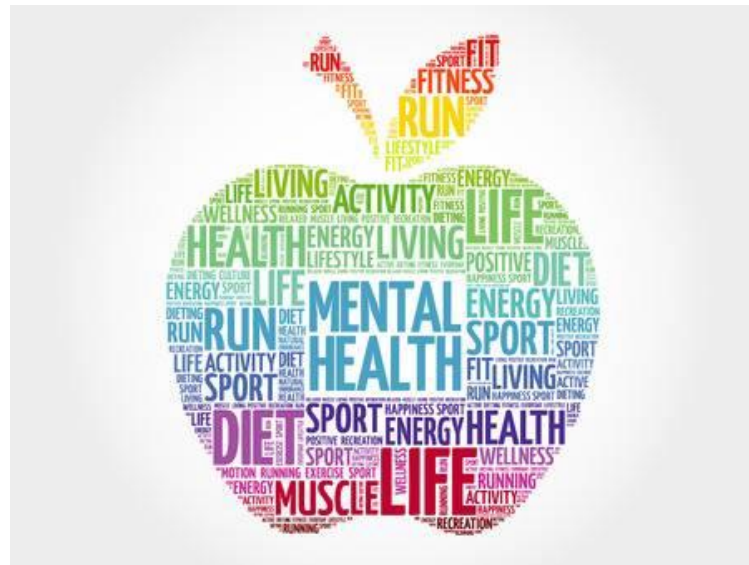


Supporting prison staff with their own mental health

Susan J. Jones, PhD

Mental Health

1. a person's condition with regard to their psychological and emotional well-being.



What is mental illness?

A diagnosable illness that:

- ▶ Affects a person's thinking, emotional state, and behavior
- ▶ Disrupts the person's ability to
 - ▶ Work
 - ▶ Carry out daily activities
 - ▶ Engage in satisfying relationships
- ▶ Mental Health First Aid



- ▶ Mental health problems are common; however, stigma is associated with mental health problems.
- ▶ 19% of all adults deal with a mental illness at some point during the year. (anxiety and depression are the most common)

C R A Z Y

--Loud and unreasonable

--Treatment doesn't help

--Always been like this

Feces- Spread, eat, throw

--hear voices

--Ridicule

--unclean

-To be avoided

--dangerous

Crazy look – crazy eyes

--No friends or family

--Picked on by all

Don't talk about this...

- ▶ The culture of corrections discourages talk of the mental health needs of staff.
- ▶ Why is this different from medical needs?



Cultural Barriers Toward Supporting the Mental Health of Employees

Healthy
Corrections
Employees

Organizational –
Isolation/negative
environment/overtime

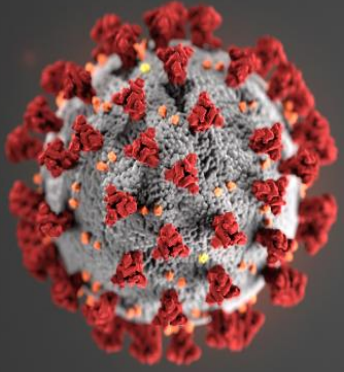
Self – “tough” – keep shell in
place

Inmates: Don't get
better/seriously ill/crazy/see
treatment that is not effective

Family –in the dark

Community – not engaged

Employee Assistance Program:
Not effective/not in touch with
corrections/ not confidential



Covid 19!

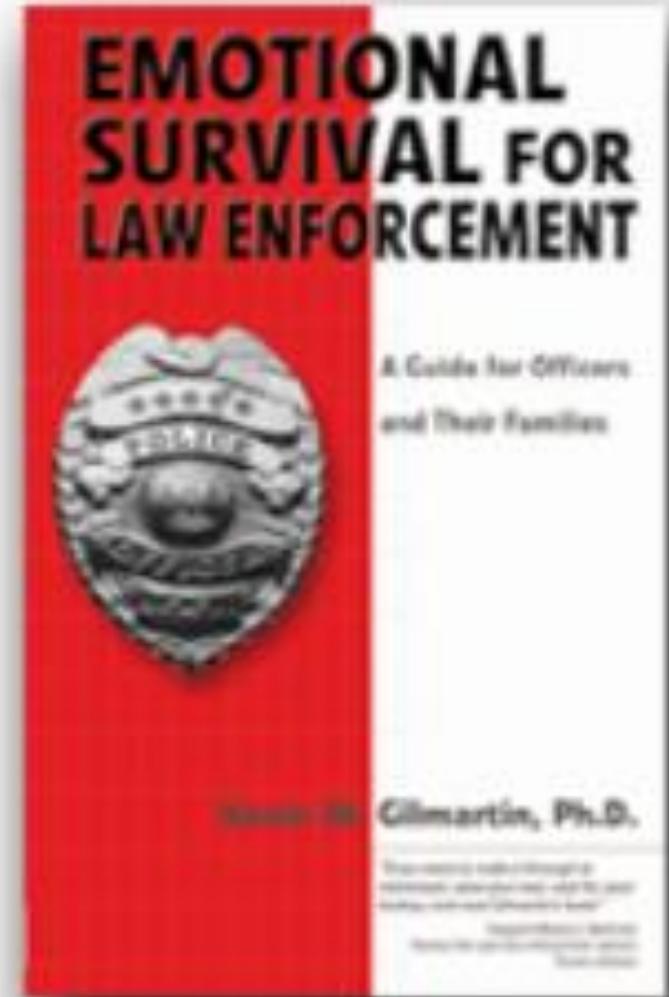
- ▶ Raising the stakes on communicable disease.
- ▶ Resources out there:
- ▶ American Jail Association -virtual Training
- ▶ American Correctional Association- webinars
- ▶ India's Response to Covid-19 - ICPA

