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CREATING SAFE SPACES: INVESTIGATING THE INCLUSION AND SAFETY NEEDS OF PERSONS DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Maricel Miren Monis
Doctor of Philosophy in Criminology, Graduate School, Philippine College of Criminology

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the implementation of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) treatment policies for Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) with special needs, focusing on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) individuals, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities (PWD). It aimed to assess compliance with treatment policies, identify challenges, examine differences in perceptions between jail officers and PDL, and propose strategies to enhance policy implementation. A mixed-methods design was used, with 160 respondents comprising 120 PDL and 40 jail officers from selected BJMP facilities. Eight key informants joined the qualitative phase. Quantitative data were statistically analyzed, while qualitative data underwent Braun and Clarke's six-step thematic analysis. Results showed a generally high level of compliance across four areas: admission and classification; housing and segregation; welfare and development programs; and safety and security. However, significant differences were found between Jail Officers and PDL with disabilities in their perceptions of policy implementation. Key challenges identified were overcrowding, inadequate healthcare services, lack of specialized training for personnel, and unequal access to programs. The study concluded that while BJMP has comprehensive policies, resource gaps and operational limitations hinder consistent implementation, highlighting the need to bridge policy and practice to ensure humane and rehabilitative jail management.

KEYWORDS: *Persons Deprived of Liberty, PDL With Special Needs, LGBTQIA+, Senior Citizens, PWD*

INTRODUCTION

The humane safekeeping and rehabilitation of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) represent both a legal obligation and a moral benchmark for any correctional system. In the Philippines, the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) is mandated to ensure the protection, welfare, and development of PDL under its jurisdiction. While this mandate applies universally, the situation of PDL with special needs—such as those belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities (PWDs)—calls for heightened institutional attention. These groups possess unique physical, psychological, and social needs that require differentiated approaches to management, protection, and rehabilitation.

This study, titled "Creating Safe Spaces: Investigating the Inclusion and Safety Needs of Persons Deprived of Liberty with Special Needs," seeks to evaluate how BJMP treatment policies are implemented to address the inclusion and safety concerns of these marginalized groups. The study further aims to develop a strategic and unified framework known as the Inclusive Justice Hub (IJH): Inclusive Jail-Based Unified System for Care, Empowerment, and Rehabilitation, which promotes an integrated and rights-based approach to correctional inclusivity.

The Philippines' correctional landscape continues to face multiple systemic challenges such as overcrowding, inadequate facilities, limited resources, and insufficient training among personnel. According to BJMP (2024), the national jail congestion rate remains over 300 percent, with some facilities operating beyond humane capacity. In such environments, PDL with special needs experience disproportionate hardship. Those with disabilities may lack mobility aids; elderly PDL may be exposed to physical strain or health risks; and LGBTQIA+ PDL may experience stigma, harassment, or inappropriate housing placements. These realities contradict the guiding principle of humane safekeeping and highlight the need to evaluate whether existing policies translate into inclusive practice.

At the global level, the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules) emphasize that all prisoners must be treated with respect for their inherent dignity. Complementary frameworks such as the Bangkok Rules (2010) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2006) reinforce the necessity of gender-responsive and disability-sensitive correctional management. The Philippines, as a signatory to these instruments, carries the responsibility to institutionalize human-rights-based corrections that uphold the dignity and equality of all PDL, regardless of gender identity, age, or disability.

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Despite the presence of policies like the BJMP's Manual on the Management of Persons Deprived of Liberty with Special Needs (2015), there is limited empirical evaluation of their implementation at the facility level. Hence, this study investigates the compliance of selected BJMP-NCR jails with established treatment policies, identifies operational and structural challenges, examines perception differences between PDL and jail officers, and proposes strategic mechanisms for inclusive management.

Literature Review

The discourse on correctional inclusivity has evolved alongside global developments in human rights, social equity, and restorative justice. The treatment of vulnerable Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) — particularly those with disabilities, the elderly, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community — increasingly reflects a nation's moral and institutional commitment to humane governance. International frameworks such as the *Nelson Mandela Rules* (UN, 2015), the *Bangkok Rules* (UN, 2011), and the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2006) affirm that humane detention must account for individual needs, emphasizing health, accessibility, and protection from discrimination.

PDL with Disabilities. Global studies indicate that correctional institutions often remain ill-equipped to accommodate prisoners with disabilities, leading to violations of their basic rights to mobility, access, and health care (WHO, 2020). Fuchs (2020) and Garland (2018) found that without disability-inclusive design, PWD-PDL frequently experience dependence on peers and staff for basic needs, compromising dignity and autonomy. In the Philippines, BJMP's *Manual on the Treatment of PDL with Special Needs* (2020) and *Memorandum Circular No. 96, s. 2020* outline accessibility and assistive provisions, yet implementation remains inconsistent due to resource constraints (BJMP, 2020). Monis (2025) observed that many PWD-PDL rely on peer assistance for mobility and access to basic services, revealing that institutional inadequacy persists despite policy presence.

Elderly PDL. The global rise of aging prison populations presents another complex challenge. Aday and Wahidin (2017) identified compounded risks of chronic illness, social isolation, and limited geriatric care among older detainees. The World Health Organization (2020) also warns that prison environments accelerate biological aging due to stress and inadequate healthcare. Locally, *Republic Act No. 9994* (Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010) provides for the protection and welfare of older persons, but these rights are difficult to operationalize in overcrowded Philippine jails. Hernandez (2020) noted that senior citizen PDLs often lack access to medical care, assistive devices, and appropriate living accommodations, contradicting both national and international human rights commitments.

