Chapter 11

Corrections Personnel
Roles and Functions
Key Terms and Concepts

Correctional officer (CO) typology
Death penalty
Detention as a career path
Inappropriate staff–inmate relationships
Jail personnel
Middle managers
New old penology
NIC Executive Training Program for New Wardens
Probation management styles
Stress and burnout
Supervisors
Warden

Learning Objectives

As a result of reading this chapter, the student will:

• know the general duties of prison wardens, prison corrections officers, jail employees, and probation and parole officers
• be familiar with the principles of good prison leadership and the training needs of new wardens for them to be successful
• know the basic responsibilities of prison wardens in carrying out executions
• have an understanding of the responsibilities of middle managers and supervisors
• know the duties and eight types of correctional officers
• understand how jails are different from prisons
• be familiar with the causes and effects of job stress and burnout in correctional facilities
• be familiar with probation administrators' management styles

The mood and temper of the public in regard to the treatment of crime and criminals is one of the most unfailing tests of the civilization of any country.

—Winston Churchill

Introduction

This chapter focuses on personnel within correctional institutions and probation and parole agencies. Presented first is a profile of prison wardens (the role of the director of a state prison system was discussed in Chapter 10), needs of and methods for preparing new wardens for the position, and recommendations for administering prisons. I then discuss the death penalty and correctional middle managers and supervisors; next I examine in greater detail the front-line personnel
in prisons: correctional officers (COs). This section includes a typology of the eight types of COs in terms of their overall orientation toward, and how they select and view, their occupation. Then, I consider the “cousins” of prisons, the local jails: their purpose and environment, how jail personnel select their type of work and facility, female detention personnel, and problems in selecting people who want detention as a career path. Next I give a brief discussion of stress and burnout in corrections, and then shift to the functions of probation and parole functions (as well as a controversy over the arming of these officers); also included in this section is an overview of probation administrators’ management styles. The chapter concludes with three case studies.

Two basic principles constitute the philosophy of corrections administrators: First, whatever the reasons a person is incarcerated, he or she is not to suffer pains beyond the deprivation of liberty—confinement itself is the punishment. Second, regardless of the crime, the prisoner must be treated humanely and in accordance with his or her behavior; even the most heinous offender is to be treated with respect and dignity and given privileges if institutional behavior warrants it. My analysis of institutional management is predicated on these two principles.

Prisons

The Warden: A Profile

A state director of prisons once stated in the author’s justice administration class that the job of prison warden is the most difficult in all of corrections; this assessment is probably true because the warden must take the director’s general policies and put them into effect throughout the prison while being responsible for the smooth day-to-day operation of the institution. These correctional executives also oversee the fastest-growing agencies in state government; administer increasingly visible operations; and are held accountable by politicians, auditors, the press, organized labor, and numerous other stakeholders. Wardens work within a field that has become more demanding, consumes an increasing share of public funds, and involves responsibility for the lives and safety of others.

Of course, both staff and inmates are sensitive to the warden’s granting of what each side perceives to be a strengthened position for the other side. For example, if a policy is enacted that gives the staff more power over inmates, the inmates will be unhappy, perhaps even rebellious; conversely, if a policy is put into practice that the staff thinks affords too much additional freedom to inmates, the staff will feel sold out. Furthermore, the prison director, typically appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the state’s governor, can exert on the warden all manner of political influences at any point in time.

A national survey by Kim et al. of 641 male and female prison wardens at adult state prisons provided the following demographic and ideological information: Regional differences account for a great degree of gender difference; in
fact, the South employs 21,862 female corrections officers, fully half of the female correctional population in the United States. Of the prison wardens, 85.9 percent were men, and 14.1 percent were women. The mean age of all wardens was 47 years, with that for men being about 47.6 years and that for women, 44.9 years. The majority (81.3 percent) were white, with 70.8 percent being white men; African American men made up 11.8 percent. White women made up 10.4 percent, and 3.0 percent were African American women. A large proportion of the respondents had experience working as correctional officers (57.6 percent) or treatment officers (62.6 percent). Almost half of the male wardens (49.1 percent) had some military experience, whereas only 7.5 percent of the women had military backgrounds. Almost half of the wardens had a graduate degree, a law degree, or some graduate work; female wardens were more likely to have done such postbaccalaureate work (61.1 percent, compared with 47.8 percent of the men).

Regarding the goals of imprisonment, male wardens ranked their four preferred goals as follows: incapacitation, deterrence, rehabilitation, and retribution. Female wardens, however, ranked them thus: incapacitation, rehabilitation, deterrence, and retribution. A greater proportion of female wardens (89.9 percent) than male wardens (83.3 percent) strongly or very strongly agreed that rehabilitation programs had an important place in their institutions. A majority of the wardens thought that the following prison amenities should be reduced or eliminated in prisons: martial arts instruction, conjugal visitation, cosmetic surgery and dentistry, condom distribution, disability benefits, sexually oriented reading material, and nonregulation clothing. Male wardens were more likely than female wardens to support the reduction of college education, copy privileges, condom distribution, full-time recreation director, musical instruments, and special diets. In contrast, female wardens were more likely to support reduction of organ transplants, weight lifting, boxing, and tobacco smoking. Generally, data support the findings that females wardens seem more likely to reduce amenities that can potentially promote violence in prison and more interested than male wardens in health conditions of inmates.

Overall, Kim et al. concluded that although the differences between male and female wardens are somewhat noticeable, the roles of corrections administrators are becoming more gender neutral.

