

ESTUDIOS

Resisting burnout: Correctional staff spirituality and resilience

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Abstract: This document summarizes the author's research on how spirituality helps correctional workers avoid burnout and maintain emotional resilience in their work.

The mixed methods design used an online survey to collect data from COs and correctional chaplains from the Departments of Correction of Oregon and Nevada, measuring their levels of burnout, resilience and spirituality. Qualitative data were collected in follow-up interviews. Findings supported the theoretical premise that COs' resilience and resistance to burnout are socially learned behaviors and these socially learned behaviors are the result of a dynamic interaction with their prison work environments. COs who score higher on indices of spirituality also scored higher in resilience and lower in burnout measures than COs working in the same environment who did not report spirituality as important to their daily lives.

Key words: *Resilience and spirituality, religion in American prisons.*

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Cómo combatir el desgaste profesional: espiritualidad y resiliencia de los trabajadores penitenciarios

Resumen: Este trabajo resume la investigación del autor sobre cómo los trabajadores penitenciarios evitan el desgaste profesional y mantienen la resiliencia emocional en el trabajo con ayuda de la espiritualidad. El diseño de métodos mixtos utilizó una encuesta online para recopilar datos de funcionarios de prisiones y capellanes de los Departamentos Correccionales de Oregón y Nevada. Se midieron sus niveles de desgaste laboral, resiliencia y espiritualidad. Se recopilaron datos cualitativos en entrevistas de seguimiento. Los hallazgos apoyaron la premisa teórica que enunciaba que la resiliencia y la resistencia al desgaste profesional de los funcionarios de prisiones son comportamientos sociales aprendidos y que estos comportamientos son el resultado de una interacción dinámica del profesional con su entorno de trabajo en la prisión. Los funcionarios de prisiones que obtuvieron una puntuación alta en índices de espiritualidad también obtuvieron una puntuación más alta en resiliencia y más baja en mediciones de desgaste profesional que aquellos funcionarios de prisiones que manifestaron que la espiritualidad no era tan importante en su vida cotidiana.

Palabras clave: *Resiliencia y espiritualidad, religión en prisiones estadounidenses.*

Résister à l'épuisement professionnel: spiritualité et résilience du personnel correctionnel

Résumé: Ce document résume la recherche de l'auteur sur la façon dont la spiritualité aide les surveillants pénitentiaires à éviter l'épuisement professionnel et à maintenir la résilience émotionnelle dans leur travail. En recourant à une conception de méthodes mixtes, un sondage en ligne a été utilisé pour recueillir des données auprès des surveillants pénitentiaires et des aumôniers correctionnels des ministères de la Correction de l'Oregon et du Nevada, afin de mesurer leur niveau d'épuisement, leur résilience et leur spiritualité. Des données qualitatives ont été recueillies lors d'entrevues de suivi. Les résultats appuient la prémisse théorique selon laquelle la résilience et la résistance des surveillants pénitentiaires à l'épuisement professionnel sont des comportements socialement acquis et que ces comportements socialement acquis sont le résultat d'une interaction dynamique avec leur milieu de travail en prison. Les surveillants pénitentiaires qui ont obtenu de meilleurs résultats aux indices de spiritualité ont également obtenu de meilleurs résultats au chapitre de la résilience et de moins bons résultats par rapport à l'épuisement professionnel que les surveillants pénitentiaires travaillant dans le même milieu qui n'ont pas déclaré que la spiritualité était importante pour leur vie quotidienne.

Mots clé: *Résilience et spiritualité, religion dans les prisons américaines.*

I. Introduction

1.1. The purpose of the study

Stress in prison is an occupational hazard. Current research shows work stress among COs is significantly correlated with physical and mental health problems, including depression, hypertension, substance abuse, emotional burnout and an elevated risk of suicide.

My work as a prison chaplain for over 20 years led me to research how CO's might avoid burnout and maintain better levels of emotional resilience. I hypothesized that those COs who score higher on indices of spirituality would be more emotionally resilient and less likely to suffer burnout than COs working in the same environment who do not have professional religious training, spirituality or a connection to supportive faith communities. Correctional chaplains were included in the study because in order to qualify for their position, chaplains must have training in some aspect of spirituality, unlike any other correctional employees. I hypothesized that correctional chaplains by virtue of their professional religious training, spirituality and connection to supportive faith communities, are more emotionally resilient and less likely to suffer workplace stress and burnout than COs working in the same environment.

The goal of this research was to explore how spirituality might help neutralize some of the stressful effects of the prison environment on corrections staff and hopefully benefit all correctional employees' ability to avoid the debilitating effects of stress and burnout.

1.2. Religion and American Prisons

Religion has played an important role in the evolution of American prisons since the founding of the Republic. The first wave of reform in the American criminal justice system came on the heels of the American Revolution with the establishment of two new models of penitentiaries; one at Eastern State in Philadelphia, the other in Auburn, New York. Each represented competing Christian theological and philosophical understandings of human nature.

The Pennsylvania system was based on the Quaker theological view of human beings' basic goodness. Eastern State Penitentiary opened in 1829 and was designed

to create an environment of total solitude for the convicts. Those imprisoned were confined to their cells day and night both to facilitate their conversion and to protect them from the sinful and corrupting influence of their fellow prisoners.

The other model of penitentiary at Auburn State Prison opened in 1821. Its design was influenced by Protestant Calvinist theology that had a far less optimistic view of human nature than the Quakers. It was thought that while some criminals might not be able to be reformed, they could all be controlled and put to work – hard work being a key virtue in Calvinist thought. In Auburn, the inmates were locked up in solitude at night but were required to work together in enforced silence during the day.

However, as in many efforts to reform corrections, the results were far from the original intentions. Within a short period of the new prisons' celebrated openings it became clear that the strict separation and solitude was leading to unacceptable levels of madness and suicide among the inmates.

Chaplains played an important role in the correctional ideology of these first prisons. They were seen as facilitators of repentance and conversion in the Eastern State model, and as both pastors *and* agents of penal control in the Auburn model, the latter perhaps a foreshadowing of the role conflicts that would continue to bedevil chaplains.

In the years following the Civil War, virtually every prison in the United States had a chaplain; yet correctional chaplains were becoming increasingly peripheral members of the prison workforce as wardens began to introduce educators, social workers and psychologists into the prison to bring about reform of the inmates.

The end of the era of rehabilitation in the 1970s created a new challenge for prison chaplains: space. By 1990, in the U.S. a new prison or jail was being opened at the rate of one per week. New prison construction could barely keep pace with the increases in incarceration. The new prison designs were functional and Spartan, emphasizing economy of operation. Space was at a premium, so these new prisons had instead of chapels, "multi-purpose" rooms shared by all religious and non-religious programs.