Lewis- Probation Officers

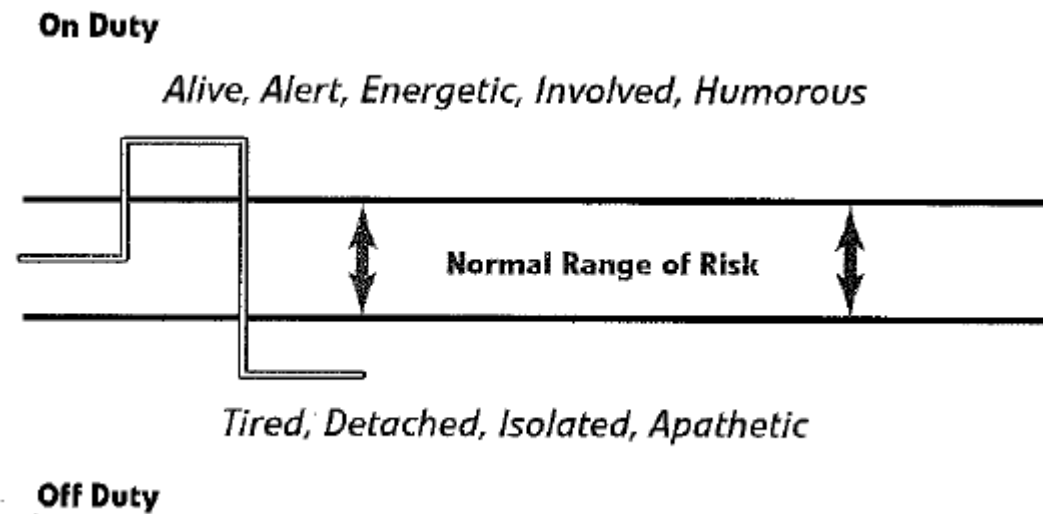
- ▶ Lewis ([2015](#)) identified trauma as a key component to corrections work and concluded that this exposure can result many adverse effects, including
- ▶ employees who struggle with boundary issues,
- ▶ intimacy difficulties,
- ▶ questions of spirituality,
- ▶ chronic suspicion of others,
- ▶ tolerance,
- ▶ intrusive imagery,
- ▶ disturbing thoughts and distress cynicism,
- ▶ increased anger, disgust, sadness,
- ▶ hypervigilance,
- ▶ distorted worldview,
- ▶ loss of empathy, desensitization, loss of trust, loss of innocence, safety concerns, intimacy problems,
- ▶ difficulty in relationships.

Gilmartin

- ▶ The job can become the central and defining aspect of the person's life
- ▶ Changes in the person can affect their world view- positive to negative, idealistic to cynical



Hypervigilance Roller Coaster - Gilmartin



PTSD

- ▶ a condition of persistent mental and emotional stress occurring as a result of injury or severe psychological shock, typically involving disturbance of sleep and constant vivid recall of the experience, with dulled responses to others and to the outside world.

Desert Waters Correctional Outreach

- ▶ **Corrections Fatigue – associated with PTSD**
- ▶ **The Corrections Ventline Email Service**
 - ▶ ventline@desertwaters.com
 - ▶ ***The Correctional Oasis Newsletter***
 - ▶ ***Research***
- ▶ ***Training- Suicide, Corrections Fatigue, Peer Support, Boundaries, Resilience***
- ▶ ***Publications: Staying Well, Passing it along,***

What needs to be done....

