

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Purpose and Objectives - Access to Counseling Services and Programs

Policy Number: 107.01

Effective Date: 1/8/2021

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Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Inmate Services (Office of
Reentry Services)

Access Listing:
Level I: All Access

I. Introduction and Summary:

The Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) provides counseling services to offenders to meet their individualized counseling needs and provide effective case management and supervision. The Office of Reentry Services will provide guidance and resources for the scope of services, program coordination, supervision, counseling, substance use programs, and Special Needs offenders. Inmate Services will inform other divisions within GDC and agencies outside GDC of the extent and availability of services and programs for agency population.

II. Authority:

A. O.C.G.A. §§ 19-13-1 and 42-5-20;

B. GDC Board Rules: 125-2-1-.01, 125-4-1-.01, 125-4-1-.02, 125-4-1-.04 125-4-1-.05 and 125-4-1-.06;

C. GDC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): 103.63, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II Provisions; 107.01 Purpose & Objectives - Access to Counseling Services and Programs 107.03, Staff Development; 107.04, Risk and Needs Assessment; 107.05 Program Management; 107.07, Peer Evaluator; 107.11, Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Programs (RSAT); 107.12 Specialized Reentry Program Prison; 108.01, Education Program Administration; 109.01, Local Management of Volunteer Services; 209.03, Disciplinary Isolation; 209.06, Administrative Segregation; 209.07, Segregation-Tier I: Disciplinary, Protective Custody and Transient Housing; 209.08, Administrative Segregation – Tier II; 209.09, Special Management Unit – Tier III Program; 211.02, Offenders Under Death Sentence; 227.05, Visitation of Offenders; 210.01, Inmate/Probation Boot Camp - General Policy; 214.02, Performance Incentive Credit Program - PIC; 215.18, Resident Classification; 219.01, Case Management-Records Maintenance; 220.03, Classification Committee; 220.04, Offender Orientation; 503.01, Faith & Character Based Initiatives; 503.02, Reentry Pre and Post-Release Planning; and 508.32, MH/MR Case Management Duties; and

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D. ACA Standards: 2-CO-1A-14, 2-CO-4B-04, 2-CO-4F-01, 5-ACI-3D-04 (ref. 4-4277), 5-ACI-3D-05 (ref. 4-4278), 5ACI-5E-01 (ref. 4-4428), 5-ACI-5E-02 (ref. 4-4429), 5ACI-5E-03 (ref. 4-4429-1), 5ACI-5E-04 (ref. 4-4430), 5ACI-5E-05 (ref. 4-4431), 5ACI-5E-06 (ref. 4-4432), 5-ACI-5E-07 (ref. 4-4433), 5-ACI-5E-08 (ref. 4-4434), 5-ACI-5E-09 (ref. 4-4435), 5-ACI-5E-10 (ref. 4-4436), 5-ACI-5F-01 (ref. 4-4442), 4-ALDF-5A-01, 4-ALDF-5A-02, 4-ALDF-5A-03, and 4-ACRS-7B-02.

III. Definitions:

- A. **Administrative Segregation** - The Classification Committee, Deputy Warden/Assistant Superintendent/Unit Supervisor, or in an emergency, the Warden/Superintendent may place in Administrative Segregation an offender whose continued presence in the general population poses a serious threat to life, property, self, staff, or other offenders, or to the security or orderly running of the facility. Offenders in administrative segregation because of behavioral problems should be provided with programs conducive to their well-being.
- B. **Community Social Service Resources** - Used to augment counseling services provided in the institution and coordinated by the Chaplain/Volunteer Coordinator.
- C. **Data Assessment Plan (DAP)** - Specific method for conducting meaningful contacts and documenting those contacts in Scribe.
1. **Data** - Data will describe the facts of a session with an offender, including the offender's disposition and attitude, the offender's assessed program needs, and how the offender is addressing their criminogenic needs.
 2. **Assessment** - Provides the overall impression of the offender contact including: how did the session go; how this particular session relates to the overall treatment goals set in the offender's case plan; where the offender is in their Stage of Change—and what is their attitude to their case-plan.

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3. **Plan** - Lists goals, objectives, and reentry interventions, referrals, etc. Includes the offender's next steps and the counselor's next steps to meet the treatment goals set in the Data section of note.

D. **Next Generation Assessment (NGA)** - GDC's assessment tool that identifies the criminogenic needs of the offenders as well as the programs to address those needs.

E. **Offenders Under Transition (O.U.T)** - A Cognitive Behavioral Program utilized in the level 5 TIER II non-mental health facilities designed to enhance an offender's motivation to change a problem behavior, combined with programming to provide new skills. The curriculum is based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Motivational Interviewing (MI) treatment concepts.

