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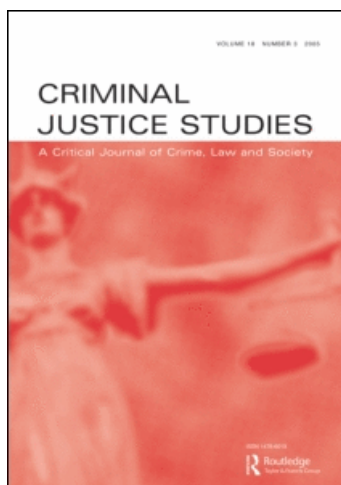
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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Preventing fatal attractions: lessons learned from inmate boundary violators in a southern penitentiary system

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Correctional officers are trained to establish a professional distance between themselves and the inmates they are paid to supervise. Nevertheless, some officers allow themselves to be compromised by inmates who are adept at manipulating prison staff. In this study, we employ face-to-face interviews with 32 inmate boundary violators in order to examine inappropriate relationships from the offender point-of-view. We are specifically interested in understanding the consequences of boundary violations between correctional employees and inmates, and more importantly, how these relationships can be prevented.

Keywords: inappropriate relationships; corruption; inmates; manipulation; correctional officers; contraband

Introduction

Almost every correctional agency has formal policies that forbid any type of familiarity between inmates and staff members. Often both inmates and staff are given explicit instructions not to fraternize with one another, and many institutions provide correctional officers with specialized training in order to prevent inmate–officer relationships from forming (Cheeseman Dial & Worley, 2008; Worley, 2010). Despite these efforts, however, infractions still occur and can range from relatively trivial (e.g. giving or receiving a candy bar or soda from an inmate) to serious (e.g. love affairs) (Marquart, Barnhill, & Balshaw-Biddle, 2001). If left unchecked, inappropriate relationships between staff and inmates can create a chaotic workplace and disrupt the security and orderliness of correctional institutions. Worley, Marquart, and Mullings (2003) define inappropriate relationships as:

personal relationships between employees and inmates/clients or with family members of inmates/clients. This behavior is usually sexual or economic in nature and has the potential to jeopardize the security of a prison institution or compromise the integrity of a correctional employee. (p. 179)

This study seeks to ascertain the consequences of inappropriate relationships from the offender point-of-view. We specifically examine the types of adverse impacts associated with inappropriate relationships and how these affect both inmates and

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staff. Also, we discuss how these relationships emerge, despite specific institutional policies (and in some instances law) which forbid these activities. Finally, after providing an in-depth analysis of the consequences of inappropriate relationships, we offer practical solutions as to how these may be prevented.

While there are many different types of inappropriate relationships, situations that culminate in sexual encounters between correctional officers and inmates stand as the most serious. As required by the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (PREA), the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) collects data on both sexual assaults between inmates and sexual relationships (defined as sexual misconduct, and hence illegal) between correctional staff and inmates (Worley, Worley, & Mullings, 2010).

Between April and August 2007, Beck and Harrison (2007) conducted the first National Inmate Survey (NIS). In this project, a national sample of 23,398 inmate respondents were given touch-screen computers to answer questions related to sexual violence in prison. Based on these responses, the researchers estimate that there were 94,900 incidents where inmates willingly engaged in sexual misconduct with a staff member. In other words, 'a total of 71 such incidents of staff sexual misconduct per 1,000 inmates were reported as willing' (Beck & Harrison, 2007, p. 5). This finding is consistent with another study where correctional authorities reported that 57% of 544 substantiated incidents of staff sexual misconduct with inmates 'appeared to be willing' (Beck, Harrison, & Adams, 2007, p. 7). Apparently, some inmates are highly motivated to engage in sexual activities with correctional employees.

