

MOVEMENT BEHIND BARS: RECREATIONAL GAMES FOR HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

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Abstract

The criminal justice system faces challenges in promoting the physical and mental health of detainees. To promote a healthy lifestyle in correctional facilities, recreational games like basketball, soccer, volleyball, and chess can be included. These games offer opportunities for physical exercise, social connection, and personal development. Academic research, reports from correctional institutions, publications from Elsevier, Sage journals, BMC, PubMed, and several other pertinent journals were used to acquire the material. It was five months long, from February to June 2023, and it had material from 2015 to 2023. Found that these activities can have a significant positive impact on offenders' well-being. Sports help with stress management, anger control, and dispute resolution, while cooperative games strengthen social ties, improve communication, and provide a sense of purpose and belonging. Recreational games also provide opportunities for personal development, such as collaboration, discipline, perseverance, and goal-setting, which can lead to better post-release outcomes and a successful transition back into society. However, there are potential roadblocks and restrictions, such as security concerns, budget limits, and the need for qualified personnel. Policymakers and correctional facility managers should focus on providing sufficient resources and cooperative relationships with neighborhood groups to facilitate these changes.

Keywords: Behind Bars, Games, Healthy Lifestyle, Movement, Recreational, Sports

INTRODUCTION

People are gradually making sports a part of their everyday lives as they frequently engage in them to reestablish a healthy lifestyle. These acts also apply to recreational facilities or the bars that individual prisoners are kept behind. Urban infrastructure is incomplete without recreational amenities, which give citizens a place to relax, fit in, and give back to the neighborhood. Rather than being only for fun, these activities are helpful tools for healing and reintegration (Werthmann, 2021; Anguelovski et al., 2020; Bahrini et al., 2017).

Correctional institutions are suitable for keeping ongoing control and observation over people's time and location, (Norman, 2017). Recreational activities offer a way of emancipation and an environment for establishing meaningful interactions for people who are confined and frequently experience issues related to confinement. Inmates who participate in these activities can get a variety of advantages, including as better mental health, greater social skills, higher physical fitness, and the development of critical thinking and decision-making skills (Gallant et al., 2015; Camplain et al., 2022).

Recreational activities encourage positive inmate conduct, lower stress levels, and create a supportive environment in correctional facilities. According to Jones and Smith (2018) and Lee et al., (2021) these programs are created to provide recreational activities that support the general health and effective rehabilitation of prisoners.

However, as part of their reintegration strategies, correctional facilities frequently offer leisure activities to prisoners. Sports, fitness regimens, board games, card games, and in certain situations even video games may be among these activities (Mondal, 2023). The importance of recreational games in prisons is examined in this article, as well as the effects of these activities on the rehabilitation of inmates and the typical game types used in these environments.

The Importance of Recreational Activities in Correctional Facilities

Recreational activity encourages physical fitness and aids in maintaining an inmate's overall health. Regular exercise may improve cardiovascular fitness and weight reduction, lower the likelihood of developing a variety of health issues, and is especially beneficial for female convicts. Recreation also serves as a stress release and aids in the management of mental health conditions like sadness and anxiety. It enables offenders to build coping skills and provides a helpful diversion from the difficulties of prison life (Yu et al., 2018; Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee, 2018; Trotte et al., 2018).

Inmates have the chance to develop new skills and discover their hobbies through recreational activity programs (Elkhawaga, 2019). Participating in leisure pursuits can boost confidence and enhance problem-solving skills. By taking part in these activities, inmates can learn important skills that will improve their chances of a successful reintegration and give them the resources they need to lead productive lives after they are released (Ortega et al., 2020; Lucy, 2021).

Recreation promotes imprisoned bonds and facilitates socializing. Participating in group activities fosters the development of interpersonal, conflict-resolution, and collaborative skills (Willox et al., 2023). It fosters a sense of belonging among detainees, which lowers tensions and improves the atmosphere for rehabilitation. Positive contacts when engaging in leisure activities might increase prosocial conduct and empathy, lessen violent events, and decrease recidivism (Valero-Garcés, 2022; Link & Williams, 2017; Caruso, 2017).

