

## Article 4

# Enhancing Job Satisfaction among Staff and Reducing Disciplinary Violations among Persons in Custody: What Works in Rehabilitative Security



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### *Objective*

Prior research documents that job satisfaction reduces staff turnover intent, and among correctional staff, rehabilitation orientation can enhance job satisfaction. Western prison research indicates that rehabilitative security can improve correctional staff's rehabilitation orientation and job satisfaction, as well as persons' in custody (PICs) institutional behaviours. This study examines whether similar phenomenon can be observed in the local correctional context where rehabilitative security has been put into the trial implementation.

### *Introduction*

Rehabilitative security (RS) is a promising direction of prison culture development that has been proven to raise staff morale, lower staff sickness, improve staff retention and reduce violence in prison. RS postulates that security and rehabilitation are most effective when they work together. Physical and interpersonal security help people feel safe with trust in fairness and respect, and thus foster rules compliance, peace and harmony. With RS, greater legitimacy of correctional staff is attained through prosocial modelling. Staff members engage PICs in an empathetic relationship, which reinforces prosocial behaviours and attitudes.

There is research evidence showing that staff training on Five Minute Intervention (FMI) of RS, such as “building trust & confidence” and “moving from the negative to the positive”, has a causal impact on staff perceptions of own ability to support offenders' rehabilitation (Barkworth *et al.*, 2021). Of equal importance is



Procedural Justice (PJ), which is not about changing the outcomes of decisions, but about explaining how decisions are made to ensure that people feel being treated fairly. When staff feel fairly treated, they have less burnout, better life and greater job satisfaction. PICs who feel treated with PJ also tend to have lower levels of violence, better well-being and lower reoffending after release.

The present research enquires whether the introduction of the above-mentioned RS principles (FMI and PJ) to a correctional institution for young PICs can improve staff's work-related psychological qualities, as well as PICs' institutional behaviours.

### ***Trial Implementation of Rehabilitative Security (更生伴「理」行) in Sha Tsui Correctional Institution***

The Hong Kong Correctional Services Department put RS into its first trial implementation in Sha Tsui Correctional Institution (STCI) in 2024. The objective was to encourage positive behaviour and rehabilitative progress among young PICs through: 1) staff training on RS, and 2) setting up of a new incentive scheme of PIC management exhibiting PJ with rewards contingent on PICs' behaviours.



The logo of RS highlights a commitment to legal, rational and empathic approaches to managing PICs and supporting their rehabilitation journey.

#### **1) Staff Training on Rehabilitative Security**

From June to July 2024, four half-day training sessions were conducted for frontline staff by senior officers and clinical psychologists (CP) in STCI. The training consisted of the following elements:

- a. A middle management staff introduced the Do's (i.e. humanistic treatment) and Don'ts (i.e. different forms of aggression) in managing PICs, and fostered collaboration among staff across levels;



*A management staff of STCI introduces some listening skills in handling PICs*

- b. The management encouraged staff to be role models for young PICs, caring for and guiding them towards positive behavioural changes, and to work lawfully and ethically to uphold departmental values;
- c. A frontline staff shared about the successful management of two challenging cases and illustrated how early intervention, consistent encouragement, clear communication of limits and humane treatment can lead to improved and law-abiding behaviour in PICs;
- d. CPs highlighted the benefits of implementing RS, and then delivered psycho-education on FMI and PJ.



*Clinical Psychologist Candy HUI introduces basic rehabilitative skills under "five-minute intervention".*



2) “Virtue and Learning: Advancement Rewards Programme” (VLARP) (品德為本計劃)

Since May 2024, the management has implemented an incentive scheme, the VLARP, which encourages all PICs to actively participate in rehabilitation programmes. “Advancement points” and “reward notes” are linked up with residential length.

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## *Measurement of Outcomes*

### 1. Job-related Psychological Qualities of Staff in STCI

#### a. Psychological Measures

Three measures were used to track changes in work-related psychological qualities before and 6-7 months after the trial implementation of RS in STCI.

##### i) Rehabilitation Orientation (Tellier *et al.*, 2001)

It measures whether an individual supports rehabilitation attempts as the most effective way of crime control. This scale consists of 9 items such as “I rarely concern whether PICs would rehabilitate or not”.

