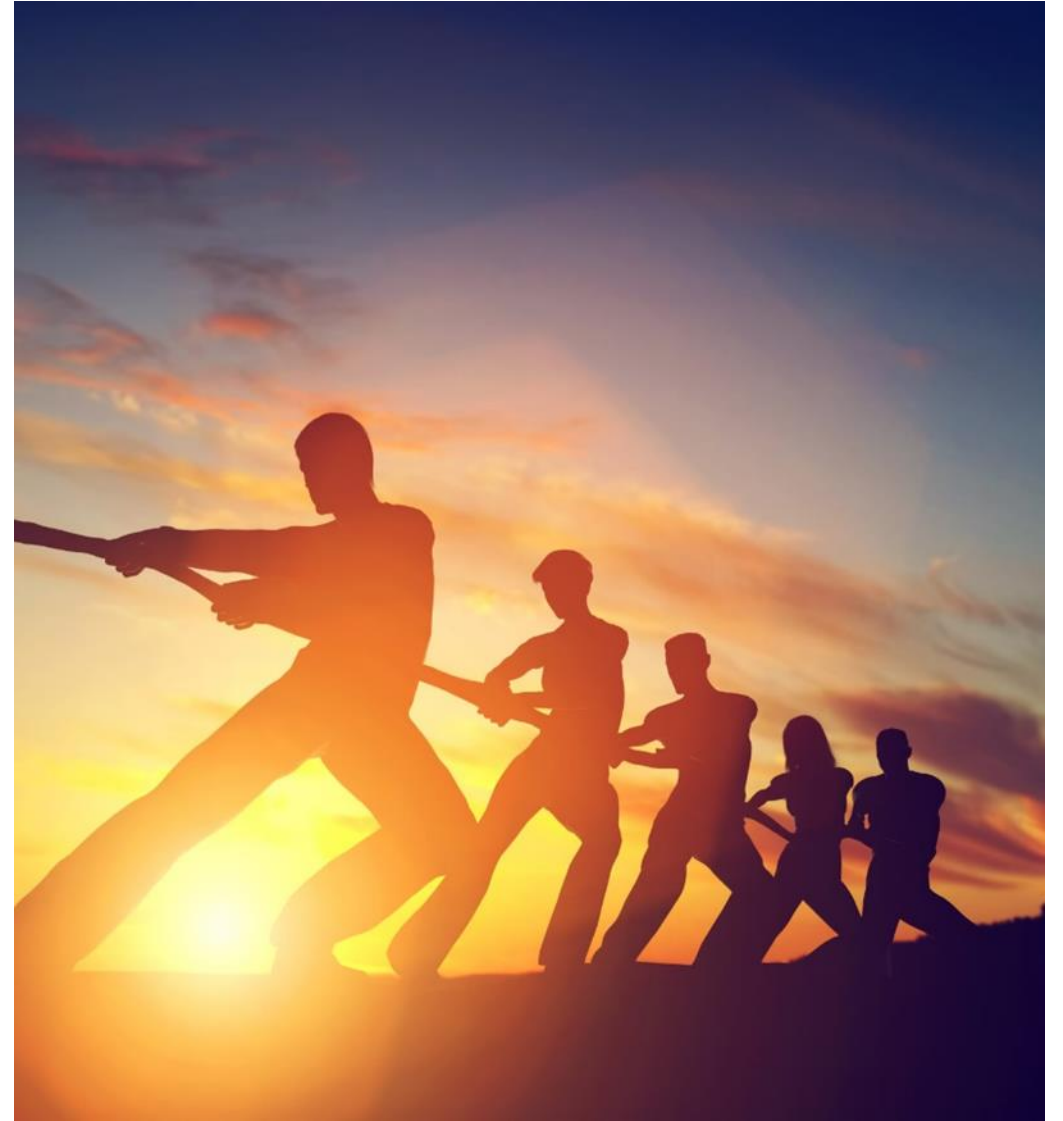


STAFF PERCEPTIONS ON CDOC'S NORMALIZATION INITIATIVE: SURVEY RESULTS

Conducted by the UCCS Research Team for the
Colorado Department of Corrections
January 2020



Research Questions for Quantitative Data

What are staff's initial reactions to four normalization strategies?

What are staff's initial reactions to potential changes to their physical environments?

What impact do staff feel changing the physical environment will have?

Where are staff at when it comes to change readiness?

WHAT ARE STAFF'S INITIAL *REACTIONS* TO FOUR NORMALIZATION STRATEGIES?

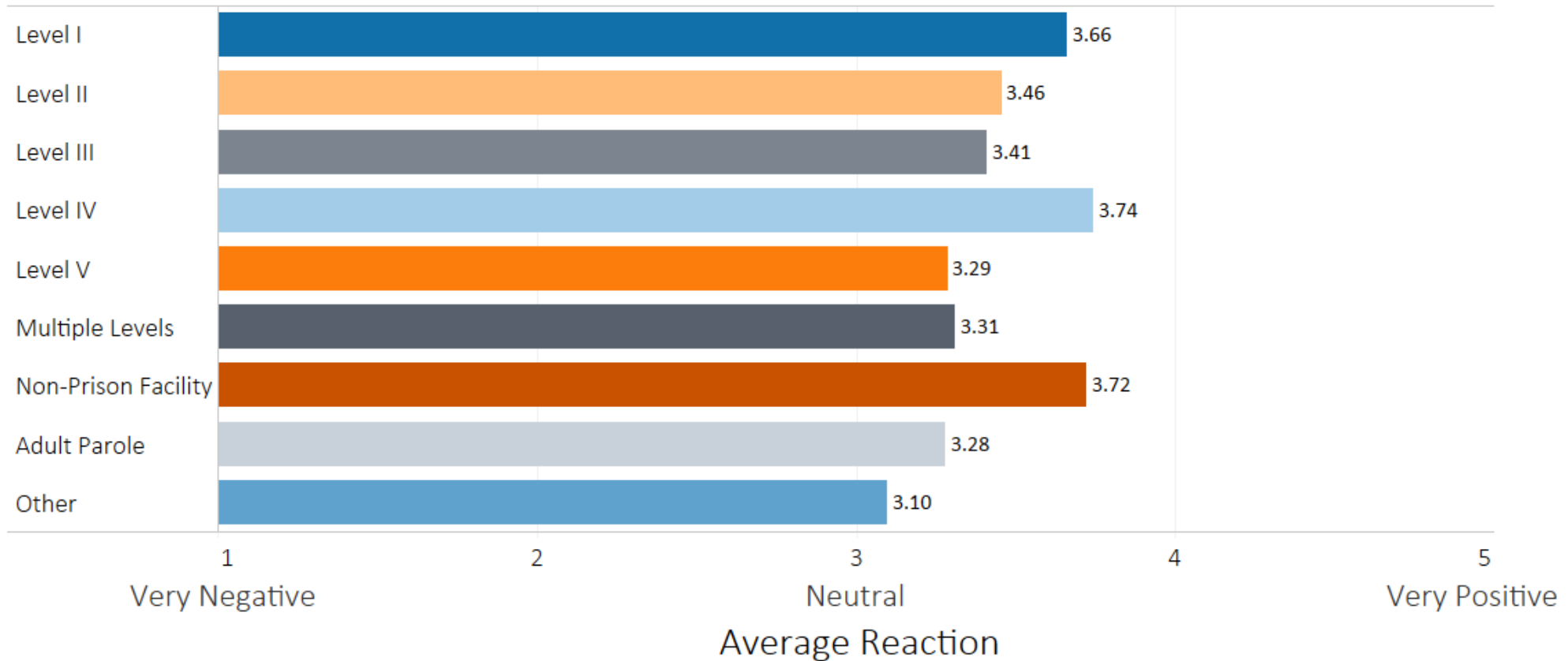
Positive Initial Reactions

- Changing the physical environment
 - Developing offender-led programming
 - Cultivating positive staff/offender interactions
-
- Neutral initial reactions towards new types of security practices



