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POLICE EXECUTIVE
RESEARCH FORUM

ICAT for Jails

A GUIDE FOR MINIMIZING USE OF FORCE
IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Integrating Communications,
Assessment, and Tactics**

April 2024



ICAT for Jails: A Guide for Minimizing Use of Force in Correctional Facilities

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FROM PERF'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Bringing Proven Use-of-Force Training to Correctional Officers

ICAT – Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics – is a training program that is transforming how law enforcement officers are trained to de-escalate critical incidents and minimize the use of force whenever possible.

Created and managed by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), ICAT was developed with input from hundreds of police officers, trainers, researchers, and others from across the United States and overseas. The curriculum includes classroom instruction split into seven modules, video case studies, and, importantly, live-action scenario-based exercises where students can practice what they learned in the classroom.

Rolled out by PERF in 2016, ICAT was originally created for patrol officers, who are typically the first responders on the scene of dynamic encounters where the potential for use of force exists. Since then, ICAT has been adopted by hundreds of police departments and sheriffs' offices across the country for their patrol divisions.

And the training has been successful. In a randomized controlled study of the Louisville Metro Police Department, researchers found that ICAT was associated with substantial reductions not only in use of force by officers, but also in injuries to both subjects *and* officers (see page 7). Other agencies have experienced similar reductions since adopting ICAT. The good news is that ICAT is making

things safer for everyone – police officers, subjects they encounter and, by extension, the community at large.

The success and growth of ICAT in police departments led us to think: if the training works for patrol officers, why wouldn't it work for correctional officers as well?

After all, both groups face similar challenges. They are regularly involved in stressful, dynamic, and potentially violent encounters with people who may have mental health challenges, substance use disorders, and extensive criminal histories. In addition, police officers and correctional officers share common goals: to de-escalate these types of encounters and minimize the use of force, all while securing the safety of both officers and subjects, whether they are on the street or in a jail or prison. ICAT is built on the guiding principle of the sanctity of human life, the goal that everyone goes home safely at the end of the day.

ICAT is designed primarily for incidents in which subjects are either unarmed or armed with a knife, baseball bat, or other impact weapon. The presence of a firearm changes the equation when it comes to use of force and de-escalation, and while ICAT principles can still be applied in some of these encounters, the training is largely designed for those situations where the subject is not armed with a firearm. This focus makes ICAT particularly relevant to jails, where firearms are not an

issue but potentially violent inmates may still be armed with other, home-made weapons.

Recently, some sheriffs' offices that train their patrol deputies in ICAT have begun to adopt the training for their detention personnel as well. (See Chapter 3 for case studies of two such agencies: the Harris County, TX and Santa Cruz County, CA sheriffs' offices.) They have found that not every part of ICAT applies to their jail personnel; for example, the module on "suicide by cop" is not necessarily a close fit in the jail environment. However, these agencies have discovered that the core elements of the training – communications, assessment, tactics, and decision-making – do apply to correctional officers, as does the concept of "stepping up and stepping in" with fellow officers when a situation is not going as planned. Agencies have found that the bulk of the ICAT curriculum can seamlessly be adapted for their jail personnel.

The early adopters have also found that the curriculum works best when they use scenarios and video case studies that are customized to the corrections environment. (The videos and scenarios in the core ICAT curriculum focus on street encounters.) But the basic ICAT curriculum transfers easily.

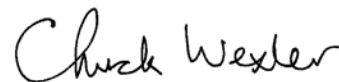
This publication is designed to help sheriffs' offices, as well as other agencies that operate lockups or other detention facilities, to implement the ICAT curriculum in their facilities. This report draws heavily on the experiences of the sheriffs' offices in Harris County and Santa Cruz County, which have been teaching ICAT to their patrol and detention personnel for well over a year. The report also reflects the ideas and insights of close to 20 individuals – sheriffs and other sheriffs' office personnel, experienced ICAT

instructors, and PERF staff – who participated in a two-day meeting in November 2022 at PERF's National ICAT Training Center in Decatur, IL.

This report is not a new curriculum for teaching ICAT to correctional personnel. What we have learned from the early adopters, as well as many of the experts we consulted with, is that the existing ICAT curriculum is a solid foundation for teaching ICAT in jails. Rather, this report serves as a guide for sheriffs' offices that are interested in how to deliver ICAT training to their jail personnel. The following chapters summarize the key elements of the ICAT curriculum, review how they apply to correctional officers, and provide examples of how sheriffs' offices have customized the curriculum and rolled out the training in their jails.

I hope this publication increases your understanding of ICAT and potentially sparks your interest in the training. If you would like to explore options for adopting ICAT in your agency, PERF is here to help you. And the National ICAT Training Center, which includes state-of-the-art classrooms and mock jail cells for scenario-based instruction, is available for training sessions run by PERF.

As the study in Louisville demonstrated, ICAT can reduce uses of force and enhance safety for both patrol officers and citizens. I am confident that we can achieve similar results in our jails. I hope you will consider being a part of this transformation.



Chuck Wexler
Executive Director

Acknowledgments

The development and growth of ICAT over the past several years has been truly remarkable, and there are far too many people who have been instrumental to our success to name here. The individuals directly involved in the development of ICAT for Jails deserve special recognition, however. First and foremost, they include the ICAT team at PERF: Dan Alioto, Associate Deputy Director, lead developer and trainer for ICAT, and head of PERF's Sheriffs Outreach program; Tom Wilson, Director of the Center for Management and Technical Assistance; Chad Lerner, Senior Manager of ICAT Facilities; Senior Research Associate Jason Cheney (who also doubles as an ICAT role player); and Adam Kass, who was instrumental in developing many of the ICAT training materials before he set off for graduate school.

PERF is also grateful to the individuals who shared their experiences and insights at the two-day meeting PERF held at the National ICAT Training Center in Decatur, IL in November 2022: Sheriff (ret.) Tom Schneider of Macon County, IL; Sheriff (ret.) Gary Raney of Ada County, ID; Sheriff (ret.) Tim Cameron and Deputy Ben Luffy of the St. Mary's County, MD Sheriff's Office; Sergeant Jose Gomez and Deputy Eric Urigas of the Harris County, TX Sheriff's Office; Captain Jeff Stefonek and Lieutenant Zach Johnson of the Marathon County, WI Sheriff's Office; Undersheriff Chris Clark of the Santa Cruz County, CA Sheriff's Office; Officer Cam Deane of the Cambridge, MA Police Department and Lieutenant (ret.) William Murray of the Camden County, NJ Police Department, both of whom are experienced ICAT trainers; and Pat Connelly, retired Senior Administrator with the Illinois Department of Corrections.

Special thanks go to Howard G. Buffett, head of the Howard G. Buffett Foundation and former Sheriff of Macon County, IL, who also participated in the meeting in Decatur. Howard has been with PERF from the very beginning of ICAT, and his invaluable support has enabled PERF to continually upgrade and improve the curriculum and to train hundreds of police departments and sheriffs' offices in ICAT over the past several years. His latest contribution – the creation of PERF's state-of-the-art National ICAT Training Center – will allow for the training of many more agencies in the years ahead, including sheriffs' offices looking to implement ICAT in their jails (see Chapter 6).

In addition to attending the ICAT for Jails meeting last November, several members of the Harris County, Marathon County, and Santa Cruz County sheriffs' offices participated in follow-up interviews detailing their experiences in implementing ICAT. So did Gary Raney, a nationally recognized expert on jail operations, including use of force. PERF appreciates the time and insights they provided, as well as their commitment to improving the law enforcement profession.

Finally, thanks go to Kevin Morison, a PERF alum and current consultant who drafted this report. Also, PERF's Communications team – Senior Principal James McGinty and Associate Dustin Waters – who assisted with the Decatur meeting and shepherded the publication of this report.

Chuck Wexler and Howard Buffett



CHAPTER 1

ICAT Overview: Developed by Law Enforcement Officers for Law Enforcement Officers

ICAT – Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics – is a training program designed to help front-line law enforcement personnel defuse critical encounters and minimize the use of force. Created and managed by the Police Executive Research Forum, ICAT was developed *by* law enforcement officers *for* law enforcement officers. In designing ICAT, PERF consulted with hundreds of police officers, supervisors and executives, training experts, researchers, and others from across the United States and the United Kingdom. They participated in seminars and working group sessions, and personnel from seven agencies pilot-tested the curriculum before its release. These professionals provided PERF with valuable experiences and insights on what works best when it comes to de-escalation and use of force.

What makes ICAT unique is that it integrates three key elements of managing tense and potentially violent encounters:

- Communications – with the subject and with fellow police personnel;
- Assessment – of the subject (including any mental health or substance abuse issues) and the threats they may pose; and
- Tactics – steps to keep officers, subjects, and the public safe.

Other training programs emphasize one or two of these three elements. ICAT focuses on all three and emphasizes how to integrate them into a coordinated response. Central to the ICAT approach is the Critical Decision-Making Model, which is a tool for evaluating situations, assessing threats, and guiding actions.

The ICAT curriculum is presented in seven modules through a combination of classroom instruction, video case studies, and live-action scenario-based training. Most agencies spend one day in the classroom and at least half a day on scenarios (although some agencies spend a full day on scenarios to accommodate additional students and/or scenarios).

Rolled out in December 2016, ICAT has been used to train patrol personnel in hundreds of police departments and sheriffs' offices across the country. Large, medium-sized, and small agencies have all adopted ICAT. In 2022, the Attorney General of New Jersey mandated that all 500-plus police agencies in the state provide ICAT training to their officers.

Recently, some sheriffs' offices that were already training their street deputies in ICAT have begun implementing the training for their correctional personnel as well. (See Chapter 3 for case studies of ICAT for Jails implementation in the Harris County, TX and Santa Cruz County, CA sheriffs' offices.)

The ICAT Modules

The ICAT curriculum consists of seven modules. (The modules are explained in greater detail in Chapters 4 and 5.)

- Module 1: Introduction to ICAT
- Module 2: The Critical Decision-Making Model (CDM)
- Module 3: Crisis Recognition
- Module 4: Tactical Communications
- Module 5: Suicide by Cop
- Module 6: Operational Tactics
- Module 7: Step Up and Step In

While ICAT was originally designed for front-line patrol officers, sheriffs' offices that have begun training their jail personnel in ICAT have found that, with the possible exception of Module 5: Suicide by Cop, all of the ICAT modules are applicable to their correctional personnel.

What ICAT Does – and What It Does Not Do

For both patrol and correctional personnel, it is important to understand what ICAT does and does not do.

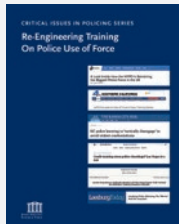
ICAT does not:

- Tell officers to walk away from or ignore dangerous situations.
- Put officers in compromised or unwinnable situations. Just the opposite: ICAT focuses on putting and keeping officers in *winnable* situations.
- Tell officers they cannot use force when appropriate.
- Limit options for officers. To the contrary, ICAT is about increasing options, which enhances safety.

ICAT does:

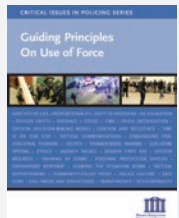
- Provide officers with more options.
- Provide a framework for effective decision-making, especially in high-risk, dynamic situations.
- Promote officer safety – not only enhancing physical safety but also reducing emotional trauma, and even disciplinary action or job loss, which can follow a use-of-force incident.
- Promote the sanctity of human life – trying to make sure *everyone* goes home safely whenever possible.

A Brief History of ICAT



August 2015

PERF publishes *Re-Engineering Training on Police Use of Force*.



March 2016

PERF publishes *Guiding Principles on Use of Force*, which lays out policy foundation of ICAT.

August 2016

ICAT pilot-tested in seven agencies across U.S.

