

New Directions in Corrections

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Resilience-Promoting Behaviors and Health Status of Corrections Professionals



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Resilience Promoting Behaviors and Health Status of Corrections Professionals



Ways Resilience has been Conceived

Latin verb ***resilire*** = to rebound or recoil

- Property of materials, ecosystems, individuals, and organizations



Ways Resilience has been Conceived

Capacity to withstand



Capacity to rebound, rebuild, or reorganize



Psychological Resilience in Research Literature

- Ability to maintain a stable equilibrium psychologically and physically, and healthy levels of functioning following exposure to a potentially highly disruptive event (Bonanno, 2004).
- The process of coping with or overcoming exposure to adversity or stress (RAND).
- Low current psychological distress (current PTSD, major depression, and generalized anxiety symptoms) in the context of high number of exposure to high-stress events and conditions (Pietzrack & Cook).
- Lower levels of psychological distress and health conditions in the context of exposure to high-stress events (DWCO).



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- Low current psychological distress (current PTSD, major depression, and generalized anxiety symptoms) in the context of high number of exposure to high-stress events and conditions (Pietzrack & Cook).
- **A degree of immunity to health-degrading consequences of potentially traumatizing or other high-stress events (Denhof & Spinaris, 2015).**



Factors that Foster Resilience According to Existing Research

- Positive Thinking
- Positive Affect
- Positive Coping
- Realism
- Behavioral Control
- Family Support
- Positive Command Climate
- Belongingness



Resilience-Promoting Behaviors

DWCO research has identified 4 classes of behaviors that serve as protective factors:

- (1) Supportive Staff Relationship Efforts
- (2) Self-care Health Maintenance Efforts
- (3) Confident/Perseverant Frame of Mind
- (4) Controlled/Logical Problem Solving



Measuring Resilience-Promoting Behaviors (RPBs) in Corrections

The Corrections Staff Resilience Inventory™ (CSRI)



Instrument Development Process

- (1) Candidate RPB items were generated
- (2) Factor Analysis was performed
- (3) Scale Reliability confirmed
- (4) Successful replication of findings

Final instrument:

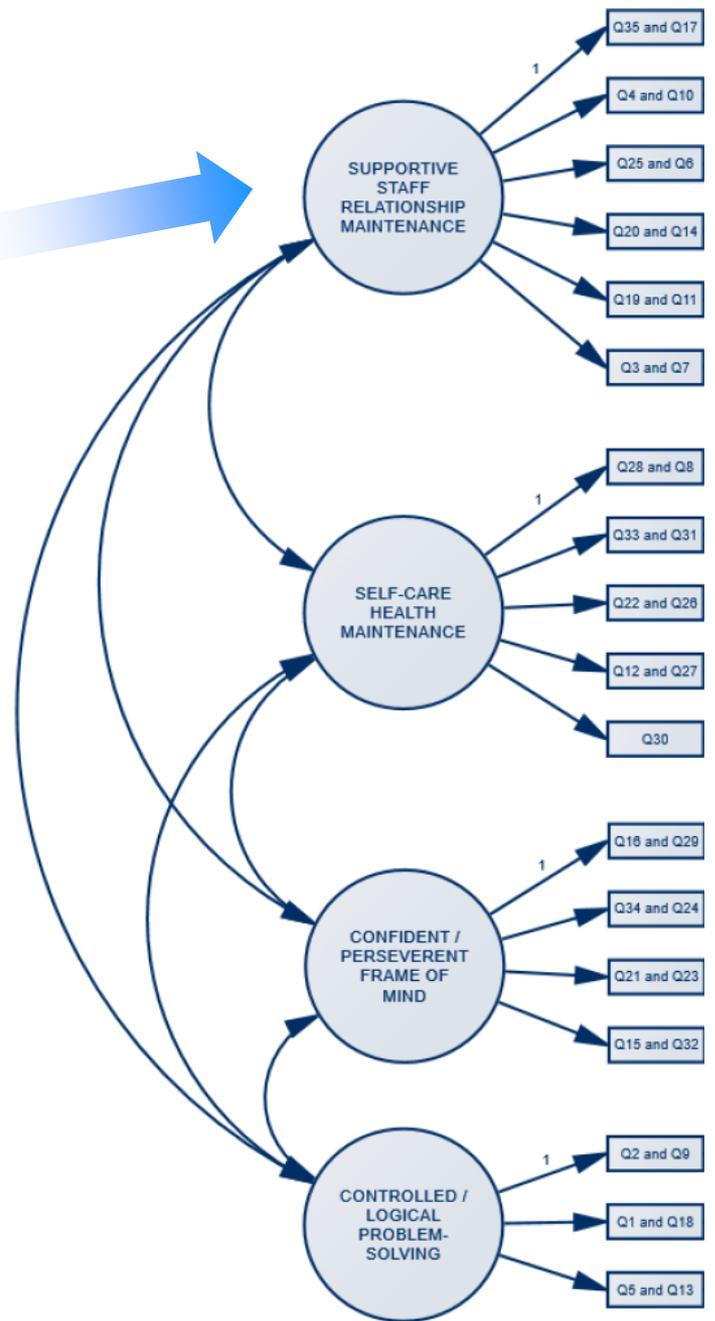
- 4 measurement scales
- 35 effective assessment items