LGBTQIA+ PDL. The experiences of LGBTQIA+ detainees remain marked by stigma, discrimination, and under-protection. The *UNODC Handbook on Prisoners with Special Needs* (2020) reports that sexual minorities face higher risks of violence and sexual abuse in detention. In the Philippines, the BJMP's *Policy on the Treatment of LGBTQI PDL* (2018) and the *Safe Spaces Act* (RA 11313) emphasize equality and protection from gender-based discrimination. However, Iaksch and Aguilar (2022) and Gonzales and Reyes (2020) argue that cultural biases and inadequate SOGIE training among custodial staff impede the realization of these protections. Despite GAD programs and orientation initiatives, implementation varies widely across facilities, depending on leadership commitment and personnel awareness.

Implementation Gaps and Systemic Barriers. De Guzman (2021) asserts that Philippine correctional reforms are often "policy-heavy but resource-light," where progressive frameworks exist without corresponding logistical and personnel support. Almazan et al. (2021) and Cruz & De Leon (2022) similarly highlight the lack of monitoring, overcrowding, and weak inter-agency coordination as systemic constraints that dilute the impact of otherwise robust policies. These findings resonate with international critiques by Jewkes et al. (2016) that institutional inertia and inadequate funding perpetuate exclusion and vulnerability among marginalized PDL groups.

Synthesis and Research Gap. Collectively, existing literature confirms that while the Philippines has adopted progressive BJMP treatment policies for PDL with special needs, significant gaps remain between policy formulation and implementation. There is limited empirical evidence examining the *actual level of compliance*, *perceived challenges*, and *lived experiences* of both jail officers and PDL across facilities. Thus, this study addresses a critical gap by combining quantitative assessment with qualitative inquiry to evaluate inclusivity, identify operational barriers, and propose a comprehensive framework — the **Inclusive Justice Hub (IJH)** — for sustainable, rights-based correctional reform.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework/Paradigm of the Study

This study is guided by three theoretical perspectives that collectively explain the intersection of human rights, vulnerability, and institutional environment: **Intersectionality Theory**, the **Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)**, and **Environmental Criminology Theory (ECT)**.

Intersectionality Theory (Crenshaw, 1989). This theory posits that multiple social identities—such as gender, age, and disability—intersect to produce unique and compounded experiences of disadvantage. Within BJMP facilities, PDL who belong to several marginalized categories often experience layered exclusion. The framework underscores that inclusivity efforts must consider these overlapping vulnerabilities to ensure equitable and context-sensitive policy application.

Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA). The HRBA anchors the study in legal and moral principles derived from international and national instruments, including the *Nelson Mandela Rules*,

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Bangkok Rules, and *CRPD*. It asserts that every PDL is a rights-holder and that the BJMP, as the implementing agency, is a duty-bearer obligated to respect, protect, and fulfill these rights. By using HRBA, the study evaluates policy implementation not just in terms of efficiency but also in terms of rights realization—measuring how well institutional practices align with human dignity, equality, and accountability.

Environmental Criminology Theory (ECT). ECT, introduced by Brantingham and Brantingham (1991), posits that the physical environment influences behavior and safety outcomes. Applied to correctional management, the theory highlights that overcrowding, poor lighting, and inadequate ventilation increase tension, reduce safety, and impair rehabilitation. By integrating ECT, the study recognizes that humane treatment requires structural as well as moral reforms—acknowledging that physical spaces are integral to inclusion and security.

Together, these theories provide a holistic analytical framework linking identity, rights, and environment as interdependent determinants of humane and inclusive jail management.

Building on these theories, the **conceptual framework** of this study connects the legal and institutional mandates of BJMP with the lived realities of PDL with special needs. It assumes that when inclusive policies are effectively implemented within supportive environments that recognize intersectional identities, the result is a safer, fairer, and more rehabilitative correctional system.

The framework positions BJMP's treatment policies as the central mechanism through which human rights principles are operationalized. The level of compliance, the degree of institutional responsiveness, and the integration of inclusivity in daily operations form the measurable dimensions of this process. The study therefore examines how these dynamics collectively influence the well-being, safety, and participation of PDL with special needs.

The study employs an **Input–Process–Output (IPO)** paradigm to depict the logical relationship among policy foundations, implementation mechanisms, and resultant outcomes:

- **Input:** BJMP's treatment policies, operational guidelines, and international frameworks such as the *Nelson Mandela Rules*, *Bangkok Rules*, and *CRPD*, all of which define standards for humane, gender-sensitive, and disability-inclusive management.
- **Process:** The implementation of these policies through institutional mechanisms—including admission and classification systems, housing arrangements, welfare and development programs, and safety measures—mediated by internal constraints like congestion, limited manpower, and budgetary limitations.
- **Output:** The proposed **Inclusive Justice Hub (IJH): Inclusive Jail-Based Unified System for Care, Empowerment, and Rehabilitation**, which serves as the unified framework derived from the study's findings. The IJH model embodies the integration of human rights principles, intersectional awareness, and environmental considerations into a cohesive system aimed at ensuring equality, safety, and rehabilitation for all PDL with special needs.

This paradigm underscores that effective policy implementation depends on the synergy among institutional commitment, physical environment, and respect for human dignity.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it addresses the systemic and operational challenges affecting Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) with special needs, particularly those who are elderly, persons with disabilities (PWD), and members of the LGBTQIA+ community. By examining their lived experiences and the implementation of BJMP treatment policies, the research aims to promote inclusive, rights-based, and humane correctional management. The study's findings will benefit the following groups:

1. Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) with Special Needs. The study highlights their unique challenges and advocates for safer, more inclusive environments that ensure accessibility, equitable participation in programs, and the protection of their rights and dignity.
2. Jail Officers and Personnel. The research provides insights for improving staff awareness and training in handling vulnerable PDL, enhancing their ability to deliver sensitive and appropriate care, and reducing risks of neglect or discrimination.
3. Jail Wardens and Administrators. The results can guide facility management in policy enhancement, infrastructure design, and resource allocation to ensure that physical spaces, medical services, and rehabilitation programs meet the diverse needs of PDL.
4. Policy and Decision Makers. The study offers empirical evidence to support the development of standardized policies and reforms that align with BJMP mandates and international human rights standards.
5. Advocacy Groups and NGOs. Findings can aid in promoting legal and institutional reforms and in raising public awareness about the conditions of PDL with special needs.
6. Academics and Researchers. The research expands the literature on inclusive corrections and provides a foundation for future studies on humane and equitable jail management.