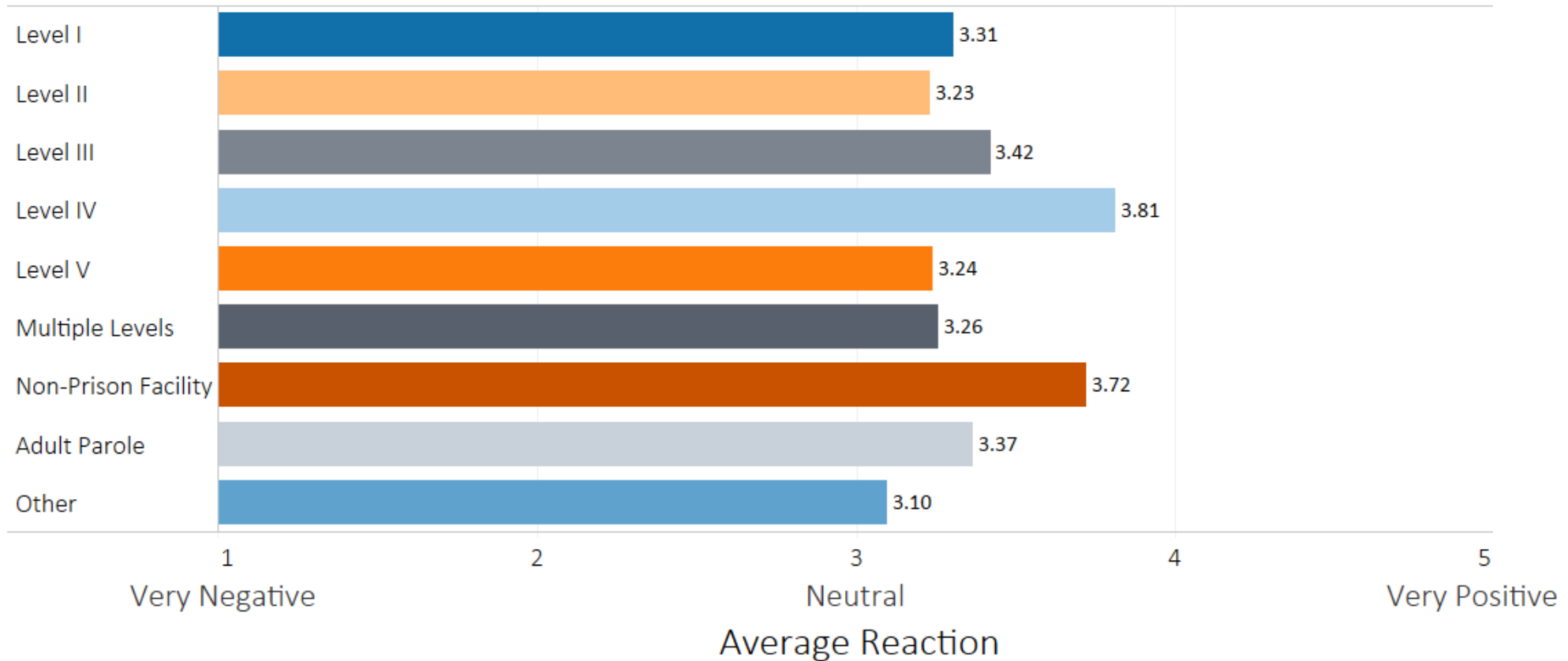
STAFF'S INITIAL REACTIONS

Changes to Physical Environment by Security Level



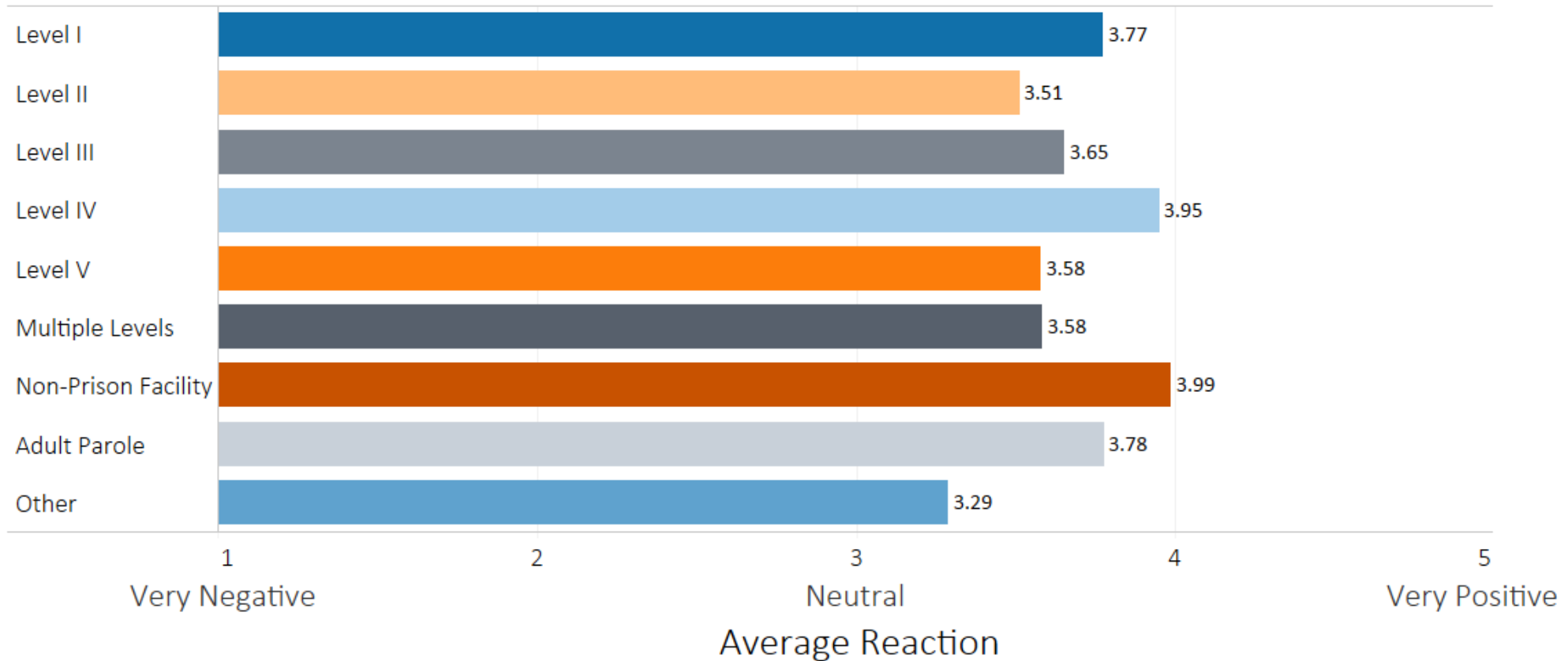
STAFF'S INITIAL REACTIONS

Development of Offender-Led Programming by Security Level



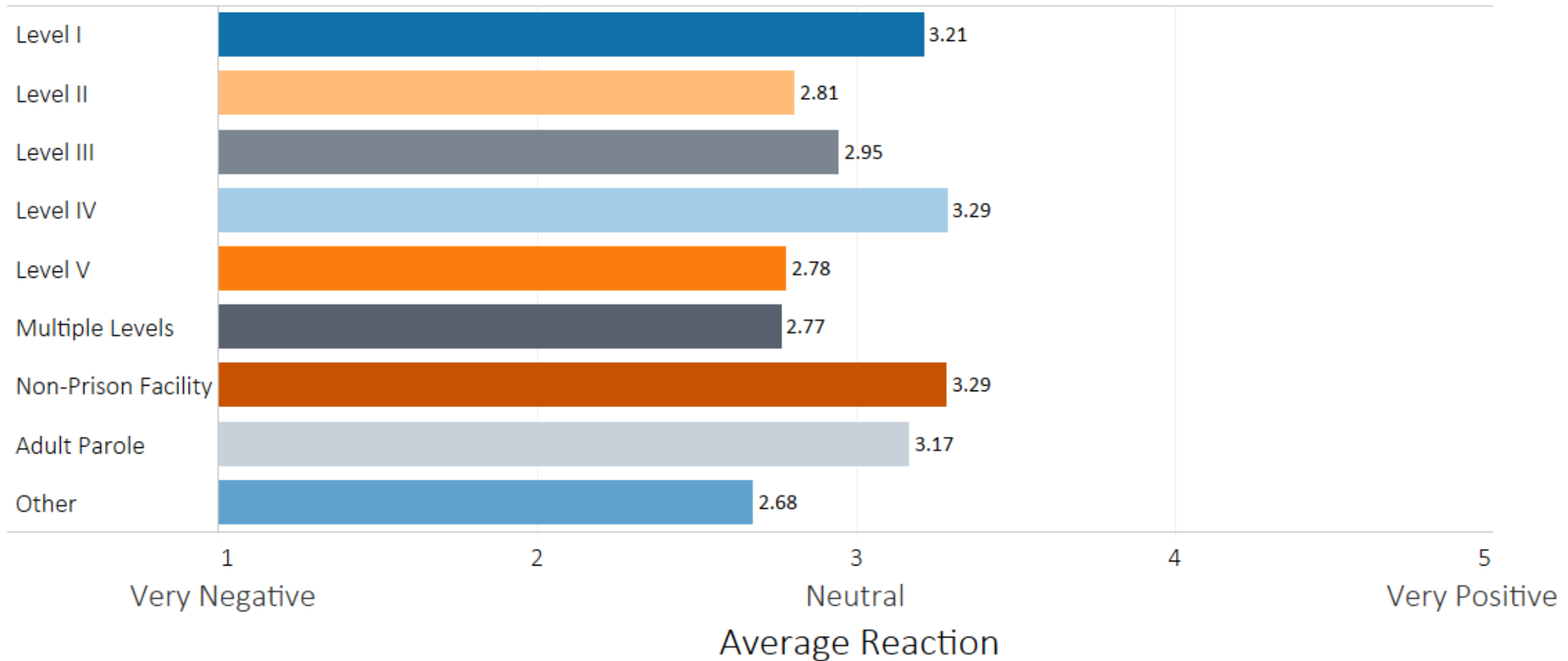
