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Coping on Death Row:

The Perspectives of Inmates and Corrections Officers

by

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An Abstract of

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This study examined the constructs of stress, coping and adjustment as they apply to both inmates on death row and the corrections officers who work on death row. Four primary goals were addressed in this study: identification of the stressors commonly faced by both inmates and officers, identification of the coping strategies utilized in response to these stressors, assessment of the effectiveness of these coping strategies in decreasing stress, and examination of the relationship between the use of particular coping strategies and level of inmate adjustment and officer burnout. Both quantitative and qualitative measures were utilized to address the aforementioned goals. The measures utilized include the Carver COPE, the Prison Adjustment Questionnaire, the Maslach Burnout Inventory, and a semi-structured interview developed by the principal investigator. A modified version of Grounded Theory Analysis was used to characterize

participants' open-ended responses to the qualitative interview. The primary stressors identified by the inmates during the interviews include deprivation, isolation, intrusion, helplessness, and painful self-reflection. The coping strategies identified by the inmates involve seeking support, preventing problems, remedying problems, changing their attitude, avoidance, and acting out. The primary stressors identified by the officers during the interviews include hostility and manipulation from inmates, difficult relationships with other officers, lack of support from administration, and difficulty fulfilling job/role expectations. The coping strategies identified by the officers involve seeking support, trying to fulfill responsibilities appropriately, becoming "lax" in performing duties, becoming "hard," and creating distance from work-related stressors. On the Carver COPE, both the inmates and officers reported "sometimes" using both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies, while "rarely" using dysfunctional strategies. On average, both the inmates and officers perceive their coping strategies as helping make their circumstances "somewhat better." On the Prison Adjustment Questionnaire, the inmates reported slightly lower levels of external adjustment difficulties than levels of internal and physical adjustment difficulties. Their use of emotion-focused coping was significantly related to internal adjustment difficulties. On the Maslach Burnout Inventory, the officers reported "average" levels of emotional exhaustion, "high" levels of depersonalization, and "high" levels of personal accomplishment. Their use of dysfunctional coping strategies was significantly correlated to emotional exhaustion, while emotion-focused strategies were linked to personal accomplishment.

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Chapter 1:

Introduction

Stress occurs when an individual is placed in a situation where his or her prior experiences or background don't easily lend themselves to interpretation of the current situation. According to Silverman and Vega (1990), a form of "culture shock" then occurs, which triggers the responses typically associated with stress. They argue that a prison constitutes a foreign environment to which a person responds with such culture shock. Death row represents one of the most foreign, and therefore most stressful, environments in which an individual can be placed. In fact, Johnson (1979) has described death row as "a prison within a prison," referring to its tendency to be physically and socially isolated from the general prison community as well as the outside world. The death row environment varies by institution, but many such facilities involve housing in individual cells, with inmates being permitted less than one hour of daily activity outside of their cells (Cunningham & Vigen, 2002). Despite the structural differences among facilities, death row inherently contains a number of stressors for inmates, as well as for the corrections officers who work there.

In 1972, the United States Supreme Court declared the death penalty unconstitutional. Since the Supreme Court's later approval of legislation supporting capital punishment in 1976, the population of death row inmates has risen dramatically (see Figure 1; U.S. Department of Justice, 2003). By the end of 2002, there were 3,557 inmates on death row in the United States (U.S. Department of Justice, 2003). The death penalty is currently authorized by 38 states in addition to the federal jurisdiction, with lethal injection being the most commonly used method of execution (U.S. Department of Justice, 2003). For those inmates executed in 2002 in the United States, the average length of stay on death row was 10 years and 7 months (U.S. Department of Justice, 2003). This indicates inmates are faced with stressors for an extended period of time, during which they may develop an established repertoire of coping strategies. If these coping strategies are maladaptive, then they will likely result in psychological distress, difficulty with adjustment, increased disciplinary infractions, and increased stress and strain on other inmates and correctional staff.

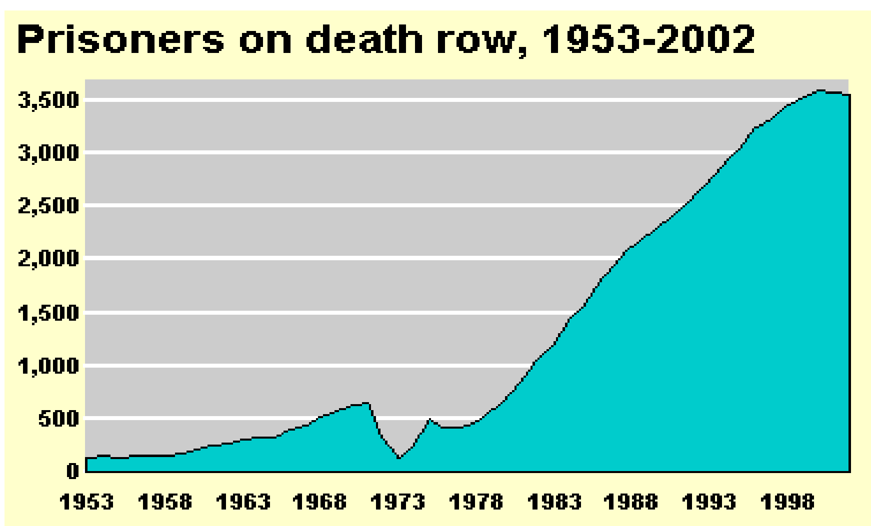

Figure 1. Prisoners on death row from 1953-2002[1]

[1] From "Capital Punishment 2002," by The United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003. Retrieved August 1, 2004, from http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/glance/dr.htm.

In addition to the rising number of inmates on death row in the past twenty years, several other circumstances such as inmate crowding and longer sentences have resulted in increased stress for corrections officers (Finn, 1998). Due to the lengthy sentences of death row inmates, corrections officers posted on death row face the accumulation of related stressors over time. They may develop some form of relationship with a number of inmates whom they know are going to die. Corrections officers' potential difficulties in coping and adjustment with these new demands hold implications for impaired health, excessive sick time, high staff turnover, and reduced safety (Finn, 1998).

From 1973 until 2000, a total of 6,930 inmates entered prison under sentence of death, 9.9% of whom were executed (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001). During these 27 years, 38% of the inmates were removed from under a death sentence by appellate court decisions and reviews (32.4%), commutations (2.2%), or death by causes other than execution (3.2%). Gallemore and Panton (1972) argue that death row confinement is not designed for positive rehabilitative emphasis. It is one of the most counter-therapeutic environments. Therefore, inmates residing on death row become progressively less suitable for reentry into the community or general prison population. For those inmates who might eventually be released back into the community, it would be harmful to society for the inmate to emerge from death row with a bitter, destructive attitude. For the substantial number of inmates whose sentences are commuted to life in prison, their efforts at coping and adjustment become an integral component in their ability to successfully transition to a general prison population. The coping and adjustment of inmates who remain in prison will invariably affect the quality of the environment as it relates to physical violence, sickness, and adverse effects on other inmates and staff, particularly during the course of a lengthy sentence. In addition to reducing the level of management problems faced by corrections officers on death row, adaptive coping skills and adjustment may allow those inmates who are eventually condemned to execution to create meaning and purpose in their life, and perhaps to confront the reality of their crimes and experience genuine remorse.

Inmates and corrections officers co-exist in a symbiotic type of relationship within the death row environment. The effectiveness of inmate and corrections officer coping strategies likely results in an interactive cycle in which the coping and related adjustment of one group inherently affects the amount of stress, and therefore coping and adjustment of the other group. Thus, if a corrections officer becomes stressed when faced with the acting-out behavior of an inmate, he may attempt to cope by becoming more authoritarian and stern. An inmate may perceive the corrections officer's harsh, punitive attitude as stressful, and may therefore attempt to cope by acting-out, thus further contributing to the stress faced by the corrections officer.

In a critical literature review of corrections research by Cunningham and Vigen (2002), only 13 clinical studies were identified within the past 35 years that focused on a death row inmate population. Within these 13 studies, many of the studies examined death row inmates from Southern states, with four utilizing inmates specifically from North Carolina (Cunningham & Vigen, 2002). Several of the studies involved a sample of fewer than 20 inmates. A literature search aimed at identifying studies with corrections officers on death row produced only one book chapter addressing prison staff who perform executions (Lifton & Mitchell, 2000). Therefore, research on these two populations is greatly needed. By contrast, there is some current research addressing coping and adjustment in general prison inmates and corrections officers, which will allow for comparison between these individuals and those in a death row environment.

The theory underlying the constructs of stress and coping will be presented next in order to provide a foundation for the examination of these concepts with inmates and officers in the death row environment.

Stress and Coping Theory

A stressor is any condition that places excessive or unusual demands on a person and is capable of endangering the individual's psychological comfort or social abilities, or creating physiological pathology (Stohr, Lovrich, & Wilson, 1994). The transactional model developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) is often used in the conceptualization of adaptation to stress. According to the transactional model, individuals interact in a dynamic and reciprocal manner with their environments. An assessment of variables related to both the individual and the environment is essential, as examination of either factor alone will not generate highly meaningful information regarding the adjustment process. The transactional model outlines a number of important factors and processes involved in coping with, and adapting to, stressful events. First, dispositional variables can affect an individual's interaction with a stressor. Examples of dispositional factors include personality, temperament, and/or biological parameters. In other words, certain types of individuals might be more vulnerable to certain types of events. Second, interpretations and evaluations are made about the potentially stressful situation. Such interpretations influence how an event may be perceived, whether coping attempts should be made, and which coping strategies will be employed. Folkman and Lazarus (1980,

1985) describe three processes in dealing with stress. The first process is called "primary appraisal," during which a person perceives an event as a threat to one's self. Lazarus (1990) argues that stress is neither in the environment nor in the person, but rather reflects the interaction of a person's motives and beliefs with an environment that poses harm, threat, or challenge. The second process is "secondary appraisal," in which a person generates potential strategies for responding to the threat. The third process is "coping," or executing the response to the threat. Folkman and Lazarus have defined coping as "...the cognitive and behavioral efforts made to master, tolerate, or reduce external and internal demands and conflicts among them" (1980, p. 223). In a sense, it is a form of adaptation.

There has been debate as to whether people tend to gravitate toward one stable coping style they implement in a variety of situations, or if they vary their coping style with time or across situations. According to Suls and Fletcher (1985), coping is not necessarily an all-or-nothing response, but instead an individual may rely more heavily on one style than another.

Folkman and Lazarus (1985) suggest coping efforts serve two important functions: the management of the source of stress and the regulation of stressful emotions. Based on these functions, coping has often been divided into two primary styles, "problem-focused coping" and "emotion-focused coping." Problem-focused coping is aimed at problem-solving, or active attempts to alter the source of stress. This coping style is most often used when people feel that the stressor is able to be changed. Emotion-focused coping deals with the reduction or management of the emotional distress which results from the stressor. This coping style is most often employed when the stressor is perceived as unchangeable, and as something that must be endured. Despite the conceptual differences between these two coping styles, Lazarus (2000) asserts that both strategies may act interdependently and complement one another in the overall coping process.

Carver, Scheier, and Weintraub (1989) argue that there are many different forms of problem-focused as well as emotion-focused coping, and that these two main coping styles can further be broken down into sub-categories. One form of problem-focused coping is "active coping." In active coping, a person takes active steps to attempt to eliminate or reduce the effects of the stressor. A second form of problem-focused coping is "planning." When a person uses planning strategies, that person is thinking about how to cope with the stressor. In a sense, this is a form of secondary appraisal rather than coping itself. A third form is "suppression of competing activities," in which a person will put other distracting projects aside in order to better deal with the stressor. A fourth form is "restraint coping." During restraint coping, a person waits until an appropriate opportunity to act. The last form of problem-focused coping is "seeking social support for instrumental reasons." Examples of this type of coping occur when people seek others for advice, assistance, or information.

The first form of emotion-focused coping is "seeking social support for emotional reasons." Examples of this form of coping are seeking moral support, sympathy, and understanding. Another form of emotion-focused coping is "positive reinterpretation" in which a person views a stressor in more positive terms, or looks on the bright side. Other forms are "denial," in which a person denies the reality of a stressful event, and its opposite, "acceptance." One last form of emotion-focused coping occurs when people turn to "religion" to help them cope.

Carver et al. (1989) also argue that people have less useful, or dysfunctional, ways of coping, which they distinguish from both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping. One type of coping which they have categorized as potentially dysfunctional is "venting," in which people deeply concentrate on and vent their emotions. Another such coping strategy they consider dysfunctional is "behavioral disengagement." Behavioral disengagement involves a sense of helplessness, when people just give up. People may also use "mental disengagement" in which they attempt to distract themselves from the stressor through acts such as sleeping, daydreaming, or abusing drugs or alcohol. Carver et al. (1989) appear to recognize the controversy in labeling certain types of coping strategies as "useful" vs. "less useful" and "functional" vs. "dysfunctional." For instance, they describe how denial may be helpful by minimizing distress, or it may be unhelpful by creating additional problems. Although it may seem more efficacious to categorize some coping strategies as adaptive and others as maladaptive, only research that measures the effects of coping on outcome can genuinely suggest distinctions between the usefulness of such strategies.

The question may be raised regarding why the adjustment of inmates on death row might be an important construct to examine, particularly as it extends beyond the safety and other logistical concerns of the institution. This question will be addressed in the next section, which focuses on the rationale for both general criminal sanctions as well as capital punishment.

Rationale for Criminal Sanctions

Rationale for General Criminal Sanctions. The most popularly held justifications for criminal sanctions can be divided into four main categories: retribution, deterrence, incapacitation, and rehabilitation (Roberson, 1997). In general, retribution refers to an attempt to "get even," in which the severity of the punishment should match the seriousness of the crime. The concept of deterrence is based on the assumption that criminal sanctions instill a sense of fear of future punishments that will serve to prevent crime. Deterrence can be specific, in that it deters the offender, or general, in the sense that it deters other individuals who might commit criminal acts in the future. According to the theory of incapacitation, a criminal is unable to commit crimes in the community while he or she is confined within a prison. Therefore, prison confinement helps to reduce criminal behavior. This theory rests on the assumption that future crimes can be predicted by a history of criminal behavior. The rehabilitation approach focuses on correcting the offender through treatment. This approach is based on two primary assumptions. The first assumption is that criminal behavior is a manifestation of pathology, which can be corrected through therapeutic activity. The second assumption is that the offender has the capability to be transformed into a law-abiding citizen. O'Leary and Duffee (1971) have a slightly different conceptualization of rehabilitation, which holds that the offender is encouraged to gain insight and understand himself better, and once personal growth has occurred, the offender will change his motivations and behaviors. According to Roberson (1997), many studies demonstrate most citizens favor rehabilitation in conjunction with an appropriate level of punishment.

Rationale for Capital Punishment. The aforementioned justifications for criminal sanctions apply to the general prison population; however, only some of these rationales have been applied to capital punishment. Based on the deterrence theory of capital punishment, certain crimes, such as murder, are so reprehensible to society that all means must be used to deter individuals from committing such acts (Palmer, 2001). According to the retribution theory of capital punishment, loved ones of murdered victims deserve the highest degree of revenge against the offender (Palmer, 2001).

In examining the various rationales for criminal sanctions and institutional goals of confinement, an important question arises: Do the concepts of reintegration and rehabilitation naturally exclude inmates who are placed on death row? When considering whether the concept of reintegration excludes death row inmates, it seems that the initial answer might be "yes," as it is often assumed that these individuals will eventually be executed or held for life without parole, and never returned to society. However, as mentioned in the introduction, a large percentage of inmates are never executed (38%), and some are returned to the general prison population. Therefore, death row should serve not only a custodial function, but also create an environment in which inmates who might eventually become reintegrated into the general population are better able to adjust.

The concept of rehabilitation, as perceived by O'Leary and Duffee (1971) seems less exclusionary when applied to death row inmates. In other words, it is possible that one of the goals of confinement on death row might also be that the inmate will gain a better understanding of his or her motivations, emotions and behavior. Perhaps an additional goal of confinement would be that the inmate develop a sense of personal accountability for his past behavior, as well as pursue a life of integrity with his remaining years within the prison environment. Radelet and Bedau (1988) have shown that murderers have one of the lowest recidivism rates of all offenders, and are less likely to commit murder upon release from prison than are offenders who have served time in prison for other offenses. Thus, these individuals may be capable of positive change.

An overview of the literature related to death row inmates will be presented in Chapter 2, in addition to previous research on stress, coping, and adjustment in prison inmates. In Chapter 3, an overview of the literature related to corrections officers will be presented, in addition to previous research on stress, coping, and burnout in this population. In Chapter 4, the method of this study will be described. The results from the inmate data will be presented in Chapter 5, whereas the results from the officer data will be presented in Chapter 6. In Chapter 7, the overall findings of the study will be discussed in greater detail, in addition to implications of the findings, limitations of the current study, and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2:

Inmates on Death Row

Death Row Inmates

<u>Death Row Inmates in the U.S.</u> According to the U.S. Department of Justice (2003), three states contain 40% of the nation's death row population: California (614), Texas (450), and Florida (366). Males comprise 99% of the national death row population (Cunningham & Vigen, 2002). The ethnic distribution of national death row inmates includes 54% European-American, 44% African-American, and 2% "Other" (U.S. Department of Justice, 2003). African-American inmates are overrepresented on death row relative to their percentage in the general population (12%) (NAACP Legal Defense Fund), as well as relative to the percentage of homicides perpetrated by African-Americans (Greenberg, 1997). In 2002, death row inmates ranged in age from 18 to 87 years old, with the greatest percentage falling within the range of 35 to 39.

Mean IQ scores of death row inmates fall within the "average" to "low average" range, which is consistent with the intellectual ability of the general prison population (Panton, 1976). Over half of death row inmates (52%) did not finish high school, and 13% completed eighth grade or less (Snell, 2001). The median level of educational completion for these inmates is 11th grade. These findings indicate the level of educational completion for death row inmates is slightly lower than the level of educational completion in the general prison population. Specifically, 41% of the general prison population completed high school and 14% completed eighth grade or less, while 12th grade is the median education level completed (Harlow, 1994). Cunningham and Vigen (1999) found a lower level of mean school attendance for death row inmates at the 9.5 grade level. They found that, overall, these inmates had functional literacy levels well below what would be expected based on level of schooling, with mean reading comprehension scores at the 5th grade level.

Inmates on death row have been found to have a disproportionately high rate of serious psychopathology relative to the general prison population (Cunningham & Vigen, 2002). In 1999, Cunningham and Vigen found that 5% of their sample of 39 Mississippi inmates exhibited psychotic disorders. In a sample of California inmates, Freedman and Hemenway (2000) found that 56% had a history of psychosis. Perhaps the highest incidence of psychopathology was reported by Lewis, Pincus, Feldman, Jackson, and Bard (1986), who reported a 60% incidence of psychosis in their sample of inmates from five states. However, these latter two studies which report alarmingly high rates of psychosis both have very small sample sizes, with 16 and 15 inmates respectively.

<u>Ohio's Death Row.</u> In 2001, Ohio ranked 6th in the nation for number of inmates on death row (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001). Ohio currently has 207 inmates sentenced to death, one of whom is female (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2004). In Ohio, 51% of death row inmates are African-American, 46% are European-American, and 1% are Hispanic (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2004).

All inmates on Ohio's death row have been convicted of Aggravated Murder. All male inmates are housed at the Mansfield Correctional Institution in Mansfield, Ohio, whereas executions take place at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility in Lucasville, Ohio. The Mansfield Correctional Institution (ManCI) is a close/maximum security institution. ManCI uses a Unit Management System, whereby the majority of inmate issues are dealt with within the housing unit. The Death Row Unit Staff consists of a Unit Manager, a Case Manager, Correctional Counselors, Unit Officers, and a Unit Secretary. Death row is divided into six pods, each holding approximately 40 inmates. Inmates undergo a 30-day Orientation period upon their admission to death row, during which time they are presented with information about the availability of programs, rules of conduct, grievance procedures, and the functions of various departments. Death row inmates are permitted to possess personal property which must fit into a 2.4 cubic ft. footlocker. Additionally, they are permitted to possess larger items such a television or radio. Inmates are permitted to obtain items through commissary one day per week. Inmates may request informational, recreational, and legal information from the library. Each inmate is given the opportunity to engage in out-of-cell recreation no less than one hour per day, during which time no more than five inmates are placed together in the recreation cage. They are permitted to smoke in their cells or other designated areas. Inmates have access to several types of religious services which are offered in secure recreation areas on the death row units. They may also request services through the Psychology or Mental Health Departments, which provide counseling and other psychiatric treatment. Inmates may participate in a tutoring program; however, no other educational programs are available.

Inmate Stress

Some of the primary stressors faced by inmates on death row include pending death sentences, an environment of deprivation, seemingly arbitrary rules, daily frustrations, staff harassment, family alienation, and isolation (Johnson, 1979). More generally, common sources of stress which prison inmates face include loss of freedom, a limited number of facilities and programs, a high potential for violence, conflict with other residents or staff, lack of privacy, and overcrowding (Paulus & Dzindolet, 1993). Inmates also have to deal with such issues as excess noise, isolation, and boredom (Negy, Woods, & Carlson, 1997). Other sources of stress include dealing with prison rules, expectations of staff and other inmates, and sexual intimidation from other inmates (Sultan, Long, Kiefer, Schrum, Selby, & Calhoun, 1984). According to Sykes (1958), inmates suffer from four major sociocultural deprivations that may result in serious psychological consequences. These deprivations include normal access to goods and services, heterosexual relationships, personal autonomy, and personal security.

In a sample of 104 female inmates from Ohio, separation from loved ones was found to be the most commonly reported stressor throughout the course of the inmate's sentence (Partyka & Hovey, 2001). With time, the inmates seemed to have increasing difficulty with the negative prison environment (e.g. perceived abuse by staff, instability of institutional rules), ambiguity of the situation, and other inmates. This is likely due to the fact that, with time, the inmates have likely had to deal with a greater number of instances involving these particular stressors.

Long-term inmates, such as those who may spend several years or even life in prison, must deal with many of the same stressors as short-term inmates, except the duration is longer (Singer, Bussey, Song, & Lunghofer, 1995). Inmates who must serve long-term sentences must also deal with time management issues, maintenance of family and other relationships, and preservation of self-identity and self-esteem. There are concerns as to whether long term inmates will experience "institutionalization," which is a term used to describe a process of losing interest in the outside world, viewing the prison as home, losing the ability to make independent decisions and defining oneself totally within the institutional context (Goffman, 1961).

It has been found that the early period in prison is more stressful for long-term inmates than later periods (MacKenzie & Goodstein, 1985). MacKenzie and Goodstein also found that inmates who anticipated longer prison terms were relatively less able to adjust to prison life during their first three years of incarceration, as exhibited by greater levels of depression and psychosomatic illnesses. Whereas short-term inmates can chart their progress toward the goal of release, long-term inmates may experience the "barrier effect," in which the only portion of the inmate's life he or she is able to focus on is the time spent in prison. The inmate’s future is seen as unchanging, and the inmate tends not to make future plans. The inmate may be afraid that he or she will soon be unable to think for him or herself. The inmate may also fear dying in prison.

Inmate Coping

In response to the stressors of death row, Johnson (1979) identified four stress reactions: a sense of helplessness, widespread anger, emotional emptiness, and a decline in mental and physical acuity. According to Johnson, deterioration of mental capabilities was evident by reported mental slowness, confusion, forgetfulness, lethargy, listlessness, and drowsiness. In addition, he described the death row inmates as experiencing chronically fluctuating moods and recurrent depression. According to a study by Lewis (1979) which examined death row inmates in the state of Florida, the environmental conditions on death row were found to be non-conducive to concentration or psychological adjustment. In fact, Lewis concluded that stressors such as noise, cramped cells, and limited exercise and social activities work to undermine attempts at coping.

Studies on changes in inmate coping over time have produced mixed, and at times contradictory, results. Paulus and Dzindolet (1993) found that the coping styles of inmates remain the same over time, whereas Sappington (1996) found that longer time served was associated with less belief that one might control one's actions, and less belief that one's actions might influence how one is treated. He also found that, with time, inmates were less likely to use problem solving or positive reinterpretation. Zamble and Porporino (1988) have found that over time, inmates tend to cope by withdrawing from social contact or activities. An increase in the amount of passive behaviors was noted, such as watching television or listening to music throughout the first three or four months. It has also been found that inmates increase their amount of inner-directed hostility over time (Heskin, 1974). With time, inmates experience an increase in their social problems inside the prison while experiencing a decrease in social problems outside of the prison (Paulus & Dzindolet, 1993). Inmates also tend to experience a drop in the number of people they can depend on for social support.

