

Trauma & Resilience amid COVID-19

Recognizing and Responding to Increased Stress
among Correctional Workers

Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)

Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT)
Program for State Prisoners

Training and Technical Assistance Resource

This project was supported by grant No. 2019-J2-BX-K001 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the SMART Office, and the Office for Victims of Crime. Point of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not represent the official position or policies of the United States Department of Justice.



This event is being recorded.



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A black and white photograph of a microphone and a computer keyboard. The microphone is in the foreground, angled towards the right. The keyboard is in the background, slightly out of focus. A blue semi-transparent overlay covers the bottom half of the image, containing white text.


Audio is provided through your computer speakers.

Your line is automatically muted.


Please type in the ALL QUESTIONS box if you require a phone connection.

Questions and Answers, Download Materials


ALL QUESTIONS


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Talk to the presenters by typing your questions here!

Type your question here, then press Enter on your keyboard! 



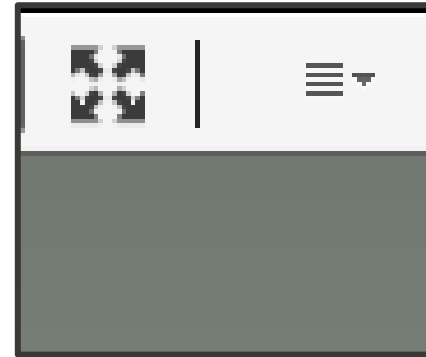
DOWNLOAD MATERIALS HERE

Name	Size
Virtual UDS Visits Defined.pdf	87 KB
Table 5 Addendum.pdf	158 KB
Nurse Visits for UDS Reporting.pdf	225 KB
Today's Slide Deck	9 MB

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Today's Speakers



Roberta C. Churchill, MA, LMHC
Senior Criminal Justice Associate
Advocates for Human Potential, Inc.

Learning Objectives

- Identify at least three descriptions of increased stress that can be observed in colleagues and yourself as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic effects within the workplace.
- Describe at least two other variables that can add to increased stress within the workplace as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Develop at least two ways to respond and increase resilience for yourself and colleagues during times of increased stress.

Poll # 1: Stress Level

On a scale of 1 -5, what is your current stress level?

1 = No stress at all!

5 = Extremely stressed / most stressed ever



Stress

Stress is a normal reaction the body has when changes occur. It can respond to these changes physically, mentally, or emotionally.

Stress can be beneficial

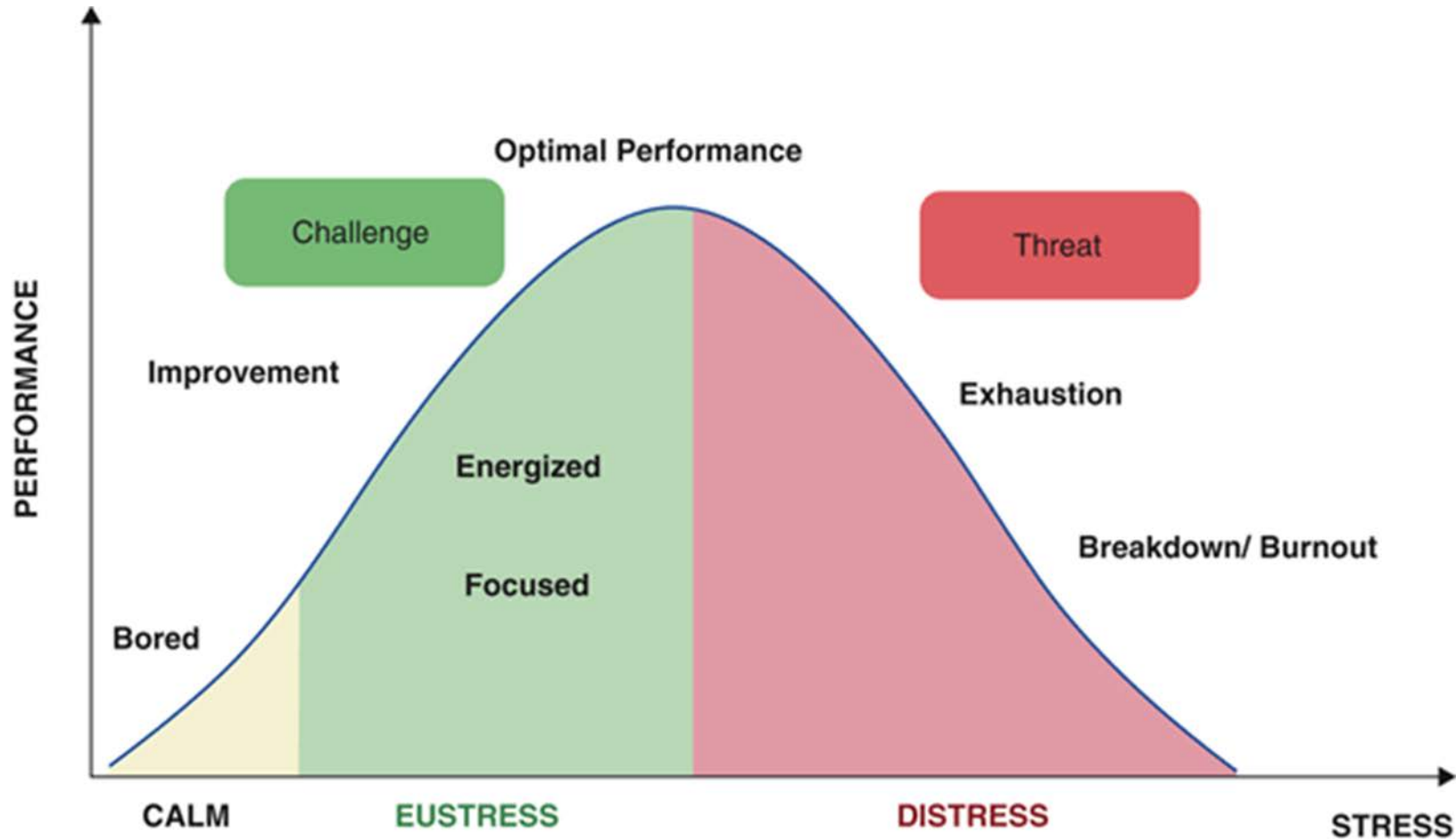
- Studying for an exam
- Training for an athletic event
- Preparing for an audit
- Learning a new skill
- Preparing for an interview
- Planning an event
- Unexpected happy surprises

A decorative watercolor splash in shades of blue, pink, and orange, serving as a background for the quote.

