is a great opportunity for us to hone our speculative skills.

## Slang Jeopardy

To some, language is beautiful because it is dynamic. Colloquialisms demonstrate the inventive human nature. To corrections staff, however, where safety is the key to every element of operations, changing language can be frustrating. We need to understand the unofficial languages of inmates. Without that knowledge, prisoners, staff, and the public are placed in increased danger.

This is a two part icebreaker that uses slang as the centerpiece.

### Part 1: Build a Vocab

- The class is divided into teams of three or four.
- Teams select three slang words that they have heard on the job.
- They write a dictionary-like definition. For example, DAWG – noun – a person who is regarded by the speaker as a friend or a familiar person.
- One person from each group speak the word and the rest of the class attempts to define the word.

### Part 2: Slang Jeopardy

- The class is divided into two teams. This can be done with a line down the middle of the room or by counting off.
- An observant facilitator can interpret skills from the Build a Vocab exercise and place extroverts and verbivores evenly on each team.
- Either via PowerPoint, written on the board, or simply spoken, the facilitator announces the word or phrase.
- The first team earns **1** point if they can provide a reasonably close definition.
- If the facilitator or an appointed judge deems the answer wrong, the second team can earn **2** points with a correct answer.

Here is an example of a PowerPoint presentation on slang that is easily adaptable:



**"BUG JUICE"**

- Term referring to depressant drugs, deleriants, or intoxicants



**"CLICK UP"**

- Gang term referring to getting along well with a homeboy, not looking for trouble.



**"DANCING ON THE BLACKTOP"**

- Getting stabbed.



**"HALF A YARD"**

• Prison slang for "fifty dollars."



**"KITE"**

• Prison slang for a contraband letter.



**"SLINGING ROCK"**

• Selling crack cocaine.



**"TITS-UP"**

• Prison slang for an inmate who has died.





**"STREET NEWSPAPERS"**

- Gang term for graffiti, a communication device for gang members.

**"BUG"**

- A person who seems mentally unstable



Although the changing language can make a list of words seem obsolete, it is still useful to play classic slang (you jive turkeys). After all, there remains an element of 'old school' offenders in custody.

Also, be aware that slang has its own geography. A *fish* to some is *green* to another. Both mean inexperienced staff or prisoners. Different jurisdictions throughout the country use various terms for the same concept.

There are three great sources for the words. They are Internet, your facility's inspector and/or Security Threat official and experience. In fact,

this icebreaker can be integrated into a Security Threat Group module.  
Different groups and their favored terms can be featured.

### Take the contraband test

Contraband control has always been and will remain a fundamental concern of corrections professionals. In order to keep staff, offenders, and the public safe, it is imperative that we mitigate the ill effects of illicit trading. Quite simply, contraband control equals safety.

I believe that contraband control is important subject matter for pre-professionals. I incorporate that in the curriculum for CJC 102 Correctional Institutions and Facilities, a course that I teach for Gogebic Community College.

The questions below are based on information from the book *Wake Up and Smell the Contraband* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (LRP Publications 2005). They consist of practical and theoretical questions about controlling contraband. Just for fun, try your hand at the 35 true or false questions:

#	Statement	True or False
1	The American Heritage Dictionary defines contraband as goods prohibited by law from being imported or exported...smuggled goods.	
2	Goods and services are contraband. For example, the promise of making a tattoo is a conspiracy to use contraband.	
3	Contraband equals power. It is precious to prisoners. In a prison setting everything is for sale or barter.	
4	Contraband equals power but it never draws respect from other inmates.	

5	When a formerly influential trader becomes less powerful, they are very likely to be challenged by ambitious prisoners.	
6	The struggle of contraband control is not always staff versus prisoners. It is also prisoner versus prisoner.	
7	There are three main danger categories of contraband. They are physical dangers, legal dangers, and professional humiliation.	
8	Safety is never an important issue to inmates.	
9	Through contraband, prisoners can command sexual favors, arrange assaults on staff and other prisoners, trick staff into uneven rule enforcement, or orchestrate disruptions, riots and murders.	
10	Department staff are legally obliged to keep everyone as safe as possible.	
11	Contraband would be of less worth if it were not mobile.	
12	Illicit goods never move from facility to facility. Mobility ends at the gates.	
13	Contraband moves with the aid of the diversion. The goods can change hands in close proximity of staff while a third party creates a disturbance.	
14	Some prisoners may hide a few forbidden items on their person during the standard pat search. The goods are of very different values to the prisoner. The primary contraband, or the most valuable item, is positioned in a more elusive spot.	
15	Creative use and scarcity dictate value.	
16	Despite what may be seen in the movies, doorjambs can never be compromised, even if the gum or tape is “properly” applied.	

