

*A NIOSH Center for Excellence to Promote a Healthier Workforce*


## **Results of the *Correctional Supervisors Council Healthy Workplace Survey***

April 2015

**Correctional Supervisors Council  
&  
The Center for the Promotion of Health  
in the New England Workplace (CPH-NEW)**

## **Background: CO Mortality in Connecticut**

- The average life expectancy for COs nationally is 58 years (Gibbons, 2006).
- The average age of death over the past ten years for active and retired correctional staff (both COs and supervisors) in Connecticut is 66 years (State of Connecticut Comptrollers Office, 2015).
- The average life expectancy in Connecticut is 81 years (World Life Expectancy, 2013).
- While correctional staff in Connecticut are living on average 8 years longer than the life expectancy for COs nationally, their life span is 15 years shorter than other Connecticut residents.



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## Introduction

- Health Improvement Through Employee Control II (HITEC-II) is a National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) funded project that focuses on Correctional Officer (CO) health and wellness.
- The goal of the project is to create interventions focused on four topics (work environment, nutrition, fitness, lifestyle factors) using a Participatory Action Research (PAR) method.
- Cheshire and Corrigan Radgowski Correctional Facilities agreed to partake in the HITEC-II project as intervention sites.
- Union leadership at the CO level (NP-4) oversees the ongoing health and wellness programs developed through HITEC-II.
- Union leadership at the correctional supervisors' level, the Correctional Supervisors Council (NP-8), recognized efforts at NP-4 level and decided to conduct similar activities, targeting supervisor health and wellness (i.e., concerns about physical/psychological wellness and low life-expectancy).



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## Introduction, *continued*

- A HITEC-II program facilitator (Dr. Alicia Dugan) conducted meetings with a core group of Correctional Supervisors Council (CSC) members (n=7) who serve on the Design Team (DT), representing various correctional facilities throughout Connecticut.
- The Center for the Promotion of Health in New England Workplace (CPH-NEW) focus group protocol was used to generate discussion on supervisor concerns pertaining to health and wellness.
- CSC DT members agreed that the best method to determine priority health areas on which to focus intervention efforts was to conduct a survey among all supervisors.
- A total of 10 meetings were conducted prior to survey administration (1 was an introductory meeting, 2 meetings were focus group sessions, and 7 meetings were dedicated to designing the survey).



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## CSC Healthy Workplace Survey

- The CPH-NEW All Employee Survey Instrument was used as the basis for the survey; items were deleted and new items added with substantial DT input to arrive at the final survey format.
- The survey was designed to gather supervisor views on health and wellness at DOC, and to provide an overall assessment of correctional supervisors' attitudes related to health and wellness, as well as supervisor perceptions of their health behaviors.
- The survey also gathered feedback on issues related to the physical work environment as well as interpersonal and social interactions that support or detract from a healthy worksite culture.



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## CSC Healthy Workplace Survey, *continued*

- Survey revisions were made after pilot-testing the survey at a union meeting on December 2, 2014.
- The final survey was in on-line format, 64 items long, and took approximately 20 minutes for participants to complete.
- The survey was distributed to all supervisors through the CSC union listserv on January 16, 2015; data collection lasted through February 18<sup>th</sup>.
- A total of 157 supervisors participated in the survey.



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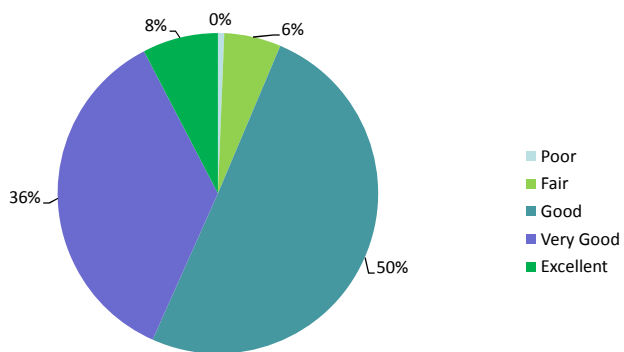
## Survey Results



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## Self-reported Health Status

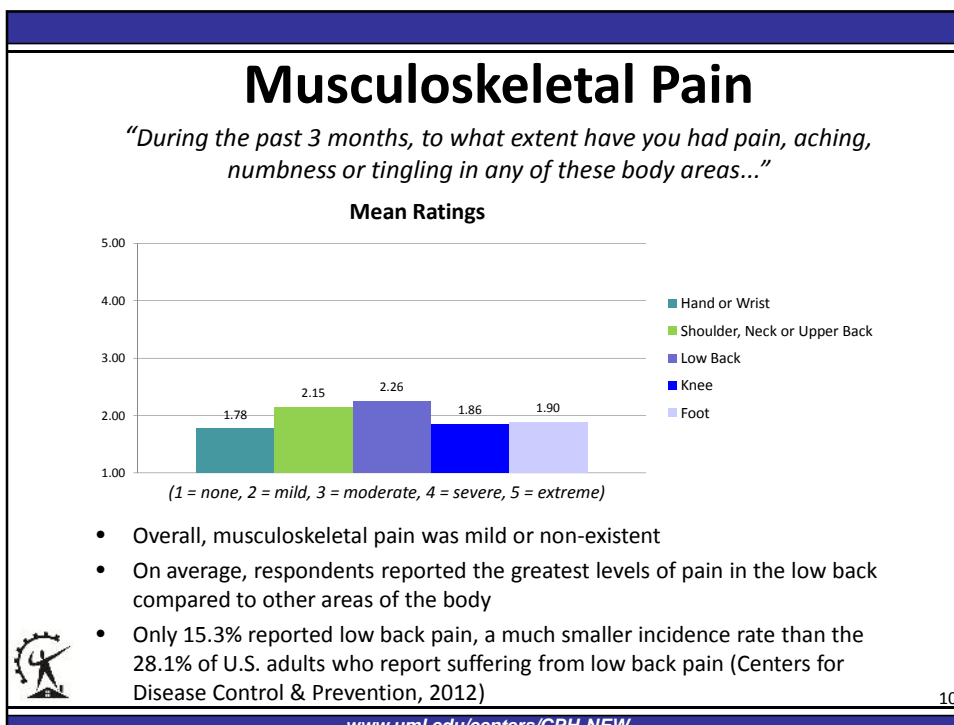
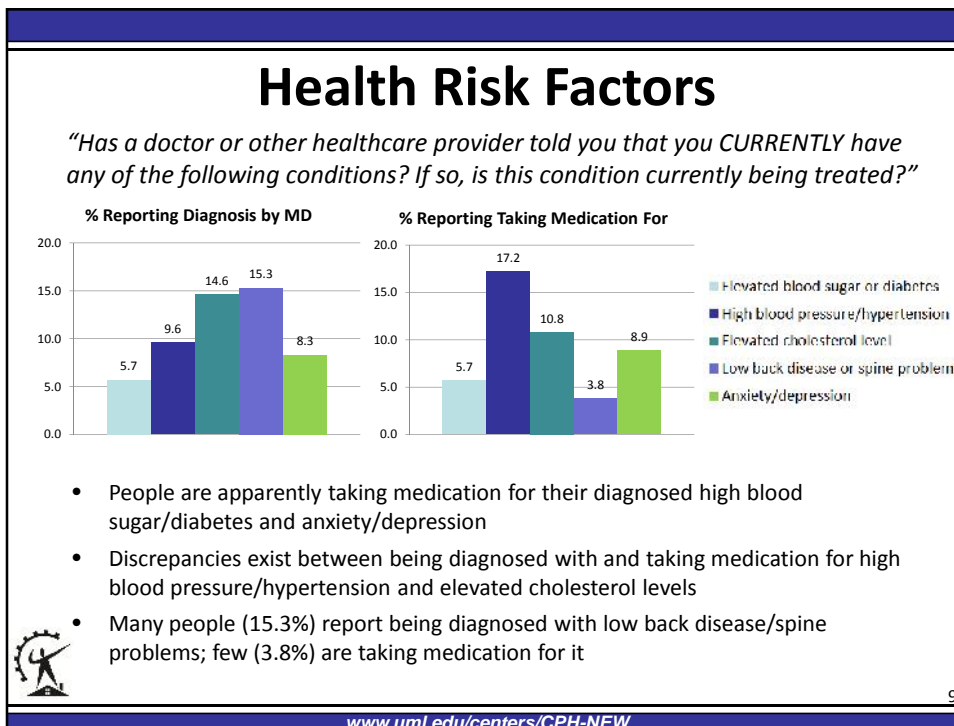
*"In general, would you say your health is..."*

