



Cornell University  
School of Industrial and Labor Relations  
Employment and Disability Institute

Community and Workforce Development

# Inmate to Citizen

**Tangible Results and Outcomes to Date**

Using Person-Centered Practices  
to Facilitate the Successful Re-entry  
of Inmates with Special Needs into  
Community Membership Roles

Carol Blessing  
Thomas Golden  
Antonio Ruiz-Quintanilla



## MISSION AND VALUES

Cornell University is a learning community that seeks to serve society by educating the leaders of tomorrow and extending the frontiers of knowledge.

In keeping with the founding vision of Ezra Cornell, our community fosters personal discovery and growth, nurtures scholarship and creativity across a broad range of common knowledge, and engages men and women from every segment of society in this quest. We pursue understanding beyond the limitations of existing knowledge, ideology, and disciplinary structure. We affirm the value, to individuals and society, of the cultivation and enrichment of the human mind and spirit.

Our faculty, students and staff strive toward these objectives in a context of freedom with responsibility. We foster initiative, integrity, and excellence, in an environment of collegiality, civility and responsible stewardship. As the Land Grant University for the State of New York, we apply the results of our endeavors in service to the community, the state, the nation and the world.

The Employment and Disability Institute, in the School of Industrial and Labor Relations, holds strongly to these values. Our mission is to provide a learning environment which

cultivates inclusive and accessible communities for individuals with disabilities. We seek to provide resources and information to individuals attempting to manage diversity in the workplace, community, and American life. We are committed to ensuring that Americans with disabilities, including youth, are provided with the opportunities and supports needed to attain their goals in settings, environments, cultures and communities of their own choosing — based on their respective interests, preferences, and capacities.

**“I would found an institution where any person can find instruction in any study.”**

*— Ezra Cornell*

## HALLMARKS FOR PERSON-CENTERED PRACTICES

Originally developed by the New York State Office of Mental Retardation, the hallmarks of person-centered practices have been adapted for the DOC Project Community to serve as a point of reference from which one might assess the degree to which the services that are being provided are in alignment with the underlying values of person-centered practices.

Hallmark #1: Initial assessments are comprehensive and lead to effective placement.

Hallmark #2: Positive profiles are developed and are balanced with specific support needs.

Hallmark #3: Care, custody and control compliment the development of flexible program options.

Hallmark #4: Inmates make informed choices about program options

Hallmark #5: An array of meaningful choices is available to the SNU inmate, within and beyond the SNU

Hallmark #6: Skill building, developing self-respect and enhancing personal dignity is the purpose of our work

Hallmark #7: Creative and flexible use of resources is supported by facility and Central Office administration

Hallmark #8: Project teams are dedicated to collaborative and on-going commitment to the person

Hallmark #9: The inmate is satisfied with his program activities, supports and transition planning services

Hallmark #10: Project members recognize the importance of developing a positive profile which includes the life context, social history, psychological and physical considerations of the individual

### Table of Contents:

Mission & Values.....	1
Hallmarks for Person-Centered Practices.....	2
Summary of Training Activities and Technical Supports Provided to date.....	3
Summary of Research Efforts Conducted To date.....	6
Preliminary Quantitative Training Measures of Success to Date.....	7
Qualitative and Anecdotal Measures of Success to Date.....	13
Looking Ahead.....	15

## SUMMARY OF TRAINING ACTIVITIES AND TECHNICAL SUPPORTS PROVIDED TO DATE

To date Cornell has engaged the three Special Needs Units (SNU) in a variety of project related training and technical assistance activities including:

1. Initial Site Visits
2. Statewide Project Mapping
3. Local Project Roll Out

### Initial Site Visits

**Summer-Fall 2003** - Cornell project staff, representatives of the Department of Corrections, the Division of Parole and the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council toured each SNU site and spoke with SNU staff in each facility. The project primer, *Integrating Person-Centered Planning Practices into Program Development, Rehabilitation and Release Planning for Inmates with Developmental Disabilities*, was provided in advance of each visit so that staff would be familiar with the project concept and be prepared to ask questions and/or identify specific issues or concerns.

### Statewide Project Mapping Session


**November 2003** - 45 people convened in Albany, NY to develop a shared system vision of services and supports for inmates with special needs. Attendees included representatives from within and across the NYS Department of Corrections

and the NYS Division of Parole as well as faculty and staff associated with the project from the Cornell University's Employment and Disability Institute and the NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council.

A planning method called PATH was used to chart the shared visioning process. The result of the statewide PATH lead to customizing the global vision with each distinct SNU unit at the designated facilities, (Sullivan CF; Arthur Kill CF; Wende CF), to develop a plan for implementation within each of the facilities.