Preparing New Wardens for Success

The explosive growth of the nation’s incarcerated population, discussed in Chapter 10, has increased the need for competent correctional administrators to ensure public safety, see that staff and inmates are safe, and spend tax dollars effectively. They must also understand and appreciate the importance of culture (the sum total of the organization’s history, staff, inmates, community, and past leadership) as they begin their tenure at an institution. Today’s correctional administrator must excel in more than just correctional operations and not rely on the all-powerful, autocratic working style and a strong paramilitary organization of decades past.
New wardens who were surveyed by McCampbell indicated they would have been better prepared for these challenges had they had job experience or skills in business administration/fiscal management; personnel and labor relations; legislative issues; and media and public relations. Unfortunately, however, a large majority (90 percent) of new wardens also reported in this survey that they did not receive any special training or orientation for their new responsibilities prior to, or just after, they received their assignment. Since 1994 there has been a training program for new wardens, as well as related publications and other resources, available from the National Institute of Corrections (NIC). Participants in this NIC Executive Training Program for New Wardens stated that the best advice they received on assuming the role included the following:

- Do not let it go to your head; keep the job in perspective.
- Have faith in yourself.
- Do not shut out your family; maintain balance in your life.
- Be fair and consistent with inmates and staff.
- Remember that your every statement is subject to scrutiny.
- Do not beat yourself up over small things; you will have enough big stuff to worry about.

**Principles of Good Prison Leadership**

Throughout the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, studies of prisons generally focused on the administrators rather than on the inmates. Beginning in the 1940s, however, an ideological shift from studying prison administration to studying inmates occurred. The central reason for the shift seems to have been that these institutions were poorly managed or were what prison researcher John J. Dilulio Jr. referred to as “ineffective prisons.” Many writers expressed grave doubts about the efficacy of correctional administrators and expressed the idea that prison managers could do nothing to improve conditions behind bars.

It is not surprising that when contemporary researchers attempt to relate prison management practices to the quality of life behind bars, the results are normally quite negative: Prisons that are managed in a tight, authoritarian fashion are plagued with disorder and inadequate programs; those that are managed in a loose, participative fashion are equally troubled; and those with a mixture of these two styles are not any better.

In a 3-year study of prison management in Texas, Michigan, and California, however, Dilulio found that levels of disorder (rates of individual and collective violence and other forms of misconduct), amenities (availability of clean cells, decent food, etc.), and service (availability of work opportunities and educational programs) did not vary with any of the following factors: a higher socioeconomic class of inmates, higher per capita spending, lower levels of crowding, lower inmate-to-staff ratios, greater officer training, more modern plant and equipment,
and more routine use of repressive measures. Dilulio concluded that “all roads, it seemed, led to the conclusion that the quality of prison life depended mainly on the quality of prison management.”¹¹

Dilulio also found that prisons managed by a stable team of like-minded executives, structured in a paramilitary, security-driven, bureaucratic fashion had better order, amenities, and service than those managed in other ways, even when the former institutions were more crowded, spent less per capita, and had higher inmate/staff ratios: “The only findings of this study that, to me at least, seem indispensable, is that … prison management matters” (emphasis in original).¹²

Studies analyzing the causes of major prison riots found that they were the result of a breakdown in security procedures—the daily routine of numbering, counting, frisking, locking, contraband control, and cell searches—that are the heart of administration in most prisons.¹³ Problems in areas such as crowding, underfunding, festering inmate–staff relations, and racial animosities may make a riot more likely, but poor security management will make riots inevitable.¹⁴

Dilulio offered six general principles of good prison leadership¹⁵:

1. Successful leaders focus, and inspire their subordinates to focus, on results rather than process, on performance rather than procedures, on ends rather than means. In short, managers are judged on results, not on excuses.
2. Professional staff members—doctors, psychiatrists, accountants, nurses, and other nonuniformed staff—receive some basic prison training and come to think of themselves as correctional officers first.
3. Leaders of successful institutions follow the “management by walking around” (MBWA) principle. These managers are not strangers to the cellblocks and are always on the scene when trouble erupts.
4. Successful leaders make close alliances with key politicians, judges, journalists, reformers, and other outsiders.
5. Successful leaders rarely innovate, but the innovations they implement are far-reaching and the reasons for them are explained to staff and inmates well in advance. Line staff are notoriously sensitive to what administrators do “for inmates” versus “what they do for us.” Thus, leaders must be careful not to upset the balance and erode staff loyalty.
6. Successful leaders are in office long enough to understand and, as necessary, modify the organization’s internal operations and external relations. Dilulio used the terms flies, fatalists, foot soldiers, and founders. The flies come and go unnoticed and are inconsequential. Fatalists also serve brief terms, always complaining about the futility of incarceration and the hopelessness of correctional reform. The foot soldiers serve long terms, often inheriting their job from a fly or fatalist and make consequential improvements whenever they can. Founders either create an agency or reorganize it in a major and positive way.

To summarize, to “old” penologists, prison administrators were admirable public servants, inmates were to be restricted, and any form of self-government
was eschewed. To “new” penologists, prison administrators are loathsome and evil, inmates are responsible victims, and complete self-government is the ideal. DiIulio called for a new old penology, or a shift of attention from the society of captives to the government of keepers. He asserted that tight administrative control is more conducive than loose administrative control to decent prison conditions. This approach, he added, will “push administrators back to the bar of attention,” treating them at least as well as their charges.\(^{16}\)

**Administering the Death Penalty**

One of the major responsibilities of prison administrators, in 37 states and in federal prisons, is to carry out the death penalty. By law, the warden or a representative presides over the execution.

