

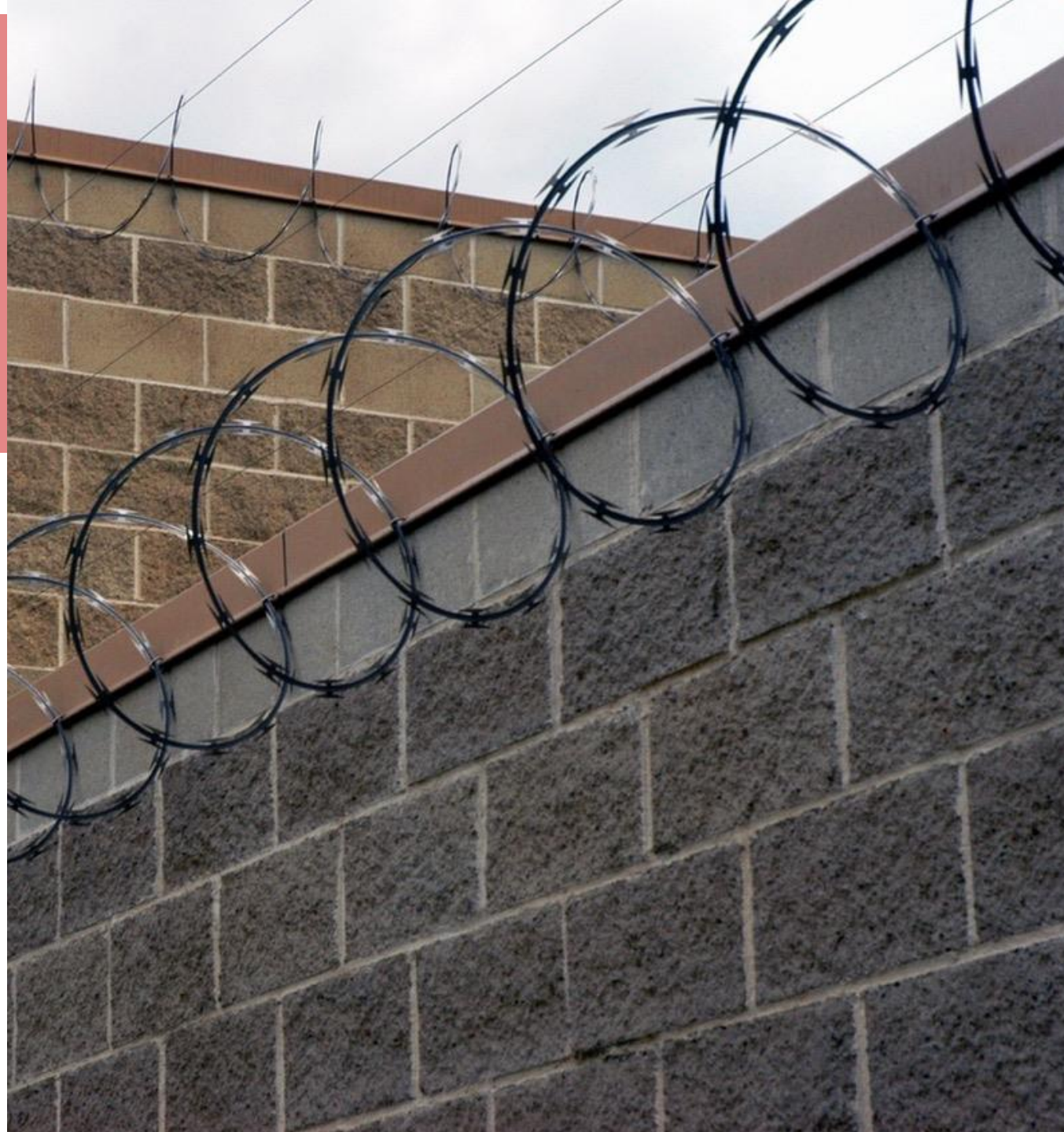
# What External Reviews of Suicide Prevention Programs Can Teach You: Lessons Learned