December 2016

PERF holds a national ICAT meeting in New Orleans, attended by 425 police professionals.



September 2020

Randomized control study by University of Cincinnati researchers finds ICAT reduces uses of force, citizen injuries, and officer injuries.



April 2021

PERF adds new ICAT module, “Step Up and Step In,” on preventing problems in potential use-of-force situations before they occur.

May 2023

PERF’s National ICAT Training Center, funded by donation from Howard G. Buffet Foundation, opens in Decatur, IL. (Photo: Howard Buffet and PERF Executive Director Chuck Wexler.) PERF publishes *Implementing the ICAT Training Program at Your Agency*.

June 2012

PERF publishes *An Integrated Approach to De-Escalation and Minimizing Use of Force*.



December 2015

PERF takes 25 police leaders to Scotland to study police response to individuals who present a threat.

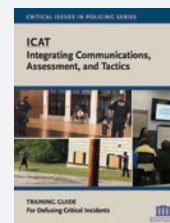


April 2016

Police professionals from U.S. and Scotland spend week at NYPD Academy developing ICAT curriculum.

October 2016

PERF publishes *ICAT: Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics*.



August 2019

PERF assembles team of experts to discuss suicide-by-cop encounters; topic later added to ICAT curriculum.

December 2020

New Jersey mandates that all sworn law enforcement officers complete ICAT.

January 2023

PERF holds first National ICAT Conference in San Diego.



Research Study Shows Success of ICAT

While de-escalation training for law enforcement officers has become increasingly popular, there has been a lack of quality research on whether the training works. This prompted a research team led by Dr. Robin Engel of the University of Cincinnati to undertake a rigorous evaluation of ICAT training in the Louisville, KY Metro Police Department (LMPD).

Using a randomized controlled trial – the gold standard of evaluation research – the team set out to test whether ICAT training affected officers’ perceptions, attitudes, and, importantly, their behaviors as well. Between February and November 2019, the LMPD trained 1,042 officers in ICAT. Officers were trained together with other members of their patrol divisions. The nine divisions were divided into three training groups, which allowed researchers to measure data from the test group (officers who had completed ICAT training) against a control group (officers who had not yet gone through the training). The research design included both pre- and post-training surveys of officers, a separate survey of supervisors, and analysis of use-of-force data.

The researchers concluded that ICAT had a measurable impact on use of force in the LMPD.¹ Specifically, ICAT was associated with:

- A 28.1% reduction in use-of-force incidents;
- A 26.3% reduction in citizen injuries; and
- A 36.0% reduction in officer injuries.

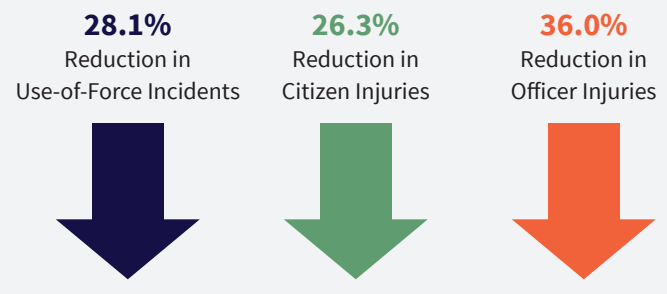
The reduction in officer injuries is especially noteworthy. A common criticism of de-escalation policies in general, and ICAT training specifically, has been that they will result in more officers getting injured or even killed by suspects wielding knives or other weapons. The research in Louisville found just the opposite; officer injuries dropped sharply after ICAT training.

The researchers did find some areas for improvement. For example, there seemed to be some training decay over time; 40% of officers reported the need for refresher training. In addition, there was low participation in supervisory activities to reinforce training. First-line supervisors play a critical role in the implementation of ICAT, and the research shows that agencies need to ensure that their supervisors receive the training and support their officers in carrying out the training in the field.



Robin Engel at the 2024 National ICAT Conference.

Impact of ICAT De-escalation Training in Louisville, KY



1. Engel, Robin et al. *Examining the Impact of Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics (ICAT) De-escalation Training for the Louisville Metro Police Department: Initial Findings*. International Association of Chiefs of Police-University of Cincinnati Center for Police Research and Policy, 2020. https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/Research%20Center/LMPD_ICAT%20Evaluation%20Initial%20Findings%20Report_FINAL%2009212020.pdf.

CHAPTER 2

Why ICAT Makes Sense for Jails

While ICAT was originally designed for police officers who patrol the street, there are many reasons why the training is a good fit for correctional officers who work in jails and other settings.

ICAT can enhance officer safety.

Correctional officers are exposed to unique workplace hazards within a controlled environment, and when they use force, the dangers they are exposed to often increase. Among all U.S. workers, correctional officers have one of the highest rates of nonfatal, work-related injuries or illnesses: 420 per 10,000 full-time employees (FTEs), compared to 104 per 10,000 FTEs among all workers in 2015 (the latest year for which comprehensive data is available).² The difference is even more dramatic when it comes to work-related injuries from assault and violent acts: 148 per 10,000 FTEs among correctional officers, vs. 7 per 10,000 FTEs among all workers.³

While many assaults on correctional officers are spontaneous and unprovoked, some assaults result from officers' decisions to use force, especially on non-compliant inmates. This can cause a reaction not only from the involved inmate but from other inmates as

well. To the extent that correctional officers can de-escalate tense situations and minimize the use of force, their own safety will be enhanced. The research study of ICAT training in the Louisville Metro Police Department found that ICAT was associated with a 36% reduction in injuries to officers who had gone through the training. While the impact of ICAT for Jails has not been studied, there is no reason to believe that correctional officers trained in ICAT could not achieve similar results.

ICAT can also improve inmate safety – and reduce legal liability as a result.

One of the underlying principles of ICAT is the sanctity of all life, the notion that everyone – officers, subjects, and the public – should go home safely after an encounter. In jails, this principle applies to correctional officers, inmates who are in crisis and acting erratically, and the broader inmate population.

Through its emphasis on communications, threat assessment, common-sense tactics, and critical decision-making, ICAT has been shown to lower the use of force and reduce injuries to people who encounter law enforcement on the street. The study in Louisville

2. Table 3. Number, incidence rate, and median days away from work for nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses involving days away from work by selected worker occupation and ownership, 2015. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/osh2.t03.htm>.

3. Table 8. Incidence rates for nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses involving days away from work per 10,000 full-time workers by selected worker occupation and events or exposures, all ownerships, 2015. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/osh2.t08.htm>.



“ Correctional officers often communicate much better with people because they have to. It’s one of the primary tools they have. They don’t have many weapons, and they’re right among the inmates themselves. It’s not like there’s someone with a gun in a turret looking down on them. They have to walk among the inmates, and that means having to communicate with them.

— **Sheriff Tim Cameron (ret.)**
St. Mary’s County, MD

found a 28% decline in use-of-force incidents and a 26% reduction in citizen injuries.

An important byproduct of minimizing force and lowering inmate injuries is reducing the risk of costly lawsuits. While precise numbers of inmate lawsuits are difficult to come by, one source found that local, state, and federal prisoners file nearly 25,000 lawsuits a year in federal court alone.⁴ It is unknown how many of these lawsuits allege excessive force and, when successful, what they cost the government entities that are sued. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that excessive force lawsuits can be costly. In June 2021, for example, Charleston County, SC paid \$10 million to the family of an inmate who died in custody after repeatedly being hit with a Taser and OC spray and held on his stomach for several minutes after refusing to leave his cell to attend a bond hearing.⁵

To the extent that ICAT can help prevent inmate injuries *and* reduce costly lawsuits, that is a win-win situation.

ICAT addresses many of the types of threats that correctional officers face – it is focused primarily on subjects armed with knives or other weapons.

In creating ICAT, PERF chose to focus on police encounters with individuals who are

not in possession of a firearm. The presence of firearms dramatically changes the threat that officers face and restricts their options to de-escalate the situation. While ICAT principles can still be applied in some situations involving firearms, the training focuses largely on those encounters in which subjects are unarmed or armed with a weapon other than a firearm – for example, a knife, bat, or other hard object

Since firearms are not an issue in jails but inmates can and do fashion improvised weapons such as knives or other dangerous objects, ICAT addresses the types of encounters that correctional officers face. By emphasizing communications and sound tactics, ICAT has the potential to help correctional officers defuse these encounters while minimizing or even eliminating the need to use force.

ICAT can also help correctional officers manage another type of situation that is common in jails: “staged” events when an inmate purposefully confronts jail staff, often in an attempt to be disciplined and be put in protective custody or another housing assignment. ICAT provides officers with tips and strategies for assessing threats and making sound decisions that do not further escalate these types of situations.

4. *Data Update*. Incarceration and the Law: Cases and Materials, 2021. <https://incarcerationlaw.com/resources/data-update/>.

5. “Charleston County settles with Jamal Sutherland’s family for millions.” Steve Garrison, *The Post and Courier*. May 25, 2021. https://www.postandcourier.com/news/charleston-county-settles-with-jamal-sutherlands-family-for-millions/article_2688c030-bdb0-11eb-8b67-ebc90c182a5c.html

ICAT is intended to help officers manage situations involving people in mental health crises or with substance use disorders, which are common in jails.

Many of the people that police officers encounter on the street have substance use disorders (SUD) or severe mental illness, and these issues are an overwhelming presence in jails and other correctional facilities. Although exact rates are difficult to measure, one study estimated that approximately two-thirds of the U.S. prison population has an active SUD, and another 20% did not meet the criteria for an SUD but were under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time they committed their crime.⁶ Given that many offenders end up in jail before having an opportunity for treatment, there is reason to believe that SUD rates are even higher in jails.

The rates of mental illness among incarcerated people are also substantially higher than among the general population. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, nearly 23% of adults in the United States experienced mental illness in 2021.⁷ But the American Psychological Association reports that 64% of jail inmates (as well as 54% of state prisoners and 45% of federal prisoners) have reported mental health concerns, and approximately half the people in U.S. jails have been diagnosed with a mental illness.⁸

And, of course, a substantial percentage of jail inmates with mental illness also have a substance use disorder.

ICAT focuses heavily on managing encounters with individuals with mental illness, an SUD, or a combination of the two. ICAT has a module specifically focused on helping officers assess these conditions and the threats posed by individuals in crisis. Throughout the curriculum, ICAT emphasizes lowering emotions, boosting rational thinking,

and getting individuals to a place where they are ready to voluntarily comply, whenever possible.

ICAT can help address many of the unique circumstances found in jails.

There are some obvious similarities between patrolling the street and managing jails. Both can be dynamic, high-risk environments that frequently involve high-risk individuals. In both environments, law enforcement officers are required to make difficult, often split-second decisions, and their actions are often captured on camera (such as body-worn cameras and CCTV). More than ever, police and correctional officers can face public scrutiny and legal peril for their actions.

However, jails present a unique set of circumstances that correctional officers must be prepared to address.

- Correctional officers operate in smaller, compressed spaces – many cell doors are no wider than 40 inches – so establishing distance and cover can be challenging. At the same time, the physical make-up of the jail often allows correctional personnel to more easily contain a situation to a particular cell, wing, or common area, an advantage that patrol officers do not always have.
- Jail personnel have to be prepared for both spontaneous incidents where use of force may be a factor as well as “planned” use-of-force events such as cell extractions.
- Correctional officers often have fewer less-lethal tools at their disposal than street officers do. Tasers are often reserved for only certain personnel, there are few impact weapons, and OC spray can be counterproductive in such close quarters.

6. Center on Addiction. *Behind Bars II: Substance Abuse and America's Prison Population*, February 2010. <https://www.centeronaddiction.org/addiction-research/reports/behind-bars-ii-substance-abuse-and-america's-prison-population>

7. National Alliance on Mental Illness. *Mental Illness By the Numbers*, last updated April 2023. <https://nami.org/mhstats>.