17	There are at least 5 different mercantile paradigms; Monopolist, Oligopolist, Multinational, Inside Trader, and Chaotic.	
18	In the prison economy, the Monopolist dominates all trade in an area.	
19	<u>Oligopolist</u> – This is an inmate who has a handful of competitors. No single inmate in this paradigm has the undisputed advantage or larger share of the market.	
20	Chaotic – This type of trader is a good planner and is never impulsive or conspicuous.	
21	The law vendor sells legal advice or services-such as lawsuits, grievances, assistance in fighting misconduct reports, or strategies in how to deal with staff.	
22	Communications Seller may sell telephone time or PIN numbers on telephone cards. Individuals may dominate the phone to command a fee from others for its use.	
23	Knowing why prisoners adopt an unobtrusive persona may lead to important discoveries.	
24	The bookie rents or sells book to others. Often, the books were illegally obtained from the institutional library.	
25	Survivalist - This prisoner operates below the radar in order to blend in. They do not wish to stand out because they need anonymity to survive.	
26	Invisible leaders keep undercover to protect their ambitions. Typically, they orchestrate loud diversions from overt prisoners, convincing them to absorb a misconduct report.	
27	Invisible soldier-These inmates will do dangerous jobs that need stealth. If they are free-lance soldiers, they follow orders for remuneration.	
28	All of us in corrections communicate well.	

29	On the face of it, it seems that corrections staff deal with just one prisoner at a time. But, usually there are many more. There are often hidden participants.	
30	There are many activities and associations that require special monitoring. Since many of those activities may involve rule violations or illicit trade, prisoners will generally go to great lengths to camouflage all of the players involved.	
31	When you find evidence of one prisoner's participation in a major entrepreneurial enterprise, it is very likely that many more prisoners are involved.	
32	Assisting in intelligence gathering is never easy.	
33	They are five groups of benefits to contraband control: Security, Staff unity, Prisoner rehabilitation, Prisoner services, and The taxpayer.	
34	Contraband control between areas builds confidence and respect. This eliminates the 'us versus them' mentality between staff.	
35	Custody staff become vested in security-minded educators. Because they can feel more akin to officer-friendly teachers, custody staff may make extra rounds in the school.	

Not all contraband control questions are the same. Most of us are most comfortable in solving problems with tangible elements. Others excel in puzzles with a theoretical base. Optimally, despite diametrically opposed philosophies and emphases, a contraband control team should feature a pragmatist and a theorist. And mixed tests like this help round the professional team.

**Note: every 4<sup>th</sup> statement in this test is "false".**

## Teamwork Towers Two

Sometimes, a new classroom exercise is really another part of an existing icebreaker. Recently, I conducted an exercise in my Criminal Justice Corrections 101 class that demonstrated some nuances of team dynamics. However, there was some unanticipated gold to be mined. As the alliterative title suggests, this exercise spawned a sequel.

I did not create the initial exercise of tower building. Perhaps you have encountered a version of this. I learned of it in a leadership training class that I attended in 2006. Teams of three or four have about 20 minutes to design and build a free-standing tower from twelve sheets of copy paper and a roll of tape. The base has to be at least eight inches tall. The tower cannot be taped to anything, including the floor. The structure has to stand for at least two seconds and be 72 inches tall or greater. The first team to accomplish this wins the competition.

Whether the tower ultimately stands, falls, or never gets close to vertical, there is much more going on. The exercise concludes with a discussion lead by the instructor. This should explore group dynamics, leadership, followership, teamwork, nuances of construction and strategies.

When I conducted this exercise on November 4, 2013 for a small class of criminal justice students, there was a healthy competitive spirit. However, at the end of the allotted time, neither of the two structures could stand without assistance. The true learning manifested in the discussion.

Then, there was talk about a sequel...

After ten minutes of productive discussion, one student had suggestions for better construction for “next time”. All of the others chimed in. They clearly wanted a rematch and to build a better tower.

Hitherto, I had never heard about “next time”. That is because there had not been a “next time” in the original exercise. Now there is. I told students that they will build again. I told them that the rules are the same and that they could not prefabricate parts and bring them to class.

One student said, “I am going to google this.” It was spoken as a firm statement, but I felt that she sought permission. I gave the class permission to research as they would. I later learned that both teams researched the topic without my prodding.

On November 18, 2013, the same teams reassembled. Pictured below are both teams. Team THAT IS SARCASM! has one member missing from the original 11/4/2013 exercise.





Team BLUNT



Team THAT IS SARCASM!

It seemed to me that the second session of building was quieter. I attribute this to the teams knowing roles and division of labor established two weeks earlier. One team googled paper tower building and had some plans drawn up prior to round two. It was a tapered cylinder with a series of spokes planned as the base. The other team, after an online search, actually built a practice tower that was square. In the end, both towers stood for at least two seconds. Preparation and planning made all of the difference.

There was some controversy over what constitutes the base, but that was an interesting exercise in who was taking notes and justification of methods and definitions. Speculation was issued about how THAT IS SARCASTIC would have fared with the missing team member present for round two.

The tower itself is merely a focusing mechanism. Learning about group dynamics is the key. Instructors should always keep an open ear for students' suggestions. When a student expresses further interest in a project or exercise, it is up to the instructor to tailor an activity to fit the curriculum. Inspiration and momentum go hand in hand. In other words, let them build another tower. The results may surprise you.

### **Thank you, Lacey, Chip and Ro: A diversion exercise**

I teach a variety of corrections classes to community college students. Often, these students have never stepped into a jail or a prison. Yet, they attend classes with the intention of entering a career in the field of corrections. One of my hopes in the education process is that I can make students aware of some of the many possible dangers that corrections staff face every day on the job. This is done in the spirit of wishing them a long, safe career.