STAFF'S INITIAL REACTIONS

Cultivating Positive Staff/Offender Interactions by Security Level



STAFF'S INITIAL REACTIONS

New Types of Security Practices by Security Level



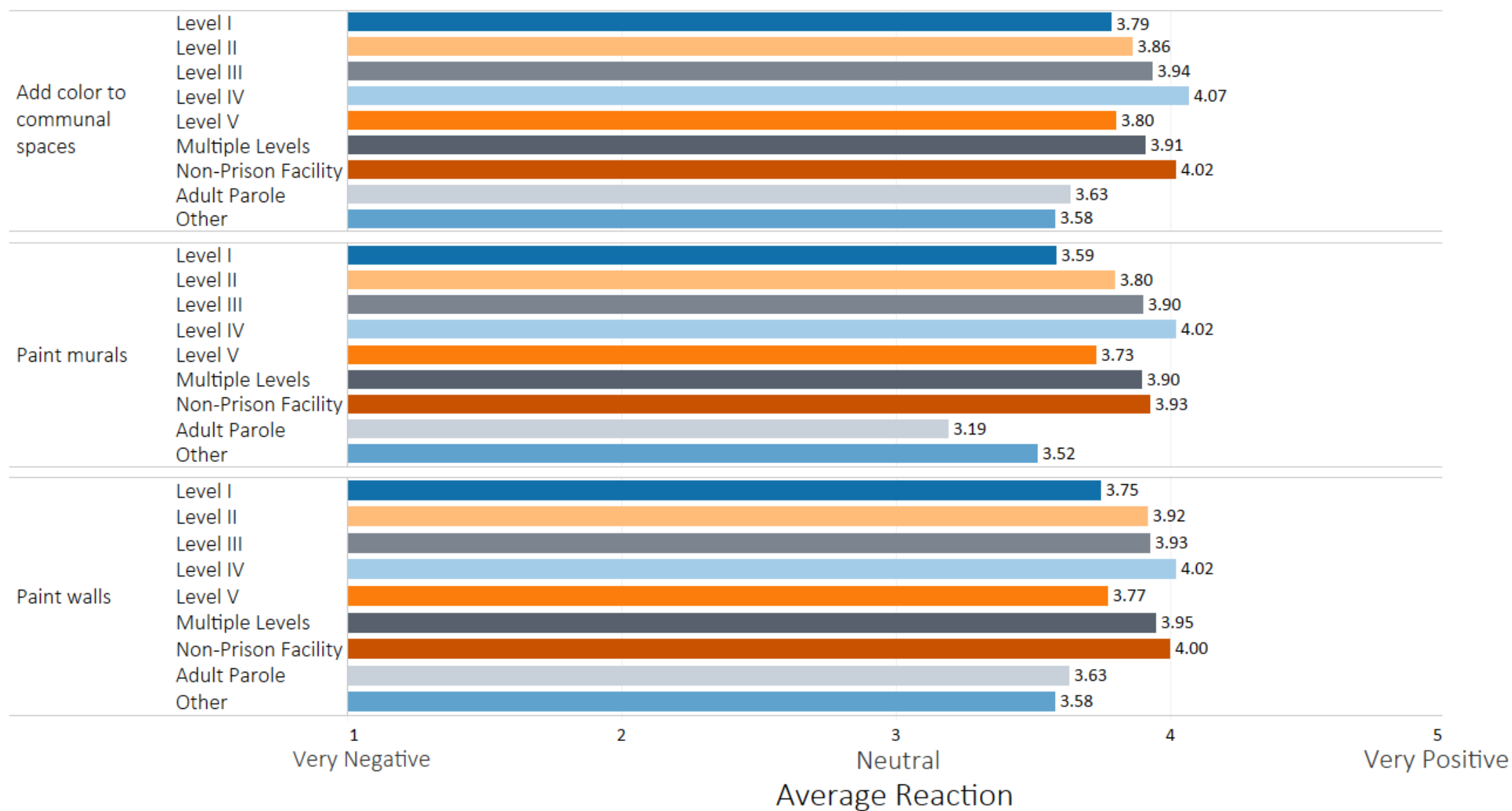
WHAT ARE STAFF'S INITIAL *REACTIONS* TO POTENTIAL ART AND COLOR CONCEPTS?