Types of Recreational Activities and Games

Recreational activities and games can vary widely and are often tailored to the interests and needs of the participants. Here are some common types of recreational activities and games:

Sports: Numerous interventions and therapy plans, including sports programs, have been established in prisons. To fulfill demand and promote physical, mental, and social well-being, these prison sports programs seek to promote, through the practice of sports, attitudes, skills, and behaviors that help to prevent high-risk social behavior and teamwork. Sports activities such as basketball, soccer, volleyball, tennis, and softball are popular (Gallant et al., 2015; Obadiora, 2016).

Outdoor Activities: Treating inmates humanely and imprisoning them is the penalty (Ondras & Alvero, 2022). Denying people who are being held access to natural light and fresh air is inhumane. These activities provide opportunities to connect with nature, improve physical health, and enjoy the outdoors (Pasat, 2022). The trauma of imprisonment is increased if convicts are not allowed to engage in outdoor activities (Micklethwaite & Earle, 2021). Outdoor recreational activities include hiking, camping, swimming, cycling, fishing, and nature walks (Kelman, 2020; Kevin, 2019).

Board Games and Card Games: The focus of Willian's (2020) research is the perception of individual emotional engagement in game-based learning activities. According to this study, playing cards makes people's emotional reactions less prominent, making it a nice and secure approach to start a conversation. People also feel happier as a result of it. Board games like chess, Scrabble, and Monopoly and card games such as poker, bridge, and Uno offer engaging and intellectually stimulating options for recreational play (Seaman., & Tran, 2021; Engelstein, & Shalev, 2022). They encourage strategic thinking, problem-solving, and social interaction, resulting in players engaging in computational thinking, teamwork, and creativity (Alfaro-Ponce et al., 2023; Bayeck, 2023).

Creative and Artistic Pursuits: According to a 2017 report by the National Alliance for Arts, Health, and Wellbeing (APPG), engaging in creative activities can improve our mental and emotional health and well-being (Giraldez-Hayes, 2022). These activities include leisure activities like painting, drawing, sculpture, pottery, and other forms of artistic expression. They can be therapeutic and provide a sense of accomplishment (Kim et al., 2023; Sicco, 2022; Castle et al., 2021).

Group Fitness Classes: It is possible to research well-liked physical activities, such as group fitness courses, to discover novel tactics for promoting exercise adherence (Gjestvang et al., 2020; Thompson et al., 2020; Graupensperger et al., 2019). These leisure pursuits give possibilities for social connection, stress alleviation, and physical activity, and include aerobics, yoga, dancing courses, and fitness boot camps (Stevens et al., 2017; Ntoumanis et al., 2017).

Mind and Brain Games: Brain training games (BTG) are being studied to determine how they affect cognition and whether they may be applied to untrained activities (Zimmermann, 2023). The phrase "brain training" has come to refer to mentally challenging exercises intended to increase mental fitness (Staiano et al., 2023; Squire et al., 2023). Increased performance on cognitive tests like speed and accuracy, visuomotor coordination, attention, memory, working memory, and overall cognitive function has been shown in numerous BTG intervention trials (Gill et al., 2022). Investigating mouse motor coordination using quantitative trait locus analysis to model the genetic underpinnings of developmental coordination disorder. These activities, including puzzles, Sudoku, crosswords, trivia quizzes, and brain teasers, provide mental stimulation and challenge. They can improve cognitive skills, memory, and problem-solving abilities (McNabb, 2022; Knowles, 2020; Al-Thaqib et al., 2018).

Music and Dance: Bojner-Horwitz et al. (2022) claim that dance and music are forms of time-ordered "trans-verbal play" in the fields of sound and movement, respectively. Many academics contend that the definitions of dance and music overlap because while music can include sound, dance can also include movement (Cross & Smith, 2022). Engaging in musical activities like singing, playing musical instruments, or participating in dance classes can be recreational and provide emotional expression, stress relief, and a sense of rhythm and coordination (Adjepong, 2020; Welch et al., 2020). Furthermore, it has been shown that music that is associated with movement may increase motivation, provoke emotions, enhance active presence, support the constructive management of emotions, foster accomplishment, and help individuals synchronize their movements with one another (Blasco-Magraner, 2021; Fancourt & Finn, 2019).