Ultimately, this study contributes to a more compassionate, rehabilitative, and just correctional system that benefits not only the PDL population but society as a whole.

Objectives of the Study

This study primarily aims to **assess the implementation of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) treatment policies** for **Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) with special needs**—specifically LGBTQIA+ individuals, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities (PWD)—within selected jails under the **BJMP National Capital Region (BJMP-NCR)**. The

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overarching goal is to evaluate the extent to which existing policies promote humane, inclusive, and rights-based correctional management and to develop a unified framework that strengthens inclusion, accessibility, and safety within custodial facilities. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. **Determine** the level of compliance of BJMP facilities with treatment policies related to the admission, housing, welfare, and security of PDL with special needs;
2. **Identify** the challenges encountered by both jail management and PDL in the implementation of these policies, particularly those affecting health care, accessibility, and program participation;
3. **Examine** the differences in perception between jail officers and PDL regarding inclusivity, adequacy of services, and overall policy enforcement; and
4. **Formulate** an innovative and evidence-based program—the **Inclusive Justice Hub (IJH): Inclusive Jail-Based Unified System for Care, Empowerment, and Rehabilitation**—as a strategic framework to enhance equitable, humane, and sustainable correctional practices.

In essence, this study endeavors not only to assess policy implementation but also to bridge the gap between **policy and practice**—transforming insights from the field into actionable strategies that advance **inclusive, dignified, and sustainable correctional care** for all Persons Deprived of Liberty with special needs under the BJMP.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this study, titled "Creating Safe Spaces: Investigating the Inclusion and Safety Needs of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) with Special Needs," was designed to comprehensively analyze the challenges encountered by three vulnerable groups within correctional settings: members of the LGBTQI community, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities (PWDs). It sought to assess the implementation of BJMP treatment policies and to develop data-driven insights that can guide inclusive and humane correctional management.

Research Design

This study utilized a **Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods Design**, which involved two interrelated phases—**quantitative** followed by **qualitative**—to provide a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of BJMP treatment policies for Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) with special needs. The **quantitative phase** was conducted first to obtain measurable data on the level of compliance of BJMP facilities with existing treatment policies across four key domains: admission and classification, housing and segregation, welfare and development, and safety and security.

The **qualitative phase** followed to explain and expand upon the statistical results by examining the lived experiences, perceptions, and insights of both jail officers and PDL belonging to vulnerable groups such as LGBTQIA+, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities. This phase provided depth and context, revealing the reasons behind the observed patterns in policy implementation.

The design was particularly appropriate for this study because it allowed the researcher to identify not only the **extent** of compliance but also the **factors** influencing it. Integration of both quantitative and qualitative findings occurred during the interpretation stage, where results were synthesized to produce a holistic understanding of the challenges, gaps, and opportunities in promoting inclusive, humane, and rights-based correctional management within BJMP facilities.

Research Method

This study employed a **mixed-method approach** implemented in two sequential phases to comprehensively assess the implementation of BJMP treatment policies for Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) with special needs.

Phase 1 – Quantitative Strand: Structured survey questionnaires were administered to jail officers and PDL with special needs across selected BJMP–NCR facilities. The instrument was divided into four major domains: (1) Admission, Assessment, and Classification; (2) Housing, Segregation, and Accommodation; (3) Welfare and Development Programs; and (4) Safety and Security Measures. Additional items evaluated the **seriousness of challenges** encountered by both groups and the **perceived necessity of proposed interventions** to enhance policy implementation. Responses generated numerical data that were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to determine levels of compliance, existing gaps, and perceptual differences between the two groups.

Phase 2 – Qualitative Strand: Following the quantitative phase, **semi-structured interviews** were conducted with a purposively selected subset of participants. These interviews explored in greater depth the experiences, perceptions, and recommendations of both jail officers and PDL, particularly regarding inclusion, accessibility, and humane treatment. Interviews were recorded with consent, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed thematically using Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework to identify key patterns and themes.

Finally, **integration** of both phases occurred during the interpretation stage. Quantitative findings provided measurable patterns, while qualitative insights offered contextual explanations, resulting in a holistic understanding of policy compliance, inclusivity, and the lived realities of PDL with special needs under BJMP care.

Population of the Study

The study population comprised PDL with special needs and jail officers from four BJMP–NCR facilities: Makati City Jail, Mandaluyong City Jail, Manila City Jail, and Quezon City Jail. These jails were purposely selected for having the largest populations of PDL with special needs, relatively lower

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congestion rates, and wider areas suitable for welfare and development programs.

A total of 160 respondents participated in the quantitative phase—equally distributed among four groups: jail officers, LGBTQI PDL, senior citizen PDL, and PWD PDL (n = 40 per group). In addition, eight (8) key informants were purposively selected for the qualitative interviews to represent varied perspectives from both the PDL and jail management sectors.

Inclusion criteria required that PDL participants be classified as having special needs (LGBTQI, elderly, or PWD), be detained for at least one year, and be physically and mentally capable of participation. Jail officers were included if they had served at least one year in the Records, Welfare and Development, or Custodial Units. Exclusion criteria included PDL without special needs and personnel without direct involvement in the management of such inmates.

Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that participants had relevant experience and could provide rich, detailed information concerning inclusion and safety issues in their facilities. This targeted approach allowed for in-depth exploration of institutional compliance and the everyday realities faced by PDL with special needs within the BJMP system.

Data Gathering Tools

Two primary research instruments were employed consistent with the Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods Design: a **survey questionnaire** for the quantitative phase and a **semi-structured interview guide** for the qualitative phase. These tools were developed to capture both measurable data and contextual insights on the implementation of BJMP treatment policies for Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) with special needs.