*Anxiety is the
hand maiden of
creativity.*

- T.S. Eliot

The Yerkes-Dodson Law



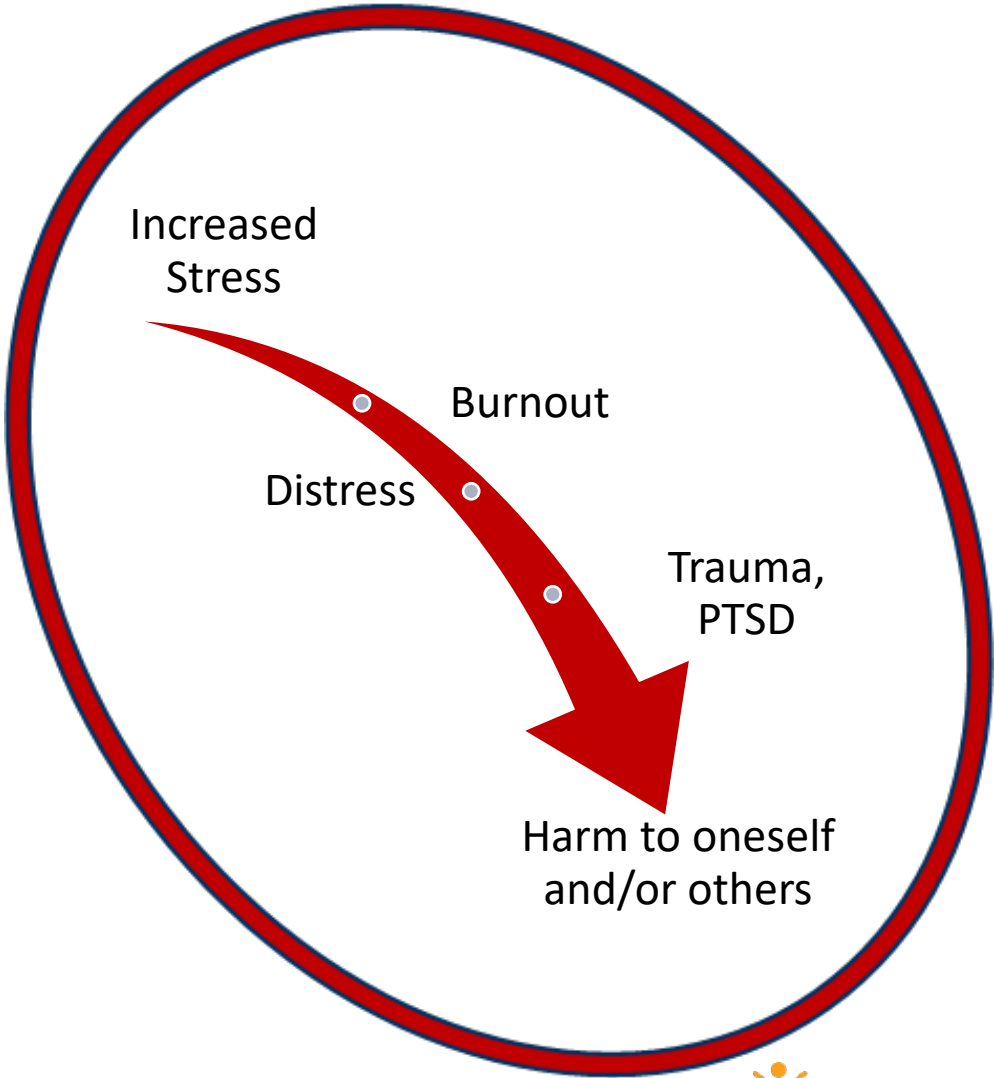
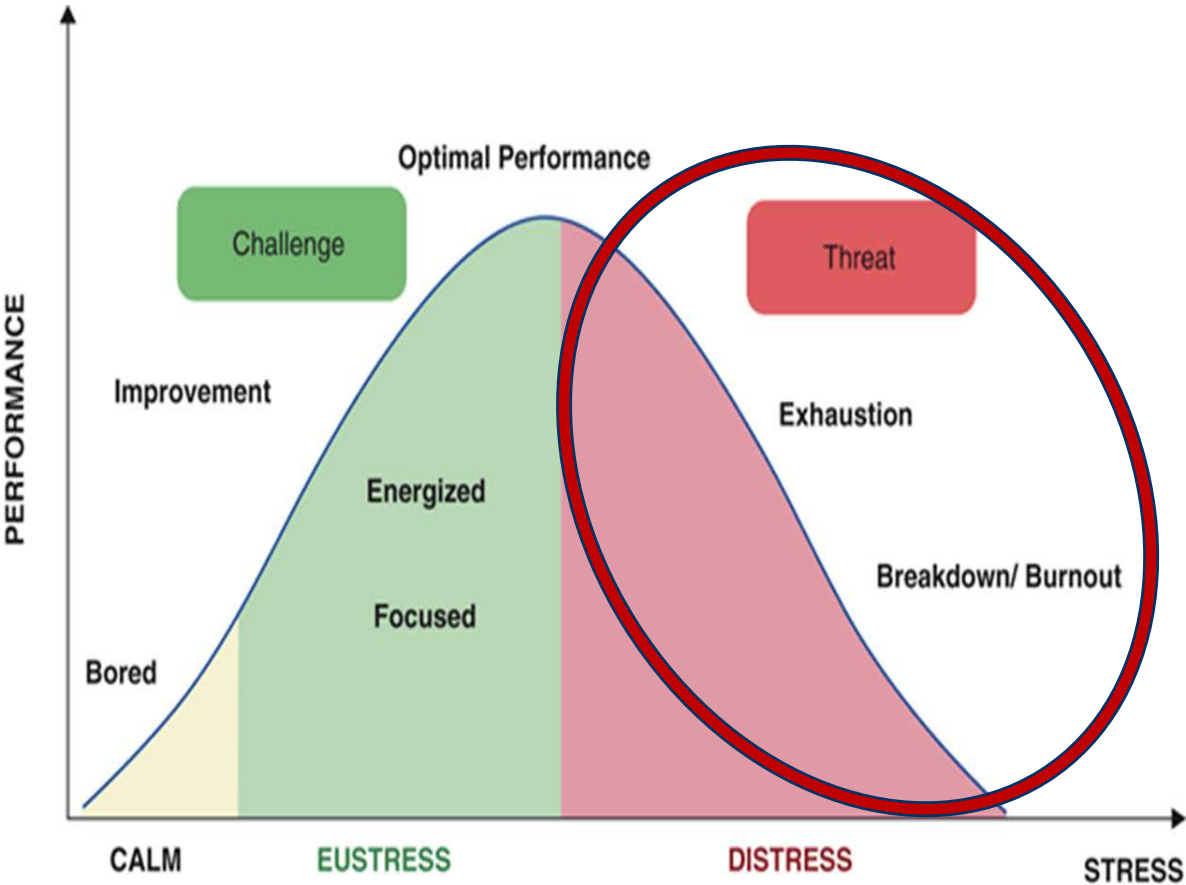
- Stress can affect work performance
- Performance increases with stress but only up to a point
- When stress becomes too high, performance decreases
- There are other variables to consider:
 - Difficult tasks vs tasks that demand stamina or persistence
 - Skill level, personality, and resilience / coping techniques

Bong C., Fraser K., Oriot D. (2016) Cognitive Load and Stress in Simulation. In: Grant V., Cheng A. (eds) Comprehensive Healthcare Simulation: Pediatrics. Comprehensive Healthcare Simulation.