Positive Initial Reactions

- Paint walls
- Painting murals
- Adding color to communal spaces



Reactions to Art and Color Concepts by Security Level





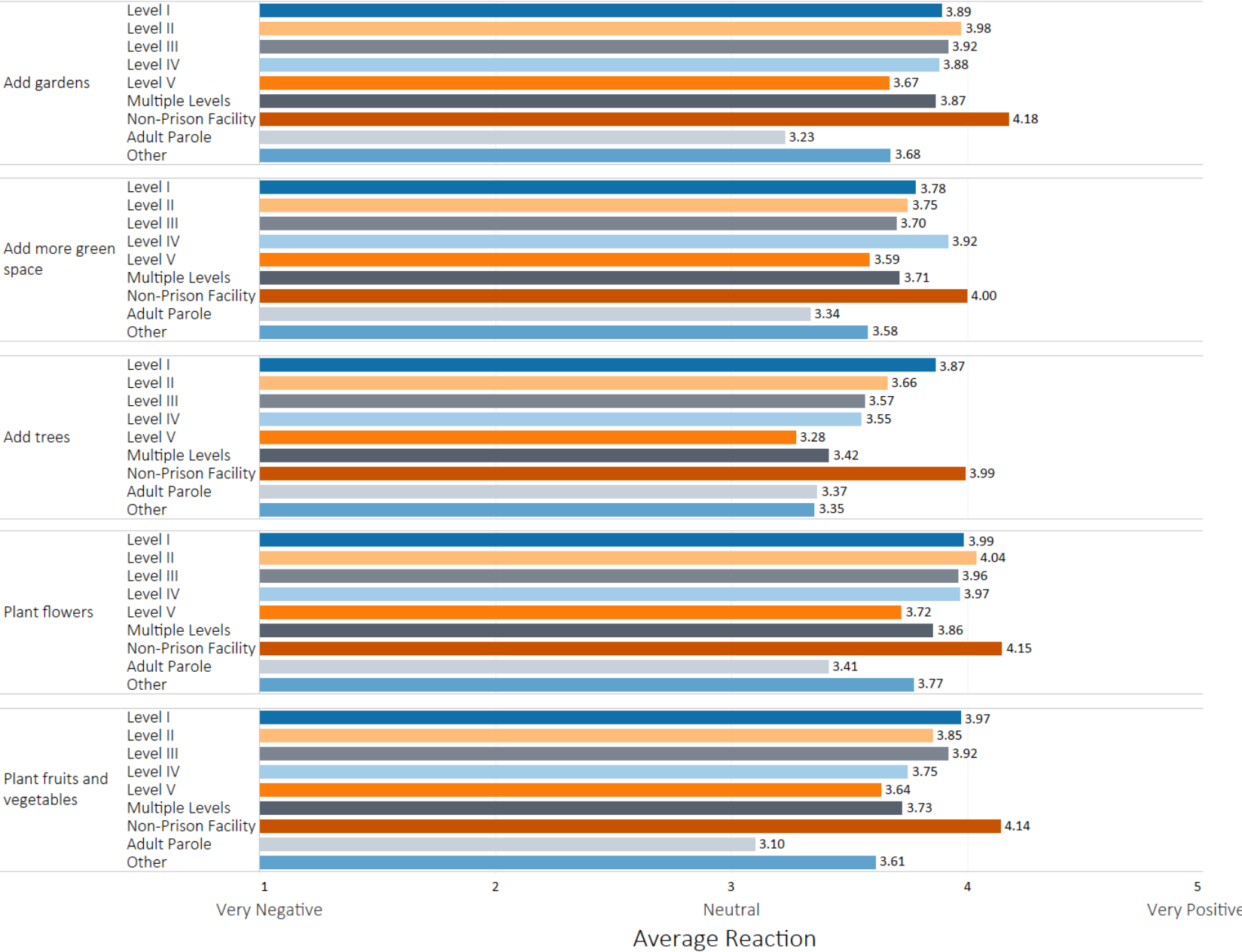
Positive Initial Reactions

- Add gardens
- Add more green space
- Plant flowers
- Plant fruits and vegetables



WHAT ARE STAFF'S INITIAL *REACTIONS* TO
POTENTIAL GREEN SPACE CONCEPTS?

Reactions to Green Space Concepts by Security Level



WHAT ARE STAFF'S INITIAL *REACTIONS* TO POTENTIAL LIGHTING CONCEPTS?

Positive Initial Reactions

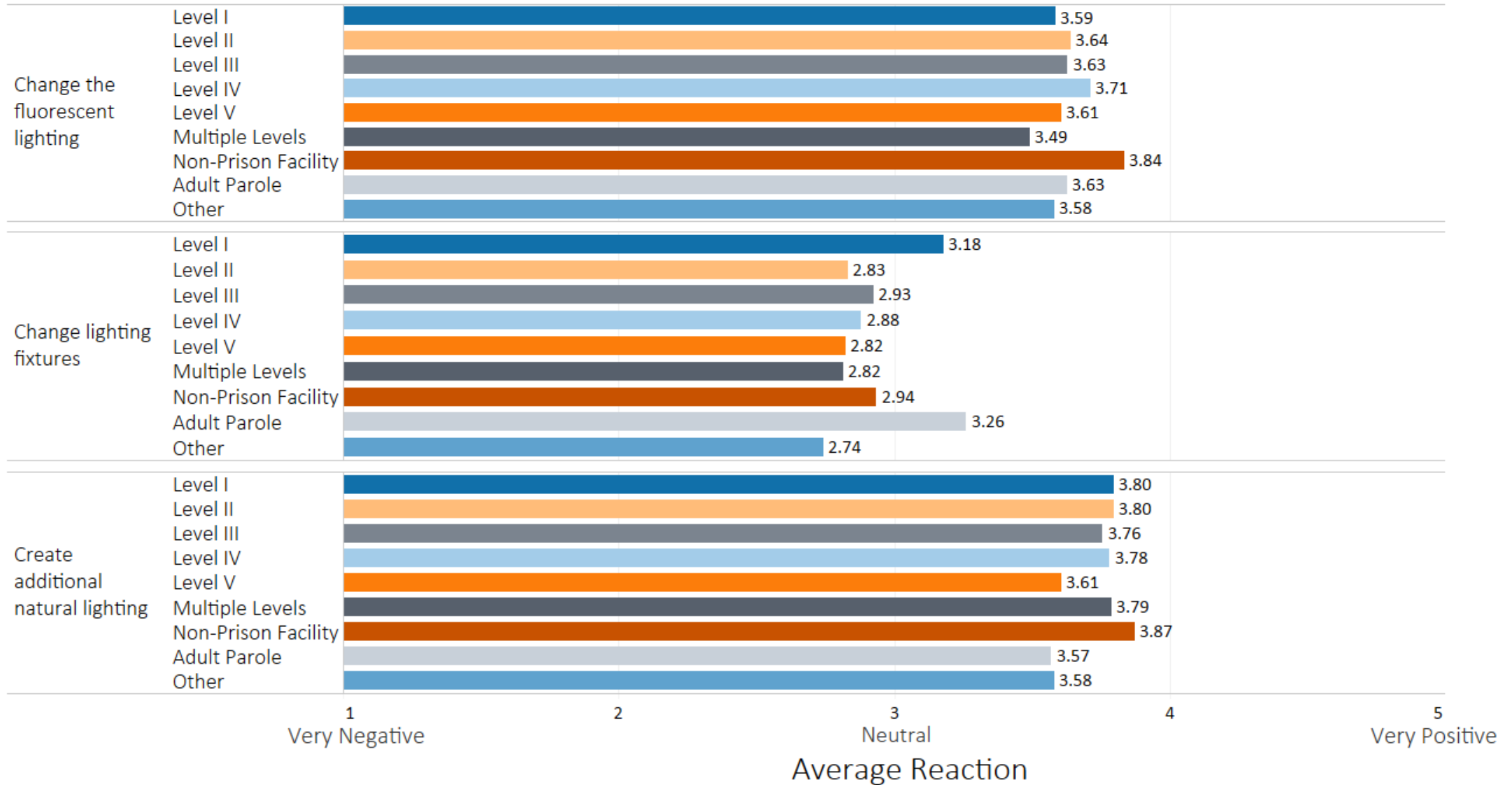
- Change fluorescent lighting
- Create additional natural lighting

Neutral Reactions

- Change light fixtures



Reactions to Lighting Concepts by Security Level





WHAT ARE STAFF'S INITIAL REACTIONS TO OTHER POTENTIAL CONCEPTS?

