

Correctional Officer Resilience:

Promoting Life Skills Strategies
Among Correctional Officers



**Suicide Prevention
Resource Center**

This document was funded by the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. SPRC is supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), under Grant No. 1H79SM083028. The views, opinions, and content expressed in this product do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of HHS, SAMHSA, or CMHS.

©2025 Suicide Prevention Resource Center. All rights reserved

This publication may be copied, reproduced, and distributed provided SPRC's copyright notice and website address (sprc.org) are included.

Suggested Citation:

Suicide Prevention Resource Center. (2025). *Correctional officer resilience: Promoting life skills strategies among correctional officers*. <https://sprc.org/online-library/correctional-officer-resilience-promoting-life-skills-strategies-among-correctional-officers/>



Table of Contents

Table of Contents 3

Introduction 4

Importance of Understanding Correctional Officer Culture 4

Clinical Development Plan: Guidance for Providers Partnering With Correctional Officers 5

Life Skill Strategies to Consider When Working With Correctional Officers 7

Cognitive Life Skills..... 7

Strategy: Creating Self-Awareness 7

Strategy: Developing Problem-Solving Skills 8

Strategy: Managing Stress Effectively 8

Behavioral Life Skills..... 9

Strategies: Building a Healthy Lifestyle 9

Strategies: Promoting Healthy Habits 10

Strategies: Seeking Work-Life Balance 10

Social Life Skills 11

Strategies: Building Interpersonal Communication Skills 11

Strategies: Maintaining Positive Relationships With Incarcerated Individuals 11

Strategies: Building Supportive Relationships 12

Strength Behind the Badge: Promoting Trauma-Informed Approaches to Building Resilience Among Correctional Officers 13

Conclusion 13

References 14

Resource Guide 17

Introduction

Research on correctional officer suicide remains sparse. The available literature identifies the need for occupation-specific interventions to address suicidality among correctional officers that consider both individual and contextual risk factors.¹ This report will highlight recent resilience-focused approaches to help mental health providers promote and support effective life skills strategies among correctional officers.

To learn more about correctional officers and suicide prevention, click the link to access this issue brief: [Barriers and Opportunities for Suicide Prevention Among Correctional Officers: An Issue Brief for Clinicians](#)

Importance of Understanding Correctional Officer Culture

To provide meaningful support, mental health providers who work with correctional officers should develop a deep understanding of the culture in which correctional officers work. Here are some key considerations:

- **Impact of High-Stress Environment:** Correctional officers face frequent workplace danger and conflict and work in a high-stress environment.²⁻⁷
- **Peer Relationships and Reluctance to Seek Help:** Correctional officers often rely heavily on their peers for emotional support and may be reluctant to seek help outside of their peer group.^{3,8,9}
- **Job Expectations:** Correctional officers can struggle to meet workplace expectations related to workload, time management, and working effectively with the incarcerated population.^{7,8,10}
- **Secondary Survivors:** The term “secondary survivors” acknowledges the significant, yet often overlooked, impact the suicidal behaviors of incarcerated individuals can have on correctional officers. Witnessing suicide attempts, managing the aftermath of suicidal behavior, and the need to be on alert to identify suicidal behaviors in others can lead to feelings of helplessness, guilt, anxiety, unresolved grief, and stress among correctional officers.^{6,8,11-15}

A Voice From the Field: Secondary Survivor Guilt

Rick Field, a retired correctional administrator, reports that officers often experience feelings of guilt when a colleague dies by suicide. Field explains that officers may feel guilt for not seeing warning signs of emotional distress in their colleague.

Clinical Development Plan: Guidance for Providers Partnering With Correctional Officers

Why This Matters

Understanding the occupational culture in correctional settings helps mental health providers build a strong therapeutic alliance with correctional officer clients by enabling providers to show empathy and respect for the officers' experiences. A strong therapeutic alliance can help providers develop more effective and tailored life skills interventions with officers in the therapeutic context.

