

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.

From the Commissioner



We have all heard the saying, that, “the more things change, the more they stay the same.”

Against the backdrop of the ongoing pandemic and these unprecedented times, I was wondering if there is still any truth to that old saying.

There can be no denying that the basic activities of our daily lives, whether at work or at home, have changed.

One of the most obvious changes we as an Agency are experiencing is the 30-year low in our incarcerated population, which stands at approximately 8,900. The current population level represents a reduction of 3,500 individuals in just over one year’s time. Even more impressive is the fact this dramatic reduction was done in a methodical and responsible manner. Another significant change, which is a result of the decrease in the incarcerated population, is the proposed closing of three facilities by July of 2022. To date, only the Northern Correctional Institution has been officially selected to be closed by July 1, 2021.

see [The One Constant](#) /page 6

Unwavering Generosity

Even during times of great uncertainty one thing is clear, the staff members of the Department of Correction (DOC) are among the most charitable group of people in the state. They once again showed their generosity by increasing the amount pledged to the Connecticut State Employee Campaign (CSEC) by more than 22%. All totaled, 590 staff members contributed \$82,979, an increase of \$15,185 over the previous year.

Over the years, the DOC has consistently been one of the leading agencies in employee participation with regards to the campaign. The donations help provide vital services for vulnerable populations and financial support for important causes: Shelter for the homeless, protection of the environment, critical medical research, and care for children and seniors. These are only a fraction of the services provided by the nearly 700 charities that CSEC partners with 100% of contributions going to CSEC and its charities.

see [Charitable Giving Results](#) /page 6

February 17, 2021
through
April 15, 2021

Distributed bimonthly
to 5,500 staff
and via the Internet
throughout Connecticut
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Addiction Treatment Unit Turns 50

Submitted by Deputy Warden Sandra Violette of the Addiction Treatment Unit

Last year, the Addiction Treatment Unit (ATU) experienced its 50th Anniversary in the CT Department of Correction (DOC). I say “experienced” because COVID-19 extinguished our plans to celebrate our 50th Anniversary. We had planned to have a huge celebration at the Maloney Center for Staff Training and Development to highlight our staff’s and unit’s accomplishments throughout the past 50 years. We had planned to invite many retired ATU staff, and have guest speakers discuss how the times have changed throughout the years. It was a huge disappointment to have to cancel our celebration. I am sure that many of you feel that COVID-19 has taken something from you and/or your family over the past year, and that it was not really a year of celebrations. I hope everyone is experiencing good health and the pandemic ends sooner than later. With that said, as the ATU Deputy Warden I wanted to take this opportunity to share some of the Unit’s accomplishments – with a focus not just on the past year, but the past 50 years.

Most recently, you may have noticed, the name of the unit has changed. We went from the Addiction Services Unit to the Addiction Treatment Unit. Many years ago, our unit was viewed as one that “just” provided services to the offender population, from Alcoholics Anonymous to Narcotics Anonymous; with a multitude of outside speakers and volunteers running meetings. That was essentially what most people thought of when they thought of our unit. While we provided treatment then (as we still do today), our name did not signify the work of the addiction treatment programs that we



Members of the Addiction Treatment Unit (L-R): Counselor Supervisor LaRue McNish, Deputy Warden Sandra Violette, Counselor Supervisors Shannon Derby and Trina Kendall.

provide within our unit. Rather than “serving” individuals, the word treatment better exemplifies what we do; we provide addiction treatment to offenders and help them prepare for the next chapter of their lives.

Our unit was formally established in 1970 through Special Act 69-71 with the original mission to develop, coordinate, and implement drug and alcohol treatment within the DOC’s correctional facilities statewide. Several addiction programs were created and implemented within our unit, to include: Tiers I, II and III (outpatient), Tier IV (residential inpatient), and Aftercare (both outpatient and inpatient). Over the years we have continued to evolve and modernize our treatment programs to include Medication Assisted Treatment with Methadone, Vivitrol, and now most recently Buprenorphine. In addition to these programs, we also provide specific treatment for DUI offenders and parolees returning to prison in the Time Out Program (TOP), the female population and the Young Adult population. SMART Recovery is one of our newer programs, which specifically targets offenders aged 16 – 25.

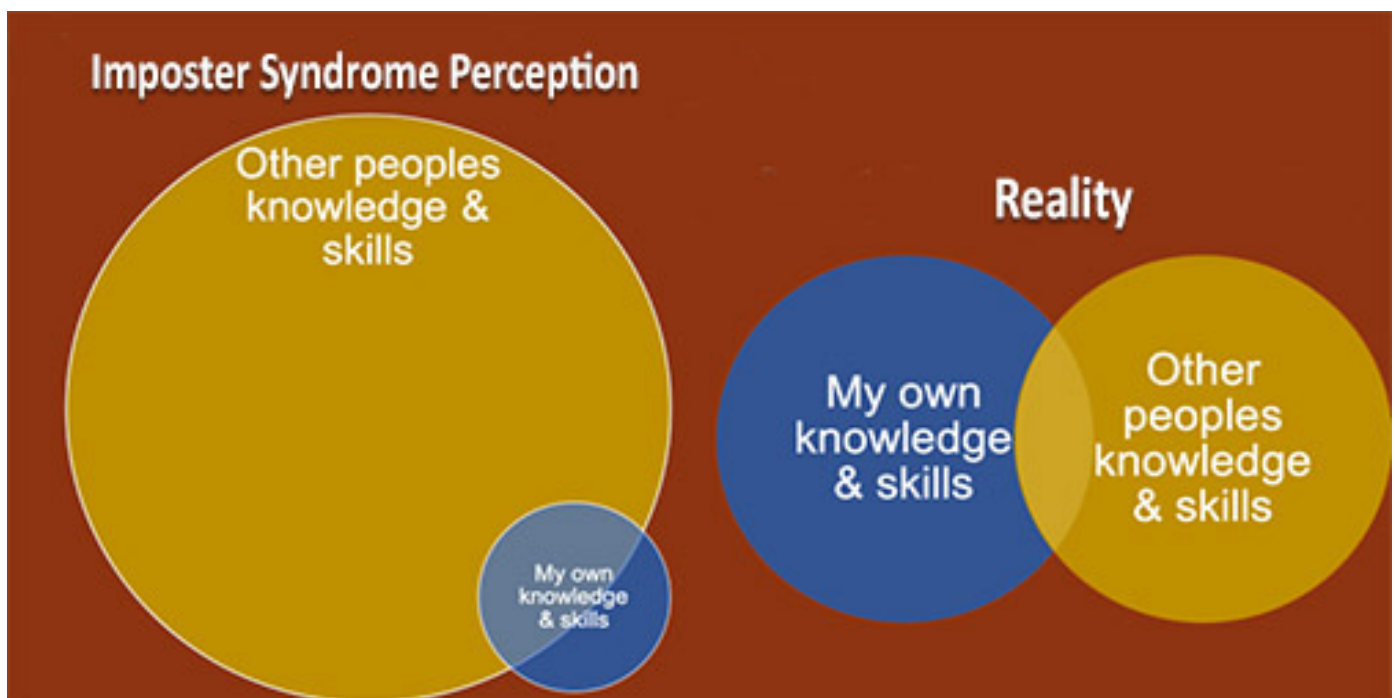
What is Imposter Syndrome

Submitted by: Robert Girard, LCSW, LADC Correctional Substance Abuse Counselor, Garner CI

Have you ever felt like you are not as intelligent or competent as others perceive you to be? Have you ever worked with someone that appears to know so much more than you about your job, to the point where you begin to feel inadequate compared to them?

This type of self-doubt is a primary symptom of something called Imposter Syndrome. The fear of being exposed as a fraud in the workplace can affect anyone, regardless of their career path.

When I began working in the field of social work, a long time before receiving my master's degree, I felt like once I received my Masters in Social Work I would be able to seamlessly solve problems as they were thrown at me. However, once I did earn my master's degree, instead of feeling like I had all the answers, I actually had several moments when I felt like I didn't know anything at all.



I have talked with multiple corrections employees that now occupy a supervisory position, and many of them will often laugh and say, “can you believe they promoted me?”

My response is “Yes, you are an incredible employee with a lot of experience, and you lead by example.” Its conversations like this that make we wonder: why are we often our own biggest critic? It's not enough that we get negativity from others, but we also have to listen to ourselves say that we don't deserve what we get? Imposter Syndrome is not a recognized mental disorder; rather, it is considered a phenomenon (an experience). However, if you are experiencing ongoing self-esteem and/or a sense of failure symptoms, these can be signs or symptoms of depression.

There are a few career events that can trigger Imposter Syndrome such as a transitional experience, new career, or a new promotion. With the amount of promotions occurring in the Department of Correction during the past two years (with more promotions to follow), I felt that it was important to discuss Imposter Syndrome and how to combat it. Perfectionists often set very high expectations for themselves, and any small mistake can feel like failure. Also, “experts” feel the need to know every piece of available information, along with being able to answer every question from people on the topic they are an “expert” in.

Virtual Career Day at York CI

Correction Officers Jasmine Arroyo and Chanti Roche of the York Correctional Institution shared insights into their profession by participating in New London’s High Roads School Virtual Career Fair Day on February 25, 2021.

The Officers gave an overview of their jobs discussing safety and security as well as some of the “tools” in their toolbox that they utilize on a daily basis such as conflict resolution, de-escalation, importance of communication and listening skills. From their perspective as mothers working in a correctional environment they discussed the importance and difficulty of balancing the needs of their families and the demands of their work life (coming to work during snow storms, pandemics, and other occurrences that keep most people at home).



Correction Officers Jasmine Arroyo (L) and Chanti Roche represent the DOC during a virtual career fair.

The High Road School of New London: Middle and High School provides individualized support within a structured environment for students who have not met with academic or behavioral success in a less restrictive environment. The school serves students with a variety of challenges that have prevented them from being successful in accessing their education. With many of these students having disabilities, the two officers made sure to explain everything very thoroughly in an easy to understand manner.

The event organizers from the High Road School wanted participants from diverse ethnic backgrounds with roots to New London, and who may have also experienced adversity or hardships growing up. The hope was to present the students of the school with tangible examples of individuals who achieved success in their careers through hard work and perseverance.

According to Warden Trina Sexton, the two officers, “...did a great job representing themselves, the facility, and the Agency.”

Around the Cell Block



INDIANA - Druidism could soon become a formally recognized religion within the Indiana Department of Correction after a federal judge granted injunctive relief to a prisoner who claimed his religious rights were violated by the lack of communal Druid services in the Indiana DOC.

SOUTH CAROLINA - A man has been charged with attempting to break into a South Carolina prison. The 19-year-old cut a hole in the outer fence and crawled through it carrying four backpacks filled with contraband. His clothing got stuck on the outer fence and he was found laying on the ground bleeding.

NEVADA - A bill proposed in the Nevada Legislature would require the state’s Department of Corrections to create regulations in the handling of transgender inmates, including providing “cultural competency” training for staff who interact with transgender inmates.

**Total CT DOC
Supervised
Population**

**on
April 15, 2021**

12,910

**On April 15, 2020
the population was
16,236**

Human Resources Super Team Achievement Award Winner

For April – June, 2020, Erica Blackmon, HR Generalist 2

Ms. Blackmon has been with the Department of Correction's Human Resources Unit for 2 and 1/2 years. She promotes teamwork when she identifies an issue in her duties that may impact HR by asking questions; doing the research and sharing the information with her unit/supervisor, which helps to educate and provide consistency for all.

Ms. Blackmon gave support and resolved an HR Unit problem by handling two demanding areas both as the Human Resources Specialist for staff of the Manson Youth Institute (MYI), while also assisting with the Correction Officer hiring process. This is not the first time Ms. Blackmon has demonstrated her ability to multi-task to keep the HR Unit functioning when she handled the Webster monumental filing and her duties at MYI.

In addition, she brings professional integrity to the unit through her exceptional performance to ensure her facility is well informed and their business is handled in a consistent and timely manner.



Human Resources
Generalist, Joyce Becker

For October – December, 2020, Joyce Becker, Human Resources Generalist 2

Ms. Becker has been reporting to the Maloney Center for Training and Staff Development (MCTSD) daily during the pandemic. She supported the cadets in Class 276 that were testing positive for the Covid-19 virus, as well as, all the staff who remained onsite working through the difficult times. She kept the staff at the MCTSD well informed of all the rules and changes in operations, while continuing to do her multitude of duties – always with a smile on her face. She is always helpful, friendly and willing to go the extra mile to get things done. It seems as if she never stops working, and is often at MCTSD before and after her regularly scheduled hours, helping to ensure that all aspects related to human resources at the academy run as smoothly as possible.



Human Resources
Generalist Joana Reis

For January – March, 2021, Joana Reis and Katrina Wilson -Human Resources Generalists 2

Joana Reis - While handling the multitude of human resource responsibilities at the MacDougall-Walker Correctional Institution on her own, Ms. Reis will additionally often take time to work with new employees – helping them with HR problems they might have. Her hard work resulted in her being recognized during an HR Appreciation Day held at her facility. Her positive attitude helps her to maintain an exceptional rapport with the facility's administration, employees and union representatives alike. She is known for her ability to problem solve while maintaining a pleasant and supportive demeanor.

Katrina Wilson – Has taken on additional responsibilities on top of her everyday duties.

Her peers refer to her as the “go to” person because she explains the reasoning behind an action, she shares concrete information, is thorough, timely and always willing to help. She is a great team player.

The One Constant from page 1

I realize the consolidation of the total number of facilities achieved by the closing of one, never mind three facilities, is cause for anxiety for correctional and support staff working within the prisons. Let me reassure you that my top priority is to minimize the disruption to those affected by the closures. My chief goal is to accomplish the closing of each of the facilities through transfers and attrition. There is no doubt that this ongoing health crisis is going to continue to bring about changes –some temporary, some permanent - in the ways that we think and work. One of the changes brought on by the pandemic is the massive effort to have everyone get vaccinated. For those of you that have received the Covid-19 vaccine, thank you. For those who have yet to be vaccinated, I encourage you to do so, it's not too late.

Despite the prospect of some things never going back to the way they were, one thing has stayed the same – your willingness, and ability to standup to any challenge no matter how challenging or unprecedented. Most impressive to me is the way that many of you have not only stepped up to the plate, but in fact, have gone above and beyond your normal duties.

You continue to set an extraordinary example of commitment and professionalism that make me proud, each and every day, to serve as the Commissioner of this great Agency.

As far as “things remaining the same,” there will always be one unchangeable constant, that being my deep gratitude for all that you have done, and for what I know you will continue to do.

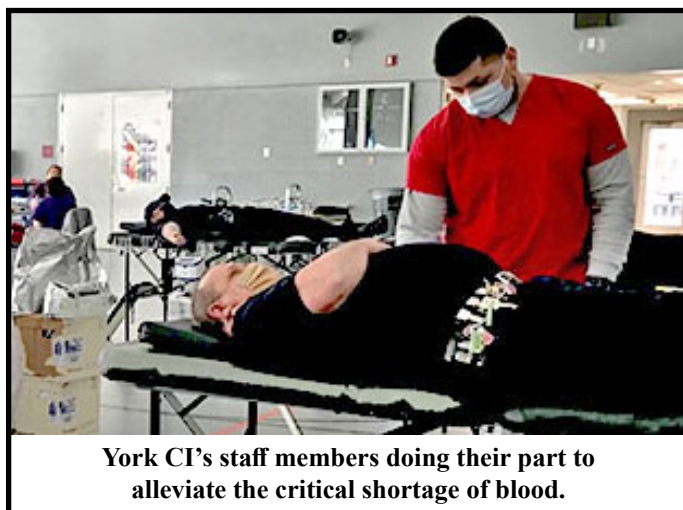
I can never say it enough, thank you.

Rolling Up Their Sleeves at York CI

In response to the critical need for blood, in large part due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the staff at the York Correctional Institution rolled up their sleeves on March 30, 2021, to provide much needed blood donations.

During the pandemic, the American Red Cross has implemented numerous safety and sanitation measures to protect the health of donors while collecting lifesaving donations. In addition, the East Gym of the York facility – where the blood drive was held – was deep cleaned before and after the event.

Thank you to all those who made the selfless act of donating blood.



York CI's staff members doing their part to alleviate the critical shortage of blood.

Charitable Giving Results from page 1

These are only a fraction of the services provided by the nearly 700 charities that CSEC partners with — each thoroughly reviewed by a committee of your peers. CSEC invests in programs that demonstrate visible, measurable results with 100 percent of contributions going to CSEC and its charities.

The staff of the Cheshire Correctional Institution laid claim to Agency-wide bragging rights by having both the most number of contributor with 149, while also contributing the highest total dollar amount with an impressive \$22,490. The facility with the second highest totals was the staff of the Hartford Correctional Center, with 98 individuals contributing \$12,684.

Thank you to all who contributed, and a special thanks to Correction Officer Michael Hanis of the Cheshire Correctional Institution who did a remarkable job in his first year as the Department's CSEC Coordinator.

Combating Imposter Syndrome from page 3

The good news is, there are ways to fight this way of thinking. The first step is to recognize and acknowledge that you are having these thoughts, and work on identifying them when they pop up. Think about the way you think (if that makes sense). Try to be conscious of your thought process, especially the negative thoughts. Once you have recognized this negative thought, then think to yourself, “Does this thinking help or hurt me?” Realize that you were not hired or promoted because you are expected to be perfect and have the answer off the top of your head to every question. You were hired because you were the best candidate for the position, and have a tremendous upside.

Another strategy to help overcome Imposter Syndrome is to share your thoughts and feelings of inadequacy with people you trust, such as a spouse, close friend, or even a therapist.

You may experience moments of doubt - that’s normal. Our jobs can impact our mental health inside and outside of the workplace. The important thing is that you acknowledge your self-worth, and realize that your supervisors are more objective about your abilities than you are. They see something in you that you may not even see in yourself. Life is short, and corrections is difficult. Our priority should be getting home physically and mentally safe to our families.

Stay safe everyone.

Celebrating 50+ Years of Treatment from page 2

Although we have evolved throughout the years, our mission to implement the highest level of treatment remains the same as the day our unit was developed. We continue to move forward with groundbreaking ideas and modern treatment strategies. In 2019, we began offering free training to all correctional staff for continuing education units (CEUs). Most recently, via Microsoft Teams (due to COVID-19) we offered training to all correctional staff for a total of 4 CEUs. To create this training, Correctional Substance Abuse Counselor, Robert Girard, the staff of the Addiction Treatment Unit, and the Quality of Work Life Committee collaborated with Miranda Chapman from the Copper Beech Institute on a four-part training series. The training was broken up over four weeks, one hour a week on Tuesday afternoons titled, *Lunch Break Wellness Series*. The topics of the trainings were: secondary trauma, compassion fatigue, working with anxiety and fear, and why is self-care so important? We believed that these topics would truly speak to correctional employees given the pandemic we are enduring together. The feedback has been very positive, and we are planning future trainings as well. Annually, since the early 2000s our unit has provided a day of wellness for our staff. Some of these days have been at different venues and we have facilitators present on several different wellness topics, to include: self-care, mindfulness meditation, stress management, relaxation techniques, just to name a few. Just as the Connecticut DOC continues to raise the bar for correctional agencies across the United States, the Addiction Treatment Unit will also continue to raise the bar by providing online training to all correctional employees, as well as, treatment specifically tailored to meet the offenders’ needs.

As the Addiction Treatment Unit embarks on the next 50 years, I hope that all correctional staff and frontline workers stay safe and healthy during these challenging times. Thank you very much for all that you do. If nothing else, COVID-19 has been a reminder to everyone that we must take care of ourselves and each other.



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National Crime Victims Rights Week, April 18-24

Every April, the issue of crime victims gets the spotlight during National Crime Victims Rights Week or NCVRW. This year the NCVRW is being observed from April 18 through April 24.

The victims' rights movement grew out of the need to ensure survivors of crime are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect as they engage with the criminal justice system. A central focus of this effort was to ensure victims are informed about both the criminal justice process and their rights.



A national focus on crime victims goes back to 1965. Since then, more local organizations have been created and grown. Federal legislation, court decisions, and in-depth studies have helped strengthen the work of assisting crime victims. Enhanced by governmental action, local crime victim programs began to grow in the 1960s with some of their most significant growth in the 1980s.

In 1975, the first "Victims' Rights Week" was organized by the Philadelphia District Attorney. President Ronald Reagan proclaimed the first national "Crime Victims Week" in April of 1981. Each year in April, the Office for Victims of Crime division of the U.S. Department of Justice leads communities in their annual observances of National Crime Victims Rights Week or NCVRW.

This week is dedicated to learn about victimization, the effect victimization has on individuals, families, friends and the community, and to promote laws, policies, and programs to help victims of crime. Every year, thousands of communities across the nation honor the dedication of those before us that established victim rights and renew commitment to guarantee that all victims have the rights and services they need to recover from crime. Victim Support Services participates in marches, tree-planting ceremonies, and many other activities that are held each year to promote victims' rights and to honor crime victims and those who advocate on their behalf.

According to the most recent Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey, U.S. residents age 12 or older experienced 3.1 million violent victimizations, and U.S. households experienced an estimated 13.3 million property crimes in 2017.

The Connecticut Office of The Victim Advocate (OVA) is honoring the 40th anniversary of National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) by hosting a statewide virtual conference. NCVRW is a time to renew our commitment to serving all victims of crime, honor and remember crime victims and survivors, acknowledge the successes in victim services and the work that is still needed. Join in the celebration and take part in the events and trainings offered during this week.

To find out more information and to register for the OVA's statewide virtual conference go to the Connecticut Office of the Victim Advocate's webpage at: <https://portal.ct.gov/OVA> and click on the link for the National Crime Victims' Rights Week Virtual Conference.

Have You Been Fully Vaccinated?

People are considered fully vaccinated:

2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine

If you don’t meet these requirements, you are NOT fully vaccinated. Keep taking all precautions until you are fully vaccinated.

WHAT YOU CAN DO ONCE YOU HAVE BEEN FULLY VACCINATED

Activity	
Visit inside a home or private setting without a mask with other fully vaccinated people of any age	✓
Visit inside a home or private setting without a mask with one household of unvaccinated people who are not at risk for severe illness	✓
Travel domestically without a pre- or post-travel test	✓
Travel domestically without quarantining after travel	✓
Travel internationally without a pre-travel test depending on destination	✓
Travel internationally without quarantining after travel	✓
Visit indoors, without a mask, with people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19	✗
Attend medium or large gatherings	✗



cdc.gov/coronavirus