##### ii) Job Satisfaction (Baxi & Atre, 2024)

It refers to an individual’s subjective evaluation of his/her work experience, encompassing feelings of contentment, fulfilment and happiness. There are 5 items about their liking or feelings towards the job, such as “I can find joy in my job”.

##### iii) Perceived Job Meaningfulness (Kubiak, 2022)

This scale consists of 4 items on perceived meaningfulness of the job, such as “My job is important to PICs’ life and well-being”.

Among the 36 pairs of completed tests collected from staff of STCI, 33 of them were found to be valid. Using a statistical package of computer software, namely SPSS, paired-sample t-tests were conducted to compare the pre-implementation (pre-I) and post-implementation (post-I) scores of the three psychological measures.

## 2. Institutional Behaviours of PICs in STCI

As an indicator for institutional behaviours, frequencies of disciplinary reports and major incidents in STCI over the second half of 2024 was compared with such over the first half of 2024 to investigate the effectiveness of RS implementation.

## ***Results***

### 1. Job-related Psychological Qualities of Staff in STCI

#### i) Rehabilitation Orientation

Results of the paired-sample t-test show that the average post-I score ( $M = 28.24$ ,  $SD = 3.36$ ) was greater than the average pre-I score ( $M = 26.42$ ,  $SD = 3.60$ ), and the difference was statistically significant ( $t = 2.39$ ,  $p = .02$ ), indicating that staff tend to become more supportive of rehabilitation attempts in STCI in general.

#### ii) Job Satisfaction

Results of the paired-sample t-test show that the average post-I score ( $M = 15.70$ ,  $SD = 3.07$ ) was greater than the average pre-I score ( $M = 14.42$ ,  $SD = 2.33$ ), and the difference was statistically significant ( $t = 2.22$ ,  $p = .03$ ), representing an improvement in overall job satisfaction among staff.

#### iii) Perceived Job Meaningfulness

Results of the paired-sample t-test show that the average post-I score ( $M = 12.24$ ,  $SD = 1.77$ ) was also greater than pre-I score ( $M = 11.12$ ,  $SD = 1.67$ ), and the difference was also statistically significant ( $t = 2.72$ ,  $p = .01$ ), indicating that staff generally perceive their jobs as more meaningful than before.





Figure 1. Mean scores of rehabilitation orientation before and after the sessions



Figure 2. Mean scores of job satisfaction before and after the sessions



Figure 3. Mean scores of perceived meaningfulness before and after the sessions

## 2. Institutional Behaviours of PICs in STCI

- a. The number of disciplinary reports decreased from 22 to 15. No reports were recorded in July and September 2024, in contrast to the first half of the year when cases were reported every month;
- b. Violent infractions under PR61(f) decreased from 8 to 4 cases;
- c. No serious or major incidents were reported in the second half of 2024.



This graphic is for illustrative purposes only.

## *Summary and conclusion*

RS was put into trial implementation in STCI in the second half of 2024. Training on RS concepts and skills was provided to frontline staff. An incentive scheme was launched to encourage PICs to actively participate in rehabilitation programmes. A comparison of scores in psychological measures and indicators of PICs' institutional behaviours show that staff have shown improvement in rehabilitation orientation, job satisfaction, and perceived job meaningfulness, whereas PICs have shown improvement in overall discipline. The results suggest that the introduction of RS in prison may produce positive changes among both staff and PICs.

## *Insights*

### **1. Introduction of Rehabilitative Security Concept**

- Rehabilitative security, an emerging prison management concept incorporating respect and empathy from authority is believed to be beneficial not only to staff morale but also to prisoner rehabilitation.

### **2. Benefits of Rehabilitative Security to Staff**

- After rehabilitative security has been implemented for half a year, psychological measures indicated that staff attitudes towards prisoner rehabilitation have become more affirmative, while their job satisfaction and perceived job meaningfulness have been enhanced.

### **3. Benefits of Rehabilitative Security to Institutional Behaviours**

- Despite the fact that rehabilitative security cultivates more humane and non-aggressive treatment on PICs, the “softer approach” adopted has improved institutional order and discipline, as reflected by a reduction in disciplinary reports, violent infractions and major incidents.



## *References*

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