

Self-care, Mental Health Awareness, & Suicide Prevention in Corrections

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WASH STATE PENITENTIARY WALLA WALLA WASH



ENTRANCE
TO

PENITENTIARY GROUNDS

FOO





The National
Mental Health Act
was created.

1946

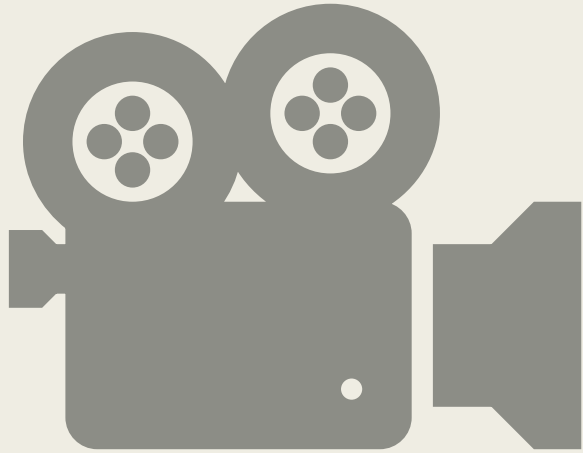
The National
Institute of Mental
Health (NIMH)
established.

1949

Community Mental
Health Services Act

1963





STAFF VIDEO

A dark, dimly lit prison cell. In the foreground, there is a toilet. To the right, there is a sink and a mirror on the wall. The walls are a dull, light-colored material. The floor is dark and appears to be made of concrete or a similar material. The overall atmosphere is bleak and institutional.

CORRECTIONS.





A dark silhouette of a person is shown behind vertical bars, suggesting a prison setting. The person's head is bowed, and their hand is near their face in a contemplative or distressed pose. The background is a gradient of dark blue and grey.

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT IN PRISON

Limited Resources

Fear of discrimination

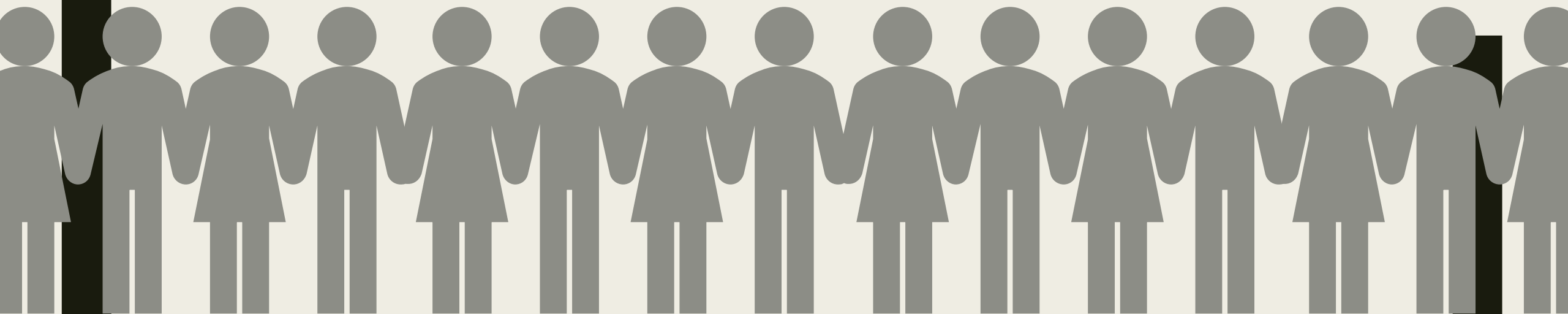
Statistics & Risk Factors

2001 to 2019, suicides increased 85% in state prisons, 61% in federal prisons, and 13% in local jails.

Suffocation accounted for nearly 90% of suicide deaths in local jails.

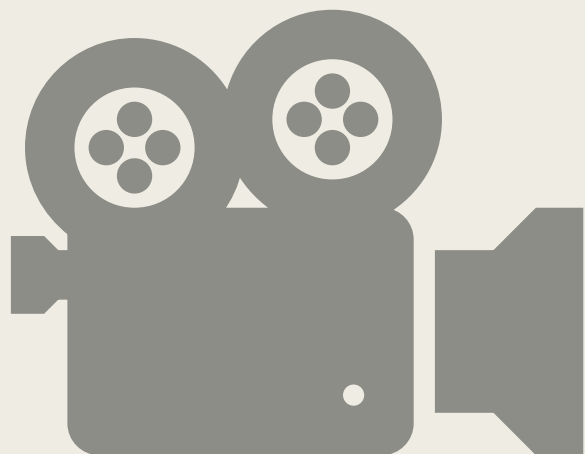
Approximately 12% of completed suicides in local jails occurred within the first 24 hours of incarceration.

Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2021



THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TOLL ON STAFF





STAFF VIDEO



Depression
PTSD

Burnout

Substance
abuse

High
turnover

**Nearly 19% of
corrections staff
meet criteria for
PTSD**

(James & Todak (2018))

SELF-
COMPASSION



Suicide & Patient Loss

- Assumptions about competence
- A desire to leave the field
- PTSD
- Difficulty processing loss
- Stigma surrounding professional vulnerability
- Due to confidentiality, difficulty processing with peers to aid in validation
- Personal and professional isolation
- Potential negative and/or unsupportive reactions from colleagues

(Coalition of Clinician Survivors, 2024)

