

**The Impact of RTA on Social and Institutional Behavior**  
**Executive Summary**  
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Thirty-five inmates whose length of involvement in “Rehabilitation with the Arts” (RTA) ranged from 6 months to 6 years were compared with thirty men from the general prison population. The two groups were matched on race, age, education, crime and length of sentence. The participants completed a battery of tests, which included standardized psychological inventories that measure interpersonal trust, self-esteem, coping responses, anger levels, empathy and social responsibility. Researchers also examined disciplinary records for both groups over the six-month duration of the study to compare infraction rates (rule violations) and positive outcomes (job promotions, rehab and educational programs and good behavior transfers). Assessments were made twice, before and after the fall production, “Slam.”

The two groups differed in a number of important ways: (1) The RTA group reported a higher level of positive coping than the control group. (2) Although RTA participants had a higher level of anger than the control participants at the outset of the study, the anger levels of RTA participants declined at the second assessment, while the anger levels of the control participants increased. (3) RTA participants had fewer infractions and spent fewer days in keeplock (locked in their cells as a disciplinary measure resulting from a violation of prison rules) than control group participants.

The amount of time inmates were active in RTA was correlated with negative and positive outcomes. The analysis pointed to a strong pattern: The longer the inmate was in the program, the fewer violations he committed. A longer period of participation predicted a higher level of social responsibility. This suggests that RTA participants are more dependable, more socially mature and, sacrifice individual needs for the welfare of a group more than control participants.

(This study was subsidized by a grant from the City University of New York (CUNY) Research Foundation and conducted with the cooperation of the New York State Department of Corrections. Details of the research design, descriptive statistics, and significance levels are available upon request).