

# The Correctional Trainer



Fall 2019



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## President's Address

Welcome to Fall 2019 fellow IACTP members! Once again, I hope this edition of the Correctional Trainer finds each of you healthy and happy. I am still basking in the glow of a very successful conference that we held in Omaha, Nebraska!!! 165 conference attendees, and 25 different states represented! Great workshops, great keynote speakers and outstanding networking events throughout the conference! For those of you that attended, thank you very much for your support, and for those of you that couldn't attend we hope that you can find the time to attend one of our future conferences. They are only getting bigger and better!!!

During our most recent conference I had several attendees ask "How can I become more involved with IACTP?" What a great question! For those of you that want to become more involved (and I hope there are many of you?) there are many opportunities. Probably the easiest way to get more involved is to do what I am doing right now. Write an article for publication in our quarterly "Correctional Trainer". Share with the rest of the membership what is happening in your "corrections world" and any tips or advice you have for other correctional trainers. Also, how about presenting one of our quarterly webinars? We need more presenters and more variety of topics. And last, but certainly not least, how about presenting at our annual conference? I now this one might be more difficult and costly, but if you are selected as one of our presenters it is more likely that your agency might foot the bill for your attendance...I strongly encourage all of you to become more involved!!!

I also want to continue to ask for your input. "How can we make this Association work better for you???" Please give us your ideas and suggestions so we can continue to grow. The only way that we get better as an Association is by listening to you and incorporating new and cutting edge methods of training. We need to hear about what is working in your jurisdiction and the great things you are doing. We listen to you, I promise! That is how we can make this association better, stronger and ensure that we cater to your needs.

I close this President's message with a very heartfelt thanks to our friends from Nebraska who did such a wonderful job of hosting our 2019 conference! Denny Campbell, Jerid Wedge and Tina Reil-Lux, THANK YOU!!! You have set the bar high for our friends in Maine who are already preparing for IACTP 2020 in Portland, ME. I hope to see all of you there. As always, thanks for your continued support!



Jim Wiseman, President



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# THE PRESIDENT-ELECT'S CORNER

Greetings fellow members of IACTP. I agree with our President, Jim Wiseman that we just finished up a fabulous conference in Nebraska. Their conference planning team knocked it out of the park!!!! I too noticed a lot of people asking how they can get involved with IACTP and Mr. Wiseman gave some great ideas. Now if you really want to get involved with IACTP, then putting on a conference is a great way to do that. You get the opportunity to interact with the board, showcase your state and exercise your creative juices. If you are still on the fence about putting on a conference, then let's take a look at some of the benefits our Board of Directors have just approved in 2019:

## Approved Benefits for Host State

### Exhibit Space

- Free exhibit booth, *(savings of \$800)*  
*Current year host gets booth + the following year's host state gets one to help promote a year in advance (e.g. 2020-Maine gets booth for hosting and MN gets booth to promote 2021)*

### Advertising

- Full-page advertisement in program book (no charge), *(savings of \$400)*  
*Current year host gets advertisement + the following year's host state gets one to help promote a year in advance (e.g. 2020-Maine gets ad for hosting and MN gets ad to promote 2021)*

### Registration

- Two free registrations (to be assigned by host state chair), *(savings of \$458)*  
*Can be used during host year or the following year. Credit will not carry beyond following year.*

### Other Perks

- Cost-sharing (up to \$1,000) for conference support (i.e. program books, presenter gifts, etc.). *All expenditures must be approved by IACTP board prior to purchase.*
- After the ASM's and Trainer of Year award recipient's room are paid, the host state should get all other benefits. Room upgrades, all ½ price rooms, hospitality treats etc.
- Opportunity to send your trainers to an international training organization's conference in your home state (limited travel costs) to receive top-notch training and networking opportunities.
- Dedicated room for host state to have staff meeting during conference, if so desired.

Pretty impressive right.....so I expect to have you all lining up to let me know what year you would like to host a conference. Our conference chair works right alongside you and will show you the ropes. You are not on your own. We will provide a checklist and have meetings and work out all the details together. Think about it and feel free to contact me or any board member.

2020 Maine  
2021 Minnesota  
2022  
2023  
2024  
2025

Trish Signor, President Elect



**IACTP** needs you and we want to hear from you. Share your stories, techniques and experiences with other correctional training personnel. All members are welcome and encouraged to write an article for The Correctional Trainer. This is a great way to learn from each other. Tell us how you do things, we want to know!

Articles can be sent to [Darryl.K.Smith@tn.gov](mailto:Darryl.K.Smith@tn.gov)

**Thank you!!!**

# Let's Train Outside the Box



Hello all, I hope everyone had a great time in Nebraska! I know I did! We also saw so many workshops that absolutely train outside the box, so we are dedicating a few pages to our 2019 Omaha, Nebraska Conference! (Shelly Carson, Missouri Dept. of Corrections)

## IACTP Conference 2019-Omaha, NEBRASKA









## **I am so sick of being the trainer.....**

**By Susan Jones**

Have you ever said those words? I know that I have during my career. As I completed duties as the facility training coordinator, and even later as I promoted through the ranks, I would occasionally grow weary of training work. The worst part was the yearly refresher training, after all, how many times can you deliver the lesson plan on key control and make it something that you want to say or that the students even listen to?

I struggled with my enthusiasm particularly when the training class was mandatory. I grew to hate the word mandatory. Then, of course, there is that back row of people who have just worked the night shift or several double shifts in a row. They are there, they sign the attendance sheet and they really try to stay awake, but many are nodding off.

