

Stress in Corrections: A Critical Racist, Feminist and Neoliberalism Analysis

by

Jasbir Kaur Shoker

Criminology Certificate, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, 2002

BSW, University of Victoria, 2006

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Supervisory Committee

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Dr. Mehmoona Moosa-Mitha, Supervisor
School of Social Work

Dr. Billie Allan, Academic Unit Member
School of Social Work

Abstract

This study explores the risk and resiliency factors for stress within a correctional environment and how correctional staff are impacted personally and professionally by occupational stress. Employing a qualitative research methodology, this research utilized thematic analysis to examine existing literature on stress in corrections. Study findings revealed that high levels of stress impacted the physical health, emotional well-being, family and relationships of correctional staff as well as the quality of service provided to clients. The risk factors for stress were identified as increased workload, lack of resources, time pressures, performance expectations, the culture of the criminal justice system, job experience/training, inadequate management support and dangerous working conditions. The resiliency factors utilized by correctional staff to cope with stress were divided into the themes of colleagues, family, social activities, career changes, training and organizational support and self-preservation. The themes of race, gender and neoliberalism also emerged throughout the literature and a Critical Race Feminism lens was applied to explore how these themes were interconnected with stress within a correctional environment. A deductive analysis of the themes of race, gender and neoliberalism revealed the further complicated nature of occupational stress and how racism, sexism and the infiltration of neoliberal policies contribute as risk factors for stress.

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Glossary of Terms

This study utilizes terms that have conceptual meaning critical to comprehension. These terms provide the framework for foundational knowledge and tenets of this study. The terms are outlined as Probation and Parole Officer, Correctional Officer and Correctional Supervisor, stress, burnout, coping, resiliency, race, gender and neoliberalism.

Probation Officers and Parole Officers:

Probation Officers and *Parole Officers* typically share similar job duties with one main exception. A parole officer supervises offenders who have been released from prison after serving part of their sentence, while a probation officer supervises offenders who are sentenced to serve probation in the community instead of being incarcerated. Both are designated as law enforcement officials who are responsible for public safety and the management of sentenced offenders. Probation Officers and Parole Officers usually work standard office hours but can be physically located in a correctional facility or in the community.

Correctional Officer and Correctional Supervisor:

The terms *Correctional Officer* or *Correctional Supervisor* as utilized in this thesis refers to correctional staff who are designated to manage offender populations within custodial and prison settings. Correctional Officers maintain the safety and security of prisons while they monitor, supervise and interact with offenders. They typically have rotational shift work as custody centers operate on a 24 hours basis.

Correctional Staff:

The term *correctional staff* is utilized throughout this thesis and encompasses the positions of Parole Officer, Probation Officer, Correctional Officer, and Correctional Supervisor. As described above these occupations are responsible for the management of offenders within a custody or community setting.

Stress:

Stress is a normal phenomenon that assists organisms in adapting to the environment. It is an extremely complex interaction between the body and the mind. I use a definition of *stress* described by Lazarus (2006), in terms of a disruption of the equilibrium of the cognitive-emotional-environmental system by external factors. If those external factors include events, people, and duties of the work environment, then the related stress is called *occupational stress* (Lazarus, 2006). Given this definition, I use the terms *stress* and *work-place stress* interchangeably throughout this thesis.

Burnout:

I use a definition of *burnout* developed by Maslach (1998), which says that burnout is a consequence of adverse working conditions characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization or cynicism, and reduced personal accomplishment or professional efficacy.

Coping:

I use a definition of *coping* developed by Lazarus and his colleagues, which says that coping is defined as a person's constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the person's resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Resiliency:

I use the definition of *resiliency*, explained by the American Psychological Association (2018), as an individual's learned capacity to “bounce back” from difficult experiences including but not limited to personal tragedy, threats, trauma and/or significant sources of stress. Resiliency in this sense is positive coping behaviors, thoughts and actions that can be learned or developed over time in individuals.

Race:

I use a definition of *race* as a social construction that denotes the colour of a person's skin for social purposes. Although race has been associated with political, biological, and judicial phenomenon, the social construction of race establishes that race was created for purposes of control and domination (Smedley & Smedley, 2005).

Gender:

I use a definition of *gender* as a social construction derived from sociocultural influences throughout an individual's development (Schneider, Gruman & Coutts, 2005). Gender identity can be affected by, and is different from one society to another depending on the way the members of society evaluate the role of females and males. The terms of gender and sex are often difficult to misused or confused and to make the distinction clearer, gender is learned from society while sex is inherited (Boss, 2008).

Neoliberalism:

I use a definition of *neoliberalism* as an emphasis on individual responsibility versus social or government responsibility. Particularly, in a neoliberal society individual responsibility

to care for yourself and be autonomous is valued, and if you are unable to provide care for yourself you are seen as a burden on society (Moosa-Mitha, 2017).

Dedication

I would like to acknowledge all of the assistance and support I received from my research supervisor, Dr. Mehmoona Moosa-Mitha, committee member, Billie Allan, program assistant Jaime Ready, and to the UVIC School of Social Work faculty and staff. I am beyond grateful of the support, kind words, guidance, feedback and encouragement I have received through this journey of learning. To Dr. Mehmoona Moosa-Mitha, thank you for your constant belief in me and challenging me to always think critically and fully apply myself. I have gained so much knowledge from all of you and my work would not have been possible without your support and guidance.

I am grateful and give thanks to my family. My dear husband Sunny who has been my steady rock and supporter throughout all these years of pursuing my educational endeavours. Thank you for always believing in me, especially during those times where I thought I could no longer continue with this work. You stood by me and dealt with all my craziness, stack of papers everywhere, falling asleep with highlighters and pencils in our bed and not to mention all the chaos associated with being first time parents. I love you for everything you did to provide me with the time I needed to complete this study. My dear daughter Avaya, I started this thesis when I was six months pregnant with you and soon you will be turning two years old. To be honest I felt very guilty at times, because I would have preferred to be snuggling with you instead of working into the late night on my thesis or papers. But I am comforted by the thought that you were in good hands, and I was always close by to tend to you. All this hard work and sacrifice is to provide you with the best life I possibly can, mommy loves you always.

Also, I express my gratitude to my mother, Jito and late father, Gurnam. As new immigrants to this country you both worked relentlessly to give your children the best life

possible. Even though both of you did not have a formal education, you valued and continuously stressed the importance of attending school. It is because of your sacrifices and wisdom, that I am here today accomplishing my educational goal. I hope my work makes you proud as I am very blessed to have you as my parents. To my siblings, nieces and nephews, thank you for all the laughs, tears and joyous times we have shared throughout the years that have truly been my saving grace. Life is short and I am lucky to have so many supportive people in my life that not only see the best in me, but push me to pursue new goals and accomplish anything I set my mind to. Thank you for your ongoing love and support. I dedicate this thesis to you.

And last, but never least, my gratitude and thanks to the Almighty who has always been by my side in darkness and in light. I end this dedication with a Sikh Prayer that sends blessings and prosperity for all.

Nanak Naam Chardi Kala, Tere Bane Sarbat Ka Pala

॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ॥ ਤੇਰੇ ਭਾਣੇ ਸਰਬੱਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ॥

Introduction

Stress has been identified by many health care practitioners as a silent killer due to its physical, emotional and psychological side effects (Cohen, 2000). In the workplace, traumatic stressors can be categorized as primary and secondary trauma (Fisher, 2003). Primary traumatic stress is defined as direct exposure to an incident and secondary traumatic stress relates to the indirect experience of a traumatic incident (Fisher, 2003). For example, if a client has verbally threatened to harm their direct supervisor, the supervisor has experienced primary traumatic stress. Staff in corrections are often exposed to secondary traumatic stress and as Figley (1995) points out, “people can be traumatized without actually being physically harmed or threatened with harm. They can be traumatized simply by learning about a traumatic event” (p.4). In many ways, Probation/Parole Officers (PO), Correctional Officers (CO) and Correctional Supervisors (CS) all deal with high workplace stressors.

In particular, PO’s supervise clients who have been convicted of a range of criminal offences, including domestic violence offenders and sex offenders. In these cases PO’s must listen to client disclosures, and review detailed police reports, psychological assessments and victim impact statements. The material is often quite graphic in nature and the ongoing review of such documents may result in secondary traumatic stress effects. For CO’s and CS’s who work in custody settings there is an inherent risk for physical injury, threats and stress in cases where an officer has actually been victimized by violence on the job. In all cases, staff in corrections face dangerous situations and these workplace stressors increase the risk for negative effects in individual officers and organizations (Fisher, 2003). As such, it is important to explore the risk factors for stress and what impact stress can have on the personal and professional lives of correctional staff. In order to manage their stress levels and effectively tend to their job duties,

staff in corrections may benefit from learning about risk factors and resiliency resources to effectively cope with work-related stress. Furthermore, an examination is required on how race, gender and power intersects with an individual's ability to address stressors within the workplace. In addition, the role of neoliberalism will also be examined and how it contributes to stress. Many factors influence stress in our lives and while some are based on individual circumstances others are structurally rooted in systemic issues beyond our control. Particularly, in a neoliberal society individual responsibility to care for yourself and be autonomous is valued, and if you are unable to provide care for yourself you are seen as a burden on society (Moosa-Mitha, 2017). Adding to the complexity of stress is the ongoing changes to workplace procedures that are largely attributed to neo-liberal policies that emphasize individual interests over the collective well-being of all (Comack, Fabre & Burgher, 2015). A review of existing literature will form the foundation of this study.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, addressing stress within the workplace has become a competing priority for many organizations. While employees are paying close attention to the impact of work-related stress on their physical, emotional and mental health; employers are also concerned about how stress impacts productivity, absenteeism and staff retention (Fisher, 2003). Moreover, stress-related symptoms, effects and illnesses have resulted in direct and indirect costs to individuals, organizations and society. Because staff in corrections have a vital role in offender management, there is a need to better understand the stress that may impact staffs' wellbeing and professional effectiveness. Corrections staff provide a valuable service to protect the public and it is important that factors that impact their well-being are understood so they can effectively

manage offenders and themselves. Lastly, research is needed to learn more about individual resiliency factors that enable staff in corrections to cope with work-related stress.

Stress in Corrections

There are a number of sources of stress in organizations that manage offender populations, and only part of that stress is associated with working with offenders. Staff in corrections are exposed to stressors of varying degrees throughout their daily routines as the clients they supervise are often facing issues of homelessness, mental illness and/or substance use. Although everyone experiences some level of stress in their lives, those working in corrections must work with an offender population that requires a distinct set of experience and knowledge. This knowledge includes the ability to be able to handle traumatic incidents and work with clients who have complex needs. Since corrections staff are working with people who break the law, many details of the work that they do is not publicized like other law enforcement professions such as police or first responders. This leads to corrections staff working in an isolated profession where public support or acknowledgment of the importance of their role is non-existent.

The working conditions for a PO include supervising adult clients “who may have multiple legal, health, social and/or mental health challenges which may involve exposure to hostile, abusive, and/or potentially violent clients; and exposure to traumatic material/images” (Adult Probation Officer Applicant Information Package, 2015, n.p.). According to Finn and Kuck (2003), most probation and parole officers attributed stress to organizational causes such as high caseloads, excessive paperwork and meeting deadlines rather than the job itself, or interacting with offenders. Other sources of organizational stress, as highlighted by Finn and Kuck (2003), included; inadequate supervision, a lack of promotional opportunities, danger,

changing or conflicting policies and procedures, being held accountable for offender's behaviour, and a lack of community resources for helping offenders. Taxman and Gordon (2009) also reported that discontent with supervisors, a lack of participation in the decision-making process and job independence were also associated with stress (p. 698).

There is also a growing body of research that has examined the sources of stress for correctional officers. Brough and Williams (2007) indicated that occupational stress for correctional officers was due to overcrowding and increases in the number of inmates with mental health issues and violent behaviours. Furthermore, they identified the organizational structure of correctional centers, shift-based work patterns, and negative perception of corrections staff by the public and power imbalances between staff and inmates as additional stressors for correctional officers.

Similar to other front-line occupations, the impact of trauma on officers is traditionally given little significance in corrections. Some officers are reluctant to come forward out of fear that they will be deemed weak or stigmatized if they admit to experiencing the effects of psychological or emotional trauma. (Fisher, 2001a; Fisher 2001b). This subculture within corrections may cause further damage and even increase stressors for employees who fail to acknowledge what they experience and don't tend to their personal self-care.

It is clear that working in the field of corrections is highly stressful. However, what remains to be explored is what specific workplace and individual risk factors are related to symptoms of traumatic stressors and resiliency factors. Additional research is needed in this area. More importantly, social identities such as race, gender, sexuality, and Indigeneity should also be examined more closely particularly in relation to levels of stress experienced. This is because probation and correctional officers are representative of all diverse groups and because

marginalised populations are over-represented in the correctional system (Allan & Smylie, 2015). It is for this reason that I have utilised a critical race feminist (CRF) theoretical framework throughout the thesis. The following section provides a discussion and definition of CRF.

Critical Race Feminism and Corrections

The following section is a discussion on the relevance of a CRF framework in the field of corrections. Throughout this thesis I have applied a CRF framework to analyze stress in the lives of correctional staff because stress can be impacted by various contributors, including race and gender. The framework of CRF examines race and racism's impact on systemic structures in society, as well as challenges the disproportionality of minority/ethnic/racial representation in the workplace (Yosso, 2005). CRF calls for critically analyzing the experiences of women of colour and the social construction of gender identity. There is a lack of research in the area of anti-racist or gendered analysis of stressors within corrections and I hope that my analysis of stress through a CRF framework will influence further research and understanding in this area. I feel that professionals in the field of corrections need to explore racial and gendered influences on stress within the workplace because there are multiple contributing factors and if these complexities are not examined or understood by workers there could be negative impacts on workers' health and the service they provide. The focus of my analysis will be on race, gender and the neoliberal environment in which corrections staff practice and how these interlock with stressors in the workplace. I have chosen to explore literature in the area of stress in corrections through a CRF lens as I feel critical analysis in this area is needed to educate workers on how multiple variables influence their ability to experience and respond to stressors. By examining stress through multiple intersections, I will be able to explore the variation of complexities of stressors. Given

the lack of previous research focused on an anti-racist and gendered analysis of workplace stressors, the current study will be exploratory in nature.

On the basis of my own experiences of being a probation officer and knowing other officers closely, it is my belief that many staff members in corrections are struggling with repeatedly painful and even horrific experiences that are disruptive to their everyday life. I anticipate that staff in corrections grapple with the difficult task of integrating these disruptions into previously held core beliefs and also struggle with the physical, psychological, and behavioural effects associated with stress and trauma. Given my own experiences, as a PO and woman of color, dealing with the emotions, anxiety, the frustrations, anger, hurt and powerlessness of day-to-day case practice, I believe there is an ethical and moral reason for chronicling the manifestation of stress in the workplace. Through my studies in the field of social work, I have been able to examine how race, gender and power are active cognitive influences in how I conduct myself in professional practice and personal life. I feel that these factors are important to consider for all staff in corrections so workers can be better equipped to understand and manage their personal health and effectively tend to their job duties.

Furthermore, the ethical imperative speaks to an obligation that staff in corrections have to provide appropriate and effective supervision to some of society's most vulnerable people. If staff in corrections as professionals do not recognize the emotional and personal impact on their work, they run the risk of failing to recognize the effects of secondary trauma and thereby jeopardizing the care they provide (Fisher, 2003). The moral necessity lies in the obligation to provide vital, effective, and excellent service to society's most vulnerable and that can only be achieved if staff in corrections take the necessary steps to manage their own self-care. But self-care has been predominantly understood in individualistic terms as promoting individual well-

being. Greater awareness around the gendered and racial impacts of workplace stressors emphasizes collective responsibility to take a pro-active role in reducing negative impacts of stress, instead of promoting individual responsibility.

Purpose of Research and Research Questions

The purpose of this research is to analyze the stressors that correctional staff experience and to identify risk and resiliency factors through a thematic analysis of relevant existing literature. In this study I utilize an anti-racist gendered framework to critically analyze literature and the relationship between these factors and stress levels. This study will also explore how neo-liberal policies that form the policy background to working within the corrections system at present and contribute to the stress faced by correctional staff. In this study, my central question is:

- What impact does workplace stress have on the personal and professional life of correctional staff?

My secondary questions are:

- What are the potential risk factors of ongoing workplace stressors?
- What resiliency factors or supports are being utilized?

Chapter One: Methodology

This chapter details the chosen methodology utilized for this research. I will first outline the research purpose and aims. Next, I begin discussing the methodology utilized in the research by defining critical race feminism (CRF) as the chosen theoretical framework that will guide my research method and data analysis. I then proceed to discuss my research method by the steps I undertook to collect data and describe the process of thematic analysis I underwent to analyze the data. I will provide an explanation of my role of the researcher taking into account my own personal bias, social location and ethical considerations of undertaking and analysing the research. Lastly, I highlight the strengths, limitations, and my motivation in the research.

Research Purpose and Aims

The journey to this research began with an examination of literature that detailed how stress manifests in the professional and personal lives of correctional staff. The data collected was both qualitative and quantitative, and I utilized thematic analysis to explore the prevalent themes. This approach allowed me to review a large set of data that covered a wide range of factors influencing stress in the workplace, including racial and gendered disparities. Using a CRF framework I undertook thematic analysis that included responses from over 7100 correctional staff that were interviewed as part of the seventeen studies that I reviewed.

This research aims to identify a range of factors that influence stress, coping and resiliency in the lives of correctional staff who are responsible for offender management. I will be conducting a critical analysis of stress that will examine the concept of stress through a CRF lens as well as more generally. The critical analysis of literature will include a focus on the intersections of race, gender, and neoliberal influences and its relation to stress in the workplace.

Since there is not an extensive amount of research on correctional staff using an anti-racist or gendered framework, utilizing CRF will address a gap in the research that will allow for future research to develop and be conducted in this area.

Much of the research conducted on stress is individualistic in nature, putting the onus on the individual PO and CO as responsible for experiencing and in managing their own stress. There is a lack of attention given to how various interlocking systemic factors influence and also play a role in experiences of stress. I will be examining both individual and systemic sources of stressors in my research. By so doing, I aim to contribute towards critical research that alters professional and social perceptions of stress as a private problem to one that sees it as a public issue. Related to this research is my personal goal of continuing to help people change their thinking around stress as a personal failure and instead recognize the many external factors influencing stress that are beyond their control.

I further hope that this research will assist front-line workers in the human service industry, beyond COs and POs, including social workers, counsellors, nurses and police officers, by advancing a better understanding of how stress can impact their professional and personal lives and what can be done about it. I believe it is especially important to address this topic as I feel that many front-line workers who work with vulnerable populations do not have a collective outlet to share their experiences. Many workers may not be aware of the role intersections of race, gender, and neo-liberal influences play in contributing to stress in their lives. By examining the issue of workplace stress through a CRF, I hope that all front line workers will find comfort in knowing that they are not solely responsible for experiencing stress and that the interlocking and systemic contributing factors of stress has an impact on all front line workers.

Methodology

Methodology provides a guideline and framework to work from as I go through the research process. Without a properly structured and implemented methodology, this research would not be viewed as reliable or credible in academia or in the professional realm. For this research, the methodology I utilized was qualitative in nature where I undertook a literature review of relevant studies that examined all aspects of stress in the lives of POs and COs which I then analyzed into themes using a CRF framework to undertake my analysis. In this section, I explore the rationale for the qualitative approach I took in my study and discuss CRF as my chosen theoretical framework.

Qualitative Study

This research focuses on themes derived from an analysis of literature which examined stress in the workplace in the lives of POs and COs and included participant responses from interviews and surveys. Since the literature included quantitative and qualitative data, I was able to have access to different types of data. As Burgess-Proctor (2006) points out, “quantitative methods are especially useful for uncovering macro-level social processes, whereas qualitative methods are especially useful for uncovering micro-level social processes” (p. 41). In the area of stress, there are both micro and macro level systems at play and by analyzing the themes prevalent in both sets of data I was able to explore ways in which impacts of stress are concurrently produced. Further, qualitative data can interrogate sensitive areas or matters that are difficult to discuss by utilizing a combined strategy that may be able to explore personal experiences as well as social power and privilege (Burgess-Proctor, 2006). For example, a mixed-methods design was utilized by Bridges and Steen (1998) to examine racial disparities in probation officers’ assessments of juvenile offenders. The quantitative analysis indicated that

differences in attributes about the causes of crime impact the relationship between race and officers' sentencing recommendations. However, the qualitative analysis of the POs narrative revealed that "aspects of social context" are as important to officers as are legal variables such as prior criminal history (Bridges & Steen, 1998, p. 558). From the results of the qualitative data analysis, Bridges and Steen (1998) conclude, "some offenders are perceived as threatening and at risk of reoffending because their personal characteristics [i.e., their social location] and their behavior are salient in officials "working explanations of criminal behavior" (p. 567). In this study, the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods provided important insight into the ways in which race, and other aspects of a defendant's social location influences his or her treatment in the criminal justice system. As this example illustrates, a research design that uses a qualitative or mixed-methods approach is particularly relevant to researching the issue of stress in the workplace as there is little research conducted in the area of how racial and gendered identities of correctional staff impact experiences of stress.

