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**NEWSLETTER OF THE ASIAN
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 apcca

EMERGING
STRONGER
FROM COVID-19

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GREETINGS

Fellow Colleagues of Correctional Agencies,

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed challenges for prisons across the world. When the unprecedented pandemic hit, we were propelled into action to prevent and mitigate COVID-19 transmission in our prisons. We responded swiftly, adapted agilely, and fought bravely as the pandemic evolved with continued challenges. Our defences are now sturdier. Our capabilities are now stronger. Our people are now steadier. Beyond the challenges, we have also reaped opportunities through this crisis that would shape the future of our correctional landscapes.

This marks the theme for the 49th edition of the newsletter, "Emerging Stronger from COVID-19". In this issue, we will read about APCCA members' commendable efforts amidst the fight against the pandemic.

ENFORCING A ROBUST SYSTEM TO DETECT AND PREVENT SPREAD OF COVID-19

To prevent the spread of the pandemic in our dense prison environment, a robust system needs to be put in place to detect and prevent transmission of the virus. With strong collaborations forged with other Ministry Departments, the Malaysian Prison Department set up temporary admission and transit centres for newly admitted inmates in order to contain the spread of the pandemic within their prisons, and the Bureau of Corrections in Philippines saw the establishment of Site Harry, a COVID-19 isolation centre. Macao Correctional Services Bureau took on a strategy of "preventing infections from outside and guaranteeing safety inside" and adopted corresponding preventive measures at different stages of the pandemic.

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY FOR EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS AND REHABILITATION

At the height of the pandemic, operational and rehabilitative efforts such as visitations and counselling were restricted. Many correctional agencies accelerated the adoption of technology to circumvent such limitations and continued to deliver excellence in our mission. In the Korea Correctional Service, technology was used extensively for a variety of purposes — from video counselling, telemedicine consultations, to even a 'smart visit', where family members can visit their loved ones on the go using mobile phones. In New South Wales,

Australia, inmates remained meaningfully engaged as they are provided access to educational material, approved news websites and additional phone calls to their family members using a new pilot in-cell tablet technology at two of the prisons in Sydney. In Correctional Service Canada, staff innovated to develop technology-enabled prototypes and solutions to tackle the pandemic. For instance, their Wellness Application helped digitise and streamline the data collection process, allowing health staff to efficiently track offender wellness.

RALLYING STAFF TO OVERCOME THE TOUGH TIMES

To fight the pandemic successfully, a large part of the efforts hinges on our staff's agility, unity and well-being.

To ensure sufficient protection equipment for staff, the Hong Kong Correctional Services Department saw more than 2,500 off-duty and retired staff participating in filter mask production around the clock and taking part in various anti-epidemic operations in the community. To build up staff resilience during this stressful period, the Singapore Prison Service established a mental health framework for staff through peer support networks, empowering leaders with skills to support staff's mental health and cultivating a culture of appreciation.

The fight against the COVID-19 pandemic is a marathon, not a sprint. We will run together to run far. We have learnt many valuable lessons and will emerge stronger from this pandemic. I hope APCCA members will enjoy reading these articles and find the sharing inspiring and insightful. I would like to thank APCCA members for your generous contribution in this edition, and I look forward to APCCA members continued support to share and learn from one another. ■

Keep Well and Stay Safe.

SHIE Yong Lee
Commissioner,
Singapore
Prison Service





ENABLING DIGITAL IN THE DAWN OF COVID RECOVERY

Simon Bonk, Chief Information Officer, Information Management Services, Correctional Service Canada

The COVID-19 pandemic has been an impetus for change, requiring correctional jurisdictions globally to reconsider the execution of their mandates. With the emergence of new health policies and nationwide lockdowns, Correctional Service Canada (CSC) mobilised rapidly and utilised digital means to redefine workflows both within the workplace and correctional institutions.

DIGITAL SCREENING TO ENSURE SOCIAL DISTANCING PROTOCOLS

CSC developed a digital screening method, along with an Office Entry Application to support a safe, organised and gradual return to CSC buildings. Developed in-house, the mobile-based application allows employees to request access to sites and managers to monitor, review and approve requests

based on safety protocols for building entry. Leveraging Microsoft365 accounts, employees can identify the specific time, floor, and building they require access to using their phones or tablets. The manager will receive an e-mail notification for each request that is approved based on floor capacity to ensure social distancing protocols are respected. ▀

USING ONLINE ASSESSMENT TO MONITOR EMPLOYEE SYMPTOMS

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve across Canada, CSC has implemented a similar solution to actively screen correctional staff entering institutions and Community Correctional Centres. The Active Screening Application is a web-based self-assessment questionnaire used by all CSC staff prior to entering CSC sites. Improving the ease and accessibility of completion, the application includes questions about symptoms and exposure history. It notifies the individual and respective institution if entry is acceptable or if follow-up with site management/local public health authority is required. By preventing those with positive screening results from

entering CSC sites, both the Office Entry and Active Screening Application have reduced the likelihood of COVID-19 entering institutions and improved CSC's ability to effectively monitor employee symptoms and movement to help support contact tracing, an important component to mitigate the transmission of the virus. ▀

Employees would have to fill up an online questionnaire before they could enter CSC sites.

TRACKING HEALTH ASSESSMENTS OF OFFENDERS

With the virus entering correctional facilities, it has enhanced the need to document and monitor offender wellness. During the initial wave of the pandemic this required documenting wellness assessments for 3400 offenders a minimum of three times per week (>10,000 visits/week), resulting in a cumbersome process with an extensive paper trail. To ease the strain, CSC is prototyping a solution to monitor the health and wellbeing of offenders.

These applications indicate that a series of wide-ranging benefits can be achieved through digitalisation, including:

- Improved effectiveness in identifying and managing the spread of COVID-19 in CSC workspaces and institutions
- Increased efficiencies in monitoring employee and offender health
- Enhanced flexibility to respond promptly to regulatory changes such as the color-coded COVID response framework

The Wellness Application will digitise and streamline the data collection process, allowing health staff to accurately and efficiently track offender wellness. Using tablets, health staff will be able to enter real-time data as they complete their assessments. Throughout the application, prompts, notifications, and decision flows will ensure quality data is collected and consolidated into the database. This immediate reporting will provide insight to CSC leadership on how COVID-19 is impacting institutions, allowing for mitigation tactics and real-time planning as the situation evolves.