Some of the strategies that I used to break this slump was to look for other types of experiences. Of course, I still had to get all of my training work done, but I would work a post with custody staff, spend time in the medical area, and even attend meetings that I was not personally required to attend. I know, this is just more work or even may seem like a waste of valuable time – which you don't have enough of anyway -- but it gave me an opportunity to remember what I was doing and why. It also gave me an opportunity to see where training was either working, or where it was not working.

I have heard from some trainers that they are on the “doubles list” so they often get the opportunity to see the results of their training. Many of these people did not see this as a positive, but as a significant burden to their schedules and their motivation.

Another strategy that helped me was to write about training by sharing ideas or asking for suggestions from other trainers. The IACTP organization allows you that opportunity – rather easily. Use this resource and reach out to others who are struggling with the same type of work stresses or burnout symptoms. You might be surprised by what you find out. The next great idea may be just a question away.

I don't regret the years I spent as the training coordinator, even when I was tired of being the trainer. I know those years prepared me for future promotions by giving me perhaps the BEST preparation for management and leadership positions. Somewhere in all those meetings, and other duties assigned, I was able to work with people from all types of corrections positions and gain a little insight into their world and their issues.

As you continue in the training position, be sure to look to the future and gain all of the skills, information, and “extra duties” that are available to you. This type of gathering of intel will serve you and your agency the best in the future.

# Our Sponsors



## Diminishing Morals

By: Serenity Ardjomand, Tennessee Department of Correction

Let's dive into the world of corrections, shall we? Far too often we hear of things turning sour for correctional officers all over the United States. But why, what is it that leads them astray? I would like to address some of the most common reasons that cause good people to lose sight of what is right and wrong within the confines of prison walls.

The cold metal gate slams shut behind me as I begin my journey into corrections. Day one and I can already see that I am in another world, one that has been set apart from "the real world". I am told the degenerates of the society reside within these walls. I stand tall as I walk the housing unit, observing everything I can. Trying to grasp just what I have gotten myself into. I will uphold my oath to the very best of my ability.

Thus is the pattern of thought in most minds as we enter into this profession. Take note that I said most because that is very important. Those that have a very high moral prowess tend to enter this field with the mindset that they will be the change the department needs. They try to uphold the oath to the fullest. So what happens over time to cause them to begin to lose sight of that code they pride themselves in? There are so many things that can start lowering standards and values.

Let's start by looking at training and what it provides. No amount of training can prepare you for the things you will witness when you begin walking in uniform with corrections. Everyone should have a base concept of the things that might transpire day to day and we give them that on the highest level possible through training exercises. You can tell someone about the fight you just witnessed but they will never get from words what the actual experience provides.

The field of Correction is continually looking for ways to improve training. We do this so that we can provide quality officers that are capable of doing this job day in and day out. We offer years of experience and many scenarios for them to explore and learn from. We do diligently try to make sure that they are finding value through the training offered. Even with all of this we have still found officers doing the wrong things. Where does change begin?

Changing a collective mindset that has been developing since the very beginning of corrections takes effort on all parties involved. Those that have been with the department for many years tend to develop opinions about the profession that hinders the mindsets of all new employees. I began to think about this at length recently and decided it's time to start changing mentalities towards the Department of Correction. Let's all look at this and begin the change that many departments so desperately need.

Consider this thought for instance. A young person just out of school decides to try his hand at corrections. He is a morally sound individual and has no interest in doing the wrong

thing. He begins his journey strong and plays the game by the rules, following all policy and procedures to a tee. Then one day he starts showing up late and letting things slide. His supervisor notices and only comments on the fact that he is consistently late and nothing more is said. He now knows that he can continue to let things slide as long as he shows up on time. There is always a catalyst to our actions and behaviors. What changed this young man's perception of his job?

To watch interpersonal interactions among the inmates shows you a different side to life and how we communicate with one another. Far too often we become so immersed in the environment that we start to lose parts of ourselves. Were you running late today? If so did you forget to bring your lunch or anything to drink? The inmates notice these things and will begin to break down your walls by offering you one of their cokes. Normally this won't affect an officer on the first try. It's easy to say no once. What if running late becomes a habit and over time you start to accept the soda or snack from the offender? What does that imply? This causes our morals to slip. Now they have you. You OWE them!

How can we as a team of professionals combat this diminishing morals epidemic? Money only does so much. It increases morale a bit. However in the end, is it the money that causes us to fail? No. It is the lack of self-discipline and the long hours causing our bodies and minds to become altered. We all start from a good place. We all desire to be the best we can be. Yet at the end of the day we are human and we need better support in place to assist us in our weakest moments.

Training for New Supervisor's is a step in the right direction for any department. We are working to build the support beams for staff across the board. Employees need to know they can communicate with their supervisors about concerns. They need to feel valued and listened to. When an employee feels like their efforts are all in vain they begin to fall. Communication is the hardest tool to learn how to use properly. However it is the most effective avenue to successfully ending the epidemic that is threatening our profession.

A recent article posted on [Correctionone.com](http://Correctionone.com) stated, "Correctional employees experience some of the highest rates of mental illness, sleep disorders and physical health issues of all U.S. workers". This article also stated that, "nearly one-fifth (19 percent) of prison workers surveyed reported symptoms that were severe enough to be diagnosed as PTSD. That is a rate six times higher than that found in the general population and slightly above what previous studies have discovered among police officers (18 percent). The PTSD rate among veterans from America's most recent wars is estimated at 11-20 percent." This study was conducted in Washington State.

Those numbers are alarming. The job that correctional officers do daily is commendable. Not just controlling movement and activities but also stopping fights, suicides, rapes and murders within the walls. This takes a toll on a person's mental and moral strengths. How do we combat that? How do take action against diminishing morals? The state is addressing some

of this through the use of the Employee Assistance Programs. However one has to recognize the problem in order to make use of a solution.