For **Phase 1**, the survey questionnaire served as the principal instrument for quantitative data collection. It was anchored on the provisions of **three BJMP Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** and **Memorandum Circulars** governing the treatment of vulnerable PDL—specifically those identifying as LGBTQIA+, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities (PWDs). The instrument was divided into four main sections: (1) the demographic profile of respondents; (2) the level of compliance with BJMP treatment policies in the domains of admission and classification, housing and segregation, welfare and development, and safety and security; (3) the degree of seriousness of challenges encountered in policy implementation; and (4) the perceived necessity of proposed measures to improve compliance. Items were constructed using **Likert-type scales**, each accompanied by explicit verbal descriptors to ensure uniform interpretation.

For **Phase 2**, a semi-structured interview guide was crafted to elicit rich qualitative data by probing participants' **lived experiences**, perceived barriers, and recommendations for improvement. The open-ended questions were aligned with the survey domains to facilitate explanation and elaboration of quantitative findings.

Both instruments underwent **expert validation** by a three-member panel composed of specialists in criminology, social work, psychology, and disability rights, ensuring accuracy, cultural sensitivity, and alignment with BJMP policies. A **pilot test** conducted at the **Quezon City Jail – Female Dormitory** confirmed clarity and internal consistency. Minor revisions were incorporated, and a **Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient above 0.80** established the survey's dependability for full-scale implementation.

Data Gathering Procedures

The data collection process adhered to the **Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods Design**, ensuring a systematic and ethically sound approach to gathering both quantitative and qualitative data.

For **Phase 1 (Quantitative)**, data collection commenced only after securing formal authorization from the **Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP)** and ethical clearance from the **Philippine College of Criminology Institutional Review Board (IRB)**. This ensured adherence to ethical principles of confidentiality, voluntary participation, and informed consent. The validated survey questionnaires were distributed to **jail officers and Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) with special needs** across four selected BJMP–NCR facilities—**Makati City Jail, Mandaluyong City Jail, Manila City Jail,** and **Quezon City Jail**. Data collection was conducted within secure and private areas to maintain respondent confidentiality and minimize potential biases. Respondents were briefed on the study's purpose and procedures prior to participation. Completed questionnaires were collected and checked for completeness before data encoding and analysis.

For **Phase 2 (Qualitative)**, the researcher identified a **purposive subset of participants** based on the results of the quantitative phase. These participants were invited for **semi-structured interviews** to further explain or elaborate on emerging quantitative trends. Interviews were conducted **face-to-face** within designated secure rooms, and in certain cases, through **online platforms** to accommodate logistical constraints. Each session lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and was **audio-recorded with consent**. All recordings were **transcribed verbatim** for thematic analysis.

The entire data-gathering process spanned **three months**, with surveys administered during the first half and interviews conducted in the latter half.

Treatment of Data

After data collection, all survey responses were manually encoded and cleaned in Microsoft Excel to ensure accuracy and consistency before statistical analysis. The verified dataset was

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imported into **JAMOVI**, a statistical software used for both descriptive and inferential analysis.

For the **quantitative phase**, **descriptive statistics**—including mean, standard deviation, and ranking—were employed to measure:

1. the level of compliance with BJMP Treatment Policies in areas such as admission, housing, welfare, and safety;
2. the degree of seriousness of challenges encountered by jail officers and PDL; and
3. the perceived necessity of suggested measures to improve policy implementation.

Normality of data was verified using the **Shapiro–Wilk Test**, which confirmed that the data followed a normal distribution. Hence, **parametric tests** were applied:

- The **t-test of independence** determined significant differences between the perceptions of jail personnel and PDL with special needs regarding policy implementation.
- The **Pearson r Correlation** assessed the relationship between the challenges encountered and the perceived necessity of improvement measures. A significance level of **0.05** was used to determine statistical validity.

For the **qualitative phase**, data were analyzed through **Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis**, involving familiarization, coding, theme generation, review, definition, and reporting. This method ensured a systematic and credible interpretation of participants' narratives, allowing for identification of recurring patterns and unique insights.

Finally, results from both phases were **integrated** during interpretation. Quantitative analyses identified general trends and relationships, while qualitative findings provided contextual depth, enabling a comprehensive understanding of policy implementation and the lived experiences of PDL with special needs.

Ethical Considerations

Recognizing the sensitivity of correctional settings, this study strictly adhered to ethical research protocols to protect the rights and welfare of all participants. Participation was entirely voluntary, and written informed consent was obtained after clearly explaining the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks, and participants' rights. For individuals with literacy challenges, consent forms were carefully explained in their preferred language to ensure full understanding and voluntary agreement.

Confidentiality and anonymity were rigorously maintained. Survey questionnaires were coded without any personal identifiers, while interview transcripts were anonymized to remove names and distinguishing details. All digital and printed data were securely stored in password-protected files accessible only to the researcher.

Special ethical consideration was given to **LGBTQIA+**, **senior citizen**, and **PWD PDLs**, ensuring that each was treated with dignity, sensitivity, and respect. Data gathering was conducted in private and secure settings to promote comfort and honest participation, with additional consent sought for recorded interviews.

All research activities were conducted under the official authorization of the **Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP)** and the approval of the **Philippine College of Criminology Institutional Review Board (IRB)**, ensuring compliance with both institutional and human-rights-based ethical standards throughout the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents the results and discussion of the study "Creating Safe Spaces: Investigating the Inclusion and Safety Needs of Persons Deprived of Liberty with Special Needs." It integrates **both quantitative and qualitative findings** organized according to the seven statements of the problem. Results are presented in tables and explained narratively with relevant interpretations and literature support. The flow of discussion progresses from the level of compliance with BJMP treatment policies to the significant differences in perception, the challenges encountered, and the measures and initiatives deemed necessary to enhance implementation. Each finding is contextualized within human rights-based frameworks, national laws, and international correctional standards to provide a comprehensive view of inclusion and safety among Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) with special needs.