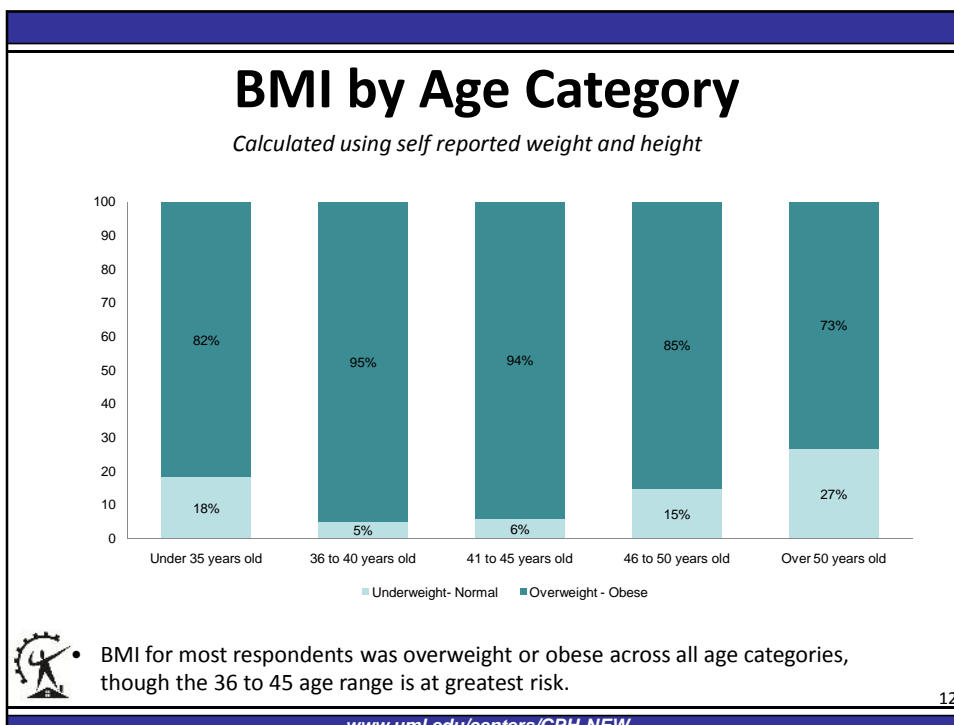
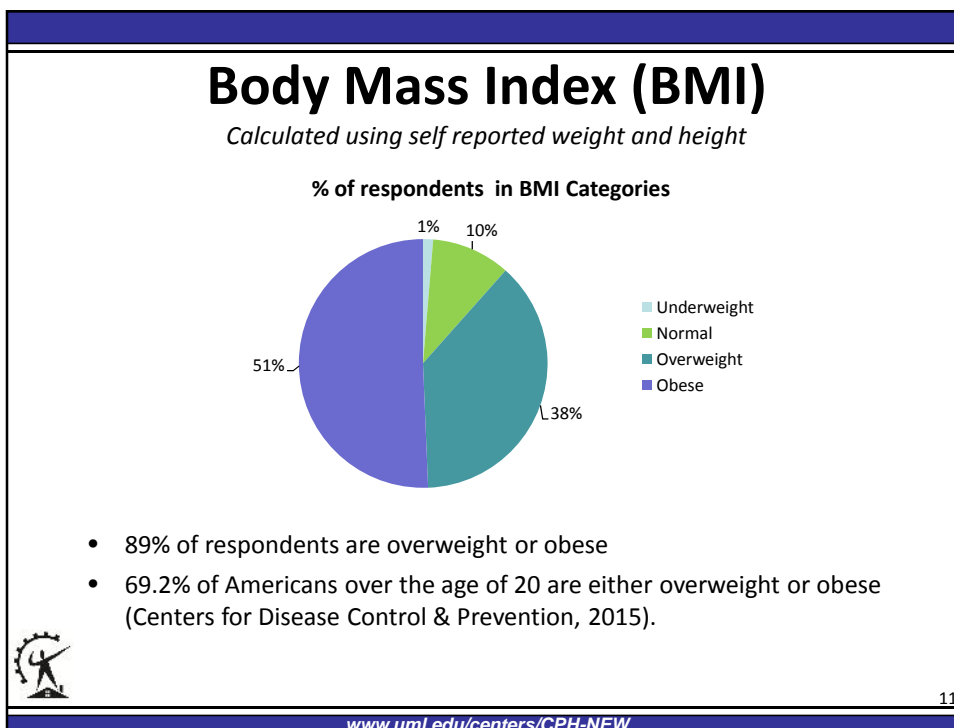


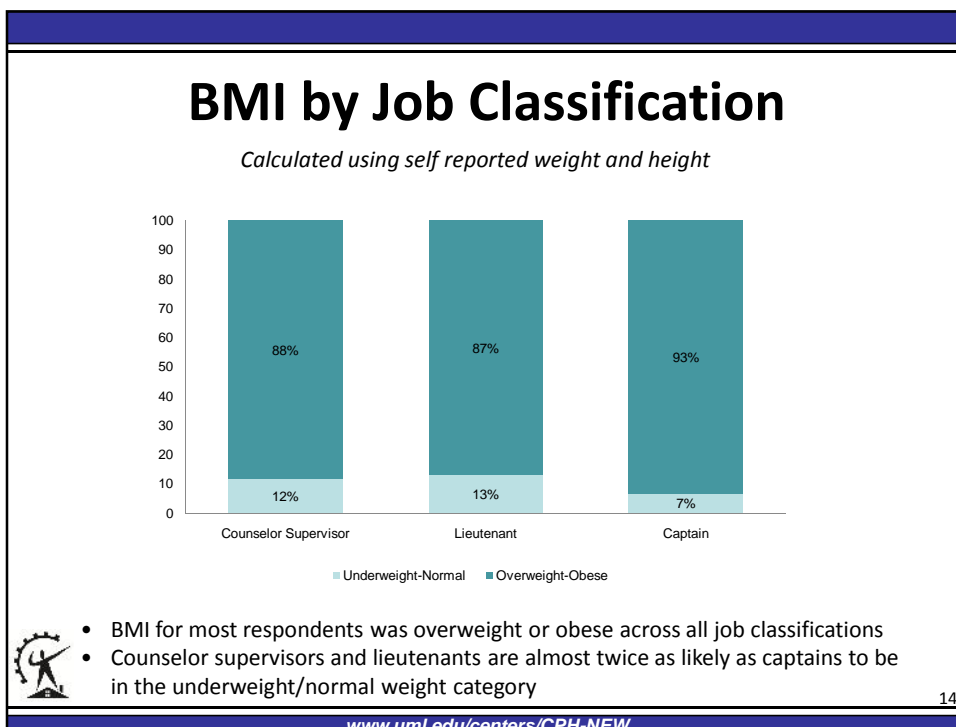
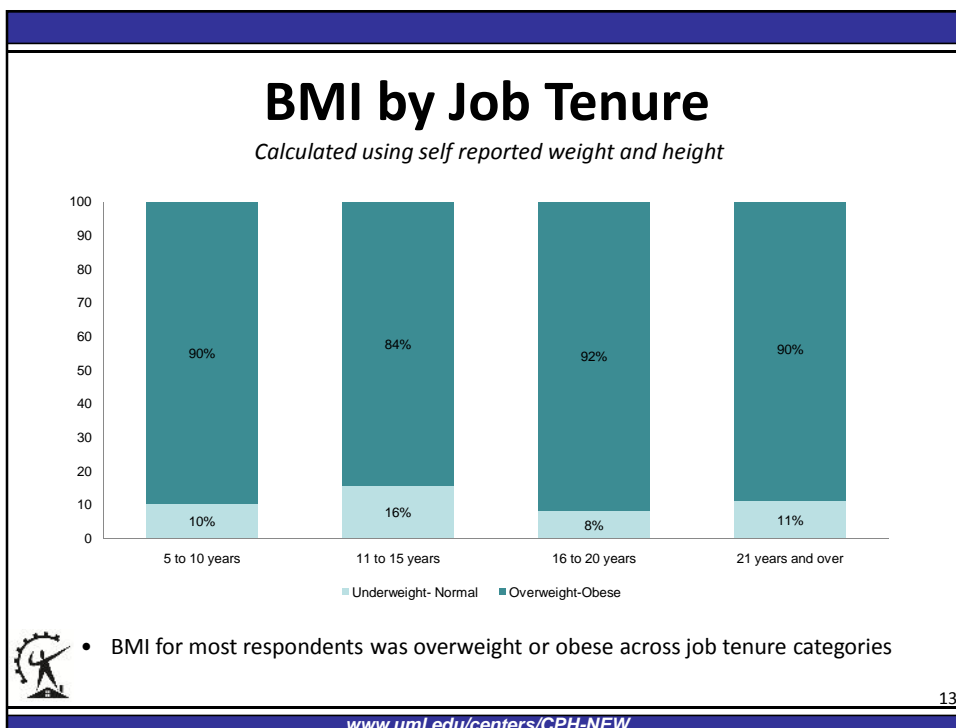
- 44% of respondents reported having very good or excellent health