We are a team and as such we should all be looking out for one another. Notice the changes as they are occurring. Don't be afraid to ask someone if they need to talk. Reach out to one another. Be the supportive back bone that your department is trying to establish. We are all One Mission, One Message, One Team!

## IACTP Conference 2019-Omaha, NEBRASKA





# Ice

# Breakers

Just for Fun!!!!

## What is your lame excuse for being late?

We all know people who will be late to their own funeral. Try as they might, the state of being early is never in their cards. But that does not exempt the rest of us from occasional delay. Even for those of us that are painfully punctual, we will likely be tardy at one time or another. With so many variables, possible roadblocks and mistakes, the odds simply will not always be in our favor.

It is obvious that classroom participation runs the gamut. But it is important to open communications and interplay. Otherwise, no matter how well written the instruction materials, it will be a two-dimensional endeavor.

To start each class off with a chance for everyone to participate, I write four questions in the board. In formula icebreakers, the first three are almost always the same, generic introduction questions.

1. What is your name?
2. What year of school is this for you?
3. What is your ultimate vocational goal? ("Uncertain" is an acceptable answer.)

The fourth question is the slightly odd, icebreaking question. For this icebreaker, the pivotal question is "What is your lame excuse for being late for class?" I used this on the first week of class this semester with a suitable buildup.

"As you enter the room, the class is already assembled. The instructor stops abruptly in mid-sentence. He looks up from his roster and locks eyes with you, piercing your unsuspecting soul. Ashamed, you nod in a sheepish manner. Without drawing additional attention to yourself, you try to find a seat as far from the front as possible. Murphy's Law is in effect and the only empty chair is front and center. All is eerily quiet, and he inevitably barks out the obvious, 'You are late! What is your lame excuse for being late to class?' As you complete the cycle of blushing, you offer this excuse..."

As an example, I stated my answers to the first three questions and offered a twist on the classic excuse (the 4th element) – "The dog ate my car keys."

The excuses that followed from the students were varied, ranging from common to incredible. But it was a way for students to think on their feet after delivering basic information to their peers. Plus, it gives the instructor the first glance at class dynamics.

None of this is to mitigate the disruption that lateness can cause. However, a lighthearted look at odd excuses can set the stage for a creative semester with increased student participation. What is your lame excuse?



## Worksheet: the name game

Sometimes, we taunt opposing teams in order to gain a psychological edge in the game. For this exercise, we are not going to the point of harassment. We aim for a bit of competitive fun. Imagine if you could name the opposing team. What if the name was not very complementary?

1. For each column, place a word as described in each heading:

<b>A</b> Negative adjective	<b>B</b> Dangerous animal	<b>C</b> Positive adjective	<b>D</b> Gentle animal
Cowardly	Wolverine	Majestic	Pot belly pig

2. Pick a word from column A and column B or;

3. Pick a word from column C and column D or;

4. Run options by your team;

5. The most ridiculous or odd name is given to the opposing team;

6. For the duration of the semester, day or presentation, the teams retain these names



Hosted by the International Association of Correctional Training Personnel (IACTP) in partnership with the Maine Department of Corrections

For more information: <http://www.iactp.org/p/conferences.html>

**SAVE-THE-DAY**  
**National Training and Performance Conference**  
September 22-25, 2020  
Portland, Maine  
[www.iactp.org](http://www.iactp.org)



# Classroom Management

## Are you Prepped, Polished and Prepared?

by David E. Nelson, Missouri Department of Corrections

There is not really an easy way to deal with the non-easy participant. There are, however, several tried-and-true classroom management techniques that can help us minimize distractions and disruptions from our prepared material.

Instructors who come to class prepped, polished and prepared are the most successful in the classroom. Our students leave a lot behind (family activities, work responsibilities) when they come to a class at the training center. Many will not have the benefit of someone covering their caseload or other duties while they are away. We each need to do our utmost to make sure the time they spend here is quality time. We will fail if we come to the classroom unprepared, unprofessional and think we can get by simply reciting the course materials to them. If we have arrived to class early, have greeted the students as they arrive in a friendly and courteous manner and begin and end promptly we will have the respect and attention of our students.

Bright smiling faces, eye contact and direct answers will build trust in your classroom. Address your students by name. If you don't know the answer to a question, write it down and offer to get back to them once you have done a bit more research. Don't hesitate to ask students to put their cell phones, iPads and tablets away. If they are not needed in class, they shouldn't be seen. It is our responsibility to make sure the classroom is free from these types of distractions; and others in class will be appreciative of your maintaining an environment where learning can take place.

Breaks as often as once per hour can help to keep your attendees fresh and alert.

Remember, bottom line: you as the instructor are the supervisor-of-the-day. If you find that you have a student who requires individual attention due to an attitude, action or appearance that is interrupting the learning environment, don't take offense...take appropriate action! Dismiss the class for a brief break and ask the difficult student to remain behind. Once the room has cleared, ask the student if there is a resolution that can be attained. Since you are responsible for the transfer of learning to every student in the room, you cannot allow the action of the one to interrupt the needs of the many.

If this does not achieve the solution that you seek, ask the student to come with you to meet with a supervisor. Your supervisor's goal for the training day mirrors yours: that an un-interrupted transfer of learning can take place. Everyone can help to achieve and maintain an environment where that transfer can occur.

# NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

## BECOMING A MODEL FOR CORRECTIONAL TRAINING

Judy P. Beale, PhD, LCSW  
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With all of the literature out there on Correctional Best Practices, one might expect to find some clear answers on what a model corrections academy ought to look like. But alas, there is no national model. Why? It is not clear. Perhaps it is because every agency, be it a jail or a prison has a different set of needs, various staffing numbers, budgets, and different ideas about how much training is enough to prepare a correctional officer to do their job.

We do know from the body of correctional literature what staff need to know to be effective in inmate management and how risk assessments, security practices, case-planning, reentry planning and programming all contribute to the safety and security of both staff and inmates. So, why then, has no minimum standard been set for the nation to incorporate such training into their corrections academies?

### **A Learning Organization**

At the end of 2018 Commissioner Brann envisioned the NYCDOC to become a learning organization and established a Division for Training & Development where one had not existed before. Transitioning from a training culture (where people are expected to go to class for annual mandate/compliance topics) to a learning culture (where each employee recognizes their responsibility for their own learning and professional development, as well as a responsibility to help teach and train their colleagues), the department began to take steps towards a 'learning organization' which involves the development of 5 disciplines according to Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski and Flowers (2004):

1. Thinking as a larger system and how the pieces of an organization inter-relate.
2. Personal mastery which not only involves doing things right, but understanding why you're doing it and getting results.
3. Awareness and understanding that peoples thinking may need to be challenged.
4. A shared vision among everyone in the organization.
5. Sharing of knowledge across the entire organization through transfer of learning.

The New York City Department of Correction (NYCDOC) is working toward becoming a model by reviewing and revising its correctional academy curricula, and training methods. This paper will outline the steps the NYCDOC is taking to become a leader in the corrections arena with regard to training and preparing staff to do one of the most difficult and critical, but often the most misunderstood and thankless jobs in public service.

### **The Establishment of a Training Division**

While the NYCDOC Academy had been around for decades, the agency at large did not have a coordinated training effort that provided training across all disciplines, uniform and non-uniform staff. The new Training & Development Division would be lead by a Deputy Commissioner, an educator with over 20 years of experience in the training world, possessing knowledge of analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation with adult learners. Later joined by an Assistant Commissioner, who brings 20 years of corrections experience to the team and an understanding of correctional best practices, the two recognized that the NYCDOC academy curriculum needed some updating. The Training & Development Division would establish 4 areas of focus to include: 1. The Academy training, EEO, compliance training, and training for volunteer and contract employees, 2. the professional development and leadership development of staff, 3. the establishment of an instructional design unit responsible for setting course design standards used across the department and, 4. the oversight and management of contracts and budget.

Together this newly established team are working to examine 6 months of training materials which includes 108 lesson plans and 4 weeks of on-the-job-training (OJT) experiences. The review will require the merging of recommendations from the current body of correctional best practice literature and the department's standard operating procedures (SOP's). In addition to the team of people from inside the organization, collaboration with outside entities will help to provide support for content development, networking opportunities and sharing of information.

A Curriculum Review Steering Committee was established in August of 2019 and began planning for the review of the academy materials and protocols. The Curricula review was just one piece of the overall project. Other challenges such as a review of staffing positions, staff training needs and the need to identify subject matter expert leads on the different content areas with an appropriate rank to oversee the review and delivery of the curriculum materials was essential.

### **Review of the Content**

The latter required that the academy content be sorted and categorized into groups for the purpose of organization, sequencing and management of the materials moving forward. It was decided that existing employees in the Captain Rank would be interviewed and identified through their knowledge and interest in the subject matter to take on a newly established role called "Content Chair". The role of Content Chair would put the Captains in charge of the oversight of all of the lessons plan materials that fell into their content area. The academy content was broken down into 12 areas as follows:

1. *Correction Best Practices (new)*
2. Facility Operations and On the Job Training (OJT)
3. Leadership Development
4. Firearm Tactics
5. Defensive Tactics
6. *Special Inmate Populations (new)*
7. Inmate Management
8. Classification/Jail Time Calculation
9. Report Writing and Investigations
10. *Wellness, Health and Safety (new)*
11. Ethics, Law & Compliance
12. Use of Force

The chosen topics resulted from sorting and categorizing existing lesson plan material from the NYCDOC academy and from researching correctional literature on what should be included in a model training academy. An article written by Burton, Lux, Cullen, Miller and Burton Jr., provided some direction into what content seems to be missing in correctional training academies around the country. The authors conducted a national survey to determine what methods and topics states incorporated into their training programs. The results indicated that methods and topics varied significantly from coast to coast. Gaps in content around the rehabilitative role of the correctional officer, identification and training around special inmate population groups such as women, young adults and LGBTQ and staff wellness, were highlighted as areas that should be incorporated into a model corrections academy (2018).

Creating a culture shift also requires a change in the way staff are interacting with and managing the inmate population. One of the most important additions to the revised curriculum, will be content that educate staff about Correctional Best Practices, which will include:

1. Core Correctional Practices (CCP)
  - a. Role Clarification
  - b. Effective Use of Authority
  - c. Effective Use of Reinforcement
  - d. Effective Use of Disapproval
  - e. Cognitive Restructuring
  - f. Problem Solving
  - g. Structured Skill Building  
(Dowden & Andrews, 2004)

2. Risk-Need-Responsivity Model (RNR)
  - a. The Risk Principle
  - b. The Need Principle
  - c. The Responsivity Principle
  - d. Effective Program Components  
(Bonta & Andrews, 2007)
  
3. Special Inmate Populations
  - a. Female Inmates
    - i. Gender responsive correctional practices
    - ii. What it means to be 'trauma informed'
    - iii. Women's pathways into the criminal justice system
  - b. LGBTQ inmates and staff
    - i. Understanding differences and appropriate practices
  - c. Young Adult Inmates
    - i. Brain Development
    - ii. Why housing them separate from adult inmates matters
  - d. Security Threat Groups
    - i. Understanding gang affiliations and housing challenges
  - e. Inmates with Mental Illness
  