F. **Operational Manual** - The facility's guidebook that details the processes and systems utilized by Care and Treatment Staff to provide services to the offender population.

G. **Special Needs** - Offenders identified as high risk of re-offending with a history of aggressive and/or sexually assaultive behavior, substance use issues and all other criminogenic areas identified from the Next Generation Assessment (NGA) or another qualified professional.

IV. Statement of Policy and Applicable Procedures:

A. It is the policy of the GDC to provide services and programs appropriate to meet the needs of the offender population. Individual and group counseling encompasses a delivery of services that may include personal/social adjustment, drug/alcohol counseling, vocational/educational guidance, family assistance, pre-release/reentry preparation, and job development, as well as other required counseling assistance. Facility Care and Treatment staff will at least annually assess the needs of the offender population to ensure that the necessary programs and services are available to meet those needs. Facilities that house pregnant offenders will provide a comprehensive counseling program with assistance in

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providing the pregnant offender with information in their expressed desires in planning for their unborn children. Program plans are made available through SCRIBE and GDC Website (www.gdc.ga.gov).

Each facility will have a formal mechanism to determine appropriate levels of counseling services staffing. The mechanism used to determine such staffing levels includes at a minimum: type of offender population served; type of facility; legal requirements; and goals to be accomplished. The facility's use of a "team" approach and use of paraprofessionals, volunteers, and students also may influence the numbers of professional staff required.

B. Program Coordination & Supervision:

The Supervising Authority (DWCT/Chief Counselor) or Senior Counselor/Assistant Superintendent are responsible for the following:

1. Ensure that the administration of counseling services will be supervised by a qualified and trained person.
2. Planning, updating and developing the Operational Manual that outlines each area of responsibility of Care and Treatment Counseling Services.
3. Supervising the counseling staff daily. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Scheduling the counselor's work hours to provide maximum access to offenders to ensure provisions are made for counseling offenders upon request and crisis intervention services.
 - b. Ensuring the appropriate groups have been scheduled to address assessed needs of offender population and ensure all case plans are completed prior to their release.

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- c. Ensuring adequate and appropriate case documentation by completing case note reviews on five percent (5%) of all counselor caseloads each month. This review should include any corrections needed for staff to correct.
- d. Reviewing and monitoring individual and group counseling activities to ensure compliance with established SOP's and integrity of the program. Counseling Supervisor will ensure that close-ended programs are started at capacity. Open-ended programs will be maintained at capacity. The review of groups and counseling sessions should be documented in the Counselors Performance Notes and Performance Management Form.
- e. Ensuring duties assigned to staff are consistent with training, abilities and job description.
- f. Conducting monthly staff meeting with counseling staff as well as MH/MR staff where applicable, to include relaying revisions of SOP's within thirty (30) days of receipt of newly revised SOP's.
- g. Using the Activity Priority Report in SCRIBE to schedule counseling programs, using the Master Calendar and Incarcerated Offender Report to review program enrollment, completions, and terminations.
- h. Ensuring offenders are enrolled in classes based on their Target Completion Dates in the Activity Priority Report and complete the group they are required to, at least fifteen (15) months prior to their earliest release date.
- i. Ensuring a Master Calendar is developed and kept up to date at the facility for review.
- j. Decreasing offender idleness by scheduling groups and programs during times when there is little to no offender movement.

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- k. Managing and utilizing the counseling budget for the purchase of counseling programs materials ONLY.
- l. Facilities will provide Community Social Service Resources, mentors, and volunteers to augment the counseling and social services provided in the institution.
- C. The programs and services provided should be comparable for all segments of the offender population without regard to race, sex, national origin, religious preference. Counseling services and programs will be scheduled to address the assessed needs of each offender. GDC prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of services, programs, and activities. Individual and group counseling encompasses a delivery of services that may include personal/social adjustment, drug/alcohol counseling, vocational/educational guidance, family assistance, family planning, parental education, pre-release/reentry preparation, job development, and community services as well as other required counseling assistance. Individual and group counseling duties include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Holding offenders accountable for their behavior during individual/group counseling services;
 - 2. Providing offenders with opportunities, in both individual and group settings, to learn skills that will address their criminogenic needs;
 - 3. As resources allow, offering counseling and crisis intervention services and groups designed for the needs of special populations such as substance use, Special Needs offenders, sex offenders, HIV+, juveniles, counseling of pregnant offenders, the elderly, veterans, and special management cases.
 - 4. During individual counseling, the counselor should focus on the thinking and choices that brought the offender to incarceration and help them develop new ways of coping as well as goals.