To minimize the possibility of error, executions are carried out by highly trained teams. The mechanics of the process have been broken down into several discrete tasks and are practiced repeatedly. During the actual death watch—the 24-hour period that ends with the prisoner’s execution—a member of the execution team is with the prisoner at all times. During the last 5 or 6 hours, two officers are assigned to guard the prisoner. The prisoner then showers, dons a fresh set of clothes, and is placed in an empty, tomb-like death cell. The warden reads the court order, or death warrant. Meanwhile, official witnesses—normally 6 to 12 citizens—are prepared for their role. The steps that are taken from this point to perform the execution depend on the method of execution that is used.\(^{17}\)

Lethal injection is the predominant method of execution and is employed in 36 states and in federal prisons; 9 states authorize electrocution; 4 states, lethal gas; 3 states, hanging; and 3 states, firing squad (17 states authorize more than one method).\(^{18}\)

Approximately 3,400 prisoners are now under sentence of death in the United States; 56 percent are white, 42 percent are black, and 2 percent are of other races; 47 (about 1.4 percent) are women.\(^{19}\)

Recently the U.S. Supreme Court rendered two significant decisions concerning the death penalty: In *Roper v. Simmons* (March 2005), the Supreme Court abolished the death penalty for convicted murderers who were less than 18 years of age when they committed their crimes; this decision ended a practice used in 19 states and affected about 70 death-row inmates who were juveniles when they committed murder. In *Atkins v. Virginia* (June 2002), the Court held that the execution of mentally retarded persons—which was permissible in 20 states—constituted cruel and unusual punishment.\(^{20}\)

**Achieving Racial Balance**

The rapid growth of the inmate population, an increased level of oversight by the federal courts, increased demands from the public, and a change in the demographic composition of the inmate population (more African American and Hispanic prisoners) all have presented wardens with a new set of challenges.
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As a result, half of all maximum-security wardens now have a policy on racially integrating male inmates within prison cells to try to achieve racial balance. Similarly, about 40 percent of these wardens do not allow their inmates to object to their cell assignments.\(^{21}\)

**Middle Managers and Supervisors**

Chapter 4 examined in detail the roles of police supervisors and managers. It would be repetitious to dwell at length here on those roles and functions because most of them apply to corrections supervisors and managers as well. The reader is encouraged to review those roles and functions in Chapter 4.

Clearly, supervisors have one of the most demanding positions in correctional institutions. They must direct work activities, assign tasks, provide employee feedback, and serve as technical experts for the staff reporting to them. They serve as boss, adviser, counselor, mentor, coach, trainer, and motivator.

Middle managers, although not on the front lines, are also in challenging and important positions. They are responsible for organizing their departments, planning and developing goals and objectives, overseeing the efficient use of resources, and developing effective communication networks throughout the organization.

**“Thy Brother’s Keeper”: Correctional Officers**

Subordinate to the institutional administrator, middle managers, and supervisors is the correctional staff itself—those who, in the words of Gordon Hawkins, are “the other prisoners.”\(^{22}\) Their role is particularly important, given that they provide the front-line supervision and control of inmates and constitute the level from which correctional administrators may be chosen.

Most applicants for positions as correctional officers may have had little knowledge of the job when they applied. A job description for the position might read something like this:

> [They] must prevent rape among two hundred convicts enraged by their powerlessness and sexual deprivation . . . prevent violence among the convicts . . . shake down all cells for contraband . . . know what is going on in the convicts’ heads and report it to their supervisors . . . account for all material entering or leaving each cellblock . . . maintain sanitation in each cell . . . give individual attention to all . . . convicts . . . [and] prevent the suicide or running amok of the raped, the depressed, and the terrified . . . and look out for their own physical and psychological survival.\(^{23}\)

In most assignments, correctional officers experience stimulus overload, are assailed with the sounds of “doors clanging, inmates talking or shouting, radios and televisions playing, and food trays banging . . . [and odors] representing an institutional blend of food, urine, paint, disinfectant, and sweat.”\(^{24}\) Correctional officers are not allowed to provide informal counseling or to aid in the rehabilitative effort. Due process rights for prisoners have made corrections jobs even more difficult.\(^{25}\) Therein lies what Hawkins and Alpert referred to as
A Typology: Eight Types of Correctional Officers

Correctional officers play an influential role in the lives of many inmates because of their direct and prolonged interaction. They are also responsible for creating and maintaining a humane environment in prisons and jails.

Mary Ann Farkas categorized correctional officers (COs) into five types—rule enforcer, hard liner, people worker, synthetic officer, and loner—based on their orientation toward rule enforcement, extent of mutual obligations with colleagues, orientation toward negotiation or exchange with inmates, and their desire to incorporate human service activities into their approach. Farkas added three residual types that were identified by respondents in her study: officer friendly, lax officer, and wishy-washy. These eight types in this correctional officer typology are discussed next.

Rule enforcers, about 43 percent of correctional officers, are the most common type in Farkas’s sample. Rule enforcers are characterized as rule bound and inflexible in discipline and have an esprit de corps with others sharing their enforcement philosophy. They are more likely than other correctional officers to be younger than 25 years old and to have a baccalaureate degree; they tend to have less work experience and to work the evening or night shifts. They typically work on posts involving direct inmate contact, such as the regular housing units and in maximum-security or segregation units. They are more likely to have entered corrections for extrinsic reasons, including job security, benefits, and job availability. They possess a militaristic approach toward inmates, expecting deference to their authority and obedience to their orders. Rule enforcers are not willing to negotiate or use exchange as a strategy to gain inmate compliance.

The hard liners are actually a subtype and an extreme version of the rule enforcers. They are hard, aggressive, power hungry, and inflexible with rules and possess little interpersonal skill. These officers are also more likely to be men, with a high school education or GED, and between the ages of 26 to 36 years. They also tend to work later shifts and in maximum-security or segregation units, and they endorse militaristic values and distinction and deference to rank and chain of command. At times, they may become abusive and aggressive toward inmates and perceive acting tough as the way a CO is supposed to act to maintain control and order.