While examining a door lock in the school building in the prison in which I work, I noticed that someone had plugged the opening in the door jamb of a bathroom with wet paper towel. This is the spot at which the locking hardware meets the door frame. I dismantled the hazard and reported it to the school officer. Evidently, someone had time to stop the lock. Perhaps they were helped by a second party with a diversionary action aimed to reroute the attention of staff.

It occurred to me that a diversion plus some wet paper towel could result in serious injury or death. I knew this, but did my students? If not, shouldn't that concept be relayed to the aspiring corrections staff?

This exercise requires very little in terms of materials:

- A room with a closing door
  - Wet paper towel
  - A student willing to quietly simulate a hazardous situation
  - A student or two to focus the attention of the class away from the door
  - A student to act as a corrections staff person
1. First, I had to choose a suitable student who could operate with stealth and cunning. The first student that entered was an ideal candidate. I told her that I needed her to plug the door frame with wet paper towel. She normally seated herself near the door, so she was in a good position to do so. I emphasized that she had to be absolutely unobtrusive. She agreed to this and even offered to palm some wet paper towel before class in order to hasten the exercise.
  2. I had to select another student to distract the class while the first student planted the hazard. I told her that we would talk in circles to a student who would pose as corrections staff. While we distracted, the first student would quietly disable the lock with the paper towel.
  3. With those two student assigned and vowed to silence, the rest of the class eventually assembled. I started the class with some comments about professionalism. I said that some offenders may try to get staff to commit to giving them something for which the offender may not be eligible. I asked for a volunteer to serve as a quiet and attentive staff member. I instructed that no matter how much the “offenders” beg for a transfer, the staff member has no authorization to grant it. A volunteer stepped forward.
  4. I faced the staff/student away from the door with myself and a student/diverter facing him. We three were seated to limit the mobility of the staff/student.
  5. I told the remaining students to focus on the body language of the staff/student.
  6. The diverter/student and I jabbered about a transfer. We begged, fawned, postured, and complained to the staff/student. Quite intentionally, we did not always make sense. To his credit, the staff/student was quiet, attentive and professional. He did not even break a smile or roll his eyes.

7. While this happened, the stealthy student disabled the lock on the door.
8. The conversation continued for a few minutes. I asked the other students to comment on the professionalism and body language of the staff/student. When the comments ended, I asked if anyone observed the student tampering with the door.
9. Students were invited to the door to see the simple, yet effective manner to disable the lock.
10. I led a discussion on the hazards of believing that a door is secured when, in fact, it is not.
11. Discussion turned to how to report this and what to look for.

As I started the exercise, one student asked if I wanted to close the door. She asked this because in earlier classes, that had been my pattern. The exercise hinged on her and this point. She accepted that I did not want a closed door, but did not voice any suspicions. That demonstrated to me that the exercise should occur early in the semester in order to increase success. Otherwise, students might read your patterns.

A wet wad of paper will not always disable a lock. However, it is a possibility. In corrections, almost everything is possible. Never say never is very applicable to the surprises that one can encounter on the job.

The tools of disorder, while not always evident, are often at the tips of offenders' fingers. This is not a pejorative statement – it is a reality. Making pre-professionals aware of some of the hazards is not merely an academic exercise. It serves as a demonstration of potential hazards in a dangerous vocation.



In this case, the 4th element could be a strange item or a very normal thing. It can be tailored to something in the module which it introduces. The hook can be out of left field and not related to anything. The point is to loosen people up via introductions.

Anything that you can think of can be fodder for the introduction formula. I once attended training where the 'hook' in the introduction was based on the then popular Twilight vampire series. The question that all had to answer was, "Are you Team Jacob or Team Edward?" (When my turn came, I answered that I am unaffiliated.)

Here are some possible fourth elements:

1. What is your favorite vacation spot?
2. What do you consider the ugliest animal in existence (or extinct)?
3. What is your worst fear?
4. Who is the funniest comedian ever?
5. If you could be an animal, what would it be?
6. Which are better, blinking Christmas lights or non-blinking?
7. Do you prefer to wash your car by hand or by automation?
8. Regarding groceries, paper, plastic or your own bags?
9. What is the best sports team of all time?
10. Which is better, apples or oranges?
11. If law mandated that only one restaurant shall remain, would it be Subway or McDonalds?
12. Do you prefer to communicate via text, email, by telephone, or in person?
13. What is your hobby?
14. Which are creepier, clowns or mimes?
15. When offered a piece of chocolate from a box, do you just grab one or inspect the chart before you select?



16.Regarding the hanging of toilet paper, do you place the roll so the next piece is under or over the roll?

The fourth element may even spawn an inside joke in the class which may last all session. The possibilities for the fourth element are limitless. (Please see “You know what I could go for now” icebreaker on page 74 of this book. It is an introduction exercise that uses the universality of food.)

## **The manipulative power of candy**

*Below is a classroom exercise that I initially conducted on Halloween 2012 for the CJC 102 class for Gogebic Community College.*

Manipulation is all around us. Print and electronic media are chock full of examples of companies and individual trying to get you to buy a product or endorse a candidate. Some deem it persuasion. Others may call it marketing. Whatever its name, it is all about convincing others to do your will.

Often, an instructor's design is to turn the floor over to the students and allow them to buttress points in the lesson with their own personal experience. Yet, classroom participation is always a challenge. Even when one had a room full of extroverts, there may be slow days and pervasive quiet. Every facilitator will eventually come to the conclusion that sometimes we need to bribe in order to get results.