Conversely, after learning the "rules" of the prison, inmates may begin to feel an increased sense of control (Zamble & Porporino, 1988). For long-term inmates, association with other long-termers leads to the development of a more mature perspective in which the inmates more thoroughly consider their actions instead of acting impulsively (Singer et. al, 1995). With aging, they also gain experience, and they know how to get things done for themselves as well as what to expect from officers. This perspective results in the inmate staying out of trouble and using his or her time more profitably.

It has been found that bitterness and expression of demoralization by the prison environment were most evident by a group of inmates who had served the shortest length of time (Sapsford, 1983). Also, a similar group of inmates having served the least amount of time showed a pattern of greater distress on measures of anxiety, depression, and hopelessness (Sapsford, 1983). Silverman and Vega (1990) found that intensity of male and female inmates' anger in response to stress decreased with age, along with an increase in suppression or control of anger. These findings may suggest that inmates are better able to adjust to their environment with time, as measured by symptoms of distress.

In their study with female prison inmates, Partyka and Hovey (2001) found that with more time served in prison, inmates are more likely to turn to spirituality in dealing with stressors. It was also found that those female inmates with more prison experience utilize significantly more mental disengagement strategies. In dealing with these prison-related stressors, turning to "spirituality" was the most commonly reported coping strategy throughout the course of imprisonment. However, almost all other forms of coping increased with time, accompanied by a decrease in maladaptive coping. One could make an optimistic assumption that these inmates may be learning to cope more positively with their stressors as they gain experience and begin to adjust to the prison setting, *Inmate Adjustment*

Prison adjustment is frequently measured through behavioral adaptation and emotional adjustment. Prison staff and administrators are most often concerned with the behavioral adjustment of inmates, as misbehavior is typically more salient. For instance, inmates who fail to adapt and thus engage in behavioral acting-out produce problems within the prison facility. Inmates who act out in a violent or aggressive manner pose a threat to the security of the institution, as they create a safety concern for both staff and other inmates. Behavioral maladjustment of inmates also creates negative economic repercussions for the facility. In a study by Lovell and Jemelka (1996) which focused on the costs of disciplinary problems at a medium-security prison, it was estimated that each disciplinary infraction cost an average of $970.

Some inmates are easily able to adjust to the prison environment, whereas others experience significantly greater difficulty. In a study by Rushton and Blud (1993), 22% of inmates reported suicidal thoughts and 14% reportedly attempted to harm or kill themselves. In addition, 16% reported being physically violent during their incarceration.

According to Goodstein and Wright (1989), several models have been proposed which attempt to explain the development of negative behaviors and attitudes in prison. One such model emphasizes "deprivation." According to the deprivation model, particular deprivations inmates face while in prison (e.g., loss of social acceptance, autonomy, material possessions) lead to the development of a normative system, or "inmate code," whereby inmates oppose authority as an attempt to be accepted by other inmates and neutralize the pains of imprisonment. According to an "importation" model, inmate subcultures, norms, and roles are extensions of belief systems and norms which inmates held prior to entering prison. Followers of the importation model reject the notion of widespread inmate solidarity and argue that the prison population is comprised of various subgroups, each with specific beliefs and norms. Thomas, Peterson, and Zingraff (1978) argue that individual inmate adjustment patterns are due to a combination of pre-prison experiences, deprivation, and extra-prison influences.

Numerous factors, both internal and external to the inmate, have been identified which influence the nature of inmate adjustment (Goodstein & Wright, 1989). For instance, a number of studies have found that commitment to antisocial values increases with length of time served (Wellford, 1967; Garabedian, 1963; Wheeler, 1961). Sieverdes and Bartollas (1986) have found higher levels of prisonization among inmates incarcerated in facilities that emphasize custody rather than treatment. This finding was also supported with incarcerated juveniles, with those inmates held in custodial-oriented institutions fostering higher levels of violence and alienation from staff (Feld, 1981). Some theorists suggest that prison life fosters a sense of institutional dependency, in which inmates' abilities for autonomous decision-making are undermined (Goodstein, MacKenzie, and Shotland, 1984). They suggest that control-limiting mechanisms undermine inmates' capabilities for coping with their environments within prison, as well as in the community. Ethnic background has been found to relate to inmate adjustment, with African-American inmates described as developing a significantly more integrated and supportive social system within the prison than European-American inmates (Carroll, 1974; Johnson, 1976). In addition, African-American inmates have been found to possess more control and influence in daily institutional affairs (Bartollas, Miller, and Dinitz, 1976).

Particular coping strategies have also been identified as being associated with various levels of adjustment. Inmates who possess larger coping repertoires have been found to exhibit better adjustment to their environment (Negy et al., 1997). However, Negy et al. point out that it is difficult to determine whether coping leads to adjustment, or if higher levels of adjustment lead to better coping. They found that both emotion-focused strategies, as well as some problem-focused strategies were correlated with psychosocial adjustment in prison. Sappington (1996) found that tendencies to blame others, dwell on problems, or to blame oneself were associated with poorer adjustment. In addition, inmates who believed their behavior did not affect their treatment and those who believed they could not control their actions were more likely to have adjustment problems. On the other hand, a tendency to look on the bright side and to use problem-solving cognitive coping styles were associated with better adjustment.

According to Cunningham and Vigen (2002), several studies have shown that the expectation that death row inmates will behave violently in prison because they have nothing to lose is unfounded. An earlier study by Cunningham and Reidy (1998) also supported the notion that most death row inmates do not exhibit serious violence within institutional confinement. One hypothesis for this finding suggests that the violent nature of the conviction occurred in a certain context which is no longer replicated in the prison setting (Cunningham & Reidy, 1999). Also, many inmates on death row are involved in appeals or post-conviction reviews of their death sentence; therefore, the results of such decisions may be partially based on positive institutional behavior. A third hypothesis is that inmates on death row continue to be influenced by the same consequences and incentives as inmates in the general population, such as programming and privileges

(Lombardi, Sluder & Wallace, 1997). Furthermore, such relatively lower levels of violence may suggest that these inmates have learned to cope effectively with their environment.

Purpose of Present Study

In a critical literature review of corrections research by Cunningham and Vigen (2002), only 13 clinical studies were identified within the past 35 years which focused on a death row inmate population. Within these 13 studies, many of the studies examined only death row inmates from Southern states, with four utilizing inmates specifically from North Carolina (Cunningham & Vigen, 2001). Several of the studies involved a sample of fewer than 20 inmates. Therefore, research on this rapidly growing population is greatly needed.

The current study proposed to examine four primary questions: (a) What stressors do inmates on death row face? (b) What strategies do these inmates utilize in an attempt to cope with these stressors? (c) How successful do these inmates perceive these strategies to be in decreasing stress? (d) How does the use of particular coping strategies relate to inmates' level of adjustment? In addition, supplemental exploratory analyses were performed to examine the relationship among various demographic variables (e.g., age, ethnicity, length of time on death row) and the constructs of coping and adjustment.

Chapter 3:

Corrections Officers on Death Row

In 1996, there were 209,467 officers working in state prisons, 59,774 in jail and detention facilities, and 12,090 in federal institutions (American Correctional Association, 1997). In many prison facilities, corrections officers have historically been White, male, from rural areas, and have minimal education (Cheek and Miller, 1983). Such a discrepancy between the demographics of officers and inmates may lead to racism and other interpersonal difficulties (Philliber, 1987).

The role of stress in the workplace will first be described, followed by more specific research which has been conducted examining the constructs of stress, coping, and burnout in corrections officers.

Stress in the Workplace

Results of a nationwide survey of American workers found that individuals who reported stress reported reduced productivity, sought job changes, and experienced stress-related illnesses (Spielberger & Vagg, 1999). According to Spielberger and Vagg, those persons who felt their jobs were stressful indicated experiencing burnout and thought about quitting twice as often as those who did not report stressful jobs. Stress has also been shown to impair performance in the workplace due to health problems, absenteeism, job turnover, accidents, substance abuse, and other counterproductive behaviors. In such cases, employers may have to recruit and train replacements for employees who leave positions due to stress-related difficulties. In 1992, Sauter (1992) found that almost 600,000 workers were disabled due to psychological disorders, costing employers over five billion dollars annually.

Corrections Officer Stress

Whereas much attention has been given to the nature, causes and consequences of police officer stress, significantly fewer efforts have been targeted toward officers in correctional facilities. Corrections officers are faced with a myriad of job-related stressors. Finn (1998) has categorized these stressors into three domains: organizational sources of stress, work-related sources of stress, and stress from outside the prison. One organizational stressor is a high workload. It has been shown that higher workload for corrections officers is related to an increased number of burnout symptoms (Digman, Barrera & West, 1986). A related stressor is understaffing, in which there are not enough officers available. Shortages in staff then result in the need for overtime among remaining staff (Finn, 1998). Many corrections officers also complain of shift work, which can disrupt officers' family lives and lead to fatigue and irritability (Cornelius, 1994; Kauffman, 1988). Also, many corrections officers experience a lack of autonomy, including aspects such as skill discretion and decision authority (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). In other words, corrections officers who perceive themselves as having little control over the performance of job-related tasks experience fewer feelings of personal accomplishment (Schaufeli, Van den Eijnde & Brouwers, 1994). In addition, lack of participation in decision-making has been found to be positively associated with job stress (Lasky, Gordon & Strebalus, 1986; Slate & Vogel, 1997). In fact, much research on stress in corrections officers has found that administrative problems such as lack of officer participation in decision making and lack of administrative support are more stressful than problems arising from interaction with inmates (Whitehead, 1989). Another stressor faced by corrections officers is underutilization of knowledge and skill. Schaufeli & Peeters (2000) state that many corrections officers feel underutilized, particularly in institutions that focus on custody rather than rehabilitation. Another involves role-related difficulties, such as role ambiguity and role conflict. Role ambiguity occurs when corrections officers are not provided with adequate information to be able to perform their job well. Role conflict occurs when corrections officers are faced with conflicting demands, such as the roles of guarding prisoners and facilitating their rehabilitation. Another stressor faced by corrections officers is uncertainty, which relates to the threat of losing one’s job as well as uncertain career prospects.

An example of a work-related source of stress is the nature of contact with inmates. For instance, Whitehead (1989) has found the number of hours per week a corrections officer spends in direct contact with inmates correlates positively with the number of burnout symptoms reported. However, Digman et al. (1986) note that the nature of contact acts as a mediating factor, with more positive contact relating to feelings of accomplishment for the corrections officers. The threat of violent confrontation and other health risks represents another stressor faced by corrections officers, with 75% of a sample of Israeli corrections officers reporting potential violence as the most stressful part of their work (Shamir & Drory, 1982). In addition, many corrections officers have difficulty with the unhealthy physical climate in their institution (Verhagen, 1986). Many corrections officers experience stress due to the frequent demands and attempts at manipulation by inmates (Cornelius, 1994). Some corrections officers may perceive their job as dull and routine (Philliber, 1987), which has increased over the past several years with the influx of other professional staff who have taken over part of the traditional role of corrections officers (Fry, 1989). Finn (1998) identified problems with coworkers as another source of stress for corrections officers. For example, some coworkers may vent their frustration on others (Cornelius, 1994). Also, officers may compete for limited assignments within the institution (Brodsky, 1982). In addition, some coworkers may experience apprehension regarding whether other coworkers will protect them or back them up during confrontation (Brodsky, 1982). Grossi & Berg (1991) note the stress which stems from the dependence of officers on one another to work safely within the institution.

An example of a stressor which generally originates from outside of the prison system is the low level of public recognition (Finn, 1998), as well as poor social status (Stalgaitis, Meyers & Krisak, 1982). Stress in corrections officers has also been associated with low pay (Rosefield, 1981).

In recent years, several developments have resulted in increased stress for corrections officers. For example, inmate crowding has increased in state correctional agencies (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1997). There has also been an increase in the number of inmate assaults against staff (Stephan, 1997). According to Martinez (1997), offenders are serving longer sentences, and therefore don't fear the punishment or authority of the corrections officers. Martinez also argues that there are now more dangerous gangs in prison.

Research has developed mixed results regarding the relationship between prison setting and amount of stress experienced by corrections officers. Whereas Van Voorhis, Cullen, Link, and Wolfe (1991) found that corrections officers in maximum security settings tend to experience greater levels of job stress, Lasky et al. (1986) found that corrections officers who were placed in various security levels did not differ in their level of distress. In a study by Morgan, Van Haveren, and Pearson (2002), the workstation where the correctional officers were assigned (e.g., recreational area, cafeteria) did not correlate with differing levels of burnout.

<u>A Typology of Corrections Officers.</u> According to Farkas (2000), corrections officers exhibit distinct and diverse styles of working with inmates. She notes the types of officers are actually representative of modes of adaptation to the structural and organizational factors within the institution. One group of officers are those considered to be "rule enforcers." These officers, who made up 43% of the respondents in her study, can be characterized as rule bound and inflexible in discipline. These officers typically adopt a militaristic approach in interactions with inmates and perceive their role as maintaining order and control within the inmate population. According to Farkas, rule enforcers display an authoritarian, distant approach due to their view of inmates as manipulative and untrustworthy.

A second group of officers are those called "hard liners," who constituted roughly 14% of Farkas' sample. These officers are described as aggressive and power-hungry, with little interpersonal skill. They may even be abusive toward inmates. Hard liners tend to hold extremely negative attitudes toward inmates and complain inmates have it "too easy" in prison. Farkas asserts identification with the institution's militaristic attitude and custodial goals helps hard liners accommodate to what they perceive as a tense, unpredictable situation.

A third type of corrections officer is the "people worker," which is representative of 22% of Farkas' sample. The officers are considered to be professional, social, and responsible. Regarding characteristics of people workers, these officers are generally White, older, and more experienced. In addition, they are less likely to work on maximum security or segregation units. These officers tend to be more flexible in rule enforcement, and believe that interpersonal communication and personalized relations were the most appropriate strategies for gaining inmate compliance. They also stressed handling problems on an individual basis with each inmate. According to Farkas, these officers mediate the rules in an attempt to find a more workable way to supervise inmates with the least amount of confrontation.

A fourth type of corrections officer is the "synthetic officer." This group of officers, which comprised 14% of the sample, is characterized by their highly situational strategies for handling inmates. This type of officer was not found in maximum security, special management, or segregation units. According to Farkas, these officers are cautious and mistrustful, but attempt to mix strong enforcement of rules with communication skills.

The "loner" is the fifth type of officer described by Farkas. This type of officer closely follows rules and regulations because he or she fears criticism of his or her performance as an officer. These officers tend to be highly represented among female and African-American officers. They tend to work on solitary posts. According to Farkas, loners tend to seek protection from criticism and minimize interaction with coworkers and inmates.

Three additional types of officers were identified by corrections officers in Farkas' study. These types include the "lax officer," who is passive and timid, the "officer friendly," who wants to be liked and is easily manipulated by inmates, and the "wishy-washy" types, who are moody and inconsistent.

Coping and Burnout in Corrections Officers

Corrections officers tend to utilize coping strategies which are more passive and indirect in nature (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000). Such strategies include activities such as listening to music, talking with family, reducing involvement while on the job, refusing to discuss work while off-duty, having sex, and reading. It has been found that corrections officers who have more experience use significantly higher levels of passive coping than corrections officers with less experience (Dollard & Winefield, 1994). As a reaction to stress, corrections officers may develop negative coping techniques such as substance abuse, smoking, overeating, and gambling (Cheek & Miller, 1983; Childress, Talucci, & Wood, 1999). According to Finn (1998), stress can also result in impaired work performance, which may lead to reduced safety in the institution.

A "social support model" has sometimes been used to describe the impact of stress on corrections officers (Cullen, Lemming, Link & Wozniak, 1985). According to this model, the interaction of stressors with an individual's social supports and coping mechanisms ultimately determine level of occupational stress. It has been found that individuals who maintain healthy systems of social support tend to utilize more effective coping mechanisms as well as deter most of the negative effects of stress. Conversely, corrections officers may also attempt to cope by displacing their frustration onto spouses or children, ordering family members around, and becoming distant by withholding information about their work experiences (Finn, 1998). In fact, the average divorce rate among corrections officers is more than the national average and is higher than that of other law enforcement officers (Childress at al., 1999).

Chronic and serious job stress may eventually lead to a condition of burnout (Cherniss, 1980). Burnout has been conceptualized as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). Initially, emotional resources become depleted and workers no longer feel that they are able to give of themselves at a psychological level. Workers tend to develop a number of negative, cynical attitudes about their clients. In addition, workers begin to evaluate themselves negatively, and may feel unhappy and dissatisfied with their accomplishments on the job.

In addition to burnout, three other primary types of stress reactions have been distinguished among corrections officers: negative attitudes, withdrawal, and psychosomatic illness (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000). Corrections officers hold a number of negative job-related attitudes. For example, their level of job dissatisfaction is significantly high when compared to jobs with similar levels of pay and education (Cullen, Link, Cullen & Wolfe, 1990). Schaufeli and Peeters (2000) note that corrections officers' skepticism and cynicism may be further driven by their inability to successfully rehabilitate inmates. Stress reactions are also reflected in high rates of absenteeism, of which approximately one-third may be stress-related (Verhagen, 1986). In fact, research has estimated that 90% of officers abuse their sick time due to burnout (Finn, 1998). In a study by Cheek and Miller (1983), it was found that psychosomatic diseases are more common in corrections officers in the United States than among members of most other occupations, including police officers. Furthermore, severe burnout may result in fatal consequences, as correctional officers are three times more likely to commit suicide than to be killed on the job (Childress et al., 1999). Additionally, these stress reactions have resulted in alarmingly high turnover rates. For example, it has been found that the average annual turnover rate among corrections officers in the United States is 16%, with some states reporting turnover rates as high as 38% (Corrections Compendium, 1996). The majority of turnover occurs in young, inexperienced corrections officers within six months after beginning their jobs. As a result, Finn (1998) notes that high turnover rates may force institutions to hire less qualified applicants than they would like. Finn also stresses how high turnover among experienced staff forces those who remain to be placed with a large number of rookies, who may not be as trustworthy or experienced. Also, assignments may be given on the basis of seniority, which results in the least experienced officers staffing the least desirable posts, which tend to be the most dangerous and demanding.

Coping with Execution

In addition to the daily stressors of working with death row inmates, corrections officers must also face the occasional execution. Although many corrections officers may not be involved directly with an inmate's execution, they are affected nonetheless.

During the hours surrounding an execution, staff members tend to become more kind and generous (Lifton & Mitchell, 2000). Some staff members may feel sympathy for the inmate, or even regret volunteering to be involved in the process. Other staff members may view their behavior as part of a ritual, in which the various participants (including the inmate) follow a particular script in order to guarantee that the process goes smoothly. Some refer to this change in behavior as switching into "execution mode." By following such a script, the staff may be able to further distance themselves from the reality of the event. Throughout the process, involved staff members often struggle against their own discomfort and guilt. In an attempt to evoke more negative perceptions and emotions toward the inmate, they may reacquaint themselves with the details of the murders committed by the inmate. In doing so, they are focusing on the fact that they are helping to kill a murderer, and not the inmate that they have interacted with regularly for years.

Purpose of Present Study

A literature search aimed at identifying studies with corrections officers on death row produced only one book chapter describing prison staff who perform executions (Lifton & Mitchell, 2000). Therefore, the area of stress and coping in corrections officers working on death row requires much exploration. In addition to examining stress and coping in death row inmates, the current study proposed to examine four additional questions: (a) What stressors do corrections officers on death row face? (b) What strategies do these officers utilize in an attempt to cope with these stressors? (c) How successful do these officers perceive these strategies to be in decreasing stress? (d) How does the use of particular coping strategies relate to officers' level of burnout? In addition, supplemental exploratory analyses were performed to examine the relationship among various demographic variables (e.g., age, length of time working on death row) and the concepts of coping and burnout.

Chapter 4:

Method

Participants

Inmate Demographics. The participants in this study include a sample of 26 inmates housed on death row at the Mansfield Correctional Institution in Mansfield, Ohio (see Table 1 and Table 2 for demographic information.) The inmates ranged in age from 26 to 77 years old, with a mean age of 43.38 years (*SD* = 11.88). When the data were divided into 5-year increments, the largest percentage of inmates fell within the range of 40-44 years of age (30.8%). This finding indicates this study's sample of inmates is slightly older than the national average, in which the largest percentage of inmates fell within the 35-39 age range. However, the study sample is somewhat more comparable to the Ohio death row population, of which the majority of inmates fall equally into the 35-39 and 40-44 age ranges. This study's sample was comprised of 61.5% European-American participants (N = 16), 30.8% African-Americans (N = 8), 3.8% Latinos (N = 1), and 3.8% Arab-Americans (N = 1). As compared to both the national death row population and the Ohio death row population, African-Americans are underrepresented in this study, whereas European-Americans are overrepresented.

Variable	*M*	*SD*	Min.	Max.
Age (n = 26)	43.38	11.88	26.00	77.00
Years of education (n = 26)	10.42	3.21	3.00	16.00
Mother's years of education (n = 17)	10.29	4.24	.00	15.00
Number of children (n = 25)	2.40	2.61	.00	9.00
Number of years in prison system as adult (n = 26)	17.44	10.40	1.83	43.00
Number of years on death row (n = 26)	11.27	5.88	1.75	21.17
Number of charges in instant offense (n = 26)	3.81	1.90	1.00	10.00

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics of Inmate Demographic Variables*

Variable	Study Sample (2003)	Ohio Death Row Population[a] (2004)	National Death Row Population (2002)
N	26	207	3,557
Modal age range	40-44	35-39, 40-44	35-39
European-American	61.5%	51%	54%
African-American	30.8%	46%	44%
"Other" ethnicity	7.6%	1%	2%
Median years of education	12.00	N/A	11.00
Mean length of time on death row (years)	11.27	10.85	10.58

Table 2. *Comparison of Demographic Characteristics across the Study Sample, Ohio's Death Row Population, and the National Death Row Population*

[a]For the Ohio death row population, the modal age range is equal between both categorical groups (35-39 and 40-44).

The educational level for the inmates in this study ranged from completion of the 3rd grade to completion of four years of college, with completion of the 10th grade being the mean educational level (*SD* = 3.21). The median level of education in the study's sample is 12 years, which is slightly higher than the median for the national population, which is 11 years. No educational data are available for comparison with Ohio's death row population. In this study, the inmates' mothers' level of education ranged from 0 to 15 years, with the completion of 10th grade being the mean educational level (*SD* = 4.24). Regarding marital status, 53.8% of the inmates were single (N = 14), 26.9% were married (N = 7), 15.4% were divorced (N = 4), and 3.8% were widowed (N = 1). The data indicate that 77% of the sample are fathers (N = 20). Their number of children ranged from 0 to 9, with a mean of 2 children (*SD* = 2.61). The inmates have spent between 1.83 and 43 years in prison throughout their adult lives, with a mean length of 17.43 years (*SD* = 10.40). They have been held on death row between 1.75 years and 21.17 years, with a mean length of 11.27 years (*SD* = 5.88). These data are comparable to the national average, in which inmates are held on death row for a mean length of 10.58 years, as well as the Ohio death row population, with a mean length of 10.85 years. The offenses which led to the inmates' current incarceration carried between 1 and 10 total charges, with a mean of 3.81 charges (*SD* = 1.90). A review of online records indicates all inmates were charged with Aggravated Murder. Additionally, 61.5% of the inmate sample were charged with Aggravated Robbery (N = 16), 34.6% were charged with Aggravated Burglary (N = 9), 26.9% were charged with Kidnapping (N = 7), 23.1% were charged with Felonious Assault (N = 6), and 11.5% were charged with Rape (N = 3). Several other charges were also represented among the inmate sample (see Table 3).