In 2000, the U.S. Congress passed the "Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act" (RLUIPA), which required prison administrators to provide equal access to religious services to any inmate claiming any religion. Since enactment of RLUIPA there has been a significant increase in the number of religious groups recognized

by departments of correction throughout the US. In California alone, there are over 150 faith groups recognized by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. As a result, the traditional denomination-based pastoral role of chaplains continues to erode and the trend of hiring non-clergy religious program managers is increasing.

1.3. The Legacy of Mass Incarceration

Beginning in the 1970s, capitalizing on public anxiety about crime, U.S. policy makers, on both state and federal levels, vied to outdo one another to appear “tough on crime”. Draconian punishment policies were implemented, including restrictions on judicial discretion, mandatory minimum sentences, three strike laws, and harsher penalties for illegal drug sale and use.

The prison system grew on a scale never before seen in the United States, from less than 200,000 inmates in state and federal prisons in 1970 to over 2 million people in American prisons and jails by 2016. Forty years ago, this scenario would have been unimaginable. In fact, in the early 1970s, some criminologists believed prisons were on the verge of obsolescence. They could not have been more mistaken. Where previously, government efforts to intervene in the lives of the poor were viewed as helpful and necessary, historical events such as the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal undermined Americans’ trust in their government’s ability to correct social problems.

At the same time a conservative backlash to the liberal great society experiments in social engineering begun in the 1960s as a “war on poverty” resulted in a political narrative constructed around the metaphor of a “war on crime”, and a “war on drugs”. This “war on drugs” disproportionately targeted the poor and minority urban population of the United States. During this period, beginning in the late 1970s as construction of new prisons in the United States accelerated, greater numbers of COs were needed to guard the growing number of prisoners. In 1971 there were less than 60,000 COs employed in U.S. jails and prisons. By 2012, the total number of Correctional Officers in the U.S. (in both state prisons and local jails) was 469,500. (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014).

1.4. Correctional Officers

As long as there have been prisoners there has been a need for someone to guard them and prevent their escape. Most studies in prison have focused on the effects of prison on prisoners. Much less research has been devoted to Correctional Officers.

COs are primarily responsible for keeping prisons safe and secure for inmates, staff and visitors, and for supervising the activities of the inmate population. They are in continuous physical contact with men and women confined against their will, who often challenge their authority, continue in criminal activities and act out in socially inappropriate, often violent ways.

COs must closely monitor and supervise these inmates and manage potentially life-threatening situations with interpersonal and verbal skills. Their daily working conditions can be unpredictable, combining boring routine with ever-present danger. Correctional officers share with prisoners the constant fear of violence in the prison. Working directly with prisoners means they regularly encounter people in crisis and are unavoidably exposed to trauma and suffering. Simply being exposed to traumatized people can affect those who themselves are not directly traumatized.

Officers with little or no training in psychology and human behavior are expected to monitor, control and protect incarcerated individuals. These prisoners often suffer from the effects of past physical and emotional trauma, mental illness and addictions. At the same time, corrections officers are expected to “correct” as their title implies, teaching inmates better coping and behavioral skills and to comply with prison rules. This creates an inherently stressful conflict between the goals of custody and the goals of treatment. COs are forced to use communication skills and behavior control strategies that, while useful in the prison environment may be quite damaging to family functioning at home. Several of the officers interviewed in this study described this tension in their own lives.

Until the 1980s, there was a cultural assumption (reinforced by the negative image of prison guards in media and entertainment) that people were drawn to corrections work because of some innate authoritarian or sadistic impulses or were transformed by the prison environment into aggressive and cruel actors. The public perception of COs in American prisons has changed and evolved over time, reflecting the changes occurring in the criminal justice system in the US. For example, the professional term “Correctional Officer” was not adopted until the 1970s by the U.S. Department of Labor, replacing the commonly used terms “guards”.

A more compassionate view of COs has since emerged, especially as researchers began to study police officer stress and traumatization. In recent years, organizations such as Desert Waters, a Colorado non-profit group have been founded to provide wellness resources and support for corrections personnel. COs today are viewed more as victims themselves of the dehumanizing effects of the prison environment. Denhoff and Spenaris (2013) report Correctional officers have a 39% higher suicide rate than any other occupation in the United States. COs on average are seriously assaulted at least twice during a 20-year career. The life expectancy of an American CO is 59 years, compared to the current US average of 78.8 years. Spinaris and Denhof also found that nearly all surveyed (99%) witnessed violence at work and nearly 60% of CO's surveyed experienced the criteria of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

1.5. Correctional Chaplains

As with COs, historically little attention has been given by the academy to the work of correctional chaplains. Correctional chaplains, like COs are front line staff in prison whose work requires them to interact directly with prisoners in all areas of the institution. Correctional chaplains spend much of their work time in the same recreation and living space as inmates. In fact, they are the only personnel other than corrections officers and medical staff who regularly interact with inmates in all areas of the prison. Chaplains are exposed to repeated traumatic experiences – either directly through their witnessing of violence at work or by vicarious traumatization listening to prisoner's accounts of their own histories of abuse and accounts of their crimes.

There is an inevitable tension between pastoral care and the custody role of the prison. Chaplains' work, based on religious beliefs and commitments, is not always in synch with institutional correctional goals of safety and security. Though bound by the same institutional rules, correctional chaplains engage with inmates in a different way than security staff. Just as COs experience the tension between custody and treatment, so too do chaplains.

In this study, correctional chaplains were hypothesized to be more emotionally resilient and less likely to suffer workplace stress and burnout than COs working in the same environment who do not have professional religious training, spirituality or a connection to supportive faith communities.

2. Theory

2.1 Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory

The Cognitive Learning Theory of social psychologist Albert Bandura is the theoretical foundation of this study. A key insight of Bandura is that behavior, cognitive and other personal factors and environmental influences all operate dynamically and interactively. In other words, environment influences behavior and behavior influences environment.

Another aspect of Bandura's thought germane to this study is his notion of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy presumes that an individual has personal agency and some ability to exert control over events in his/her life. Bandura's conception of self-efficacy suggests that emotional and psychological resilience as well as behavior can be enhanced by improving the workplace environment.

It would follow based on Bandura's theory, that the socially learned behaviors of correctional officers are molded and altered by both the environment of the prison as well as the personal characteristics of the COs themselves. Bandura's contends the environment is both the product of human choices as well as a force for shaping those choices.

The basic premise of this research is that COs' resilience and resistance to burnout is socially learned behavior in the context of a dynamic and reciprocal interaction with the prison environment, inmates and fellow-workers. It is hypothesized that spirituality might provide socially-learned values and beliefs that could help COs better cope with their challenging work.

