A WARDEN'S GUIDE

Culture Change in Detention Facilities

JUST DETENTION INTERNATIONAL

RAPE IS NOT PART OF THE PENALTY

Great Wardens Project

Great Wardens Project

ABOUT THE GREAT WARDENS PROJECT

The Great Wardens Project is an initiative that aims to build a corrections culture based on safety and dignity. Recognizing the vital role of prison leaders, the initiative provides wardens and superintendents with leadership resources.

The project's core beliefs are that wardens and superintendents have a responsibility to promote safe, secure, and healthy corrections facilities; and that advocates and prison leaders can work together to reimagine how corrections facilities operate and shape a new generation of committed corrections professionals.

The Great Wardens Project is managed by staff at Just Detention International, a nonprofit organization that seeks to end sexual abuse in all forms of detention. The project is guided by the Great Wardens Task Force, a group of prison leaders who are widely recognized for their cutting-edge approaches to facility safety.

GREAT WARDENS TASK FORCE

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Deborah Wofford, Gender Responsive Administrator, Washington State Department of Corrections

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OPENING LETTER

Dear Friend,

When I began my career in corrections, there was no handbook for culture change. In fact, the term "culture change" wasn't part of our vocabulary, even though many of us intuitively knew something needed to change. Staff were working too hard, incarcerated people were struggling to be heard, and both were looking to me, as warden, for support. I knew I wanted to bring in more rehabilitative programs for the incarcerated population at my prison, because teaching them to be more productive and respect themselves would in turn make the prison safer for the staff.

The Great Wardens Project emerged from a commitment to advancing leadership practices that empower and support bold, visionary leaders within correctional institutions across the country. We recognized the importance of having a corrections culture that prioritizes safety, dignity, and respect for both staff and incarcerated people. We knew that corrections leaders — wardens and superintendents in particular — have a critical role in instilling those values in both the people who work in the facility and the people who live there. At the same time, it was clear that there was no roadmap for leaders to build such a culture, nothing that spelled out how it could be done.

As the Warden or Superintendent, it is possible to build a supportive community inside the walls of your facility. You have the power to set the tone of the institution. The way you communicate, the decisions you make, and your treatment of

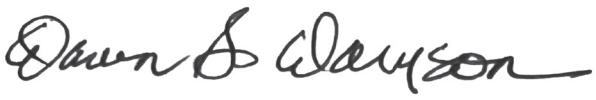
Great Wardens Project

staff and incarcerated people serve as the model for everyone else. This is a tremendous responsibility, but it is also an incredible opportunity to positively impact the lives of the people in your facility.

I've seen remarkable transformations happen, both in facilities where I've worked and in those run by peers on the Great Wardens Task Force. The pages in this guide provide a template so that you too can create lasting, sustainable change. You'll find insights into topics like accountability and communication, as well as tips and ideas on how to improve staff wellness and retention.

We hope this guide will be a valuable tool for you, and we encourage you to share it with others in positions of leadership, at your facility and beyond. Working together, we can uphold our duty as wardens to ensure our facilities are safer for everyone.

Sincerely,



DAWN S. DAVISON
Warden (retired)
California Institution for Women
California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
and Chairperson, Board of Directors
Just Detention International

> You as a warden have an ability to change the culture. They're going to follow your lead. It doesn't matter where you work, what prison, or where you're at right now. If the culture is not what you'd like it to be, you can change it.

MARK S. NOOTH, EASTSIDE INSTITUTIONS ADMINISTRATOR (RET.)
Oregon Department of Corrections,
and a member of the Great Wardens Task Force

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INTRODUCTION

Wardens and superintendents[1] have a tremendous amount of authority. Their actions shape the culture and safety of large and complex institutions, where sometimes thousands of people live and work. This guide is for those wardens and superintendents who seek to build a healthier culture inside their facilities, but who also face resource limitations that make change seem impossible. The following pages contain the wisdom and lessons learned from current and former wardens and superintendents from facilities across the country. Each section analyzes a topic or challenge unique to corrections, explores strategies for implementing culture change, and provides examples of concrete steps wardens can take — all based on the experiences of wardens and other corrections leaders.

The aim of the guide is to give practical advice for wardens on how best to instill a set of principles that promote the safety and well-being of both their employees and the people in their custody. In addition, the end of each chapter contains guidance from corrections professionals, drawn from their experience in the field. Recognizing that no facility is the same, and that challenges differ across institutions, the advice we offer is meant to be adaptable, planting a seed for change that is rooted in what we have learned from working with leaders nationwide.

Why Culture Change — and Why Now?

The field of corrections currently faces a monumental staffing crisis. In 2022, the number of people working for state prisons hit its lowest mark in over two decades.[2] At the same time, the number of people being incarcerated has gone up. Staff are forced to work overtime, often in an increasingly chaotic facility environment. On top of feeling overworked, many

staff feel unsafe at their jobs and generally do not think they are making a positive difference.[3] The result is a workforce that suffers from stress, fatigue, and depression. Staffing problems also exacerbate other issues at facilities, including low morale, low program participation, and even a lack of safety. Understaffed agencies look to make cuts when accommodating for fewer staff, and often the first target is programming and visitation for incarcerated people. A situation with a population whose basic needs aren't being met, combined with a workforce that has reached a breaking point, is ripe for conflict that impacts both staff and incarcerated people alike. Brian Dawe, National Director of One Voice United, an advocacy organization for corrections officers, puts it plainly: "We're all in the same toxic environment."[4]

Wardens and superintendents may see themselves as powerless to solve problems that often stem from staffing shortages, particularly when resources are limited. But as facility leaders, wardens do have the ability to influence facility culture and create a safer place for staff to work and for incarcerated people to live.

What Is Organizational Culture?

Organizational culture can be hard to define, but the simplest way to explain it is as a consistent pattern of behavior within a workplace. It is an understanding of the "what" and "why" of an organization that is shared by the people who work there. It is a collaborative and shared awareness of values and goals — of what is right and wrong. These values solidify into norms, creating expectations for how one should behave. Yet organizational culture is not static; it can shift in response to internal and external changes.

A number of factors influence corrections culture, including the agency's mission and values, the people who live in the facility, the people who live in the surrounding community, and the broader political environment. Above all, the culture of a facility is shaped by the actions of the people who work there and the expectations of the people who lead them.