Quick Tips

Seek to Understand

Explore correctional officer culture. Learn about the nature of corrections work. Understand the unique values, risks, beliefs, and language in the profession. It may be beneficial to visit a few correctional facilities and witness first-hand the environmental conditions correctional officers face in their daily work.^{7,9,16}

Build Partnerships

Collaborate with local and state correctional officer peer support programs to gain a better understanding of correctional officer culture. Peer support networks can offer providers important information about the complexity of correctional work and the unique culture and nuances of each facility.^{7,9,16}

Build Trust

The culture in correctional institutions relies on mutual trust and respect between officers and incarcerated individuals, as well as among incarcerated individuals. It is important that mental health providers work to develop trust with officers and emphasize maintaining officers' privacy. Officers need to trust that the information they share with a provider will be kept confidential within professional and legal guidelines, and that it will not be intentionally used against them.^{7,16}

Respect Differences

Correctional officers are more likely to feel safe and understood when their unique identity is acknowledged and respected. Recognize the multiformity of trauma responses and officers' backgrounds. The simple act of acknowledging each officer's unique background can go a long way toward building trust and confidence in the therapeutic alliance.^{7,9,16-18}

Promote Safety

Due to the stigmatization of help-seeking behaviors in correctional officer culture, getting correctional officers to engage in a therapeutic relationship can be challenging. Create a therapeutic environment in which correctional officers can feel physically and emotionally safe while also respecting correctional officer culture. A sense of safety can support collaboration and resilience.^{8,9}

Enhance Family Collaboration

If the officer is open to it, promote and participate in maintaining open lines of communication with the correctional officer's family or trusted supportive friends. Family members and close friends are often the first to observe personality changes and the negative effects of correctional work in their loved one or friend.^{7,9,16}

Be Inquisitive

Be transparent, inquisitive, and ask direct questions. Correctional officers place a high value on clear and effective communication. They regularly deal with complex behaviors and often receive inconsistent messages from both fellow staff and incarcerated individuals. Asking direct questions while in session with an officer is a great way to build trust, confidence, and credibility, which are essential to the therapeutic relationship.^{7,9}

Market Yourself

Market your skills in providing positive psychological support to members of correctional communities. Identify respected members of the correctional community who can share information about your services with their peers.^{7,9}



Life Skill Strategies to Consider When Working With Correctional Officers

Why This Matters

Mental health providers can play a vital role in supporting healthy coping mechanisms among correctional officers. They can also encourage correctional officers to communicate openly with each other, which can enhance their mental well-being and support positive help-seeking behaviors. Mental health providers can significantly enhance resilience among correctional officers by encouraging life skills that promote change, focusing on areas of wellness that are in the officers' control. Providers can encourage or model positive behavior and provide mindfulness training.^{7,19}

Cognitive Life Skills

Strategy: Creating Self-Awareness

Approaches

- **Identify Negative Thoughts:** Correctional officers face a range of stressors that contribute to negative thoughts. Officers may have thoughts like, "I can't talk about my stress; they will think I'm weak. They'll make fun of me." Offer to help officers identify intrusive negative thoughts, beliefs, and cognitive distortions.^{2,7,8,10,20}
- **Challenge Negative Thoughts:** Encourage officers to reframe their negative thoughts and emotions and develop strategies for moving out of negative emotional states or thought processes. Support officers in developing more balanced, rational, and realistic ways of thinking.^{7,9,21}
- **Promote a Strengths-Based Approach:** Use a strengths-based approach. Focus on leveraging correctional officers' strengths, positive attributes, and problem-solving abilities in therapy sessions to build officers' confidence and resilience in difficult situations.^{9,22}

A Voice From the Field: Negative Thoughts

Rick Field has observed that, as officers approach mid-career (10-15 years in a correctional setting) they may begin to experience increased negative thoughts and struggle to manage their emotions. Field stresses the importance of teaching officers coping skills such as identifying and managing negative thought patterns when they arise.

Strategy: Developing Problem-Solving Skills

Approaches

- **Develop Resourcefulness:** Support officers' capacity to see a range of potential solutions to problems. Approaches might include increasing mental health literacy, working to destigmatize help-seeking, and supporting officers' motivation to make positive changes.²²⁻²⁴
- **Promote Critical Thinking:** Enhance officers' ability to analyze complex situations and assess risks effectively. Building the capacity to think logically and independently can help officers recognize and challenge negative thought patterns that may heighten their emotional responses during critical incidents. Thinking strategically can help officers manage stress and respond effectively to complex and unpredictable situations.^{25,26}
- **Set Goals:** Help officers break large problems into smaller, manageable goals. This can reduce feelings of being overwhelmed and assist officers in making steady progress toward overcoming the challenges they face in correctional settings.^{25,27}