8. American Psychological Association. *Incarceration Nation*, October 2014. <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2014/10/incarceration>.



“ The biggest thing that I try to get officers to realize right at the start of the class is you’re working in an environment where you don’t have the same tools that patrol has. ”

— Deputy Eric Urigas
Harris County, TX Sheriff’s Office

- Many jails, especially smaller facilities, do not have specialized resources such as mental health counselors on staff or dedicated tactical teams to handle certain high-risk situations. And many jails are facing a staffing crunch, as more correctional officers are leaving than agencies can hire to replace them. The result is that many jails have limited staffing, which means existing personnel have more responsibilities and are called upon to address situations that specialized personnel might otherwise handle.
- Unlike patrol officers, who may determine that they can simply walk away from situations that do not involve criminal activity, correctional officers have a duty to act to keep inmates safe when they are engaged in concerning behavior.

In addition, many jails face serious overcrowding, a problem made more challenging by their staffing shortages. Jail staff tend to be younger and less experienced than street deputies. And some agencies, such as the Marathon County, WI Sheriff’s Office, have to pull deputies from the road to work in the jail because of understaffing. They may have little or no experience working in the jail.

ICAT can help correctional officers manage these challenging circumstances. The Critical Decision-Making Model helps all officers think through situations and consider their options when dealing with stressful situations. In addition, ICAT stresses the importance of communications and active listening, and not simply relying just on

less-lethal tools, when encountering people in crisis. It is a solid foundation for street deputies who may not have much experience working in the jail. And ICAT emphasizes the importance of keeping officers in a winnable position through pre-planning, sound tactics, and “spinning the model” when Plan A doesn’t work.

ICAT can help correctional agencies meet – and even exceed – the legal standards on use of force.

In its 2015 decision, *Kingsley v. Hendrickson*, the U.S. Supreme Court established “objective reasonableness” as the standard for judging use of force in jails.⁹ The case involved a jail inmate in Monroe County, WI who refused orders to remove a piece of paper placed over the light fixture in his cell, then resisted officers during handcuffing as they removed the paper. In the scuffle, a sergeant placed his knee in the inmate’s back, a deputy deployed a Taser to his back, and he was left handcuffed in a cell for approximately 15 minutes.

The inmate filed a civil suit against the correctional officers in federal court, alleging excessive force under the Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment. The trial jury found in favor of the officers, and the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the jury verdict, ruling that the law required assessment of the officers’ state of mind from a “subjective inquiry.” But in a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court reversed the Appellate Court and held

9. *Kingsley v. Hendrickson*, 576 U.S. 389 (2015).

that the officers' actions must be judged from an objective standard of what a "reasonable" officer would do under similar circumstances. This is essentially the same standard the Court established for evaluating use of force by police officers 26 years earlier in *Graham v. Connor*.¹⁰ In *Kingsley*, the Court stated that the use of an objective standard "adequately protects an officer who acts in good faith."

In *Kingsley*, the Court touched on many of the underlying principles that are central to ICAT.¹¹ These include:

- **Assessing threats.** The Court emphasized the importance of officers "reasonably perceiving" threats, which means that training officers in threat assessment is key. ICAT has a module dedicated to threat assessment, and the Critical Decision-Making Model emphasizes the importance of constantly assessing – and re-assessing – threats as situations evolve.
- **Providing options.** The Court held that subjects must be given the opportunity to comply and "efforts [be] made to temper or to limit the amount of force." ICAT is built on the importance of providing options and putting officers in winnable positions.
- **Proportionality.** The Court referenced "the relationship between the need for the use of force and the amount of force used." Proportionality is one of PERF's 30 guiding principles on use of force, and it lies at the core of the ICAT Critical Decision-Making Model.

The *Kingsley* decision also recognized that jails are unique and that the standard of objective reasonableness cannot be applied "mechanically." Rather, the standard should be based on the "facts and circumstances of

each particular case"; the need to "preserve internal order and discipline and to maintain institutional security" in the jail must be taken into account as well.

While "objective reasonableness" is the national standard for use of force, some jurisdictions are looking to expand that minimum standard. For example, the state of California in 2019 passed AB 392, which updates the legal standard governing when force can be used and how it is to be evaluated.¹² In addition to being objectively reasonable, a use of force must be "necessary in defense of human life." Law enforcement experts predict that more jurisdictions will adopt similar standards in the future.

With its emphasis on threat assessment and sound decision-making, ICAT can help jails demonstrate they have made a good-faith effort to train their personnel to meet current legal standards on use of force and to adhere to new and emerging standards and public expectations.

ICAT applies to all correctional personnel, regardless of their assignment.

ICAT is a thorough, well-rounded curriculum that can be taught to all personnel in a jail, regardless of their assignment. While incidents can and do flare up in housing units, there are other key pressure points in jails, and personnel assigned to these areas can benefit from the curriculum's focus on critical decision-making and de-escalation. For example:

- **Intake.** Many of the people entering jail are in crisis, under the influence, or just angry. They haven't had time to stabilize and are prone to acting out.

10. *Graham v. Connor*, 490 U.S. 386 (1989).

11. For an analysis of the *Kingsley* decision and what it means for jails, see Daigle Law Group, LLC. Objective Use of Force Standards Defined as to Pre-Trial Detainees—Guidance on Objective Reasonable Standards, 2015. <https://daiglelawgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Kingsley-v.-Hendrickson.pdf>.

12. AB-392 Peace officers: deadly force. (2019-2020) https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB392.

- **Visitations.** Visitations can be a source of conflict for inmates, especially if they get bad news from family or friends.
- **Transfers and court appearances.** Court appearances are also a frequent source of conflict, especially if they have unwelcome results.
- **Common areas.** Some inmates are prone to act out in common areas such as day rooms because they provide an “audience” of other inmates.
- **Cell extractions.** These “planned” use-of-force events are among the most dynamic, high-risk situations correctional officers face. And while some larger jails have dedicated tactical personnel for these assignments, many jails rely on their line personnel.

ICAT can help overcome commonly held preconceptions about de-escalation.

Correctional officers are often taught that they cannot afford to be perceived as weak, either by fellow officers or especially by inmates. As a result, approaches such as “de-escalation” or “tactical repositioning” are sometimes seen as showing weakness. Common “wisdom” has been that projecting strength was essential at all times, and that using force was sometimes a necessary part of that.

Police agencies that were early adopters of ICAT faced similar concerns and pushback from patrol officers going through the training. A common belief was that officers would be injured – or even killed – if they practiced the de-escalation tactics taught in ICAT. But as the research study in the Louisville Metro Police Department demonstrated, ICAT was actually associated with a substantial *reduction* in injuries to officers.

Jails are clearly different from the streets, and many actions that correctional officers take have a built-in “audience” of other inmates. Correctional officers always need to consider how their actions may affect inmates in the jail. While the use of force may be lawful and justified in many circumstances, using force against one inmate may agitate other inmates in the facility and disrupt jail operations more broadly.

Many of the jail experts PERF consulted with said that, far from a sign of weakness, practicing ICAT principles – sound communications skills, threat assessment, tactics, and decision-making – is a demonstration of strength when done effectively. By showing respect for the individuals they are dealing with, correctional officers can actually build up their credibility with the inmate population.



The ICAT in Jails Exploratory Meeting.

CHAPTER 3

Case Studies: Two Sheriffs' Offices That Have Implemented ICAT for Jails

Two sheriffs' offices – in Santa Cruz County, CA and Harris County, TX – were among the early adopters of ICAT training for their patrol deputies. Recently, the two agencies have adapted the training for their jail personnel. This section describes how they have gone about implementing ICAT for their jails.

Santa Cruz County, CA Sheriff's Office

The Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) is a full-service agency located on the California coast just south the San Francisco Bay Area. The SCSO has approximately 350 employees – sworn and civilian professional staff – working across three bureaus: Operations, Corrections, and Administration. The Corrections Bureau includes approximately 100 correctional officers, a half dozen first-line supervisors, and four lieutenants. The correctional officers and first-line supervisors (sergeants) are not sworn law enforcement officers but do have limited police powers. The Corrections Bureau is overseen by a Chief Deputy.

The Bureau manages four jail facilities: the main jail, a women's facility, a medium-security facility, and a rehabilitation and reentry facility. Together, the four units have an average daily population of approximately

350, although the numbers fluctuate and have been much higher at times. Approximately two-thirds of the inmate population are detainees awaiting trial, almost all of them on felony charges; the rest are sentenced offenders or are awaiting transfer to state prison.

How ICAT Was Introduced

The SCSO was one of the first law enforcement agencies in California to implement ICAT. In 2017, Sheriff Jim Hart sent two agency representatives – Lt. (now Undersheriff) Chris Clark and a use-of-force training sergeant – to an ICAT demonstration organized by PERF. With the support of Sheriff Hart, the team came back and rolled out the training for its patrol deputies in 2018. The Sheriff's Office runs ICAT training twice a year for its patrol personnel.



Lt. (now Undersheriff) Chris Clark, Santa Cruz County, CA Sheriff's Office

Given its success with ICAT training for patrol, the SCSO in 2019 decided to bring the training to its jail personnel as well. Enlisting the support of training supervisor Kyle Ward, the ICAT team reviewed the existing ICAT curriculum and created an implementation plan for its jail personnel.

ICAT for Jails Curriculum – Emphasizing the CDM

The SCSO divides its ICAT training time equally between classroom instruction and scenario-based exercises. This allows the agency to get through the classroom material while still devoting ample time for scenarios.

Initially, the SCSO was able to put approximately 80% of correctional officers and sergeants through training over the course of two days. The other 20% completed the training during make-up dates. Both line personnel and supervisors were trained together, which supported the team concept in implementing ICAT.

The SCSO opted to use the basic ICAT curriculum, with some modifications to make it more relevant to the jail setting. For example, the agency dropped Module 5: Suicide by Cop and removed some of the video case studies, especially those that focused on less-lethal options that are not available to jail personnel. However, the agency kept many of the video case studies, even though they generally represent encounters on the street. The agency felt that they illustrated valuable principles and lessons for correctional officers.

A major focus of the ICAT for Jails training in the SCSO is the Critical Decision-Making Model (Module 2). The agency tries to teach the CDM not as an entirely new concept, but rather as a process that correctional officers already use in their day-to-day work. Trainers emphasize that it is helpful to have the process spelled out on paper. They also stress the importance of “spinning the model” if an officer’s first approach to a situation is not successful. SCSO leaders feel that the agency empowers its employees to a great degree and

that the CDM helps them think through their decision-making and be more successful.

A Focus on Scenarios

While the SCSO left much of the basic ICAT classroom curriculum intact for its jail personnel, it spent considerable time and energy on developing customized scenarios that were specific to the jail setting. The agency had conducted some scenario-based training in the past, but SCSO leaders found that the ICAT curriculum provided helpful background and context for the scenarios. And the agency now uses the CDM to help debrief the scenarios that correctional officers go through.

Types of scenarios. One important source for creating ICAT scenarios is actual critical incidents in the jail. Supervisors and trainers review 12-hour shift logs that record all use-of-force incidents that occurred. When they see a particularly noteworthy incident or a pattern of incidents that other personnel could learn from, they work on developing realistic and challenging scenarios. (If the incident involves an issue that needs to be addressed right away, the SCSO will send out a training bulletin to personnel.) For example, the agency developed a duty-to-intervene scenario based on a review of actual incidents. Body-worn camera and other video footage are good sources of material for developing the scenarios.