Critical Race Feminism

A CRF framework guided this research due to its activist roots in social justice and consideration of how race, class, gender, patriarchy, power relations and oppression intersect. The foundational principles of CRF emerge from Critical Race Theory, and were largely influenced by black feminists and feminists of colour who challenged dominant White mainstream liberal feminism discourses by centering the lives and knowledge of women of color. CRF scholars such as Patricia Hill-Collins, Sherene Razack, Kimberly Crenshaw, bell hooks and Carol Aylward, further interrogate gender and race through the understanding that these locations are socially constructed and used simultaneously to create unbalanced power relations. Aylward (1999) points out how "mainstream feminist theory has failed to deal with Black

women's [and other racialized women's] realities of racism, sexism, and classism, or with White women's own part in this oppression" (p. 3). More specifically, CRF scholars call for a detailed exploration of 'invisible' privileges that exist within 'whiteness' (Sue, 2006). bell hooks (1990) and Audre Lorde (1984) further critique racism in second wave liberal feminism and argue for the need to theorize difference and diversity, as well as the interlocking systems of oppression; they also suggest that race, class, sex and age identities create difference among women. This research draws from Lorde (1984) and hooks (1990) perspective to explore difference and diversity and further interrogate multiple stories.

Across North America there are varying degrees of difference amongst judicial sanctions that are imposed on clients. The clients of the criminal justice system (CJS) share many similarities and differences in race, gender, sexual orientation, class, ability ethnicity, culture and socioeconomic backgrounds. The CJS in Canada is heavily influenced by political parties in power who have criminalized racial minorities and those of lower socio-economic status (Mirchandani & Chan, 2002). Furthermore, history details the CJS as being rooted in systemic disparities based on class, race and gender and colonialism (Crutchfield, Fernandes & Martinez, 2010). Class disparities is described as the differences in the way clients from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are processed compared to clients from higher socioeconomic backgrounds whereas racial disparities refers to the differences in the way clients of colour are processed in the CJS compared to White clients. Gender disparities further speak to the differences in the way men are processed in the CJS in comparison to women. For example, according to Statistics Canada (2017) in 2015/2016, Aboriginal (Indigenous) adults accounted for 26% of the admission to provincial and territorial correctional services, while they only represent less than 5% of the Canadian population. This overrepresentation was more

pronounced for Indigenous females compared to Indigenous males as female admissions to provincial custody centers was 38% while males was 26%. Specifically the CJS has been a critical tool for the colonization of Indigenous peoples in order to criminalize Indigenous peoples to aid in undermining sovereignty, self-government, treaty rights, land title, restricting movement and rupturing Indigenous gender structures (Allan & Smylie, 2015)

Throughout my ten year career as a PO, I have been witness to many cases where racial, class and gender disparities were overtly present. In my experience, I have seen judicial sentences for women and people of colour to be more punitive than clients who are white and men. Those unable to afford legal representation also received lengthier sentences, than clients who had the economic means for a qualified legal team. Being aware of these systemic barriers I could not overlook how racism and gender discrimination are a reality in the lives of the clients I supervise. POs who work within this flawed system also come from varied racial, gender and cultural backgrounds. Currently, there is a lack of research that examines how these differences impact stress in the lives of POs. For example, BC Corrections is a diverse workplace employing many people of color, racial and cultural ethnicities. However, many of the positions occupied in Senior and Divisional Management are by white, upper-middle class, heterosexual men. Furthermore, there is a lack of literature examining how POs of colour or female POs address these interlocking identities. It is because this area is uncharted territory that a CRF framework is best-suited to interrogate these identities and draw attention to further the need for further examination in this area. By highlighting the prevalent themes in existing literature that focuses on general impacts of stress, future researchers can examine the complexities of stress in the field of corrections.

The law, as many scholars of colour and Indigenous scholars have noted, reproduces dominant discourse of Whiteness and oppressive dynamics (Crenshaw, 1995). Razack (1998) points out, “these complex operations of hierarchies of gender and race point to contradictions and cracks in hegemonic systems and illustrate the central importance of understanding how various systems interlock to produce specific effects” (p. 13). The law is not neutral or objective and CRF scholars assert that dominant discourses need to be de-centered so issues of race, class, sexuality, ability, gender identity, sex, religion, language and citizenship can be explored. CRF seeks to deconstruct power within dominant norms and center multiple sites of difference. Razack (1998) explains it is important to look at where these identities interlock, meet and engage each other; conflict and disturb each other in order to unpack the processes of domination and subordination. Razack (1998) differentiates between an “interlocking” versus “intersectional” approach to oppression and states, “analytical tools that consist of looking at how systems of oppression interlock differ in emphasis from those that stress intersectionality. Interlocking systems need one another, in tracing the complex ways in which they help to secure one another” (p. 13). Many of the clients POs supervise face systemic barriers that may contribute to their criminal behaviour. In order to fully ‘help’ clients I feel it is crucial for correctional staff to explore how social locations impact their practice. If correctional staff are unable to ascertain how race or gender interlocks with other locations, there can be significant systematic barriers and gaps created for service users and providers (Razack, 1998). These barriers ultimately add to the workload that correctional staff face and may become a contributing stressor. I feel that correctional staff need to interrogate how race and gender ‘interlock’ and what impacts it has on their personal and professional lives.

Furthermore, my interest in examining interlocking power relations is closely tied to my role as a South Asian female researcher. In a subordinate position I am held responsible by management for the decisions I make and am regimented to conduct tasks according to legal and departmental guidelines. Power in itself is not neutral and power relationships are interlocked with race with class, ability, sexuality, religion, language, citizenship, sex and gender identity, as well as other locations (Razack, 1998). For example, I have a complicated relationship of power because I am a woman of colour in a system where the majority clients and members of management are white and/or males. There is a significant amount of power and authority that is delegated to correctional staff in order for them to conduct their duties. This power comes from policy makers, and government officials that have influence over judicial sanctions and construe laws to reinforce dominant discourses (Smith & Linnemann, 2015). The issue of power in this research is also very complicated and multifaceted which is further reiterated in this research. Initially, I intended to interview POs employed by BC Corrections on their experiences of stress. Due to financial and time constraints, I was unable to pursue my original idea of interviewing POs who I directly work with. Even though my intent was to equalise power in my research through participant interviews that did not go as I had planned. However, I still carried on with my desire to explore the area of stress and widened my scope to include correctional staff from varied geographical locations.

A critical race investigation that examines the consequences of white privilege is useful in this research because it helps to explore what kinds of influences social identities have on stressors manifested within the workplace. Additionally, without challenging racial and gender privileges, social justice efforts within diversified workplaces cannot prevail. Racism, gender discrimination as well as unbalanced power relationships create the perfect storm for increased

stressors within the workplace. CRF provides a space for critical analysis that explores the impact of colonialism, White supremacy, and racism as it interlocks with sexism, ableism, heterosexism, and classism, among other issues of citizenship, language, religion, and age. In addition CRF centres the experiences of Indigenous women and women of colour and gives voice to those often silenced and made invisible in legalities, practice and process.

Overall, the framework of CRF examines the impact of race and racism on systemic structures in society, as well as challenges the disproportionality of racial representation in the workplace (Yosso, 2005). CRF critically analyzes the experiences of women of colour and works towards creating awareness around the dominant discourses that influence normative gender role categories. Therefore, CRF becomes critical to unpacking the dynamics of stressors in the workplace experienced by female correctional staff and correctional staff of color. The foundational significance illustrates that the experiences and perspectives of women of colour are different from the experiences of men of all races and white women. Due to the dual complexities of race and gender, women of colour must navigate through a system of dominant white and gendered discourses. The theoretical tenets, therefore, frame a targeted focus on experiences of women of colour and in the field of corrections who may have encountered multiple forms of discrimination, due to the intersections of race, class, and gender within a system of white male patriarchy and racist oppression. CRF provides a benefit to investigating and theory building around workplace issues that impact correctional staff.

Lastly, I must speak to my own experiences of racism and gender discrimination that have existed in my life as long as I can remember. I have been the target of racist and sexist remarks, jokes and gestures sometimes in a blatant manner and at other times in subtle ways. No matter what the method, the impact and feelings of discomfort and pain have been the same. I am

aware that the colour of my skin has afforded me certain privileges as I am lighter skinned and therefore cast in a favourable light in comparison to my darker skinned brothers and sisters. As a first generation Canadian, my historical ancestry is embedded in colonial, racist and patriarchal influences and I also continue to face systemic barriers. However, as a settler on Indigenous land I am also complacent in my role as a colonizer as I work within a flawed system. It is through these multiple intersecting experiences that have shaped my life that have helped me become resilient. By being attentive to race and gender I can question knowledge, the sources of my information and how my actions impact others. My own values, beliefs, and experiences will contribute to what role I see myself having as a researcher. The key to navigating these categories was by having an understanding of how they interlock and influence the research while being mindful that my own ideas did not control the outcome of the study. As a student in the Masters of Social Work Program at UVIC, I have been guided by the various instructors and committee members to examine the role of power and how it influences the research area, process, analysis, findings and discussion. From the creation of the research questions, analyzing and interpreting the themes and writing the final version, I had the wisdom of my committee members and external examiners to guide the various components of research. Through utilizing the CRF lens this research acknowledged racial and gender differences and explored how they had an impact on how stress manifests in the work and private life of correctional staff.

Data Collection

I began collecting studies for my research in April of 2018. I used various search engines including, Google Scholar, Pro Quest and UVIC Library databases. The search terms utilized were ‘Probation Officers + Stress’ in Canada. While collecting the data, I quickly realized the lack of literature available on PO’s and stress within Canada. I had originally wanted to utilize

data that was from an isolated geographical area, to see if there were similarities between stressors experienced by PO's across the provinces and territories. Unfortunately, I was unable to find enough literature to support this route and consequently widened my search parameters to include 'Corrections + Stress' as well as locations within the US and Europe. Immediately, I came across a full annotated bibliography by the US Department of Justice's, National Institute of Corrections. This collection titled, Occupational Stressors in Corrections Work, formed the foundation for my research. After reading a short synopsis about the research contained in this document, I was able to locate the study via Google Scholar or the Uvic Library database. I started a Word document and started to keep a list of all the studies. Once I had approximately twenty studies, I began to review the articles to see if they mentioned key words pertaining to race, gender, or power and stress. I was able to shortlist seventeen final studies that formed the basis of the literature review.

Data Analysis

I utilized thematic analysis to explore the data gathered in my literature review. Thematic analysis is the most commonly used qualitative approach to analysing interviews as well as literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I reviewed existing literature, studies, reports, and annotated bibliographies on stress and POs from North America and Europe. The data that I was able to gather included both qualitative and quantitative data as both methods were able to provide a rich data source. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), "thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data" (p.79). I selected this method because a "rigorous thematic approach can produce an insightful analysis that answers particular research questions" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.97). This method also complements my research questions because I can utilize the data to code themes in an inductive manner and

also to explore if the data is consistent with my research question in providing enough information. Braun and Clarke (2006) point out how flexibility is one of the benefits of using thematic analysis as a “useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data” (p. 78). Thematic analysis requires that the researcher make a number of decisions prior, during and after collecting the data. These decisions need to be explicitly discussed and explained so there is ongoing reflexive dialogue throughout the analytical process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These elements were important in my research as it allowed for transparency and credibility of the data.

In thematic analysis researchers take an active role in identifying themes that stem from their own theoretical positions and values in relation to the data. To begin, the researcher must read and re-read their data so they are familiar with the content. The next phase is to start analysing the data to identify themes. The themes must capture a key element within the data in relation to the research question and symbolize a level of a patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). The researcher must be consistent in the process to identify the themes. Since I investigated an under-researched area, the main objective was to identify, code, and analyse the content from an entire collection of data. As Braun and Clarke (2006) explain themes or patterns within data can be identified either in an inductive 'bottom up' way (citing Frith & Gleeson, 2004), or in a theoretical, deductive 'top down' way (citing Boyatzis, 1998 & Hayes, 1997). According to Thomas (2003) there are three main purposes for using an inductive approach:

- (1) To condense extensive and varied raw text data into a brief, summary format;
- (2) to establish clear links between the research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data; and
- (3) to develop a model or theory about the underlying structure of experiences or processes which are evident in the raw data (p. 1).

I feel that this approach was best suited for my research as through inductive analysis I will be coding the themes without a pre-existing coding frame and my research would be data-driven.

I applied both inductive and deductive to the thematic analysis of data and examined the studies, reports and annotated bibliographies (Braun & Clarke, 2006) with data driving this approach. My theoretical framework, CRF added to the thematic analysis, as there was no precise theory on stress as experienced by POs and I had the freedom to explore this issue from a wider theoretical framework. Through identifying themes interpretatively, I was able to explore assumptions, ideas, ideologies and conceptualizations “that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data” (p. 84). Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six steps of thematic analysis informed my research process as I describe it next. The themes of race, gender and neoliberalism were analyzed deductively, as they did not emerge from the literature but rather I utilized CRF to explore the prevalence of these themes throughout the literature. The importance of using both deductive and inductive approaches in the analysis allows for a thorough examination of factors that the original researcher may not have necessarily hypothesized in the study. Throughout the application of CRF as a lens, I was able to further the rigour of my research by being open to the data that emerged inductively and also ensure that critical analysis was being conducted on issues of racism, sexism and the influences of neoliberal policies.

First, I divided the studies into general categories of Impact, Risk Factors and Resiliency based on a quick read of the abstract. This process ensured that I analyzed enough data in all three areas to fully address the research questions I began the process of establishing themes by reading the entire study without making any notes or comments. On the second read of each study I separated the studies into categories of ‘Impact’, ‘Risk Factors’, and ‘Resiliency’. I also paid specific attention to key words and descriptions pertaining to ‘race’, ‘gender’, ‘financial

constraints' and 'power'. Any time these words came up I highlighted the sections using different colours and used post it notes to tab important participant responses. I began to make notes on the sides of the documents with coloured highlighters representing each category. The above steps were taken in order to observe and identify theme patterns which emerged from the content. I then documented each theme and sub theme in a separate Word document. Each study was categorized in a different colour so I knew which information belonged to each one.

After the preliminary scanning of data and development of thematic categories was completed the next step involved in coding of the material as representative of the themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) explain how coding involves observing patterns in the data and categorizing the data to clarify the details within large amounts of content. In order to do this, the patterns were labelled with codes. Then distinctions are drawn between different aspects of the content by organising the data into a set of categories. My last step was to develop a coding legend which also used colour coding to identify categories for the analysis. I used the codes to formulate a word cloud in the 'Word it out' program, as pictured below.

Illustration #1: Word It Out: This illustration served as a visual representation on the prevalent themes within the literature.



Following this process I analyzed any connection, ideas or relevant findings in the different categories and themes of the research. For the analysis portion of my research, I also utilized NVivo12 which is qualitative and mixed methods data analysis software. The process followed by Nvivo12 parallels the approach recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006) and my own thematic mapping served as a secondary layer to test and validate the computer-generated responses. I reviewed all the codes I used in my Word documents with NVivo12 to ensure the coding was accurate. By carefully reviewing the data inputted in NVivo12 I was able to ensure that proper coding was conducted and minimize the potential of missing information.

Once I was satisfied with the final themes and codes I defined and named my themes accordingly. For each theme a detailed analysis was required and I explored how this theme fits into the overall story of my data in relation to my research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It

was important that my written thematic analysis provided, “a clear, concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interest account of the story the data will tell” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 96). Rather than just providing a description of the data I have provided an argument in relation to my research question. By adapting two methods to verify the data, I was able to ensure that the analysis tells an accurate story of the data.

Ethical Considerations

Conducting an ethical research study is of utmost importance to me as a researcher, PO, student and member of society. I value the importance of ethics in all research areas and therefore have tried my best to uphold them by being transparent in my intentions. At times research has been utilized in ways that has caused harm to participants and trust has been broken. It has been my sincere intention to utilize a CRF framework to explore how multiple interlocking issues can impact coping and resiliency factors to stress. I believe there is a responsibility by all researchers to sustain the highest standard of ethical conduct achievable in their work. The following section of this chapter will explore my personal bias and social location in the research process.

Personal Bias

First, there is an acknowledgment of personal bias, since I have insider knowledge on factors that may impact a PO’s level of stress. I have a personal interest to explore this topic as it not only impacts my career but also that of my colleagues. I was cognizant of my personal biases so I would not let my own theoretical knowledge taint the research process. If my personal biases were to seep into the research the work presented here would not be a reflection of participant experiences but rather my own perspective on what information is deemed important or relevant.

My experiences of undergoing traumatic stressors also could have had an impact on the study if I did not attend to my responsibility of engaging in critical reflexivity. My work in law enforcement has also given me strong beliefs regarding the existing legal and social injustices with respect to client supervision, which is gender-based and further, promoted through structural violence imbedded in government and society. I believe wholeheartedly that the governments and legal systems have responsibility for upholding and enforcing legal rights to safety, dignity, and protection of persons. But I also believe that people who work in these fields have the same right to safety, dignity and protection. Since working in government systems of oppressions, I have found that the ‘helper’ role becomes invisible in an attempt to provide the best level of service to the client (Badwall, 2013).

By adhering to the principles of socially just research the researcher puts the best interests of the community first and their own needs last. Strega and Brown (2015) state “socially just research requires critical reflexivity, an approach to reflection that focuses primarily on the politics and ideologies embedded within the self of the researcher” (p.8). I used critical reflexivity to ensure that the research is analyzed based on my analysis of the data and not my own personal opinion. In my selection of literature I was conscious of reviewing literature that includes the voices of culturally diverse populations. I feel that I had a moral and ethical responsibility not only to current POs but all front-line workers who are facing similar workplace stressors.

Second, through continuous review of the data and practicing critical reflexivity I was held accountable as a researcher. According to Strega (2015) “the worldview of the researcher shapes a research project at every level, because it shapes the researcher’s epistemological foundation” (p. 121). I cannot erase my personal experiences out of my memory but I was self-

aware of how my current knowledge can impact the research. I did not want the research to be a reflection of my own personal values and beliefs. My intrinsic beliefs cannot be fully separated from my research, so it was imperative throughout the research process that I continued to reflect, examine, and identify how my beliefs and values affect my research.

My methodology included personal reflexivity. Based on my values and beliefs, are the meanings I created out of the data. I took into consideration issues of personal bias as well as potential conflicts of interests. Strega (2015) explains how continuous self-reflection of our thoughts and feeling in the research process allows for researchers to be cognizant of biases. By evaluating our positionality within the research we can be critically reflexive and work towards not being complacent in furthering system of inequality. According to Strega (2015) practicing critical reflexivity:

Highlights rather than obscures the participation of the researcher in the research process. It makes clear that interpretation is taking place, and by implication calls into question the alleged neutrality and objectivity of other researcher/researchers, thus offering an important political and methodological challenge to standard practices. It calls into question whether standard means of assessing rigour and validity are the “proper” or best means by which to assess research (p. 146).

Since bias is part of any type of research, qualitative or quantitative, the researcher cannot be assumed to be neutral but can address how to mitigate issue.

Lastly, by checking in with myself and my supervisor throughout the process I was held accountable for the decisions I made. Employing personal reflexivity through comparing data findings with my thematic coding allowed me to ensure that the analysis was accurate and I did not miss any pertinent information. I engaged in journaling as a means to assist with these issues, thereby engaging reflexively with the data. The process of journaling was also beneficial, as I was able to write down any questions, comments and thoughts while amidst my data analysis.

This allowed me to keep track of my thoughts and re-think my approach after stepping away from the section and discussing options with my supervisors. I employed these techniques in attempts to ensure this research was as bias and judgment free as possible (Creswell, 2013). Further, Braun and Clarke (2006) spoke to the importance of researchers not only being aware of their decisions and choices, but also being accountable for those decisions.

Social Location

My own social location as a cis-gendered woman of colour who was born and educated in BC also has an impact on the research. The idea of this research was conceived when I began my Masters of Social Work degree and as such, I am responsible for all decisions related to this study including, but not limited to, the research question and ultimate results. Further, I have grounded this research in theories of CRF, my own experiences and beliefs in spiritual wellness, along with my professional experiences as a PO. These have all guided me to view the data through a lens of oppression, marginalization and patriarchy. By embarking on this research journey in a quest to find answers to the research questions, I began by questioning my own privileges that are embedded in my social location. I further reflected on how I can challenge dominant discourses, social policies, institutions and bring awareness to the stereotypes that are prevalent among marginalized populations. I believe that I have an ethical responsibility to be an activist and support POs who are impacted by ongoing traumatic stressors.

Strengths and Limitations

In addition to the strengths of this research, I have identified a few limitations and this list is not exhaustive, but rather a compilation of areas I see as salient. I believe that critical self-reflection is key in all areas of social work practice, including research, and thus I would like to

acknowledge both the strengths and limitations of the research. In the following section I will explore this area further and also speak to the motivation behind this research.

There are many strengths to using thematic analysis. First, this qualitative methodology provides analytical tools and strategies that can be implemented without adhering to a prescribed theory or point of view. By reviewing data and analyzing it from different levels emergent themes were examined and new theoretical statements were made. As an adult learner, with full-time family and employment responsibilities, it would have been impossible for me to gather large amounts of data on my own. In reviewing existing qualitative studies I was able analyze secondary data in a cost effective and time efficient manner. Through the Uvic library and internet resources (Google Scholar, Pro Quest) I also had access to a large number of studies which are geographically and demographically varied. This large scope of data has mostly been conducted by professional researchers that have the time, financial resources and experience to support their work.

Braun and Clarke (2006) note that the limitations of thematic analysis include a lack of formal guidelines that creates the perception that ‘anything goes’ (citing Billig, Edwards & Potter, 2002). Since most of my literature was gathered from sources throughout North America and the UK, I was unable to concentrate on one geographical area. Future quantitative and qualitative studies with more time and selective criteria for participants may be able to explore a specific geographical location and how stress impacts correctional staff and what resiliency mechanisms they utilize.

A further limitation was the learning challenges I experienced with NVivo12 data software as it was my first time utilizing this platform. It is important to note that any form of data analysis can have its limitations. NVivo12 served as one tool in my analysis as I am

ultimately responsible to ensure that the data is analyzed and coded ethically. My own epistemological position and knowledge about the workplace was undoubtedly a crucial component of this research and therefore remained at the forefront of my research.