Strategy: Managing Stress Effectively

Approaches

- **Provide Education on Stress:** Connect officers to psychoeducational materials that address how stress affects the body and mind. Emphasize the importance of self-care and offer practical tips for managing stress in high-pressure work environments. Provide evidence-based therapeutic interventions that can assist officers in effectively managing stress. Don't be afraid to test out new techniques. There is no one size fits all.^{9,28}
- **Offer Emotional Regulation Techniques:** Provide officers tools for recognizing and managing their emotional responses to stress. These tools might include exercise and visualization, both of which can help mitigate the impact of high stress situations.^{29,30}
- **Promote Mindfulness:** Mindfulness practices can benefit correctional officers by supporting their awareness of their internal states and environment. Examples of effective mindfulness exercises include breathwork, body scans, and walking meditation. Practicing mindfulness can improve mood, reduce stress hormones, and boost overall resilience.^{29,31,32,52}



Behavioral Life Skills

Strategies: Building a Healthy Lifestyle

Approaches

- **Get Adequate Sleep:** Correctional officers are shift workers who may have irregular schedules. Help officers understand the importance of prioritizing sleep and encourage them to develop a healthy sleep routine. Reducing voluntary overtime shifts can help officers develop good sleep habits, which can improve their resilience and ability to handle stressful situations.^{7,25,33-36}
- **Pay Attention to Fuel and Movement:** There is a strong connection between physical fitness, healthy eating habits, and resilience. Encourage officers to explore developing a workout routine, eating a healthy diet, and staying hydrated throughout the workday. Creating routines centered on healthy living may help build confidence and reduce stress.^{10,23,25,31}
- **Limit Harmful Substances:** Avoid or limit the use of potentially harmful substances like alcohol, caffeine, and tobacco as their use can impair officers' overall health and mental clarity, affecting officers' ability to address workplace hazards. Help officers recognize the risks of substance use and how it can affect mental well-being. Emphasize healthy mechanisms for coping with stress.^{25,28,31,37}

Ideas for Action:

Flexible Scheduling

Administrators in correctional settings should be mindful of the impact that forced overtime can have on officers. Lack of sleep can negatively affect officers' resilience and ability to sustain healthy habits.

A Voice From the Field: Substance Misuse

According to Rick Field, officers often experience increased levels of adrenaline and cortisol as a result of the need for hypervigilance on the job, as well as exposure to violence and the ongoing threat of being the target of a violent act or having to respond to a violent incident. Officers may experience a sharp rise in adrenaline multiple times in a shift and it can take hours for adrenaline levels to decrease. This can lead to sleepless nights, sometimes many in a row.

Sometimes officers use alcohol in an attempt to offset the effects of the adrenaline spikes. While alcohol may seem to help officers fall sleep, it can also disrupt sleep, causing drowsiness the next day. This can lead to the use of caffeine, sometimes in excess, to power through a work shift. The cycle of sustained adrenaline, lack of sleep, alcohol consumption, and caffeine use can lead to difficulty controlling emotions as well as reduced mental capacity and clouded judgment. This can result in officers violating departmental policy and receiving disciplinary actions, which can cause additional stress.

Strategies: Promoting Healthy Habits

Approaches

- **Spiritual Resilience:** There is a positive relationship between spirituality and workplace satisfaction. Support spiritual growth as a protective factor. Spiritual growth can promote resilience and a sense of purpose.^{31,38}
- **Self-Compassion:** Self-compassion has a significant positive association with well-being. Explore practical approaches to helping officers develop self-compassion. Creating a culture of compassion for self and others has been shown to be related to decreased stigma around mental illness.³⁹⁻⁴¹
- **Lifelong Learning:** Foster a commitment to lifelong learning. Encourage officers to take professional development courses or read materials that encourage personal growth and curiosity. This can help them maintain mental sharpness, which can enhance emotional problem-solving skills and resilience.^{7,31}

Strategies: Seeking Work-Life Balance

Approaches

- **Create Boundaries:** Help officers learn how to set healthy boundaries between their work and personal lives. Encourage them to identify their limits and pay attention to their feelings. Setting clear and effective boundaries can help officers develop, build, and maintain resilience in the workplace.^{7,31}
- **Encourage Work-Life Balance:** In one study, officers identified life balance as a product of accepting personal limitations and maintaining psychological distance from the job. Motivate officers to engage in activities outside of work that promote relaxation and joy, such as spending time with family and friends, seeking adventures, and engaging in hobbies.^{2,7,15,25,31}
- **Promote Stress Management:** Help officers prioritize reducing stressors outside the workplace such as excessive spending and debt. Officers with debt may find overtime shifts becoming a necessity for financial survival.^{7,6,42}

Ideas for Action:

Affirm Pride

According to Rick Field, an officer's job may represent a larger part of their personal identity than their connections with family and friends or activities outside of work. Providers can affirm officers' pride in their work as a source of strength and a motivation to strengthen connections with their family and friends.