While some studies suggest that male staff members are most likely to be responsible for engaging in sexual contact with female inmates (Amnesty International, 1999; Bowker, 1980; Cheeseman & Worley, 2006a; Sagarin & MacNamara, 1975; Siegal, 1999), recent BJS data show that in reality this is not the case. For instance, Beck and Harrison (2008) write that in 2007:

nearly 62% of all reported incidents of staff sexual misconduct involved female staff with male inmates; 8% involved male staff with female inmates. Female staff were involved in 48% of incidents reported by male inmates who said they were unwilling and in 79% of incidents with male inmates who said they were willing. (p. 7)

Other research has demonstrated that female employees are disproportionately likely to be involved in sexually inappropriate relationships with inmates. In one study, Marquart et al. (2001) analyzed the personnel files of 508 Texas correctional officers who were disciplined for having inappropriate relationships with inmates and found that female correctional officers accounted for 60% of cases involving sex. The authors characterize these officers as love sick employees who became infatuated and then fell in love with the inmates they were paid to protect. In this same study, female officers accounted for 77% of all inappropriate relationships with inmates (Marquart et al., 2001). Many of these nonsexually inappropriate relationships included placing money in an inmate's trust fund, exchanging letters or erotica, and providing the inmate with contraband (e.g. cellular telephone).

Though some research indicates that some inmates consent to and even initiate sexual relationships with staff members (Worley & Cheeseman, 2005, 2006; Worley et al., 2003; Worley & Worley, *in press*), even if an inmate willingly has a sexual relationship with a staff member, it is still a violation of policy and law (Smith, 2008; Smith & Yarussi, 2009).

Worley and Cheeseman (2006) contend that correctional officers with relationship problems have a higher likelihood than other officers of engaging in boundary

violations with inmates. This finding is consistent with Marquart et al. (2001) who write that many officers who have inappropriate relationships with offenders are likely to have problems, such as 'sexual frustration, marital strife or discord, boredom, ruptured dreams, or separation from their spouses' (Marquart et al., 2001, p. 214). Also, both male and female employee boundary violators are likely to have at least one of the following characteristics: wild social lives, feelings of social isolation, financial difficulties, and job-related problems (Allen & Bosta, 1981; Worley & Cheeseman, 2006).

Though most correctional officers who have inappropriate relationships with inmates violate policy voluntarily, inmate boundary violators are still persistent in establishing these relationships. Worley et al. (2003) contend that boundary violators are offenders who initiate relationships with prison staff in order to establish sexual relationships, obtain contraband, or disrupt the orderly operation of the facility. Some researchers have even documented strategies that inmate boundary violators utilize in their quest to establish inappropriate relationships with prison staff (Cornelius, 2001; Elliot & Verdeyen, 2002; Worley, 2010). The present study seeks to ascertain the consequences of inappropriate relationships as well as provide suggestions as to how they can be eradicated or reduced in correctional settings.

Methods

The data for this study were collected by the first author as part of a larger project on inappropriate staff–inmate relationships within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). In order to ascertain how inappropriate relationships can be stopped, we re-examined interview data with 32 inmate boundary violators.

There was a full human subjects review by both Sam Houston State University and TDCJ. Both boards included an inmate advocate, which is a federal guideline, according to Maxfield and Babbie (2005).

The sample

All inmates in this sample had been investigated for engaging in a boundary violation with a correctional officer during a four-year period (1995–1998). Of 225 inmates still residing within TDCJ at the time of the data collection 82 (36%) inmates affirmatively responded to a written invitation to participate in the study. Though we received responses from 82 inmates, only offenders who lived within a 100 mile radius of Huntsville, Texas were interviewed due to scheduling and budget limitations. The final sample consisted of 29 male and three female inmates.

Of these respondents, 13 were African-American (41%), 12 were Caucasian (38%), and seven were Hispanic (21%). The interviews were conducted at 17 prison facilities in Southeast Texas. They were unstructured and averaged 30–45 minutes, with many lasting up to 90 minutes. Each respondent was interviewed at his or her current assigned unit. This unit was often a different facility than where he or she had engaged in an inappropriate relationship.

Findings

Consequences of inappropriate relationships

A review of the completed interviews shows that inmates are able to recognize the negative consequences of inappropriate relationships between offenders and staff

members. Specifically, these inmate boundary violators stated that inappropriate relationships are perceived to result in: (1) negative staff-on-staff relationships; (2) negative staff-on-inmate relationships; (3) negative consequences for the inmate and/or inmate population; and (4) negative consequences for the staff member. These four types of inmate-perceived consequences are outlined in Table 1.

