

The California Model

MAGAZINE

The CA Model Pillars

Summer 2024 | Issue No. 1

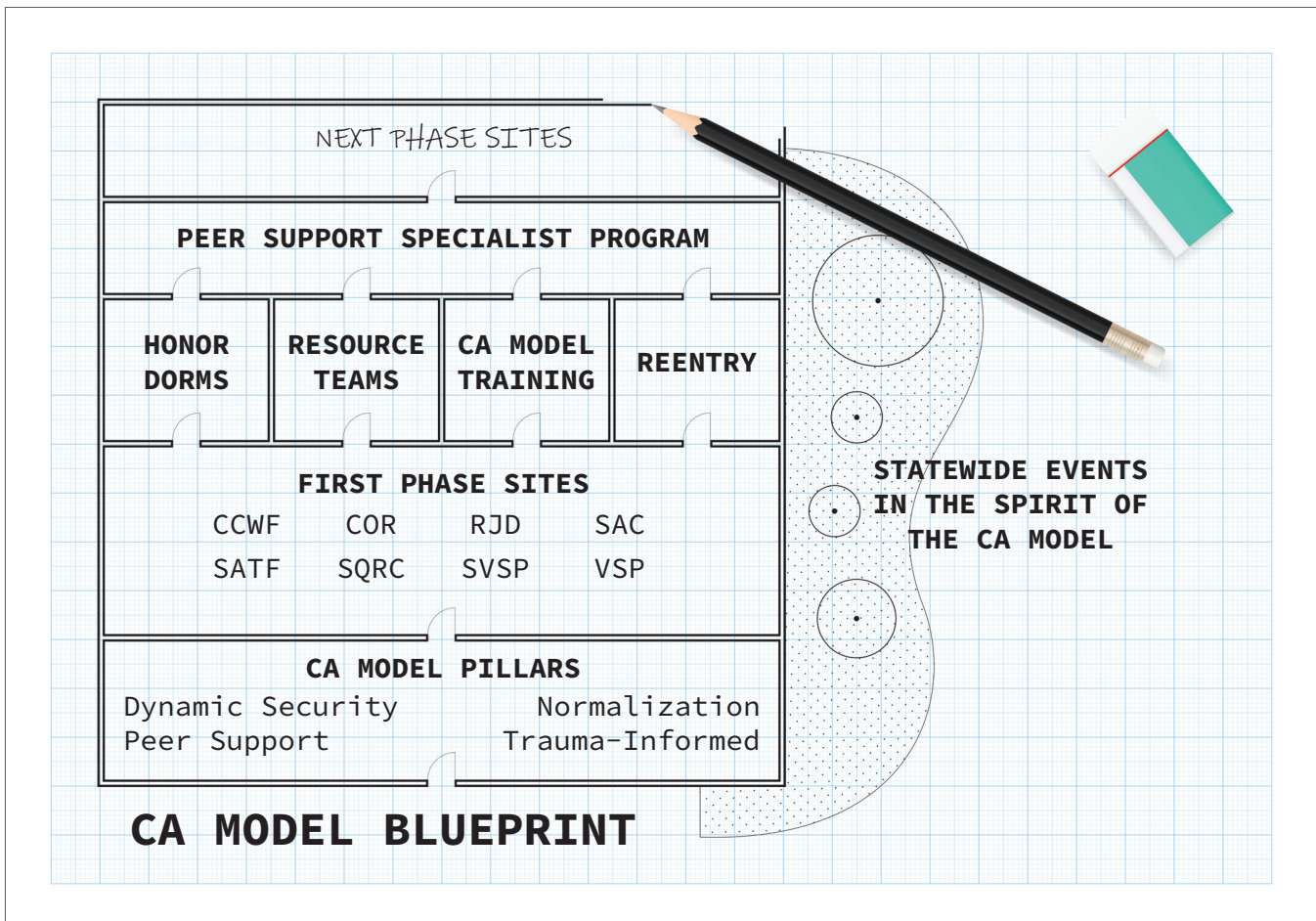


WHAT IS THE CALIFORNIA MODEL?

The California Model (CA Model) is a system-wide change within California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and California Correctional Health Care Services (CCHCS). It draws on national and international best practices to change culture within our prisons and improve our correctional environment through staff training, tools, and resources that promote the health and well-being of those who work and live in them.