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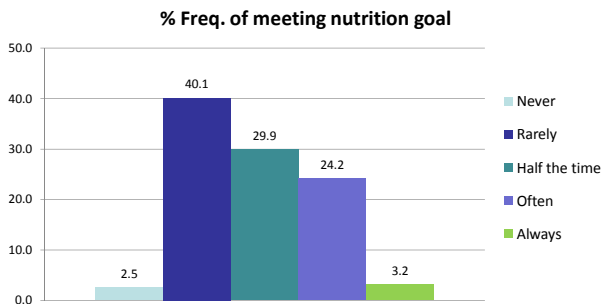






## Nutrition

*“Nutrition experts recommend filling half of your plate with fruits and vegetables at every meal and snacking occasion. How often do you meet this goal?”*



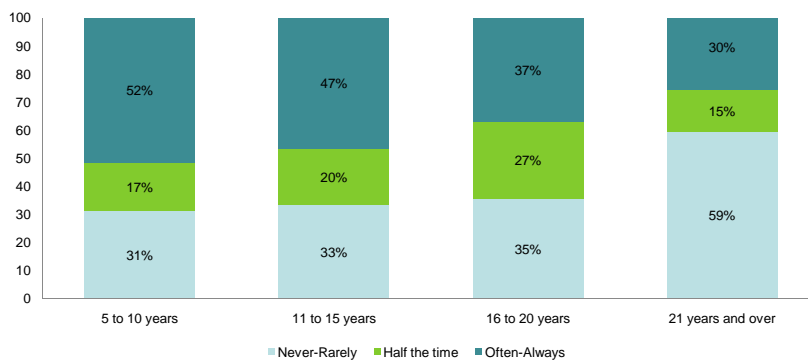
- 42.6% of respondents report never or rarely meeting expert recommendations for fruit/vegetable intake



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## Nutrition by Job Tenure

*“Nutrition experts recommend filling half of your plate with fruits and vegetables at every meal and snacking occasion. How often do you meet this goal?”*

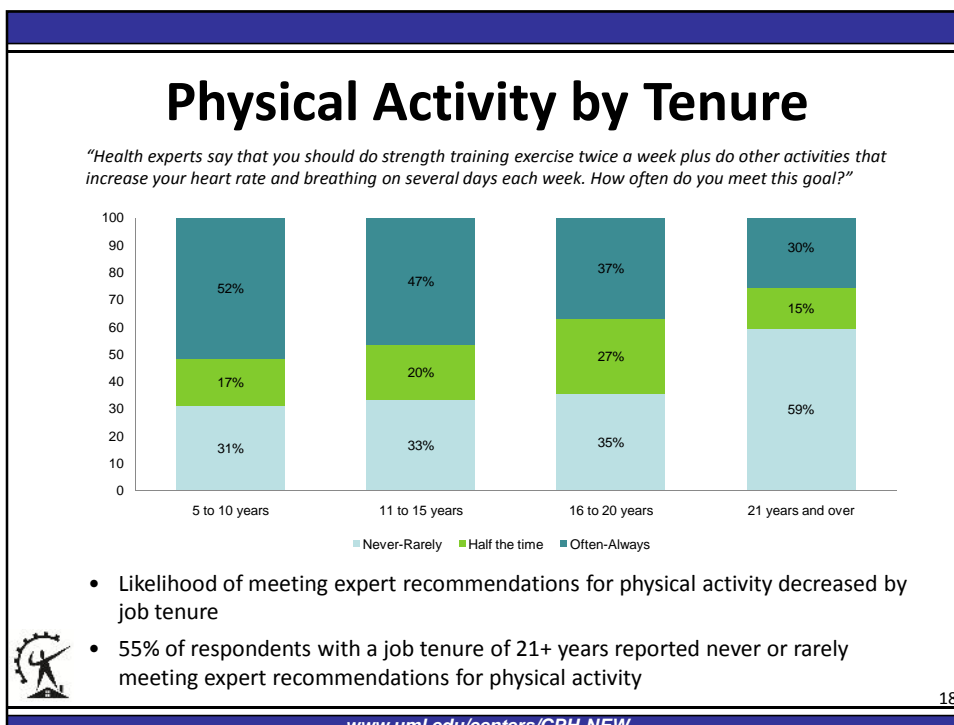
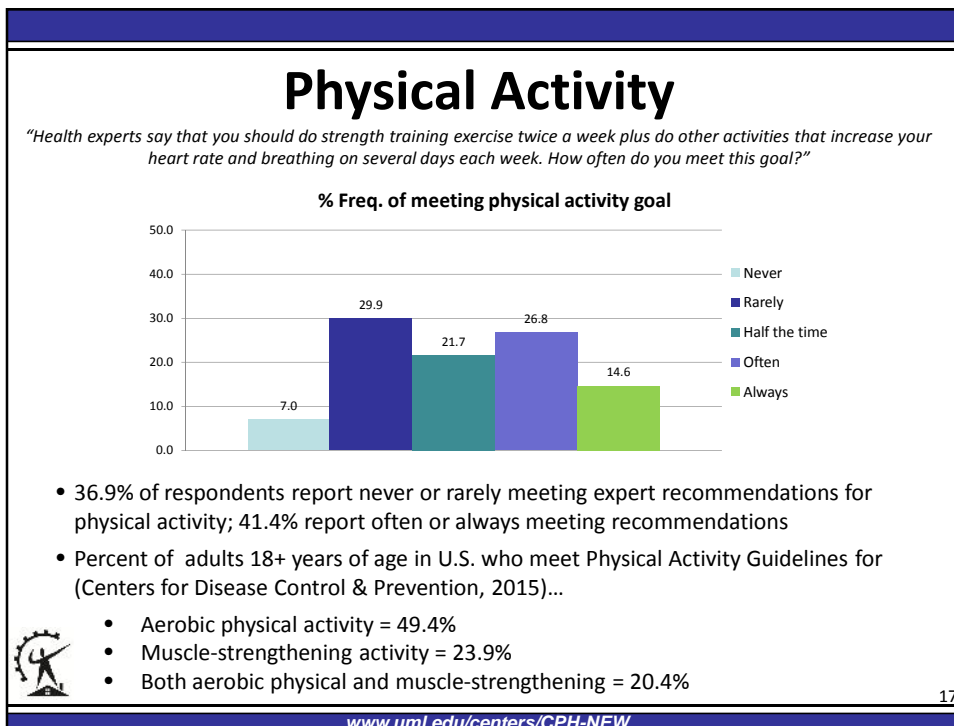