Charge	Percentage of Sample[a]	N
Aggravated Murder	100.0%	26
Aggravated Robbery	61.5%	16
Aggravated Burglary	34.6%	9
Kidnapping	26.9%	7
Felonious Assault	23.1%	6
Rape	11.5%	3
Murder	7.7%	2
Theft	7.7%	2
Weapon Under Disability	3.8%	1
Aggravated Arson	3.8%	1
Breaking and Entering	3.8%	1
Robbery	3.8%	1
Escape	3.8%	1
Extortion	3.8%	1
Forgery	3.8%	1
Attempted Murder	3.8%	1
Attempted Aggravated Murder	3.8%	1
Abduction	3.8%	1
Attempt to Commit Offense	3.8%	1
Petty Theft	3.8%	1
Attempted Rape	3.8%	1
Tampering with Evidence	3.8%	1
Abuse of Corpse	3.8%	1

Table 3. *Charges included in Inmates' Instant Offense*

[a]Percentages total more than 100% because most inmates were charged with more than one crime as part of their instant offense.

Corrections Officer Demographics. The participants in this study include a sample of 15 corrections officers employed on death row at Mansfield Correctional Institution in Mansfield, Ohio (see Table 4). Among the 15 officers who participated in the study, 8 completed the questionnaires in addition to the qualitative interview, whereas 7 agreed to complete the questionnaires only. Since the demographic information was included as part of the qualitative interview, demographic data are only available for 8 of the 15 officer participants.

Variable	*M*	*SD*	Min.	Max.
Age (n = 8)	43.50	12.01	24.00	55.00
Years of education (n = 8)	13.00	1.07	12.00	15.00
Mother's years of education (n = 7)	11.57	1.62	8.00	13.00
Number of children (n = 8)	1.38	.92	.00	3.00
Number of years working in prison system (n = 8)	9.14	3.29	4.00	13.00
Number of years working on death row (n = 7)	4.38	3.10	1.00	9.00

Table 4. *Descriptive Statistics of Officer Demographic Variables*

The sample of officers who reported demographic information ranged in age from 24 to 55 years old, with a mean age of 43.5 years (*SD* = 12.01). Seven of the officers were males and one was female. They were comprised of 87.5% European-American participants (N = 7) and 12.5% African-Americans (N = 1). Their level of education ranged from completion of high school to completion of one year of graduate school, with completion of one year of college being the mean educational level (*SD* = 1.07). Their mothers' level of education ranged from 8 to 13 years, with completion of 11th grade being the mean educational level (*SD* = 1.62). Regarding their marital status, 50% of the officers were single (N = 4), whereas 50% were married (N = 4). The data indicate that 87.5% of the officers were parents (N = 7), and their number of children ranged from 0 to 3, with a mean number of 1 child (*SD* = .92). The officers had been working in the prison system between 4 and 13 years, with a mean length of 9.14 years (*SD* = 3.29). The length of time they had been working on death row ranged from 1 year to 9 years, with a mean of 4.38 years (*SD* = 3.10). Very little data exist which details demographic statistics of corrections officers on a national or state level; therefore, such statistics were not available by which to assess the representativeness of this sample.

Measures

Carver COPE: The Carver COPE (Carver, Scheier, and Weintraub, 1989) was administered to both inmates and corrections officers. This measure was used to assess the extent to which individuals utilize each of the three primary coping styles (see Appendix A). The Carver COPE contains 53 items in which participants are asked to denote how often they usually employ a particular coping style. The participants respond according to a 5-point ordinal scale format with the following choices: "never," "rarely," "sometimes," "often," or "always". Many of the items in the measure were generated based on theoretical arguments about functional and less-functional properties of coping strategies. Inmates were specifically instructed to complete the measure while considering the methods they use "to cope with the stressors of being on death row." Similarly, corrections officers were asked to complete the measure while considering the methods they use "to cope with working on death row." Results of this measure indicate the frequency with which an individual utilizes three main categories of coping styles: problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and dysfunctional coping. In addition, these primary coping styles may be divided into 13 subcategories (see Stress and Coping Theory in this document).

In the development of the COPE, tests were conducted for internal reliability, using Cronbach's alpha for each of its 13 sub-scales. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for 12 of the subscales have been found to be adequate, with values ranging from .62 to .92 (Carver et al., 1989). These authors noted a low reliability coefficient of .45 for the Mental Disengagement scale. Test-retest reliability of each subscale was also measured by administering the inventory to students at 6 or 8-week intervals after the original administration, with correlations ranging from .46 to .86. Convergent and divergent validity data were also found to be adequate. The use of the COPE has been successfully supported in previous studies involving inmates (Partyka & Hovey, 2001; Negy et al., 1997) as well as numerous other populations (Carver et al., 1989). As compared to other coping instruments, the COPE has been shown to have slightly more predictive value. It was found to be more strongly related to outcome variables such as positive and negative affect and life satisfaction than two other commonly used coping measures (Clark, Bormann, Cropanzano, & James, 1995).

Qualitative Interview on Stress and Coping. Both inmates and corrections officers were administered the qualitative interview on stress and coping, which was developed by the principal investigator (see Appendix B). The qualitative interview began with general demographic information, such as age, ethnic background, highest level of education completed, highest level of education completed by mother (as an estimate of socioeconomic status), marital status, and number of children. Inmates were asked to identify the length of time they have been on death row as well as the amount of time they have spent in prison as an adult. Officers were asked to identify the length of time they have worked on death row as well as the length of time they have worked in the prison system. Next, the inmates and corrections officers were asked to identify any stressors they faced while on death row throughout the past year. The "past year" specification is helpful in standardizing the time period from which the participants were responding, since the duration of time they spent in the death row environment varies greatly. After each participant identified a stressor, they were asked, "Are there any other stressors you've experienced?" until they were no longer able to produce additional stressors. Following the identification of stressors, the interviewer then referred the participant to his or her first identified stressor. The participant was then asked to identify any strategies he or she has utilized in an attempt to cope with that particular stressor. This method was helpful in identifying situation-specific coping strategies rather than simply identifying more generalized attempts at coping. Similar to the procedure for eliciting stressors, participants were asked "Are there any other coping strategies you used to cope with ___?" until they were no longer able to identify additional coping strategies. Once the coping strategies were identified for that particular stressor, the participant was then asked to determine how successful each strategy has typically been in reducing stress associated with the particular stressor, according to the four-point rating scale listed on the interview sheet. This four-point scale allows the participant to identify coping strategies that have resulted in a worsening of stress (somewhat or significantly) or the alleviation of stress (somewhat or significantly). After all of the success ratings were obtained for the coping strategies associated with the first identified stressor, the interviewer then asked about coping strategies utilized to cope with the second identified stressor, and so on. Once the list was completed, the participant was asked if he or she had any additional stressors to add to the list. If so, then the same series of questions was asked about each added stressor.

Prison Adjustment Questionnaire. In order to assess inmates' self-perceptions of their adjustment to the prison environment, The Prison Adjustment Questionnaire (PAQ) was administered (see Appendix C; Wright, 1985). The PAQ is a measure that consists of 30 items addressing common adjustment problems inmates may experience during incarceration, such as difficulty relating to other inmates and staff, illness and injury, or fear. On this measure, inmates are asked to compare how they are doing in prison with how they functioned in the free world. If their adjustment is worse while in prison, then they are asked to indicate the severity or frequency of the problem. Based on exploratory factor analysis, the items on this measure form three dimensions: internal, external, and physical. A total of eleven items comprise the three scales. These items require the inmate to rate the frequency with which he experiences a number of adjustment problems, and inmates are presented with responses ranging from (a) most of the time to (e) never. Therefore, higher scores on each scale represent greater levels of adjustment difficulties. The inmate's score on the internal dimension indicates to what extent he or she internalizes adjustment difficulties. The inmate's score on the external dimension indicates to what extent he or she externalizes distress through fighting or arguing. Lastly, the inmate's score on the physical dimension indicates to what extent he or she experiences adverse physical effects of distress, such as sickness or injury. Indicators of internal consistency have been calculated for each of the three dimensions, with alpha coefficients ranging from .50 to .74 (Wright, 1985).

Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Survey. Burnout is generally described as a long-term stress reaction that consists of three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach, 1993).

Emotional exhaustion refers to a sense of being emotionally overextended and depleted of one's emotional resources. Depersonalization is a negative or excessively detached response to those who are the recipients of one's services. Reduced personal accomplishment is a decrease in one's sense of competence or achievement relating to work performance. In order to assess these three dimensions of burnout, the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS) was completed by the sample of corrections officers (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). The MBI-HSS is a 22-item measure in which participants are asked to rate each item on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (every day). Scores for three dimensions are obtained, which can then be categorized as "low," "average," or "high." Adequate internal reliability coefficients have been demonstrated for the three subscales (Emotional Exhaustion = .90, Depersonalization = .79, and Personal Accomplishment = .71). The Maslach Burnout Inventory is the leading measure of burnout, and the three-dimensional structure of the measure has been validated in a number of different settings (Maslach et al., 1996). The questionnaire is a general measure that is typically administered to individuals employed in various human services fields, such as police, nurses, social service workers, and mental health workers. The term "recipients" is used broadly in the questionnaire to refer to the people for whom the participant provides services, care, or treatment. In this case, the corrections officers were instructed to substitute the term "inmates" for "recipients" when responding to the questionnaire.

Procedure

In order to gain access to a prison population, a proposal was reviewed and approved by the Research Review Committee of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC). In addition, the proposal was reviewed and approved by The University of Toledo's Human Subjects Research Review Committee. All data were collected during the course of four days in May 2003.

Data Collection from Inmates. Once permission was granted to commence with the study, correctional personnel at The Mansfield Correctional Institution created a randomized computer-generated selection of 30 death row inmates. The first 20 selected inmates were presented with a consent form to review (see Appendix D). If inmates demonstrated reading difficulty, they were presented with a second version of the consent form which presented the same information at a more basic reading level (see Appendix E). After being presented with information about the study, three inmates indicated they were not interested in participating. The primary reasons for choosing not to participate were lack of interest and distrust of the interviewers. At that time, another three inmates were selected from the computer-generated list and presented with information about the study. They agreed to participate. As the interviewers completed the data collection in less than the allotted time period, they were permitted to collect data from an additional six inmates from the computer-generated list, for a total sample of 26 inmates. None of the inmates presented as acutely psychotic, verbally inappropriate, or physically aggressive so as to warrant their removal from the study.

The two interviewers were the principal investigator and a Master's level male graduate student in clinical psychology. At the time the interviews were conducted, the principal investigator was a fourth-year graduate student in clinical psychology with two years of experience working with forensic populations, but no clinical experience working in a prison or with prison inmates. Her primary theoretical orientation at that time was humanistic, and in this study, she was focused on learning more about the inner experiences of the inmates in order to explore the potential for a rehabilitative mission for mental health providers working with death row inmates. Additionally, she was focused on learning about the emotional struggles officers may experience in working with inmates who are sentenced to death. At the time the data were analyzed, the principal investigator had completed her predoctoral internship in a federal prison. Her experience working as a staff member in a correctional institution served to broaden her scope of interest, with greater consideration of the custodial, security, and practical concerns of the institution, as well as the dynamic interplay between the two populations of interest.

The interviewers divided the inmate sample into two groups and met with each inmate separately. The inmates were each placed in an isolated room and given the Carver COPE to complete first, followed by the Prison Adjustment Questionnaire. The instructions for each measure were read aloud and an offer was made for the items to be presented orally for inmates with reading difficulty. They were encouraged to ask for clarification of any items they experienced difficulty reading or understanding. One inmate requested the items to be read aloud. The remainder of the inmates presented with no significant reading, language, visual, or audio impairments which would have impeded on their ability to complete the measures. All inmates demonstrated an adequate understanding of the questionnaire materials. The COPE and PAQ measures each took approximately ten to twenty minutes to complete. Following the administration of the

COPE and PAQ, the interviewers then administered the qualitative interview on stress and coping. Each interview lasted between thirty to sixty minutes per inmate, depending on the verbosity of the inmate and the number of stressors and coping strategies provided. The interviews were tape recorded to allow for more in-depth clinical analysis of participants' verbatim responses.

Data Collection from Officers. Due to the limited number of corrections officers who work a post on death row, all officers working during the four days of data collection, across all three shifts, were presented with a copy of the consent form and information about the study (see Appendix F) and asked to participate. Of the 36 officers presented with information about the study, 15 chose to participate. While seven of the officers chose to complete the self-report measures, an additional eight officers chose to complete the qualitative interview in addition to the self-report measures. Questions pertaining to the demographic information of the officers was only included as part of the qualitative interview. The most common reasons provided by the officers for not completing the measures and/or interview were lack of time and lack of interest.

The officers were given the Carver COPE and Maslach Burnout Inventory to complete in isolated rooms. The instructions were read aloud and they were encouraged to ask for clarification on any items they experienced difficulty reading or understanding. None of the officers presented with any reading, language, visual, or audio impairments which would have impeded their ability to complete the measures. All officers demonstrated adequate understanding of the materials. The COPE and MBI each took approximately ten to twenty minutes to complete. After completion of the written measures, the qualitative interview was administered to those officers who agreed to participate. Each interview lasted between fifteen and forty-five minutes, depending on the verbosity of the officer and the number of stressors and coping strategies provided. The interviews were tape recorded to allow for more in-depth clinical analysis of participants' verbatim responses.

Grounded Theory Analysis. During the qualitative interview on stress and coping, the inmates and officers identified a number of stressors they've experienced and coping strategies they've utilized as a result of their confinement or work on death row. Each interview was tape-recorded and transcribed. In order to interpret the data, a modified form of Grounded Theory Analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was utilized. The grounded theory method emphasizes the generation of theory through the inductive examination of information. First, three inmate transcripts and three officers transcripts were chosen that seemed most representative of the larger samples. The transcripts were broken up into meaning units, which in this case, typically consisted of sentences or groups of sentences which conveyed a complete concept or statement. The inmate and officer transcripts were analyzed separately and the meaning units were systematically sorted into descriptive categories on the basis of the meaning embedded in each item. A constant comparative method was used, so that each meaning unit was compared to each category, and if the meaning unit did not fit into an existing category, a new category was then developed.

After the initial transcripts from each sample were analyzed, additional transcripts were selected for analysis until the categories became more saturated. Saturation occurs when the analysis of additional protocols reveals no new categories or properties. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967) saturation often occurs after the analysis of five to ten protocols. In this study, eight inmate transcripts (out of 26) and five officer transcripts (out of eight) were analyzed before reaching saturation. Saturation was determined by reviewing the remaining transcripts and noting the responses provided would not have contributed significantly to the development of the stressor and coping categories. Throughout the process of data analysis, a running list of memos was kept to document ideas about the data, categories, and theory. The data were conceptualized as forming a network of categories forming a hierarchical structure in which primary categories subsumed lower-order categories. Categories with few connections to the emerging structure were collapsed into other categories. After the categories and overarching hierarchical structure were developed, two members of the dissertation committee were consulted for feedback regarding their impressions of the category development and structure. The categories were then revised based on the feedback received, thus resulting in the final set of categories. Each stressor and coping strategy for each participant sample was then coded into the existing categories. No new categories emerged through this coding process; however, the structure and titles of the existing categories and subcategories were continuously revised throughout the process to accommodate the new data.

Data Entry and Storage. Each participant's data was assigned a code number for identification purposes. Following data collection, the consent forms (which contained participant names) were stored separately from the participant data so that no identifying information can be traced back to each participant’s raw data. All information is currently stored in a locked facility as well as recorded in a password protected computer database program. The interviews have been transcribed from the audiotapes into written documents. The majority of information that has been collected is used for group analysis, with the exception of specific examples or quotes selected from the transcripts. When data are presented for publication or other forms of dissemination, all information provided will be presented in an anonymous manner so that individual participants will not be identified. Once completed questionnaires and interview tapes have been determined to be no longer needed for analysis, they will be destroyed.

Chapter 5:

Inmate Results

Relationships Among Inmate Demographic Variables

Pearson correlations were used to determine the relationships among the continuous demographic variables within the inmate sample. As expected, age was found to be significantly correlated with length of time served in prison (r = .59, p < .01), as well as length of time served on death row (r = .39, p < .05). In other words, as age increased, the length of time served on death row, as well as in prison generally, increased. Also as expected, length of time served in prison was highly correlated with length of time served on death row (r = .77, p < .001), as the former variable subsumes the latter. Lastly, education was found to have a significant negative correlation with length of time served in prison, such that as the level of education increased, the length of time served in prison decreased (r = -.41, p < .05). These data are presented in Table 5. T-tests were used to determine whether significant differences exist as a function of categorical demographic variables (i.e, marital status, ethnicity) with regard to the continuous demographic variables (i.e., length of time on death row); however, no significant differences were found.

	Age	Education Level	Number of Children	Length Served in Prison	Length Served on Death Row
Age	—	-.32	.26	.59**	.39*
Education Level	—	—	-.07	-.41*	-.29
Number of Children	—	—	—	-.01	-.23
Length Served in Prison	—	—	—	—	.77***
Length Served on Death Row	—	—	—	—	—

Table 5. *Correlations Among Inmate Demographic Variables*

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Inmate Coping Styles

In order to describe the inmates' use of various coping styles, total scores were calculated for each of the three primary coping types on the Carver COPE: problem-focused, emotion-focused, and dysfunctional. The inmates in this sample obtained a mean total score of 65.85 (SD = 12.18) on the problem-focused coping scale, whereas they obtained a mean total score of 62.73 (SD = 8.36) on the emotion-focused coping scale. Lastly, they obtained a mean total score of 30.69 (SD = 4.86) on the dysfunctional coping scale. It should be noted that the discrepancy between the mean total for the dysfunctional coping scale and the other primary coping scales is largely reflective of the fact that it consists of only three subscales (12 items), whereas the others consist of five subscales (20 items) each. Therefore, a more meaningful description of the inmates' use of these coping styles may be obtained by examining the mean frequency rating (i.e. 1 = never use, 5 = always use) obtained across all items which comprise each of the three primary scales. The mean frequency rating across all items in the problem-focused coping scale is 3.29 (SD = .61), indicating the inmates in the sample "sometimes" used problem-focused coping strategies. The mean frequency rating across all items in the emotion-focused coping scale is 3.14 (SD = .42), indicating the inmates also "sometimes" used emotion-focused coping strategies. Lastly, the mean frequency rating across all items in the dysfunctional coping scale is 2.33 (SD = .53), indicating the inmates "rarely" use dysfunctional coping styles. Using a one-way ANOVA, a significant difference was found among the mean frequency ratings for the three primary coping strategies (F = 24.99, df =2, p < .0001). To determine where the significant difference exists, a Tukey's Studentized Range (HSD) Test was utilized. The mean frequency rating for dysfunctional coping was found to be significantly less than both the problem-focused and emotion-focused coping frequency ratings.

Pearson correlations were used to determine the relationships among total scores for each of the three primary coping styles; however, no significant correlations were found.

Pearson correlations were used to determine the relationships between the continuous demographic variables and the reported totals of the primary coping styles, whereas T-tests were used to determine whether significant differences exist as a function of the categorical variables with regard to coping styles. As compared to minority inmates (N = 10), European-American inmates were less likely to report engaging in emotion-focused coping strategies ($F = 5.17$, $df = 1$, $p < .032$). The minority inmates obtained a mean emotion-focused coping total of 67.10 ($SD = 8.81$), whereas the European-American inmates obtained a mean emotion-focused coping total of 60.00 ($SD = 7.02$).

Grounded Theory Analysis of Inmate Stressors

Using the grounded theory method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the inmates' reported stressors were conceptualized as forming several hierarchical categories (see "Grounded Theory Analysis" in *Procedure* section for overview of this method). The identified stressors fell into five primary categories which are presented in Appendix G.

Isolation. The first category is *Isolation*, which refers to the inmates' sense of being cut off from the rest of the world. The first form of Isolation is *social isolation*. Most notably, the inmates described feeling cut off from loved ones in the community. One inmate stated, "I think the most stressful thing would be being away from my family. My family lives several hundred miles away so I hardly ever get to see them. And as the years go by, I get to see them less and hear from them less." They described disappointment when loved ones don't come to visit, and they expressed a sense of loneliness resulting from difficulty developing or maintaining romantic or sexual relationships. Even when loved ones visit, they feel physically removed due to strict visitation protocol. According to one inmate, "…my family can come and visit me and I can't reach across the table and touch my wife or my grandchildren or my children's hand because they say there is a risk of security." Another inmate reported, "And when they come to see you, you feel good, you know, you get to see your family. But then you got to watch them walk out that door and you gotta go the other way and you can't go with them. I think that's the most difficult thing for me." They reported feeling cut off from the outside world, with a recognition that the world around them is evolving with current events and technological advancements, despite the fact that their environment within the prison seems to remain relatively static. According to one inmate, "Since I've been locked up, I've seen so much changing. For instance, the internet. When I was out, the internet, hardly anybody had the internet and now it's so prominent." The inmates even reported feeling isolated from others within the prison, such as staff and other inmates. They described difficulty forming close friendships with other inmates, even though they share many of the same difficult life circumstances.

In addition to feeling socially isolated, one inmate described a sense of *emotional isolation* stemming from a perceived inability to express his emotions within the prison environment. His interactions with other inmates are often colored with fear and distrust, and he feels a need to "act hard" in order to prevent losing the respect of other inmates. According to the inmate, "It's really hard to show emotions in here, because you know, you don't want people to take kindness for weakness or something...You don't want to get tears in your eyes in front of people. You don't want to dig that deep out in front of people." Regarding other inmates, he stated, "They stay away from you. They're real hesitant and they don't like to share, they don't like to share anything with you as far as stories, background. They keep to themselves. But they're scared. They don't open up." Not only does this inmate feel the need to hide his emotions from other inmates, he also fears expressing emotions to staff. Specifically, it was noted that he is hesitant to admit symptoms of depression or suicidal ideation, as he fears being "punished" through placement on suicide watch status.

Deprivation. The second stressor category is *Deprivation*. The inmates report feeling *deprived of physical items or resources*, such as palatable food or adequate hygiene supplies. Regarding the food provided, one inmate stated, "That's stressing because, you know, you get hungry and you want to eat, but when you see what they put on that tray, you won't eat it." He also described frustration with making long-distance phone calls to family members by stating, "One thing that stresses me too is the cost of phone calls….Now it costs twenty dollars just to call them once a month. If I call them twice a month, that's forty bucks."

A pervasive stressor reported by numerous inmates is *deprivation of freedom*. One inmate described loss of freedom as "not being able to do what you want, go where you want, eat what you want." Regarding the loss of freedom, another inmate stated, "It's the simple things in life that people take for granted. You know, walking in the grass…maybe a traffic jam or something." According to another inmate, "But freedom, to go out and smell the rain at night. To be able to smell a flower, to touch another human being. So many things out there we take for granted. We take our kids, we take everything for granted. And I guess for me, that's my worst punishment."

The third type of deprivation deals with *poor or inaccessible care*. Inmates describe various types of care (i.e., medical care, mental health care, educational or therapeutic programming) as being inadequate or inaccessible. Regarding the cost of medical care, an inmate reported, "You have to pay money if you want to see a doctor.

You have to pay three dollars just to see a doctor in here and if they give you medication you have to pay money for that." Regarding mental health treatment, one inmate stated, "As soon as the psychologist come over and [asks] do you wanna talk, everyone's going to say no. Because they know that you go out there and you talk to them, and as soon as they get to know you to where you're able to open up to them, then they're transferred and somebody else is coming in."

Lastly, some inmates described feeling *deprived of justice*, or of being treated with fairness. One African-American inmate stated, "If you white back here on the row, you get more special treatments, more attention, than if you a brother. If you a brother, you ain't got nothin' comin'. F-you. You say something smart, you in the hole." Inmates also expressed frustration with the differences between treatment of death row inmates and those inmates in the general prison population. One inmate reported, "One person does something [wrong] and all of death row pays for it. And that doesn't happen in GP (general population)." Another inmate stated, "A lot of the guys that are back here, the only reason they are back here is because of what county they were in. If they would have done the exact same thing in the county next to the county they were in, they wouldn't be on death row. They would be on population." He later added, "It matters who's the prosecutor, if he's up for election, if the judge is up for election. If, you know, a lot of it is politics. A lot of it is politics."