Let's not elevate this to the point crossing into the realm of impropriety. I am simply suggesting that a little treat goes a long way. Do not underestimate the manipulative power of candy.

This classroom exercise needs very little in terms of preparation. All that is necessary is a talking point for the group. In terms of materials you will need a small bag and a few pieces of candy each for every participant. However, inside one of the bags will be placed an unobtrusive marker of some sort. This could be a number written inside or in the bottom of the bag. Or, one could put a quarter or an index card in the bag.



First you introduce your concept. For example if the topic is manipulation or persuasion:

*“Once, I was vacationing in Florida. I remember that as a time when many people used strong persuasive measures on me. Their goal was to sell me a time share. They matched me with a sales person who seemed to reflect my demographic. This sales person brought in a parade of “supervisors” who used concepts like family values, economic value and luxury. They also included a tour of a resort, discount tickets to a local theme park, a breakfast and steadily drop in the price of the time share. The price literally dropped thousands of dollars during the course of the two hour presentation...”*

Then you tell the class to think about a time where they recognized someone trying to convince them. Let them know that their example can be subtle, blatant, or even ham-handedly ridiculous. It does not even have to be a direct contact – a commercial or pamphlet will do. I found that telling each student to write some notes on an incident of manipulation in which they were involved works well. Give them a few minutes to do so. When each person reports, they have notes.

Then, present each person with a bag of candy “as a gift”. Of course, the person with a marker on the bottom or inside of the bag will be the first person to report their example of manipulation. This exercise is like a

lottery or winning a door prize when you have a number taped under the seat that you randomly select.

When the first person has related the tale of handling, she or he is told to select a “volunteer” from the class to go next. This fosters a bit of playfulness and empowers speakers to appoint someone the instructor may not have selected. And it goes on. The good news is that everyone gets the sweet gift of candy and some or all can support the lesson with tales of their own.

As tales are told, the instructor can write a one or two word descriptor of the style of manipulation used. Of course, some will see the exercise as manipulation. Spoiler alert: It is manipulation. In fact, do not be surprised if someone reports that a time they were persuaded/manipulated was when this classroom activity started.

The timing of this can impact the effectiveness. For example, conducting this before lunch or in midafternoon might yield better results, as the incentive for a snack is greater at those times. Directly after lunch is not necessarily a good idea, as the classroom may be too bloated to enjoy a treat.

I conducted this exercise for the first time during a class that fell on Halloween. All of the simple gift bags had a few mini candy bar within. One of those bags had a small, plastic snake in keeping in the spirit of the holiday.

Before I field tested this, someone suggested that I add a note in one of the gift bags that said “you are my favorite student.” This, she reasoned, would give a lesson in division and favoritism. In the post mortem, the student who randomly selected the bag with the message admitted that he felt manipulated when he read it. In other words, his radar was on. It was noted that he chose the bag quite randomly. However, this introduced a classroom talk about how favoritism is a form of manipulation.

At the American Jail Association conference in 2013, I gave away a horse shoe key chain in the bag of candy to gentleman pictured below. He rendered an excellent tale of manipulation to the class.



The cynical and untrusting may unfairly label this as exploiting a weakness for sweets in order to force participation. I prefer to think of it as fostering a willingness to share in the education process by using universally beloved confections. And if you think that this is manipulative, we can talk about it over a snack.

## The name game

No matter how lax the trainer may be, immature behavior is generally not fostered in the classroom. In particular, name-calling is discouraged. Certainly we can make allowance for an occasional incident of rough verbal camaraderie. However, one would not expect the facilitator to encourage or even mandate name-calling.

Of course, pride in one's team can bring out the competitive edge, thus forcing the teams to coalesce. So, in the spirit of group identity, I give you The Name Game.

What follows is an icebreaker that can be used in all exercises that have teams. It is a very short exercise that precedes any team icebreaker. At the start divide the class into two teams. The facilitator will then tell both teams that they have to name the other team.

Then, each team is given a list of 20 words – 10 rows of words in two columns. On both pages, the left column will feature ten adjectives. The right column will feature ten animal names.

For the sake of variety, at random, one team will receive a list of strong, positive adjectives and traditionally weak animals. Conversely, the other team will receive the list with pejorative adjectives and traditionally strong animals. That will make for an interesting mix. (Please see two lists below).

Once each team has a list, they will be told that they have 5 min. to name the other team. They have to use one word from each column. There will be a lot of silly combinations that come from this. For example, one team may

name the other the Frustrated Eagles. On the other hand, the other team can be called the Vicious Wombats, depending on the words on the list.