Providing a safer environment where staff want to go to work and add value will reduce the trauma and toxic stress experienced daily. The CA Model also aims to help incarcerated individuals prepare to become better neighbors when they return to our communities. This is how we can best promote public safety. It's a vitally important statewide effort that is expanding to every aspect of CDCR and CCHCS. The CA Model is not going to stop all our bad days or violence within our system, but it will hopefully reduce the number of bad days and violence our staff experience now.

Learn more about the CA Model in the pages to follow, including a breakdown of its foundational pillars (next page), and how those tie into what we've already done to ensure a brighter, safer future.



The CA Model is built on
FOUR FOUNDATIONAL PILLARS



DYNAMIC SECURITY

An approach that promotes positive interactions between staff and incarcerated people through purposeful activities and professional, positive, and respectful communication.



NORMALIZATION

Aims to bring life in prison as close as possible to life outside of prison. The more life in prison resembles life in the community, the easier it will be for people to transition and adjust to life in the community upon release.



PEER SUPPORT

Seeks to train incarcerated individuals to use their lived experiences to provide recovery and rehabilitative support to their peers. It's an opportunity to earn a paying job, a highly-regarded certification and valuable experience to make participants highly marketable upon release.



TRAUMA-INFORMED ORG.

Will improve the practices, policies, and culture of the entire department by educating staff at all levels to recognize the impacts of trauma and enhance the physical and emotional safety of all staff and incarcerated individuals.

CONTENTS

CA Model Overview

2

Foundational Pillars

3

Special Acknowledgements

4

Project Implementation Timeline

5

Pillar Overview: Dynamic Security

8

Pillar Overview: Normalization

9

Pillar Overview: Peer Mentorship

10

Pillar Overview: Trauma-Informed Organization

11

Special Acknowledgements

“Safe Communities, Inside and Out.”

This mission, highlighted in CDCR’s 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, is powered by our collective commitment. Together, our employees, currently and formerly incarcerated people, lawmakers, and community organizations can transform public safety in California. We thank everyone who plays a role in this important transformation.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE PEOPLE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS MAGAZINE:

Denise Allen, CCHCS Research Specialist IV
Lt. Evan Bielanski, SVSP Resource Team member
Ike Dodson, CCHCS Information Officer II
Liz Gransee, CCHCS Communications Deputy Director
Todd Javernick, CDCR Information Officer I
David Maldonado, CDCR Deputy Chief, Strategic Communications and External Affairs
Deanna Minasian, CCHCS AGPA
Randy C Thompson, San Quentin News

CDCR STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028

Read how the strategic plan supports the CA Model:
www.cdcr.ca.gov/blog/strategic-plan/



The California Model

Project Implementation Timeline



BREAKING GROUND

On March 17, 2023, Governor Gavin Newsom announced a historic commitment to safety and justice, the California Model, to include the transformation of San Quentin Rehabilitation Center. On April 4, 2023, CDCR Secretary Jeff Macomber and CCHCS Receiver J. Clark Kelso published a joint memo recognizing the importance of providing staff with tools and resources to improve staff safety, wellness, and rehabilitative opportunities for incarcerated individuals.

MARCH 2023

JUNE 2023

Norway Visits



Resource Teams at Test Sites



YOP Services, Camp Pilot Program Development



Expansion to 8 Test Sites



First 3 Test Sites

Honor Dorms at VSP

CA Model Communications Campaign

NORWAY VISITS

Two and a half years after the organization's first visit to Norway, CDCR and CCHCS staff, including CDCR Secretary Jeff Macomber, visited Norway prisons to study staff wellness strategies and best practices aligned with CA Model foundational pillars such as Dynamic Security, Normalization, Peer Support, and Becoming a Trauma Informed Organization.

FIRST TEST SITES

CA Model principles incorporated at three test sites: Salinas Valley State Prison (SVSP), Valley State Prison (VSP), and Central California Women's Facility (CCWF). These sites focused on core principles: Dynamic Security, Progression, and Re-entry. In May 2023, after visiting Norway, CDCR expanded to five additional test sites (COR, RJD, SAC, SATF, SQRC)¹.

RESOURCE TEAMS

Resource Teams are trained in Dynamic Security principles and operate in the highest security levels at the institution to meet the needs of our highest-risk individuals with the goal of reducing violence, use of force incidents, and the harm of isolation. These principles foster trust, healing, positive communication, and rehabilitation.