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# Disclosure and Disclaimer

**“We do not have any relevant financial relationships with any commercial interests.”**

- **This informational presentation was developed by independent experts. The information provided in this presentation is not the official position or recommendation of NCCHC but rather expert opinion. This information is not intended to be appropriate for every clinical situation nor does it replace clinical judgment.**
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# Educational Objectives

- **Describe (4) ways a system-level review of a suicide prevention program can help decrease suicide attempts and deaths**
- **Articulate (4) lessons learned from the system-level suicide prevention reviews of two very different jails**
- **Discuss (3) potential downsides of having outside experts review a correctional suicide prevention program**

**Jail**

**Prison**

**Administrator**

**Mid-level  
Manager**

**Medical**

**Mental  
Health**

**Front-line**

**Corrections**

# Suicide Prevention

- Policy
- Screening
- Assessment
- Housing
- Clothing
- Treatment
- Emergency response
- Mortality reviews
- Programming
- Facility culture
- Officer Interactions
- Other.....

# **4 Ways a System-level Review Can Help Decrease Suicide Attempts and Deaths**

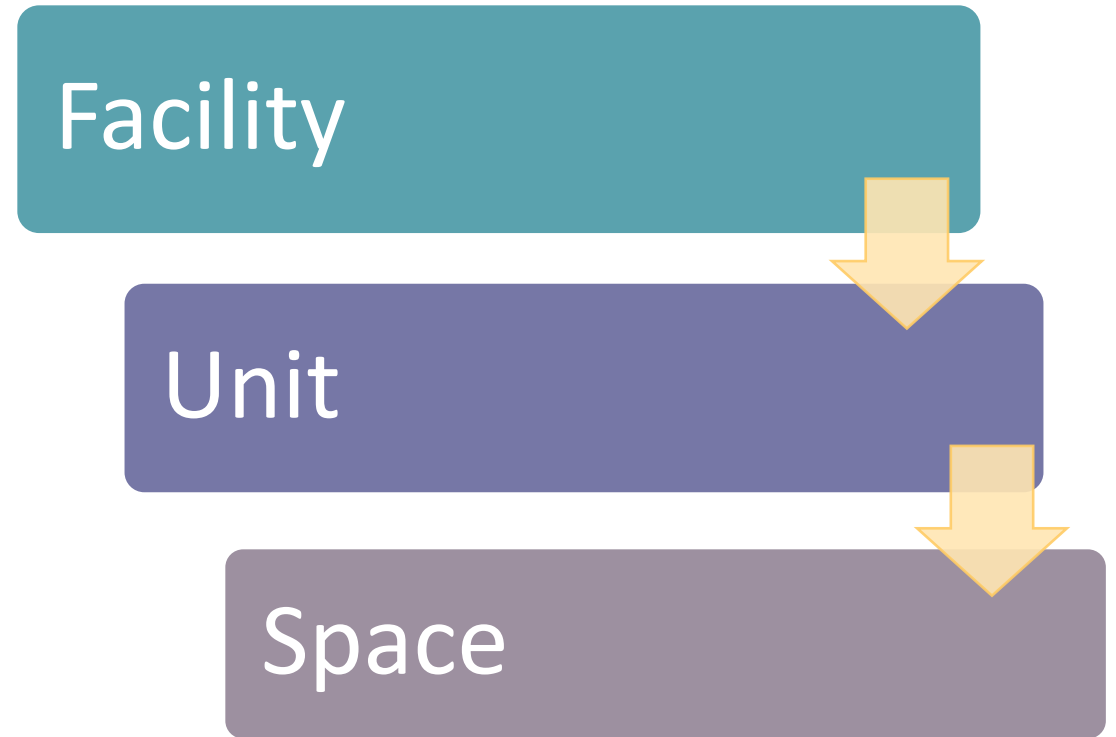


# 1) Suicide Prevention Training



## 2) Facility Assessment

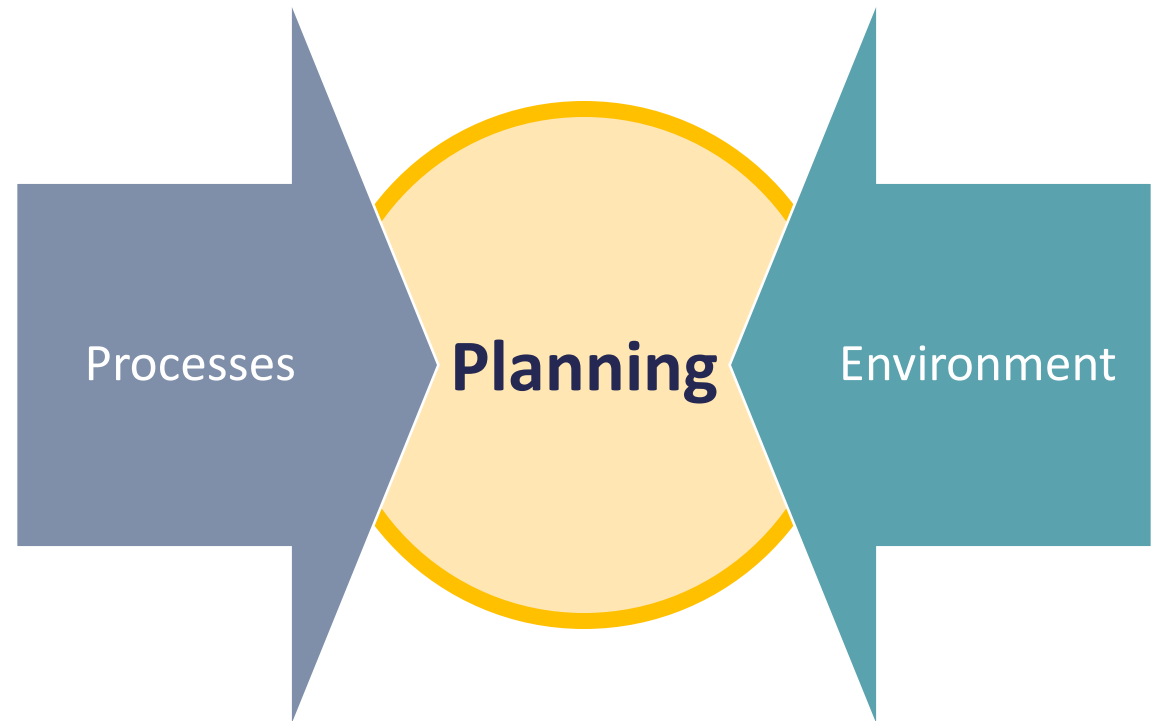
- Facility-wide documentation
- Collaboration with stakeholders
  - Administration
  - Security
  - Health Care
  - Maintenance
- Observe & review together





## 2) Facility Assessment

- Documentation serves as a template for *ACTION*
- Comprehensive review requires understanding relationships



### 3) Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMHP)



## 4) Minimizing Environmental Risks

- No such thing as a suicide proof space
- Focus on areas where physical changes can have greatest impact
- Educate staff