Lastly, I must speak to my motivation behind this research. When speaking to colleagues and peers about my thesis project many people have questioned my reasons for wanting to explore this area. Depending on my relationship with that person, how much time I have to respond and quite frankly how I felt that day, my answer had always been different. At times I expressed that I wanted to influence change in my organization, other times I have wanted to uncover how racial and gender discrimination impact workplace stressors and selfishly I have wanted to better my own understanding of stress and how it can impact my own professional and personal career. Ultimately all these answers are true; however above all I genuinely want to help POs in their roles as helpers. I sincerely envision a workplace that is free of negative stressors and well-equipped with services and resources for its employees and clients.

Summary

Within this chapter of my research I presented an overview of the methodological approach that was utilized. The purpose of my research and what I aim to accomplish was explored; my methodology of a CRF framework guiding the thematic analysis of literature was discussed as well as the reasons behind its selection were explained; the procedure for data analysis was detailed step-by-step. I also presented ethical considerations and reflected my own personal bias and social location; lastly, I concluded the chapter with what I believe to be the strengths and limitations of this research and the motivation behind the research.

Chapter 2: Thematic Analysis of Literature Review

Introduction

In this section, the findings will be presented through six major themes and the relevant sub-themes which emerged during the thematic analysis process. As mentioned previously, themes reported in this section were found to be either repetitive (pattern) and of importance during the analysis or interesting to the overall research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The six major themes identified are *Impact, Risk, Resiliency, Race, Gender* and *Neoliberalism*. Before introducing the themes, it is important to discuss the literature used in this study. I will be providing a synopsis of all the literature utilized in this research and have listed the studies in alphabetical order. The entire set of literature was reviewed for the prevalent themes and provides support for the research questions. The purpose of this is not to describe the analysis, but simply to provide the reader with a succinct outline of each study in order to gain more context before presenting the thematic findings.

Part I: Literature

Britton (1997) examined the relationship between race and sex and perceptions of the work environment among correctional officers in the US. The quantitative findings indicated that race and sex are a contributing factor in shaping a PO's workplace perspectives. The results indicated that among minority male officers, levels of job stress decreased when greater efficacy was attained in working with inmates. Additionally, white female officers who viewed supervision more positively had higher levels of job satisfaction.

Cheesman-Dial, Downey and Goodlin (2010) surveyed correctional officers to examine the impact of gender and generation on work stress. The data was gathered through self-report surveys administered to correctional officers in a southern prison system in the US. The

quantitative results indicated that gender is a significant factor related to workplace stress and that generation had a small impact on job stress. These results also suggested that gender affected perceptions of workplace, more than race/ethnicity education, and job tenure.

Finn and Kuck (2003) prepared a mixed methods report for the US Department of Justice. The report was intended to help probation and parole agency administrators develop an effective program for preventing and treating stress among officers. I reviewed Chapter 2 of this report which included the results of qualitative interviews and informal conversations with 45 staff members from 17 different agencies. Chapter 2 identified three most frequent and severe sources of stress for officers as high caseloads, excessive paperwork and meeting deadlines. These three work conditions cumulatively make it difficult for many officers to find the time to properly supervise their caseloads. Furthermore, the report strongly recommends that administrators provide the same stress services to all staff in corrections, including support and administrative staff and all family members.

Gayman and Bradley (2013) explore the link between depression and work-related stress in probation officers. Specifically, the researchers utilize statewide survey data from 825 US, North Carolina Parole and Probation Officers to examine the association between depressive symptoms, work stress, and work environment. The findings of their study reveal that work stress and organizational climate are early indicators of burnout and have a direct and indirect relation to depressive symptoms in officers.

Heer and Atherton (2008) utilized quantitative and qualitative methods to explore how visible and invisible discriminatory practices were embedded in the probation service in the UK. The researchers initially surveyed 140 participants who were members of the National Association of Asian Probation Staff. All the survey participants were also invited to participate

in 1-1 interviews and 40 participants took part in sharing their experiences. Their findings revealed that staff had a lack of confidence in management regarding diversity issues; there was a change in attitudes towards Asian staff post 9/11, a lack of understanding of Asian culture by White, Black and minority ethnic colleagues and concerns around promotion and job security.

Hurst & Hurst (1997) explored gender differences in how correctional officers in Southern US react to severe occupational stress and addressed differences in coping processes and social support utilization. The study employed a quantitative survey administered to the volunteering participants. The statistical analyses revealed that correctional officers experience high levels of occupational stress but did not indicate gender differences in emotional exhaustion or depersonalization. However, the results indicated that female officers more frequently than male officers processed stress by seeking social support, while male officers more frequently than female officers processed stress by problem solving techniques.

Lewis, Lewis and Garby (2013) assessed traumatic stress, the personal impact of the job and burnout in adult probation officers from Arizona, California and Texas, US. The quantitative findings indicated that PO's who had violent and sexual recidivism on their caseloads, offender suicide, and threats and/or assaults associated with their caseload had increased levels of traumatic stress compared to PO's who did not experience these events.

Morran (2008) explored the experiences of practitioners who work with domestic violence offenders in the UK. A questionnaire was distributed to professionals working in domestic violence perpetrator programmes, which asked about their experiences of engaging with domestic violence offenders, the quality of the training received prior to this work and the support and supervision available thereafter. Other areas explored included the challenges and rewards of working in this field, the coping strategies workers employed in doing so and their

willingness to continue doing such work. My analysis focused on the experiences of the sixteen probation officers who worked with domestic violence offenders. The qualitative findings of this study suggests that the emotional consequences of working with male domestic violence offenders are considerable. Although the results varied for male and female practitioners, there were potential implications for the nature of their relationships and intervention with men on such programmes.

Morgan, Van Haveren and Pearson (2002) examined the relationship of several variables (i.e., age, gender, race, education, shift, tenure, hours of client contact, security level) that have led to inconsistent results in previous studies on stress and correctional officers from the US. The authors also expanded on previous research by exploring the relationship of two new variables (i.e., job title and work station) with correctional officer stress. The quantitative results indicated that older and more educated officers reported increased levels of personal accomplishment, whereas less experienced officers and officers with increasing job responsibilities experienced increased levels of depersonalization and emotional exhaustion and decreased levels of personal accomplishment. Furthermore, gender comparisons indicated that female correctional officers were less likely to respond impersonally to inmates than their male counterparts.

Owen (2006) examined occupational stress among correctional supervisors. This study draws on a sample of 329 correctional supervisors in one US state to provide a quantitative and qualitative examination of correctional supervisor stress. The findings revealed that correctional supervisor's experiences of low levels of overall stress were not varied by gender, race, educational level, and work environment. Additionally, three variables were identified as predictors of low levels of stress which were high levels of job satisfaction, high levels of social support, and an internal locus of control.

Petrillo (2007) examines how female probation officers working with high risk offenders experience gender in their work. The qualitative research with female probation officers in London, UK, reveals the ways in which the officers perceive gender to feature in their work with high risk men, how they use gender to inform their practice and the nature of personal impact of this work. The participants all shared experiences which included the impact of motherhood on their ability to work, an increased level of awareness of their vulnerability, the impact of constant exposure to traumatic and graphic offence data and the effect of the work on their personal relationships.

Rattai (2011) analysed the results from a self-assessment questionnaire provided to BC POs after a 2-day workshop. This quantitative study specifically examined the challenges female POs face in work-life balance in the context of traumatic stress. The study participants completed questionnaires on primary traumatic stress risk factors, secondary traumatic stress risk factors, primary traumatic stress effects, and secondary traumatic stress effects. The findings revealed that a significant portion of female POs experience high levels of workplace traumatic stress and female POs with child care responsibilities disclosed increased symptoms of negative stressors. The study also reported that many female officers did not feel that their supervisor was helpful and the workplace lacked recognition of the impacts of stress.

Salyers, Hood, Schwartz, Alexander, and Aalsma (2015) randomly selected 26 PO's for qualitative interviews, who had previously participated in a workplace survey in the US. The researchers utilized emergent, consensus-based methods, to identify key aspects of the burnout experience. The PO's identified negative effects of burnout, which included spending less time with clients and utilizing more directive strategies. There was also a lack of coping strategies identified by the PO's to manage burnout.

Severson, and Pettus-Davis (2011) explored US parole officers' and parole officer supervisors' experiences of the symptoms of secondary trauma when supervising sex offenders. Their qualitative study provides a detailed exploration of the experiences of officers and supervisors, how they cope with the symptoms of secondary trauma, and what participants identify as areas of change.

Slate, Wells and Johnson (2003) conducted self-report surveys of probation personnel in a southern US state. This quantitative research considered the relationship of a number of demographic variables with employee perceptions of participation in decision making and stress levels. The results revealed that an employee's perception of participatory decision making was an important factor in job satisfaction that influenced organization and physical stress symptoms. The researchers recommend the use and development of participatory management techniques within the workplace to assist in addressing workplace stress.

Wells, Colbert and Slate (2006) examined the role that gender plays in stress management for criminal justice workers in the US. In their study, they examined how cis-gendered PO's perceive stressors through an analysis of gender. In this study men were in supervisory positions and women were mostly front-line staff; gender discrepancies and hierarchy were not considered. The quantitative data for this study was taken from the same data set collected for an earlier study of state probation officer stress (Slate et al., 2003). The findings revealed that although females displayed more physical signs of stress, they reflected lower levels of workplace stress in comparison to their male counterparts.

White, Gasperin, Nystrom, Ambrose, and Esarey (2005) identified US probation officers recognized for their sustained performance and health. They utilized individual questionnaires and focus group discussions to identify those strategies used to achieve and sustain such

performance and health. The qualitative responses of the individual questionnaires were analyzed, and focus group interviews were transcribed and analyzed for dominant themes and recommendations. The major stressors identified by participants were role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload, challenges to personal and professional integrity and difficulties managing personal and professional boundaries. Additionally, strategies utilized to manage stressors were also detailed by participants and included interpersonal qualities, support from personal relationships, peer support, self-care and participation in wellness activities.

Part II: Themes

As touched upon briefly in the previous chapter, detailed analytical examination of the literature led to a final set of categories. These themes are: *impact, risk, resiliency, gender, race* and *neoliberalism*. For some of the larger inductive themes, I defined a number of sub-themes as a way to further condense the data into clear groupings (See Table 1). It is these themes that detailed the complicated relationship between stress and correctional staff. Three of the overarching categories had several clear sub-themes (See Table 2, Diagram 1 and Diagram 2) and a number of these seemed to overlap or slip into one another. This overlapping will be explored further in discussing each of the categories and it is important to note that even though each distinct category will be presented there is an interlocking relationship between all of them. In Chapter 3, it will also be discussed how intersections of race, gender and neoliberal influences cannot be viewed as individual factors but rather compounding stressors impacting correctional staff. The categories of race, gender and neoliberalism are being presented separately because there was not enough research in these areas and I utilized a deductive approach to analyse these categories. Therefore for organizational purposes the inductive and deductive themes will be discussed separately. I also included numerous qualitative quotes and quantitative references so

a reader may actively participate in determining the validity of the data presented. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained, descriptions of the human experience are considered credible and reliable. In providing the various quotes from the qualitative literature, I hope that readers are able to connect with the participant’s words and perspectives directly. My goal is that readers will be able to empathize with the description of the experiences of correctional staff and enhance their own understanding of stress within the workplace. For readability and clarity the quotes presented in this section as excerpts from the literature are italicized.

Table 1- Overview of Thematic Findings: This table provides the list of themes and subthemes for each area that was examined in the literature. The table format is used to show how each theme was analyzed individually, inductively and deductively but is tied to the overall area of stress.

INDUCTIVE THEMES	DEDUCTIVE THEMES
IMPACT Physical Health Emotional Well-being Family & Relationships Client Service	GENDER
RISK Increased Workload Lack of Resources Time Pressures Performance Expectations CJS Culture Job Experience/Training Inadequate Management Support Dangerous Work Conditions	RACE
RESILIENCY Colleagues Family Social Activities Career Changes Training & Organizational Support Self-preservation	NEOLIBERALISM

Theme 1: Impact

A review of literature in this study revealed that many correctional staff had similar experiences of how stress impacted their personal and professional life. When exploring this theme of *Impact* I analyzed the literature for references on stress and its effect on individuals. The literature detailed a number of personal and professional issues that can be directly attributed to the stress in the workplace. The literature provided many examples of the personal and professional impacts and I further categorized into subthemes of *physical health*, *emotional well-being*, *family & relationships* and *client service*. Although I have divided the theme of impact into further sub-themes, I felt a further separation into personal and professional categories was not necessary as there was an interlocking relationship between the two categories and how they manifested in the lives of correctional staff. For example, *physical health* and *emotional well-being* were documented as impacts on both the personal and professional lives of correctional staff. Whereas *family relationships* had more of a personal impact and *client service* related more to a professional impact. However, as mentioned all sub-themes do not occur in isolation and impacts in one area could easily spill over to another. I will now go into a general description of each sub-theme of *Impact* as listed in Table 2. This table provides itemized columns of the four predominate sub-themes that emerged in the area of impact. The four columns include a list of descriptive words used directly by participants and/or included in the survey questionnaires.

Table 2- The Personal and Professional Impacts of Stress on Correctional Staff:

Physical Health	Emotional Well-being	Family & Relationships	Client Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Headaches •Stomach aches •Lower back pain •Muscle, chest and joint tension/pain •Heart palpitations •Sweating •Trembling •Shortness of breath •Nausea •Dizziness •Chills or hot flashes •Irritability •Restlessness •Trouble concentrating •Burnout/Exhaustion •Lack of energy/Fatigue •Sleeping problems/nightmares •Colds and Flus •Changes in weight/appetite •Gastrointestinal problems •Increased cardiac risk •Stress related illness (PTSD, Depression, Panic Disorder, Anxiety Disorder) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Isolation •Fear •Rage •Hate •Sadness •Confusion/disoriented •Shame •Impatience •Despair •Guilt •Hopelessness •Intolerant •Loathing •Vulnerable •Overwhelmed •Emotional exhaustion •Depression/Anxiety •Out of control •Moody/unpredictable •Judgmental •Sense of worthlessness •Suicidal Thoughts/Plans •Questions meaning of life •Self-esteem problems •Victimization •Insecurity •Emotionally numb •Sense of apathy •Loss of passion •Being done or 'fed up' •Excessive worry •Inability to take pleasure in things one used to enjoy •Feeling frozen when experiencing traumatic incident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Unstable personal life •Withdrawal from family/friends/spouse/children/relatives/peers •Family problems •Decreased energy and time to spend with family •Work related intrusion into personal life •Hypervigilant •Family fears for officers safety •Lack of communication with family members •Disconnect from loved ones •Loss of interest in intimacy •Difficulties attaining separation from personal and professional lives •Stress being passed onto family members •Mistrustful of others •Distorted worldview •Interpersonal problems •Increased social isolation/avoidance •Suspicious of people as criminals •Re-appraisal of personal relationships •Annoyance with co-workers •Use of escape or avoidance behaviour •Addiction •Sex issues •Questions spirituality •Loss of spiritual faith 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Unable to develop supportive relationship with offenders •Less tolerant/more directive •Miss important details in clients lives •Hypervigilant or untrusting towards offenders •Inability to listen or empathize •Believing judicial system was too hard on the offender •Annoyance with clients •Fantasizing about harming offenders •Work performance •Attention problems •Doing the bare minimum •Reduced quality of care •Less attention to files •Divided attention •Inability to make decisions •Annoyance with judicial system •Desensitization to violent and/or sexual material •Fear administration will scapegoat officer •Feeling responsible for offenders mis-conduct •Unfair demands by judicial partners, victims, law enforcement officers.

Subtheme 1 Physical Health

In this section physical health refers to physiological responses that our body gives when we are not functioning at optimal health levels. Many correctional staff described various physical symptoms of stress within the workplace that ranged from common ailments to serious

health conditions. The real effects of stress on the body included **headaches, stomach aches, lower back pain, muscle, chest and joint tension/pain, heart palpitations, nausea, dizziness, sweating, fatigue, trembling, chills or hot flashes, and shortness of breath.**

“Over 40% of female probation officers indicated muscle and joint pain, as well as headaches. Over half of all the female probation officers reported they experience fatigue and lack of energy” (Rattai, 2011 p. 73).

“I’ve only come really close to throwing up two times. Especially when you have detailed, investigative reports right here in front of you. It’ll get to you. And if I treated that person, I would destroy a person like that, I wouldn’t even...I don’t care”. (Severson & Pettus-Davis, 2011, p. 7).

Additional health symptoms described by correctional staff were closely tied to daily functioning and cognitive ability. These responses included **irritability, restlessness, trouble concentrating, burnout, exhaustion, lack of energy, fatigue, sleeping problems, and nightmares:**

“At least 30% of female probation officers reported serious sleep disturbances. Those with children also reported feeling irritable and angry (40%) and emotionally upset (20%); while a quarter of those without children reported high levels of physical anxiety” (Rattai, 2011, p. 65).

“Almost 50% of female probation officers report feeling restless, and easily fatigued. Over half were experiencing irritability, muscle tension and sleep disturbance, while about 40% of study participants had difficulty concentrating” (Rattai, 2011, p. 76).

Lastly, overall physical health impacts included illnesses and/or medical conditions such as **increased frequency of colds and flus, changes in weight/appetite, gastrointestinal problems, increased cardiac risk** and stress related illness such as **Depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and Anxiety/Panic Disorder:**

“We have problems with coworkers calling in ‘sick’ at the last minute because we have to cover for them—take on their caseload.” Employees may also take sick days because they are truly ill, but their illnesses—lower back pain and headaches, for example—may be the result of work-related stress” (Finn and Kuck, 2003, p.24).

“Depression is a serious illness which can erode the quality of life for the individual suffering from it. For half of the clinical depression variables (7), female probation officers with children indicated high levels of occurrence, and those without children reported the occurrence of five of the variables” (Rattai, 2011, p. 74).

Subtheme 2 Emotional Well-being

The data reviewed in this sub-theme documents the emotional and psychological responses of correctional staff from workplace stressors. In terms of feelings associated with workplace stress within the literature correctional staff reported **isolation, fear, rage, hate, sadness, confusion/disoriented, shame, impatience, despair, guilt, hopelessness, intolerant, loathing, vulnerable and overwhelmed:**

“experience of working with men had resulted in ‘extreme feelings of fear, rage, hate and confusion’ observed, I am far more concerned about seeing these clients at times that are safer for me, when others are around. . . . I frequently think about my clients and whether any of my input is resulting in increased difficulties for their partners. The moral dilemmas are enormous” (Morran, 2008, p.146).

“I experience strong feelings of shame if I let something go that I felt I should have challenged. Sometimes I am filled with loathing if the man is bragging about his capacity to manipulate, scare or control others. I experience rage when men justify appalling abuses as responses to perceived slights from their partners” (Morran, 2008, p.146).

“There is a danger in getting caught up in negativity. A lot of our day is spent with negative people, and being caught up in all this negativity can really weigh on you. Sometimes you just want to say, “Why do I even bother.” That negativity can poison your work life and your home life” (White et al., 2005, p. 9).

“When you read something, they are horrific, but I’ve read so many horrific things that I don’t think many of them shock me anymore. Which isn’t necessarily a good thing. I don’t know, I think it makes me a bit sad because I just, I think maybe working with these types of offenders, I just have less faith in the human race. I think people are greedy and selfish and just out for what they can get. Especially with sex offenders, the whole abuse of power thing to the detriment of someone more innocent. And it doesn’t even cross their minds” (Petrillo, 2007, p. 402).

Additionally literature also revealed the impacts of feelings on an individual’s mental health which included **emotional exhaustion, depression, anxiety, out of control, moody/unpredictable, judgmental, sense of worthlessness, suicidal thoughts/plans,**

questions meaning of life, victimization, self-esteem problems, insecurity, emotionally numb, a sense of apathy, loss of passion, being done or 'fed up', excessive worry, inability to take pleasure in things one used to enjoy and feeling frozen when experiencing traumatic incident:

“Lost the passion you once had... I kinda feel like I’m in that rut now. Although I will clarify that I still do my job to the best of my ability, I still provide my clients with the level of service that they deserve, but still, I just feel like my passion for the job is diminishing. I don’t enjoy it as much as I used to” (Salyers et al., 2015, p 8).

“At a more severe level, participants discussed a sense of apathy and just going through the motions. For example, P1 described, “no longer caring about doing your job right. You just can’t take anymore, so it becomes monotonous to do it because you have to. [You] do it to get your paycheck instead of caring or putting any effort into what you’re doing.” For some people, burnout incorporated a sense of “dread” – not just a lack of caring, but also feelings of avoidance, where they don’t want to come to work” (Salyers et al., 2015, p 8).

“I am dreading going to work every day, which is totally what I am in the middle of right now... Because, I mean, this job is terrible. I mean it is terrible, it really is terrible, it really is awful... But then occasionally a couple times a year I will be depressed at the idea of even going in there, honestly. I mean, I am definitely not depressed, but definitely on Sunday nights I, like, hate my job. I don’t want to go there for another 40 hours the next week” (Salyers et al., 2015, p.9).

“Nearly 64% of the participants reported a moderate or high amount of emotional exhaustion, over 80% of the officers reported a moderate or high amount of depersonalization, and nearly 82% of the participants reported a moderate to high lack of personal accomplishment” (Hurst & Hurst, 1997, p. 130).

“One officer indicated feeling victimized by reading the sex offenders’ files. But every time you read their files that victimizes you. I’ve read that officers dealing in . . . sex offenders, they need a break every so often because they are so victimized every time you look at them” (Severson & Pettus-Davis, 2011, p. 7).