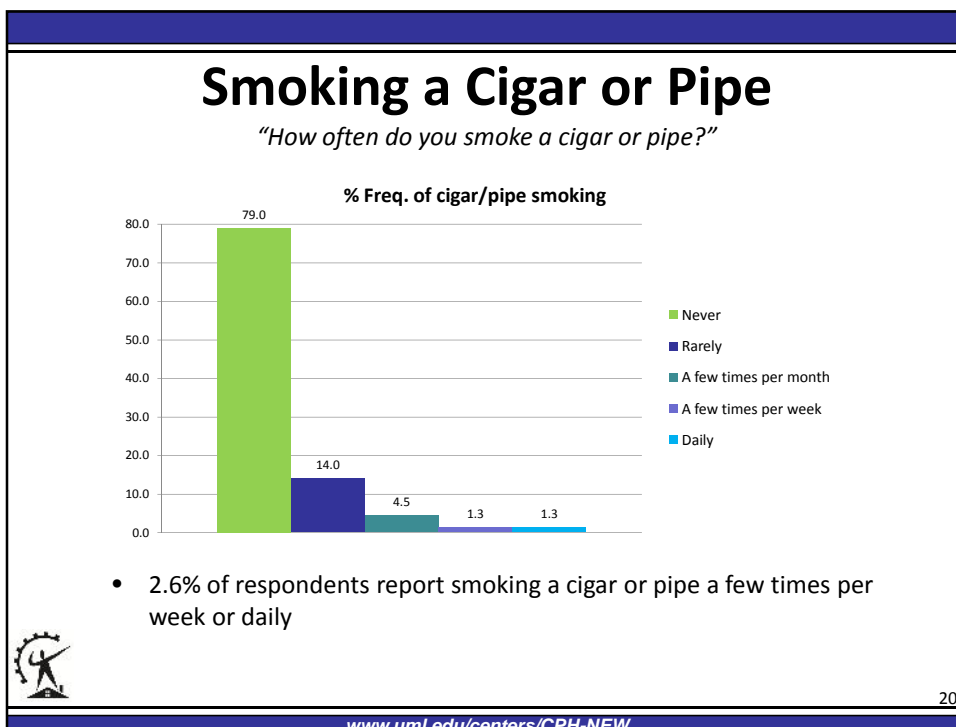
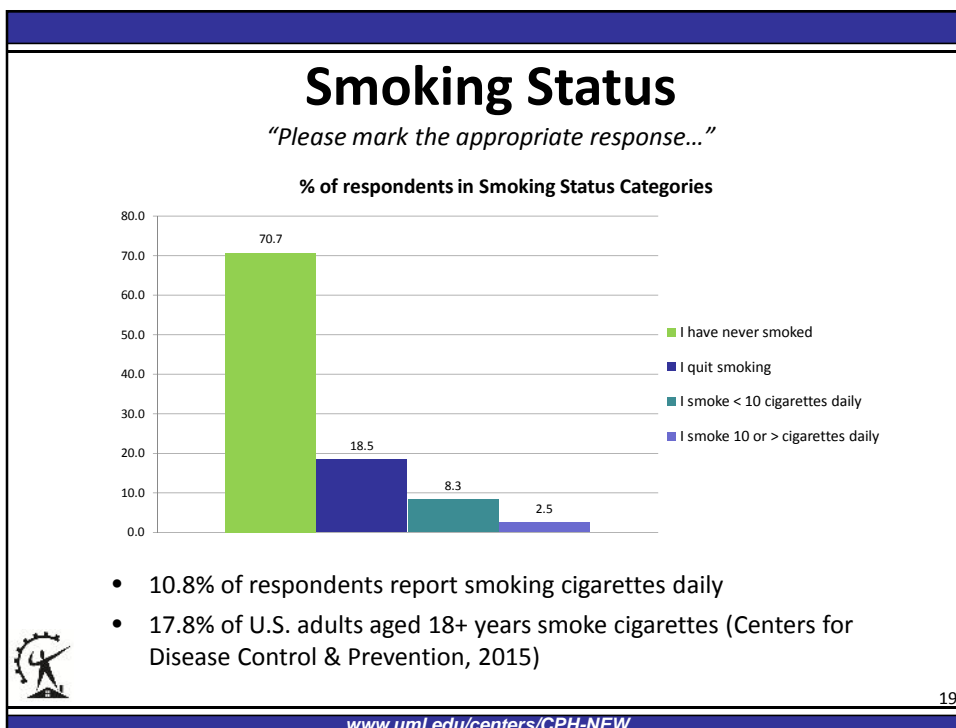
- Likelihood of meeting expert recommendations for fruit/vegetable intake decreased by job tenure
- 59% of respondents with a job tenure of 21+ years reported never or rarely meeting expert recommendations for fruit/vegetable intake

