

# Virginia Department of Corrections



# ***THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITIES***

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# Therapeutic Community Modality

- TC Model Introduced into Prisons in early 1960s
- Modified TC to Operate in Modern Prisons
- Employs Peer Accountability & High Structure
- Evidence-Based Treatment Modality

# Therapeutic Community Modality

- 1600+ TC Beds in 3 Institutions
- Utilizing Social Learning and Cognitive Approaches
- Involuntary Placement in Treatment
- Five Program Phases (4 in prison, 1 in community)

TC is not a program, it is a lifestyle that must be practiced for a significant period of time.

It's not enough to simply treat an offender's substance abuse.

TCs, at their core, are designed to re-socialize an offender

# TC Essential Elements

TCs help offenders to restructure their thinking and beliefs to support pro-social values

TC teach and provide offenders practice with new pro-social skill sets

TCs teach offenders relapse prevention skills

TC teach offenders how to establish and maintain healthy relationships and parenting skills.

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# TC Tools & Processes

## ☀ Philosophy

- ☀ Values

- ☀ Principles

## ☀ Structure Board & Jobs

## ☀ Standards of Behavior

- ☀ Cardinal

- ☀ Major

- ☀ House

## ☀ House Meetings

- ☀ Morning Meeting

- ☀ Evening Meeting

- ☀ Community Meeting

## ● Awareness Tools

- Verbal Push-up

- Verbal Pull-up

- Written Pull-up

- Encounter Group

- Process Group

## ● Thinking reports & Journals

## ● Consequences

- Learning Experiences

- Privileges

- Rewards

- Sanctions

- Behavior Contract

## ● Educational/Treatment Classes

## ● Phases & Status

## ● Ceremonies

## ● Authority & Responsibility

## ● Conflict Resolution Tools

- Mediation Table

- Glue Contract

- Reflection Chair



**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
*Substance Abuse Community-Model Treatment Programs*  
**OVERVIEW OF TC PHASES**



Screening, Evaluation, & Assessment

**TREATMENT**

Phase 1:  
Orientation

Phase 2:  
Resocialization & Recovery

Phase 3:  
Internalization & Maturation

**AFTERCARE / CONTINUING CARE**

Phase 4:  
Re-entry (In Institution)

Phase 5:  
Post-release to TTC

# Admission Criteria to TCs

- No Sex Crimes History
- Documented History of Substance Abuse
- Substance Abuse Related Crime
- Must be Sentenced to 2 or More Years
- Must have 18 Months Left to Serve\*
- Must be Level 1 or Level 2 Inmate



# Therapeutic Communities

- Indian Creek Correctional Center  
984 male offenders
- Botetourt Correctional Center  
352 male offenders
- Virginia Correctional Center Women  
274 female offenders

Total Beds: 1610

# Pre-Release Option

- Based upon the prior offense and program progress, offenders are screened to enter a pre-release option pool. Inmate must have post release supervision.
- Up to 180 days prior to official release date, offenders in pre-release pool may enter TTC
- If inmate reaches mandatory release date prior to completion of 6-month program, inmate remains in program but is supervised by community corrections

# TTCs (Transitional Therapeutic Communities)

- Gemeinschaft (Harrisonburg)  
48 male beds, 12 female beds
- Rubicon (Richmond)  
33 male beds, 4 female beds
- Hope Harbor (Danville)  
8 male beds
- Bethany House (Roanoke)  
13 female beds
- Vanguard (Arlington)  
3 male beds

Total: 121 beds (92 male, 29 female)

THE THERAPEUTIC  
COMMUNITY IS A  
RESEARCH-BASED  
SUBSTANCE ABUSE  
TREATMENT MODALITY

# NATIONAL RESEARCH

- Delaware found a 40% difference in the re-arrest rate for TC completers versus a no treatment group.
- TC Completers from the Amity Program in California had a recommitment rate of 40% less than that of the no treatment group.
- Texas found almost a 20% lower recommitment rate for TC completers versus a no treatment group.