Five general valued objectives for the project surfaced at the statewide meeting. The objectives were:

1. Develop a seamless system of **continuity** throughout the life of the sentence from reception to discharge planning;
2. Provide **individualized planning and supports** to inmates via program design and implementation during incarceration;
3. Enhance **skill development** with inmates and staff based on identified individualized goals, interests and needs;
4. Promote and sustain a focus on **community-building** within and beyond the SNU and;
5. Build and foster **relationships** between and among staff; colleagues; family members; community members, etc.

 Cornell University

**Training & Technical Assistance**

**2003**


- Site Visits to Sullivan, Arthur Kill and Wende Correctional Facilities to explore interest and project potential with SNU staff
- Initial Mapping Session – State-wide forum to develop shared vision

 Cornell University

**Training & Technical Assistance**

**Statewide Shared Vision-Key Objectives:**

- Continuity
- Individualized planning and supports
- Skill development
- Community-building
- Relationship building

 Cornell University

**Training & Technical Assistance**

**2004 - Sullivan**

- Customize PATH
- Core Training Series completed
- Research instruments developed and implemented
- Over 50+ hours Technical support provided to date (5/05)

## **Project Roll - Out**

**May - June 2004** - Customized the Map at Sullivan Correctional Facility

**July 2004** – Sullivan Core Training I - Focus on the Foundations of Person-Centered Practices

**October 2004** – Sullivan Core Training II - Focus on the Development of Positive Profiles to Plan for Action

On-Site Technical Assistance/Support

10/13/04  
10/15/04  
10/20/04  
10/30/04  
12/15/04  
2/17/05  
3/14/05  
3/15/05  
4/26/05  
4/28/04

**October 2004** – Sullivan Core Training III - Focus on Networking the Planning Process to Community Resources and Potential Partners

**Fall 2004** – Presentation of the research design at the conference for International Classifications organized by the World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Center for North America in Nova Scotia, Canada

**March 2005** Customized the Map at Arthur Kill

**March 2005** – Arthur Kill Core I Training


**April 2005** – Arthur Kill Core II Training

**May 2005** – Arthur Kill Core III Training

## **Systems Impact**

As a result of efforts provided to date systems impact has occurred in several areas.


- Person-centered language appears in the SNU Policy and Procedure Manual
- Hallmarks for person-centered work is an addendum to the SNU Policy and Procedure Manual
- 10/25/04 - Training Intervention in Wende: *Trends in Serving and Supporting People with Disabilities* 27 corrections and civilian staff of the facility. Annual staff development day. Conducted initial project data collection.
- 10/27/04 - Criminal Justice Sub-Committee meeting held with representatives from a myriad of community provider agencies to discuss implementing project within local communities.
- Initial implementation and observation of person-centered approach during intake assessment team meeting process at Sullivan CF



**Training & Technical Assistance**

2005 – Arthur Kill


- Customize PATH
- Core Training Series completed
- Research instruments implemented
- Over 15+ hours Technical support provided to day (5/05)



**Training & Technical Assistance**

**Systems Impact**

- Person-Centered language in policy/procedure manual for SNU
- Hallmarks of PCP for SNU added in addendum of manual
- Intake assessment begins to integrate pcp at Sullivan and Arthur Kill



**Training & Technical Assistance**

**Systems Impact**

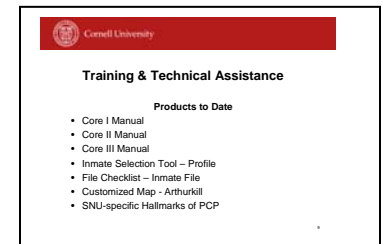
- Criminal Justice Subcommittee Community meeting held
- Informational session on person-centered practices held with SNU inmates at Arthur Kill; sample workbook reviewed

- Initial implementation and observation of person-centered approach during intake process at Arthur Kill CF
- Informational session with inmates of SNU unit regarding person-centered practices at Arthur Kill CF

### **Products to Date**

The following project-related products have been developed to date:

- Project Primer: *Integrating Person-Centered Planning Practices into Program Development, Rehabilitation and Release Planning for Inmates with Developmental Disabilities*
- Data Collection Instrument - Survey
- Statewide Map (PATH)
- Customized Map - Sullivan
- Core I manual
- Core II manual
- Core III manual
- Inmate Selection Tool – Profile
- File Checklist – Inmate File
- Customized Map - Arthur Kill



## SUMMARY OF RESEARCH EFFORTS CONDUCTED TO DATE

Cornell has designed and implemented a rigorous scientific methodology to measure project impact.

The following instruments have been developed, tested and finalized for the study:

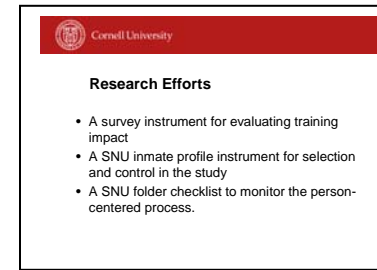
- A survey instrument for evaluating training impact
- A SNU inmate profile instrument for selection and control in the study
- A SNU folder checklist to monitor the person-centered process.