4. Staff Wellness
  - a. Corrections Fatigue Defined
    - i. Behavioral Functioning
    - ii. Leadership Supportiveness
    - iii. Meaning
    - iv. Moral Injury
    - v. Morale
    - vi. Outlook/Disposition
    - vii. Psychological Safety
    - viii. Staff Reliability
    - ix. Staff Supportiveness  
(Desert Waters, Process Model, 2016)
  
5. Evidence-Based Practices (EBP)
  - a. The 8 Principles of Effective Intervention
    - i. Assess inmate risk
    - ii. Enhance intrinsic motivation
    - iii. Target intervention
    - iv. Skill train with directed practice
    - v. Increase positive reinforcement
    - vi. Engage on-going support in community
    - vii. Measure relevant practices
    - viii. Use data to inform practice  
(Crime and Justice Institute at Community Resources for Justice, 2009)
  
  - b. EBP Programming vs. other programming (what's the difference?)
  - c. How Correctional Officers' can support programming

On behalf of the U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, the RAND Corporation, in collaboration with the Police Executive Research Forum, RTI International, and the University of Denver examined the challenges and needs associated with building a high-quality correctional workforce (Russo, Woods, Drake, & Jackson, 2018). They determined that "corrections is fundamentally a 'people profession.' At its essence, the work of the sector, whether performed in institutional or community

settings, can be described as 'humans supervising other humans'." This fact suggests that correctional administrators should review their recruiting and hiring practices as well as ongoing performance reviews of staff once they are in the job.

Best practice literature on how adults learn indicates a need to incorporate blended learning experiences into the curricula to establish efficiency and produce a more meaningful learning experience for staff. The goal is less classroom lecture and more interactive learning through helping them understand the reason behind the practice, interactive discussion, problem solving, group activities, and practice of skills (Trivette, 2009). This will also include simulations of security practices, role plays to reinforce appropriate staff/inmate interactions and on the job training.

### **Policy Review**

Policies and protocols will be reviewed and aligned to ensure that staff teaching at the academy are meeting the learning needs of those working in the facilities. It is important for the agency to have a policy that drives the functions of the academy that will provide clarification on how the academy is structured and staffed, a process that outlines how training materials will be reviewed and approved, timelines for the establishment of new lesson plans and review protocols for existing lesson plans, training requirements for staff who teach at the academy and for those who do instructional design as well as a methodology for continuous quality improvement (CQI).

Currently NYCDOC has a paper based policy system, which will present some challenges in the organization and review of the policies. It will require the development of a spreadsheet that will identify which policies will impact which lesson plans, so as material is reviewed, the committee can determine if either the policy or practice needs to be amended, changed or revised. Once this process has been established, annual reviews of lesson plans will be easily referenced with clarity on the policy that will need review along with it.

### **Learning Management System**

As part of a larger effort to transition the Department into a technology-enabled correction organization, the Training & Development Division has sourced a Learning Management System (LMS) to manage all training related data and reporting, but more importantly to support the roll out of online, self-paced learning for the staff in the organization. A team of people were hired to be part of the Training Division and manage the LMS system in collaboration with the IT Division. The LMS system will allow for the organization of training materials, records of attendance and monitoring of mandatory training requirements. It will also establish continuity across all training materials while managing the oversight of the training materials and provide data that will inform a process for continuous quality improvement.

### **Summary**

The work on this project has commenced, and as the NYCDOC moves through this process there will be much to learn and grow from. The enthusiasm with which the uniform and non-uniform personnel are embracing the new structure, bringing their ideas to the table, is enabling the progress as an organization. Further development of instructor skills through ongoing training, observation and assessment will allow for continuous quality improvement that will inform the necessary tools and support necessary to grow and enhance learning across the Department.

At a minimum, this work will perpetuate the questions and conversations around the establishment of minimum standards for correctional training programs across the country. Ideally, this paper will help other jurisdictions think about how they would examine their training culture and training methods as the research in correctional practices continues to evolve.

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## **2019 IACTP WEBINARS**

**Date:** December 11, 2019

**Presenter:** Dr. Penny Veit-Hetletved Director of Education, Staff Development, and Core Correctional Practices of the ND DOCR

**Presenter Email:** [phetletved@nd.gov](mailto:phetletved@nd.gov)

**Title of Webinar:** Assessment—what does that even mean?

**Description of Webinar:** This session will discuss the world of assessment and how it applies to training personnel. Participants will receive resources, examples, and an opportunity to discuss obstacles and how it can be framed in a measurable (non-emotional) way.

### **IACTP Regional Training Initiative**

Is your agency seeking professional, interactive correctional based training? The IACTP Board is seeking partners to host regional training sessions.