During ICAT, the SCSO puts correctional officers through multiple scenarios – up to seven in all – during the four hours of scenario-based training. The agency developed a “training wheel” of the different scenarios that the officers go through. One benefit of this approach is that officers get multiple experiences encompassing different parts of the jail, such as the visitation area, dining hall, cell blocks, patios, etc. Since the scenarios are run concurrently, this approach limits officers’ down time, and it reduces the chances of them talking among themselves about the scenarios they have completed. Each scenario is a one-time event. The SCSO does not reuse or recycle scenarios that have been used in ICAT,

which means that agency trainers need to continuously focus on developing fresh scenarios.

Undersheriff Clark and Training Supervisor Ward said their ICAT scenarios focus on common, high-risk situations that correctional officers face, such as take-downs, cell extractions, and other planned activities where the possibility of force can be high. They said the agency is always looking for new ways of handling these types of high-risk maneuvers more safely – for their staffs and the inmate population. The agency also works to introduce realism and some level of stress into its ICAT scenarios. In one scenario, for example, an “inmate” role player who “cuts” himself releases realistic-looking fake blood to add a surprise factor. The goal is to prompt the correctional officers going through the scenario to stay calm, work through the CDM, and prioritize their actions.

Trainers and role players. Running multiple scenarios does place demands on the trainers. The agency uses its two “regular” ICAT instructors for the classroom instruction. They are familiar with the material and have learned how to adapt it for the jail setting. For scenario proctors, the agency calls upon its SWAT team members and other specialists, all of whom have gone through initial ICAT training and twice-annual refresher courses.

For its role players, the SCSO uses mostly outside contract personnel. Many are employees of a private security company, so they have some familiarity with law enforcement. The role players go through extensive training and coaching by the ICAT team. The one exception is that the SCSO used sworn deputies in the duty-to-intervene scenario.

Scenarios are sometimes conducted in the agency’s jail facilities, when cells and other locations are available. But the SCSO uses other locations at times. For example, the agency rented a local campground, which had multiple buildings that could be adapted to different jail settings.

Debriefings. The SCSO has begun using the CDM to debrief not only its ICAT scenarios but also actual critical incidents that occur in the jail. The focus is on how adept the correctional officers were at gathering information, recognizing people in crisis and the risks they pose, and using effective communications and sound tactics. In one incident involving two inmates fighting, the debrief revealed that while the outcome was ultimately good, the responding officers’ initial tactics could have been improved. When the officers first showed up, there was no supervisor on the scene and no real plan for what to do. The officers eventually called for a supervisor, who brought in additional resources, including a mental health specialist to assist with de-escalation and other correctional officers to help move the other inmates away from the scene.

Training Supervisor Ward said that while there was initially some skepticism about debriefing these types of incidents using the CDM, the reaction among front-line personnel has been generally good. He has helped to lead some of the debriefings himself and has emphasized to other supervisors the importance of asking questions, getting feedback from everyone involved in the incident, and not shutting anyone down for making a comment. Training Supervisor Ward noted that two weeks after a particular supervisor questioned the need for a critical incident debriefing, that same supervisor contacted Supervisor Ward for advice on how to handle a challenging incident.

ICAT Training Schedule

Newly hired correctional officers in the SCSO go through orientation training that discusses de-escalation in general from day one but doesn’t go into ICAT specifically. Experienced SCSO correctional officers, like the agency’s patrol deputies, get ICAT training twice a year. It involves a condensed version of the classroom instruction, plus a new round of scenarios.



“

Sheriff Gonzalez pledged to implement ICAT training for all law enforcement personnel but almost immediately recognized the beneficial role that this training could play in our detention facilities. The integration of the Critical Decision-Making Model within our 9,000+ inmate population jail has proven to be a game-changer. The initial training is reinforced with strategically placed reminders for our detention staff, as well as annual ICAT refresher training. The positive feedback from our detention team reaffirms the need for this specialized training.

”

— **Chief Deputy Mike Lee**
Harris County, TX Sheriff’s Office

In the future, the agency hopes to conduct group or team scenarios on a more regular basis, with supervisors taking the lead in developing and running the scenarios with their teams. They could focus on the particular challenges their teams are facing, while using ICAT principles to address them.

Impact

SCSO officials said there has not been any formal analysis of whether ICAT has affected use of force or officer or inmate safety. Use-of-force incidents in the jail are down, but officials note that many factors could influence this figure, including an overall reduction in the inmate population. But they said the training has received a generally good response from the correctional officers who have gone through it.

Harris County, TX Sheriff’s Office

The Harris County, TX Sheriff’s Office (HCSO) serves the Houston metropolitan area and is one of the largest full-service sheriffs’ offices in the nation, with patrol, detention, and dispatch responsibilities. The agency has approximately 5,000 employees, including about

2,300 sworn deputies and 1,000 detention staff who work in the Harris County Jail.

Approximately 95% of the jail’s detention personnel are non-sworn professionals called detention officers; the other 5% are sworn law enforcement officers who are known as detention deputies. The two groups are responsible for approximately 10,000 inmates housed in four different jail facilities. The inmate population includes a mix of pretrial detainees (almost all accused of felony offenses), sentenced offenders, and convicted felons awaiting transfer to state prison.

An Agency-wide Commitment to ICAT

Under the leadership of Sheriff Ed Gonzalez, the HCSO has made an agency-wide commitment to training its personnel in de-escalation in general and ICAT specifically. The agency started with its patrol personnel. Using a top-down approach – in which agency leaders and supervisors were trained first, followed by patrol deputies – the HCSO trained all of its sworn personnel in ICAT.¹³

Texas law requires all sworn officers to complete a minimum of eight hours in de-escalation training, although it does not specify the content of the instruction.

13. See *Implementing the ICAT Training Program at Your Agency*, Police Executive Research Forum, 2023, pp. 44-45, for more details on how the Harris County Sheriff’s Office rolled out ICAT for its patrol personnel. <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/ICATImplementation.pdf>.

Although the HCSO's non-sworn detention officers are not subject to the requirement, Sheriff Gonzalez insisted that all jail personnel, sworn and non-sworn, not only meet the state requirement, but exceed it.

All detention personnel started with Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training, either the full 40-hour course or a condensed 8-hour version at a minimum. The goal was to provide staff with a foundation of knowledge about mental health issues. That foundation is then built upon with the 16-hour ICAT curriculum for detention personnel. Sergeant Jose "Rico" Gomez, the HCSO's ICAT Coordinator, said he considers CIT to be the introductory course. ICAT, with its emphasis on decision-making, tactics, and scenario-based instruction, is the advanced course. The initial coursework is reinforced with an annual 8-hour refresher course.

Developing the Curriculum

To create its ICAT for Jails curriculum, the HCSO drafted two veteran deputies who were experienced ICAT trainers and who had also worked in the jail. Their mission was to review the existing ICAT curriculum, make appropriate modifications for detention personnel, and then deliver the course. The agency felt it was important that the effort be led by personnel

who had both jail and street experience, and who would be respected by the detention personnel. Importantly, the trainers were not part of the Academy training staff but were members of a special HCSO team that is focused on the agency's response to behavioral health issues broadly. That gave them more flexibility to conduct site visits at the jail, better understand the challenges the jail staff face, and create a unique curriculum.

For the most part, the HCSO kept the basic ICAT curriculum intact for its jail personnel. They teach six of the seven modules, skipping Module 5: Suicide by Cop. The agency modified the lineup of video case studies, keeping some that had important principles that apply to jail personnel, dropping others, and augmenting with new videos where they were available. The key issue is to steer the discussion to jail-specific issues and challenges whenever possible.

The HCSO issues periodic "ICAT Training Bulletins" for its jail personnel, similar to the training updates it provides to its patrol deputies. These focus on new or emerging issues and provide refreshers on key elements of the ICAT curriculum. To reinforce the importance of the Critical Decision-Making Model, the agency posts copies of the CDM at prominent locations throughout the jail where staff can readily see it.



Sergeant Jose "Rico" Gomez, the HCSO's ICAT Coordinator, at the 2024 National ICAT Conference

Improvising with Video Case Studies and Scenarios

The ICAT trainers discovered that finding good, jail-specific videos to use in the class has been a challenge. HCSO detention personnel do not wear body-worn cameras, and the agency has privacy concerns about using videos where inmates and staff may be easily identified. The agency does have access to CCTV video footage in the jail, but these cameras generally do not have audio. To get around this limitation, instructors narrate the video as it plays and stop and discuss key issues as they come up. Sgt. Gomez said it is critical for the videos that are used in ICAT to be relevant to the challenges jail personnel face and be reasonably current. It is also important that students be shown videos with positive outcomes as well.

The HCSO has customized ICAT scenarios for its jail personnel. Since the agency operates four different facilities, the trainers created scenarios that apply to the various environments that the deputies work in. Different facilities may necessitate different approaches, and the HCSO works to ensure that its ICAT scenarios address those idiosyncrasies.

Some of the scenarios the HCSO uses include the following:

- A detention officer is called to a residential pod where the officer observes a fellow officer engaged in a heated dispute with an inmate; both individuals are screaming profanities and threatening to assault each other. The student is expected to de-escalate this volatile situation.
- A detention officer is in charge of visitation. Visitation is over, and the officer asks all inmates to leave the area so the next group of inmates can come in to visit with their loved ones. One inmate refuses to comply, becomes extremely confrontational, and threatens to fight. The student is expected to de-escalate the matter and utilize available resources to get the inmate out of the area.
- A detention officer is asked to assist with getting an inmate off the phone. The inmate's phone time is up, and another inmate is waiting to use the phone. The inmate refuses, stating that he is talking to his lawyer and needs more time. The student knows that a few months earlier, the inmate was found with a "shank" in his property. The student is expected to safely resolve this situation and provide the inmate with options for communicating with his attorney.

A major theme of the entire ICAT for Jails curriculum in the HCSO is to challenge conventional wisdom on how things should be done. For example, trainers emphasize the importance of replacing the "Ask-Make-Tell" model of communications with a more tactical approach that emphasizes ICAT concepts such as active listening and asking open-ended questions. The training also stresses the importance of slowing situations down and using time to the deputies' advantage. For years, jail personnel have felt pressure to hurry up and resolve situations so they can get on with finishing their rounds.

Training New Detention Personnel First

As it rolled out ICAT in its jail, the HCSO focused on training new detention officers and deputies first. The agency brings on approximately 30 new jail personnel a month, and HCSO leaders thought it was critical to get them trained right away. More experienced detention deputies already had some general de-escalation and CIT training, so training them in ICAT could be deferred a bit.

When the HCSO implemented ICAT for its patrol personnel, the agency took a top-down approach. It started by providing its Command Staff with a four-hour introduction to ICAT, then brought the training to first-line supervisors, field training deputies, and then patrol deputies. Because the jail administrators attended the Command briefing, they were familiar with ICAT and emphasized its importance to personnel in the jail.

In addition, newly promoted sworn supervisors in the HCSO are often assigned to the jail. Because those supervisors have already completed ICAT training, they know the key principles and tactics of the training and are able to coach the newly trained detention personnel in implementing ICAT.

Bridging a Cultural Divide

Sgt. Gomez noted that historically in sheriffs' offices, there is often a cultural divide between patrol and jail personnel. The latter do not always get the training and other resources that their colleagues in patrol do. Providing detention officers and deputies with ICAT, along with other training and resources that patrol deputies have, has helped to bridge some of that divide. While the agency has not done a formal evaluation of ICAT for Jails, Sgt. Gomez said that overall, the reaction to the training has been positive, especially among the newly hired detention personnel.

5 Key Lessons Learned

The experiences of both the Santa Cruz County and Harris County sheriffs' offices point to some important lessons for rolling out ICAT for Jails.

Success will depend on adopting an agency culture that supports ICAT.