Officer doing his regular checks on an offender.

Let's talk about masks!

- ✓ Non-medical masks may help protect others around you
- ✓ Wearing a non-medical mask is **NOT** a replacement for physical distancing, hand washing, and monitoring your health
- ✓ Wearing a non-medical mask can increase your risk of infection if you touch your face more frequently

TECHNOLOGY IS THE WAY FORWARD IN THE "NEW NORMAL"

As CSC moves from crisis management into redefining the "new normal", the benefits realised by digitalisation had enabled the organisation to challenge the status quo and reconsider how services are delivered and operations are conducted across corrections. The early returns CSC is receiving from these services and applications indicate that digitalisation has the potential to modernise the business of corrections, while simultaneously increasing efficiency and effectiveness.

To emerge stronger post-pandemic, an alignment of digital efforts is integral to ensure that the organisation can realise the benefits of these efforts without missing opportunities or implementing incompatible technologies or processes. A strategic enterprise approach to digitalisation that

involves robust stakeholder engagement and change management efforts, including communication and education, is embraced to ensure that a digital foundation is in place to prepare for future demands and continued modernisation efforts.

Recognising the opportunity to change the way technology is supporting corrections, CSC is unifying the work being done and aligning it to a digital strategy. Investigating an under-development Technology Way Forward, which considers both the technologies and capabilities required to enable success, CSC will be able to appropriately cast an approach to digitalisation that will act as an anchor for future business and technology decisions.

Leveraging the business benefits of digitalisation born of COVID-19 on a small scale, CSC's strategic approach to digitalisation can facilitate the organisation's successful transformation to be more efficient, effective, and flexible in the dawn of COVID recovery. ▶



In CSC, robust stakeholder engagement across all units is crucial in the fight against the pandemic.

Drawing on the opportunities afforded during COVID-19 to do things differently, CSC has made strides to accelerate and augment the delivery of digital services such as video visitation, telemedicine, digital education and virtual program delivery to help realise correctional outcomes during these unprecedented times.



RISING TO FUTURE CHALLENGES THROUGH OPPORTUNITIES AND SOLIDARITY

Hong Kong Correctional Services Department



Like many parts of the world, COVID-19 had brought unprecedented impacts on all walks of life in Hong Kong. The unique setting of correctional institutions, coupled with the dense population and high turnover at individual institutions, proved to be a formidable challenge for Hong Kong Correctional Services Department (HKCSD) in the fight against the virus. Ever since the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) raised the COVID-19 response level to Emergency Response level in January 2020, the HKCSD implemented various timely measures to mitigate threats and leverage opportunities amid the COVID-19 epidemic.

UTILISING TECHNOLOGY TO PREVENT SPREAD OF COVID-19

To strategically implement the manifold anti-epidemic work across all correctional facilities, the HKCSD appointed a special task force from the onset to coordinate and monitor all the cleansing and disinfection programmes within correctional institutions. The task force also actively explored the possible use of technology for epidemic prevention.

Under the efforts of the task force, a series of high-end disinfection equipment were introduced to enhance the hygiene of custodial environment, such as:



Sanitising Passage

Sanitising of staff and Persons in Custody (PICs) after returning to institution from outside locations such as public hospital and court



HEPA Filter Air Purifiers

Placed in institutions particularly at those vulnerable places such as hospital and visit facilities to enhance air quality



Ultra-Violet Disinfection Robots

Deployed to disinfect high-risk locations such as hospital wards



Ultra-Low Volume Fogging machines

Professional use in disinfecting aircraft compartment being extensively deployed for disinfection in various locations including departmental vehicles and premises such as staff offices and communal areas of PICs



Infrared Thermometer Robot

Used to screen body temperature of PICs and for early detection of those who have fever

ENHANCING PREVENTION AND INFECTION CONTROL MECHANISM WITH MEDICAL EXPERT ADVICE

Besides screening the body temperature of all those entering correctional institutions, all newly admitted PICs had to undergo a minimum 14-day quarantine program, during which their health condition would be closely

monitored for signs of COVID-19 before they could associate with the main population. To identify asymptomatic carriers and prevent the spread of the virus, the HKCSD liaised with the Department of Health in providing COVID-19 tests to all newly admitted PICs and PICs on transfers amongst institutions.

Regular COVID-19 testing sessions were also arranged for staff on a voluntary basis.



Conducting of COVID-19 tests for PICs.

With the advice from the Department of Health, the HKCSD also enhanced its Three-Tier Medical Response System for Containing Outbreak of Infectious Diseases in Correctional Institutions, which depicted the general management for a consistent and systematic approach to contain infectious diseases outbreaks at different emergency level in penal settings. Moreover, the HKCSD had prepared for the worst and reserved sufficient facilities in correctional institutions

for quarantining those PICs who have closed contact with confirmed cases, whereby alleviating the prospective burden of the medical system in the HKSAR.

During the COVID-19 epidemic, the response system was put to the test on occasions, and the HKCSD swiftly responded to any reported or suspected COVID-19 cases to prevent mass outbreak. Due to the stringent measures imposed, confirmed cases were few and far between. ■

IMPROVING SOLIDARITY AMONG STAFF MEMBERS VIA COLLABORATIVE SUPPORT IN ANTI-EPIDEMIC COMMUNITY SERVICES

Amid the challenging times of the COVID-19 epidemic, the HKCSD is devoted to contributing to the anti-epidemic work for the wider community. Faced with a shortage of filter masks in the early stage of the epidemic in HKSAR, the HKCSD has strived to enhance its mask production to meet the keen demand for filter masks from various government departments and the community. Apart from the workforce of PICs, over 2500 off-duty and retired staff were recruited as volunteers to participate in filter mask production round the clock at filter mask workshops in an institution. This resulted in the monthly production of

filter masks to increase drastically from 1.1 million to 5.4 million.

