

ISSUES WITH MED-CELLS IN THE PSYCH HALL

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The "psych hall" is a term used for a section in prison where something called the "Med-cells" are located. The psych hall is an inhumane aspect of the prison system that very few people in the outside world are aware of. A Med-cell in the psych hall consists of a totally empty cell made of hard concrete with nothing but a sink, toilet, and hard plastic bed. Some Med-cells only have a concrete outcropping instead of a plastic bed stand, However sometimes that is preferable, and I will explain why.

When someone is sent to a Med-cell they have to take off all their clothes and they are given a single suit made of heavy cloth and velcro. The suit is called "The turtle suit" by inmates. You are then put into the cell with nothing but the turtle suit, the metal sink and toilet, and the plastic bed stand. You receive two to three white paper sacks of food daily.

Generally inmates are put into the psych hall because they are suicidal; there are cases however when inmates have been placed there for punishment.

Now, here is what is so inhumane about this treatment: The heavy cloth and velcro of the turtle suit chafe the skin and nipples. The hard concrete textured floor hurts your feet, as well as the fact that it is usually freezing cold and filthy. The plastic bed is either wavy or sunken and not only hurts your back, but is so hard that only twenty minutes of laying down will give you shooting and throbbing pains in your hip, or the back of your head. You can't go number 2 in the toilet for fear that you won't be able to wash your hands with soap, or have enough toilet paper, even though they sometimes give a little to you off the roll. The blinding white light is on at all times, and so you have to hide your head in your turtle suit while trying to keep your butt inside, meanwhile you're having shooting pains in your hips until your whole body is aching with pain. You ache and hurt all over if you try to sleep, or if you try to stay awake. The cell is almost always filthy and you worry that you will catch something by even putting your feet on the ground. After a few days of this the whole experience becomes so traumatizing that people can have PTSD caused by it. One time I was so cold, and my hip hurt so badly that I went into shock and started shaking uncontrollably. Luckily a nurse saw me and gave me three Ibu-profens. No one knows what a Med-cell is like until they have experienced it.

For this reason, I gave a seminar in S.O.L.I.D. called "Psych hall survival guide" wherein I gave tricks and pointers that I have learned over the years, after being in the psych hall more than eight times, as well as being a psych-hall cleaner. Some of the tips included: Using orange slices for hand soap, how to brush, or clean, or teeth with carrots, how to wear the turtle suit tightly to avoid chafing, how to make white sack paper into a pillow, how to hide extra toilet paper, and how to smuggle soap from the shower by velcroing it into the suit. These things become necessary for someone's mental survival.

They could easily have a warm, clean, padded, and sanitary environment for people suffering from suicidal ideation, but they don't because it is easier and cheaper to punish them in an inhumane concrete cell, with nothing. After about three days they will give you a mattress, but it is hell until then. I have spent three weeks in a Med-cell. One inmate who had dementia, and always cried "I'm hungry," (named Hunt) spent more than a year in there, in 2023-2024. This practice at some point must end, and human rights at some point must prevail.