Bandura accounts for spirituality in his cognitive learning theory noting, "Most people acknowledge a spiritual aspect to their lives, in the sense of seeking meaning and social connectedness to something greater than oneself without being tied to a formal religion or deity" (Bandura, 2003: 170). For Bandura, our capacity for spiritual life depends on social modeling from other people.

2.2. Spirituality Theory

Spirituality as operationalized in this study is not to be confused with confessional religious faith. Religious beliefs were not the focus and were not measured. Wres-

ting with the relationship of religion and empirical science is at least as old as the field of sociology itself. Durkheim writes in his meticulous study of the phenomenon of religion "this entire study rests on the postulate that the unanimous feelings of believers down the ages cannot be mere illusion... the fundamental categories of thought, and thus science itself, have religious origins" (Durkheim: 420).

While a small number of researchers have looked at the role of spirituality in corrections, most of the work in criminology studying spirituality has focused on offenders.

For example, looking at the historical use of physical punishment in American penitentiaries, and reflecting on the use of prison architecture to constrain human interaction, Jeffries describes the spiritual damage that high security prisons inflict on the human spirit (Jeffreys, 2013:53). Jeffries' study focuses on the effects of prison on inmates' spiritual lives; this research attempts to study the effects of spirituality on the work lives of COs.

Peacemaking criminologist Quinney defines crime as suffering and suggests the solution to this suffering is of a spiritual nature (Pepinsky & Quinney, 1991). Ironically, some of the best definitions of spirituality in relation to the problems of coping with stress, trauma and violence come not from peacemaking criminology, but from the American military. Recent groundbreaking work by U.S. military chaplains has provided a way to operationalize spirituality. The definition of spirituality employed by the U.S. Army chaplains is: "[Spirituality] is a process transcending self and society that empowers the human spirit with purpose, identity and meaning" (Wester, 2010:8).

2.3. Wellness Theory

Victor Frankl, a concentration camp prisoner of the Nazis wrote in his celebrated book, "Man's Search for Meaning" (Frankl, 1959) that the search for meaning is a core psychological motivation in life, and only the individual can discover the meaning of his or her own life Maslow describes this growth in awareness and meaning as a process of "self-actualization" (Maslow, 1968). Wellness or well-being is associated with spirituality insofar as it is identified as a process of searching for meaning or purpose in one's life.

The concept of wellness as a holistic model of physical and psychological health emerged as a subject of empirical social science study in the 1970s as American medical practitioners began to consider wellness as the maintenance of health and

not simply a reactive solution to pathology. Current research approaches wellness as a multidimensional phenomenon including spirituality.

Police and firefighting agencies were quick to adopt wellness programs for their employees. Researchers have consistently found police officers are more vulnerable to suicide, alcoholism, drug use, depression, anxiety, internal stress, PTSD, marital problems and domestic violence compared with the general population.

Despite the stressful nature of the work and similarities to other public safety agencies, corrections departments were slow to implement wellness programs for correctional workers.

Many correctional agencies have begun introducing CO safety and wellness policies and programs with the intention of enhancing CO well being. This study is an attempt to contribute to our understanding by adding to the scant literature on CO wellness in order to suggest policy choices for correctional agencies to improve the well-being of their officers.

3. Methods

Conducting exploratory research in American correctional facilities is very difficult. The Departments of Correction of California, Washington State, Maryland and Massachusetts were all approached by this researcher and all refused access to their employees. Typically, lack of resources to dedicate to the research was cited as the reason for denying access.

This study surveyed correctional officers and correctional chaplains selected by their respective departments from the state prison systems of Oregon and Nevada. Due to privacy concerns, the OR and NV Departments of Correction insisted that they be the ones to select and contact their employees. These employees were randomly selected by their departments from their DOC employee databases, using a random number generator.

Once the COs and chaplains were selected, their respective departments forwarded them an email from this researcher inviting them to participate in an online survey. The email contained an introduction, an online consent form and a link to the online survey. On average, the survey took respondents 12 minutes to complete. The subjects indicated their consent by going to the online link provided and completing the online questionnaire.

A total of 700 randomly selected corrections officers, (400 from the Oregon Department of Correction and 300 from the Nevada DOC) and 25 chaplains (21 from OR and 4 from NV) were contacted by their departments via email inviting them to participate in an online survey.

Because the number of corrections chaplains in each state is much smaller than the number of COs, the entire chaplain population in each state was surveyed: 21 chaplains in Oregon and 4 chaplains in Nevada.

This cross-sectional study used an online survey incorporating three existing, well-validated scales. The survey included demographic information such as gender, age, and years of service (in corrections). Stata 14[®] software was used to organize and analyze the quantitative data. Qualitative data were collected from 12 intensive interviews with correctional employees randomly selected from those who indicated in their survey response that they were willing to participate in a follow up interview. Of the original 134 respondents, 45 COs and 17 chaplains expressed their willingness to be interviewed. The qualitative component provided a richer context for understanding the work environment and challenges encountered by correctional workers. Atlas.ti[®] software was used to manage, organize and analyze the qualitative data.

Operational Definitions:

Independent variable: Spirituality

The objective was to measure if and how much the independent variable, Spirituality can predict levels of burnout and resilience among prison workers. The Spirituality Scale, developed by US Army Chaplains during the U.S. military engagement in Iraq in 2008 has three subscales: Connection to Others, Religious Identification and Hopeful Outlook. A factor analysis of the Spirituality Index, using this study's data revealed a robust inter-correlation of all items. Reliability analysis of the combined spirituality index yielded a Cronbach's Alpha score of .90.

Dependent Variable I: Burnout

Burnout was operationalized for this study using the Maslach Burnout Inventory –General Scale (GS) (Maslach, 1986). This instrument was developed to meet the need for a scale measuring burnout in occupational groups that did not see them-

selves primarily as human service workers. The focus of this survey is to measure burnout as a crisis in one's relationship with work, and not necessarily as a crisis in one's relationship with people at work. The MBI-GS has three subscales: Emotional Exhaustion, Cynicism, and Professional Efficacy. A high degree of burnout is reflected in high scores on Exhaustion and Cynicism and low scores of Professional Efficacy.

As with the spirituality index, this researcher conducted a factor analysis of the MBI index portion of the study's survey data. Cronbach's method for reliability analysis of the combined burnout index yielded an alpha score of .91, well above an acceptable 0.8 threshold for scales.

Dependent variable 2: Resilience

Resilience was operationalized for this study using the 25-item Resilience Scale for Adults. (Wagnild & Young). In this scale, resilience is measured as a sum of its (5) subscales: Self-reliance, Meaning, Perseverance, Equanimity and Existential Aloneness. Both the MBI and The Resilience Scale have been well-validated in many studies. As with the Burnout and Spirituality Indices, a factor analysis of the Resilience Scale using the study's survey data was conducted. Reliability was high, particularly with the combined indices of resilience. Analysis of the combined resilience index yielded a Cronbach's Alpha score of .86.