Negative staff-on-staff relationships

Nine of the respondents claimed that inappropriate relationships have a negative impact on relationships among prison staff members. One issue identified here is the perception that inappropriate relationships may cause supervisors to be leery of female employees. When asked to clarify this issue, one inmate explained:

It's not fair that most all women guards at one time or another are suspected of having a boyfriend. If a woman has even a conversation with an inmate, she's made to feel like she's doing wrong. A boss man can be talking to an inmate all day and no one thinks anything of it. I ain't down with that.

The statement from this inmate boundary violator illustrates that inappropriate relationships have the potential to ostracize female correctional officers. This is consistent with another respondent who said:

Female C.O.'s are fearful they might get caught up in a game, even if they're not doing nothing wrong. So, there's paranoia. Whenever the rank wants to crack down on inappropriate relationships, they always look at the boss ladies first.

Given the above statements, it is highly possible that this group of officers may disproportionately experience the fallout associated with inappropriate relationships. While the literature has shown that female correctional officers are highly competent and viewed as professional by the inmates they protect (Cheeseman, Mullings, & Marquart, 2001; Cheeseman & Worley, 2006a), some may be likely to be treated with suspicion and disrespect for no other reason than being the wrong gender.

Table 1. The consequences of inappropriate relationships.

Type of consequence	Consequences of inappropriate relationships
Negatively affects staff-on-staff relationships	• Supervisors view most female officers with suspicion • Creates clique and factions among employees • Makes the workplace less professional
Negatively affects staff-on-inmate relationships	• Utilization of inmate snitches • Staff are leery of all offenders
Negative consequences for the inmate and/or inmate population	• Punishment/stigmatization of boundary violators • Boundary violators may victimize other inmates, if they have protection from being disciplined • Officers supply inmates with dangerous contraband
Negative consequences for the staff member	• Can lose job and/or be sent to jail for having an inappropriate relationship • Risk losing their family members/relationships • Source of embarrassment for other employees/correctional administrators

Inmates also suggested that staff relations with other staff may be negatively impacted by inappropriate relationships with inmates if such acts create cliques or factions among the workforce. For example:

On small farms, the sergeants and lieutenants know who the good officers are and which ones are dirty. They put their good bosses out in the hall and on the desks. This creates cliques, with different bosses hanging out with their own set of people.

This inmate went on to explain that cliques were bad for the organization because they had the potential to ostracize some employees and result in poor employee morale. When there are significant perceptions of favoritism and a lack of teamwork, this can result in a hostile and unpleasant working environment.

Additionally, inmates also suggested that inappropriate relationships make the workplace less professional. As one inmate explained:

It's unprofessional because these relationships make officers fight with each other over who's dirty and who's not. It makes employees feel paranoid even if they're not doing anything wrong. Also, because dirty officers act unprofessionally and break the law every time they bring in contraband or have sex with an inmate, this sets a bad example for all of the other offenders.

Negative staff-on-inmate relationships

A second frequently identified negative consequence of inappropriate relationships focuses on damages to relationships between correctional employees and the inmate population. One way in which staff-inmate relations are damaged is through the actions of correctional supervisors who focus attention on catching deviant employees to the point of actively cultivating inmate informants. For example:

Some supervisors have such a hard-on for catching dirty bosses that they'll find themselves a snitch and start to move him around to different cell blocks, just to get a little tidbit of information on the officers they think are dirty.

There is no doubt that using inmate informants is a questionable practice. In his classic depiction of the 1980 Riot at the Penitentiary of New Mexico, Roger Morris (1988) argues that correctional officers' utilization of the *snitch game* increased tensions within the prison and was ultimately one of the factors that led to one of the bloodiest riots in prison history. This riot resulted in the deaths of 33 inmates. Most of the prisoners who were killed had been identified as *snitches* by other inmates. This incident illustrates the potential hazards associated with employing inmate informants. Nevertheless, the data collected from this sample indicates that supervisors are willing to utilize informants in their quest to stop inappropriate relationships. When correctional officers utilize informants, this could potentially place inmates and staff in dangerous situations.

A second way inmates perceive inappropriate relationships negatively impact staff-inmate relations is that they may cause staff members to be overly suspicious of all inmates. For example, one female boundary violator stated:

These relationships between staff and inmates cause some officers to avoid any interaction with inmates, even if it's on a professional level. There are some officers that look at you strange, even if you're just asking for something legit like an I-60 [request to an official] or a Tyleneol.