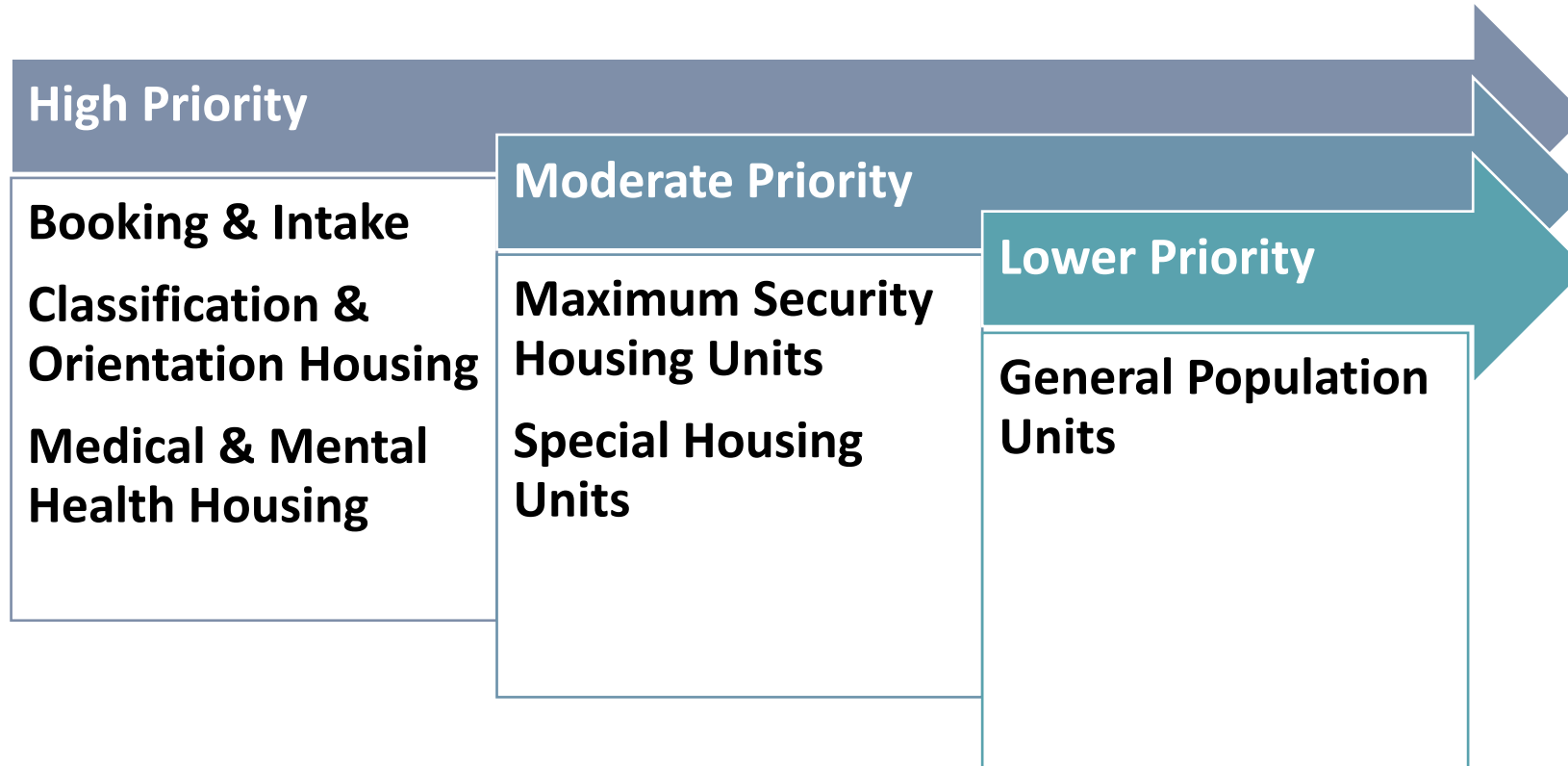


## 4) Minimizing Environmental Risks

- **Fixtures, furnishings & equipment**
- **Visibility**
- **Access**



## 4) Minimizing Environmental Risks



**(4) “Lessons Learned”  
from the System-Level  
Suicide Prevention Reviews  
of (4) Very Different Jails**

# Lesson Learned #1

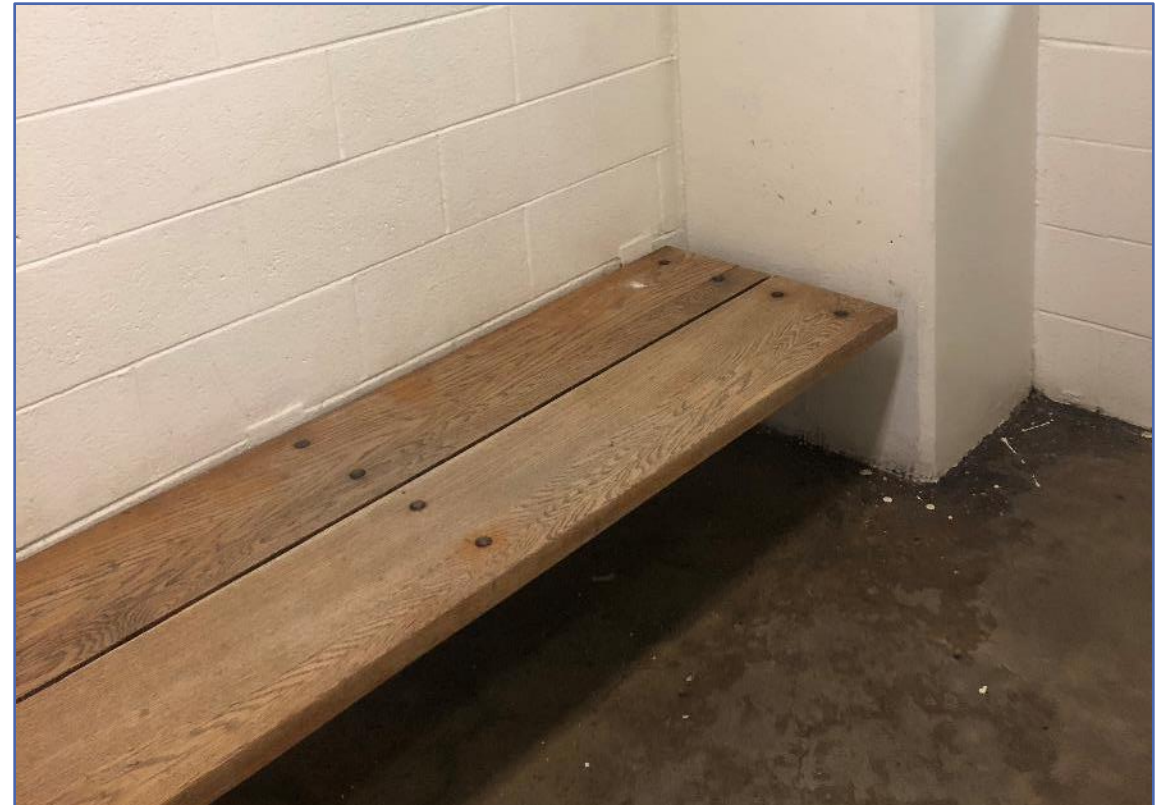