Demographic variables used as control variables

In addition to the dependent variables burnout and resilience, four demographic variables were included as control variables in the final analysis of the data: Gender, Age, Years in Service and Work Role (CO or chaplain). These variables were included because they showed statistically significant effects. This researcher chose not to include either race or ethnicity as variables because extant literature has not shown that race or ethnicity correlated significantly with correctional work stress.

4. Analysis

By holding constant all the other predictor variables in multiple regression models, the researcher was better able to identify changes in predictors without confusing the effects of the other predictor variables. The outcomes of each nested model were measured by examining the coefficients for each predictor, with a p-value

of <0.05 as the criterion for significance. Stata 14[®] software was used to analyze this data.

Qualitative data were obtained through intensive interviews conducted either by phone or Skype and were recorded with the permission of the interviewees. The researcher employed a graduate student assistant to code the transcribed interviews. Confidentiality of the subject interviewees was safeguarded by the researcher removing any identifying information from the interview transcripts prior to providing them to the student coder. Having another coder who did not work in prisons reduced the risk of imposing the researcher's bias into the data as much as possible.

The graduate student assistant assigned both labels for the codes, based on words used by the interviewees (in vivo codes), as well as the analytic memos based on the coded data. The researcher then used Atlas.ti[®] software to analyze the data codes and memos, developing the second level of coding using 'axial codes' – which pulled together into families or patterns the codes that the graduate student had identified from the raw data.

The student, who had no experience working in prisons and was not familiar with the quantitative data in this study, organized the codes into 5 basic themes; Stress and Burnout, Resilience, Spirituality, Work Environment, and CO Culture.

5. Findings

There is consistent and statistically significant evidence that for the data collected in this study, spirituality predicts both burnout and resilience scores, once all other relevant variables are controlled.

5.1. Descriptive Statistics

Of the COs sampled, .68 were male, and .32 were female out of a total OR DOC employee population where .83 of the COs are male and .16 are female. Survey data reveal that chaplains tended to be older than the CO respondents. The median age range of all CO respondents to the survey was between 30–40 years old. The median age range for all chaplains responding to the survey was considerably older – in the 50–60 year age range. Chaplains were considerably more educated than COs, 88% of all the chaplains surveyed had a BA or higher,

and of these, 22% had doctoral degrees. Among COs, 31% of all surveyed had Bachelors' degrees and 5% had Master's degrees. None of the COs surveyed had completed doctoral studies.

5.2. Multivariate Results

Spirituality and Burnout

The reader is reminded that it was hypothesized that correctional workers who score high on indices of spirituality would demonstrate less burnout than correctional staff that do not score high on spirituality.

There were three multivariate regression models for each of the three Burnout Subscales (Cynicism, Emotional Exhaustion and Professional Efficacy). In the subsequent nested models, each subscale of the independent variable spirituality (Connection to others, Hopeful Outlook and Religious Identification) was regressed one at a time.

Connection to Others and Hopeful Outlook were the stronger predictors of decreased cynicism, lower emotional exhaustion and a greater sense of professional efficacy. In other words, the more a person reports having a hopeful outlook and feeling connected to others, the more effective they report they are in their work. The models also predicted that the more a person is identified with a religious faith group, the less cynicism they report. On every subscale of spirituality, each model predicted a statistically significant decrease in the cynicism and emotional exhaustion scores, after controlling for gender, age, years of service in corrections and occupational role (CO or chaplains). The hypothesis that a higher spirituality score would predict a lower level burnout was supported by this data. Across all three models of the burnout subscales, Religious Identification had the weakest predictive power, suggesting that Connection to Others and Hopeful Outlook are better predictors of burnout than Religious Identification.

Multivariate Results: Spirituality and Resilience

The second research questions posed in this study asked if there is a correlation between spirituality and resilience among correctional workers. It was hypothesized that correctional workers who score high on indices of spirituality would demonstrate greater resilience than correctional staff that do not score high on spirituality.

A series of nested models were conducted to predict resilience scores from the spirituality scores. Analysis revealed that on every subscale of spirituality, each model predicted a statistically significant increase in the Total Resilience score, after controlling for all other variables.

The data was clear that Hopeful Outlook is the best overall predictor for resilience. Connection to Others is the next best predictor for resilience. Across all models, Religious Identification had the weakest predictive power for resilience.

Control Variables

Gender, Age, Years of Service

There were no statistically significant differences due to gender in regard to burnout. In this study, gender did not significantly predict burnout scores. However the data predicted female (COs and chaplains) would be more resilient than males in regard to finding their work meaningful. This is consistent with other research showing female correctional workers experience higher levels of personal achievement and accomplishment than their male counterparts (Carlson et al. 2003).

There were no statistically significant differences due to age in any of the predictors of burnout or resilience. This suggests that for the sample respondents, their age was not a factor in their self-reported sense of burnout or in their reported levels of resilience.

There were two statistically significant predictors of burnout and resilience based on the years of service. These were the burnout subscale Emotional and the resilience subscale, Existential Aloneness. Data predicted that as years of service increase, so will the score for Emotional Exhaustion. This makes sense intuitively and is borne out in the qualitative data. As one progresses in one's career in correction with years of service, one would expect to find a greater amount of emotional exhaustion. COs were also shown to score higher on Cynicism than chaplains.

5.3. Qualitative Findings

Coding each interview line by line resulted in about 350 codes or units of information. The interviewees' words and phrases were then organized into categories. Organizing the qualitative data in this manner allowed for discernable patterns and themes to emerge from the interviews.

The interview results proved helpful in highlighting some of the relationships between spirituality, burnout and resilience that the quantitative analysis demonstrated. The qualitative data substantially support the quantitative data collected in the survey process.