Leadership and Culture

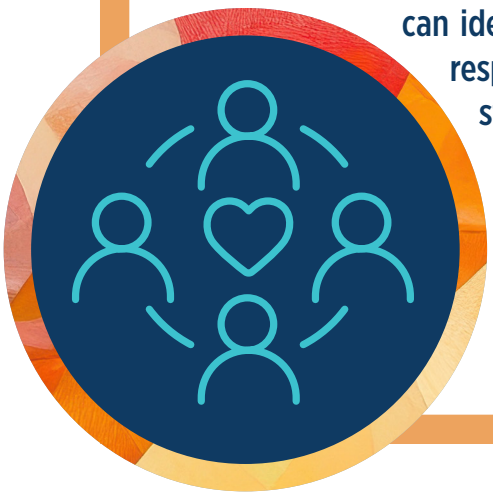
In 2021, the Great Wardens Project conducted an anonymous survey with 150 corrections leaders on facility culture. The results were clear: staff shortages and staff retention had a ***significant impact*** on the facilities surveyed. Half of the respondents reported that the culture of their facility was a "mix of healthy and not healthy," but more than half said that they felt empowered to make changes necessary to improve facility culture. Even though wardens may not be able to control hiring or budgets, they have a significant impact on a facility's culture.[5] Staff and incarcerated people alike look to facility leaders to set expectations and provide guidance. Wardens are role models for other corrections officials; the way a warden behaves and communicates sets the tone for the environment.

Culture Change Roadmaps

Culture change is difficult and takes time, and success is rarely linear. Even with a firm

Assessing Workplace Culture

Understanding the current state of a facility's culture is an essential component of the warden's role. As facility leaders, wardens are always observing how staff perform their duties, how they interact and communicate with each other and with the people who are incarcerated, and how they present as corrections professionals. Wardens can identify patterns that may need to be addressed and ensure that responses are always fair and consistent. Wardens can also identify staff who have the potential to influence and create change — either positively or negatively. Incarcerated people also have an impact on a facility's culture. When assessing overall culture, soliciting input from incarcerated people is essential, as they can offer a unique perspective and work collaboratively with staff to make change.



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WHO WE ARE	WHAT WE ARE	WHAT WE HOPE FOR
• What do we believe in? • What is important to us?	• What actions are we taking?	• What does success look like? • What changes because of our actions?

understanding of a facility's culture and the underlying beliefs and assumptions that guide behavior, creating lasting change requires ongoing commitment. Finding a place to start can be overwhelming. Creating smaller and more attainable goals, developing a step-by-step plan for achievement, and setting measures for success can help start the process, track progress, and create results.

Achieving larger goals often requires a strategic plan — a comprehensive roadmap to carry out a facility or organizational mission. At the foundation of every strategic plan are a set of values, a mission statement, and a vision statement. Building on these foundational pieces, a strategic plan identifies short- or long-term goals that will lead to making the vision a reality and includes ways to measure success. Some facilities have mission statements that are tailored to fit the specific needs of their population and the kinds of services provided. In addition to a mission and vision, strategic plans may include analysis of the **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats to success. A **SWOT** analysis, as these are commonly known, can help to clarify what the barriers are, and how to leverage strengths and opportunities to minimize those barriers.

Once the values, mission, and vision are identified, and any other analyses are completed, the next step is to name short- or long-term goals in service of creating change. Goal setting can present its own set of challenges, especially for a goal as complex as changing culture. For example, all wardens have the goal of ensuring safety for their staff and people in their custody, but what exactly does safety mean, and how can it be measured? The SMART goals framework can help clarify expectations and define success. **SMART** goals — **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-Bound — encourage the breaking down of larger objectives into smaller actions with clear measures for success.

Sometimes the biggest barrier to change is internal — low motivation, feeling powerless, or even feeling hopeless. One tool designed specifically to strengthen motivation and overcome internal obstacles is the **WOOP** tool — **W**ish, **O**utcome, **O**bstacle, **P**lan. This approach encourages reflection on the things that are within someone's control, and shows how to leverage existing control to achieve identified outcomes.

Many corrections agencies have agency-wide strategic plans that can be used as templates for creating facility-specific plans. Consider reviewing your agency's strategic plan for inspiration, or refer to the American Jail Association's guide to strategic planning. Whichever tools you use, the key is to identify realistic goals, to ensure that they contribute to your stated vision, and to be able to measure success along the way.

PLANNING TOOLS

The American Jail Association special report on strategic planning has helpful guidance on creating a plan that works for your facility. It also contains examples of SMART goals and SWOT analysis (page 41): www.americanjail.org/files/Core%20Competencies/2017_JA_Core%20Competencies_Strategic%20Planning.pdf

To access the WOOP tool, visit: www.woopmylife.org

“Hope is a remarkable currency. We work with a lot of people who sometimes tell us they don’t have any hope, and we need to find ways of making sure that they do have hope.”

ART BEELER, WARDEN (RET.)

Federal Bureau of Prisons, and a member of the Great Wardens Task Force

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RESILIENCY AGAINST CORRECTIONS FATIGUE

Corrections work is challenging. Wardens and superintendents know all too well how the job can harm staff's physical and mental health. Research shows that corrections officers experience depression and post-traumatic stress at alarmingly high rates,[6] which has profound consequences for their long-term health. Corrections leaders can help promote wellness and build staff resiliency against the harms that come from working in this traumatizing and often dehumanizing environment, which collectively are known as "corrections fatigue." The way to do so is by creating an institutional culture that values mental health and wellness.

What is Corrections Fatigue?

The term corrections fatigue was coined by Dr. Caterina Spinaris, Founding Director of Desert Waters, to describe "the cumulative and commingled effects of operational, organizational, and traumatic stressors on an individual staff's personality, health, and functioning, as well as core beliefs and behaviors."[7] Operational stressors are often inherent to the job, such as loud environments, temperature extremes, and equipment issues. Organizational stressors refer to harmful elements in the workplace, such as constant conflict, harassment, or a lack of clear purpose. Traumatic stressors include direct experiences of violence, or the

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Left unchecked, staff exposure to traumatic stressors causes: personality changes, decline in health and functioning, and development of dysfunctional core beliefs and behaviors.

indirect trauma of witnessing or hearing stories of violence.

Traumatic stressors are crucial to identify and address to ward off corrections fatigue and ensure staff wellness. The build-up of repeated traumatic stressors results in chronic stress and a constant fear of violence. Without appropriate support, this can lead to a state of hyper-vigilance, a state of heightened alertness to threat or danger, for both corrections officers and incarcerated people. Unfortunately, exposure to violence in correctional facilities is not at all uncommon. Corrections officers who experience or witness violence in facilities are often expected to return to work as though nothing has happened.

Left unchecked, staff exposure to traumatic stressors causes: personality changes, decline in health and functioning, and development of dysfunctional core beliefs and behaviors. In these instances, the brain itself literally has changed, as a way to prepare for stressors that may occur in the future. This kind of chronic stress is insidious; it sneaks up on people before they notice, and after they might be in real trouble.