Subtheme 3 Family & Relationships

This sub-theme details how correctional staff described “taking work home” and having their job impact their personal life, life with family members, their relationships with others and ultimately lead to unhealthy behaviours. The personal impacts of stress on correctional staff and their family members included an **unstable personal life, withdrawal from**

family/friends/spouse/children/relatives/peers, family problems, decreased energy and time to spend with family, work related intrusion into personal life, hypervigilance in personal life, fears by officers family for officer's safety, lack of communication with family members, disconnect from loved ones, loss of interest in intimacy, difficulties attaining separation from personal and professional lives, and stress being passed onto family members:

"Some officers take it [their frustration with their work] home when kids [juveniles on probation or parole] get locked up [i.e., recidivate]. This creates family problems. When I was a new officer, my girlfriend told me, 'Don't talk to me about this [problem you're having at work], it's depressing'" (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p.24).

"The job creates a lot of stress, and it's brought home. This has a negative impact on the family, so the officer returns to work with another problem. So the stress [of the job] is compounded [by the tension that officers' stress may create at home]" (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p.24).

"So actually some of the most stressful times is [sic] getting ready to go on vacation because you keep asking yourself, "Am I gonna have this work done and be allowed to go?" And you're telling your wife, I don't know if I am gonna make it this time, blah and you have plane tickets" (Salyers et al., 2015, p. 15).

"I had an officer who, uh, worked with us . . . [and] he started going out in the middle of the night and checking up on his sex offenders cuz he was worried about them; afraid that they were going to do something. Um, he ended up havin' to go on medication . . . and had to be transferred" (Severson & Pettus-Davis, 2011, p. 9).

"Officers described feeling hypervigilant in their personal lives. You'd be walkin' down the street and you'll see an old man with a little kid and you start thinkin' [whispered], "he's a sex offender." . . . and I am very overprotective with my own children" (Severson & Pettus-Davis, 2011, p. 9).

"I had to work this past Saturday. I have so much to do that I can't get it done in my normal work hours, even though I try to protect my weekends for my family and close friends" (White et al., 2005, p. 7).

"At a personal level, I think most officers stay pretty closed up—like police officers. What do you do—go home and tell your wife or husband about the child abusers and rapists you saw in the office today? It's difficult for officers to not carry their work home and yet difficult not to be able to talk about it there" (White et al., 2005, p. 9).

The literature review also revealed that stress impacted the relationships correctional staff had with others, included peers and supervisors. The results included correctional staff being **mistrustful of others, having a distorted worldview, interpersonal problems, increased social isolation/avoidance, suspicious of people as criminals, re-appraisal of personal relationships, and annoyance with co-workers:**

“The effect of regularly encountering issues of abuse and control through work with perpetrators had affected some women’s decisions to remain in, or terminate relationships, and had also resulted in them re-appraising current and former partners. ‘It’s made me aware that a previous relationship I had was emotionally abusive,’ one reflected” (Morran, 2008, p.146).

“You think to yourself that you can’t go out in the community and unwind quite as much as other people, because when you go out into the community, people know you and watch you. You’re not just expected to be a positive role model from eight to five; we live with expectations that are 24/7” (White et al., 2005, p. 12).

Lastly this subtheme included unhealthy behaviours that could have an impact on family and personal relationships. These included the **use of escape or avoidance behaviour, addiction, sex issues, questioning spirituality and a loss of spiritual faith:**

“There are a lot of times I come home from work and I wish I didn’t know so much about what goes on behind people’s closed doors. Sometimes I would like to not know what’s going on in the world. I just want to be in my own little house, my own little family, and deal with my own stuff, and not have to think about who’s abusing who down the street” (White et al., 2005, p. 9).

“It is concerning to see that the female participants with children presented with higher levels of social avoidance, and were likely to feel distant from their spouse and to have lost interest in intimacy” (Rattai, 2011, p. 78).

Subtheme 4 Client Service

This sub-theme describes how correctional staff continuously expressed not being able to provide client service at levels desired by their employers. The correctional staff reported how ongoing workplace stressors impacted their **inability to develop supportive relationships with offenders, they became less tolerant/more directive, missed important details in client’s lives, became, hypervigilant or untrusting towards offenders, inability to listen or**

empathize, believing judicial system was too hard on the offender, annoyance with clients and fantasizing about harming offenders:

“Participants talked about their interactions with clients and how their own level of stress may make them less tolerant and more directive with clients. For example, one responded, “Oh I’m sure it does. Probably the tolerance is not there, maybe not being as open to listen or work with them. Maybe being a bit more direct, maybe put them in an ultimatum type of situation instead of being open to work with them” (Salyers et al., 2015, p. 11).

“If I’m worried about keeping all of my ducks in a row, I can’t really listen to them and take into consideration their thoughts and concerns and needs as well.” (P26). Another participant, echoing earlier sentiments on working hard to not let stress affect clients, described how a lack of attention to detail can lead to missing things” (Salyers et al., 2015, p. 12).

“You have this overwhelming number of cases to deal with, and if something goes wrong, you start wondering, “Could I have done something better before this client committed another crime?” Such issues can wear probation officers down” (White et al., 2005, p. 7).

This sub-theme also included correctional staffs’ responses on how changes to their behaviour and attitudes affected client service. The literature revealed issues of **work performance, attention problems, doing the bare minimum, reduced quality of care, less attention to files, divided attention, inability to make decisions, annoyance with judicial system, de-sensitization to violent and/or sexual material, fear administration will scapegoat officer, feeling responsible for offenders mis-conduct and unfair demands by judicial partners, victims, law enforcement officers:**

“I am doing my work, but it’s just, you know, pushing through it You know, I never really delve too far into their lives, I mean I just kind of do what we need to get done for court and what we need to get done with for probation” (Salyers et al, 2015, p. 10).

“As one participant put it “there’s a basic minimum [you] would have to do just because you have to, you’re still here and you have the cases but, my concern for the kids and the real reason why I’m here, I kind have lost sight of it, because I was more concerned about people above me.” (P18) By just putting in the minimum level of effort, it means that clients “might not get as much attention as you would have wanted to give them”(P8) or that workers “maybe don’t take as much care with each family, tend to kind of move them through without seeing the person. ‘Gotta get this paperwork done, so I think that’s how it affects them and it’s not good” (Salyers et al., 2015, p. 12).

Theme 2: Risk Factors

The literature identified a number of risk factors that directly contribute to the high stress and traumatic events of working within corrections. When conducting my search for risk factors within the literature I reviewed the content and found that many sub-themes were needed to capture the plethora of variables that may increase risk for correctional staff. It is to be noted that all factors do not need to exist for correctional staff to feel stress and high stress from one risk area may have devastating impacts on correctional staff. Additionally, correctional staff work in different work sites (i.e. community offices vs custody centers). Since the data I reviewed included different worksites, all correctional staff may not be at risk for the same risk factors compared to others. The literature suggests that there are several significant risk factors of stress for many correctional staff and all of them are perpetuated by organizational requirements. In my exploration of *risk factors* for stress, I found that correctional staff expressed concerns **of increased workload, lack of resources, performance expectations, time pressures, criminal justice system culture, job experience and training, inadequate management support and dangerous work conditions** (see Diagram 1). This diagram provides a circular visual on the risk factors of stress. The use of a circle shows risk factors as a cycle and how the issues contained in one area can impact other sections even if they occur in isolation of one another.

Diagram 1- The Risk Factors for Stress on Correctional Staff



Subtheme 1 Increased Workload

In this sub-theme, literature corroborated how increased workloads were a risk factor for stress. I chose to create this sub-theme based on a clear pattern that emerged from the data. Specifically, I noticed that the majority of studies referred to increased workload or caseload within their findings or as a variable to high levels stress. The *increased workload* subtheme

includes the increase of inmates in custody centers or clients needing supervision in the community, as well as the procedural tasks associated to manage their files. This includes routine tasks, such as the amount of **excessive paperwork** required to process clients and inmates through the system. The below quotes are representative examples of this sub-theme:

“Officers report that high caseloads create more stress for them than any other single aspect of their work... Next to high caseloads, paperwork is the most significant source of stress for many officers. “There’s a piece of paper for everything,” one officer observed... Even when extensive Management Information Systems (MIS) have reduced the paperwork burden, unwieldy data entry screens and outmoded databases can be equally onerous for officers and supervisors” (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 19).

“I’m frustrated that I can’t help people [i.e., offenders] because of paperwork— that I can’t make more of a difference [in their lives]” (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 20).

“In terms of workload, over half of the study participants indicated too much paperwork, too little relief, and a heavy workload” (Rattai, 2011, p. 67).

“Citing paperwork as a source of frustration within a criminal justice agency should come as no surprise. One common feature of bureaucracy, generally, is a reliance on the proverbial “red tape.” As one supervisor commented, “there’s just not sufficient time to be out on the floor with the folks actually interacting, doing some one on one group supervision in the workplace. I’m supervising paperwork versus people” (Owen, 2006, p. 173).

Subtheme 2 Lack of Resources

The lack of resources was also identified as a stressor within the literature. This subtheme captures the **financial restrictions** and **lack of community resources** that are needed by correctional staff to supervise inmates and clients. The concerns regarding community resources included:

“A slight majority of individuals contacted for this report said that officers’ level of stress had increased over the past several years, primarily because... there are fewer opportunities for promotion, and there are fewer options for helping offenders (e.g., fewer drug treatment programs)” (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 17).

“In many cases, there are decreasing community alternatives available for offenders, such as drug treatment programs and halfway houses. One officer reported that “We used to have two intermediate facilities for alcohol or noncompliant offenders, a restitution center for helping them to get jobs, a residential treatment facility, and a counseling facility. They’re all gone, and

the only [remaining] drug facility is only for males. So we can't be creative in terms of sanctions or rehabilitation" (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 23).

"I find the frustrations generated by the bureaucracy most stressful. As soon as politics come into play, it drives me nuts. And there is the constant funding crisis and worry about where we are going to get money for this and how are we going to do that" (White et al., 2005, p. 8).

An interesting aspect of financial restrictions was pay raises and compensation that correctional staff received and **inadequate salary** was cited as an influential stressor (Slate et al., 2003, p. 535).

"Many officers report that the low salaries they are paid contribute to their work-related stress—in one survey, 80 percent of the officers reported stress due to inadequate pay. Indeed, the median annual salary for probation officers and correctional treatment specialists in 1999 was only \$36,130.26. Because of their inadequate pay, many officers hold down second and even third jobs to make ends meet. Working such long hours may create still further stress for many officers because they have so little time to spend with their families and may be chronically tired" (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 21).

"Regarding pay, one supervisor in this study reported that the state "has fallen behind, in pay scale and benefits, to our neighboring states, making employee retention very difficult" (Owen, 2006, p. 172).

Subtheme 3 Time Pressures

The subtheme of time pressures includes the organizational requirement to **meet deadlines** in accordance with policy requirements as well as the **lack of time** available to supervise clients effectively. As discussed above, since there is no cap on the number of clients that correctional staff supervises the operational demands of client service must meet policy timeframes, despite the number and type of client being supervised. The below quotes detail the specific experiences of correctional staff having to **meet deadlines**, both unexpected and expected:

According to one officer, "A supervisor can come in and say, 'so-and-so got arrested, so you have to go to the police department and get him.' So I have to drop what I'm doing to prepare the paperwork—there's a time limit for getting the arrest report done for the hearing deadline—so all my other work backs up" (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 19).

An institutional parole officer said, “Home planning investigations have a time limit—that’s stressful. For example, a release needs to have his home vetted to see if it’s suitable, so I have to do a home plan, and [then] I have only three weeks in which to do the visit, go to the local police department to find out if the cops have had to respond to drug dealing in the home, take a look at the neighborhood, and so on” (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 19-20).

Further, the **lack of time** available to do the job in accordance with organizational protocols was also discussed and captured in the quotes below:

“I can have somebody’s file pulled because they are a higher-risk person and I want to focus on his supervision and service needs, and then the sixteen stupid things that I shouldn’t have to be dealing with at all come walking in the door. At the end of the day I realize that the one person I really should’ve been spending time with didn’t get any time. That frustrates me because, let’s face it, those are the cases that potentially are going to blow up in your face” (White et al, 2005, p. 7)

“. . . there certainly is the time factor to consider, and yet when I’m with a client, I want that person to believe that right then, they matter to me more than anything—that I’m listening to what they’re saying, responding to what they’re saying, and that I don’t have one eye on the clock. And yet realistically, I have to keep them focused. It takes good training for a probation officer to have the skills to attend to that individual while managing the limited hours in the workday. It’s a delicate balance” (White et al, 2005, p. 7).

“It’s not like anyone else picks up the slack. It’s the kind of job that we work extra hard the two weeks that we go on vacation and the two weeks after we get back to make up for the time that we were gone. Nobody does it while we are gone” (Salyers et al, 2015, p. 15).

Subtheme 4 Performance Expectations

Another major organizational factor contributing to correctional staff stress is the tension correctional staff experience as a result of serving multiple constituencies. The literature detailed how correctional staff report an **imbalance of job responsibilities**, specifically protecting public safety and rehabilitating offenders. The challenge of meeting performance expectations was largely attributed to the inability to integrate the conflicting dual roles of correctional staff.

Further described with the quotes below, correctional staff explain how the enormous performance expectations of the role produces high levels of stress:

“You feel the strain between the need for firmness and the need for flexibility. [As a probation officer] you need to know when to be authoritarian and when to hold back a bit longer and let

your client work something through. We operate with the constant awareness that we can be criticized for being too harsh or too lax in the management of any case” (White et al, 2005, p. 6).

“Being caught between management and line officers—for example, ‘Officers blame me for not implementing changes, but managers have little control over implementing improvements,’ and ‘I’m trying to please the bosses while enforcing policies officers don’t like” (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 23).

“Interestingly, role conflict appears to have both a direct and indirect relationship with depressive symptomatology. While role conflict was a strong predictor of job burnout, it continued to remain a significant predictor of depressive symptoms after controlling for burnout” (Gayman & Bradley, 2013, p.339)

“Together, the findings reveal that role conflict, role overload, role ambiguity, and work stress are linked to emotional exhaustion/burnout among PPOs. In addition, as measures of organizational climate, emotional exhaustion/burnout and role conflict (along with work stress) explain a substantial proportion of the variability in mental health among officers” Gayman & Bradley, 2013, p. 336).

“[Supervision] It’s punitive, it’s target-focused, it’s, it’s primitive Management seem to forget that we have to go into a room with these people day in day out, but all the pressure from management is just about the targets. It’s almost like having two jobs. Now, there’s not really anyone who can talk you through the practical stuff, let alone the emotional stuff” (Petrillo, 2007, p. 404)

Subtheme 5 Criminal Justice System Culture

This subtheme captures the overall pressures from being a part of the Criminal Justice System and **conflicting mandates** are a risk factor for stress. As previous stated, worksites will differ amongst correctional staff, however overall job duties are regulated by government agencies, whether federal, provincial or state. Many aspects of the job involve working collaboratively with in the criminal justice system with judicial partners and victims, despite conflicting mandates. The following quotes describe the sources of stress for this sub-theme:

“The stress comes from the judge, the state’s attorney, the police, the jail staff, and the county board. And the only times I ever get mad and want to say, “I’m outta here,” is when too many egos get in the way of getting something worked out. I really enjoy the job. . . . I can handle the probationer, but for the judge and the state’s attorney and others to have expectations that we [probation officers] can do things that we can’t is frustrating” (White et al., 2005, p. 8).

“We get calls from family members, neighbor, or victims wanting to report some concern about a probationer. They demand, “Why aren’t you people doing something?” Probation officers are

blanketed within this “you people” category. It is not an endearing term. When we try to explain what we can and can’t do in response to such complaints, they have difficulty understanding the legal limitations we operate under” (White et al., 2005, p. 8).

“Some officers object that the court system does not pay attention to officers’ reports. One officer observed that “Judges will be judges [i.e., do whatever they want]. I work with a kid and recommend something to the judge, and he ignores it, but the officer knows what the kid needs.” Other officers find what they perceive to be leniency on the part of courts to be stressful” (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 22).

One respondent lamented “politicians who do not have a clue about an adult correctional facility making laws governing my job.” In addition, another was concerned about “inflexible/uneducated politicians,” and a third supervisor did not feel as though corrections received “respect from legislators” (Owen, 2006, p. 175).

Subtheme 6 Job Experience/Training

The **amount of experience** on the job and the **quality of training received** also emerged as important subthemes as potential risk factors for stress. The experience attained for the job was based either from educational pursuits or on the job training. Many studies documented how training and experience were contributing factors for stress as noted in the following quotes:

“There was widespread criticism over the lack of training for those staff who had not undergone the TPO (trainee probation officer) programme; approximately 30% of respondents felt this area was under-resourced; for example, one officer commented: I did not receive any formal training in my role – I was just thrown in the deep end and expected to get on with it” (Heer & Atherton, 2008, p. 9)

“When asked about training around the stress related to managing sex offenders or on issues such as secondary trauma, the officers generally responded by shaking their heads, and indicated that no such training had occurred” (Severson & Pettus-Davis, 2011, p. 12).

“Age and education, contributed significantly to correctional officers’ sense of personal accomplishment but did not contribute to their experience of depersonalization or emotional exhaustion. These findings indicate that older and more educated officers are more likely to experience increased feelings of personal accomplishment” (Morgan et al., 2002, p. 152).

“As the number of years employed with a probation agency increased, physical stress levels also increased” (Slate et al., 2003, p. 533).

“Importantly, even when controlling for organizational climate measures, job tenure remained positively related to burnout; each additional year of employment was associated with a .01 increase in the level of job burnout” (Gayman & Bradley, 2013, p. 334).

“One seasoned parole officer talked about the shock new officers experience when first reading case files in preparation for meeting with offenders. Sometimes new officers, you know, I—they’ll read through the profile report or they’ll read then they’re like, fallin’ outta their chair I mean, I don’t think you actually have, you know, posttraumatic stress syndrome goin’ on because of it, but—yah, they’re—everybody seems, when they’re new, seems t’ be, “Oh, my God!” (Severson & Pettus-Davis, 2011, p. 9).

“This study determined there is a correlation between longevity and traumatic stress for both time on duty and length of time in current assignment as purported in the third hypothesis of this study... Therefore, increases in traumatic stress appear to be directly related to longevity in the field of probation and not influenced by life stages” (Lewis et al., 2013, p. 78-79).

However, one study found that “generation had little impact on overall feelings of work stress for correctional officers, although membership in the baby boomer generation did decrease work stress” (Dial et al., 2010, p. 614).

Subtheme 7 Inadequate Management Support

The subtheme of inadequate management support emerged as an important contributing risk factor as it was also noted as a resiliency factor, which will be discussed later. The **lack of management** support was cited as a stressor for correctional staff who felt that their direct supervisors, regional directors or even higher levels of management did not provide them with the support to do adequately do their jobs. The literature provided the following quotable examples:

“...where management seemed uninterested, unsympathetic to perpetrator work, or as Petrillo (2007) has also observed, preoccupied with targets, consequences for workers were disabling, damaging to their esteem and on their ability to work confidently and effectively. One noted that ‘probation management say all the right things but show no real interest or commitment to the process of supporting staff in doing this work, or of understanding the impact it has on the energy and emotions of workers.’ Another, whose manager was sceptical about perpetrator programmes, felt personally isolated and professionally obstructed. Finding time to prepare properly for group work had been ‘a nightmare. . . . I’m afraid to say the probation service does not support me. I have had no supervision in the last eight months.’ Opportunities for debriefing and offloading personal feelings, so crucial in minimizing the negative impact of stressful emotional work, were not available for more than two-thirds of the entire sample” (Morran, 2008, p. 143).

“Two post-traumatic factors of interest are support and resources. A relatively high proportion of both groups indicated their supervisor was not a resource for them and that they felt lack of

recognition about the stress effects of traumatic experiences within the workplace” (Rattai, 2011, p. 62-63).

“...approximately a quarter of participants felt they were unable to access safe, trustworthy supervision, and at least a quarter of female probation officers did not believe the workplace recognized the effects of secondary traumatic stress (Rattai, 2011, p. 69).

The officers consistently indicated that they felt little departmental support in general, “And ugh, dealing with all of that [sex offenders] . . . the department says they have help for us, but they really do not.” Some officers described negative experiences with departmental supports. I have experienced crisis intervention one time . . . but that was a complete mistake . . . everyone in the office knew what was going on” (Severson & Pettus-Davis, 2011, p. 12).

Some officers report that their supervisors create significant stress for them. Most of the criticisms of supervisors reflect the feeling that bosses fail to recognize the good work that line officers do—never singling them out for praise or thanking them for a job well done. One officer who told a supervisor about the need for complimenting officers who do a good job was told, “Your reward is every two weeks in your pay check” (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 21).

Subtheme 8 Dangerous Work Conditions

This last sub-theme describes the dangerous working conditions of correctional staff both within community offices and custody centers. There is both the **real and perceived danger of physical assaults** from clients and well as **threats**, but there is also the **danger in working with inmates** or in **isolation within rural communities**. The level and types of stress in this area will be based on the specific occupation and the type of client supervised, but below are a few cited examples of the dangers of correctional work:

“Officers who supervise sex offenders can feel responsible 24 hours a day for offenders’ behavior—and the risk they pose to the community” (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 16).

“For many probation officers in rural areas a . . . problem concerned the excessive amounts of driving time spent in completing their field visits One officer noted that ‘we cover 25,000 square miles of Utah with 15 agents’” (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 16).

“In many small communities, employees’ families and offenders’ families attend the same schools, churches, bowling leagues, and other activities. Running into each other can create an uncomfortable situation for officers or support staff. One officer reported that, “When an offender found out that his children attended the same elementary school as my children, the offender made a veiled threat against my kids during an office contact” (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 16).

“The danger of assault—typically experienced during field contacts but sometimes even in the office—is a significant source of stress for some officers. In a survey of Federal probation and pretrial service officers, almost all (96 percent) expressed concern for their personal safety when making field contacts; almost 9 percent had experienced physical assaults” (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 21).