The coding data categories are:

1. Stress and Burnout
2. Resilience
3. Spirituality
4. Work environment
5. CO Culture

5.3.1. Stress and Burnout

All interviewees spoke about the difficulty of not bringing their work home with them and feeling that their families did not fully understand the stressful nature of their work. For example,

Sometimes we have a sort of gallows humor. We do a lot of making fun of things that maybe other people might find strange. It's our way of dealing with what goes on inside, but other people don't understand that. OR Chaplain 1

If you haven't ever worked in a prison, people don't understand what it is like. NV CO 1

While all acknowledged that they find their prison work stressful, all also described coping mechanisms centered around feeling supported and connected to peers family and/or a spiritual community. Some described how they see themselves as a source of support for their peers:

I like to support my coworkers in ways that they find helpful so if they're trying to work through something and that's the only tool they have then I do my best to support them. OR CO 1

Many mentioned their feelings of connection with inmates in their care:

There are inmates that I've known over 30 years and over the years we have taught each other different things so that interaction is rewarding because we have come to an understanding with each other and there is a certain amount of respect. OR CO 3

COs described their principle sources of stress came from fears for personal safety, the lack of predictability of each work day, negative co-workers and a feeling that they are not supported by their supervisors:

I don't let it get to me as much as when I first started, but the negative attitudes of staff members and their lack of work ethic is troubling. NV CO 1

Consistent with the MBI inventory results, a common complaint of both chaplains and COs interviewed was a feeling of emotional exhaustion. One CO describes it poignantly:

There's kind of a profound sadness in seeing people at their absolute worst.

They're so far down that they're not really who they are. And you know that, and so there's a profound sadness associated with that for me – it doesn't last a long time, but when I'm in it with them, I'm in it with them. OR CO 1

Both chaplains and COs described becoming desensitized to violence, a phenomenon that became manifest in the kind of gallows humor used by both groups of prison workers:

I guess you kind of get a sick sense of humor in this line of work, it's just stuff that would be disgusting to most people, we end up finding a way to joke about it among ourselves and the best way for me to explain it is that it's a way for us to uh, downplay the fears of what just happened to us. NV CO 2

The COs and chaplains interviewed all acknowledge some degree of feeling burned out at times:

You just dread going in, you just sit in your car and you just kind of drop your head and you say, "I just need 5 more minutes before I go in". Everything is a chore, it's difficult to go to meetings, you feel that you have nothing more to give but everybody wants something from you, so you just go home and you are exhausted and fall on the couch. OR CO 2

5.3.2. Resilience

The responses of the interviewees painted a rich description of men and women who have managed to thrive in their work despite the stresses and dangers of prison work:

I like the um, it sounds weird, but I like the starkness of the trauma, I mean, like everyone was bleeding and you couldn't deny it, you can't hide it when you're in prison, at least in my experience, I just enjoy the environment I enjoy the intensity of conversation, the type of conversations I get to have. OR Chaplain 3

There have been many times in the several places I've worked where I've felt I have walked through the valley of the shadow of death, however, I know I don't fear any evil because I believe God is with me, so I carry that every day. NV CO 3

The student coder who analyzed the interview data was not privy to the quantitative findings of this study. Nevertheless, her coding revealed a structure of responses that closely mirrored the elements of resilience scale used earlier in the study. For example some respondents described their own experiences of self-reliance in terms of their making conscious efforts to avoid becoming cynical, setting clear work goals for themselves, and recognizing their own limitations:

I went through some phase here – there were times when I carried anger with me, but over time in dealing with inmates and counseling them, I've learned from my own words trying to counsel them that some of this stuff affects me the same way and I no longer carry anger with me, I can be angry at a situation, but generally within twenty to thirty minutes that is totally gone. NV CO 1

Respondents spoke about how they coped with daily stressors. One described the work of maintaining physical and emotional balance vividly:

We call it pulling the pedals off a flower (Makes gesture of outline of a large daisy or sunflower) – pulling the pedals off a flower. When you start working in corrections your flower is full, but by the time you get done, if you don't work at keeping it full, you're gonna [sic] be without relationships, without much of anything. OR Chaplain 3

Both chaplains and COs interviewed recognized the need to maintain balance and equanimity in their work and their lives outside of work.

I convinced myself that if I don't care for somebody or care for what they did, it's a terrible waste of energy because it takes a lot of energy to carry anger with you. And I, to me, if I feel negatively about somebody, they're not worth that much energy. OR CO 4

As noted earlier, meaning, as measured in the resilience scale is the realization that life has a purpose and recognition that there is something for which to live. The phenomenon of existential aloneness is the realization that one's life path is unique and that there are some experiences in life that must be faced alone.

5.3.3. Spirituality

The responses of the chaplain interviewees indicated the centrality of spirituality in their lives. Many expressed feelings of gratitude for their work. For example, one chaplain stated,

I am glad I was able to be used by the Lord for this good purpose. I have a certain background, in training and education and personal experiences with God that equip me for this moment right now. But I'm not the answer and I don't provide all the answers, what I try to do is create an environment in which they can find answers for themselves through their own spiritual path. OR Chaplain 6

Spirituality is the key independent variable in this study and was operationalized with three subscales: "connection to others", "religious identification" and "hopeful outlook". These subscales were mirrored in the qualitative data where interviewees reported feelings of being connected to others both at work and at home and having a hopeful outlook toward both work and life outside of work.

The theme of the importance of connection to others was strongly reinforced in the interview responses. Predictably, all the chaplains interviewed belong to a specific faith group. They all expressed a sense of calling to their work. They described this calling not merely as religious identification based on denominational affiliation, but as a living spirituality that includes a sense of connection with others and a hopeful outlook.

The majority of the COs interviewed for this study (3 of the 5) reported having no faith group affiliation. This is consistent with the overall survey results showing 60% of CO respondents claim "none" as their faith group affiliation.

Religious Identification does not appear to be a significant predictor of the subjects' sense of professional efficacy. Professional efficacy measures the subjects' sense of or expectations about their effectiveness at work. None of the interviewees cited denominational religious affiliation as an essential aspect of their sense of their own accomplishments or effectiveness in their work. One CO, who did not belong to a specific faith group stated,

I don't think that there isn't a God, you know I do pray, but it's not like a traditional prayer or anything, it's just something I say to create a little bit of calm over a bad situation. I'll say something in my head, I don't really say anything out loud, um and I wear a correctional officer's prayer tag every day I go to work, I put it on, it's sort of like superstition, but it's not just a superstition. NV CO 2

Some of the COs interviewed however did explicitly mention the importance of spirituality in their lives. For example, one CO stated:

I think the everyday sort of little earthquakes, the shocks that you go through... I think for me, uh, definitely my belief, my faith, my ability to go to Church. I think that has definitely been my crutch". NV CO 1

As hypothesized, chaplains by virtue of their training and the nature of their work, expressed the value of their spirituality in terms of helping them cope with workplace stressors:

I think the biggest piece that I struggle is with cynicism and despair. And if it wasn't for connection to a religious community and my connection to a religious practice, um, I

mean those are my primary coping strategies, I mean that's why I'm in ministry I guess because religious experience is how I cope with life. OR Chaplain 2

The responses of the interviewees affirm the importance of feeling hopeful and feeling connected to others. All the respondents in this study expressed their pride in their work and in terms of integrity, compassion, and service.