Personality Changes

The traumatic stressors of corrections work can sometimes cause personality changes. This may include "becoming highly irritable, impatient, prone to unprovoked anger outbursts, aggressive, emotionally numb, or exhibiting negative moods."[8] These are common responses to regular exposure to traumatic stressors and can happen to anyone. Charles Elward, Warden at the Riverhead Correctional Facility in New York, puts it bluntly, "You almost become non-human, robotic, emotionless."[9]

Decline in Health and Functioning

Corrections professionals, as a group, tend to have poor long-term health outcomes, and may struggle with physical health challenges such as high blood pressure and sleep disturbances. Staff mental health fares no better. Research has shown that "the high rates of mental health conditions exhibited by correctional officers exceeded those of first responders, people in the military, and national data by multiple times."[10]

Development of Dysfunctional Core Beliefs and Behaviors

People who develop corrections fatigue can sometimes experience a change in how they see themselves, other people, and the world around them. They may develop views that are negative and pessimistic, which, over time, can lead to a tendency to dehumanize others. In the case of corrections staff, the "other" is more often than not incarcerated people in their custody. This may be a result of the facility or agency culture, or the "us versus them" dynamic that can seem inherent to corrections culture and therefore may not be identified as a problem.

However, the problem becomes clearer when the "other" extends to administrative staff, family members, or the overall community outside the facility. Corrections staff then have no safe harbor other than colleagues who are similarly suffering, and the cycle deepens.

Staff may fail to recognize negative changes in their beliefs or behaviors, or deny or minimize the effects of traumatic exposure. Staff often believe that seeking

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A Space for Staff Wellness

DeAngelo Earl, former Superintendent at the Wrightsville Unit, in Arkansas, is committed to staff wellness. He also recognizes the importance of learning from his peers, so when he found out about a staff wellness room at another facility, he decided to try it at his. At the time, Superintendent Earl and his colleagues were dealing with the tragedy of losing a staff member to suicide. Prioritizing his staff's mental health never felt more important.

Superintendent Earl asked his staff for input on what the wellness room should be — what kind of things would they need in order to rest and recharge. They filled the room with comfortable places to sit, snacks, cellphone storage, and games. When the room was unveiled, staff were thrilled. Staff can also use the room to talk to mental health professionals or the chaplain.

The wellness room has been a huge success — staff use it during breaks and to pause when they need a quiet moment. For staff, the room is a concrete representation that leadership cares about their mental and emotional well-being and wants them to feel healthy and safe at their jobs.

external help for the effects of repeated trauma is a sign of weakness. In some cases, staff may turn to high-risk behaviors to cope, such as alcohol or substance abuse. One study of a state prison system identified that one in five custody staff — and one in four custody staff at men's prisons — used alcohol excessively.[11]

Corrections fatigue hurts staff and affects the overall culture and safety of an institution. Dr. Spinaris compares corrections fatigue to a contagion: staff who are experiencing corrections fatigue are likely to "infect" one another, damaging the overall health of the organization. Specifically, staff are more likely to see incarcerated people as adversaries who are undeserving

of the rehabilitation and support that are foundational principles of the profession. Carrying chronic stress can also lead to distrust between staff and a sense of isolation. In such a climate, overall morale can go into free fall. However, corrections fatigue is not inevitable, and corrections leaders can shift the cultural norms and mindset that allow corrections fatigue to set in.

Corrections Fatigue and Cultural Norms

The corrections field is increasingly recognizing the need to address corrections fatigue in staff. Many agencies have Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) that offer a range of confidential support services for staff.[12] Unfortunately, using such programs has not yet become part of the institutional culture of the broader corrections community. According to a National Institute of Corrections (NIC) survey, only 13% of corrections staff found EAPs to be helpful.[13] Conversely, most middle managers and senior administrators (77% and 84%, respectively) believe that their EAP offerings fit the needs of staff — demonstrating a clear disconnect between the views of officers and leadership. Indeed, many initiatives designed to increase EAP usage "fail to address the impact of stigma, misunderstandings about mental illness, and the reluctance of many employees to seek counseling."[14]

Given the tendency to discourage any expression of emotion, it is little wonder that so few corrections officers have embraced their agency's EAP benefits as a trusted source for help and support. Per the NIC study, many COs worried that their sessions would not be confidential. Relatedly, some worried that disclosing a mental health problem would put their job at risk, an understandable concern in a culture that does not encourage open discussion of these challenges. Whatever the reason, it is clear that many people in corrections don't feel they can get help — and suffer in silence as a result.

Consider a common scenario in corrections: a staff person, overwhelmed and stressed

Effective leaders can address corrections fatigue and thereby improve staff mental health and overall facility culture.

out, vents to a colleague. Their colleague, similarly overwhelmed and stressed out, responds, "Suck it up. That's the job." The colleague's response is both an indication of the culture of the facility and their own stress, and replicates the expectation that staff should be unfazed by their workplace environment, no matter how chaotic or harmful it is to their mental health. Struggling with trauma or chronic stress can be perceived as a personal and professional failure, which in turn exacerbates the staff member's stress reaction. This response sets the tone for the entire facility, with devastating results. As Desert Waters Research Associate Greg Morton put it, "Denying corrections fatigue kills people."[15]

Building Resiliency and Shifting Mindsets

Fortunately, effective leaders can address corrections fatigue and thereby improve staff mental health and overall facility culture. One of the most effective ways they can do so is by helping staff find positive meaning in their work. The grim reality facing the

Changing the Culture, One Pup at a Time

Dog training programs are common in prisons. They are spaces where incarcerated people learn how to train service animals or rehabilitate dogs with behavioral issues to prepare for adoption. These programs are known to have a tremendous impact on those who participate, including lower levels of anxiety and fewer disciplinary issues. The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections also runs such programs, but with a seemingly small yet impactful addition: a dog day care for staff. For a small fee, staff can drop their dog off with a group of incarcerated trainers, who will care for their pet while they are on shift. Staff can even board dogs overnight so they can more easily take vacation knowing their dog is being well cared for.

The dog day care program has had a profound impact on the culture in these facilities. At the Chillicothe Correctional Institution (CCI), about 30 staff dogs are cared for by a team of up to 30 trained handlers every day. Facility staff report that it has helped to build trust between them and the incarcerated population and bringing their dogs to work helps to ease their stress, particularly when they work overtime or double shifts. Staff who run the program also stated that the dog area is the safest part of the facility, and that there have been no incidents there since the program began. One officer noted that one handler who previously had racked up many disciplinary tickets had gone five years without a single one.

