

Current Event Assignment (9-29-14)

Source: New York Times (online)

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Article: Solitary Confinement to End for Youngest at Rikers Island

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- Solitary confinement has long been a form of punishment at Rikers Island jail and other jails, even among the youngest of inmates.
- Solitary confinement includes when prisoners are locked in a cell for days, weeks, or months for over 23 hours a day.
- This type of punishment has been found to be rather damaging and excessive.
- A call has been made to improve the conditions for adolescent inmates at Rikers Island.
- Correction commissioner, Joseph Ponte, has ordered a ban of the usage of solitary confinement upon 16 and 17-year-olds, as well as other improvements, such as expanded education.

Although this current event only took place in one confined setting, it still has many sociological implications. Clearly, the article suggests that the treatment of prisoners, especially younger ones, is beginning to come under closer inspection. It also insinuates that mental health, particular among adolescents, is starting to be considered under a more serious light. I believe that this event signifies a healthy step towards progression that will be spread beyond prisons to other aspects of society.