## Sample list number one: positive adjectives – weak animals

Choose one from each column

<b>Positive adjectives</b>	<b>Weak animals</b>
Bold	Weasels
Ferocious	Earwigs
Undaunted	Mice
Victorious	Kittens
Amazing	Shrews
Beautiful	Slugs
Intelligent	Capybaras
Unfathomable	Wombats
Indescribable	Hamsters
The great	Hummingbird



## Sample list number two: pejorative adjectives – strong animals

Choose one from each column

<b>Pejorative adjectives</b>	<b>Strong animals</b>
Lazy	Dragons
Incompetent	Oxen
Moronic	Bears
Clumsy	Lions
Gullible	Wolverines
Gossipy	Wildcats
Neurotic	Raptors
Psychotic	Alligators
Indecisive	Wolves
Nauseous	Elephants

Here are some tips for a more successful running of The Name Game:

- This is designed as an icebreaker that proceeds in icebreaker. In other words is a set up for another team driven icebreaker.
- This is a quick moving game whose results will be evident in the next icebreaker. You may think that you are done once each team names the other. However, depending on audience dynamics, this game casts a long shadow.
- Rough verbal camaraderie can be productive in fostering competition and bringing the best out of participants. However, this will not always be the case. If the exercise flounders, move on to the main event of the team driven exercise that you have in store for the class.
- This exercise works best with extroverts or with audience members that may know one another. You may have difficulty in a more formal setting.
- The focus is on team pride. You may wish to intervene if the chatter gets too personal or tends to focus on the individual.
- Be prepared to see strange plays on words for the name selected.
- It's also possible that the teams may embrace the quirky names and perhaps even draw a mascot. Whether you permit this, of course, is up to you. It is up to many factors such as your patience, the amount of time that you have, and the sense of creativity in the teams.
- Keep a lid on it. Always remember your facility's discriminatory harassment policy.

How do you get a group of people to work as a team? Sometimes an encouraging name can help this. But when opposing teams are permitted to tease their adversaries a bit by assigning a less than complementary team name, the results can be encouraging. I will not go on record as saying that blatant, malicious name-calling is a healthy teamwork event. However, I know that The Name Game can inspire teamwork and creativity.

## Worksheet: the name game

Sometimes, we taunt opposing teams in order to gain a psychological edge in the game. For this exercise, we are not going to the point of harassment. We aim for a bit of competitive fun. Imagine if you could name the opposing team. What if the name was not very complementary?

1. For each column, place a word as described in each heading:

	A	B	C	D
	Negative adjective	Dangerous animal	Positive adjective	Gentle animal
EXAMPLE:	Cowardly	Wolverine	Majestic	Pot belly pig
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

2. Pick a word from column A and column B or;
3. Pick a word from column C and column D or;
4. Run options by your team;
5. The most ridiculous or odd name is given to the opposing team;
6. For the duration of the semester, day or presentation, the teams retain these names.

### True or falsitude: Subtle language exercise

The substitution of a word can change the meaning and the veracity of the statement. Consider the following statements:

“You could be a rock star!”

“You will be a rock star!”

In a true or false test, the first statement is true, as (almost) anything is possible with a conditional word. The second statement does not use any qualification and cannot be as true as the flexible “could” statement. Unless you are unmistakably prescient, how can you know that the person will attain rock star status?

In many professions, what you say and what you do not say can be held against you. Corrections and criminal justice occupations are good examples of this. It behooves practitioners to know the difference between mandatory words like ‘shall’, ‘will’ and ‘must’ versus the less definitive ‘should’, ‘could’ and ‘would’.

A ‘should’ issued versus a ‘shall’ could mean the difference between a simple verbal warning and prosecution. In a prison setting, this is a crucial element to maintain safety and discipline. If a prisoner is threatening you, the order that you issue is crucial. There really is a difference between these two statements:

Go to your cell now.

You should go to your cell now.

The former is a direct order and the latter is a suggestion. An inmate could argue, perhaps successfully, that staff used 'should' and that it was not really meant as an order but as a choice or a suggestion. This may not seem like a big deal to those who do not work in corrections. However, there exists a difference that could undermine staff authority and the validity of an order.

To drive this lesson home, I crated two true or false tests. One consists of completely mandatory words and the other has less definitive words. Students are given these tests one at a time. They shall be instructed that if a statement is not totally true, then it should be marked as false.

#### Test 1

1. All men eat meat and nothing else.
2. You will outlive your grandfather.
3. Bigfoot is real.
4. China will win a land battle with Russia in the next twenty years.
5. This test will be fun for everyone.
6. Everyone thinks that Paul Bunyan was responsible for deforesting the upper Midwest in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
7. As a party spot, Daytona Beach is definitely better than Virginia Beach.
8. All Chevrolets are better vehicles than Fords.
9. Criminals are always caught in the end.
10. The pug is universally considered the most stubborn animal in existence.

All of these are false because they are not necessarily true.

Then, students put aside test 1 as the facilitator distributes test 2. Test 2 is very similar to test 1, but with a few differences.

### Test 2

1. Some men eat meat and nothing else.
2. You may outlive your grandfather.
3. Bigfoot may be real.
4. China could win a land battle with Russia in the next twenty years.
5. This test may be fun for everyone.
6. Some people think that Paul Bunyan was responsible for deforesting the upper Midwest in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
7. As a party spot, Daytona Beach is often considered better than Virginia Beach.
8. Many Chevrolets are better vehicles than Fords.
9. Criminals are often caught in the end.
10. The pug is thought by some the most stubborn animal in existence.

All of the statements in Test 2 can be considered true because there are qualifying, flexible words in the statement.

They should notice (but not necessarily shall notice) that all answers are the same in each test. The test with shall, will, must is completely false. All of the statements in Test 2 can be considered true because there are qualifying, flexible words in the statement.

Students are asked the primary differences between the tests. Then words that are definitive in test one shall be circled by participants. Students will then circle the flexible language elements in the statements in test 2.