HKCSD staff also participated in various Governmental anti-epidemic operations, such as enforcing 'restricted areas' for compulsory testing programmes in the community. The concerted efforts made by the HKCSD not only won applause from the community, but it also greatly enhanced cohesiveness among HKCSD staff and increased their sense of belonging to the Department in this time of adversity.

The response to the COVID-19 epidemic in Hong Kong by the HKCSD had been proactive and expeditious. With the enhanced solidarity amongst staff members in fighting against the epidemic, the HKCSD will regularise and continue to enhance the existing epidemic control measures with a view to rising to future challenges! ▍

The experience gained in combating against it has brought not only invaluable know-how in strengthening its resilience to challenges of the epidemic in the future, but also leveraging opportunities in the form of implementing initiatives, such as application of technology in the correctional services.



HKCSD staff volunteered in the production of filter masks round the clock.





OVERCOMING THE PANDEMIC THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Korea Correctional Service



A staff at work in a quarantined area of prison.

The Korea Correctional Service (KCS) experienced a COVID-19 outbreak in its correctional facilities in 2020, which saw 1,177 inmates infected with the virus. Drawing from the lessons learnt, KCS was swift to introduce technology at various touch points of the inmates' rehabilitation journey, such as Smart Visit with family members and Video Conferences with psychologists.

OVERCOMING THE MASS INFECTION OF COVID-19 IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Amid the spread of the COVID-19 around the world, correctional facilities in Korea could not be free from it. After the first coronavirus case was confirmed in Korea on 20 January 2020, correctional facilities had effectively mitigated the spread of mass infection through quarantine and stable inmate management despite the outbreak in the local community.

Despite these efforts, however, 1,177 inmates were later infected after one of the staff from

the Seoul Dongbu Detention Center was tested positive on 27 November 2020. The key reasons identified were the newly admitted inmates who arrived asymptomatic, the structure of a closed facility, overpopulation, and a lack of quarantine space.

In response to this, the KCS formed the COVID-19 Countermeasure Headquarters and converted the Gyeongbuk Bukbu 2nd Correctional Institution and the Seoul Dongbu Detention Center into a life treatment center, where all efforts were devoted to treatment of confirmed patients and management of contact tracing. In order to secure quarantine

space and reduce accommodation density, the KCS transferred 1,221 inmates, including confirmed cases, to six correctional institutions nationwide. 1,629 inmates were also released early on parole.

The quarantine period for newly admitted inmates also increased from two to three weeks, and all staff and inmates were tested with PCR tests to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

As a result of the active response from the KCS, no more confirmed case was reported after the last positive case on 23 January 2021. On 8 February 2021, the Seoul Dongbu Detention Center were finally normalised. This positive result was a testament of the sacrifices and efforts of about 16,000 correctional officers, as well as field staff and medical staff, who fought this invisible virus together while simultaneously performing quarantine and accommodation management tasks.

After experiencing the outbreak of COVID-19 at the Seoul Dongbu Detention Center for

about three months, the KCS made efforts to strengthen initial response capabilities in order to prevent recurrence. Those efforts include:

- Establishing the “COVID-19, Correctional Facility Response Manual”
- Preparing for medical isolation space for confirmed cases
- Conducting self-training by the respective institutions according to the manual
- Establishing a nationwide transfer plan for large-scale outbreak, and
- Immediate isolation measures for contactors

To ensure the rights and interests of inmates in the Post-Corona era, the KCS introduced non-contact policies such as:

- **Smart Visit**
- **Telemedicine**
- **Video Family Visits**
- **Video Conference with External Experts** ▶

EXPANSION OF A SMART VISIT — AVAILABLE ANYWHERE

The KCS implemented a Smart Visit system so that inmates have an opportunity to communicate in the era of *untact* due to COVID-19. This system proved to be a useful service for the elderly or disabled visitors, whose mobilities are limited, or for visitors who live far away.

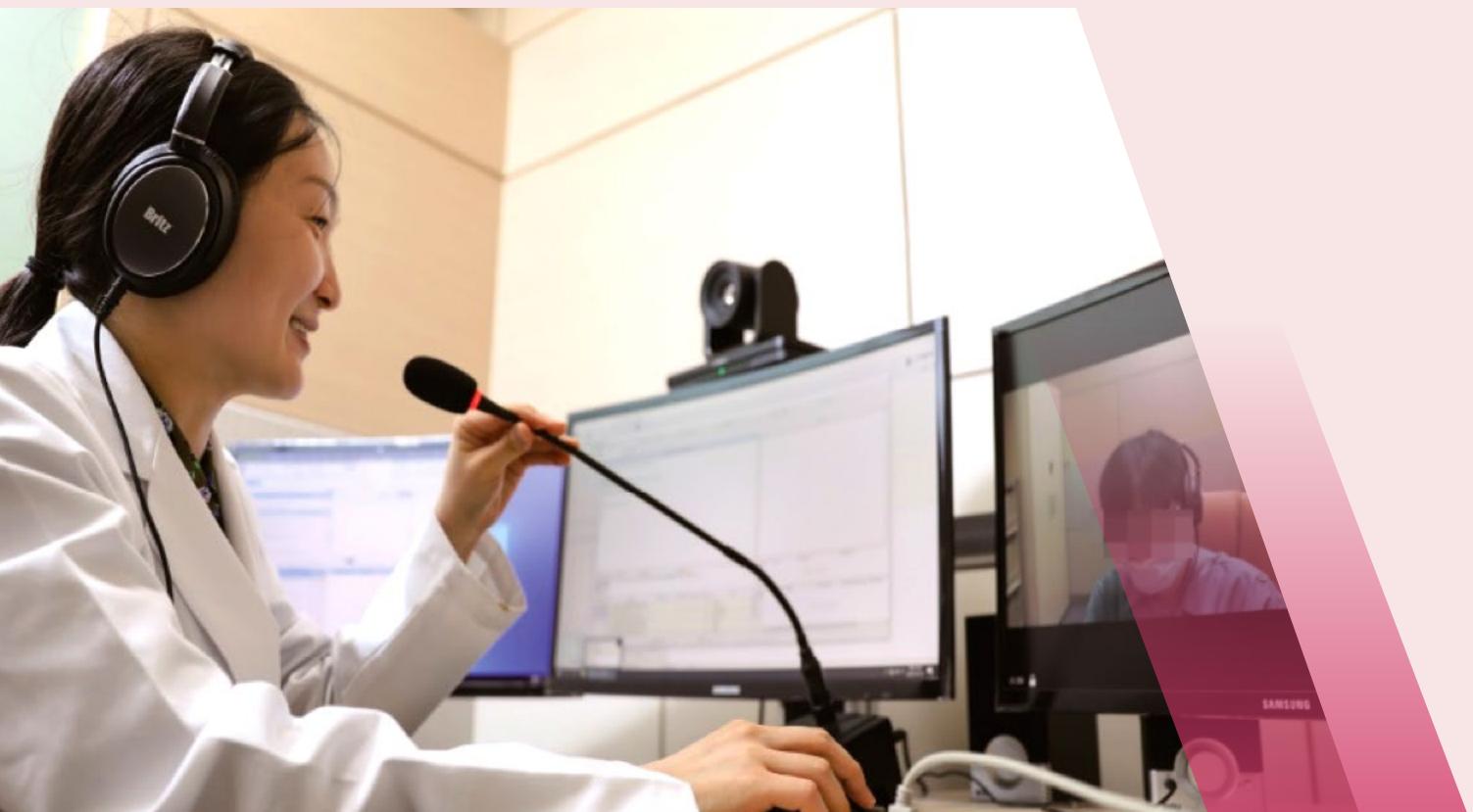
A Smart Visit could be characterised by the fact that a visitor could utilise it conveniently