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5. The programs that are offered by the Office of Reentry Services are:
 - a. Counseling & Substance Use Programs, which include Anger Management, Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT), Thinking for a Change (T4C), Problem Solving Skills in Action (PSSIA), Sex Offender Psycho-educational Program (SOPP), Matrix Early Recovery System (ERS), Matrix Relapse Prevention (RP), Breaking the Chains of Trauma, Moving On (Gender responsive-females).
 6. Each facility (except Metro RF, Transitional Centers, County Facilities, and Probation Detention Centers) will offer at a minimum the following programs:
 - a. Motivation for Change (M4C) or Matrix Early Recovery Skills;
 - b. Reentry Skills Building: All offenders are required to complete Reentry Skills Building in addition to completing all assessed program needs. Performance Incentive Credit (PIC) eligible offenders with no assessed program needs will obtain all six (6) PIC program points upon the successful completion of this program;
 - c. Family Violence if there are enough offenders with the identified need to start a class;
 - d. Thinking for A Change (T4C) if there are enough offenders with the assessed need to justify class;
 - e. Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT); and
 - f. Matrix Relapse Prevention, if there are enough offenders with the assessed need to justify class.
- D. Counselors are responsible for case management including documentation, coordination of services and making appropriate referrals to behavioral programs,

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educational programs, vocational programs, and details. Case management responsibilities shall be done in accordance with SOP 219.01, Case Management-Records Maintenance and may also include, but are not limited to:

1. Providing offenders appropriate supervision through intake admission and orientation, program coordination, referrals based on individualized case plans, completion of classification and reclassification, SCRIBE documentation, generating and/or completing work activity performance reports (WAPR), parole review summaries, facilitating groups, and assisting in the grievance resolution process.
2. Assisting offenders with individualized preparation for reentry and adjustment in the community upon release, including appropriate referrals for residence, employment, and aftercare arrangements, as well as assistance in obtaining a birth certificate, driver's license or state ID, and social security card.
3. Conducting Meaningful Contact with offenders:
 - a. In State, Private, and County facilities, counselors should conduct a meaningful contact at a minimum of once every ninety (90) days in accordance with SOP 220.03, Classification Committee.
 - b. Counselors are responsible for responding to offenders as needed or upon request of another staff member. Offenders may use Counselor Request Form from SOP 220.03, Classification Committee (Attachment 8).
 - c. Provisions are made for counseling and crisis intervention services. It is the responsibility of the counselor to continue to monitor their caseload, and each counselor is expected to exceed the quarterly minimum as needed.
 - d. In PDCs and TCs, counselors should conduct a meaningful contact at a minimum of once per month in accordance with SOP 220.03,

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Classification Committee. When possible, counselors should make themselves available to offenders regularly.

e. Examples of meaningful contacts:

- i. The program case-plan should focus on addressing the offender's NGA assessed needs, barriers to treatment, and the progress or lack of towards meeting goals of case-plan.
- ii. Offender behavior that should be addressed includes skipping class, failing to follow instructions, insubordination, refusing programs, etc.
- iii. Crisis situations, include death in the family, divorce, sickness of offender or someone in their family, etc.
- iv. The contact must be progressive. Sessions should build off each other (i.e. review what was discussed in the plan from last session.)
- v. Goals should be discussed with the offender and "LIFE" goals should meet the SMART Criteria—Specific, Measurable, Attainable (under their control), Realistic, and Time-sensitive.
- vi. Discussion of phone lists, the Admissions and Orientation (A & O) process, visitation list and other case management issues are not meaningful offender contacts.

4. The DAP meaningful contact should be entered in SCRIBE case notes within 48-hours from the time the offender was seen by his/her counselor.

E. An offender will be assigned to a permanent counselor during initial classification or at arrival to the institution. An initial DAP interview should be conducted with the offender within seven (7) calendar days of assignment to a permanent counselor and/or Admissions & Orientation (A&O) Counselor. If the offender is

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assigned to the A & O Counselor/Dorm, the A & O Counselor will be responsible for conducting the initial interview session. The A & O contact does not count as the initial interview. The A & O Counselor will have the same responsibilities as a permanent counselor while offender is assigned to their caseload. Once an offender has been reassigned from the A & O Counselor/Dorm to a permanent counselor, SOP 219.01, Case Management-Records Maintenance regarding transferring cases will be followed. The purpose of this initial interview will be to determine critical issues that need immediate attention, create a case plan for successful reentry, identify any American with Disabilities Act (ADA) needs, create goals, review the NGA assessed needs on the program case plan and set up a timeline for programming based on Target Completion Dates. Counselors will prioritize offenders as follows:

1. Offenders who are at the top of the list on the Activity Priority Report in Scribe.
 2. Offenders who are referred by Central Office; and
 3. Offenders with earliest Target Completion Dates.
- F. Each facility will provide programs that address reentry, criminal thinking (Cognitive), substance use, sex offenders, vocational, and academic education needs of the population. Group size should not exceed the guidelines established in the program curriculum. Groups without a group size guideline shall not exceed thirty (30) offenders per group, except for 12 Step groups, which have no limit as to number of attendees.
- G. Each psycho-educational group shall have a detailed lesson plan on site approved by the Office of Reentry Services used by Care and Treatment staff for all sessions taught.
- H. Counselors who are assigned specific groups to facilitate must be trained in the curriculum through GDC sponsored training (except Reentry Skills Building). All

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trained facilitators must also attend program boosters if offered in the programs they are trained in.