The point is not the patterns of true or false. The idea is to note the subtleties of language. Law enforcement and corrections staff learn the importance of these subtleties through experience. Perhaps their effectiveness in this is strengthened through this exercise.

In any event, it should promote discussion.



## Where there's a will, there's a way

Just like pulling a small keystone from an arch, little things can have great consequences. I recently learned this while searching a law book. And this is something that can help break the ice when presenting a contraband control module.

There is almost no material needed for this exercise.

1. Simply have two – 3 inch squares of paper on hand.
2. Give one to each of your two volunteers.
3. Tell them to scribble on one side of the paper, leaving the other side devoid of marks. The papers can also be pre-prepared.
4. Have participants fold the paper with the marked side inside.
5. The outside should have no marks on it.
6. Have participants flatten the fold by running a finger over it
7. Instruct paper holders to fold the paper again – keeping the fold in the same direction
8. Repeat step six.
9. Repeat steps seven and eight so that there is a three inch by ½ inch v shaped paper
10. Have participants place the paper in a book in a place where they feel it is least likely to be detected.

Next have the participants hide the paper in a book. This should open discussion about contraband control

Here are some useful questions:

1. What else would prisoners use as vessels for drop and pass?
2. What sorts of information are dangerous in the hands of prisoners?
3. How effective is your search?



## You be the (sentencing) judge

Education and Criminal Justice are alike in that people often have very strong ideas about what should be done. There is an “If I were in charge” mentality, at times. But, there is often a great difference in what we think should be done, and what is actually done.

### PART ONE:

First, name a crime. You may list crimes against property as a theme or crimes against persons. You may even mix them. Give a brief description of the offenses one at a time and ask what they think the punishment should be. You can tell them, “You be the judge”.

The key is to ask *what the sanction ought to be* in the humble opinions of class members.

1. Third Degree Home Invasion
2. Second Degree Home Invasion
3. First Degree Home Invasion
4. breaking and entering a building or structure *other than a dwelling*
5. Possession of Burglar’s Tools
6. Driving on a suspended or revoked license in Michigan is a **misdemeanor offense**. If this is a **first offense** of this nature,
7. However, if this is your **second or subsequent conviction**
8. stalking
9. If you are found guilty of the above described offense and the victim involved was under the age of 18,
10. felony aggravated stalking

### PART TWO:

Have two teams compete against each other in a quiz about what the actual sanctions in a certain jurisdiction. Cite your source. In this case, it is Michigan Criminal Defense Lawyer

Closest to instructor's list of sentences in certain jurisdiction wins a point. As in part one, give a brief description of the offense.

### Third Degree Home Invasion

If you are accused of breaking and entering a dwelling (without permission) with the intent to commit a misdemeanor or if while within you break the terms of your probation, parole, or a protection order, you could face charges of home invasion in the third degree.

#### 1. What is the sentence?

This offense is a felony charge and carries up to 5 years in prison and fines reaching \$2,000.

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### Second Degree Home Invasion

Second degree home invasion charges apply if you are believed to have broken and entered a dwelling without permission, with intent to commit a felony, larceny, or assault while within, whether or not your were successful.

#### 2. What is the sentence?

If convicted, this offense carries up to 15 years in prison and fines reaching \$3,000.

\*\*\*\*\*

### First Degree Home Invasion

You could be facing first degree home invasion charges if you break and enter a dwelling with the intent to commit a felony, larceny, or assault, and you are either armed at the time or someone is present within the dwelling.

#### 3. What is the sentence?

This offense carries up to 20 years in prison and \$5,000 in fines if convicted.

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*

If the crime of breaking and entering is committed on a building or structure *other than a dwelling*, you could face this charge. Breaking and entering (B & E) carries a potential penalty of

#### 4. What is the sentence?

up to 10 years in prison upon conviction.

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

### Possession of Burglar’s Tools

If you are accused of possessing the tools of a burglary, usually those that can help you gain access to secure areas, and it can be proven that burglary was your intended use for them,

#### 5. What is the sentence?

you could face this felony charge and up to 10 years in prison.

\*\*\*\*\*

Driving on a suspended or revoked license in Michigan is a **misdemeanor offense**.

If this is a **first offense** of this nature,

**6. What is the sentence?**

you face a potential sentence of up to 93 days in jail and up to \$500.

\*\*\*\*\*

However, if this is your **second or subsequent conviction**

**7. What is the sentence?**

you face up to 1 year in prison and up to \$1,000 in fines.

\*\*\*\*\*

What is considered stalking under Michigan law?

The term stalking can be confusing in and of itself. A few legal definitions can help you understand the charges against you as defined by Michigan’s stalking laws (*MCL 750.411h*)

Stalking: a willful course of conduct involving *repeated or continuing* harassment of another individual that would cause a reasonable person to feel terrorized, frightened, intimidated, threatened, harassed, or molested and that actually causes the victim to feel terrorized, frightened, intimidated, threatened, harassed, or molested.

Harassment: conduct directed toward a victim that includes, but is not limited to, repeated or continuing unconsented contact that would cause a

reasonable individual to suffer emotional distress and that actually causes the victim to suffer emotional distress.

What contact is considered “unconsented”?