The dog handlers emphasized how the program provides an opportunity to learn new skills, develop bonds with the dogs, and feel a sense of accomplishment. “When staff took that leap of faith on me, it did a lot for me. Staff that used to hate me now trust me with their dogs,” said one of the handlers. Others added that the connections they have built with the dogs allow them to tap into emotions they otherwise mask, and that caring for the dogs has helped them get back in touch with their human side. “There is a stigma of being in prison and being labeled the bad guy. This program helps me know I can change, and that I can be worth something. It’s the best thing this prison has done,” one handler shared. For both the staff and handlers, one thing is clear: the program has given everyone at CCI hope that change is possible.

field is that most corrections officers do not think that what they do matters. According to one survey, fewer than half of corrections officers believe that prison time makes a person more likely to follow the law upon their release.[16] If staff believe that their work does not create positive outcomes, it's understandable that they will feel pessimistic about it.

Staff health is inextricably linked to the health of incarcerated people, and a warden's job is to build a culture of safety and wellness for everyone in the facility. Research has found that officers with at least one symptom of PTSD are less likely to put value on the rehabilitation of people in their care. However, when staff are able to recognize and value personal growth among incarcerated people, staff stress levels actually decrease.[17] The bottom line is that one of the best ways for wardens to make sure that their staff are healthy and resilient is by emphasizing their duty to promote the rehabilitation of the people in their custody, and valuing their efforts.

Corrections leaders should call out staff successes, and create opportunities for their staff to celebrate the positive outcomes of their work. Hosting events or gatherings, such as a family day or staff appreciation barbecue, are important for morale. Since these events take time and require resources that are not always readily available, it may be worth carving out space from existing routines. For example, staff meetings or shift briefings — which typically consist of going through a laundry list of problems — can be modified to include an agenda item for people to share personal accomplishments and gratitude for colleagues. This simple change not only can help lift staff spirits but also lead to a broader shift in the culture of the facility, where people feel seen and appreciated. This strategy can be widely applied. Any setting where staff are gathered is an opportunity to highlight achievements.

The presence of wellness programs alone won't fix the problem of corrections fatigue. As corrections leaders, it is

crucial to model support for bold initiatives and for the very concept of wellness. Leaders have to be open to new ideas, help make them happen, and take care of their own well-being. You can send memos and give pep talks about wellness and self care and taking time off, but it won't mean much if you never touch your own vacation time. As Mike Capra, former Superintendent with the New York Department of Corrections and Community Supervision and member of the Great Wardens Project Task Force, explained, "'Do as I say not as I do' just doesn't work. Wardens need to take time off and need to assign someone to take on decision making responsibilities while they are out." Leading by example in this way gives others permission to take time off, sends the message that time off is truly time off, and demonstrates trust in your team.

WHAT WARDENS ARE SAYING ABOUT COMBATING CORRECTIONS FATIGUE

- **Bring as much beauty and nature into the environment as possible to give staff a sense of well-being**
- **Create opportunities for levity throughout your workday**
- **Model wellness — encourage and support wellness activities and let staff see you practicing self care**
- **Practice listening to incarcerated people and staff without judgement**

> Transparency in communication with staff, incarcerated individuals, the community, headquarters, and politicians will automatically lead to accountability. When you're transparent in your approach, trust is built. When you follow through on your communications, accountability is the product.

DAWN S. DAVISON, WARDEN (RET.)
California Institution for Women, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and a member of the Great Wardens Task Force

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COMMUNICATION

Positive, open communication is a cornerstone of a strong institutional culture. This is true in any kind of setting — whether it's a factory or a farm, a college campus or a corrections facility. How we interact with one another — not just the words we speak and write, but how we speak and write them — sets the tone for the overall environment.

Communication is particularly vital in corrections settings because the stakes are so high. A vaguely worded message can have profound ramifications for a person's safety. Consider, for example, a protocol that spells out how to help someone having a mental health crisis. If one step is missing or is unclear, the person in crisis — or even the person administering care — could be at risk of harm. Messages that are intentionally harmful will have even more dire consequences, particularly if the person on the receiving end is incarcerated. If a staff person harasses or demeans someone, it sends a signal to everyone — staff and incarcerated people alike — that that kind of behavior is acceptable and the person's safety has no value.

Wardens and superintendents have a strong degree of control over how people communicate in their facility. They can shape how people interact by implementing written policies, establishing strong practices, and modeling good behaviors that are based on the principles of person-first, human-rights centered communication. These principles should shape how wardens interact with staff and how staff talk to one another — as well as how leaders and staff talk to incarcerated people. While distinct, communication among corrections staff and between staff and incarcerated people are mutually reinforcing. When staff engage with one another in a respectful way, they are more

Communication is particularly vital in corrections settings because the stakes are so high.

likely to engage with incarcerated people in a respectful way — who then, in turn, are more likely to show that respect back to staff.

Communicating with Staff

Good leaders know first-hand the importance of strong communication. They've seen how the way that they talk to their staff can make a difference in the running of the facility — how the tone of a conversation or in a memo can lead to changes in behavior. But there are also basic steps that even the most seasoned corrections officials can take to improve how they communicate.

It may seem obvious, but simply being available for staff matters a great deal. As Joe Page III, Warden at a large metropolitan jail and member of the Great Wardens Task Force, explained, "I call my staff regularly to check in if they are out sick, to ask if they need anything." Warden Page regularly gives support to staff, and these acts of kindness make up what he calls an "emotional bank." He learned the concept from one of his first corrections mentors, who he credits for using money as a metaphor to make emotional investments

easier to understand. Using this framing, Warden Page considers his everyday interactions with staff and incarcerated people as opportunities to make investments, or deposits, into an emotional bank. Infusing these everyday interactions with positivity increases the account balance. "I can't control what they think about me," he explained, "But I can control what I put out there, and make sure it's positive." As the number of positive interactions increases the account balance, so does the ability to see the return on the investment. "A detention facility can be an emotionless environment," Warden Page added. "Give people five minutes, and you'll get more knowledge. I've seen staff start verbalizing the need to invest in each other's emotional banks during roll calls." When staff and incarcerated people receive positive communication from facility leadership, they are significantly more likely to reflect that back.

The person in charge needs to be plugged into what's happening; in a corrections setting, that means the warden is present and observes and interacts with staff first-hand. Finding a balance is important — no one enjoys having a boss who breathes down your neck. The way to be a helpful presence, and not perceived as unhelpful or even a threat, is by demonstrating compassion and offering positive reinforcement to make it clear that the people on your staff are valued. When Warden Page calls to check in on staff who are out sick, he makes sure to say he's calling to ask about their well-being, not to ask them about unfinished tasks or because he was suspicious that they were faking it.

A hands-on approach to leadership makes facilities safer. This point was a theme of the Review Panel on Prison Rape, an initiative within the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs that examines best practices for making facilities safe from sexual abuse. "By walking around the facility and being more visible," one warden told the panel in 2016, "[Incarcerated people and staff] become more familiar with [the facility's] leaders and are more

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The OARS Approach to Communication

Effective corrections leadership depends on being present for staff and incarcerated people, ensuring you understand their perspectives, and encouraging their continued success. One tool that can help facilitate communication is a technique called OARS.[20] OARS offers a way to guide conversations to promote understanding and positive growth.

