

# Suicide Prevention in Administrative Segregation Units - What Is Missing?

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## Abstract

Suicide remains a problem in prison administrative segregation units. Preventing suicide requires more than following policies and procedures and making structural changes to these units. The primary reason for placement in administrative segregation units is for an alleged rule violation, which in some cases could also be a crime. Prisoners could also be placed there for protection from other prisoners or pending an investigation of their allegations of staff misconduct. From the moment a prisoner is handcuffed for placement in administrative segregation, clinical and custody staff must work together in a manner that communicates genuine concern for the prisoner's well-being. This requires developing empathic relationships, understanding the prisoner's unique circumstances, and recognizing changing dynamics that could lead to hopelessness and suicide. Staff must be able to view the situation, including short- and long-term consequences, from the inmate's perspective. The author offers 10 recommendations to help reduce suicide on these units.