VSP HONOR DORMS, YOUTHFUL OFFENDER PROGRAM (YOP), CAMP PROGRAM

In an Honor Dorm setting at VSP, CDCR provides targeted services and allows for greater access to enhanced programming and education, progressing to employment opportunities for adults under 26 to serv

¹ California State Prison-Corcoran, Richard J. Donovan Correctional Facility, California State Prison-Sacramento, Substance Abuse Treatment Facility and State Prison, San Quentin Rehabilitation Center

The California Model

Project Implementation Timeline



BUILDING THE PILLARS

JULY 2023

DEC 2024

Leadership Training

Trauma Informed Organization T4T

All-Staff Training

Normalization Initiatives

Identify Phase 2 at 8 Test Sites



Test Site Training

Peer Support Specialist Program Training

Resource Team Activities

Phase 1 Test Site Townhalls

Implement Phase 2 at 8 Test Sites



LEADERSHIP TRAINING

CDCR Secretary Jeff Macomber shared his insights and vision for the CA Model with CDCR and CCHCS institution leadership alongside national/international partners. This training provided CA Model leadership with tools necessary to incorporate operational changes, institutional best practices, and encouraged staff wellness and culture change.



TEST SITE TRAINING WITH NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

In August 2023, staff from CA Model test sites received extensive introductory Resource Team training to develop operational skills and understand CA Model safety requirements. In March 2024, all Resource Teams began activities with high-risk populations to reduce violence against staff and provide a safer environment for both the staff and population.



PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST PROGRAM (PSSP) TEST SITES

CDCR is providing certified PSSP training to incarcerated people at VSP, CCWF, CMF, ASP, and CAL². Specialists learn skills in health navigation and recovery support, are paid during training and certification, and work with their peers during incarceration to meet needs. The program allows specialists to earn a liveable wage in their communities upon release.



ALL-STAFF TRAINING

Trauma-Informed Organization, Active Bystandership, Dynamic Security, Normalization, and Progression were incorporated into required training for all staff in January 2024. In 2025, additional transformative training will focus on employee health and wellness, allowing staff to champion the important role they play in successful rehabilitation.



NORMALIZATION INITIATIVES

These policy initiatives support a positive working and living environment for staff and the population alike, and include expanding supply closets, upgrading furniture, and funding to support staff wellness and beautification projects. These efforts aim to reduce stress and make life in prison as similar as possible to life outside.

² Valley State Prison, Central California Women's Facility, California Medical Facility, Avenal State Prison, Calipatria State Prison

The California Model

Project Implementation Timeline



BRIGHTER, SAFER FUTURE

JAN 2025

JUNE 2026

Education and Wellness

Identify Next 8 Test Sites

Next Phase Test Site Townhalls

Identify Next 8 Test Sites

Implementation at All Facilities



Next Phase Test Site Townhalls

Implement Next Phase Test Sites

All-Staff Training

San Quentin Rehabilitation Center Completion

Complete All Townhalls

EDUCATION-BASED DISCIPLINE AND STAFF WELLNESS

The department will transform the current staff disciplinary processes to a supportive, education-based model. Supervisors will have the tools necessary to engage with staff at the lowest level to incorporate enhanced training and diversion techniques, and only use disciplinary or punitive measures as a last resort.

TEST SITE IDENTIFICATION

Identify test site locations for all implementation phases. New sites will establish partnerships with existing CA Model sites to begin identifying best practices and implementation strategies. New test sites will be given an opportunity to understand operational goals and participate in collaborative townhalls.

TOWNHALLS

CDCR will host multi-day townhall events at CA Model test sites in a phased approach with staff, incarcerated people, and external stakeholders. Activities will provide an in-depth overview of the implementation of the CA Model, its foundational pillars, and the importance of health and wellness to inspire population and staff engagement.

IMPLEMENTATION

In a phased approach, sharing best practices and guidelines from aligned institutions, CDCR will expand CA Model initiatives to all prisons by June 2026. Resource Teams, Peer Support Specialists, and Honor Dorms in facilities will be fully activated and e

LOOKING AHEAD

Future developments include expanding the CA Model to every aspect of CDCR/CCHCS operations, improving staff wellness and public safety while fostering the transformation of incarcerated individuals into productive members of society and cultivating a positive work environment to empower staff as leaders in the field of corrections.



