

# Strategic Inmate Management

A smarter, safer approach to jail operations — built on engagement, accountability, and dignity.



Modern corrections is evolving beyond containment. **Strategic Inmate Management (SIM)** is the comprehensive operating philosophy — developed by the National Institute of Corrections — leading the field toward **proactive, people-centered, and safer jail operations.**

## WHAT IS IT?

### Defining Strategic Inmate Management

SIM is a comprehensive operating philosophy that unifies two proven frameworks — **Direct Supervision** and **Inmate Behavior Management (IBM)** — into one adaptable approach applicable to any correctional facility, regardless of its design or age.

Rather than relying on glass, steel, and physical barriers to control behavior, SIM empowers staff to manage individuals through **clear expectations, positive incentives, and individual accountability.** It replaces the reactive "suppress and contain" model with proactive engagement.

Importantly, SIM is not merely a program — it is an **organizational culture transformation** addressing how leadership treats staff, how staff treat each other, and how every member of the organization engages with those in custody.

## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

### The Case for a Smarter Approach

Traditional models default to worst-case assumptions. Experience shows that when placed in the right environment and given clear expectations, **the vast majority of people in custody will behave appropriately.**

- ✓ **Staff Safety & Wellness**  
Fewer confrontational incidents and a more rewarding work environment through proactive engagement.
- ✓ **Facility Safety & Security**  
SIM facilities report fewer assaults and disturbances. A quieter facility is demonstrably safer for everyone.
- ✓ **Better Outcomes**  
Addressing root causes of behavior improves long-term results and supports successful reintegration.
- ✓ **Any Facility, Any Design**  
SIM's principles are not tied to architecture — they work in aging linear and modern podular facilities alike.



*"Close your eyes and visualize what you want your facility to look, sound, smell, and feel like. That's the outcome. Work backward from that outcome — and the SIM principles just make the most sense in achieving it."*

- BRIAN LEE, VICE PRESIDENT, CGL COMPANIES | FORMER DEPUTY CHIEF, MARICOPA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## HOW DID WE GET HERE?

### Evolution of SIM

#### TRADITIONAL ERA

##### Linear / Indirect Supervision

Staff monitored inmates remotely through barriers. Entirely reactive, focused on physical containment with limited staff-inmate interaction.



#### MID-ERA INNOVATION

##### Direct Supervision + IBM

Officers moved into housing units. NIC developed Inmate Behavior Management — but each model operated independently, often tied to specific facility designs.



#### TODAY

##### Strategic Inmate Management

SIM unifies the best of both frameworks into a single, design-agnostic philosophy centered on culture, communication, engagement, and measurable outcomes.

# Six Pillars & Real-World Outcomes

Every element of SIM works together — from initial intake to daily operations — to build environments where staff and incarcerated individuals can both succeed.

## WHAT SIM ENTAILS

### The Six Core Pillars of Strategic Inmate Management

Each pillar builds on the last — together forming a comprehensive system for managing behavior, improving safety, and transforming facility culture.

#### 01 ASSESSING RISK

A comprehensive risk-needs assessment at intake evaluates each individual's history, behavioral patterns, and specific needs — ensuring every decision is data-driven and individualized from day one.

#### 02 CLASSIFICATION

Proper classification assigns individuals to housing units where they are most likely to succeed. Compatible populations reduce conflict and allow more targeted programming and rehabilitation efforts.

#### 03 MEETING BASIC NEEDS

Rooted in Maslow's hierarchy, SIM recognizes that individuals who feel unsafe or deprived cannot engage meaningfully. Meeting physical, safety, and social needs creates the foundation for behavior change.

#### 04 INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Each person is held individually responsible for their actions — not as part of a group. Clear, consistent expectations and consequences empower individuals and eliminate the culture of collective punishment.

#### 05 SUPERVISING & LEADING

Effective SIM demands strong, empathetic leadership at every level. Supervisors lead staff the same way staff are expected to lead those in custody — through empowerment, communication, and consistent support.

#### 06 ENGAGING INMATES

Idle time breeds negative behavior. SIM prioritizes meaningful engagement — education, vocational training, work, recreation, and therapy. Engaged individuals focus on self-improvement, not disruption.

## WHAT SIM DELIVERS

### A Safer, More Successful Environment

- ✓ **Reduced assaults and critical incidents**  
Proactive engagement and clear expectations replace reactive suppression — dramatically reducing violence and disturbances facility-wide.
- ✓ **Improved staff recruitment and retention**  
When officers feel empowered and supported by leadership, job satisfaction rises — addressing corrections' most urgent workforce challenge.
- ✓ **Cleaner, quieter, more professional facilities**  
SIM agencies describe measurable shifts in daily atmosphere — less noise, less conflict, and a more dignified environment for everyone.
- ✓ **Organizational culture transformation**  
The most powerful outcome: agencies embracing SIM report a fundamentally different work culture — one built on professionalism, communication, and respect at every level.
- ✓ **Improved community and reentry outcomes**  
By addressing behavioral root causes, SIM contributes to reduced recidivism and stronger reintegration — outcomes that matter to taxpayers and communities.

### SIM IN ACTION // REAL RESULTS

## 8%

Staff attrition during a major 2,000-bed facility transition — down from NIC's projected 25% — following full SIM implementation.

*Salt Lake County, Utah*

## 90%

Of incarcerated individuals are expected to behave appropriately when provided the right environment, clear expectations, and consistent human engagement.

*NIC-derived SIM Principle*

## 30+

Years of combined correctional leadership behind CGL's SIM advisory team — including former commissioners and county sheriffs.

## Ready to Transform Your Facility's Operations?

CGL's team of former correctional commissioners, sheriffs, and operations leaders partners with justice agencies nationwide to implement SIM, improve safety outcomes, and build lasting organizational culture. Whether planning a new facility or improving an existing one, CGL has the experience to help you get there.

**Contact Us Today:**  
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