People workers (22 percent of COs) are characterized as “professionals trying to be social, responsible, and trying their very best.” They have a more comfortable style with inmates, are more flexible in rule enforcement and disciplinary measures, use their own informal reward and punishment system, and believe that the way to gain inmate compliance is through interpersonal communication and
personalized relations. They regard an overreliance on conduct reports as an indication of one’s inability to resolve difficult situations. They often discuss issues privately with inmates instead of embarrassing them in front of peers. They are concerned with conflict resolution, relying on verbal skills in defusing situations, enjoy the challenge of working with inmates, and actually prefer the posts with more inmate contact.31

The synthetic officers (14 percent) are essentially a synthesis of the rule enforcer and the people worker types. They are typically older (57 years and older), more experienced officers who work in regular inmate housing units on the day shift. Synthetic officers try to modify the formalized policies and procedures to emphasize organizational directives and interpersonal skills. They follow rules and regulations closely, yet they try to consider the circumstances. They are careful not to deviate too far from procedure, however, which might cause sanctions for themselves. Strict enforcement of rules and flexibility in enforcement are juggled in their interactions with inmates.32

Loners (8 percent) are also similar to rule enforcers but differ in the motivation behind their policy of strict enforcement. Loners closely follow rules and regulations because they fear criticism of their performance. Female and black officers are more likely to be represented in this type. Loners are likely to be between the ages of 26 and 36 years and less experienced COs and to work on solitary posts. Loners believe their job performance is more closely watched because of their female and/or minority status, as well as the need to constantly prove themselves. They do not feel accepted by other officers, nor do they identify with them. They are wary of inmates. There is a basic mistrust, even fear of working with inmates.33

The three residual types—the lax officer, officer friendly, and wishy-washy—are officers who reject the official values and goals of the formal organization. Their rule enforcement is erratic, inconsistent, or nonexistent.

The lax officers are described as passive, apathetic, or timid. They are generally veteran male COs who are weary of arguments with inmates and writing conduct reports. They are just “doing their time,” wanting to get through the day with a minimum of effort. Officer-friendly types are subtypes of people workers, wanting to be liked by all inmates and easily manipulated by inmates to give lots of “second chances.” They negotiate with inmates to maintain order and gain compliance by overlooking minor violations or doing favors. They typically have little loyalty or affinity to other officers. Wishy-washy types are unpredictable, moody, and inconsistent. They communicate and help inmates at one time, then are distant and rule oriented at another. They are likely to be accused of favoritism and mistrusted by inmates because they do not follow through on promises.

To summarize, age and seniority are associated with officer types. Rule enforcers and hard liners tend to be younger, less experienced COs, whereas older, more experienced officers belong to the people worker or synthetic officer categories. Generally, as officers mature, they become more interested in service delivery.
Although one might assume that more educated officers are inclined toward rehabilitation and are less punitive or aggressive toward inmates, Farkas found that rule enforcers were more likely to hold baccalaureate or master's degrees; she suggested that education may not be a strong indicator of human service attitudes. Considerable evidence suggests that higher education may lead to lower job satisfaction. One observer noted that “except for the somewhat disappointing finding that [correctional officers] with more education are less satisfied with their jobs, the overall picture shows that education is not related to any attitudinal variable examined thus far.” Other studies have determined that as officers’ educational levels increased, so did their desire to become administrators, the less likely they were to feel a sense of accomplishment working as correctional officers or to want to make a career of corrections, the more likely they were to express dissatisfaction with the pace of career advancement, the more interest they had in counseling, but the less willing they were to engage in rehabilitation activities.

Shift and work assignment also affect one’s orientation—the more custodial types of officers work later shifts because they are newer officers and are more likely to work on units with more difficult inmates (such as maximum-security, segregation, or units for inmates with behavioral problems). Finally, the reason for becoming a CO is related to officer type: People workers are attracted to intrinsic factors of correctional work because of its interesting and challenging aspects. Rule enforcers and hard liners become officers for extrinsic reasons: job security and benefits of state employment and job availability.

These CO typologies are actually modes of accommodation or adaptation to the organizational factors of the correctional institutions, including overcrowded conditions, more troublesome inmates, and a more litigious environment.

Inappropriate Relationships with Inmates

Despite formal policing prohibiting familiarity between offenders and prison staff employees, infractions occur that range from “serious” (e.g., love affairs) to “unserious” (e.g., giving or receiving candy or soft drinks to/from an inmate). Contemporary prisons are no longer sex segregated, and female security officers work in male institutions. This situation allows for different types of inappropriate staff–inmate relationships to occur. Worley et al. found three types of “turners”—offenders identified as developing inappropriate relationships with staff members:

1. **Heart breakers.** They seek to form an emotional bond with the staff members, which can even lead to marriage; they generally act alone, and may spend several months courting a staff member.

2. **Exploiters.** They use an employee as a means for obtaining contraband or fun and excitement; they usually act with the help of other inmates, are very manipulative, and likely to use a “lever” (intimidation) on prison employees.
3. Hell-raisers. These inmates engage in a unique kind of psychological warfare, and simply want to cause trouble and create hell for the prison system. They often have long histories of personal involvement, and form relationships as a way to create problems or disruptions. They thrive on putting staff members into situations where their jobs are compromised, and enjoy the notoriety that follows their relationship being exposed. They focus on staff members (e.g., secretaries; trustees have even become involved with staff members’ spouses), and not security officers.

Worley et al. point out that such behaviors are not the norm in penal environments; nevertheless, prison administrators must understand that offenders are very persistent in initiating interactions with employees for a variety of reasons.  