Positive Initial Reactions

- Additional cooking options
- Integrate music

Neutral Reactions

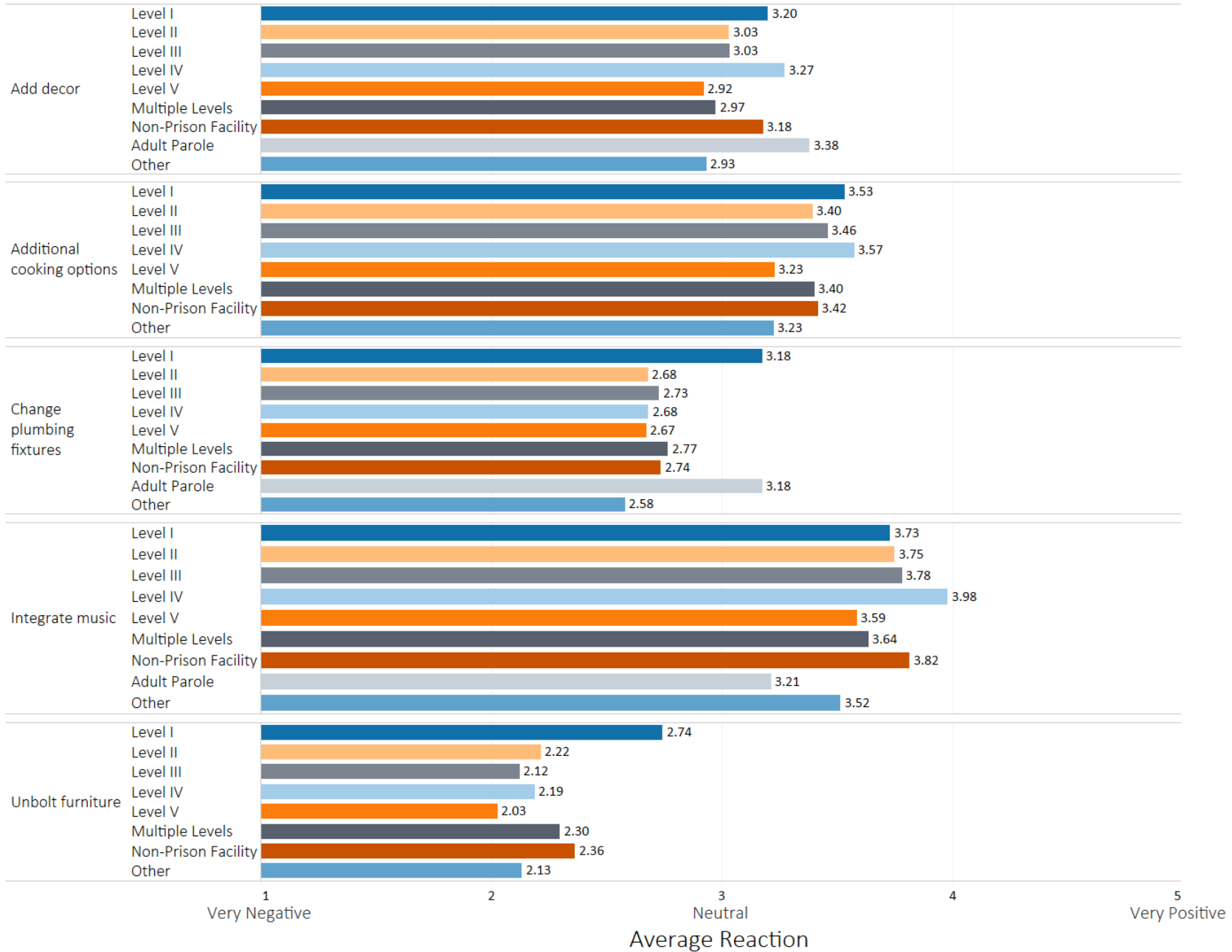
- Add décor

Negative Initial Reactions

- Change plumbing fixtures
- Unbolt furniture



Reactions to Additional Concepts by Security Level



WHAT IMPACT DO STAFF FEEL CHANGING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT WILL HAVE?

Positive impact on:

- Staff/offender interactions
- Offender programming
- Neither prepared nor unprepared to implement changes to their physical environments

WHAT IMPACT DO STAFF FEEL CHANGING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT WILL HAVE?

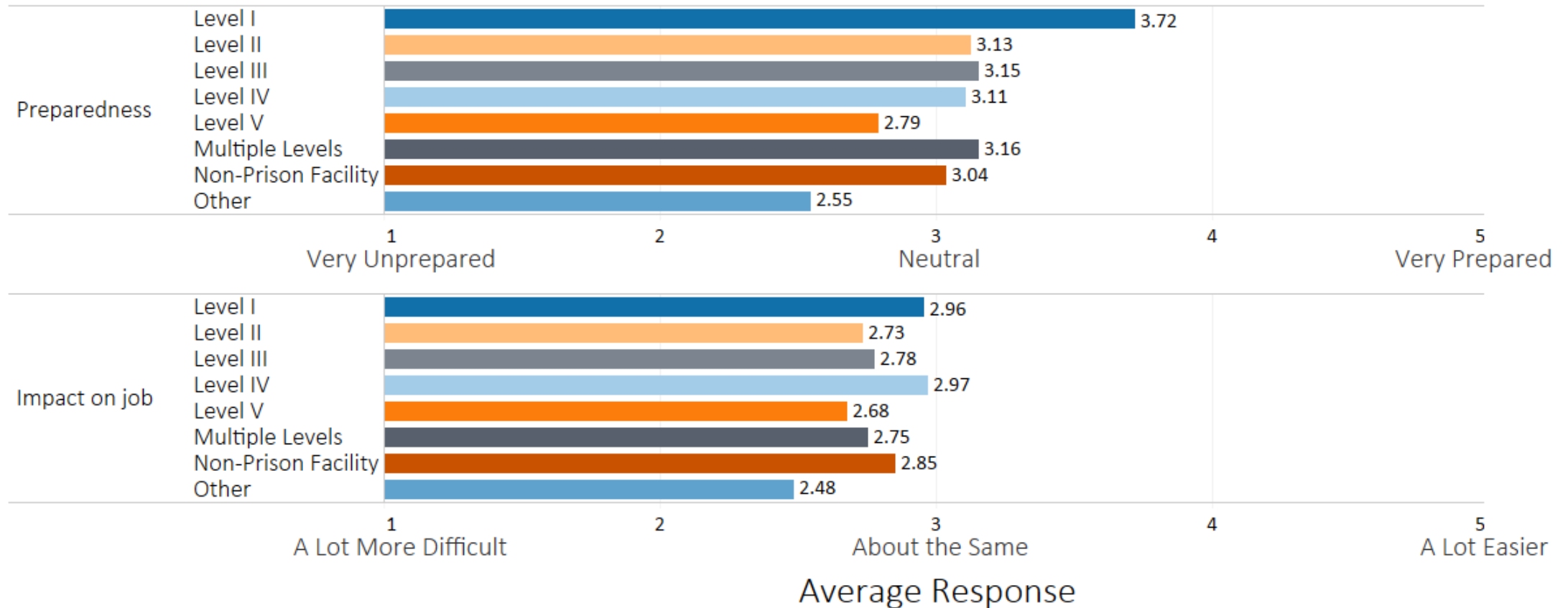
Negative impact on:

- Their jobs
- Staff safety
- Their daily responsibilities
- Security of their facilities
- Security procedures
- Offender safety



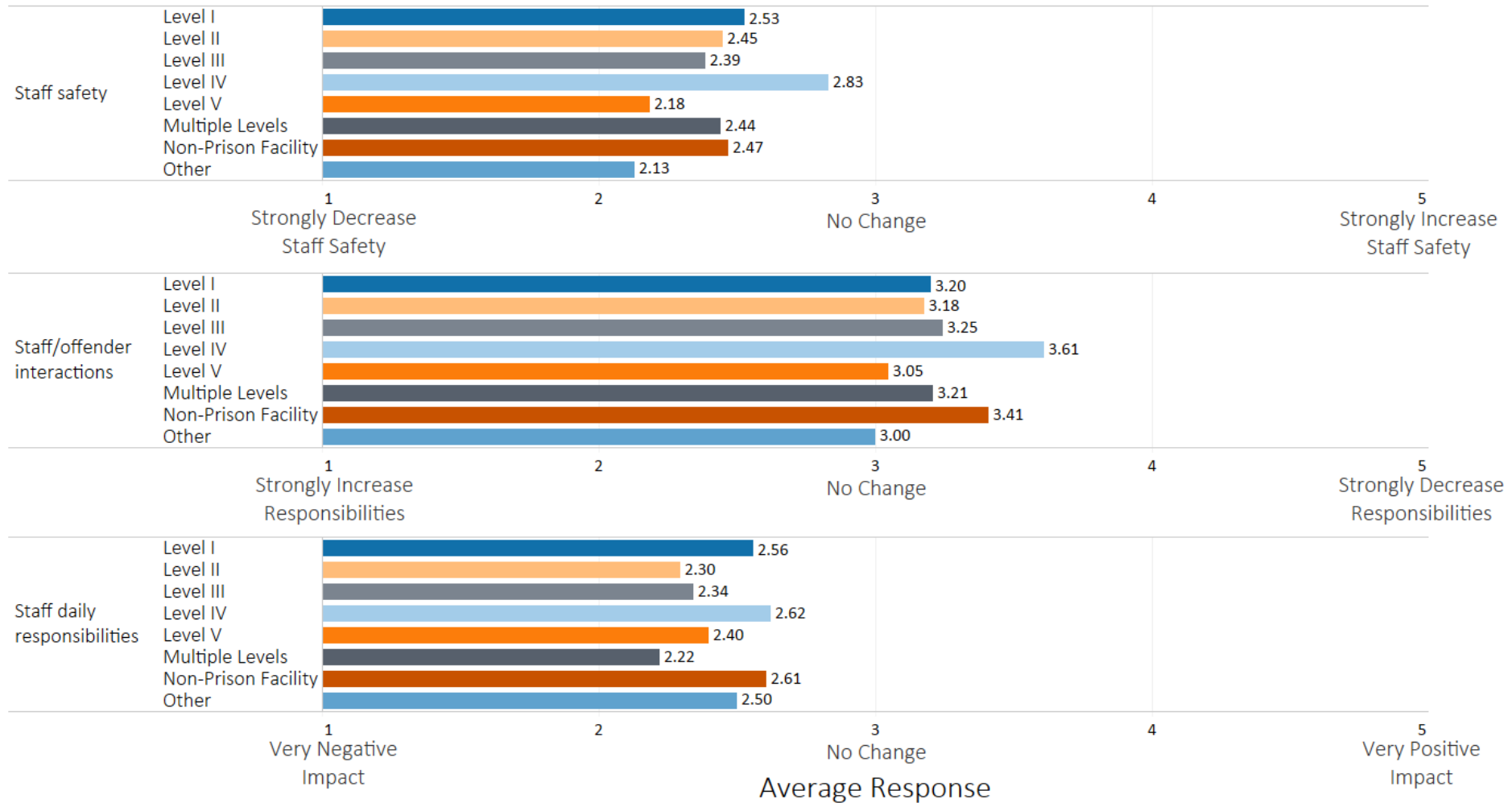
PERCEIVED IMPACT OF PHYSICAL CHANGES

Preparedness and Job Impact by Security Level



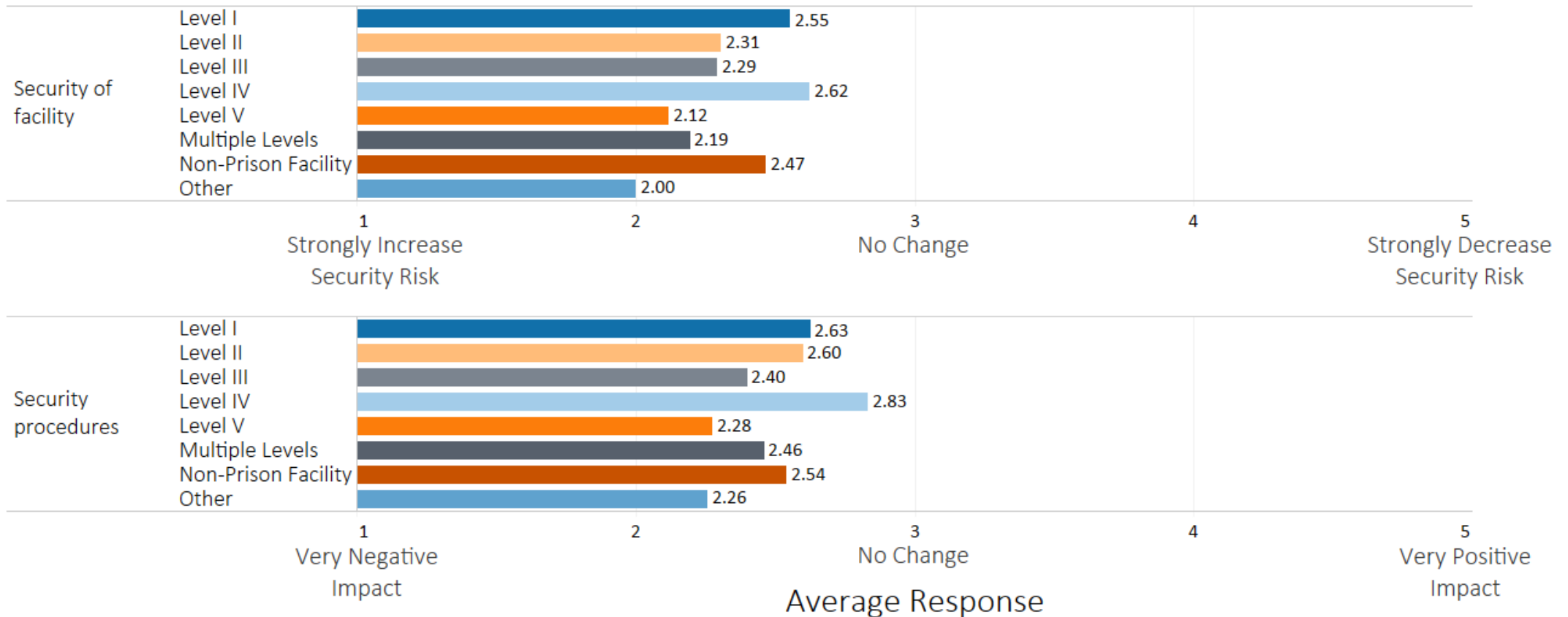
PERCEIVED IMPACT OF PHYSICAL CHANGES

Staff Impact by Security Level



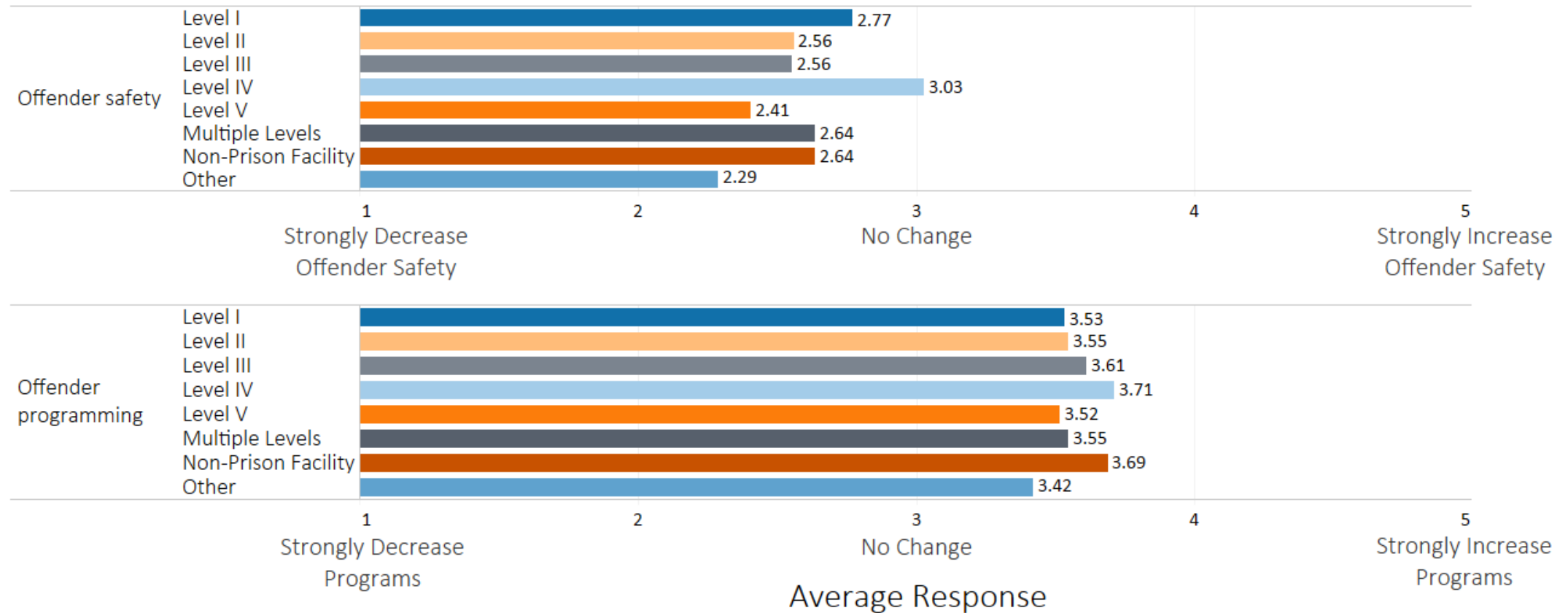
PERCEIVED IMPACT OF PHYSICAL CHANGES

Security Impact by Security Level



PERCEIVED IMPACT OF PHYSICAL CHANGES

Offender Impact by Security Level



Research Questions for Qualitative Data Analysis

What do you know of the Normalization Initiative?

What are the top 3 concepts you would like to see implemented at your prison facility/office?

What additional suggestions or strategies do you have to change the physical environment of your prison facility/office?

How do you think the changes to the physical environment will affect your job?

How Staff Describe the Normalizing Initiative

"Main objective is to reduce recidivism and help offenders' transition back to society."

"We are trying to change the atmosphere and philosophy of how we incarcerate people."

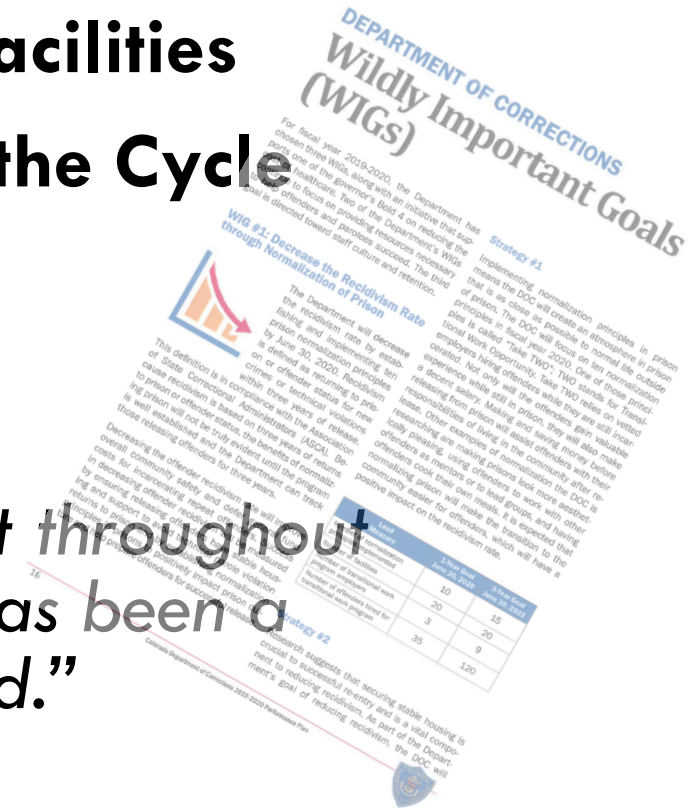
"It is designed to reduce the culture shock experienced as an offender transitions from prison to outside life. The goal is to promote success after prison life."

WHERE STAFF ARE HEARING ABOUT THE NORMALIZATION INITIATIVE?

Heard by official CDOC emails, the Wildly Important Goals (WIGs) document, their Wardens or within their facilities

Read scholarly articles or watched the Breaking the Cycle documentary.

“The Normalization initiative has been talked about throughout our facility by staff as well as offenders. There has been a committee formed and meetings conducted.”