# VIRGINIA BASED-RESEARCH

- Gemeinschaft Transitional Therapeutic Community (TTC) Pilot Program Study: Dr. Peggy Plass, James Madison University
- Virginia DOC Therapeutic Community Male Participants Study
- Virginia DOC Therapeutic Community Female Participants Study

# GEMEINSCHAFT STUDY

- This study was a collaborative research effort with Dr. Plass at JMU, Ms. Jennie Amison at Gemeinschaft Home, and Jean Mottley, DOC Program Evaluator.
- Gemeinschaft was the first TTC program (final phase of the TC program) established in July of 2000.
- This study provided the first opportunity to evaluate the complete VADOC TC program model.

# Gemeinschaft Transitional Therapeutic Community (TTC) Pilot Program

- First Cohort entered July 2000
- Last Cohort entered June 2002
- At the time of this report, offenders had been out of prison for a minimum of 1.5 years and a maximum of 3.5 years.



# Gemeinschaft Participants

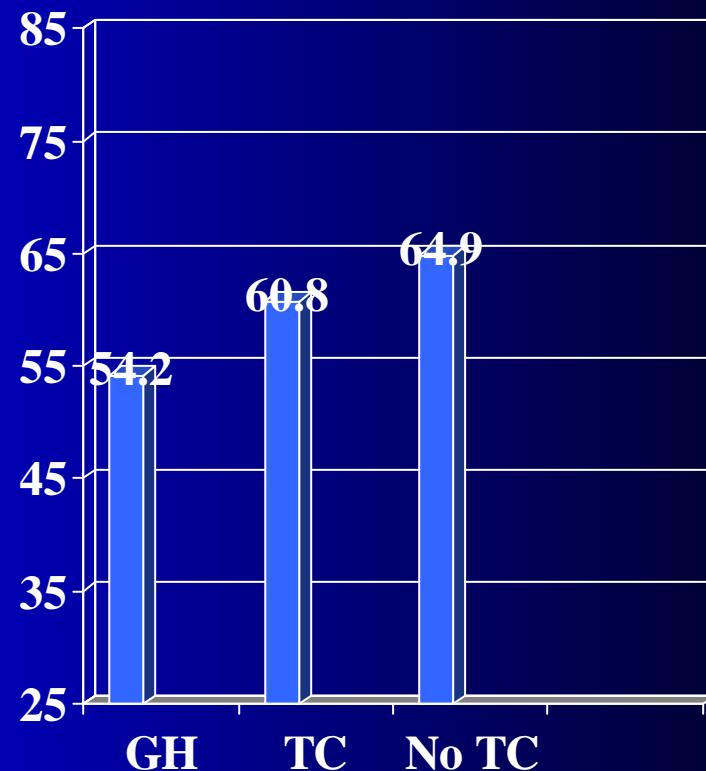
- 163 offenders admitted to the program in the evaluation period
- 131 successfully completed and graduated from the Gemeinschaft TTC (and therefore completed the VADOC TC treatment program)

# Control Groups Composition

- Prison TC Only Participants 339
- No Treatment Group 504
- Total in Control Groups 843