Social Life Skills

Strategies: Building Interpersonal Communication Skills

Approaches

- **Enhance Conflict Resolution Skills:** Conflict in the workplace affects correctional officers' overall health. Encourage officers to remain calm in stressful situations. Remind officers to focus on shared goals and use negotiation during conflicts to de-escalate and remain safe. Use role playing in therapy sessions to model conflict de-escalation strategies and help officers practice how they could use these strategies in the workplace.^{31,43,44}
- **Encourage Empathy and Emotional Intelligence:** Help officers understand the importance of practicing empathy for incarcerated individuals struggling with mental illness. Officers' capacity to empathize and express compassion may be diminished or weakened over time as a result of their exposure to conflict and violence and they may lose touch with their compassion as a survival mechanism.^{7,31,40}
- **Support Nonverbal Communication Awareness:** Positive and appropriate nonverbal cues can help officers establish and maintain authority, convey empathy, and de-escalate conflicts, helping them feel more confident and safer in the correctional setting. Assist officers in recognizing verbal and nonverbal emotional cues. Allow officers to practice their nonverbal communication awareness in the safe space of the therapeutic environment.^{45,46}

Ideas for Action:

Promote Compassion

Use role playing in therapy to model and encourage compassion in officers who may struggle with showing compassion in interactions with colleagues or incarcerated individuals who are experiencing stress.

Strategies: Maintaining Positive Relationships With Incarcerated Individuals

Approaches

- **Model Positive Behaviors:** Officers are in a position of authority and leadership in the correctional setting. Encourage correctional officers to model behaviors like respect and emotional regulation to promote these behaviors in incarcerated individuals. This can help officers build confidence, establish consistent expectations for conduct, enhance mutual respect, and reduce conflict in the correctional environment.²³

A Voice From the Field: Promoting Resilience

Rick Field recommends helping officers strengthen and maintain healthy relationships with coworkers and incarcerated individuals. He says this is an essential component of developing resilience in a work atmosphere with frequent conflict, challenges, and threats of violence.

Field believes that providers should be prepared to offer guidance to officers on ways officers can navigate the daily challenges they may face over the course of a career that may last thirty years or more.

- **Develop Emotional Regulation Skills:** Encourage officers to develop effective emotional regulation skills to manage anger. An ability to manage their own anger can help officers maintain safety and professionalism and improve interactions with incarcerated individuals.⁴⁷
- **Build Trust With Incarcerated Individuals:** Creating a collaborative environment can help build trust between correctional officers and incarcerated individuals. Building trust promotes safety and helps correctional officers manage stress and build resilience by creating a more predictable, respectful environment where cooperation is more likely, and conflict is reduced.²²

Strategies: Building Supportive Relationships

Approaches

- **Engage in Peer Support Programs:** Encourage correctional officers to participate or organize a peer support group in which they can share experiences, provide each other with mutual support, and enhance their ability to work as a team. Peer support programs provide correctional officers a safe place to talk with peers who understand the unique stress of the job. These programs can help officers process traumatic experiences soon after they happen, which can reduce the risk of long-term emotional distress and suicide.^{2,6,9,15,25,44}
- **Prioritize Time With Family and Friends:** Help officers schedule time to spend with family and friends. Family difficulties and a sense of being a burden to family are significantly associated with suicidality. Increasing time with friends and family can decrease the likelihood of experiencing PTSD.^{15,27,31,34,44,53}
- **Practice Understanding and Patience With Colleagues:** Encourage officers to strengthen their own self-care so they are better able to offer compassion to others and be emotionally and physically present for colleagues who are experiencing distress. Demonstrate ways officers can offer emotional support to colleagues during difficult times. Increased compassion can help everyone in the workplace maintain resilience.^{2,7,25,34}

Ideas for Action:

Encourage Active Listening

Motivate officers to be fully present with loved ones by practicing active listening techniques, sharing feelings, and expressing gratitude. Expressing gratitude has been shown to be a protective factor for suicide.

Strength Behind the Badge: Promoting Trauma-Informed Approaches to Building Resilience Among Correctional Officers

This section focuses on building awareness of trauma-informed approaches to supporting resilience among correctional officers.