at any place just by using a smartphone or PC. Not only did this system save visitors' transportation costs and travel time, a Smart Visit allowed virtual visitations in this period of COVID-19, where physical visits were limited. This also contributed greatly to the family bonds between the inmates and their family members. Due to these advantages, the usage rate of Smart Visit had been increasing year by year, and the KCS would continue to provide the service by expanding servers and improving related equipment in the future. ▶

A visitor using a smartphone to meet an inmate.

Untact: A combination of the prefix “un” and the word “contact”. It is a buzzword coined by Korea which describes doing things without having direct contact with others, such as having self-service kiosks and contactless payments.





A health care provider having a conference through a telemedicine system.

A NON-CONTACT TELEMEDICINE SYSTEM: GUARANTEEING THE INMATE'S RIGHT TO HEALTH CARE

To mitigate the risks of COVID-19, the KCS continued to promote a non-contact healthcare system that could protect the health of inmates while maintaining the quarantine system for correctional facilities.

The Telemedicine System was first introduced in 2005 by external health care professionals to treat detainees through a virtual platform. In 2018, a Telemedicine Center was opened in the Seoul Dongbu Detention Center, and telemedicine service was made available for 47 correctional facilities nationwide.

The number of medical treatments stood at 548 before the outbreak of COVID-19 in January 2020. When the COVID-19 outbreak in local communities was in full swing, the number of telemedicine treatments rose significantly to 2,133 in December 2020 — proving that the Telemedicine System would greatly contribute to the expansion of treatment opportunities for inmates now and in the Post-Corona era.

The KCS would be laying out plans to complete the installation of telemedicine systems in all correctional facilities nationwide in 2021. ▶

VIDEO COUNSELLING WITH EXTERNAL EXPERTS

Counselling is available for inmates in Korean correctional facilities, which help them to resolve problems and ensure a stable life. Counselling had been provided for each stage and type — such as initial counselling, crisis intervention counselling, in-depth counselling, grief counselling, and follow-up counselling. If

more professional psychological analysis and support were needed, external experts, such as a psychiatrist, would conduct consultations with the inmates.

However, due to the pandemic, external expert visits to correctional facilities were suspended. Therefore, all correctional facilities operated the 'External Expert Video Counselling' in order to prevent the



An inmate meeting his family through video.

consultation gap and resolve mental health challenges, such as 'Corona depression'.

By continuously providing counselling services, regardless of the geographic specificity of the correctional facilities, this would contribute greatly to the treatment of inmates. All video consultation and communication costs were borne by the country.

With a steady usage rate, over 400 video consultations were conducted in 2020. ■

"I was in a difficult position due to family problems while living in prison, however, through the video counselling, a lot of my mental burden was relieved."
— An inmate who had experience using video counselling expressed his gratitude

CONTINUATION OF FAMILY VISITS DESPITE THE PANDEMIC

In correctional facilities in Korea, various programs were operated to prevent the dissolution of family relations of inmates and to restore disconnected family relations during prison life. However, due to the pandemic, family visits to facilities were restricted and family relations recovery programmes were suspended.

As an alternative to these measures, the KCS established a video visit system in the family visiting room to provide opportunities for non-contact meetings between inmates and their families. The introduction of video family visits would contribute to the recovery of family relations among inmates during the outbreak of COVID-19. ■



An inmate having a video conference with an external expert.

The KCS will continue to implement various policies to fight against the virus, and recognised the importance of sharing best practices from each country during the global COVID-19 pandemic. Along with other correctional authorities in Asia-Pacific countries, the KCS will continue to maintain a cooperative relationship to solve common problems in the future.



THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES BUREAU'S EFFORTS ON COVID-19 PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Macao Correctional Services Bureau

Taking on a holistic strategy of "preventing infections from outside and guaranteeing safety inside", the Macao Correctional Services adopted various measures at different stages of the pandemic and adjusted their modes of communications and services to continue meeting the needs of inmates and their family members.

INTERCEPTING COVID-19 FROM ENTERING PRISON

To prevent COVID-19 from spreading to correctional facilities, the Correctional Services Bureau acts in line with the Macao SAR Government's epidemic prevention

guidelines, adopting a strategy of "preventing infections from outside and guaranteeing safety inside" to ensure the health of inmates, juvenile delinquents and staff members and the safe and orderly operation of Coloane Prison and the Youth Correctional Institution.

Staff of the
Correctional
Services Bureau
disinfects the
prison vehicles
after each escort.