Psychometric Properties



Factor/
Construct



Constituent
Assessment
Items

Measurement Instrument Factor Structure



CSRI Scale Reliability

Reliability Statistics	Scale α	# of Items
Supportive Staff Relationship Maintenance Efforts	.89-.92	12
Self-Care Health Maintenance Efforts	.88-.91	9
Confident/Perseverant Frame of Mind	.86-.90	8
Controlled/Logical Problem Solving	.81-.82	6



Criterion-Related Validity Evidence

Correlations Between the CSRI Overall Score and Various Established Health-Related Measures



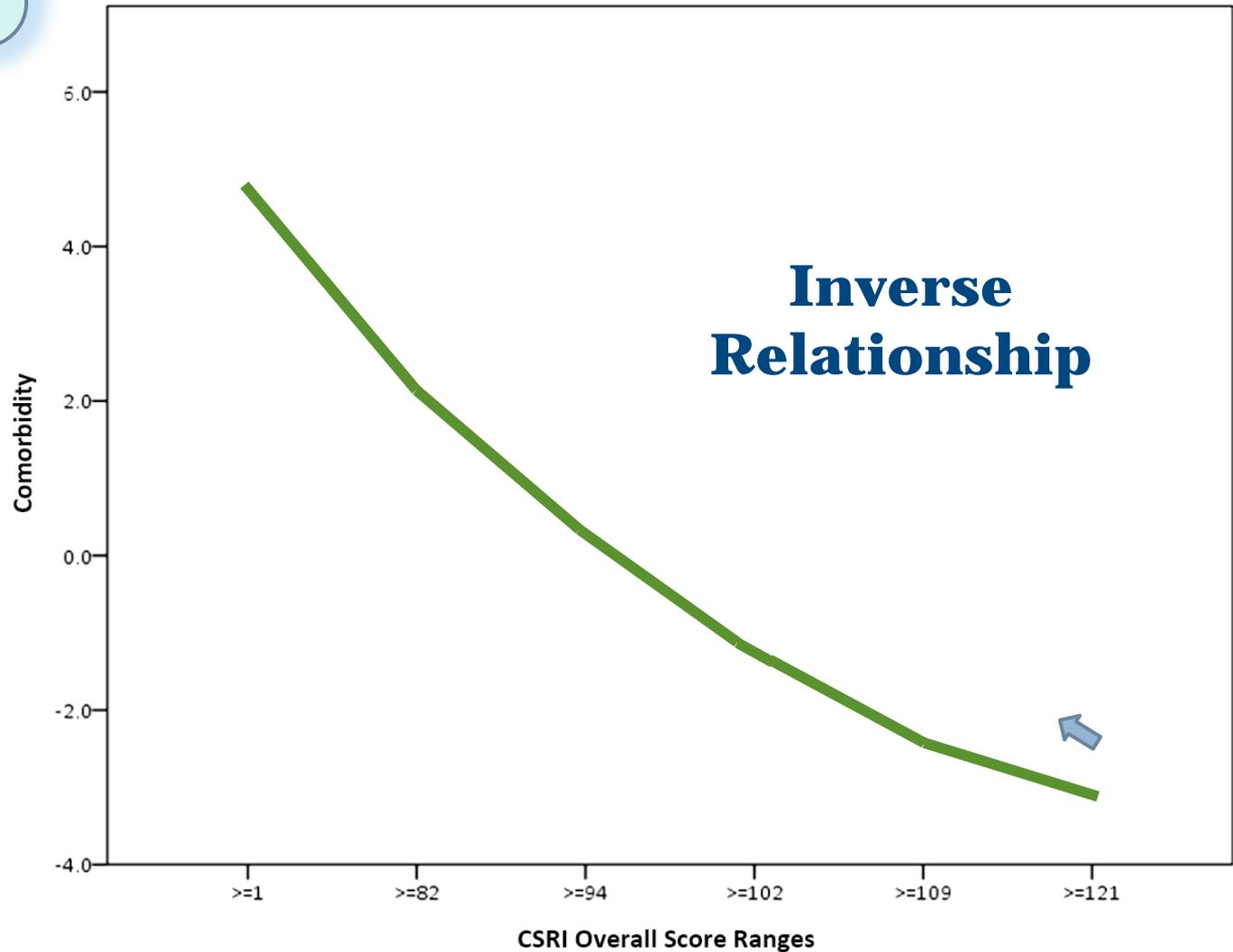
*All (Pearson) correlations are statistically significant using the $p < .01$ criterion.



