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# Staff Retention In Corrections. How to Keep your Peeps



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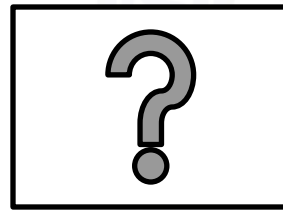


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# Staff Retention- Challenges

There are challenges to retaining qualified and experienced corrections and detention officers in today's climate.



What are some of those challenges?



# Staff Retention- Challenges

## Challenges- In Corrections-

1. Moving on in their Law Enforcement career.





# Staff Retention- Challenges

## Challenges- In Corrections-

### 2. Lack of competitive pay.





# Staff Retention- Challenges

## Challenges- In Corrections-

### 3. Difficult profession.





# Staff Retention- Challenges

## Challenges- In Corrections-

### 4. Working conditions.

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# Staff Retention- Challenges

Challenges- In corrections-

5. The job market.





# Staff Retention- Challenges

Challenges- In corrections-

6. The overall feelings regarding law enforcement in this country.





# Staff Retention- Challenges

Challenges- In corrections-

7. The willingness of younger officers to walk away.





# Staff Retention- Challenges

Challenges- In corrections-

8. Lack of retirement system/benefits.





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# Staff Retention- What to do?

You must show staff that they are valued and appreciated. Let them know they are part of a team and the job that they do is important.





# Staff Retention- Pay?

If pay is an issue, and I'm sure it's an issue, highlight your agency's efforts to improve salary and benefits.

If your commission doesn't approve, it still means you put in the effort. You're working for them.



# Staff Retention- Pay?

Although pay is important, there are many other actions you can take to help with staff retention.





# Employee Engagement

Meet Quarterly with representatives of line staff. Listen to concerns.

Command Staff meets with line staff, not other supervisors present.

Call it “Employee Advisory Committee Meeting”



# Employee Engagement

Illicit staff buy in on key decisions.

- We live in a Democracy, we don't work in one-
- However, if you can, allow staff to express their opinion-

They will feel empowered if they are a part of decisions.



# Employee Engagement

Illicit staff buy in on key decisions.

- Even if it's a choice between A and B, at least it's a choice!





# Employee Engagement

Meet with employees on a regular basis. Especially new officers!

1. Ask them about their future plans.
2. Talk to them about job performance. Career.
3. Get to know them personally.



# Employee Engagement

Why meet with employees?

1. You show that you care!
2. They understand you're paying attention.
3. They feel important and valued.





# Let them know the job they do is important!

The reason the citizens of your community can sleep well at night is because corrections officers keep their nightmares locked in their cells!



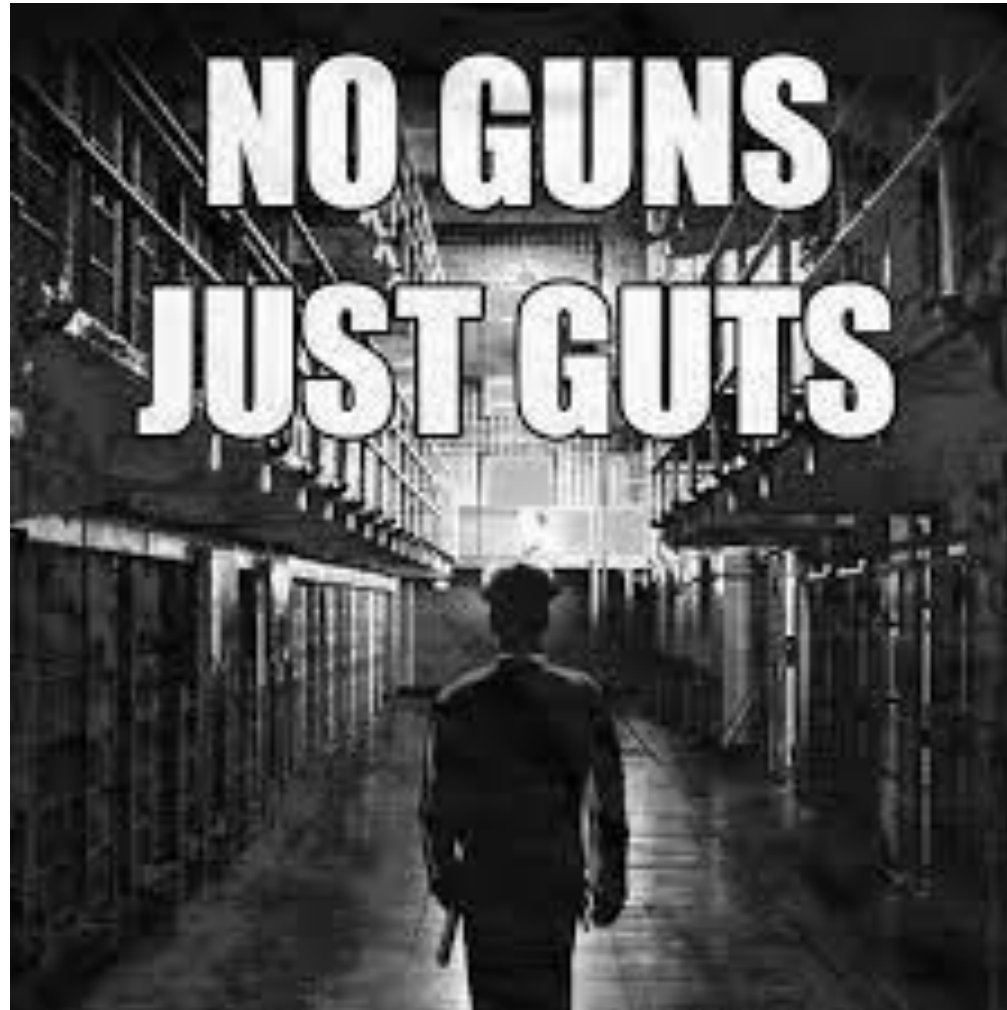
# Let them know the job they do is important!