Dynamic Security

CA Model Resource Teams Lead the Way

MEET THE HOME TEAM

CA Model Resource Teams play a crucial role in identifying and facilitating access to diverse programs and tools that contribute to a positive environment during incarceration. It's a collaborative team of correctional staff, working in conjunction with mental health and medical professionals. The Resource Teams develop individual rehabilitation plans to ensure incarcerated people have the resources they need to thrive. The overarching goals are to:

- Reduce acts of violence against staff, fostering a safer work environment
- Simultaneously create a more secure living environment for incarcerated people



CA Model Resource Teams received national and international training on Dynamic Security

This is achieved through meaningful interactions that prioritize building rapport, leading to dynamic security.

Heard on the Tier: SVSP Resource Team

The Resource Team is staff injecting normality into the way we conduct business on a day-to-

day basis. They increase the number of positive interactions our incarcerated population have with staff, through meaningful activities and positive reinforcement.

The Resource Team at SVSP has focused on a challenging area of the institution, the Psychiatric Inpatient Program (PIP) and our Restrictive Housing Unit (RHU).

Since the activation of the team in June 2022, acts of self-harm within Treatment Centers 1 and 2 saw an immediate decrease by 53%. Violent acts against staff have also decreased and staff have seen a huge reduction in negative interactions in these areas.

This is the ultimate goal of the Resource Team, to create a safer and healthier environment in which to work and rehabilitate. It's working because SVSP wasn't afraid of change and was willing to be a pioneer in operating a Resource Team in a California prison. This program doesn't happen without all of your support.

We know it's possible. We know it works!

CDCR/CCHCS have been evaluating individual CA Model efforts as they are being implemented, because we want to see which initiatives are getting the best results. As leaders, we can then build on those best practices to more quickly change our system.

Resource Teams have already shown progress in reducing use of force, violence, and rule violations.

It's Not Just the Events, It's the Daily Interactions

BRIDGING THE GAP

Together, we are bridging the gap.

The more we mirror prison and community environments, the easier it will be for people to transition and adjust to life in the community upon release. It's critically important, considering around 90 percent of incarcerated people return to those communities.

It's why we promote Normalization practices that go way beyond the in-prison events catching headlines across the state. Those events are important, but it's not all fun and games. It's about daily resources that prepare people for normal life on the outside, and the small moments that create a healthier, safer environment for all.

"It's about the interactions, getting to know each other," a SQRC correctional officer said during a recent chess tournament with staff and population. "I didn't know that guy before, but now when I see him again, I can say, 'Hi.'"

"Normally you would walk by certain people and not even acknowledge each other. It's nice to be able to know people and there not have to be a gap there anymore."

"Once the captains got involved it brought in the other staff," an incarcerated participant added. "This is the part in bridging the gap. Bridging the gap is me reaching out to you, and feeling like I can work with you."

It's why staff and incarcerated populations across the state continue to work together to make the CA Model a success. It's a shared energy. Since the March 2023 commitment to implement



A correctional officer and an incarcerated person from SQRC compete for pieces at a recent chess tournament

the CA Model, institutions across the state have rallied to host Normalization events. They have included sporting events, art, environment beautification, holiday celebrations, live music, therapy, debate, and charitable works.

The events bring the community into correctional facilities and build this within as well. It's how daily engagement improves and how we work together to bridge the gap.

#NEWSLINK

Normalization is highlighted in many of the stories and videos with CA Model ties shared on the "Inside CDCR" news site. Some of these are direct CA Model initiatives by first phase sites, and others are events inspired by CA Model principles.

Read and watch for yourself at www.cdcr.ca.gov/insidecdcr.

Peer Support

Certified Specialists Create Real-Life Change

TRUSTED PEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

An incredible resource is growing quickly inside California prisons.

They are Peer Support Specialists, incarcerated people who are trained to use their lived experiences to provide valuable and trusted recovery and rehabilitative support to their peers.

First launched at five CDCR institutions (CAL, ASP, CCWF, CMF and VSP), the Peer Support Specialist Program (PSSP) expanded to four more in June (CMC, SAC, SATF, MCSP³).

This new tool in helping people early, before their problems become severe, is a CDCR/CCHCS collaboration, founded by CCHCS Nursing Services.

It utilizes a new Peer Support Specialist certification managed by the California Mental Health Services Authority. It's how CDCR can train and pay incarcerated individuals to obtain and use that certification to support their peers as they cope with life in prison.

It's already happening.



Peer Support Specialists at CCWF are making great strides

Heard on the Tier: PSSP Impacts

At ASP in April, an incarcerated person was at their breaking point with staff. Before the situation could escalate, a PSS reached out to deploy conflict resolution and effective communication. A quick lesson in self-advocacy guided the conflict to a painless resolution. The yard's captain admitted they were surprised by the swift de-escalation, saying, "If this is what the program is about, I'm for it."