RPBs vs Comorbidity

Lower CSRI Scores \longleftrightarrow Higher Comorbidity

CSRI Overall Score Ranges Versus Presence of Negative Health Conditions



Aggregate Score (z) for Multiple Conditions



Final Scale Content

CSRI Scales	Targeted Content / Based on Constituent Items
Supportive Staff Relationship Efforts	The extent to which corrections professionals: support each other through validating or supportive communications and acknowledgements; talk to each other about best practices and lessons learned; seize opportunities to encourage teamwork and collaboration, exert effort to maintain professional and healthy relationships or repair damaged ones; make efforts to “stay connected” with other staff, and seize opportunities to improve the workplace environment in general.
Self-care Health Maintenance Efforts	The extent to which corrections professionals: take steps to ensure activity and enjoyment during time outside of work; take steps to address potential relationship difficulties related to workplace stress; take steps to stay emotionally connected with significant others outside of the workplace; let go of workplace issues when returning home after their shift; maintain an optimistic frame of mind; make sure to obtain adequate sleep/ recovery; and let go of anger related to workplace frustrations.
Confident/Perseverant Frame of Mind	The extent to which corrections professionals: are able to maintain determination and confidence in their ability to perform effectively on the job; feel skillful/masterful at addressing challenging situations; follow through with tasks, even when challenging; model/demonstrate admirable/professional behavior in the workplace; and are able to maintain adaptability in the face of changing circumstances on the job.
Controlled/Logical Problem Solving	The extent to which corrections professionals: are able to remain mindful that all events cannot be controlled; see mistakes as learning opportunities; remain mindful, when experiencing elevated stress, that perseverance pays off; are able to calm themselves in response to anger/agitation before responding to situations; remain mindful, when facing workplace challenges, that facing one’s fears pays off; and utilize the strategy of tackling big problems by first breaking them down into smaller and more manageable parts.