Symptoms of Increased Stress

The Yerkes-Dodson Law



Bong C., Fraser K., Oriot D. (2016) Cognitive Load and Stress in Simulation. In: Grant V., Cheng A. (eds) Comprehensive Healthcare Simulation: Pediatrics. Comprehensive Healthcare Simulation.

Increased Stress and Burnout

Symptoms of Increased Stress

- Over-promising work responsibilities (i.e., extra projects, extra shifts)
- Arriving late for work
- Interrupted exercise / leisure time activities
- Tasks not done at expected performance level
- Work completed late or past deadlines

Symptoms of Burnout

- Irritability with others at work and/or home
- Interrupted sleep patterns
- Inability to meet work responsibilities
- Calling in sick more often
- Blaming others for own mistakes OR blaming self for all mistakes (externalizing OR internalizing)



Distress

Acute Distress or Acute Stress

- A single episode that can be immediate and intense, and triggers the brain's reaction to a perceived threat, challenge or scare: the flight, fight or freeze response.
 - Job interview, getting stopped by law enforcement, fighting with domestic partner, living through a natural disaster
- Depending on the severity of the acute distress or acute stressor, a person may experience mild symptoms to major physical / mental health symptoms.
 - Headaches, stomach problems, insomnia, heart problems, breathing problems

Acute Stress Disorder

Occurs when a person has been through a traumatic event – experienced it directly or indirectly.

- Recurring recollections of the event
- Avoid anything that reminds of the event
- Hypervigilance and exaggerated startle response
- Altered sense of reality
- Difficulty concentrating
- Inability to experience positive emotions
- May experience “flashbacks”
- Sleep disturbances, irritability or angry outbursts

Symptoms begin with 4 weeks of the traumatic event and last a minimum of 3 days. However, symptoms last **NO LONGER** than one month.

<https://www.merckmanuals.com/professional/psychiatric-disorders/anxiety-and-stressor-related-disorders/acute-stress-disorder.?redirectid=64>

Chronic Stress

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN IT JUST WON'T STOP



Chronic Distress

Chronic Stress or Chronic Distress

- A consistent sense of feeling overwhelmed and pressured over a long period of time
- Repeated demands of time and/or unexpected shocking situations and events
- Drains a person's psychological resources and damages their brains and bodies
- Coping and resiliency skills aren't working anymore

Mariotti A. (2015). The effects of chronic stress on health: new insights into the molecular mechanisms of brain-body communication. *Future science OA*, 1(3), FSO23.

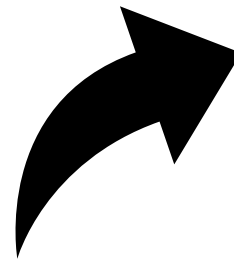
Symptoms

- Physical symptoms and illnesses, lowered immune system response
- Emotional / psychic “numbing”, or feeling hopeless
- Inability to focus and concentrate, memory problems
- Hypervigilance
- Negative perspective of people, self and world around you
- Change in social behavior
- Disruption in sleeping and eating patterns
- Hostility towards others
- Paranoia
- Increased alcohol and/or substance use

Chronic Distress

Chronic Stress or Chronic Distress

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- Repeated demands of time and/or unexpected shocking situations and events
- Drains a person's psychological resources and damages their brains and bodies
- Coping and resiliency skills aren't working anymore



What do these symptoms sound like to you?

Symptoms

- Emotional / psychic “numbing”, or feeling hopeless
- Inability to focus and concentrate, memory problems
- Hypervigilance
- Negative perspective of people, self and world around you
- Change in social behavior
- Disruption in sleeping and eating patterns
- Hostility towards others
- Increased alcohol and/or substance use
- Physical symptoms and illnesses, lowered immune system response
- Heart problems

Mariotti A. (2015). The effects of chronic stress on health: new insights into the molecular mechanisms of brain-body communication. *Future science OA*, 1(3), FSO23.

Trauma

Both Acute and Chronic Stress can cause Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects in the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

SAMHSA, 2014

Environment of Repeated Chronic Stress and Potential Trauma

- Individuals experiencing substance use and mental health disorders
- Violence and abuse are not uncommon
- Threats and coercion are common
- Unpredictability and chaos are common despite rigid structure and regulations
- There is a feeling of a “loss of control” experienced by individuals

Spinaris, Caterina, Michael Denhof & Gregory Morton (2013) Impact of Traumatic Exposure on Corrections Professionals. National Institute of Corrections White Paper.

Why do people respond differently to stress?

Predisposing factors

- Prior diagnosis of PTSD and/or prior experience(s) of trauma
- Mental health disorders
- Alcohol and/or substance use disorders
- Recent non-work-related acute stress (death of a loved one, divorce/separation, medical diagnosis, financial problems)
- Lack of healthy coping skills
- Lack of social / family support and/or social isolation
- Medical issues



[Promising Practice Guidelines for Jail-Based Medication-Assisted Treatment NEW.indd \(rsat-tta.com\)](#)

Word Cloud Activity

Answer the question in the chat box below to create a word cloud we will share at the end of today's presentation.