Leaders of both the SCSO and the HCSO emphasized the importance of making an agency-wide commitment to ICAT, anchored by management buy-in and support. On the first day of ICAT training – for patrol and correctional officers – both Sheriff Jim Hart and Sheriff Ed Gonzalez deliver messages, either in person or via video, expressing their commitment to ICAT and their expectations that agency personnel learn and embrace the training. Both agencies also work to ensure that their supervisors are fully trained in ICAT and understand that supporting their deputies in implementing the training is part of their work as managers and leaders.

In addition, the two sheriffs' offices emphasize that aligning agency policy with ICAT training is essential. ICAT will succeed only if the training is supported by policies that emphasize the key principles behind ICAT.

Agencies don't need to "reinvent the wheel" in customizing the ICAT curriculum for jails. The focus should be on applying the Critical Decision-Making Model and other modules to the challenges correctional officers face.

Both the SCSO and the HCSO found that, with a few adjustments, the basic ICAT curriculum developed for patrol personnel worked well for their correctional officers.

- Both agencies modified Module 5: Suicide by Cop, as the threats faced by correctional officers are very different from those that patrol officers encounter.
- The agencies emphasize Module 2: The Critical Decision-Making Model as the foundation of ICAT. They make sure to weave the CDM into all the other classroom modules, and they utilize the CDM when debriefing their ICAT scenarios. Both agencies emphasize that the original approach to a situation seldom goes exactly as planned, so it is critically important to have a "Plan B." The CDM is an ideal vehicle for developing and implementing a Plan B.
- In some cases, the agencies introduced some new video case studies that focused on challenging use-of-force situations in jails. But they also used some of the existing videos of encounters on the street and steered the follow-up discussion to how the principles associated with the video may play out inside jails. The agencies acknowledged that finding good, jail-based videos is a challenge for various reasons (not all correctional officers are equipped with body-worn cameras, privacy concerns, etc.). But they found some creative workarounds. As noted previously, for example, the HCSO uses videos from the

jail's CCTV camera system; although the videos don't have audio, instructors narrate the video as it progresses.

- The agencies found that customizing the ICAT scenarios for jail-specific encounters is absolutely essential (see below).

Selecting the right trainers is key.

Both agencies said that finding and using highly qualified trainers – ***who understand and embrace the principles of ICAT*** – is critical. The agencies relied on personnel who were involved in implementing ICAT for their patrol deputies and who also had some knowledge of and experience with their jails.

The agencies realized that the best trainers for ICAT for Jails (as well as ICAT for Patrol) were not necessarily traditional instructors from their academies. Instead, they relied on other staff who already demonstrated their ability to customize and present ICAT.

Agencies should concentrate on developing realistic, jail-specific scenarios that will challenge correctional officers going through the training.

The two sheriffs' offices found that recent situations that occurred in the jail were an excellent source of realistic and relevant scenarios for ICAT. Using this approach, the SCSO creates a wheel of seven different scenarios that all trainees cycle through during their ICAT training. To ensure that the scenarios don't get stale or routine, the SCSO cycles out any scenarios already used in ICAT training.

The agencies try to focus their scenarios on both routine and higher-risk situations that their correctional officers may encounter. These include situations such as inmates coming back from visitation or court with bad news, inmates not wanting to be transferred

from their cells, fights in common areas, etc. Because some "routine" encounters can turn dynamic in an instant, it is important for agencies to practice those situations, as well as those encounters (such as cell extractions) that are inherently challenging.

Some agencies have used simulators and virtual reality to support their use-of-force training. However, both the SCSO and the HCSO rely on live-action actors, who provide both greater realism and flexibility when training correctional officers in challenging situations.

While some customization of the basic ICAT curriculum is necessary for the jail curriculum, sheriffs' offices need to remain true to program fundamentals.

Both experience and research show that it is critically important for agencies implementing ICAT to follow the curriculum as developed. This is known as "implementation fidelity."¹⁴

ICAT for Jails requires some level of customization, especially in ensuring the video case studies and scenarios are relevant to correctional officers. But some elements of the training are essential. They include:

- Following the basic classroom curriculum;
- Emphasizing the Critical Decision-Making Model throughout the classroom and scenario portions of the training;
- Keeping class sizes to manageable levels; and
- Devoting ample time to both classroom and scenario training.

14. In a white paper she prepared for PERF, Dr. Gabrielle Isaza of the National Policing Institute concluded that for patrol personnel, following the ICAT training model as designed increases the likelihood of program success. "When implemented as intended, ICAT is more likely to result in improvements in your agency, such as increasing officer skills to safely resolve critical incidents, reducing the need for deadly force, and promoting the sanctity of all human life," she concluded.

CHAPTER 4

The Critical Decision-Making Model: The Foundation of ICAT

Despite their clear differences, the street and jails have one thing in common: the need for sound decision-making by front-line personnel. Decision-making is at the heart of what correctional officers do every day. Whether it's a routine task such as making rounds in a housing unit or monitoring a common area, or a higher-risk endeavor such as extracting an inmate from their cell, correctional officers are constantly assessing situations and making decisions. Sound decision-making can be the difference between a situation remaining uneventful or becoming chaotic and possibly resulting in the use of force.

The jail experts who have assisted PERF with this project told us that correctional officers can easily lose focus when it comes to decision-making. The monotony of their day-to-day routines can breed complacency, and in high-risk situations they sometimes allow their egos to take over.

The Critical Decision-Making Model (CDM) – a foundation of ICAT training – helps to combat both complacency and ego-driven responses. Based on a similar National Decision Model that has been used for a number of years in the United Kingdom, the CDM walks officers through a process of gathering information; thinking about and assessing the threats they face; considering their authorities, agency policies, and available resources before acting; and determining the

best course of action. The CDM also prompts officers to constantly seek out additional information and evaluate how the response is going – to “spin the model” as needed and move to a Plan B if the initial response is not effective.

Importantly, the CDM is not a linear, one-time approach. Rather, it is a circular process that encourages officers to remain flexible in their immediate response and to learn from their experiences to help guide future actions.

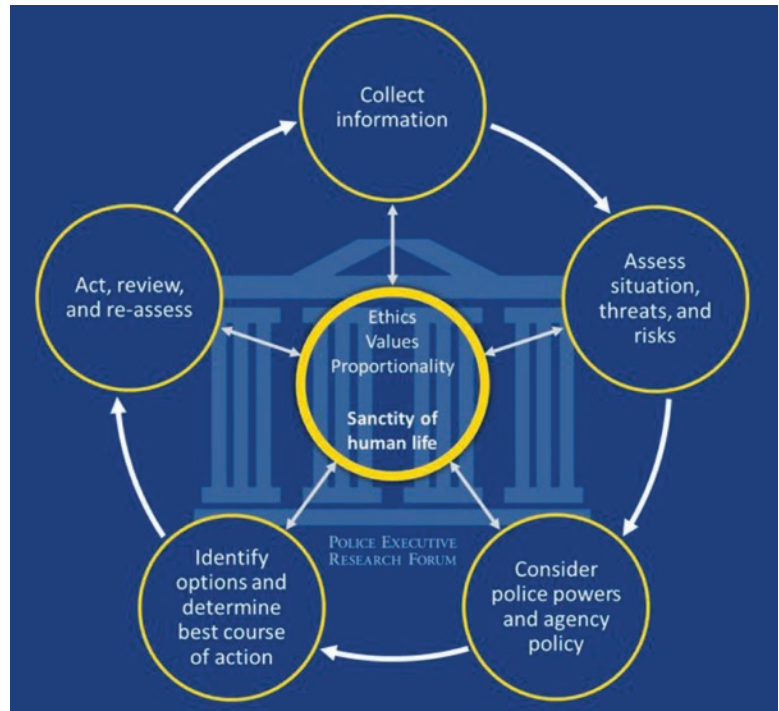
The CDM Explained

The CDM is a five-step process that helps officers improve their decision-making in responding to any type of incident. It can be especially useful in potential use-of-force encounters. Module 2 of ICAT covers the CDM in detail. It explains the basics of the model, describes each of the five steps, and presents examples of how agencies have incorporated the model into their training and operations.

The CDM is a simple and intuitive tool for structuring and guiding officers' decision-making. It is not necessarily about teaching officers “new” skills in how to make decisions. Rather, it reflects the way most correctional officers already think. The CDM merely captures that process in a visual form, which helps to remind officers about the key steps in decision-making and how following them can result in better and safer decisions.

There are three important things to remember about the CDM:

1. **The CDM is *not* a “checklist” or “worksheet” that officers somehow need to “fill out” before they take action.** Rather, the CDM is a visual reminder of the steps that most officers naturally take to reach decisions.
2. **The CDM is intended to methodically organize decision-making.** Depending on the situation, officers should work through the CDM as quickly or as deliberatively as needed. If they have the luxury of time, officers may be well served to work through the five steps in a more methodical manner. But if the situation requires immediate action, officers should be prepared to work through the steps at an accelerated pace. As they get used to working with the CDM, many officers find that slowing down or speeding up the process becomes second nature.
3. **Nothing in the CDM (or ICAT in general) says that officers cannot take immediate action (including the use of force) if it is warranted.** Officers should never feel hamstrung to make a decision and take decisive action when circumstances call for it. Again, with experience, officers often find that quickly spinning the model in these situations can enhance decision-making when a quick decision is needed.



The Critical Decision-Making Model (CDM)

The CDM includes five steps that officers should work through when they are responding to any incident, but especially a potential use-of-force encounter:

1 Gather information.

In this step, officers ask a series of questions, such as the following:

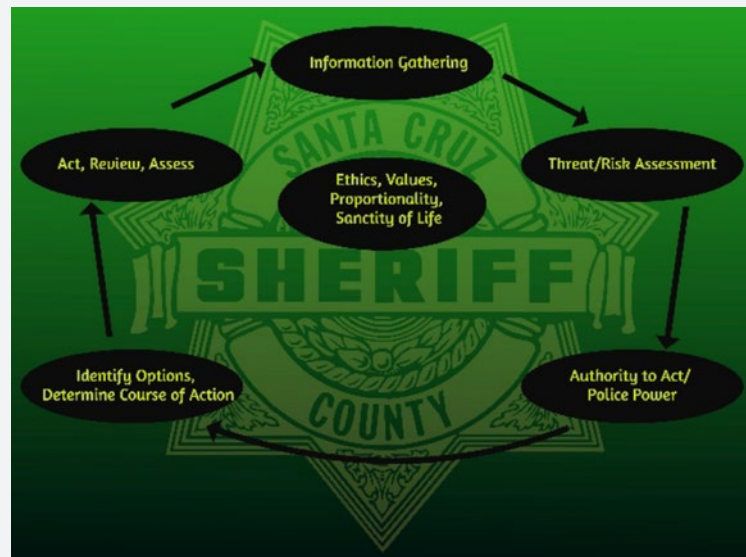
- What do I know about this particular inmate, including any mental health or substance use disorder diagnosis, medications, criminal history and current charges, etc.?
- What happened **today** that might be affecting this person?
- What do I know about the current environment, including the mood among other inmates?
- What do I know about past encounters that I or other correctional officers have had with this inmate?

The CDM Core

The CDM is built around a “core.” Broadly speaking, the core represents the mission, ethics, values, and principles and priorities of the agency. It is the “moral compass” that guides an agency’s actions. The core guides all five steps in the decision-making process, and each step needs to reflect and reinforce the core elements.

The CDM developed by PERF contains four items in the core: ethics, values, proportionality, and sanctity of human life. However, agencies that adopt ICAT are encouraged to customize the CDM core to represent their own mission, vision, culture, and values. For example, the Monterey, CA Police Department includes the same four items in its CDM core but presents them in the context of the motto: “Remember who you are and what you represent.”

