

Reducing stress among parole officers using centered caring

Joe King, MS, RN, PMH-BC

Problem

- Parole officers (POs) have the highest rates of depression and suicide of all law enforcement personnel (Sykes, 2010).
- They report that stress and shame are daily characteristics of the job (McAlly, 2012).
- Initial training for POs is \$42,000 and turnover wastes \$4 million per year (Sykes, 2013).

Claim

- Stress-reduction knowledge and skills training based on centered caring for parole officers is associated with a 10 point decrease on the Pearson Stress Test (PST) within 30 days.

Evidence

- Stress-reduction knowledge and skills training based on centered caring is associated with reduced the PST levels of rookie law enforcement officers (LEOs) in six weeks (Able, 2009).
 - $M_{\text{before}} = 22.31$ ($SD_{\text{before}} = 5.56$) and $M_{\text{after}} = 10.57$ ($SD_{\text{after}} = 3.6$)
 - $t(45) = 3.14, p < .05$
- Centered caring meditation significantly reduces PST levels in Trauma nurses (TNs) after two weeks (Baker, 2012)
 - $M_{\text{before}} = 17.32$ ($SD_{\text{before}} = 4.5$) and $M_{\text{after}} = 10.41$ ($SD_{\text{after}} = 4.6$)
 - $t(35) = 2.64, p < .05$
- Centered caring time-outs were associated with a reduction in PST levels of Urban high school teachers (UHSTs) in four weeks (DeLaney, 2010)
 - $M_{\text{before}} = 18.63$ ($SD_{\text{before}} = 4.4$) and $M_{\text{after}} = 9.46$ ($SD_{\text{after}} = 4.0$)
 - $t(215) = 4.73, p < .05$

Reasoning

- Job stress of POs has many of the same characteristics and consequences of job stress experienced by other LEOs, TNs, and UHSTs (Able, 2012; Bader, 2009; DeLaney, 2010).
- LEOs, TNs, and UHSTs reduced their PST levels by 7 to 12 points in 2 to 6 weeks (Able, 2012; Baker, 2009; Delaney, 2010).
- Therefore, in a paired-samples *t*-test comparing PST scores before and 4 weeks after centered-caring stress-reduction training, POs should show an average reduction of about 10 points.

Implications

- If centered-caring, stress-reduction training can reduce the stress levels of PO's, we may see a corresponding reduction in the rates of depression, suicide, and job turnover among these personnel (Able, 2009; Cool, 2014).
- The savings in human and economic capital corresponds with overall improved public health (McAlly, 2012; Cool, 2014).
- We may also see increased job effectiveness of Pos, which could positively impact their clients, recovering additional human and social capital from the correctional system (O'Coole, 2005).

Sample

- I recruited 35 parole officers from the Nahtdis County Probation Department Adult Court Services (ACS) Division, a convenience sample from the county probation department.
- Descriptive statistics will be compared to overall department parameters to establish generalizability.
- Participation will be mandated to participate as part of the We Care About Us (WCAS) initiative to improve employee mental health.
- Participants will sign optional waiver form to confirm participation.

Variables

- Demographic variables will be collected for sample
 - Age, gender, race, ethnicity, years on job, education level, overall health status, full-time/part-time status
- The Pearson Stress Test (pst_pre) will be administered prior to the three-week knowledge and skills training.
- The Pearson Stress Test (pst_post) will be administered four weeks after the conclusion of the training.

Plan and Timeline



Summer 1, 2016

- Completion of IRB Paperwork
- Approval from chair and committee
- IRB Submission



Summer 2, 2016

- Subject Recruitment
- Training Scheduling
- Identify potential meetings for abstract submission
- Identify potential journals for manuscript submission
- Obtain Department-level demographics if possible



Fall 1, 2016

- Begin training
- Demographic Data collection (pre-training survey)
- Pearson Stress Test (pst_pre)



Fall 2, 2016

- Training ends
- Begin writing manuscript
- Analyze Demographic characteristics



Spring 1, 2017

- Pearson Stress Test (pst_post) four weeks after training
- Analyze PST scores (t-test)
- Synthesize data
- Continue manuscript

References

XXX,X. (XXXX). XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.
XXXX: XX

XXX,X. (XXXX). XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.
XXXX: XX

XXX,X. (XXXX). XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.
XXXX: XX

XXX,X. (XXXX). XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.
XXXX: XX