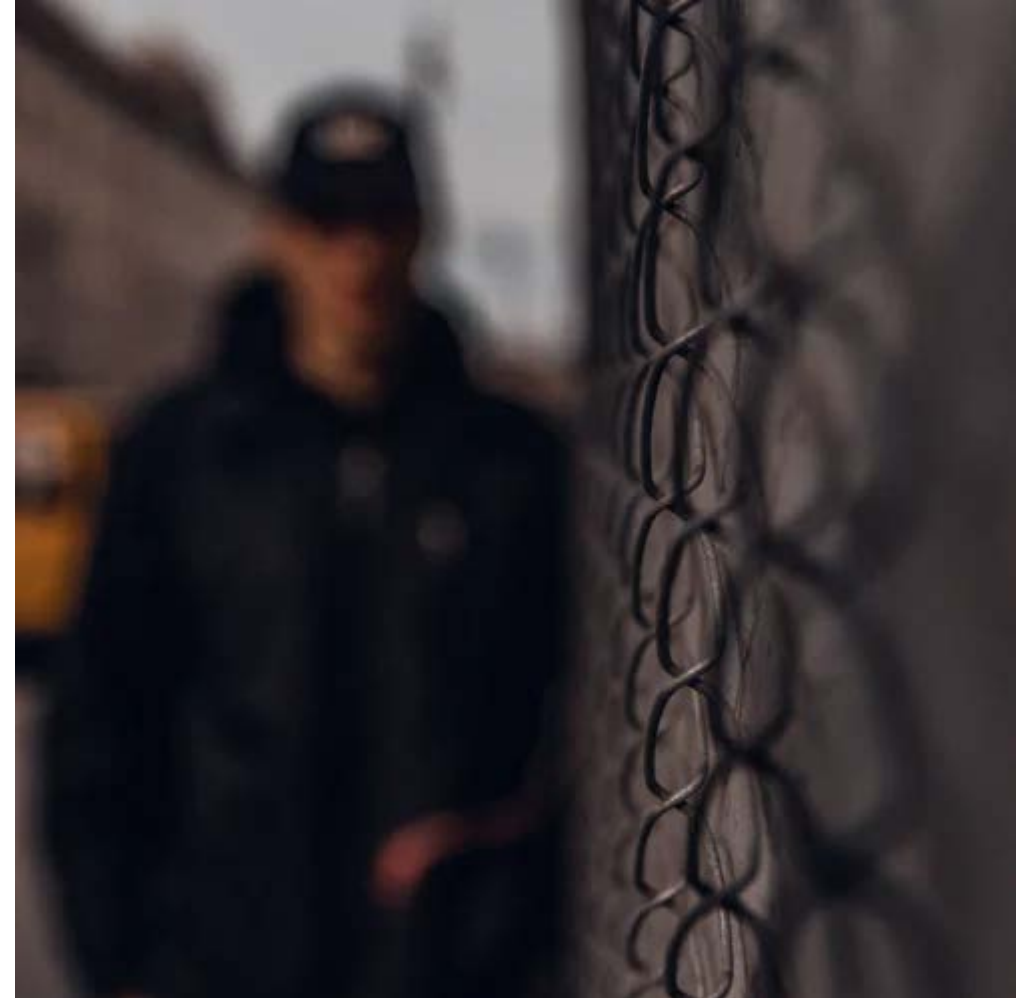
Question: What is the first word or short phrase that comes to mind when you think about specific stressors for correctional workers?

Type as many responses as you would like.

Stressors for Correctional Workers in Jails / Prisons

- Cut off from the world during work hours, limited movement
- Persistent potential threat of violence
- High noise level and bright lights
- Inadequate equipment, lack of resources, insufficient compensation
- Role ambiguity, flexibility demanded on the job may not comply with rules and regulations
- Lack of skill utilization, lack of participation in unit / organizational decisions
- Lack of autonomy in regards to decision making but high responsibility in regards to immediate response
- Lack of professional worth
- Lack of quality supervision, inconsistent leadership, and perceived lack of organizational support
- Lack of perceived organizational justice

Finney, C., Stergiopoulos, E., Hensel, J., Bonato, S., & Dewa, C. S. (2013). Organizational stressors associated with job stress and burnout in correctional officers: a systematic review. *BMC public health*, 13, 82.



<https://unsplash.com/@snezhokman>

Literature Review

2018 – 320 correctional officers, Midwest U.S. jails

- 53.4% of jail officers screened positively of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Jaegers, L. A., Matthieu, M. M., Vaughn, M. G., Werth, P., Katz, I. M., & Ahmad, S. O. (2019). Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Job Burnout Among Jail Officers. *Journal of occupational and environmental medicine*, 61(6), 505–510.

2018 – 355 Washington state DOC correctional employees

- 19% of correctional employees met the criteria for diagnosable PTSD. Most employees were COs (65%), although the study included medical professionals, counselors, administrative staff and other ancillary staff.

James L, Todak N. Prison employment and post-traumatic stress disorder: Risk and protective factors. *Am J Ind Med*. 2018 Jun 12.

2012 – 3599 correctional workers

- 34% of security staff assessed positively for PTSD vs. 23% of all other staff
- 30% of all staff assessed positively for depression
- 14% of all staff assessed positively for depression and PTSD

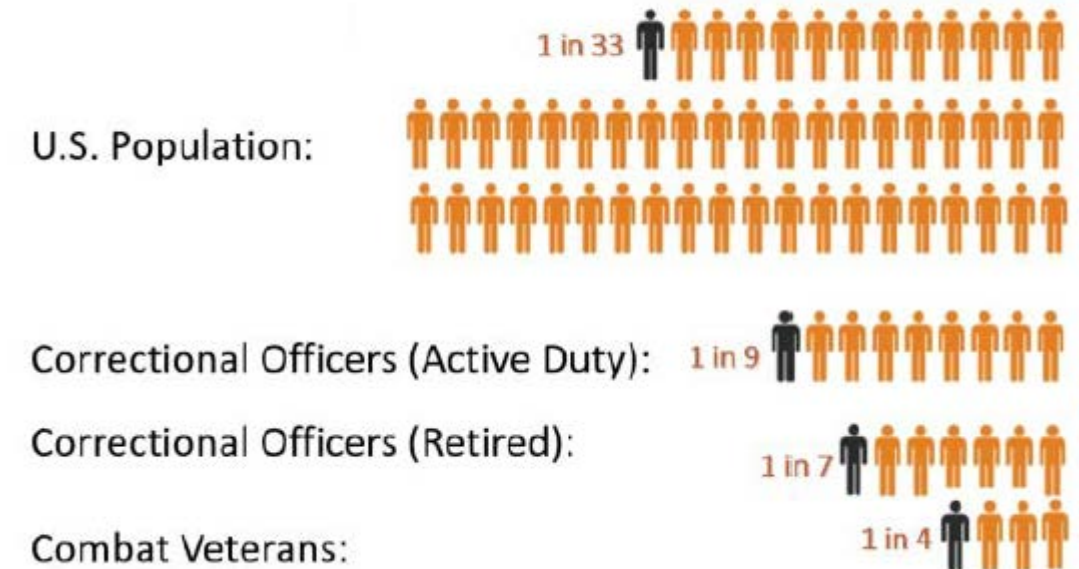
Spinaris, Caterina, Michael Denhof & Julie Kellaway (2012) Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in United States Corrections Professionals: Prevalence and Impact on Health and Functioning. Desert Waters Correctional Outreach, Florence, CO. http://www.corrections.com/system/assets/0000/1228/Desert_Waters_2016Feb01_research_2.pdf

California Correctional Officer Survey

2017 – 8,334 correctional officers

- 70% of correctional officers (COs) don't think there is enough staff to provide for the safety and security of staff
- 29% of COs have been seriously injured and 60% of COs fear serious injury or death
- 85% of COs have seen someone seriously injured or killed
- 42% of COs have or are at risk of developing high blood pressure, 22% of COs have or are at risk of developing diabetes and 16% of COs have or are at risk of developing heart disease
- 28% of COs report often or sometime feeling down, depressed or hopeless, and 38% have little interest or pleasure in doing things

Officers' reported prevalence of suicidal ideation is extremely high.