“Some officers feel the community, the media, or agency administrators will hold them personally accountable for offenders’ misconduct. In Washington State, this feeling has been exacerbated by the passage of the Offender Accountability Act, which provides legal recourse for victims of crime committed by a reoffender by allowing personal liability lawsuits against state community corrections officers” (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 22).

“First, more offenders have serious drug histories and have little hesitation in using violence.’ More generally, people sentenced to probation and released on parole are more serious offenders than in the past in terms of seriousness of criminal acts, prior records, and drug abuse histories. A second reason for the perception of increased danger is that ‘. . . over 72% of agencies have either requested or required officers to spend more time in the field than in previous years...’ and field work is typically perceived to be the most dangerous aspect of officers’ work” (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 22).

“The results of this study support our first two hypotheses that participants who reported challenging caseload events or victimization scored higher on measures of negative job impacts compared to those who did not have these experiences. In addition, officers and managers who were threatened or assaulted in the line of duty reported levels of traumatic stress and burnout that were significantly higher than participants who did not experience such incidents” (Lewis et al., 2013, p. 78).

Theme 3: Resiliency

As presented in the findings above, one can see that there are many serious consequences stress may have if it goes unmanaged. It is important to note that this research is influenced by my own personal interest in the area of resiliency because I personally know of many people within the field of corrections that have had positive and long standing careers. While keeping my personal bias in mind I reviewed the data and kept note of feelings through the process of reflective journaling. This section provides an overview of what components are important in building and maintaining resiliency and coping with stress within the field of corrections. The subthemes of **colleagues, family, social activities, career changes, training and**

organizational support and **self-preservation** clearly emerged throughout the literature and will be further described below (See Diagram 2). This diagram includes the use of circles that are used to depict how many areas can have an impact on resiliency. An individual does not have to practice all these resiliency factors, however the greater the amount of internal or external support, the more ways the person can effectively cope with stress.

Diagram 2- Resiliency and Correctional Stress



Subtheme 1 Colleagues

This subtheme captures the importance building **positive collegial support** within a correctional workplace. As a coping mechanism to stress having support within the workplace from colleagues and supervisors can help build resiliency and also influence workplace

perceptions and job satisfaction. Many correctional staff discussed how coping with stress includes talking with colleagues about how to handle troublesome cases and being able to vent their frustrations (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 27). The literature reviewed captured the following quotes from correctional staff who rely on **peer support and mentorship**:

“I think what helps me relieve my burnout is what I did yesterday. I went to the other probation officers and vented. Then I moved on, because I’ve got 60 to 100 other kids I have to deal with and work with. And that’s kind of what we all do - we vent to each other then move on to the next case” (Salyers et al., 2015, p. 13).

“I feel like I have some co-workers that would definitely help out, as I would with them, if they knew that I needed help. But like say, [if] I’m sick a day, the person who knows if I have appointments or not is my supervisor, and whether or not they need to be covered, and they’re the ones who would be asking others to help with that” (Salyers et al., 2015, p. 14).

“There are times when we’re emotionally down or emotionally up, and there are some people who are constantly negative or positive. It’s really important for us to recognize, and I think we do it intuitively, who’s gonna suck the energy and positive stuff out of us, and who’s gonna help rejuvenate us. I try to spend as much time as possible with the positive people” (White et al., 2005, p.18)

“If I’m frustrated at work with something, I seek out people—a coworker or my boss—that I feel like I can talk to about it and who can give me good feedback. So it’s not just a gripe session, but it’s a let’s-solve-the-problem session. That really helps when I can’t deal with it on my own” (White et al., 2005, p.17-18)

“The new probation officers coming in have something to teach us. When we’ve done this for a while, we can lose some of the good qualities we had when we started. New officers can get us back in touch with those qualities. Clients can also help. I’ve learned that if you really respect and listen to your clients, they will tell you what’s going on, but you have to listen” (White et al., 2005, p.18)

“There is an inverse relationship between social support and stress, indicating that as social support increases, stress decreases” (Owen, 2006, p. 170).

Subtheme 2 Family

This area details the importance of being **connected with family members** and how they can assist in building resiliency. As noted above, unmanaged stress can spill over into family life

and impact relationships with partners and children. The literature detailed ways to communicate with family members and focus on the relationships at home:

“Conversely, family members can help reduce the officer’s stress if they are understanding, flexible, and empathetic. One officer reported, “My spouse is a godsend—calm, doesn’t overreact, tells me to calm down—‘You can’t change that idiot client’” (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 27).

“Tried to leave it at work. Talked about it with my spouse, talked about it with my supervisors and the director... I try to leave it at work, because I have other responsibilities and children at home. So when I go home I just focus on them and doing things with them. Whether it’s going outside and playing, or playing games, or reading, or whatever it is that night. I just focus on them and what we are doing with my children” (Salyers et al., 2015, p. 15).

“At this point I have the advantage of saying I’ve been married the same time, 35 years. And to a great person, my wife... the best children... I am just super blessed, and it gives me more security in my everyday convictions of how family is important, how to treat people. But you gotta take care of yourself too” (Salyers et. al, 2015, p. 16).

“Also noteworthy is the prominent role that relationships played in ameliorating stress. Five of the top seven strategies used by our superperformers to manage professional stress involved drawing support from relationships outside of or within the work environment” (White et al, 2005, p. 21).

“I guess for me, I don’t take my work home with me. When I go home I focus on my own kids. I don’t let my work consume my life. So then I try to keep them separated, so that [they don’t] start interfering with each other. Just like I don’t bring my home life to work” (Salyers et al., 2015, p. 16).

Subtheme 3 Social Activities

The reliance on social activities both within the home with partners and children or outside the home were described by correctional staff as ways to manage stress. The ways to **participate in social activities** as described by correctional staff are presented below:

“However, more officers cited exercise—some type of physical activity—than any other technique as the way they attempt to cope with stress. The exercise can be walking, jogging, using weights, golfing, or gardening. Several officers mentioned playing with or walking their dogs as one way of reducing stress. (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 26).

“Uh, even though I’ve had this job for some time now, I try not to be jaded about things. I try not to take the job home with me, I have nice release mechanisms at home: playing guitar, reading, things like that. I’ve got some good friends” (Salyers et. al., 2015, p. 16).

“For instance, providing physical fitness facilities and programs can provide (in the words of a supervisor) “a place where staff can go to work out not just to be physically fit but [where] they can work off stress” (Owen, 2006, p. 177).

“Several participants described unpaid volunteer work outside of the probation field as a means of sustaining their health as a probation officer. I volunteer for the local YMCA, where I teach a class for two- and three-year-olds. I find such activities rewarding for me and a break from so many negative things I see in the probation part of my life” (White et al., 2005, p. 19).

Subtheme 4 Career Changes

This subtheme describes ways in which correctional staff have changed their careers either by way of **advancement to higher ranks, pursuit of further education or movement within the organization to a different position**. The literature described how these changes that were self-initiated by correctional staff have been described as positive ways to address the stressors of front-line work. The reasons for moving into different positions was often related to having more opportunities to implement changes, less direct contact with clients and fewer deadlines (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 23).

“A supervisor said a good way to reduce stress is prioritizing: “We had 200 cases at one time, so we picked the 50 worst cases and took our chances with the rest. As a result, we get a feeling of making achievable goals no matter what the agency expects. We set our own expectations, not let someone else set them” (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 26).

“I think before, as a PO, I either needed to make a change or do something different, and that is when I applied to be a supervisor” (Salyers et al., 2015, p. 15).

“One officer reported that the only way for him or her to cope was to switch units. I’ve been dealing with them [sex offenders] for 8 years and that’s been exclusive. And it’s been very challenging, but I’m just switching over to a generic unit, a rural unit, because I’ve just burned out. You are their victim also” (Severson & Pettus-Davis, 2011, p. 10).

“Rather than viewing work in a correctional facility as stressful, one supervisor said, “Our facility is modern, safe, and very well staffed. However, it is an opportunity for advancement in life just waiting to be taken advantage of” (Owen, 2006, p. 174).

Subtheme 5 Training & Organizational Support

The availability of **ongoing training and organizational** support was one re-occurring theme noted within the literature that assisted correctional staff build resiliency. The literature revealed that employees who had a **role in decision making, had supportive supervisors, received recognition for their job** had lower levels of stress and higher levels of job satisfaction. The support provided by the organization comes from management direct supervisors and policy makers as well as programming and training in area of effective stress management. This subtheme is a crucial area of resiliency as risk factors discussed above were largely rooted in organizational process and procedures. The following ways that training and organizational support can address stress were identified by correctional staff:

“You know, if you have the right office atmosphere, you’ve got each other. Hopefully you have a supervisor who is supportive; I try to be very supportive. And when my staff gets treated like dirt, I stand up for them, so I think that makes a difference. It certainly did when I was supervised, and I have been supervised. I do have a supervisor above me. That support makes a difference. And there is not a whole lot, there’s not a whole lot. You have to draw from where you can. I try to take a walk frequently, try to commiserate with others who are doing the same work. Try to be a good advocate” (Salyers et al., 2015, p.14).

“Another supervisor tells staff, “No matter what the department or I say, do what will promote community safety and CYA. Don’t worry about small stuff and stupid stuff” (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 26).

“Correctional officers with more education [training] were found to report higher levels of personal accomplishment” (Morgan et al., 2002, p. 157).

“...experience plays a particularly important role in shaping perceptions of the work environment, but not in any simple and direct fashion. Officers with more experience are, on the whole, more satisfied, regardless of their individual characteristics or those of the institutions in which they work” (Britton, 1997, p. 101).

“...employee perceptions of participation in decision making proved to be a pivotal variable in the current study, as the perceived atmosphere for participation in workplace decision making significantly influenced one’s opinion of his/her job and the Total Stress Scale” (Slate et al., 2003, p. 536).

“The results from this analysis indicate that employees who perceive that they have input into workplace decision making are more likely to express higher opinions of their job and are less

likely to report physical symptoms of stress, which can translate to greater productivity and morale, with less absenteeism, health care costs, and employee turnover” (Slate et al., 2003, p. 537).

“We’ve been so lucky to have a great supervisor who then became the director. I had a friend in the hospital, and he kept looking at me and saying, “What are you doing here? Your work will be here tomorrow, and you better not be. This is why we give you sick time and vacation time. We can cover for you.” When you get that kind of support, you are ready to work twice as hard when you come back” (White et al., 2005, p. 20).

Subtheme 6 Self-Preservation

The last subtheme that details how correctional staff build and maintain resiliency is tied to **personal self-care activities** and **internal thought processes**. These are described as things that correctional staff do to promote self-efficacy and how they perceive the stressors within the workplace. The literature extensively detailed how correctional staff can **focus on the positive, self-monitoring, practice self-care, set limits and have boundaries within the workplace, and participate in centering or mirroring rituals**. Additionally **possessing certain interpersonal attributes**, such as **having a sense of humor** and **being able to confront negativity** were cited by correctional staff as ways they cope with stressors. I have listed below some of the strategies correctional staff practice to cultivate their own sense of wellness:

“Some officers perceived joking as necessary but also somewhat abnormal. Usually we lose it. At some point in the day, [when] just maxed out, we’ll just lose it for about 10 minutes [a string of profanity followed]. We have to joke about it just to keep from going crazy [with general agreement from others who murmured “right”] and if somebody else heard some of our jokes and stories (another participant said, “they would think we are very stilted”) they would run screaming [laughter of the entire group followed this comment]” (Severson & Pettus-Davis, 2011, p. 11)

“I ask those who are constantly negative, “Why do you work here.” I get tired of hearing “I’m here for the benefits” or “I need to pay the bills” or whatever. You can get benefits somewhere else. I stay away from them as much as possible” (White et al., 2005, p.18)

“It’s hard to confront the negativity for fear of being calling a cheerleader or a Pollyanna or accused of kissing up to management. It’s easier to just surround yourself with really positive people and avoid the others” (White et al., 2005, p.18).

“Vacation. I go away. I go out of the country for vacation every year. That’s the only way I can get away. Because now, when I go out of the country, I turn my phone off and I don’t have Internet. I don’t have TV where I go. But if I’m around home having vacation, I still get the emails from my phone; I’ve been called in on my vacation. So the only way I can really, really just get away from it is to leave the country” (Salyers et. al, 2015, p. 14)

Well, usually I try to do something creative. I have different projects that I like to do, reading, just anything that kind of takes your mind away from work. Do something a little for yourself. (Salyers et. al, 2015, p. 15)

“I am introspective and self-reflective. And with my training in psychology and cognitive therapy and behavior, I just think that the individual has control over how they see things and react to things. And I think that’s really been a strength of mine to try to pass that on to people that I work with” (Salyers et al., 2015, p. 16).

“Yea, I certainly know the importance of nutrition, eating good, sleeping good, exercising; all those help a person meet the challenges of the physical or psychological stresses of everyday life. My personal specialty when I was in grad school, I had to deal with, I studied stress, and I was trained in deep muscle relaxation. And there were other modes of relaxing. I could go back and tell you all about stress and what it does physiologically and psychologically, but that was an area of interest with me. Learn that you can’t be stressed and relaxed at the same time. So, if you can learn to identify when you’re stressed, there are measures that reduce stress and promote relaxation” (Salyers et al., 2015, p. 16).

“While most study participants had something they did to manage burnout, only one person had a very extensive burnout prevention plan, which appeared effective for him. Notably, the strategies included many elements of effective burnout interventions that build on a multimodal approach to reducing stress: relaxation exercises, cognitive strategies, and emphasizing physical health and nutrition” (Salyers et al., 2015, p. 18).

“I had to learn to listen to myself. Our minds and our bodies tell us what we need to do, but we just don’t listen. When we aren’t taking care of ourselves, our body, our thoughts, our emotions will tell us” (White et al., 2005, p. 14).

“We have to follow our instincts. If we listen to ourselves, we know what we need to do. Even in decisions we make on the job. When I first started as a probation officer, I felt like a fish out of water because it was so different from what I had been doing. I was listening to what everybody was telling me and trying to incorporate all of those things into the way I was trying to do my job, but it didn’t work very well. What I had to do was find my own way. I got a lot of good advice, but I had to put it together with what worked for me by listening to myself” (White et al., 2005, p. 14).

Theme 4: Gender

In my review of literature I utilized a Critical Race Feminism lens to examine the data for instances where gender references were made on how stress impacted correctional staff. Overall,

some studies found statistical differences for correctional staff and others reported that additional research was needed in the area of gender and stress. For example, many studies documented how women had dual roles as caregivers, were more expressive about the symptoms of stress and also utilized more sick days than men. Below I will present findings from the studies that describe the variances of difference genders reported on how they experience stress:

“Follow-up univariate analyses for gender indicated that males reported significantly more depersonalization, than did their female counterparts, but males and females did not report significantly different levels of personal accomplishment” (Morgan et al., 2002, p. 151).

“Findings indicate that race and sex do play a role in shaping officers’ perceptions of the work environment, that these differences between groups are not completely accounted for by job or institutional characteristics and do not attenuate over time, and that there are factors that mediate the relationship between race and sex and workplace perceptions” (Britton, 1997, p. 85).

“In this study, female probation officers had a greater level of physical stress than male probation officers, but internal stress, job stress, and personal stress were greater among male officers than among female officers. Yet, gender was found to have no direct effect on internal stress, external stress, job stress, or personal stress when salient demographic and work-related factors were statistically controlled” (Wells et al., 2006, p. 72).

“Female probation officers, as noted earlier, have been found to exhibit greater levels of occupational stress than their similarly situated male counterparts... and female probation officers were found to significantly report greater physical symptoms of stress than their male counterparts in the current study” (Slate et al., 2003, p. 533).

“...both men and women in this research reported higher levels of depersonalization and lower levels of personal accomplishment, indicating a high level of job stress. They were likely to have unfeeling and uncaring attitudes toward inmates at their facilities, and they tended to have feelings of underachievement. However, feelings of being emotionally exhausted by one's work were not significant” (T. Hurst & M. Hurst, 1997, p. 129).

“Gender, in this study, was the most significant personal characteristic in predicting work stress. Interestingly, being male or female impacted perceptions of work in institutional corrections, more than race/ethnicity, education, and years of service” (Dial et al., 2010, p. 613).

As you can see from the quotes detailed above there was no consistent result within the entire set of quantitative literature as to whether gender impacts stress. However, many of the qualitative studies did report findings that women were impacted differently than men when they

experienced stressors within the workplace. The following examples provide support for the prevalence of gender differences on how stress impacts correctional staff.

Females:

“I’ve certainly stopped working with sex offenders for a while, consciously because of having a child and not being able to remain objective when working with them, and actually becoming very, very disturbed at having to read the details of their offences, especially if the child was a similar age to my own child. So I made that conscious effort for about 15 years to just avoid that type of work. It’s so overwhelming . . . I suddenly realized this overwhelming change in me . . . I couldn’t disassociate myself from what I was reading. I didn’t want to read things like that. I don’t know how you handle it, but I seem to be able to deal with it as work and I don’t personalize it in any way, but when your child’s a similar age, there seems to be no way to be able to take that step back” (Petrillo, 2007, p. 401).

“I mean, on a personal level, I’m much more careful about going out on my own in the evening and how I dress and how I have my hair and sort of the risk issues involved in all that” (Petrillo, 2007, p. 401).

“I am more wary and I focus on aspects of abuse in my own relationship,’ one noted. ‘I will not permit any type of abuse to go unnoticed in my own relationship!’...Some women reflected on their own potential for behaving abusively, ‘. . . doing this work has had quite an impact on my own relationship. Sometimes I wonder if I’m becoming abusive to him as I react to every little thing!” (Morran, 2008, p. 145).

“The majority of the variables in this study found that women officers with children were experiencing more workplace traumatic distress and suffering. The role of motherhood adds another dimension for women working as probation officers. Having children provides added responsibility, and tasks which require time and energy” (Rattai, 2011, p. 83).

Males:

“They, like the women, were also more alert to power and control issues in their personal relationships. Their comments suggested they ‘thought more’ about how their behaviour affected their partners, were prepared to ‘take on [partners’] perspective more’, and were ‘generally less selfish” (Morran, 2008, p. 147)

“This need for the support of other male colleagues and for a recognition from them of the importance of working with men’s violence and abuse as a legitimate area of probation concern continually came across as crucial and essential” (Morran, 2008, p. 148).

“In this study, men were more likely than women to hold a supervisory or managerial position, and managerial position was a significant predictor of stress. This finding suggests that the observed bivariate differences in stress between men and women may have been due, at least in part, to the differences between men and women in their position within the organization” (Wells

et al., 2006, p. 74).

Theme 5: Race

The examination of racial differences was also part of the methodology of this study. Recognizing that racial differences may impact stress in the field of corrections was an area that I wanted to explore through a critical lens. Overall six studies of the seventeen reviewed mentioned ‘*race*’ within the context of their study. Salyers et al. (2015) collected racial data on the participants but did not provide any further racial analysis. Owen (2006) found that racial differences did not lead to different levels of correctional officer burnout. Gayman and Bradley (2013) pointed out how although African-Americans reported lower levels of burnout compared to White officers, but that differences “were not significant once work stress was taken in account”(p. 334). Slate et al. (2003) reported how the probation administration revealed that there had been a history of racism and/or sexism in some field offices, though not agency wide. Although this information was known to the researchers a racial variable was not utilized in the study. Lastly, Britton (1997) and Heer and Atherton (2008) provide support that racial differences do contribute to the manifestation of stress and excerpts from these studies are detailed below:

“Overall, however, it is the case that race and sex shape officers’ perceptions of the work environment on a number of dimensions and that differences among officers are generally not accounted for by characteristics of the work environment and do not attenuate over time” (Britton, 1997, p. 98).

“...black male and female officers are less satisfied with their jobs than their white male counterparts, and this is the case regardless of the institutional context in which they work. Further, this relationship holds even after controlling for evaluations of the quality of supervision and officers’ perceived efficacy in dealing with inmates” (Britton, 1997, p. 98-99).

“Race has some positive effects, at least for male officers; black and His-panic male officers feel more efficacious in working with inmates than white men, and black men report lower levels of job stress. The higher level of efficacy reported by minority male officers holds regardless of

institutional context and is unaffected by the racial composition of the inmate population with which they work” (Britton, 1997, p. 99).

“Those who work in institutions in which there is a high proportion of minority inmates and/or a high proportion of white male custody staff perceive the work environment more negatively in almost all respects” (Britton, 1997, p. 99-100).

“White women do not perceive the work environment more negatively than do white men; their positive evaluation of supervision ultimately leads to significantly higher levels of satisfaction with their work” (Britton, 1997, p. 100).

“For white women, supervision appears to be the most important factor; white female officers who evaluate supervision more positively report higher levels of satisfaction with their work. For black and Hispanic male officers, efficacy in their work with inmates is the most important element; those who report more efficacy are also more satisfied and experience less stress” (Britton, 1997, p. 101).

“Almost two-thirds of employees did not feel valued at work, based upon their culture, as many felt that African-Caribbean, white and European staff’s stereotypical views of Asians were not challenged or corrected. Such views were expressed in some conversations, like the assumption that all Asians had arranged marriages, they did not have a social life, and they only ate curries: Colleagues have made remarks at lunch time that my food is smelly. I do not seem to fit in as I do not go out drinking with others or visit pubs and clubs on weekends” (Heer & Atherton, 2008, p. 9).

“Most of the sample interviewed (32) felt that although there were some Asian staff in senior positions, this was not enough to reassure them that they would progress well, based upon merit. Additionally, some respondents thought that their religious practices impacted upon their promotional prospects, including wearing cultural dress to work:

I think that management feel that offenders will give me a hard time and because of this they will not give me greater responsibility.

The service tends not to encourage Asian staff to apply for management jobs as far as I can tell. I feel management in my service are not ready to have traditionally dressed Asian women in charge of a white or indeed a black group of people” (Heer & Atherton, 2008, p. 10).