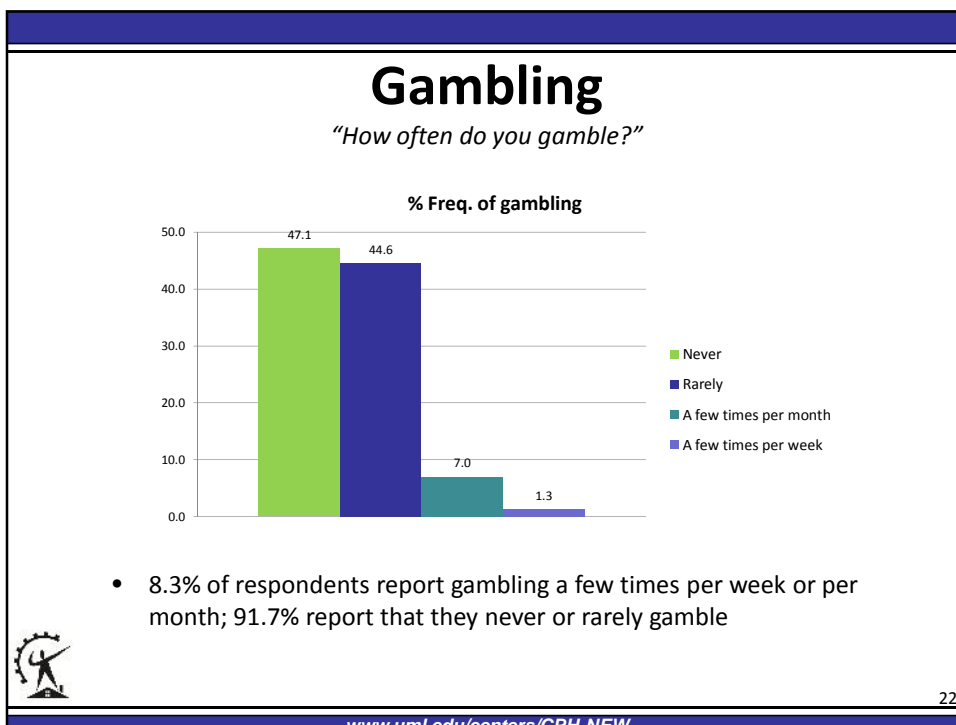
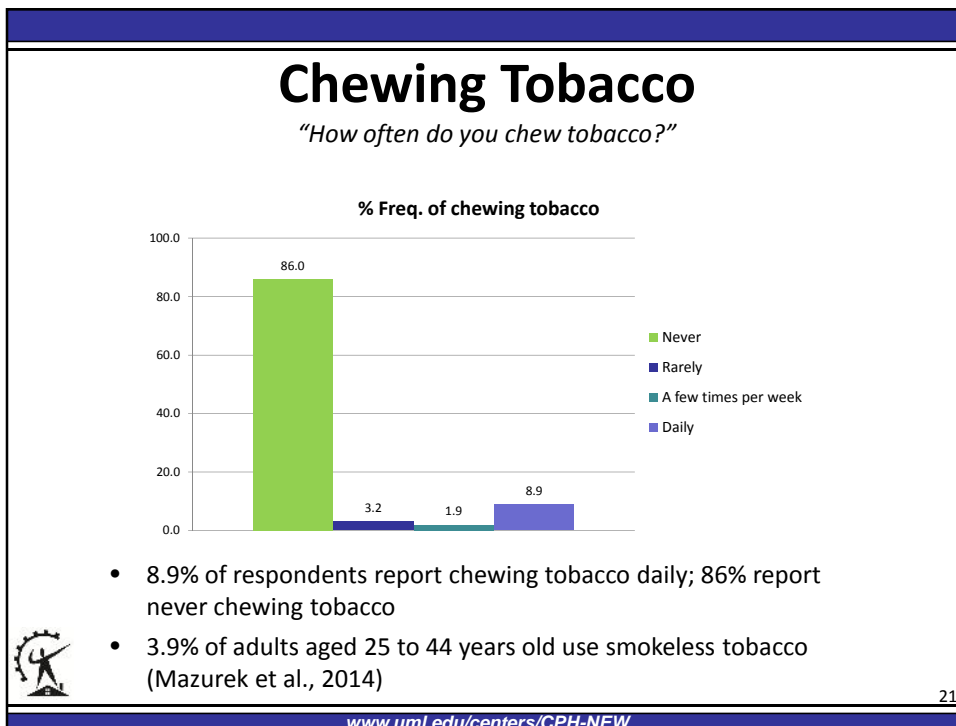


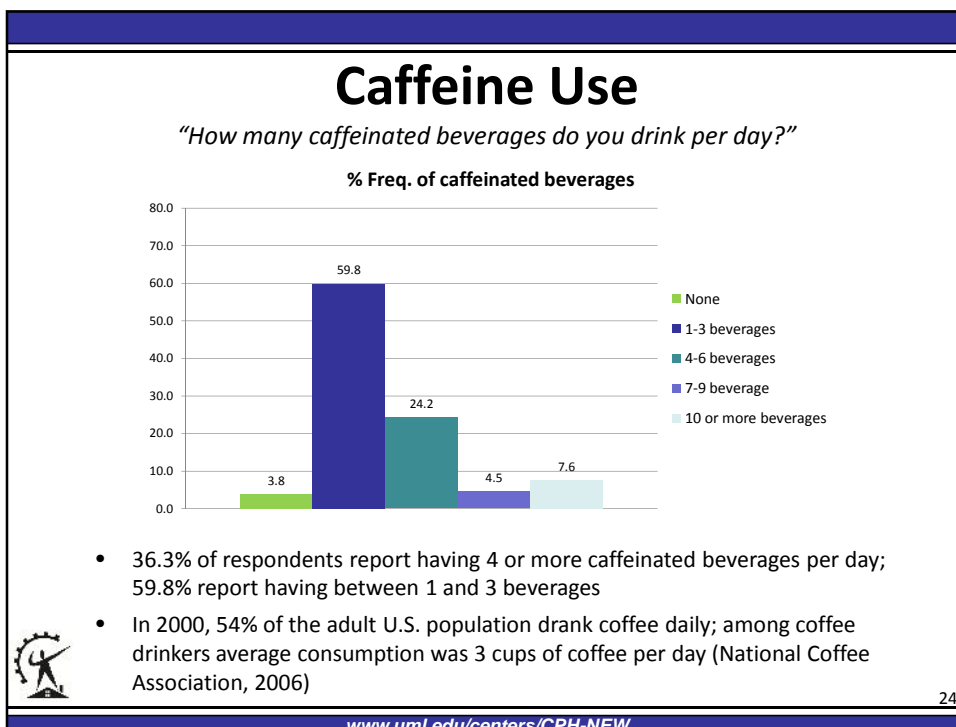
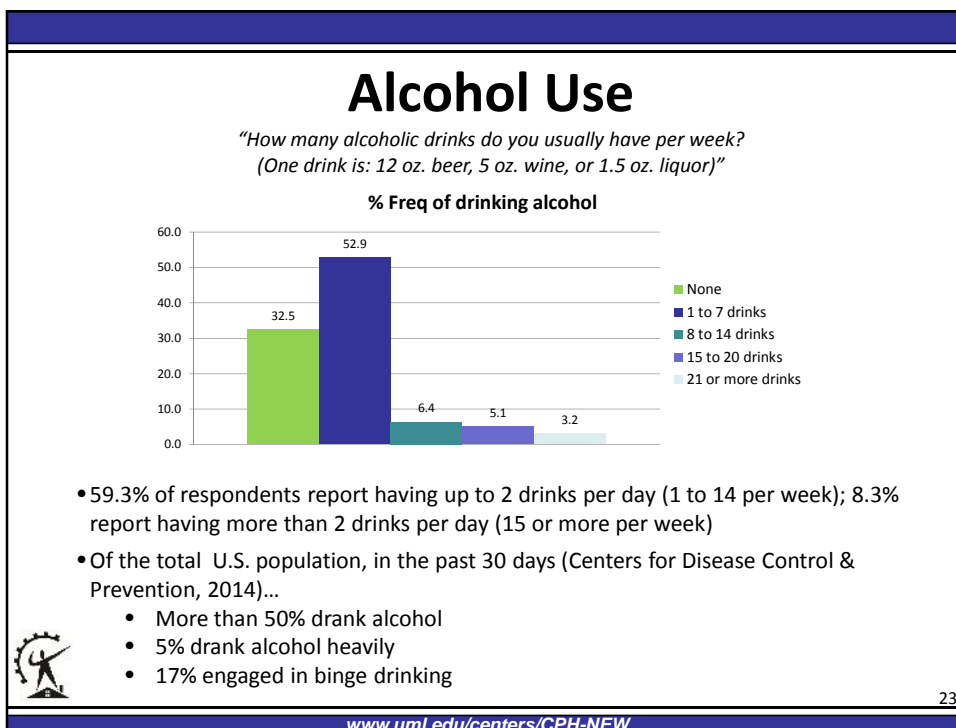
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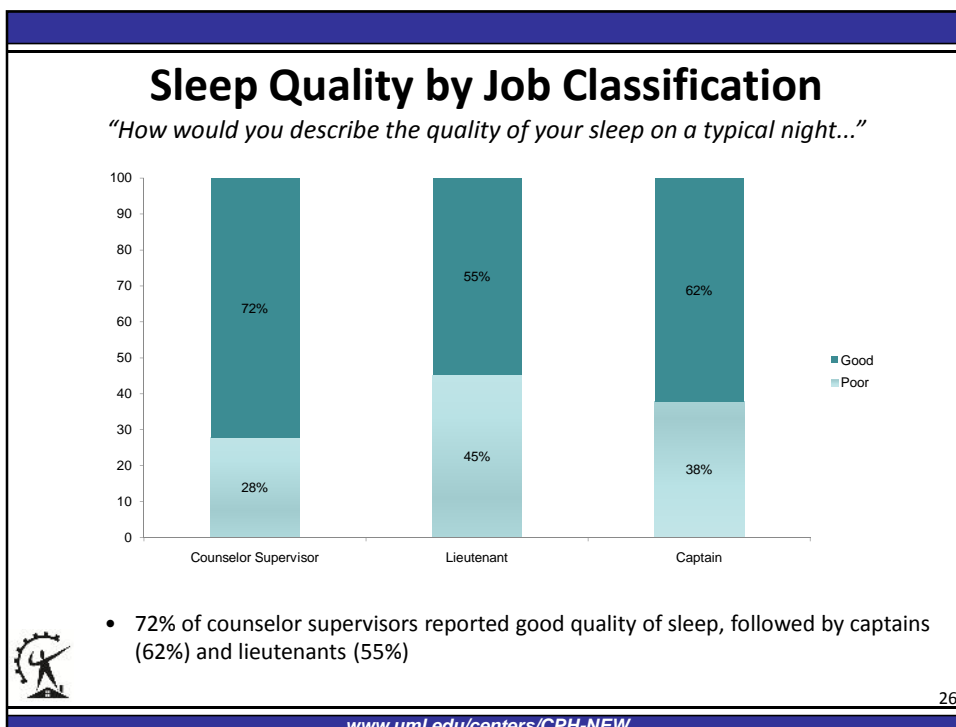
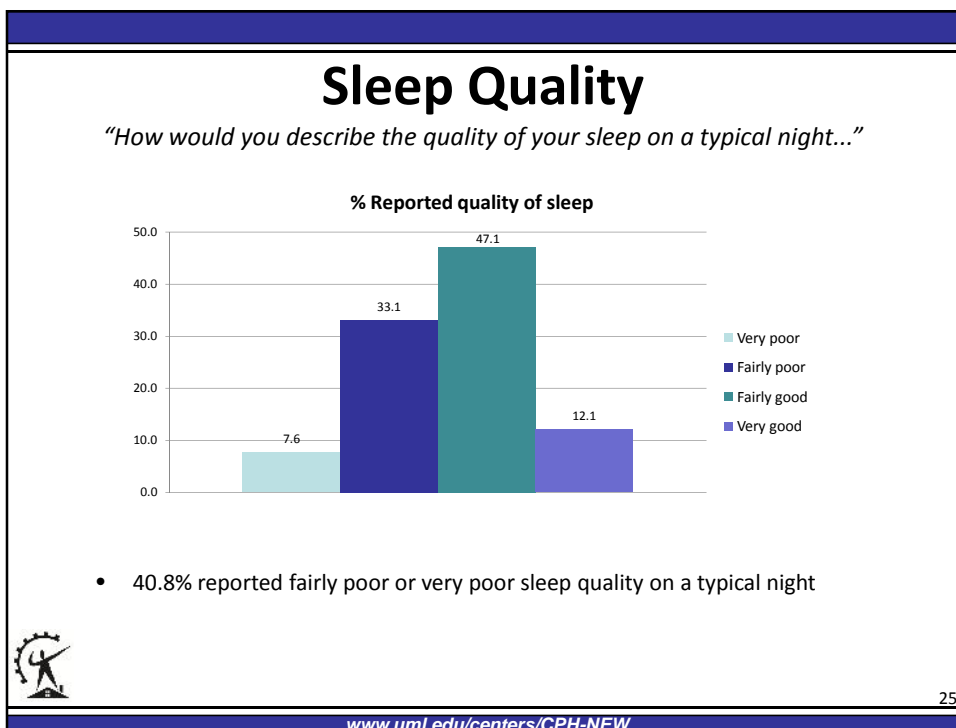