The thing I like the most is just being able to see and be a catalyst for people to change their lives. OR Chaplain 1

In the grand scheme of things I think God has a plan for me and once I get past this chapter of my life, whatever that is, but whatever, when I leave the earth, I'd like people to say that I helped somebody. OR CO 5

The chaplains and COs interviewed affirmed Bandura's contention that most people acknowledge a spiritual aspect to their lives, in the sense of seeking meaning and social connectedness to something greater than oneself without (necessarily) being tied to a formal religion.

5.3.4. Workplace Environment

Both COs and chaplains described themselves as concerned for the welfare of others (both inmates and peers) and all expressed empathy for the suffering they observe in prison work.

The interaction, I think that's the draw to coming to this place every day, It's the interaction with people, it's always different, you know. NV CO 1

Having to deal with things that aren't easy, having the chance to deal with the stories of some of these guys who have made great changes in their lives, makes you step back and realize all the blessings you have had and appreciate them. OR Chaplain 3

While COs described themselves as more cynical than chaplains, both groups interviewed expressed similar desires to find meaning in their work and to make their workplaces safer and better for both inmates and staff. This is consistent with the quantitative data that showed that while COs scored higher in cynicism than chaplains after controlling for all other variables, work roles (CO or chaplain) had less of an effect on predicting cynicism than did the respondents' spirituality scores.

A common concern voiced among COs was that chaplains did not really understand the security aspect of prison work:

I don't always know if the chaplains view the situation from the standpoint of security. Security has a job to do in order to keep the inmates safe, the chaplain has a job to do

from the standpoint of spirituality, sometimes from the spiritual side of things they might see security as a conflict cuz [sic] they're looking at it specifically from the spiritual side. OR CO 1

The chaplains interviewed all expressed awareness of the importance of security yet all but one spoke of concerns that at times security was overbearing:

For the most part I'm lucky, our officers are a pretty professional, well-trained appropriate... but there's always one, there's always one asshole, and sometimes, it's the abuse that this officer can continue to get away with, or what appears to be... And the staff know that this officer is like this and the inmates know and management knows and they do what they can but she continues to abuse inmates. And it's just, maddening. OR Chaplain 1

All of the interviewees described difficulties and challenges they experienced working in prisons. The interviews reinforced the idea that prison work is stressful. Respondents identified bureaucracy (in the form of administrative paperwork for both COs and chaplains) as a constant source of stress and anxiety. For example, two chaplains described the burden of paperwork in the context of feeling burned out at times:

It's the overwhelming grind of paperwork that you never get done with, ever. You can never come to the end of your day and think, wow, that was great and I'm all done. It just never gets done. OR Chaplain 1

I probably spend 60% of my time on the computer doing administrative stuff and 40% of my time actually with people doing people stuff. OR Chaplain 2

In addition to the administrative/bureaucratic work, all the chaplains describe the emotionally difficult aspects of their work:

I just had to tell a guy that three of his kids died in a fire, and he had never been able to even meet the youngest one. OR Chaplain 3

We had a woman in our facility who just passed away from lung cancer and she was three months from the gate and they denied her early release – Why? Why the fuck [sic] did they do that? Three months. Really? She's on hospice! Really, she's a danger to society? It's things like that. And sometimes it's just the reality of the terrible things that people do to each other and the terrible things that have been done to them. OR Chaplain 1

The COs interviewed also described their work as emotionally difficult at times. All the COs reported two competing sources of difficulty. One is working with difficult inmates, particularly those suffering mental illnesses. For example, one CO stated,

We've got a lot of mentally ill people that do some of the weirdest things to themselves that the only way you can look at it – I mean, you can look at it and be completely repulsed by it, shocked and quit the job. NV CO 2

The other complaint was a perceived lack of support on the part of the COs interviewed from their correctional supervisors and administrators. This complaint was unique to the COs interviewed as all the chaplains interviewed report feeling supported and appreciated by their administrators.

I have all the confidence in the world that I would be supported by my peers. Now, administration and management, um, now that's a loaded question, but most of the time, no, I don't, honestly I don't feel supported by them. NV CO 1

All but one of the chaplains reported feeling supported by their administrators, the one who did not felt that his administrations talked about support, but did not follow through with needed training,

"The department needs to do more with trauma and burnout. I feel like they want to talk good talk, "staff wellness" is a big thing, but I don't feel it is trickling down, not to the level we need. The department won't spend money on the kind of treatment we really need. OR Chaplain 3

A common complaint of the COs interviewed was that administrators often are promoted from non-custody positions and thus do not fully understand the COs' work:

Over the years, the way that they've hired administrators has changed, uh dramatically. It used to be that you worked your way up through the ranks and um now it isn't so much that way. We have people that um came from education, there are doctors; they don't understand the impact of the decisions they make. OR CO 5

Four of the five COs interviewed expressed the difficulties they encounter working with large numbers of often anti-authority and "anti-rule" inmates in situations that often require lightning-speed judgment and physical reactions. All spoke of the inherent dangers they feel each day:

When you walk into a place like this where you know if you make a mistake, or if someone else makes a mistake, it could possibly cost them their lives or their welfare – or possibly your own life. NV CO 1

The CO who fired the shot has fired shots at other institutions and wounded inmates before. He did what he had to do, he followed protocol and what are you supposed to do, stand by and watch them beat someone to death? So there were some staff, the ones who had the most difficulty dealing with it were the non-security staff who witnessed the blood spurting everywhere. OR CO 2

Both chaplain and CO interviewees also described how their work environment shapes their own behavior, both in terms of stress reactions and in coping mechanisms. This is consistent with the central theory behind this research: that environment shapes behavior and behavior shapes the environment and that these socially learned

behaviors are the result of a dynamic interaction with the prison environment. For example, one chaplain observes,

You're dealing with officers whose job is 90% boredom and 10% fear and I've had them react at me, I've been at the state pen where we had 75 guys fighting on the yard, we've had major lockdowns for two weeks at a time, where at gunpoint every inmate was pulled out of his cell, the cell searched, the inmate strip searched, and I've seen several staff suicides, I've been to their funerals. I listen to their denial talk like "we're just doing our job" – like Bullshit, you're doing your job and you're going home drinking and you're taking drugs and you're beating your wives, and it's not affecting you? It is bullshit ... it's all denial, no one wants to face the reality of it. OR Chaplain 4

The phenomenon described by Bandura as “social verification by peers” where behavior and attitudes are reinforced by co-workers is evident in some of the responses of the interviewees. For example, even if individuals began work as corrections officers with benign attitudes toward prisoners, it is likely their peers will shape their workplace views to fit the institutional mold (which may not be benign at all). Both chaplains and COs interviewed describe this workplace socialization:

I realized I was headed down the road to being negative like a lot of the other officers that I was seeing that I didn't like but I was turning in to them ... it kind of made me grow up when I was 23 or 24 years old. And I just stopped letting those little things that the inmates do that they're gonna [sic] do for the rest of my career get to me because they're not important – I just started, you know changing myself slowly, my supervisors noticed it and started acting different towards me and one of my supervisors in particular he gave me the chance to become [a CO trainer] and once I got that certification, I just flourished because you don't get very many, you know, good jobs, in this career. NV CO 2

I have a network of other chaplains – some more than others, that I do meet with for support. I see them on a consistent basis – I still study with my teachers so I see them regularly, and that helps a lot. OR Chaplain 5

5.3.5. CO Culture

All the chaplains and COs interviewed agree that there is a culture among COs. Chaplains tend to be more critical of what they perceive to be the CO culture they observe:

There's a culture in this prison, and not just here, particularly among correctional officers that probably are burned out after a few years dealing with inmates and they end up not engaging purposefully with the idea of helping them become better human beings. OR Chaplain 3

While two of the COs complain the most difficult part of their work is dealing with other officers, all of the COs express a measure of camaraderie and pride among their peers. One CO describes her perception of COs as:

They have to carry that tough guy image on the outside, but when they get outside the doors, most corrections officers are totally different, they're very soft, they're softer spoken, um they're loving and caring towards their families. OR CO 2

Two of the COs spoke with some empathy toward prisoners:

I think once you really get down to the nitty-gritty of it, people are people, no matter what their sentence is, no matter what crime they committed, people are people. They made some really really bad choices, along the way, but people are people. NV CO 3

No matter what people say about their fears about dealing with inmates and being behind the wall, inmates are just people who made bad decisions at one time or another – as we all have at one time or another. OR CO 4

The other COs describe more the dangers they perceive in the inmates.

When I was working in the SHU the guys who were in the SHU were throwing urine and feces on our staff and, threatening to kill us every day. And so, the thought process or cynicism that I carried was that these guys out here walking around at any given moment these guys have the potential and the capacity to cause all this harm and chaos. NV CO 1

There are some inmates here –all they know is trying to get over which is either gaining the upper hand or acting in such a way to get the best results– and they couldn't tell you the truth if they wanted to (laughs) because that wouldn't be in their best interest. OR CO 3

The COs interviewed for this study all indicated that they respected inmates who treated them with respect. One CO described a rather chilling incident where an inmate's behavior elicited fear:

There was an inmate who was pretty well known as one of the most dangerous individuals who walked through these walls. I got to know him and we talked and there'd be a little pause in the conversation and he'd kind of smile a little bit and he'd tell me "by the way, you know that if I get the chance I've got to kill you!" And I told him "Yeah, I know that". OR CO 3

Another aspect of COs' and chaplains' work that creates stress is the inherent role conflict they encounter in their daily work. This conflict can be summarized as the tension between the need to maintain control, custody and security of the institution while at the same time "correcting" or participating in the rehabilitation of offenders. This conflict was echoed in the responses of several of the CO's interviewed in this study.

In my work, I want to make it a better place, a better place for the officers. The inmates, I really don't care about them. As far as I'm concerned their lives are too liberal as it is...NV CO 1

You may have, the day before had a decent conversation with the guy, you may have recommended him for a program but he wakes up on the wrong side of the bed and

he's a different guy and then you have to deal with him as a different guy. I think that's probably the most challenging parts of working in a place like this. OR CO 3

6. Ways forward, conclusions

The major findings and contribution to the literature from this study are:

- Higher spirituality scores predict lower levels of burnout reported by participants in this study.
- Higher spirituality score predict greater resilience as reported by participants in this study.
- Correctional chaplains report less burnout and greater resilience than correctional officers surveyed in this study.
- Correctional workers who feel connected to others in both their personal and professional lives report in this study a greater ability to resist the effects of burnout from work stress than those workers who feel alone or isolated in their personal and professional lives.
- Having a hopeful outlook provides the best overall predictor for resilience in this study.
- Among those participating in this study, religious preference is less important in predicting either burnout or resilience than having a hopeful outlook and feeling connected to others.

6.1. Limitations

While large enough to provide the statistical power needed for analysis, the sample size is admittedly very small. The major challenge of this project was gaining access to an adequate population of correctional officers. Collecting data in prisons is difficult. The two departments that did provide generous access were Oregon and Nevada, however these states have relatively small corrections departments and both are the western part of the United States. This limitation poses a challenge to any attempt to draw generalizable conclusions from this study.

Since this study was a one-time cross sectional study of a specific population, it did not provide an opportunity to test for changes. While the correlation of the

variables suggests a relationship between spirituality, burnout and resilience, without more data, preferably longitudinal data, it is not possible to demonstrate causality.

Related to this is another limitation caused by the lack of ability to differentiate between workplace stress and stressors occurring outside of work. More data about specific sources of stress – would be helpful to determine if the stress is work related or from some other cause not related to working conditions.

Another limitation is that in order to get access to the whole population of COs in each corrections department, it was necessary to survey across each state's institutions. Respondents worked in a variety of institutional settings, with differing security levels, different inmate populations (male or female inmates) and different ethnicities. No one prison is the same as another and each depends to a great degree on the quality and policies of the administrators managing each institution. Given the small sample size and the geographically limited area of the survey population, as well as the variations in prison security and inmate populations, the results of this study must be interpreted with these limitations in mind.

Feeling isolated and unappreciated were common themes in the CO interviews. A feeling expressed by all of the COs interviewed can be summed up in the observation of one interviewee:

You know, in law enforcement, in corrections, we never get the spotlight. NV CO

One of the chaplains and three of the COs interviewed also spoke of feeling tired out or depleted from their work and did not anticipate staying in the work much longer. For example,

I have my VA pension so I plan on just cashing out my pension so I'll just be done. I can't do this for 20 years – I'm not even sure I can do it for another 6 years. NV CO 2

Despite a common perception of the lack of social recognition, the COs interviewed all expressed pride, meaning and purpose in their work.

The interviewees expressed a lack of social recognition and social status as contributing to a lack of feeling accomplishment (professional efficacy) with work. This is consistent with Bandura's theory that people are more likely to exhibit modeled behavior if it results in valued outcomes than if it has unrewarding or punishing effects.

This is also consistent with Bandura's notion of self-efficacy. As noted earlier, self-efficacy presumes that an individual has personal agency and some ability to exert control over events in his/her life. Self-efficacy gives people the per-

severance to remain focused on their goals even when challenged with severe difficulties.

The quantitative data suggest one's religious identification is not a predictor of one's level of professional efficacy. This is also borne out by the fact that only 40% of COs reported a religious affiliation or identification with a faith group. This was echoed in the interviews of COs whose sense of professional accomplishment working in a prison environment did not appear to be affected by whether one considers him/herself "religious" or not. It suggests that the construct of spirituality used in this study is able to distinguish between spirituality as operationalized and religion in the lives of the respondents.