- ▶ **The solution must come from many different angles!**



**Self- “Things
are off”
Admit to self
and others**

**Co-workers – don’t
ridicule mentally ill... talk**

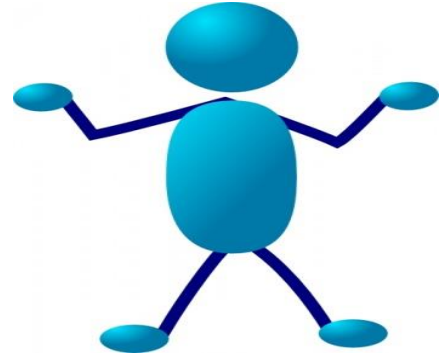
**Supervisors: Acknowledge the issue
Engage with EAP
Get educated**

**Organization: Reduce overtime!!
Overtime is Detrimental to safety!
Recruit, retain – pay and benefits**

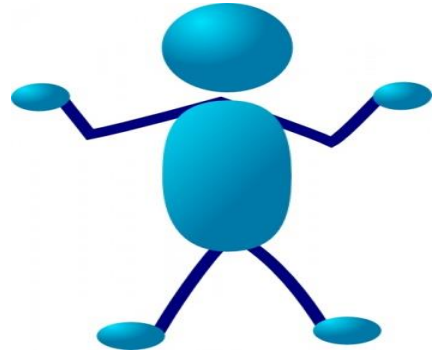
**community: Develop resources – ASSUME the Need
Exists!**

“if you build it... they will come”

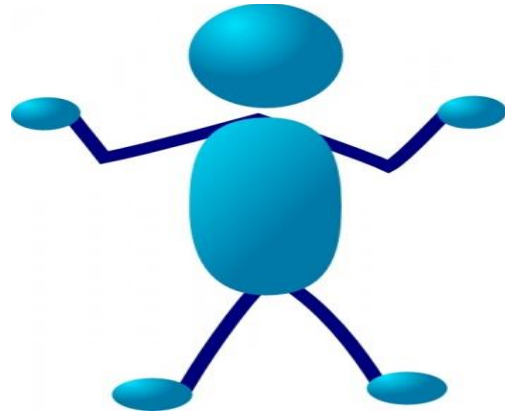
Family: Things may not be fine!



Self- “Things are off”
Admit to self and others



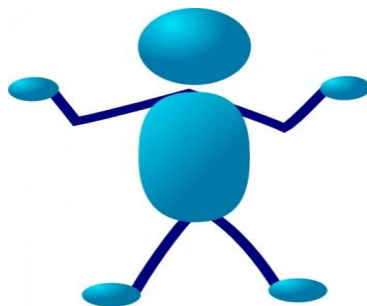
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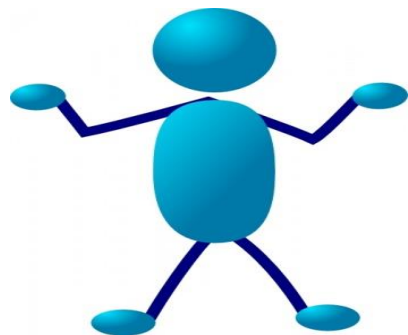
Get educated



Organization: Reduce
overtime!!

Overtime is Detrimental to
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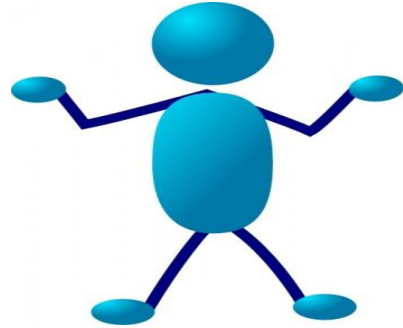
Recruit, retain – pay and
benefits



Community: Develop resources –
ASSUME the Need Exists!

“if you build it... they will come”

Offer Mental Health First Aid courses



Family: Things may
not be fine!

Individual Strategies



Home › Health and Wellness for Corrections Professionals

Health and Wellness for Corrections Professionals

The corrections profession is a tough business. While the work can be immensely rewarding, individuals entering this profession should be aware of both the tremendous opportunities that exist as well as the risks. Whether working in an institutional or community corrections environment, corrections professionals are faced with a myriad of challenges daily, from the populations we work with, responsibility to



NIC RESOURCES



What does wellness look like?

- ▶ Empowered
- ▶ In control
- ▶ Energetic
- ▶ Happy
- ▶ Productive

- ▶ Find strategies to release those things that are creating stress



- ▶ Treat leisure time like a job- forced idleness, playfulness, relaxation



Vacations!!

- ▶ *Travel not only stirs the blood . . .
It also gives strength to the spirit.*
- ▶ - Florence Prag Kahn



Set Limits

- ▶ *I have had enough.*
- ▶ -Golda Meir

Succession

- ▶ **INDISPENSABLE/CONTROL**
- ▶ *A few years ago, I had someone called me an Indispensable Woman, I would have said, “Thank you.” I would have considered it a compliment. Today, I know better.*
- ▶ - Ellen Sue Stern

Susan Jones, PhD

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- ▶ 719-429-5258