The findings of this study reveal an overarching pattern of strong compliance with BJMP treatment policies, yet also highlight persistent operational and systemic gaps across the three vulnerable PDL groups—members of the LGBTQIA+ community, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities (PWDs).

Quantitative results were further interpreted through existing policies such as the BJMP Comprehensive Operations Manual (2015), SOP No. 02-2016, the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons (RA 7277), the Expanded Senior Citizens Act (RA 9994), and other national and international human rights instruments.

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SOP #1

Table 5. ***Summary Table on Level of Compliance with BJMP Treatment Policies for PDL with Special Needs as Perceived by the Three (3) Sets of Respondents.***

Group of Respondents	Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation	Key Observation
Jail Officers and LGBTQIA+ PDL	A. Admission, Assessment and Classification	**3.49**	**0.789**	**Always Implemented**	Strength in welfare programs but safety and security measures need improvement, particularly in gender-sensitive frisking and conjugal visitation policies.
	B. Housing, Segregation & Accommodation	**3.45**	**0.847**	**Always Implemented**	
	C. Welfare and Development Programs	**3.62**	**0.693**	**Always Implemented**	
	D. Safety and Security	**3.28**	**0.838**	**Always Implemented**	
Jail Officer and Senior Citizen PDL	A. Admission, Assessment and Classification	**3.78**	**0.553**	**Always Implemented**	High compliance in admission and welfare services; minor issues in consistent segregation due to facility constraints.
	B. Housing, Segregation & Accommodation	**3.60**	**0.621**	**Always Implemented**	
	C. Welfare and Development Programs	**3.72**	**0.420**	**Always Implemented**	
	D. Safety and Security	**3.76**	**0.492**	**Always Implemented**	
Jail Officer and PWD PDL	A. Admission, Assessment and Classification	**3.72**	**0.449**	**Always Implemented**	Strong intake and documentation procedures; improvement needed in mobility support, assistive devices, and standardized safety protocols.
	B. Housing, Segregation & Accommodation	**3.62**	**0.578**	**Always Implemented**	
	C. Welfare and Development Programs	**3.59**	**0.588**	**Always Implemented**	
	D. Safety and Security	**3.47**	**0.727**	**Always Implemented**	

Table 5 presents the **level of compliance with BJMP Treatment Policies** as perceived by jail officers and Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) with special needs, including LGBTQIA+, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities (PWD). Results revealed that overall compliance across all groups was rated **"Always Implemented,"** indicating a generally high adherence to BJMP's correctional standards.

The **highest mean scores** were noted in the **Welfare and Development Programs** domain, reflecting strong implementation of livelihood, educational, and therapeutic activities consistent with the *Therapeutic Community Modality Program (TCMP)* and the *BJMP Welfare and Development Framework.* This finding suggests that rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives are well institutionalized, affirming BJMP's commitment to humane and rehabilitative management practices.

Conversely, the **lowest mean scores** were observed in the **Safety and Security** domain, underscoring ongoing challenges in enforcing gender-sensitive frisking procedures, providing mobility assistance for PWDs, and ensuring equitable visitation rights for LGBTQIA+ PDL. These issues mirror the observations of **Hernandez (2020)** and **Fuchs (2020)**, who noted that operational and resource constraints often hinder the consistent application of inclusive custodial practices despite established policy frameworks.

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Admission, Assessment, and Classification policies emerged as a strong area, particularly for senior citizen PDL (M=3.78), reflecting compliance with *SOP No. 02-2016* and *RA 9994 (Expanded Senior Citizens Act)* mandating dignified and age-sensitive treatment. However, modest variations among LGBTQIA+ and PWD PDL indicate that gender- and disability-responsive approaches still rely heavily on staff competence and facility readiness (*CHR, 2020; UNODC, 2009*).

Inferential analyses revealed minimal perceptual differences between jail officers and PDL, suggesting a shared understanding of policy implementation but persistent gaps in accessibility, inclusion, and program delivery that warrant continued institutional strengthening.

SOP #2

Table 9. ***Summary of Table on the Test of Significant Difference between the Level of Compliance of the PDL and Jail Officer with BJMP Treatment Policies for PDL with Special Needs.***

Policy Area	LGBTQIA+ PDL (Mean ± SD)	Senior Citizen PDL (Mean ± SD)	PWD PDL (Mean ± SD)	Jail Officers (Mean ± SD)	Overall Mean	Decision
Admission, Assessment & Classification	**3.56 ± 0.697**	**3.89 ± 0.380**	**3.87 ± 0.383**	**3.43 ± 0.884**	**3.69**	**Fail to Reject Ho** (Not Significant for LGBTQIA+, Senior Citizen) / **Reject Ho** (Significant for PWD)
Housing, Segregation & Accommodation	**3.60 ± 0.681**	**3.78 ± 0.474**	**3.83 ± 0.319**	**3.31 ± 0.982**	**3.63**	**Fail to Reject Ho** (LGBTQIA+) / **Reject Ho** (Senior Citizen & PWD)
Welfare & Development Programs	**3.80 ± 0.525**	**3.76 ± 0.382**	**3.77 ± 0.386**	**3.45 ± 0.805**	**3.70**	**Reject Ho** (LGBTQIA+ & PWD) / Fail to **Reject Ho** (Senior Citizen)
Safety & Security	**3.38 ± 0.784**	**3.76 ± 0.440**	**3.75 ± 0.434**	**3.19 ± 0.898**	**3.52**	**Fail to Reject Ho** (LGBTQIA+ & Senior Citizen) / **Reject Ho** (PWD)

The inferential analyses revealed that most domains showed **no significant difference** between the perceptions of jail officers and Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL), reflecting a shared understanding of policy implementation and daily operations. This suggests that both groups generally recognize the presence and intent of BJMP Treatment Policies in promoting humane and equitable management. However, **significant differences emerged between PWD PDL and jail officers** across all domains. While PWD PDL perceived higher levels of policy compliance, jail officers reported lower ratings, likely due to their firsthand awareness of operational constraints such as limited resources, overcrowding, and insufficient facilities.