As the above quotation indicates, inappropriate relationships have the potential to have adverse consequences on the interactions between prison employees and the inmates they are paid to protect.

Negative consequences for the inmate and/or inmate population

A third specifically mentioned consequence of inappropriate relationships is such that may have an adverse impact on either the inmate population on the whole or the inmates involved. One respondent, who was also a former correctional officer, suggested that inappropriate relationships have the potential to make the prison environment a more dangerous place for both inmates and staff members. For example:

These relationships are dangerous. If a convict has a boss on his payroll, he can go around and victimize other inmates without getting in any trouble.

The above respondent also suggested that inappropriate relationships allowed dangerous contraband, such as illegal drugs, to flow throughout the facility. He stated:

If officers bring an inmate drugs, this is very dangerous. An inmate jacked up on coke is one bad son of a bitch! Besides that, a boss might think he's got back-up, but not if it's some boss that is dealing drugs to other inmates.

Several inmate boundary violators also argued that an offender who is involved in a relationship with a staff member is subject to many severe disciplinary sanctions, including the loss of good time, being sent to a less desirable facility, and having negative information placed in his or her official records. Also, respondents said that offenders can lose their contact visits and access to college classes if they are apprehended and punished for having inappropriate relationships. Three inmates claimed that once they had been labeled as having been involved in an inappropriate relationship they were quickly ostracized by correctional staff members. One inmate boundary violator expressed himself in the following manner:

Even to this day, officers distance themselves from me and want nothing to do with me at all. I didn't get a case, but all of the officers still know what I did.

As such, an inmate who has an inappropriate relationship with a staff member may suffer both formal and informal types of consequences, if their inappropriate relationship is detected. Also, inappropriate relationships have the potential to endanger the inmate population as a whole, if they enable drugs and other contraband to flow freely through the facility.

Negative consequences for the staff member and/or other employees

The fourth type of identified consequences of inappropriate relationships identified by inmates known to have engaged in such are negative consequences for either the staff members who engage in them or the larger population of correctional employees. As several inmates specifically stated, employees can either be disciplined or lose their jobs if they are caught having relationships with offenders. One respondent commented:

It's pretty stupid for a boss lady to get involved with a convict. Nine times out of ten, she'll get burned by the convict she's having a relationship with. If a convict gets in a

jam over something else, he might give the boss lady up in order to wipe the slate clean. This can mean her job.

Also, two inmate boundary violators suggested that employees who have relationships with inmates may be prosecuted and eventually sentenced to correctional facilities if they are caught. As one offender explained:

Back at my old unit, I had one officer who used to bring drugs in for me. I made some good money with him. I burned him at the end though because he shorted me out of \$150. I was pissed that he stole from me, so I went to IAD, and we set him up. Later, the warden told me that the boss man got a felony conviction.

In addition to job loss and possible prosecution, some inmates also suggested that correctional employees who have inappropriate relationships with inmates may damage personal relationships with members of their own families. If an employee who is in a relationship outside is found to have engaged in sexual activities with an inmate, this is likely to result in a break-up or divorce if the behavior becomes known. Several of the inmate boundary violators admitted to targeting employees who were involved in relationships outside of the prison setting. Many of these outside relationships ended badly once the inappropriate prison relationship was detected. One inmate boundary violator stated:

It's bad whenever a boss lady who is married gets caught having a relationship. It becomes known all over town and sometimes gets put in the paper. I heard about one boss lady who had kids, and they got picked on at school because she got caught having sex with an inmate.

While inappropriate relationships can have a detrimental impact on a staff member's family life, they also have the potential to be a source of embarrassment for other employees and prison administrators. As one inmate proudly proclaimed, inmates 'love every minute of this.' In fact, eight of the boundary violators interviewed claimed that they had inappropriate relationships for the sole purpose of embarrassing correctional administrators. One inmate, who allegedly had affairs with the wives of correctional administrators, stated:

I've had sex with the wives of two different wardens. One night around Christmas, I went over to the house of one warden, and his wife asked me to put her son's bicycle together. You know, it was a Christmas present. Then she cooked dinner for me and we had sex right there in the kitchen, on the floor. I can talk my way into any woman's panties. I did it 'cause I could. You know what I am saying? Man, when they busted me for that, all hell broke loose. It was hilarious. Yeah, I lost my outside trusty job, but it was worth it 'cause I embarrassed the shit out of that warden and his family. I still can't stop laughing 'bout it.