<u>Intrusion.</u> Third, several stressors can be described as involving some form of *Intrusion.* In addition to feeling deprived of physical freedom of movement, several inmates experience a sense of *intrusiveness from the environment*. They feel their personal space is intruded upon through the use of physical restraints such as handcuffs,

shackles, and bellychains, in addition to the imposition of bars, locked doors, and cages. Such restraints may also be difficult to deal with when considering loved ones' reactions to them. According to one inmate, "All they see is you sitting there chained up behind a wall like some kind of animal. The last thing they'll remember is 'I remember going to see my father and he was chained up, chained to the floor and the walls…'"

They also experience *intrusiveness of staff*. For instance, they reported feeling their privacy is intruded upon by staff. Having to deal with the fact that the guards are "always watching" was a frequently identified stressor. Several inmates also felt that the officers intentionally attempt to provoke them. One inmate stated, "And then you get some guards that just seem to wanna cause trouble…Some of them bring in their outside troubles in here and then they take it out on us." According to another inmate, "Sometimes I think they do it on purpose, just to see how inmates are going to respond to it." Another inmate stated, " It's just some of these guards come in and they don't understand what you're going through and they come in with this nit-pick shit and it will bring you to the point where you just want to rough one of them up." Regarding perceived harassment from the officers, another inmate stated, "…they can disrespect you, they can call you a name, they can jester about you, they can say things to other inmates about other inmates, lies. But you don't have the right as an inmate to do those kinds of things to them."

Some inmates experience *intrusiveness from other inmates*. Some inmates feel exploited and manipulated by other inmates. Regarding provocation by other inmates, one inmate reported, "They exaggerate. They'll say something and it's not the truth, but they want to see if you're going to bite on it, see if you want to come to blows with them, be a tough guy and all."

Lastly, some inmates feel a sense of intrusion when their *integrity is questioned* during investigations, or they feel as though they are being wrongfully accused. One inmate complained of the perception officers have of the inmates on death row by stating, "…then that influences the guards when they come back here, they're like 'oh, these guys are a bunch of murderers.' Not all of us are that way…'Cause everybody keeps thinking, you know, they think 'oh, death row, that's the worst of the worst.' Well actually, it's not."

Helplessness. Another primary stressor category focuses on the inmates' sense of *Helplessness* in their current circumstances. Inmates feel they have *no "voice."* They describe feeling as though they have no advocate, or they feel as though their advocate (i.e., their attorney) invests little effort into representing them. According to one inmate, "…it goes in one ear of my lawyer and out the other, and it really hurts, you know. I thought they're supposed to help me but they're not." Another inmate reported, "I don't have any, an advocate or anybody I can go to as far as to help me resolve a problem…Of course there's always somebody there to listen. It's somebody that's gonna do something is another thing." Many inmates describe the grievance system within the institution as ineffective. While some feel as though their grievances are ignored, several also fear adverse repercussions for filing grievances. One inmate stated, "They just don't want to hear you. And if you complain very much, then they just totally disregard what you're saying."

A sense of helplessness is also apparent when the inmates face *ambiguity* with their legal circumstances. They spend a great deal of time waiting and not knowing the outcome of various decisions which could potentially have life-or-death consequences. One inmate stated, "You don't know where you're going. You don't know what's going to happen…Not knowing whether you're coming or going, basically." Another inmate stated, "Are they going to execute me, or are they not? You just never know when your appeal is going to run out and a date be set and the execution pushed forward." Several inmates also reported experiencing a sense of ambiguity regarding rules and expectations within the institution, as they described the rules as frequently changing and being enforced inconsistently.

The inmates also reported a sense of personal *ineffectiveness* in matters such as dealing with the problems of loved ones in the community, as well as feeling unable to help other inmates in any appreciable manner. According to one inmate, "The hardest one is when my mother just had a heart attack a year ago…I guess just not being able to be there physically and not being in control to help or do something." Another inmate described frustration with "…not being able to be out there to comfort my son and keep him out of situations that might place him in situations like this."

<u>Painful Self-Reflection.</u> The last stressor category deals with *Painful Self-Reflection*. This category encompasses issues related to inner struggles. One inmate reported feeling as though he has *nothing to look forward to*. For instance, he experiences difficulty with a lack of goals and has problems engaging in future-oriented thinking. Regarding a lack of goals, he reported, "What I feel they should do is set a goal, say 'Okay, if you go for this long amount of time without having any problems with

the institution or other inmates, then we can take a step toward your goal.' And that way you have goals and something to work for. But if they don't set no goals for you to try and stay out of trouble, then you ain't going to stay out of trouble…You ain't got nothing to look forward to."

Some may experience *guilt* over the choices leading to their offense, or guilt that their family has had to suffer because of their actions. One inmate stated, "What I fear is the hardship and the hurt that it puts on the people that I love." According to another inmate, "I've been able to sit back and see what all I've done…I think I can see all the hurt I've caused…I feel it for all the victims, their families. My wife, my kids, I mean, they're all forever going to be doing time now." He later added, "Maybe that's one reason I know that I'll die and go to Hell, because I'll never forgive myself."

Some inmates reflect upon their own *mortality* as they fear growing old in prison and the threat of impending execution. Regarding aging on death row, one inmate reported, "A person on death row doesn't look in a mirror that much…And then whenever I look in the mirror, it's like 'huh?' I already got gray hair, and just looking older than what you was when you first come down here and you don't know where the time went." Another inmate stated, "Then you got that death sitting on your shoulder. You know, you like 'No, I ain't gonna die like this, they can't kill me like this. God ain't gonna let them.' You start bringing all factors in, and God ain't gonna let it happen, but it's still there til you get off death row, so it's always going to be there."

Information regarding the percentage of inmates who identified each stressor is presented in Table 6. *Deprivation* and *Intrusion* were the two most frequently reported type of stressor, each identified by 22 inmates (85% of the sample).

Stressor Categories and Subcategories (N = 26)	Number of Inmates
Isolation	19 (73.08%)
Social Isolation	18
Emotional Isolation	1
Deprivation	22 (84.62%)
Deprivation of physical items/resources	9
Deprivation of freedom	9
Poor or inaccessible care	6
Deprivation of justice	10
Intrusion	22 (84.62%)
Intrusiveness of environment	6
Intrusiveness of staff	11
Intrusiveness of other inmates	15
Integrity is questioned	9
Helplessness	14 (53.85%)
No "voice"	7
Ambiguity	7
Sense of ineffectiveness	3
Painful Self-Reflection	18 (69.23%)
Nothing to look forward to	1
Guilt	7
Mortality issues	13

Table 6. Number of Inmates who Identified Stressors by Category

Based on the work of Rhodes, Hill, Thompson, and Elliott (1994), such categories can be described as "general themes," "typical themes," or "variant themes," depending upon the extent to which they are reported by individuals in the sample. The categories of *Deprivation* and *Intrusion* are both considered "general themes," as they were reported by almost all inmates sampled. The largest percentage of inmates who identified *Deprivation* as a stressor described difficulty dealing with deprivation of justice. The largest percentage of inmates who identified *Intrusion* as a stressor described intrusiveness of other inmates as problematic. The second most frequently reported stressor type was *Isolation*, which was identified by 19 inmates (73%). The largest percentage of inmates who reported that stressor type described difficulty dealing with social isolation. The third most commonly identified type of stressor was *Painful Self-Reflection*, which was reported by 18 inmates (69%). The inmates who reported that stressor type described facing issues related to their mortality as being stressful. Lastly, 14 (54%) of the inmates sampled reported stressors related to *Helplessness*. The inmates who identified that stressor type equally reported difficulties with feeling they have no voice and facing ambiguity in their current circumstances. *Isolation, Painful Self-Reflection,* and *Helplessness* are considered "typical themes," as they were reported by at least half of the inmate sample.

Grounded Theory Analysis of Inmate Coping Strategies

The coping strategies identified by the inmates were analyzed and categorized in the same method as were the inmate stressors. Six primary categories emerged from the data. These categories are presented in Appendix H.

<u>Problem Prevention.</u> The first type of coping strategy deals with *Problem Prevention.* First, inmates reported specific attempts at *preventing problems* from occurring. Inmates described the importance of staying out of trouble and "keeping a low profile." Several attempted to avoid responding to others' provocation, and they make an effort to respect other inmates. Regarding the avoidance of conflict, one inmate reported, "So here you know if you do something, you're basically putting a nail in your coffin, so you have to bite your tongue and go on a lot of the time." Another inmate stated, "In

prison you have to be pretty much aware of what you're saying and how it's conveyed and how it's gonna be taken. So you have to, you can't just blurt out stuff."

Inmates also reported attempts at making positive *self-improvements*, such as gaining specific skills, which could serve to prevent future problems on a more general level. One inmate reported, "I try to make myself a better person." He added, "Right now I'm in the process of trying to find ways that I can become skilled in something so that when I do get out I have some type of training." Another inmate stated, "I try to do a lot of reading like self-help books, like Dr. Phil. I try to, you know, I used to watch his program every night when it first come out." Inmates may also engage in self-evaluative processes. For instance, one inmate stated, "I just try to understand myself, as a person…There's a time come that you got to sit back and evaluate yourself as a person."

<u>Problem Remedy.</u> The second coping strategy category focuses on *Problem Remedy*. Many inmates spend a great deal of time and effort focused on their *legal work*, either by studying the law or by working with their attorney on an appeal. One inmate reported, "I go do my case work…I wanna be involved in my case…and it's also helping me because I know that it will help me to get out of here." Another inmate stated, "I've worked on my appeals and tried to better my situation within the court system." According to another inmate, "Working on my case, working on the law, showing me that there is a way to get this thing overturned is giving me the hope that it will be overturned. That's giving me the strength to go on."

Inmates may engage in more general *problem-solving* strategies such as gathering additional information or analyzing the situation. In response to deprivation of resources, one inmate stated, "Oh, I'll ask, try to get some info from someone." Inmate also engage in situation-specific problem-solving efforts. For example, one inmate reported purchasing a noisy fan to mask the sound of others' voices, which was preventing him from sleeping well at night.

Additionally, inmates attempt to *express their concerns* through making requests, complaining, or filing grievances. One inmate described the grievance process by stating, "First you file a formal complaint. If that's not to your liking, then you can file a grievance to the formal complaint, you know, you have paperwork, a bunch of paperwork." Another inmate stated, "When I complain, I don't complain to someone that can't do anything about it. I complain the right way to the proper people."

<u>Support.</u> The third type of coping strategy deals with seeking or obtaining some form of *Support*. One way inmates seek support is *through religion or spirituality*. They may rely on their faith to help them through difficult situations, or they may read or study religious texts. One inmate stated, "I pray there is a God that'll make things right." Another inmate stated, "I love God with all my heart…and I pray to him and ask for help, you know, and I pray for people back here." Another inmate reported, "Spiritually, my spiritual bond with God is strong and can't be broke, so that's what keeps me focused, that's what keeps me - I'm not gonna hurt myself." He added, "Deep down inside I believe, I know what's going on with me ain't right, but at the same time I know God got a plan for everybody. Ain't nothing happen in this world that God ain't made it happen. So I come to grips with it, you know, just let my faith take action." They may also engage in various types of religious or spiritual practices, such as prayer or meditation. Additionally, they may interact with religious figures, such as a priest or chaplain. Belief in a life hereafter was also described as helpful for some inmates. According to one

inmate, "A lot of the time, I mostly rely on my faith in God. And know that this life is only temporary, in the sense that I hope for something beyond this life." He later added, "I look at this life as temporary. And it's like a probationary stage."

In addition to seeking support through religion or spirituality, some inmates seek support through *others in the community*, such as family members or other loved ones. One inmate described the value of family support by stating "Knowing you've got that love at home, somebody out there cares for you, period, whether you live or die, who is fighting for you. They might not be in here physically with you, but you got that emotional support to help you get through that." A few inmates reported requesting support from other legal representatives, advocates, organizations, or prison pen pal services.

Inmates may also seek support from *other inmates*, particularly since they are experiencing many of the same stressors. According to one inmate, "With the guys here that I do talk to, it reminds me of a sense that we all share the same problems…I guess the old saying was 'misery loves company.' Well, we're all miserable, so it's more company for us to have others to be around."

Lastly, inmates may seek support through *staff*, either through informal conversations or through more formal services such as counseling. Regarding his relationship with officers, one inmate stated, "I get along with them real good you know. I joke around with them and they joke around with me…The other officer out here, I mean, he's like a father to me. He doesn't know that I'm saying that but he is, he's like a dad to me. I'd do anything in the world for that man…They treat me like I'm a human…"

Attitude Change. The fourth coping strategy includes different forms of *Attitude Change*. One form of attitude change is *acceptance* or acknowledgement of the problem. One inmate reported, "Go with the flow. I try to go with the flow. Try to understand." According to another inmate, "If you asked most people, they'd probably boo hoo and whine about they can't have this or this. But this is a penitentiary, and they got to grow up. A penitentiary's got their rules. You either got to go by them or you don't. That's just life. You can't boo hoo because you think you get treated wrong or you don't get as much as the next person, or it might be a racial thing. That's just a blame game. Me, I just take it as it is. That's it."

Another way inmates may change their attitude toward the stressor is through *positive reframing*, or looking for the positive in their situation. Inmates may do so through appreciation of aspects of their lives they may have previously taken for granted, as well as attempting to maintain a sense of humor. According to one inmate, "I think another thing I've learned is just be happy for what you have today. I mean, I don't know what tomorrow brings. I don't have a clue." Another inmate reported, "I try to appreciate what I have more and not worry about what I don't have." According to another inmate, "I try to concentrate on the quality of my existence, the quality of life." One inmate stated, "You got three squares a day, you might have a job, you get a free bath. What else can you be complaining about? I mean, there's kids and stuff out there that ain't even got that." Another inmate stated, "Sometimes when I look outside, I think, you know, it's a nice day out. I say it's a beautiful day. I'm not in a good situation, but thank God I'm alive." According to another inmate, "Heard of the saying 'When a person around you smiles, it helps make the day a lot better?'…It kinda helps me because you try to be cheerful with people, with people dying around us."

A more negative form of attitude change is developing an *attitude of non-coping*, or giving up trying to deal with the stressor. This attitude is reflected through statements such as "A lot of times I can't deal with it," "I don't know how to deal with that," and "Sometimes you throw your hands up and say 'Oh well, there's nothing I can do.'" According to one inmate, "There is no relief for stress. There is nothing we can do. There is nothing that is given to us. There is no release." Another inmate stated, "Sometimes I just get fed up, I just want to call it quits" and "I tried to commit suicide."

<u>Problem Avoidance.</u> A fifth strategy for coping is through *Avoidance* of the stressor. A common form of avoidance is through *distraction*. Distraction may occur when inmates engage in activities such as work or recreation, such as reading, watching TV, or engaging in hobbies. One inmate stated "I use that book to escape my reality of where I'm at, you know, for a minute I can be somewhere else."

Inmates may also turn to *withdrawal* from others as a way of dealing with the difficulties of incarceration. One inmate reported, "I don't come out for rec. I stay in my cell." According to one inmate, "Usually, I set everything aside and retreat into my own little world." Regarding other inmates, one inmate stated, "I shut them out, keep them at a distance."

There are a number of ways inmates may engage in *mental avoidance* of a stressor, such as through denial or blind hope. They may also make an active attempt to avoid thinking or speaking about the problem. Regarding dealing with painful family visits, one inmate stated "Well I don't let them come up and visit me, and even though they want to I've never let them come to see me…It's just too emotional, and I would rather not see them than to have them see me here." Another inmate said "We don't usually say 'goodbye' no more, we say 'see you next time.' You know, 'goodbye' would be something too final." According to another inmate, "For me, like my little daughter's birthday is tomorrow. But I put it out of mind. I don't have a wife. I don't have a kid. I'm, you know, I more or less freed them. Go on and do your life and forget about me." Many inmates spend much of their time sleeping, either as a way to pass the time, or as a way to avoid thinking about their circumstances. According to one inmate, "But mainly, I just sleep all the time. That's basically what it's been this whole time. You just sleep, sleep, sleep. Throughout this ten years of being in an isolated situation like this, I've slept at least half of it away." Another inmate stated, "I realize sleep is my safety valve. It's my escape and sometimes I get so stressed out or whatever and that sleep saves my life as far as I'm concerned…If I had to stay awake and actually deal with that I would probably explode all over the place."

Another method of avoidance is through active *physical avoidance* of the stressful situation. For instance, several inmates reported avoiding interacting with certain staff or suffering through medical problems rather than request help, in order to avoid potentially frustrating situations. Regarding avoidance of negative interactions with officers, one inmate stated, "I try to stay away from them, just avoid them. I don't conversate with them. I don't have nothing to say to them. The only time I speak to them is when I need something, so other than that I don't have anything to say. The best way to avoid it is to avoid them." Another inmate stated, "You sort of just stay away from them, stay more in your cell or you go outside. You get away from them. You just try not to deal with them at all." He added, "This way if you don't have contact with them, you don't gotta deal with them. It's the way I look at it." One inmate described his avoidance of the frustration of wearing shackles and cuffs when leaving the cell by stating he makes an effort not to leave his cell. He added, "The less you put them on, the less you got to think about them."

Acting Out. Lastly, some inmates deal with stressful situations by *Acting Out*, either toward themselves, others, or property. Acting out includes behaviors such as lashing out verbally towards others or engaging in physical confrontations. According to one inmate, "I got a TV in there and sometimes I just want to slam it." He also stated, "There's certain things that someone say to you, certain things they shouldn't say, you know, and it…got to me and I hurt this other person, not by physical, but by words." Additionally, he stated, "I've cussed some, a few of the inmates out. I've cussed some of the officers out…I talk back to them at the wrong time." Another inmate stated, "Sometimes you gotta punch the wall." Another inmate stated, "I usually tear up stuff that belongs, you know, my stuff. Or punch walls."

The percentage of inmates who identified each coping strategy is presented in Table 7. The most frequently reported type of coping strategy was *Problem Avoidance*, which was identified by 24 inmates (92% of the sample). The largest percentage of inmates who reported this strategy described using some form of distraction. The second most frequently identified coping strategy was *Problem Remedy*, which was identified by 21 inmates (81%). The largest percentage of inmates who reported this strategy described attempts at expressing their concerns to others.

Coping Strategy Categories and Subcategories (N = 26)	Number of Inmates
Problem Prevention	14 (53.85%)
Prevention of problems	11
Self-improvement	4
Problem Remedy	21 (80.77%)
Legal work	5
Problem-solving	12
Expressing concerns	15
Support	18 (69.23%)
Support through religion/spirituality	10
Support through others in the community	14
Support through inmates	9
Support through staff	2
Attitude Change	20 (76.92%)
Acceptance	9
Positive reframing	13
Attitude of non-coping	3
Problem Avoidance	24 (92.31%)
Distraction	19
Withdrawal	4
Mental avoidance	14
Physical avoidance	17
Acting Out	10 (38.46%)

Table 7. *Number of Inmates who Identified Coping Strategies by Category*

Both *Problem Avoidance* and *Problem Remedy* are considered "general themes," as they were reported by almost all inmates sampled. The third most popularly identified strategy was *Attitude Change*, which was reported by 20 inmates (77%). The largest percentage of inmates who identified this strategy used positive reframing. The use of

Support was identified by 18 inmates (69%), with the largest percentage seeking support through others in the community. *Problem Prevention* was utilized by 14 inmates (54%), with the largest percentage using a method of preventing specific problems. *Attitude Change*, *Support*, and *Problem Prevention* are all considered "typical themes," as they were reported by at least half of the inmate sample. The least commonly reported coping strategy was *Acting Out*, which was identified by 10 inmates (38%). *Acting Out* is referred to as a "variant theme," as it was reported by less than half of the inmate sample.

In order to gain a better understanding of the inmates' use of situation-specific coping strategies, the percentage of inmates utilizing each coping strategy was tabulated for each stressor. These data are presented in Table 8. In dealing with *Isolation*, inmates most typically respond by seeking *Support* or through *Problem Avoidance*. Each of the two coping strategies was reported by 11 inmates. In coping with *Deprivation*, the majority of inmates tended to use *Problem Avoidance*, which was reported by 13 inmates. As a response to *Intrusion*, inmates also tended to use *Problem Avoidance*, which was reported by 15 of the inmates sampled. *Support* was identified by 10 of the inmates sampled in response to *Helplessness*. Lastly, *Painful Self-Reflection* was most typically coped with through *Problem Avoidance*, which was reported by 12 inmates. It was noted that, although *Acting Out* was reported as a coping strategy by relatively few inmates in the sample, it was most typically reported in response to *Intrusion*.

Stressor and Coping Strategy Categories (N = 26)	Number of Inmates	% of Inmates
Isolation (n = 19)		
Problem Prevention	3	15.79
Problem Remedy	3	15.79
Support	11	73.33
Attitude Change	6	31.58
Problem Avoidance	11	73.33
Acting Out	1	5.26
Deprivation (n = 22)		
Problem Prevention	2	9.09
Problem Remedy	9	40.91
Support	4	18.18
Attitude Change	8	36.36
Problem Avoidance	13	59.09
Acting Out	0	0.00
Intrusion (n = 22)		
Problem Prevention	7	31.82
Problem Remedy	12	54.55
Support	8	36.36
Attitude Change	4	18.18
Problem Avoidance	15	68.18
Acting Out	7	31.82
Helplessness (n = 14)		
Problem Prevention	1	7.14
Problem Remedy	6	42.86
Support	10	71.43
Attitude Change	7	50.00
Problem Avoidance	4	28.57
Acting Out	0	0.00
Painful Self-Reflection (n = 18)		
Problem Prevention	3	16.67
Problem Remedy	6	33.33
Support	4	22.22
Attitude Change	5	27.78
Problem Avoidance	12	66.67
Acting Out	2	11.11

Table 8. *Percentage of Inmates who Identified Coping Strategies per Stressor Category*

Success of Reported Coping Strategies

In order to gain a sense of the inmates' perceptions of the effectiveness of their coping strategies, they were asked to rate each reported coping strategy on a scale of 1 to 4. A rating of 1 indicates the strategy typically resulted in the situation becoming "significantly worse," whereas a rating of 2 indicates the strategy typically resulted in the situation becoming "somewhat worse." A rating of 3 indicates the strategy typically resulted in the situation becoming "somewhat better," whereas a rating of 4 indicates the strategy typically resulted in the situation becoming "significantly better." For the sample of inmates, a mean success rating of 2.81 (SD = .51) was found across all coping strategies. In other words, on average, the inmates feel their overall repertoire of coping strategies results in the stressful situations becoming "somewhat better."

The success of the coping strategies was also analyzed by examining the mean success rating for each category of coping strategy. The use of *Support* was found to be the most successful, with a mean rating of 3.52 (SD = .82), while *Acting Out* was rated to be the least successful, with a mean rating of 2.00 (SD = 1.22). Using a one-way ANOVA, significant differences were found among the mean success ratings for each coping strategy ($F = 4.68$, $df = 5$, $p < .001$). To determine where the significant differences exist, a Tukey's Studentized Range (HSD) Test was utilized. The mean success rating of 3.53 (SD = .81) for Support (x = 3.52, SD = .81) was found to be significantly greater than the mean success rating of 2.76 (SD = 1.01) for Problem Remedy as well as the mean success rating of 2.00 (SD = 1.22) for Acting Out. The mean success rating of 3.33 (SD = .88) for Attitude Change was also found to be significantly greater than the mean success rating for Acting Out. These results are presented in Table 9.

Coping Strategy Categories	Mean Success Rating[a]	*SD*
Problem Prevention	3.23	.60
Problem Remedy	2.76	1.01
Support	3.52	.81
Attitude Change	3.33	.88
Problem Avoidance	3.17	.93
Acting Out	2.00	1.22

Table 9. *Mean Inmate Success Rating per Coping Strategy*

[a] 1 = "significantly worse"
2 = "somewhat worse"
3 = "somewhat better"
4 = "significantly better"

The mean success ratings of each coping strategy were also examined across each stressor. In other words, the success of each coping strategy was analyzed as it applied to each reported stressor. Such statistics provide greater information about the situation-specific use of these coping strategies, as opposed to information about their general helpfulness across situations. These data are displayed in Table 10. Due to very low "*n*'s," for many of the categories, these data should be interpreted with caution. It is noted that these data were compiled by examining only those stressor-coping pairs for which inmates provided a success rating. Success ratings were provided for 203 of 287 stressor-coping pairs. The majority of these missing data are due to the inmates expressing difficulty in assigning a value to the success of their coping strategies. In examining the mean success ratings for each coping strategy as applied to each stressor, one-way ANOVAs were utilized to determine whether significant differences exist. Tukey's Studentizied Range (HSD) Tests were then used to determine where such significant differences lie.