Challenges and Limitations of Recreational Activities in Correction Facilities

Some factors that are worth understanding influence jail life. Many more prisoners than the number for which the prisons were designed are forced to live together; they come from different ethnic backgrounds, social classes, and genders; in this situation, rumors, suspicion, opposing factions, and conflicts abound; and this atmosphere is marked by the traditional rivalry between male and female inmates. The following are a few of the many obstacles that might prevent restrictions on leisure activities in today's correctional facilities:

Prison overcrowding: Prison overcrowding is a widespread issue that exists in many nations. The physical and emotional well-being of detainees suffers because of the current conditions in correctional facilities (Baldonado et al., 2022; Khai, 2022; Martos-Garcia et al., 2022). The goal of imprisonment is rehabilitation; nevertheless, difficulties

like overcrowding prevent prisoners from undergoing rehabilitation and lead to fighting and other forms of violence, as mentioned by the studies of Triska et al. (2023) and Nkosi and Maweni (2020). Overcrowding or overpopulation in prisons can have an impact on inmates with increased physical contact, a lack of space and ventilation, as well as a reduction in time spent outside or engaging in social recreation activities, all of which contribute to the spread of infectious diseases. (Glade et al., 2022; Jauk et al., 2022; García-Guerrero and Marco, 2015). The same was reported in the Philippines, where it is incredibly tough to administer and maintain more than 400 jails around the country due to overcrowding. Because of this, it often takes months to obtain reliable information about the issues that each jail faces, such as water system failures and levels of overcrowding (Asis, 2022; Santos, 2016).

Limited resources and funding: According to Clemente-Faustino and de Guzman (2022), a problem that many government agencies are facing is the issue of funding or sourcing adequate funds needed for caring for people in need, like those kept in many correctional facilities, where inmates frequently face budget constraints that can limit the availability and quality of recreational programs. Shortage of money might result in a shortage of tools, spaces, and qualified personnel to plan and manage operations (Ebrahimi-Rigi et al., 2023; Fadare et al., 2021; Minton et al., 2016). Numerous studies have mentioned this as well; they include every institution, not only prisons. The equipment and kits required to support all the activities may be purchased with the limited resources and budget available.

Security, staffing, and supervision concerns:

Standards for safety and security must serve as the cornerstone of all correctional operations. Without continuing and efficient safety and security protocols, everyone—including PDL employees, members of the community, and prison staff—is particularly susceptible to a variety of threats. Because security-related activities and services are typically part of a jail's mission, they must exist. However, they must be constructed upon a strong basis. Recreational activities might make it difficult to maintain order and prevent incidents in correctional institutions, where security is a top priority (Asis, 2022; Mohsan et al., 2023). It can be challenging to strike a balance between the requirement for recreational possibilities and security measures, which calls for thorough planning and risk assessment. Recreational programs must be implemented successfully, which requires sufficient manpower and well-trained workers. However, there may be difficulties in providing continuous and efficient supervision in correctional institutions due to personnel shortages and high turnover rates (Minton et al., 2016).

Inmate participation and motivation: It has been proven that prison-based programs can reduce recidivism and encourage successful reentry. A decrease in prisoner misconduct has been linked to inmate involvement in prison activities, which has been pushed. However, access to programs is not always straightforward, and even then, some inmates may not be motivated or interested in participating (Wu et al., 2023; Kaiser et al., 2022). Some prisoners might not be motivated or interested in participating in leisure activities. The efficacy of these programs may be hindered by elements like

indifference, disengagement, or a lack of knowledge about the advantages of recreation. Other important elements include social dynamics and stigma. It's possible for stigma or societal pressure to prevent inmates from participating in leisure activities. Participation rates can be affected by peer pressure, anxiety over criticism, or issues with social standing in the jail population (Cheng et al., 2019). It is urged that our various governments look at ways to motivate individuals who are jailed to engage in sports and leisure activities by providing them with enough possibilities to be interested in doing so. The most excellent inmates can get motivational rewards, both internal and external.

Best Practices for Implementing Recreational Programs.

The best practices must be followed when implementing effective recreation programs in correctional facilities. These techniques were developed as a result of research and fieldwork.