“There was a general consensus from the interviewees who felt the major problems stemmed from lack of awareness and understanding about how racism impacts on their day-to-day life, for example:

I feel I have to explain my religious beliefs unnecessarily to white colleagues on a regular basis.

Having worked in an all-white office and geographical area, I would advise against this practice as it further isolates people of colour; safety in numbers helps so I would have felt better if at least another non-white staff member was there” (Heer & Atherton, 2008, p. 11).

While there was not enough research on the impact of gender on stress and the results were mixed, there was also very little research on gender and race as interlocking factors and this is an area that further research will be needed.

Theme 6: Neoliberalism

This overarching theme was most notably apparent and closely tied to the theme of risk factors of stress as detailed above. Specifically the risk areas explored in this study were increased workload, lack of resources, performance expectations, time pressures, organizational culture, job experience and training, inadequate management support and dangerous work conditions. The next chapter will provide an analysis of the ways neoliberalism is interconnected with the risk factors. In my review of literature I was able to locate several instances where diminishing resources, increased expectations on staff, shifts in types of resources impacted the ability of correctional staff to do their job.

“As a result [of lack of time], many officers say they end up prioritizing their caseload into offenders they supervise closely and those they partially, largely, or completely ignore:

- *‘We have over 5,000 cases which are totally unsupervised due to staff cuts’*
- *‘We have ‘banked’ caseloads [cases unassigned to a specific officer unless a violation is reported or other action is required] of 6,500 clients who are ‘supervised’ by 4 probation officers’*
- *‘I have 108 cases right now—I can’t supervise all of them by the book—there’s no time. One offender alone can eat up an enormous amount of time’ (Finn & Kuck, 2003, p. 20).*

“I understand budget cuts and counties being reluctant to pay for extra officers, but when I started our average caseload was about eighty and it’s literally double that now, plus the increased expectations for home visits, additional documentation, and casework—all on a 100% felony caseload” (Salyers et al., 2015, p. 7).

“Frustration at the politics of the budgetary process was listed as a stressor: ‘Politics affecting pay raises and performance incentives. State employees never know from one year to the next

what they can expect as far as money for themselves or to run their facilities' (Owen, 2006, p. 175).

The literature also detailed how correctional staff felt that job expectations increased but constraints on time and services increased. Correctional staff described how they felt that they can no longer do their best and must prioritize their work based on needs. Others mentioned taking more enforcement oriented approaches as they had deadlines to adhere to and lack of support from management to implement changes within the workplace. Additionally correctional staff documented how the paperwork was prioritized over building relationship with clients. These multiple areas of risk for stress as closely tied to the shift in neoliberal policies and will be further analyzed in the preceding chapter.

Summary

Within this second chapter of the research study, a detailed outline of literature utilized was provided. I presented an overview of the thematic findings including a description of the main themes and sub-themes. Next, Chapter 3 will provide an analysis of the thematic findings and provide an explanation of the various influences of stress within the workplace.

Chapter Three: Discussion

Introduction

This research sought to examine occupational stress within a correctional environment. A qualitative methodology was utilized to conduct a thematic analysis of existing literature that explored the impacts, risk and resiliency factors of stress on Probation/Parole Officers (PO), Correctional Officers (CO) and Correctional Supervisors (CS). Further, the researcher used the theoretical approach of CRF to examine the interrelationship between race, gender, neoliberalism and stress. The following section provides an analysis of the thematic findings which detailed the multiple risks, impacts and consequences of workplace stressors as well the resiliency factors identified for coping with stress.

Based on the thematic findings organizational factors such as increased workloads, lack of resources, performance expectations, time pressures, criminal justice system culture, job experience/training, inadequate management support and dangerous work conditions were identified as risk factors for occupational stress. In addition, racism and gender discrimination were also recognized as potential stressors as well as the stressors inherent to working within a neo-liberal environment, which will be discussed further on. When these stressors were not addressed staff were impacted emotionally, physically, mentally and spiritually and their ability to adequately service clients was lessened. The literature also revealed that correctional staff who engaged in social activities, had supportive relationships, changed careers, or engaged in self-preservation strategies were able to build and maintain resiliency. Prior to diving into a discussion of each theme, and because I am using a critical race feminist analysis, it is important for readers to have context around how race, gender and neoliberalism intersected with the impacts, risk factors and resiliency factors of stress on a macro level. I will begin this chapter by

providing the readers with a critical analysis of the relationship between occupational stress and race, gender and neoliberalism and then move onto discussing each individual thematic findings.

The interlocking connections of race, gender, neoliberalism and stress

In order to understand the complexity of experiences of stress within the field of corrections, it is important to acknowledge that corrections is an integral part of the criminal justice system (CJS) as it oversees pre and post judicial sanctions imposed on offenders. The CJS has long been criticized as a tool for continued colonization through the ill treatment of Indigenous peoples, people of color, and women (Allan & Smylie, 2015; Cao, 2011; Johnson, 2003; Owusu-Bempah & Wortley, 2014; Schiffer, 2014). Race, gender and neoliberalism are all interlocking connections that influence the experiences of occupational stress within Corrections. I will discuss how the social constructions of race and gender as well as practices supporting neoliberalism are strongly tied to preserving the interests of the dominant group. As such, stress cannot be explored through a singular lens as multiple praxis influences the experiences of stress. The themes of race, gender and neoliberalism were analyzed through a critical race feminism perspective and there was evidence that correctional staff belonging to these groups were subject to increased levels of stress. Consequently, the increased risk factors for stress are manifested through the processes of colonization that function to control Indigenous peoples, people of colour and women as a tool of power that subjugates marginalised populations.

Bourassa, McKay-McNabb and Hampton (2004) describe how colonialism is dependent on the oppression of one group over another and is rooted in the process of creating the 'other'. The concept of 'othering' was introduced by Fanon (1967) who argued that White practices can include people of colour if their practices maintain the power of the dominance. Since White people are considered members of a dominant group, the identity of a non-white person is

considered lacking or less than in comparison to whites and therefore subject to discrimination. Said's (1978) perspective on Orientalism further alludes to how Western discourses 'othered' people of the Orient. The process of categorizing the West as 'rational' and orient as 'irrational' allowed for colonization to prevail on the premise that the East needed to be controlled. The skin colour of the 'other' was seen as a threat or dangerous to Whites, regardless of the social or educational achievements of the person of colour (Fanon, 1967). Since colonization, the West has had a pre-occupation with labelling, controlling and regulating differences of race and ethnicity through processes of racism and economic discrimination. It is crucial that we do not forget the historical roots of Canada and the USA as white settler societies built on the 'near extermination of Indigenous populations' (Razack, 2000) and the management of immigrant and working-class communities (Razack & Badwall, 2006). This history of colonialism is continuous with present times when institutions such as the CJS become a tool by which to categorise the 'other' as criminal through its practices. In more contemporary times, the concept of 'othering' can also be applied to neoliberal ideologies that blame individuals for not being able to succeed in a free market and fail to consider the impacts of systemic barriers.

Neoliberalism is described as an "individualist responsibility where social problems are seen as personal failure" (Morrow, Hankivsky, Varcoe, 2004, p. 360). The focus of individual responsibility over the collective good of society results in private means to address social inequities which are fiscally prioritized (Morrow et al., 2004). Particularly, individual responsibility to care for oneself and be autonomous is valued in a neoliberal society, and if you are unable to provide care for yourself you are seen as a burden on society (Moosa-Mitha, 2017). The welfare state is viewed as causing dependency and social need is viewed as being rooted in moral and psychological dysfunction (Fraser & Gordon, 1994). Consequently, those individuals

who belong to lower economic classes, commit crimes, suffer from mental health issues or rely on social programs to meet their basic needs are seen as responsible for their state of dependency. This process of ‘othering’ these individuals is further justified as necessary to ‘correct’ individuals, who are a burden to society, to levels where they can participate as contributing members of society. Furthermore, correctional staff who are unable to tend to their levels of stress are ‘othered’ due to their assumed inability to manage and cope with stress.

In the current context, neoliberalism functions as a new form of racism because it disregards differences based on race and focuses on the personal strengths of an individual. Neoliberalism further attempts to deconstruct the meaning of racism as a phenomenon of the past that has been addressed by liberal initiatives that promote equality, diversity and cultural competency (Pon, 2009). As Davis (2007) explains:

Under neoliberal racism the relevance of the raced subject, racial identity and racism is subsumed under the auspices of meritocracy. For in a neoliberal society, individuals are supposedly freed from identity and operate under the limiting assumptions that hard work will be rewarded if the game is played according to the rules. Consequently, any impediments to success are attributed to personal flaws. This attribution affirms notions of neutrality and silences claims of racializing and racism. (p. 350).

Davis’ (2007) describes how racism is regarded as the experience of the ‘other’. Based on neoliberal philosophy incidents of racism do not merit the need for any intervention because everyone is considered to have equal opportunity to succeed. This perspective is based on dominant group ideologies that frame the construction of racial and gendered identities. As such racialized correctional staff are expected to ‘internalize’ incidents of racism as reflective of individual flaws and further isolates them within the work environment.

Therefore, it is important to consider how racism impacts the stress levels experienced by people of color. Franklin, Boyd-Franklin and Kelly (2006) state that race-related stress is an

outcome of real and perceived racism, which creates emotional abuse and psychological trauma for people of color. They describe how people of colour with less resources or power often have to protest unfair policies within institutions that are dominated by White people. These protests are often dismissed or ignored as it is difficult to challenge White privilege. A formal definition of the development of the invisibility syndrome is provided as “cumulative experiences of confronting race-related stress, emotional abuse, and the psychological trauma of racism” (Franklin et al, 2006, p. 13). Consequently, people of colour feel that they are invisible because their talents and abilities are not valued and are disregarded by White people who are in positions of having power over them (Franklin et al, 2006).

The relationship between gender and stress also needs due attention. Burdett, Gouliquer and Polin (2018) confirmed that the experiences of women in corrections include incidents of sexism, hostility, paternalism, and social alienation are maintained and reinforced through the male-dominated and masculine-defined culture of a correctional environment. Within a correctional environment women were directly and indirectly reminded of their frailness, physical inferiority and regarded as unfit in comparison to male correctional staff (Burdett et al, 2018). These studies suggest that correctional offices and custody centres, which is a part of the criminal justice system, have long been considered a structure of oppression and gender discrimination due to its patriarchal values. Many studies also corroborate that women working in corrections confront tremendous obstacles due to incidents of gender discrimination and harassment (Carlson, Anson, & Thomas, 2003; Morash & Haarr, 1995; Pogrebin & Poole, 1997; Zimmer, 1986). For example, Zimmer (1986) found that female correctional officers had to deal with comments about their appearance, sexually charged jokes and teasing, falsified rumours about sexual encounters with male inmates or male staff, obscene phone calls, and reminders of

their “female” status within the workplace. Female jail officers described sexist comments as common within their worksites and described feelings of discomfort and pain (Pogrebin & Poole, 1997). In other studies, it was found that women were far more likely to have been victims of sexual harassment from fellow male staff and superiors than were men (Beck and Stohr, 1991; Stohr et al., 1998). Morash and Haarr (1995) further stated that:

An increase in women's stress is related to their spending time and energy dealing with sex, age, race, or ethnic group bias directed against others and themselves. An atmosphere marked by profanity and sex jokes is also related to stress. Because these workplace stressors are correlated with sexual harassment, stress increases in an atmosphere of disrespect, bias, and prejudice against women; such an atmosphere forces women into an "outgroup" whose members must expend energy on dealing with their status. (p. 132).

The categorization of women as an ‘outgroup’ lends credibility to gender being ‘othered’ within the criminal justice system, and women being seen as subordinates to men. Perry, Harp and Oser (2013) reported that African American women from low socio-economic status that experience social stressors of racial and gender discrimination are at an increased risk for poor health and well-being, and are more vulnerable to individual stressors. These findings support the diversity of stress experiences for women, as the risk factors for stress will be incumbent on the levels of racism, classism and ableism that are prevalent within the work environment and broader society.

The relationship between neoliberalism and gender is further complicated as gender equality is supported by neoliberal feminism as long as the individual woman is willing to take responsibility for herself. Rottenberg (2018) examines how neoliberalism feminism promotes gender equality but ignores the influences of socio-economic and cultural structures that impact the lives of women. She further contends that “incessantly inciting women to accept full responsibility for their own wellbeing and self-care, neoliberal feminism ultimately directs its

address to the middle and upper-middle classes, effectively erasing the vast majority of women from view” (Rottenberg, 2018, p. 2). As a result, the experiences of racialized women experiencing gender inequality is regarded as a personal flaw and little consideration is given to their lack of power as subordinates to white women (Rottenberg, 2018). Smith, Young and Day (2008) confer that as a result of neoliberal policies women “...are marginalized and politically disempowered, face increasing social and economic deprivation, and that issues of women’s equality are erased from the political agenda” (p. 61). So on one hand some White women have benefited from neoliberal philosophies, while women who are racialized ‘others’ have been further impacted by policies that ignore the diversity in experiences of women. In the case of female correctional staff, the thematic findings provide examples of how women with children who had dual roles also experience increased levels of stress.

Recently, researchers have raised awareness around how people of colour and women are particularly vulnerable to health hazards brought on by stress (Racco, 2018). According to Dr. Meredith Marten “people who experience more discrimination and encounter racism have a higher risk for negative health outcomes, in part because of the stressor of experiencing discrimination” (as cited in Racco, 2018, n.p.). As cited by the American Psychological Association (2010),

“...women are more likely than men to report that their stress levels are on the rise. They are also much more likely than men to report physical and emotional symptoms of stress. When comparing women with each other, there also appears to be differences in the ways that married and single women experience stress” (para. 1). Based on this research race and gender both are significant risk factors for stress.

As a South Asian female Probation Officer, my personal experiences of racism and gender discrimination are multi-dimensional and diverse. At times, I felt impacted by racism directly from clients and other times I experienced indirect racism through organizational

practices. An example is the expectation from my employer that I speak my native language of Punjabi with clients of South Asian descent. In my relationship with male South Asian clients there is an intersection of cultural, class and gendered hierarchies due to my ethnicity, social position and gender. It was assumed by my employer that I would provide translation to my clients without the consideration that there are barriers to communication due to these hierarchies. I propose there are many other experiences of racialized workers within the correctional environment that need to be explored. Without attention to this area, the cycle of racial oppression continues and racialized workers are at an increased risk of experiencing stress within the workplace in isolation.

The connection between racism, sexism and neoliberalism is that they are all mechanisms for creating and maintaining the power over subordinate groups. Neoliberalism reinforces differences in power along, for example, race and gender lines and furthers the sustainability of colonialism and inequality. Accordingly, neoliberal philosophies embedded within correctional environments preserve the status quo and dismiss the rights and identities of women, people of colour and Indigenous peoples. This further adds to the stress experienced by subordinate groups as race, gender and neoliberalism not only impact stress but are also risk and resiliency factors. The themes presented in this Chapter provide evidence that the connection between neoliberalism as a risk factor is truly complex and resiliency factors are also interconnected with experiences of racism and sexism. All seventeen studies referenced some degree of financial constraint and/or personal responsibility as part of the risk factors for organizational stressors. The studies utilized for the thematic analysis were geographically situated in Canada, the US and the UK. Although neoliberalism has manifested differently throughout these three countries, they share commonalities in terms of elected political structures that have fiscal responsibilities

designated to them. These political structures have repeatedly made cuts to social programs that have inherently impacted the work of correctional staff that have few resources but unchanged expectations to offer a high standard of service (Bowden, 2013).

It is important to also note that a majority of the studies used in the thematic analysis did not specifically hypothesize racial, gendered or neoliberal influences in the manifestation of stress, despite the fact that correctional staff work with a large number of racial and ethnic minorities (Chan & Chunn, 2014). Due to the lack of research in these areas, further studies are required to explore this crucial topic to understand the complicated influences on stress within the workplace. The role of correctional staff in perpetuating and experiencing racism and gender discrimination against clients has not been the focus of literature and is definitely an area that requires further research; this is supported by the premise that offenders in the CJS are ‘othered’ based on their race, gender and adherence to neoliberal values. A further discussion of how race, gender and neoliberalism are multi-dimensional influences on stress will unfold throughout this Chapter through the described experiences of workers in a correctional environment.

Impact

Although everyone experiences some level of stress in their lives, those working within corrections deal with ongoing incidents of primary and secondary trauma due to their work with offender populations. The professional and personal impacts of stress on correctional staff were well documented within the literature and the sub-themes detailed the manifestation of stress on multiple domains of physical health, emotional well-being, relationships, and client service. The sub-theme of client service detailed how correctional staff were not able to meet operational expectations of the service they provide to clients. Consequently, staff who cited concerns with being unable to service clients in accordance with policy likely failed to meet organizational

mandates. This may have jeopardized the overall goal of correctional facilities to reduce recidivism and protect public safety. Additionally, the impacts of stress often overlapped into one another and the sub-themes showed that if a person's family relationships were being impacted by stress, their ability to work with others, or supervise their clients was also affected. Therefore, each of the subthemes does not operate in isolation and if one is heavily impacted, other areas may also suffer.

This intertwined nature of stress is confirmed by Griffin, Hogan, Lambert, Tucker-Gail and Baker (2010) who concluded that correctional employees with high levels of job stress also experienced increased levels of emotional exhaustion and treated others callously and impersonally. Correctional staff provide front-line service and if they are not emotionally, mentally or physically stable, the type and level of interaction and how they behave with the offenders may also be compromised (Griffin, et. al, 2010). Those who are suffering emotionally due to high levels of stress may then find that their physical health is consequently threatened (Cohen, 2000). Lambert and Paoline (2008) further affirm how stress related illness can affect life expectancy and are "linked to divorce, substance abuse and suicide among correctional staff" (p. 543). The long term exposure to stress is referred to as 'burnout' which is a "syndrome where the worker experiences emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment" (Lambert, Hogan & Alheimer, 2010, p. 97). These studies support the thematic findings on the impacts of stress and further detail the consequences of stress for correctional staff. An area that requires further exploration of how stress impacts client service, from the perspectives of the client is also needed. Since correctional staff are responsible for life altering decisions in a client's life, it is important to consider how an individual exposed to high

stress environments functions in their role compared to someone who is not impacted by stress or someone who has resiliency mechanisms to address stress.

Additionally, other service providers also attest to the similarity between the nature of impact and consequences of occupational stress to the thematic findings presented in Chapter 2 and their own experiences of stress. In the field of law enforcement, the impacts of occupational stress have been cited as having harmful consequences for officers, colleagues and the entire organization (Fisher, 2001a; Fisher, 2003; Hepburn & Knepper, 1993; Lambert, Horgan & Barton, 2002; Patterson, 1992; Violanti, 1985; Violanti, 2010; Whitehead, 1987; & Whitehead & Lindquist, 1985). According to Violanti (2010), police officers have expressed frustration with the criminal justice system, shift work, lack of public empathy, relationship problems, ongoing exposure to human misery and being employed in punitive organization. Wilkerson (2010) reports that “some studies profess that law enforcement personnel suffer from a corrosion of the human spirit by bureaucratic rules and hostile management practices, upper management failing to support rank-and-file members and officers at times of personal or professional crisis” (p. 15). Researchers in the area of social work also present similar findings on the impacts of workplace stress for front-line staff and further cite constant employee turnover rates as a result of the high stress environment (Dillon, 1990; Gilbar, 1998; McLean & Andrew, 2000; Rushton, 1987).

Although, we can conclude that the nature and consequences of stress is similar across a diversity of service providers, it is not confined to the world of social services. Interestingly, according to Statistics Canada (2014), 23 per cent of people over the age of 15 report that most days are “quite a bit” or “extremely” stressful, and that number rises to 30 per cent among the 35 to 54 age group. These statistics show that at least in a Canadian context, stress is not being addressed and has increased over the years to more detrimental levels. Therefore a multi-level

critical analysis of stress is needed to explore the reasons for high stress environments and what can be done about it.

Furthermore, while there is similarity of experiences and consequences of stress, the effects of stress are uneven based on gender, race and the workings of neoliberal state practices. When examining how racial and visible minorities were impacted by stress, the themes did not produce any conclusive data. The literature is not in total agreement on the association between race and correctional staff job satisfaction. A large proportion of the empirical findings indicate that there is no significant relationship between race and job satisfaction. The majority of the studies revealed inconclusive results or lack of evidence to support that a relationship between race and stress exists. Overall, there were not many qualitative studies that explored the perspectives and experiences of occupational stress on people of colour and women of color. Based on the demographics gathered in the seventeen studies I examined, there are vast differences in the race, gender, social location, and educational experience of the participants, which confirms that correctional staff is not one homogenous group.

Guided by the framework of CRF, this study attempted to explore the experiences of people of colour to show that not all experiences are the same, and to give voice to those differences (Yosso, 2005). Two studies did describe the experiences of racialized correctional staff who reported that race played a factor in how they perceived their work environment (Britton, 1997; Heer & Atherton, 2008). For federal correctional facilities, Britton (1997) concluded that Black federal correctional officers reported lower levels of job satisfaction as compared to White officers, when controlling for evaluations of quality of supervision and officer's perceived efficiency in dealing with inmates. Asian POs interviewed by Heer and Atherton (2008) revealed that that race relations played a vital role in workplace dynamics.