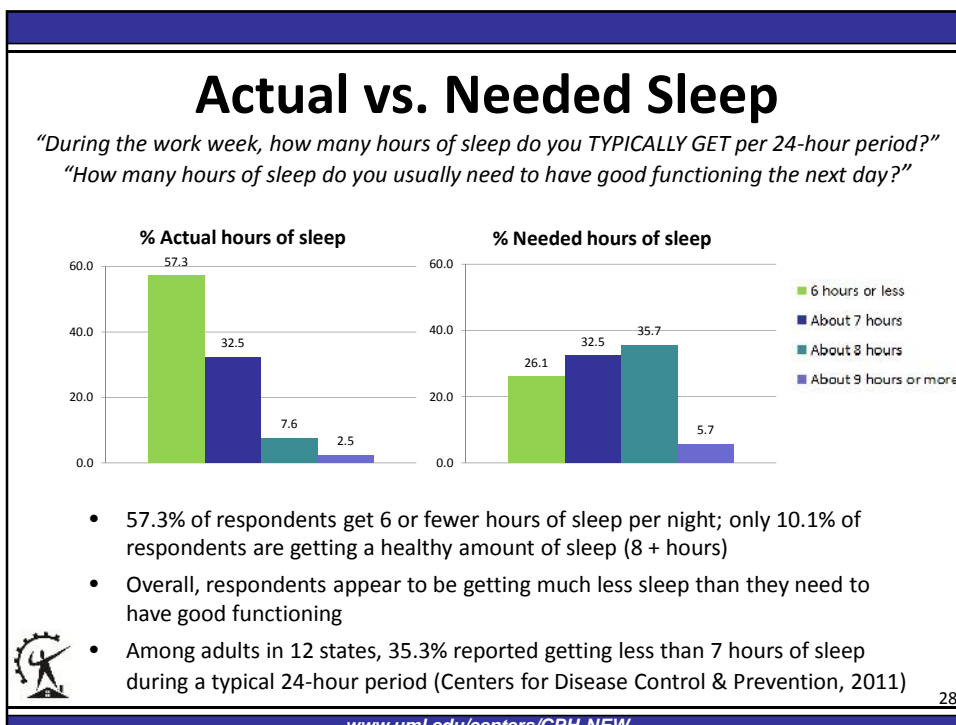
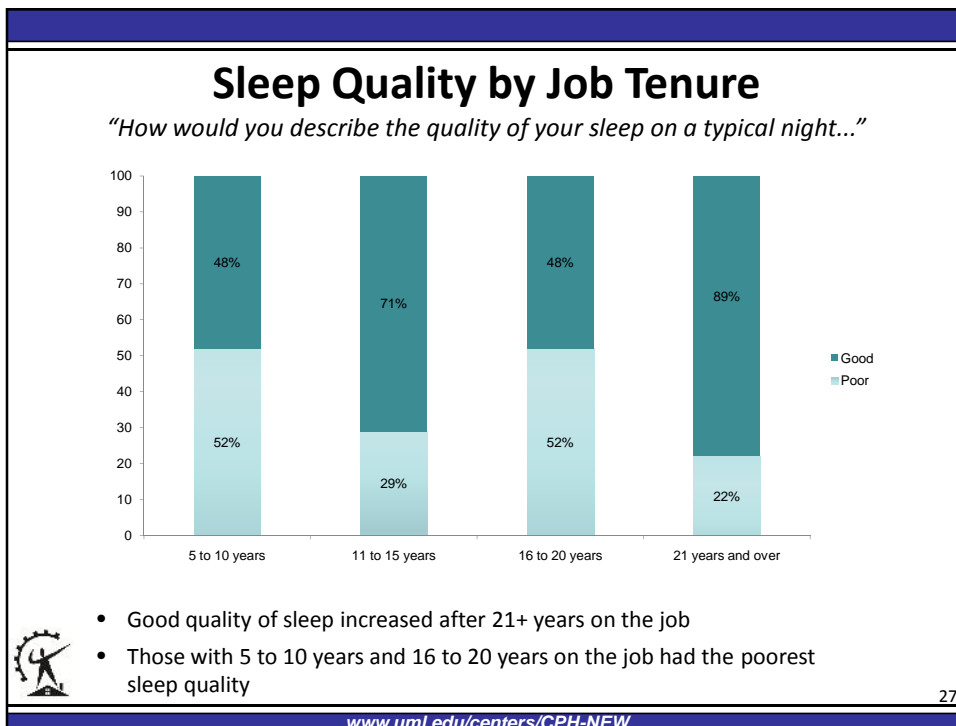