- 4 months
- How did MH miss it?
- What mistakes?
- What should/could have been done



# Lesson Learned #2

## Understanding Environmental Risks – Spreading the Word

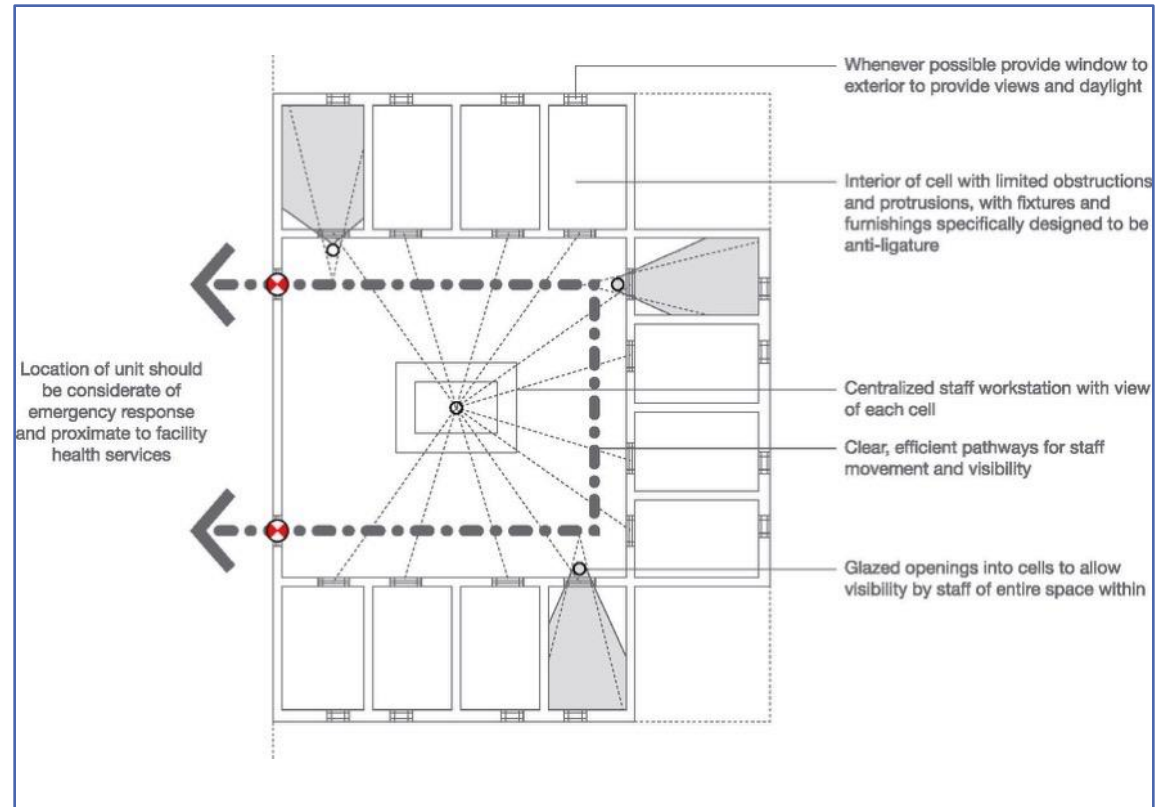
- Ligature risks are often misunderstood or go unseen
  - Communicate with staff
  - Monitor damage / deterioration
- Use space appropriately