Who: Seeking Federal, State, Local Correctional Agencies  
What: Regionalized Training (Topics to Be Determined)  
Where: Host Agency's Training Academy  
When: To Be Determined By Host Agency  
How: For additional information, please contact: Elizabeth Kreger @ 614.981.8436  
Elizabeth.Kreger@odrc.state.oh.us

### **Check out the new structure of our membership fees**

<b>Type of Membership</b>	<b>Annual Dues</b>
New Member	\$50.00
Renewing Member	\$50.00
Full-Time Student (w/ID)	\$35.00
Affiliate Organization	\$250.00
Associate/Corporate	\$1,000.00
Agency Membership: (3-8 Members)	\$43.00 per person
Agency Membership: (9-12 Members)	\$42.00 per person
Agency Membership: (13-16 Members)	\$40.00 per person
Agency Membership: (17-20 Members)	\$38.00 per person
Agency Membership: (21-24 Members)	\$36.00 per person
Agency Membership (25-30 Members)	\$34.00 per person
Agency Membership (31-60 Members)	\$33.00 per person

## ***The Forgotten Public Servant***

By Aaron J. Krahl, Tennessee Department of Correction

In 2005, I began my career in corrections. During orientation for pre-service training, a lone instructor entered the auditorium and stood before the class. The instructor, in a perfectly pressed uniform complimented by flawlessly shined boots, welcomed the incumbent cadets and narrated the academy's handbook. Though much of what he said has long been forgotten, his command presence and the "two cents" he offered during his closing remarks remain fresh in my memory. Initially, the "two cents" offered seemed frivolous, something most would consider common sense. However, after years of navigating the complexities associated with corrections, I have come to understand and appreciate two things. First, the value of simplicity and, second, common sense is not common.

***"A penny for your thoughts, I am going to leave you all with my two cents". "First, never lose your sense of humor and, second, never lose yourself to this job".*** The instructor continued, elaborating on his "two cents", and said "if you find yourself watching a comedy with a significant other, friends, or family and unable to laugh with those around you, talk to someone". "Over time, being a correctional officer will change you many things about you". "If you don't believe me, take this into consideration; you are voluntarily serving a 20 to 30-year sentence". "Technically, as a correctional officer, you will spend more time and share more holidays with convicted felons than you will with your own family". The instructor paused for a brief moment and allowed time for his message to resonate with each person. Following the brief pause, the instructor continued and stated, "the best advice I could give any new correctional officer is to be selfish with your off days". "During your career, you will willingly and unwillingly sacrifice more than time to this career; never sacrifice time with friends and family, or the activities and hobbies you enjoy, to cover a shift". "The benefits of any career come from working to live, not living to work". At the time, I was naïve to the complexities of corrections and wouldn't understand the relevance behind the "two cents" offered until two years later.

Following my pre-service graduation, I returned to my facility and was assigned to the general population unit on second shift. At my facility, walking in to work second shift was similar to a gladiator walking into a coliseum. The officers on second shift were a very close-knit group since the majority of inmate-on-inmate or inmate-on-staff assaults occurred during this shift and little emphasis was placed on interpersonal communication. The comradery among second shift correctional officers was established and reinforced by everyone's ability to protect themselves and their willingness to protect each other. Consequently, those unwilling or unable to adhere to those standards were reassigned to another shift.

It was shortly after being permanently assigned to second shift that I established a professional and personal friendship with Mac. As a new correctional officer, Mac was assigned as my mentor and tasked with the responsibility of ensuring I could successfully perform operational procedures and comply with department policy. On the first day Mac established his professional and personal expectations for me to ensure a successful working relationship. A penny for your thoughts, Mac's "two cents" offered were to **"work hard and work diligently for the citizens that pay your salary" and "if we are going to share breaks together for the next three months, we will not discuss work during**

**that time**". Mac continued and stated, "corrections is a family and during that time we should all be spending that time learning about each other".

At first, as a new correctional officer eager to learn every nuance of the profession, it was difficult for me to engage in casual conversation with Mac during our breaks. After our first week together, Mac and I met in the training office for our scheduled debrief. Confident the week of praise and recognition received would be elaborately discussed. I was shocked that none of Mac's feedback was work-related. Instead, Mac utilized the time to share something that I had heard before. Sitting across from me Mac said, "**a person is more than their career**" and "**don't let being a correctional officer define your path in life**". After acknowledging his comments, I responded by asking about my performance for the week. Mac responded and ended our debriefing by saying, "**developing yourself professionally is of little importance if you fail to develop yourself as a person**".

During that weekend, I reflected on Mac's comments and struggled with my ego. The night before returning to work, I recognized the meaning behind Mac's comments. Realizing a mentor relationship is transactional, I had spent a week withdrawing professional knowledge while not offering anything in return. Aware that I had not deposited as much as I had been withdrawing, I placed more emphasis on personal communication during the second week.

Unaware at the time, the second week of my corrections career would initiate the most significant and transformational period in my life. Though he was ten years my senior and a father, Mac and I shared many common interests and hobbies. Over the years, we discussed everything from sports to philosophical theory and nurtured healthy competition in everything from training scores to Scrabble. Days off from work were spent together. Our significant others became friends and his children accepted me as family. From January 2005 to September 2007, our friendship enriched both our professional and personal life. Mac had been promoted to Corporal and, though only one slot was available, we were both selected to the Special Response Team. The team director claimed that since a clear decision could not be made, he had to select us both. During this period of time, Mac and I had become the *Maverick* and *Goose* of our department. A friendship parallel to kinship, it was the fall of 2007 that the "two cents" offered by Mac would not only be the most insightful but his last.

In September of 2007, Mac's significant other contacted me and said, "Mac's in the hospital". Concerned, I asked her permission to visit him after my shift. After a brief pause, she responded by saying "I don't think he will be here much longer but, call me when you are off shift and let's talk". Following my shift, I learned Mac had struggled with substance abuse and was admitted to the hospital following an accident. Before our conversation ended, I asked her to take care of him and relay a message that I would call him in the morning before stopping by the house. The following day, Mac and I spoke on the phone about his accident. Mac assured me things were fine, explaining he had drunk too much and fallen off the roof. After the two of us expressed care and concern through the exchange of sarcastic jabs, I hung up the phone and looked forward to seeing him and his family on the weekend. At the time, I did not realize this would be our final conversation. A few days later, I was devastated after learning Mac had committed suicide. In the days, weeks, months, and years following his death, I struggled with accepting and coming to terms with Mac's finite decision.

