

Reasons Inmates Attempt Suicide or Die by Suicide: Implications for Assessment, Treatment, and Institutional Prevention Programs

Robert Horon, PhD
Track: Clinical
CE: CPA/BBS/BRN (1.5)
POST TBD

Narrative

This presentation will discuss unique contextual motivators for self-injurious behavior, suicide attempts, and deaths by suicide in incarcerated populations. Specific interview strategies designed to assess correctional motivators for self-harm will be presented. The presenter will explain the implications of presented information to institutional suicide prevention practices, as measured by statements of direct applications made in small and large group settings. This presentation will incorporate a clinical interview demonstration and attendees will discuss implications of the material presented for either clinical practice or institutional suicide prevention practices.

BIO

Robert Horon, PhD

Chief Psychologist, Chief of Mental Health, California Health Care Facility

Robert has worked in a number of capacities for the California Department of State Hospitals (DSH) and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation since 1994. He has been involved in DSH studies on the neuropsychology of schizophrenia and on predictors of violence risk and was the principal investigator on studies of violence risk and suicide risk within DSH patients. He has worked in both community and institutional inpatient settings for many years. In 2006, Robert became the director of an APA-Accredited internship and earned a postdoctoral fellowship at the DSH facility in Vacaville, CA (DSH-V). While at DSH-V, he designed and was the principal investigator on a large study of suicide risk assessment tools and suicide risk factors in an incarcerated sample. Specifically, a group of 620 psychiatrically hospitalized inmate/patients were evaluated on a battery of standardized and experimental suicide risk assessment measures while collecting data on prior attempts, personal and criminal history, etc. Robert developed and co-developed instruments designed specifically for incarcerated populations; one to aid cultural suicide risk formulation, another to evaluate prisoner's degree of readiness for death by suicide, and a third employing a structured professional judgment (SPJ) approach to suicide risk formulation. Data collection on this study was completed with several manuscripts published, submitted, or in preparation. From 2015 to 2017, Robert served as the DHCS (Headquarters) Suicide Prevention and Response Focused Improvement Team (SPR FIT) Coordinator for the CDCR. In this role, he presented monthly suicide prevention videoconferences, developed and conducted related webinars and workshops, conducted suicide reviews, and participate in statewide policy and practice development. Robert currently is the Chief Psychologist at the California Health Care Facility (CHCF), a modern prison dedicated to treating a variety of mental health and medical needs.

Learning Objectives

1. Identify unique contextual motivators for self-injurious behavior, suicide attempts, and deaths by suicide in incarcerated populations, as measured by responses to multiple choice questions posed within the presentation.
2. Describe specific interview strategies designed to assess correctional motivators for self-harm, based on presentation content and demonstration, and measured by small and large group discussion.
3. Explain the implications of presented information to institutional suicide prevention practices, as measured by statements of direct applications made in small and large group settings.