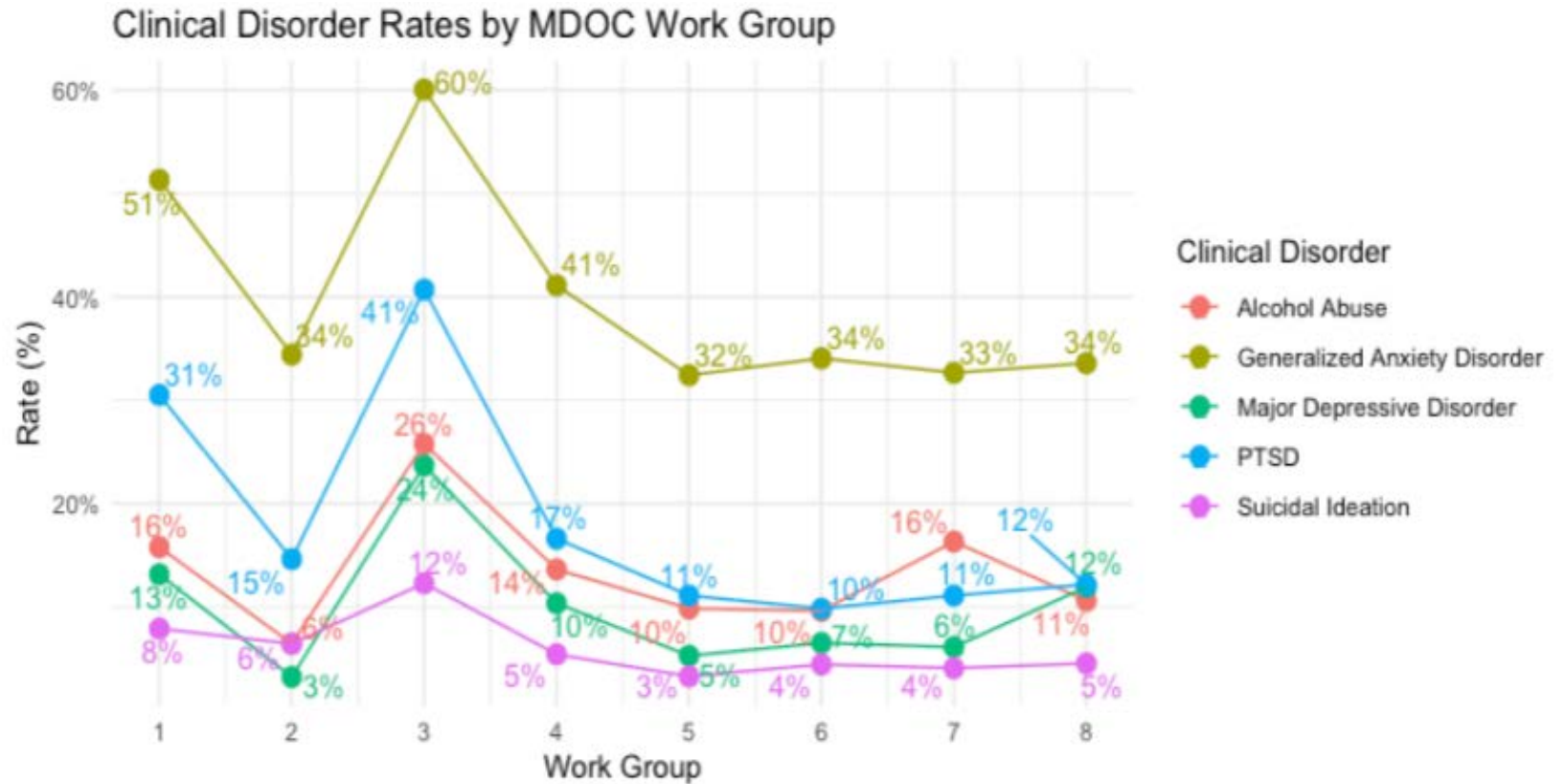


Lerman A. Officer health and wellness: results from the California Correctional Officers Survey.
Available at: https://gspp.berkeley.edu/assets/uploads/research/pdf/executive_summary_08142018.pdf.

Michigan DOC Correctional Worker Survey

2019 – 3,502 DOC correctional workers

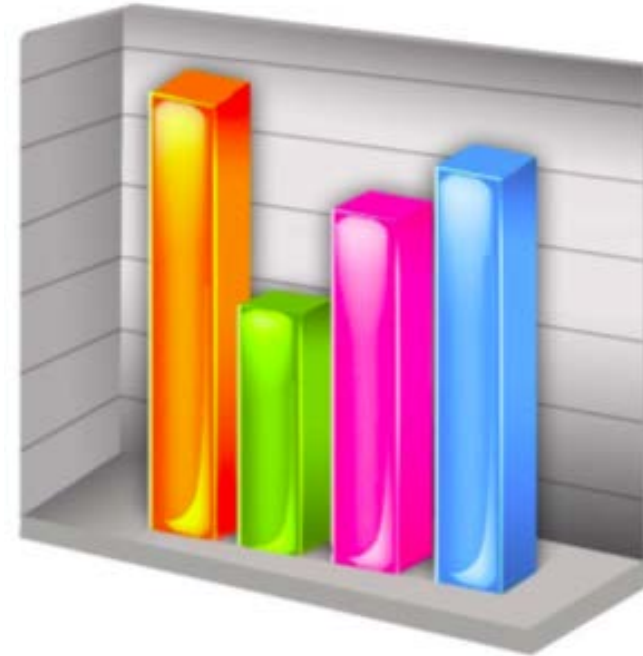
- The effects of job dissatisfaction, demoralization and exhaustion at work has a greater impact on mental and physical health than exposure to danger or trauma
- Lack of input into decision-making or inadequate employment benefits is a greater risk to mental health than physical risks
- As work health deteriorates, mental health, family health and physical health also deteriorate significantly.