The same month at ASP, specialists reversed all 37 refusals for cancer screenings on a yard, after assisting visits with primary care teams.

A month later at CMF, an incarcerated person confessed to a PSS they were ready to receive help to stop their substance use, but were concerned about punishment for previously using. The PSS established trust with the individual and joined their meeting with a certified medical assistant to help build the path to recovery.

These are a few of the many real-life changes happening through the PSSP. By connecting with people with similar life experiences, individuals can get the help they need. Specialists also help staff better understand what's going on with an incarcerated person and develop an effective response.

It makes life easier for staff and the population while supporting valued, employable people.

Read the full story and learn more about PSSP by visiting www.cdcr.ca.gov/insidecdcr.

³ Mule Creek State Prison

Trauma-Informed Organization

Training for an Informed Future

SOLUTIONS TO A SERIOUS HEALTH CRISIS

The research is clear.

Working and living conditions inside prisons include risk of physical harm and exposure to violence, which contribute to toxic stress and the development of health and behavioral health issues.

It's why becoming a Trauma-Informed Organization is so important, and why the CA Model is committed to improving the practices, policies, and culture of the entire department. This year, CDCR and CCHCS began educating staff at all levels to recognize the impacts of trauma.

Why does it matter?

National data shows 34% of correctional officers suffer from PTSD (compared to 14% of military veterans). Correctional staff also have higher rates of depression and substance use.

The suicide rate among correctional officers is extraordinarily high, with suicide risk nearly 40% higher among correctional officers than that of the general working-age population and all other professions combined. Correctional health care workers also reported symptoms of depression, anxiety, burnout, and PTSD symptoms, ranging from 37% to 50%.

The National Institutes of Health also estimates 18% of incarcerated men and 40% of incarcerated women suffer from PTSD.

What's the solution?

In January of 2024, CDCR/CCHCS launched significant CA Model trainings, including Trauma-

Informed Organization.

This training addresses the occupational health crisis in the correctional environment, recognizing trauma and associated stress as its root cause.

Participants learn to recognize the personal and professional impacts of trauma on those who work and live in carceral environments. They study how trauma impacts the physical and emotional wellness of all staff and incarcerated persons, regardless of how long ago the trauma occurred.

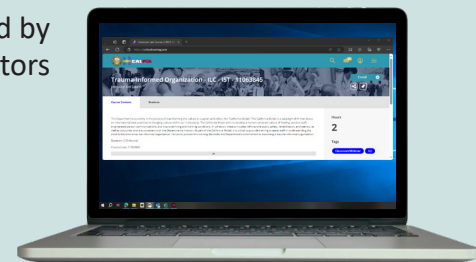
The training also details how CDCR/CCHCS can utilize gained knowledge to foster a path for the organization to become Trauma-Informed.

Together, let us forge a future rooted in well-being, rehabilitation, and the foundational pillars of the California Model.

A LOOK AT CA MODEL TRAININGS

- Trauma-Informed Organization
- Wellness & Stress Resiliency
- Active Bystandership
- Professional Engagement
- Dynamic Security, Normalization & Progression*

Training is offered by in-person instructors and online via CDCR's Learning Management System (LMS).



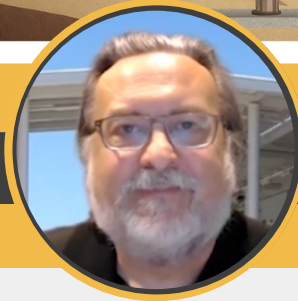
The California Model

Messages from Leadership



“Just because we are adopting the California Model does not mean we are ignoring Corrections 101. If I can lower the stress level of staff, have fewer employees out on worker’s comp and long-term sick, make people want to come to work today, why wouldn’t I try that? I would rather try and fail than not try at all. I believe the California Model can make life better and improve public safety.”

- Jeff Macomber, CDCR Secretary



“The really clear focus on day-to-day interactions and what we hope to accomplish there – Dynamic Security, the Trauma-informed Organization, Peer Support, Normalization – I think that’s a pretty good combination of things. If we can change them, you really are changing people’s daily interactions. I think we’ve just got committed leadership that is really enthusiastic. They’re committed to making this work.”

- J. Clark Kelso, Receiver