The above offender enjoyed the sense of notoriety that followed after his relationship was exposed. He perceived that he was elevated in the eyes of his fellow inmates and was almost a 'hero' in a sense. This respondent stated that by creating a huge scandal within the facility, he had 'out-conned the law.'

Ways inappropriate relationships could be stopped

Inappropriate relationships between correctional employees and inmates can have a number of disastrous consequences. Given these adverse impacts, we wanted to ask

Table 2. Ways inappropriate relationships can be stopped.

Research results	Ways to stop inappropriate relationships
Improve supervision of employees	• Wardens should be more visible on the units • Supervisors must be more professional; not play favorites • Specifically monitor officers who are on the night shift • Rotate officers often during their shifts
Institute changes affecting employees	• Raise hiring/retention standards for employees • Increase pay • Have amnesty programs for staff members who have committed rule infractions
Change certain aspects of the prison culture	• Restrict cross-gender supervision • Allow tobacco in certain areas of the prison • Provide inmates with tools to cultivate relationships on the outside (e.g. provide access to payphones)

inmate boundary violators how these relationships could be stopped. Of the 32 respondents, eight (25%) felt that these could not be prevented entirely. Nevertheless, all of the participants offered some suggestions as to how inappropriate relationships could be either stopped or at the very least significantly reduced. Three types of administrative and managerial actions were identified by inmates as possible ways to curtail staff–inmate inappropriate relationships. These include: (1) improving the supervision of employees; (2) instituting changes which affect employees; and (3) changing certain aspects of the prison culture. These solutions are outlined in Table 2.

Improving the supervision of employees

The most common suggestions offered by inmates of how to eliminate or reduce the incidence of inappropriate staff–inmate relationships center on a need to improve the supervision of employees. Among specific suggestions for achieving better supervision is to use video cameras throughout the entire facility. The need for enhanced supervision is especially important for officers on third-shift (10 pm to 6 am), when opportunities are perceived as greatest for inappropriate relationships to be initiated and maintained. More basically, inmates also stated that correctional administrators should take a more active interest in supervising their employees. For example, one inmate boundary violator stated:

Wardens need to be really harsh on their officers. They also need to be more visible on their units. A good warden always makes himself known to both the convicts and the officers. The right warden can turn a bunch of deadbeat officers into robocops.

The above quote illustrates that certain managerial characteristics of upper echelon executives are believed to be important to discourage inappropriate relationships between staff and inmates from forming. An additional suggestion centered on supervision of staff is for supervisors to rotate officers to different positions during every shift. Such a strategy is perceived as an effective and efficient way to prevent overfamiliarization between inmates and staff members. Some inmates even suggested that employees should be rotated a minimum of three–four times during an eight-hour shift. In a related vein, inmates pointed to supervisors who ‘play favorites’ with

selected staff. When such occurs, not only are other staff alienated, but they also become ripe for manipulation by inmates. For example:

At this farm, the supervisors only let certain bosses work the hallways or the desks. They treat these bosses like gold and joke around with them. But they ignore the rest of the bosses and make them work tanks every day. This kind of favoritism causes bad blood. It's very bad for morale, and some bosses might try to get even by being hanging out with inmates.

Institute changes affecting employees

In addition to improving the supervision and management of employees, several inmate boundary violators suggested that certain policies that directly affect correctional employees should be implemented in order to prevent inappropriate relationships. First, many respondents argued that hiring and retention standards for correctional employees should be raised, especially for security staff. More specifically, these suggestions included that the agency should conduct psychological tests and require at least two years of college for all applicants. Many offenders believed that this would result in a more professional workforce with staff who were less inclined to behave inappropriately with offenders. One inmate expressed this view, saying:

We got some bosses here that belong in a psych unit. TDCJ needs to get rid of these bosses and hire some people that are more stable and professional. Of course, that's gonna cost money.