**Survey** baseline data have been collected for staff in all three SNU. To date pre- and post training survey data are available for the SNU where the core trainings have been completed. Preliminary analysis results are presented later in this report.

The **Inmate Profile Instrument** was tested and revised by the SNU at Sullivan Correctional. Data was collected using the final version.

The **SNU Folder Checklist** was rated by experts and revised, and is now ready for implementation.

We continue to collaborate with the New York Department of Corrections to explore ways to integrate information from the corrections data system into research and evaluation process.



# PRELIMINARY QUANTITATIVE MEASURES OF TRAINING SUCCESS TO DATE

The Survey Instrument to evaluate the impact of training is comprised of the following scales:

1. Skills to Facilitate SNU to Community Transition Scale
2. Activity Limitations and Participation Restriction Scale
3. SNU Climate Scale
4. Basic Demographic Information.

We use the SNU Service Climate Questionnaire section of the instrument to assess the impact of training on attitudes, values and performance. A successful training is indicated by an increased presence of person-centered views, principles, and ideals among the training participants following actual training.

The following tables on pages 11 and 12 show which views, principles, and ideals where impacted most by the training interventions to date among all participants.

## Training Impact on Person-Centered Views, Principles and Ideals

Looking at Table One, three areas of impact can be distinguished:


### **Minor positive changes occurred in importance given to:**

- SNU inmates need to feel good (13)
- SNU inmates need to share feelings (16)

- Early identification and integration of community providers (17)
- Understanding the SNU inmates condition and need (6) *(For this item it is important to realize that the pre-training values were already high, thus there remained no room for improvement. This item received the highest pre-test value of all items and stabilized on that plateau)*


### **Moderate positive impact was observed in the importance attributed to:**

- Handling SNU inmates as a person (11)
- Helping SNU inmates to develop trust (8)
- Helping SNU inmates to feel accepted (5)
- Answering SNU inmates questions (9)
- Understanding how SNU inmates see things (15)
- Caring about SNU inmates as a person (12)
- Encouraging SNU inmates to ask questions (7)
- Conveying confidence in SNU inmates (4)
- Encouraging SNU inmates to be open with staff (3)
- Helping SNU inmates to demonstrate their abilities (19)



**Preliminary Quantitative Measures of Training Success to Date**


- Skills to Facilitate SNU to Community Transition Scale
- Activity Limitations and Participation Restriction Scale
- SNU Climate Scale
- Basic Demographic Information.



**Preliminary Quantitative Measures of Training Success to Date**

Minor positive changes occurred in importance given to:


- SNU inmates need to feel good (13)
- SNU inmates need to share feelings (16)
- Early identification and integration of community providers (17)
- Understanding the SNU inmates condition and need (6)



**Preliminary Quantitative Measures of Training Success to Date**

Moderate positive impact was observed in the importance attributed to:

- Handling SNU inmates as a person (11)
- Helping SNU inmates to develop trust (8)
- Helping SNU inmates to feel accepted (5)
- Answering SNU inmates questions (9)
- Understanding how SNU inmates see things (15)



**Preliminary Quantitative Measures of Training Success to Date**

Moderate positive impact was observed in the importance attributed to:

- Caring about SNU inmates as a person (12)
- Encouraging SNU inmates to ask questions (7)
- Conveying confidence in SNU inmates (4)
- Encouraging SNU inmates to be open with staff (3)
- Helping SNU inmates to demonstrate their abilities (19)

**Major positive impact was observed related to the importance attributed to:**

- Integration at parole staff (18)
- Providing SNU inmates with choice and options (1)
- Listening to how SNU inmates like to do things (10)
- Helping SNU inmates to feel understood (2)
- Trying innovative approaches for rehabilitation (14)

In summary, Figure 1 shows that educational staff started with views more favorable to the person-centered approach; when compared to corrections officers in Figure 2. Both groups clearly benefited from the training by changing their views in the desired direction.

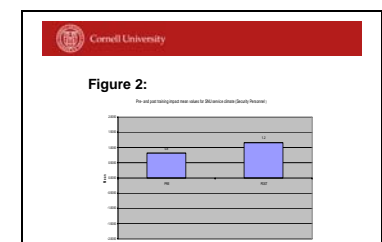
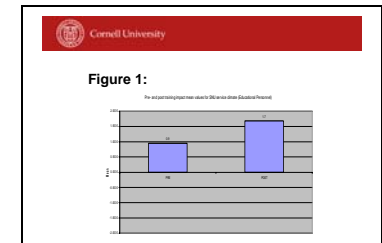
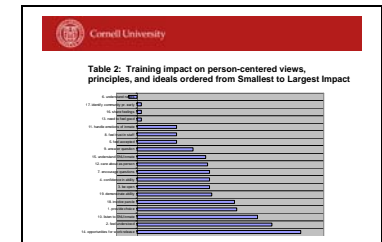
Additional analysis of the other scales is currently in progress.

