

Our Mission

The Department of Correction shall strive to be a global leader in progressive correctional practices and partnered re-entry initiatives to support responsive evidence-based practices aligned to law-abiding and accountable behaviors. Safety and security shall be a priority component of this responsibility as it pertains to staff, victims, citizens and offenders.

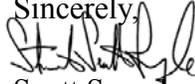
Correctional Employee, Nurses, and Teachers Week, May 7-13

Each year, the first full week in May is set aside as a time to recognize the commitment that correctional officers and employees bring to their difficult and dangerous line of work. This week has also been set aside as Health Services Employee, and Teacher Appreciation Week – all professions that comprise essential components of our correctional family. Somehow it does not seem fair to try to squeeze the appropriate recognition for all of these worthy and beneficial individuals into just one week's time. Believe me when I say, not a day goes by that I am not truly grateful for the outstanding staff that comprises the Connecticut Department of Correction.

As correctional professionals, each and every day, you place yourselves in harm's way to maintain the safety of the public, fellow staff, and offenders as well. Few among the general public can fully comprehend the challenges and dangers correctional professionals face on a regular basis. Not only do you protect society from those unwilling or unable to abide by its laws, you must also feed them, educate them, provide them treatment, and heal them. You also work cooperatively with community and religious organizations, state and local authorities and inmates' families to help ensure the successful reintegration of offenders into society.

I want to also acknowledge the members of our agency who provide the daily services which are vital to the successful operation of our agency: our administrative and clerical staff, computer support and maintenance, our teachers and health services members, mail room and human resources members, and all those who perform their duties without much fanfare while representing the best of our Department.

On behalf of myself and the entire Executive Team please remember this - not just for this week, but throughout the entire year - the good work that you do is important and appreciated. I am humbled to work with such a caring, talented, and dedicated group of professionals.

Sincerely,

Scott Semple
Commissioner

April 12, 2017
through
May 8, 2017

Distributed monthly
to 6,000 staff
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Thanks for Giving

Once again the staff members of the Connecticut Department of Correction were honored for their generosity during the Connecticut State Employees' Campaign for Charitable Giving 2016 Thank You Recognition and Luncheon held April 25, 2017, at the Connecticut Valley Hospital in Middletown.

Out of all the state's agencies, the Department of Correction employees contributed the second highest amount of money to the campaign, with a total of 779 individuals pledging an impressive \$98,284.

The staff of the MacDougall-Walker Correctional Institution recorded the highest percent of participation – a total of 30% of the facility's employees contributed. Meanwhile, the York Correctional Institution had the highest contribution total, with a grand total of \$18,752. In addition to recording the highest contribution level the



staff of the York facility also had one of the highest participation rates at 27%, second only in the Department to the staff of MacDougall-Walker. Also worth noting is that the employees of the Manson Youth Institution tied for second place in the percentage of participation category with 83 individuals making contributions for a rate of 27%.

In recognition of their efforts, representatives from each facility received a commemorative plaque during the luncheon.

All told, more than 5,000 state employees donated over \$1,150,000 to the 2016 campaign which ran from September 6, 2016, to December 9, 2016. The contributions go to hundreds of (thoroughly vetted) participating non-profit organizations. If they wish, employees can specify which charity, or charities, receive their donations. The contributions made



Representatives from the York Correctional Institution proudly display their plaque for donating the most amount of money to the campaign.

by you and your fellow state employees make possible a wide range of vital services, some of which include: shelter for the homeless, protection of the environment, research for cures of diseases, and care for children.

A special thanks to Captain Timothy Newton of the Hartford Correctional Center who served as the 2016 Connecticut State Employees' Campaign Committee Leadership Chair. Thanks also to Counselor Kim Benoit of the York Correctional Institution who acted as the agency's "loaned employee" to the campaign.

Congratulations to the winning facilities and thank you to all who contributed, and/or volunteered to make this year's campaign a great success.



Representatives from the MacDougall-Walker Correctional Institution proudly display their plaque for having the highest percentage of staff participation.

HEP Helps - A Firsthand Testimonial

Retired Lt. Bernier Loubier credits HEP for the early detection of his cancer

After my annual physical on October 3, 2016, with my long-time primary care physician, I left the visit with a clean bill of health. Two days later I was contacted and asked to return to my physician's office for another blood test because they felt they may have made an error on the test - so I returned that afternoon for another blood test. The following day I was contacted again by my physician's office, and advised I had a low iron count in my blood and to just simply start taking daily iron supplement pills. The next day my family and I left for a week long trip to Walt Disney World. When I returned home, I discovered an envelope in the mail which contained instructions for an upcoming colonoscopy. I contacted my physician to inquire about the colonoscopy and he said the low iron issue just did not sit well with him and he wanted further testing. I am only 45-years-old, and even though this test does not typically occur until age 50, he strongly recommend it. Sure I was a bit nervous and scared, and thought I am way too young for that test. None the less, I went and had the testing procedure.

On October 23, 2016, I was diagnosed with colorectal cancer. Completely discovered by a simple blood test, no symptoms whatsoever! Further testing revealed the cancer in the colon had made its way into my liver.

I am a very healthy person, I have never smoked cigarettes, and never consumed illegal drugs. I did consume alcohol but never in high quantity, oops - except the night of my retirement party. I immediately ceased all alcohol consumption when I learned the cancer had spread to my liver.

Prior to the state enacting the Health Enhancement Program (HEP), I only went to the doctor if I was sick, and that was a rare occurrence. I am sure I went several years or more between checkups. However, I did follow the HEP schedule since the day it came out. Sure, when the program began I was angered with it, feeling that all these mandatory medical appointments would be an inconvenience, and besides, "who are they to mandate medical visits?"

I can honestly say today that the HEP helped save my life. I had no symptoms whatsoever, and even now I am symptom free. I would never have gone to the doctor because I never felt sick. To date, I have received nine doses of chemotherapy and underwent a major abdominal surgery in which my right colon was completely removed along with my gallbladder. My surgical team was unable to remove the tumor in my liver as it sits dangerously close to the organ's primary blood supply. They did however implant a pump about the size of a hockey puck in my belly that will directly feed chemotherapy to the liver (modern medicine is amazing).

I am on the healing path now, five weeks post surgery as I write this story. A full recovery and the expectation of a cancer free life ahead of me is realistic, but there are many more chemotherapy treatments in store, as well as the potential for another surgery down the road.



Retired Lt. Bernie Loubier



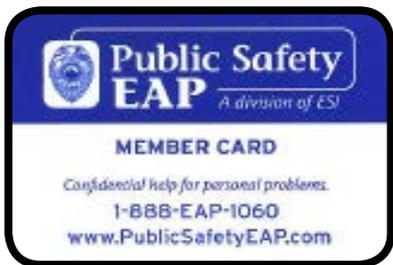
Suicide among COs: It's time for an open discussion

Discussion of suicide within the profession was a taboo topic because corrections employees were not supposed to appear emotionally vulnerable or fragile

By Dr. Michael Pittaro, Faculty Member, Criminal Justice at American Military University

This article first appeared in CorrectionsOne.com and reprinted here with permission: www.correctionsone.com

During my undergraduate education and on-the-job training as a young corrections officer starting in 1989, I was exposed to a plethora of research that focused on the various causes of and responses to prisoner suicides. Yet throughout my 20-year career in corrections, very little (if any) attention was paid to the issue of correctional officer suicides. Discussion of suicide within the profession was a taboo topic because corrections employees were not supposed to appear emotionally vulnerable or fragile. After all, emotional vulnerability often equates to emotional instability, which is perceived to be a weakness within the profession.



There has been much written concerning suicide among law enforcement officers, but very little about suicide among correctional officers. As a university professor, I teach law enforcement and corrections courses. In my law enforcement courses, we go into great depth about the risks of stress, burnout, depression, and suicide rates among police officers, but in my corrections courses the topic is rarely, if ever, discussed.

Existing Research on Suicide in Corrections

Research studies have found high suicide rates in the corrections field. For example, a 2009 New Jersey State Police Task Force Study found that corrections officers have a suicide rate that is twice as high as the rate of police officers and the general population.

A 2013 U.S. Department of Justice's Programs Diagnostic Center Study found corrections officers:

- Have a much higher rate of suicide than those in other occupations.
- Experience some level of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) during their careers.
- On average, will not live to see their 59th birthday.

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Around the Cell Block



INDIANA - An inmate at a northwest Indiana prison who went missing recently was located inside the prison. On Friday May 5, an inmate was unaccounted for inside the pallet shop where he worked at the Westville Correctional Center. Authorities said Sunday, May 7 that the inmate was found, still inside the pallet shop after crawling into mechanical systems in the ceiling.

NEW JERSEY - A 59-year-old flower shop owner has been arrested for allegedly stealing plants and other items from graves at a New Jersey cemetery, possibly for months. Police say there is no evidence the stolen flowers were re-sold in the flower shop.

**Total
Supervised
Population
on
May 8, 2017
19,035**

*On May 8, 2016
the population was
19,798*

Chilling Out at Osborn CI

March was a busy month at Osborn CI as the staff engaged in two fund raising activities for Special Olympics. Nine Osborn staff members jumped into icy water for a good cause on March 25, 2017 at the Ellington, CT Penguin Plunge, including: Captains Jeanette Maldonado and Ramon Nunez; Counselor Supervisors Aesha Mu'min and Washington; Lt. Donald Acus; Counselor Laurie Eagleson; C/O Jeffrey Rodriguez; Secretary Laurie Viscomi; and E. Estevez.

“It was for such a good cause that I don’t think anyone minded jumping into water on such a cold day,” said Counselor Supervisor Mu'min who, along with Captain Maldonado, arranged for the Osborn team to participate in the plunge. “For most of us, this was the first time participating in the ‘Plunge’ and we had a great time.”

Osborn staff also held a chili cook-off on March 31 with staff donating money to benefit Special Olympics for the opportunity to taste and judge the nine different kinds of chili made by their fellow staff members. This year’s unique submissions were a seafood chili and a white bean chicken chili, and some even submitted chilis made using secret family recipes. The event raised nearly \$200 for the cause.

First place winner in the cook-off was officer Roberto Oliveras; second place winner was officer Henry Kozikowski; and third place winner was Counselor Supervisor LaRue McNish. “I have only been Warden at Osborn for a short time, but I was struck by the generosity and community spirit that the staff has displayed so far,” said Warden Weir. “Special Olympics is such a worthy cause and Osborn is dedicated to assisting our partners and neighbors in the community in any way that we can.”



Chili Champions (L to R): Officer Henry Kozikowski, 2nd place; officer Roberto Oliveras, 1st place; and Counselor Supervisor LaRue McNish, 3rd place.

Lasting Impression



Warden Anne Cournoyer (L), presents Leon and Debra Spinks with a commemorative plaque.

In addition to the recent graduation ceremony of the VetDogs program at the Enfield Correctional Institution on April 10, 2017, there was a unique reunion two years in the making.

Back in 2015 Sam, a black lab, became the program’s first graduate. The program helps provide disabled veterans with specially trained dogs. Sam was paired with Leon Spinks, former boxing World Heavyweight Champion and Olympic Gold Medalist. Mr. Spinks, his wife Brenda and his Service Dog Sam were all on hand to witness the graduation of three more dogs who had completed the roughly yearlong primary training with their inmate handlers.

However, the Leon and Debra Spinks, and Sam had an alternative reason for traveling across the country to attend the event, they wanted to personally thank the inmate handler that trained Sam. Once the certificates and dog vest were presented to the handlers and the graduates, it was time for the reunion. Everyone in the room was impressed as the inmate handler

was brought into the room and Sam, after not seeing him for two years, reacted immediately. The black lab’s tail wagged frantically and he was jumping at the chance to greet his trainer. The temporary reuniting of dog and trainer, as well as the gratitude of a world champion, served as a powerful reminder to all those present of the lasting importance of the work that the American VetDogs program performs.

A “Big” Ambassador

In recognition of his continued efforts on behalf of the Big Brothers Big Sisters program York Correctional Institution’s Lieutenant Michael Beaton has been named the Nutmeg Big Brothers Big Sisters Ambassador to the Department of Correction. Lt. Beaton has been a member of the Nutmeg Big Brothers Big Sisters program since 2002. The position was created collaboratively with the Director of Community Programs for the Nutmeg Big Brother Big Sisters, Ryan Mathews. The Nutmeg Big Brothers Big Sisters Ambassador is responsible for assisting in the recruitment of qualified adult volunteers, as well as engaging community, state, and/or corporate stakeholders who are able to assist in building overall program service capacity. By serving as a program and agency advocate, the ultimate goal is to increase participation among Department of Correction staff members in Nutmeg’s community-based mentoring program.

In the Big Brothers Big Sisters community-based mentoring program, volunteer mentors (Bigs) provide mentees (Littles) with dedicated time and attention, at least 6-10 hours per month. During unstructured weekly or bi-weekly outings, filled with conversations and shared activities, they develop a relationship that helps youth manage the everyday challenges that are part of growing up. Over the course of time, children gain confidence in themselves, acquire new skills and competencies, and develop an enhanced capacity to care for others - all tasks that are a part of developing healthy maturity. The community-based program is designed for children ages 6-14 and volunteers ages 21 and older. The program is fully professionally supported by a trained team of enrollment and match support coordinators so matches can grow into lasting, fruitful friendships.

Types of Activities

Unlike Nutmeg’s site-based mentoring program, in community-based mentoring Bigs and Littles have the freedom to coordinate their own, personalized match activities. While each match is fully supported by trained professional match support staff who help provide access to low-cost, no-cost activities on an on-going basis, matches enjoy the flexibility to schedule outings themselves, while participating in activities that they share an interest in. In community-based mentoring, getting together with your Little doesn’t require a special occasion, specific day and time, or even an expensive activity - it just requires a few hours every month doing things you already enjoy.

Volunteer Requirements

Over the age of 21.

Able to make a one-year commitment to spend at least six hours together each month.

Provide at least three references.

Pass criminal and motor vehicle history background check.

Have a valid driver’s license, proof of auto insurance, and have access to reliable transportation.

Complete an in-person interview with a Nutmeg Big Brothers Big Sisters program staff member.

Attend a one-time, two hour pre-match training session at our state office in Hartford.



Big Ambassador, Lt. Michael Beaton

For an application or for more information, you may contact Lt. Beaton at (860) 451-3138 or via e-mail: Michael.Beaton@ct.gov or go to the Nutmeg Big Brothers Big Sisters website at: <https://nbbbs.org/>

Breaking the Silence

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In one of the few studies specifically addressing correctional officer suicide, the Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries indicated that 38 percent of the intentional fatalities were suicides by self-inflicted gunshot wounds, but the actual percentage is largely unknown because the BLS only reports suicides that occur in the workplace.

Suicides that occur at home or elsewhere are classified as non-occupational and are not part of the BLS data. Therefore, more research is needed to develop a better understanding of the prevalence and causes of suicide among corrections officers.

Enhance and Equip EAPs

It is imperative that corrections professionals spearhead a discussion about suicide and ensure there are resources to provide assistance to officers who need it. The good news is that many agencies have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). However, EAPs must be tweaked to provide the necessary support to address suicide.

EAPs must be administered by specialized professionals who:

- have advanced knowledge of the corrections field
- are familiar with the agency and its policies and procedures
- understand the current issues that may have an adverse influence on corrections officers and their families

Furthermore, the EAP programs must be easily accessible to corrections officers and equipped to address a wide range of mental health and substance-abuse issues, which are sadly endemic in the profession.

Establish Critical Incident Response Teams

In addition to robust EAPs, agencies must set up a critical incident response team, to include a trauma psychologist, and provide necessary support to officers who have been exposed to traumatic incidents. Members of the critical incident response team should be tasked with evaluating corrections officers following critical events and following up with them in the days, weeks, and months after the incident.

As clinical assessments are necessary for corrections officers and their families in such circumstances, corrections administrators should maintain a referral network of clinical providers who offer confidential critical incident stress management services.

Engage Family Members

Lastly, the organization should also offer in-service and family trainings that address stress and wellness issues. Many family members and loved ones can benefit from counseling after a traumatic event. Families often need assistance and training so they can learn how to best support their affected family members and how to identify symptoms and early warning signs of suicide.

About the Author: *Dr. Michael Pittaro is a 28-year criminal justice veteran, highly experienced in working with criminal offenders in a variety of settings. Pittaro has lectured in tertiary education for the past 14 years while also serving as an author, editor and subject matter expert.*



Resources

National Suicide Prevention Hotline 24/7: 1-800-273-8255

Crisis Text Line (free) 24/7: Text 741741 to text with a trained Crisis Counselor.

Hopeline - IMAlive: A free, confidential and secure online chat service that provides live help to people in crisis: <http://hopeline.com/> or call **1-800-Suicide (1-800-784-2433)**.

Years of Service

Employees with 20 Years of DOC Service as of March 2017

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Facility</u>	<u>Hire Date</u>
Bernstein, Steven	Corr Indry Supv 2	York CI	1/31/1997
Capasso, Monse	Lieutenant	Enfield CI	1/31/1997
Conway, Gregory	State School Teacher	Enfield CI	1/31/1997
Gonzalez, Carmelo	Correction Officer	MWCI	1/31/1997
Mosena, George	Correction Officer	York CI	1/31/1997
Moyher, Eric	Correction Officer	Brooklyn CI	10/20/1996
Phillips, Thomas	Plnt Facils Engr 1	York CI	1/31/1997
Smith, Joanne	Counselor	Osborn CI	3/31/1997

Employees with 25 Years of DOC Service as of March 2017

Gagnon, Steven	Correction Officer	Hartford CC	3/6/1992
Goyzueta, Daniel	Correction Officer	Hartford CC	3/6/1992
Hunt, Thomas	Deputy Warden	Cntrl Off	3/6/1992
Jurewicz, John	Correction Officer	Hartford CC	3/6/1992
Mulhall, Stephen	Food Svcs Supv 2	MYI	3/6/1992
Murphy, Daniel	Deputy Warden	Hartford CC	3/6/1992
Murphy, William	Warden	CRCI	3/6/1992
Rice, Richard	Correction Officer	York CI	3/6/1992
Rinaldi, Monica	Dep Commissioner	Cntrl Off	3/2/1992
Ryba-Murphy, Rosanne	Counslr Supv	Cntrl Off	3/6/1992
Sarsfield, Mark	Parole Officer 2	Cntrl Off	3/6/1992
Saundry, Linda	Secretary2	Cheshire CI	3/6/1992
Stenson, Judith	Correction Officer	York CI	3/6/1992
Sulewski, Joseph	Correction Officer	MWCI	3/6/1992
White, Katrien	Administrative Asst	BCC	3/20/1992
Williams, Paulette	Counslr Supv	CRCI	3/6/1992

Employees with 30 Years of DOC Service as of March 2017

Pfeiffer, Dineen	Correction Officer	York CI	1/30/1987
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Positive Outcome

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I visited four cancer centers prior to making my decision to be treated by Memorial Sloan Kettering in New York City and to also receive chemotherapy from Midstate Medical center in Meriden, Connecticut, an affiliate of Memorial Sloan Kettering.

The most important thing I have learned through his entire process is to “shop around” so to speak, for the best treatment available. Sure, a six hour round trip from my home to New York City can be a bit of a hassle, but fortunately that is where one of the best cancer centers in the world is located.

The second most important thing is to become educated by the doctors, not the internet. Lastly, even though the diagnosis of any form of cancer deals a devastating blow, remain as positive as you can, rely on your support team, family and friends. Not only does cancer affect the person who has it, it also affects everyone who cares about you.

I have attended 58 medically related visits since October, and I am sure this number will double before I am finished.

They are not an inconvenience, they are necessary to ensure I live happily ever after.

**Lieutenant Bernie Loubier
Retired**



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