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Supportive Staff Relationship Effort	<p>The extent to which corrections professionals: support each other through validating or supportive communications and acknowledgements; talk to each other about best practices and lessons learned; seize opportunities to encourage teamwork and collaboration; exert effort to maintain professional and healthy relationships; and seize opportunities</p>
Self-care Health Maintenance Effort	<p>during time outside of work; take steps to stay healthy; address issues when needed; and get an adequate sleep/</p>
Confident/Perseverant Frame of Mind	<p>confidence in their ability to complete tasks; follow through with tasks; and are able to maintain adaptability in the face of changing circumstances on the job.</p>
Controlled/Logical Problem Solving	<p>The extent to which corrections professionals: are able to remain mindful that all events cannot be controlled; see mistakes as learning opportunities; remain mindful, when experiencing elevated stress, that perseverance pays off; are able to calm themselves in response to anger/agitation before responding to situations; remain mindful, when facing workplace challenges, that facing one's fears pays off; and utilize the strategy of tackling big problems by first breaking them down into smaller and more manageable parts.</p>

Supportive Staff Relationship Efforts

The extent to which corrections professionals:

- Support each other through communication (e.g., validations, acknowledgements)
- Talk to each other about best practices and lessons learned
- Seize opportunities to encourage teamwork and collaboration
- Exert effort to maintain professional relationships or repair damaged ones
- Make efforts to "stay connected" to other staff
- Take advantage of opportunities to improve the workplace environment generally



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Self-care Health Maintenance Effort	<p>Self-care Health Maintenance Efforts</p> <p><u>The extent to which corrections professionals:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take steps to ensure activity and enjoyment during time outside of work • Take steps to address potential relationship difficulties related to workplace stress • Take steps to stay emotionally connected with others outside the workplace • Let go of workplace issues when returning home after their shift • Maintain an optimistic frame of mind • Make sure to obtain adequate sleep/recovery • Let go of anger related to any workplace frustrations <p>during time outside of work; take steps to stay calm; address issues when returning home; and obtain adequate sleep/recovery</p>
Confident/Perseverant Frame of Mind	<p>The extent to which corrections professionals: are confident in their ability to complete tasks, even when challenging; model/demonstrate admirable/professional behavior in the workplace; and are able to maintain adaptability in the face of changing circumstances on the job.</p>
Controlled/Logical Problem Solving	<p>The extent to which corrections professionals: are able to remain mindful that all events cannot be controlled; see mistakes as learning opportunities; remain mindful, when experiencing elevated stress, that perseverance pays off; are able to calm themselves in response to anger/agitation before responding to situations; remain mindful, when facing workplace challenges, that facing one's fears pays off; and utilize the strategy of tackling big problems by first breaking them down into smaller and more manageable parts.</p>



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Confident/Perseverant Frame of Mind	<p>Confident/Perseverant Frame of Mind</p> <p><u>The extent to which corrections professionals:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are able to maintain determination and confidence in their ability to perform well • Feel skillful/masterful at addressing challenging situations that come up • Follow through with tasks, even when difficult/challenging • Model/demonstrate admirable/professional behavior • Are able to maintain adaptability in the face of changing circumstances on the job <p>confidence in their ability to perform well; follow through with tasks, even when challenging; model/demonstrate admirable/professional behavior in the workplace; and are able to maintain adaptability in the face of changing circumstances on the job.</p>
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Controlled/Logical Problem Solving

The extent to which corrections professionals:

- Are able to remain mindful that all events cannot be controlled
- See mistakes as learning opportunities
- Remain mindful, when experiencing stress, that perseverance pays off
- Are able to calm themselves in response to anger before responding to situations
- Remain mindful, when facing challenges, that facing one's fears pays off
- Utilizes the strategy of tackling big problems in a sequence of smaller steps



How Decision-makers Can Make Use of Resilience-Promoting Behaviors



Objective Assessment

- Use of reliable/validated assessment instruments (preferably population-specific).
- Promotes consistency, accuracy and objectivity, and use of quantitative baseline data.