To reinforce the message and importance of the CDM, many ICAT agencies print and display posters of the CDM throughout the agency – for example, in training facilities and roll call and break rooms. Some agencies provide officers with pocket cards containing the CDM or include it as a screen-saver background on agency computers.



LEFT: The CDM used by the Harris County, TX Sheriff's Office.

RIGHT: The CDM used by the Santa Cruz County, CA Sheriff's Office.

- What have my training and experience taught me about these types of situations? How did I handle similar situations in the past, and did it work?

There are many sources of information that correctional officers should turn to. These include classification information gathered at intake, other personnel who have dealt with the inmate, the officer's own experiences, and supervisors. Throughout the information-gathering process, the goal should be trying to separate facts from assumptions.

While gathering information is one discrete step in the CDM, it is important to remember that information collection is not a one-time activity. As an event unfolds, new information will undoubtedly come up. An inmate's own words and actions are a great source of new information, especially in higher-risk encounters where the use of force may come into play. It is essential that correctional officers working through the CDM not be satisfied with the initial information they gather. Rather, information collection must be ongoing and continue throughout an event. As new information comes in, correctional officers must be prepared to adjust their decision-making and their actions.

2

Assess the situation, threats, and risks.

Step 2 in the CDM involves assessing the individual a correctional officer is encountering, the threats they pose, and the risks of taking action or not taking action right away. In this step, officers should ask questions such as the following:

- Is there an imminent danger? Do I have to act now?
- What type and severity of threat does the inmate present? Could they be armed?
- Am I alone, or do I have backup? How many people could I potentially call on to assist, and how close are they?
- Am I trained and equipped to handle this situation, or do I need assistance?
- How will acting (or not acting) affect the other inmates in the area? Could I potentially make the situation worse by acting alone right now?

In assessing a situation, it is important for correctional officers to distinguish between a **potential threat** (such as an inmate being angry or even possessing a weapon) and an **imminent threat** (an inmate actually engaging in behavior that puts himself or others at risk). Potential threats typically do not warrant immediate action, while imminent threats usually do. ICAT teaches officers that in assessing threats, they should focus on an inmate's means, ability, opportunity, and intent. The more of these factors that are present, the greater the likelihood of needing to act right away.

Transfer of Malice

Throughout the decision-making process, officers should remain vigilant regarding the potential for "transfer of malice," in which a person in crisis suddenly focuses their attention (and often anger) away from the issue at hand and to the responding officers. Transfer of malice can quickly and dramatically change the threat assessment.

Sometimes the mere presence of the officers can prompt a transfer of malice. While the responding officers may have limited options for preventing it from occurring, they should make every effort to shift the person's focus back to the problem at hand.

3**Consider legal authority and agency policy.**

Before taking action, it is critical for officers to consider, if only briefly, their legal authority and agency policy in the situation at hand.

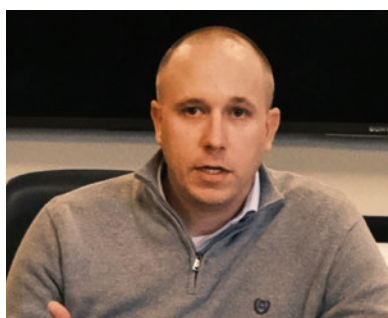
- What does the law say I have to do?
- What does my agency expect me to do? What is the prevailing policy in this situation?
- Do I need supervisory approval before taking action?
- Are there other people I need to contact?
- Can I contribute to a successful outcome? And how?

There is one important difference in how correctional officers may work through this step of the CDM, compared with street officers. While there may be circumstances on the street where officers have the legal option of delaying action or even walking away from a non-criminal incident, inside jails correctional officers generally have a duty to act when an inmate's actions have the potential to harm themselves or disrupt the jail's operations. It is important for correctional officers to keep that in mind when considering their legal authority and agency policy.

4**Identify options and determine the best course of action.**

This is the step in the process when officers pare down their options and select the one with the greatest likelihood of success. Questions to be asked here include:

- What options do I have?
- Again, do I have to act now, or can I wait? Especially if the inmate is in their cell and not self-harming, is there an imperative to take action now?
- What exactly am I trying to achieve?
- Am I trained and equipped to handle this situation? Am I comfortable and confident in my abilities?
- Am I the best person to respond? Or are there specialized resources, such as qualified mental health professionals or special response teams, I should call on?
- How might my actions affect other inmates? How are they likely to respond?
- Is it worth risking injury to myself or fellow officers over this, or can we achieve our goal in a different way?
- Which option has the greatest likelihood of success? Which one best meets the standards of objective reasonableness, proportionality, and necessity, and also reflects the mission and values of my agency (the CDM core)?



“As leaders, it is important to explain to these young officers that, when the situation allows, we're going to take our time to come up with a good plan. These situations can go really well for you. But if you act too quickly, or let your ego get in the way, that's when things go wrong.”

— **Lt. Zach Johnson**
Marathon County, WI Sheriff's Office

“Catastrophizing”

Law enforcement officers, including those who work in corrections, are frequently trained in a “worst case scenario” mentality. This is sometimes referred to as “catastrophizing.” Officers who are frequently taught to be prepared for the worst can develop thought patterns that lead them to take action sooner – or use greater force – than may be necessary.

While officer and public safety are paramount and there are instances when officers need to take swift and decisive action, the worst-case scenario does not always unfold. The CDM is designed to help officers realistically assess threats and come up with options that best respond to those threats. As such, the model can lessen the tendency toward catastrophizing most situations.

5 Act, review, and reassess.

In this step, officers execute the plan they decided on and then ask, Did I achieve my objectives, in whole or in part?

If the matter is not fully resolved the first time through, or if new information enters the picture that changes the situation, then officers go through the steps of the CDM again – a process known as “spinning the model.” In doing so, they ask questions such as:

- What new information do I have?
- Has the threat changed and, if so, how?
- What new options do I have? What is my Plan B? Having a Plan B is crucial for both officer and inmate safety.
- How might the Plan B affect conditions in the jail? How might the other inmates react?

It is important for correctional officers to continue trying to de-escalate the situation as they’re spinning the model and after everything is resolved. As many encounters in a jail have a built-in audience of other inmates, officers need to focus on maintaining calm among the larger population. That may require removing from the scene any correctional officers who had to use force during the encounter.

Eric Urigas and Jose Gomez at the ICAT in Jails Exploratory Meeting



Using the CDM to Safely Carry Out Cell Extractions

Cell extractions are a common occurrence in most jails. Inmates may refuse to leave their cell to attend court or other appointments. They may obscure the staff's view into the cell by covering cameras or windows. Or they may destroy property or threaten to harm themselves. As a result, cell extractions also carry a high potential for use of force by corrections personnel.

The St. Mary's County, MD Sheriff's Office trains its staff in using the Critical Decision-Making Model to help safely carry out cell extractions while minimizing the use of force. The agency empowers its supervisors and team leaders to use the CDM in developing their initial plan and encourages them to "spin the model" throughout the operation. Their use of the CDM begins with three basic assumptions:

1. Cell extractions are dangerous for **everyone** if the team has to go in.
2. A person who is contained alone is a threat only to themselves, so don't rush things.
3. Anger is finite, while jails operate 24/7, so time is usually on the side of correctional officers.

Here is how the CDM may be used in carrying out a cell extraction.

Step 1: Collect Information

- Who is in the cell? Is it one person or multiple people?
- If there are multiple people, can we remove the other subjects to take the inmates' "group mentality" or "ego" out of the equation?
- What do we know about the inmate in question? What crime have they been charged with? Do they have mental health issues? Have there been recent incidents?
- Why are they refusing to exit? Were they written up for some infractions? Are they afraid to go to another housing area? Are they upset because **this** particular group of officers is working?

Step 2: Assess Situation, Threats, Risks

- Does the inmate have a history of aggression or violence?
- If they're covering the camera or window, can you still maintain contact with the inmate?
 - » Remember: do not get tunnel vision. Other cell doors will not be opened until the cell is cleared.

Step 3: Consider Correctional Powers and Agency Policy

- What is our agency's policy on forcing an inmate out of their cell?
 - » Many agencies have hygiene policies that say inmates have to exit their cell or shower every certain number of hours. But do we also have an umbrella provision of respecting and protecting human life?
- Might forcing someone out of their cell do more harm than good?
 - » Consider how the operation may affect other inmates and the overall operation of the jail.

Step 4: Identify Options to Determine the Best Course of Action

- Does the inmate really need to come out – and come out now?
- Keep the inmate talking, if possible, to wear down their anger.
- Identify one person to make contact with the inmate, but if they don't establish a rapport, turn to someone else.
- Listen to what the inmate is saying. Gather more information and spin the model to adjust the plan as appropriate.
- Buy yourself more time, if possible. It may provide the opportunity to resolve the situation without having to use force.
 - » A correctional officer may say: "I hear what you're saying, and I'll work on what you told me the real issue is here. We're all going to step back and take a breath, but I'm really working with you here. I'll come back in 30 minutes, and we can we talk about it again and make a plan together."
 - » Even if communications doesn't resolve the situation, the additional time will give the extraction team time to suit up, prep their equipment, and prepare the rest of the facility for the operation.
- Is an isolation cell a good option?

Step 5: Act, Review, and Re-Assess

- Assess whether Plan A was successful. Even a small victory – for example, getting the inmate to remove the cover from the window or camera – may be progress that can be built on.
- If Plan A didn't fully resolve the situation, spin the model and develop a Plan B.
- Rely on the team leader or supervisor to take the lead but involve other members of the team in the process.
- Consider calling in additional resources, such as mental health staff, high-level commanders, etc.

Key Benefits of the CDM

Agencies have found that the CDM has two key benefits:

1. **Better decisions up front.** This is often because officers take the time to gather information, assess the situation, and develop options.

An example of this comes from the Marathon County, WI Sheriff's Office, whose representatives participated in the ICAT for Jails meeting in Decatur, IL in November 2022. Officers in the segregation unit detected a darkened cell and assumed that the inmate inside had covered up the overhead light, a fairly common infraction in the jail. Two officers were preparing to enter the cell and deploy their Tasers if necessary, while the inmate threatened to throw an object at the officers.

But a supervisor on the scene slowed the situation down, closed the cell door, and began gathering more information. What

he learned was that the cell lights in the entire wing had inadvertently been turned off. That's why the inmate's cell was dark. Slowing down and following the steps of the CDM helped the officers avoid an unnecessary confrontation.

2. **Better explanations of decisions after the fact.** The CDM helps officers in writing their reports and testifying in court. It can also be used by supervisors to debrief critical incidents in an organized manner, helping everyone learn what worked well and what didn't.

The Santa Cruz County, CA Sheriff's Office has used the CDM to debrief some critical incidents within its jail. Officials say the CDM helps them structure the after-action sessions, focusing on key issues such as information gathering, crisis recognition and tactics, and identifying strengths and weaknesses in an objective, non-judgmental fashion.



The Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office conducts live scenario-based ICAT training.

CHAPTER 5

The Other ICAT Modules

The Critical Decision-Making Model (CDM), a central component of ICAT, is covered in-depth in Module 2 of the curriculum and explained in the previous chapter of this report. This chapter describes ICAT Modules 3 through 7, all of which build upon the foundation of the CDM.

The sheriffs' offices that have implemented ICAT training for their jail personnel have found that all of the modules – with the possible exception of Module 5: Suicide by Cop – are applicable to their correctional officers. These agencies have largely adopted the entire ICAT curriculum as is, although they have customized some of the video case studies and, especially, the scenarios in the curriculum to make them relevant to their jail personnel. (See the case studies in Chapter 3 for more details.)

Module 3: Crisis Recognition

Overview

This module provides useful information about recognizing people in crisis and practical tips on how to approach them and defuse potentially volatile situations. It includes an overview of some common indicators of mental illness, substance use disorders, and developmental disabilities. It focuses largely on strategies for responding to people in crisis and trying to get them to think and act rationally.

