

Correctional Officer Suicide And Officer Wellbeing

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Background

Project Title: *Measuring the Effects of Correctional Officer Stress on the Well-Being of the Officer and the Prison Workplace and Developing a Practical Index of Officer Stress for Use by Correctional Agencies*

Funding Agency:
U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice (NIJ)

NIJ Award #:
2014-IJ-CX-0026

Research Partners:
Arizona State University (Hepburn and Griffin);
Northeastern University (Frost and Monteiro);
Sam Houston State University (Tasca)

CO Stress Preliminary Conclusions

Controlling for other factors **administrative support, education, rank, tenure, security level, social support, job satisfaction, and promotion stress** all predict either **generalized stress and anxiety (GSA)** AND/OR **work-related stress (WRS)**

- **Generalized Stress and Anxiety (GSA)** is a significant predictor of emotional and psychological wellbeing and of organizational behavior

- **Work-related stress (WRS)** predicts **emotional exhaustion** but not other emotional and psychological outcomes nor organizational behavior

Background

Project Title: *The Impact of Correctional Officer Suicide on the Institutional Environment and on the Wellbeing of Correctional Employees*

Funding Agency:
U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice (NIJ)

NIJ Award #:
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Research Partners:
Northeastern University
(Frost and Monteiro)

Massachusetts
Department of Correction

Riverside Community Care

Correctional Officer Suicide

Between 2010 and 2015, **at least 16** current or former correctional officers employed by the Massachusetts Department of Correction (MA DOC) died by suicide.

Suicides among MA state correctional employees have occurred across all ranks, early in the career and post-retirement, and across varied correctional settings.

Although the MA DOC runs 17 state correctional facilities, the correctional officer suicides have occurred among officers working at seven different facilities, and have concentrated at three (MCI-CJ, SBCC, and BSH).

Study Objectives

1. To develop a nuanced understanding of the context within which CO suicide occurs.
2. To understand the many impacts of correctional officer suicide, including impacts on families, friends, and colleagues.
3. To assess the effects of fatalities on the institutional environment and on the wellbeing of the correctional staff working in correctional facilities where suicides have concentrated.
4. To identify risk factors for anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation.

Correctional Officer Suicide and Wellbeing: Two Phases

Phase One: 2017-2018

- **Goal:** to develop a rich understanding of the personal, occupational, and institutional factors that can lead to officer suicide and to identify risk factors for suicidal ideation
- **Method:** Rich qualitative case studies based on personnel file reviews and family, colleague and supervisor interviews

Phase Two: 2018-2019

- **Goal:** to assess the impact of the suicides on perceptions of the correctional environment and to assess the wellbeing of correctional officers
- **Method:** Intensive interviews with, and assessments of, up to 300 correctional personnel in Massachusetts across four facilities