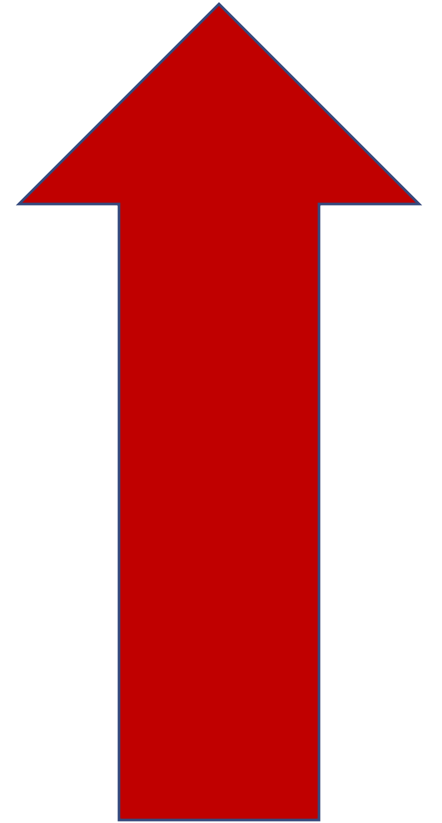
# Lesson Learned #2 (continued)

## Understanding Environmental Risks – Spreading the Word

- Avoid use of cells with poor visibility / accountability
- Eliminate upper bunks whenever possible



## Lesson Learned #3



## Lesson Learned #3 (continued)





# Lesson Learned #4

## Design for Wellbeing

- **Natural Light**
  - Physiological, mental, and behavioral responses
- **Acoustics / Communication**
  - Sleep loss and fragmentation
  - Fatigue & job strain
- **Color & Texture**
  - Visual, kinesthetic, tactile



# Lesson Learned #4

## Design for Wellbeing

- Reduce stress
- Improve communication
- Mental and physical restoration



**Lots of +**





**Downside**



# Cost

- **Modifications are costly**
- **Ligature resistant fixtures and furnishings cost more**
- **Capital funding is difficult to obtain**
- **County / Department have different priorities**



