



The Damage of Solitary Confinement

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Problem Statement

Most people do not know and understand the damage that solitary confinement can do to prisoner's health.

Introduction

Solitary confinement is the act of locking an inmate in an isolated area, such as a cell, for long periods of time and there is little to no human contact (Rousseau, n.d). Rousseau continues to explain how usually inmates are placed into solitary confinement because of behavior, to protect inmates and staff, and more. However, the issue with solitary confinement is that it is being weaponized against inmates and making matters worse rather than it being utilized correctly (NYCLU, 2023). Inmates may be in solitary confinement for extensive periods of time. The only time they are let out is to shower and recreation time. In some cases inmates do not even shower everyday, water is cut off before inmate is finished showering, etc (Deng, 2024). According to an article published by Vera, solitary confinement also deteriorates and negatively effects inmates mental health and instead of rehabilitating them; it makes them worse (James & Vancouver, 2021). This poster will cover the data to support the issues I claim, what a solution(s) may be and how to work through and attain that solution(s).

Pathway to Solution

Because this issue is sort of broad and there are many other factors that play into this issue, there are many pathways to a solution or solutions. The very first step towards a solution is advocacy.

Advocacy: First spreading the word about what solitary confinement does to inmates is the first step in this pathway. The reason this is so important is because it'll spark a conversation and get people's attention even if they do not agree. The thought about someone caring for inmates is provocative whether people care about inmates or not. However, advocacy may not be enough, and that leads us to our next step.

Experiments: Experiments are always good way to conduct research and get people to actually pay attention. Because an experiment is so hands on and active, it is more likely for people to understand what is happening than just looking at data and statistics. What this experiment would look like is we would use subject (people) who will volunteer for the experiment. We would then take those people and put them in a prison like facility where everything is either similar or an exact replica of a prison. We will then place them in solitary confinement with all of the restrictions inmates usually have. We will then monitor their behavior, mental health, and any other factors. The idea behind the experiment is to put people in the shoes of inmates in order to understand the inhumane things they go through on a daily basis.

Materials: People, cameras, facility, utilities, food, experiment partners, clothing, etc.

Problems: There are many problems that may occur on the pathway to solution, more especially the experiment. Some of these problems may be lack of volunteers for the experiment, lack of resources, people not paying attention to the issue at hand. Lack of awareness, people not willing to understand the issue, prison policies and their lack of leniency, etc. The list of problems can go on. However, some problems are better solved once they occur.

The pathway to a solution is not an easy thing. When dealing with law and order, nothing comes easy. It is going to take time and effort in order to come to a solution. However, the biggest and most important step is advocacy, to spread awareness. People cannot have an opinion on something that isn't brought up in the first place, especially when the topic is about something like inmate health. The biggest goals is getting people to listen and understand that inmates are human too and there are better ways to properly rehabilitate them.

Solution

There isn't exactly a solution for this project. It's more so to give people a different perspective on how inmates are treated. However, some possible solutions can be better treatment of inmates or restriction on certain laws pertaining to inmates. So an example would be giving convicted felons the right to vote, extreme restrictions or abolishment of solitary confinement, abolishment of the death penalty, restrictions on the control that the government has on inmates, etc (United Nations of Human Rights, n.d). There are even some states such as CT and NJ that have restrictions on how long an inmate can be held in solitary confinement (Stroud, 2024). If we can consider inmate's health and actually helping them, it may help with lower recidivism rates and making society safer for everyone including inmates who are released (Wallace & Wang, 2020). There are many different solutions that can come out of our pathway, however the main point and the first step is to get people to understand how inhumane inmates get treated and how something like solitary confinement isn't rehabilitative and effective.

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