This perceptual divergence echoes the findings of **Cruz and Santiago (2020)** and **UNODC (2015)**, which observed that custodial personnel often evaluate compliance through institutional capacity rather than service experience. Conversely, PDL tend to assess implementation based on perceived care, inclusion, and responsiveness to their needs.

In particular, differences noted in **Welfare and Development Programs** for LGBTQIA+ and PWD PDL suggest that detainees appreciate existing inclusion efforts in livelihood, recreation, and spiritual activities, whereas officers emphasize challenges in sustaining and expanding such programs. These contrasting perspectives highlight the need for **participatory evaluation mechanisms**, enabling both groups to collaboratively assess program relevance and effectiveness. This approach, supported by **Ilagan (2019)** and the **BJMP Manual on the Care and Treatment of PDL with Special Needs (2022)**, can enhance transparency, mutual understanding, and shared accountability in advancing inclusive correctional practices.

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SOP #3

Table 13. ***Summary of Challenges Encountered by Persons Deprived of Liberty and Jail Officers in the Implementation of the BJMP Treatment Policies.***

Challenge Domain	LGBTQIA+ PDL (Mean ± SD)	Senior Citizen PDL (Mean ± SD)	PWD PDL (Mean ± SD)	Jail Officers (Mean ± SD)	Overall Mean	Interpretation
Adequacy of Programs and Services	3.49 ± 0.98	3.42 ± 1.06	3.33 ± 1.15	3.45 ± 1.02	**3.42**	Very Serious
Accessibility and Mobility	3.33 ± 0.98	3.20 ± 0.99	3.17 ± 1.11	3.24 ± 1.03	**3.24**	Very Serious (PWD, LGBTQIA+) / Moderately Serious (SC)
Personnel Commitment and Capacity	3.45 ± 0.92	3.43 ± 1.09	3.38 ± 1.10	3.42 ± 1.03	**3.42**	Very Serious
Management Support and Initiatives	3.21 ± 1.19	3.33 ± 1.03	3.31 ± 1.00	3.29 ± 1.07	**3.29**	Very Serious

SOP #3 examined the degree of seriousness of challenges in implementing BJMP treatment policies among LGBTQIA+, senior citizen, and PWD PDLs. Results revealed that all four domains—program adequacy, accessibility, personnel capacity, and management support—were rated **"very serious"**, highlighting the systemic barriers confronting vulnerable detainees.

Adequacy of Programs and Services (Mean = 3.42). Findings revealed insufficient healthcare, aftercare, and gender-sensitive programs. The lack of geriatric and disability-inclusive services violates provisions under *RA 9994* and *RA 7277*. These deficiencies risk worsening health outcomes and rehabilitation prospects, underscoring the need for specialized care and individualized reintegration planning.

Accessibility and Mobility (Mean = 3.24). Limited ramps, assistive devices, and inclusive spaces hinder participation and safety, contravening *BP 344 (Accessibility Law)* and the *Bangkok Rules*. Infrastructure upgrades and partnerships with LGUs and NGOs are crucial to ensure compliance.

Personnel Commitment and Capacity (Mean = 3.42). Inadequate SOGIE, geriatric, and disability-sensitivity training result in inconsistent policy application. Mandatory capacity-building aligned with BJMP's *Gender and Development Framework* is needed to improve staff competence and accountability.

Management Support and Initiatives (Mean = 3.29). Weak inter-agency coordination and lack of specialized facilities compromise welfare and safety. Strengthening collaborations with DSWD, CHR, and NGOs aligns with the *Philippine Development Plan (2023–2028)* toward inclusive justice.

Overall, the findings underscore the urgency of reforms in healthcare, infrastructure, capacity building, and governance to ensure humane, equitable, and rights-based treatment of all PDL with special needs.

SOP #4

Table 14. ***Degree of Necessity for the Suggested Measures in the Improvement of the implementation of BJMP Treatment Policies.***

Indicators	LGBTQIA+ PDL & Jail Officers			Senior Citizen PDL & Jail Officers			PWD PDL & Jail Officers		
	Mean	**SD**	**VI**	**Mean**	**SD**	**VI**	**Mean**	**SD**	**VI**
a. Enhancing PDL involvement									
1. Conduct of Orientation to LGBTQIA+ PDL, Senior Citizen PDL, Persons with Disabilities (PWD) PDL, and other PDL to inform them the importance and objectives of segregation to avoid possible complaints	3.68	0.721	**HR**	3.69	0.752	**HR**	3.30	1.042	**HR**

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b. Expanding Personnel Training Programs									
1. Personnel are to undergo gender sensitivity and SOGIE training	3.69	0.700	**HR**	3.69	0.682	**HR**	3.38	0.913	**HR**
c. Strengthening Jail Reportorial Requirement									
1. Submission of monthly statistical report of LGBTQIA+ PDL, Senior Citizen PDL, Persons with Disabilities (PWD) PDL,	3.58	0.771	**HR**	3.60	0.735	**HR**	3.21	0.931	**HR**
2. Submission of monthly accomplishment report for WD Programs provided to LGBTQIA+ PDL, Senior Citizen PDL, Persons with Disabilities (PWD) PDL.	3.66	0.724	**HR**	3.58	0.771	**HR**	3.23	0.987	**HR**
Overall Mean Score & Standard Deviation	**3.65**	**0.670**	**HR**	3.64	0.679	**HR**	**3.28**	**0.839**	**HR**

Legend: *4.00 – 3.21 = Highly Recommended (HR); 3.20 – 2.41 = Moderately Recommended (MR); 2.40 – 1.61 = Slightly Recommended (SR); 1.60 – 1.00 = Not Recommended (NR); Standard Deviation (SD); Verbal Interpretation (VI)*

The findings indicate that the perceived necessity of proposed measures to enhance the implementation of BJMP treatment policies, based on responses from LGBTQIA+, senior citizen, and PWD PDLs, as well as jail officers. The measures focused on three areas: enhancing PDL involvement, expanding personnel training, and strengthening reportorial requirements.