- **OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS.** Unlike yes/no questions, asking open-ended questions allows a person to share, and also demonstrates your genuine interest in the person's answers. To take a basic example, it's the difference between asking "Are you ok?" and "How are you doing?"
- **AFFIRMATIONS.** When speaking with either staff or incarcerated people, always affirm their strengths and skills. It's not easy to disclose challenges, especially to a warden or superintendent. For example, if someone has raised a potentially uncomfortable issue, praise them for having the courage to do so.
- **REFLECTIVE LISTENING.** To ensure you understand what the person is saying — and show that you're present and paying full attention — it can help to repeat back what you've heard. Simply telling someone, "It sounds like [insert experience here] was really hard for you," can go a long way toward making them feel appreciated.
- **SUMMARIZE.** Giving a brief recap of the conversation can serve both to check that you understood everything and signal the end of the conversation. A summarizing statement could start with, "Let's pause for a moment to make sure we are on the same page and we know what the next steps are."

likely to raise concerns with them."[18]

It should go without saying that wardens should talk respectfully to their staff and never belittle them. Equally important, wardens should make sure to clamp down on bullying and harassment among staff. Even seemingly small things, such as "good-hearted" teasing, can have a detrimental effect on staff morale. Staff on the receiving end may not feel like they can express how hurtful the teasing is and ask for it to stop. If facility culture allows for such behavior, it will continue unchecked. Verbally abusive behavior is harmful in its own right and is a violation of policy (and, in some cases, the law); it also paves the way for other forms of harm, like physical and sexual violence.

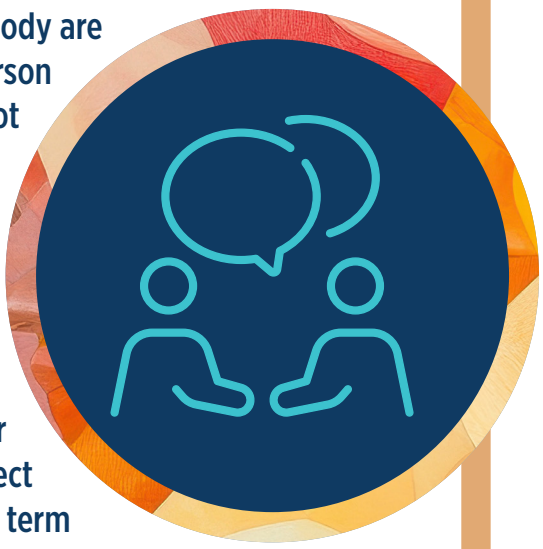
Communicating with Incarcerated People

There are a number of best practices for how to talk to incarcerated people in a professional manner. It should go without saying that strong leaders must enforce a policy of zero tolerance for sexual harassment, for example. And any sexualized language at all — such as innuendos, jokes, or conversations about sex — should be forbidden, whether it is between staff or between staff and incarcerated people.

When staff cross the line of what's appropriate in their speech, it not only harms the person they're speaking to or who overhears them, it also creates a climate of permissiveness for physical and sexual violence. As one expert noted to the Review Panel, "Verbal harassment in prison is a key indicator of the level of violence a correctional institution may tolerate."[19]

The words that we use matter. How we talk about people, either directly to them or about them to others, can have an impact on their mental health — especially when they are in your custody. But even beyond affecting any one individual, the language you use influences the culture of the facility. The power that a word can have should be a familiar concept to many people in corrections. There are a number of corrections officers who feel

Using Respectful Language



In prisons and jails, the words used to address people in custody are often degrading. Some of these words are shorthand — a person arriving in a facility is an "intake," for example. It is also not unheard of for staff to talk about "bodies," as in, "We need to move thirty bodies to the dining hall." The term "offender" is the most stigmatizing. It reduces a person to the worst acts they may have committed, can cause people to see themselves in a negative light for the rest of their incarceration and when they reenter society. It is also commonplace to call or refer to incarcerated people by their inmate number or just using the word "inmate." A survey by The Marshall Project found that just ten percent of people behind bars favored the term "inmate," expressing a preference for a range of other words, including "incarcerated person," which is what this guide uses.[21]

Even if it is not the speakers' intent, the effect of words like "offender," "inmate," or "body" can be to diminish the person. It can make them feel as if they are defined by something other than their personhood, using a term that they didn't themselves choose. This is also why using the correct gender pronouns when talking about someone else is so important. The fact that some people wish to be known by pronouns that they themselves select — as opposed to the gender listed on their official documents — has become a political flashpoint. But really, it's about seeing people for who they are and making sure they feel respected. And when people feel respected, they are more likely to be better members of your community.

Several states have passed laws that ban the use of the certain words, like "inmate" in favor of person-first alternatives, and wardens should be familiar with those new rules and make sure they are adhered to. But the point isn't to keep a list of words that are acceptable and those that are not. Rather, the important thing is to be mindful of the power of language, and how word choices can make a profound difference in the emotional well-being and safety of your community.

undermined by the term "guard," because it suggests a lack of professionalism.

There are ways beyond cracking down on harassment and bullying that wardens can communicate to demonstrate their absolute respect for people in custody. One way is to normalize people-first communication (see text box on the previous page). If it feels like a huge shift to use a new set of terms, that's because it is. For years, it has been standard practice to use words like "inmate" and "convict"; these words come as second nature, not just to people working in corrections, but across society at large. Still, it is possible to change norms around language used in a facility and, by doing so, change its overall culture.

WHAT WARDENS ARE SAYING ABOUT COMMUNICATION

- **Be honest and explain your reasoning when you can**
- **Ask for input from staff and incarcerated people and really listen to what they have to say**
- **Create a variety of ways to communicate with staff and incarcerated people and for them to communicate with you: a monthly newsletter, a suggestion box, regular meetings, town halls, to give a few examples**

“My most influential mentor taught me the need to be present within the institution on a daily basis. This creates a climate of trust, care, and accountability. You also have to empower employees — doing so unleashes their potential, increases innovation, and creates buy in for positive change.”

LYNN BISSONNETTE, SUPERINTENDENT (RET.)
MCI-Framingham, Massachusetts Department of Corrections,
and a member of the Great Wardens Task Force

4

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability and safety go hand in hand. This is true of any workplace, but especially in corrections. If people know that what they do has consequences, they are less likely to act unprofessionally. In detention settings, wardens have the power to hold others to account — both incarcerated people and their staff. They do so by setting rules that align with policy, and by following through when those rules are not followed. Too often, however, accountability is defined purely in terms of punishing rulebreakers (either staff or incarcerated people). This approach is overly narrow and leaves out other forms of accountability that emphasize dialogue and mutual respect, without letting anyone off the hook.

