

Amend: Foundational Principles

Amend at the University of California, San Francisco is a public health program that works with select U.S. prisons to improve the safety, health, and well-being of incarcerated individuals and correctional staff. Amend is led by a physician and staffed by public health and public policy experts, lawyers, researchers, formerly incarcerated people, and former correctional professionals who collectively have many decades of experience working in partnership with prisons in the U.S. and around the world.

Currently, Amend works with state prisons in California, Oregon, Washington, and North Dakota to foster national leaders who are transforming U.S. corrections for the better by developing new, healthier, and more effective approaches to achieving their public safety mission.

Amend's primary partner for developing and implementing its program is the Norwegian Correctional Service, widely recognized as among the world's best performing correctional systems with the least violence and lowest recidivism. Beyond Norway, Amend draws on international best practices in corrections, occupational health, and public health.

Wherever we work, we train, support, and invest in correctional leaders and professionals – and incarcerated individuals - who are interested in our core concepts and see an opportunity to drive change that betters the health and well-being of everyone in their system.

Core Concepts

Dynamic Security

Static security is the walls, doors, uniforms, and other physical elements that make a prison a prison. *Organizational security* is the routines, shift plans, and everyday procedures that bring consistency and predictability to a prison. *Dynamic security* is the frequent, effective, and respectful communication between correctional staff and prison residents that characterize the safest prisons. Staff who practice dynamic security know the incarcerated individuals they are responsible for and are invested in their success. Dynamic security is about finding better ways to motivate incarcerated individuals - and hold them accountable when needed. It never means violating common sense professional boundaries.

Contact Officer

A *Contact Officer* is a correctional officer or staff person who is assigned to a small number of incarcerated individuals to support their success and prevent problems before they arise. The Contact Officer might connect incarcerated individuals to resources and opportunities, support them as a coach, mentor, and role model, or create events or small projects that make their

housing unit a better place to work and live. The Contact Officer has more tools to hold incarcerated individuals' accountable because they are empowered to make important decisions in their unit and can create meaningful opportunities for the population they're working with. The Contact Officer model is flexible and adaptable; the specific role of a Contact Officer should differ from unit to unit and prisons to prison based on participating staff's strengths, opportunities, and goals.

Normalization

Normalization means that life inside prison should resemble life outside of prison as much as possible. A more normal environment and daily life better prepares people for reentry and helps make sure that the prison environment is not harmful to the people who work there. Under this principle, each incarcerated person serves their sentence at the lowest possible security level and everyone works to make prison as healthy and supportive as it can be. Normalization can cover anything from improvements to the living and working environment to creating innovative programs in which incarcerated individuals can practice being a positive, responsible member of their community.

Progression

Progression means that every incarcerated individual knows what they need to do to be successful where they are – and has opportunities to earn trust (i.e. more privileges or lower security housing) alongside increasing responsibility (employment, education, programming, mentorship, or other duties connected to the success of the prison community) while they're incarcerated. With progression, all staff have opportunities to work with motivated incarcerated individuals who want to make the most of their time inside.

Resource / Activity Team

Research shows that long-term isolation is harmful and ineffective – it doesn't support behavior change – and that working in segregation units takes a unique toll on staff's physical and mental health. The Resource / Activity Team approach empowers uniformed staff to work safely and effectively with the highest-risk, highest-need incarcerated individuals to dramatically increase time-out-of-cell and ultimately support them to live safely and successfully without isolation. A Resource Team is based in a restrictive housing unit; an Activity Team is mobile, working throughout the prison, and focuses on people who are self-isolating and other high-risk individuals who need extra support to stay on track and out of restrictive housing. Resource / Activity Team members receive extensive additional training, and dedicated project time, to work effectively with the most complex individuals.