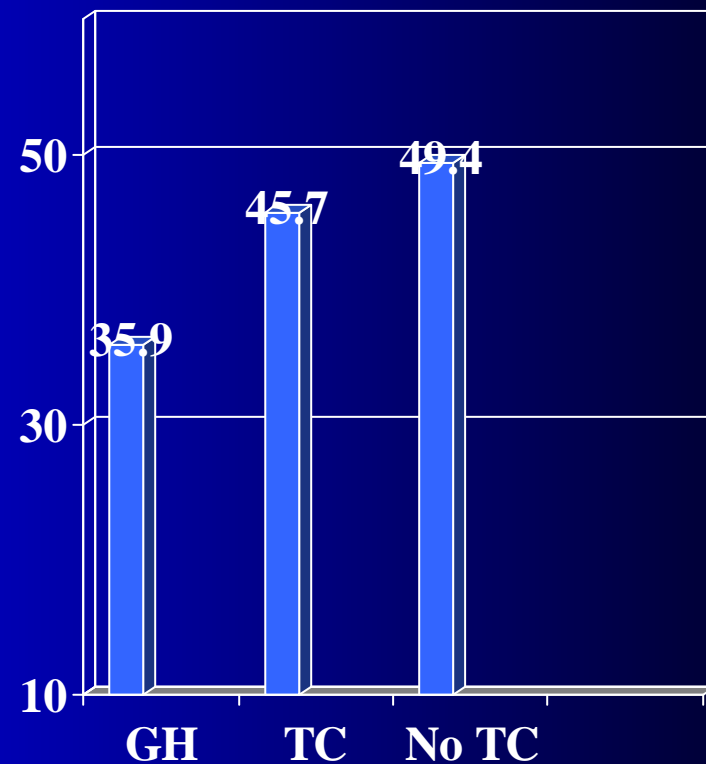
# Re-Arrest 2004

- Gemeinschaft participants were less likely to be re-arrested than were either Prison TC or Non-Prison TC Controls.
- Prison TC Controls had lower arrest rates than did Non-Prison TC offenders.



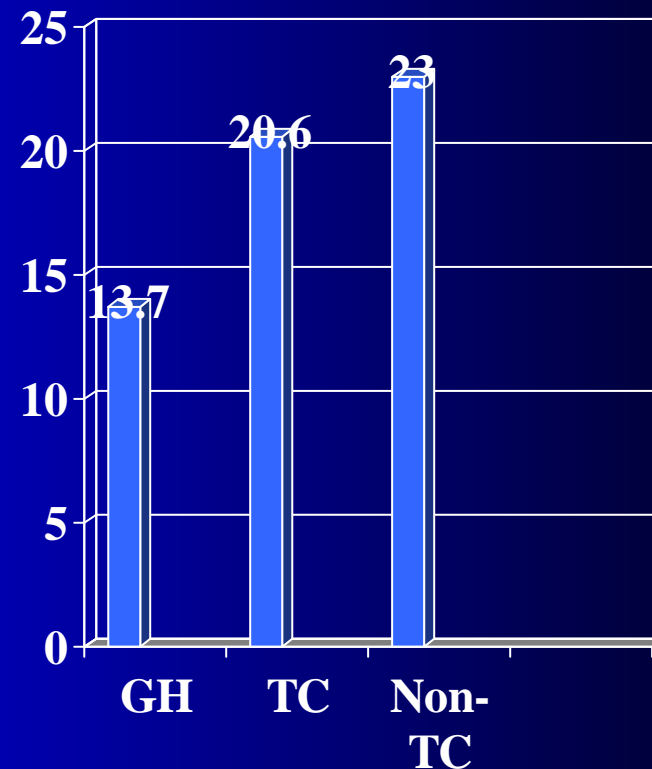
# Re-Conviction 2004

- Gemeinschaft participants had significantly lower re-conviction rates than did either Prison TC or Non-Prison TC Controls.

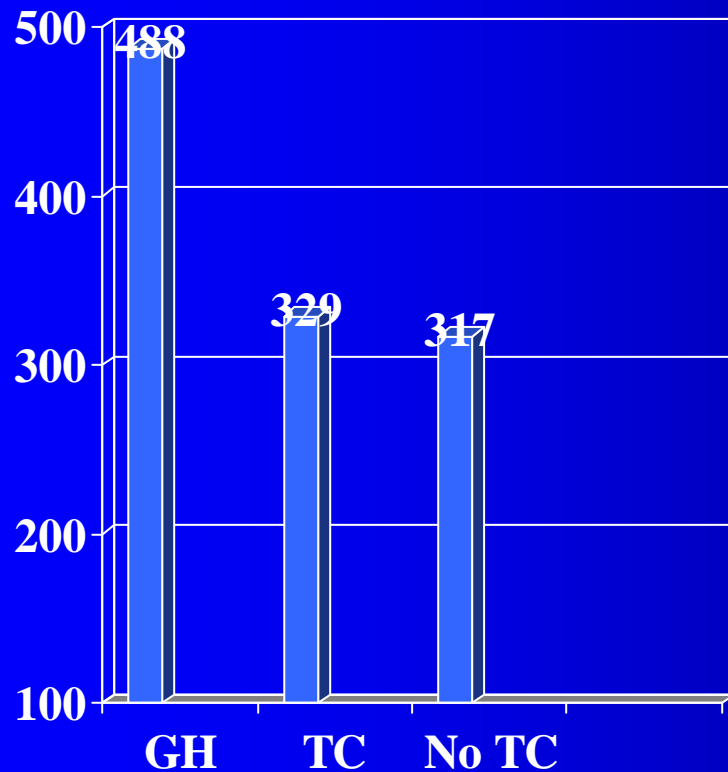


# Recommitment 2004

- Gemeinschaft participants had lower Re-committal rates than did either Prison TC or Non Prison TC Offenders.