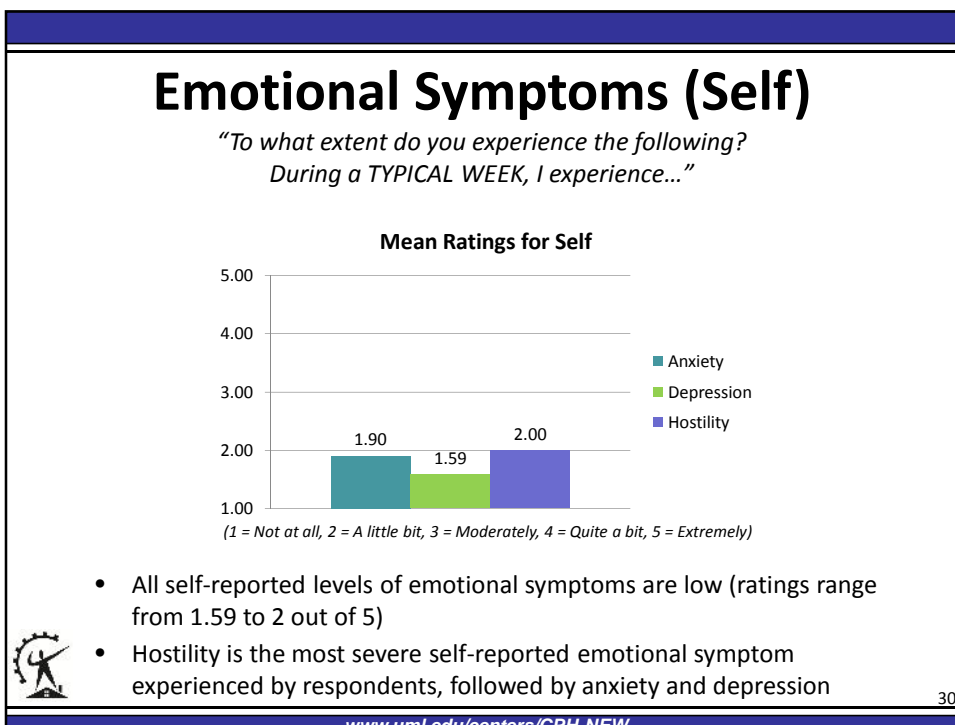
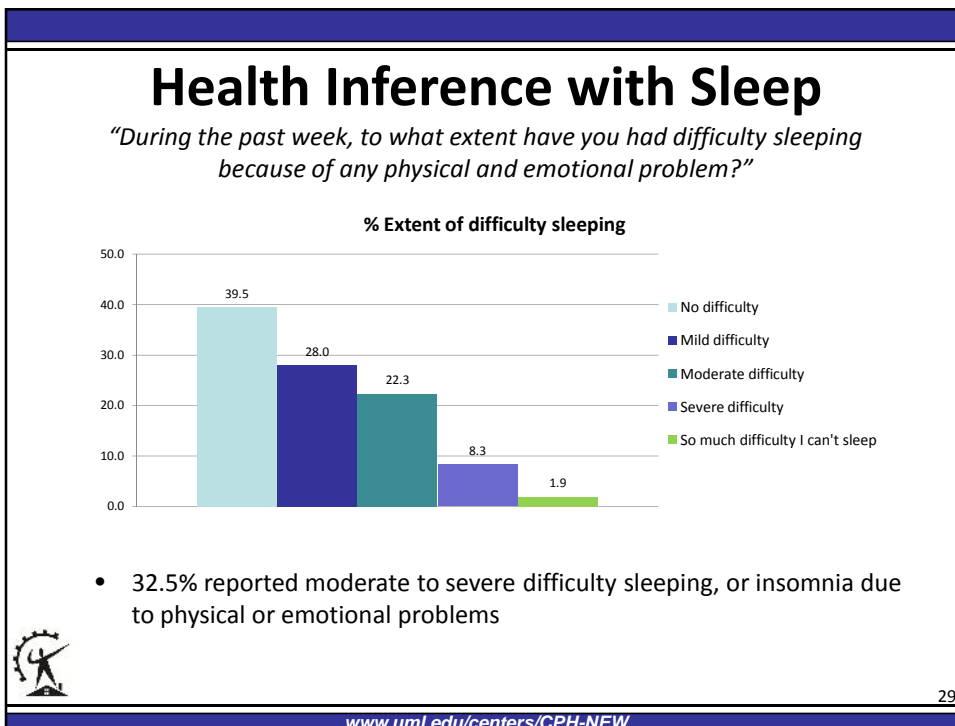








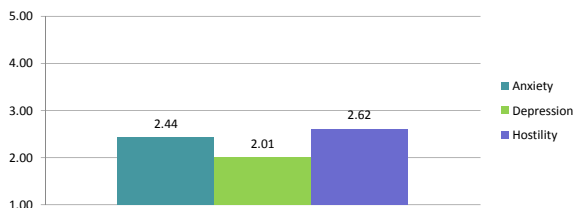




## Emotional Symptoms (Supervisors)

*"In your opinion, to what extent do you think your fellow supervisors experience the following? During a TYPICAL WEEK, my fellow supervisors experience..."*

Mean Ratings for Other Supervisors



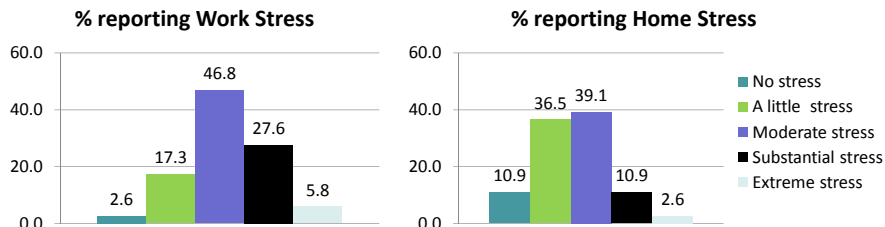
- All levels of emotional symptoms perceived to be experienced by other supervisors are relatively low (ratings range from 2.01 to 2.62 out of 5); however respondents reported that other supervisors experienced all emotional symptoms more severely than the respondents themselves
- Hostility is the most severe emotional symptom perceived to be experienced by other supervisors, followed by anxiety and depression



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## Work and Home Stress

*"In the past 30 days, how would you rate the amount of stress at work?  
How would you rate the amount of stress at home?"*



- 80.2% of respondents reported moderate to extreme stress at work
- 52.6% of respondents reported moderate to extreme stress at home
- Respondents reported a greater level of stress at work than at home
- A 2007 U.S. survey showed that 74% of workers in various occupations reported feeling stressed from work (Schnall et al., 2009).