Jail Personnel

Jail Purpose and Environment

As noted in Chapter 10, about 713,000 persons are incarcerated in 3,316 local jails in the United States, either awaiting trial or serving a sentence. Furthermore, about 229,000 people are employed in local jails. The jail is the point of entry into the criminal justice system. Whereas prisons hold persons who have committed felonies and have been sentenced to at least 1 year in prison, jails hold persons who are arrested and booked for criminal activity or are waiting for a court appearance if they cannot arrange bail, as well as those who are serving sentences of up to 1 year for misdemeanors. Jails also temporarily hold felons whose convictions are on appeal or who are awaiting transfer to a state prison.

Perhaps one of the most neglected areas in criminal justice research concerns individuals who are employed in local jails; what limited studies have been performed generally focus on the conditions of confinement. Jail personnel, however, often must work in an environment that is unstable, uncertain, and unsafe. Therefore, it would be beneficial for jail administrators to become knowledgeable about why people choose to work in local jails, as well as jail employee job satisfaction and turnover.

Choosing Jail Work and Type of Facility

Studies have fairly consistently shown that both male and female workers utilize a standard set of priorities in choosing the work they prefer: salary, autonomy, prestige, and location. Although individual motivation will vary, certainly these factors, along with job security, will come into play when someone considers a jail career. Furthermore, research indicates that, given a choice, men and women apparently prefer predominantly male occupations, as they are generally better paying, more prestigious, carry more authority, and offer more opportunities for advancement than their female-dominated counterparts.
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One study of correctional officers in a southwestern state found that 83 percent of the COs expressed a preference for working in men’s prisons because men are perceived as being easier to manage and more respectful (particularly of female officers). Officers’ overall view was that women are more prone than men to irrational outbursts.

Correctional officers also see the women’s facility as something less than a “real prison.” Women’s prisons typically have a much smaller inmate population than men’s, with only one officer assigned to a dormitory, so officers are isolated from one another for the majority of their shifts. This situation differs markedly from men’s prisons, where officers are almost never assigned alone; the strong team structure and the sense of being a member of a team that are thus present in men’s prisons are primary reasons for both male and female correctional officers preferring to work with male inmates.

Female Jail Employees

The primary stimulus for the employment of female officers in local jails has been the need to comply with federal guidelines on hiring, various court orders to implement hiring quotas to increase female representation, or to rewrite entrance exams and requirements to encourage the employment of women.

Several administrative factors have also driven the need for more female employees. First, jails must house both male and female inmates, and women are needed to supervise the female residents. Second, female officers are needed to conduct searches of female visitors. Third, a rapid expansion of the jail workforce has increased demand and opened job opportunities for qualified female applicants.

Despite this increased female presence in jail work, the role of a female jail employee or deputy is different from that in other workplaces, in that violence is prevalent in the work environment and it is perceived to be a highly sex-typed male job requiring dominance, authoritativeness, and aggressiveness. Studies have shown that, quite often, female deputies believe that they are judged as members of a gender class rather than as individuals—that male workers don’t see them as equals.

One of the most pervasive themes expressed by nearly every female officer in each of the jails studied was the perception that female staff members possess more effective communication skills than do male staff and that female officers rely more on their verbal skills. Male officers are more confrontational than female officers. Men working in jails are more willing than female officers to employ threats, intimidation, and physical coercion in order-maintenance tasks. It has also been determined that female jail deputies are more likely than male deputies to develop friendly relationships with inmates to get inmates to follow the rules—often through the strategic use of humor.

According to Nancy Jurik, perhaps the most demoralizing realization for women employed in jails is that their opportunities for advancement are limited.
Women in corrections routinely experience exclusion, discrimination, and hostility from male supervisors and co-workers. Supervisors who are biased against women working as corrections officers use performance evaluations to discourage them and keep them in subordinate positions.

**Detention as a Career Path**

Because no single jail administrator is responsible for statewide jail management, detention officers may manage their jails according to vastly different perceptions and philosophies concerning their staffing and operation. Most jails are supervised by a sheriff’s office, where career advancement may be quite limited. When jails are separate units of local government with their own director, they tend to attract more qualified administrators with greater career commitments. A separate, jail-related career path for correctional workers in jail administration is currently needed.

As mentioned earlier, many local jail facilities hire people first as detention officers, who, after attending their basic academy training, may work for 3 to 5 years in detention; eventually, wanting to do “real police work,” they transfer to the patrol division as soon as a vacancy becomes available and after attaining a sufficient amount of seniority within their law enforcement agency. This situation often results in tremendously high turnover rates in the jail, as well as large numbers of less experienced detention personnel and low job satisfaction on the part of jail employees. In addition, many good officers resign, being unwilling to serve a period of several years working in detention.

Jail administrators finding themselves in this situation—having difficulty in recruiting people into detention, and then experiencing high employee attrition and low job satisfaction in detention—would do well to take one of two approaches: (1) attempt to create two separate career paths—one in patrol and one in detention. Those who begin on one path can choose to remain in it, be promoted within it, and, it is hoped, even retire from it. Of course, the detention program of the agency must be made attractive enough for one to pursue detention as a career path. (2) The administrative, middle management, and supervisory personnel can attempt to convince newly hired personnel to look at the “big picture”: that only about 20 percent of their 20-year career will be spent working in detention, with the remaining 80 percent spent as a road deputy.

**Employee Training**

Jail administrators and employees need to be thoroughly trained in all aspects of their job. Jail workers have been criticized for being untrained and apathetic, although most are highly effective and dedicated. One observer wrote that personnel is still the number one problem of jails. Start paying decent salaries and developing decent training and you can start to attract bright young people to jobs in jails. If you don’t do this, you’ll continue to see the issue of personnel as the number one problem for the next 100 years.
Training should be provided on the booking process, inmate management and security, general liability issues, policies related to AIDS, problems of inmates addicted to alcohol and other drugs, communication and security technology, and issues concerning suicide, mental health problems, and medication.