Inmates must undergo a body temperature test when entering or leaving the prison.

ADJUSTING MODES OF COMMUNICATION AND SERVICES

The Bureau made work adjustments in response to the development of the epidemic situation, including communicating, by means of broadcast and explanations by the staff, to inmates and juvenile delinquents. The messages touched on content such as epidemic prevention, health information, special service arrangements amidst the epidemic, emotional relief methods, relaxation exercises.

The permitted frequency of visits to inmates and juvenile delinquents was also adjusted to once every two weeks, and the number of vocational training programs and group activities were also tweaked to minimise the flow of people. These adjustments, made in compliance with epidemic prevention needs, facilitated the Bureau's continued efforts on offender rehabilitation as they guaranteed the continuity of the education and training for inmates and juvenile delinquents and their opportunities to meet family members.

In response to the outbreak of the pandemic, there had been no cases of inmates and juvenile delinquents being infected as of April 2021. ■

During the pandemic, visitors were still able to visit inmates by using intercom devices .





FIGHTING THE PANDEMIC THROUGH JOINT COLLABORATION AND EFFORTS

Malaysian Prison Department

The battle against COVID-19 cannot be fought alone. Recognising the importance of synergy, partnership and shared resources, the Malaysian Prison Department collaborated with various inter-ministry agencies to introduce extensive measures in keeping the virus from entering their prison compounds.

In Malaysia, the first COVID-19 case was identified on 25 January 2020. Subsequently, the Malaysian Government enforced Movement Control Order (MCO) on 18 March 2020.

Upon the discovery of the first positive case in Malaysia, Malaysian Prison Department commenced work on implementing measures to contain the spread and transmission of COVID-19 within its facilities.

Malaysian Prison Department formed a committee at HQ level to ensure the

management of COVID-19 in Malaysian Prison Department. The committee ensured that the Department adhered to the regulations set by Health Ministry of Malaysia. In ensuring this, each prison institution was asked to form their own COVID-19 committee. These committees ensured compliance to the COVID-19 guidelines, set by Prison HQ, in terms of security, rehabilitation activities, human resource management among the staffs and the up-keep of inmates.

Screening procedure for staff entry into prison.



MEASURES TAKEN

The Central Operations Centre and Prison COVID-19 committee were formed to monitor and manage COVID-19 in prison. The respective prison institutions would then provide 24/7 reporting to Central Operation Centre at Prison Headquarters.

In containing and overcoming COVID-19, the Malaysian Prison Department worked in 3 phases of the MCO:

Phase 1

Malaysian Prison Department placed strong emphasis on the education of staff and inmates of the COVID-19 virus through training and raising of awareness. Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), such as face shields, masks and sanitisers, were provided to the staff on duty. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), along with posters on the Do's and Don'ts, were distributed to educate staff on the management of inmates in terms of security, rehabilitation and skills training during this COVID-19 pandemic. Mandatory screening was also implemented on everyone coming in and out of prison — including inmates, staff and partners.

Phase 2

The Malaysian Prison Department looked into the overcrowding issue and took measures

Did You Know?

A special task force, Prison COVID-19 Task Force (PCTF), was formed at the Ministry Level. Led by the Ministry of Home Affairs, PCTF was supported by the Ministry of Health, Judiciary, Royal Malaysian Police, Immigration Department, and other relevant authorities.

Malaysian Prison Department also collaborated with Ministry of Health, Ministry of Defence (Armed Forces) and other agencies in treating, managing and controlling the spread of the pandemic.

by gazetting 11 training centres as temporary prisons to accommodate new admissions who entered the system during the MCO period. Admission and Transit Centres, known as Satellite Prison, were also established for the purpose of quarantine and screening for newly admitted inmates.

SOPs were also established and followed at every institution, such as the implementation of daily cohorts in the inmates' admission process. Inmates would be housed in Satellite Prison from Day 1 until Day 10 to undergo COVID-19 screening test. During this period, Malaysian Prison Department worked closely with Ministry of Health and local health authorities to ensure that the screening, quarantine and treatment process of COVID-19 among inmates, staffs and family were followed up promptly.



Manufacturing of Personal Protective Equipment for daily use by staff.



Sanitation of prison areas.

Malaysian Prison Department also engaged other enforcement agencies and the judiciary in containing the spread of the pandemic. For instance, cooperation was sought from the judiciary to suspend their hearings. With the exception of urgent cases, enforcement agencies also temporarily ceased the admission of new inmates to prevent positive cases imported from the community.

Phase 3

During this phase, the Malaysian Prison Department enhanced the inter-agency collaboration which involved:

- Screening and COVID-19 test on inmates who are
 - Newly admitted, where they will be screened by enforcement agencies prior to being sent to prison
 - Released from prison to Immigration detention centres
 - Attending court proceedings
- Extended duration of quarantine of inmates was determined under the advice of Ministry of Health, and only those who had been tested negative could be transferred from the Satellite Prison to the prison institutions
- Engagement and assistance from Ministry of Health to manage inmates who are

asymptomatic and under observation (first and second stage) by establishing Low Risk COVID-19 Centre (LRCC) within prison premises

- Implementation of Periodic Environmental cleaning and sanitisation
- Amendment to Compulsory Attendance Act, which was extended from 3 months to 1 year to allow more convicts to serve their sentences in the community as an alternative to imprisonment
- Site visits, such as family visit, legal visit, and government agencies' and embassies' interviews, were replaced with online visitation and communication system.

The steps taken by Malaysia Prison Department, such as setting up Temporary Prison, Admission and Transit Centres, managed to ease and control the COVID-19 pandemic within prison. It also helped to ease the problem of overcrowding. With the assistance of Ministry of Health, screening done in prisons also enabled the Malaysian Prison to detect positive cases at an early stage.

Current data showed that majority of the cases of COVID-19 arose from newly admitted inmates, with only a small number found among the existing ones. Due to the strong commitment and joint efforts from the Ministry of Home Affairs and the relevant agencies, the COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysian Prison is under control and manageable. ■



COVID-19 SPARKS DIGITAL REVOLUTION IN NSW PRISONS

The head of Australia's largest correctional jurisdiction reflects on the challenges and successes of a year of working through the pandemic.