The new generation of employees want to have a purpose.

Every human being wants to do good and make a difference. It's our nature.



Let them know the job they do  
is important!





# Let them know the job they do is important!





# Let them know the job they do is important!

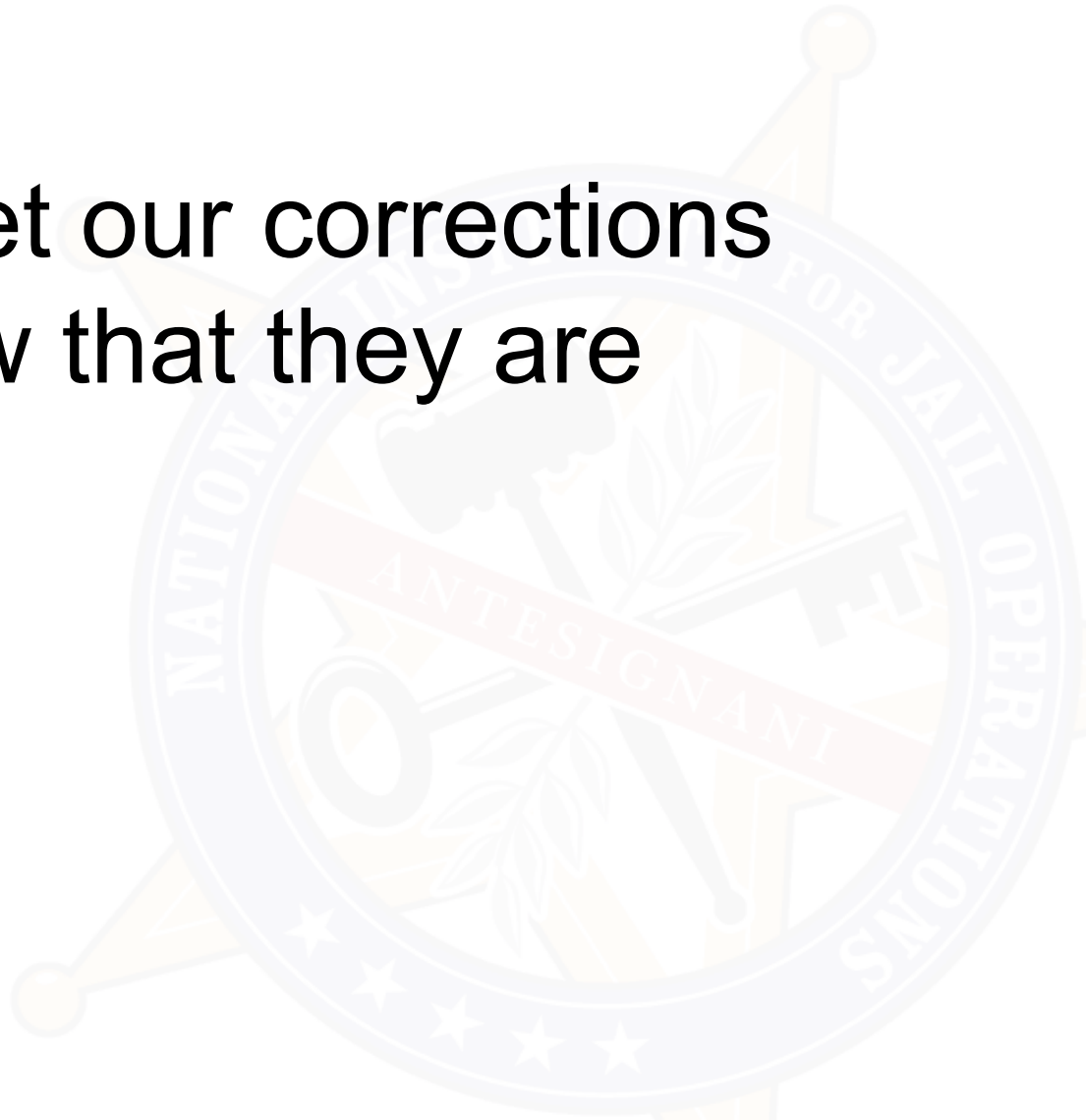
Let your officers know that they are the unsung heroes of the justice system.