STAFF REPORTING NORMALIZATION IS UNCLEAR

Many staff across all custody levels reported that they had heard “very little” or didn’t feel there was much clear communication on normalization.

“I know that it is the direction the Department has decided to go but general and vague understanding is all that we have right now.”

“I have limited to no information on the Normalization Initiative. Any information has been speculation and unclear.”

“I don’t fully understand the initiative.”

STAFF CONFUSION ABOUT THE NORMALIZATION INITIATIVE

“Things will be a little more relaxed painting and decor added; Lessening old style presentation of prisons.”

“I’ve heard that Offenders will be given the option of wearing normal civilian clothing. Washing their own clothes, cooking skills, curtains etc. I also been told the goal is to have a more normal relationship between staff and offenders.”

“It involves male offenders changing their sex to change where they live?”

“From what I have already began to notice is that we are changing rules and policies for offender's that are allowing them to not be held accountable for their actions.”

SAFETY CONCERNS ABOUT NORMALIZATION

Frustration was directly tied to concerns for staff and offender safety or giving inmates “too many privileges”

Higher security level prison facilities (Levels IV & V)

“I think that it is putting staff members at risk for staff compromise by inmates and blurs the lines between staff and inmate interactions.”

“I think that this is going to make the offenders feel that we are their friend and that they will not respect the badge. I will not sit and play cards, watch sports or interact with the offenders outside of the job that I was hired to do and that is to protect and service the community and to hold the offenders accountable for the behavior and actions.”

