

# Critical thinking assignment # 3

Law



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**Solitary Confinement** Solitary confinement is a situation in which a prisoner stays alone in a cell or unit, usually for 22 to 23, and has no contact to other inmates and prison activities because they often have no contact with other human beings. It has names such as permanent lockdown, isolation, or administrative segregation. Confinement in such units is a form of punishment that seeks to modify disorderly behavior, to isolate gang members, or at times, merely to fill up the empty solitary units. Regardless of the reasons, the rationale for solitary confinement does not justify the means because it is wrong and ineffective.

According to Cole, Smith, and DeJong, the rationale of solitary confinement is that it serves as a form of punishment for prisoners who do not follow rules. There are strict rules that inmates must follow, and it is the right of correctional officers to enforce such rules. A good prison has captives that behave in an orderly manner (Cole, Smith, and DeJong 365). The authors define 'order' as proper conduct that enhances a peaceful and orderly coexistence of inmates and correctional officers. Assault, rape, and other forms of violence and threat are examples of disorderly behavior that threaten the existence of correctional officers and other inmates. Solitary confinement is punishment in itself because it isolates inmates from others, and hinders their social interactions. Finally, the authors mention that it reduces overcrowding in prisons

After watching the documentary, I think that solitary confinement is wrong and ineffective. Solitary confinement is like being buried alive. People go crazy while they are alone in their cells. Most of them are self-abusive and cause bodily harm. A solitary unit is a prison within a prison, and it does no good in bettering the attitudes of prisoners. They become depressed in the

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solitary confinement, and some often get into a mental state. In addition, there is an increased chance of suicide, insomnia, and paranoia. Solitary confinement severely compromises the mental health of a person, especially those who enter such units when already in a pitiable mental state. If they survive the mental torture, there is a risk of being extremely anti-social when released from prison (Frontline).

Officers put prisoners in solitary confinement for several reasons. Some are there because of their violent behavior, while others are there for the sake of their own protection. Mostly, it is about punishment for disruptive behavior, for instance, riots. When released from prison, they cannot fit into the normal society. Officers treat them like animals, yet they expect them to fit into the society later after their release. As seen in the documentary, solitary confinement makes people mean and violent. In the main, as seen in the documentary, this form of punishment is an inhumane practice that violates human rights.

In conclusion, solitary confinement presents both positives and drawbacks. It is important to understand that solitary confinement is only for errant prisoners who behave in a disorderly manner. Lack of order threatens the safety of correctional officers and other prisoners. Even so, as seen in the documentary, solitary confinement is not as effective as correctional officers hypothesize. It often makes prisoners worse than they were, results in mental conditions, and encourages isolation and withdrawal behavior of humans, who are naturally social beings. Social contact and social interactions are necessary, and correctional facilities should consider alternative forms of punishment.

#### Works Cited

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< <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/locked-up-in-america/#solitary-nation>>