Key points of Module 3

- Mental illness and substance use disorders are diseases. They typically cannot be overcome by sheer willpower or going “cold turkey.” Medications can help, but they are not perfect.
- In addition to people with chronic mental health or substance abuse conditions, officers frequently encounter people with situational mental health episodes. In jails, these include inmates undergoing situational stressors, such as bad news following a court appearance, visitation, or other communication.
- It is important for officers to try to understand what is behind someone's erratic behavior, especially if it involves an episodic crisis. But it is *not* the officer's role to make assumptions about a person in crisis or attempt to clinically diagnose, cure, or “solve” the underlying crisis.
- ICAT emphasizes trying to stabilize the situation, make it safe, and help the person move past the crisis and toward identifying options that may offer a solution.
- Information gathering – Step 1 in the CDM – is an essential element of crisis recognition. Knowing ahead of time about an individual's mental health helps officers better and more safely manage these encounters.

- When officers encounter a person in crisis, ICAT follows a three-phase response process:
 - » Safety first. Officers should focus on ensuring the safety of themselves, the subject, and other inmates.
 - » Stability. After securing the situation, officers should try to get the person stabilized using verbal and nonverbal de-escalation techniques, depending on their assessment of the threat.
 - » Rational thinking. Once the person is stabilized, officers should transition to problem-solving communication – trying to get the person to a state of more rational thinking.
- Persons in crisis are often overwhelmed by emotions. As emotions rise, rational thinking is diminished. ICAT focuses on how officers can help bring down an individual's emotions and bring up their rational thinking.
- The emotional vs. rational thinking balance affects officers as well. As officers' emotions increase during a tense situation, their rational thinking can decline. ICAT emphasizes the importance of officers keeping their own emotions in check.

Why this is important for jail personnel

- Given the high percentage of jail inmates who have chronic mental illness, substance use, or co-occurring conditions, as well as individuals experiencing situational crises, correctional officers encounter people in crisis on a regular basis. Learning to work effectively – and safely – with this population is critically important.
- In jails, the mental health and related information collected at intake can be extremely helpful in helping to manage individuals in crisis. It is important for jails to ensure that this information is collected in the

first place, both through self-reporting and debriefing with the police officers who transported the inmate. If an inmate is transferred from another location, such as a mental health treatment facility, it is essential that information about the earlier stay is also collected at intake. In addition to collecting information, jails need to ensure that the information is available to the correctional officers who are in day-to-day contact with the inmate.

- People in crisis need help. They are a potential threat to themselves and others, and they can easily disrupt jail operations. Correctional officers have a duty to help these individuals, as well as the other inmates in the jail.
- Some agencies have found it useful to pair ICAT and Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. The two trainings provide a complementary course of instruction on dealing with people in crisis. CIT focuses more on recognition and awareness; ICAT reinforces that with a focus on decision-making and tactics.

Module 4: Tactical Communications

Overview

This module covers both the theory and practice of effective communications, especially in tense, dynamic situations. It operationalizes concepts such as active listening (listening to understand and not just respond), “triggers and hooks,” and non-verbal communications. The module provides helpful “do’s and don’ts” for effective communications, and it uses video case studies to illustrate how officers can effectively use tactical communications to defuse situations involving people in crisis who were posing a threat to themselves or others.

Key points of Module 4

- ICAT provides a communications alternative to the traditional “Ask-Make-Tell” approach that many law enforcement officers are trained in. In some situations, it is appropriate to issue stern commands. In many others, however, it makes sense to slow things down, begin to talk, and try to establish rapport.
- Active listening is a key component of Tactical Communications. ICAT teaches officers to follow the “80/20 principle” – officers should try to talk only 20% of the time and let the subject do the other 80%. When they

Five Universal Truths of Human Interaction

The ICAT Tactical Communications module teaches the concept of the Five Universal Truths of Human Interaction, developed by George Thompson and Jerry Jenkins as part of their “Verbal Judo” course.¹⁵ The Five Universal Truths offer a framework for teaching the specific tools and tactics that Module 4 presents. While officers cannot necessarily practice all five in every encounter, they do provide a useful foundation for approaching officers’ communications, especially with people in crisis.

Here are the Five Universal Truths:

- People feel the need to be respected.
- People would rather be asked than be told.
- People have a desire to know why.
- People prefer to have options rather than threats.
- People want to have a second chance.

are talking, officers should try to ask open-ended questions that will get the person talking; this can provide important information about the subject’s state of mind and what the appropriate response may be.

- In the heat of the moment, law enforcement officers can get caught in the loop of repeatedly barking the same command – such as “Drop the knife” on the street, or “Come to the door and cuff up” in a jail. This approach seldom works, especially with people in a mental health crisis. This module provides officers with alternative ways to begin a conversation and give information and options to the subject.
- ICAT teaches officers about “hooks and triggers” – hooks being those topics that may calm a subject down and get them talking, triggers being those topics that are likely to agitate the person and should be avoided.
- ICAT emphasizes a team approach to communications. This entails only one officer talking at a time, not multiple officers shouting different commands at once. And it means providing clear, simple statements. Other officers support the team approach by providing any necessary cover and helping control the environment. In jails, that means reducing any distractions from other inmates and ensuring other correctional officers arriving on the scene know their roles. And if one officer is not getting through to the subject, the team approach means that another officer steps forward and takes the lead on communications.
- The Tactical Communications module provides a number of specific, helpful tips for communicating effectively. These include:
 - » Maintain eye contact.
 - » Offer “minimal encouragers” such as nodding your head to recognize what the

15. Thompson, George J., and Jerry B. Jenkins. *Verbal Judo: The Gentle Art of Persuasion*. William Morrow, an Imprint of Harper Collins Publishers, 2013.

person is saying, acknowledging the crisis they may be experiencing, and paraphrasing and summarizing what they are saying.

- » Modulate the tone of your voice to match the situation – maintain a calm tone if the subject is agitated.
- The module also provides some communications “don’ts.” For example:
 - » Don’t join in the subject’s behavior. If they are agitated, stay calm and allow them to vent.
 - » Don’t confuse the subject. Keep communications simple and don’t issue multiple, rapid-fire commands.
 - » Don’t diminish the subject, for example by joking or whispering about them.
 - » Don’t lie or deceive the subject. If they catch you in a lie, then you have lost trust with them and reduced the opportunity for voluntary compliance.
 - » Don’t talk yourself into a corner – for example, through statements such as “Do this or I will deploy my Taser.”
- ICAT emphasizes the importance of non-verbal communications, which research suggests accounts for the majority of a person’s communications. The module stresses the importance of maintaining eye contact with the subject, using appropriate facial expressions, having a professional posture, and using open-handed gestures. It also counsels officers to align their words and non-verbal signals. Finally, the module reminds officers to read the body language of the subject; it is critical for threat assessment.

Why this is important for jail personnel

- While communications is an important skill for all law enforcement officers, it is often the most important tool that jail personnel have. Correctional officers work closely among the inmate population every day, and they are generally not equipped with the range of other tools and weapons that street officers have. Effective communications is a critical skill for the safety of correctional officers and the inmate population.
- Effective communications is often the best – and least dangerous – approach to gaining voluntary compliance.

Module 5: Suicide by Cop

Overview

This module addresses the extremely challenging situation in which a suicidal person tries to get a police officer to take their life. The module builds on *Suicide by Cop: Protocol and Training Guide*, which PERF published with input from experienced police officers and psychologists who work extensively with law enforcement.¹⁶ Because suicide-by-cop encounters typically occur on the street and involve armed subjects trying to provoke responding police officers to use deadly force, this module may not apply directly to correctional officers. **However, many of the principles in the module will apply to jail personnel who encounter inmates who take threatening actions in an attempt to provoke correctional officers to use force against them.**

Key points of Module 5

- There are two types of suicide-by-cop encounters:
 - » Planned events, in which the subject was thinking about suicide (or otherwise

16. *Suicide by Cop: Protocol and Training Guide*, Police Executive Research Forum, 2019. www.policeforum.org/assets/SBCTrainingGuide.pdf.

provoking an officers) for a period of time and had developed a plan for carrying it out.

- » Spontaneous events, in which the subject makes an instantaneous decision to provoke the officer, often in response to a stressor or even the actions of the officer.
- In these types of situations, repeatedly barking commands is seldom successful. It is important for officers to practice the tactical communications skills covered in Module 4 and attempt to establish a rapport with the subject.
- These types of encounters are best handled through a team approach that includes specialized personnel trained in mental health and crisis intervention.
- Supervision and leadership are critical. The presence and direction of a leader on scene can have a stabilizing effect on inexperienced officers in difficult situations like these.

Adopting suicide by cop for jail situations

- As noted earlier, traditional suicide-by-cop encounters rarely, if ever, occur in jails. Nevertheless, there are situations in which an inmate may attempt to provoke a correctional officer into using force, so it is important for officers to be able to recognize and respond safely and appropriately, with minimal force if possible.
- Inmates may provoke these types of encounters for a number of reasons, including showing off to other inmates or deliberately trying to generate disciplinary action. For example, an inmate seeking a change in their housing assignment – to protective custody, for example – may intentionally confront a correctional officer in the hopes that they may use force.
- There are a number of “precursor indicators” of an inmate who may be looking to provoke a confrontation. These include

intentionally not taking medication, distancing themselves from a group or appearing to avoid interaction with others, wearing extra clothing or wrapping their face in a shirt or other cloth, changing from shower shoes to sneakers at inappropriate times, making “armor” out of magazines, books, or legal documents, or covering cameras or light fixtures. These are analogous to situations on the street in which an individual may walk toward a police officer with a knife and say, “Shoot me.” These types of actions indicate that the person is pushing you to use force against them. Recognizing these types of odd behaviors and trying to understand the motivations behind them can help a correctional officer craft the most effective response that minimizes the use of force.

Module 6: Operational Tactics

Overview

This module focuses on three phases of any response: pre-planning, the actual response, and post-event reviews. The module covers a number of specific strategies and tactics for putting officers in a winnable situation – and keeping them there throughout the event. It also includes guidance on how to conduct an effective after-action review to assess performance and learn for the future.

Key points of Module 6

- For the pre-response phase, officers are taught to gather as much information as possible (Step 1 in the Critical Decision-Making Model) and begin developing a working strategy.
 - » If time and circumstances permit, officers are encouraged to take a “tactical pause” to huddle up, collect and share information, and work through some of the “what if” scenarios they may encounter. Correctional officers can use this time to collect and analyze information about the

inmate, the situation that precipitated the encounter, and the environment.

- » It is also essential for officers to prepare to control the entire scene (this is especially important in smaller, enclosed spaces such as jails) and to prepare and manage themselves (including their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors).
- For the response phase, ICAT covers several tactics that can be effective on the street as well as in correctional facilities. These include:
 - » Use time to officers' advantage. Except in true emergencies where immediate action is required, in many incidents it is advantageous for officers to slow the situation down, allowing them to use the Critical Decision-Making Model to gather more information, marshal additional resources, and develop a plan of action.
 - » Establish and maintain a reactionary gap by using distance and available cover. While spaces inside jails may be more truncated than on the street, in many encounters inside jails there are still opportunities for correctional officers to maintain distance from a subject and use cover (including an inmate's cell door). Some encounters may require officers to "tactically reposition" as the situation unfolds; this helps to maintain the reactionary gap, preserve officer safety, and increase opportunities to consider options ("spin the CDM"). The goal is for officers to always stay in a winnable position.
 - » Use containment to your advantage. Many situations can be contained to a manageable space, such as a cell, wing, or common area. Containing situations to a smaller, defined area is an advantage that correctional officers should use.
 - » Start "low" whenever possible. Circumstances and threats will always dictate the

Emotional Contagion

ICAT teaches the concept of "emotional contagion" – that an officer's words and actions are contagious to those around them. If you are displaying fear, anger, frustration, or aggression through your words, voice tone, and body language, those emotions will "leak out" and may spread to the subjects you are dealing with. Conversely, if you are displaying a calm demeanor, emotional control, empathy, and patience, those emotions also will spread.