Following Mac's suicide, the familial culture and morale at work began to dissolve. The personal conversations among correctional staff eroded, lighthearted debates were replaced by work-related discussion or harsh criticisms. As the previously strong interpersonal bonds weakened, cliques and rumors grew powerful. Over time those who felt overwhelmed or unable to share light-hearted moments with their peers began resigning. One at a time a department with minimal turnover experienced a mass exodus. Departing staff were replaced by new faces that would become infected and adopt this toxic culture. It did not take me long to become a statistic. Prior to submitting my formal resignation, I reflected back on many of the "two cents" offered during my personal conversations with Mac and struggled with my decision. Conflicted between **"Walk away from this career before you become complacent or act in a manner that would bring shame to your family or bring resentment or hatred from someone else's family"** and **"do not grant anyone the satisfaction of knowing their words or their actions caused you to become upset, maintain a strong poker face and impermeable to influence"**.

It would take a few years before making a decision to return to the law enforcement community. During that intermission, I worked to understand if I enjoyed the law enforcement career or if I enjoyed the familial bond shared among my peers. It was during this period of time that I completed my psychology degree and began to understand how "two cents" logic can simplify complexities associated with life and work culture. It was through this period of personal development that I began to come to terms and accept Mac's suicide, converting his legacy from tragedy to triumph.

Mac was not the first, nor the last, person to commit suicide. Tragically, officer suicide has become a national epidemic within the law enforcement community. Based on statistical research, the suicide rate within the law enforcement community is two times higher than that of the general public. Previously conducted statistical research indicates correctional officers have a 39% higher rate of suicide than any other profession (Reavy, 2017). The United States Department of Justice reported the annual average of correctional officer suicides at 156 (2013).

In October 2019, ABC News reported the number of correctional officer suicides was tied for the most in a single year (Barr & Thomas, 2019). In an effort to provide their audience a cause and effect explanation for the escalating rates of suicide among correctional officers, ABC News attempted to simplify the complexity behind this epidemic. Bypassing all previously conducted research, a reliable source provided speculation and offered their "two cents". Stating the increased prison population and shortage of correctional officers has created a more demanding work environment which has elevated levels of work-related stress among correctional staff. The reliable source continued and stated, in an attempt to decrease suicide rates over the last few years, correctional officers receive suicide training annually and, as part of their benefits, have access to an Employee Assistance Program. However, a question that was not asked, how does a correctional officer find the time to attend suicide training or take advantage of the Employee Assistance Program if their work has become more demanding? Suicide is a self-inflicted death in which a person makes a conscious effort to intentionally end their life. A social phenomenon, suicide is connected to recent events or current conditions in a person's life, the interaction between many psychological and sociological variables. In his book, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Albert Camus offered his "two cents" and theorized a person commits

suicide when they believe their **life has no purpose** or their purpose in **the world has no meaning**.

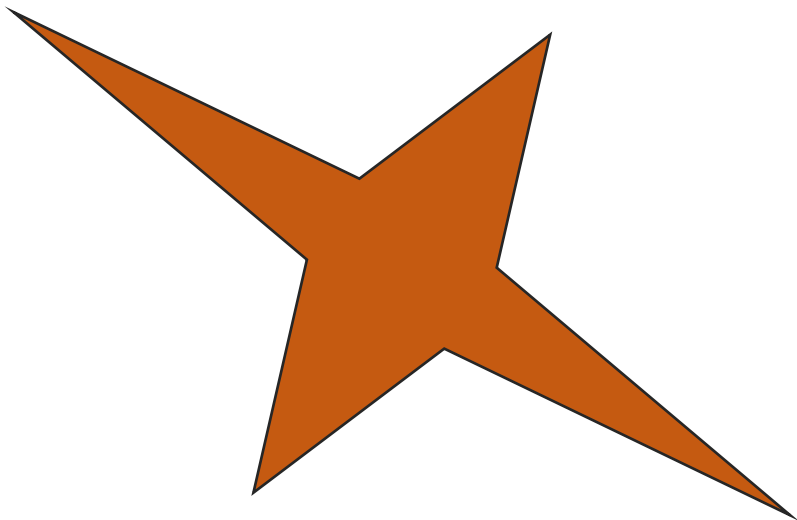
Reflecting back on Mac's life and the many "two cents" deposited throughout the years, I have come to terms with his death. I may never fully understand his daily suffering but I have come to admire his courage and strength. Mac's battle with suicidal thoughts started before our friendship began in 2005. Ten years my senior, Mac had been a correctional officer since graduating college with a degree in criminal justice. Over the course of his career, he was exposed to many occupational and personal stressors. Years after his death, I would conduct my own psychological autopsy and learn more about Mac's life from those who knew him best; his family. The purpose and rationale? Not to find closure or compound his family's grief but to find a way to forgive myself. Following his death, I went through all the stages of grief but I remained angry at myself for not recognizing any of the warning signs and failing him and his family.

After talking with Mac's family, I learned that the many "two cents" offered throughout the years were his strategies for maintaining his sobriety, managing his stress, and coping with his suicidal thoughts. Mac's passion for creating a family culture at work and learning about his peers on a personal level was his way to put others before himself. Mac found purpose in helping others while covertly learning new coping skills through every interaction. Mac used to say, "being a correctional officer is the easiest and the hardest career in the world". Explaining, "we are in the business of managing human behavior through the daily exchange of life skills" and "each interaction is mutually beneficial". However, "there are days or situations where neither person has the life skills necessary and aggression or violence is exchanged". Following a use of force incident, Mac would always reach out to the officers involved and offer them his time if they wanted to talk. It was his belief that, even if the use of force was necessary or justified, a person should never feel comfortable with or feel no remorse for aggressing on another person. Reminding people that should they find themselves comfortable or unremorseful following a physical altercation, then being a correctional officer was not the career for them.

