



FROM CORRECTIONS FATIGUE TO FULFILLMENT™

Introducing the CF2F

By: Caterina Spinaris, PhD, LPC
Desert Water Correctional Outreach

Greetings to all NCDPS staff! Sometime in the next year you will be able to attend a training session called “From Corrections Fatigue to Fulfillment” (CF2F for short), and I wanted to give you a heads up as to what this training is about. My name is Dr. Caterina Spinaris. I am the founding director of Desert Waters Correctional Outreach, with the mission to promote the health and wellness of the public safety workforce.

The first thing I want you to know about CF2F is that the material was put together strictly for YOU. It was designed with your well-being in mind. The course is not about managing inmates, offenders, or juveniles. It is not about policies and procedures. Rather, it is all about ways to help take care of staff and ways for staff to take care of themselves.

So here’s a little background to explain all that.

Prior to my becoming involved in this field, I provided direct psychotherapy services to trauma survivors. Then, in the year 2000, I moved to Fremont County, Colorado, which at the time housed twelve prisons and a jail. My client load started to include corrections personnel and families. What I learned very quickly was that no matter what the job role or rank, corrections work tends to be highly stressful, and at times also dangerous and traumatizing. I became aware that during the course of their corrections career, staff are exposed to multiple types of occupational stressors, including traumatic stressors, usually over and over again. I observed that this eventually took a toll on their health—their physical, psychological, and spiritual health. I observed that it also took a toll on their functioning at work, at home, and in their community. And it negatively shaped the health of their workplace culture. My conclusion was - and still is - that staff need to be trained from the outset on how to develop effective coping strategies in order to be able to stay well in the midst of such highly demanding work conditions.

And what I learned about corrections work over the years in clinical settings, during staff trainings, and during informal conversations, has been confirmed through Desert Waters’ studies and other researchers’ work during the last several years.

In response to these glaring needs, and incorporating my previous work with trauma, I designed the CF2F 1-day course, with input from corrections staff and their family members, and also with input from cherished colleagues. This, of course, is only ONE training. More interventions need to follow. However, through the CF2F course we take the first step on the corrections staff’s wellness journey by helping increase awareness of issues that confront the profession.

So today, I am writing to introduce CF2F to you, to be offered to you in the near future by NCDPS OSDT trainers who were trained and certified by Desert Waters Master Trainers.

Once again, this material was put together strictly for YOU. It was designed with your well-being in mind. The course is not about managing offenders or about reviewing agency rules. Rather, it is all about taking care of yourselves and each other.

The CF2F course increases your awareness of the effects on the job on you, your work team, and your family. It validates your work-related experiences, and offers some explanation as to how Corrections Fatigue happens—that is, negative changes in corrections staff and in entire workplace



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cultures over time. It also assists you in identifying solutions that you can put to practice to deal more effectively with challenges, and strategies to increase the likelihood of your sense of professional fulfillment. The course also presents strategies that supervisors and administrators can implement and resources they can offer to better support the public safety workforce.

NCDPS already offers the WE CARE program to its staff. The CF2F course is an addition to this program, a resource to promote staff's well-being.

I'd like to assist, even in small ways, in increasing your resilience - your ability to bounce back after disappointments, struggles and other hard times. I want to encourage you to continue developing as professionals and as individuals. I'd like to see you enjoying a sense of fulfillment and healthy pride as you serve your community, state, and country in the public safety arena.

We at Desert Waters appreciate you, and we know that what you do matters greatly. You protect and shape lives, perhaps for generations to come. Sometimes you save lives. You help keep facilities, agencies, offices, and whole communities safe. And you do all that under what are usually extremely challenging working conditions. We at Desert Waters thank you for this.

So let us keep moving away from Fatigue and toward Fulfillment. Let us do that through enhanced professionalism, teamwork, interpersonal skills, health-affirming skills, and life-affirming values. My desire is to see you flourish both personally and professionally. You were created for that. And you, your loved ones, and the profession deserve it.