Asian in the context of their study was defined as belonging to India, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or other minority ethnicity. Heer and Atherton (2008) explain that, “for people of Asian descent working in the criminal justice system, racist views and prejudice about their culture may well be present among their co-workers, and could have implications for their treatment and promotion prospects” (p. 5). Asian staff who work in the probation service had to deal with additional stressors due to their ethnicity and commented on how colleagues within their workplaces made assumptions and held stereotypes about Asian cultures, which made them feel isolated and detached. The staff also described how management did not view Asian staff as credible, and Muslims especially were seen as being “suspicious, untrustworthy and passive” (Heer & Atherton, 2008, p. 11). Specifically, Heer and Atherton (2008) noted that in 2004 and 2005 there was a 600% increase in hate crimes directed towards Asians due to post 9/11 racial tensions in the UK (as cited by Institute of Race Relations, 2005). Some participants described how because of the racial tensions, they became complacent and did not challenge the stereotypes about their culture made by White or Black colleagues. While others who felt compelled to raise awareness on diversity issues were labelled as outspoken and felt that they were not considered for promotional opportunities. Heer and Atherton (2008) described these incidents as visible and ‘(in)visible’ racism within the probation service and how it impacts employee relationship with colleagues, clients, supervisors as well as retention and job satisfaction.

When examining research in professions such as policing there is substantial evidence which confirms how racial and ethnic minorities’ experience workplace issues differently from their white colleagues (Bolton, 2003; Dowler, 2005; and Peak, 1997). Morash and Haarr (1995) found that Hispanic male police officers reported feeling “invisible” to their White colleagues as they were ignored or not recognized for their presence or contributions within the workplace.

Haarr (1997) also found that feelings of social distance were more likely to be reported by African Americans than other officers. Since many correctional staff have backgrounds in social work, it is imperative to look at the literature from the area of social work and how racism intersects with stress. Badwall (2013) examined racism within social work practice and the ways managers and co-workers responded to incidents of racism against racialized workers. The stories of the racialized workers provided crucial insight into how dominant White discourses infiltrate the profession of social work to control how workers discuss racism with the workplace. Badwall (2013) concludes that impacts of racism are treated as personal and individual to the worker and there is an expectation that the worker not let their personal stress hinder their ability to meet the needs of the client. In this way a racialized worker compromises their own sense of self and submits to dominant white discourses which may conflict with their racial identity. This adds to the stress faced by racialized workers as they must grapple with conflict between their professional practice and racial identity (Badwall, 2013).

The theme of gender was also examined throughout the analysis to explore what gender differences existed in the manifestation of stress within the workplace. The majority of offenders supervised by correctional centers are male and correctional staff identify as cis-gendered male or female. The examination of this theme also produced mixed results and there was no conclusive answer as to whether gender differences impact stress. The reason behind the lack of clarity may be related to the fact that the studies originated from a variety of workplaces in different years and gender differences and were not examined qualitatively. The number of female staff vs male staff on shift, the quality of service provided to clients and shift tenure are all aspects of the role that influence the level and type of stress experienced but were not fully explored by any of studies.

The work of Petrillo (2007) and Rattai (2001) did provide insight on the impacts of stress on women correctional staff. Petrillo's (2007) study was able to capture the experiences of female PO's who were cognizant of the male dominated workplace and altered their interactions with clients and people in general as a result of their ongoing interactions with male offenders. There was also discussion of how women were cognizant of power and control issues due to their work with violent offenders. A few women commented on how they easily noticed incidents of abuse in their own relationships and felt that they were more sensitive towards partners and became abusive due to their constant exposure to abuse within relationships. Rattai (2011) discussed the dual role of female PO's as mothers who were experiencing more workplace traumatic distress and suffering compared to women PO's without children. Rattai's findings reflect the research of Montas-Hunter (2012) who describes how, "women have to scramble to maintain a home, succeed in their role as mother and/or wife, and at the same time take on every project, work 12-hour days and volunteer on every committee to succeed in the workplace" (p. 318). The differences noted in stress levels where females are perceived as more emotional compared to their male colleagues can be further explained by dominant gender role expectations, between males and females (Lambert et al, 2010).

In a general study of how men and women process stress, Matud (2004) found gender differences and explained that "women have more daily stress, with more chronic problems and conflicts and daily demands and frustrations" (p. 1411). Furthermore, women also were more affected by the stress of those around them, as they tend to be more emotionally involved than men in social and family networks (Matud, 2004). Smith (2012) affirms that Black women correctional officers are at greater risk of abuse from male co-workers and inmates because they do not 'fit in' either due to their race or gender or both. They are in a unique position because

they have power over male inmates but also are fearful that male inmates or male co-workers may be sexually inappropriate towards them. The stress of dealing with these gender specific tensions felt by racialized correctional staff will be further explored in the risks section.

Lastly, I examined how the implementation of neoliberal policies influenced the experiences and consequences of stress. The daily stressors correctional staff face are complex and varied since individuals will feel, rationalize and synthesize experiences in their own unique ways. The ways in which staff addresses stressors, internalize or react to trauma at the workplace, or how their stress impacts clients is dependent on many risk factors. Adding to the complexity is the changes to workplace procedures that are largely attributed to neo-liberal policies that emphasize individual interests over the collective well-being of all (Comack, Fabre & Burgher, 2015). For example, the 'get tough on crime' strategy used by the federal conservative government in Canada cut employee wellness programs, services to offenders, and reduced the number of staff being hired. These strategies place a greater reliance on correctional staff to manage offenders despite the fiscal restraints (Comack et al, 2015). Correctional staff are encouraged to abide by the workplace policies despite the levels of stress they experience and thus the quality of service is compromised. From the literature we were able to see examples of how correctional staff felt client service was being impacted when they were expected to work within financial constraints. There has been an expectation from the employer to offer the same levels of client service with decreased resources and reduced decision making capabilities. The employee is then left powerless and must adhere to expectations as those in higher positions of privilege are the decision makers. This shift in power is a result of neoliberal policies and Baines (2006) describes the tensions associated by workers when there is a conflict in professional and workplace values. For example, offender may not be able to meet expectations to attend

programming or secure employment in the community due to financial constraints. Although there efforts may be viable, the lack of progress in the community is viewed by the organization as the inability to successfully reintegrate since the goals were not met. It is not surprising then to find a high degree of stress on the dimension that measures emotional well-being as correctional staff seek careers that promote social justice (Dominelli, Jeffers, Jones, Sibandan, & Williams, 1995).

Furthermore, there is a compounded impact on the clients as the attitudes and behaviours of correctional staff shifted from client centred approaches to meeting the demands of the work. This crucial area of client service has been adversely affected by occupational stress as staff felt that they were unable to meet service delivery expectations because of their own levels of stress made them emotionally unstable or physically exhausted. Many participants described how they have seen changes in workplace policies that make them feel responsible for client behaviour. The sub-theme of client service detailed how correctional staff felt that their values were compromised when they could no longer do their job in an adequate or meaningful way. The moral dilemmas that correctional staff felt about having to supervise clients in more punitive ways or adhere to prescriptive models rather than working with the client are all examples of shifts in perspectives. Baines (2011) explains that neoliberalism has created many tensions and debates between agencies, social workers and clients in areas such as service values and social justice. Bowden (2013) describes how neoliberalism has caused the perspectives of workers to shift from socially conscious to individual minded and connects how in neoliberalism individual responsibility is closely tied to vulnerability. Consequently, workers who protest the demands of the work are seen as incompetent and there is no obligation of the employer to keep staff that are

not fit to survive. This could be a reason as to why stress in a correctional setting has been a focus of researchers for the past thirty years, but little change in organizations has been noted.

The need for corrections to look at how neoliberalism impacts stress and consequently employees and clients is crucial, specifically since the mandate is to protect public safety and rehabilitate offenders. Correctional staff provides more than security of offenders, they advocate for clients' needs on a higher level within the organization to ensure clients' needs are being met. When clients' needs are not being met, their rights to access justice are also violated. Dominelli et al. (1995) further emphasizes the need to address the concerns that impact social justice and the rights of clients to receive the highest level of services at all times. Therefore, correctional staff must continue to voice their concerns about the impacts of stress and how stress is not a personal failure but rather rooted in neoliberal policies that characterize efficiency and cost saving over human service (Baines, 2011).

Researchers in the field of social work have also concurred that impacts of stress are damaging to a practitioners sense of self-worth and efficacy (Arches, 1991; Acker, 1991; Cunningham, 2003; Lloyd, King, & Chenoweth, 2002). As discussed by Baines (2006) social workers are also providing client services with tight fiscal restraints, funding cuts, and cost-saving service delivery models. These changes that include funding cutbacks, standardization of services and shift towards worker competencies do not function to support social justice or the perspectives of workers or clients (Baines, 2006). The strong parallels amongst, social workers and correctional staff further solidify the rationale that those professions working with marginalized populations are expected to navigate through organizational stressors regardless of the impact on themselves or clients.

Risk

There are a number of contributing risk factors for stress when working in a correctional setting. As identified by the subthemes, correctional staff are faced with organizational stressors such as increased workload, lack of resources, time pressures, high performance expectations, working within an unfair criminal justice system, lack of job experience and training and inadequate management support while being situated in work conditions that could be considered dangerous. The literature was undoubtedly in agreement that a range of organizational factors place correctional staff at an increased risk for occupational stress. The variables identified in the sub-themes have repeatedly been flagged by researchers in the past as areas that require attention. Even as early as the mid-eighties, Whitehead and Lindquist (1985) were highlighting their concerns about organizational factors that contributed to stress for correctional staff, which they defined these as consisting of role ambiguity, role conflict, challenge of the job, and job autonomy. Lambert, Hogan and Barton (2002) reported similar findings that role stressors and job stress have a negative impact on job satisfaction. This risk of stress associated with workload and time pressures also has significant adverse effects on the individual (Finn & Kuck, 2003; Morran, 2008; Slate, Wells, & Johnson, 2003; Whitehead, 1987). Additionally, Taxman and Gordon (2009) have concurred that organizational factors are root causes of workplace stress within corrections, and further noted that discontent with supervisors and job independence were also contributing risk factors for stress (Taxman & Gordon, 2009). Furthermore, I have identified race, gender and neoliberalism as additional contributing influences to the risk factors for stress and this will be discussed further below. As the literature suggests the risk factors for stress have not decreased over time and it is important to look at how the field of corrections has changed to allow organizational pressures to flourish.

Predominantly, the areas of risk for stress were all rooted within organizational/political structures. The organizational risk factors associated with occupational stress are closely tied to the rise in neoliberal policies. In analysing the various risk factors it was clear that Corrections has shifted from a client centered approach to an individualistic one (Bowden, 2013). The work of Tracey (2003) speaks to organizational tensions that are present within the correctional work environment and concludes that correctional officers experience more stress and burnout because of contradictory messaging within the workplace. For example, Tracey (2003) explains how officers are required to be consistent in their approaches with inmates but also be flexible by offering alternatives. She further contends that "...burnout and stress are often treated as problems that correctional officers can and should deal with on their own" (Tracey, 2003, p. 90). In this way Tracey (2003) draws attention to how neoliberalism has influenced the risk factors for stress and emphasized individual responsibility for officer's experiencing increased levels of stress. Tracey recommends that addressing organizational stress needs to start with an examination of the structural norms that construct stress within the workplace and move away from seeing stress as a personal problem.

Another organizational risk factor for stress was the lack of resources due to financial cuts made by political parties who shared neoliberal philosophies of decreasing the dependency of social institutions on governments. The ongoing cuts to correctional services, decreased funding for resources and frozen salaries for correctional staff have inadvertently starved the correctional system in being able to afford services that provide rehabilitation and support to offenders (Bowden, 2013). Smith et al (2008) describe how neoliberal policy changes led to cuts to legal aid and social assistance, elimination of the equality and human rights commissions, courthouses closures and changes to the prosecution of criminal cases in Canada. The decreased

budgets resulted in larger caseloads, longer waitlists for services and had significant impacts on front-line staff. Additionally, a research review conducted in the US by Slate, Johnson and Wells (2000) found a direct link between financial concerns, uncertainty about retirement benefits, insufficient mileage reimbursement, and family matters; and a greater propensity for quitting among entry-level probation officers and among better educated and minority probation officers. The financial constraints discussed in these studies have striking similarities to risk factors for stress and provide evidence of the infiltration of neoliberal policies within correctional systems.

The shift towards neoliberal philosophy in corrections is also reflected in role conflict as being identified as a risk factor for stress. The changing role of correctional staff which is now focused on stricter supervision methods to protect the public, rather the client centered approaches (Bowden, 2013). Within a correctional setting offenders are managed as a homogenous group and their individual needs are not considered. Bowden (2013) further confirms how the clients of the criminal justice system as "...lumped together as an undifferentiated mass of the 'undeserving poor' or an always potentially criminal 'underclass' requiring an equal degree of punitive supervision, surveillance and 'management'" (n.p). These policy shifts also mean that service to clients suffers because of the weight given to satisfying the bureaucratic requirements of the job. To move forward and address these risk factors for stress it is evident that additional resources will be needed or current tasks and expectations required of staff will need to be eliminated. In this era where public services receive minimal funding, the addition of new resources appears to be an unrealistic expectation. However, by eliminating services or making changes to procedures may also cause concern as ultimately the protection of public safety and offender rehabilitation is a core fundamental component of correctional

organizations. The risks presented above, rooted in organizational policies and processes cause a conundrum for correctional staff.

The consequences of workplace stress pose potentially serious problems in corrections for staff and the organization as a whole (Fisher, 2003). The findings here in the risks section provide evidence that there are a number of factors that can contribute to the impact and consequences of stress but these need to be understood as a collective not each factor individually. The risk and impacts need to be analyzed in the context of the larger work environment and there needs to be a shift in how organizations not only prioritize employee well-being but also work to address the root of the problem. An area that would require further investigation is the role of technology in workplace stress. Over the years, advances in technology, such as electronic record keeping, the wide use of cellular phones, emails and monitoring software have been implemented so correctional staff can work more efficiently and effectively. However, this may also be a risk factor if it leads to higher performance expectations. Employers may expect employees to be available for work 24/7 if they are provided with a work cell phone, or reply to their emails quicker, or spend hours trying to enter client information as documentation requirements instead of using their time to actually meet with clients. If employees are not able to use the technology efficiently, or fail to respond in a timely manner, there could be repercussions from managers. Bowden (2013) explains how the focus on technological efficiency is another way that neoliberal philosophies continue to infiltrate the correctional system and replace the rehabilitative role of corrections with a more supervisory one. The increased focus on monitoring clients and staff through technology supports neoliberal ideology of controlling individuals and exerting mechanisms of fear and punishment (Bowden, 2013).

In terms of risk factors for stress, race was also analyzed as a theme. The influence of race a risk factor for stress was examined by Britton (1997) and Heer and Atherton (2008). Britton (1997) concluded that race and gender are contributing factors in stress and further identified the need for future researchers to explore how these intersections influences the lives in staff who work in a correctional environment. In the sub-theme of training and support, POs reported that racist comments were not adequately addressed, which led to feelings of marginalization and isolation (Heer & Atherton, 2008). The participants in this study further noted how they felt devalued at work due to their culture and how Asians were not encouraged to apply for promotional opportunities (Heer & Atherton, 2008). Furthermore, the participants noted that post-9/11 their relationships with colleagues and clients were impacted, as Asians as a whole were generalized as linked to terrorist activities. These experiences of racialized workers reveal that racism is exists throughout the probation service causing them to feel devalued at work and marginalized due to their ethnicity and culture (Heer & Atherton, 2008).

Dominelli et al. (1995) points out how there has long been concern that people from minority ethnic groups may be subject to disadvantageous treatment at all stages of the criminal justice process, even if this is not as a result of overt racist discrimination. Although anti-racism policies have been implemented in the Probation Service, Dominelli et al. (1995) explains how “justice is being denied to black women and men in the work environment, and to black’ clients’ in the dispensation of justice itself” (n.p.). Denney (1992) further describes how probation service focuses on offenders achieving desired normative behaviour, such as securing employment or housing, within timeframes established by officers. However, what is not considered is how the racialized offender may not be able to achieve tasks as directed by the PO due to structural factors such as racism. Denney (1992) points out that“...the probation officer

has more power than the probationer by virtue of his legal position. Such inequitable power relationships, however delicately hidden, are powerfully felt by a group who for generations have been subjected to the oppression of white domination” (p. 161). So in essence the position that a PO holds over a client further reinforces the long standing history of racialized groups being controlled by white dominant groups and discourses.

It is important to acknowledge that within the CJS there is an overwhelming amount of racial minorities that are part of a social disadvantaged group of people who are at a greater risk for being victims of crime and offenders (Millar & Owusu-Bempah, 2011). Crutchfield and Weeks (2015) note a disproportionate number of those in prison are people of color, those struggling with mental health and/or chemical dependency issues, poor education and employment skills, and other outcomes from substandard housing, violent neighborhoods, and dysfunctional families. Alternatively, there has been support for systemic and racial discrimination as a contributing factor of overrepresentation due to incidents where visible minorities are treated differently by police and parts of the CJS. Schiffer (2014) explains how racial minorities are more likely to be arrested, charged, convicted and sentenced to imprisonment compared to whites. She describes how:

African Americans make up 13% of the population, 28% of all persons arrested, 40% of inmates currently in prison and jail, and 42% of inmates on death row. Over 60% of those who are incarcerated in the U.S. are racial minorities. To put this in perspective, one in every ten Black men in his thirties is in prison right now. (Schiffer, 2002, p. 1205).

Similarly, in the Canadian system, Indigenous peoples, people of colour and ethnic minorities have higher conviction and arrest rates compared to Whites (Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System, 1994). Owusu-Bempah and Wortley (2014) confer how African-Americans are overrepresented in the US system and, “...Aboriginal

Canadians are just as overrepresented within the Canadian system and that African Canadians are almost as overrepresented” (p. 6). A review of Canadian statistics confirmed the over representations of Indigenous populations in the criminal justice system. According to Statistics Canada (2017) in 2015/2016, Aboriginal adults accounted for 26% of the admission to provincial and territorial correctional services, while they only represent less than 5% of the Canadian population. This overrepresentation was more pronounced for Aboriginal females compared to Aboriginal males as female admissions to provincial custody centres was 38% while males was 26%. The role of the CJS in perpetuating racial inequality is clearly evident based on the data that is available. However, it is crucial to note that the statistical data is limited, as not all crimes are reported, process through the system or result in convictions. Furthermore, there is inaccessibility for researchers to collect and analyse data in racial difference in the CJS in Canada. Millar and Owusu-Bempah (2011) warn that, “the suppression –whitewashing- of racial data by a powerful public institution like the police, more than contradicting democratic values, may be hiding inequalities that, in the end, harm police effectiveness and deteriorate community relationships” (p.661). This bureaucratic obstruction to collect and analyze racial data in the criminal justice system has stark ramifications on the field of corrections. Specifically, due to the large number of racial and Indigenous peoples under the supervision of Corrections, staff may be perpetuating further racial and gendered discrimination against offenders. Additionally, racialized workers may be dually impacted by race related stress due to their own experiences of stress and the fact that they are working within a system that perpetuates inequality.

Race has been identified as a risk factor for stress in other front-line professions such as policing and social work. Haarr and Morash (1999) found that Black female police officers reported significantly higher stress levels than Black male officers. Dowler (2005) confirmed

how Black police officers reported higher levels of criticism and perceptions of being militant but decreased negative or depressive experiences about work in comparison to white officers. Bolton (2003) examined the workplace experiences of Black police officers who felt a lack of support networks and constant conflict and stress. Black officers described incidents of ongoing exposure to racial slurs, joke and cartoon, derogatory name calling, rude behavior and harassment from colleagues and supervisors (Bolton, 2003). Gosine and Pon (2011) validated the complex experiences of racialized social workers and how workers discussed "...issues of racism as evidenced by a perceived lack of promotion and advancement opportunities, a lack of respect, silencing, microaggressions, and workplace practices and policies that constrained their individual practices" (p. 154). Yee, Wong and Janczur (2006) suggested that although social workers work to protect the rights of disadvantaged groups, those originating from disadvantaged groups can still be victims of individual and systemic discrimination. Likewise, Badwall (2013) also confirms that racialized social workers feel silenced and ashamed about their experiences of racism. Lastly, Razack and Badwall (2006) concur that there is a lack of literature focusing on the perspectives and experiences of social workers of colour in Canada.

In utilizing a CRF lens, I examined the role of power within the professional working relationships of correctional staff. As detailed in the impacts sections, Petrillo (2007), Salyers et al (2015), and Rattai (2011) provided support for how women are impacted by stress differently than men and gender is contributing risk factor for stress. First, women have minority status in male correctional facilities as a large number of inmates are men and second, they are not in supervisory positions of authority as men typically occupy those posts (Lambert, Paoline, Hogan, & Baker 2007). Female correctional staff working within power based relationships both challenge and adhere to subordinate and dominate gender roles, with the former relating to their

work with clients and the later working under male supervisors. The thematic findings described instances where women felt that their access to supervisory positions was limited due to sex, gender roles and race (Britton, 1995; Heer & Atherton, 2008; Rattai, 2011). Furthermore Lambert et al. (2007) reported that when women do not occupy supervisory roles there is an unequal access to power as women are assigned the least desired shifts, cases or job duties (Lambert et al., 2007).

Smith (2012) postulates that although female correctional officers have power over inmates that they supervise, their level of power may be reduced due to the intersections of gender, race and class. For example, Black female correctional officers reportedly experienced gender discrimination from inmates which was further combined with incidents of racial and class discrimination (Smith, 2012). The fact that female correctional staff must deal with sexism and sexual harassment within the workplace has been substantiated as stressor within existing literature and further supported by the thematic findings. The combination of sexual or racial discrimination in the workplace along with the lack of power may cause female correctional staff to be more vulnerable to not only stress but also increased victimization by inmates or male supervisors.