# Cost (continued)

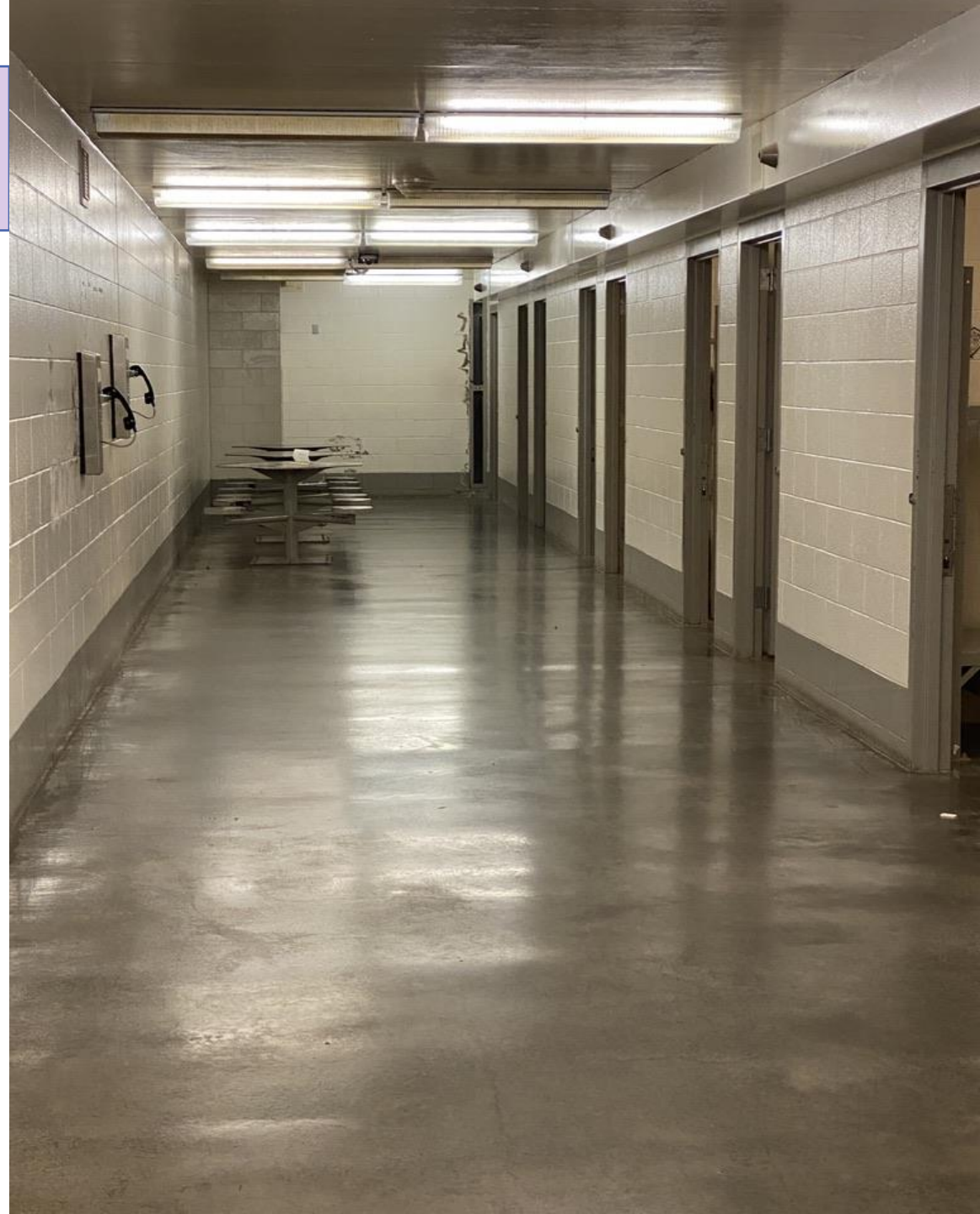
- Leverage knowledge obtained in review to prioritize efforts
- Educate decisionmakers
- Advocate beyond the minimum
- ***PLAN FOR THE FUTURE***





# Morale

- **Depressing**
- **Overwhelming**



# Difficulty Establishing Priorities

- Significant demands on resources
  - Staffing
  - Financial
- Differing opinions
- Rapid changes in population / system
- Future unknowns



# Difficulty Establishing Priorities (continued)

## *GUIDING PRINCIPLES*

- Center decision-making on safety and wellbeing
- Build consensus through education and collaboration aligned with shared goals
- Trust the plan



# Trouble

- Discipline
- Suspension
- Fired
- Charged



- Corrections, Medical, Mental Health





- **Downside**
- **Most afraid of**









Be ♡  
The  
CHANGE





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# References

- **Lieberman, et al. (2004). Environment risk factors in hospital suicide. *Suicide and Life Threatening Behavior*, 34, 448-453.**
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