**Preliminary Quantitative Measures of Training Success to Date**

- Major positive impact was observed related to the importance attributed to:
  - Integration at parole staff (18)
  - Providing SNU inmates with choice and options (1)
  - Listening to how SNU inmates like to do things (10)
  - Helping SNU inmates to feel understood (2)
  - Trying innovative approaches for rehabilitation (14)

**Table 1: Mean Single Pre and Post Training Item Comparison for SNU Service Climate (all Participants from one SNU) ordered from smallest to largest training impact**

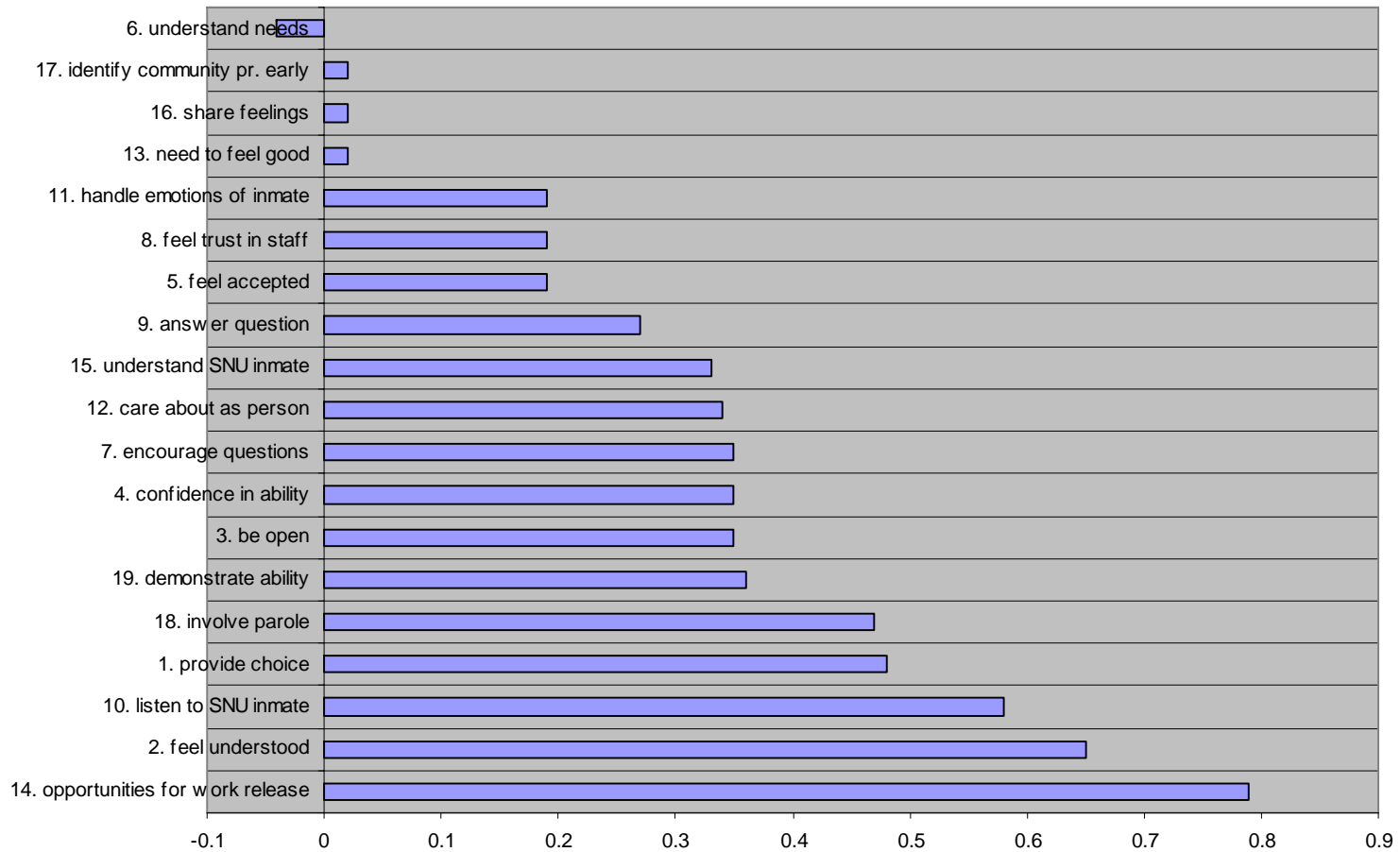
Item	Pre	Post	Change
1.1.1	1.5	1.8	0.3
1.1.2	1.5	1.8	0.3
1.1.3	1.5	1.8	0.3
1.1.4	1.5	1.8	0.3
1.1.5	1.5	1.8	0.3
1.1.6	1.5	1.8	0.3
1.1.7	1.5	1.8	0.3
1.1.8	1.5	1.8	0.3
1.1.9	1.5	1.8	0.3
1.1.10	1.5	1.8	0.3
1.1.11	1.5	1.8	0.3
1.1.12	1.5	1.8	0.3
1.1.13	1.5	1.8	0.3
1.1.14	1.5	1.8	0.3
1.1.15	1.5	1.8	0.3
1.1.16	1.5	1.8	0.3
1.1.17	1.5	1.8	0.3
1.1.18	1.5	1.8	0.3
1.1.19	1.5	1.8	0.3
1.1.20	1.5	1.8	0.3