It is noteworthy that the above speaker makes an illusion to money because many of the inmate boundary violators stated that the agency should give correctional employees a pay rise. These respondents suggested that a pay increase would prevent officers from trafficking with inmates in order to supplement their income. For example, when asked why officers provide inmates with contraband, one inmate boundary violator said:

Bosses bring in contraband because they need money. Pretty soon they start to feel pretty good, once they see that they are making some real money by bringing in tobacco. If things are good, and I want other things, I might say something like, 'so what else do you play with?' An officer can make \$1,000 a week by bringing in cocaine.

Given such responses, it might behoove correctional agencies to increase the salaries of correctional officers. Currently, Texas, the site of the present study, pays starting officers \$27,000 per year and only requires them to have a GED and pass a written examination (TDCJ, 2010). If salaries are raised, this will very likely increase the number of job applicants, which may encourage and allow prison administrators to implement more stringent hiring standards.

A final suggestion related to staff policies is to implement an amnesty program for staff, in which minor transgressions would not result in the firing of a staff member. Allowing staff who commit minor infractions to retain their jobs might prevent inmates from gaining leverage and power over correctional employees when a first transgression occurs. For example, if an employee who commits a petty violation with an inmate (e.g. accepting a soda) is given the opportunity to admit to his or her mistake and be forgiven by the agency, offenders would be incapable of blackmailing this individual to break more institutional rules.

Change to the prison culture

In addition to instituting changes which directly affect employees, numerous inmates also stated that certain aspects of the prison culture should be changed. More specifically, suggestions included that cross-gender supervision between officers and inmates should be forbidden. All inmates offering this idea stated that female officers should not work in close proximity to male inmates. Others restricted this suggestion to female officers not conducting pat searches or strip searches of male inmates, as such activities could lead to inappropriate relationships and other unprofessional behaviors. One female inmate made the following statement:

In here, the male bosses aren't even allowed to come near us or pat us down. TDCJ should limit female employees' contact with male offenders the same way it limits male employees contact with female offenders.

In the twenty-first century, there is an abundance of female correctional officers. Bureau of Justice of Statistics data indicate that 26% of correctional officers in state facilities are females (National Institute of Corrections, 2008). While some research indicates that the presence of female officers may have a calming effect on male inmates (Alpert & Crouch, 1991; Cheeseman et al., 2001; Cheeseman & Worley, 2006b; Jurik, 1988; Jurik & Halemba, 1984; Kissel & Katsampes, 1980; Lawrence & Mahan, 1998; Zimmer, 1986), prison administrators should have the authority to restrict or control cross-gender supervision. According to the respondents many male offenders are initiating inappropriate relationships with female guards in order to have sex and alleviate what Sykes (1958) refers to as one of the major 'pains of imprisonment' (p. 64). If offenders were only closely supervised by staff of the same sex, it is likely that this would drastically reduce inappropriate relationships of a sexual nature.

Inmates also suggested that correctional institutions should allow cigarettes in at least some parts of the facility. Many of these offenders perceived that boundary violations increased dramatically after Texas prisons outlawed tobacco. For example:

After TDCJ [the Texas prison system] changed its tobacco policy, all the black inmates dominated the market. For us white inmates, we were losing money on cigarettes to the Blacks, so we needed to find our own officer who would bring us in some tobacco. [That way] we wouldn't have to pay these outrageous prices to the Blacks. Pretty soon, business got so good that I had to hire some of my homeboys to help watch my back. In the end, that's what got us busted though. Things got too big and out of control and someone snitched to the warden.

The above respondent was emphatic that he would never have engaged in a boundary violation had he not needed cigarettes. This is consistent with other researchers who contend that one of the unintended consequences of outlawing tobacco products in prison facilities is that it often creates a black market, and some inmates go to virtually any means to dominate this underground economy (Alarid, 2005; Kalinich, 1980; Lankenau, 2001; Patrick & Marsh, 2001; Silverman, 2001).

A few inmates also stated that prisons should provide inmates with tools to preserve any personal relationships that they have outside of prison. For example, some subjects suggested that Texas correctional institutions could offer pay phones for offenders to keep in touch with their loved ones. Although the situation with telephone access varies across states, in Texas inmates are generally afforded only one five-minute conversation with a loved one every 90 days. Inmates also suggested that

conjugal visits with their wives or girlfriends might also prevent them from establishing inappropriate relationships. This might be particularly true if conjugal visits could be taken away for disciplinary infractions (Gordon & McConnell, 1999). One inmate boundary violator stated:

TDCJ tries hard to keep inmates from society. Instead, it needs to make an effort to let an inmate cultivate and maintain the relationships that he has out in the free world. If this was properly done, then inmates would stop worrying about starting relationships with female officers because they'd have more contact with their wives and girlfriends on the outside.