Spinaris, Caterina, & Nicole Brocato (2019) Descriptive Study of Michigan Department of Corrections Staff Well-being: Contributing Factors, outcomes, and Actionable Solutions. Desert Waters Correctional Outreach and Gallium Social Sciences. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/corrections/MDOC_Staff_Well-being_Report_660565_7.pdf

Poll # 2: COVID-19

How many of you know of a colleague at your workplace who has been diagnosed with COVID-19? (this includes yourself as well)



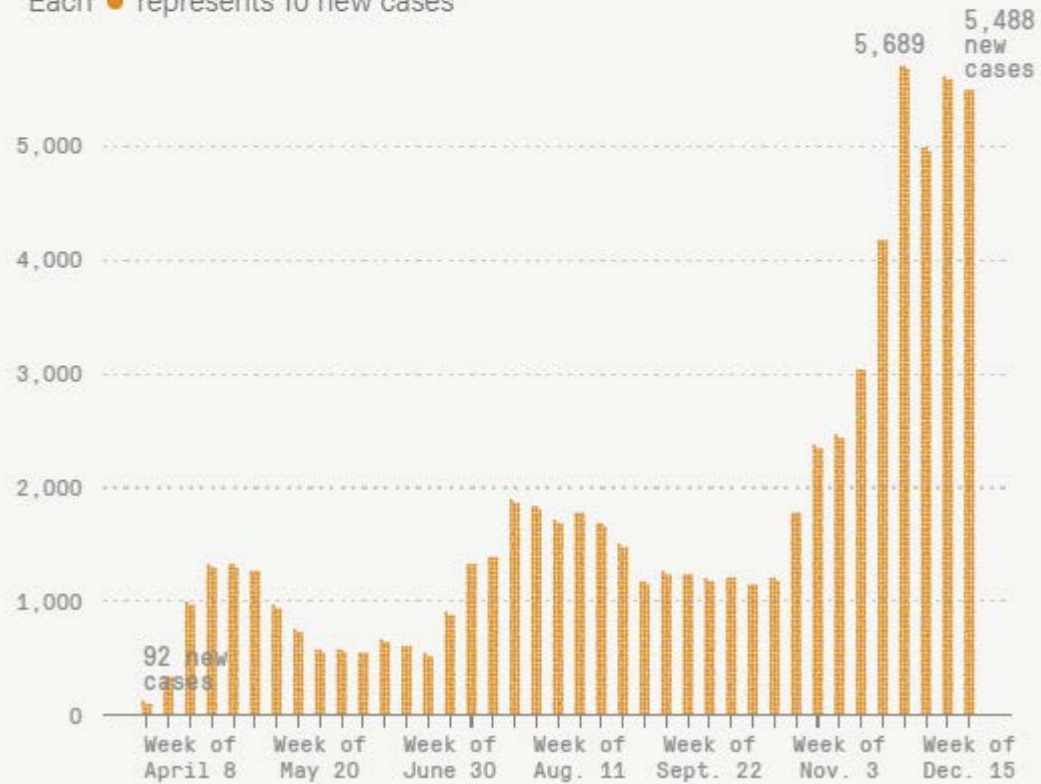
There have been at least

67,883 cases

of coronavirus reported among prison staff.

46,598 staff have recovered.

Each ● represents 10 new cases

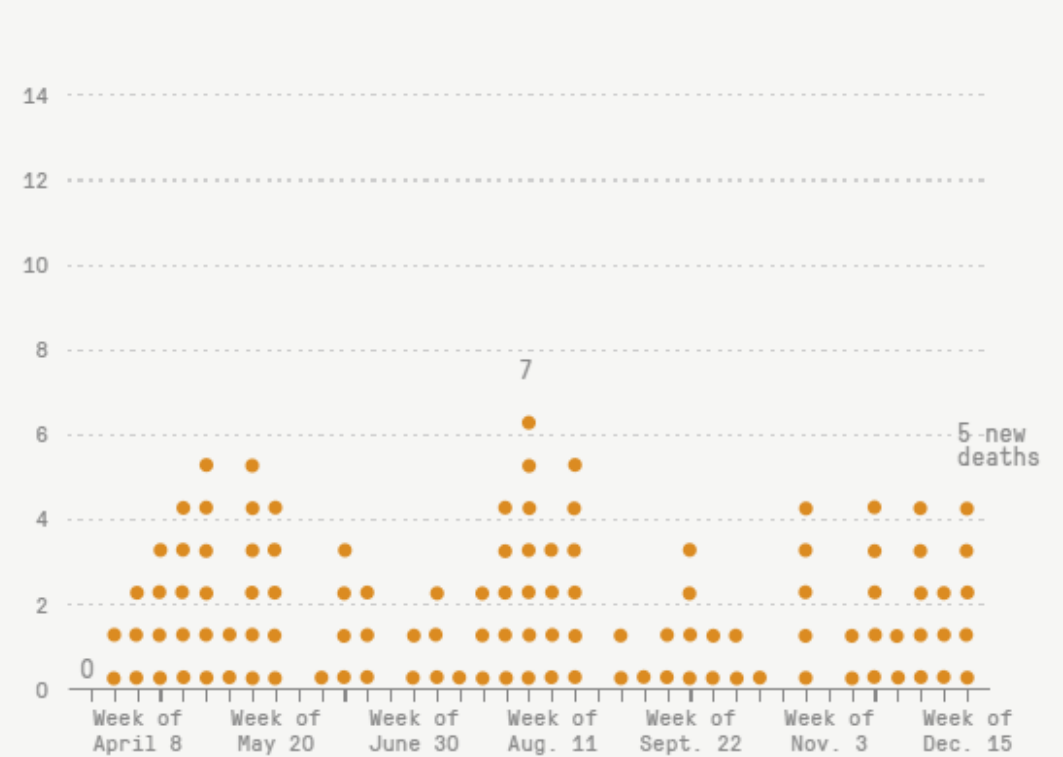


There have been at least

113 deaths

from coronavirus reported among prison staff.