Resiliency

The emergent themes identified in the last chapter detail how multiple supports can be essential to building resiliency and effectively coping with stress. The themes confirmed that those who have successfully navigated stress within a correctional setting have relied on colleagues and family, participated in social activities, changed careers through unit switches or promotions, or benefited from ongoing training and organizational support. Additionally those who engaged in self-preservation techniques were able to partake in centering rituals, set

boundaries within the workplace or utilize personal self-care activities to promote self-efficacy and change their perceptions about stressors in the workplace from negative to positive. Lambert et al. (2002) similarly report that participation in decision making, promotions and quality supervision all positively influence job satisfaction. These components of resiliency building are tied to individual efforts made by correctional staff and do not confront the various organizational risk factors for stress. Britton (1995) reported that work environment structures are more important in shaping job satisfaction than are personal characteristics. Lambert et al. (2002) point out how organizational and work environment factors are more important than individual attributes in shaping correctional staff attitudes of inmates (as cited in Jurik, 1985). The fact that the work environment has a larger influence on correctional staff job satisfaction in comparison to personal attributes was also reported in professions of social work, administrative services and nursing (Arches, 1991; Glisson & Durick, 1988; and Lyon, 2000).

Although the thematic findings did identify organizational support from managers as a resiliency factor, the majority of resiliency strategies focused on individuals taking ownership for their stress. But as stated previously, correctional staff cannot be viewed as a homogenous group as each staff member has different responsibilities both in their roles and personal lives.

Therefore their level of commitment and ability to utilize resiliency factors is based on many extenuating variables. Person, Colby, Bulova and Eubanks (2010) explain that:

Research shows that women are generally more likely to participate in worksite wellness programs than men and, overall, married employees have a much higher participation rates than their single co-workers... Other detriments to higher participation rates include: white collar or secured contract employees, full-time employees, older age, and small company employees; shift workers, lower income, and less education displayed much lower participation rates. (p. 150).

As such men and women, who have child care responsibilities, have second jobs in order to make ends meet, are single parents and have other responsibilities outside work, are at an unfair

advantage because they may not have the time to engage in resiliency strategies outside of work. Additionally, to participate in wellness activities one must also have adequate resources available. For example, paying for fitness passes, nutritional supplies, transportation and equipment related to physical activities can be quite costly. Add in the expenses required for an adequate standard of living, caring for dependants and incidental expenditures coupled with the amount time required to participate in social activities can mean that some resiliency approaches are not idealistic for everyone. It was unclear in the literature if those who identified using coping strategies had additional responsibilities outside the home or if they were financially stable. This is a crucial missing piece of information as the expectation that everyone take control of their mental health on their own time, assumes that correctional staff have the time to devote to themselves when this may not be the case.

There also may be differences between coping strategies utilized by men and women who work in high-stress professions. For police officers, Haarr and Morash (1999) explain that:

There is some basis for expecting unique coping strategies among women. Some observers argue that women police are likely to employ different coping strategies than men because the experience of exclusion and oppression makes them more critical of dominant occupational group norms and practices, particularly those which appear to preserve predominantly male interests. (p. 310)

In a study of social workers and resilience, Ryan, Merighi, Healy and Renouf (2004) concluded that optimism was linked to a worker being able to successfully maneuver challenges throughout their career and build optimism based on their own ability to address stressors.

Additionally, the resiliency techniques described focus on the individual to practice self-care and therefore inability to build resiliency becomes a personal failure. Again the components of neoliberalism leak into the manifestation of how stress is addressed. By placing individual responsibility on correctional staff to manage organizational stressors they are ultimately set up

to fail. Due to the large number of risk factors for stress there may be correctional staff that has made attempts to manage stressors but these may not have been realistic strategies as they do not have control to change organizational mandates. For example, correctional staff who identified taking vacations as a coping mechanism also discussed how lack of coverage meant that they actually came back to more work. Even though their efforts to manage stressors may have been sincere, the continuous organizational stressors impeded on their ability to fully benefit from the coping strategy. There is also a noted reluctance to admit to experiencing stress or acknowledging the impacts of stress due to the culture of the organization. Miller (1999) described how officers “deal with both the routine and exceptional stresses by using a variety of situationally adaptive coping and defense mechanisms, such as repression, displacement, isolation of feelings, humor often seemingly callous or crass humour and generally toughing it out” (p. 319). Therefore, some of the resiliency factors noted such as using humor may be examples of avoidance strategies that work well in the short term but can long term impacts on an individual’s health and well-being.

The resiliency factors mentioned were also not gender or race specific, meaning that everyone was able to have equal access to organizational support despite their gender or race. However based on the relationship between race, gender and stress, some groups such as women or racialized workers may not feel the support from management or the organization due to how stress has manifested itself in the workplace. For example, if their work environment is toxic and there is ongoing incidents or racism or sexism that are being ignored or dismissed by management, than these individuals may not be able utilize management as a resiliency factor. Furthermore, women or racialized workers may not receive the same amount of support from colleagues as would members from the dominant group, or be considered for promotional

opportunities due to race or gender. The risk factors for stress discussed above described some of the experiences of people of colour and women, but the resiliency factors did not detail any specific information pertaining to coping mechanisms exclusive to these groups.

As mentioned in the work of Heer and Atherton (2008), the POs who participated in the study were part of the National Association of Asian Probation Staff (NAAPS) that as an external organization may be able to provide support and validity for Asian POs who have experienced racism or discrimination. In this way membership in the NAAPS may be considered a resiliency factory and work to empower Asian POs to vocalize their experiences as a collective instead of suffering in silence. However, the stress that is added onto racialized or women correctional staff may be difficult to cope with if they are not afforded with the same level of supports within the workplace. The lack of access to the resiliency factors hinders their ability to be resilient or effectively cope and may be an explanation as to why women correctional staff or racialized staff reported increased levels of stress.

Lastly research in policing has also examined race and gender differences amongst coping skills for stress. He, Zhao and Archbold (2002) coping methods among genders and reported how “females are more likely to use “emotional-focused coping strategies compared to males who are more proficient with problem-focused coping strategies” (p.689). In a separate study He, Zhao and Ren (2005) reported that African-American male police officers reported more camaraderie than African- American female police officers and that African-American males and females were also more likely to use constructive methods of coping to stress compared to white officers. The constructive coping methods were further described as positive responses to workplace stress which included talking to a spouse, relative or friend about the

problem, making plans to address the stress and following through or utilizing spirituality or faith-based approaches.

Overall, the impacts of stress have significant consequence on an individual's personal and professional life as well as client service. It is important to point out that everyone will have different resiliency strategies that may or may not have been identified throughout the literature due to their own personal discretion to keep it private. However, in order to address stress we must seek to employ coping mechanisms both from an individual perspective and an organizational one. If correctional staff are given the support they need on and off the job, there is a better chance that correctional staff will have a healthier and happier life by using positive coping mechanisms and be better equipped to help their clients be successful in the community. Should this state of complacency with working in high stress environments continue it is possible that productivity is further impacted and people will either start to leave their organizations or succumb to the health risks associated with stress (Fisher, 2003). Each of these alternatives further compounds the existing issues and are not long-term solutions to address stress. Both community and custody correctional environments have the responsibility to change workplace procedures so that officers are better equipped to perform their duties and lead healthy lives.

Summary

This third chapter of this thesis provided the reader with a focused discussion on how a correctional environment is part of a larger CJS that systematically creates stress for correctional staff through its various policies and mandates. Ultimately, the goal of a correctional environment to rehabilitate offenders is compromised when correctional staff are under high levels of stress and cannot perform their job duties in accordance to organizational expectations.

The high levels of stress in a correctional environment are derived from the organization itself and not rooted in deficiencies amongst individual staff. The personal and professional impacts were thoroughly explored and detailed how stress affected correctional staff and client service. Furthermore, organizational stressors, race, gender and neoliberalism were discussed as contributing risk factors for stress within a correctional environment. In terms of resiliency, individual correctional staff provided a variety of coping mechanisms to manage stress, however these strategies were individually initiated and not equally available to all staff. Additionally, the differences between how people from different races and genders experience, manage or suffer from stress was also analyzed and consideration was given to how multiple intersecting influences contribute to stress across many service professions. Lastly, there was also discussion regarding the culture of a correctional environment and how it works to reinforce colonialism, patriarchy, sexism and racism. Although it may not be realistic that all stressors are removed from correctional workplaces, there needs to be an acknowledgement and commitment to look at the various intersecting influences on stress and then work towards possible solutions.

Conclusion

To conclude, this was a qualitative study into how stress impacts the personal and professional lives of correctional staff. This study was guided by critical race feminism and analyzed the how race, gender and neoliberal influences were risk factors for stress. A thematic analysis was used to identify the emergent themes of the impacts, risks and resiliency factors for stress. Based on the thematic findings there can be no doubt that correctional staff are affected by stress not only personally and professionally but also the quality and ability to provide effective services is compromised. Therefore it is crucial that interventions to address correctional officer stress include a multi-level understanding and analysis of the problem.

Implications of current research on future research

The current research has shed light on the plethora of consequences of unmanaged stress. In future studies including a contextual analysis of the experiences of clients and professionals by discussing the impact of race, gender and neoliberalism may yield further insight into this area. Given the qualitative method for this research study, and the use of both quantitative and qualitative studies for the literature review, a further exploration of participant experiences may be supported by quantitative survey to show the statistical relevance. Although the current research included data from over 7,500 correctional staff, the data was geographically sourced from Canada, the US and the UK. Further studies may want to explore a smaller geographical site, perhaps for a single state or province in North America or analyze a wider data set to include additional countries in Europe, Asia or Australia to compare and contrast findings. Due to the sensitive nature of the area of stress and its relation to race, gender and neoliberalism, researchers must also be cognizant that participants may be reluctant to participate in the research unless anonymity is maintained. The current research may influence critical areas for

researchers to analyze, whether it be looking at racialized experiences of gendered correctional staff or perhaps focusing solely on neoliberalism and how it impacts individual officers. Lastly, no research thus far has followed the stress levels of correctional staff over time. Therefore, longitudinal studies of correctional staff job stress would identify both the antecedents and consequences of stress within correctional settings.

While this study did not examine whether stress was the reason correctional workplaces experiences high turnover rates or why there has been an increase stress related absences (Kilduff, 2014), I believe given the high personal and professional impacts associated with stress, one could safely conclude this is a major factor. Consequently, these impacts have a domino effect by adversely affecting the judicial system as a whole and undermining the morale of remaining staff. I also believe that associated with the high turnover rates are the pressing issues of the identified short-term and long-term emotional and physical disorders, strains on interpersonal relationships, professional impacts and costs of not attending to the insidious way stress affects correctional staff. If it is not recognized and responded to, stress may derail the primary mission of the correctional system— assuring the safety of the public and assisting the rehabilitation of offenders.

Recommendations

Correctional staff are especially skillful in dealing with offenders who present an array of challenging behaviours. However the impact of stress coming from organization requirements, social identity factors and working within a neo-liberal environment seems to be overlooked by workers and employers. Lambert, Hogan and Tucker (2009) point out that, “satisfied, committed and unstressed staff members are necessary to create and maintain a professional, productive, safe and humane correctional facility. Dissatisfied, uncommitted and stressed staff, on the other

hand, can lead to a disorganized and poorly run correctional facility” (p. 543). Although a general awareness of stress within their jobs may be known, I believe that further education is required for all levels-employees and their families, management, policy makers and the criminal justice system partners, in order to counteract the devastating effects.

I also believe that a multi-level approach is needed where the responsibility of addressing stress is shared. First, individuals entering high-stress environments must have the knowledge to understand how stress can impact them and what adaptive coping skills will work for them. Exploring interventions on a personal level can highlight educational needs, assist staff with building on individual strengths, and on a professional level lead to the development of strategies to help correctional staff manage within their workplaces, and facilitate the provision of ethical and effective services. Second, the organization must remain supportive and respect that workers will go through periods of high stress and require additional flexibility.

Additionally, on an organizational level this knowledge about workplace stressors can be used to assist in advocating for social and institutional changes that can help workers maintain their well-being and ensure policy directives do not compromise service delivery. The organization must also be proactive in recognizing the signs of stress and implementation strategies to minimize impacts of staff and their families. Lastly, government and state policy makers must examine current policy and procedures to ensure that their procedural expectations are realistic and attainable. The policy and programs must take into account the risks and impacts of stress and work within attainable parameters so employees will flourish not fail.

Since, this study also examined how race, gender and neoliberalism as contributing risk factors, it is imperative that any recommendations or interventions to address stress within corrections follow an anti-racist and intersectional framework (Crenshaw, 1995). The themes

from this study reveal the need for correctional organizations, management and policy makers to examine the influence of racism and sexism within correctional environments and how that contributes to high levels of stress. As a government organization, correctional facilities have a responsibility to create policy and procedures that are equitable. The over-representation of Indigenous peoples and people of African descent in custody highlight the need for Corrections to adapt an anti-racist and anti-gendered approach in how it manages offenders. The correctional staff delegated to supervise offenders will then have the appropriate mechanisms to help offenders and thus minimize the stress that they experience when they cannot meet the expectations of their job. Furthermore, there needs to be an acknowledgement from policy makers that stress is not a linear process but rather a complex entity that has different impacts on everyone. With that being said people of colour and men and women working within corrections need tools that will help them address stress according to their own needs, and not a cookie-cutter approach for all. Last but not least, the organizational stressors were heavily linked to neoliberal influences within a correctional environment, and unless those are addressed expectations that staff are responsible for their own stress will continue. In order to address neoliberal influences, there needs to be a better understanding of how neoliberal discourses have infiltrated corrections. Once the effects and impacts are thoroughly and critically examined we can move towards initiating changes in the affected areas. Based on the resiliency factors identified within the literature and components of CRF, I propose the following recommendations be considered:

1. Increase family involvement in education and information programs

In order for family members to continue to play a vital role in reducing stress for officers, educational and information programs need to be implemented. The programs will help family

members understand the professional roles of officers and how stress can impact an individual's professional and personal life. Since family members were identified as a resiliency factor by correctional staff, individuals and organizations need to appreciate how healthy and positive relationships can help officers balance their professional roles and mitigate the impacts of stress.

2. Initiate frequent and regular consultations with peers for clinical support

Colleagues can be a powerful source of support for each other, as they understand the demands of the job as well as ways to combat ongoing stressors. Allowing co-workers the opportunity to debrief encourages them to reflect on their case management decisions and stressful incidents. This approach can reduce feelings of isolation and allow employees to gain insight into their case decisions. A strong consultation model will assist in staff in being able to have the time to take a personal inventory on their current level of stress and seek supports if they are feeling overwhelmed. Additionally, the implementation of ongoing consultations will need to be a priority for organizations and communication from up top needs to value this approach and encourage its use within all levels of management.

3. Provide adequate financial incentives and rewards for officers

As the literature suggests inadequate financial resources are problematic as correctional staff do not feel compensated for the work that they do and do not feel that they have access to resources for their clients. The need for better compensation for front-line workers and additional services for clients is crucial and long overdue. Additionally, within the organization, financial incentives for participation in social activities such as the attending yoga or fitness classes, and other stress management techniques can be offered. Whether the organization provides financial

reimbursements to employees or free passes to local fitness clubs, finances utilizes in preventative measures can offset future costs associated with stress related illness and absences.

4. Provide opportunities for transfers to different work units or leadership positions

Being able to have flexible work arrangements is an important need identified by correctional staff. Whether staff choose to transfer to another work unit, or move into supervisory positions, any transitions should occur in a smooth fashion to mitigate any stress on the officer requesting the move. By providing a change in work environment staff are able to get a break from their regular job duties, learn new process and gain confidence in the work that they do. Although not everyone will want to change positions, encouraging all staff to try supervisory positions or new roles, may help staff build their skillset and determine what area they are best suited for.

5. Increase training for front-line staff and build supportive management

The utilization of ongoing training and development opportunities by correctional staff and having supportive managers also was associated with building resiliency. In any work environment, managers have a pivotal role in understanding the demands of the workload and advocating for workers to senior levels of management. The expectation that staff will individually address stress on their own accord is not fair as they often do not have control over the work they are assigned to complete. Those involved in supervising correctional staff should continuously promote a healthy workplace for all its employees and recognize that ongoing training and development for staff is a priority. Additionally advocating for the needs of employees is crucial for staff to feel that they can trust management to support them on issues pertaining to client service and their own well-being.

6. Help employees build resiliency

Correctional offices and centers invest a great deal of time and resources to hire, train and employ staff. However if organizations want to retain healthy staff in all its work sites, more attention is needed to ensure the longevity of its employees. Many correctional staff provided insight on how they manage stress and those senior staff play a vital role in transferring their knowledge and expertise to new hires. The organization needs to provide staff with the incentive to acquire further knowledge to stay with the organization and opportunities to practice their discretion within a worksite. Those working in a correctional environment should be able to make decisions about their work capacity and management should be receptive to flexible work options instead of adhering to rigid operational policies. This approach will help employees change their attitudes about job satisfaction if they are able to participate in influencing changes about their work.

7. Increase understanding and knowledge of risks and impacts of stress

In order to address the impacts of stress, the stigma around stress will need to be recognized and addressed in a systemic way. Employees who work in a high-stress environment are expected to carry on and work through competing priorities with little support and this is wrong. The knowledge around stress and how it impact all levels of the organization needs to be increased so everyone is understands their role in managing it. An ideal workplace would provide its employees with comprehensive information around stress as a mandatory component of post-hire training. By breaking through the barriers of stigma, stress within the workplace would be normalized as an organizational issue and not rooted in an inability of an individual to do their job.

8. Mandate participation in health and wellness programs for all staff

While I have covered some of the impacts of stress, I am sure that other negative effects exist and also need to be mitigated. Many workplaces have initiated employee wellness programs, but accessing these support when employees do not have the time to do so creates problems. Therefore I propose that any prevention program should be mandatory for all staff to participate in, and whether they are a new worker or senior staff member they must be given uninterrupted time during their shift to complete health and wellness programs. Additionally, ongoing efforts must be made by management to promote the utilization of these resources, not only for staff but also for family members.

9. Recognition of the diverse needs of staff and offer alternatives

The correctional system as a whole needs to recognize the impacts and risks of stress and how unmanaged stress can be toxic for any work environment. That being said, correctional staff are not just one homogenous group and the diversity within their personal and professional experiences needs to be taken into consideration. So collectively, an office environment will have to employ different strategies that best meets the needs of all its staff regardless of their race, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, culture, physical or cognitive ability or job type. Not all staff have the same educational background and experience to meet the needs of diverse communities. This adds an additional barrier when staff of multiple ethnicities work in an environment and different world views that may conflict with one another. For example, racialized workers and women may not be aware of how their practice may be impacted when they are subjected to racism or sexism within the workplace. Correctional staff should not have to wait for an incident to happen for anti-oppressive training to be implemented in the workplace. Rather, information on how stress impacts everyone differently based on our race, gender, social

location, and any other position must be taken into consideration by the organization and responded to in an appropriate manner throughout wellness programs and job training. The need for social justice initiatives to be included in training for all staff is a long overdue need. The inclusion of social work principles in working within a diverse organization can assist in ensuring equitable service for clients and correctional staff.

10. Explore racial and gendered perspectives on stress within the workplace.

The lack of research with racialized workers and gendered workers is apparent within the literature studies reviewed. How people of color, different genders, socio-economic status and education process and respond to workplace stressors is an area that requires further exploration. Without obtaining greater understanding in this area, programs implemented to reduce stress will only be relevant to those belonging to dominant sub-groups. Opportunities to conduct research and obtain various perspectives need to be imbedding within organizational structures so solutions can be proposed that are considerate of multiple factors.

11. Address the systemic issues perpetuating high stress within the work environment

Overall policy makers need to recognize that the correctional work environment causes undue stress for its employees and there needs to be changes made to reduce redundancies. The high stress environments of stress resulting from high demand of work, little support and role conflicts are causing havoc across the nation. Consequently, policy makers need to be cognizant of the challenging environment within corrections. The staff face similar barriers as clients when it comes to resources and inequities within a flawed system cannot be blamed on service users or providers. Those responsible for policy changes need to take a look at operational procedures and practices and see how staff are stressed by competing demands and lack of resources to

fulfill mandates that are virtually unachievable. Having unrealistic expectations of staff to navigate through systemic issues compromises the integrity and level of service clients deserve.

12. Lobby for change

The final strategy is more of an overarching vision to promote an awareness of correctional issues and portray a real and accurate picture of what it is like to work in corrections. Of courses depending on the area, these roles will be diverse, however the main intent of lobbying will educate politicians and the public on the realities and gaps in the system of correctional services for staff and clients. By creating awareness around the issues of lack of resources, budget constraints, and increasing workload in a public setting, politicians will need to tend to the risk factors for stress that are systemically rooted.

Concluding Reflections as a Researcher

The journey of conducting this research was filled with many feelings and experiences for myself as an individual and a researcher. I felt very much attached to this issue due to my own practice and wanted to produce the most honest account of the realities of stress within the workplace. Having such a large set of literature to review I was challenged to capture the many different aspects of stress, some which were familiar to me and others that were quite shocking. I was unaware of exactly how stress impacted people who also experienced racism and sexism. It is my sincere hope that the work that I have produced will provide the field with useful information and a basis for further research. As a woman of colour this research has been quite important to me in working with a CRF perspective to challenge mainstream discourses which portray stress as a general issue and ignore the complexities of race and gender.

This research and findings have allowed me to come to accept my own vulnerabilities as a Probation Officer who has always been task oriented and cognizant of meeting organizational

demands. For example, in the start of this research I was aware that my life may have been impacted by stress, but did not realize how many ways stress was penetrating my personal and professional life. In completing this work I have become even more committed to continuing the dialogue about employee wellness and the importance of organizational changes. I hope that my work will assist in further the dialogue and initiate advocacy and awareness in more public domains.

As a researcher my work would not be complete, without availability of previous literature that I was able to explore. Correctional staff provided their valuable experiences, insights and recommendations that I was able to analyze and combine to produce this research. I must express my gratitude towards participants in the field of corrections who continue to do important work despite the many challenges and obstacles. Furthermore, in viewing the literature through a critical race feminism lens, it becomes strikingly evident that racial and gender issues have been largely under-researched in the criminal justice system. There is much more work needed in the area of stress and corrections and until these issues are addressed staff and clients will continue to pay the greatest price.

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