**Table 1: Mean Single Pre and Post Training Item Comparison for SNU Service Climate (all Participants from one SNU) ordered from smallest to largest training impact**

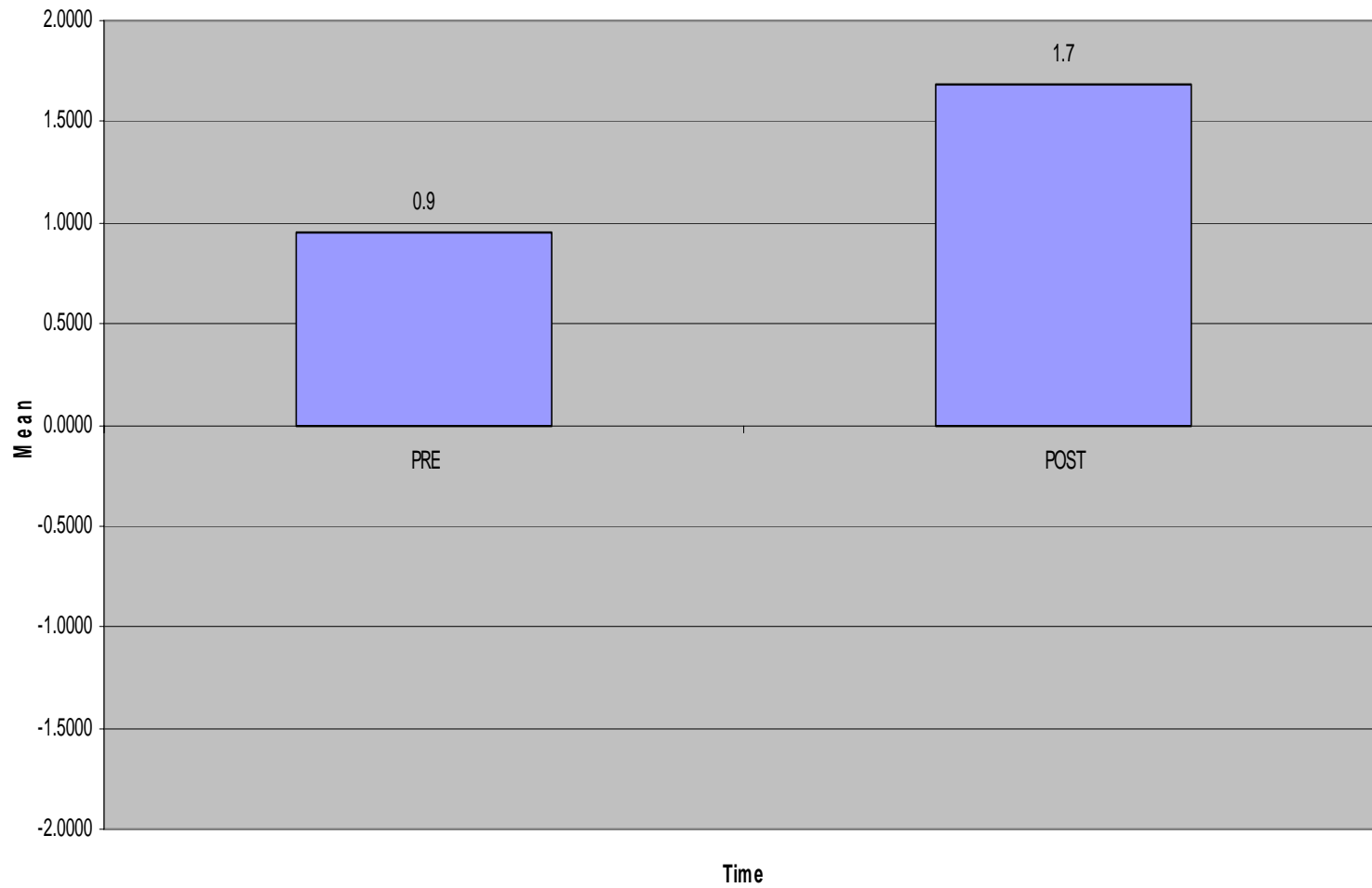
PRE	POST	Mean difference	FULL ITEM TEXT
1.09	1.35	0.26	SNU Service Climate Questionnaire Scale Total
0.46	1.25	0.79	SNU inmates should have opportunities for work release and other innovative approaches to rehabilitation treatment.
0.85	1.50	0.65	SNU inmates should feel understood by service staff and community providers.
0.92	1.50	0.58	It is important to listen to how SNU inmates would like to do things.
0.85	1.33	0.48	It is important to provide the SNU inmate with choices and options.
0.86	1.33	0.47	Parole staff should be integrally involved into all level of treatment and release planning for each SNU inmate
1.14	1.50	0.36	SNU inmates need the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and functional capacity under post-release conditions prior to release.
1.23	1.58	0.35	SNU inmates should feel able to be open with the service staff at meetings
1.15	1.50	0.35	It is important to convey confidence in a SNU inmate's ability to make changes
1.15	1.50	0.35	It is important to encourage SNU inmates to ask questions.
1.08	1.42	0.34	It is important to care about the SNU inmate as a person.
0.85	1.18	0.33	It is important to understand how SNU inmates see things before introducing them to new ways of doing things.
1.23	1.50	0.27	It is important to try to answer each SNU inmates questions fully and carefully
1.23	1.42	0.19	SNU inmates should feel accepted by their service staff and community providers
1.23	1.42	0.19	SNU inmates should feel trust in their service staff and community providers
1.31	1.50	0.19	It is important to handle each SNU inmate as a person.
1.15	1.17	0.02	SNU inmates need to feel good about the way service staff and community providers talk with them.
1.23	1.25	0.02	SNU inmates need to feel able to share their feelings with the service staff
1.23	1.25	0.02	It is important to identify community providers early and integrate them into all aspects of service delivery planning.
1.54	1.50	-0.04	Service staff and community providers should make sure that they really understand the SNU inmate's condition and what they need.