In coping with *Isolation*, the use of *Problem Remedy* obtained the highest success rating; however, it was only endorsed by two inmates. Significant differences were found among the success ratings of the coping strategies utilized in response to *Isolation* ($F = 3.72$, $df = 4$, $p < .01$). The mean success rating of 4.00 ($SD = 0.00$) for *Problem Remedy* was found to be significantly greater than the mean success rating of 2.77 ($SD = .94$) for *Problem Avoidance*.

In dealing with *Deprivation*, the use of *Problem Prevention* obtained the highest success rating; however, it was also endorsed by a small number of inmates. Significant differences were found among the success ratings of the coping strategies utilized in response to *Deprivation* ($F = 9.03$, $df = 4$, $p < .001$). The mean success rating of 2.27 ($SD = .97$) for Problem Remedy was found to be significantly less than the mean ratings for all other reported coping strategies.

Stressor and Coping Strategy Categories	Number of Instances Reported[a]	Mean Success Rating	*SD*
Isolation			
Problem Prevention	4	3.00	.82
Problem Remedy	2	4.00	0.00
Support	15	3.13	.99
Attitude Change	6	3.17	1.17
Problem Avoidance	15	2.77	.94
Acting Out	0	-	-
Deprivation			
Problem Prevention	3	3.67	.58
Problem Remedy	9	2.27	.97
Support	5	3.40	1.34
Attitude Change	7	3.43	.79
Problem Avoidance	20	3.03	1.01
Acting Out	0	-	-
Intrusion			
Problem Prevention	5	3.20	.45
Problem Remedy	12	2.63	.98
Support	12	3.83	.39
Attitude Change	4	3.25	.50
Problem Avoidance	25	3.28	.84
Acting Out	4	1.50	.58
Helplessness			
Problem Prevention	0	-	-
Problem Remedy	4	2.25	.96
Support	10	3.70	.48
Attitude Change	6	2.67	1.37
Problem Avoidance	4	2.75	1.50
Acting Out	0	-	-
Painful Self-Reflection			
Problem Prevention	1	3.00	-
Problem Remedy	6	3.67	.52
Support	5	3.70	.67
Attitude Change	5	3.80	.45
Problem Avoidance	13	3.54	.66
Acting Out	1	4.00	-

Table 10.*Mean Success Ratings of each Inmate Coping Strategy per Stressor Category*

[a]Number of instances reported in which a success rating was also provided.

In coping with *Intrusion*, seeking *Support* obtained the highest success rating. Significant differences were found among the success ratings of the coping strategies utilized in response to *Intrusion* (F = 30.83, df = 5, p <.001). The mean success rating of 3.83 (SD = .39) for *Support* was found to be significantly greater than the success ratings for all other reported coping strategies. The mean success rating of 3.28 (SD = .84) for *Problem Avoidance* was found to be significantly greater than the mean success rating of 2.63 (SD = .98) for *Problem Remedy* and the mean success rating of 1.50 (SD = .58) for *Acting Out*. The mean success rating of 3.25 (SD = .50) for *Attitude Change* was found to be significantly greater than the mean success ratings of *Problem Remedy* and *Acting Out*. The mean success rating of 3.20 (SD = .45) for *Problem Prevention* was also found to be significantly greater than the mean success ratings of *Problem Remedy* and *Acting Out*. Lastly, the mean success rating of *Problem Remedy* was found to be significantly greater than the mean success rating of *Acting Out*. In fact, the mean success rating for *Acting Out* was found to be significantly less than that of all other reported coping strategies.

In coping with *Helplessness*, seeking *Support* obtained the highest success rating. Significant differences were found among the success ratings of the coping strategies utilized in response to *Helplessness* (F = 11.76, df = 3, p <.001). The mean success rating of 3.70 (SD = .48) for *Support* was found to be significantly greater than that of all other reported coping strategies.

Lastly, in facing *Painful Self-Reflection*, the use of *Acting Out* obtained the highest rating, although it was only endorsed by one inmate. The use of *Attitude Change* obtained the next highest success rating for that stressor category. No significant differences were found among the success ratings of the coping strategies utilized in response to *Painful Self-Reflection*.

The stressor-coping strategy pairs for which inmates did not report a success rating were also visually examined for potential patterns in the data; however, it did not appear that certain factors such as stressor type or coping type were related to the inmates' inability to identify success ratings.

Pearson correlations were used to determine the relationships between the continuous demographic variables and the mean success ratings of reported coping strategies, but no significant correlations were found. T-tests were used to determine whether significant differences exist as a function of the categorical variables with regard to the success ratings. No significant differences were found.

The stressors and coping strategies generated from the qualitative interviews are presented in Figure 2. This model represents the interactions between reported stressors and coping strategies, as well as the reported success of the coping strategies.

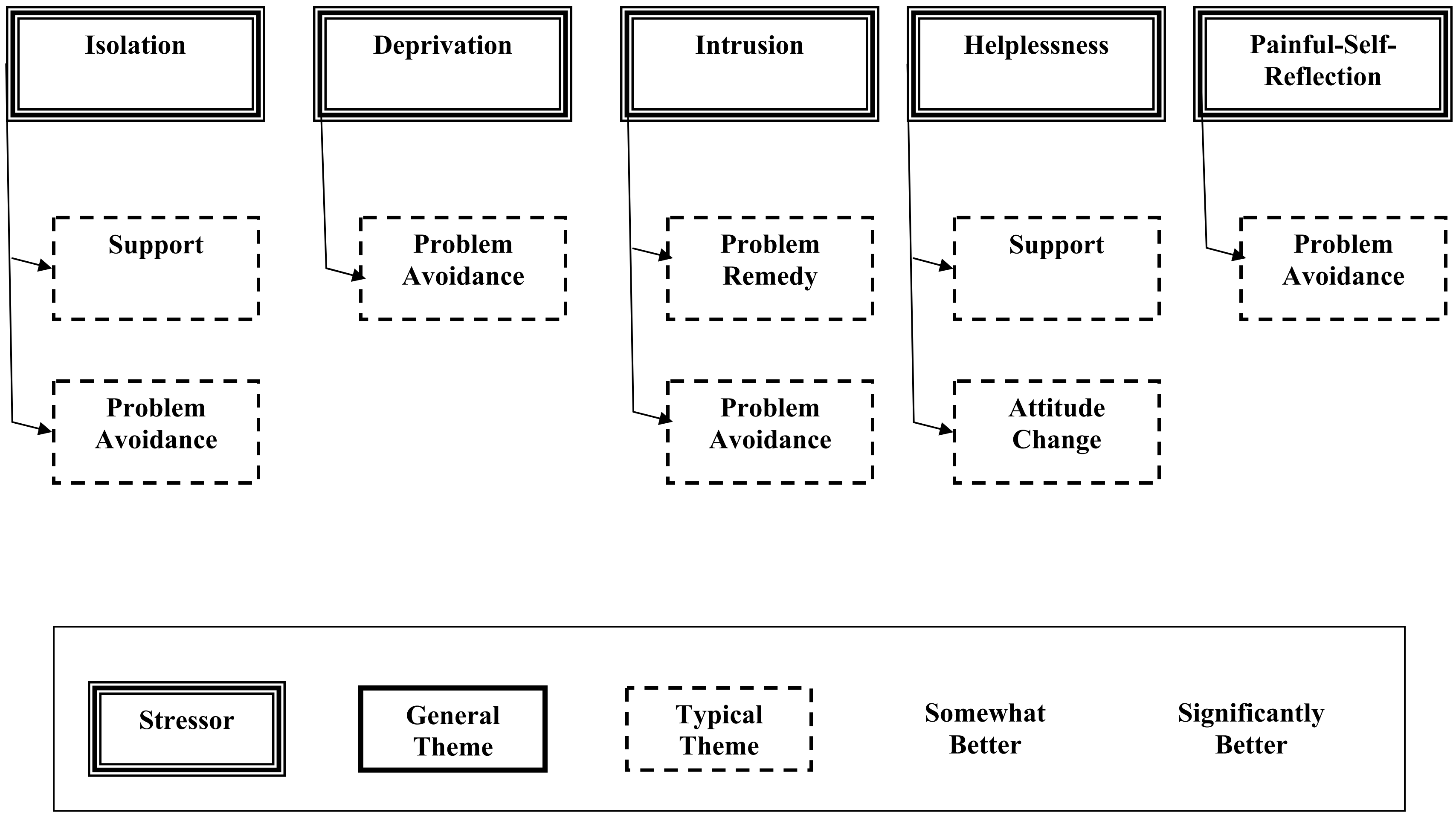

Figure 2. *Inmate Coping Strategies in Response to Stressors*

Inmate Adjustment

To assess the inmates' perceived level of adjustment to their environment, they were each asked to complete the Prison Adjustment Questionnaire (PAQ). This measure contains three dimensions of adjustment: Internal, External, and Physical. Each inmate obtains a total score on each scale, with higher scores representing lower levels of adjustment difficulties. The sample of inmates obtained a mean total score of 11.31 (*SD* = 3.07) on the Internal scale, while they obtained a mean total score of 7.54 (*SD* = 2.64) on the External scale. On the Physical scale, they obtained a mean total score of 11.54 (*SD* = 3.43). It should be noted that both the Internal and Physical scales are composed of four items each (20 maximum points), whereas the External scale is composed of three items (15 maximum points). Since the scales contain unequal numbers of items, a more meaningful description of the inmates' experience of these adjustment difficulties may be obtained by examining the mean frequency rating (i.e., 1 = most of the time, 5 = never) obtained across all items which comprise each of the three adjustment scales. The mean frequency rating across all items in the internal adjustment difficulties scale is 2.83 (*SD* = .77), indicating the inmates in the sample "occasionally" experienced internal adjustment difficulties. The mean frequency rating across all items in the external adjustment scale is 2.51 (*SD* = .88), indicating the inmates also "occasionally" experienced external adjustment difficulties. Lastly, the mean frequency rating across all items in the physical adjustment difficulties scale is 2.88 (*SD* = .86), indicating the inmates "occasionally" experience physical adjustment difficulties. Using a one-way ANOVA, no significant differences were found among the mean frequency ratings for the three primary adjustment scales.

Pearson correlations were used to determine the relationships between the continuous demographic variables and the levels of adjustment difficulties, but no significant correlations were found. T-tests were used to determine whether significant differences exist as a function of the categorical variables with regard to adjustment problems. It was found that European-American inmates reported lower levels of external adjustment difficulties than minority inmates ($F = 12.92$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$). European-American inmates reported a mean external adjustment difficulty total of 8.75 ($SD = 2.41$), whereas minority inmates reported a mean total of 5.60 ($SD = 1.71$).

Pearson correlations were used to determine the relationships among total scores on the adjustment scales. Significant positive correlations were found between the extent of physical adjustment difficulties and both internal ($r = .50$, $p < .01$) and external adjustment difficulties ($r = .47$, $p < .05$). In other words, as the level of physical adjustment problems increased, the level of both internal and external adjustment difficulties increased as well.

Pearson correlations were also used to determine the relationships between the inmates' mean total scores on the three primary coping styles (problem-focused, emotion-focused, and dysfunctional) and their scores on the PAQ subscales. A significant correlation was found between the use of emotion-focused coping strategies and the level of internal adjustment difficulties, such that as the reported use of emotion-focused coping increased, the level of internal adjustment difficulties decreased ($r = .42$, $p < .05$). No other significant correlations were found. These data are presented in Table 11.
A model representing the plausible interaction between coping strategies and adjustment is presented in Figure 3.

	Problem-focused Coping Total	Emotion-focused Coping Total	Dysfunctional Coping Total
Internal Adjustment Difficulties	-.15	.42*	.01
External Adjustment Difficulties	.03	-.23	-.11
Physical Adjustment Difficulties	-.25	.00	.00

Table 11. *Correlations between Primary Coping Styles and Inmate Adjustment*

**p* < .05

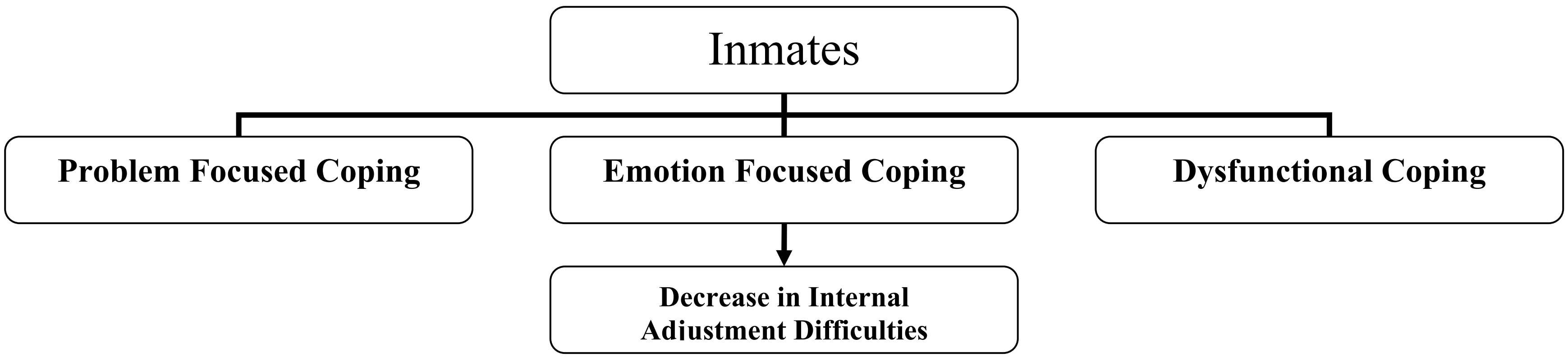

Figure 3. *Inmate Coping Styles and Change in Adjustment Difficulties*

Chapter 6:

Corrections Officer Results

Relationships Among Corrections Officer Demographic Variables

Pearson correlations were used to determine the relationships among the continuous demographic variables in the officer sample. No significant findings were observed; however, a nearly significant positive correlation was found between age and length of time working in a prison ($r = .68$, $p = .061$). T-tests were used to determine whether significant differences exist as a function of the categorical demographic variables with regard to the continuous demographic variables. It was found that officers who were single were found to be younger ($F = 10.74$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$) and have fewer children ($F = 6.82$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$) than those who were married. Officers who were married had a mean age of 52.5 ($SD = 3.11$), whereas those who were single had a mean age of 34.5 ($SD = 10.54$). Officers who were married had a mean of 2 children ($SD = .82$), whereas those who were single had a mean of .75 children ($SD = .50$).

Corrections Officer Coping Styles

In order to describe the officers' use of various coping styles, total scores were calculated for each of the three primary coping types: problem-focused, emotion-focused, and dysfunctional. The officers in this sample obtained a mean total score of 64.00 (*SD* = 6.99) on the problem-focused coping scale, whereas they obtained a mean total score of 55.73 (*SD* = 9.20) on the emotion-focused coping scale. Lastly, they obtained a mean total score of 29.60 (*SD* = 6.36) on the dysfunctional coping scale. As was utilized with the inmate sample, the mean frequency rating (i.e. 1 = never use, 5 = always use) was calculated across all items which comprise each of the three primary scales. The mean frequency rating across all items in the problem-focused coping scale is 3.21 (*SD* = .36), indicating the officers in the sample "sometimes" used problem-focused coping strategies. The mean frequency rating across all items in the emotion-focused coping scale is 2.79 (*SD* = .46), indicating the officers also "sometimes" used emotion-focused coping strategies. Lastly, the mean frequency rating across all items in the dysfunctional coping scale is 2.40 (*SD* = .53), indicating the officers "rarely" use dysfunctional coping styles. Using a one-way ANOVA, a significant difference was found among the mean frequency ratings for the three primary coping strategies ($F = 11.88$, $df = 2$, $p < .0001$). To determine where the significant difference exists, a Tukey's Studentized Range (HSD) Test was utilized. The mean frequency rating for problem-focused coping was found to be significantly greater than both the emotion-focused and dysfunctional coping frequency ratings.

Pearson correlations were used to determine the relationships among the total scores on each of the primary coping scales. The use of problem-focused coping strategies was found to correlate significantly with the use of emotion-focused coping strategies, such that as the reported use of problem-focused coping increased, the reported use of emotion-focused coping also increased ($r = .77$, $p < .01$). Such a high correlation suggests perhaps the categories of problem-focused and emotion-focused coping may be measuring a more general, underlying construct such as an overall coping repertoire.

Pearson correlations were used to determine the relationships between continuous officer demographic variables and total scores obtained on the three Carver COPE scales; however, no significant correlations were found. T-tests were used to determine whether significant differences exist as a function of the categorical demographic variables with regard to the total COPE scores, but no significant findings were observed.

Grounded Theory Analysis of Corrections Officer Stressors

Stressor categories for the sample of corrections officers were developed in the same manner as the inmate categories, using a modified form of Grounded Theory Analysis (see "Grounded Theory Analysis" in *Procedure* section for overview of this method). These categories are presented in Appendix I.

<u>Inmate Hostility and Manipulation.</u> The first category that emerged from the data is the presence of *Inmate Hostility and Manipulation*. Officers must often face the *inmates' negative attitudes toward them*. Inmates may not have respect for the officers and they may act in an aggressive manner. One officer said, "Sometimes the inmates will get mouthy with you or, you know, talk back to you." According to another officer, "They see us as the enemy really, just a flunky CO (corrections officer). They don't want to hear what we have to say."

Officers must continually deal with inmate *attempts to take advantage of them*. According to one officer, "The inmates are watching. They're always studying you…they're always looking for weaknesses, or if a person isn't doing what they're supposed to do when they're supposed to do it." Some inmates wrongfully claim to have been treated unfairly by the officers, and officers may face the potential of being sued by an inmate. One officer stated, "I was told if you come into corrections, you're eventually going to get sued anyhow, and here I am, but it's not a good feeling."

In addition to facing the inmates' hostility toward them, they also reflect upon the hostile nature of many of the *inmates' crimes*. One officer stated, "These guys here act like they're the victims, and not, they didn't victimize someone - they're the victims for being on death row. They're not accepting what they've done, why they're here."

<u>Difficult Relationships with Other Officers.</u> The second stressor category focuses on *Difficult Relationships with Other Officers*. Inmates are not the only ones who behave in a hostile manner toward the officers. In addition to dealing with the difficult attitudes of inmates, officers struggle with the *intrusiveness* of their fellow co-workers. According to one officer, "My stress comes from staff. It does not come from inmates." Some fellow officers are overly intrusive and exercise poor relational boundaries or engage in gossip. One officer stated, "Staff is very nosy and anything that they can find that is not a good thing, they go on with it."

Several officers admitted to feeling as though they have *difficulty trusting their fellow officers*, particularly regarding their personal safety and the security of the institution. One officer described how he might occasionally work with another officer who "…day dreams….talks too much to the inmates and doesn't pay too much attention to detail when he puts on the cuffs or chains…" One officer stated, "Some of the officers get too relaxed with being around these guys. They think 'Well, they're not going to do anything. They like me.'" Another officer reported, "But we got some officers that are just relaxed and they just think this is just peachy back here." According to another officer, "There are actually people [officers] here that's as crazy as some of these people [inmates]. And they're hard to work with."

Stressful Job/Role Expectations. A third category of stressors deals with *Stressful Job/Role Expectations*. Some officers experience *boredom* due to the monotony of their day-to-day, highly structured routine, particularly when they are working in an environment in which the inmates are locked in their cells for the majority of the day. One officer reported, "Your biggest thing is fighting boredom and staying active…"

One officer reported experiencing *difficulty in following procedure* as expected. He described stressful aspects of his job as "…making sure inmates are properly restrained when being taken out for rec…or other movements. Keeping an eye out for my partner, making sure he is safe at all times."

Although violent incidents may happen relatively infrequently, officers must always be faced with the potential for a critical incident to occur without warning at any moment. For some, it is stressful to constantly *maintain a sense of readiness* and to have ongoing concern for their personal safety. One officer stated, "There could be an attempt. There's always that possibility of an escape attempt or some kind of action that you're not aware of." According to another officer, "What do they got to lose? Nothing…I don't know what kind of night they had last night. I don't know what kind of phone call they got or had the day before. Something could have triggered them off." Regarding the potential for a riot, he added, "It's not 'if' it's going to happen, it's 'when.' It may be seven years from now, it may be ten years from now. It's going to happen….It's going to happen for the simple reason sixteen of them, or eighteen of them out at one time, three officers can't control them. There's no way we can handle eighteen all alone, on three. And my personal feeling is just, it's just a matter of time. And that's hard to deal with." Regarding the experience of critical incidents, one officer said, "…they should at least offer the officer, you know, 'hey, how are you feeling?' Because it may not affect you at that particular time, but an hour or two or even a day later, it affects you."

For officers on death row, one officer reported experiencing an emotional struggle when faced with an *inmate execution*. According to the officer, "We're glad that they take inmates out on first shift [for execution]. 'Cause if it's someone we kicked it with, he happened to be one of our porters or something like that…we don't have to see them, you know, say that last, 'hey, see you later.'"

<u>Lack of Support from Administration.</u> A final stressor category focuses on *Lack of Support from Administration*. One officer reported feeling as though he is *not trusted or respected* by his superiors. He stated, "The people with authority, they basically almost kind of see us like inmates, in a way. We're just like the inmates, with keys, you know."

They may become frustrated because they are expected to perform their duties in a particular manner; however, they may feel that administrators and supervisors make it *difficult to perform their job appropriately*. They described being faced with orders that frequently change or that appear contradictory to other orders. One officer stated, "It's the rules and the administration, everybody changing everyday. You don't know exactly what you're supposed to do and what you're not supposed to do. It just seems like everyday, there's always something added to post orders…" He later added, "Sometimes they change rules that you don't know about and your supervisors will try to check you on it." They also experience frustration with the amount of paperwork involved in a number of tasks.

Lastly, one officer reported experiencing a sense of *job insecurity*, particularly when the officer is denied seniority rights or witnesses co-workers being asked to leave. One officer stated, "I've been here and seen people get walked out."

The percentage of officers who reported each stressor is presented in Table 12. *Inmate Hostility and Manipulation* was the most frequently reported type of stressor, identified by 7 officers (88% of the sample). The largest percentage of officers who reported that stressor type described difficulties dealing with inmates' negative attitude toward guards. *Inmate Hostility and Manipulation* is considered a "general theme," as it was reported by almost all of the officers sampled. The second most frequently reported stressor type was *Lack of Support from Administration*, which was identified by 6 officers (75%). The largest percentage of officers who reported that stressor type described the administration as making it more difficult for them to perform their job appropriately. The third most commonly identified type of stressor was *Difficult Relationships with Other Officers*, which was reported by 5 (63%) of the officers sampled. The officers who reported that stressor type equally identified intrusiveness of other officers and difficulty trusting other officers as problematic. Lastly, 4 officers (50%) reported stressors related to *Stressful Job/Role Expectations*. All of the officers who reported that stressor described a need to maintain constant readiness for a critical incident as being stressful. Lack of Support from Administration, Difficult Relationships with Other Officers, and Stressful Job/Role Expectations are all considered "typical themes," as they were reported by at least half of the officers sampled.

Stressor Categories and Subcategories (N = 8)	Number of Officers
Inmate Hostility and Manipulation	7 (87.50%)
Inmates' negative attitudes toward guards	5
Inmates try to take advantage of officers	2
Dealing with inmates' crimes	2
Difficult Relationships with Other Officers	5 (62.50%)
Intrusiveness	3
Can't trust other officers	3
Stressful Job/Role Expectations	4 (50.00%)
Boredom	2
Difficult to continue following procedure	1
Maintain readiness to deal with incidents/safety	4
Dealing with executions	1
Lack of Support from Administration	6 (75.00%)
Lack of respect/trust	1
Difficult to perform job appropriately	5
Job insecurity	1

Table 12. *Number of Officers who Identified Stressors by Category*

Grounded Theory Analysis of Corrections Officer Coping Strategies

Five categories of coping strategies emerged from the officers' interview responses. These categories are presented in Appendix J.