Findings revealed that **orientation sessions on segregation policies** were highly recommended across all groups, emphasizing their importance in preventing misunderstandings and promoting compliance. This aligns with the *BJMP Manual on Classification and Segregation of Inmates* (2020) and *UNODC* (2009), which stress awareness as a means of fostering social cohesion. Similarly, **expanded personnel training**, particularly on gender sensitivity and SOGIE, was strongly endorsed. This supports *RA 11313 (Safe Spaces Act)* and the *Mental Health Act (RA 11036)*, mandating sensitivity programs for public servants. Gonzales and Reyes (2020) also found that training reduces discrimination and enhances officer-PDL relationships.

Strengthening reportorial requirements was likewise viewed as essential for promoting transparency and data-driven jail management. Regular documentation, as required under the *BJMP Revised Manual on Operations* (2021), supports accountability and rights protection (CHR, 2022).

Overall, the measures were rated "highly recommended," indicating broad consensus on the need for inclusive and evidence-based correctional practices consistent with the Nelson Mandela Rules (2015). The results underscore the urgency of institutionalizing education, continuous training, and structured reporting systems to uphold humane treatment and effective governance in managing PDL with special needs.

SOP #5

Table 15-A. ***Statistical Correlation Between the Challenges Encountered and the Perceived Necessity of Suggested Measures*****.**

Variables Correlated	Computed r-value	p-value	Interpretation	Decision on Ho
Challenges in Policy Implementation and Necessity of Suggested Measures	0.691**	0.000	Significant Relationship	Reject Ho

Legend: p < 0.05 (Significant); p > 0.05 (Not Significant)
N = 160 (Combined PDL and Jail Officer Respondents)

The computed r-value of 0.691 with a p-value of 0.000 indicates a highly significant positive relationship between the challenges encountered by jail personnel and PDL in implementing BJMP treatment policies and the perceived necessity of the suggested measures for improvement. This means that as the severity of challenges increases—such as those related to infrastructure, personnel capacity, accessibility, and management support—the perceived need for targeted interventions and reforms likewise becomes more pronounced.

This relationship validates the study's assumption that the effectiveness of inclusive jail management depends on recognizing and directly addressing the operational barriers faced in policy implementation. It suggests that the proposed measures (such as specialized training, participatory evaluation, and improved aftercare systems) are grounded in the practical realities of jail operations rather than theoretical policy intentions.

These findings are consistent with prior studies (CHR, 2021; UNDP, 2021; Villanueva, 2020), which emphasized that institutional reforms are most sustainable when designed in

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response to empirically identified constraints. Furthermore, the positive correlation underscores the importance of continuous monitoring and feedback systems within BJMP to ensure that new strategies remain responsive to emerging needs and systemic limitations.

Overall, the significant relationship reinforces the necessity of aligning programmatic reforms with the lived experiences of both jail personnel and PDL. In doing so, the Bureau can strengthen its inclusive jail management framework, transforming existing policies from mere compliance instruments into dynamic tools for empowerment, equality, and rehabilitation.

Qualitative results of SOP #6 analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis framework. Data were gathered from eight participants—comprising both jail officers and Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) with special needs, including members of the LGBTQIA+ community, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities (PWDs)—across multiple BJMP facilities. Three interrelated themes emerged from the analysis: (1) Perceptions of Policy Implementation, (2) Challenges Encountered, and (3) Suggested Measures for Improvement. The sequence of themes reflects a logical progression wherein perceptions reveal existing realities, challenges expose structural gaps, and suggested measures outline the pathways for reform.

1. Theme 1: Perceptions of Policy Implementation
   Participants generally acknowledged the BJMP's efforts to implement treatment policies for special-needs PDLs, particularly in segregation, provision of basic needs, and participation in programs. However, levels of implementation varied across facilities. While some respondents confirmed that orientations were conducted upon admission— "*Na-orient din po kami nung una naming pagdating dito*" (LGBTQI PDL, Mandaluyong Female Dorm)—others expressed limited awareness of programs or rights, with some LGBTQIA+ PDLs noting sporadic inclusion in livelihood activities. This finding supports Santos and Villanueva (2022), who stressed that awareness of rights and services builds trust and prevents symbolic implementation. Moreover, consistency across jails was uneven. Jail officers in well-resourced facilities affirmed full policy compliance— "*Lahat po ng PDL with special needs ay kasama sa mga activities ng WD*" (Jail Officer, Manila Male Dorm)—but others cited space and staffing limitations. Variability in implementation reflects structural disparities among facilities, echoing the BJMP Manual (2023), which emphasizes uniform access to programs as a rehabilitative right. The qualitative insights thus reveal that while policies are known and applied, inconsistency in dissemination and inclusivity limits their transformative impact.
2. Theme 2: Challenges Encountered
   Despite positive perceptions, respondents identified recurring issues that hinder full implementation of inclusive jail management. The most cited concern was overcrowding, which restricts proper segregation, raises tensions, and compromises health and safety— "*Ang pinakamahirap po ay ang siksikan minsan sa selda*" (Senior Citizen PDL, Mandaluyong Male Dorm). This reflects a persistent national concern and contradicts UN Mandela Rule 13, which mandates adequate space and humane conditions. Limited medical and psychological support also emerged as a pressing issue, with shortages of supplies and delayed access to care— "*Minsan nagkukulang lalo na kapag maraming may sakit sa amin*" (Senior Citizen PDL). Moreover, unequal access to programs left certain groups feeling excluded, especially LGBTQIA+ PDLs in overcrowded facilities. Finally, insufficient training for jail personnel on SOGIE and disability sensitivity was a common concern, as officers themselves acknowledged the need for further orientation— "*Kailangan din po ng awareness programs... para mas maging sensitive at equipped ang personnel*" (Jail Officer, Manila Male Dorm). These challenges affirm Cruz and De Leon (2022), who emphasized that specialized training reduces discrimination and strengthens humane correctional care.
3. Theme 3: Suggested Measures for Improvement
   Participants recommended a blend of structural and human-centered reforms to address these gaps. Proposals included expanding jail infrastructure to reduce congestion, increasing medical supplies, enhancing healthcare access, and ensuring regular check-ups for elderly and PWD PDLs. Respondents also called for more diverse and frequent activities to improve rehabilitation— "*Dagdagan sana ang mga activities at programa para hindi lang kami nakakulong buong araw*" (LGBTQI PDL, Quezon City Male Dorm). Jail officers stressed the importance of continuous professional development— "*Ang pinaka-importante ay patuloy na training at development programs para sa mga jail personnel*" (Jail Officer, Makati Male Dorm). These recommendations align with international correctional standards such as the Mandela Rules and Bangkok Rules, highlighting the need for both infrastructure improvement and personnel capacity building.