**Table 2: Training impact on person-centered views, principles, and ideals ordered from Smallest to Largest Impact**



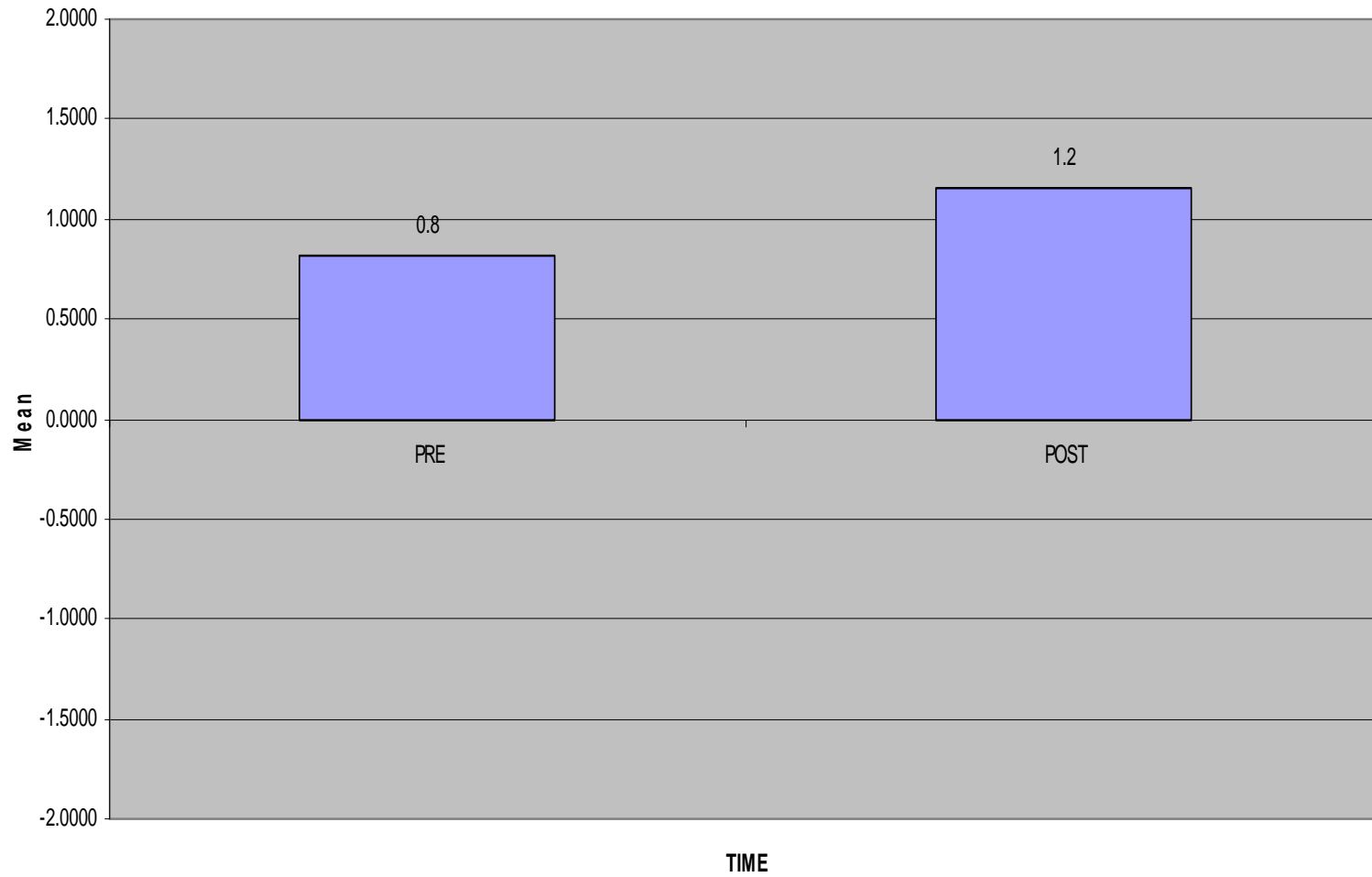
**Figure 1:**

Pre- and post training impact mean values for SNU service climate (Educational Personnel)



**Figure 2:**

Pre- and post training impact mean values for SNU service climate (Security Personnel )



## QUALITATIVE AND ANECDOTAL MEASURES OF SUCCESS TO DATE

Since the inception of the project by the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council in partnership with the Department of Corrections and Division of Parole, Cornell's Employment and Disability Institute has not only been quantitatively tracking systems and attitudinal changes but also documenting anecdotal experiences and observations of change at the direct line and administrative levels within Special Needs Units. Person-centered planning philosophy on some level has been embraced by each of the SNU represented in this project community. From the central administration of the corrections facilities down to individual inmate's cells, stories of change have been observed.

**The Case of the New Inmate.** A few months following completion of the core training curriculum, faculty from Cornell were provided an opportunity to actually engage and participate in a team intake assessment within one of the SNU for an inmate who had been transferred from one of the other SNU. The inmate was brought down from his cell where he was serving out a 90-day key lock. Formalities of introduction out of the way, the team immediately began to engage in an unscripted interview. The interview began with basic information pertaining to the individual's crime but moved quickly into a positive profiling process using

the core elements of the "Framework for Planning" that were taught as an essential person-centered planning tool. The team questioned the inmate regarding his education and work background but also explored his interests and preferences, support network outside the prison system, and values and ideals. While not a formal "mapped" planning, it incorporated vital and critical elements that could provide the base for a probable and possible future for this young man upon his release from prison.

**The Case of the Superintendent.** From the project's inception, administration within the individual prison systems have been exceptionally supportive. Not only have Superintendents asked for intermittent and regular reporting of the project's progress but in many cases have also asked for Cornell faculty to "stop by the office" whenever they are onsite for informal updates and catch-up. Superintendents and their administration have not stopped there though. In both core trainings conducted to date, both Superintendents and other administrators have stopped by the training sessions to discuss their support for the project and intervened when obstacles had been identified by participants. One Superintendent in fact asked the Cornell trainers to keep a list of obstacles, challenges and barriers that participants would like addressed and actually facilitated a question

and answer period with the training participants to help strategize solutions and possible remedies.