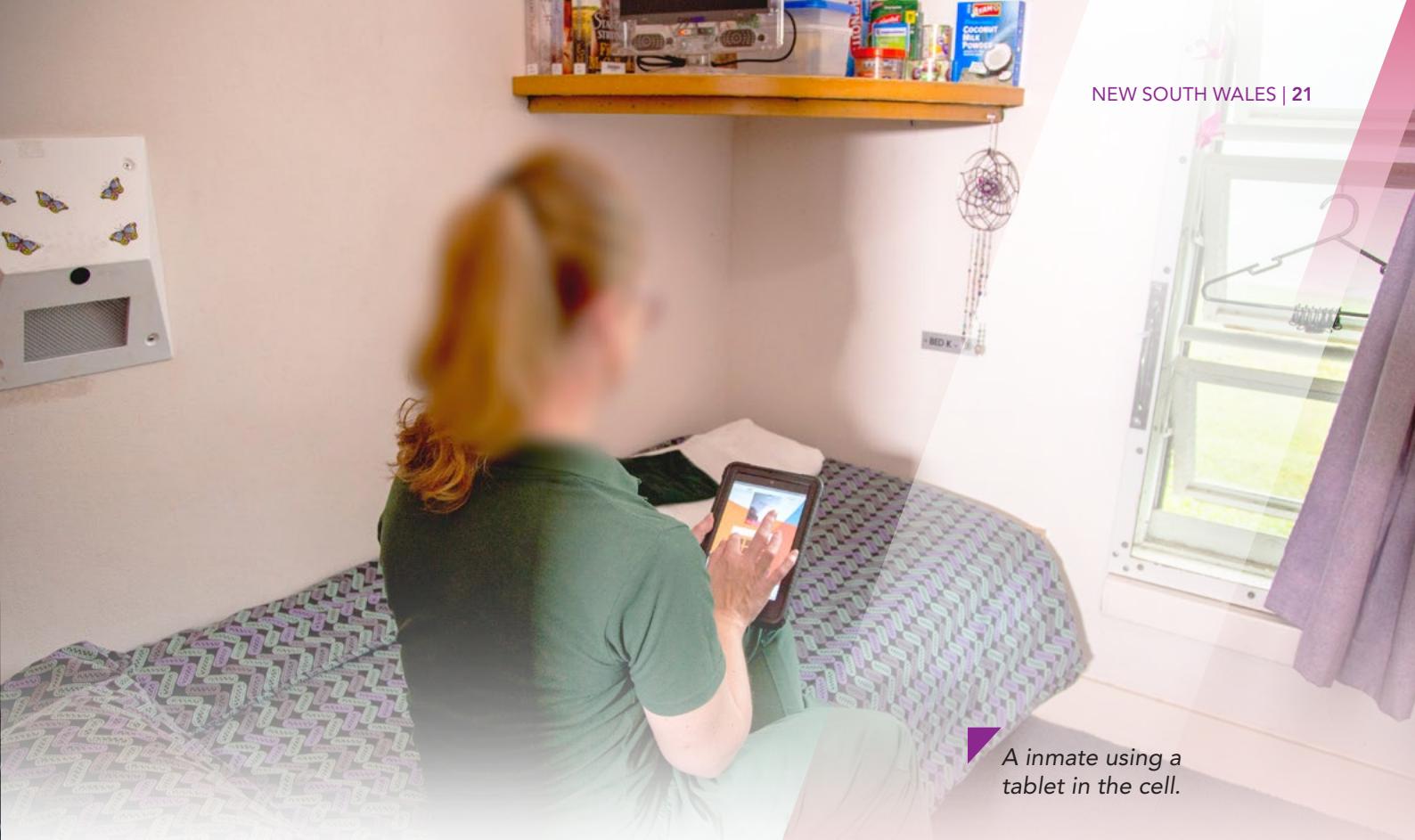
Correctional Services New South Wales



Frontline staff wearing PPE at the Metropolitan Reception and Remand Centre, Sydney.

A COVID-induced digital revolution had allowed inmates in New South Wales to attend programs, court hearings and connect with family.

The roll-out of video visits by Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) was achieved in weeks, rather than years, and has led to more than 200,000 social visits in the past 12 months.



A inmate using a tablet in the cell.

INMATE ACCESS

CSNSW Commissioner, Mr Peter Severin, said the technology has had a profound impact on inmates' mental health and wellbeing — allowing them to see their homes and pets, and connect with overseas or frail relatives.

"It has also allowed CSNSW staff to continue running our prisons safely and securely in the absence of in-person visits, without the threat of widespread rioting experienced by prisons overseas," Mr Severin said.

"In addition to the video visit technology, staff have aided the roll-out of new pilot in-cell tablet technology at two Sydney prisons, which enables inmates to access programs,

educational material, approved news websites and make additional phone calls to loved ones."

The highly secure in-cell tablets have been purpose-built for prison use, are tamper resistant, run on a secure network and have restricted access.

The initial roll-out of the tablets exceeded expectations: there was a 60% increase in phone calls to family and friends among inmates with these tablets — an important element of rehabilitation.

This new technology is also important to increase inmates' confidence and digital literacy to apply for driver's licenses, submit a resume for a job, look for rental properties online, upskill, address their offending and strive for rehabilitation. ■

COMMUNITY OFFENDERS

Mr Severin said the ways in which staff have adapted their everyday operations in light of these new technologies had been innovative and wide-ranging, and many of the solutions would form part of the ongoing correctional landscape in NSW.

"The introduction and expansion of LiViT — Live Virtual Therapeutic programs and services online — had allowed us flexible delivery of psychological services and behavioural-change programs during COVID-19 restrictions," Mr Severin said. ■

Did You Know?

Using interactive technology, more than than 1,300 hours of LiViT programs, including Explore, Question, Understand, Investigate, Practice, Succeed (EQUIPS) Foundation, EQUIPS Domestic Abuse and Safe Driver Program were delivered remotely!