Each ● represents one new death



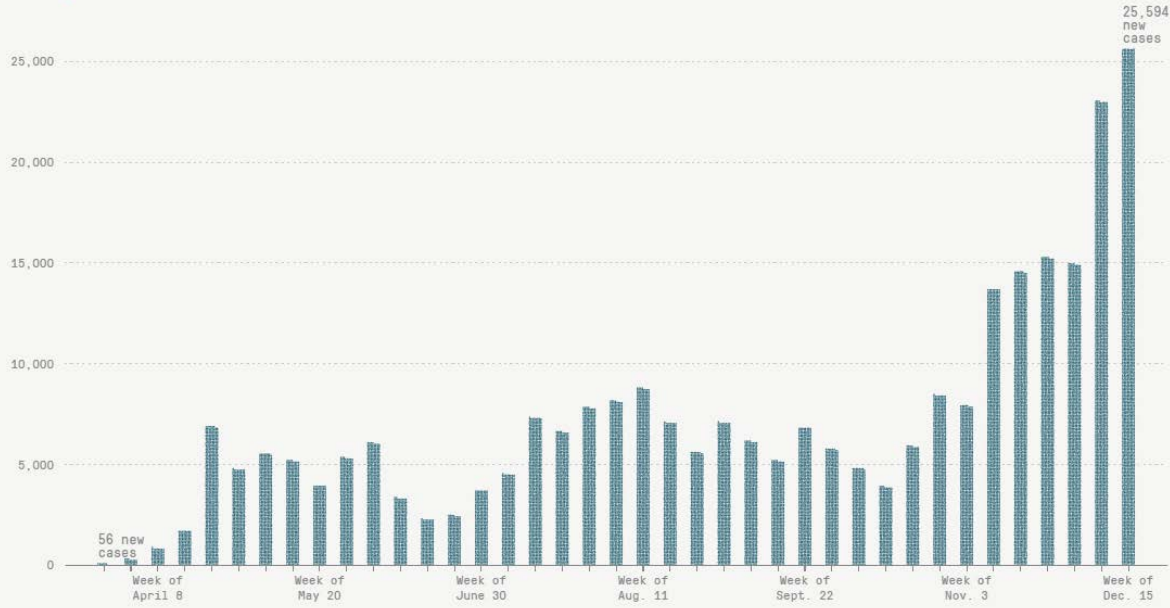
There have been at least

276,235 cases

of coronavirus reported among prisoners.

186,881 prisoners have recovered.

Each ● represents 10 new cases

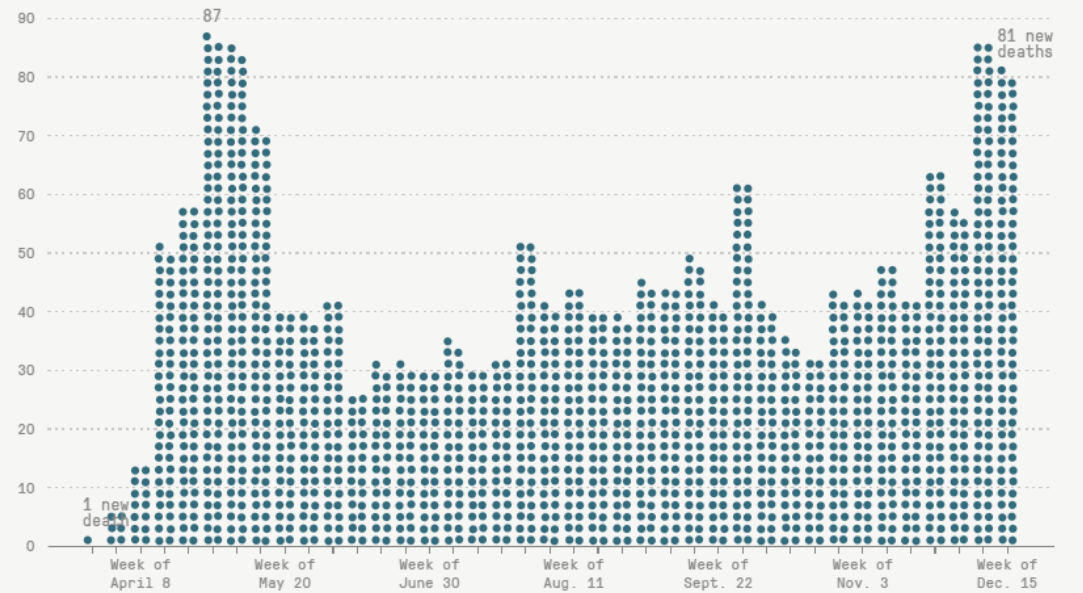


There have been at least

1,738 deaths

from coronavirus reported among prisoners.

Each ● represents one new death



Responding to Stress

Some Wounds
are INVISIBLE

"The reason that so many of our public servants suffer in silence is that they fear the unknown. It is easier to suffer in silence than to fear losing one's gun, badge, career, and the respect of fellow officers."

—Olivia Johnson, DM
BJA VALOR Program

Correctional Workers Want Resources to Address Chronic Stress

- Only 18% of COs have used the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). 20% expressed concern about the confidentiality of these services.
 - 15% were concerned about negative consequences from management, 13% worry about judgment from co-workers and 11% fear losing their job if they utilized EAP

Type of Resource	% Interested or Very Interested
Confidential links to counselors or therapists	49%
Online/digital resources related to health and well-being	58%
Anonymous hotline for law enforcement	43%
Stress management training	88%
Trauma/PTSD training	82%
Training in personal nutrition and exercise	86%

Evidence-based Responses to Improve Wellness

Recommendations

- Comprehensive employee wellness must involve both top-down and bottom-up involvement, organizationally and individually
 - Policy changes need to occur simultaneously with training and educational strategies
- Invest in employees work and social health
 - Employee benefits that include gym membership, positive interactions and support from supervisors and co-workers
 - Limit mandatory overtime, offer support for families
- Peer Support
 - Training Correctional Officers / Workers within the facility to be in-house Peer Support
 - **Virtual support / podcasts by correctional officers:** <https://www.corrections1.com/columnists/tier-talk>

Spinaris, Caterina, & Nicole Brocato (2019) Descriptive Study of Michigan Department of Corrections Staff Well-being: Contributing Factors, outcomes, and Actionable Solutions. Desert Waters Correctional Outreach and Gallium Social Sciences. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/corrections/MDOC_Staff_Well-being_Report_660565_7.pdf

Evidence-based Responses to Improve Wellness

Recommendations

- Program and administrative support for mental health – just like physical health - to encourage employees to engage in wellness activities
 - Compile list of behavioral health providers within the community who are educated (former criminal justice / law enforcement) in the areas of clinical issues of correctional staff and the workplace culture
 - Educating EAP clinicians in correctional staff workforce culture, mental health and family issues and increasing annual sessions to at least ten
 - Provide classes in healthy coping and self-regulation skills to enhance work, social and family health
- Implement social and physical health programs
 - Create policies and events that reinforce exercise, healthy eating, and limited alcohol use
 - Offer problem-solving and communication classes; “management by walking around” while positive communicating

Spinaris, Caterina, & Nicole Brocato (2019) Descriptive Study of Michigan Department of Corrections Staff Well-being: Contributing Factors, outcomes, and Actionable Solutions. Desert Waters Correctional Outreach and Gallium Social Sciences. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/corrections/MDOC_Staff_Well-being_Report_660565_7.pdf

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TRUST

What kind of wellness activities do you engage in?