**The Case of the Teacher.** The civilian team that provide educational and clinical support to inmates within the SNU are exceptional. On one occasion a Cornell faculty member had the opportunity to car pool on a trip with one of the SNU teachers. A good portion of the four hour trip was spent discussing the Teacher's aspirations and goals for their program and accomplishments with individual inmates. The Teacher spoke of their support for the demonstration project but further went on to give examples of how they had seen changes in other personnel, their interactions with inmates as well as with one another. Realistically they also shared obstacles they saw to the ongoing success of the program which further highlighted potential interventions that might be needed.

**The Case of the "Spades Club".** On one of the many onsite interventions within a SNU, Cornell faculty had an opportunity to actually visit the block on a Saturday to observe the activities that went on. Immediately a small group of inmates asked one of the Cornell team to join in on a game of Spades. The ensuing game went on for over an hour during which the inmates spoke of their excitement with the project and their anticipation for planning to take place with them. Specifically, they referenced that they had heard that the

Cornell team had actually conducted a "planning session" with one of the IPAs. They actually had a chance to see the map that was completed and went on to convey that they knew if someone would begin "drawing" with them in mind that they knew it would help them "not have to come back to this place".

**The Case of the IPA.** The Cornell team actually did a test planning case with one of the IPAs from a SNU to demonstrate for the SNU team what an actually mapping process might look and feel like. The inmate chosen was selected based on his potential for release as well as outside support network. During the planning session he became passionate about his potential and abilities to be successful upon release. Further, the team engaged in the planning focused on creating a possible and probable future for the individual with a heavy focus on the extensive individual capacities and attributes he had to draw upon. The session was emotionally moving with the inmate moved to tears on a couple of occasions. The experience itself proved an extremely positive experience for not only demonstrating the process but also a strong testimonial to its value--which spread throughout the cell block within days.