This powerful statement definitely brings into question whether prison facilities should change their policies to accommodate inmates and their families. Not only might this be more conducive to rehabilitation, but it could also drastically reduce inappropriate relationships in penal facilities.

Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, we contend that, as the data here on inmates' views of inappropriate relationships between prison staff and inmates suggests, such are highly detrimental to correctional facilities. According to the inmate boundary violators interviewed here, inappropriate relationships may be perceived as adversely affecting both staff-on-staff and staff-on-inmate relations. Additionally, they can have negative consequences for inmates, the inmate population, and the employees who are involved in them. In order to control such problems, correctional executives must improve the supervision of their staff members. Wardens should be more visible on the units and supervisors should be more professional in their interactions with employees. It might also be beneficial to install video cameras throughout the prison. Currently, few if any Texas prisons have this equipment, and as a result there are several blind spots that enable inappropriate relationships between staff and inmates to occur.

This study presents the first documentation of how prison inmates perceive the dynamics and consequences of inappropriate relationships established with correctional staff. Although much of what is shown here may be 'known' to those working and studying in this area, such 'knowledge' has to date been without validation or supporting evidence. Although previous research (Worley & Cheeseman, 2005, 2006; Worley et al., 2003) has shown that inmates may initiate such relationships, there has yet to be examination of how inmates perceive, plan, and actively manage such manipulated relationships. With the understandings highlighted herein, we can now more definitely claim understandings of how such relationships develop and impact inmates, staff, and correctional environments.

In attempting to address such situations, correctional executives should also consider raising both the hiring standards and pay for officers. It is likely that this will do much to discourage inappropriate relationships. It might also be worthwhile to institute employee amnesty programs. If a correctional officer has committed a minor rule infraction, he or she could be formally forgiven by the agency. This would prevent inmate boundary violators from developing a lever over an employee. Also, administrators should be given the authority to restrict cross-gender supervision. This will be likely to curtail many situations involving sex between inmates and staff. Finally, correctional administrators should consider allowing inmates to smoke in at

least some areas within the prison. If smoking is entirely forbidden, this will result in both institutional violence and the corruption of staff members (Lankenau, 2001; Patrick & Marsh, 2001; Worley et al., 2003).

It is interesting to note that almost all of the suggestions inmates offered as ways to curtail or control inappropriate relationships between staff and inmates have also been formally proposed by the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission (NPREC) (2009). Whereas the NPREC-proposed standards for prison and jail operations were based on input from correctional administrators, inmate advocates, academics, and other seasoned correctional professionals, many of the same ideas for addressing the problem of sexual relations between staff and inmates are also seen as valid by those who would be directly affected by such changes, inmates themselves. This lends yet further credibility to the proposals of NPREC; when all groups involved in the problem see the likely solutions in the same way, it seems logical to assume such solutions carry a high likelihood of success.

While we contend that this study makes an important contribution to the academic literature, there is still much research that needs to be conducted in order to understand the dynamics of inappropriate relationships. First, future studies must investigate the process by which inmate boundary violators are able to gain power over their captors. It would further be worthwhile to examine whether or not inmate boundary violators are fundamentally different from the general inmate population. Correctional officers should also be surveyed in order to ascertain whether or not they perceive inappropriate relationships to be a major security issue. Projects such as these should provide officers with opportunities to give input which might help to prevent these relationships from occurring. Finally, it would be beneficial to interview correctional officers who have engaged in inappropriate relationships with inmate boundary violators, though this may be a challenge due to privacy concerns.

Inmate boundary violators have become a huge concern for prison administrators. These offenders have the potential to be very dangerous and may compromise the safety of an institution. In addition to understanding the consequences of boundary violations, correctional administrators must also realize that some actions can be taken to prevent these behaviors from occurring. If the suggestions offered here are implemented it is likely that boundary violations will decrease and correctional facilities will become more secure.

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