

# STAGES PROGRAM

## Residential



### High-Intensity Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Serious Mental Illness and Personality Disorders

#### DESCRIPTION

Steps Toward Awareness, Growth, and Emotional Strength (STAGES) is a unit-based residential Psychology Treatment Program for inmates with a diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder. The program uses an integrative model that includes an emphasis on a modified therapeutic community (MTC), cognitive behavioral therapy, dialectical behavior therapy, and skills training. It uses evidence-based treatments to increase the time between disruptive behaviors, fosters living within the general population or community setting, and increases prosocial skills. This program aims to prepare inmates for their transition to less-secure prison settings and promote successful reentry into society at the conclusion of their terms of incarceration.

The typical STAGES inmate has the following behavioral characteristics:

- A history of long-term restricted housing placements
- Multiple incident reports and/or suicide watches
- A long and intensifying pattern of behavior disruptive to the institution
- A demonstrated willingness to engage with treatment staff and change the way s/he deals with incarceration (although behavioral problems may continue)

#### HOURS

This program is typically completed in 500 hours.

#### LOCATIONS

USP Florence                      FCI Terre Haute (Medium)

#### NEEDS

Antisocial Peers, Cognitions Mental Health, and Trauma

#### PROGRAM DELIVERY

To ensure program fidelity and proper credit, the **STAGES** program must be delivered by Psychology Services staff.

**Table 11**

<b>Steps Toward Awareness, Growth, and Emotional Strength (STAGES) Program</b>	<p>The STAGES Program is a residential treatment program for male inmates with serious mental illnesses and a primary diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder. The program uses an integrative model that includes a modified therapeutic community, cognitive behavioral therapies, and skills training. The program is designed to increase the time between disruptive behaviors, foster living within the general population or community setting, and increase pro-social skills.</p>
	<p>The program curriculum is derived from Dialectical Behavior Therapy and takes place in a modified therapeutic community. There is also an emphasis on basic cognitive-behavioral skills consistent with other BOP treatment programs; for example, criminal thinking is addressed through the identification of criminal thinking errors and engagement in pro-social interactions with staff and peers. Program content is designed to prepare inmates for transition to less secure prison settings and promote successful reentry into society at the conclusion of their term of incarceration. Program staff collaborate with community partners to facilitate reentry.</p>
	<p>Inmates referred to the STAGES Program have a primary diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder and a history of unfavorable institutional adjustment linked to this disorder. Examples of unfavorable institutional adjustment include multiple incident reports, suicide watches, and/or extended placement in restrictive housing. Inmates designated to the STAGES Program must volunteer for treatment and be willing to actively engage in the treatment process. Willingness to engage in the treatment is addressed through a brief course of pre-treatment in which the inmate learns basic skills at the referring institution.</p>
	<p>The STAGES Program is conducted over 12–18 months. Inmates may participate in the program at any time during their sentence. Formal programming is facilitated half-days, 5 days a week, with the remaining half-day dedicated to an institution work assignment or other programming.</p>

Notes: The STAGES Program is available at FCI Terre Haute, Indiana (medium security), and USP Florence, Colorado (high security).

Source: BOP, A Directory of Bureau of Prisons' National Programs

## Secure STAGES

Evidence-based treatment for successful management of mental illness



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**(BOP)** - Maximum security inmates with personality disorders and a history of self-injurious behavior or with a history of not functioning effectively in a prison setting have new programming opportunities in federal prisons. The Secure STAGES Program, modeled after the Stages Program that was developed at the Federal Correctional Complex (FCC) Terre Haute, has been expanded to the United States Penitentiary (USP) Florence where it has been well received. This residential treatment program targets inmates who have historically been difficult to manage in the prison environment, and provides them an opportunity to address their mental illness and learn skills needed to function effectively in prison and the community.

Secure STAGES has a locked side and an open side, thereby allowing inmates to participate in treatment while they are enhancing their ability to function in a more open setting. While in the program, which lasts for a minimum of 12 months, inmates learn to manage intense emotions, use rational thinking, and build positive relationships.

Aaron Stone, one of the 12 participants in the program at USP Florence, finds the program extremely beneficial: "[The] Secure STAGES Program has been everything to me; given me hope and optimism for the future." Brian Murray, another participant, also finds the program effective: "Secure STAGES is highly beneficial to one's needs to gain the proper tools to join society and to be productive while incarcerated."