Overall, the qualitative findings reveal that while BJMP policies for PDLs with special needs are in place and recognized, implementation remains uneven due to overcrowding, limited resources, and inconsistent awareness. The themes collectively demonstrate that inclusion is achieved not only through policy existence but through effective dissemination, resource adequacy, and continuous capacity development. Addressing these interlinked factors through infrastructure investment, healthcare enhancement, inclusive programming, and sustained personnel training will enable BJMP to actualize its commitment to humane, rights-based, and inclusive correctional management.

SOP #7: Proposed Innovative Program. Drawing from the findings and insights of the preceding Statements of the Problem, this study introduces the **Inclusive Justice Hub (IJH): Inclusive Jail-Based Unified System for Care, Empowerment, and**

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Rehabilitation—an innovative and holistic framework designed to enhance the implementation of BJMP treatment policies for **Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL)** with special needs. Specifically, the IJH addresses the critical challenges faced by **LGBTQIA+**, **senior citizen**, and **PWD PDL** groups, including inadequate aftercare services, limited accessibility features, insufficient staff training, and weak coordination with external institutions.

The IJH framework integrates **digital innovation**, **inclusive infrastructure**, and **multi-sectoral collaboration** to create a standardized and rights-based correctional system. Its major components are:

1. a **Digital Monitoring Platform (e-IJH)** for real-time tracking of PDL welfare, policy compliance, and service delivery;
2. **Accessible Facility Upgrades** in accordance with BP 344 and UN standards;
3. **Specialized Rehabilitation Tracks** tailored to the psychosocial and physical needs of PWD, elderly, and LGBTQIA+ PDL;
4. a **Personnel Capacity-Building Academy** to train and certify jail staff on SOGIE sensitivity, disability management, and geriatric care; and
5. a **Community Partnership Desk** to strengthen linkages with **DSWD, TESDA, CHR, LGUs**, and other agencies for reintegration and aftercare programs.

Collectively, these interlinked strategies aim to institutionalize humane, inclusive, and sustainable correctional management that promotes **equity, dignity, empowerment, and rehabilitation** for all PDL with special needs.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that the **Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP)** has established clear policies and demonstrated a strong institutional commitment to the humane and equitable treatment of **Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) with special needs**, particularly those who are LGBTQIA+, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities (PWD). Across the four major policy domains—**admission and classification, housing and segregation, welfare and development programs, and safety and security**—implementation was generally rated as *"Always Implemented,"* reflecting BJMP's adherence to national laws and international custodial standards such as the **Nelson Mandela Rules** and the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**.

Despite these positive results, persistent gaps remain in several areas, including limited post-release aftercare, inadequate assistive equipment and facilities, and uneven recognition of diverse PDL needs. These shortcomings hinder the full realization of inclusive and rights-based correctional management. Differences in perception between jail officers and PDL were also evident—while PDL focused on direct experiences of care and participation, jail officers viewed policy implementation through operational and resource constraints. This perceptual divide underscores the need for **improved communication, participatory evaluation, and systematic monitoring** to ensure that policies translate effectively into practice.

The study found that the **severity of operational challenges directly correlates with the perceived necessity for policy improvement**, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions that respond to on-the-ground realities. Systemic barriers such as insufficient healthcare, overcrowding, lack of gender-sensitive and disability-responsive facilities, and limited staff training remain key obstacles to humane detention. Addressing these concerns requires coordinated efforts between management, personnel, and external stakeholders to align institutional capacity with policy objectives.

Furthermore, qualitative findings revealed that both PDL and jail officers share aspirations for a **safe, inclusive, and dignified correctional environment.** This shared vision highlights the importance of adopting participatory, rights-based approaches to correctional governance that reflect the lived realities within facilities and promote empowerment, accountability, and mutual respect.

Based on these conclusions, the following **recommendations** are proposed:

1. **Strengthen Policy Implementation and Standardization** through uniform operational guidelines, compliance audits, and accessible facility assessments.
2. **Enhance Aftercare and Reintegration Programs** by partnering with LGUs, NGOs, and government agencies to provide livelihood, psychosocial, and legal support.
3. **Upgrade Jail Infrastructure** to ensure accessibility, safety, and segregation compliance for PDL with special needs.
4. **Expand Specialized Personnel Training** on SOGIE sensitivity, disability management, and elder care.
5. **Promote Participatory Jail Management** by involving PDL in orientations, grievance systems, and feedback mechanisms.
6. **Improve Data and Reporting Systems** for evidence-based policy formulation.
7. **Strengthen External Partnerships** with DSWD, CHR, and TESDA for program sustainability.
8. **Align Reforms with Lived Realities** by integrating qualitative insights into policy design.
9. **Adopt the Inclusive Jail Management Framework** developed in this study as a guide for long-term planning and program development.

In essence, this study reaffirms that achieving inclusive and humane correctional management requires not only well-crafted policies but also sustained commitment, collaboration, and compassion in their implementation.

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