## LOOKING AHEAD

### **Community Support for Sullivan Parolees**

A strong emphasis on building and sustaining community networks for and with inmates who are engaged in discharge and release planning will be the focus for 2005. Developing support and service connections in the mainstream of the local community to which the inmate will be released will be the primary objective for this phase of the project at the Sullivan CF.

On site support will continue at Sullivan Correctional Facility. The emphasis for intervention will be to continue to work with facility staff to identify potential for deepening the facilities ability to provide customized programs and supports to inmates within the special needs units. It is expected that much of what has been learned and applied regarding person-centered approaches will begin to be generalized to the SNU inmates who are not specifically targeted for inclusion in this project.

### **Transition Planning for Arthur Kill Parolees**

Developing strong plans for transition for inmates who are getting ready for release will be the focus of the work at Arthur Kill. Inmates in the project community will be readying and steadying themselves for re-entry into the community. Active

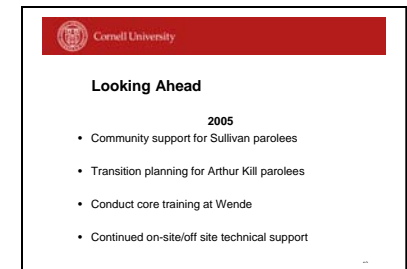
involvement, whenever possible, of community service providers as well as natural and paid support while the individual is still incarcerated will be the focus for the core of the 2005 work.

On-site support will continue in the areas of facilitating planning processes and customizing program services and supports with project-selected inmates and with the general SNU population when deemed appropriate.

### **Conduct Core Training at Wende**

Customizing the PATH process to tailor goals and objectives for implementing the project at Wende will set the context for the delivery of the Core Training Series.

The better part of the first half of the year will be spent delivering the training and providing on and off-site support for applying the concepts embedded within the training. Facility staff will learn and engage in facilitating person-centered plans and translating the plans into program service/support plans and discharge/release plans.



### **Research Review for Project Adjustments**

2005 shows promise in providing the project community with a solid body of knowledge born from the research conducted thus far. Review of research results against the project goals (shared project vision) will serve as the basis if necessary for adjusting technical support and identified additional staff development/training needs to better meet project goals and objectives. The research will further the ability of the project community to create a template for potential project replication to share with other interested providers, as well as to assist the project community in charting its course into the final phases of the project.

### **Develop and Disseminate Project Findings to Date at Local and National Forums**

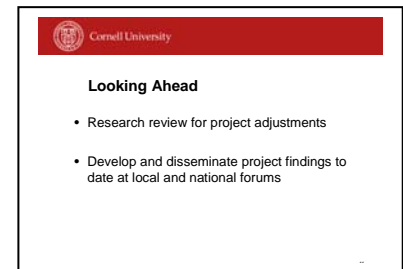
Early project results will be collected, reviewed and summarized against the state-wide goals and objectives for this project. The summaries will be written to reflect the quantifiable data produced thus far through project activities and interventions and will include qualitative measures gleaned from testimonials and other stories and examples from the field.

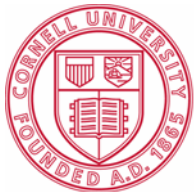
Project staff from Cornell University will be invited to speak about the project activities at local and national forums to gain project exposure to begin to establish a pathway for dissemination of the project results at the conclusion of the life of the project.

Currently, Cornell is on the agenda to speak about the project at the Association for Persons in Support Employment, (APSE) national conference in Mobile, Alabama during the summer of 2005.

### **Additional**

- Continued on-site/off site technical support based on specific request and unique needs of each facility.
- Cornell staff will begin examining the potential of working with the U.S. Department of Labor, the National Institute for Justice, etc., to leverage additional funds to support project enhancement and community provided involvement.
- Development of an inmate workbook to facilitate planning and preparation for mapping.





**Cornell University**  
ILR School  
Employment and Disability Institute

Thomas Golden  
Principal Investigator  
201 ILR Extension Building  
Ithaca, NY 14853

607-255-2731  
607-255-2763 (fax)  
607-255-2891 (TTY)

E-mail: [tpg3@cornell.edu](mailto:tpg3@cornell.edu)  
<http://www.edi.cornell.edu>

Carol Blessing  
Project Director  
11 Buchanan Way  
Averill Park, NY 12018

518-283-4408  
607-255-2763  
607-255-2891 (TTY)

E-mail: [cjb39@cornell.edu](mailto:cjb39@cornell.edu)  
<http://www.edi.cornell.edu>

NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council  
155 Washington Avenue  
Second Floor  
Albany, New York 12210

**Phone / FAX:**  
TDD/TTY: 1-800-395-3372  
Voice: 518-486-7505  
FAX: 518-402-3505

**Email:** [ddpc@ddpc.state.ny.us](mailto:ddpc@ddpc.state.ny.us)