Decision-making around whether and how to discipline a staff person or incarcerated person can be difficult, resting on a complex set of factors that include the person's prior behavior, the nature of the infraction, the culture of the facility, and existing laws and regulations around punishment. But there are key principles that wardens should keep in mind when addressing rule violations, and what kinds of sanctions will be effective.

Creating a Culture of Accountability

Leaders can't create a safe environment if they don't know what's happening. But as any leader knows, it's not easy to always be in the loop, particularly when a facility culture labels staff who come forward with concerns as "snitches." This taboo on speaking out isn't just prevalent among officers; it also exists among incarcerated people. It's not hard to see why the pressure to stay silent could have an impact on safety. If people do not, or feel they cannot, speak out about the bad things that they're experiencing or seeing — including physical and sexual violence —

Great Wardens Project

Building Leaders on Your Staff

It is important for all staff, not just wardens, to build trust with incarcerated people. When incarcerated people have high-ranking staff they can turn to for information and support, it makes everyone safer. That was certainly true for Rodney Roussell. At the Louisiana state prison where Roussell served time, one lieutenant developed a reputation for building strong, positive relationships with the people in her custody. A fixture on the yard, she had a sharp understanding of the interpersonal dynamics of prison life. "Anyone who tried to perpetrate knew not to, because she knew how this ran," Roussell explained. "Usually on her shift, nothing really happened. So I felt safe." Roussell's experience at the state prison was a far cry from his stint at a local jail, where he was sexually assaulted many times over a period of several weeks. The jail staff made infrequent rounds and even when he did interact with them, asking for help was out of the question. "There was never a situation where I could say to them, 'Something's wrong here'."

As the warden, you can help identify staff who have the potential to become leaders within a facility. There are likely people on your team who have a talent for connecting with others and are positive role models for staff and incarcerated people alike. If you know who those people are, let them know you see their leadership skills, and offer ways to support their continued development as leaders.

change is impossible. Keeping secrets and looking the other way when there are problems has ramifications for overall safety. After all, few things are more detrimental to the smooth running of a facility than staff, or incarcerated people, ignoring dangerous, even criminal, behavior.

The good news is that wardens can break the culture of silence. It starts with trust. As a leader, you have to take steps to ensure that both incarcerated people and staff feel safe coming to you with concerns. Leaders must make it clear to everyone that not only will any reports of rule violations

be appreciated and handled appropriately, but that retaliation for speaking out will not be tolerated.

Establishing trust isn't easy. The fear that people have around speaking out is real and justified. One way to allay those concerns is by establishing a presence on the ground, as a way to gain knowledge and also demonstrate that you are available. Wardens should not make themselves accessible for critical issues only. People need to feel empowered to discuss more mundane concerns; otherwise, they won't feel safe talking about the larger ones. "One of the things that drive my staff crazy, but that I love, is when children file grievances," explains Johnitha McNair, who heads the Northern Juvenile Detention Center in Alexandria, Virginia. "If kids feel safe to complain about the brand of soap, they can complain about anything." Johnitha's approach is no less valid for adults in custody. For any person who is locked up, pointing out that something is wrong can be a brave act — and should be treated as such.

Positive Accountability

By earning the trust of staff and incarcerated people, wardens can develop a culture of accountability. Holding staff accountable might seem impossible without betraying trust. An officer might not want to share anything with you if that information will be used to get a fellow staff member in trouble.

But accountability doesn't need to be solely punitive. There is also an approach known as *positive accountability*. Under this approach, leaders give encouraging feedback and praise good work. This model recognizes that it's possible to be both firm and kind, and that when you want to get people to follow the rules, it's often more effective to use the carrot than the stick. To be clear, sanctions can be a necessary tool. When leaders respond to infractions in a manner that is proportional and consistent, it can reduce the likelihood of them happening again.

Progressive Discipline

It can be difficult for wardens to balance the need to enforce

Wardens can break the culture of silence. It starts with trust.

the rules and build trust. One approach is *progressive discipline*.

The core idea underpinning progressive discipline is prevention, specifically by addressing minor problems before they escalate. This method of holding people accountable is commonly used in human resources, and it can be effective in a corrections environment. Eric Aldridge, the warden at Fluvanna Women's Correctional Center, has adopted a progressive discipline approach in his facility that is people-centered and rooted in kindness. For example, he makes sure to address problems with a staff person in private, and never in front of a group. The tone is always positive and affirming, with a focus on what should have been done. The key, as ever, is building trust.

Progressive discipline also works as an approach for holding incarcerated people accountable. Rather than instinctively cracking down harshly on all rule infractions, leaders should try to identify the underlying causes of why people are breaking the rules in the first place. One way to do so is to ask questions. In many cases, incarcerated people act inappropriately or disruptively — or even violently — in response to trauma, unaddressed needs, or because they themselves feel unsafe or at risk. Once that issue is resolved, or a plan is put in place to address it, the behavior is more likely to stop.

At Fluvanna, the impact of this approach has been overwhelmingly positive. "Warden Aldridge actively promotes a culture of respect, kindness, and accountability," shared one woman incarcerated at Fluvanna. "He set a standard of conduct he expected everyone to abide by." The core tenets of progressive discipline are found in the acronym **IDOC**: **I**nstruct what you expect; **D**emonstrate what you expect; **O**bserve for changes; **C**ompliment success or provide **C**onstructive feedback. If a warden needs to address a problem, they should explain clearly to the person what the

A Lesson in Leadership

In 2018, Dawn Davison, who was then the warden at the California Institution for Women, was told by her Chief Deputy Warden that a group of women had kicked in the walls and windows in one of the dorms. A quick solution would have been to move the women to a new dorm with reinforced walls. But Warden Davison took a different approach. She visited the women and asked them why they were acting destructively.

What Warden Davison learned is that the women had been held in a high security wing for people with a history of disciplinary infractions — for weeks, or sometimes months, longer than they were supposed to have been. They had been promised counseling, education services, access to religious and other programs, but none were delivered.

Warden Davison immediately set out to get the women the programming that they were entitled to and arranged for a case manager to review their housing placements. For their part, the women agreed to stop damaging property. "Increased communication, patience, relationship-building, working with trauma — these are things that we know work," said Warden Davison, explaining her approach.