<u>Seek Support.</u> The first coping strategy that emerged from the data is *Seeking Support*. Officers *discuss difficult issues with their peers* in order to gain feedback and validation. One officer stated, "We all talk about it a lot. And that makes it better, it does. Because they know exactly how you feel. So you just sit around and basically bitch. You know, and then it's OK. 'Cause usually there's someone that has a worse story about something than you do." Regarding dealing with irresponsibility of other officers, one

officer stated, "I'll make sure that my partner knows that I'm not going to do any shortcuts, and I'd appreciate it of he didn't do any shortcuts. And basically just talking to the officers that I'm working with."

The officers also *ask for work-related assistance* from supervisors or other staff. One officer reported, "If an inmate comes up to me and tells me that he needs medical attention, I'm going to relay that information on to the nurses or whomever, and let them decide." Regarding filing a grievance on another employee, one officer stated, "What made me feel better is that I wrote him up...If I didn't write him up, down the road it may have affected me."

For dealing with their personal issues, they may choose to *seek professional help*, either through the use of counseling or medication. According to one officer, "They [inmates] could sense that something's wrong with you. So you try to keep everything stable from day to day, and so that's why I have to take medication. I know that I want to control things, but it's hard for me."

One officer reported turning to *family* for support. Regarding an incident at work, the officer reported the helpfulness of going home and discussing it with family members.

One officer also reported seeking *religious or spiritual guidance*. In dealing with critical incidents, the officer stated, "I ask God to help me out on that…I ask for courage to do what is right and not make any mistakes."

<u>Try to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately.</u> The second type of coping strategy is *Trying to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately*. One officer stated, "If I'm following the rules that the administration has set out to a tee, I don't have a problem."

Several officers described strategies for dealing with stressful situations which focused on *fair treatment of inmates*, such as treating them as they themselves would prefer to be treated, letting the inmates know their perspective, or providing inmates with what they need, within reason. One officer reported, "You treat the inmates the way you want to be treated." Another officer stated, "I just try to give them what they got coming to them and usually you don't have any problems out of them, as a general rule."

Some officers try to *gain a better understanding of the inmates* by observing them closely, gathering information about them, or trying to understand the inmates' perspective. According to one officer, "I try to understand where they're coming from, and sometimes put myself in their place and I basically just try to understand and go from there." Another officer stated, "It's like the same thing every day, and you watch for the days that it's not that same thing. And you just, you really keep a much closer eye on, just try to see if you can find out what the situation is."

Some officers make a concerted effort to *follow procedure properly*, which may include attempting to understand the reasons behind a particular order, maintaining an awareness of their surroundings, and being responsible for the behaviors of fellow officers. One officer stated, "I try to watch out what's going on in the environment, what the inmates are doing. If anything looks out of order, you know, I keep my eye on it." Another officer stated, "I keep in the back of my mind where I'm at and what I'm doing, and try not to get relaxed to the point of not doing simple procedure, things I'm supposed to be doing." Some officers make an effort to keep an eye on their fellow officers and write up other staff indiscretions.

Become "Lax" in Fulfilling Role Expectations. In contrast, a third coping strategy involves *Becoming "Lax" in Fulfilling Role Expectations*. One officer reported efforts to *displace responsibility* onto others in order to feel less accountable for his own mistakes. According to the officer, "…but now I really don't care. I mean, it gets done. But if it doesn't get done, I'm not the only one that works here."

One officer reported engaging in a great deal of *flexibility* in choosing when and how to perform his duties and enforce certain institutional rules. He said, "You become more flexible, you do. You know, to eliminate a lot of trouble…We won't break the rules, but we bend them." He added, "That's basically what I always do, and I have to say most of the other CO's (corrections officers) do it too. That's the only way to make the situation better. That's about the only thing you can do."

Some officers may simply *choose not to respond* whatsoever to certain stressful situations. One officer reported, "Sometimes you have to ignore."

"Hardness." A fourth method for coping with the stress of working on death row is to become "*Hard*." One officer reported *not allowing himself to be bothered* by the events he faces while working. According to the officer, working in a prison environment "…makes you hard. You become very rigid." That officer further stated, "When I first came in, I was a humble person, but now I'm not humble anymore. Because you have to have a backbone in here. If you don't, then you're going to get trampled on." Further, it was stated, "As far as I'm concerned, those guys are inmates and I don't care what their personal opinion is of me. So whatever they say or do towards me, it doesn't bother me. I don't take it personal." Regarding provocation by inmates, it was stated, "You just kind of laugh at it and smile at them, and usually that pisses them off more than you getting angry yourself."

Some officers may *mistreat others* or lash back at inmates by yelling at them, ignoring them, or choosing to punish them by shortening their recreation period. Regarding provocation by inmates, one officer stated, "Most of us get angry right back at them…You know, yell things, everything…" He later added, "But if they make us mad, we'll shorten the rec period."

Create Distance from Work-Related Stressors. A final coping strategy is to *Create Distance from Work-Related Stressors*. One officer reported using *social distancing* in which he chooses not to socialize with other staff or disclose personal information to them. The officer reported "…after I leave here, I don't see anyone. I don't associate, I don't go to any parties or anything like that. I try to stay away from the people I work with…"

One officer reported *engaging in outside activities*, such as exercise. According to the officer, "When I feel that I'm getting a little anxiety from that, I'll do some exercises or take myself outdoors – do some hunting, fishing, try to keep myself busy. That seems to help, you know, to keep my mind off of it."

The officers may attempt to create *mental distance* from work-related stressors by trying not to think about work while at home or using humor. One of the officers said, "…when I come home, I forget about this place…As long as you don't remember anything or take any of this home with you, you're OK…If you take this home, it's going to ruin your marriage." The officer added, "Leave it at the door. When you come in, pick it back up. That's how you cope." Regarding his awareness of inmates' crimes, one officer stated, "You try not to think about what they did or why they're in here." Another stated, "I don't look at what they've done to get in here…I don't let that interfere with my emotions, you know. I keep that separate."

Lastly, one officer reported trying to *escape* from work-related problems by abusing sick leave. The officer stated, "You call your supervisor and you tell him that you feel very sick and you need to go home….Everybody does it, you know."

The percentage of officers who reported the use of each coping strategy is presented in Table 13. Coping strategies involving *Support*, *Trying to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately*, and *Creating Distance from Work-Related Stressors* were each reported by 7 officers (88% of the sample). The largest percentage of officers who identified *Support* as a coping strategy reported discussing issues with their peers. All of the officers who identified *Trying to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately* described attempts at following proper procedure. The largest percentage of officers who identified *Creating Distance from Work-Related Stressors* used some form of mental distancing. *Support*, *Trying to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately*, and *Creating Distance from Work-Related Stressors* are all considered "general themes," as they were reported by almost all officers sampled. The next most frequently identified coping strategy was developing *Hardness*, which was reported by 6 officers (75%). The largest number of officers who identified that strategy reported mistreating others. The least-reported coping strategy was *Becoming "Lax"*, which was reported by 5 (63%) of the officers sampled. The largest number of officers who identified that coping strategy reported not responding to the issue. Both *Hardness* and *Becoming "Lax"* are "typical themes," as they were reported by at least half of the officer sample.

Coping Strategy Categories and Subcategories (N = 8)	Number of Officers
Seek Support	7 (87.50%)
Discuss issues with peers	5
Ask for work-related help	3
Seek professional help	3
Speak with family	1
Spirituality/religion	1
Try to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately	7 (87.50%)
Treat inmates fairly	5
Gain a better understanding of inmates	2
Follow proper procedure	7
Become "Lax" in Fulfilling Role Expectations	5 (62.50%)
Displace responsibility	1
Become flexible in following rules	1
Don't respond to the issue	4
"Hardness"	6 (75.00%)
Don't let self get bothered	1
Mistreat others	5
Create Distance from Work-Related Stressors	7 (87.50%)
Social distancing	1
Engage in outside activities	1
Mental distancing	4
Escape	1

Table 13. *Number of Officers who Identified Coping Strategies by Category*

In order to gain a better understanding of the officer' use of situation-specific coping strategies, the percentage of officers utilizing each coping strategy was tabulated for each stressor. These data are presented in Table 14. In coping with *Inmate Hostility and Manipulation*, the strategies of *Trying to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately* and developing *Hardness* were reported equally by 6 officers.

Stressor and Coping Strategy Categories (N = 8)	Number of Officers	% of Officers
Inmate Hostility and Manipulation (n = 7)		
Seek support	2	28.57
Try to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately	6	85.71
Become "Lax" in Fulfilling Role Expectations	3	42.86
"Hardness"	6	85.71
Create Distance from Work-Related Stressors	2	28.57
Difficult Relationships with Other Officers (n = 5)		
Seek support	4	80.00
Try to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately	2	40.00
Become "Lax" in Fulfilling Role Expectations	1	20.00
"Hardness"	1	20.00
Create Distance from Work-Related Stressors	3	60.00
Stressful Job/Role Expectations (n = 4)		
Seek support	3	75.00
Try to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately	4	100.00
Become "Lax" in Fulfilling Role Expectations	0	0.00
"Hardness"	0	0.00
Create Distance from Work-Related Stressors	2	50.00
Lack of Support from Administration (n = 6)		
Seek support	3	50.00
Try to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately	2	33.33
Become "Lax" in Fulfilling Role Expectations	3	50.00
"Hardness"	1	16.67
Create Distance from Work-Related Stressors	2	33.33

Table 14. *Percentage of Officers who Identified Coping Strategies per Stressor Category*

In dealing with *Difficult Relationships with Other Officers*, the officers most often reported seeking *Support,* which was identified by 4 officers. *Trying to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately* was the most frequently reported strategy for coping with *Stressful Job/Role Expectations*, as it was reported by all four officers who identified that stressor. Lastly, officers most often seek *Support* or *Become "Lax"* in dealing with *Lack of Support from Administration*, with each coping strategy reported by 3 officers.

Success of Reported Coping Strategies

In order to gain a sense of the officers' perceptions of the effectiveness of their coping strategies, they were asked to rate each reported coping strategy as typically resulting in the situation becoming "significantly worse" (1) to "significantly better" (4). For the sample of officers, a mean success rating of 3.24 (SD = .29) was found across all coping strategies. In other words, on average, the officers feel their overall repertoire of coping strategies results in the stressful situations becoming "somewhat better."

The success of the coping strategies was also analyzed by examining the mean success rating for each category of coping strategy. The method of *Creating Distance from Work-Related Stressors* was found to be the most successful, with a mean rating of 3.71 (SD = .49), while developing *Hardness* was rated to be the least successful, with a mean rating of 2.67 (SD = .52). Using a one-way ANOVA, significant differences were found among the mean success ratings for each coping strategy (F = 3.89, df = 4, p < .01). To determine where the significant differences exist, a Tukey's Studentized Range (HSD) Test was utilized. The mean success rating of 2.67 (SD = .52) for *Hardness* was found to be significantly less than the mean success rating of 3.71 (SD = .49) for *Creating Distance from Work-Related Stressors* and the mean success rating of 3.68 (SD = .46) for *Seeking Support.* These results are presented in Table 15.

Coping Strategy Categories	Mean Success Rating[a]	*SD*
Seek Support	3.68	.46
Try to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately	3.13	.74
Become "Lax" in Fulfilling Role Expectations	3.00	.82
"Hardness"	2.67	.52
Create Distance from Work-Related Stressors	3.71	.49

Table 15. *Mean Officer Success Rating per Coping Strategy*

[a] 1 = "significantly worse"
2 = "somewhat worse"
3 = "somewhat better"
4 = "significantly better"

The mean success ratings of each coping strategy were also examined across each stressor. It is noted that these data were compiled by examining only those stressor-coping pairs for which officers provided a success rating. Success ratings were provided for 40 out of 86 stressor-coping pairs. The majority of these missing data are due to the officers expressing difficulty in assigning a value to the success of their coping strategies. In examining the mean success ratings for each coping strategy as applied to each stressor, one-way ANOVAs were utilized to determine whether significant differences exist. No significant differences were found among the mean success ratings of each coping strategy as applied to each stressor. Due to very low "*n*'s" for many of the categories, these data should be interpreted with caution. In coping with *Inmate Hostility and Manipulation*, attempts at *Trying to Fulfill Job Expectations Appropriately* obtained the highest success rating. In coping with *Difficult Relationships with Other Officers*, the use of *Creating Distance from Work-Related Stressors* obtained the highest success rating. Attempts at *Trying to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately* as well as *Creating Distance from Work-Related Stressors* obtained the highest success ratings for coping with *Stressful Job/Role Expectations.* Lastly, seeking *Support* obtained the highest success rating for dealing with *Lack of Support from Administration*. These data are displayed in Table 16.

Stressor and Coping Strategy Categories	Number of Instances Reported[a]	Mean Success Rating	*SD*
Inmate Hostility and Manipulation			
Seek Support	0	-	-
Try to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately	8	3.13	.35
Become "Lax" in Fulfilling Role Expectations	1	3.00	-
"Hardness"	4	2.50	.58
Create Distance from Work-Related Stressors	1	3.00	-
Difficult Relationships with Other Officers			
Seek support	3	3.33	.58
Try to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately	2	3.00	0.00
Become "Lax" in Fulfilling Role Expectations	0	-	-
"Hardness"	1	3.00	-
Create Distance from Work-Related Stressors	3	3.67	.58
Stressful Job/Role Expectations			
Seek support	6	3.75	.42
Try to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately	2	4.00	0
Become "Lax" in Fulfilling Role Expectations	0	-	-
"Hardness"	0	-	-
Create Distance from Work-Related Stressors	1	4.00	-
Lack of Support from Administration			
Seek support	2	4.00	0.00
Try to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately	2	3.50	.71
Become "Lax" in Fulfilling Role Expectations	3	3.00	1.00
"Hardness"	1	3.00	-
Create Distance from Work-Related Stressors	0	-	-

Table 16. *Mean Success Ratings of each Officer Coping Strategy per Stressor Category*

[a]Number of instances reported in which a success rating was also provided.

The stressor-coping strategy pairs for which officers did not report a success rating were also visually examined for potential patterns in the data; however, it did not appear that certain factors such as stressor type or coping type were related to the officers' inability to identify success ratings.

Pearson correlations were used to determine the relationships between the continuous demographic variables and the mean success ratings of reported coping strategies. Although no statistically significant correlations were found, it was noted that both age and length of time working in prison were nearly significantly correlated with mean success ratings. Specifically, age was found to correlate positively with mean success at $r = .75$ ($p = .054$), whereas length of time working in prison was found to correlate positively with mean success at $r = .68$ ($p = .06$). T-tests were used to determine whether significant differences exist as a function of the categorical demographic variables with regard to the mean success ratings of the reported coping strategies, but no significant differences were found.

The stressors and coping strategies generated from the qualitative interviews are presented in Figure 4. This model represents the interactions between reported stressors and coping strategies, as well as the reported success of the coping strategies.

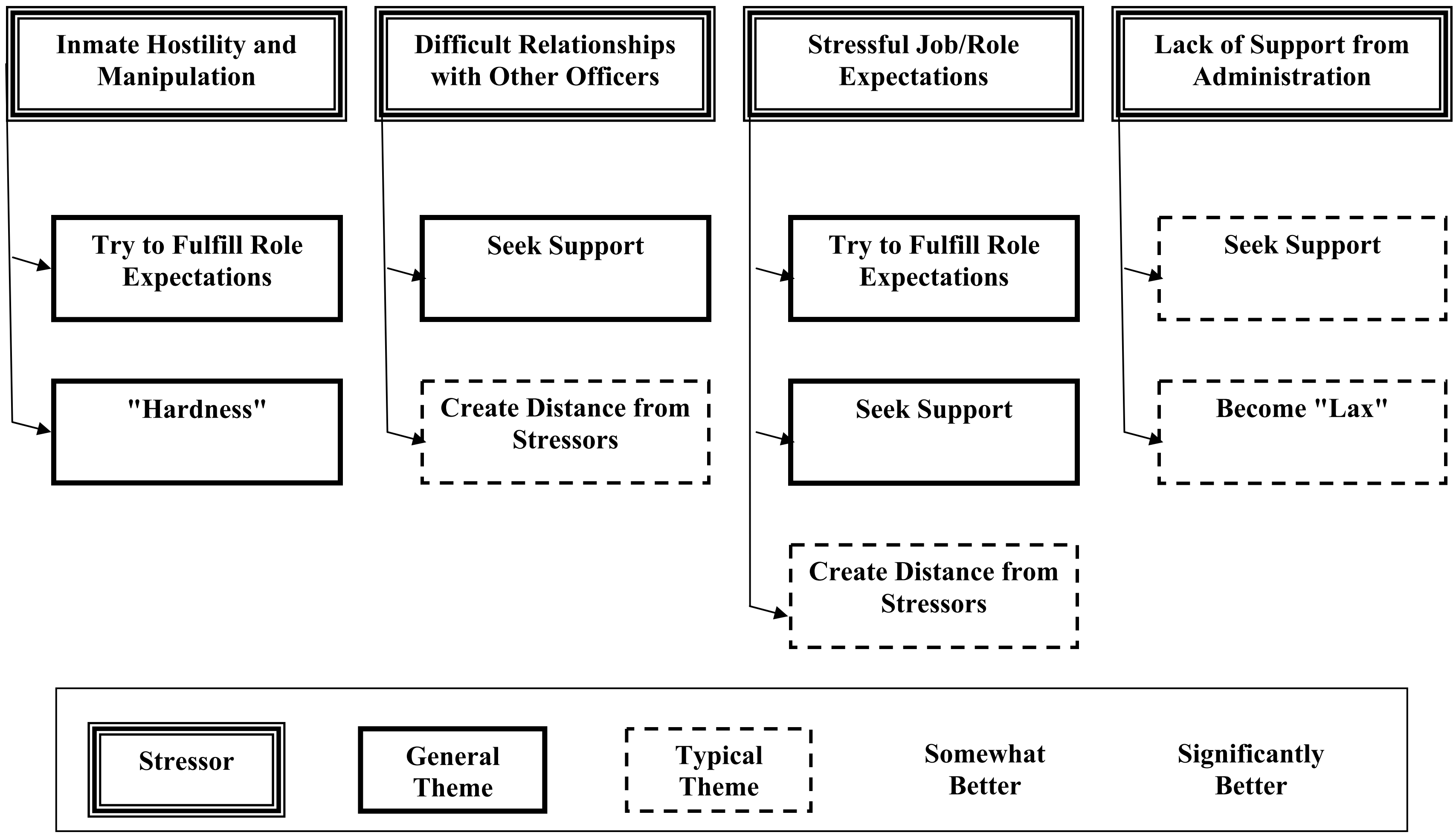

Figure 4. *Officer Coping Strategies in Response to Stressors*

Officer Burnout

In order to assess the officers' level of burnout, they were each asked to complete the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). The MBI yields scores on three dimensions: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment. On this measure, the sample of officers obtained a mean score of 23.80 (SD = 7.97) on the Emotional Exhaustion subscale, which falls within the "Average" range. They obtained a mean score of 15.13 (SD = 4.07) on the Depersonalization subscale, which falls within the "High" range. Lastly, they obtained a mean score of 28.40 (SD = 6.53) on the Personal Accomplishment scale, which falls within the "High" range. These results indicate this sample of officers experiences a significant sense of personal accomplishment in their work, yet they also experience an unfeeling and impersonal attitude toward the inmates with whom they work.

Pearson correlations were used to determine the relationships among total scores on the three dimensions of burnout; however, no significant correlations were found.

Pearson Correlations were used to determine the relationships between the continuous demographic characteristics of the officers and their scores on the MBI subscales, while T-tests were used to determine whether significant differences exist as a function of the categorical demographical variables with regard to the MBI subscales; however, no significant findings were observed.

Pearson correlations were also used to determine the relationships between the officers' mean total scores on the three primary coping styles (problem-focused, emotion-focused, and dysfunctional) and their scores on the MBI subscales. The officers' use of dysfunctional coping strategies was found to be significantly correlated with their level of emotional exhaustion (*r* = .73, *p* < .01), whereas their use of emotion-focused coping strategies was found to be significantly correlated with their sense of personal accomplishment (*r* = .65, *p* < .01). In other words, as the reported use of dysfunctional coping increased, emotional exhaustion increased. As the reported use of emotion-focused coping increased, a sense of personal accomplishment also increased. Although not statistically significant, the officers' use of problem-focused coping was also found to have a high positive correlation with a sense of personal accomplishment (*r* = .51, *p* = .051). These data are presented in Table 17. A model representing the plausible interaction between coping strategies and burnout is presented in Figure 5.

	Problem-focused Coping Total	Emotion-focused Coping Total	Dysfunctional Coping Total
Emotional Exhaustion	.31	.09	.73**
Depersonalization	.13	-.05	.38
Personal Accomplishment	.51	.65**	-.11

Table 17. *Correlations between Primary Coping Styles and Officer Burnout*

***p* < .01

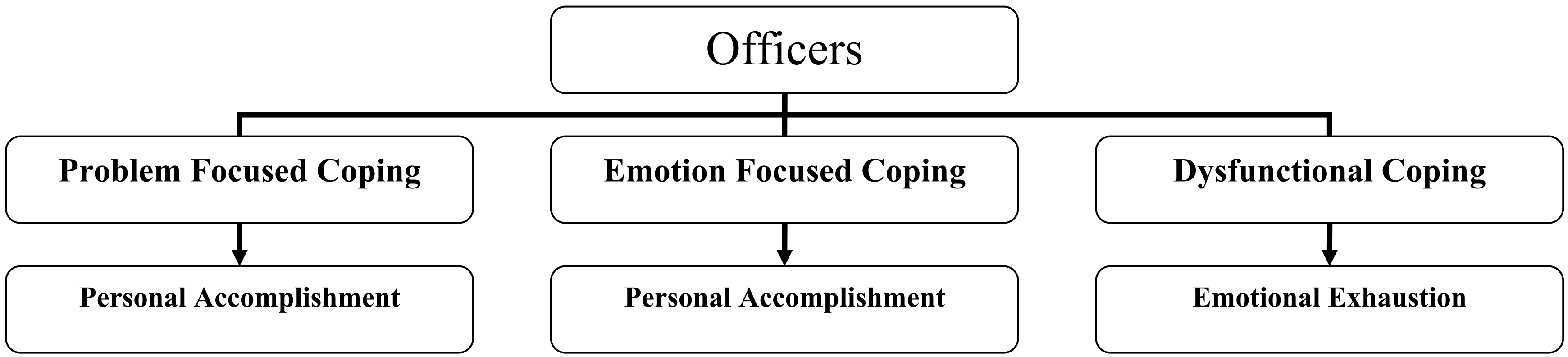

Figure 5. *Officer Coping Styles and Dimensions of Burnout*

Chapter 7:

Discussion

Inmate Data

Extremely few psychological studies have been conducted utilizing a population of death row inmates. Although a fair amount of research exists which examines constructs such as stress, coping, and adjustment in an inmate population, no studies have directly addressed these issues as applied to inmates who are facing potential execution in prison. In addition to utilizing an under-studied population, this study expands upon previous stress and coping research by examining the inmates' perceptions of the efficacy of their coping strategies, and exploring the relationships between coping strategies and the specific stressors to which they are applied. The current study focused on the examination of four primary questions: (a) What stressors do inmates on death row face? (b) What strategies do these inmates utilize in an attempt to cope with these stressors? (c) How successful do these inmates perceive these strategies to be in decreasing stress? (d) How does the use of particular coping strategies relate to inmates' level of adjustment? In addition, supplemental exploratory analyses were performed to examine the relationship among various demographic variables (e.g., age, ethnicity, length of time on death row) and the constructs of coping and adjustment. Each question will be addressed separately.

Question (a): What stressors do inmates on death row face? The stressors identified by the inmates in this sample through the semi-structured qualitative interview yielded five primary categories of stressors: *Isolation*, *Deprivation*, *Intrusion*, *Helplessness*, and *Painful Self-Reflection*. Each primary stressor category can be further divided into a number of smaller subcategories. These primary stressors are all experienced by a large percentage of inmates, indicating a number of shared perceptions of the difficulties inherent in being confined on death row. For instance, forms of *Deprivation* and *Intrusion* were the most highly reported types of stressors, each identified by 22 of the inmates (84.62% of the sample). These stressors can be conceptualized as being complementary to one another; whereas one stressor involves the "removal" of a positive stimulus, the other involves the "insertion" of a negative stimulus. Isolation was reported by 19 inmates (73%), while *Painful Self-Reflection* was reported by 18 inmates (69%). The least frequently reported stressor was *Helplessness*, which was identified by 14 (54%) of the inmates sampled.

