



# ***A Participatory Needs Assessment to Identify Correctional Workplace Health Interventions 2015 - 2016***

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# Participating Jails

1 Urban (2 locations)

City of St. Louis Division of  
Corrections

2 Rural (1 location each)

County Sheriff Departments



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# Study Goals

1. Create community-based participatory research teams of correctional / jail officers, sheriff's deputies.
2. Explore workplace health needs.  
*Emergent mixed methods: Survey results informed focus group questions.*
3. Share the results with each jail (*59 page report*).
4. Together, develop evidence-based workplace interventions.

# *Better Tomorrow In Corrections*

## Urban Jail

- Participatory team set goals and a mission.
- Developed Team name
  - Logo



# Needs Assessment Data

Social Ecological Model Levels	Participatory Team Meetings	Surveys	Focus Groups
Policy (city/county)	✓		✓
Community / Society (general public/ neighborhood)	✓		✓
Institutional (jail)	✓	✓	✓
Interpersonal (supervisor, workgroup)		✓	✓
Intrapersonal (CO)		✓	✓



# Findings (N=328)

	All (N=328)	Rural (n=48)	Urban (n=280)
<b>Age (average)</b>	44	37	45
<b>Range</b>	19 - 75	19 – 33	24 – 75
<b>(SD)</b>	(11.3)	(11.7)	(10.9)
<b>Gender (female)</b>	52%	27%	57%
<b>Ethnicity (African Am, Black)</b>	77%	2%	86%
<b>Jail Tenure 2 years or less</b>	19%	47%	15%



# Health Findings (N=328)

PROMIS Global Scale	COs Mean Score	General Population Mean Score
Physical Health	46.4 * (SE, 0.44)	50
Mental Health	47.21 * (SE, 0.45)	50

\* $p < .0001$ . Indicates lower, less healthy than general population.  
November-December, 2015. ~80% response rate

*Scoring PROMIS Global Short Form*: Hays, R. D., et al. (2009). Development of physical and mental health summary scores from the Patient Reported Outcomes Measurement Information System (PROMIS) global items. *Quality of Life Research*, 18(7), 873-80. (PMCID: PMC2724630)

# Health Findings (N=328)

Missed work due to medical problem in past 4 weeks	47%
Have become harsh towards people since taking the job	40%
Felt depressed at least 1-2 days in last week	39%
Depression (CESD ) scores in the depressed range (>10)	32%
Bothered by repeated, disturbing memories in the past month (PTSD)	33%
Taking medication for high BP or hypertension	31%



# Findings (N=328)

## Social Climate

*Reported agree or strongly agree*

Employees and management <b>work together</b> as a team.	27%
COs <b>have a great deal of say</b> over what has to be done on their job.	35%
COs are <b>asked about their opinion</b> when a work-related problem arises.	49%

Saylor, W. 1996. Prison Social Climate Survey: Reliability and Validity Analyses of the Work Environment constructs. Federal Bureau of Prisons.

# Actions, Policies, Procedures

- Breaks

*“The policies and procedures change all the time.”*

- Rotation of post

- Posting policies online & available in resource room

*“In terms of other types of officers, I think we’re the low man on the totem pole – we have to pay for parking, horrible insurance, and no*

- Residency

*discounts.”*  
*“Since we’re city employees, we have to stay in the city and most of these guys, they don’t stay here forever and we’ll see them again on the outside.”*

# Actions - Wellness

*64% have Body Mass Index > 30 (obese category). Average BMI = 32.8.*

## Barriers to Exercise

1. Work schedule (54%)
2. Lack of motivation (48%)
3. No free time available (40%)
4. Pain or injury (37%)
5. Fatigue (38%)

*“We have to do that on our own. They don’t provide that for us as far as I am concerned.”*

- BeFit wellness programs.
- New fitness equipment & dedicated workout space.
- Open gym time for employees.

# Actions – Food Access

**“You eat fast or you eat junk.”**

% who eat \_\_\_\_ at least 5 days per week.

5 servings of fruit or vegetables	14%
Whole grain breads or cereals	21%
3 servings of milk, yogurt or cheese	21%

New vending areas with healthier food options.



# Actions – Training

*“Working with other officers – that’s how I got my training.”*

Motivational, leadership.  
Stress and signs of burnout  
Control tactics –  
SRT Train the Trainer

Percent of COs who agree or strongly agree..

Jail training program has helped me to work effectively with inmates

35%

Receives the kind of training that I need to perform my job well

30%



# Actions - Ongoing

Workplace culture issues, problem solve:

## Appreciation & Respect

*“They need to teach supervisors how to respect, honor, and appreciate their officers in order to motivate them.”*

*“The disrespect from the inmates is ridiculous.”*

## Supervisors

*“If they would stop treating us as if we are children – this place would run much smoother.”*

## Consequences

*“My favorite word or phrase they always say is, ‘I’ll write you up.’”*

*“Anything you say to them is insubordinate.”*

## Consistency

*“There’s a lack of communication and it’s not consistent.”*



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# Actions – Reentry Philosophy

% of COs who agree or strongly agree...	
Treatment programs for inmates are a good idea	63%
Inmates at this jail should receive treatment	56%
Supports extending current offender rehabilitation programs in jail	49%

Align role of CO with the facility mission:

*‘...provide opportunities for the inmates to become a more productive citizen upon their reentry...’*



# Actions – Reentry Philosophy

- Involve officers in planning meetings
- Allow day visits, phone calls
- Dynamic: Conflict resolution, anger management, positive interactions
- Allow for more service providers, community partners

*“Every day of accepting reentry philosophy, has the potential to reduce the job difficulty of officer.”*





# Actions – Reentry Philosophy

## 2017 Reentry Fair

- 50 Community Service Providers
- 600 residents attended

*Took full staff participation, engagement, many volunteered...indicates culture shift / change..*



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# Actions – Reentry Philosophy

- Daily reentry programming and events
- Transport through the facility
- Inspiring others
- Meaningful work activities
- COs recognized by program participants



# Conclusion

- Participatory approach
- Philosophy for culture change
- Engage individuals in meaningful occupations
- Continue to learn and refine interventions with evidence

Social Ecological Model Levels
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