There is always the problem of bias. Given the small population and the difficulties inherent in obtaining responses to online surveys, there is likely a process of self-selection that occurs. Those COs who are most interested in the area of wellness and stress are more likely to respond to such a survey than COs who are already burned out and stressed by their work. There is also the problem of researcher bias in that this researcher has many years of experience as a professional correctional employee. In designing the research, methods to reduce bias were introduced, such as having another trained person do the qualitative coding of the data, but it is not possible to guarantee complete objectivity.

6.2. *Strengths*

Despite these methodological imitations, there are a number of strengths in this research. This study addresses an aspect of the correctional system that has been given little attention in the field to date. This study is unique in that it compares correctional officers and correctional chaplains; two professional groups that share an intimate access to prisoners' daily lives. It helps fill a continuing gap in our understanding of correctional workplace challenges.

While the methodological limitations pose a challenge to any attempt to draw generalizable conclusions from this study, the results of the analysis provide compelling evidence to warrant future research. The data support aspects of Bandura's social learning theory and thus contribute to this theoretical dimension of criminology.

The use of mixed methods in both a survey instrument and qualitative interviews lent strength to the findings. The online survey proved effective in reaching a large number of correctional personnel quickly and efficiently

The use of in-depth interviews added to the base knowledge generated by the survey data by offering the rich descriptions of lived experiences of correctional personnel.

6.3. Recommendations for future research

The cross-sectional nature of the survey and the small sample size should be addressed in future research by using a much larger population to draw from, in prisons across the United States. Future research should also include cross-cultural study of correctional systems in countries other than the U.S.

A longitudinal study would be useful to study how the traits that a correctional officer brings to the job (age, gender, race, education) are shaped by the prison environment itself over time. While obviously the prison environment is not going to change immutable qualities such as age, and gender, it would be expected that the effect of the prison environment would have different effects on individuals depending upon their age and gender. Ideally, a study using both quantitative and qualitative data together would follow the careers of new correctional officers starting from the time they apply for the job. Data from their qualifying exams might be very helpful to establish baseline characteristics and abilities. The experiences of the recruits as they go through the training academy would be important to observe and document. This could best be accomplished as a participant observer. With the permission of the department of correction, the researcher could accompany a class through the twelve-week training academy. Ethnographic research involving conversations with recruits and perhaps their own written or oral narratives of their experience would enhance such a study.

Future research might also begin with a clearer understanding of the interactive effects of the environment on different types of people hired as correctional officers. If not already used, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI-2) would be a useful tool for evaluating the personality characteristics of potential correctional officers. The MMPI-2 can provide insights on several work-related aspects of personality such as openness to evaluation, social facility, addiction potential, and stress tolerance.

Additional study of spirituality is needed. The data suggests in this study that spirituality, particularly operationalized as connection to others and hopeful outlook may serve to promote increased resilience and greater resistance to burnout among correctional workers. As Bandura theorizes, "To alter how people behave, one must alter how they think" (1985:519). Further study of this phenomenon might suggest

ways of enhancing CO wellness by helping them develop a more hopeful outlook and strengthen their sense of connectedness to others.

6.4. Policy implications and Recommendations

While much attention has been given to the socialization of inmates and “inmate culture” within prisons, surprisingly little has been added to the literature of corrections theory regarding prison managers or corrections officers. Any attempt to reform the prison system will likely fail if it does not address the concerns of the correctional officers.

The results of this research support the hypothesis that spirituality can play a significant role in both resisting burnout and in increasing the resilience of correctional workers. This has some important policy implications for correctional officials tasked with the well being of correctional employees. One change could involve a recognition of the role spirituality can play in helping COs. It is generally accepted that spirituality is employed to help change inmates’ behavior. It would follow, based on the results of this research, that spirituality can also change CO’s behavior, and in so doing, change the environment of the prison in a positive way.

One does not have to look very far to find recent and disturbing prison environments such as Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq and the detention center in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Understanding how dysfunctional and cruel attitudes are formed might indicate ways they can be corrected and prevented in the future. This would serve not only the benefit of prisoners, but also would help those who work every day in the prisons to ensure safety and security for staff as well by creating a more humane work environment.

The findings suggest some concrete steps policy makers can take to assist their correctional workers on the job. For example, one CO in Oregon observed,

We don’t have a quiet place to go where we feel safe, you know, hanging out where there’s a comfortable place to talk about what’s going on... like in situations where something comes up at home, like someone calls you to tell you there’s been a death. That’s happened to me, and I couldn’t cry in front of the inmates, so all I could do was go and sit in a cubicle – in the back of the control point. I really just need someplace where I can go and spend a few minutes to deal with my emotions. OR CO 2

At nearly every correctional facility there is some sort of room set aside for inmates to attend religious services. With either dedicated chapels or more commonly, multi-faith, multi-purpose rooms, correctional departments provide for the consti-

tionally protected religious/spiritual needs of prisoners. What is telling however is that as two COs complained, there is no comparable go-to place for correctional staff to have their spiritual and religious needs met in the same prison environment:

I wish we had a meditation room for the staff, because we provide it for the inmates.
OR CO 2

You know, as much as they have support groups for ex-offenders outside, that's what officers definitely need too—the same thing. NV CO 1

Providing a safe space for correctional employees to go to during stressful moments at work when they do not have the ability to leave the institution would be one recommendation for policy makers to consider.

Policy makers could consider ways to enhance CO perceptions of social support through various programs designed to develop camaraderie and trust among COs.

Another recommendation based on the evidence in this study that demonstrates the positive effects of spirituality on resisting burnout and increased resilience, would be to establish a volunteer-based interfaith chaplaincy within each prison dedicated specifically to the spiritual needs and wellness of the staff. Such a chaplain would need to be clearly differentiated from those chaplains who minister to the inmate population. The CO chaplain/spiritual advisor would ideally have both law enforcement and ministerial training. Using volunteers from the community (as is the practice in most police and fire departments in the U.S.) would not require diversion of resources from the corrections departments.

6.5. Conclusion

Social learning theory, with its behavioral, cognitive and social–interaction components has been applied to treatment programs in prisons to bring about behavioral change in both juvenile and adult offenders. The results of this study suggest that social learning theory could also be used to bring about positive, stress–reducing changes in the work lives of correctional personnel. Correctional officers must cope with both the tedium of daily prison life and the ever–present potential of violence. It is hoped that this research, in some way might contribute to the well being of Correctional Officers and thus contribute to the creation of more humane correctional institutions for all who live and work in them.

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