Consent is a key element of a stalking charge. Unconsented contact is any contact that the other party does not want and can include:

- Sending email or posted mail
- Being in visual contact with
- Approaching
- Confronting
- Calling
- Entering that persons property or workplace

### Michigan Criminal Stalking Penalties

If you are found guilty of the above description of stalking

#### **8. What is the sentence?**

You will be facing misdemeanor penalties, which could be up to one year in prison and fines of up to \$1,000.

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

If you are found guilty of the above described offense and the victim involved was under the age of 18,

#### **9. What is the sentence?**

You are facing felony status and a sentence of up to 5 years in prison and fines up to \$10,000.

The court may also require a restraining order, counseling, anger management classes, or other remedies if you are convicted.

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

Aggravated stalking is a serious felony. (MCL 750.411i) What makes it different than misdemeanor stalking is that one of the following situations must apply:

1. One of the committed actions making up the offense was in violation of an existing restraining order.
2. One of the committed actions making up the offense was a violation of probation, parole, or pre-trial release.
3. The offense involves at least one believable threat against the victim, their family, or another individual living with the victim.
4. You have previously been convicted of misdemeanor stalking, i.e. it is a second offense stalking charge.

## You know what I could go for now?

Some people have a very specific memory. They seem to remember very acutely in certain categories. My father was like this. It seems that he could remember all meals that he has ever consumed. He also could recall anything that anyone else ate. His accuracy was dead on. If he said that you ate a pretty big salmon steak on July 21, 2003, you definitely ate salmon on that date.



Al Bouchard loved food. A good meal was not only enjoyed at the time. It is also a point of reminiscence. He also was very open about what he was intended to eat. I can still hear him say, “You know what I could go for now?” In many cases, that was a blueberry pie from Baker’s Square.

As trainers, we can harness the universality of the meal. Nothing brings people out of their shells like food. Everybody eats and everybody has a rotation of favorite foods. This is a realm in which all in attendance have knowledge.

When we introduce ourselves, we sometimes become self-conscious and involved in saying things perfectly. This should really be a time to learn about others in the classroom. Food binds us together, even just talking about it. “You know what I could go for now?” is designed to bring those in the classroom out of a shy area and into the realm of participation.

We use the four part formula for introduction:

1. Name
2. Years in corrections
3. Title
4. 4<sup>th</sup> element. In this case the 4<sup>th</sup> element is “You know what I could go for now?”

The instructor goes first.

1. *Hi, my name is Joe Bouchard.*
2. *I have 20 years in corrections.*
3. *I am a corrections librarian, author, and a college instructor*
4. *Do you know what I can go for now? I want a sesame seed bagel with salmon spread. (Salmon seems to be a theme for me in this exercise.)*

Like the manipulative power of candy exercise, timing is an interesting issue. The timing of this can impact the effectiveness. For example, conducting this before lunch or in midafternoon might yield better results, as food is on the mind of most people at those times. Directly after lunch may not yield the famished enthusiasm desired, as the classroom may be too bloated to contemplate meals.

When I test-drove this exercise in class, the group of shy students became hungry and vocal. Budgets will dictate if you provide a small snack afterwards.



You may issue very specific stipulations. Some may want the 4<sup>th</sup> element to be just food. Others may also include a beverage. By issuing no parameters you may yield a free-for-all on “what I could go for right now”. Libations and other adult themes could be mentioned. Some prefer an uninhibited exchange. Others would guide a more traditional talk on food and food only. What you stipulate should match your style. The audience is always an interesting wild card.

This talk can segue into a lecture on food service in corrections. This topic is huge. The talk of food preferences prior prepares participants to think in terms of the complexities of feeding hundreds of offenders three times a day and 365 days a year.

Food is love. Food is comfort. Food is necessary. Food is something that is universal. Everyone in existence has a favorite meal. All of us can relate to a delicious plate. It is not an abstraction.

## **Your opportunity to school a fish**

Do you remember when your first day in corrections? You might have been regarded as green, fresh meat, red tag, or fish. The name fish is appropriate in this setting as one who is as new as to be easily caught. That is why mentoring is so important. The fewer fish that are caught, the larger the pool of effective staff and the better the safety.

Flash forward to today. You have all of your experience to back up your well-earned knowledge. You feel comfortable as one can be without being complacent. You are a seasoned, security-conscious corrections professional. During the middle of a routine day, a sergeant marches ten new recruits into your area of control. She asks if you have any advice for your new colleagues.

What do you tell the green staff? Some ideas follow:

Share concerns with chain of command.

Watch your sixes.

Do not approve a request from a prisoner without checking to see if it is permitted to do something.

Talk to different shifts.

Look at all staff as potential resources.

Follow policy and procedure.

The gems of advice are really limitless.

It is your opportunity to school a fish. And it is very simple to do. Let us start with this as a classroom exercise:

1. The class is split into groups of four.

2. A spokesperson is appointed/solicited from each group.
3. Teams compile ten bits of advice that they think all new recruits must have in order to do well on the job.
4. Each team ranks these in order of importance.
5. Each team reports out in turn to the entire class.
6. One of the spokespersons from the four is elected/appointed/ordered/volunteered to facilitate the class. This spokesperson guides the class in discussion of which of the 40 advice tidbits will become part of the big ten advice list. The best ten should be selected.
7. As the four lists are already prioritized, this should just be a matter of quick discussion.
8. The master list should eventually contain ten bits of advice in order of importance.