Approaches

- **Understand the Basics of Trauma:** Provide officers with training and psychoeducation about trauma, including its definition, various types (e.g., childhood, PTSD, incarceration-related trauma), and how it can affect behavior. This may help officers recognize trauma-related responses (e.g., fight or flight) among incarcerated individuals and in themselves.^{5,9,15,21,23,44,48,49}
- **Acknowledge Vicarious Trauma Responses:** Educate officers about vicarious trauma, which can result from repeated exposure to the trauma of others. Help officers identify vicarious trauma early and normalize identifying and acknowledging trauma responses. Encourage officers to recognize subtle signs of distress (e.g., body discomfort, heightened emotions) among incarcerated individuals and themselves and help officers improve their ability to respond to their own needs.^{3,6,15,31,50,51}
- **Prioritize Officer Well-Being:** Educate officers about the benefits of self-care and active mental health help-seeking. These behaviors can support officer well-being, help officers manage their trauma responses, and prevent PTSD or burnout. Literature on correctional officer resilience shows a strong correlation between self-care and resilience.^{7,25,28,49}

Conclusion

The strategies proposed in this report are intended to help mental health providers promote life skills to support suicide prevention among correctional officers working in a challenging occupational environment. Promoting life skills such as emotional regulation, stress management, effective communication, and problem-solving helps officers better cope with the complex stressors that have been shown to increase suicide risk among correctional officers. By understanding and respecting the culture of correctional officers, providers can more effectively build rapport with officers to support them in developing cognitive, behavioral, and social life skills for healthy coping and suicide prevention.



References

- ¹ Zimmerman, G. M., Fridel, E. E., & Frost, N. A. (2023). Examining differences in the individual and contextual risk factors for police officer, correctional officer, and non-protective service suicides. *Justice Quarterly*, 41(2), 190–217. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2023.2188063>
- ² Gould, D. D., Watson, S. L., Price, S. R., & Valliant, P. M. (2012). The relationship between burnout and coping in adult and young offender center correctional officers: An exploratory investigation. *Psychological Services*, 10(1), 37-47. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029655>
- ³ Frost, N. A., Monteiro, C. E., Stowell, J. I., Trapassi, J., & St. Louis, S. (2020, September). *The impact of correction officer suicide on the institutional environment and on the wellbeing of correctional employees*. National Institute of Justice. <https://nij.ojp.gov/library/publications/impact-correction-officer-suicide-institutional-environment-and-wellbeing>
- ⁴ Miller, O., Shakespeare-Finch, J., & Bruenig, D. (2024). Predicting burnout, well-being, and posttraumatic growth in correctional officers. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 51(5), 724-742. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00938548241233932>
- ⁵ Alshahrani, K. M., Johnson, J., Prudenzi, A., & O'Connor, D. B. (2022). The effectiveness of psychological interventions for reducing ptsd and psychological distress in first responders: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *PloS One*, 17(8), e0272732. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0272732>
- ⁶ Ferdik, F., & Pica, E. (2024). Correctional officer turnover intentions and mental illness symptom: Testing the potential confounding effects of resilience. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 30(1), 33-47. <https://psycnet.apa.org/fulltext/2023-60261-001.html>
- ⁷ R. Field. (2024). (personal communications October-December 2024).
- ⁸ Wills, C., Bates, K., Frost, N. A., & Monteiro, C. E. (2021). Barriers to help-seeking among correction officers: Examining the influence of institutional culture and structure. *Criminal Justice Studies*, 34(4), 423-440. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1478601x.2021.1997276>
- ⁹ Papazoglou, K., & Tuttle, B. M. (2018). Fighting police trauma: Practical approaches to addressing psychological needs of officers. *SAGE Open*, 8(3), 215824401879479. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018794794>
- ¹⁰ Ferdik, F. V., & Smith, H. P. (2017). *Correctional officer safety and wellness literature synthesis*. Department of Justice. National Institute of Justice. <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/250484.pdf>
- ¹¹ Lavrič, M., Zadravec Šedivy, N., & Poštuvan, V. (2022). How correctional officers experience inmates suicidal behavior? – Qualitative research and development of the model of a house. *The Prison Journal*, 102(1), 64-83. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00328855211069302>
- ¹² Frost, L., & Scott, H. (2022). What is known about the secondary traumatization of staff working with offending populations? A review of the literature. *Traumatology an International Journal*, 28(1), 56-73. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1037/trm0000268>
- ¹³ Frost, N. A. (2020). Understanding the impacts of corrections officer suicide. *Corrections Today*, 82(2), 14-18. <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/understanding-impacts-corrections-officer-suicide>
- ¹⁴ Valera, P., Malarkey, S., Owens, M., Sinangil, N., Bhakta, S., & Chung, T. (2024). Remote mental health first aid training for correctional officers: A pilot study. *Psychological Services*, 21(2), 328-336. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ser0000860>
- ¹⁵ St. Louis, S., Frost, N. A., Monteiro, C. E., & Trapassi Migliaccio, J. (2023). Occupational hazards in corrections: The impact of violence and suicide exposures on officers' emotional and psychological health. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 50(9), 1361-1379. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00938548231177710>
- ¹⁶ Department of Justice. (2023). *Department of Justice report on best practices to address law enforcement officer wellness*. https://www.justice.gov/d9/2023-05/Sec.%204%28a%29%20-Report%20on%20Best%20Practices%20to%20Advance%20Officer%20Wellness_FINAL.pdf
- ¹⁷ Simpson, A. I. F., Gerritsen, C., Maheandiran, M., Adamo, V., Vogel, T., Fulham, L., Kitt, T., Forrester, A., & Jones, R. M. (2022). A systematic review of reviews of correctional mental health services using the STAIR framework. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2021.747202>
- ¹⁸ Sue, D. W. (2001). Multidimensional facets of cultural competence. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 29(6), 790-821. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000001296002>