A body scanner at the Metropolitan Reception and Remand Centre in Sydney.

"Through better use of technology, CSNSW increased the program availability for high-risk offenders in the community during this time...It was an important factor in ensuring priority offenders continued to receive interventions in the community post-release, and a prime example of how new technology has helped us improve outcomes."

— Mr Peter Severin,
CSNSW Commissioner

LEGISLATIVE CHANGES AID TECHNOLOGY ROLL-OUT

CSNSW introduced swift legislative changes during the pandemic to tighten the Commissioner's powers in refusing people entry to correctional centres on health grounds.

Mr Severin said other important changes to the law allowed for staff to provide inmates with scanned copies of all non-privileged mail to stop contraband from entering the prisons.

"In addition, we secured more than \$AU15million for the purchase and

installation of 70 body-scanners to further strengthen the fight against contraband," Mr Severin said.

"So far, we've rolled out 26 body scanners in metropolitan and regional maximum security prisons in NSW, with an additional 44 being brought online in the coming months."

"The scanners have the capacity to detect contraband before it enters centres. This can be done so by screening all inmates when they arrive at prison and after each contact visit."

"More than 2,000 scans have been undertaken so far, with several incidents of internally-secreted contraband being seized."

CSNSW Commissioner,
Mr Peter Severin,
inspecting the temporary
COVID-19 field hospital.





CSNSW staff working alongside Justice Health staff to monitor offenders in isolation.

CSNSW staff were required to wear masks when working in proximity to offenders.



Other initiatives we have rolled-out since the beginning of the pandemic included:

- The establishment of isolation hubs in prisons across NSW
- Training inmates in forensic cleaning, which provided them with an employable skill, while also managing hygiene in our correctional centres
- The establishment of a central Personal Protective Equipment warehouse by Corrective Services Industries to support NSW Government agencies' access to PPE
- The establishment of the world's first temporary prison hospital at Sydney's Metropolitan Remand and Reception

Centre. This 33-bed facility was built in just three weeks to treat cases of COVID-19 and was designed to manage inmates who may have become acutely unwell.

"Our well-managed response to COVID-19 meant we did not need to use the hospital," Mr Severin said.

"However, the foresight to be prepared in the event NSW experienced higher rates of COVID-19 transmission within the correctional environment, demonstrates why NSW are leaders in the field."

As at March 2021, NSW has had only one reported case of coronavirus diagnosed in the inmate population of about 13,000 people.



SCAN TO WATCH THE TIME-LAPSE OF CSNSW STAFF AND INMATES CONSTRUCTING A TEMPORARY COVID-19 FIELD HOSPITAL!





EMERGING THROUGH COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Bureau of Corrections, Philippines

The Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) has been ensuring that its mandate is consistently implemented. The outbreak of COVID-19 in the country did not hinder the BuCor in continuously providing our Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) with their basic needs, especially in the health aspect.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the BuCor was compelled to establish measures to prevent the entry of infection to all prison facilities. Hence, numerous memos were developed as proactive measures for infection prevention and control inside prison camps and offices. One of the significant actions that was taken is the establishment of the COVID Isolation Center, Site Harry. Site Harry was successfully established with the extensive support of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Another important preventive action was mass immunisation. The objective of the



CTSSUPT Ma Cecilia V Villanueva with ICRC staff checking the situation at Site Harry, BuCor COVID Isolation Center (CIC).

flu vaccination was to reduce the risk flu infections, hospitalisation, and death of our PDLs. Noteworthy, BuCor personnel benefited from the immunisation as well.

Despite the rigorous preventive efforts, COVID-19 infection penetrated the prison walls. It has infected a total of 505 PDL and 213 Personnel BuCor wide. All infected PDLs were transferred to Site Harry for quarantine and to prevent further spread of the virus. ▀



Flu vaccination were provided to PDLs.

Did You Know?

The Directorate for Health and Welfare Services (DHWS) initiated distribution of nutritional support, such as food packs and dietary milk, to the senior citizens, people who are chronically ill, and also nutritionally challenged PDLs, as having balanced meals will boost their immune system to fight against the infection.

The health frontliners of BuCor have seen the face of COVID-19, as they were not spared of infection despite the stringent precautions taken.

<u>As of March 27, 2021</u>	PDL	Personnel
Confirmed Cases	505	213
Recoveries	470	208
Deaths	31	0
Active Cases	4	5

On a more positive note, the BuCor has kept COVID-19 cases stable inside the prison facilities, with only four active cases among 48,000 PDLs and nine among 3,500 personnel.

As part of continuous preventive efforts, the DHWS is coordinating with Superintendents and Supply Officers of the National Bilibid



Intensified screening and testing of PDL and personnel were also carried out.

Prison and the Correctional Institute for Women and Public Information Office to distribute hygiene kits to PDLs. ▀

EFFORTS IN MITIGATING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

The BuCor has taken several measures to reduce the spread of the virus in prison, which includes:

- Posting of Health Advisories at all entrances and conspicuous areas of quadrants/compounds
- Daily misting and/or disinfection of hallways, lobbies, offices, comfort rooms
- Misting/Disinfection of brigades at least three times a week
- Restriction of visitors
- Regular Swab/ PCR testing of employees
- Implementation of Skeletal workforce
- Strict "No Face Mask, No Entry" policy

- Implementation of 14 days duty for personnel inside compounds
- Establishment of Site Harry, COVID Isolation Center (CIC)
- Rapid test for PDLs due for release
- Constant linkage/coordination with other Government and Non-government Organisations
- Issuance of supplemental nutrition, food, vitamins, hygiene kits and others
- Procurement of necessary materials, supplies, and equipment for infection, prevention and control
- Establishing isolation areas in each compound ▀



Ongoing construction of the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) Hospital.



COMBATTING COVID-19 AS ONE SPS

Singapore Prison Service



In continuing with our mission to ensure safe and secure custody of offenders and rehabilitate them, the Singapore Prison Service (SPS) implemented various measures to prevent, detect and control COVID-19 in prison. SPS also harnessed technology to enhance our operations and engage our beneficiaries, as well as ensure staff well-being and resilience to fight the virus as one SPS.