Mac's legacy is a triumph, not a tragedy. Through his battle with suicidal thoughts, he created a supportive family culture. Ensuring his peers never lost themselves or their sense of humor by inspiring lighthearted conversation and encouraging open communication. In closing, a penny for your thoughts, this story I leave with you as my "two cents" on how we can lower correctional officer suicide rates. "Create a supportive and nurturing culture" and "be mindful that every interaction is an opportunity to exchange life skills that could mask or unmask vulnerabilities".

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# YESTERDAY IN IACTP

## **NIC Academy Holds Video Conferences on Critical Topics** **Winter 1995 Journal:** **By Ida M. Halasz, Ph.D.**

With “so much to train, so little time and resources,” it’s no surprise that the National Institute of Corrections Academy has found satellite videoconferencing to be timely and cost-effective way to train thousands of correctional practitioners nationally. These videoconferences are basically like viewing live television, with the opportunity for participants to telephone in questions for experts to answer during the program. While many people prefer to attend meetings and training sessions in person, it’s not possible to reach thousands of practitioners as quickly or as inexpensively through on site events. In addition, videoconferences are compact, 2-hour sessions that can train many staff members of an agency at the same time, saving agency dollars for staff time and travel. During 1995, there were 22,000 participants in two videoconferences produced by the Academy. The first was on “Managing Tuberculosis in a Correctional Setting” and the second was on “Implementing the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in Corrections.” In addressing critical issues with serious medical and legal implications for corrections, these videoconferences provided cutting-edge information to practitioners. Many participating site coordinators held meetings afterwards to start planning new programs for their agencies or requested additional information from the NIC Information Center...

# What can IACTP Do for you?

We need your help!

We need to know if you  
have any ideas or needs  
that IACTP can help  
with.

Please send your  
responses to:

<http://www.iactp.org>

"Alone we can do so little;  
**together**  
we can do so much."  
~Helen Keller



If you change  
**Nothing,**  
nothing will  
change.



## The Certified Correctional Trainer

### The Purpose of Trainer Certification:

The Correctional Trainer Certification Commission (CTCC), the International Association of Correctional Training Personnel (IACTP), and the American Jail Association (AJA) promote the concept of voluntary certification for all correctional trainers. Certification is one part of a process called credentialing. It focuses specifically on the individual and is an indication of current competency in a specialized field. Correctional trainers who become certified will be distinguished as individuals who have reached one of the highest levels of achievement in their field.

Candidates must have an aggregate of **three years of experience** as a correctional trainer as defined in the CCT Handbook for Candidates (subject to change). Anyone who provides training for managers, staff, and/or volunteers of a correctional agency. Adjunct or field trainers and faculty of institutions of higher learning in the areas of corrections, criminal and juvenile justice (and related areas) are eligible to participate in the certification process.

This an example of some comments made during a recent AJA survey:

*“It has helped me by ensuring that I continue my involvement in training for recertification. Staying current with best practice always helps.”*

*“In addition to providing immediate affirmation of additional credentialing as a correctional trainer, the CCT certification has provided opportunities for increased growth via the necessity to keep pace with correctional training trends.”*

*“Professionally, the CCT has opened doors within the agency, which are directly related to knowledge learned during preparation for the exam.”*

The CCT is a path toward success within one’s agency. Are you interested?

To obtain more information download the [CCT Handbook](#) (PDF).

The application can be downloaded at [CCT Application](#) (PDF).



## International Association of Correctional Training Personnel (IACTP) Awards of Excellence



Please submit nominations for the 2020 IACTP Awards of Excellence. Annually our organization strives to recognize excellence in correctional training in the following categories:

**Specialized Topics Award** - given for high quality training in a particular course, program or subject.

**Innovative Approaches Award** - given for high quality training which advances the state of the art in correctional training.

**Training System Award** - given for high quality training throughout an entire system or training department.

**Commercial Program Award** - given for a high quality training offered by a commercial vendor.

**President's Award** - presented by the IACTP President for outstanding contribution to the Association and/or the field of correctional training.

### INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CORRECTIONAL TRAINING PERSONNEL (IACTP) Trainer of the Year Award Guidelines

#### General

This award is to recognize individuals who have made contributions in training Correction's Professionals. The following guidelines apply to all nominations for the Trainer of the Year Award.

1. Membership to IACTP is a prerequisite for this award.
2. The candidate may not nominate him or herself.
3. The candidate provided exemplary training that surpassed the organization's guidelines while meeting personalized learning strategies for trainees.
4. Individuals may not be considered if they have received this award within the last 3 years. **Application Requirements**

The application form must be completed in full, with a narrative not to exceed 500 words, in support of the nomination. Any incomplete applications will be refused.

#### **Awarded Recipient**

The Trainer of the Year will be announced at the IACTP Conference during the Awards Banquet. The recipient will be expected and be allotted the following:

- Receive an Award.
- Receive a 1-year membership to IACTP, the year after receiving the award.
- Receive a conference registration, the year after receiving the award.
- Receive a three nights free hotel room, the year after receiving the award.
- The recipient will be asked to present at the conference the following year.

All the above awards will be presented at the 2020 National Training and Performance Conference hosted by IACTP. 2020's conference will be held in Portland, Maine from September 22-25, 2020.