Wellness Activities

Evidence-Based Tools to Address Chronic Stress

- Cultivate social support
- Eat healthy
- Decrease / avoid alcohol and other substances
- Move your body
- Take a moment in nature
- Find time for your pleasurable activities
- Protect your sleep
- Participation in faith-based / spiritual practices

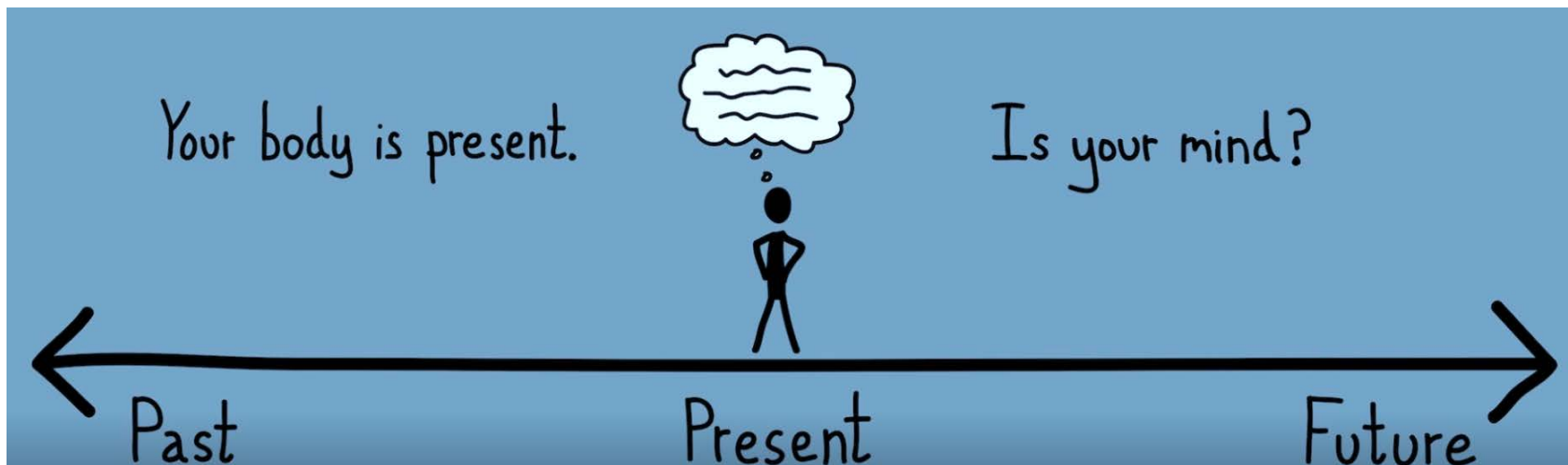
Evidence-Based Tools to Address Acute Stress

- Remember your reactions are normal
- Talk or write about your experience(s) **IF YOU ARE ABLE TO** at the time
- Exercise, even if it's a short walk
- Spend time with supportive people
- Stay away from mood altering substances
- Lower expectations of what you “should be doing”
- Nurture yourself
- Serenity prayer: focus on those thing you do have control over instead of events beyond your control

American Psychological Association. (2019, November 1). *Healthy ways to handle life's stressors*. <http://www.apa.org/topics/stress-tips>

Mindfulness

“You can’t stop the waves
but you can learn
how to surf.”
- Jon Kabat-Zinn



Doug Neill,
<http://www.thegraphicrecorder.com/blog/page/4/>

Mindfulness is an evidence-based intervention

Mindfulness – paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.

- Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR)
- Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT)
- Mindfulness-based emotional intelligence (MBEI)
- Mindfulness-based wellness and resilience (MBWR)
- Increase attentional efficiency
- Increased working memory and flexible, creative thinking
- Improves emotional regulation
- Improves behavioral regulation, reduces fight/flight/freeze and increases more conscious and aware reactions
- Improved changes within the brain

Good DJ, Lyddy CJ, Glomb TM, et al. Contemplating Mindfulness at Work: An Integrative Review. *Journal of Management*. 2016;42(1):114-142.

Mindfulness is an evidence-based intervention

How does mindfulness help in workplace?

- Less mistakes due to increased attention and flexible, more creative thinking
- Increased ability to maintain work performance during emotionally charged environments
- Improved relationship quality: better communication, reduced conflict, greater expression of compassion and empathy
- Increased compassion and empathy with staff, co-workers, clients and loved ones
- Increased cohesion among co-workers
- Mindful leaders engage in nonjudgmental ways with staff which results in increased trust within the workplace
- Reduced levels of burnout and perceived stress, higher levels of job satisfaction
- Development of self-compassion resulting in self-care

Good DJ, Lyddy CJ, Glomb TM, et al. Contemplating Mindfulness at Work: An Integrative Review. *Journal of Management*. 2016;42(1):114-142.



Mindfulness: Where do I start?

01

Engaged Mindfulness

[COMMUNITY | EMI
\(engagedmindfulness.org\)](https://engagedmindfulness.org)

FREE online mindfulness meditation sessions plus other resources!

02

Mindfulness in Public Safety

<https://www.mindfulpublicsafety.org/>

FREE meditation videos, articles and more; special page just for corrections

03

Mindfulness Center at Brown

<https://www.brown.edu/publichealth/mindfulness/class/three-community-mindfulness-meditation-sessions-available-zoom-and-telephone>

FREE online meditation classes

04

Palouse Mindfulness

<https://palousemindfulness.com/index.html>

FREE online meditation resources, course and audios / videos



QUESTIONS

- ▶ Type your questions in the Q&A box on your screen.



Speaker Contact Info:

Roberta C. Churchill | rchurchill@ahpnet.com

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CERTIFICATE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION



1 Continuing Education Hour (CEH) approved by NAADAC, the Association of Addiction Professionals



Pass 10-question quiz with 7 correct answers



Download certificate upon completion of the quiz

January 6, 2021 RSAT webinar CEH quiz link:

<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6124390/January-6-2021-RSAT-Webinar-CEH>

CONTACT



<http://www.rsat-tta.com>



Stephen Keller

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