**Correctional Officer Stress and Burnout**

As the prison population continues to blossom, the conditions within correctional facilities will remain stressful for staff members. A listing of potential stressors for officers, which can lead to stress and burnout (i.e., the depletion of an individual’s physical and mental resources), includes role ambiguity and conflict, workload, understaffing, overcrowding, lack of participation in decision making, inmate contact, and job danger. Such stressors can lead to the following health-related problems for officers: cardiac difficulties, substance abuse, hypertension problems, and an increase in sick leave.\(^5^5\)

Although studies have been inconsistent as to whether correctional officers’ gender and educational level are significantly related to stress, studies have indicated that one’s job title and workstation can lead to higher stress levels. Specifically, officers in entry-level positions experience lower levels of stress than do officers with other titles; it may be that new officers are more optimistic regarding their ability to be of service to society and helping a troubled population, but this enthusiasm wanes as they mature in the job.\(^5^6\)

Interestingly, however, the workstation where officers were assigned (e.g., living areas, the “yard,” recreational area, cafeteria) did not result in differing levels of stress or burnout. Therefore, one implication for corrections administrators is that regularly scheduled rotations of shift and workstation may help reduce the potential for burnout.\(^5^7\)

**Probation and Parole Officers**

**Primary Duties**

Probation and parole officers must possess important skills similar to those at a prison caseworker, such as good interpersonal communication, decision making, and writing skills. They operate very independently, with less supervision than most prison staff. These officers are trained in the techniques for supervising offenders and then assigned a case load. Probation and parole officers supervise inmates at the two ends of the sentencing continuum (incarceration being in the middle). Probation officers supervise offenders with a suspended sentence, monitoring their behavior in the community and their compliance with the conditions of their probation and suspended prison sentence. Parole officers supervise inmates who have been conditionally released from prison and
returned to their community. These officers report violations of the conditions of offenders’ release to the body that authorized their community placement and placed conditions on their behavior (the court for probation, and the parole board for parole).

**To Arm or Not to Arm?**

Whether probation and parole officers should be armed continues to be an oft-debated topic in corrections. The debate revolves around whether a probation or parole officer can effectively perform traditional duties while armed. Traditionalists believe that carrying a firearm contributes to an atmosphere of distrust between the client and the officer; enforcement-oriented officers, conversely, view a firearm as an additional tool to protect themselves from the risk associated with violent, serious, or high-risk offenders.

Officers must make home and employment visits in the neighborhoods in which offenders live; some of these areas are not safe, and officers must often inform offenders that they will be recommending their revocation, which could result in imprisonment. Most probation and parole agencies believe that if officers carry weapons they are perceived differently than as counselors or advisors who guide offenders into treatment and self-help programs. Over the last two decades there has been a move from casework to surveillance by officers, however; the caseloads include more dangerous offenders.

There is no standard policy for these agencies regarding weapons, and officers themselves are not in agreement about being armed. Some states classify probation and parole officers as peace officers and grant them the authority to carry a firearm both on and off duty. Some authors believe that officers should not be required to carry a firearm if they are opposed to arming, and that providing an option allows for a better officer/assignment match. In sum, it would seem the administrator’s decision concerning arming should be placed on the need, officer safety, and local laws and policies.

**Probation Management Styles**

Patricia Hardyman’s study of probation administrators focused on their **probation management styles**—this style being the fundamental determinant of the nature of the probation organization—and was instructive in its description of the impact of this style on the department’s operation. Few departments, even those with hierarchical organizational structure, had a pure management style; administrators vacillated among a variety of styles, including laissez-faire, democratic, and authoritarian. The degree to which administrators included the probation officers in the decision-making process and communicated with officers varied. The authoritarian administrator created emotional and physical distance between the officers and themselves. Surprisingly, the most common management style used by probation administrators was laissez-faire.
Hardyman found that many probation administrators simply did not participate in the day-to-day activities and supervision strategies of the staff. They remained remote but made final decisions on critical policies and procedures. Hardyman also found that few probation administrators across the country operated with the democratic style. Those who did, of course, listened more to the concerns and suggestions of the line supervisors and officers. The administrator still made final decisions, but information was generally sought from the line staff and their opinions were considered. Officers working under this style had a greater sense that their opinions mattered and that the administrator valued their input. An additional benefit of the democratic style was that the administrators had power by virtue of both their position and their charisma, which inspired teamwork and task accomplishment.
The following three case studies deal with corrections personnel roles and functions and will help the reader to consider some of the chapter information concerning employee behaviors. The first case study shows the kinds of problems faced by a middle manager in a prison and the ways in which he or she spends time during a tour of duty; the second and third case studies involve jail and parole scenarios, respectively.