To be clear, Warden Davison knows that sanctions can be a useful tool, and she never would condone destructive behavior. But in this instance, Warden Davison recognized that adding yet another layer of punishment wouldn't help anyone — not her staff, and not the people in her custody. Her bold decision paid off. "Never had another broken window, never had another bashed in wall," Warden Davison explained. "There were about 40 in the unit at the time and over the course of a couple of months, we had it down to about six."

issue is and why it matters. After that initial conversation, the warden should monitor the person to see if they've changed how they handle similar situations — and then follow up regularly with appropriate feedback. The key is to ask questions and dig for more information. This can involve checking in with staff and incarcerated people who may know about an incident during rounds; it also can entail reviewing relevant past disciplinary records.

To be clear, the progressive discipline approach can be time-consuming — and not every leader has the luxury of examining the prior infractions of every person who breaks a rule. Sometimes swift measures are necessary. It's worth keeping in mind, however, that harsh punishments carry their own risks. For example, placing people in solitary can lead to a more chaotic environment.

Multiple studies have shown that people who spend time in isolation are far more prone to suffer severe mental health problems, which can lead to conflict with staff and incarcerated people alike.[22] In other words, making an effort on the front end yields better long-term results.

Accountability Goes Both Ways

Wardens are at the top of a rigid hierarchy, within the larger hierarchy of the overall agency. They, too, can and should be held accountable; they are managed by and answerable to people at the agency, even if it's at a distance. Accountability can also come from the bottom up. Officers can give feedback to leadership on policy and on the running of a facility, either through their union or through more informal staff committees. Wardens should invite staff to become involved in decision-making. When staff are given an opportunity to offer input in how their facility is run, they feel more invested in its culture. They are also less likely to experience burn out. Research on the mental health of corrections officials in the US and Canada has consistently shown that staff who are shut out of decision-making feel more stress.[23] A workplace is its own community, and everyone should have a voice.

It may seem counterintuitive, but incarcerated people can also hold staff — and even wardens — accountable. No one is in a better position to provide insight into the running of a facility than the people who live there. Incarcerated people can offer wisdom on every facet of facility life, from the food to the programming. One way to solicit feedback is by establishing incarcerated persons advisory councils. These councils offer opportunities for incarcerated people to discuss facility conditions and then draw up recommendations. At Joseph Harp Prison in Oklahoma, leadership worked with an Inmate Advisory Council to develop and analyze quality-of-life surveys sent to the entire population. "They have a voice to tell me why, and not just why, but to bring solutions to the table," said one staff person in an interview with The Oklahoman. "Then, I can take that information to the executive team and say, 'OK, here's where we're lacking at Joseph Harp.'"[24]

WHAT WARDENS ARE SAYING ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY

- **Be honest and consistent — make them aware of what is and is not acceptable**
- **Set clear expectations**
- **Address little things before they become big things**
- **Explain why and how we work together to improve**
- **Ensure your staff is receiving proper training**
- **Spend time building trust with staff — it will make it easier to hold them accountable**
- **Once disciplinary action is taken — let it go**

> When we show staff that we care and we want their input, it becomes infectious, and you get buy-in.

MICHAEL CAPRA, SUPERVISING SUPERINTENDENT OF THE NEW YORK CITY HUB (RET.)
New York Department of Corrections and Community Supervision,
and a member of the Great Wardens Task Force

5

STAFF RETENTION

The ongoing corrections staffing crisis is a top concern in the field. Conversations around staffing tend to focus on hiring practices and how to recruit the best people. While many corrections agencies have invested in recruitment strategies, staffing remains low and turnover remains high. Per the American Correctional Association, almost half of corrections agencies have officer turnover rates ranging from 20-30% annually. The turnover rate is even higher for newer officers, with 38% of staff leaving within one year, and 48% leaving within one to five years.[25] It is costly in both time and money for agencies to recruit, train, and onboard new staff. State corrections agencies lose between $20,000 and $31,000 for each officer who resigns within their first year.[26]

Corrections leaders have a crucial role to play in ensuring that their staff are skilled, have been trained, and feel good about their work. But recruitment is usually handled at the agency level; while wardens have a voice in the process, they are not the final decision-makers. On the other hand, wardens have direct influence over staff *retention*. A leader who is strategic and committed to retention can address the staffing crisis, while improving morale and the workplace culture overall.

Stay Interviews

Many workplaces use exit interviews as a tool to understand why staff leave. Armed with this information, leaders can make improvements. But the exit interview gives an incomplete picture. It's not only important to understand why people leave, but also why they *stay*. This is the principle behind the *stay interview*.

A stay interview consists of a formal — or informal — conversation with current staff about how they feel about their job. It covers their overall

satisfaction with the job and with the agency, their level of engagement with the agency and facility mission, and what changes they would like to see. Interviews can be conducted via anonymous survey or in person, or both. Wardens can include questions that are specific to their facilities or address concerns that have been discussed among staff. Stay interviews can also highlight the positives, encouraging staff to reflect on what aspects of their job provide the most meaning.

Oriana House, Inc., a community corrections facility in Ohio, implemented stay interviews to better understand the needs of their staff. Jacob Sadon, the facility's Organizational Development Manager, says that in the years since conducting these interviews, they have made a range of changes that have helped address staff needs. For example, the interviews showed that supervisors may have a lot of technical knowledge but sometimes lacked an understanding of their role as leaders. "People who get promoted are usually people who have mastered the job, but that doesn't mean they have the skills to lead a team," Sadon shared. Supervisor training was then reworked to include more on leadership, teamwork, and a strengths-based approach to supervision. Oriana House also added a standing agenda item for monthly supervisor meetings that includes a testimonial from a formerly incarcerated person or a staff person on how the facility has positively impacted their lives. "People have really responded to these stories," Sadon said. "They help remind us of our mission."

Supporting Staff to Increase Retention

Information from stay interviews can help corrections leaders shift communication strategies and refocus resources to address staff needs. The Vermont Department of Corrections has used stay interviews to focus on new staff, starting from the moment they walk in the door for training. They created a new position at each facility — Facility Staff Experience Supervisors (FSES) — who meet with new staff beginning at the training academy and follow them to their facilities, continuing to meet weekly to provide support.

Stay Interviews — In Practice

There are several ways to conduct stay interviews depending on the needs, goals, and facility size. For larger-scale, all-staff feedback, it may be more efficient to use a survey and ask staff to rank their agreement with certain statements, or to describe their experience in as few words as possible. Below are examples of some of the questions Oriana House included in anonymous surveys sent agency-wide:

- Rate your agreement with the following statements (agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, disagree):
  A. I feel committed to the Agency's mission statement
  B. I am recognized by my supervisor when I do great work
  C. I see myself working for [Agency Name] in two years
  D. I trust senior leaders at [Agency Name] to make the best decisions for employees
  E. I feel like I have opportunity to advance in [Agency Name]
- Describe your work environment with three words

The Vermont Department of Corrections (VDOC) has also been conducting stay interviews in the form of individual discussions with newer staff. By opting for in-person conversations, the department has been able to ask open-ended questions that encourage staff to share more about their experience, and then follow up with more specific questions for interviewers to gather more detailed information. For example, some of VDOC's questions include:

- When you travel to work each day, what things do you look forward to? What parts are the most challenging?
- What are you learning here? Is there anything you'd like to be learning but are not? Do you feel like you can advance your career here if you want to?
- Why do you stay here? How much does the type of work you do impact your decision to stay?
- When was the last time you thought about leaving our team, and what prompted it? What meaningful action can be taken to address the issue?
- What can I do to make your experience at work better for you?

