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Correctional Worker Wellness: Moving from Corrections Fatigue to Fulfillment – Text Alternative

Presenters

- Catherina Spinaris, Ph.D., LPC | Founder, Desert Waters Correctional Outreach
- Michelle Staley, B.S., CAC III | Correctional Treatment Board Coordinator, Colorado State Court Administrator's Office
- Brent Parker, B.A. | Training Manager, Desert Waters Correctional Outreach
- Tony Gonzales III | Captain, California Department of Corrections
- Lisa Williams | Major, Illinois Department of Corrections, Hill Correctional Center

Session Notes

- Why focus on wellness for corrections workers?
 - There is a mental health pandemic
 - Mandatory overtime is beyond brutal
 - Many states have cut pay, benefits, and time off
- These feelings build up over their careers
 - "What I come across at work wounds my soul"
 - "Nobody cares"
 - "I can't be in places with crowds"
 - "I'm afraid to ask for help"
 - "I don't trust anybody"
 - "My reaction to everything is anger"
 - "It's us against them"
- Workforce culture change
 - How do you build trust and promote participation?
- Bottom-up, top-down approach
 - You need champion buy-in and leadership support
 - Leadership bridges the gap
 - Bottom-up creates an empowering sphere of influence
 - "I didn't feel alone anymore"
 - "This terminology and language was validating and provided comfort"
- Staff Wellness Response Teams
- Correctional outreach
 - Teach coping skills
 - Ex: meditation, breathing exercises
 - Build relationships and shared understanding of different stressors
 - Have compassion
 - Not a one-size-fits-all solution

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- Address racial and ethnic disparities
- Mental health resistance
- Understand cultural stigmas
 - Ex: “I was raised not to cry,” “I was raised not to get help”
- Situational Disparities
 - Rural officers in a majority minority facility