Staff Impact



Emotional and psychological toll



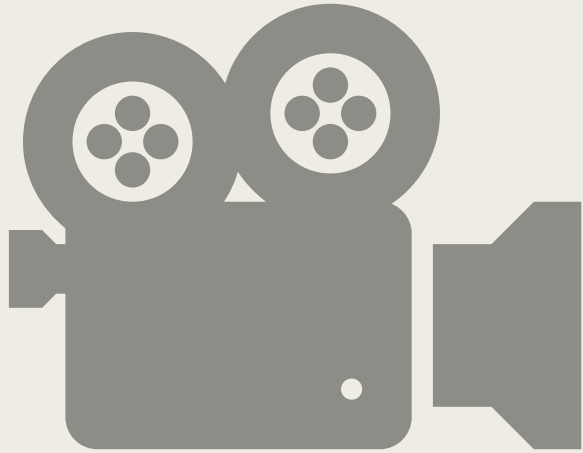
Facility strain & increased workload



Workplace safety and facility stability



Compassion fatigue

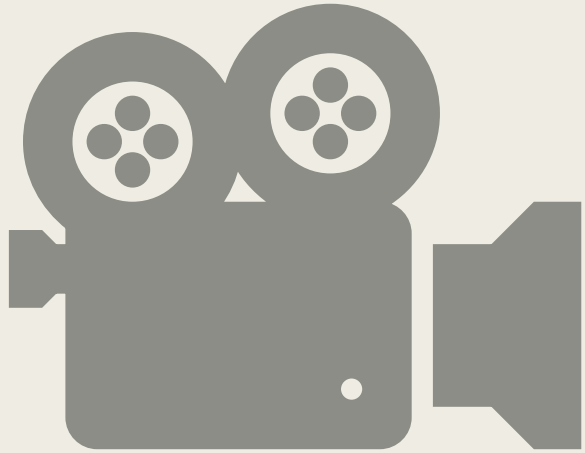


STAFF VIDEO

PREVENTION & POSTVENTION

Prevention Through Preparedness

- Training for all staff
- Establishing clear protocols for communication and intervention
- Building relationships within staff and inmates
- Create a culture of awareness



STAFF VIDEO

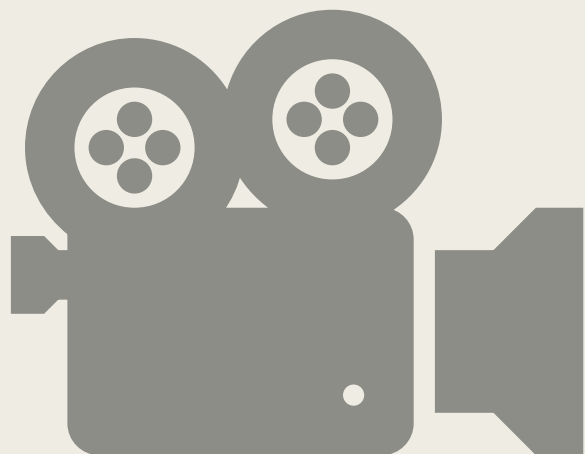
Long-term Support & Systemic Change

Required Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) and trauma-informed counseling.

Regular check-ins by leadership to monitor staff wellbeing.

Adjusting workloads to prevent repeated exposure to traumatic events.

Policy changes that prioritize staff mental health alongside inmate care.



STAFF VIDEO

The background features a dark gray field with several stylized, semi-transparent illustrations. At the top center is a blue shield with the words "Mental Health" in a light blue font. To the left of the shield is a large, dark red heart. Below the heart is a large, dark red brain. To the right of the brain is a large, dark green cross. In the background, there are silhouettes of four people: a man on the left holding a stethoscope, a man in the center holding a clipboard, a woman on the right holding a tablet, and another person partially visible behind the brain. The title "EMPLOYEE RESOURCES" is centered in a large, white, serif font, framed by a white L-shaped border on the left and bottom.

EMPLOYEE RESOURCES

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

877-313-4455 | eap.wa.gov | A confidential, free resource to support the well-being of public employees and their families.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Call or text **988** | 988lifeline.org | 24/7 free & confidential crisis support.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

Helpline: **1-800-950-NAMI (6264)** | nami.org

Crisis Connections: 1-866-427-4747 | crisisconnections.org

Washington State Dept. of Health – Suicide Prevention

doh.wa.gov/suicideprevention | Statewide prevention plan, toolkits, and community supports.

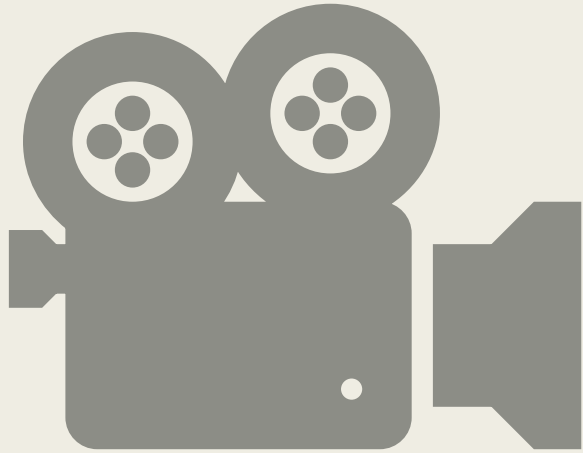
Forefront Suicide Prevention (UW) | forefrontuw.org

Education, policy, and training to reduce suicide in WA communities.

Coalition of Clinician Survivors (CCS)

www.cliniciansurvivor.org

Provides support, education, resources and consultation to mental health professionals and other caregivers who experience suicide loss in personal/professional context.



STAFF VIDEO

Special Acknowledgements

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Cited

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James, L., & Todak, N. (2018). Prison employment and post-traumatic stress disorder: Risk and protective factors. *AM J Ind Med*.

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