

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice

Time to Think Differently: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Suicide Prevention

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Educational Objectives

Learning Objective 1: **Discuss how collaborative partnerships within an organization can achieve successful outcomes**

Learning Objective 2: **Identify solutions for suicide prevention and response in a correctional setting**

Learning Objective 3: **Brainstorm ways to create a multidisciplinary approach to suicide or another specific challenge being faced**

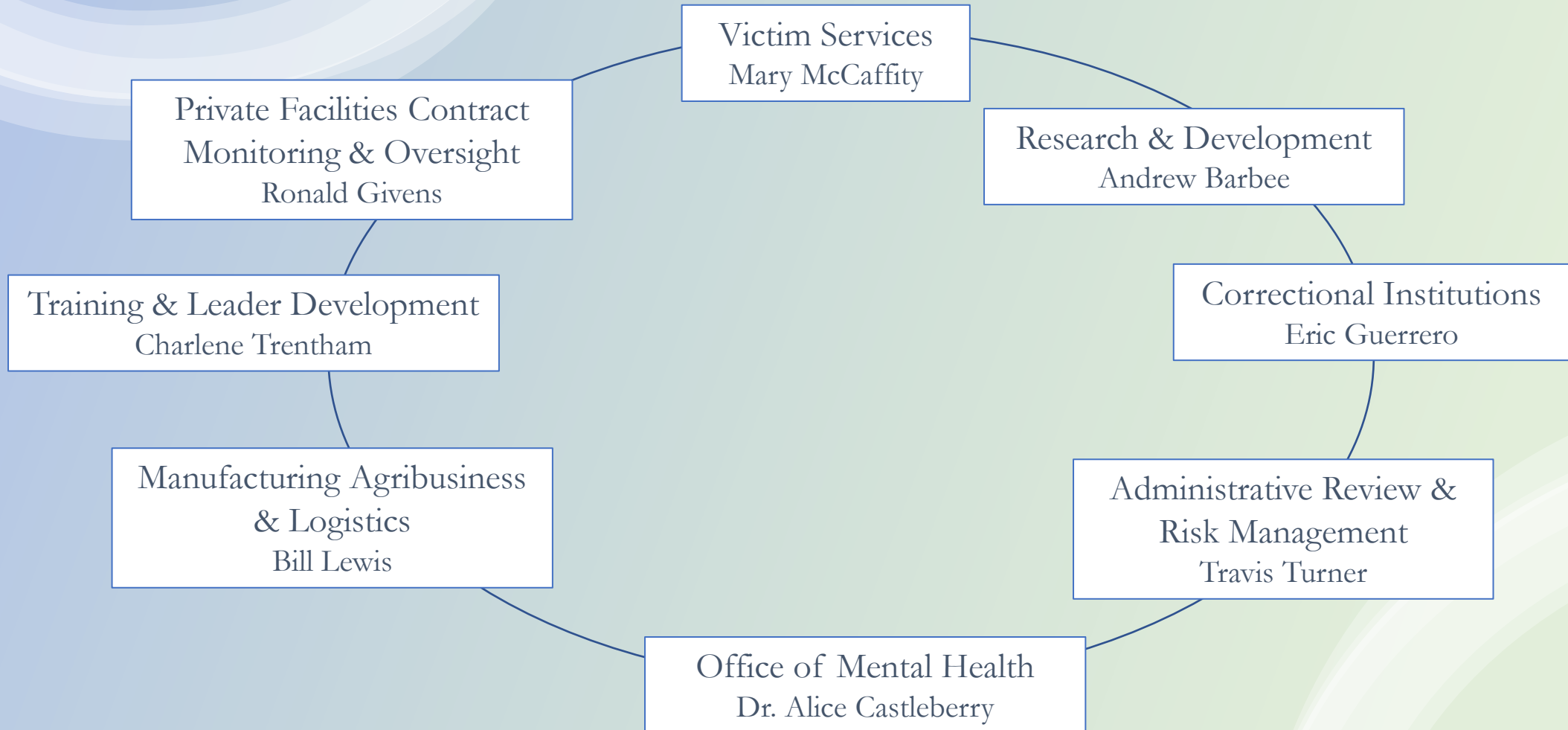
What/How Did We Start

Original Deputy
reviews

R&D doing research

Need to bring key
perspectives from
across agency together

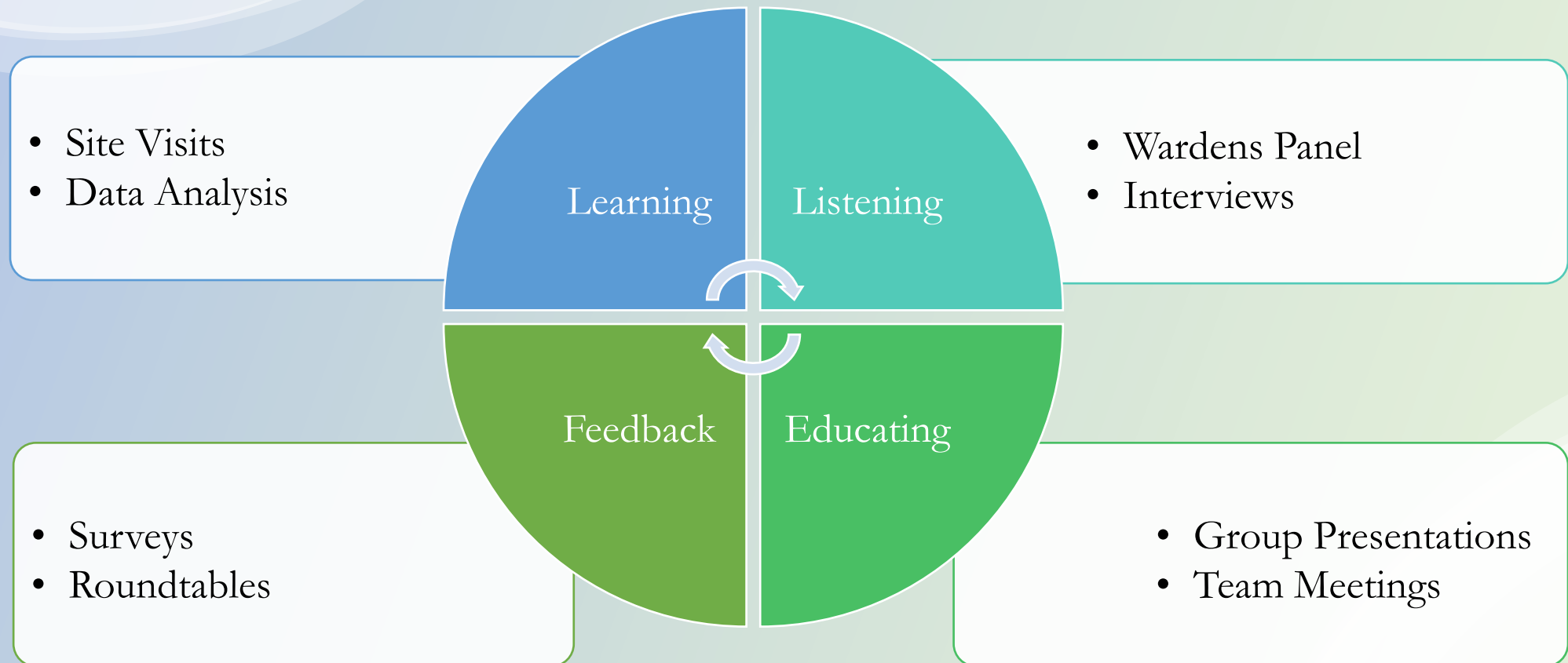
Who – Members of the Team



Goals of the Team

- Ensure variety of perspectives
- Identify gaps – in understanding, process, and collaboration
- Craft solutions:
 - Remove silos
 - Increase support to facilities and staff
- Address TRAUMA:
 - Organizational and ever-present (fatigue, burn out)
 - Critical incident