- ¹⁹ Taylor, K. H., & Swartz, K. (2021). Stress doesn't kill us, it's our reaction: exploring the relationship between coping mechanisms and correctional officer PTSD. *Criminal Justice Studies*, 34(4), 380-396. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1478601x.2021.1999116>
- ²⁰ Brower, J. (2013). *Correctional officer wellness and safety literature review*. U.S. Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. <https://www.ojp.gov/library/publications/correctional-officer-wellness-and-safety-literature-review>
- ²¹ Lees, T., Elliott, J. L., Gunning, S., Newton, P. J., Rai, T., & Lal, S. (2019). A systematic review of the current evidence regarding interventions for anxiety, ptsd, sleepiness and fatigue in the law enforcement workplace. *Industrial Health*, 57(6), 655-667. <https://doi.org/10.2486/indhealth.2018-0088>
- ²² Cassiano, M. S., Bennett, B. A., Andres, E., & Ricciardelli, R. (2022). What it takes to be a "good" correctional officer: Occupational fitness and co-worker expectations from the perspective of correctional officer recruits in Canada. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 24(1), 98-120. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17488958221087488>
- ²³ Southwick, S. M., & Charney, D. S. (2012). The science of resilience: Implications for the prevention and treatment of depression. *Science*, 338(6103), 79-82. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1222942>
- ²⁴ Xu, Z., Huang, F., Kösters, M., Staiger, T., Becker, T., Thornicroft, G., & Rüsch, N. (2018). Effectiveness of interventions to promote help-seeking for mental health problems: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *Psychological Medicine*, 48(16), 2658-2667. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291718001265>
- ²⁵ Gist, J. T. A., Ferdik, F., & Smith, H. P. (2023). A qualitative inquiry into the sources of resilience found among maximum security correctional officers. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 34(3), 291-315. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08874034221143750>
- ²⁶ Burhanullah, M. H., Rollings-Mazza, P., Galecki, J., Van Wert, M., Weber, T., & Malik, M. (2022). Mental health of staff at correctional facilities in the United States during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2021.767385>
- ²⁷ Klinoff, V. A., Van Hasselt, V. B., Black, R. A., Masias, E. V., & Couwels, J. (2018). The assessment of resilience and burnout in correctional officers. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 45(8), 1213-1233. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854818778719>
- ²⁸ Bryan, C. J., Baucom, B. R., Crenshaw, A. O., Imel, Z., Atkins, D. C., Clemans, T. A., Leeson, B., Burch, T. S., Mintz, J., & Rudd, M. D. (2018). Associations of patient-rated emotional bond and vocally encoded emotional arousal among clinicians and acutely suicidal military personnel. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 86(4), 372-383. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ccp0000295>
- ²⁹ Edgelow, M., Scholefield, E., McPherson, M., Mehta, S., & Ortlieb, A. (2022). A review of workplace mental health interventions and their implementation in public safety organizations. *International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health*, 95(3), 645-664. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00420-021-01772-1>
- ³⁰ Kaufman, C. C., & Rosmarin, D. H. (2024). Spiritually integrated group psychotherapy for first responders: Forgiveness, trauma, and alcohol use. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 74(2), 217-243. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207284.2024.2322500>
- ³¹ National Consortium on Preventing Law Enforcement Suicide. (2018). *National consortium on preventing law enforcement suicide toolkit*. International Association of Chiefs of Police. <https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/ToolkitComboFinal.pdf>
- ³² American Psychological Association. (2018, April 19). *Mindfulness*. Retrieved October 7, 2024, from <https://www.apa.org/topics/mindfulness>
- ³³ James, L., Samuels, C. H., & Vincent, F. (2017). Evaluating the effectiveness of fatigue management training to improve police sleep health and wellness. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 60(1), 77-82. <https://doi.org/10.1097/jom.0000000000001174>
- ³⁴ James, L., & Todak, N. (2018). Prison employment and post-traumatic stress disorder: Risk and protective factors. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, 61(9), 725-732. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajim.22869>
- ³⁵ Lerman, A. E., Harney, J., & Sadin, M. (2022). Prisons and mental health: Violence, organizational support, and the effects of correctional work. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 49(2), 181-199. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00938548211037718>
- ³⁶ James, L., Todak, N., & Best, S. (2017). The negative impact of prison work on sleep health. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, 60(5), 449-456. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajim.22714>