It is noted that many of these stressors involve circumstances that apply to inmates more generally, regardless of their confinement on death row. Two sub-categories of *Painful Self-Reflection*, "nothing to look forward to" and "mortality issues" are the only two issues which seem most highly relevant to inmates facing execution; however, they do not exclusively apply to such a population. These findings indicate inmates on death row may not experience a significantly wider repertoire of stressors than do inmates in the general prison population.

Question (b): What strategies do these inmates utilize in an attempt to cope with these stressors? In analyzing the data obtained through the inmates' completion of the

Carver COPE, it was found that they do not differ significantly in their use of problem-focused versus emotion-focused coping strategies. Despite the fact that they are faced with a number of stressors which may be out of their control, the inmates are equally likely to use either type of strategy. Such a conclusion was formed through examining the totals for each of the primary coping scales, as well as examining the mean frequency rating for all items comprising each scale. Whereas the inmates reported "sometimes" using both problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies, they reported "rarely" using dysfunctional coping strategies. It is possible that a social desirability effect may have influenced the inmates' report of the dysfunctional coping styles. It is also possible they may utilize such strategies less frequently because they have been ineffective in coping with the stressor.

The coping strategies identified by the inmates during the qualitative interview yielded six primary categories: *Problem Prevention*, *Problem Remedy*, *Support*, *Attitude Change*, *Problem Avoidance*, and *Acting Out*. These categories differ from the categories established in the Carver COPE, in that they are not divided into emotion-focused, problem-focused, or dysfunctional types of strategies. In fact, several of the primary categories some categories which may involve more of an "internal" coping style, as well as categories which focus on more of an "external" style. For instance, the primary category *Problem Avoidance* contains a subcategory of "mental avoidance," which involves attempts to avoid thinking about difficult issues, while it also contains a subcategory called "physical avoidance," which involves active attempts to avoid the source of stress. Additionally, these categories do not involve inherent assumptions regarding the functionality of the strategies. Rather, each strategy is viewed as a method of coping which may or may not prove helpful in any given circumstance.

The most highly reported coping strategy is *Problem Avoidance*, which was reported by 24 inmates (92% of the sample). However, *Problem Remedy* was the second most highly reported coping strategy, identified by 21 inmates (81%). This suggests that inmates on death row are likely to respond to stressful situations through a number of methods, some of which may at times appear contradictory. In other words, they may attempt to avoid facing or thinking about the stressor, or they may be equally likely to put forth active efforts to remedy the stressful situation. The least reported coping strategy was *Acting Out*, which was reported by 10 (38%) of the inmates sampled. It is possible that this number may be lower due to limited opportunities to engage in acting out behavior, particularly toward other inmates. They may also face disciplinary repercussions for engaging in such behavior. In addition, a social desirability effect may have prevented some inmates from describing instances in which they have acted out in response to stress.

In order to gain information about the use of situation-specific coping strategies, the coping strategies were examined as they were applied to each category of stressor. *Problem Avoidance* was the most highly reported coping strategy in response to three of the five categories (i.e., *Deprivation*, *Intrusion*, and *Painful Self-Reflection*), and it was reported equally with the use of *Support* in dealing with *Isolation*. Therefore, while data indicate *Problem Avoidance* was the strategy identified by the largest percentage of inmates in the sample, data also indicate it is the most frequently used strategy in dealing with the majority of stressors faced by this population. It was also noted that *Acting Out* was relatively infrequently reported; however, it was identified most often in response to a sense of *Intrusion*.

The frequent use of *Avoidance* strategies was apparent during the interviews, as the majority of the inmates surprisingly chose not to identify impending execution as a stressor. In fact, most of the inmates did not raise the issue whatsoever throughout their entire interview. Specifically, many inmates expressed the belief that they will not be executed. A large number of inmates presented a rationale for why they feel they are unique compared to other death row inmates, as well as why they are likely to have their sentences commuted to life in prison, or even be released to the community. According to one inmate, "The whole reason why I'm on death row and everything is hogwash and one day you'll see what I'm telling you is the truth. You'll see that and I'm going to walk out of here and I believe this in my heart." He added, "I try to keep myself in a frame of mind where I could walk out of here…I'm going to stay strong and know one day I'm going to walk out of here, and it's my job to survive in here." Another inmate stated "I don't have to worry about it as much as the other inmates do because it's almost a guarantee that I won't be executed…" A third inmate said "I know there's a possibility, there's a strong possibility, that I'll be back out on the streets." Several inmates spoke as though they would one day be released from prison. For instance, one inmate reported "Most of the things I do is work on my case. 'Cause that's gonna get me out of here. So I pour all of my energy into that, that and working out, trying to stay healthy, so when I do get out of here I ain't all falling apart." It is unclear to what extent the inmates truly believe they will be released, or if they speak in such a manner as a coping mechanism. In other words, it may be very painful to speak openly about their impending execution.

Some inmates recognize the use of such unrealistic optimism as a way of helping to cope with the overwhelming amount of stress, as reflected through statements such as "I deal with it basically in the belief of sooner or later…relief will come in terms of my being taken off death row." Regarding execution as a topic of conversation, one inmate stated, "They don't talk about that back here…That's like a conversation that you don't really wanna talk about." He added, "We're not trying to think about it at this point because if everybody back here thought about it, being executed, you know what would happen back here?...There would be riots every day. It would be fights every day because no one wants to die. No one wants to die. No one."

Very few inmates expressed acceptance of death as a legitimate and strong possibility. Nevertheless, as one inmate stated, "I have no hope. I'm never gonna leave death row, so it doesn't matter. When it's my time, it's my time." Regarding other inmates' denial, he stated, "They're living in a dream world. It's a dream world. It's not going to happen." He added, "I don’t live in a fantasy world. I know I’m gonna die." Other inmates acknowledged this process as a struggle. According to one inmate, "It’s like denial. You’re like ‘this ain’t happening.’ I’m just in prison doing time, but then something happens, they kill somebody, then reality snaps back, punches you in your face. You sit down and be like ‘I gotta get out of here,’ you know, but you can’t avoid it. Anytime you try to forget it, where you at, something always reminds you where you at."

Lastly, it was noted that several coping strategies may also dually serve as stressors. For instances, many inmates attempt to file grievances to address specific issues they are experiencing within the prison. However, the grievance process was often described as ineffective, and many inmates reported feeling that they had suffered adverse consequences, and therefore additional stress, as a result of having filed a grievance.

Question (c): How successful do these inmates perceive these strategies to be in decreasing stress? By examining the mean success rating across all coping strategies, it was found that inmates perceive their repertoire of coping strategies to result in their circumstances becoming "somewhat better." In order to determine the perceived efficacy of each of the primary coping strategies, the mean success rating was calculated for each category. Even though data indicate *Problem Avoidance* is the most frequently used strategy, the use of *Support* was rated as being most successful, followed by the use of *Attitude Change*. Although *Support* was rated as being the most effective strategy for dealing with stress, the inmates have also described limited opportunities to develop supportive relationships with others, including family, staff, and other inmates. The least successful strategy was *Acting Out*, which is also the least frequently used strategy. As mentioned previously, it is likely that engaging in such acting-out behavior often results in disciplinary consequences.

The success of each strategy was also examined as it was applied to each stressor category. As success ratings were not provided for a large number of stressor-coping strategies, it is possible that the available data are not completely representative of the efficacy of these strategies. The large amount of missing success ratings is largely due to individuals having difficulty assigning a single success rating to their coping strategies. This is important in suggesting that any given coping strategy may be both helpful or unhelpful at different times, even when applied to the same type of stressor.

Additionally, the low number of instances in which each coping strategy was reported across each stressor leads to difficulty in generalizing the findings.

Question (d): How does the use of particular coping strategies relate to inmates' level of adjustment? On the PAQ, the inmates were generally found to experience slightly lower amounts of physical and internal adjustment difficulties as compared with external adjustment difficulties. Whereas physical adjustment difficulties include illnesses and injuries, internal adjustment difficulties include problems such as discomfort with guards and other inmates, difficulty sleeping, and problems with anger. External adjustment difficulties include fights and arguments with guards and other inmates. The PAQ does not provide cut-off scores or categorical descriptions for scores on each scale, which renders it less clinically useful. However, the scores are useful in determining relationships between adjustment and coping styles. It was found that the use of emotion-focused coping strategies was significantly correlated with decreased internal adjustment difficulties. It is unclear whether emotion-focused coping is effective in decreasing internal adjustment difficulties, or whether individuals with few internal adjustment problems are more apt to use emotion-focused coping strategies. It is noted that no significant relationship was found between the use of dysfunctional coping styles and adjustment difficulties.

Supplemental exploratory analyses. Additional exploratory analyses were conducted to determine potential relationships between demographic variables. Educational level was found to have a significant negative relationship with length of time served in prison. It is possible that individuals who are more highly educated are less likely to engage in illegal behaviors, or to engage in behaviors in such a way that they are easily caught. Another potential explanation is that because individuals have spent a long time in prison, they have had more limited opportunities to further their education.

Additional exploratory analyses were also conducted to examine the relationships between demographic variable and the constructs of coping and adjustment. Compared to minorities, European-American inmates were less likely to engage in emotion-focused coping styles. However, it was not demonstrated that this lower level of emotion-focused coping was accompanied by a higher level of problem-focused coping. Therefore, an increase in one type of strategy does not necessarily imply a decrease in the other coping style. It is unclear why coping style differs by the ethnic background of the inmate, although it is possible some forms of coping may be more socially accepted in one cultural group than in another. Demographic variables were not highly related to perceived effectiveness of coping strategies.

Lastly, it was found that European-American inmates reported lower levels of external adjustment difficulties than minorities. This finding is somewhat inconsistent with earlier findings that suggest African-American inmates describe developing a significantly more integrated and supportive social system within the prison than European-American inmates (Carroll, 1974; Johnson, 1976) and have been found to possess more control and influence in daily institutional affairs (Bartollas, Miller, and Dinitz, 1976). However, since many inmates on death row are more physically separated from one another than inmates in the general prison population, they may be less likely to find opportunities to develop such social support networks.

Officer Data

Much research has been conducted on the effects of stress and burnout on various types of law enforcement officers; however, corrections officers have been underrepresented in this field of research. In fact, a PsychInfo search produced no studies examining stress or coping in officers working on death row. This study focused on the examination of four primary questions: (a) What stressors do corrections officers on death row face? (b) What strategies do these officers utilize in an attempt to cope with these stressors? (c) How successful do these officers perceive these strategies to be in decreasing stress? (d) How does the use of particular coping strategies relate to officers' level of burnout? In addition, supplemental exploratory analyses were performed to examine the relationship among various demographic variables (e.g., age, length of time working on death row) and the constructs of coping and burnout. Each question will be addressed separately. Throughout the interviews, it was noted that many of the officer participants presented as more guarded and provided less detailed information during the interviews than the inmate participants.

<u>Question (a): What stressors do corrections officers working on death row face?</u> Based on their responses during the qualitative interview, the stressors reported by the sample of officers fell into four primary categories: *Inmate Hostility and Manipulation*, *Difficult Relationships with Other Officers*, *Stressful Job/Role Expectations*, and *Lack of Support from Administration*. It was noted that the majority of stressors were non-specific to working in a death row environment. With the exception of the sub-category "dealing with executions," which was reported by only one officer, the stressors could easily be generalized to work performed in the general prison population. Therefore, the

officers working in this environment may not experience an appreciable number of stressors specific to the death row environment. In fact, most officers described working on death row as being significantly less stressful than working with the general inmate population. One officer reported, "It's a better job to have…Mainly because there's fewer inmates. For the most part, they're better behaved than inmates off population….It's not as noisy. You don't have inmates coming up to the desk, wanting this, wanting that. It just makes for a good, easy day." Regarding inmates' behavior, one of the inmates on death row stated, "They know that the death penalty in itself is enough problems, so they want to avoid problems and they stay out of trouble."

Question (b): What strategies do these officers utilize in an attempt to cope with these stressors? Based on their responses to the Carver COPE, the officers obtained significantly higher total scores in their use of problem-focused coping than emotion-focused and dysfunctional coping, which may be somewhat reflective of the custodial/security types of issues to which they are required to respond; however, examination of the mean ratings for all items comprising each of the coping style categories revealed the officers reported "sometimes" using both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies. The use of problem-focused coping was also found to correlate significantly with the use of emotion-focused coping. This suggests the use of problem-focused strategies and emotion-focused strategies are not exclusive of one another. In addition, high scores in both categories may represent an overall large repertoire of coping strategies. The officers reported "rarely" using dysfunctional coping strategies. It is possible a social desirability effect may have led the officers to be more hesitant to endorse such strategies. Another explanation could be that such strategies are less effective, and therefore used less frequently than other strategies.

In examining their responses to the qualitative interview, the officers' coping strategies fell into five primary categories: *Seeking Support*, *Trying to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately*, *Becoming "Lax" in Fulfilling Role Expectations*, developing *Hardness*, and *Creating Distance from Work-Related Stressors*. Three of these categories were each reported by 88% of the sample: *Seeking Support*, *Trying to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately*, and *Creating Distance from Work-Related Stressors*. The least reported strategy was *Becoming "Lax,"* which was reported by a large 63% of the sample. Therefore, each of these coping strategies is used by the majority of the officers.

It was also noted that two of the coping strategies, *Trying to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately*, and *Becoming "Lax"* were somewhat contradictory to one another. Whereas the former was reported by 88% of the officers, the latter was reported by 63% of the officers. The data suggest some overlap, in that many of the officers use both types of strategies.

<u>Question (c): How successful do these officers perceive these strategies to be in decreasing stress?</u> On average, the officers rated their coping strategies as helping their circumstances become "somewhat better." Therefore, they generally view their ability to cope with stressors as moderately effective. Overall, the officers described *Creating Distance from Work-Related Stressors* as being the most effective coping strategy, whereas they identified developing *Hardness* as the least effective strategy.

The success of each strategy was also examined as it was applied to each stressor category. As success ratings were not provided for a large number of stressor-coping strategies, it is possible that the available data are not completely representative of the efficacy of these strategies. As was mentioned previously in reference to the inmate data, the large amount of missing success ratings is also important in suggesting that any given coping strategy may be both helpful or unhelpful at different times, even when applied to the same type of stressor. Additionally, the low number of instances in which each coping strategy was reported across each stressor leads to difficulty in generalizing the findings.

<u>Question (d): How does the use of particular coping strategies relate to officers' level of burnout?</u> Based on their responses on the MBI, the officers in this sample reported an "Average" level of Emotional Exhaustion, whereas they reported a "High" level of Depersonalization. It is possible that they may experience a high level of depersonalization toward the inmates due to the fact that individuals working in custodial settings such as prisons are frequently warned of the dangers of developing relationships with inmates. Additionally, when working with a population of individuals condemned to death, depersonalizing those individuals may serve as a way of more easily coping with their impending death. These officers reported a "High" level of Personal Accomplishment, indicating they take pride in their work and they feel their work is effective.

In examining the relationships between coping styles and burnout, the officers' use of dysfunctional coping strategies was found to be significantly correlated with their level of emotional exhaustion. It is unclear to what extent the emotional exhaustion is a result of engaging in dysfunctional coping styles, or whether dysfunctional coping styles are often used to dope with emotional exhaustion. The officers' use of emotion-focused coping strategies was found to be significantly correlated with their sense of personal accomplishment. Again, it is unclear whether emotion-focused coping styles lead to feelings of accomplishment, or whether feelings of personal accomplishment influence an individual to engage in more emotion-focused coping styles. However, it was noted that the officers' use of problem-focused coping was also found to correlate highly with a sense of personal accomplishment, although the relationship between the two was not quite statistically significant. Therefore, it may be possible that a large repertoire of coping strategies in general may be related to feelings of personal accomplishment.

Supplemental exploratory analyses. Supplementary exploratory analyses were used to examine the relationships between demographic variables and the constructs of coping and burnout. No significant relationships were found between the demographic variables and copings styles, thus indicating officers of different ages, education levels, and prison work experience do not greatly differ in the way they cope with stress. Additionally, no significant relationships were found between demographic variables and burnout. Due to the relatively small number of officers utilized in the analyses, it is possible that no significant findings were observed due to the low power of the analyses.

Implications

Although this study has made an effort not to label certain coping strategies as inherently "functional" or "dysfunctional," it is reasonable to assert that certain strategies can create difficulties in the individual's environment. For instance, when officers respond to stress by becoming increasingly flexible with rules, such a coping strategy has the potential to place the security of the institution at greater risk. Therefore, providing information for officers during training regarding potential stressors they may face and coping strategies they may use may help raise awareness of potentially harmful coping strategies. Similarly, it will be important for officers to recognize how their lack of attention to rules creates additional stress for their fellow officers who don't trust their coworkers, or who feel the need to "pick up the slack."

As prison administrators and supervisors become more aware of the stressors these officers face, they may be able to strategize methods for decreasing potential stressors. For instance, many officers reported they feel they aren't respected, and they view many orders as unclear or contradictory. Perhaps administration can make additional efforts to ensure officers understand what is expected of them.

Inmates on death row described gaining support as one of the most helpful coping strategies for dealing with their difficult circumstances. However, these inmates have extremely limited opportunities to gain support from others. Due to the physical restrictions of their environment, in addition to prison culture attitudes which may create hesitancy to open up to and trust other inmates, inmates experience difficulty in sharing their experiences with one another. Therefore, they may benefit from increased opportunities to share their experiences with one another, perhaps in a structured manner facilitated by staff. In addition, perhaps more experienced inmates who have consistently demonstrated effective and appropriate coping strategies may serve as mentors for newer inmates who are struggling with the transition to the death row environment. Such a level of intervention may serve a preventative function in managing inmate stress on a daily or weekly basis, before such problems escalate to the point where they create disruptions to the institution. In addition, a mentor type of relationship can provide benefits to both individuals involved, particularly as inmates strive for goals and purpose in their lives. Although these inmates have been condemned to death, they are still presented with daily opportunities to learn from themselves and others, and to make positive choices which will further their growth as individuals.

Further, inmates described a stigma or fear attached to seeking formal support services through psychology or other staff. Staff may make additional efforts to inform inmates of potential support that is available to them, whether it be through counseling services, religious services, or community organizations. Increased education regarding psychology services may help to dispel such concerns among the inmate population and encourage utilization of such services when needed.

Limitations of the Current Study and Directions for Future Research

Although this study examines the participants' perceived adjustment and burnout, objective measures of these constructs were not utilized due to logistical and security concerns of the institution. However, additional inmate measures such as number and frequency of illnesses and medical visits, as well as number and type of incident reports would have served as a useful complement to the Prison Adjustment Questionnaire. Similarly, officer measures of sick leave and disciplinary violations would have proven helpful in providing a more objective measure of burnout that is more closely linked to real-world applications.

In assessing the concepts of coping styles, adjustment, and burnout, it is possible that social desirability effects may have skewed the participants' reports. For instance, although both inmates and officers were informed the researchers were not affiliated with the prison and their data was to remain anonymous, they may have been concerned their responses could bring potentially negative consequences. A number of potential response biases may have altered the validity of the results. Inmates may have been hesitant to report adjustment difficulties, as they may fear punishment or other unwanted attention. Conversely, some inmates may have wanted to emphasize or exaggerate the negative aspects of their imprisonment in an effort to gain sympathy or present an undesirable view of the facility or prison system. Officers may also have feared negative consequences for speaking negatively about the institution or other staff, or they may have feared losing their jobs if their supervisors learned they were experiencing difficulties coping with stress. In addition, they may have felt a need to uphold a "macho" image which is often stereotypically associated with individuals employed in law enforcement. Therefore, the concurrent administration of a social desirability measure would have been useful in describing the participants' style of responding.

Although this study provides rich detail regarding the participants' stress and coping, the limited number of participants leads to difficulties in generalizing the results to other populations of death row inmates and officers employed on death row. It is unclear to what extent these results apply to the entire death row population of Ohio or of the United States in general. As was noted previously, African-American inmates were underrepresented in this study. It is possible that those individuals who chose not to participate differed significantly on a number of variables from those individuals who did choose to participate. For instance, perhaps those who chose not to participate were faced with greater amounts of stress or adjustment difficulties than those who did participate. In the planning stages of this study, it was not foreseen that some officers might elect to participate in only the self-report measures and not the interview; therefore, questions regarding demographic variables were not included with the self-report measures. As a result, demographic data is only provided for the eight officers who chose to participate in the qualitative interview.

In this study, there are large numbers of missing data related to the participants' perceived success of their coping strategies. Therefore, caution is needed in interpreting analyses utilizing that construct. The majority of individuals who did not provide success ratings described difficulty in assigning a single rating to the use of coping strategies, as their effectiveness varied from one instance to another. Future studies will need to address the question of how to develop more effective methods for evaluating the success of coping strategies which take into account the great fluctuation of effectiveness across situations.

This study did not explicitly examine the methods through which the participants attempt to make meaning of their current circumstances. It is expected that their belief systems help to shape their perceptions of stressors as well as their choice of responses to those stressors. Whereas some individuals may view their experience as simply something which must be endured, others appear to create meaning in their circumstances. As one inmate stated, "I’ve tried to better myself. You know I write my mom a letter and I told her if I came to this place and die with the same personality, same attitude, same character I was on the streets that put me here, and then die like that, then I wasted my life – it was useless. But if I come here and change, try to make a difference before I die, not in the way in communicating with others, but in the way how I am true and honest with myself, then I'll know I made a difference…" Therefore, further exploration of the meaning-making process for these individuals will create a greater context in which to examine the interplay of stress and coping.

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Appendix A

Carver Coping Scales

Instructions: The following are ways of reacting to various difficult, stressful, or upsetting situations. Please rate each of the following items from 1 to 5, by circling the appropriate number. Indicate how much you engage in these types of activities when you encounter a difficult, stressful, or upsetting situation.

#	Coping Strategy	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	I take additional action to try to get rid of the problem.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I try to come up with a strategy about what to do.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I put aside other activities in order to concentrate on this.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I force myself to wait for the right time to do something.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I ask people who have had similar experiences what they did.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I talk to someone about how I feel.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I look for something good in what is happening.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I learn to live with it.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I seek God's help.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I get upset and let my emotions out.	1	2	3	4	5
11	I refuse to believe that it has happened.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I give up the attempt to get what I want.	1	2	3	4	5
13	I turn to work or other substitute activities to take my mind off things.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I concentrate on my efforts on doing something about it.	1	2	3	4	5
15	I make a plan of action.	1	2	3	4	5
16	I focus on dealing with this problem, and if necessary let other things slide a little.	1	2	3	4	5
17	I hold off doing anything about it until the situation permits.	1	2	3	4	5
18	I try to get advice from someone about what to do.	1	2	3	4	5
19	I try to get emotional support from friends or relatives.	1	2	3	4	5
20	I try to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive.	1	2	3	4	5
21	I accept that this has happened and that it can't be changed.	1	2	3	4	5

#	Coping Strategy	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
22	I put my trust in God.	1	2	3	4	5
23	I let my feelings out.	1	2	3	4	5
24	I pretend that it hasn't really happened.	1	2	3	4	5
25	I just give up trying to reach my goal.	1	2	3	4	5
26	I go to movies or watch TV, to think about it less.	1	2	3	4	5
27	I learn something from the experience.	1	2	3	4	5
28	I get used to the idea that it happened.	1	2	3	4	5
29	I try to find comfort in my religion.	1	2	3	4	5
30	I talk to someone to find out more about the situation.	1	2	3	4	5
31	I make sure not to make matters worse by acting too soon.	1	2	3	4	5
32	I keep myself from getting distracted by other thoughts or activities.	1	2	3	4	5
33	I think hard about what steps to take.	1	2	3	4	5
34	I do what has to be done, one step at a time.	1	2	3	4	5
35	I discuss my feelings with someone.	1	2	3	4	5
36	I act as though it hasn't even happened.	1	2	3	4	5
37	I reduce the amount of effort I'm putting into solving the problem.	1	2	3	4	5
38	I daydream about things other than this.	1	2	3	4	5
39	I take direct action to get around the problem.	1	2	3	4	5
40	I try to grow as a person as a result of the experience.	1	2	3	4	5
41	I think about how I might best handle the problem.	1	2	3	4	5
42	I accept the reality of the fact that it happened.	1	2	3	4	5
43	I try hard to prevent other things from interfering with my efforts at dealing with this.	1	2	3	4	5
44	I feel a lot of emotional distress and I find myself expressing those feelings a lot.	1	2	3	4	5
45	I restrain myself from doing anything too quickly.	1	2	3	4	5
46	I talk to someone who could do something concrete about the problem.	1	2	3	4	5
47	I sleep more than usual.	1	2	3	4	5

#	Coping Strategy	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
48	I get sympathy and understanding from someone.	1	2	3	4	5
49	I drink alcohol or take drugs, in order to think about it less.	1	2	3	4	5
50	I pray more than usual.	1	2	3	4	5
51	I get upset, and I am really aware of it.	1	2	3	4	5
52	I say to myself, "this isn’t real."	1	2	3	4	5
53	I admit to myself that I can’t deal with it, and quit trying.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix B

Qualitative Interview on Stress and Coping

1. What is your age?:
2. What is your race or ethnicity?:
3. What is the highest level of education you've completed?:
4. What is the highest level of education your mother completed?:
5. What is your marital status (single, divorced, married)?:
6. How many children do you have?:
7. How long have you been living/working on death row (years and months):
8. How long have you spent living/working in the adult prison system (years and months):

Use the attached chart to complete question #8.