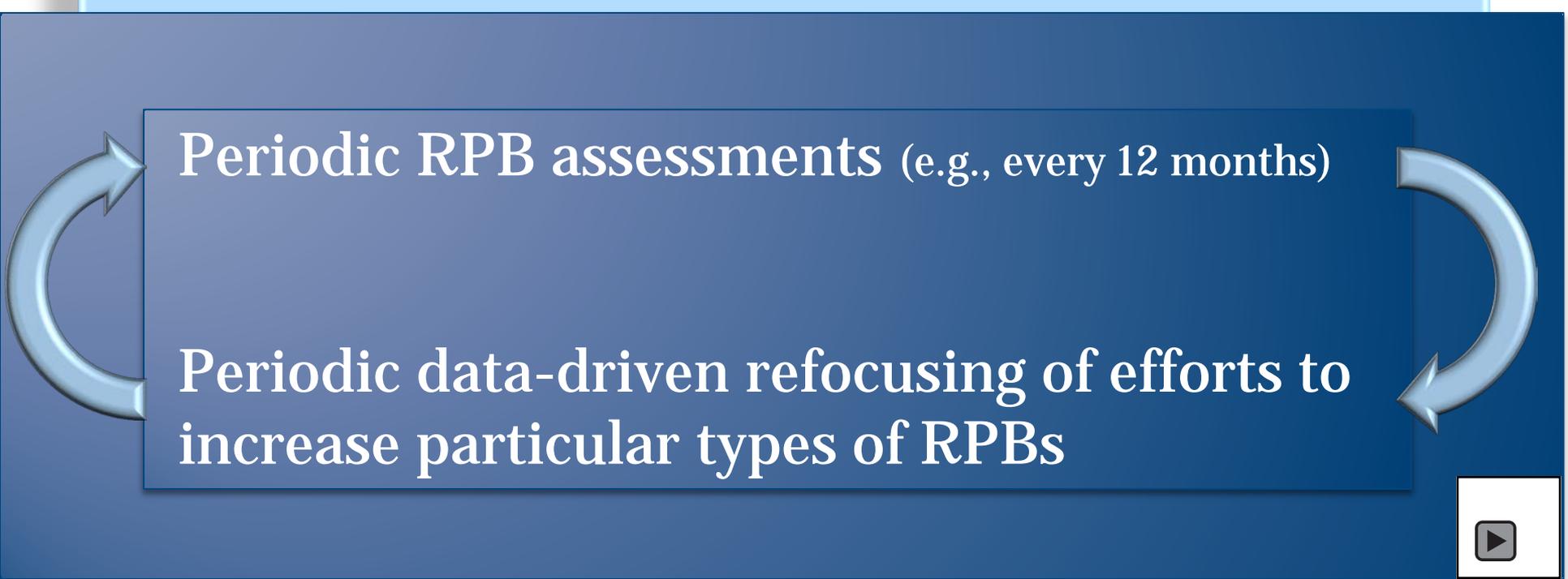
RPB Training and Reinforcement

- Identified low rate RPBs are the primary focus.
- Staff are educated on the operation and benefits of resilience-promoting behaviors.
- Training process focuses on segments of RPB content, one at a time.



Ongoing Cycle of Periodic Assessment/ Evaluation and Adjustments

Recommended cyclical approach:



Periodic RPB assessments (e.g., every 12 months)

Periodic data-driven refocusing of efforts to
increase particular types of RPBs



Summary

- Research evidence indicates that increased presence of RPBs is associated with decreased presence of negative mental health symptoms/conditions in corrections professionals
- The extent to which RPBs are happening within a corrections workforce and culture can be reliably assessed
- An ongoing process of assessment followed by targeted training activities designed to maintain optimal RPB levels within the workforce has much to offer in terms of workforce health and functioning

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TakeAways

- RPBs *ARE* important for staff mental health maintenance in high-stress corrections work environments.
- RPBs *CAN* be taught!
- RPBs *SHOULD* be taught!
- RPBs *SHOULD* become a normal part of a corrections agency's culture—"the way we conduct ourselves around here."