An officer supervising temperature taking of an inmate.
As part of SPS's COVID-19 detection regime, inmates have their temperatures taken twice daily.





Officers donning the Personal Protective Equipment prior to engaging inmates who are on cohort segregation.

PREVENTION, DETECTION AND CONTAINMENT OF COVID-19 CASES IN PRISON

In the early days of the virus in Singapore, SPS swiftly and proactively implemented various prevention, detection and containment measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in prison. SPS segregated newly admitted offenders for at least 14 days and took their temperatures twice daily. Newly admitted offenders had to undergo COVID-19 tests at the start and end of their segregation period, and were only allowed to join the general population after they test negative for COVID-19. Inmates who displayed symptoms of Upper Respiratory Tract Infection were also

subject to such tests and were isolated until they recovered. This multi-layered detection regime enabled SPS to promptly detect and isolate any COVID-19 positive cases that were newly admitted into prison. In line with Singapore's COVID-19 vaccination programme, all inmates regardless of nationality, were availed the opportunity to be vaccinated if they met the criteria for vaccination. ■

SPS's multi-layered detection regime enabled SPS to promptly detect and isolate any COVID-19 positive cases that were newly admitted into prison.



Re-enactment of an inmate attending a virtual court hearing using video-conferencing.

HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE OPERATIONS

While routines had to be adjusted rapidly amidst the pandemic, SPS's extensive use of technology helped staff to continue their daily operations, while ensuring the health and safety of our inmates and staff. For instance, SPS collaborated with the Courts and the Attorney-General's Chamber, to replace physical court appearances with video court sessions. In 2020, SPS conducted approximately 4,500 sessions of remote court hearings via video-conferencing, resulting in 8,111 hours of manpower savings. On top of that, SPS also began trial of tele-consultations of inmates' medical reviews to minimise inmates' external movements to high-risk locations, such as hospitals. ■



Inmates in a group engagement session with Correctional Rehabilitation Specialists with safe distancing measures observed.

At the height of the pandemic, virtual counselling sessions were conducted for inmates.



CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT WITH OUR BENEFICIARIES

Despite the heightened safety measures due COVID-19, rehabilitation remains one of the key focal areas of SPS and cannot be disrupted. Community partners, Correctional Rehabilitation Specialists and volunteers worked tirelessly to convert physical rehabilitation programmes into videos and workbooks. Psychoeducation materials, consisting of correctional interventions and relaxation techniques, were developed to help officers provide mental support to inmates who might be prone to adjustment issues. Although entry into the institutions was limited due to the pandemic, staff and

community partners of SPS conducted interviews and counselling sessions through electronic means. This allowed inmates to remain engaged and preserve a sense of routine and normalcy in a time of uncertainty.

SPS continued to look for new opportunities for inmates to connect with their families. During Children's Day 2020, SPS collaborated with community partners to organise six virtual family bonding sessions, where offenders were able to engage in game activities with their children who were under foster care.

As Singapore continues to monitor the number of community cases, SPS ensured a calibrated and phased resumption of activities, to keep the virus at bay.

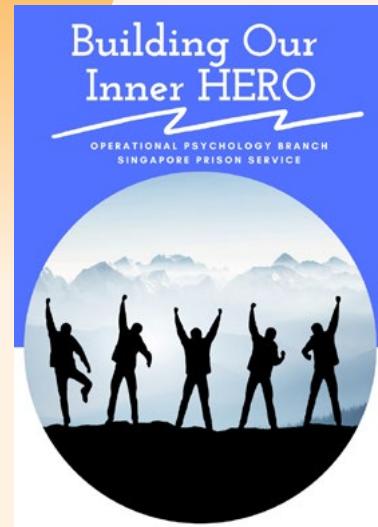
Children of incarcerated inmates attending a virtual bonding session with their parent in custody during Children's Day.



Did You Know?

- During the height of the pandemic in 2020, an estimated 34,000 phone calls were facilitated between inmates and their families
- When visitations were restricted, SPS allowed inmates to send more e-letters

The use of e-letters allowed foreign inmates to correspond with their families residing in countries where essential services, such as postal delivery, were disrupted. These efforts allowed offenders to sustain meaningful engagement with their family members amidst the restrictions.



To build staff resilience in coping with the pandemic, SPS disseminated various broadcasts and readings, such as *Building Our Inner Hero* and the COVID-19 Survival Guide.

ENSURING STAFF SAFETY, WELL-BEING AND RESILIENCE

Recognising the risk of staff-imported COVID-19 virus, sentinel surveillance was also conducted on frontline officers regularly. Staff were also split into distinct teams to mitigate the risk of cross-infection. Officers and medical staff engaging newly admitted inmates donned the full Personal Protective Equipment while discharging their duties. Despite the long hours of deployment, SPS officers adapted quickly and maintained high operational vigilance.

A mental health framework was launched to enhance staff's mental health during this stressful period, including establishing peer support networks, empowering leaders with skills to support staff's mental health, and cultivating a culture of appreciation within SPS. Although non-frontline staff were unable to meet physically for a period of time, virtual engagements allowed staff to continue to connect with one another. ■

Did You Know?

To ensure the safety and protection of our staff, SPS facilitated the vaccination of staff since the start of 2021. As of 7 June 2021, 87% of them have been fully vaccinated.

EMERGING STRONGER: THE WAY FORWARD

Moving forward, SPS will continue to bolster our national efforts in battling the virus through continued strict safe distancing measures and progressive vaccination efforts. While local community cases in Singapore remains relatively low, SPS will continue to stay vigilant and leverage on technology, enhance our infrastructure and build staff resilience to better position ourselves for future challenges. ■



Ms Shie Yong Lee, Commissioner of Singapore Prison Service, receiving her COVID-19 vaccination dose. Since January 2021, all SPS staff were given the option to receive the vaccination.



SCAN THE QR CODES TO WATCH THE VIDEOS!



[Our Aspiration, Our Change: Staying Steadfast and Innovative Through COVID-19](#)



[Back to School at Tanah Merah Prison School](#)



Asian and Pacific Conference
of Correctional Administrators

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