8a. What aspects of your (confinement/job) on death row have you perceived as stressful within the past year?

8b. What coping strategies have you used in an attempt to cope with this stressor within the past year? [ask for each identified stressor]

8c. How successful do you feel this strategy has been in helping you to cope with this stressor? [ask for each identified coping strategy] Use the following rating system:

1 – resulted in situation being significantly worse
2 – resulted in situation being somewhat worse
3 – resulted in situation being somewhat better
4 – resulted in situation being significantly better

Stressor	Coping Strategy	Success
1.	**1a.**	**1a.**
	1b.	**1b.**
	1c.	**1c.**
2.	**2a.**	**2a.**
	2b.	**2c.**
	2c.	**2c.**
3.	**3a.**	**3a.**
	3b.	**3b.**
	3c.	**3c.**
4.	**4a.**	**4a.**
	4b.	**4b.**
	4c.	**4c.**
5.	**5a.**	**5a.**
	5b.	**5b.**
	5c.	**5c.**
6.	**6a.**	**6a.**
	6b.	**6b.**
	6c.	**6c.**
7.	**7a.**	**7a.**
	7b.	**7b.**
	7c.	**7c.**
8.	**8a.**	**8a.**
	8b.	**8b.**
	8c.	**8c.**
9.	**9a.**	**9a.**
	9b.	**9b.**
	9c.	**9c.**
10.	**10a.**	**10a.**
	10b.	**10b.**
	10c.	**10c.**

Appendix C

*Prison Adjustment Questionnaire is a 5-page document which is unavailable in a computer document. This measure will be manually inserted into my dissertation.

*Prison Adjustment Questionnaire is a 5-page document which is unavailable in a computer document. This measure will be manually inserted into my dissertation.

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Appendix D

Information and Informed Consent Form
Inmate Version 1

Study Title: Coping on Death Row: The Perspectives of Inmates and Corrections Officers

Researchers: Rhea D. Partyka, M.A.
Wesley A. Bullock, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology
The University of Toledo
2801 W. Bancroft St.
Toledo, Ohio 43606
(419) 530-2721

Purpose of the study:
The purpose of this study to is to find out about the different types of things that are stressful about being on death row. Also, this study will explore some of the ways that inmates try to cope with these stressful situations, as well as determine whether these ways of coping are successful in making the situations less stressful. Lastly, this study will help to determine how certain ways of coping lead to adjustment on death row. By participating in this study, you will be helping people better understand stress and coping on death row. This information may be used in helping to understand the needs of inmates in such a setting.

What you will be asked to do:
You will be asked to complete two questionnaires and participate in a short interview. The first questionnaire will ask you to identify certain things that you typically do to cope with stressful situations. The second questionnaire will ask you questions about how well you have adjusted to being in prison. Both of the questionnaires may last from ten to twenty minutes each, depending on your level of reading. During the interview, the researcher will ask you more questions about the things that you find stressful about being on death row, as well as the ways that you cope with each of these situations. The researcher will also ask you how successful you feel that each of the coping strategies have been in lowering stress. The interview will take thirty minutes or less. You will also be asked to grant the researcher permission to find out certain information about you, such as how long you have been in prison and if you’ve gotten into any trouble since being in prison. During the interview, the researcher may ask to tape record your responses for purposes of accuracy and record-keeping. The tapes will only be heard by members of the research team (psychology graduate students and faculty, or closely supervised undergraduates) for purposes of being transcribed into written form, and will be destroyed once they have been transcribed. Your agreement to be recorded is not a condition of participation; therefore, you may still participate in the study if you do not want the interview to be recorded.

Summary of important points:

- Your participation in this study is **voluntary**. You don't have to participate if you don't want to.
- If you choose not to participate, your decision will **not be held against you** by The Mansfield Correctional Institution, The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, or The University of Toledo.
- If you do choose to participate, your decision will **not result in any rewards** from The Mansfield Correctional Institution, The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, or The University of Toledo.
- **All of your information will be kept strictly confidential.** No names will be written on the questionnaires or interview record. We will be using research numbers instead of names to identify all of the information you provide.
- All of your information will be stored in a locked facility and only the researchers and professional consultants will have access to them. The staff of The Mansfield Correctional Institution and The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction **will not have access to the specific information you provide**. However, certain limits to confidentiality do exist. For example, if you tell me that you are planning to hurt yourself or another person, or if you admit to a crime that you have not already been charged with, I will have to report that to prison officials.
- The information collected in this study will be used in a Doctoral Dissertation that may be presented at a conference or printed in a publication so that other professionals can learn from this project. The data will be provided in a general format with the exception of some specific examples from the interview, but all information that you provide will remain anonymous.
- Although it might be helpful to talk about your experiences with the researcher, the topic may remind you of uncomfortable or painful experiences. The main researcher is a trained graduate student in clinical psychology who is supervised by a licensed clinical psychologist. She will help you with the questionnaires and interview in such a way as to minimize discomfort, and she will be prepared to refer you to a prison mental health professional if you become distressed as a result of your participation. Remember that you can end your participation in the study at any time. If you feel that your participation in this study might be too emotionally distressing for you, please do not participate.
- A copy of this consent form will be provided for you to keep. The researchers will be happy to address any questions or concerns you may have about this study. The address and phone numbers of the researchers is listed at the top of the consent form. Also, an individual has volunteered to serve as an advocate for the participants in the project who have questions or concerns about the project. His job is to give participants someone to talk to besides the researchers. His name is **Vincent Nathan**, and you can reach him at

  Arnold & Caruso
  1822 Cherry Street
  Toledo, OH 43608

Informed Consent Agreement

This is to certify that I have read the above information describing this study. I understand the purpose of the project, as well as what my voluntary participation will involve. I agree to participate in this study.

Please initial the appropriate statement:

- I agree to participate and to have my interview tape-recorded. ______
- I agree to participate, although I do not agree to have my interview tape-recorded. ______

Name of Participant (please print): ___________________________________

Signature of Participant: ____

Date: ______________

Authorization for Release of Confidential Information
for an Approved Research Study

Inmate's Name: ______________________
I.D.#: ________________________________

I hereby authorize: The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and/or the Mansfield Correctional Institution

To share with or release to: The University of Toledo, Department of Psychology, Toledo, Ohio, 43606

The following information: The number of documented rule violations that I've committed in prison over the past year; the number of times I've visited the medical clinic for physical pain or illness during the past year.

I understand that the institution cannot release information obtained from other sources.

I understand the individual/institution receiving this information may not re-release it to any other individual or other sources.

I knowingly and voluntarily consent for this authorization for release of information to be in effect for the duration of the research project, at which time it will automatically expire.

I also understand that this release can be revoked by me at any time and that the revocation must be signed and dated by me.

Authorization for Release of Confidential Information

I hereby authorize the Department of Psychology at The University of Toledo to obtain information regarding the number of documented rule violations I've committed while in prison during the past year, as well as the number of times I've visited the medical clinic due to physical pain or illness over the past year. This information will be used to examine factors related to stress, coping, and adjustment in a death row environment.

Name of Participant (please print): ____

Signature of Participant: ____

Date: _______________

Appendix E

Information and Informed Consent Form
Inmate Version 2

Study Title: Coping on Death Row: The Perspectives of Inmates and Corrections Officers

Researchers:
Rhea D. Partyka, M.A.
Wesley A. Bullock, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology
The University of Toledo
2801 W. Bancroft St.
Toledo, Ohio 43606
(419) 530-2721

Purpose of the study:
I would like to ask you some questions about some of the things that you have had to deal with since being placed on death row. Everyone deals with tough situations in different ways, and I would like to know how *you* deal with tough situations. I would also like to know if you think the things that you did *helped* the situation or *made it more difficult* for you. I would also like to know if I can find out some information about how often you get sick and how often you have gotten into trouble since you've been on death row.

What you will be asked to do:
I will ask you questions about some tough situations that you've faced, as well as how you've dealt with them. You will also be asked to fill out two papers that ask questions about how you deal with tough situations. If you have trouble reading the questions, I can help you. Last, you will be asked to say that it's OK that I find out how often you have been sick and how often you've gotten in trouble since being on death row. During the interview, I may ask to tape record your responses to help me remember what you say. You can still participate even if you don't want your interview recorded.

Things to remember:
- You don't have to do this if you don't want to.
- Nobody will get upset at you if you don't do this.
- You will not get any type of reward for agreeing to do this.
- Nobody will know the answers that you give me, not even the people that work in the prison. But if you tell me about a plan to hurt yourself or someone else, or if you admit to a crime that nobody knows about, then I will have to report those things.
- You can stop at any time if you don't feel like doing it any longer.
- I will answer any questions you have now. If you think of questions later, you can contact me. If you would rather talk to someone that is not doing the research, you can contact **Vincent Nathan**. You can reach him at:

  Arnold & Caruso
  1822 Cherry St.
  Toledo, OH 43608

Informed Consent Agreement

I understand the information on this form and I agree to participate in this project.

Please initial the appropriate statement:

- I agree to participate and to have my interview tape-recorded. ______
- I agree to participate, although I do not agree to have my interview tape-recorded. ______

Name: ___________________________________

Signature: ____

Date: ______________

Authorization for Release of Confidential Information for an Approved Research Study

Inmate's Name: ______________________
I.D.#: _______________________________

I allow the prison (Mansfield Correction Institution) **and The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation to give the researcher** (The University of Toledo, Department of Psychology, Toledo, Ohio, 43606) **information about how often I've gone to the medical clinic and how often I've broken any rules here on death row over the past year. I understand that they cannot give the researcher any other information that I don't say it's OK to. Also, the researcher can't give this information to anyone else.**

The researcher can only collect this information while working on this project. Once she is finished with this project, she can't collect more information about me. I also understand that I can change my mind later about allowing the researcher to collect this information. If I change my mind, I will have to sign and date a different form.

--

Authorization for Release of Confidential Information

It is OK for the researcher (Department of Psychology at The University of Toledo) to get information about how often I've visited the medical clinic and how often I've broken the rules while on death row in the last year.

Name*:* ____

Signature: ______________________________________

Date: _______________

Appendix F

Information and Informed Consent Form
Corrections Officer Version

Study Title: Coping on Death Row: The Perspectives of Inmates and Corrections Officers

Researchers:
Rhea D. Partyka, M.A.
Wesley A. Bullock, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology
The University of Toledo
2801 W. Bancroft St.
Toledo, Ohio 43606
(419) 530-2721

Purpose of the study:
The purpose of this study to is to find out about the different types of things that are stressful about working on death row. Also, this study will explore some of the ways that corrections officers try to cope with these stressful situations, as well as determine whether these ways of coping are successful in making the situations less stressful. Lastly, this study will help to determine how certain ways of coping lead to adjustment in a death row work environment. By participating in this study, you will be helping people better understand stress and coping on death row. This information may be used in helping to understand the needs of corrections officers in such a setting.

What you will be asked to do:
You will be asked to complete two questionnaires and participate in a short interview. The first questionnaire will ask you to identify certain things that you typically do to cope with stressful situations. The second questionnaire will ask you questions about how well you have adjusted to your job on death row. Both of the questionnaires may last from ten to twenty minutes each. During the interview, the researcher will ask you more questions about the things that you find stressful about your job on death row, as well as the ways that you cope with each of these situations. The researcher will also ask you how successful you feel that each of the coping strategies have been in lowering stress. The interview will take thirty minutes or less. You will also be asked to grant the researcher permission to find out certain information about you, such as how long you have been working in prison and if you've had any disciplinary action taken against you since beginning your job as a corrections officer in this institution. During the interview, the researcher may ask to tape record your responses for purposes of accuracy and record-keeping. The tapes will only be heard by members of the research team (psychology graduate students and faculty, or closely supervised undergraduates) for purposes of being transcribed into written form, and will be destroyed once they have been transcribed. Your agreement to be recorded is not a condition of participation; therefore, you may still participate in the study if you do not want the interview to be recorded.

Summary of important points:

- Your participation in this study is **voluntary**. You don't have to participate if you don't want to.
- If you choose not to participate, your decision will **not be held against you** by The Mansfield Correctional Institution, The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, or The University of Toledo.
- If you do choose to participate, your decision will **not result in any rewards** from The Mansfield Correctional Institution, The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, or The University of Toledo.
- **All of your information will be kept strictly confidential.** No names will be written on the questionnaires or interview record. We will be using research numbers instead of names to identify all of the information you provide.
- All of your information will be stored in a locked facility and only the researchers and professional consultants will have access to them. The staff of The Mansfield Correctional Institution and The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction **will not have access to the specific information you provide**.
- The information collected in this study will be used in a Doctoral Dissertation that may be presented at a conference or printed in a publication so that other professionals can learn from this project. The data will be provided in a general format with the exception of some specific examples from the interview, but all information that you provide will remain anonymous.
- Although it might be helpful to talk about your experiences with the researcher, the topic may remind you of uncomfortable or painful experiences. The main researcher is a trained graduate student in clinical psychology who is supervised by a licensed clinical psychologist. She will help you with the questionnaires and interview in such a way as to minimize discomfort, and she will be prepared to refer you to a prison mental health professional if you become distressed as a result of your participation. Remember that you can end your participation in the study at any time. If you feel that your participation in this study might be too emotionally distressing for you, please do not participate.
- A copy of this consent form will be provided for you to keep. The researchers will be happy to address any questions or concerns you may have about this study. The address and phone numbers of the researchers is listed at the top of the consent form. Also, an individual has volunteered to serve as an advocate for the participants in the project who have questions or concerns about the project. His job is to give participants someone to talk to besides the researchers. His name is **Vincent Nathan**, and you can reach him at:

  Arnold & Caruso
  1822 Cherry Street
  Toledo, OH 43608

Informed Consent Agreement

This is to certify that I have read the above information describing this study. I understand the purpose of the project, as well as what my voluntary participation will involve. I agree to participate in this study.

Please initial the appropriate statement:

- I agree to participate and to have my interview tape-recorded. ______
- I agree to participate, although I do not agree to have my interview tape-recorded. ______

Name of Participant (please print): ___________________________________

Signature of Participant: ____

Date: ______________

Authorization for Release of Confidential Information
for an Approved Research Study

Officer's Name: ______________________

I hereby authorize: The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and/or the Mansfield Correctional Institution

To share with or release to: The University of Toledo, Department of Psychology, Toledo, Ohio, 43606

The following information: Information gathered from my personnel file, including the number of documented disciplinary infractions that I've committed while employed in this institution over the past year and the number of times I've been absent from work during the past year.

I understand that the institution cannot release information obtained from other sources.

I understand the individual/institution receiving this information may not re-release it to any other individual or other sources.

I knowingly and voluntarily consent for this authorization for release of information to be in effect for the duration of the research project, at which time it will automatically expire.

I also understand that this release can be revoked by me at any time and that the revocation must be signed and dated by me.

Authorization for Release of Confidential Information

I hereby authorize the Department of Psychology at The University of Toledo to obtain information regarding the number of documented disciplinary infractions I've committed while employed at this institution during the past year, as well as the number of times I've been absent from work during the past year. This information will be used to examine factors related to stress, coping, and adjustment in a death row environment.

Name of Participant (please print): ____

Signature of Participant: ____

Date: _______________

Appendix G

Inmate Stressors

I. Isolation
  A. Social isolation
    1. From loved ones
      a. limited contact with loved ones
      b. loved ones don't visit
      c. death of loved ones
      d. no romantic/sexual relationship
    2. From other inmates
      a. little interaction with other inmates
      b. difficult to form friendships with other inmates
    3. From staff
      a. little interaction with staff
    4. From the outside world
      a. limited contact with outside world
      b. outside world is changing
  B. Emotional isolation
    1. Inability to express emotions
      a. need to hide emotions from other inmates
      b. repercussions of expressing depressive/suicidal thoughts to staff
    2. Fear and distrust
    3. Need to "act hard"

II. Deprivation
  A. Deprivation of items and resources
    1. Lack of freedom
    2. Lack of access to food
    3. Lack of hygiene supplies
  B. Deprivation of freedom/movement
  C. Poor or inaccessible care
    1. Healthcare
      a. poor healthcare
      b. high price of healthcare
    2. Mental health
      a. difficult to see mental health providers
      b. frequent turnover of mental health providers
    3. Programming
      a. lack of therapeutic programming
  D. Deprivation of justice

III. Intrusion
  A. Intrusiveness of environment
    1. Shackles/handcuffs
    2. Restricted physical environment
    3. Noise

B. Intrusiveness of staff
1. Guards always watching
2. Disrespected/mistreated by guards
C. Intrusiveness of other inmates
1. Exploitation and manipulation
2. Arguments and fights
3. Vicarious intrusions
a. other inmates acting out
D. Integrity is questioned
1. Being investigated
2. Being wrongfully accused
2. Being labeled a snitch

IV. Helplessness
A. No "voice"
1. No advocate/poor advocate
a. no advocate
b. case being handled poorly
c. no protection from the institution
2. Ineffective grievance system
a. little redress for complaints
b. requests are ignored
c. repercussions for filing grievances
3. Lack of access to legal resources
a. inadequate access to books
b. inadequate access to office supplies
B. Ambiguity
1. With legal circumstances
a. waiting/not knowing
b. no control over situation
2. With rules and expectations
a. poor system
i. system run poorly
ii. lack of staff training
b. changing rules
c. inconsistent enforcement of rules
C. Sense of ineffectiveness
1. Unable to help loved ones
2. Needing to be supported by loved ones
3. Unable to help other inmates

V. Painful Self-Reflection
- A. Nothing to look forward to
    - 1. No future
    - 2. Staff don't set goals/rewards for inmates
- B. Guilt
    - 1. About crime
    - 2. About how loved ones are affected
- C. Mortality issues
    - 1. Awareness of others' mortality
        - a. observing others' resignation to their fate
        - b. awareness of others being executed
    - 2. Growing old
        - a. growing old in prison
        - b. physical illness
    - 3. Facing own death
        - a. dealing with thought of own death
        - b. having a set date/impending execution

Appendix H

Inmate Coping Strategies

I. Problem Prevention
- A. Prevention of problems
    1. Stay out of trouble/keep a low profile
    2. Don't respond to provocation
    3. Don't interfere with others/respect others
- B. Self-improvement
    1. Try to change/improve self
    2. Gain specific skills

II. Problem Remedy
- A. Legal work
    1. Study law/work on case
    2. Appeal
    3. Delegate legal work to attorney
- B. Problem-solving
    1. Gather additional information
    2. Analyze situation
    3. Active problem-solving
        - a. general problem-solving
        - b. situation-specific problem-solving
- C. Expressing concerns
    1. Assertively make requests
    2. File grievances
    3. Yell and complain

III. Support
- A. Support through religion/spirituality
    1. General faith
        - a. spirituality
        - b. rely on faith
        - c. read or study religious/spiritual text
    2. Religious/spiritual practices
        - a. prayer
        - b. meditation
        - c. confession
        - d. communion
    3. Interaction with religious or spiritual figures
        - a. visit with priest
- B. Support through others in community
    1. Maintain contact with loved ones
    2. Maintain contact with non-close others
- C. Support through inmates
    1. Talk with other inmates
- D. Support through staff

1. Talk with staff
    a. talk with officers
    b. talk with mental health staff
    c. talk with medical doctor

IV. Attitude Change
- A. Acceptance
    1. Basic acceptance/acknowledgement of problem
    2. Facing the problem
        a. adapt/prepare
        b. suck it up
        c. don't give up
- B. Positive reframing
    1. Appreciation
    2. Positive focus
        a. new perspective
        b. stay positive
        c. maintain hope/optimism
    3. Humor
- C. Attitude of non-coping
    1. There is no way to cope with problem
    2. Giving up

V. Problem Avoidance
- A. Distraction
    1. General distraction
    2. Activities
        a. work
        b. recreation
        c. writing
    3. Daydreaming
- B. Withdrawal
- C. Mental avoidance
    1. Denial
    2. Don't think or speak about problem
    3. Divorce self from problem
- D. Physical avoidance

VII. Acting Out

Appendix I

Corrections Officer Stressors

I. Inmate Hostility and Manipulation
- A. Inmates' negative attitude to guards
  - 1. Inmates are aggressive
  - 2. Inmates wrongly claim unfair/harmful treatment
    - a. inmates make unreasonable demands
    - b. inmates act like the "victim"
    - c. inmates sue officers
  - 3. Inmates don't have respect for officers
- B. Inmates try to take advantage of officers
- C. Difficult dealing with inmates' crimes

II. Difficult Relationships with Other Officers
- A. Intrusiveness
  - 1. Poor boundaries
  - 2. Gossip
- B. Can't trust other officers to exercise care to prevent incidents

III. Stressful Job/Role Expectations
- A. Boredom
- B. Difficult to continue following procedure
- C. Maintain readiness to deal with incidents/safety concerns
  - 1. Potential for danger
  - 2. Dealing with critical incidents
  - 3. Potential for needing to use deadly force
- D. Dealing with execution of inmates

IV. Lack of Support from Administration
- A. Lack of respect/trust
- B.. Difficult to perform job appropriately
  - 1. Rules change/are contradictory
  - 2. Too much paperwork
  - 3. Unable to contact superiors
  - 4. Audits are rushed
- C. Job insecurity
  - 1. Newer officers forced to perform more
  - 2. Seniority rights denied
  - 3. Staff asked to leave

Appendix J

Corrections Officer Coping Strategies

I. Seek support
- A. Discuss issues with peers
- B. Ask for work-relatedhelp
  - 1. Request help from supervisor
  - 2. Request help from other staff
- C. Seek professional help
  - a. counseling
  - b. medication
- D. Speak with family
- E. Spirituality/religion

II. Try to Fulfill Role Expectations Appropriately
- A. Treat inmates fairly
  - 1. Treat inmates as you want to be treated
  - 2. Let inmates know your perspective
  - 3. Provide inmates with what they need
- B. Gain a better understanding of inmates
  - 1. Observe inmates closely
  - 2. Gather information about inmates
  - 3. Try to understand inmates' perspective
- C. Follow proper procedure
  - 1. Try to understand reasons for orders/accept orders
  - 2. Stay aware of surroundings
  - 3. Follow orders
  - 4. Responsibility for others
    - a. keep eye on other officers
    - b. perform others' duties
    - c. write up staff indiscretions

III. Become "Lax" in Fulfilling Role Expectations
- A. Displace responsibility
- B. Become flexible in following rules
- C. Don't respond to the issue

IV. "Hardness"
- A. Don't allow self to get bothered
- B. Mistreat others
  - 1. Ignore inmates
  - 2. Yell at inmates
  - 3. Shorten inmate rec period

V. Create Distance from Work-Related Stressors
- A. Social distancing
  - 1. Don't pretend to like other staff
  - 2. Don't socialize/share personal info with other staff
- B. Engage in outside activities
  - 1. Exercise
  - 2. Outdoor activities
- C. Mental distancing
  - 1. Don't think about the problems
  - 2. Use humor
  - 3. Don't take the issue personally
- D. Escape
  - 1. Drink alcohol
  - 2. Leave work