Needs assessment: Perform a thorough needs study to learn about the many hobbies and leisure demands of the jail population. Age, gender, cultural background, and personal preferences are all significant considerations in this assessment. Providing a range of programs Provide a wide choice of leisure activities to accommodate a variety of interests and skills. Sports, workout routines, arts and crafts, educational courses, music, and other recreational pursuits may fall under this category (Latessa, 2018; Halden, 2019). It is necessary to conduct an evaluation to determine how patrons at the bar react to recreational activities and how those in charge of such training pay attention to them. Given that a teacher or student will always be evaluated by their teachers or by their supervisor, evaluation must always be given a chance in all we do. This is crucial to our day-to-day operations.

Qualified staff and training: Make that the staff members in charge of developing and managing leisure programs has the necessary education. They must be individuals with the necessary leadership skills and expertise to supervise leisure activities, which may include staff with a background in physical education. The training required for leading and guiding should cover a variety of topics, including communication skills, behavior management, conflict resolution, and cultural awareness. Make a thorough schedule for your leisure pursuits to maintain regularity and predictability. Give the prisoners plenty of opportunity to engage and make sure they understand the timetable completely (Gaes & McGuire, 2018).

Incentives and rewards: To encourage inmates to participate in leisure activities, provide a system of prizes and incentives. Depending on active participation, provide prospects for growth or special treatment. Celebrate and honor accomplishments. Rewards like switching around their assignments and obtaining the possibility to improve the lives of convicts will be of enormous value to them all. (Dennard et al., 2021; Elbers et al., 2022). For many people, especially athletes or coaches who participate in sports and recreation, incentives and prizes may act as a source of inspiration. Children continue to do well when their parents or school continue to recognize their efforts.

Collaborative partnerships: Since so many people must be involved, including people from different professions, governmental agencies, and non-profit organizations, to engage and provide care, collaborations among prisoners and the development of cooperation are crucial. The difficulty is that because the majority of these people are arranged according to their functions, the prisoners can see where these functional seams are. Encouragement of inmate engagement in leisure activities is crucial to achieving the goal of this partnership. Encourage cooperation with other organizations, neighborhood associations, or volunteers to expand the scope and quality of recreational programs. These partnerships could give the institution access to more materials, information, and help (Barker et al., 2022; Bennett & Holloway, 2018; National Institute of Corrections, 2020).

Evaluation and feedback: Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of recreational programs through feedback from both staff and inmates. Use this feedback to make improvements, address any concerns, and ensure ongoing program relevance (Sanchez-Lastra et al., 2019; Pérez-Ordás et al., 2021).

Future of Recreation Activities and Games in Correctional Facilities Centre.

Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR): In the future, many correctional facilities will benefit more from VR and AR in this new century. Recreational activities and games in prisons might be completely changed by integrating VR and AR technologies. Inmates can participate in a variety of leisure pursuits, sports, or instructional games using these immersive technologies, which can provide virtual settings and interactive experiences (Ranasinghe et al., 2017).

Gamification of rehabilitation: It is becoming more popular to apply gamification techniques in correctional environments. Recreational games may be created to encourage pro-social behaviors, skill development, and rehabilitation objectives by adding game features including challenges, prizes, and progress monitoring (Faiella & Ricciardi, 2015; Buckley & Doyle, 2017).

Mobile gaming and apps: Within prisons, tailored and accessible recreational gaming experiences are possible thanks to mobile devices and applications. Using smartphones or tablets, inmates might play games that promote physical fitness, emotional wellness, cognitive development, or skill-building (Hedman et al., 2016).

Serious games for reentry preparation: Serious games, created with specific educational goals in mind, can be used to help convicts become ready for their reintroduction into society. These games can concentrate on enhancing decision-making skills, financial literacy, work preparedness, and fundamental life skills (Ortiz et al., 2018).

Collaborative and competitive gaming: Gaming with many players or a team might encourage convicts to cooperate and engage in constructive competition. Such games can promote good social dynamics and personal development by encouraging collaboration, communication, and conflict resolution abilities (Mace et al., 2017).

CONCLUSION

Along with other evidence-based correctional activities including education, vocational training, counseling, and drug abuse treatment, recreation should be made available. Correctional institutions may optimize the influence on inmate rehabilitation and raise the possibilities of a successful reintegration into society by combining a wide range of services. Finally, every government should back this position by a sufficient statute or Republic Act. Inmates can form sports teams since exercise is important for them.

Declaration of Conflict

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

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