Correctional Fatigue & Self-Care

Denise Beagley, M.Sc.
Training and Curricula Development Program Manager
ASU Center for Applied Behavioral Health Policy
Learning Objectives

• Identify signs and symptoms of correctional fatigue
• Develop a personalized self-care plan to prevent correctional fatigue
• Identify actions and behaviors that violate healthy boundaries
• Provide at least two examples of self-care and/or strategies to manage correctional staff fatigue
Do you believe that working in corrections has changed the way you behave?

A. Yes
B. No
Top 5 ways you know you suffer with correctional fatigue

1. During a trip to the store, you wonder if you will run into an offender.
2. You pat search your loved ones before they leave… and after they get home from anywhere.
3. Your password on your home computer is “security”.
4. When family members or friends stop by, you call it a “visitation”.
5. Everybody looks “a little shady” to you.
part I: what is correctional fatigue?
What is Correctional Fatigue?

The condition known as Correctional Fatigue involves the gradual wear-and-tear of the spirit, soul and body of correctional staff as they adapt to the demands of their workplace and career.
Question

Where does most of your stress come from?

A. Family
B. Job
C. Friends
D. Financially
Stress

• Alarmingly, Correctional Officers die far sooner than average and have a higher than expected likelihood of: hypertension, heart attacks, ulcers, and other stress related illnesses

Paoline III, Lambert, & Hogan, 2006
Question

When you are feeling stress, which one of these four options would you choose?

A. Exercise / Physical Activity
B. Alcohol and/or other Substances
C. Watch TV
D. Time Alone
part II: signs & symptoms
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signs &amp; Symptoms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correctional Fatigue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance abuse</th>
<th>Depression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sleep disturbances</td>
<td>Anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaming</td>
<td>Chronic lateness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low self-esteem</td>
<td>Hypertension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent headaches</td>
<td>Workaholism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased irritability</td>
<td>Exhaustion (physical or emotional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less ability to feel joy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reduced sense of personal accomplishment
Inability to cope with problems and daily activities

Depletion of physical and intellectual energy

- Happens when overworked, stressed, and involved in demanding situations over a long period of time

May feel tired, rundown, overwhelmed, and irritable

Warning signs for correctional fatigue

Thinking or talking about suicide or harming oneself

Prolonged depression and apathy

Burnout
Self Assessment For Correctional Fatigue

Answer “yes” or “no” to the questions below:

1. ___ Personal concerns commonly intrude on my professional role.
2. ___ My colleagues seem to lack understanding.
3. ___ I find even small changes enormously draining.
4. ___ I can’t seem to recover quickly after association with a traumatic event.
5. ___ Association with trauma affects me very deeply.
6. ___ My offenders’ stress affects me deeply.
7. ___ I have lost my sense of hopefulness.
8. ___ I feel vulnerable much of the time.
9. ___ I feel overwhelmed by unfinished personal business.

Answering “yes” to four or more questions might indicate that you’re suffering from Community Correctional Fatigue. This instrument is for informational purposes to serve as a quick check; it has not been validated.
part III: factors that contribute to correctional fatigue
What are the **factors** that contribute to Correctional Fatigue?
Factors that contribute to Correctional Fatigue

- Nature of the job
- Role conflict
- Negative workplace environment
- Frustrating work situations
- Case management workload
- Not talking about it

- Exposure to traumatic material
- Coworker personality styles
- Lack of effective support systems
- Lack of community resources
- Fear of negative publicity
Unhealthy ways of coping

- Acts of frustration towards loved ones
- Deny stress
- Minimize issues
- Get depressed
- Get anxious
- Intellectualize
- Use substances to include but not limited to alcohol
Consequences of untreated Community Correctional Fatigue

• Causes people to leave their jobs/careers
• Fall into the agony of addictions
• Self-destructive behaviors
• Suicide/homicide
Burnout Stage

Have you ever felt like you only have half of yourself at work or at home?
In dealing with those who are undergoing great suffering, if you feel “burnout” setting in, if you feel demoralized and exhausted, it is best, for the sake of everyone, to withdraw and restore yourself. The point is to have a long-term perspective.
Question

Do you feel like you are dealing with job burnout?

A. Yes

B. No
Preventing Correctional Fatigue

- Awareness of symptoms
- Do not self-medicate with drugs or alcohol, or other self-defeating addictions
- Implement regular mini-escapes in your life, healthy diversions from the intensity of your work
- Restore a healthy balance in your life
  - Adequate sleep
  - Adequate nutrition
  - Exercise
I used to be a cat...
“When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, ‘Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.’"

-Mr. Rogers
out-of-balance wellness wheel

Occupational

Physical

Intellectual

Social

Emotional

Spiritual

Wellness

what is out of balance in your life?
in-balance wellness wheel

Wellness

- Physical
- Intellectual
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Social
- Occupational
“The tank is empty!”
“Let’s refill it!”
poor self-care

- poor self-care = burnout/dissatisfaction = reduced ability to be empathic
part VIII: next steps
Develop a self-care plan

- Recharge your batteries daily
- Spend plenty of quiet time alone
- Hold connected and meaningful conversations daily
- Don’t be afraid to ask for help
- Write your thoughts down
Questions & Comments
motivational interviewing

awareness/introductory trainings

These are half to full day introductory motivational interviewing trainings for a general audience.

Learning objectives for awareness trainings might include:

- Identifying where in their client/patient consults a guiding style, rather than a directing style, might be useful
- Contrasting directing helping style responses with motivational interviewing helping style responses to client statements
- Describing how the dimensions of the motivational interviewing spirit, collaboration, respecting autonomy, and curiosity, look in their client/patient consults
- Recognizing examples of resistance talk and change talk in client statements. Practicing responding to client statements with reflections and open-ended questions, with the intent of soliciting change talk
Resources

- Professional Quality of Life Compassion Satisfaction, Compassion Fatigue and Secondary Traumatic Stress; http://www.proqol.org
- Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project http://www.compassionfatigue.org
- National Institute of Corrections http://nicic.gov/
- Corrections.com