Recruitment Considerations

While recruitment is not one of their core duties, wardens and superintendents can help shape how agencies bring people on board. For example, facility leaders often have a say in how job openings are posted, and whom they target. An ad that emphasizes officers' roles in rehabilitation — as opposed to ads that are more law-and-order focused — may do a better job attracting the kind of people you are looking for.

Consider what other career options recruits may have, and be prepared to positively distinguish what you have to offer as candidates weigh employment choices. Also consider community perceptions of your facility. Publicize your successes in the press, if possible, and on your website. Build connections with community groups to encourage bringing new resources into the facility.

Where you recruit can also dictate the types of candidates you attract. Consider your recruitment options, including whether to rely on traditional online law enforcement recruitment platforms, in-person community job fairs, and online or in-person job fairs at community or local colleges/universities. Some corrections agencies are employing unique approaches to recruitment, focusing on storytelling and engaging with technology. For example, the King County Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention (DAJD) in Washington State used a comic-book style approach to telling stories of corrections officers in their "On the Job" recruitment campaign. "By speaking to candidates through a graphic comic medium and by using the format to showcase our work, we can make the job more relevant and earn consideration from a wider pool of applicants," said DAJD Deputy Director Steve Larsen.

Hawaii's Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) launched a recruitment campaign in 2024 titled "Unlocking Potential." This campaign highlights the mentoring relationship between a corrections officer and an incarcerated person, and how that connection supported the incarcerated person's rehabilitation. "We're looking for employees with a genuine desire to help others succeed in life," said DCR Director Tommy Johnson. "We want adult corrections officers who see the potential in [the people in their custody] and are willing to serve as mentors." Similar to the "On the Job" campaign, "Unlocking Potential" focuses on telling the stories of how corrections staff make a difference.

James Rice, the Executive Director of the Office of Professional Standards for the VDOC, shared that the original intent of the stay interviews was to encourage new staff to view corrections as a career. In practice, however, they learned that newer staff were not focused on long-term goals, but rather more concerned with immediate needs. The Department adjusted their stay interview questions used by the FSES to include, "What is happening today that is making you think about leaving tomorrow?" Because each staff person is paired with the same Facility Staff Experience Supervisor over the course of their first year, trust can be built, encouraging staff to be more open and upfront with their concerns. The information learned from stay interviews provides invaluable insight into why retention in the first year can be such a challenge. "If not for the weekly stay interviews, we'd still be talking anecdotally," Rice shared. "Now, we have data to refer to. The conversation has changed from 'stick it out longer and have a 30-year career' to focusing on the immediate."

WHAT WARDENS ARE SAYING ABOUT STAFF RETENTION

- **Get involved with new staff early, checking in and getting feedback**
- **Make staff feel a part of the facility's success and progress**
- **Highlight the achievements and accomplishments of staff members**
- **Provide opportunities for growth and professional development**
- **Say thank you**
- **Give grace for small mistakes**

> When it comes to culture change at a facility, I think it means respecting history but having the integrity to do what is right, even if it goes beyond the scope of how you've been trained.

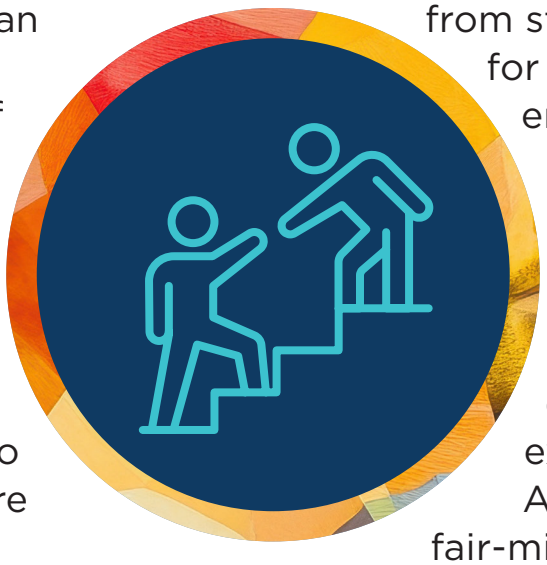
ERIC ALDRIDGE, WARDEN
Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women, Virginia Department of Corrections, and a member of the Great Wardens Task Force

6

CONCLUSION

Culture change is a steady, deliberate process — a marathon, not a sprint. A culture that has developed over decades takes time to change and sustain. With deliberate attention to the process and modifications as necessary, change can move consistently in the right direction, if not always at high speed.

How you treat your staff — and how your staff treat incarcerated people — is crucial to the process of culture change. Leadership should model the behavior they expect by regularly being present in the facility; understanding the daily demands on staff; engaging in meaningful, respectful communications with staff regarding both their duties and their well-being; really listening to staff; and providing supportive feedback and coaching. Although leadership must ensure fair and consistent application of facility rules and procedures, while the facility norms are changing, staff will benefit more from coaching, guidance, and training for minor missteps than from strict discipline for unintentional errors. Above all, predictability is key to achieving a desired culture: staff should know both what to expect and what is expected of them. A thoughtful, fair-minded approach to managing staff will help combat the very real — and increasingly common — problem of corrections fatigue. Wardens and superintendents who support an infrastructure of wellness programming will see improvements in staff morale, performance, and mental health.



These changes, in turn, will lead to positive changes in the treatment of incarcerated people. When staff have experienced traumatic stressors and do not receive needed support, they lash out at incarcerated people and sometimes each other and even their loved ones. When they have a healthy outlet for their feelings, a facility culture that values safety and dignity for staff and incarcerated people alike is more likely to take hold.

The aim of this guide is to help wardens and superintendents along the pathway to building a safe and healthy facility culture. Reading this guide is an important step on the journey, but it is not the end point. As leaders assess their facility culture, new challenges will emerge. But it is vital to remember that no corrections leader needs to do the work alone.

WHAT GIVES WARDENS HOPE FOR THE FUTURE OF CORRECTIONS

- **Watching new corrections leaders who believe in treating people with dignity and respect**
- **Successful re-entry stories and formerly incarcerated people sharing how staff made a difference in their lives**
- **The increased focus on more restorative programs**
- **Agencies prioritizing safe communities and reducing recidivism**

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Great Wardens Project

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