- ³⁷ Frost, N. A., & Monteiro, C. E. (2020). The interaction of personal and occupational factors in the suicide deaths of correction officers. *Justice Quarterly*, 37(7), 1277-1302. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07418825.2020.1839538>
- ³⁸ Pont, S. T. (2022). Job satisfaction and spirituality in the workplace: A case study in resilience. *Crisis, Stress, and Human Resilience: An International Journal*, 4(2), 109-119. <https://www.crisisjournal.org/article/38374>
- ³⁹ Lowery, A., & Cassidy, T. (2022). Health and well-being of first responders: The role of psychological capital, self-compassion, social support, relationship satisfaction, and physical activity. *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health*, 37(2), 87-105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15555240.2021.1990776>
- ⁴⁰ Litz, B., & Carney, J. R. (2018). Employing loving-kindness meditation to promote self- and other-compassion among war veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder. *Spirituality in Clinical Practice*, 5(3), 201-211. <https://doi.org/10.1037/scp0000174>
- ⁴¹ Kois, L. E., Hill, K., Gonzales, L., Hunter, S., & Chauhan, P. (2020). Correctional officer mental health training: Analysis of 52 U.S. jurisdictions. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 31(4), 555-572. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0887403419849624>
- ⁴² Cornelius, G. F. (2021, March 8). *12 strategies for combating burnout in corrections*. Lexipol. <https://www.lexipol.com/resources/blog/12-strategies-for-combating-burnout-in-corrections/>
- ⁴³ American Correctional Association. (2020). Corrections employee wellness: Improving the health of our greatest asset. https://www.aca.org/ACA_Member/ACA/ACA_Member/Staff_Wellness_Prep.aspx
- ⁴⁴ Lewis-Schroeder, N. F., Kieran, K., Murphy, B. L., Wolff, J. D., Robinson, M. A., & Kaufman, M. L. (2018). Conceptualization, assessment, and treatment of traumatic stress in first responders: A review of critical issues. *Harvard Review of Psychiatry*, 26(4), 216-227. <https://doi.org/10.1097/hrp.0000000000000176>
- ⁴⁵ Moreland, A. (2021, December 10). *What it means to be an active listener in corrections*. Cidnet. <https://cidnet.net/2021/12/what-it-means-to-be-an-active-listener-in-corrections/>
- ⁴⁶ Arble, E., Daugherty, A. M., & Arnetz, B. (2019). Differential effects of physiological arousal following acute stress on police officer performance in a simulated critical incident. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00759>
- ⁴⁷ Brown, S. G., & Daus, C. S. (2015). The influence of police officers' decision-making style and anger control on responses to work scenarios. *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, 4(3), 294-302. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jarmac.2015.04.001>
- ⁴⁸ Regehr, C., Carey, M., Wagner, S., Alden, L. E., Buys, N., Corneil, W., Fyfe, T., Fraess-Phillips, A., Krutop, E., Matthews, L., Randall, C., White, M., & White, N. (2019). Prevalence of PTSD, depression and anxiety disorders in correctional officers: A systematic review. *Corrections*, 6(3), 229-241. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23774657.2019.1641765>
- ⁴⁹ Spinaris, C. G., Denhof, M. D., & Kellaway, J. A. (2012). *Posttraumatic stress disorder in United States corrections professionals: Prevalence and impact on health and functioning*. U.S. Department of Justice. <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/posttraumatic-stress-disorder-united-states-corrections>
- ⁵⁰ Konyk, K., & Ricciardelli, R. (2023). Tough lessons: Pathways toward correctional officer resilience and growth. *Traumatology: An International Journal*, 29(3), 340-351. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1037/trm0000408>
- ⁵¹ Grossman, S., Cooper, Z., Buxton, H., Hendrickson, S., Lewis-O'Connor, A., Stevens, J., Wong, L. Y., & Bonne, S. (2021). Trauma-informed care: Recognizing and resisting re-traumatization in health care. *Trauma Surgery & Acute Care Open*, 6(1), e000815. <https://doi.org/10.1136/tsaco-2021-000815>
- ⁵² Mayo Clinic. (2022). *Mindfulness exercises*. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthylifestyle/consumer-health/in-depth/mindfulness-exercises/art-20046356>
- ⁵³ Krynska, K. (2018). Gratitude as a protective factor for suicidal ideation and behaviour: The theory and the evidence base. In J. Hirsch, E. Chang, & J. Kelliher Rabon, (Eds.), *A positive psychological approach to suicide: Theory Research and Prevention* (pp. 89-110). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-03225-8_5