Efforts of the Team



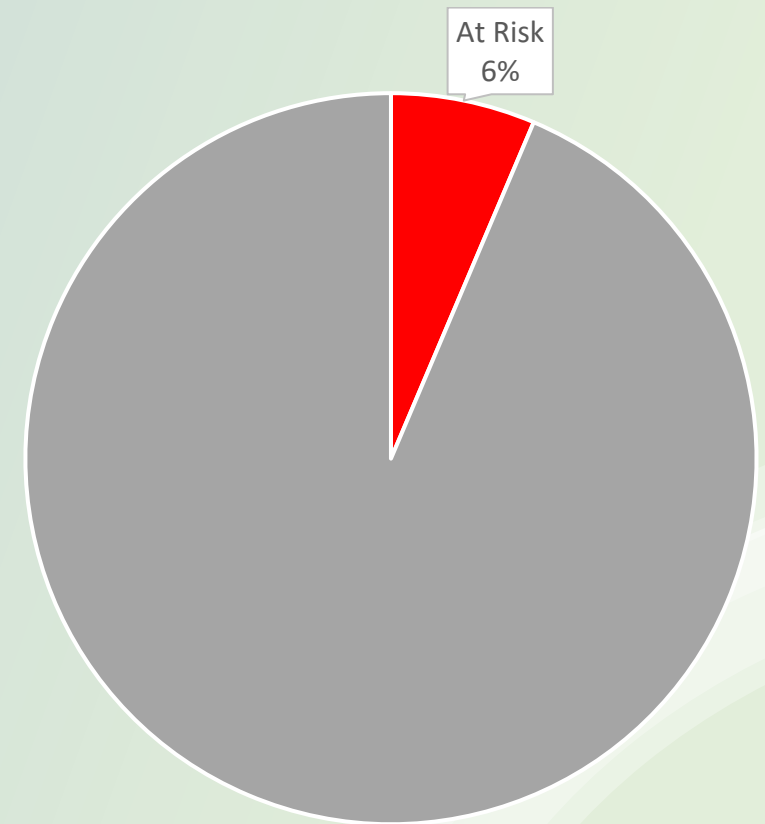
Brief Discussion of the Research & Development of the Screening Tool

- Lack of research and data mining
- Finding patterns
- Risk screening tool development:
 - Individual factors
 - Environmental factors
- Daily updating across entire inmate population:
 - Risk-based deployment of strategies to mitigate self-harm

Screening Tool

13 Factors

- History of self harm
- Restrictive housing
- Single celled
- Threats against inmate
- Violent offense
- Misconducts
- Time incarcerated
- Mental health score
- Age
- Gender
- IQ
- Religion
- Children



Lessons Learned



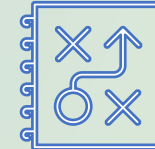
Listen to Understand

- Judgment and critique ineffective
- Build rapport and trust



Ask Questions (especially the dumb ones)

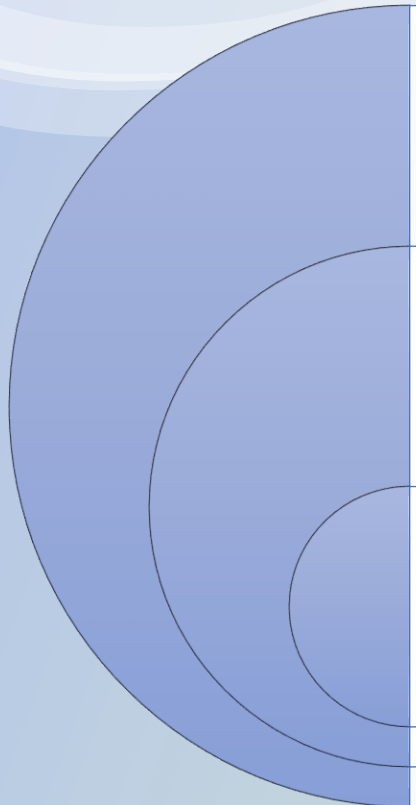
- Need to ensure all on same page
- Having to articulate rationale critical (identifies strengths and weaknesses)



Challenge “The Way We’ve Always Done It”

- Nothing is too sacred to be challenged re: effectiveness
- Need to address pretense

Strategies



Training & Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revamp pre-service and in-service• Deliver education and develop deeper understanding among staff and inmates
Unit-Based Pilots	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identification• Engagement• Collaboration• Operations
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critical Incident Response• Wellness

Piloting of 8-part Strategy

1. Identification Tool

Make use of daily updates of inmates flagged as “at risk” for self-harm. Generated through automated data mining and pushed to unit

2. Self-Harm Prevention Office

Unit-based office with 3-4 staff that coordinate information specific to inmate self-harm and planning

3. Security Precaution Designator for Self-Harm

Use of SPDs created specifically for “at risk” inmates

4. Inmate Peers

Leverage use of field ministers, peers, and life coaches to engage “at risk” inmates

5. Multiple CDOs

Identify space to establish ability for one officer to provide constant, direct observation (CDO) to multiple inmates simultaneously

6. Operations

Scrutinize “traditional” practices for efficiency, true connection to security and safety, and feasibility given modern staffing realities

7. Capacity

In concert with different practices, revisit how capacity is allocated for “at risk” inmates

8. Staffing

Explore surging staff and power shifting at key times to “power up” and offsetting by having fewer staff at other times

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