STAFF CONCERNS ABOUT GRANTING PRIVILEGES TO OFFENDERS

“I know that we're giving the offenders too much lead way. They're suppose to be in prison as a punishment, not a vacation or college campus”

“I can assure you these inmates here think of this place as a “SPA” and normalizing would have to pay for everything (services they receive).”

“In the real-world people pay health insurance and are expected to apply for aid if they do not have a job that provides it. They also have to apply for jobs. Cook their own food. And pay for their housing. The real world also offers opportunities, such as; their own room, their own bathroom, and further education. However these opportunities are something that people in society have to work for.”

FRUSTRATION WITH THE COMMUNICATION OF THE NORMALIZATION INITIATIVE

Staff expressed frustration in not having the opportunity to provide input, feeling there was a lack of communication around possible changes, and concerns about keeping their job if they voiced opposition.

“Staff were told to basically get on board or leave. The offenders are reporting that they were informed that if staff were not on board they would be fired.”

“I know a great deal about the initiative and understand its desired effect. I do believe they are rolling it out too fast, leading us to be reactive instead of proactive. They are not considering all of the variables to have plans in place to deal with the possibilities of what can happen...They are also not considering the impact that this may have on the victims.”

ENTHUSIASM FOR THE NORMALIZATION INITIATIVE

Many CDOC staff indicated that this change was going to be good for the corrections culture, including benefitting staff and having a positive societal affect.

“Normalization should provide better alternatives for offenders to learn what it could be like in a normal environment. Also give staff the opportunity to feel like they are actually helping these offenders succeed.”

“It is an attempt to reform the prison system for the better in that it will help bring the community/society on board to assist with the rehabilitation of the inmates in an attempt for their transition and future lives to be more "normal" thereby being more safe and healthier for society as a whole.”

“Normalization aims to bring the prison experience opportunities that would be more like those experienced outside of the walls of prison. It has us as a department looking at our processes, procedures, and rules and evaluating how they can safely be met but implement in a demeanor that closely mimics how it might work in the community.”

Staff
Suggestions to
Change the
Physical
Environment
in CDOC
Facilities or
Offices



Green Space



Aesthetic



Lighting



Furniture



Programming

Staff Suggestions for Green Space Concepts

- Community gardens
- Add trees
- Gardening programs
- Lifer gardening programs
- Plants being grown indoors
- Houseplants
- Vegetable gardens



STAFF SUGGESTIONS FOR AESTHETICS CONCEPTS

- Hang Pictures
- Paint walls
- Murals
- Add color
- Accent walls
- Artwork



SUGGESTIONS FOR LIGHTING AND FURNITURE CONCEPTS

Lighting

- Lack of natural lighting in staff offices
- Change out bulbs to LED bulbs
- Simulate sunlight with lighting

Furniture

- Nicer Furniture for offenders
- Softer housing furniture
- More “real life” furniture

SUGGESTIONS FOR LIFE SKILL PROGRAMMING

- **Budgeting**
- **Cooking**
- **Cleaning**
- **How to mail a letter**
- **Pay bills**
- **Coping skills**
- **Pay Taxes**
- **Shopping list**
- **Self-check outs**
- **Laundry**
- **Change a tire**
- **Learn social boundaries**
- **Interview for employment**
- **Pay for meals**
- **Homemaking**
- **Social skill building courses**
- **Write a resume**

SUGGESTIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

- Anger management
- Sociology courses
- Parenting
- Online education for higher learning
- Thanking for a Change
- Offender mentoring programs
- Classes on ethics
- Class on morals
- Advanced Re-entry Programming
- Peer Counseling
- Skills/Crafts
- Study Hall
- Crossfit classes
- Powerlifting program
- Offender-led programming
- Driver's Education

SUGGESTIONS FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMMING

Additional Suggestions...

- **Mental Health Programs**
- **Drug and alcohol programs**
- **Counseling**
- **Anti-Drug**
- **Self-Medication**
- **7 Habits**
- **MRT**
- **Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy**
- **Cognitive Behavioral courses**

SUGGESTIONS FOR VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Add...

- Internships
- Trade schools
- Apprentices programs
- Certifications and Licenses
- Colorado Correctional Industries
- Specialized Technical Training
- Animal programming

Types of Courses Suggested...

- Construction
- Welding
- Electrical
- HVAC
- Plumbing
- Woodworking
- Horticulture



Top concepts
recommended
by
security level





TOP CONCEPTS LEVEL I, II, III

Level I

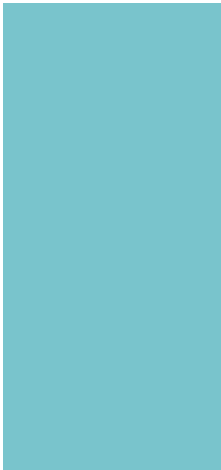
1. Add gardens
2. Cooking options
3. Paint facility walls

Level III

1. Add gardens
2. Plant fruits and vegetables
3. Paint facility walls

Level II

1. Add gardens
2. Paint facility walls
3. Plant trees



TOP CONCEPTS SUGGESTED FOR LEVEL IV, V, AND PAROLE

Level IV

1. Paint facility walls
2. Add gardens
3. Integrate music

Parole

1. Paint walls
2. Change fluorescent lighting
3. Integrate music

Level V

1. Paint facility walls
2. Add gardens
3. Paint murals



Impact of Normalization on Staff's Job



POSITIVE OUTCOMES STAFF ANTICIPATE

Staff indicated that they were committed to high quality work and professionalism.

“A more positive environment should have a rippling effect and also people can celebrate more successes with their work.”

“More peace for inmates, less stress for staff, better results for mental health and rehabilitation, provide inmates with a release for stress.”

“Help build professional relationships and allow more engagement in their treatment.”

“My job consistently includes constant change, but I believe it is possible that Normalization will make long term positive effects to my job. the initial changes will be hard, but the longer it stays around the better it will change everything.”

STAFF PERCEPTIONS TO SAFETY AND WORKLOAD

Staff anticipate the greatest impact on their jobs as safety and workload.

“Security is going to have to pay much closer attention with the added freedoms, items, and other additions.”

“My job is already getting more dangerous, and that’s at the beginning of the Normalization Process.”

“Much of the supervision of these changes is going to be done by officers, which are in short supply as is. It’ll create a lot of overtime and cause increased burnout.”



**WHERE ARE STAFF AT WHEN IT
COMES TO CHANGE READINESS?**

- Proficient in confidence and resourcefulness
- Could use some support on:
 - Adaptability
 - Adventurousness
 - Drive
 - Optimism
 - Tolerance for ambiguity

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

- Staff report:
 - positive overall perceptions of most normalization strategies and concepts
 - concerns focused on safety, security, and workload
- Staff are confident in their ability to handle new tasks, and they are good at using available resources to develop plans and achieve goals

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS CONTINUED...

According to the Readiness for Change Scale, staff need development when it comes to:

- Flexibility
- Pursuing the unknown
- Having passion for their jobs
- Focusing on possibilities instead of obstacles
- Being more comfortable with uncertainty

Trainings may want to focus on enhancing these skills

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE STAFF SURVEY RESULTS



Increase Communication about Normalization



Consider the Delivery Approach for Normalization Information



Develop Training that Includes Addressing Staff's Major Concerns



Receive Facility/Office Specific Input from Staff Before Implementing Changes



Stagger Rollout of Normalization Changes Across Facilities



Keep Communication Open for Staff During the Normalization Process



Highlight the Successful Examples



University of Colorado
Colorado Springs



University of Colorado

Boulder | Colorado Springs | Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus