

Job Stress Experienced by Correctional Officers in Hawai'i
Related to Working in a Carceral Space

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Abstract

The problem of poor psychological and physical health and wellness among correctional officers (COs) is not new, but it is getting more attention. Extant literature suggests that one of the greatest threats to CO wellness is job stress (Brower, 2013; Huckabee, 1992). A United States Department of Justice Programs Diagnostic Center Study found that COs have: (1) a higher rate of suicide than those in other occupations; (2) experience some level of post-traumatic stress disorder, and; (3) on average, will not live past 59 years of age (Brower, 2013). This research: (a) investigated job stress experienced by COs in Hawai'i working in Carceral Space and (b) informed the need for evidence-based prevention programming to prevent and treat job stress experienced by COs in the system of corrections in Hawai'i. It was found that: (i) COs experienced their work environment as a site of liminality; (ii) COs interpersonal relationships suffered as a result of their job stress; (iii) COs experienced declining health and well-being, which they attributed to their job stress; (iv) COs wanted access to resources/support to help ameliorate their job stress; and (v) COs placed importance on their sense of support within their work environment for dealing with their job stress. The implications of this research suggest that the negative impacts of poor CO wellness cast a long shadow, impacting prisoners, co-workers, families, the entire correctional setting, and the communities in which COs live. It is suggested that individual and system-level research be conducted within correctional facilities to ensure that these institutions are running well and can help safeguard all health and safety.

Keywords: corrections, correctional officer, stress, job stress, prevention, intervention, jail, prison, carceral geography, carceral space, liminal, liminality, liminal carceral space

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Job Stress Experienced by Correctional Officers in Hawai'i
Related to Working in a Carceral Space

Historically, incarceration has been conceptualized as a discrete period of jail or prison time (e.g., 'doing time') distinguished from the rest of the prisoner's life course (Moran, 2013). 'Carceral geography' is an emerging field of research into practices of incarceration that bring the experience of 'carceral *space*' (CS) to the foreground rather than the experience of 'carceral *time*' (Moran, 2013). Carceral geographers often examine the experience of CS by prisoners. But prisoners are not the only people regularly existing within CS.

Steadily rising incarceration rates denote a growing occupation of CS, such as jails and prisons. In 2020, 2.3 million people were incarcerated in 1,833 state prisons, 110 federal prisons, 1,772 juvenile correctional facilities, 3,134 local jails, 218 immigration detention facilities, and 80 Indian Country jails (Wagner & Sawyer, 2020). Therefore, the sum of individuals whose lives intersect with prisoners occupying CS also rises, ranging from families and friends of the prisoners to individuals working in the rapidly expanding carceral system. Regardless, carceral geographers don't tend to examine the experiences of these other individuals.

This research study examines the impact of regularly existing in CS (i.e., jail or prison), which is conceptualized as a site of liminality for correctional officers (COs) who are stressed by constantly alternating between the conflicting roles of employees working 'inside' CS and citizens living 'outside' CS where the rules are vastly different coupled with the day-to-day demands of their occupations over time. This research study also suggests that further exploration of the impact of regularly existing in CS for COs and evidence-based prevention programs designed to prevent and treat job stress experienced by COs working in CS would be beneficial.

Further exploration of these topics shines a light on the negative impacts of stress on the overall well-being of both COs and the institutions in which they work and can be utilized to lend support to the claim that it would be helpful to introduce meaningful programming to prevent and treat job stress experienced by COs into the structure of corrections. Therefore, the goals of this research are to (a) add to the existing body of research on job stress experienced by COs and the impact of regularly existing in CS on employees of CS and (b) inform the need for evidence-based prevention programming aimed at preventing and treating job stress experienced by COs.

This research study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 will focus on theoretical orientation, reviewing how the socioecological perspective and carceral geography research have developed as well as how carceral geography can be used to understand job stress experienced by COs. Chapter 2 will review the existing literature on some of the impacts of job stress on COs. Chapter 3 will focus on research methods designed to explore job stress experienced by COs by identifying the problem being addressed, the role of the researcher, outlining research questions, and formulating steps to best answer the research questions. Chapter 4 will illustrate the results of this research study by outlining themes and major categories using standout quotes from interviews with COs. Chapter 5 will discuss the significance of the results in relation to the extant research and literature on job stress experienced by COs.

CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this research is interdisciplinary, drawing from subdisciplines of psychology (socioecological perspective) and geography (carceral geography). The theories that the theoretical framework leans on are ecological systems theory and the theory

of liminality. Both approaches emphasize the dynamic relationship between persons and their environments. This research seeks to do so by exploring relationships between persons (COs) and their work environments (jail or prison) as well as the potential impacts (adverse psychological and physical health outcomes due to job stress) of the dynamics of that relationship. First, the socioecological perspective and relevant theories will be reviewed, followed by an extensive review of carceral geography.

Socioecological Perspective

The term 'ecology' pertains to the interrelations between organisms and their environments (Hawley, 1950; Stokols, 1992, 1996). The ecological paradigm has evolved across multiple disciplines to provide a general framework for understanding the nature of people's transactions with their physical and sociocultural surroundings (Stokols, 1992, 1996). The field of social ecology, which emerged during the mid-1960s and early 1970s, stretches beyond the original ecological paradigm, which mainly focused on biological processes and the geographical environment by giving greater attention to the social, institutional, and cultural contexts of the relationship between people and their environment (Stokols, 1992, 1996).

Ecological Systems Framework

One of the seminal frameworks of the socioecological perspective is Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979) ecological systems framework, which claims that many systems or contexts shape human development. Specifically, Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979) divided psychological influences on behavior into micro-, meso-, exo-, and macro-system levels of power. Based on Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979) ecological systems framework, McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckler, and Glanz (1988) proposed a socioecological health promotion framework by dividing levels of influence specific to health behavior into intrapersonal factors, interpersonal processes, primary

groups, institutional factors, community factors, and public policy. Each of the subsystems in Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979) and McLeroy et al.'s (1988) frameworks affect behavior and may themselves change as their members are replaced or altered. Therefore, there is reciprocal causation between the individual and the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979; McLeroy et al., 1988).

This research study utilizes the socioecological perspective and theories to explore the relationships between COs and their work environment and issues related to the dynamics of that relationship. The socioecological perspective recognizes individuals as embedded within larger social systems and describes how individuals' interactive characteristics and environments underlie health outcomes (Green & Kreuter, 1999; Sallis, Owen, & Fisher, 2008; Stokols, 1992, 1996). This research study also utilizes the socioecological perspective to show that the work environment of COs (i.e., jail and prison) is a complex ecological system of which COs are a part, and whose relationships within that system impact the functioning, health, and well-being of COs individually and the system of corrections organizationally.

This section reviewed the socioecological perspective and specific theories to show its importance to this research study as a tool for understanding the dynamic relationship between persons and their environments. This research study conceptualizes carceral geography as a specific example of the socioecological perspective; the socioecological perspective represents a macro-level analysis of persons within larger systems, while carceral geography represents a micro-level analysis of job stress experienced by COs in carceral settings. The following section will review geography's emerging subdiscipline of carceral geography.

Carceral Geography

The field of carceral geography emerged when Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot (2012) drew together two pieces of literature to theorize involuntary and coerced mobility, which had been inadequately explored, drawing from qualitative and ethnographic interviews with current and recently released prisoners in Russia. The bodies of literature that Moran et al. (2012) pulled together were mobilities work in geography and a body of work beginning to coalesce around the spatialities of detention and imprisonment. The term ‘carceral geography’ was developed by Moran et al. (2012) to describe the burgeoning field of research into practices of incarceration that, by contrast, brings the experience of carceral *space* (CS) to the foreground rather than the experience of carceral *time*. In Moran et al.’s (2012) conceptualization, CS is viewed broadly as an institution whose distributional geographies and geographies of internal and external social and spatial relations could be explored. Carceral geography explores the individual’s movement in and out of that space, their experience within it, and the physical manifestation of the penal institution in space (Moran et al., 2012).

Some scholars argue for a more nuanced interpretation of carceral geography than has been put forth thus far. On the one hand, some view carceral geography more stringently. Philo (2012) describes carceral geography as a substring of ‘geographical security studies,’ emphasizing “the spaces set aside for ‘securing’ – detaining, locking up/away – problematic populations of one kind or another” (p. 4). On the other hand, as previously stated, some scholars argue for a more nuanced interpretation of the work in this emerging field. Moran (2013) breaks carceral geography into three main areas of interest: (i) the nature of CS and experiences within it, (ii) the spatial or distributional geographies of carceral systems, and (iii) the relationship between the carceral and an increasingly punitive state. Turner (2014) also calls for a more

nuanced interpretation, calling for a re-conceptualization of traditional notions of the border to “unravel the numerous scales, the differing boundaries, the multiple power-space geometries that operate when different types of people move across and between variously defined territorial/legal borders” (p. 242). Turner’s (2014) research explores the nuanced interpretation of carceral geography.

Turner (2014) examines the ‘cross-prison border practices’ of prisoners in employment schemes for offenders who are either in prison and employed on a day release program (also referred to as a work furlough program) or employed while on probation. The purpose of Turner’s (2014) examination of prisoners in employment schemes is to examine the implications of simultaneously belonging to two groups – a group of conventional employees and those with criminal records. Turner (2014) describes this research as “revealing a careful negotiation of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ identities that complicate matters of belonging” (p. 228).

In Turner’s (2014) examination of ‘cross-prison border practices,’ the prisoner who is on work release is conceptualized as an ‘agent of border crossing’:

The body, in effect, becomes the carrier of the border (Amoore, 2006, p. 347-348), acting as the most acceptable scale of political space (Hyndman & de Alwis, 2004, p. 549)...As such, prisoners’ everyday lives engage with a physical and metaphorical boundary between prison on the inside and non-prison outside that performs a unique type of border crossing – that serves to create, re-imagine, blur, and even ignore this border. In this way, the prison wall becomes a porous boundary, with the prison gate facilitating two-way traffic across it. (p. 229)

Turner (2014) emphasizes that the prisoner allows researchers the opportunity to move away from the ‘typical’ populations encountered in border studies to consider the novel power

relationships that ensue as this “particular boundary between ‘outside’ and ‘carceral’ space is crossed (and often blurred)” (p. 242). Turner (2014) goes on to explain that this conceptualization of the prisoner as an agent of border crossing can be situated alongside geographic research that provides a more nuanced understanding of other ‘unique border practices,’ citing examples like the bordered lives of young people (Aitken & Plows, 2010), everyday experiences of homemaking in relation to nature in suburban homes (Power, 2009), and embodied experiences of negotiating the boundary between the physical and virtual world of video games (Ash, 2010). Turner’s (2014) research concludes by considering “prison as one, among many, manifestations of a border” (p. 242).

The theoretical framework of this research study utilizes a more nuanced conceptualization of carceral geography, not unlike the conceptualizations of Moran (2013) and Turner (2014), with added emphasis on Moran’s (2013) first main area of interest: The nature of CS and experiences within it. Some researchers theorize that CS are sites of ‘liminality.’ The following section will describe the theory of liminality and how it fits into the carceral geography framework.

Liminality

A theoretical framework that underpins the field of carceral geography is that of ‘liminality.’ The word liminal comes from the Latin word ‘limen,’ which means threshold – as in, the bottom part of a doorway that must be crossed when entering a building (La Shure, 2005). Anthropologist Van Gennep (1960) first introduced (originally in 1909) the concept of liminality to describe the transition from adolescence to adulthood. However, the idea of liminality did not gain popularity until the second half of the 20th century through the writings of Turner (1967, 1969). The liminal space is a space where social rules are suspended because the subject no

longer belongs to the old world or the new one – temporarily suspended in ‘nowhere land’ (Moran, 2013). Van Gennep (1960) described rites of passage (e.g., coming of age rituals and marriage) as having a three-part structure: (1) separation – the person undergoing the ritual is stripped of the social status that they possess before the ritual, (2) liminal period – the person undergoing the ritual is inducted into the liminal period of transition, and (3) reassimilation – the person undergoing the ritual is given their new status and reassimilated into society.

Turner (1967, 1969) borrowed and expanded upon Van Gennep’s (1960) concept of liminality. However, while Turner (1967, 1969) did draw heavily on Van Gennep’s (1960) three-part structure for rites of passage, Turner (1967, 1969) focused entirely on the second stage – the liminal period. Initially, Turner (1967) noted that the status of individuals in the liminal stage is ambiguous: “the subject of passage ritual is, in the liminal period, structurally, if not physically, ambiguous” (p. 95). Later, Turner (1969) further developed his theory and described liminality as an ambiguous or indeterminate phase or period (limbo), where an “individual passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state” and is “neither here nor there” but “betwixt and between positions” moving from one stage of life to the next (p. 94-95). During the liminal stage, individuals’ roles become increasingly ambiguous, with their rights and obligations unclearly defined and aspects of their future uncertain (Turner, 1969). Turner (1969) argued that liminality begins when individuals are removed and isolated from society and ends with individuals reintegrating back into everyday life and assuming their former roles. Many geographers have utilized the concept of liminality since Van Gennep (1960) introduced it, and Turner (1967, 1969) expanded upon it.

Geographers in many contexts have invoked the concept of liminality. For example, in exploring hotels as liminal sites of transition and transgression (Pritchard & Morgan, 2006),

exploring the street as a liminal space for prostitutes in Brazil (de Meis, 2002), exploring cyberspace as a performative liminal space for new and expectant mothers (Madge & O'Connor, 2005), and exploring Gaza as a liminal territory (Bhungalia, 2010). The above-cited research highlights and conceptualizes how being “betwixt and between positions” (Turner, 1969, p. 94-95) can be problematic for the individuals engaging with or creating those liminal spaces. In such a conception, it can be argued that regularly existing in CS forces individuals into a liminal state. The following section will expand on that argument, introducing Moran’s (2013) concept of CS as sites of liminality.

Liminal carceral space. Some researchers have conceptualized CS as sites of liminality, which Moran (2013) refers to as ‘liminal carceral space’ (LCS). This conceptualization is usually restricted to exploring the impact of existing in LCS on prisoners. For example, Harvey (2012) conducted 70 interviews that explored the early transition of prisoners to prison. This initial period of entry into prison was termed a ‘liminal phase’ in which the prisoner crosses a boundary between the outside world and the prison within (Harvey, 2012). Harvey (2012) explained that prisoners could remain in this liminal phase for anywhere from their first few days of imprisonment to indeterminably longer.

While it has been suggested that individuals who are in a liminal phase are said to have the capacity to be very self-reflective (See Beech, 2011), Harvey (2012) found that the prisoners he interviewed in the liminal phase found it very difficult to accept their transition into prison: “Prisoners felt disconnected in time and space and so detached from reality” (p. 32). Harvey (2012) identified four key elements that made this liminal phase of imprisonment difficult. The first key element identified was a preoccupation with safety:

Many young men did not want to accept the reality of imprisonment and did not want to attach to the world they had been forced to join; this maintained their sense of uncertainty and fear. Because they did not engage with the new environment, they could not master it and feel safe; they felt uncertain, detached, and out of control, so they felt unsafe.

(Harvey, 2012, p. 34)

The second key element identified was uncertainty, mainly concerning personal relationships: “Do they know I am in prison? What are they thinking now? Will my family disown me? Will my girlfriend leave me? Will she be faithful?” (Harvey, 2012, p. 38). Also, uncertainty about what would happen to them when they were released from prison: “About their accommodation, about debts building up while they were inside, about relationships breaking down, about friends disowning them and about losing their jobs” (Harvey, 2012, p. 38). The third key element identified was losing control and freedom: “Surviving this sudden lack of freedom and control over life outside prison, and in relationships with those on the other side, was a major problem during the transitional or liminal stage of imprisonment” (Harvey, 2012, p. 41). Finally, the fourth key element identified was separation and loss: “Prisoners felt they had lost their ‘whole life’” (Harvey, 2012, p. 41).

Harvey’s (2012) study exposed the discomfort of being in the liminal phase for any length of time. Harvey (2012) reflected on what the prisoners he interviewed experienced: “They had to survive being in a liminal state, resting between two worlds, both of which concerned them and not being attached to either” (p. 38). While Harvey (2012) chose to examine prisoners’ experiences within the liminal phase of transitioning into prison, other researchers have chosen to explore the impact of existing in specific sites of liminality within or attached to CS (e.g., prison visiting rooms).

Some researchers conceptualize prison space in its entirety as a liminal space for prisoners transitioning in or out of prison, and others argue that specific sites within (or even attached to) a prison can also be conceptualized as sites of liminality due to the intersection of peoples that interact there. Regarding specific sites of liminality, Jewkes (2005) explained:

Liminality can refer to physical spaces that act as a boundary zone where one group of individuals, or one kind of environment, is distinguished from another. The doctors or hospital waiting room, the prison reception area, and the holding bay for prison visitors all represent liminal spaces. (p. 375)

In a similar vein, Moran (2013) wrote: “Although carceral space seems to be sharply demarcated from the outside world, the prison wall is, in fact, more porous than might be assumed” (p. 1).

Moran (2013) conceptualized prison visiting rooms as LCS, arguing for the “importance of relationships and experiences that take form in these transformative spaces” (p. 2). Moran’s (2013) research considered the experiences of prisoners who come face-to-face with persons and objects that come from and represent their lives on the ‘outside’ as well as visitors’ experiences of the institutionalization of the ‘inside.’ Whether researchers are examining prison in its entirety or specific spaces within or attached to it as sites of liminality, researchers usually limit their examination of these spaces to the context of how prisoners experience them. However, some researchers have begun to examine how non-prisoners experience these spaces.

Comfort (2003) and Codd (2007) explored the impact of existing in LCS by examining the implications of existing in LCS on friends and family visiting prisoners. Comfort (2003) studied the experiences of women visiting loved ones in prison, describing the visiting suite as a “border region of the prison where outsiders first enter the institution and come under its gaze” (p. 80). Comfort (2003) extended Sykes’s (1958) analysis of the ‘pains of imprisonment’ by

theorizing that these women underwent a form of ‘secondary prisonization’ in that they were subject to secondary prisoner status during visits of their prisoner loved ones through their sustained contact with the correctional institution. The process of secondary prisonization is made possible by the liminality of the visitation suite: “It is a *liminal space*, the boundary between ‘outside’ and ‘inside,’ where visitors convert from legally free people into imprisoned bodies for the duration of their stay in the facility” (p. 86). Codd (2007) similarly described how visitors “enter ‘liminal space’ in which they are not entirely prisoners; however, they are within the prison establishment and thus defined as not entirely free either” (p. 257).

This research study departs from prior conceptualizations of CS and LCS by proposing that the entire correctional facility, including specific sites located within and attached to it, can be classified as a LCS for prisoners *and* other individuals, such as visitors and employees. As such, Moran’s (2013), Comfort’s (2003), and Codd’s (2007) works conceptualizing prisoner visiting rooms as LCS and the researcher’s personal experiences working in LCS is the premise for proposing not only that the entire correctional facility is a LCS, but is experienced as such for employees who regularly enter and exit that space, as well.

To reiterate an earlier point: It is not only prisoners who regularly exist in CS. Yet most carceral geographers focus exclusively on the experiences of prisoners, failing to account for the numerous other individuals also regularly existing in CS. This research study expands upon Moran’s (2013) conception of LCS, arguing that other persons who regularly exist in LCS, such as employees, are negatively impacted by the confusion of liminality. In doing so, this research study is the first to use the carceral geography framework to explore the health and well-being of *employees* working in LCS. Specifically, this research study examines the impact of regularly existing in CS (i.e., jail or prison), which are further conceptualized as sites of liminality (i.e.,

LCS), for COs who are constantly alternating between their competing roles – employee existing ‘inside’ of the CS and citizens existing in the vastly different world ‘outside’ of CS. The goals of this research study are to (a) add to the existing body of research on job stress experienced by COs and the impact of regularly existing in CS and (b) inform the need for the development of evidence-based prevention programming aimed at preventing and treating job stress experienced by COs.

Chapter 1 provided a theoretical orientation to the research study, reviewing the socioecological perspective, carceral geography, and relevant theories from both subdisciplines. While these subdisciplines and selected theories have differing epistemological assumptions, their merger provides a more comprehensive understanding of individuals embedded within systems and how that relationship defines individual- and system-level functioning. The sociocultural perspective was introduced into the theoretical framework because it stresses understanding persons in context and asserts that contexts are complex dynamic systems that contain a web of interaction. Carceral geography was introduced into the theoretical framework to substantiate the argument that ‘carceral settings’ have their unique ecology and are sites of ‘liminality’ or LCS, which should be considered when studying individuals working in them. Next, Chapter 2 reviews existing literature on the impacts of job stress experienced by COs.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research indicates that liminality is stressful to those experiencing it. Jewkes (2005) explains: “Passage through the liminal environment signifies uncertainty, vulnerability, chaos, and danger because customary rules are upturned, and normal codes of activity or behavior are suspended” (p. 375). This research study argues that COs are stressed psychologically and

physically by their occupations' liminal nature and day-to-day stressors. Chapter 1 discussed the experience of regularly existing in LCS, particularly for prisoners and non-prisoners, such as employees. Chapter 2 will discuss the psychological and physical impacts of job stress experienced by COs associated with working in LCS.

Job Stress Experienced by Correctional Officers

Certain occupations, such as law enforcement, are known to induce high levels of 'perceived work stress' (Brown & Campbell, 1994; Gershon, Barocas, Canton, Li, & Vlahov, 2009; Horn, 1991; Johnson et al., 2005; Kroes & Hurrell, 1975; Raiser, 1974; Reilly & DiAngelo, 1990; Violanti & Marshall, 1983). Perceived work stress is defined as how workers 'feel strain' associated with their jobs and is related to adverse psychological and physical health outcomes (Gershon et al., 2009; Karacek & Theorell, 1990). For example, perceived work stress experienced by law enforcement is linked to cardiovascular disease and depression (Brown & Campbell, 1990; Collins & Gibbs, 2003; Franke, Cox, Shultz, & Franke, 1997; Franke, Ramsey, & Shelley, 2002) as well as maladaptive and antisocial behaviors like problem drinking, hyper-aggressiveness and violence, both on and off the job (Kohan & O'Connor, 2002; Paton, Violanti, & Schmuckler, 1999; Violanti, Marshall, & Howe, 1985). This research study hypothesized that working as a CO in jail or prison is one such high-stress occupation, as well (See Finn, 1998, 2000; Brower, 2013), and yet the problem of high levels of job stress experienced by COs receives little attention and therefore, less support and treatment, than other high-stress occupations, such as law enforcement.

Before moving forward, the term 'stress' in relation to this research study should be clarified. 'Stress' is operationalized in many ways spanning decades of research and literature (see Thoits, 2010). The terms 'stress' and 'job stress' will be used interchangeably and defined

as the relationship between the person and the environment where the environment is taxing or exceeding the person's resources or endangering the person's well-being (Carlson & Thomas, 2006). The terms 'stress' and 'job stress' may also refer to an employee's feelings of job-related tension, anxiety, frustration, and distress (Lambert, 2004), which can lead to psychological and physical health problems that can damage both emotional and physical well-being (Cooper, Dewe, & O'Driscoll, 2001; Health and Safety Executive, 2001; Thoits, 1995, 2010).

Before moving forward, the terms 'jail' and 'prison' related to this research study should also be clarified. Although research related to CS often uses these terms interchangeably, jail and prison are different in their design and function. The main difference between jail and prison is that jail inmates should stay a short term while awaiting trial compared to prison inmates who stay a long term, having been tried and convicted of their crimes. By nature, jail is a more transient place than prison, with inmates coming and going frequently. In comparison, prison is a more stable place designed for longer-term residence while inmates serve their sentences. For this research study, the terms jail and prison are used interchangeably, and both are considered LCS. OCCC is a jail, not a prison; the only jail on the island of O'ahu, and therefore the researcher has not de-identified the workplace of the participants of this study. However, working as a CO in jail is considered more stressful than working as a CO in prison due to the more transient nature of jail, although both places are inherently stressful.

Although being a CO in jail or prison is considered a high-stress occupation, the problem of high levels of job stress experienced by COs receives less attention than other high-stress occupations, such as law enforcement. In fact, in many ways, the daily pressures faced by COs exceed those experienced by law enforcement officers (Armstrong & Griffin, 2004; Lincoln, Chen, Mair, Biermann, & Baker, 2006). For example, for law enforcement officers, the threat of

violence is periodic (i.e., during citizen encounters only) (Brower, 2013). In contrast, for COs, the threat of violence is constant (i.e., during their work shifts) (Brower, 2013). Also, even though the threat of violence is more persistent for COs than for law enforcement officers, COs are usually not armed (Konda, Reichard, & Tiesman, 2012).

Moreover, law enforcement officers may receive positive feedback and appreciation from the public. In contrast, COs rarely receive such positive feedback, and in many cases, even positive interactions with inmates are brief and fleeting (Brower, 2013). Given that, in several ways, the daily pressures faced by COs exceed those experienced by law enforcement officers, it is puzzling that more attention isn't paid to the topic of job stress experienced by COs.

Compared to law enforcement, significantly less attention has been dedicated to the harmful individual and organizational effects of job stress among COs (Brower, 2013). Furthermore, while the general public acknowledges other public servants, such as law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges, for their essential roles in the criminal justice sector, the roles of COs are often overlooked (Coyle, 2008). In the book entitled *Understanding Prison Staff*, professor of prison studies Andrew Coyle (2008) describes the hidden and often marginalized role of prison staff:

They carry out their duties away from public view. In common with prisoners, they are hidden behind high prison walls. In a disturbing number of countries, they are poorly trained, badly paid, and are given little respect from their governments, other public officials, or the rest of society. (p. 234-235)

Coyle's (2008) point is not lost on COs who reported feeling "unvalued by their managers and the general public" (p. 147). Furthermore, COs are not regarded as 'on par' with other public

service workers, which can be a profound source of resentment and disappointment (Coyle, 2008). For example, one CO commented:

We never get a mention on Christmas day. [On television and radio] it's always, 'Let's give a thought to the policemen, the nurses, the firemen, and the ambulance men who work on Christmas day.' They never mention prison officers. But we give up our Christmas as well to make it a bit better for this lot. (Coyle, 2008, p. 147)

Addressing the health and well-being of COs has not been prioritized, but research findings suggest that it ought to be. Research findings confirm that working in jail or prison as a CO is a high job-stress occupation, which has adverse outcomes on COs (Brower, 2013; Cheek & Miller, 1983; Finn, 1998, 2000; Johnson et al., 2005; Konda, Tiesman, Reichard, & Hartley, 2013; Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000; Slate, 1993). For example, Johnson et al. (2005) explored the relative value of stress across 26 occupations. Of the 26 occupations included, prison staff was one of the six identified (i.e., ambulance, teachers, social services, customer services, call centers, police, prison staff) as being the *most* stressful occupation concerning psychological and physical well-being and as having the lowest levels of job satisfaction (Johnson et al., 2005).

When the experience of stress is extreme or prolonged, it has a powerful influence on psychological and physical well-being, potentially creating substantial adverse effects (Cooper et al., 2001; Health and Safety Executive, 2001). For example, with regards to the impact of stress on psychological health, people who lived nearer to the site of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City reported experiencing more stress in the year following it than those who lived farther away (Lampert, Baron, McPherson, & Lee, 2002; Pulcino et al., 2003). Concerning the effect of stress on physical health, in the years following Hurricane Katrina in Gulfport, Mississippi, survivors of the natural disaster had a rate of heart attacks three times higher than the national

average (American Medical Association, 2009). It should be noted that both examples are the result of exposure to extreme rather than prolonged stress. However, as the following sections will show, the job of a CO is arguably *both* extreme (e.g., exposure to violence can be a daily part of the job) and prolonged (e.g., most COs are required to work overtime due to understaffing and colleague burnout), rendering COs vulnerable to the hazardous impacts of stress.

Finn (1998, 2000) conducted an extensive review of the literature and conducted interviews with over 50 correctional employees to help correctional administrators develop an effective program for preventing and treating job stress experienced by COs. Finn (1998, 2000) found numerous sources of stress for COs, including (a) organizational sources of stress – understaffing, overtime, shift work, unreasonable supervisor demands; (b) work-related sources of stress – the threat of prisoner violence, actual prisoner violence, prisoner demands and manipulation, problems with coworkers, and (c) stress outside the system – poor public image and low pay. Studies have also found that after observing so many released prisoners returning, again and again, COs might eventually come to feel that they are wasting their time because the penal system does not result in rehabilitation (Finn, 1998). Next, the sources of job stress experienced by COs will be described, starting with organizational sources of stress.

Organizational Sources of Stress

Organizational sources of stress (e.g., work overload, role conflict, underpromotion) interact with individual factors (e.g., personality, family problems) to create psychological and physical health consequences for employees (Cooper & Marshall, 2013). Finn (1998, 2000) identified understaffing, shift work, overtime, and unreasonable supervisor demands as major organizational stressors among COs. Understaffing occurs when there are not enough COs available to staff authorized posts, creating many types of stress, including working at a hasty

speed to complete shift work or lack of time to complete required tasks at all (e.g., headcounts, searches, paperwork), concern that there are not enough COs available as a back-up in the event of prisoner violence, and inability to get time off of work (Finn, 1998, 2000). Understaffing also creates extensive and stress-producing overtime for remaining CO staff (Finn, 1998, 2000). Interviews revealed that COs varied in their feelings about overtime – many took great pains to avoid overtime, while others opted to take advantage of the opportunity for the extra income (Finn, 1998, 2000). However, it was reported that the COs who opted to work long overtime hours for additional income tended to produce sloppy work and risk burnout (Finn, 1998, 2000). Supervisor demands were also identified as a source of stress due to COs feeling that they could not fulfill all of their supervisor's demands in the time allotted (Finn, 1998, 2000).

Finney, Stergiopoulos, Hensel, Bonato, and Dewa (2013) also conducted an extensive review of the literature related to organizational stressors among COs, yielding five categories: (a) stressors intrinsic to the job – understaffing, overtime, overcrowding, training, tasks within and outside of the correctional facility, and resources available, (b) role in the organization – role ambiguity and role conflict, (c) rewards at work – personal fulfillment and organizational recognition for their efforts, (d) supervisory relationships at work – quality of supervision and perceived supervisory support, and (e) organizational structure and climate – organizational support and organizational justice. Finney et al. (2013) found that the organizational structure and climate correlated with job stress and burnout, concluding that interventions should aim to improve the organizational structure and climate of the correctional facility by improving communication between management and COs. Some specific ways to accomplish this might include providing COs with a written description of goals and policies, increasing the number of collaborative meetings between management and COs, increasing the transparency of the

processes and factors involved in decision-making, and increasing the support of the COs by formally recognizing their contributions to the workplace (Bourbonnais & Jauvin, 2012; Dussault, Jauvin, Vézina, & Bourbonnais, 2012). Next, work-related sources of stress will be described.

Work-related Sources of Stress

Finn (1998, 2000) identified work-related sources of stress for COs as the threat of prisoner violence and actual prisoner violence, prisoner demands/manipulation, and problems with coworkers. During Finn's (1998, 2000) interviews, COs cited the threat of prisoner violence against staff as the primary source of stress in their occupation. Except for police officers, nonfatal workplace incidents are higher per 1,000 employees for COs than any other profession (Finn, 2000). Prisoner demands and manipulation were also stressful for COs, including cigarette or extra food requests with an implicit quid pro quo of promising not to create trouble or keep other prisoners in line (Finn, 2000). COs cited problems with coworkers as their second-most challenging occupational stressor, such as trepidation that coworkers wouldn't back each other up in confrontations with prisoners because they are too inexperienced or don't have the emotional or physical strength to be effective (Finn, 2000). Of all work-related sources of stress for COs, the threat of prisoner violence, actual prisoner violence, and problems with coworkers are especially salient issues, which will be described further.

Threat of prisoner violence and actual prisoner violence. Finn (1998, 2000) found that COs cited the threat of prisoner violence against staff as the primary source of stress in their occupation. COs are at risk for work-related injuries due to nonfatal and fatal assaults and violent acts, transportation-related fatalities, and overexertion (Konda et al., 2013). For example, from 1992 to 1996, there were nearly 218 incidents for every 1,000 COs, totaling 58,300 incidents

(Finn, 2000). From 1999 to 2008, emergency departments (ED) treated an estimated 125,200 nonfatal work-related injuries experienced by CO staff (Konda et al., 2013). Fatal incidents occur less frequently than nonfatal incidents, but they do occur. From 1999 to 2008, there were 113 work-related fatalities suffered by CO staff (Konda et al., 2013).

Problems with coworkers. Marston (1993) found that COs viewed other staff as more stressful than any other factor except the threat of prisoner violence. Conditions that can cause tension between coworkers are numerous, such as burned-out coworkers venting their frustrations to one another (Cornelius, 1994). Another issue is coworkers competing with one another for choice work assignments, which are usually awarded based on seniority and rank (Brodsky, 1982; Dahl, 1979). There is also the apprehension among coworkers that they will be unable to back up or protect each other during confrontations with inmates (Brodsky, 1982; Dahl, 1979). Lastly, coworkers might take issue with inappropriate behavior toward inmates, such as bringing in contraband, getting too friendly, using unnecessary force, and taking questionable disciplinary action (Brodsky, 1982; Crouch, 1986). Next, stress experienced by COs from outside the system will be described.

Stress Outside the System

Finn (1998, 2000) identified stress from outside the system as a source of stress for COs, such as poor public image and low pay. Regarding COs' poor public image, in Finn's (1998) interviews, one female officer said she routinely tells people she works for the State rather than specifying her specific job due to her fear of their reaction if they find out she is a CO. Vickovic, Griffin and Fradella (2013) conducted an ethnographic content analysis using 489 articles from major newspapers across the United States and found that COs were 'overwhelmingly portrayed negatively' in 80% of the articles. Van Fleet (1992) remarked: "A negative image of corrections

is regularly portrayed in the media “[with COs depicted] as stupid, animalistic, and senseless abusers of socially wronged individuals” (p. 41). Many COs also cited low pay as a source of stress. The salary range for COs is \$31,315 to \$45,376 (Hawai'i Corrections Officer Job Description, 2018). However, this can vary widely depending on factors (Hawai'i Corrections Officer Job Description, 2018). There are other significant implications of stress beyond the organizational-, work-, and outside-related sources of stress for COs. The following sections will touch upon the individual and organizational impacts of the experience of job stress for COs. First, some of the individual effects of job stress will be described.

Individual Impacts of Job Stress

Excessive job stress experienced by COs can result in serious problems, four of which will be described. First, stress may result in physical illness, ranging from heart disease to eating disorders and substance use disorders among susceptible individuals (Cheek & Miller, 1983; Woodruff, 1993). Second, stress can lead to burnout, which produces emotional exhaustion and depersonalization that causes impersonal and cynical interactions and a lack of feelings of personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Third, stress has been implicated in excessive disability retirements (Slate, 1993). Fourth, stress may damage family relationships by COs displacing frustration onto spouses and children and becoming distant by withholding information about their work that they feel family members will not understand (Finn, 2000).

Furthermore, according to the “Correctional Officer Wellness and Safety Literature Review” conducted for the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) Programs Diagnostic Center by Brower (2013), COs: (a) have a higher rate of suicide than individuals in other occupations (Morgan, 2009) – the suicide rate of COs is 39% higher than the rest of the working-age population (Stack & Tsoudis, 1997) and twice as high as the suicide rate of police

officers and the general population (New Jersey Police Suicide Task Force Report, 2009); (b) experience some level of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which is a medical syndrome that includes symptoms of anxiety, sleeplessness, nightmares, and social withdrawal – a national study of 3,599 corrections professionals found that 27% of respondents indicated that they were suffering from PTSD (Spinaris, Denhoff, & Kellaway, 2012) and; (c) on average, will not live past 59 years of age – Cheek (1984) found that the average life span of COs was 59 years of age, which was 16 years lower than the national average at 75 years of age. If the life expectancy of COs remained unchanged since Cheek’s (1984) findings were published, the average life span of COs at 59 years of age would be 20.7 years lower than the national average life span, which was 78.7 years in 2018 (Donnelly, 2018).

While the average national lifespan of COs has not been recently updated, it is anecdotally agreed upon by COs and other corrections employees that COs die too early – often just before or just after retirement age – which is usually between 55 and 60 years of age – because COs are required to have reached 30 years of service and be at least 55 years of age to retire with full benefits. The Office of the Sheriff in Florida (2011) conducted the “Florida Mortality Study” and found that the average life span for Florida Retirement System members assigned to ‘corrections duties’ was 62.4 years of age, which was 12 years lower than the average life span for Florida's general population at 74.2 years of age in 2011 (Parker, 2011). Next, the physical illness and substance use among COs related to job stress will be described.

Physical illness and substance use. Research has linked lowered physical health and stress among COs (Cheek & Miller, 1983; Denhof & Spinaris, 2013; Stadnyk, 2003). Cheek and Miller (1983) asked COs to self-report on illnesses they experienced within the past six months, finding that colds, hypertension, hay fever, trouble with teeth, arthritis, and migraines were most

frequently reported. However, when COs were asked to report on the health of other COs who had experienced heart attacks, 41% reported knowing one or two, 23% reported knowing three to five, and 8% reported knowing six or more who had experienced heart attacks (Cheek & Miller, 1983). When asked how many COs had experienced heart attacks while on-duty, 38% knew one to two, 38% knew three to five, and 3% knew six or more to whom this had occurred (Cheek & Miller, 1983). Additionally, Adwell and Miller (1985) found COs more prone to heart attacks, high blood pressure, and ulcers than the general public.

Due to the sensitive nature of substance use and stress relative to actively working as a CO, the availability of peer-reviewed research on the topic is sparse. Still, research has linked substance use problems and stress among COs (Morgan, 2009; New York State Department of Corrections, 1975; Spinaris, Denhof, & Kellaway, 2012; Stadnyk, 2003; Svenson et al., 1995). For example, Svenson et al. (1995) found that in a sample of 77 Canadian COs, 58% indicated past illicit substance use compared to 20% of Canadians who indicated illicit substance use, suggesting that COs were more likely than the general population to use illicit substances.

Norman Seabrook, president of the New York City Corrections Officers' Benevolent Association, explained that without a proper outlet, many COs turn to substance use because they "can't make the transition between 'This is my family, and this is my job.' So they relate to Johnny Walker, Greg Goose, Jack Daniels" (Lopez, 2014).

Research has shown that comorbidity of other issues experienced by COs is positively associated with a heightened risk of substance use. For example, Denhof and Spinaris (2013) reported that COs meeting the criteria for PTSD and depression concurrently showed significantly higher scores and effect sizes across a spectrum of related health measures, including substance use. Burnout has also been shown to agitate substance use among COs.

Shepherd, Fritz, Hammer, Guros, and Meier (2019) conducted a study examining predictors of alcohol use in 1,039 COs from 14 state correctional facilities. Results of the study indicated emotional demands at work were positively associated with burnout, which was positively associated with COs' drinking, and emotional demands at work had a significant indirect effect on COs drinking through burnout (Shepherd et al., 2019). Next, burnout in COs will be discussed.

Burnout. Stress and low levels of job satisfaction experienced by COs have been linked to burnout (Finn, 1998, 2000; Finney et al., 2013; Griffin, Hogan, & Lambert, 2012; Keinan & Malach-Pines, 2007; Paoline, Lambert, & Hogan, 2006; Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986). Maslach (1993) describes burnout as a long-term stress reaction that principally occurs among professionals who work with people in some capacity, such as teachers, nurses, social workers, and prison staff. Burnout is a psychological syndrome of (a) emotional exhaustion – feelings of being emotionally overextended and depleted of one's emotional resources, (b) depersonalization – a negative, callous, or excessively detached response to other people who are usually the recipients of one's services or care, and (c) reduced personal accomplishment – a decline in one's feelings of competence and achievement in one's work (Griffin, Hogan, & Lambert, 2012; Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000).

Burnout significantly detracts from the quality of life for those who suffer (Finn, 1998, 2000; Paoline et al., 2006; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986). Furthermore, burnout of COs is harmful to both the employee and the correctional organization (Finn, 1998, 2000; Paoline et al., 2006; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986). While burned-out employees may be physically present at work, they may have psychologically withdrawn, which is potentially dangerous for correctional facilities (Paoline et al., 2006). As if the personal consequences of burnout aren't damaging

enough, employees suffering from burnout tend not to treat prisoners or other staff well either, negatively impacting those around them in the workplace (Paoline et al., 2006). Next, excessive disability retirements among COs will be described.

Excessive disability retirements. Stress has been identified as a leading factor in disability retirements among COs (McShane & Williams, 1993; Slate, 1993). Even when disability retirements are brought on by physical illness, the physical illness itself might have been brought on by stress (Finn, 2000). Honnold and Stinchcomb (1985) traced CO disability leave to “heart problems, alcoholism, and emotional disorders all stemming from stress” (p. 47).

Tartaglini and Safran (1997) conducted a study reviewing the work-related impact of psychiatric disorders among COs to examine the effect of psychiatric diagnoses on the occupational functioning of COs. The results showed that 19% of COs suffered from mood disorders, 12% suffered from adjustment disorders, and 8% suffered from nonphobic anxiety disorders (i.e., PTSD, Panic Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder) (Tartaglini & Safran, 1997). Compared to a sample of civilians, COs had a higher rate of mood disorders (19% vs. 11%), adjustment disorders (12% vs. 10%), and nonphobic anxiety disorders (8% vs. 5%) (Kaplan, Sadock, & Grebb, 1994; Kessler, McGonagle, & Zhao et al., 1994; Tartaglini & Safran, 1997). After reviewing 1,029 medical charts of COs complaining of psychological distress, many psychiatric conditions accounted for a substantial loss of full-duty workdays (Tartaglini & Safran, 1997).

Traumatic incidents at work can also be linked to excessive disability retirements. Spinaris, Denhof, & Kellaway (2012) found that exposure to violence, injury, or death-related events is associated with worse scores on health, functioning, and well-being measures. In an interview, the California Youth Authority’s Officer Return-to-Work program coordinator

commented on the impact of a traumatic incident at work on a group of COs, “After inmates killed a civilian employee, 17 officers took disability leave. Seven never returned. Of the five who went for individual counseling, four returned. [The one who did not was the officer who found the body.]” (Finn, 2000). Next, the impact on family relationships will be described.

Impact on family relationships. The impacts of job stress experienced by COs may damage their family relationships. Research has shown that many facets of job stress can produce harmful results for the family relationships of COs, including shift work, dual roles at work and home, chronic fatigue, cynicism, pessimism, sarcasm, flattened drama/stress response, and exposure to trauma, to name a few. (Brower, 2013). For example, understaffing, shift work, and overtime may result in COs not getting time off for special family occasions or crises (Finn, 2000). Also, COs may displace their frustrations onto spouses and children, ordering family members around as though they were prisoners and becoming distant by withholding information about their work that they feel family members will not understand (Black, 1982; Breen, 1986; Finn, 1998, 2000). Behavioral problems for COs may arise, including anger towards family and friends (Morgan, 2009). As a result, COs might feel isolated and estranged from friends and family (Maghan & McLeish-Blackwell, 1991).

The stressors described above can create issues in the family and home lives of COs, leading to difficulties in developing trust with others, increasing the likelihood of divorce, and leaving COs with a lack of connectedness and empathy to human suffering (Brower, 2013; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Furthermore, the negative impact of job stress experienced by COs on family relationships can increase the likelihood of other harmful factors impacting COs’ well-being, such as depression, anxiety, and isolation (Morse, Dussetschleger, Warren, & Cherniack, 2011; Swenson, Waseleski, & Hartl, 2008). For example, Obidoa, Reeves, Warren,

Reisine, and Cherniack (2011) assessed the impact of work-family conflict on depression for 220 COs using questionnaires. In doing so, Obidoa et al. (2011) found that depressive symptoms were high among COs, and work-family conflict was a critical contributing factor to psychological distress. Additionally, work-family conflict can impede a COs ability to perform at work because the CO cannot handle both family and work demands (Obidoa et al., 2011). Next, some of the organizational impacts of job stress will be described.

Organizational Impacts of Job Stress

In addition to the individual suffering job stress experienced by COs causes, those impacts cast a long shadow, impacting prisoners, co-workers, and families of COs, which, in turn, affects the functioning of the entire correctional organization. Job stress experienced by COs is connected to low levels of job satisfaction, damaging correctional agencies. For example, low levels of job satisfaction have been linked to increased absenteeism, turnover intent, and actual turnover among COs (Byrd, Cochran, Silverman, & Blount, 2000; Dennis, 1998; Jurik & Winn, 1987; Paoline et al., 2006; Wright, 1993). Absenteeism and turnover are disruptive and costly for correctional organizations, directly and indirectly wasting human and monetary resources (Lambert, 2001). Furthermore, turnover may force departments to hire less qualified applicants than they would like and require extra taxpayer dollars to pay overtime to officers covering for sick and disabled coworkers, compromising safety at prisons and jails (Finn, 1998).

To summarize, Chapters 1 and 2 revealed that the job stress experienced in the day-to-day work routines of COs coupled with the added stress of regularly experiencing liminality is taxing both psychologically and physically. COs are constantly passing between and negotiating their lives and identities ‘inside’ the context of their occupations within a LCS (e.g., prison employee, rule enforcer, punisher, peacemaker, etc.) and ‘outside’ the context of their

occupations within a LCS (e.g., parent, child, husband, best at barbequing, etc.). Some scholars have applied these constructs to a postmodern society, arguing against the linear progression of transformation through pre-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal stages.

This research study explored if COs are suspended between their roles ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ of CS, causing them to experience permanent liminality, which can negatively impact COs both psychologically and physically. For example, Phillips (1990) argued that the permanently disabled may perceive themselves as “suspended between the sick role and normality, between wrong bodies and right bodies” (p. 851) in a state of permanent liminality. In Phillip’s (1990) conception of permanent liminality, disabling societies create barriers that prevent disabled individuals from completing the passage to social reincorporation. Moran (2013) comments that arguments like Phillip’s (1990) for stasis of liminality “destabilizes the notion that liminality represents a space of linear transformation from one state to another and supports the idea that individuals may become permanently identified with a state of betweenness from which they cannot emerge” (p. 12).

Based on the literature outlined in Chapters 1 and 2, there is a need to reduce the experience of job stress experienced by COs associated with working in LCS. Given that, how can job stress experienced by COs working in LCS be reduced? One possible solution might be to introduce meaningful programming to mitigate and prevent job stress experienced by COs into the system of corrections, which will be briefly discussed in the next section.

Programming

While prisoners usually have programming available to help them cope with the stress of their living environment (e.g., individual and group psychotherapy, church groups, Alcoholics Anonymous, etc.), COs tends to have limited resources designed to help them cope with jail or

prison environment (Morgan, Van Haveren, & Pearson, 2002). It has been suggested that programming may help reduce job stress experienced by COs, yet such programs tend to be unavailable or underutilized (Brower, 2013; Finn, 1998, 2000). However, it should be noted that even if resources specifically designed to help COs cope with the jail or prison environment were made readily available to COs, COs might not initially be motivated to utilize them.

COs tend to have subcultural taboos regarding acknowledging a need for medical or psychological assistance due to popular belief among COs that asking for help is a sign of personal weakness (Brower, 2013). To that end, COs tend to develop machismo attitudes since correctional environments are typically considered ‘tough’ and ‘dangerous’ places of employment (Cheek & Miller, 1983). Indeed, the Zimbardo Prison Experiment found that prison environments contribute to aggressive, rigid, and power-motivated behaviors (Haney, Banks, & Zimbardo, 1973). Unfortunately, COs who subscribe to the subcultural taboos regarding the acknowledgment of a need for psychological or medical assistance and who develop machismo attitudes are far less likely to ask for help during times of stress regardless of how badly they may need it (Brower, 2013; Morgan et al., 2002). One possibility might be for the correctional institutions in which COs work to incorporate meaningful *mandatory* programming designed to reduce and prevent job stress experienced by COs. Participating in such mandatory programming might alleviate the perceptions among COs that they are admitting weakness by participating in potentially beneficial programming.

According to the report entitled “Addressing Correctional Officer Stress: Programs and Strategies” conducted for the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) by Finn (2000), some keys to successfully developing and maintaining a successful stress program for COs are to:

- Appoint talented and dedicated staff who can stand the stress of helping others experiencing stress.
- Get the wholehearted participation of top administrators, union officers, line officers, and family members.
- Maintain confidentiality; provide an array of services, not just debriefings. After critical incidents, train supervisors to spot and refer officers who may be experiencing stress; and change the correctional organization itself to reduce [CO] stress.
- Monitor program activities and evaluate their effectiveness in reducing stress and saving the department money. (p. 13)

Finn (2000) also proposes that developing effective programming for preventing and treating job stress experienced by COs would be widely beneficial to both the COs and the institution as a whole to: (a) save correctional administrators money by reducing overtime costs incurred when COs take sick time or quit because of job stress, (b) improve CO performance by enhancing staff morale, (c) increase institutional safety by reducing distractions caused by stress, (d) improve relations with the union by working together on a program that can mutually benefit both parties, and (e) show concern for employees by demonstrating that the department cares about its staff as human beings, not just as employees.

According to the “Correctional Officer Wellness and Safety Literature Review” conducted for the U.S. DOJ Programs Diagnostic Center by Brower (2013), there is very little research on the prevalence and effectiveness of CO wellness programs and while both the American Correctional Association (ACA) and the NIJ have published guidelines for the development of CO wellness programs, neither is evidence-based. There is, however, a small collection of program case studies detailing seven programs that have been implemented in

correctional facilities across various states available in the NIJs report entitled “Addressing Correctional Officer Stress: Programs and Studies” (2000) written by Finn (See Finn, 2000, Chapter 3). Therefore, the deficiency of research on the job stress experienced by COs and their relationship to the overall organizational functions of the institution significantly hampers the development of meaningful prevention strategies.

Chapter 2 has sought to utilize existing research and literature to illustrate the multilevel impacts of how psychologically and physically stressful being employed as a CO in a LCS is. Chapter 2 has also suggested that further understanding of the adverse effects of job stress on COs may illuminate the need for devising ways to promote CO wellness, which could be achieved by correctional institutions implementing meaningful programming to prevent and reduce job stress experienced by COs. Before proceeding to Chapter 3, a few areas should be expanded. The following section will introduce the local context in Hawai'i and the process of attempting to get buy-in for this research study from governing correctional organizations.

The Local Context

Hawai'i's Public Safety Department (PSD) experiences difficulties, such as understaffing and overcrowding of its facilities. A new jail is slated to be built to alleviate overcrowding. But even though there are plans to create a new jail projected to open in 2023 (Magin, 2018), funding for the new jail has not been solidified, and there are mixed opinions on whether or not the jail should be built in the first place and how the jail will be funded. Also, although multiple open hiring calls for COs statewide have been put out (Staff, 2018), local correctional facilities remain understaffed. Some local news headlines include: “Relief for overcrowding at Hawai'i correctional facilities years away” (Lincoln, 2018), “Hawai'i could partner with a private developer to build Honolulu jail” (Magin, 2018), and “Hawai'i corrections officer: Understaffing

putting lives at risk” (Ching, 2018). Some other local news headlines involving problematic behavior displayed by COs both on and off-duty include: “State investigates after correctional officer brings gun to a career fair” (Nagaoka, 2018), “Allegations of rape and blackmail inside the Halawa Correctional Facility” (Awa, 2018), “Federal judge awards former OCCC inmate \$30K for 2015 beating” (Daysog, 2018), and “Man shot by police was former corrections officer with troubled history” (Fujimori, 2018).

Given that PSD is the subject of the negative local press, the knowledge regarding the health and well-being of COs in Hawai'i generated by this research study could, in theory, benefit PSD. Since job stress experienced by COs is likely connected to the behavior of many COs both in public and at work, the results of this research study may inform future decisions on how to increase the psychological and physical health and well-being of COs in Hawai'i. Given that the knowledge generated by this research study might be helpful to inform future decision-making regarding the health and well-being of COs, several attempts were made to get buy-in from community stakeholders related to corrections, such as PSD. There was back and forth between the researcher and community stakeholders related to corrections over eight months ranging from March 2018 to October 2018. Although it is not customary to include a detailed history of getting buy-in, the researcher believes it is essential to be transparent about the hurdles this research study faced to help future researchers set their expectations and prepare. A summary of that eight-month process follows.

The Process of Buy-in

In March of 2018, the researcher wrote and delivered a cover letter (see Appendix A) and an executive summary of the proposed research (see Appendix B) to PSD officials, asking for their support of the research study. In May 2018, PSD officials expressed that they did not want

to support the study. PSD officials suggested that the researcher approach the union representing the COs (Union) to ask for their support.

In June 2018, the researcher wrote and delivered an updated cover letter (see Appendix C) and executive summary of the proposed research (see Appendix D), asking for the Union's support of the research study. In response, Union officials suggested that the researcher get 'permission' from PSD. The researcher contacted PSD officials to ask again for PSD's support. PSD officials responded by requesting that the researcher rewrite the cover letter and provide a letter of support from the Union.

In response to PSD's request, the researcher had a telephone conversation with a Union official where the researcher was able to get buy-in from the official, which led to another draft of the cover letter (see Appendix E) and an unchanged executive summary of the proposed research (see Appendix D). As a result of back-and-forth correspondence with the Union over a few months, the researcher re-drafted the cover letter (see Appendix F) and the executive summary of the proposed research (see Appendix G) one final time in July of 2018.

In August 2018, the researcher met with a Union official to discuss the next steps. It was decided that the researcher and the Union would draft a letter from the Union to PSD asking again for them to support the research study alongside the Union. In September of 2018, the letter co-created by the researcher and a Union official was reviewed, signed, and sent to PSD. Later that month, PSD responded to the Union's request with a letter signed by PSD declining the Union's request that PSD supports the proposed research alongside the Union.

In early October of 2018, the researcher had a meeting with a Union official to discuss the next steps. In that meeting, the researcher asked if the Union would still be willing to support the proposed research. The Union respectfully declined due to political concerns regarding their

relationship with PSD. Ultimately, the researcher decided to move forward without official buy-in from PSD or the Union. The following section will outline the problem statement and research questions.

Problem Statement and Research Questions

While several research studies have focused on job stress experienced by COs, this study will be the first of its kind to be carried out in Hawai'i. This study will also be the first to explore the topic of job stress experienced by COs using the theoretical framework of carceral geography and LCS, introducing for the very first time to the body of extant carceral geography literature the conceptualization of not only inmates but also employees working in CS as being impacted by the liminality of those spaces, as well. Lessons learned from this study may serve to inform future prevention and intervention strategies to aid in preventing and treating job stress experienced by COs in Hawai'i. As such, three research questions are proposed to inform the foundational research that could provide the basis for the development and implementation of such prevention and intervention strategies in the future:

Research Question 1 (R1): What is the nature of the relationship between COs and their carceral work environment?

Research Question 2 (R2): How do COs cope with job stress?

Research Question 3 (R3): What types of resources/support are available to COs through their carceral work environment to cope with job stress?

As stated previously, this study is a phenomenological qualitative interview study. R1, R2, and R3 are exploratory, having the overall goal of deepening the understanding of job stress experienced by COs related to their carceral work environment and how they cope. Since R1,

R2, and R3 are exploratory, there are no hypotheses. The following section will discuss the research methods, design, and rationale to answer R1, R2, and R3.

The Current Study

As stated previously, the objectives of this research study are to (a) add to the existing body of research on job stress experienced by COs, with the addition of the impact of regularly existing in LCS on COs in Hawai'i, and (b) inform the need for the development of evidence-based programming aimed at preventing and treating job stress experienced by COs. To inform the above-stated objectives, the researcher employed a qualitative phenomenological interview study with 20 COs formerly or currently employed at OCCC. During interviews, a semi-structured interview guide was used to ask participants to share their experiences working in jail to understand better the relationships between COs and the carceral environments in which they work. Next, Chapter 3 will focus on research methods designed to explore job stress experienced by COs by identifying the problem being addressed, the role of the researcher, outlining research questions, and formulating steps to best answer research questions.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This research study investigated the interpersonal effects of job stress experienced by individuals working for a larger organization. It is not an investigation of the organization itself. However, the findings of this study do expose some of the shortcomings of the organization, which merits future investigation. The methodology selected for this research study was chosen for its ability to showcase the collective experiences of individuals working within the complex system of corrections. The following section expounds upon the design and rationale of this research study.

Design and Rationale

The researcher conducted a phenomenological interview study following the guidelines created by Patton (2002), Corbin and Strauss (2008), and Creswell (2013) to understand better the experiences of COs in Hawai'i employed at OCCC, which is conceptualized as a LCS. Phenomenology was selected for its philosophical perspective. Creswell (2013) explained that phenomenology requires the researcher to “suspend all judgments until they can be founded on a more certain basis” to honor “the intentionality of consciousness” and “recognize that the reality of anything, objects or otherwise, is inextricably linked to one’s consciousness of it, and what’s more that this intentionality of consciousness prevents a subject-object dichotomy because the reality of an object cannot be understood without the perceived meaning of the experience of an individual” (p. 59).

As such, a qualitative phenomenological approach utilizing interviews as the primary source of data was used to address R1 (i.e., “What is the nature of the relationship between COs and their carceral work environment?”), R2 (i.e., “How do COs cope with job stress?”), and R3 (i.e., “What types of resources/support are available to COs through their carceral work environment to cope with job stress?”). This approach was the most appropriate because the purpose of utilizing the phenomenological approach is to describe the common meaning (i.e., being a CO) for several individuals (i.e., COs) of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon (i.e., job stress related to working in CS in Hawai'i) (Creswell, 2013). This qualitative phenomenological interview study explores the common meaning of job stress experienced by COs working in LCS in Hawai'i to produce a universal essence and better understand the phenomena (Creswell, 2013). Next, the role of the researcher will be explained.

Researcher Role

The role of the researcher is threefold: (1) researcher, (2) community practitioner, and (3) former co-worker. The first role is that of the researcher engaged in science to develop programs and tools through research (Julian, 2006). The second role is that of a community practitioner involved in service to implementing interventions to support community problems (Julian, 2006). The third role is that of a former co-worker who sat alongside COs in LCS for three years, sharing their frustrations associated with working in corrections, laughing in the face of those frustrations, and receiving news of fatalities of co-workers related to their adverse health and well-being. It should be noted that this entire study would not have been possible without the social capital garnered from the researcher's third role as a former co-worker, which is explained below.

I, the researcher, was in a unique position to conduct this proposed research because I spent three years working alongside the COs in the security office at OCCC, conducting randomized video surveillance of COs monitoring inmates on suicide watch, safety watch, and being held in the holding unit as part of an ongoing continuous quality improvement (CQI) project through my former position as a graduate research assistant (GRA) conducting research and evaluation in public safety settings. In doing this work, sitting side-by-side with the subjects that I was evaluating (i.e., COs), I began to gain insight into what COs go through at work, especially the constant job stress they experience.

While this research study is independent and unrelated to my former position as a GRA conducting research and evaluation in public safety settings, my work experience alongside COs at OCCC put me in a unique place to observe the challenges COs face at work and the impact of spending so much time inside of a LCS. My experience observing, sitting alongside, and getting

to know the COs at OCCC is directly connected to the inception of this research study, which sought to explore the stress associated with being a CO and the appropriateness of introducing programming to address CO stress. Next, participants and sampling are described.

Participants and Sampling

Participants. All participants were required to meet the following selection criteria: (a) be at least 21 years of age and (b) be currently or formerly employed as a CO at OCCC. The minimum age of participants is 21 years of age because all prospective hires of OCCC must be at least 21 years of age by completing the Basic Corrections Recruit Class (BCRC). Participants of any ethnicity and gender that met the selection criteria were included.

During the interviews, participants reported working at OCCC for as little as three years to as many as 32 years, averaging 16.5 years. Among all 20 participants, they had accumulated 330 years working at OCCC. Most participants started working at OCCC in entry-level CO positions and later advanced to various mid- and advanced-level CO positions.

Sample size. To fulfill the goals of this research study, twenty participants currently or formerly employed as COs at OCCC were interviewed between August 2019 and April 2021. According to Creswell (2013), the sample size should be large enough to obtain feedback for most or all perceptions, leading to ‘saturation,’ which occurs when adding more participants to the study does not result in additional perspectives or information. Creswell (2013) suggests that 20-30 participants are sufficient to reach saturation.

Type of sampling. Although purposive sampling is the most common sampling technique when conducting qualitative research (Creswell, 2013) as well as the most utilized when conducting phenomenological research (Patton, 2002), this study utilized snowball or chain sampling because it enabled the researcher to recruit participants from a population that

tends to be suspicious of ‘outsiders’ who might be otherwise challenging to recruit. The researcher started with a few relevant and information-rich interviewees and then asked them for appropriate contacts who could provide different and confirming perspectives (Patton, 2002). Specifically, the researcher recruited the first five participants through social referral. After the researcher recruited and interviewed the first five participants, the remaining participants were recruited using snowball sampling; participants referred to other participants they knew were ‘information-rich’ (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002).

Interview setting. The majority of interviews occurred at the outside seating area of a Starbucks location convenient to the participant. There were a few exceptions due to participant privacy preferences wherein the researcher and participant agreed on a different interview location. All participants were interviewed once.

Measures

There are four measures involved: researcher background statement, consent form, interview guide, and demographic form.

Researcher background statement. The researcher recited the ‘Researcher Background Statement’ (see Appendix H) to all participants as part of recruitment. The researcher also repeated it to all participants as part of the informed consent process right before their interviews. The statement served to introduce the researcher, the purpose of the study, how the researcher became interested in the topic of job stress experienced by COs, and what the researcher would do with the research study's findings. Reciting the researcher’s background statement demonstrated transparency to the participants and managed their expectations of the research study results.

Consent form. Before participating, all participants signed the ‘Consent to Participate in an Interview for a Research Project’ form (see Appendix I). The first page briefly introduces the study and gives an overview of what participating in the study involves, such as activities and time commitment, benefits, risks, confidentiality, and privacy. The first page of the form also reminds the participant that participation is voluntary, they can stop anytime, and provides the researcher’s contact information. The second page provides an authorization statement confirming that the participant has read the form and consents to the conditions of participating in the study once they sign the form. There is also a follow-up question asking the participant: “Are you interested in receiving a summary of the results of this study?” If the participant responded ‘yes,’ they wrote down their contact information for the researcher to follow up with them. Once the informed consent form was signed, the researcher administered the interview using the interview guide.

Interview guide. The ‘CO Interview Guide’ (see Appendix J) is a semi-structured interview guide explicitly developed for interviewing COs about their perceived relationship to their work environment and how they cope, emphasizing job stress experienced by COs. The interview guide contains 17 questions (e.g., “What are the most stressful aspects of your job?”) and several prompts (e.g., “Have your stress levels changed over time?”). After the interview, all participants were asked to complete the demographic form.

Demographic form. The ‘Demographic Information Form’ (see Appendix K) is a self-report measure that asks for general demographic information, such as age, sex, marital status, income level, education, having children, and ethnicity. The form also asks for specific details about being a CO, such as how many years spent working as a CO, the shift most often performed, and the average overtime hours worked per pay period.

Procedures

Within two weeks of a participant being recruited, the researcher contacted the participant (via telephone or email) to organize the interview date, time, and location. The researcher also delivered the researcher's background statement to the participant while collecting the specifics of the interview so that the participant could make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. The researcher greeted the participant at the designated time and place to interview on the interview day. First, the researcher summarized and recited the content of the 'Researcher Background Statement,' then went through and explained the 'Consent to Participate in an Interview for a Research Project' form and asked if the participant had any questions for the researcher. Once any potential questions were answered and the participant signed the informed consent form, the researcher turned on the audiotape recorder and commenced the interview following the 'CO Interview Guide' to administer the interview questions. After the interview, participants were asked to complete the 'Demographic Information Form.' After the participant completed the form, the researcher asked if the participant knew of another CO that the researcher should contact to interview. If the participant knew of another CO, the researcher would follow up with the participant within a few days. After the interview, the participant was given a copy of the informed consent form with the researcher's name and contact information in case they had any questions, comments, or concerns later.

Data Collection

All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The interviews ranged from as short as 23 minutes to more than two hours, averaging about one hour each. Transcribed material from all 20 interviews amounted to 354 single-spaced pages (Times New Roman 12-point font),

averaging about 18 pages each. During transcription, there were times when parts of interview recordings were undecipherable due to the participants' voices being drowned out by noises in the environment, such as traffic, weather, or the voices of passersby. However, this loss of data had minimal impact on the findings of this research study.

Data Analysis

The phenomenological approach to data analysis was utilized. First, the researcher went through interview transcriptions and highlighted 'significant statements' (Creswell, 2013). After highlighting significant statements, 'clusters of meaning' were identified from the significant statements to develop into themes (Creswell, 2013). Next, the significant statements and themes were used to write up a description of what the participants experienced (textural description) in the context that influenced how the participants experienced the phenomenon (structural description) (Creswell, 2013). From the structural and textural descriptions, the researcher wrote a composite description presenting the essence of the phenomenon (essential, invariant structure), which should leave the reader feeling that they have a better understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). During the data analysis process, the researcher took precautions to increase the validity and reliability of the study.

Validity and Reliability

Validity. Lincoln and Guba (1985) described validity as the 'credibility' and 'trustworthiness' of research findings. Creswell (2013) suggests eight strategies that qualitative researchers frequently use for assessing validity: (i) prolonged engagement and persistence in the field, (ii) triangulation, (iii) using peer review or debriefing, (iv) negative case analysis, (v) clarifying researcher bias, (vi) member checks, (vii) rich, thick description, and (viii) external audits. For this qualitative phenomenological interview study, the researcher selected three of the

eight strategies to ensure the study's validity: peer review or debriefing, clarifying research bias, and member checking. The three strategies to ensure the study's validity will be described below.

First, the strategy of peer review or debriefing was utilized. The researcher enlisted a 'peer debriefer' for the duration of the study. The researcher had monthly 'check-ins' with the peer debriefer to reflect on and describe the researcher's experiences conducting the research study. The peer de-briefer would ask questions and challenge the researcher's views and experiences. Lincoln and Guba (1985) define the role of the debriefer as 'devil's advocate,' keeping the researcher honest, asking hard questions, and providing the researcher with the opportunity for catharsis by listening to the researcher's feelings.

Second, the strategy of clarifying research bias was utilized. The researcher provided a researcher background statement to the research participants before scheduling their interview and to the reader of the research study at the beginning of the written report of the study. Merriam (1988) posited that explaining researcher bias from the outset of the study is essential so that the reader understands the researcher's position and any preconceptions or assumptions that impact the inquiry, commenting on past experiences, biases, prejudices, and orientations that have likely shaped the interpretation and approach of the study.

Third, the strategy of member checking was utilized. In member checking, the researcher solicits participants' views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988). The researcher selected a few participants to periodically check in with during the data analysis phase of the study to present the preliminary analyses to deduce the accuracy of the account. The researcher acknowledges that member checking violates Husserl's (1983) classic and pure criteria for phenomenological research based on Giorgi's (1985) study identifying common errors among dissertations that claimed to use the phenomenological

method. However, the researcher needed to be transparent with the participants and present the findings as accurately as possible, so the researcher chose to use the strategy of member checking regardless. In addition, to further ensure the protection of participants, the researcher periodically stopped some of the interviews to remind the participants that they were being audio-recorded so that they would be reminded to not reveal details they would not want to be revealed in the context of this study.

Reliability. In qualitative research, the term reliability often refers to the stability of responses to multiple coders of datasets (Creswell, 2013), which, in this case, is interview transcript data. The intercoder agreement is the extent to which coders reach the same conclusion in their analysis, and it is critical when using multiple coders to analyze transcript data (Creswell, 2013). The researcher developed an initial codebook to increase reliability and independently enlisted two coders to double-code the same four transcripts, which the researcher also coded. After that, the researcher and coders met to review the reliability of the coding of those double-coded transcripts. The researcher required at least an 80% agreement rate between coders after the review (Miles & Huberman, 1994). There were three instances among the four double-coded transcripts where there was initially no intercoder agreement, but the coders discussed the discrepancies until they agreed. The researcher and coders made necessary edits and continued refining the codebook as the data analysis achieved a higher percentage of agreed-upon codes and themes. Next, data protection will be described.

Data Protection

The identities of all participants were protected and kept confidential. Data were de-identified using anonymous participant IDs (e.g., COS001) instead of names. All raw data and identifying information (i.e., signed informed consent forms, digital recordings of interviews,

hard copies of interviews) were locked away. Paper files were locked in a file cabinet, and digital files were kept in a password-protected folder – both of which only the researcher had access to. Once all data was collected and analyzed, all raw data was destroyed, eliminating the possibility that the researcher or any other party may access the information contained in the raw data, including the participants' identities. When the study results were written up, the researcher did not use any personal identifying information that could be used to determine the participant. Research findings were reported to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participant to the extent allowed by law. The timeline of this research study is summarized in the next section.

Timeline

Data collection began in August 2019 and lasted 39 weeks or nine months. The study actively lasted 61 weeks or 14 months. Transcribing interviews, coding, and analyzing the qualitative interview study lasted 22 weeks or five months. Next, Chapter 4 will illustrate the results of this research study by outlining themes and major categories using standout quotes from interviews.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study is a qualitative interview study utilizing phenomenological methodology to answer the following exploratory research questions: (1) What is the nature of the relationship between COs and their carceral work environment? (2) How do COs cope with job stress? and (3) What types of resources/support are available to COs through their carceral work environment to cope with job stress? Since the research questions are exploratory, and having no hypotheses, the overall goal of this study is to deepen the understanding of job stress experienced by COs related to their carceral work environment and how they cope. Fourteen themes emerged

from the twenty interviews conducted. Those fourteen themes fell into six major categories: (a) how participants' dealt with the transition into and out of their carceral work environment, (b) how participants' interpersonal relationships were impacted by their carceral work environment, (c) how their carceral work environment impacted participants' health and well-being, (d) participants' access to resources/support for participants through their carceral work environment, (e) participants' feelings of being supported by their carceral work environment, and (f) participants' feelings towards themselves since beginning to work in the carceral work environment. The six categories mentioned above containing fourteen themes and subsequent subthemes will be described in the remainder of this chapter.

Category I: Transitioning In and Out of the Carceral Work Environment

Theme 1: Daily Routines for Going to Work

Participants used daily routines to cope with the transition into their work environment at OCCC. When asked, "Do you feel like you have to prepare yourself or 'gear up' to go into work?" most participants responded that they did. The routines or "rituals" that participants regularly utilized to "prepare" or "gear up" to go to work were to rest their minds, listen to music, do bathroom hygiene activities, and drink caffeine.

Rest mind. Participants' most common pre-shift routine for going into work was "resting" their minds or taking "a break," which manifested in various forms. One participant said they "rest" their mind before their shift: "I just close my eyes and just rest my mind before I open the house [let inmates out of their cells] at six-thirty." Another participant described taking a "mind break" before their shift: "Take a break. Take a mind break before you open up at six-thirty. From six to six-thirty, just don't bother me now." This participant said they liked to take a "power nap" to prepare for their shift mentally: "My routine is I would always try to catch a little

power nap right before and at least try to keep myself calm before coming in. Mentally, just try to prepare for work before my shift.”

Some participants described resting their minds in ways that involved focusing on words, such as reading, praying, or paying attention to the daily news. One participant said they liked to read a daily religious publication to “try to focus on the positive.” Another participant described praying during their commute: “I drive to work. That’s my time for prayer. When there’s no one around, I’ll do it so I’ll be alone, and I can just have my thoughts. But, I’ll do that before I come to work.” A few participants said they liked to read/listen to the daily news. One participant said, “I put on the news [at] four-thirty in the morning. I wake up, and when I’m getting ready, I listening to the news.” Another participant said, “I read the newspaper. Just, you know, rest my mind.”

Listen to music. The next-most common practice to prepare for going to work was listening to music or, as one participant called it: “throwing on the tunes.” One participant explained how music gets them “set” for their shift: “I always play my music fo’ get me going, get me up and going to get me ready fo’ tackle this eight hours, and by the time I hit that gate, I should be – my mind should be set fo’ take on this eight hours.” Another participant explained how listening to music helped keep them “calm” for their shift: “Just listen to music on the way to work. I think it calms me down.” This participant explained how “jamming out” helped them prepare to “expect the unexpected” at work:

I just listen to music coming in. You jam out, listen to it loud, you know? So yea, I listen to music coming in mostly because I used to what’s going to happen at the facility. There isn’t much that is new that I have not seen over the years or will expect. Anything can happen, so you are; it’s ingrained in your mind to be prepared to expect the unexpected.

Bathroom hygiene and caffeine. Several participants also described their physical practices when getting ready for work, like bathroom hygiene activities and drinking caffeine. Some participants said they made sure to have “a cup of coffee” or “a Monster [energy drink]” on their way to work. One participant called their process for getting ready for work their “battle rhythm,” which is described here: “Look professional, brush teeth, shave, drink coffee, drink water, drink an energy drink, take vitamins.” Another participant recited their daily routine: “Get up, use the bathroom, brush my teeth, get my stuff, move it from my room to the living room by the kitchen, get dressed into my uniform, go to the kitchen, make sure I got everything. Every day, same thing.”

A few participants specifically said they prepared for work by taking a shower. One participant described showering as their “daily ritual”: “Always take a shower before work. Always prepare with the same daily ritual to prepare myself for work.” Another participant said, “I shower in the morning, come to work, know my job.” This participant speculated on the helpfulness of their “daily routine” of showering in the morning: “Shower. Actually, just taking a shower in the morning and going to the daily routine helped.” One participant described the importance of their daily routine, saying, “If it’s not the routine, I don’t really like it.” Now that participants’ daily routines or “rituals” for getting ready for work have been described, the psychological impact of leaving home/going to work will be described next.

Theme 2: Psychological Impact of Leaving Home/Going to Work

Participants reported feeling psychologically impacted when leaving home/going to work at OCCC. When asked, “How do you feel when you come into work?” participants indicated experiencing psychological consequences in preparing to enter OCCC and start their shifts.

Many participants experienced the feeling that they needed to “mentally prepare” or put their “game face” on, and a large portion of the participants experienced a sense of “dread.”

Mentally prepare. Nearly all participants reported needing to “mentally prepare” or “be ready for anything” for going to work. One participant said, “I feel like I have to motivate myself and be prepared.” Participants also reported that they needed to be “ready for anything.” One participant explained, “I would gear up cuz I have to be ready for anything.” Another participant described the uncertainty of what the workday might bring: “I guess it depends on the day. You kinda have that feeling, ‘Oh man, is it gonna be a good day or bad day?’ Some days up in the air.”

Similarly, a participant described their process for expecting the unknown: “You prepare yourself for anything far as I concern. You never know what the day is gonna bring you, so kinda put yourself in that mode – wanna be on your guard. So, you kinda prepare yourself. I prepare myself before I go in there.” Another participant matter-of-factly described feeling they needed to prepare for the worst when going into work: “When it comes to work, I’m tryna prepare myself to expect the worst. Just gotta expect the worst. You never know.”

Put on game face. Several participants described putting their “game face” on in preparation for going to work. For example, one participant stated that when they go to work, “I have my game face on.” Another participant said, “Mentally, just try to psyche yourself out.” This participant described their “game face”:

I put on my game face. My game face look like I don’t give a shit cuz in that position is a lot of stuff we deal with. You gotta remain calm. But I try tell myself, “Don’t allow that to bother you.” But it is. I’ll be lying if it wasn’t. So, that’s a lot here, and yes, it’s beyond my control. I can’t help it, but it’s frustrating.

This participant explained their frustrated attitude when preparing to go to work: "Kind of steel my mind into going into the job and putting up with the bullshit. Putting up with the bullshit every day."

Sense of dread. A large portion of participants recounted having negative feelings or a sense of "dread" when going to work. This participant said, "Sometimes lately I dread coming to work." One participant said it was "a drag to come to work." Another participant said, "I wake up like, 'Uggghhh, again?'" This participant acknowledged that not every day was dreadful, but most were: "Some days it's gonna be good over here, but the majority of the days it's pretty much not too good." Conversely, this participant felt days were reliably dreadful at work: "You already know how the day is going to go. It's always one crisis after another."

Some participants who expressed a sense of dread going to work were depressed. One participant said they "hate it" and then corrected themselves, "despise it actually." Another participant described how their sense of dread going into work had been causing them to worry and call in sick frequently: "I've been worried lately a lot more about work to the point I called in sick within the past two weeks probably at least four times. Uh, mentally, I guess, the days that I call out, I'm just exhausted. I think all of us, I mean if we didn't have to work, we wouldn't go to work." This participant described their malaise when going into work as "doom and gloom": "This place for me, I get - I just feel it's not one good place, and everything over here, I've always heard that saying, 'It's like the cesspool of humanity or something.' And that's how I feel. When I come to work, it's like doom and gloom." Now that the psychological impact of leaving home/going into work experienced by participants has been described, the psychological impact of leaving work/arriving home will be described next.

Theme 3: Psychological Impact of Leaving Work/Arriving Home

Participants reported feeling psychologically impacted when leaving work at OCCC and arriving home afterward. When asked, “How do you feel when you leave work?” and “How do you feel when you get home?” participants reported experiencing psychological effects on leaving OCCC and arriving home. Most participants experienced feeling “happy” or “excited,” and a large portion experienced feeling “exhausted” or “relieved” to leave work and arrive home afterward.

Happy/excited. When asked, “How do you feel when you leave work?” most participants reported that they felt “happy” or “excited.” One participant said, “When I leave work, I’m happy to leave work.” Another participant responded enthusiastically with one word: “Excited!” This participant explained that leaving work was the best part of their day: “Oh, das' the best part of my day. I love that. I always say that. Every time I walking out the door, I say, ‘Best part of the day, guys. See you guys later. See you guys tomorrow. We do this again.’ To me, I love when the day ends.”

Several participants added, for varying reasons, that they were pleased to leave work because it meant that they got to go home. One participant described feeling so excited to go home that the last part of their day drags: “Fo’ me, the last hour of my day drags fo’ some reason, fo’ get to that point, cuz I getting so excited that I get to walk out and go home.” Another participant explained their happiness and related it to not being a rookie anymore:

I'm actually really happy. I'm like, "Oh - this day's over. I get to go home." When you're a rookie in this place, you don't really kinda look forward to that for a while because our staffing is short. For the most part, we get held back, and so when I first started here, I think I would work three to four overtimes in my five-day work schedule in a week for

like a whole year and a half. So, now I have a few more years under my belt, and there's a lot of classes [of new COs] coming under [starting work at OCCC]. At first, that's what you really didn't look forward to. Because you likely gonna get held back and have to work another eight [hours], you know?

A few participants reported that they were happy to leave work but left with some reservations. One participant explained their mixed feelings: "I feel happier than arriving here. There's a lot of stress that's gone, and there is some worry that something bad could happen when I'm not here for the other workers."

Participants also felt happy to leave work because they "got through the day" and could go home to their families. One participant responded happily because going home to their families meant they got out of work safely: "Happy. I am happy because I can walk out of here safely and go home to my family safely. Yea, and just happy I got through the day, and it's over." Another participant explained feeling good because they get to see their family: "I feel good, yea. Always better to go home cuz now I can see my family. I have a family, so that helps a lot."

Exhausted/relieved. When asked, "How do you feel when you get home?" a significant portion of participants experienced feeling "exhausted" or "relieved.". One participant said, "I get home, and I'm exhausted." Another participant responded emphatically: "Exhausted!" One participant expressed feeling "drained": "When I leave work? Tired. Like mentally drained." Several participants added that they not only felt exhausted but also felt a sense of relief when they arrived home. One participant responded, "I guess I feel relieved. Um, at the end of the day, after a day of really doing a lot of work."

Several participants expanded on feeling relieved, emphasizing the importance of leaving work behind. This participant described their process for leaving the job behind:

Feel kinda relieved. The day went by. If you had an altercation or something like that, just kinda leave everything at the job. You don't wanna take it home. You kinda just de-stress yourself. For me, I de-stress myself. So okay, I'm moving on to whatever I gotta do, whether it's taking my son or my family to whatever practices they have. I used to coach before, too, yea? So, I just kinda give myself up to that.

Another participant described leaving work behind: "I feel relieved like another day is gone. That's good. Whenever there's like situations that'd happen or stuff, I would always try to tell myself to leave everything at work. Not try and bring anything back home." Now that the psychological impact of leaving work/arriving home on participants has been described, participants' daily routines or "rituals" for coming home will be described next.

Theme 4: Daily Routines for Arriving Home

Participants used daily routines to cope with the transition out of work at OCCC. When asked, "When you arrive home, describe what you do to decompress or 'gear down' after leaving work?" most participants responded that they did have a post-work routine or "ritual." The practices that participants regularly utilized to decompress or "gear down" after leaving work had to do with making physical changes to their bodies or environments to help the transition from their work mindset to their home mindset.

Altering the physical body. Upon arriving home from work, the most common practices utilized by participants involved modifying their physical bodies, such as changing out of their work uniforms and showering. Many participants made a particular point to describe taking off their work uniforms. One participant emphatically said, "Hang the uniform up. Hang it up!"

Another participant said, “Take off my uniform, of course – my monkey suit. You know what I mean? Take that off.” Another participant described their routine: “I get home. I strip outta my uniform. I go to the bathroom. That’s where I feel most comfortable.”

Several participants specifically described taking a shower when they got home as a precursor to relaxing. One participant said, “When I come home, it’s take a shower and go to sleep.” Another participant said, “Just go in the shower and relax, and feel good, yea.” Similarly, this participant said, “Yea, I take a shower, and I go into my room, and I lay, relax, enjoy life.” One participant explained, “Get home. Take a shower. I eat sometimes. Get in bed. Watch TV till I tired.” Another participant described his routine in detail:

When I get home, I’ll probably try to grab something to eat, probably go to shower, and I’m a TV person. So, I record everything. So, if I have an opportunity, or if I’m not that tired, I’ll try to watch my DVR. I like to watch UH athletics, so I try to watch something. But that’s normally how I fall asleep is watching TV.

Some participants had more unique ways of relaxing when they got home from work. For example, this participant shared:

Sometimes I leave work and go directly to bed. Sometimes I don’t have an overtime shift, and I leave work, go home, and do what I do to relax. I know this is gonna sound bizarre, but I will predicate it on you probably don’t know who Rosey Grier was. He was a very famous football player, and after he retired, what he did to relax was knit. So, I sharpen knives. I have a knife collection, and I sharpen knives – doing the same repetitive task. Sometimes they’re knives of my friends and family. Sometimes they’re knives that I use in the kitchen on a daily basis. Sometimes I just keep the knives sharp in the collection.

Altering the physical space. Other typical routines participants engaged in upon returning home from work involved modifying their physical spaces, such as cleaning and organizing. One participant said, “I do laundry.” Another participant said they like to clean and cook: “I’ll clean the house, cook dinner, and then wait for everybody to come home.” This participant described their cleaning routine:

I’m the cleaner. So, I’ll take care of the kitchen cuz every time I come home, home is a mess, so clean the kitchen so that when mom comes home from work, she has a clean kitchen. I can make some things, but she’s the cooker, and she’s great at it. So, I try to make sure that she has a clean environment to cook in, and then she comes home and does her thing.

Another participant said they like to get organized: “Put my things away. Open the windows of the house if they’re not open. Turn on the fans.”

Physical exercise. Other routines participants engaged in upon arriving home from work involved physical activity. One participant matter-of-factly stated: “I do my exercise.” Another participant shared that they like to “take the dog for a walk.”

Some participants explicitly stated that physical activity was directly linked to their mental health. This participant reflected, “I started to do an hour/hour and a half walk. It’s probably a little bit better mentally.” Similarly, another participant described how exercising helps “relieve stuff”: “I was always into exercising and try to get stuff off my chest or anything like that. I think that’s what kinda help. Like the next day, I would have to work out or something. That was like my thing to really try to relieve stuff.” Lastly, this participant described their new exercise regimen at home and its positive consequences:

I had a heart attack like two years ago, and ever since then, you listen to the doctor. We do home Crossfit workout – backyarders. We do Crossfit at home, so we started, and I have a couple nephews that come over. Couple people come over. My daughter’s an addict now. Some days I don’t feel like working out or lifting or doing a run, but my daughter and my nephews, and my nieces come over. I guess after a while, I noticed that I need it to not only deal with the job but to deal with my family. So my youngest daughter’s eight, and she comes out and does a lot of the bodyweight stuff. That’s the peewee class. We ride scooters, and we have a big parking lot across the street from my house. Ride scooters while we run or something. That’s the kinda stuff I do.

Themes 1 through 4 were related to how participants dealt with the transition into and out of the carceral work environment. Themes 5 through 7 relate to how participants’ interpersonal relationships are impacted by work outside the carceral work environment. Next, how participants struggle to separate their work identities from their home identities or “bringing the job home” will be described.

Category II: Interpersonal Relationships and the Carceral Work Environment

Theme 5: Bringing the Job Home

Participants struggled with separating their work identities from their home identities; at some point during nearly every interview, participants stated, “definitely don’t bring the job home.” One participant reiterated advice that they gave to all their coworkers: “I would always talk to all the workers: ‘Remember, say no, don’t take it home.’” Another participant explained why it’s important to “leave work” and “never try to take it home”:

I always leave work here. I never try to take it home. Anything I deal with over here, I try to leave it, and I just try to clear my head before I leave cuz the way I am at work is

totally different at home. I gotta be one different person here. I cannot be that person at home. That person is too nice to be over here. Over here, you cannot be too nice.

However, it was evident that most participants struggled with the negative impacts of “bringing the job home.” The main adverse effects were participants talking to their families like inmates and being short-tempered.

Talking to family like inmates. Most participants described having difficulties related to talking to their families like they speak to inmates at work. One participant said, “When I first got in, I talked to my wife like an inmate, so she had to put me in check.” Another participant said sometimes they are “short” with their family despite trying not to be: “Sometimes I'm more short with my family, you know what I mean? It sucks. Like, I don't know. I see it, yet I'm tryna break it. Because it's the way you gotta be in here, and I know I change, but that's just how it goes, I guess.” This participant explained why they take out their frustrations on “somebody close”:

Sometimes you get so frustrated at work. You know when you have kids when they do something bad in school? Think about having to scold 90-120-something individuals – constantly we're doing that: “Told you clean up after yourself! Clean up your room! Dah dah dah. Pick this up!” Constantly doing that. You know, after a few times, you get sick and tired of telling these individuals. That frustration transcends into sometimes, um, you getting, taking it out on somebody close to you.

This participant described having to be “put in place” for yelling at their family like inmates:

It affects how I react throughout the day, and hopefully, I don't bring it back home. And in the beginning, and when I first started, I was just tryna deal with how to deal with situations and not bring it home, and I kinda got put in my place when my wife told me,

"Hey. Don't yell at us like we're inmates." I do realize the way I was talking to inmates; I was talking like that to my kids. In the beginning, you don't know, you know? You have to put on your work face. Like I said, in the beginning, it was – I had to know how to act towards them. I didn't know myself that I was doing that. I had to be put in place.

This participant reflected on how they've been "different" since starting their position at OCCC:

My wife, she says ever since I started, I've been a little bit edgy here and there on certain things. I say, "Yea, I guess." Before, I used to be this quiet person, just no bother, but now certain things tick me off. She notice that. She looks at me, "What's wrong with you? How come you act like that?" I say, "I don't know." She goes, "You cannot do that. You cannot talk like that to your kid. That's not one inmate!" I catch myself, but my wife always catches me on my stress and all that. I get defensive at first, "That's not because of the job or this and that." Next time, when I sit down, I start thinking over these past couple years. Yea, I've been kind of different ever since I started.

Short-tempered. Many participants reported that their families were frustrated with their taking their work behaviors home, causing participants to be short-tempered outside of work.

This participant offered insight into having to "learn how to talk" at work versus home:

Lotta COs' wives knows exactly what happens and how you feel, and like my wife understands, I turn it off, turn it on, and she understands the way I am here. Sometimes it comes out. The joke: "The CO comes out. The CO's words come out." If I don't swear - I try not to swear around my kids – and then you come here and every word is "fuck, you fakah, bullshit," and then you have to learn how to talk here; talk at work. I try not to talk like that around my kids. Even though that's the way of the world, that's not the way they should hear the world.

Several participants described how their short-temperedness outside of work caused them to be put “in check” by their families both at home and in public places. For example, this participant explained their wife’s frustration:

My wife says this to me: "The CO comes out." Every once in a while, the CO will come out. The CO’s voice will come out, or the CO’s action will come out, and being the okay I am with my wife gets turned off, and when this happens, it turns on, and my wife says, "Not only do you think you wanna punch this guy’s face and drag him out the store, but your body language tells me that your gonna do it, cuz when you here, you do those kinda things. You like act stupid?" But it doesn't work out there, so she sees me and says, "Calm down." She has to physically yank and go, "Shhh, gotta go somewhere else." Cuz I’m desensitized. To me, that's okay. This fakah is doing this? I gon' smack him and drag his ass out, and everyone here would probably applaud me for doing that. Yea, I have to learn how to turn it on and off.

Another participant described how their wife couldn’t wait for them to retire: “She can't wait till I retire. She's seen, of course, the good side: Money, benefit package. As well, she's seen the negative side: The short-temperedness. You could be in [a restaurant], and this tourist who has no clue cuts in front of you and how that thing can explode, and you come that close to having it out. True story.” Now that participants struggle to separate their work identities from their home identities or “bringing the job home” has been described, how participants withhold information related to work from their partners will be told next.

Theme 6: Withholding Information Related to Work from Partners

Participants described total or partial withholding of information related to work from their partners. When participants who had partners were asked, “Do you talk to your partner

about work?” the vast majority reported that they either did not talk about work at all or they did but edited out specific information. The few participants who reported speaking to their partners about work said they did so because they also worked in corrections or a related field and were “able to understand.” Participants said they withheld information related to work from their partners because participants felt they “wouldn’t understand” and felt the need to “shield” or protect them from upsetting details related to work.

Feeling that partners wouldn’t understand. Most participants who reported that they didn’t share information related to work with their partners at all said it was because they felt their partners “wouldn’t understand.” One participant said, “We cannot go home explain to our wife, ‘Oh, this happen.’ Not gon’ understand what happen.” Similarly, another participant exclaimed why they felt their partners wouldn’t understand: “You not gon’ know what I went through unless you in there. You not gon’ know how I feel unless you been in the situation we’ve been in.” Another participant explained why they didn’t speak to their partner about work related to frequent experiences with violence at work, explaining: “She doesn’t really understand it. She doesn’t understand the violent mentality - the violence: ‘Somebody went to the ER today with a broken jaw and fractured eye socket.’”

Shielding partners from upsetting details. Many participants also reported that they didn’t share with their partners about work because they were “shielding” their partners so they wouldn’t feel troubled or worried. In the words of one participant, “I don’t want her to deal with the stress I gotta [deal with].” Another participant explained it as “insulating” their partner from their work: “I didn’t want her knowing the bad stuff that’s happening, so I was trying to insulate her from hearing that.” However, they admitted to the negative consequences of “insulating” their partner, saying, “Keeping her from knowing the bad stuff is not talking at all.”

Some participants reported that they did sometimes share information related to work with their partners but explained that they frequently “edited” their stories, especially if they experienced traumatic or violent experiences at work. One participant said they gave the “Reader’s Digest version” of their day:

I was very lucky. My wife is a good listener. Of course, she still didn't hear everything. There's some things I'm not gonna say. She doesn't need to hear about guys hanging or slitting their wrist or painting their rooms in shit, you know? She doesn't need to hear about that. But I would skim over - give her the Reader's Digest version of my day.

Another participant explained how they “sometimes” talk to their partner about work:

Sometimes. I don't tell her everything. Like I've never told her about when I was over there tryna save the guy's life that tried to hang himself. I don't wanna give the extreme stuff – the most extreme stuff. But I'll tell 'em about the guy that sat on the toilet and he so skinny he fell in the toilet. You know, I tell 'em those kind stories. I don't like to freak her out, you know? Don't want her to think about the stuff I go through.

Now that how participants withhold information related to work from their partners has been described, the likelihood of divorce among COs will be described next.

Theme 7: Likelihood of Divorce among COs

Many participants speculated that divorce among COs was likely. One participant said, “Some people say if you're married, you might be divorced after five years, ten years. I've seen a lot of my friends get married, get divorced, get married, get divorced.” Another participant who was not divorced and not currently in a relationship shared why they were single: “I think it's partially cuz I'm busy, and you hear the horror stories from everybody else. All that drama that working in this place has caused, you know? And this is just in my own personal conversation,

but I know just in my short time here, I know lotta guys who've gotten divorces.” Other participants gave some reasons that they believed divorce was so prevalent among COs, such as becoming COs after getting married and communication issues.

Going into corrections after marriage. Many participants said: If you aren't in corrections already when you get married, your marriage won't last. For example, one participant said, “If you were married to somebody before you go into corrections, it usually doesn't last as long as if you marry somebody while you're in corrections.” Another participant explained that the spouse of the CO might have different expectations of the CO's schedule based on their prior work, saying, “If you meet someone before you are a CO, it's not going to last because the expectations of the spouse are different. Working at a bank has regular hours and closes at a certain time. You [as a CO] are on the periphery of society, and that's twenty-four-hour business.”

Communication issues. Some participants also felt that being a CO strains communication in a marriage. For example, this participant explained that the CO might become isolated because their spouse doesn't want to hear about their work:

Marriages "don't last" for COs. If your other half knows you when you already have the job, it's probably better than if you work for a construction company and she knows you when you working that construction company, then you come to work for the jail. It's a little more difficult for her. A lot more difficult. Because you gonna become isolated more. Your wife gonna tell you, "I don't want to listen to that kinda stuff."

Conversely, this participant believed that not talking about work was what caused problems for COs in their marriages:

If you look at the whole field of correctional officers and if you do a study, you will see that those who are married before they became correctional officers are no longer married. Number one is: Because before, you used to talk to your spouse, right? When you become a correctional officer, you don't. So, if you're a correctional officer and you get married, you don't talk to your spouse from the beginning. But you can build upon that; you can only get better; get more communication skills. The other way around: You lose it, and that's why you get more divorces.

Themes 5 through 7 addressed how work outside the carceral work environment impacted participants' interpersonal relationships. Themes 8 and 9 relate to participant health and well-being, both physically and mentally. Hypervigilance among participants will be described next.

Category III: Health and Well-being in the Carceral Work Environment

Theme 8: Hypervigilance

The majority of participants experienced a constant state of alertness (hypervigilance; a common indicator of PTSD). When asked, "How has your job impacted other aspects of your life?" participants responded that they felt paranoid, like they had "raised awareness," and were more "security-minded" when in public places outside of OCCC. One participant explained, "It makes me more aware of my surroundings when I'm outside in public. Sometimes I feel like maybe I'm – I don't know if it's judgmental – but I'm analyzing people too much?" Some participants reflected that their hypervigilance responded to feeling that they needed to be prepared for anything. One participant explained, "I just try to talk to my own self and just say, 'Remain calm.' But it's hard. You never know what's gonna happen. I tell myself I'm always gonna try be on my A-game. Though you're never ready, right?" Some of the ways that

hypervigilance manifested for participants were eyes constantly darting around, needing a visual of the exit in enclosed public spaces, avoiding crowds, and being antisocial.

Eyes darting around. Most participants reported that they couldn't keep their eyes from "wandering" or "darting around" when they were in public places, especially when accompanied by their families:

He made me more aware of people wherever I go. Profiling people wherever I go now, you know, just to be on the safe side. Not only for myself but for my family. Just people and how they, how they body language – mainly that. I don't know. I just observe people. My eyes are always moving around – watching people around you and stuff like that – around my family and me.

Several participants also expressed that their hypervigilance in public places was a source of irritation to their families:

Even my wife, who was my girlfriend at the time, she would talk to me. We'd be talking, and she'd yell at me, "Look at me when I talk to you!" I'm looking over her shoulder cuz I see movement, you know, or somebody's walking by us, and she's since gotten used to it, but yea, eyes are always moving. You're always evaluating and don't walk behind me – hyperawareness.

This participant explained that their children get frustrated with their behavior in public, but it's only because they want to make sure their family is safe:

You don't want your kids to be in this type of environment, so your anxiety is high, right? And then even being out in the public with the kind of inmates that we deal with here. My kid will tell me, "Why are you like that? What's going on?" I would say, "Just be quiet. I'll tell you later." Because you see something that – I don't know, you just

more aware and observant of your surroundings, and sometimes it may not be nothing. Something that catches your eye that you wanna make sure that you and your family is gonna be safe if something is about to happen.

One participant even pointed out that they were consciously experiencing hypervigilance during the interview:

Always aware of my surroundings. I don't know if you've noticed as we're talking; my eyes keep wandering. So, it's just – you're pretty much on your toes. You don't know what to expect. It's an island. I'd say about 99.9% of the times I'm out, outside of work – just always on your toes. My whole family knows. That's why if we're out and I walk away from them, it's for a reason.

This participant was especially fixated on watching people's hands even four years after retiring from OCCC:

I still do all these things. I keep my back to the wall. I watch everybody. I've been gone four years now, and I still evaluate everyone walking past me. I always watch people's hands. Trust nobody. It's a shame, but it's a product of the environment. You know, it's a very toxic environment, and like I said, to this day, I'm still like that. I still trust nobody. I'm always watching people's hands. I trust nobody. I see people walking. I'm always evaluating everybody, and it's weird and even older people are walking by me; I'm evaluating, watching their hands.

Needing a visual of the exit. Several participants reported that they had to be facing the exit if they were seated in an enclosed public place. One participant said they always “sit in the back of the restaurant” to “know where everything's at all the time.” Another participant described their experience walking into a restaurant: “I'm always looking around. I'm always

watching hands. Always gotta sit facing the exit. You know what I mean? But that's just how it is. No matter what, I'm walking in, 'K, that's the bathrooms. That's the exit.' I make sure I'm sitting this way. Just like, always gotta be aware of your surroundings." This participant reported that they would not go to a restaurant or any other public place in slippers in case they had to "run to or run away" from a dangerous situation:

I guess, if anything, it just raised my awareness. Security-minded, you know? Whenever I go out – I won't go out to a restaurant, to the mall, in slippers. Basically, if the shit hits the fan, you gotta be able to run to or run away from whatever that is. So, if you're wearing slippers, you're gonna cut up your feet. It's one of the little things I do regularly. How many times you seen these mass shootings where people are wearing the wrong shoe wear? They just can't run from someone else cuz their shoes.

Avoiding crowds. The stress of being hypervigilant in public places was so severe for some participants that they intentionally avoided crowds. One participant said, "You and I could be walking down the street talking, and I would purposely cross the street if I see a whole bunch of teenagers. I tend to avoid that. Just things like that." Another participant reported feeling rueful that they avoided crowds altogether now and could no longer engage in activities they used to enjoy:

I'm not like how I was. I don't like to go to public places. I don't like to go to football games at UH, at the Aloha Stadium, and I don't like that, and it's not because I don't like them. It's not because I don't like to hang out. It's not because I don't drink. I like football. I get paranoid in places like that. I learn to just watch everybody, and people's faces look familiar when I walk around, and it is what it is. It's an island – can't get

away. It stresses me out. I don't go public places – pretty much stay at home, dive, and work out.

Being antisocial. Some participants expressed that their hypervigilance was so taxing that they had become antisocial to avoid it. One participant explained how outside of work, they are “short with people” and “don't really like to talk to anybody”:

I will be short with people, I guess. It's kinda like guys that work here – maybe I'm like that too. I don't know. I don't run around acting like an officer, but some will still kinda walk around like how they walking here. When I leave here, I'm different. I go shopping; I wanna go home. My thing is: Go home. Go home. Stay home. I don't have to go to store; I'd rather go home; I don't have to talk to anybody. It's funny cuz I'll talk to people here, but I don't really like to talk to anybody out there.

Another participant said that their being antisocial had resulted in a rift between them and their family:

Definitely made me more short-tempered, less emotion, numb to human suffering. Antisocial in a way that separates you – I'm estranged from my family here. It's like slowly, slowly. Now I don't even see 'um. Now they don't call, whatever, so just things like that. You just find yourself short-tempered. Kind of struggle. Kind of everyday struggle.

Now that hypervigilance among participants has been described, adverse health consequences will be defined next.

Theme 9: Negative Health Consequences

Participants experienced a variety of adverse health consequences. Although the interview did not explicitly ask participants about health conditions, most participants referred to

negative health consequences that they directly or indirectly attributed to working at OCCC. The negative health consequences referenced most often by participants were high blood pressure, stroke and heart attack, increased substance use, and generally attributing poor health to the stress associated with working at OCCC.

High blood pressure. The most prevalent negative health consequence that participants referred to was developing high blood pressure after beginning to work at OCCC. Many participants referred to their blood pressure in a quick and off-handed manner. For example, in response to the question, “What kinds of things do you do to manage your job stress?” this participant matter-of-factly stated: “My blood pressure medication.”

Some participants went into more detail. For example, in response to the question, “On average, how long does it take you to decompress or ‘gear down’ after leaving work?” this participant said they don’t: “I don’t really relax, and I try to, but it’s hard. Yeah, it’s hard, very hard for me. Even the people say you gotta try, but I don’t. That’s why I think I have high blood pressure.” In response to the question, “Have your stress levels changed over time?” another participant reflected on how their job stress and being a parent is likely related to their heightened blood pressure, explaining, “Now I have high blood pressure. I guess it’s harder cuz now I’m a parent, so your stress level is higher, and then you work in jail, and you see what goes on, right? You don’t want your kids to be in this type of environment, so your anxiety is high, right?” When discussing self-care, this participant talked about their blood pressure, stress, and the importance of being active and not “burning your candle on both ends”:

You gotta go out and you gotta move. You gotta exercise. You gotta – at the very least – just walk. Cuz I gon’ tell you – the high blood pressure. I remember that commercial

when that candle burning at two ends: “You live your life burning your candle on both ends.” You really need to stop and realize that your health is most important.

Stroke and heart attack. The second-most prevalent negative health consequence that participants referred to during the interviews was experiencing stroke or heart attack after beginning to work at OCCC. Several participants referred to their stroke or heart attack without adding much detail. For example, one participant alluded to their stroke in the middle of answering an unrelated question, saying, “Couple years back, I already had a stroke. That was scary.” Similarly, this participant prefaced the answer to an unrelated question with, “Ever since my heart attack,” and another participant said, “I had a heart attack like two years ago, and ever since then, you listen to the doctor.”

Some participants went into more detail, especially regarding their experiencing stroke. For example, in response to the question, “Do you talk to your partner about work?” this participant mentioned their stroke, “Now I do. I didn’t before. Before the stroke, I wouldn’t talk to my wife about stuff at work. I would block her out. Now, let her come in. You cannot close off.” In response to the question, “Is [your job stress] different than when you first started?” another participant revealed their stroke while describing their job stress before: “It was worse before. Way worse. It was way worse before my stroke. Way worse.” In response to “Have you ever utilized resources/support [for employees regarding their job stress]?” one participant explained they did not but felt they could have “prevented having gone through this” if they did: “Don’t wanna be labeled as weak. Had [support/resources] been available honestly prior to my stroke, had I reached out and vented correctly or found different options, I think I may have prevented having gone through this.”

Increased substance use. Another prevalent negative health consequence that participants brought up during interviews was increased substance use, especially alcohol consumption, since beginning to work at OCCC. Some participants brought it up casually and talked about it in a non-problematic way. For example, in response to the question, “When you are finished with work, do you go anywhere else to decompress or ‘gear down’ after leaving work?” this participant responded, “If I’m stopping on the way home, it’s at a bar. There’s bars that serve steak and beer at six-thirty in the morning.” Another participant casually referred to how their co-workers “go drinking – that’s their de-stress.”

Other participants talked about increased substance use in a more complex way. For example, in response to the question, “What kinds of things do you do to manage your job stress?” this participant described how they used to use alcohol to cope before developing Hepatitis:

Eh - me and tequila got along really well. Scotch – we got along really well.

Unfortunately, too well. I am an alcoholic. I haven’t had a drink in many years. And that’s the way I dealt with it, and I drank all the time. I would drink to excess. It got to the point; literally, you know these little half-gallon containers? I would make Crystal Lite iced tea in it and add the tequila. That’s how I would drink. I’d go to [neighborhood] meetings with that. By the end of the meeting, I was pretty buss’. But yeah, me and alcohol got along too well, and that’s how I dealt with it. But, the Hepatitis was a backhanded godsent, you know? I stopped drinking.

Other participants talked about the problematic increased substance use of their co-workers. In response to the question, “Does your position offer any resources/support for

employees regarding their job-related stress?" one participant described that it did not, but that maybe it would help if there was "instead of everybody turn to the drinking":

Nah. No mo' dat stuff. They've had psychologists the COs can talk to about drinking or whatever – go to somewhere, someplace they can decompress. I think the rate would probably be way lower and easier for them and for us too. Instead of everybody turn to the drinking, you know what I mean? The partying. Worse cuz it compiles, compiles, and after dat, it's over.

In response to the question, "What advice would you give to a new CO?" this participant grimly responded: "If you have a drug problem, alcohol problem, gambling problem, or any kind of vice out there, it's probably best that you don't work here. It'll probably make it worse. With people, with connections, it's just a matter of time. Whether it's drugs, gambling, or even women, you will eventually fall."

Generally poor health. Several participants not only alluded to having developed health issues since beginning to work at OCCC, but they explicitly attributed those health issues to the stress of their occupation. For example, one participant stated emphatically: "Trust me. I have some health issues I directly attribute to the job." Similarly, when discussing the negative impacts of work stress, one participant stated: "I have diabetes and gout now." Another participant speculated on the health of a fellow CO who "had a heart attack a year ago, and that's from taking work home with him." This participant attributed the health problems of employees to the stress of being forced to work overtime: "Force existing employees to work overtime, to contribute to their health problems, and then you get high blood pressure, hypertension, and it just snowballs from there."

Some participants offered more insight on why they felt job stress was related to their health issues. In response to the question, "How has your job impacted other aspects of your life?" this participant described having panic attacks and how their stress has "gotten a lot worse over the years":

I was having panic attacks. I had no idea, and I pride myself on being able to control things like that, but no. It took like seven months to figure out what's wrong with me. I'd go to the ER with heart palpitations. Finally, one night I went into the clinic late at night, and the doctor handed me [anxiety medication] and said, "Take this." Gave me prescription. Just can't yell at people. As far as the stress levels related to health, it's gotten a lot worse over the years.

In response to the question, "Have you ever utilized resources/support [for employees regarding their job stress]?" this participant responded that they wished they had "reached out for something" because maybe they "wouldn't have gone through" the health issues they experienced:

I never thought it was for me. Even though I realize now that I should have reached out for something because maybe I wouldn't have gone through what I gone through. Things happen – you know you gotta check this, you gotta check your blood every time. Now every month, I take blood test. Every time they make sure everything is working kinda correctly. Making sure my mineral levels are level. Not over-excessive on phosphorous, you know? You know, make sure the diabetes is in check.

This participant spoke specifically about work stress leading to stress eating: "The stress. Lotta stress eating from here, and the food they give you is not - I don't eat the food here anymore, and

it's not because - it's just when you stressed, you do a lotta stress eating. You gonna just eat eat eat because you're stress, so them telling us this job is not stressful is a bunch of bullshit.”

Some participants spoke about how many of their co-workers get sick and die just before or after retiring. One participant reflected on this phenomenon and speculated that it was “probably just maybe stress”: “A lot of people go get sick just before retirement – many, many. Many will die, or they die soon after. Probably just maybe stress. Maybe the body so used to it, and once you don't have it anymore, doesn't know how to cope with it and shuts down.” Another participant said, “I only know two COs that lived longer than ten years after retirement.”

Themes 8 and 9 focused on participant health and well-being, both psychologically and physically. Themes 10 and 11 will address the availability of resources/support for employees at OCCC through OCCC. Lack of resources/support for employees will be described next.

Category IV: Access to Resources/Support through the Carceral Work Environment

Theme 10: Lack of Resources/Support for Employees

Most participants believed there was no available resources/support for employees regarding their job-related stress (resources/support). Of the twenty participants interviewed, when asked, “Does your position offer any resources/support for employees regarding their job-related stress?” sixteen did not know of any. Before describing those sixteen participants' responses, the reactions of the four who did think there was resources/support will be summarized.

Available resources/support. Four out of twenty participants reported knowing of some type of resources/support for their job-related stress. Two of those four participants had only a vague knowledge of what they were, saying, “I know there is, but I don't know what it is because I've never used it.” and “I know there's ways, but you basically gotta dig and find your

ways to the ways.” Only two of the four participants had some concept of what resources/support were available, with one simply saying, “There’s a call thing.” This was the only participant who was able to describe the resources/support, but they admitted to not using it or knowing anyone who has:

For here, they do have an employee assistance program where they refer you to go see the professional mental health help. You either see the captain or see the human resources and then refer you and then call this number, which is the employee assistance program, and they will assist whatever your needs are - seeing a psychologist/psychiatrist or substance abuse, mental health. Don’t know everything in detail cuz I’ve never used it, but I know it’s available, and I don’t know anybody that sought attention there.

The researcher could not confirm that the above-described programming currently exists because not a single participant knew of anyone who has ever utilized it. Next, the responses of the sixteen participants who did not know any resources/support will be summarized.

No available resources/support. As stated previously, a distinctive theme from interview responses when asked if there were any resources/support available to employees regarding their job-related stress was that most participants said none. A few participants curtly said, “Not that I know of.” “I don’t believe so. I’m not aware of any.” and “Not to my knowledge. I don’t feel like there’s anything specific, and if there is, it’s not discussed or spread. It’s not widely known.” One participant offered a little more information, saying: “No. In general, no. It’s just whatever’s available that would be available to the general public. You can refer to the suicide crisis [hotline]. There’s nothing in the [Public Safety] Department.” But, most participants said: “No.” “Nah.” “Nothing.” “The answer is no.” Some subjects that arose from interview responses involved describing resources/support that used to be available, the lack of

debriefing after traumatic incidents, and how employees come together to support each other in the absence of available resources/support.

Previously available resources/support. A few participants described previous resources/support that was no longer available. For example, one participant recalled that “someone” was known to talk to once when “somebody passed away”: “I know when there was, what I remember was they offered for people – I can’t remember. Somebody that passed away? I think they offered somebody wanted to talk to them or anything, and they were able to go, but I’m not 100% sure.” This participant reflected on how “the job” used to respond to “extreme” incidents when they first started compared to now:

I mean, at the job, only when something extreme happened, they used to bring us to the Module 9 area, and we used to sit down. The nurses used to come. Even the therapist used to come. We used to talk about what happened. Um, the guy hang himself and stuff like that - after the fact, we went over there and talk about it. Anybody need time, whatever. So, I mean, basically went down to the people who was running the jail. They’re honorable men. They took care of us with compassion. Not only for us, but they had the respect of even the inmates. They used to have that. But now, they don’t have that, especially after the shooting and stuff like that. Yea, there was no de-stressing. Sad cuz we used to have that before. We did. That was like in - when I first came in 1997? Shoot, maybe til 2000 - the early 2000s? After that, it just faded away. We don’t even address it.

This participant reflected on resources/support that used to be available and how they think they would be helpful now, especially regarding employee deaths related to drinking and “partying”:

They've had psychologists COs can talk to about drinking or whatever. Go to somewhere – someplace they can decompress. I think the rate [of employee deaths] would probably be way lower and easier for them and for us too. Instead of everybody turn to the drinking – the partying. Worse cuz it compiles, compiles, and after dat, it's over.

Lack of debriefing. Some participants described the adverse effects of not having resources/support available, explicitly citing the lack of “debriefing,” especially after traumatic incidents occurred at work. One participant explained:

Whenever something happens, there's no debriefing over here – see how everyone's doing. They more worried about the reports. There was never even a peer group. COs don't have a peer group – the social workers do – and they would never even bring in grief counselors. Because some COs handle the dead bodies really badly. You know, we lost a lotta guys. They stop coming to work. I believe if they had that [resources/support] available, I'm sure those that around them would say, “You know what, maybe I'll go with you.” That's part of being a brotherhood, you know? “Eh. I think we should maybe go talk story with the guys. I go with you.” You know what I mean?

Another participant tearfully shared an example of the lack of available resources/support after an incident where a CO fatally shot an inmate, saying, “I believe we deserved a debriefing of the situation”:

I wanted to share an example, and it's what's bothered me. I know you probably heard about that shooting that killed that inmate a few months ago, and till this day, it's bothered me. I believe that we deserved a debriefing on the situation – the event. I was almost working that day. But they ended up saying they didn't need me. So, I went home that day. But I can only imagine what everybody else went through and how they felt. I

know how I felt. I seen it on social media. I just happened to be on Facebook and reading it. So, I know my heart stopped. I felt for the guy. I called to see if they needed me to come into work, and from that incident on, there was no debriefing - there was nothing. There was nothing to tell us, "Okay, should this occur again, we have [an] available team." Like in schools in crisis. Schools has counselors. Like there was no debriefing to say that if you need this, go here. Like we have psychologists on here, and there was just no communication whatsoever to kinda let us know that there are these people here to help us if we need and tell us, "Should this happen again, this is what we should go." Cuz at that point, I know a lot of people were kinda like didn't know how to handle the situation – what we should've done. So, they should've debriefed us. Let us know should this occur again; this is how we should handle it. We get nothing till this day from that situation. They no mo' talk about it. They refuse to talk about it. Sorry, I'm getting emotional about this (*wiping tears*). You think about [CO shooter], and I know we've tried to reach out to him. He doesn't reach out to us. But, there's someone that talked to him, and they always tell us, say, "He's not well. He's not in a good place."

One participant compared OCCC's lack of resources/support for employees after traumatic incidents to Maui Correctional Center's response: "I know if something happen, [the employees] replay the scenario in their head like should've, could've, would've. At least in Maui, whenever an incident happen, grab da people, and tell 'um debriefing. Make sure everyone is alright. Over here, they don't really do that over here. They just want the report." This participant shared their thoughts on why there is currently no available resources/support for employees, saying, "According to the Department [of Public Safety], this job is not stressful. They know, but to them, that equivalates to stressful job means pay them more, give them more leave, and enforce

programs. All they see is cha-cha-ching. That's a whole bunch of bullshit. They don't give a shit."

Employees supporting each other. Due to the lack of available resources/support, several participants described employees leaning on one another for support, saying things like, "The brotherhood over here is very helpful." and "When something happen at work, I talk to the guys I work with. If anything, they'd understand, yah?" This participant responded to what resources/support are available, saying, "Not really—just talking amongst ourselves. Just blowing our steam. That's it." Another participant described the unofficial way employees handled supporting each other: "Nothing official. We kind of put together an off-the-books type of peer counseling. We kind of started a little thing with them, 'Go to talk to [CO name].' Stuff like that." One participant described a specific example of how employees refer each other to a fellow employee who is also a pastor to seek counsel:

They have a pastor. I've seen guys see somebody die from hanging or see somebody get the crap beat outta them in the holding unit and die, and they tell the CO to go and talk to [CO/pastor] and [CO/pastor] good about it. He tries to come. He works with us. He's one of us. He understands, but we should be able to go see somebody else, not CO online [on-duty]. I mean, he happens to be a pastor. He's not getting paid to do that, but we should have people here to talk to them cuz some guys, they freak out.

Now that the lack of resources/support for employees has been explained, the need for resources/support for employees will be described next.

Theme 11: Need for Resources/Support for Employees

Participants collectively felt a dire need for resources/support for employees regarding their job-related stress. When asked, "If you were in a position to change what resources/support

is provided, what would you propose?” nearly all participants said they would propose access to someone to talk to through work, such as a psychologist or psychiatrist. Responses on what that access might look like ranged from general to specific. Participants also shared insights on why resources/support shouldn't just be for inmates and why they think the “culture” of corrections might be an initial barrier to employees utilizing resources/support if they did become available.

Someone to talk to. Nearly all participants said they would propose access to someone to talk to through work, such as a psychologist or psychiatrist. Some responses were more general. One participant suggested “a de-stress hotline or something like that.” Another suggested, “Getting free psychological help. Confidential too.” adding, “Talking guarantee relieves all that pressure.” This participant suggested giving contact information to employees who “need help”: “I guess just having, putting down on paper and just telling them - just giving them information for if you need help and try to contact this [resource].” One participant said that “anybody” to talk to would be helpful, reflecting on how employees who “hold it in” take their frustrations “out on something else”:

Someone to talk to and not necessarily have to be the chaplain. I think could be anybody. I think we should have people onboard or whatever position we come up with. Yea, but I think we should have couple people so can talk to – whateva profession they are. They don't have to be mental health. Not even CO, just anybody, just to get off your chest, just to vent. I think would be helpful cuz everyone just holds it in, and then when they go home, they take it out on something else. Hopefully, before they go home, they could debrief – get off your chest before you leave the facility.

Some responses regarding having someone to talk to were more specific. One participant suggested incorporating a psychologist visit into their yearly employee evaluation (“eval”):

There's a eval that every year they have to turn in to see how you're doing as far as work, and so may be part of that eval will be maybe to talk to a psychologist. Yea. Like, "How are you doing? How's your family life? How is your work life? Is there anything..." You know what I mean? Maybe as part of their annual eval, see that someone's tryna check on their well-being.

Another participant suggested embedding information for employees on seeing a psychiatrist into pieces of training designed for helping inmates with topics like mental health and suicide:

I gave da mental health or the suicide classes. I would be like, "Oh, this is not only for the inmates. If you guys have issues or whateva, here's the persons you can reach out to. Anybody feeling stressed? These the numbers you can call. Go to these people." That's what I would do. You know how they say you can go see the chiropractor – part of your job. Why not go see the psychiatrist as part of your job? You having problems; that's part of the medical plan. Have people go see the psychiatrist.

Resources/support should not just be for inmates. Some participants were frustrated, feeling that inmates had access to resources/support that employees did not. This participant described themselves as "an inmate that gets to go home": "You just learn how to survive in here. So, the joke is: I'm an inmate that gets to go home. I learn how to survive in jail, but it's only for eight to sixteen hours, then get to go home. We're inmates that get to go home." One participant described the first time they saw an inmate die from hanging at work and how the inmates got more support after the incident than the employees did:

When I first seen somebody hang themselves and die – there's more stuff for the inmates when something drastic happens. Let's say the inmate sees the guy hanging in his cell. The CO responds. We have to cut the guys down. We have to do first-aid. We're doing

compressions, so we get hands-on. The inmate just seen the guy hanging. They talk to the inmate more cuz they're more concerned about his well-being than the actual CO that has to deal with actually attempting or trying to save this guy's life. The CO has to stay there for so long and do chest compressions, and the guy dies. The inmate seen it, and you feel sorry. That's his roommate, and the CO attempted and failed. How does that make him feel that he had to bring him down and do all that stuff, and you work there and see the guy every day? You feel for the guy too, but there's "Oh poor inmate. Just make your report, and you're good."

Similarly, this participant voiced his frustration at concern for inmates after traumatic incidents and not employees, explaining how COs have to be "desensitized" as a "coping mechanism":

You desensitize yourself. Fuck it. You know, I tried, and the guy died. Just make your report, and you good. I've seen guys break down, and I've broken down, and I see a lot of COs desensitized because that's our coping mechanism, I guess. You just shut it out cuz that's the way they want you to do. They want you to look like, "Okay. You seen the guy die and all the shit that comes with it, and write your report. Yea, he's fine." Admin says, "He's fine. How's the inmate? Is the inmate okay?"

Some participants felt that the employees should have the same opportunities as inmates for support. For example, this participant suggested:

Especially any extreme events, I would bring 'em back like how we did it back in the day. Bring 'em up to Module 9 or whatever, and you know, just talk about it and just to forward them to some of the resources - maybe not in the facility or whatever - and they would provide the resources. Cuz we have mental health trailers now, so they're not all

for the inmates. What about the COs? Yea, not only the COs cuz I know some of our administration staff need it too. Yea. Yea. We need it. They need it.

Another participant said, “Well, we already have a mental health establishment for the inmates. But would it be hard to hire one or two more people to be on-site to take care of any issues that come up with staff?”

Culture of corrections as a barrier. While many participants said they wanted resources/support for employees, they also said it might be challenging to convince employees to take advantage of these resources/support due to the “macho” atmosphere of OCCC; employees might be ashamed or fearful that asking for help would be viewed as showing “weakness.” Ultimately, participants concluded that resources/support is necessary for improving their health and wellness, but the success of those resources/support would be contingent upon changing the “culture” of corrections.

Many participants described the environment at OCCC as “masculine” or “macho.” When asked, “Do you think employees would take advantage of available resources/support if there were any?” most participants said it would be challenging to get employees to take advantage due to the “macho” attitudes held by employees. For example, one participant responded, “He-man attitude. Yea, I think it’s a matter of whether they willing to accept it too. It’s hard, yea? You can tell ’em straight in the face, “Eh, come here. You go with me!” and they resist you. Cannot force you to go.” Another participant responded, “I don’t know if anybody would talk. I don’t know. You neva know. It might work out. Especially some other guys suicide – you know, the inmates or whatever. Gotta go cut ’em down, gotta see all that. We need to talk about it. Hard for corrections officers sometimes, cuz macho.” This participant explained the “masculine environment” of OCCC as a “different society”:

Especially this environment is very masculine, so there is just - the norms are different in this place. So, in my last job, we had an employee assistance program, so we knew if ever we felt suicidal, if we had issues, that information - the resources were available to us. So, we knew where to locate it. But, jail corrections is such a different society. What's normal outside of jail walls is not the norm in here. It's a very masculine environment. Even what I'm doing now, even with the little emotion I'm showing you now, it's like no one wants to show that. But everyone knows who I am. I'm an emotional person, and it's who I am, and it doesn't bother me that people see me. But, for a lot of these guys, it is a problem for them. They hide it.

Participants did express a desire for access to resources/support, though. This participant suggested that medication and having someone to talk to would be helpful to employees but acknowledged that the "macho environment" at work might present a challenge at first:

I guess more and more medication and people need to know that they can discuss their feelings about what happened and there'll be no judgments. Because this is such a macho environment, and I think society as a whole, from my generation, especially here in Hawaii, grew up with spankings and parents or relatives that didn't have the best parenting skills. It was always my way, and that was it. There was no explanation on why you got spankings. So, when I came here, it was similar like here. So, I felt like I fit right in - what I used to know; how I was raised.

Many participants said it would also be challenging to get employees to take advantage of resources/support because they would be afraid of being viewed as "weak." For example, one participant described "the stigma of stress" as a barrier to seeking help: "You have to remember the stigma of stress. I can't say, 'I'm stressed.' If I say, 'I'm stressed,' I can't carry a gun, which

means I can't have my job. Seeking health is weakness – that whole stigma. I was so well aware of that, and it didn't bother me. But, I never sought help except at the bottom of a bottle.” This participant described how some employees don't want to ask for help because they are afraid of looking “weak,” giving an example of a co-worker who experienced a traumatic incident at work:

It's kinda true where this tough guy-something happens. He's not gonna wanna try to ask for help - gonna make him look weak. But, at the same time, we wanna try to reassure that we're not tryna make you look weak. We're just tryna cope or whatever with what may have happened that may have triggered something in your head. [CO name] actually shot an inmate that tried to escape. I don't even know if anybody tried to help him, but he's been out of work. I haven't seen him back since the shooting, and I know HPD has something when they fire their firearm, whether or not they kill somebody or not, they go on administrator leave and have counseling or whatever. Something like that would be good for him to reassure him, “We're by your side. We're tryna help. Make sure you're all good, and when you're ready, come back to work.” I don't know if we have anything like that. That would be great if we did. Not sure if everybody would take advantage of it. But I think it's just like a match: As soon as you light it and some people start going, it'll kinda prompt everyone else that is there if they need it.

One participant commented: “The only time people become truly united is when they have big incidents. But, on a day-to-day, everybody has a facade. Nobody wants to be perceived as weak.” Similarly, this participant said, “You don't wanna show yourself as weak and whatnot. I think everybody wants to just try deal with it themselves.” This participant furthered the exploration of

seeking resources/support being perceived as “weakness” by exploring the feelings of shame associated with seeking resources/support:

Ashamed right? Some people ashamed. Some people are scared. Some people have trust issues, right? You know what I think is hard. Maybe like somewhere where you could express your feelings – coming here and speaking and say, “Eh, this is what I’m going through.” Then when people hear that someone is going through something, a lot of times, people is very judgmental, so it’s very hard.

A few participants acknowledged it would be a challenge to change the “culture” of OCCC from a “macho” one where “seeking help is weakness” to one that encourages it but ultimately felt it was worth the investment. This participant described the “culture” at work as a barrier to recruiting participants for a program offering resources/support to COs, saying, “it may not been who you were, but working here, you tend to adopt it”:

I have a friend try to create something where it was a conversation – a roundtable with COs and inmates. Just something to talk, you know? But, she said she had the hardest time finding someone. I said, “You know it’s a culture. It’s hard to change a culture.” It may not been who you were, but working here, you tend to adopt it, and that’s how it is. It’s hard to change the mindset. It’s hard to change the mentality, and it take a lot of work and a lot of time to change the culture.

One participant expressed the need for change: “They have to change the culture. I think every little bit helps. Just have to chip away at the mountain, chip away at the mountain slowly. It’s not gonna change overnight.”

Themes 10 and 11 addressed the question of the availability of resources/support for employees at OCCC through OCCC and the “culture” of OCCC as a potential barrier. Themes

12 and 13 will look specifically at participants' feelings of being supported at OCCC. Participants' sense of camaraderie with one another will be described next.

Category V: Sense of Support in the Carceral Work Environment

Theme 12: Sense of Camaraderie

Participants felt a strong sense of camaraderie toward their coworkers. When asked, "What are some of the most positive or rewarding aspects of your job?" most participants responded that they had a "bond" and a strong sense of "brotherhood" or "sisterhood" with their coworkers. Participants' reverie for their work relationships manifested in participants' countenance of their coworkers as "good" people, socializing with coworkers, and feeling supported and understood by each other.

Good people. A lot of participants described their coworkers as "good" – "good people," "good braddahs," "good personalities." In context, "good" descriptors for coworkers they enjoyed working with, getting to know, and generally being around. For example, one participant responded, "Get a lot of good COs. Lotta good guys. Plenty guys, I love working with over here." Another participant said, "I think I work with a lotta good employees over here. I get along with everybody, so it's nice to see all the braddahs here." This participant expressed that they feel there are more negative than positive aspects to their work, but the "good people" they work with make them happy: "Positive? Uh. There is, but I think there's more negative. I gon' say there is a few good people here. They try to make it a better working place to work in, but it's beyond our control. I guess that's the part that makes me happy." This participant summarized their sense of camaraderie at work as a "brotherhood" or "sisterhood":

Oh, the camaraderie - the brotherhood or the sisterhood in our place [OCCC]. Um, just the personalities that the - good personalities, you know? It's nice to know your

coworkers, and also you get to know the coworker's families, you know? You all kind of bond together. You know there's an unwritten rule about us being a brotherhood, yea? Or a sisterhood. And I think that still takes place today.

This participant described how having a "good" partner makes a big difference in the quality of their workday: "When I see certain guys, when I'm talking with them, working with them – that's what makes my day fun. Like when I get a good partner. Like when I go in the module (that's when you hear your partner) and it's one good one, and you know your day gon' be alright. It's a whole lot better when you get a good partner."

Socializing. Several participants referred to their social lives with their coworkers outside of work and their importance. One participant described socializing as the "number one positive aspect" of work: "Many times we would have watch parties, barbeque, have some beers. Hopefully, nobody gets into a fight (*laughs*). But that's the number one positive aspect from the job." Another participant explained that, through work, they now have friends "from all over the island": "Yea, cuz you meet people from all over the island. People – females, guys from all over this island. It's crazy. Because before growing up, I just stayed on the West Side. I hardly came out. I just stayed on the West Side. But now, I get friends all over this island cuz of all my coworkers. I have a lot." One participant described bonding with coworkers outside of work over "shared experiences" or "war stories": "There's a lot of gatherings for drinking after the shift is over, and that's where lot of shared experiences - whether some are 100% accurate or 98% accurate. They call it war stories." This participant described the "fun and fellowship" as well as the added benefits of "resources" available through coworkers:

The fun and fellowship of the coworkers. There's a lot of workers here that are involved with a lot of extracurricular activities, from high school football coaching, head coaches,

assistant coaches to softball. A lot of sports-involved coaches, a lot of pastors, and a lot of construction people, and this place here is filled with so much resources. Pretty much if you need something to do with your life, there's someone here that can assist you directly or refer you to somebody that can help you with your needs, and that's the biggest thing here for the workers. Anything pretty much you can think of that somebody here will have a lead for you.

This participant reflected on finding they had increasingly less personal relationships outside of work but increasingly more personal relationships inside of work: "After a while, your friends from the outside get a little bit smaller. Then you realize your other circle of friends, like your co-workers, getting bigger."

Support. The most talked-about positive aspect of the camaraderie experienced by participants toward their coworkers was the feeling of being both supported and understood. One participant described the unique bond between coworkers: "Meeting different people going through the same struggle in different ways and then just the rapport of hanging out with the workers - different kind of tightness." Another participant described the value of being able to talk to coworkers: "I mean, working with a lot of people - a lot of boys and girls. Communicate and talk to them about if they have problems or any good things or bad things. Just having lotta friends is a good thing - my coworkers." A participant described how being able to talk to their coworkers "gets your day by":

We talk, you know? There's certain people in there that you kinda latch onto, so you call 'em up wherever they are, "Hey man., I have a problem over here." or "I got an issue."

Just try to get their take on it, and then you can just try to - try to heed their advice if you

wanna take it or not. So, having good relationships - closer relationships - with certain employees, certain people, kinda gets your day by.

This participant described how they feel bonded to their coworkers like “combat veterans”:

We are our own support group. Regardless of what we personally feel about each other, we do draw solace from each other in the fact that we shared experiences. In some ways, combat veterans. We have much more camaraderie than even the police officers in that we work more closely with each other as a group than police officers work as a group. That’s very rewarding.

Similarly, this participant described the unique support system between coworkers and how they “rally” for each other when times are tough:

At my last job, prior to me coming here, I really didn’t know my coworkers. But, here, I think I’m closer with so much of my coworkers. You know, I hang out with them. I deal a lot with them outside of work, and that’s probably been the most rewarding cuz we know what we go through, and I just think it’s built some really good relationships as far as between COs and how they’re very supportive of each other when they’re - someone dies. You know, we had a fundraiser - someone had cancer. Just, you know, when someone’s down, I’ve seen this place rally real quick for people.

One participant emphatically stated that the camaraderie between coworkers was so strong that they would die for each other:

The camaraderie. The people at OCCC I would give my life for, to this day, and I’m sure they would for me. One of the best compliments I’ve ever received – [CO] said, “You know, there is not a door I would not go through with you.” That’s the best compliment I think I’ve ever gotten cuz I’d rather get that compliment from someone that I’m working

with than somebody up here that's never worked with me, and he gave me that compliment.

Now that the sense of camaraderie among employees at OCCC has been described, the perceived lack of organizational support among employees at OCCC will be described next.

Theme 13: Perceived Lack of Organizational Support

Participants perceived a lack of organizational support for employees at OCCC. When participants were asked, "Generally speaking, do you feel supported by the larger organization (PSD) that supports this facility (OCCC)?" an overwhelming majority reported that they did not. The few participants who reported feeling supported or neutral rather than unsupported explained that it was only because they held a position at OCCC valued by PSD but still acknowledged that PSD did not care for the employees. For example, one participant responded, "Well, I don't feel supported by them. I'll take that back. They have been supportive of me, personally. But on average, for the average Joe that works over there, I don't know." Another responded, "As a group? No. If you were to ask that individually, I would say yes." This participant said, "Because of the work I do, yes, because my views are more important on the management side. Maybe not so much if I was to talk to the others. They probably have opposite views." Participants reported feeling that the employees at OCCC were unsupported, unvalued, and uncared for by PSD.

Feeling unsupported. When asked if they felt supported by PSD, most participants reported feeling completely unsupported. Many participants simply responded, "No" or "Nah." One participant burst into laughter and squeezed out the word "No" between labored laughs. Another participant explained that "nobody felt supported." This participant reaffirmed the point, "Never – Union or Downtown [PSD]." A participant said, "Not really. I would say no. Would be

nice to see some support from Public Safety.” This participant heartfully reflected, “I do not. However, I do wanna state that I do feel supported by all my coworkers.”

Feeling unvalued. When asked if they thought PSD valued their contributions to its well-being, most participants said they did not. There were, however, a few unsure participants, saying things like, “I don’t think so.” For example, one participant said, “Hard to say. I’ve not had any verbal feedback about it.” Similarly, another participant said, “Not sure. Nobody tell us good or bad what we do.” But the vast majority of participants reported that they did not feel valued. Most participants responded with brief answers like, “No.” “Nope.” or “Never.” A few participants expanded on their views. One participant said, “They don’t give a shit, really.” Another participant said, “I don’t even think they know who I am.” This participant said, “I don’t know if they value anybody’s contribution.” After reflection, this participant said, “We work for a non-caring master.”

Several participants also reported feeling expendable. One participant responded, “No. Cuz if I didn’t wanna do it, ‘Who’s next? We can offer you weekends off.’” Similarly, this participant said, “What I think – you’re disposable. You can be replaced.” This participant expressed how they feel drained by PSD: “I feel like they’re sucking me for everything I got, and then when I’m done, they’re just throwing me to the fire.”

Feeling uncared for. When asked if they thought the organization cared about their general health and well-being, nearly all participants said they did not. Participants echoed their answers to the previous questions and prompts, mainly responding with answers like “No.” and “Never.” One participant offered some explanation, saying, “No. Because they already know the health problems we got.” Another participant said “No.” and then gave an example of a meek attempt of PSD to express gratitude to the employees, “Occasionally they’ll say it’s corrections

week, and they'll have a special meal in the mess hall. It's not that great." One participant refused to answer, saying, "I cannot. No comments." Participants' descriptions of how they feel like a different person due to working at OCCC will be the final theme portrayed in this chapter. Themes 12 and 13 looked specifically at participants' feelings of being supported at OCCC. Theme 14 will describe how participants feel about themselves.

Category VI: Feelings About Oneself in the Carceral Work Environment

Theme 14: Feeling Like a Different Person

Many participants reported feeling fundamentally different from when they first started working at OCCC. Although there were no questions during the interview explicitly asking if participants' felt this way, many volunteered to share that they thought they had become "different" since beginning their positions at OCCC. For example, one participant said, "I know I change. But, that's just how it goes, I guess." Some of the subthemes that came up within the more prominent theme of participants' feeling like a "different" person were participants' realizing they've changed, become desensitized, and wished things could be different.

Realizing they've changed. After years of working at OCCC, several participants expressed that they realized that they had changed. One participant shared something a co-worker said to them when they first started their position: "Ask somebody in two years how you've changed. Somebody who knows you now and doesn't see the gradual change, you know, and ask them how you've changed. You will change. This job will change you. Change your attitude. Change the way you live." This participant recounted similar advice from a co-worker, attributing their change to the "insidious stress" at OCCC:

The stress at OCCC is really insidious. You're there a couple years; next thing you know, it comes out and smacks you in the back of the head and says, "Hey! I'm here! Now

you're stressed, buddy!" And I did something that somebody told me to do when I was in basic training. They said, "In a couple years, ask people who know you how you've changed." And I did. I changed.

Another participant described the "insidious stress" and how it had changed them:

That's where the stress comes from. That's how it's insidious and just wears on you. If you've been on the job, after a few years, it smacks you in the head because you notice that these things have happened to you, and you've become that hyperaware, and you're always up here now (*points toward the head*). You never come down.

One participant ruefully explained that they have "been kind of different" since starting at OCCC, saying they "no like be that guy":

When I sit down, I start thinking over these past couple of years: Yea. I've been kind of different ever since I started this job. And then sometimes, when I stay at work, I no like be that guy. Like, I no like be that guy that I gotta be. And then my wife says, "Oh, you so different!" ever since I been here. Just different. Life is different.

This participant expressed that they had changed so much that they had grown distant from family and friends: "You become very difficult to talk to – very, very difficult – and it's just a slow progression. You have family and friends that are close to you. But in the end, after thirty years, at the end, they're at a much greater distance."

Becoming desensitized. Many participants spoke about the feeling of becoming desensitized as a result of working at OCCC. One participant explained how this desensitization helped them deal with "traumatic incidents," saying they were "used to it now":

You have to turn it on and turn it off. Sometimes you have to turn it off - that's the difference. Whether it'll take you twenty minutes to go on the side and calm your spirit

down and nerves or an hour - it depends. But, for me now, because I seen a lot of traumatic incidents, you know, a lot of blood or near-death – used to it now.

Another participant described becoming desensitized to traumatic incidents at OCCC, comparing themselves to their Dad, who was a Vietnam veteran:

I've seen guys hang themselves in the module, and they die. I've seen guys get the crap beat outta them – they almost die. I guess we, as COs, we desensitize ourselves. My Dad was a Vietnam veteran, and as I grew up, I always wondered why my Dad like when we went to hunt pigs? I thought killing a pig was cruel. We gonna eat 'em but sticking the knife in was scary. My Dad was in Vietnam, and to him, he was desensitized, and I feel that. Seeing all this crap that happens here, I get desensitized to lotta stuff that my daughters and my wife or a lotta my nephews would probably cringe at in movies – just doesn't bother me cuz I've seen guys hang themselves and die in there. Even us trying to save them. I feel - and I guess over the last two to three years - I was really bad with my mental side, but I think within the last - ever since my heart attack, I kinda just put everything in perspective and just decided to say, "You gotta learn from these old guys. How do they do it? Turn it on and off, and that life over there is different coming here."

Wishing things were different. Some participants who felt they had changed expressed that they wished things were different as time went on. For example, this participant said, "Sometimes I wish that I didn't work here, honestly, and do something else. Though I'm grateful and thankful that I have a job. I just feel like I could've done better as I get older." Another participant compared working in jail to being in the war and shared that they "struggle" with realizing their job isn't as "glorious" as it once was: "I don't really know if it's the war or the jail: I really have a hard time to differentiate from the two. But it's not as glorious as I once thought.

Glorious as far as exciting; different; all those things. If I actually knew, I think I would have changed my decision to work in jail. I struggle with all those things every day.” Lastly, this participant described the difference between how they felt when they first started working at OCCC and how they felt thirteen years later:

I used to work warehouses and enjoyed my job back then, but they said this was the one. They said it's a good-paying job and it's steady. So, I said, "Okay, I go try 'um." When I finally did 'um, and I finally came, and after the first year, I was like, "Oh, I should have come a long time ago." After going into the second year, I started seeing this job for not what I thought it would be, and I was surprised I stayed here this long – thirteen years and change. That's the longest job I ever been at. Every time I get this feeling that that's it for me, and I don't know: It's like I like do something else. Something that gon' make me happy. I look at life and you happy with your job no matter the pay. You go to work. You no work no single day you no like. But if you not happy with your job, you gon' feel like one slave, and that's how I feel. I told, 'um, I feel like that over here. I no even really like this job.

Next, Chapter 5 will discuss how the results of this research study are significant in relation to what is already realized in the extant literature on job stress experienced by COs.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The objectives of this research study were to (a) add to the existing body of research on job stress experienced by COs, with the addition of the impact of regularly existing in LCS on COs in Hawai'i, and (b) inform the need for the development of evidence-based programming aimed at preventing and treating job stress experienced by COs. Before proceeding, the

researcher would like to note that this was a study of one aspect of the system of corrections regarding job stress experienced by a specific group of people (COs) related to working in one particular carceral setting (OCCC) during a specific period of time (2019-2020). The findings of this research study might not apply to the system of corrections across all space and time.

Previous research studies have focused on job stress experienced by COs, but this research study is the first to be carried out in Hawai'i. Also, this research study is the first to explore the topic of job stress experienced by COs using the theoretical framework of carceral geography and LCS, introducing the conceptualization of not only inmates and their visitors but also employees working in LCS as being impacted by the liminality of those spaces, as well.

To inform the objectives of this research study, the researcher employed a qualitative phenomenological interview study asking former or current COs to share their experiences working at OCCC to answer three research questions. First, "What is the nature of the relationship between COs and their carceral work environment?" Second, "How do COs cope with job stress?" Third, "What types of resources/support are available to COs through their carceral work environment to cope with job stress?"

Regarding R1, the results of this research study suggest that the nature of the relationship between COs and their carceral work environment is complicated, leaning more toward the negative. COs reported feeling overstressed, underappreciated, and run-down by their jobs. This was exemplified by the negative impacts on their lives, such as stress on personal relationships, adverse health consequences, lack of available resources/support, and generally feeling undervalued by their workplace.

Regarding R2, the results of this research study indicate that COs devise ways to cope with their job stress, with some being positive and some being negative. Some of the positive

ways COs coped with their job stress were by implementing daily routines or “rituals” for preparing to enter and exit OCCC and the support and camaraderie they felt among their co-workers. Some of the negative ways COs coped with their job stress were by attempting to separate their work identities from their non-work identities, not talking to their partners about work, taking their work stress out on others, not seeking resources/support, increased substance use, and avoiding people and places outside of work, to name a few.

Regarding R3, the results of this research study indicate that COs do not consistently receive any resources/support from the larger organization for coping with their job stress. This was evidenced by their responses to the question of what resources/support were available to them, to which most of them responded that there were none, with the exception of a few who thought maybe there was something but weren't sure what it was. Next, the five main findings of this research study will be discussed, starting with Finding I: Participants experienced OCCC as a liminal carceral space.

Finding I: Participants Experienced OCCC as a Liminal Carceral Space

This research study expanded on previous concepts and research studies by suggesting that employees of LCS (in this case, COs working at OCCC) go through difficulties associated with experiencing liminality. The findings of this research study are in line with Moran's (2013) concept that jails and prisons (i.e., CS) are sites of liminality (i.e., LCS), along with Harvey's (2012) findings that the experience of liminality for any length of time is experienced as difficult. The findings of this research study are also in line with Comfort's (2003) and Codd's (2007) ideas that inmates experience this difficulty, and so do friends and family visiting inmates. The findings of this research study are likewise in line with Van Gennep's (1960) explanation of the performance of rituals as a means of resolving discrepancies and enabling the transformation

from one state of being to another. However, this research study departed somewhat from Van Gennep's (1960) concept of liminality. Van Gennep (1960) described the experience of liminality as involving a status change resulting from entering and exiting a threshold, such as entering a puberty ritual as a child and exiting as an adult. But, OCCC is not a threshold; it's a place conceptualized as liminal for COs while working in it, making it a LCS.

This research study suggests that participants' experienced OCCC as a LCS having a different set of rules than the world outside – an indicator of liminality. Liminality was described by Turner (1967) as an indeterminate phase or period where an “individual passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state” (p. 94-95). Participants routinely performed rituals to smooth the transition of going to and arriving home from OCCC – a *physical space* with actual borders and spatiality. Participants also routinely performed rituals to smooth the transition in and out of their mental states associated with the transition of going to and arriving home from OCCC – a *non-physical space* without defined borders and spatiality.

A recent study by Schrøder, Janssens and Hvidt (2021) supported the importance of rituals in LCS by investigating how healthcare professionals mentally cope with adverse events, such as the death of a patient while under their care. Schrøder, Janssens, and Hvidt (2021) used Van Gennep's (1960) and Turner's (1967, 1969) concepts of liminality to explain the process of transition between the two professional identities – potentially infallible where patients live and potentially fallible where patients die. In doing so, Schrøder, Janssens, and Hvidt (2021) found that organizational hospital procedures may serve as a ritual for the healthcare professional's mental states in the aftermath of adverse events. In the absence of organizational correctional procedures, participants of this research study created their own rituals.

The liminality of participants' experiences was evident in their performance of rituals coupled with the psychological impacts they reported when transitioning in and out of OCCC. Participants reported having rituals for going to work, such as resting their minds, listening to music, bathroom hygiene, and drinking caffeine (refer, Category I, Theme 1), and arriving home, such as altering their physical bodies, altering their physical spaces, and exercising (refer, Category I, Theme 4). Participants likewise described experiencing psychological impacts when leaving home/going to work, such as needing to mentally prepare, putting on their game faces, experiencing a sense of dread (refer, Category I, Theme 2), and leaving work/arriving home, such as feeling happy/excited and exhausted/relieved (refer, Category 1, Theme 3).

Furthermore, COs experience of OCCC as a LCS is likely connected to the fact that jails, unlike prisons, are constructed to be temporary spaces. Jails are not designed to be inhabited for an extended period, making them inherently transient. However, unlike inmates who will eventually be released from jail within shorter periods ranging from hours to months, COs spend years, often decades, working in a space not meant for long-term inhabitation - jail. This research study suggests that COs experience the consequences of that, and Finding I speaks to their desire to ease their experience of liminality with the comfort of ritual and repetition. The following section will describe Finding II: Participants' interpersonal relationships outside of OCCC suffered.

Finding II: Participants Interpersonal Relationships Outside of OCCC Suffered

The findings of this research study are in line with Finn's (2000) findings that stress may damage COs' family relationships. This damage often occurs because COs displace their frustration onto spouses and children and become distant by withholding information about their work that they feel family members will not understand (Finn, 2000). This research study implies

that participants' interpersonal relationships outside of OCCC suffered because of difficulties related to participants' attempts to separate their work selves from their non-work selves.

Participants reported having issues with "bringing the job home" – talking to their families like they talk to inmates and being short-tempered like they are at work (refer, Category II, Theme 5).

Participants also reported that they withheld information related to work from their partners because they thought their partners wouldn't understand and wanted to shield their partners from upsetting details (refer, Category II, Theme 6). Participants' struggles with "bringing the job home" and withholding information related to work from their partners are likely associated with the likelihood of divorce among COs, which COs cited as being due to becoming a CO after marriage and issues with communication (refer, Category II, Theme 7). The following section will describe Finding III: Participants attributed declining health and well-being to job stress.

Finding III: Participants Attributed Declining Health and Well-being to Job Stress

The findings of this research study are in line with extant research showing that excessive job stress experienced by COs can result in serious health problems ranging from PTSD (Brower, 2013; Spinaris, Denhoff, & Kellaway, 2012) to heart disease, disordered eating, and increased substance use (Cheek & Miller, 1983; Woodruff, 1993). Participants' health problems were evident in their descriptions of hypervigilance (a common effect of PTSD) outside of OCCC, such as eyes darting around, needing a visual of the exit, avoiding crowds, and being antisocial (refer, Category III, Theme, 8). Although research on CO health and well-being receives less attention than law enforcement health and well-being, one of the more heavily researched measures of health and well-being among COs is PTSD. COs suffer higher rates of PTSD than the general public, with previous studies showing that rates of PTSD among COs are approximately 1 in 3 COs (Denhof & Spinaris, 2016; Spinaris et al., 2012; Swartz et al., 2017).

This is especially alarming because individuals who suffer from PTSD have an increased risk of suicide, hospitalization, and alcohol abuse (Davidson, 2000). Additionally, research suggests that PTSD is not only psychological but will likely manifest itself as physical symptoms resulting from stress (Davidson, 2000; Pitman, 1997). This correlation was evident in participants' descriptions of adverse health consequences they directly attributed to working at OCCC, such as high blood pressure, stroke, heart attack, and increased substance use (refer, Category III, Theme 9). The following section will describe Finding IV: Participants want non-judgmental access to resources/support.

Finding IV: Participants Want Non-judgmental Access to Resources/Support

The findings of this research study support the claim that while inmates usually have programming available to help them cope with the stress of living in LCS, COs tend to have limited resources to help them cope with the stress of working in LCS (Morgan, Van Haveren, & Pearson, 2002). Participants reported a lack of resources/support for employees at OCCC, with some reporting there are limited resources and others saying that there were none whatsoever (refer, Category IV, Theme 10). Participants were especially frustrated with the lack of debriefing after a traumatic incident and reported that they relied on one another for support in the absence of available resources/support (refer, Category IV, Theme 10).

If anything, the results of this research study could suggest that COs feel that they may experience the difficulty associated with being in an LCS on a more severe level than inmates and their visitors due to the length of exposure to LCS. While most inmates will leave jail at the end of their sentence, COs might work for decades in an LCS. Participants expressed a great need for resources/support for employees at OCCC, saying that they would like to have someone to talk to and that resources/support should not only be for inmates (refer, Category IV, Theme

11). However, employees did cite the culture of corrections as a potential barrier to COs accessing resources/support if they become available (refer, Category IV, Theme 11). The following section will describe Finding V: Participants stressed the importance of the sense of support at OCCC.

Finding V: Participants Stressed the Importance of Sense of Support at OCCC

The findings of this research study are also in line with Moran's (2013) argument for the importance of relationships and experiences in LCS. Participants reported feeling a strong sense of support from their co-workers, citing a strong sense of camaraderie expressed through giving examples of the good people they worked with, socialized with, and supported when they were struggling (refer, Category V, Theme 12). On the other hand, participants reported feeling a weak or nonexistent sense of support from the greater organization (i.e., OCCC administration and PSD), emphatically stating that they felt unsupported, unvalued, and uncared for (refer, Category V, Theme 13). The power of how perceived relationships in OCCC shaped the quality of COs' experiences working there was evident in their responses.

People, Places, Systems

In Chapter 1, Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979) ecological systems framework was introduced. Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979) proposed that many systems or contexts shape human development and divided psychological influences on behavior into micro-, meso-, exo-, and macro-system levels of power. In Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979) framework, each system level of power affects behavior and may change as its members are replaced or altered. Therefore, there is reciprocal causation between the individual and the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979; McLeroy et al., 1988).

This research study utilized Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979) ecological systems framework to explore the relationships between COs and their carceral work environment at OCCC. In doing so, it was apparent that there were issues related to the dynamics of the COs' carceral work environment, which directly impacted their health and well-being. Also, COs' perceptions of themselves and their value within their specific carceral environment and the larger system of corrections were affected by their perceptions of the level of organizational support they received. In other words, people, places, and systems are directly impacted by one another.

The findings of this research study remind us of the importance of the symbiotic relationships between people, places, and systems. As such, affecting change at any level of a complex network of systems can impact all levels within those systems. That being said, this research study should not be viewed as an attack on COs, OCCC, or even PSD. But, rather a reminder that as eminent Stanford psychologist Philip Zimbardo (2011) said, "It's not a bad apple; it's a bad barrel of apples." As such, the system of corrections as a whole is a complicated and layered network of individuals and subsystems that require care and attention to improve the health and well-being of the people and places within it. The following section will delineate some of the limitations of this research study.

Limitations

While the phenomenological approach provides compelling research data allowing the researcher to gain insights into the lived experiences of human beings, there are limitations. One limitation is that the individual circumstances under which data are collected cannot be generalized. Another limitation is researcher bias. These two limitations will be described next, starting with generalizability.

Generalizability

A colleague asked Corbin and Strauss (2008), “How can you generalize from studying just this one factory to all other Japanese factories?” to which they responded:

True, you can't generalize from one factory to all factories and from one country to another. But then, generalization is not the purpose of qualitative research. The idea behind qualitative research is to gain understanding about some phenomenon, and a researcher can learn a lot about a phenomenon from the study of one factory or organization. (p. 377)

This study is a qualitative phenomenological interview study conducted in the State of Hawai'i exclusively with participants currently or formerly employed as COs at OCCC – the only jail on the Island of O'ahu. While there are similarities that dictate how COs are trained and how each correctional organization is run, there are differences. It is conceivable that if this study were conducted in another state or even on a neighboring island within the State of Hawai'i, the data produced might yield different results.

Researcher Bias

On researcher bias, Corbin and Strauss (2008) explained: “Every researcher has perspective, biases, and assumptions that they bring with them to the research process. These impact every aspect of the research, from the topic chosen to study to the audiences for whom books and articles are written. This is a given fact about which there is no dispute.” (p. 46). One of the strategies offered by Corbin and Strauss (2008) for controlling the intrusion of perspectives, biases, and assumptions is keeping a journal, which the researcher did throughout this research study.

Still, it is essential to draw attention to the researcher's positionality and potential biases. Before this research study, the researcher was a contracted employee for a University of Hawai'i-based research group working out of OCCC for three years. The researcher had a pre-existing relationship with the first five participants interviewed, allowing the researcher to utilize snowball sampling to gain the last fifteen participants' trust. At the same time, the researcher took precautions to ensure that they did not project their own experiences at OCCC onto the participants, and in the data analysis process, there is always the possibility that some implicit bias was involved at times. However, without a doubt, this research study would not have been possible if the researcher didn't have preexisting relationships with some of the participants. The researcher only had access to this population because she had shared experiences and knowledge of their experiences as employees inside of OCCC. The following section will propose recommendations for future research.

Recommendations for Future Research

Participants were limited to a demographic within one geographical location. It would be valuable to collect data from participants across different geographical areas to enhance the richness of the findings of this study. It would be especially beneficial to start by replicating this study on the neighboring islands for an in-state analysis. Then, it would be worthwhile to expand this kind of project to the remaining 49 states.

Participants valued their daily rituals for transitioning in and out of work and their sense of support at work. Researchers and practitioners are encouraged to quantitatively and qualitatively explore the protective factors or coping mechanisms that were found to exist within the correctional environment. A deeper analysis of these protective factors or coping

mechanisms will assist in producing a better understanding of how these mechanisms may be better institutionalized to benefit all employees.

Participants indicated that they would like access to resources/support for their job stress; they want someone professional to talk to, especially after traumatic incidents occur at work. It is highly encouraged that researchers and practitioners investigate how psychologists and other mental health professionals are working in other correctional organizations to ensure that psychological approaches are most effectively used in helping contribute to positive behavioral changes among correctional staff.

Participants reported experiencing symptoms of PTSD. Given that research has shown rates of PTSD among COs are higher than in the general population and that individuals who suffer from PTSD are at an increased risk of suicide, hospitalization, alcohol abuse, and other physical symptoms resulting from stress (Davidson, 2000; Pitman, 1997), it is highly encouraged that researchers and practitioners examine PTSD in COs more deeply. In particular, how to manage symptoms of PTSD so that they do not negatively interfere with COs daily lives. If possible, that research should be widely disseminated to correctional organizations.

Lastly, participants emphatically stated that they felt unsupported by the larger organization in which they worked. Other researchers are urged to examine different levels of organizational support experienced by correctional employees in as many carceral settings as possible. The following section will describe some of the implications of the findings of this research study.

Implications

The first implication is related to the voices of the participants. There is extant research exploring the problem of poor health and wellness (both psychological and physical) among

COs. However, very little of that extant research has allowed COs to express themselves in their own words. This research suggests that allowing specific groups of individuals to tell their own stories illuminates the experiences of that group and illustrates the core similarities across seemingly separate populations.

The second implication is related to programming. The implications of the findings of this study are significant for existing institutional employee stress management or reduction programs. Education and training should be implemented to assist COs in effectively processing their job stress to avoid negative impacts on employees individually and the corrections system. It would undoubtedly benefit all if correctional organizations addressed the problem of job stress experienced by COs and implemented further training and educational procedures to offset the negative symptoms that occur as a product of being a CO, such as PTSD.

The third implication is related to the organization in which the participants work. This research study investigated the interpersonal effects of job stress experienced by individuals working for a larger organization; it was not an investigation of the larger organization itself. However, the findings of this study expose the shortcomings of the larger organization. In particular, this research study revealed the lack of organizational support for its employees working in correctional settings, which merits future investigation. Correctional organizations should examine what kinds of organizational structures are in place to support COs. In the absence of such organizational structures, COs will continue to languish at both direct and indirect costs to COs personally, to correctional organizations as a whole, and ultimately, to the communities in which those correctional organizations are embedded.

Conclusion

This research study explored the unique lives and experiences of COs working in a local jail in Hawai'i. But it revealed itself as an exploration of what makes us human. The findings of this research study took the experiences of a particular group of people and found that they have the same basic needs and challenges as most of us do – the desire for stability, the want for connection, the fragility of our minds and bodies under the burden of stress, the need for support, and how we feel about ourselves in the context of our own stories at the end of the day. The experiences of the COs who participated in this study are undoubtedly unique; we do not all have the experiences working in jail that they do, and they deserve to be recognized for that. However, their experiences, while indeed magnified, are also universal. It is the researcher's great hope that those who read this research study will recognize not just the differences between themselves and the participants, but the similarities, as well. If you identified something of yourself and your own experiences in the participants of this study, please consider taking that recognition and applying it as you go forth into the world that we all exist in – together.

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Appendix A

Cover letter to PSD (March 2018)

Dear [REDACTED],

I'm writing to you to ask you to allow me to conduct a needs assessment investigating levels of occupation-related stress experienced by correctional officers (COs) employed at O'ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) in order to examine the impacts of that stress on the COs individually and OCCC organizationally. At the conclusion of this investigation, I plan to: (1) deliver my findings to the Department of Public Safety (DPS) along with a comprehensive write-up of existing programs being utilized in correctional settings to prevent and treat occupation-related stress experienced by COs, and (2) utilize the data and knowledge gained from this investigation as the foundation for writing and defending my dissertation so that I may graduate with my PhD in community psychology and utilize that degree to further serve my community.

I believe that I am in a unique position to successfully conduct this proposed research because I have spent nearly two years working alongside the COs in the security office at OCCC where I conduct randomized video surveillance of COs monitoring inmates on suicide watch, safety watch, and being held in the holding unit as part of an ongoing continuous quality improvement (CQI) project through my position as a graduate research assistant (GRA) for Research and Evaluation in Public Safety (REPS). In doing this work, sitting side-by-side with the subjects that I was evaluating (i.e., the COs), I have begun to gain insight into what COs go through at work and especially the constant stress that they are under. Literature suggests that not only is being a CO dangerous, stressful, and relatively disrespected as a profession; it's extremely psychologically and physically damaging.

I believe that my prior work experience alongside COs at OCCC has put me in a unique position to observe the challenges COs face at work and the impact of spending so much time inside of a correctional setting. My experience observing, sitting beside, and getting to know the COs at OCCC is directly connected to the inception of this proposed research. This proposed research seeks to highlight and quantify the stress associated with being a CO and the need for programming to address CO stress. My goal is to provide research-driven feedback to you in order to improve the health and overall functioning of both your employees and your institution. I am looking forward to meeting with you to address any questions, concerns, or feedback that you may have regarding this proposed research.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

All the Best,
Sophie Amanda Gralapp
Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

Appendix B

Research Study to PSD (March 2018)

Proposal for the Use of Department of Public Safety Data
For Student Research Project

Student Researcher: Sophie A. Gralapp, M.A./Doctoral Candidate

Project Goals: (1) To examine perceived work stress (PWS) experienced by correctional officers (COs) and the relationship between PWS experienced by COs and the organizational functions of the institutions they serve; and (2) to produce a comprehensive overview of prevention and intervention programming being delivered to COs in other correctional facilities to mitigate PWS experienced by COs.

Background

Certain occupations, such as being a policeman, are known to induce high levels of *perceived work stress* (PWS).^{10,14-15} PWS is defined as the degree to which workers feel strain associated with their jobs and is associated with negative physical and mental health outcomes.^{10,12} For example, police PWS is associated with cardiovascular disease and depression^{4,9,10} as well as maladaptive and antisocial behaviors like problem drinking, hyper-aggressiveness, and violence.^{10,13,19}

Working in jail or prison as a Correctional Officer (CO) is also a high-PWS occupation^{1,8,11,17,21} and research findings confirm negative outcomes of PWS on COs.^{1-2,8,16,21,24} According to a literature review conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice Programs Diagnostic Center in 2013, many COs experience some level of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) – a medical syndrome that includes symptoms of anxiety, sleeplessness, nightmares, and social withdrawal.¹ In fact, national studies have demonstrated that 27% of more than 3,000 COs indicated that they were suffering from PTSD²², COs have a higher rate of suicide than those in other occupations (i.e., CO suicide rate is 39% higher than the rest of the working-age population²³ and twice as high as the rate of police officers and the general population¹⁸), and, on average, COs will not live to see their 59th birthdays.¹ Furthermore, a number of negative outcomes can result from high levels of PWS at both the individual and organizational levels.^{7,20} For example, the negative outcomes of PWS on COs can degrade their ability to perform their responsibilities in ways that create stress for other staff, cost money, and compromise institutional safety.^{2,5,8,16,24}

It has been suggested that meaningful programming designed to prevent and treat CO stress may be beneficial to helping reduce CO PWS.^{8,17} While inmates usually have prevention programs available to help them cope with the stress of their living environment (e.g., individual and group therapy, church groups, Alcoholics Anonymous, etc.), COs tend to have limited resources designed to help them cope with the jail and prison environment.¹⁷ It has been postulated that developing effective programming for preventing and treating CO stress can:

- save correctional administrators money by reducing overtime costs incurred when COs take sick time or quit because of PWS;
- improve CO performance by enhancing staff morale;
- increase institutional safety by reducing distractions caused by PWS;
- improve relations with the Union by working together on a program that can mutually benefit both parties; and

- show concern for employees by demonstrating that the department cares about its staff as human beings, not just as employees.⁸

Purpose

Given that (1) understanding the impact of CO PWS is critical in developing interventions to promote CO wellness and (2) CO wellness also impacts offenders, colleagues, families, and communities in which COs live, this investigation aims to examine PWS of COs and the role CO wellness programming could have on the functioning of the institutions in which they work.

Methods

Data

All data collected will be collected from COs employed by O'ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) and the identities of the participants will be kept confidential for the protection of the participants. The following types of data will be collected:

1. OCCC CO self-reported survey data (to be developed and collected by researcher)
2. OCCC CO self-reported interview data (to be developed and collected by researcher)

Analysis

1. OCCC COs will be contacted by mail (postal or electronic) and asked to anonymously complete a survey designed to assess CO stress across several domains with the goal of gaining insight into their lives that won't be skewed by self-consciousness or social desirability bias. The survey results will be analyzed and interpreted using a quantitative statistical software program called SPSS.
2. OCCC COs will be recruited for interviews using questions designed to gain insight into what they experience at work with the goal of using information gained to provide recommendations for meaningful programming that would help COs prevent and cope with work-related stress. Interview results will be audio recorded, transcribed, coded, analyzed, and interpreted using the qualitative data software program called NVivo.

Study Aims

There is a lack of research on the development of meaningful prevention and intervention strategies for job-related PWS experienced by COs. As such, four specific aims are proposed to provide the foundational research that will provide the basis of the development and implementation of such interventions:

- Aim 1: To investigate and analyze PWS experienced by a sample of COs employed at OCCC.
- Aim 2: To review coping strategies for PWS utilized by a sample of COs employed at OCCC.
- Aim 3: To assess strategies utilized by OCCC to prevent and/or mitigate workplace burdens, including PWS experienced by COs employed at OCCC.
- Aim 4: To research intervention programs developed and disseminated in other correctional facilities to mitigate PWS experienced by COs in order to produce a comprehensive overview of these programs to provide to the Department of Public Safety (DPS) for DPS's consideration.

Benefit to PSD

PWS experienced by COs has a significant impact on the institutions in which COs work. Findings of this exploratory study will inform prevention and intervention strategies. Organizationally, high levels of PWS experienced by COs impact correctional center budgets due to staff illness, turnover, required overtime, early retirement, and workers' compensation claims.³ Furthermore, since the institutions in which COs work are responsible for returning both its employees (daily) and its offenders (upon release) to the community, it is especially important that the institution be running effectively to ensure the health and safety of the greater community.

Project Impact: This is the first investigation to systematically examine job-induced stress experienced by COs in Hawai'i. Lessons learnt will inform prevention and intervention strategies.

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Appendix C

Cover Letter to the Union (June 2018)

Sophie A. Gralapp, M.A./Doctoral Candidate
Community and Cultural Psychology
Department of Psychology
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing to you to ask for your support as I endeavor to conduct an investigation that would require the participation of at least 120 of your members. I plan to conduct a needs assessment investigating levels of occupation-related stress experienced by correctional officers (COs) employed at O'ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC). The purpose of this needs assessment is to examine the impacts of stress on COs individually and OCCC organizationally. At the conclusion of this needs assessment, I plan to: (1) present my findings to the Union along with a comprehensive write-up of existing programs being utilized in correctional settings to prevent and treat occupation-related stress experienced by COs, which the Union may use a template for potential programming to be implemented at OCCC in the future, and (2) utilize the data and knowledge gained from this investigation as the foundation for writing and defending my dissertation so that I may graduate with my PhD in community psychology from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and utilize that degree to further serve my community.

Although it is not necessary to formally receive your support in order to recruit participants for this study, I would prefer to be transparent with you and your members before I begin. In the event that you do decide to lend your support to this research, I would request from you a letter or memo addressed to current members acknowledging that you are aware that this research is taking place and encouraging members to participate. I would also request a verbal reminder that the research is taking place at a Union meeting prior to when I begin recruitment, which is projected to begin sometime in the next 4-5 months. Furthermore, I am formally requesting your support because I believe that the findings of this research could be utilized by to advocate for your members.

I will be independently funding and conducting all of the proposed research on my own and only ask for your endorsement of the study to current Union members in the form of a letter or memo and announcement at a Union meeting (all to occur at a later date and prior to the actual launch of the research study). I believe that I am in a unique position to successfully conduct this proposed research because I spent over two years working alongside the COs in the security office at OCCC where I conducted randomized video surveillance of COs monitoring inmates on suicide watch, safety watch, and being held in the holding unit as part of an ongoing continuous quality improvement (CQI) project through my position as a graduate research assistant (GRA) for Research and Evaluation in Public Safety (REPS). In doing this work, sitting side-by-side with the subjects that I was evaluating (i.e., the COs), I have begun to gain insight into what COs go through at work and especially the constant stress that they are under. Literature suggests that not only is being a CO dangerous, stressful, and relatively disrespected as a profession; it can be psychologically and physically damaging.

While this proposed research is independent and totally unrelated to my position at REPS, it is my prior work experience alongside COs at OCCC that put me in a unique position to observe the challenges COs face at work and the impact of spending so much time inside of a correctional setting. My experience observing, sitting beside, and getting to know the COs at OCCC is directly connected to the inception of this proposed research. This proposed research seeks to highlight and quantify the stress associated with being a CO and the need for programming to address CO stress. My goal is to provide research-driven feedback to you in order to advocate for improving the health and overall functioning of both your members and your institution. I would like to schedule a meeting with you to address any questions, concerns, or feedback that you may have regarding this proposed research.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Sophie Amanda Gralapp
Phone: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]

Appendix D

Research Study to the Union (June 2018)

Proposal for the Support of the Union for Recruitment
For Student Research Project

Student Researcher: Sophie A. Gralapp, M.A./Doctoral Candidate

Project Goals: (1) To examine perceived work stress (PWS) experienced by correctional officers (COs) currently employed at O'ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) and the relationship between PWS experienced by COs and well-being at both the individual and organizational levels; and (2) to produce a comprehensive overview of prevention and intervention programming being delivered to COs in other correctional facilities to mitigate PWS experienced by COs.

Background

Certain occupations, such as being a policeman, are known to induce high levels of *perceived work stress* (PWS).^{3,10,14-15} PWS is defined as the degree to which workers feel strain associated with their jobs and is associated with negative physical and mental health outcomes.^{10,12} For example, police PWS is associated with cardiovascular disease and depression^{4,9,10} as well as maladaptive and antisocial behaviors like problem drinking, hyper-aggressiveness, and violence.^{10,13,19}

Working in jail or prison as a Correctional Officer (CO) is also a high-PWS occupation^{1,8,11,17,21} and research findings confirm negative outcomes of PWS on COs.^{1-2,8,16,21,24} According to a literature review conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice Programs Diagnostic Center in 2013, many COs experience some level of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) – a medical syndrome that includes symptoms of anxiety, sleeplessness, nightmares, and social withdrawal.¹ In fact, national studies have demonstrated that 27% of more than 3,000 COs indicated that they were suffering from PTSD.²² The literature review conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice Programs Diagnostic Center in 2013 also found that COs also have a higher rate of suicide than those in other occupations (i.e., CO suicide rate is 39% higher than the rest of the working-age population²³ and twice as high as the rate of police officers and the general population¹⁸) and, on average, COs will not live to see their 59th birthdays.¹ Furthermore, a number of negative outcomes can result from high levels of PWS at both the individual and organizational levels.^{7,20} Individually, the negative outcomes of PWS on COs can degrade their ability to perform their responsibilities in ways that create stress for other staff, cost money, and compromise institutional safety.^{2,5,8,16,24} Organizationally, the negative outcomes of PWS on COs impact correctional center budgets due to staff illness, turnover, required overtime, and workers' compensation claims.³

It has been suggested that meaningful programming designed to prevent and treat CO stress may be beneficial to helping reduce PWS experienced by COs.^{8,17} While inmates usually have prevention programs available to help them cope with the stress of their living environment (e.g., individual and group therapy, church groups, Alcoholics Anonymous, etc.), COs tends to have limited resources designed to help them cope with the jail and prison environment.¹⁷ It has been postulated that developing effective programming for preventing and treating CO stress can:

- save correctional administrators money by reducing overtime costs incurred when COs take sick time or quit because of PWS;
- improve CO performance by enhancing staff morale;
- increase institutional safety by reducing distractions caused by PWS;

- improve relations with the Union by working together on a program that can mutually benefit both parties; and
- show concern for employees by demonstrating that the department cares about its staff as human beings, not just as employees.⁸

Purpose

Given that (1) understanding the impact of PWS experienced by COs is critical in developing interventions to promote CO wellness and (2) CO wellness also impacts offenders, colleagues, families, and communities in which COs live, this investigation aims to examine PWS experienced by COs and the role that CO wellness programming could have on the functioning of both the COs individually and the greater institutions in which they work.

Methods

Data

All data collected will be collected from COs employed by O'ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) and **the identities of the participants will be kept confidential for the protection of the participants**. The following types of data will be collected:

1. OCCC CO self-reported survey data (to be developed and collected by researcher)
2. OCCC CO self-reported interview data (to be developed and collected by researcher)

Analysis

1. OCCC COs will be either recruited in-person or contacted by mail (postal or electronic) and asked to anonymously complete a survey designed to assess CO stress across several domains with the goal of gaining insight into their lives that won't be skewed by self-consciousness or social desirability bias. The survey results will be analyzed and interpreted using a quantitative statistical software program called SPSS.
2. OCCC COs will be recruited for interviews using questions designed to gain insight into what they experience at work with the goal of using information gained to provide recommendations for meaningful programming that would help COs prevent and cope with work-related stress. Interview results will be audio recorded, transcribed, coded, analyzed, and interpreted using the qualitative data software program called NVivo.

Study Aims

There is a lack of research on the development of meaningful prevention and intervention strategies for job-related PWS experienced by COs. As such, four specific aims are proposed to provide the foundational research that will provide the basis of the development and implementation of such interventions:

- Aim 1: To investigate and analyze PWS experienced by a sample of COs employed at OCCC.
- Aim 2: To review coping strategies for PWS utilized by a sample of COs employed at OCCC.
- Aim 3: To assess strategies utilized by OCCC to prevent and/or mitigate workplace burdens, including PWS experienced by COs employed at OCCC.
- Aim 4: To research intervention programs developed and disseminated in other correctional facilities to mitigate PWS experienced by COs in order to produce a comprehensive overview of these programs to provide to the Union for their consideration.

Benefit to the Union and Union Members

PWS experienced by COs has a significant impact on both the COs individually and the institutions in which COs work. Findings of this exploratory study will inform prevention and intervention strategies that the Union could advocate for that would increase the wellness of its members. Since the institutions in which COs work are responsible for returning both its employees (daily) and its offenders (upon release) to the community, it is especially important that the institution be running effectively to ensure the health and safety of both the COs as well as the greater community.

Project Impact: This is the first investigation to systematically examine job-induced stress experienced by COs in Hawai'i. Lessons learnt will inform prevention and intervention strategies.

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Appendix E

Updated Cover Letter to the Union (June 2018)

Sophie A. Gralapp, M.A./Doctoral Candidate
Community and Cultural Psychology
Department of Psychology
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
Telephone: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing to ask for your support as I endeavor to conduct an investigation that would require the participation of at least 120 of your members. I plan to conduct a needs assessment investigating levels of occupation-related stress experienced by correctional officers (COs) employed at O'ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC). The purpose is to examine the impacts of stress on COs individually and OCCC organizationally. At the conclusion of this needs assessment, I plan to: (1) present my findings to the Union along with a comprehensive write-up of existing programs being utilized in correctional settings to prevent and treat occupation-related stress experienced by COs, which the Union may use a template for potential programming to be implemented at OCCC in the future, and (2) utilize the data and knowledge gained from this investigation as the foundation for writing and defending my dissertation so that I may graduate with my PhD in community psychology from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and utilize that degree to further serve the members of our community.

I am formally requesting your support for this study because I want to be transparent with you and your members about the goals and intentions of the study before I begin. Furthermore, I am formally requesting your support because I believe that the findings of this research study can be utilized to advocate for the wellbeing of your members. In the event that you do decide to lend your support to this research, I would request from you a letter or memo addressed to current Union members that: (1) acknowledges that the Union is aware that this research will be taking place, (2) assures Union members that the researcher will be permitted to keep the identities of the participants of this study confidential, and (3) encourages Union members to participate once the study launches and recruitment begins, which is projected to begin sometime in September/October of 2018. I will be independently funding and conducting all of the proposed research and only ask for your endorsement of the study to current Union members in the form of a letter or memo.

I believe that I am in a unique position to successfully conduct this proposed research because I have spent over two years working alongside the COs in the security office at OCCC conducting randomized video surveillance of COs monitoring inmates on suicide watch, safety watch, and being held in the holding unit as part of an ongoing continuous quality improvement (CQI) project through my position as a graduate research assistant (GRA) for Research and Evaluation in Public Safety (REPS). In doing this work, sitting side-by-side with the subjects that I was evaluating (i.e., the COs), I have begun to gain insight into what COs go through at work and especially the constant stress that they are under. Literature suggests that not only is being a CO dangerous, stressful, and relatively disrespected as a profession; it can be psychologically and physically damaging, as well.

While this proposed research is independent and totally unrelated to my position at REPS, it is my prior work experience alongside COs at OCCC that puts me in a unique position to observe the challenges COs face at work and the impact of spending so much time inside of a correctional setting. My experience observing, sitting beside, and getting to know the COs at OCCC is directly connected to the inception of this proposed research. This proposed research seeks to highlight and quantify the stress associated with being a CO and the need for programming to address CO stress. My goal is to provide research-driven feedback to you in order to advocate for improving the health and overall functioning of both your members and the institution in which they work.

I am committed to the goals of this research and am available (in-person, via telephone, via email) to address any questions, concerns, or feedback that you may have regarding this proposed research. *Mahalo* for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



SOPHIE A. GRALAPP

Appendix F

Updated Cover Letter to the Union (July 2018)

*Sophie A. Gralapp, M.A./Doctoral Candidate
Community and Cultural Psychology
Department of Psychology
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
Telephone: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]*

Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing to ask for the support of the Union as I endeavor to conduct an investigation that would require the participation of at least 120 Union members. I propose to conduct a research study investigating levels of occupation-related stress experienced by correctional officers (COs) employed at O'ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC). The purpose of this study is to examine the impacts of stress on COs individually and OCCC organizationally. At the conclusion of this study, I plan to: (1) present my findings to the Union along with a comprehensive write-up of existing programs being utilized in correctional settings to prevent and treat occupation-related stress experienced by COs, which, the Union may use a template for potential programming to be considered for implementation in the future, and (2) utilize the data and knowledge gained from this investigation as the foundation for writing and defending my dissertation so that I may graduate with my PhD in community psychology from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and utilize that degree to serve our community.

I am formally requesting the support of the Union for this study because I want to be transparent with the Union and its members about the goals and intentions of the study before I begin. Furthermore, I believe that the findings of this study can be utilized to advocate for the wellbeing of the Union members. In the event that the Union decides to lend its support to this research, I would request from you a letter or memo addressed to current Union members that: (1) acknowledges that the Union is aware that this study will be taking place, (2) assures the Union members that the researcher will be permitted to keep the identities of the participants of this study confidential, and (3) encourages Union members to participate once the study launches and recruitment begins, which is projected to begin sometime in September/October of 2018. I will be independently funding and conducting all of the proposed research and only ask for Union endorsement of the study to current Union members in the form of a letter or memo.

I believe that I am in a unique position to successfully conduct this proposed research because I spent over two years working alongside the COs in the security office at OCCC conducting randomized video surveillance of COs monitoring inmates on suicide watch, safety watch, and being held in the holding unit as part of an ongoing continuous quality improvement (CQI) project through my former position as a graduate research assistant (GRA) for Research and Evaluation in Public Safety (REPS). In doing this work, sitting side-by-side with the subjects that I was evaluating (i.e., the COs), I have begun to gain insight into what COs go through at work and especially the constant stress that they are under. Literature suggests that not only is being a CO dangerous, stressful, and relatively disrespected as a profession; it can be psychologically and physically damaging, as well.

While this proposed research study is independent and totally unrelated to my former position at REPS, it is my prior work experience alongside COs at OCCC that puts me in a unique position to observe the challenges COs face at work and the impact of spending so much time inside of a correctional setting. My experience observing, sitting beside, and getting to know the COs at OCCC is directly connected to the inception of this proposed research study, which seeks to highlight and quantify the stress associated with being a CO and the need for programming to address CO stress. The study's overall goal is to provide research-driven feedback to the Union and PSD in order to advocate for improving the health and overall functioning of the Union members and the institution in which they work.

I am committed to the goals of this research and I firmly believe that the findings of this study could be used to benefit all involved. I am available (in-person, via telephone, via email) to address any questions, concerns, or feedback that you may have regarding this proposed research. *Mahalo* for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,


SOPHIE A. GRALAPP

Appendix G

Updated Research study to the Union (July 2018)

Proposal for the Support of the Union for Recruitment
For Student Research Project

Student Researcher: Sophie A. Gralapp, M.A./Doctoral Candidate

Project Goals: (1) To examine perceived work stress (PWS) experienced by correctional officers (COs) currently employed at O'ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) and the relationship between PWS experienced by COs and well-being at both the individual and organizational levels; and (2) to produce a comprehensive overview of prevention and intervention programming being delivered to COs in other correctional facilities to mitigate PWS experienced by COs.

Background

Certain occupations, such as being a policeman, are known to induce high levels of *perceived work stress* (PWS).^{3,10,14-15} PWS is defined as the degree to which workers feel strain associated with their jobs and is associated with negative physical and mental health outcomes.^{10,12} For example, police PWS is associated with cardiovascular disease and depression^{4,9,10} as well as maladaptive and antisocial behaviors like problem drinking, hyper-aggressiveness, and violence.^{10,13,19}

Working in jail or prison as a Correctional Officer (CO) is also a high-PWS occupation^{1,8,11,17,21} and research findings confirm negative outcomes of PWS on COs.^{1-2,8,16,21,24} According to a literature review conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice Programs Diagnostic Center in 2013, many COs experience some level of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) – a medical syndrome that includes symptoms of anxiety, sleeplessness, nightmares, and social withdrawal.¹ In fact, national studies have demonstrated that 27% of more than 3,000 COs indicated that they were suffering from PTSD.²² The literature review conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice Programs Diagnostic Center in 2013 also found that COs also have a higher rate of suicide than those in other occupations (i.e., CO suicide rate is 39% higher than the rest of the working-age population²³ and twice as high as the rate of police officers and the general population¹⁸) and, on average, COs will not live to see their 59th birthdays.¹

Furthermore, a number of negative outcomes can result from high levels of PWS at both the individual and organizational levels.^{7,20} Individually, the negative outcomes of PWS on COs can degrade their ability to perform their responsibilities in ways that create stress for other staff and cost money.^{2,5,8,16,24} Also, PWS may damage CO family relationships by displacing their frustration onto spouses and children and becoming distant by withholding information about their work that they feel family members will not understand.^{8,17} Organizationally, the negative outcomes of PWS on COs impact correctional center budgets due to staff illness, turnover, required overtime, workers' compensation claims, and compromise institutional safety.³

It has been suggested that meaningful programming designed to prevent and treat CO stress may be beneficial to helping reduce PWS experienced by COs.^{8,17} While inmates usually have prevention programs available to help them cope with the stress of their living environment (e.g., individual and group therapy, church groups, Alcoholics Anonymous, etc.), COs tends to have limited resources designed to help them cope with the jail and prison environment.¹⁷ It has been postulated that developing effective programming for preventing and treating CO stress can:

- save correctional administrators money by reducing overtime costs incurred when COs take sick time or quit because of PWS;

- improve CO performance by enhancing staff morale;
- increase institutional safety by reducing distractions caused by PWS;
- improve department relations with the Union by working together on a program that can mutually benefit both parties; and
- show concern for employees by demonstrating that the department cares about its staff as human beings, not just as employees.⁸

Purpose

Given that (1) understanding the impact of PWS experienced by COs is critical in developing interventions to promote CO wellness and (2) CO wellness also impacts offenders, colleagues, families, and communities in which COs live, this investigation aims to examine PWS experienced by COs and the role that CO wellness programming could have on the functioning of both the COs individually and the greater institutions in which they work.

Methods

Data

All data will be collected from COs employed by O'ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC). Participants may be recruited in-person, using social referral, by mail (postal or electronic), or by responding to advertisements for the study (e.g., flyers, business cards). All data will be collected off-site while participants are off-duty. The following types of data will be collected:

1. OCCC CO self-reported survey data (to be developed and collected by researcher)
 - Researcher aims to survey 100 participants
2. OCCC CO self-reported interview data (to be developed and collected by researcher)
 - Researcher aims to interview 20 participants

Data Protection

The identities of the participants will be protected and kept confidential by de-identifying data using anonymous participant IDs (e.g., COS001) instead of names. All raw data and identifying information (i.e., signed Informed Consent Forms, hard copies of surveys, digital surveys, digital recordings of interviews) will be locked away. Paper files will be locked in a file cabinet and digital files will be kept in a password protected folder – both of which only the researcher will have access to. Once all data is collected and analyzed, all raw data will be destroyed, eliminating the possibility that the researcher or any other party may access the information contained in the raw data, including the identities of the participants.

Analysis

1. Surveys – Participants will be asked to anonymously complete a survey designed to assess CO stress across several domains with the goal of gaining insight into their lives that won't be skewed by self-consciousness or social desirability bias. The survey results will be analyzed and interpreted using a quantitative statistical software program SPSS.
2. Interviews – Participants will be asked for an interview with the researcher, which will include answering questions designed to gain insight into what COs experience at work with the goal of using information gained to provide recommendations for meaningful programming that would help COs prevent and cope with work-related stress. Interview results will be audio recorded, transcribed, coded, analyzed, and interpreted using the qualitative data software program NVivo.

Study Aims

There is a lack of research on the development of meaningful prevention and intervention strategies for job-related PWS experienced by COs. As such, four specific aims are proposed to provide the foundational research that will provide the basis of the development and implementation of such interventions:

- Aim 1: To investigate and analyze PWS experienced by a sample of OCCC COs.
- Aim 2: To review coping strategies for PWS utilized by a sample of OCCC COs.
- Aim 3: To assess strategies utilized by both COs and OCCC to prevent and/or mitigate workplace burdens, including PWS experienced by OCCC COs.
- Aim 4: To research intervention programs developed and disseminated in other correctional facilities to mitigate PWS experienced by COs in order to produce a comprehensive overview of these programs to provide to both the Union and the Public Safety Department (PSD) for their future consideration.

Benefit to the Union and Union Members

PWS experienced by COs has a significant impact on both the COs individually and the institutions in which COs work. Findings of this exploratory study will inform prevention and intervention strategies that the Union could utilize to advocate for meaningful programming that would increase the wellness of Union members. Since the institutions in which COs work are responsible for returning both its employees (daily) and its offenders (upon release) to the community, it is especially important that the institution be running effectively to ensure the health and safety of both the COs as well as the greater community.

Project Impact: This is the first investigation to systematically examine job-induced stress experienced by COs in Hawai'i. Lessons learnt will inform prevention and intervention strategies.

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Appendix H

Researcher Background Statement

My name is Sophie Gralapp. I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in the Department of Psychology. The purpose of the project you are about to participate in is to gain a better understanding of correctional officer (CO) health and well-being in the context of jail and prison work. I am asking you to participate because you are employed in a local jail or prison as a CO and can impart valuable knowledge and insight on this topic.

I became interested in this topic because of working in the security office at OCCC for three years, where I did video surveillance of COs monitoring inmates on suicide and safety watch as well as in the holding unit as part of a continuous quality improvement (CQI) project for my position as a graduate research assistant (GRA) for a contractor of Public Safety Department (PSD). While this proposed research study is independent and unrelated to my GRA position, it is my experiences over the past three years observing, sitting beside, and getting to know the COs in the security office at OCCC that inspired me to dedicate my dissertation research study to explore the job stress experienced by COs to shed light on the need for programming to address, prevent, and combat the negative impacts of job stress on COs health and well-being.

You are free to utilize the findings of this research in any way that you wish. If you would like, a summary of the conclusions produced by this research will be delivered to you at the conclusion of this research study. In the future, the findings produced by this research may also be delivered to policymakers in the form of a letter, testimony, or bill proposing investment in programming designed to prevent and treat job stress experienced by COs.

Appendix I

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Consent to Participate in an Interview for a Research Project

My name is Sophie A. Gralapp. I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in the Department of Psychology. The purpose of the project you are about to participate in is to gain a better understanding of correctional officer (CO) health and well-being in the context of jail and prison work. I am asking you to participate because you are, or previously were, employed in a local jail or prison as a CO and can impart knowledge and insight on this topic.

Project Description – Activities and Time Commitment: If you participate in this project, I will meet with you for one interview at a date, time, and location convenient for you. The interview will consist of 13 open-ended questions. Interview questions will include questions like: “What are the most positive aspects of your job?” “What are the most stressful aspects of your job?” and “What kinds of things do you do to manage your stress?” Only you and I will be present during the interview. I will audio-record the interview so that I can later transcribe the interview and analyze the responses. Completing the interview will take up to 1 hour. I expect at least 20-30 people will take part in this project.

Benefits and Risks: There will be no direct benefit to you for taking part in this research. The findings produced by this research aim to examine job stress experienced by COs and the impacts of job stress on the health and well-being of COs. A summary of the findings produced by this research might be delivered to governing correctional organizations [i.e., Public Safety Department (PSD) and the Union]. In the future, the findings of produced by this research may also be delivered to policy makers in the form of a letter, testimony, or bill proposing investment in programming designed to prevent and treat job stress experienced by COs. In the event that the findings produced by this research inform a decision to implement programming designed to aide in preventing and/or coping with job stress experienced by COs, that would be an indirect benefit to you. I believe there is little risk to you in participating in this research project. You may become stressed or uncomfortable answering any of the interview questions or discussing topics with me during the interview. If you do become stressed or uncomfortable, you can skip the question or take a break. You can also stop the interview or you can withdraw from the project altogether.

Confidentiality and Privacy: I will keep all information in a safe place. Only my University of Hawai'i advisor and I will have access to the information. After I transcribe the interviews, I will erase or destroy the audio-recordings. When I report the results of my research project, I will not use your name. I will not use any other personal identifying information that can identify you. I will use a pseudonym (fake name) and report my findings in a way that protects your privacy and confidentiality to the extent allowed by law.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any time. If you stop being in the study, there will be no penalty or loss to you.

Questions: If you have any questions about this study, you may call (808.554.3810) or email me (gralapp@hawaii.edu). You may also contact my adviser, Dr. Ashley Maynard, by telephone (808.956.7343) or email (amaynard@hawaii.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Human Studies Program by telephone (808.956.5007) email (uhirb@hawaii.edu).

Authorization Statement

I have read each page of this paper about the study (or it was read to me). I know that being in this study is voluntary and I choose to be in this study. I know I can stop being in this study without penalty. I will get a copy of the first page of this consent form now and can get information on results of the study later if I wish.

Participant Name: _____ Date: _____

Participant Signature: _____ Time: _____

Are you interested in receiving a summary of the results of this study?

Yes

No

If you responded 'Yes' to any of the above questions, please write your preferred method of contact information (i.e., telephone number, email, home address, etc.) in the space below:

Consent form explained/witnessed by: _____

Signature

Printed name: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Appendix J

CO Interview Guide

1. What year and what position did you start in at OCCC?
 - a. Prompt: Think back to when you first started. How would you describe your job then?
2. What is your current position at OCCC?
 - a. Prompt: How would you describe your position now?
 - b. Prompt: Take me through the general structure of an average workday.
 - c. Prompt: Do you do anything to break-up your workday/shift?
3. How do you feel when you come into work?
 - a. Prompt: Do you feel like you have to prepare yourself or “gear up” to go into work?
 - b. Prompt: Describe what, if anything, you do to prepare yourself or to “gear up” before going into work.
4. How do you feel when you leave work?
 - a. Prompt: Describe what, if anything, you do to decompress or “gear down” before leaving work.
 - b. Prompt: When you are finished with work, do you go anywhere else to decompress or “gear down” before going home? If yes, describe where you go and what you do.
5. How do you feel when you get home/wherever you go after work?
 - a. Prompt: When you arrive home, describe what you do to decompress or “gear down” after your day at work?
6. Do you find it difficult to decompress or “gear down” after leaving work?
 - a. Prompt: On average, how long does it take you to decompress or “gear down” after leaving work?
7. What are the most stressful aspects of your job?
8. What are some of the most positive or rewarding aspects of your job?
9. What kinds of things do you do to manage your job stress? What helps you through your day?
 - a. Prompt: Is that different from when you first started?
 - b. Prompt: Have your stress levels changed over time?
10. Does your position offer any resources/support for employees regarding their job-related stress?

- a. Prompt: Have you ever utilized these resources? If yes, was it effective? If no, why not?
 - b. Prompt: Have any of your co-workers ever utilized these resources? If yes, was it effective? If no, why not?
 - c. If you were in a position to change what resources/support is provided, what would you propose? Why do you think this would be more effective?
11. You spend the most face-to-face time with inmates of any other occupation; do you think that affects you?
 - a. Prompt: If so, how?
12. How has your job impacted other aspects of your life?
 - a. Prompt: What have been some successful ways you've coped with this?
13. I sometimes wish someone told me what to realistically expect when I started my program. What advice would you give to a new CO?
 - a. Prompt: Knowing what you know now, what do you wish you would have known starting out as a new CO?
14. Sometimes I wish there were things I could change about my job. If you were in a position to change anything about your working conditions, what would you change?
 - a. Prompt: For example, is there anything you would change about the structure of your workday?
 - b. Prompt: What would need to happen to make that change?
 - c. Prompt: How do you feel the larger organization that represents this facility would respond to your suggested changes?
15. Generally speaking, do you feel supported by the larger organization that represents the facility?
 - a. Prompt: Do you feel that the organization values your contribution to its well-being?
 - b. Prompt: Do you feel that the organization cares about your general health and well-being?
16. What are your plans for retirement?
17. Is there anything else that I should have asked you?

Appendix K

Demographic Information Form

Instructions: Please provide a response for each of the following questions.

1. What is your age? _____

2. What is your sex?

Female Male Other (please specify) : _____

3. What is your marital status (check all that apply)?

Single Dating Living with significant other Married Separated
 Divorced Widowed Remarried Other (please specify) : _____

4. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

Less than high school GED High school diploma Technical degree
 Some college AA/AS degree BA/BS degree MA/MS degree PhD
 Other (please specify) : _____

5. How would you describe your income?

Low income Middle-low income Middle income Upper-middle income High income

6. How many children under 18 years-old live in your household?

None 1 2 3 4 or more

7. Were you born in Hawai'i?

Yes No If not, where were you born?: _____

8. What is your ethnic background (mark all that apply)?

African American/Black <input type="radio"/>	Alaskan Native <input type="radio"/>	American Indian/Native American <input type="radio"/>
Asian Indian <input type="radio"/>	Caucasian/White <input type="radio"/>	Chinese <input type="radio"/>
Filipino <input type="radio"/>	Hawai'ian <input type="radio"/>	Hispanic <input type="radio"/>
Japanese <input type="radio"/>	Korean <input type="radio"/>	Latino/a <input type="radio"/>
Micronesian <input type="radio"/>	Middle Eastern <input type="radio"/>	Pacific Islander, other: _____ <input type="radio"/>
Portuguese <input type="radio"/>	Puerto Rican <input type="radio"/>	Samoan <input type="radio"/>
	Unknown <input type="radio"/>	Other (please specify): _____ <input type="radio"/>

9. How long have you worked in corrections? _____ years _____ months

10. What is the level of facility in which you work?

NA 2 3 4 5

11. What shift do you primarily work?

1st 2nd 3rd Rotating Other (please specify) : _____

12. Have you ever served in any type of military organization?

Yes No If yes, length of service? _____ years

13. Have you worked for any police force?

Yes No If yes, length of service? _____ years

14. On average, how many non-overtime hours per pay period do you work? _____

15. On average, how many hours of overtime per pay period do you work? _____

16. Has any member of your family ever worked in corrections?

Yes No

If yes, which family member(s) (check all that apply):

Father Mother Daughter Son Spouse/significant other

Brother Sister Aunt Uncle Grandpa Grandma

Other (please specify) : _____

17. How would you describe your post assignment most often worked?

General housing unit Sick/housing/spare Control center Holding Unit

Restrictive housing unit Tower/perimeter duty Other (please specify) : _____

18. Have you ever been diagnosed with:		Was this condition diagnosed before being hired?	
Diabetes	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Chronic low back pain	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Clinical depression	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
High blood pressure	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Liver disease	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Heart disease	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify):		Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>

19. Have you taken sick time in the last year?

Yes No If yes, how many days? _____

20. If your place of work offered training on coping with job stress, would you be interested in attending?

Yes No