- I. Counseling programs will be offered to accommodate offenders' schedules, including those offenders who work or have program details during the day.
 1. Optional Groups/Classes: The following optional groups/classes should be offered at the facility's discretion depending on their resources and the needs of the offender: Active Parenting, Family Violence, Statewide Lifer's Program, Veteran's Program. Offenders are also provided religious services and community resources to assist in their transition to the community.
 2. The Office of Reentry Services Programs shall be the priority for offender placement in programs. Other programs may be provided, but they shall not conflict with the Office of Reentry Services interventions. Facility Counseling Resources (Budget) shall be used to facilitate ONLY programs that have been endorsed by the Office of Reentry Services.
 3. For specialized interventions where lesson plans are supplied, the facility shall not modify the information in the approved lesson plan without prior approval from the Office of Reentry Services. The MRT offender handbook SHALL NOT BE COPIED or duplicated in any manner. All offenders assigned to MRT are required to have their own handbook for them to complete the lessons in the book. Review the instructions manual that accompanies each program for specific instructions regarding delivery of the material.
- J. Facilities may provide additional programs/services as identified by the case plan. The additional programs/services may only be offered to offenders who have completed their required curriculum and the Office of Reentry Services programs. Written procedures will be developed that ensure access to counseling services/programs for those offenders not assigned to general population. These procedures will address the needs of offenders who are permanently or temporarily

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assigned to Tier I, Tier II, Protective Custody, Death Row, Special Management Unit, Medical Infirmaries, etc.

- K. Written procedure will be developed to provide counseling and case management coverage during the extended absence of a counselor, and this should be kept in the Care and Treatment Operational Manual.
- L. Offenders who do not have access to the services or programs required to meet the goals established in the case plan will be considered for transfer to a facility/site that can provide those services/programs.
- M. Counseling Services for Offenders in Administrative Segregation Units:
 - 1. Offenders shall continue to receive the services of a Counselor. Offenders may participate in such educational, vocational and/or rehabilitative programs as can be provided within the confines of the Administrative Segregation unit, consistent with the security needs of the unit.
 - 2. Counselors should meet with offenders in Administrative Segregation at least once per week. During this meeting the counselor will document the offender's behavior and notate any improvement or lack thereof. They will ask the offender if there is any assistance they need regarding their programs. They will ask the offender if they are having any suicidal thoughts.
 - 3. The O.U.T Cognitive Behavioral Program is to be delivered as designed by the developer and according to the Office of Reentry Services staff in Reentry & Cognitive Behavioral Programs Unit requirements, to maximize the effectiveness of the group. Facilitators must follow the established lesson plan found in the program manual received during the facilitator training. The O.U.T program will be delivered in three (3) phases:

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- a. Phase One: Programming will be delivered in cell. Program progression specified by program schedule. (Example: Week five an offender receives Lesson 1 and Lesson 2);
 - b. Phase Two: Programming will be delivered in a combination of in cell and therapeutic module setting; and
 - c. Phase Three: Programming will be delivered in security chairs every week. Progression through the phases will comply with SOP 209.08, Administrative Segregation - Tier II.
4. Offenders are required to complete the program once enrolled. Participation and completion of Phase I in-cell programming components is mandatory, not voluntary; and
 5. Phase II and Phase III group attendance is also mandatory and not voluntary.
 6. Program Delivery Standards: Offenders Under Transition (O.U.T):
 - a. Facilitators will follow the established curriculum detailed in the manual received at initial training;
 - b. Facilitators shall conduct an initial interview with all offenders prior to offender beginning self-study portion;
 - c. During the interview the facilitator will use motivational techniques to enhance the offenders' acceptance of the program. At this time, any program related forms should be reviewed and completed;
 - d. Only trained facilitators shall participate in the delivery of O.U.T.; and

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- e. Staff will utilize those materials designed for use in O.U.T, as determined by the Office of Reentry Services staff and maintain adequate supplies to deliver it.

V. **Attachments:** None.

VI. **Record Retention of Forms Relevant to this Policy:** None.