Resource Guide

Mental Wellness

[Desert Waters Outreach](#): Provides mental health support, trainings, research, and resources to promote wellness among correctional officers.

[American Community Corrections Institute \(ACCI\)](#): Provides evidence-based cognitive life skills courses and programs. Offers an array of life skills curricula for correctional facilities.

[First H.E.L.P.](#): The First H.E.L.P. Readiness program is designed to help learners understand stress and the possible physical and psychological effects it has on first responders.

[Correctional Officers De-escalation Education \(CODE\)](#): A training film produced by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) intended to help officers support individuals with mental illness.

Working With Traumatized Police Officer-Patients: A Clinician's Guide to Complex PTSD Syndromes in Public Safety Professionals (BOOK)

Description: Rudofossi offers his experience as a police officer, clinician, and researcher. He provides insights and tools to help police and fire personnel who experience traumatic stress reactions face the emotional challenges confronting first responders in their everyday work life.

Citation: Rudofossi, D. (2007). *Working with traumatized police officer-patients: A clinician's guide to complex PTSD syndromes in public safety professionals*. Bayswood Publishing Co.

Resilience

[Training Response Network](#): Provides enhanced training for law enforcement officers, including correctional officers, on various topics related to personal and professional development. These training options are intended to guide, motivate, and promote resilience among officers.

[Beyond Us & Them](#): Evidence-based, 12-week Peace Officer Wellness, Empathy, and Resilience (POWER) training program for law enforcement officers. Promotes wellness, empathy, and resilience among first responders.

[Corrections One Academy](#): A first responder training academy that offers trainings to help individuals and correctional facilities maintain compliance with industry requirements.

[Warrior's Rest Foundation](#): Offers peer support teams, workshops, and educational tools to help remove the stigma that surrounds job-related trauma, support healthy individuals, and build infrastructure within agencies.

[Boulder Crest Foundation](#): Offers Struggle Well, a prevention-focused program based on the science of post-traumatic growth. First responder agencies and military units can participate in 1-, 2-, or 5-day post-traumatic growth programs.

Struggle Well: Thriving in the Aftermath of Trauma (BOOK)

Description: Training to help combat veterans battling PTSD understand and achieve post-traumatic growth in the aftermath of trauma.

Citation: Falke, K., & Goldberg, J. (2018). *Struggle well: Thriving in the aftermath of trauma*. Lioncrest Publishing.

Mindfulness for Warriors: Empowering First Responders to Reduce Stress and Build Resilience (BOOK)

Description: Provides first responders with practice techniques to help them cope with workplace stress and trauma. The book offers first responders and their families hope by introducing practical mindfulness tools to help reduce stress, promote emotional regulation, and improve overall health and well-being.

Citation: Colegrove, K. (2020). *Mindfulness for warriors: Empowering first responders to reduce stress and build resilience*. Mango Media.

The POWER Manual: A Step-By-Step Guide to Improving Police Officer Wellness, Ethics, and Resilience (BOOK)

Description: Offers practical, research-based strategies to help all members of law enforcement improve their wellness, strengthen their ethical commitments, and increase their resilience both on- and off-duty.

Citation: Blumberg, D., Papazoglou, K., & Schlosser, M. D. (2021b). *The POWER manual: A step-by-step guide to improving police officer wellness, ethics, and resilience*. American Psychological Association.

Peer Support

[National Institute of Corrections](#): Guidelines and a webinar developed by community supervision leaders, front-line officers, and peer team members to support community supervision agencies in creating and maintaining peer support programs.