The Wright Way

Lieutenant Bea Wright has been in her current position in the state prison for 1 year and is shift supervisor on swing (evening) shift, with 20 officers on her shift. There is also a recreation and development lieutenant, who oversees the yard, commissary, and other high-participation activities during the shift. Wright begins at 4:00 p.m. by holding a roll call for officers, briefing them on the activities of the day, any unusual inmate problems or tensions in progress, and special functions (such as Bible study groups) that will be happening during the evening. Soon after roll call, Wright has the staff conduct the very important evening count—important because inmates have not been counted since morning. At about 5:00 p.m., Wright determines that there are only four correctional officers in the dining room with 1,000 inmates, so she contacts other units (such as education, library, recreation) to have them send available staff to the dining hall for support. After dinner, Wright finds a memo from the warden, asking her to recommend ways of improving procedures for having violent inmates in the Special Housing Unit (SHU) taken to the recreation area in the evening. Wright asks two of her top COs who work in the SHU to provide her with some preliminary information concerning the system in place and any recommendations they might have. While walking the yard, Wright observes what appears to be an unusual amount of clustering and whispering by inmates, by race; she asks a sergeant to quietly survey the COs to determine whether there have also been unusual periods of loud music or large amounts of long-term foodstuffs purchased in the commissary (together, these activities by inmates might indicate that a race war is brewing or an escape plan being developed). Furthermore, as she is on the way to her office an inmate stops her, saying that a group of inmates is pressuring him to arrange to have drugs brought into the prison and he fears for his safety. Wright arranges for him to be called out of the general population the next day under the guise of being transported to a prison law library, at which time he can privately meet with an investigator and thus not draw suspicion to himself for talking to the staff. At about 9:00 p.m., Anderson, a CO, comes to her office to report that he overheard another CO, Jones, making disparaging remarks to other staff members concerning Anderson’s desire to go
to graduate school and to become a warden some day. Anderson acknowledges that he does not get along with Jones, is tired of his “sniping,” and asks Wright to intercede. She also knows that Jones has been argumentative with other staff members and inmates of late and makes a mental note to visit with him later in the shift to see if he is having personal problems.

Questions for Discussion

1. Does it appear that Lt. Wright, although fairly new in her position, has a firm grasp of her role and performs well in it?
2. In what ways is it shown that Wright seeks input from her subordinates?
3. How does she delegate and empower her subordinates?
4. Is there any indication that Wright is interested in her correctional officers’ training and professional development?
5. In which instances does Wright engage in mediation? MBWA (management by walking around)?

The Wraung Way*

Randall Wraung has been a shift supervisor at the Granite County Detention Facility for the last 3 years. He was promoted to sergeant, performed patrol duties, and had about 10 years’ experience with the sheriff’s office. Wraung enjoys taking new hires under what he terms his “unofficial tutelage,” priding himself in the fact that he knows every aspect of the jail’s operation.

Wraung is supervising a newly hired deputy, Tom Sharpe, who is a graduate of the local university’s criminal justice program and, like all new hires, is initially assigned to detention. Sharpe finds Wraung to be an interesting and outspoken person. In their conversations about work in the jail, Wraung decides to give Tom some insights.

“I have some good advice for you, kid, and for anyone else going into this job.” Wraung continues, “First, try to get out of the jail and into a patrol car as soon as you possibly can. Office politics are extremely bad in here, where you’re surrounded and watched by brass all the time. Plus, you can’t use any of your university education or academy training ‘inside,’ so you’ll want to get out on a beat as soon as possible.

“Second, I find that you have to be realistic about your chances for having any positive influence with the scum who come through here. Oh, I’ve worked with lots of people who thought they could change the world in here. Me? Well, I’m a realist. Let’s face it. We get the people everyone else has given up on, so what can we be expected to do? I tell visitors that ‘We get the cream of the crap here,’ and I mean it. Don’t set your expectations very high, and you won’t be

*Contributed by Ted Heim, Professor Emeritus, Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas.
disappointed. I have always been able to keep a good perspective. Hell, the top brass around here and the politicians over at the courthouse give us plenty to laugh at. All you need to do when you’re down is look at some of the orders these clowns put out and some of the things our glorious leaders tell the public about treatment, efficiency, blah, blah, blah. I personally don’t believe stuff like boot camp and the jail’s educational and industry programs even belong here.

“The job tends to get you down if you let it. I have found that you have to find a relief from all the frustrations you experience and the problems created by some of the SOBs who come through here. About once a week, the gang and I hold ‘choir practice’ at a bar down the street. After about five or six beers, this place and the world look a helluva lot better. People who don’t work in corrections can’t understand the need to let off a little steam once in a while. Gladly, I am halfway to being able to just retire and walk away from this place.”

Questions for Discussion

1. Assume that you are Wraung’s lieutenant and, while standing in the hallway, you overhear this conversation. What would be your immediate reaction to Wraung’s expression of his views of the job and the inmates? To Sharpe? What long-term actions would you take with Wraung and/or Sharpe?

2. If you were Wraung’s supervisor, would you feel compelled to look into, leave alone, or halt the “choir practices”?

3. Assume that you are Sharpe; of all the points made by Wraung, are there any with which you agree? Disagree? Why or why not? Is there any value whatever to listening to such candor from someone like Wraung?

4. Is Wraung the sort of employee who should be supervising others? Dealing at all with the public?

5. Do you believe such cynicism is common in corrections? In criminal justice, generally? In most other occupations? Explain your answer.

“Cheerless Chuck” and the Parole Officer’s Orientation Day

“So, you’re the new parole officer with a criminal justice degree from the university? Well, I hope you last longer than the last recruit I had. She meant well, but I guess her idealistic ideas about the job of parole officer couldn’t handle the realities of the work. In a way, I understand what she went through. Same thing happened to me 12 years ago when I started this job. There I was, fresh out of college with a brand new diploma with Social Work written on it. I figured that piece of paper made me a social worker, and I better get right to work fixing society. It didn’t take me long to realize that the real world was different from what I had learned in college. It was like I had been trained as a sailor, and I was about to set out on a voyage, but I couldn’t take the time to steer the ship.
because I was so busy bailing water. The crises we deal with here make it
darned difficult to do the work we all see needs to be done. Years ago, when I
first started with the parole department, things were a lot better than they are
now. Caseloads were lower, fewer people were getting parole who didn’t
deserve it, and the rest of the criminal justice system was in a lot better shape,
which made our jobs a lot easier to do.

