

# 5 Steps to Mental Health First Aid: Correctional Officers



## 1 Approach the Individual

- Assess the situation.
  - Does the person seem at risk of harming themselves?
- Approach them as an equal.
- Respect their privacy. Determine an appropriate setting.



## 2 Assess and Assist with any Crisis

- Listen to the individual's concerns, and help when needed.
- Practice empathy for them.
- Try to be accepting, regardless of your feelings.
- Uphold confidentiality. Their information is personal.

## 3 Give support and information

- Support the individual after they have shared their experiences.
- Provide them with hope, and useful facts.

### Fact

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Correctional officers often face significant challenges, and traumatic events, with many experiencing high rates of major depressive disorders (37%), anxiety (49%), and suicidal thoughts (35.2%) compared to the general population (Flumo et al., 2024).



## 4 Encourage appropriate professional help

- The earlier someone gets professional help, the better their chances of recovery.
- Offer to help them find resources.

## 5 Encourage other supports

- Help to identify personal support systems.
- Promote local resources, and community programs.
- Personalize a mental and physical help plan.

“...from taking this course and reading all the material, it allowed me to open up, and learn about myself...” (Flumo et al., 2024)



### Want to know more? Read the research:

Flumo, R., Valera, P., Malarkey, S., & Acevedo, S. (2024). Improving the mental health and well-being of correctional officers through mental health first aid training. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 39(1), 131-140. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11896-023-09620-3>