ICAT reminds officers that they are the ones in control of the situation, and their actions and words should be geared toward achieving voluntary compliance and a peaceful resolution, as opposed to leading to more disruption and chaos.

response, and some situations will require immediate and assertive action. Other situations, however, will benefit from officers coming in "low" and not over-relying on less lethal weapons. Experience shows that it is often easier to escalate a response than it is to de-escalate one when officers come in "high."

- » Follow a team approach. While a single officer may be able to handle some situations on their own, many encounters where the use of force may be a possibility are best handled by teams of officers. ICAT emphasizes that the team can divide up responsibilities (contact and communications, cover, control of the scene, scribe, etc.) and call in additional, specialized resources as needed. In jails, it is especially important that some team members be assigned to controlling the other inmates.
- » Get supervisors involved. ICAT stresses the importance of supervision and informal leadership during critical incidents. If supervisors are not available, then



“ In corrections, the process can sometimes get ‘stalled’ and take a long period of time. And that’s OK. When time is on your side, you can use a **lot** of time. If the person is isolated and safe, then use that time. ”

— **Kyle Ward, Training/Compliance Supervisor
Santa Cruz County, CA Sheriff’s Office**

informal leaders – those with the experience, training, and temperament to manage the scene – need to step up.

- » Be ready with a Plan B. A key element of the CDM is continuing to gather information and consider options as the situation unfolds. ICAT emphasizes not only having an initial Plan A, but most importantly, being ready with a Plan B (and potentially a Plan C, D, etc., as the situation evolves). Plan B situations inside a jail depend on many factors, such as the number of inmates involved in an incident and how large an area they are contained in. The resources and tools used in a spacious yard or dorm area would differ from those appropriate for a two-person cell. In considering a Plan B, it is essential for correctional officers not only to keep collecting and analyzing information, but also to consider the resources and tools available to them that would be appropriate for the setting.
- The post-response phase covers best practices for debriefing incidents after they have concluded. Key elements include the following:
 - » Use the Critical Decision-Making Model to structure the debriefing. The CDM is a handy tool for reviewing each of the response steps: What information did we have? What additional information would have been helpful? What were the threats and risks? What was agency policy in this situation? etc.

- » Focus on more than just tactics. Debriefings should also include how the team performed with crisis recognition, threat assessment, communications, and other elements of the response.
- » Debrief as a group. Make sure that everyone who took part in the incident response is also part of the debriefing. And ensure that everyone gets a chance to talk and contribute to the discussion.
- » Supervisors play a critical role. They need to facilitate, not dominate, the discussion during debriefings.
- » Debriefings should not be a blame session. Instead, they should focus on strengths, missed opportunities, and key takeaways.

Why this is important for jail personnel

- One thing that differentiates ICAT from other de-escalation training is that it integrates tactics with skills such as crisis recognition and communications. Utilizing all three skill sets is important for jail personnel.
- Many of the fundamental ICAT tactics designed for patrol officers – for example, using distance and cover to create time, or taking a team approach to an incident response – apply to correctional officers as well. Following them can enhance officer safety and help minimize the use of force whenever possible.
- How these tactics are applied inside jails is going to vary based on a number of factors,



“ Time is usually on our side. The biggest failure I see is that we just get frustrated. One of the really common situations is that we rush something because we’re late for our well-being checks. ”

— **Sheriff Gary Raney (ret.)**
Ada County, ID Sheriff’s Office

including facility size, staffing, style of supervision, and inmate population characteristics. ICAT is a flexible approach that jails can customize to meet their specific conditions and needs.

- Use-of-force incidents can have a ripple effect inside jails, on both the other inmates and the jail personnel who relieve those who were on duty during the incident. Minimizing the use of force and learning from incidents that do occur can promote the overall safety and functioning of the facility.

Module 7: Step Up and Step In

Overview

This module focuses on how officers can – and should – intervene in two types of situations: 1) when a colleague is about to engage in some form of misconduct, including the use of excessive force; and 2) when the current plan is clearly not working and another officer has a different approach that is more likely to resolve a situation successfully. The concept of “stepping up and stepping in” is about preventing problems in potential use-of-force situations before they occur. It is also about showing leadership and pivoting to a Plan B when the original course of action is not progressing.

Key points of Module 7

- Critical incidents – on the street or in a correctional setting – seldom unfold in a tidy, predictable manner. Especially in

these situations, officers can get off track or lose focus, sometimes to the point that they may begin engaging in behavior that is unprofessional, counter-productive, or even excessive.

- To effectively “step up and step in,” officers need to have a thorough understanding of the laws and agency policies for the particular situation – step 3 in the Critical Decision-Making Model. This will help guide their response.
- Being ready and able to exercise leadership is critical in these situations. In some situations, supervisors may not be available, which means officers must have the confidence to step up and exercise informal leadership with their peers.
- The module includes several video case studies showing instances where officers successfully intervened and redirected situations that were headed in the wrong direction, as well as cases where “stepping up and stepping in” could have been valuable. Classroom discussions of these case studies is the heart of this module.

Why this is important for jail personnel

- By interrupting potential misconduct before it occurs, the concept of stepping up and stepping in can reduce instances of excessive force inside jails. This can help avoid costly lawsuits against the correctional facilities and their governing bodies and also protect the careers of individual correctional officers.

- Emotional contagion (see page 36) can be a particular issue inside jails, where an inmate's aggressive or disrespectful behavior toward a correctional officer can prompt a similar response from the officer. (Patrol officers often refer to this as "contempt of cop.") How a correctional officer handles one confrontational situation of this type can have a ripple effect on the rest of the inmate population, potentially leading to additional confrontations if not handled well. This module helps officers avoid the trap of emotional contagion in the first place and intervene with fellow officers who may be moving in that direction.
- As many jails continue to be short-staffed, the pressures on existing personnel can be enormous. "Stepping up and stepping in" can help relieve some of those pressures and foster teamwork and camaraderie among staff.

CHAPTER 6

Next Steps

For sheriffs' offices and other agencies

with a correctional function that are interested in ICAT for Jails, PERF is ready to assist with information and assistance. Agencies can contact PERF Associate Deputy Director Dan Alioto, who also leads PERF's Sheriffs Outreach program, at dalioto@policeforum.org to set up an initial discussion.

How to Preview the ICAT Curriculum

Agencies interested in previewing the ICAT curriculum should contact Dan Alioto or PERF Senior Research Associate Jason Cheney at jcheney@policeforum.org or 202-466-7820.

There is no charge for sheriffs' offices or other law enforcement agencies to acquire and adopt the ICAT curriculum. However, to help ensure quality control and a successful implementation, agencies are expected to send personnel to an ICAT train-the-trainer session presented by PERF, where they can learn about the curriculum in detail and receive guidance on how to effectively present the material. Alternatively, some agencies elect to hire PERF to come in and directly train their personnel.

PERF National ICAT Training Center

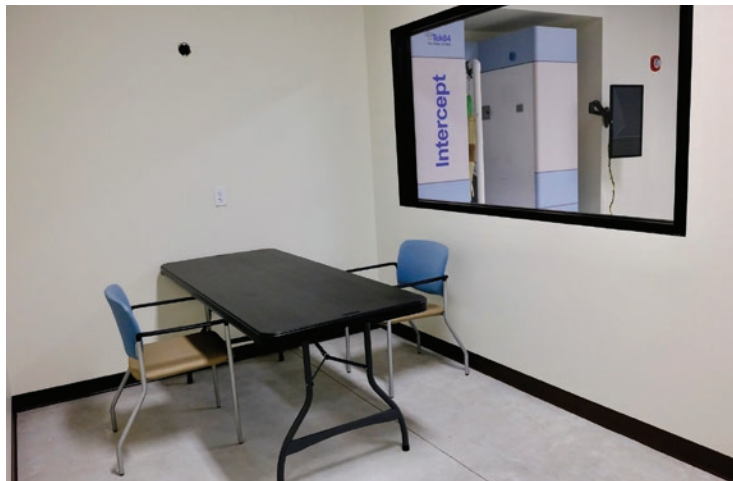
While some larger police agencies, such as the Harris County Sheriff's Office, have modern training facilities that feature state-of-the-art classrooms, technology, and tactical villages for scenario-based training, the vast majority of departments lack such amenities. The new PERF National ICAT Training Center is helping to close that gap by making contemporary training facilities geared toward the delivery of ICAT available to more agencies, including sheriffs' offices looking to implement ICAT for their jail personnel.

Funded by a generous donation from the Howard G. Buffett Foundation, the PERF National ICAT Training Center will allow PERF to conduct both train-the-trainer sessions and agency-specific ICAT instruction for interested agencies from across the country. It will also serve as an innovation hub for developing and testing new features of ICAT.

Located on 52 acres in Decatur, IL, the training facility includes 50,000 square feet of classroom space, scenario-based training venues, and administrative offices. These include an auditorium with stadium-style seating for 144 students and a 108-seat classroom, both equipped with industry-leading technology.



ABOVE: National ICAT Center auditorium.
RIGHT, BOTH PHOTOS: National ICAT Center Jail Intake Room



The training center also includes a dozen different scenario-based training venues spread over 22,500 square feet. In addition to venues simulating locations where patrol officers frequently operate (convenience store, fast-food restaurant, hospital, school, etc.), the facility has a separate venue that mirrors a correctional facility, including prisoner intake, day room and recreation area, and eight prisoner cells. This venue is ideal for carrying out scenarios in the ICAT for Jails curriculum.

The PERF National ICAT Training Center is operated by the Public Safety Training Foundation, in partnership with PERF. Retired Macon County, IL Sheriff Tom Schneider oversees the facility's operations.

About the Police Executive Research Forum

The Police Executive Research Forum

(PERF) is an independent research organization that focuses on critical issues in policing. Since its founding in 1976, PERF has identified best practices on fundamental issues such as developing community policing and problem-oriented policing; using technologies to deliver police services to the community; and developing and assessing crime reduction strategies. Over the past decade, PERF has led efforts to reduce police use of force through its guiding principles on use of force and innovative Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics (ICAT) training program.

PERF strives to advance professionalism in policing and to improve the delivery of police services through the exercise of strong national leadership; public debate of police and criminal justice issues; and research and policy development.

The nature of PERF's work can be seen in the reports PERF has published over the years. Most of these reports are available without charge online at <http://www.policeforum.org/free-online-documents>.

In addition to conducting research and publishing reports on our findings, PERF

conducts management studies of individual law enforcement agencies; educates hundreds of police officials each year in the Senior Management Institute for Police, a three-week executive development program; and provides executive search services to governments that wish to conduct national searches for their next police chief.

All of PERF's work benefits from PERF's status as a membership organization of police officials, academics, government leaders, and others with an interest in policing and criminal justice.

All PERF members must have a four-year college degree and must subscribe to a set of founding principles, emphasizing the importance of research and public debate in policing, adherence to the Constitution and the highest standards of ethics and integrity, and accountability to the communities that police agencies serve.

PERF is governed by a member-elected President and Board of Directors and a Board-appointed Executive Director.

To learn more about PERF, visit: www.policeforum.org.



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**For more information (or if your agency is interested in a customized,
on-site training for all agency personnel): Contact Jason Cheney at
jcheney@policeforum.org or 202-454-8331.
www.policeforum.org/ICAT**

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COUNTY JAIL