“Think about it. We vote in politicians who promise the public that they are
going to ‘get tough’ on crime and the first thing they do is allot more money for
law enforcement stuff: beat cops, car computers, helicopters, and so on. These
things are great, but all they do is add more people into a system that is already
overloaded. No one gets elected by promising to build more courts or add jail and
prison space, or probation and parole officers. Eventually these added police offi-
cers arrest more people than the system can handle. The courts back up, which in
turn messes up the prisons and the jails. The inmates stuck in these crowded
places get tired of living like sardines, so they sue the prisons and jails. Remember,
the Constitution prohibits cruel and unusual punishment. A lot of times inmates’
complaints are legitimate, and they win. The judge orders the prison to lower its
population to a reasonable level, which forces the parole board to consider more
inmates for early release. They come knocking on our doors, hoping we can get
them out of the mess that politics and budgets have created. Nobody mentions
giving the parole department more officers, or a bigger budget for added adminis-
trative help. No, the bucks go to the flashy, visible things like cops and cars.

“Meanwhile, in the last 10 years, our average caseload for a parole officer has
increased 75 percent. We have more people who need supervision, and we are
doing it on a budget that has not kept pace with the remainder of the criminal
justice system. This wouldn’t be so bad if the system was at least adding things
to other areas, like the jail or the courts. The problem here is that we depend on
the jail to hold our parolees who have violated their conditions. We catch some
of them using booze or drugs, and we are supposed to bring them in to the
county jail to wait for a hearing to decide if they are going back to prison or
back on the street. But the jail has its own set of problems. A couple of years ago
the U.S. district court slapped a population cap on our jail. If it goes over that
population, the jail will not accept our violators. So we send them home. If they
get into more serious trouble, we call it a new crime, the police arrest them, and
the jail has to take them. Then they have to sit and wait for the court to catch
up, since the courts are not in much better shape than the jail. I guess the job
would be easier if the prisons were doing their jobs, too. I can’t really blame
them, since the prisons are funded in much the same way that parole is. We
are not ‘glamorous’ places to send your tax dollars, but if the prisons were getting
more money, they might be able to improve the quality of inmate they send to
us. Maybe a little more vocational training and substance abuse counseling, so
they could stay off the booze and drugs. Possibly then fewer of these parolees
would wind up back behind bars a few years later.

“The worst part about the job is the caseload. We presently have so many on
parole that I am lucky if I can get a phone call to each of them once a week, and
maybe a home visit once a month. You can’t tell me that a phone call and a home visit are really keeping these guys from committing crimes. The sad part about it is that with the proper budget and staff, we could really make a difference. We spend so much time bailing water out of the boat, we don’t realize that there is no one steering, and we are just drifting in circles.

“By the way, my name is Charlie Matthews, but everyone calls me Chuck. I’m a supervisor here as well as the designated new-employee orientation specialist and all-round public relations person. I hope I’ve not depressed you too much on your first day, but now is a good time to drop your idealism and get to work ‘bailing.’ What’re your views and ideas?”

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Should Chuck be retained as orientation coordinator? Why or why not?
2. How would changes in politics affect the parole system directly and indirectly?
3. How does an old criminal justice planning adage that “you can’t rock one end of the boat” seem to be applicable to what Chuck says about law enforcement getting so much new political funding?
4. What kinds of administrative problems and practices might be responsible for this agency’s situation?
5. Why do crowded jails and prisons make the job of parole officers more difficult?
6. How could practices of the jails and prisons change the success of the parole system?
7. Based on Chuck’s assessment of the local situation, where do you believe the greatest misconceptions about courts and corrections exist?

**Summary**

This chapter examined those criminal justice employees who work in correctional institutions and probation and parole agencies, with particular emphasis placed on administrators. Certainly, as noted in Chapter 10, substantial pressures are now placed on these administrators by the external and internal environments. They must maintain a secure environment while attempting to offer some degree of treatment to their clients, who should not leave incarceration or the probation/parole experience in a much worse condition than when they entered. At the same time, another increasingly difficult challenge is that these administrators must constantly strive to maintain a competent, dedicated workforce that will also uphold the primary tenets of incarceration: providing a secure environment while also ensuring that inmates are treated with respect and dignity.
Questions for Review

1. What is meant by the term new old penology?
2. According to DiIulio, what are some major principles of successful prison administration?
3. What are some of the major problems encountered by prison or jail employees?
4. What factors contribute to their stress and burnout, and what can their administrators do toward alleviating those problems?
5. What are the eight types of correctional officers? How do age, length of service, type of assignment, and education affect where one fits in this typology?
6. In the case study involving Lt. Wright, what are some of the major elements and problems of the role that are made evident?
7. What are the three types of inmates who engage in inappropriate activities with correctional staff members?
8. What are the functions of middle managers and supervisors in jails and prisons (see Chapter 3 if necessary)?
9. Describe the prison warden and his or her role. What kinds of training and education are necessary for a new warden to succeed?
10. Why is there often a detention-or-patrol tension or dichotomy for new jail hires? What can jail administrators do to try to convince employees that they should consider a career in the detention field?

Notes

2. Personal communication, Ron Angelone, Director, Nevada Department of Prisons, April 27, 1992.
5. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
10. Ibid., p. 449.
12. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
26. Ibid., p. 345.
29. Ibid., pp. 438–439.
31. Ibid., pp. 440–441.
32. Ibid., p. 442.
33. Ibid., pp. 442–443.
34. Ibid.
38. Ibid., pp. 445–446.
40. Ibid., p. 93.
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44. Christine L. Williams, Still a Man’s World: Men Who Do “Women’s” Work (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995).


46. Ibid., p. 462.

47. Ibid., pp. 465–466.


49. Ibid., pp. 117–118.

50. Ibid., p. 120.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid., p. 125.


56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.


60. Seiter, Correctional Administration, p. 387.


63. Ibid.

64. Ibid., p. 71.