This is a very simple exercise that can serve as a great segue into any security module.

- It is meant to build empathy between the seasoned staff and the new staff.
- It shows the culture of the class.
- It is a look at interpersonal dynamics which can serve as useful information for future classroom exercises. Thinkers, leaders, and effective compilers can be indicated by this exercise.
- It gives seasoned staff a stake and interest in securing the new front – new staff.
- It supports the mission statement of safety.
- When practiced in the field, it could inspire fish to ask questions.

It is important to share old, favorite gems with new staff. These are really means of coping with this challenging profession. What is passed down as good advice for coping in a stressful vocation is crucial for the survival of staff. It also can produce an atmosphere of safety for prisoners and the public. Don't forget to school your fish.



## You're without sight: Color blind

How does a facilitator impart the lessons of trust, teamwork, adherence to instruction and patience to corrections staff? Use the exercise "Color Blind".

There are very few things needed. Four blindfolds, four coloring books and four small boxes of crayons.

The facilitator also has an index card that says "You cannot tell this to the blindfolded team member". This is the **Direct Order Card**.

1. Divide the class into four teams.
2. Select one student on each team who will be blind folded. Do not blindfold until step 3 is completed.
3. The person to be blindfolded is allowed to look at an uncolored picture from a coloring book for a few minutes.
4. The student is blindfolded and given instructions by the other team members. The goal is to color the picture as well as possible while not being able to see it.
5. Instructors may thwart the teams. For example, a picture may be turned upside down by the instructor while the blindfolded student is unaware. At this point, the facilitator silently presents the **Direct Order Card** to the sighted team members. The thwarting could be arbitrary and not impact all teams. That is the nature of circumstances in an unpredictable world.
6. It is up to the facilitator's discretion to throw wrenches in the works like this or to let the team guide the sightless member without hindrances.
7. Team members are not allowed to touch the crayons or paper or blindfolded team mate. They may only use their words to guide the blindfolded colleague.

8. At the end of ten minutes, the blindfold come off and pages are displayed.
9. The teams report out to the entire class about the challenges and triumphs involved in how they guided the blinded team member.

Teamwork is so important in our vocation. Sometime we are guiding colleagues who have no real grasp of the situation – like giving vision to those who cannot see.

### Zeroing in on the write stuff

It is no surprise that some prisoners will compose letters that are unsigned and have no real means of identification. These letters are often sent to staff anonymously.

Prisoners do this for a few obvious reasons. Anonymous letters may be issued to unnerve staff. Or, a prisoner will disguise handwriting and send a security oriented message to send an informant's message without being labeled as a "snitch". (*There will be a hit in C unit*, for example).

Whatever the reason, it is difficult to uncover masked handwriting. Still, the identification of the writer may be important in order to obtain more information or to secure a potential threat to the order and security of the institution.

There may be official hand writing comparers in the institution. There may be others untried who have a natural talent for this. Zeroing in on the write stuff is an icebreaker that can hone the skills of seasoned handwriting comparers and inspire would-be script sleuths. This is how it works:

1. Three students write the following phrase in block, cursive, print, and with non-dominant hand in any style. So that would be four different styles of writing on three separate pieces of paper.

***"The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog"***

2. Each of these is given a different name or number as identification. These are the three known samples from three suspects.
3. One of those three writer composes a short letter in natural handwriting or printing – whichever is the natural way that person writes.
4. This letter is written in secret so the class does not know the identity of the unidentified letter.
5. The short letter should be like this: “There is metal in the level two on the north side. Lots of people will be hurt. The dude with the shank is going to hit staff then convicts that work in the kitchen. I ain’t telling you who wrote this because I don’t want to get hit.”
6. Four comparison teams are assembled. They should be small, as to not put too many cooks in the kitchen.
  
7. Four teams are given a photocopy of the three samples. They find and highlight similarities of the anonymous letter as compared to the known samples.
  
8. The four teams use the yellow highlighter to mark the similarities between known samples and the letter in question.
  
9. The teams write the similarities on a separate piece of paper and present their findings at the end of the exercise.
  
10. A valid answer to this is “INCONCLUSIVE” or “AUTHOR UNKNOWN”.
  
11. At the end of fifteen minutes (unless it is solved earlier) the first team to identify the letter is declared the winner.

While the four teams work in a separate area the rest of the class is questioned about elements to look for. The question is: What should you focus on when comparing known writing samples to an anonymous letter? Participants are welcome to come to the marker board to illustrate their ideas. Some of the elements that you may hear are:

- Letter sizes
- Darkness of script



- Odd things like underlining
- Text talk
- Emoticons
- Slant
- Grammar and spelling errors
- Use of capital letters in mid word

Handwriting comparison skills can help provide evidence to secure an otherwise unsecured threat. When clues are in (with an adherence to due process and the prisoner discipline policy) the facility will be a safer place.



About the Author:

Joe Bouchard is a Corrections Librarian, College Instructor and Corrections Author. He has published over 1,000 corrections articles and eight books. Bouchard has presented at over 50 corrections venues. His specialty topics are staff interaction and contraband control. He is the Editor of *The Correctional Trainer*, the journal of The International Association of Correctional Training Personnel (IACTP). You can contact Bouchard at (906) 353 7070 ext. 1321. To learn more about IACTP, go to [www.iactp.org](http://www.iactp.org).