Ideas on how to do this?



# Discussion

How to we let our corrections officers know that they are valued?





# Discussion

## Ideas

1. National Corrections Officers Week is the first week of May.
2. Have the Sheriff come down and address the staff. Tell them how vital they are.
3. As a leader, walk around and thank staff for the job they do.



# Morale

The first thing senior commanders must understand about morale is that there is only so much that can be done.

You cannot control someone's happiness.





# Morale

Easy steps to improve morale!

1. Encourage communication!

- Talk to employees about what works and what doesn't work.
- Have an open door policy, but respect chain of command!



# Morale

Easy steps to improve morale!

## 2. Recognize Employees.

- Take the time to recognize good employees.
- Thank them for their dedication
- Spotlight great work!
- Employees that are appreciated will work harder and stay longer!



# Morale

Easy steps to improve morale!

- If you don't have an employee recognition program, start one!
- Employee of the month or quarter.
- Take them out to lunch. Put up a plaque. Low cost, but it pays dividends!



# Morale

Easy steps to improve morale!

## 3. Give Employees a break!

- Not necessarily time off!
- If they have a tough assignment, switch it up!
- First line supervisors can give extra breaks at times.

It shows employees you care and you see when a break is needed.



# Morale

Easy steps to improve morale!

## 4. Accommodate Employee Schedules!

- Make an effort to work with employees on their schedule.
- Not necessarily time off!
- Switch RDO's or shifts for a day or a week.
- Perhaps a supervisor can fill in.



# Morale

Easy steps to improve morale!

## 5. Build a work family!

- Encourage teamwork, comradery.
- Jail teams- sports
- Allow employees to become familiar with the people they work with.



# Morale

Easy steps to improve morale!

## 6. Have FUN!

- Corrections can be a fun business to be in. Don't suffocate your officers. Allow them, time and place appropriate, to have fun.



# Morale- Have Fun!





# Morale- Have Fun!

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# Confront the Cancer

Almost all corrections facilities have certain employees that are a cancer to the rest of the facility.

You must address the cancer.



# Confront the Cancer

They will undermine the good work you do to improve morale.

They are miserable by nature.  
They take great pleasure in rallying discontent.



# Confront the Cancer

They are only happy when everyone around them is unhappy as well.

It is difficult to retain employees that are convinced by the “cancer” in your facility that the job is miserable.



# Confront the Cancer

You must confront the cancer!

1. Talk with them and be frank.
2. Tell them what kind of effect you believe they have on the staff.
3. Ask what they would do to help improve the work environment.



# Training Opportunities

Provide staff the opportunity to better themselves.





# Training Opportunities

What are the biggest obstacles in allowing your officers to train?

Staffing and Money!





# Training Opportunities

## Solutions?

### On-line training. Advantages?

Low Cost! On-line training is affordable!

## DACOTA





# Training Opportunities

On-line training. Advantages?

You do not have to require staff to take the training.

Make it optional, but be sure to reward those who train on-line, especially if its on their own time.



# Training Opportunities

What are the benefits?

Increase job satisfaction and morale among employees

I ♥  
MY JOB





# Training Opportunities

What are the benefits?

Increased employee motivation





# Training Opportunities

What are the benefits?

**REDUCED EMPLOYEE  
TURNOVER!**





# Training Opportunities

What are the benefits?

Employees that receive training opportunities believe they are growing in their career. They become more motivated. In addition they learn and become better corrections officers.



# Staff Development

Besides on-line training, staff development is critical in motivating employees to stay with your agency-

Start grooming your future leaders!



# Leadership

Provide your first line supervisors training in leadership.

Give them guidance and set a good example.

People want to be around good leaders and tend to stay around.



# Leadership

Examples of good leadership:

- Praise in public- correct in private.
- Don't be afraid to get your hands dirty with your officers.
- Hold your employees accountable.



# Leadership

Examples of good leadership:

- Come in on the holidays and talk with officers that must work.
- Share your vision of the agency.
- Be humble and show gratitude.



# Leadership





# Summary

## Staff Retention

1. Make staff feel important.
2. Pay issues.
3. Employee Engagement.
4. Career is important.
5. Staff is valued.
6. Morale- Be able to have fun.
7. Confronting the Cancer.
8. Provide training opportunities.



# Summary

## Staff Retention

- 9. Provide staff development.
- 10. Leadership.





# Future Webinars!

- **Session 6: Beneficial Training to Reduce Liability**  
October 7, 2026 from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM -
- **Session 7: Inmate Death – How to Reduce Liability, Suicide Prevention Policy**  
November 4, 2026 from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM -
- **Session 8: Procedures for Suicide Prevention – Proactive Steps Your Agency can take to help Prevent Suicide in your Facility**  
December 2, 2026 from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM -



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## **HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED MORE RESOURCES?**



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