# Average Days to Re-Arrest



Gemeinschaft participants resisted re-arrest significantly longer than either Prison TC or Non-Prison TC Offenders

# RESEARCH FINDINGS

“The results of this evaluation of the Pilot Program at Gemeinschaft are very positive. Taken all together, the offenders who completed the Pilot Program did better in every respect measured than did the controls, and most of these differences were statistically significant. “

Peggy Plass, Ph.D.

# DOC TC MALES STUDY

- Study included 103 TTC completers, 165 Institutional TC only completers, and 237 offenders with no treatment who left during 2001.
- Three recidivism measures: re-arrest, reconviction, and recommitment.
- Status check date was in January of 2004 so participants had been out between 24 and 36 months.
- On all measures the TTC completers had best outcomes. For re-arrest and reconviction the differences were statistically significant.
- Percentage differences between program completers and no treatment group: Re-arrest [18%]; reconviction [22%]; and recommitment [9%]



# DOC TC FEMALES STUDY

- Study included 34 TTC completers, 119 Institutional TC only completers, and 224 offenders with no treatment who left during 2002.
- Three recidivism measures: re-arrest, reconviction, and recommitment.
- Status check date was in March of 2005 so participants had been out at least two years.
- On all measures the TTC completers had best outcomes. Percentage differences between program completers and no treatment group: Re-arrest [12%]; reconviction [13%]; and recommitment [6%]

# JLARC STUDY RESULTS

- TTC completers had mixed recidivism outcomes when compared to TC institution-based portion participants and the no treatment group.
- Results indicated that TTC completers imposed higher costs upon the State and localities after being treated than similar groups, with or without accounting for treatment expenditures.
- However, TTC completers were less likely to be returned to prison (four percent of TTC completers compared to eight percent of TC-only completers and ten percent of non-participants).
- Though recidivism measures were mixed, TTC completers had higher rates of employment than TC-only completers during the 18-month period after treatment.

# DOC TC HISTORICAL DATA TO INFORM JLARC OUTCOMES

- Quarterly reports on the status of the TC programs have been produced since 2000.
- Information derived from the reports from 2004-2005 were used to review the status of the TC programs during the time that the JLARC study participants were in treatment.

# PROGRAM CHALLENGES

## 2004-2005

- Privatization of our largest TC at Indian Creek Correctional Center
- Overhaul of Botetourt Correctional Center TC
- TC Director Vacancies
- Clinical Staffing Shortages
- Major Change to Treatment Model with Addition of Pre-Release
- Court Ruling Shortened Sentence (and interrupted treatment episode) for Some Participants

# CHANGES MADE SINCE 2005

- Staffing levels stabilized.
- TC Administrator positions filled.
- ICCC TC is fully functional.
- Cognitive Behavioral Skills Curricula being integrated into the TCs.
- Texas Christian University Assessments being implemented.
- Now have transition specialists positions at the TCs.
- CADMUS, an electronic data collection system has been implemented at all TCs.

# CHANGES SINCE 2005 (continued)

- DOC's Classification Unit has designated a fulltime position to focus solely on placing participants in TCs and at TTCs.
- Aggressive staff training programs implemented.
- A DOC position has been tasked with monitoring TTC programs to ensure fidelity of operations.

# 2007 RECOMMITMENT STATUS DATA

- The next formal outcome evaluation of the VADOC TC model will include participants who left the programs during 2007. It will begin in early 2008 to establish one-year outcome results and will include re-arrest, reconviction, and recommitment measures. The study will continue to collect outcome data for at least a three-year period.
- While the results of a one-year outcome evaluation can not yet be produced, we do monitor the recommitment status of the participants.
- As of the end of the second quarter of 2008, institutional TC completers who left during the first half of 2007 had a recommitment rate of 11% but those who participated in the TTC had a rate of 3%. This information is not part of a formal outcome evaluation but rather just a status check.

# QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

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