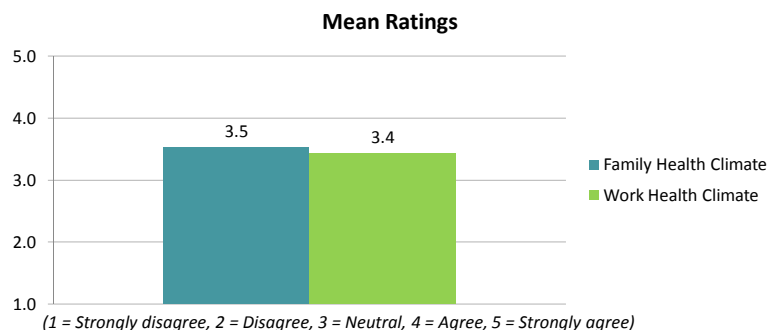


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## Health Climate at Work and Home

*"Health Climate" is defined as the extent to which the values and behavior practiced and encouraged in a particular environment are associated with health and well-being*



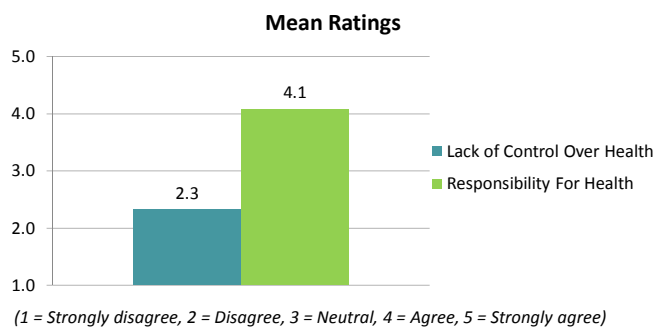
- Ratings on health climate at home and health climate at work were relatively high (rated about 3.5 out of 5)



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## Fatalistic Attitude about Health

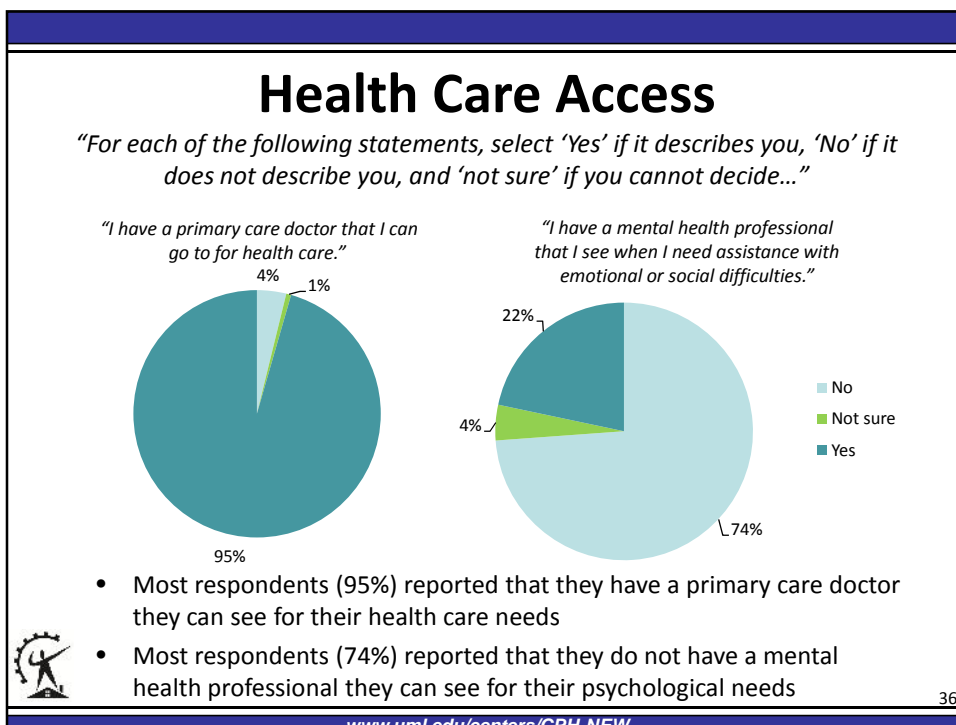
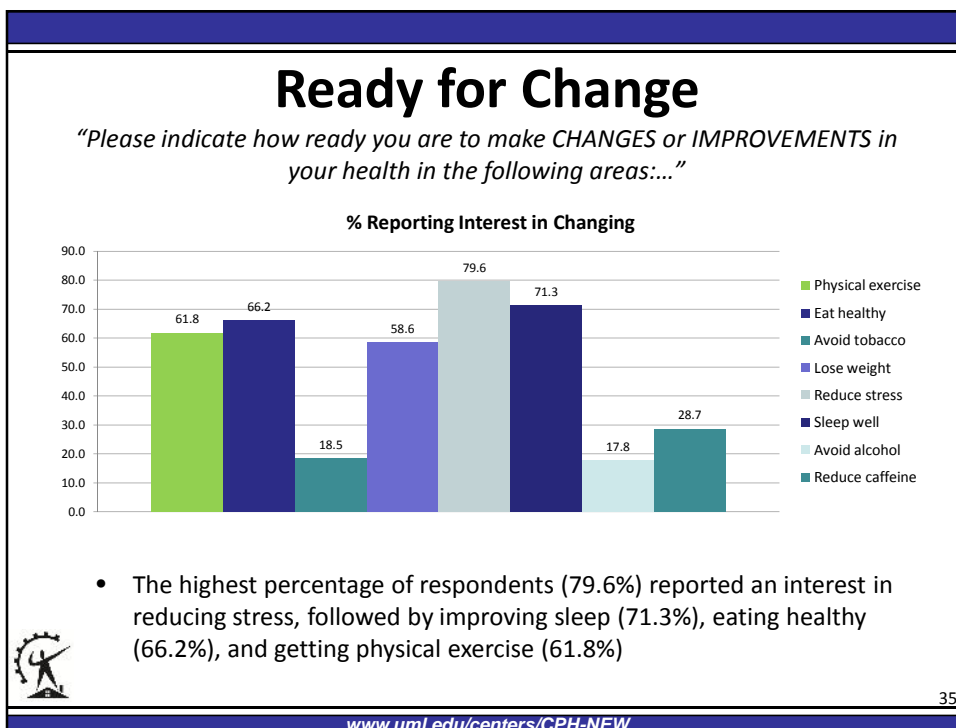


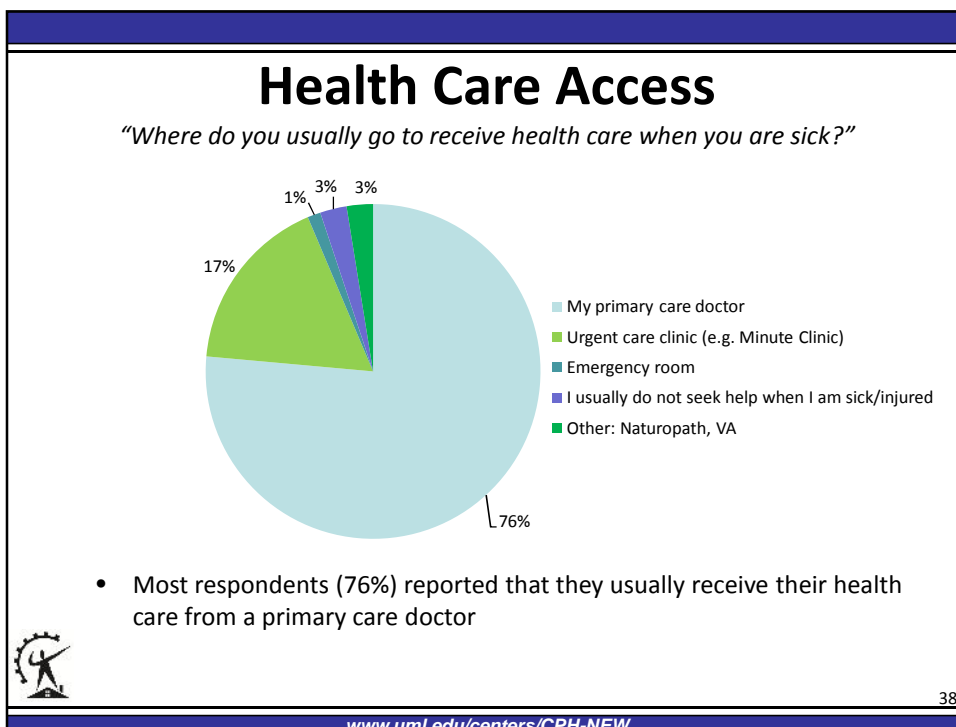
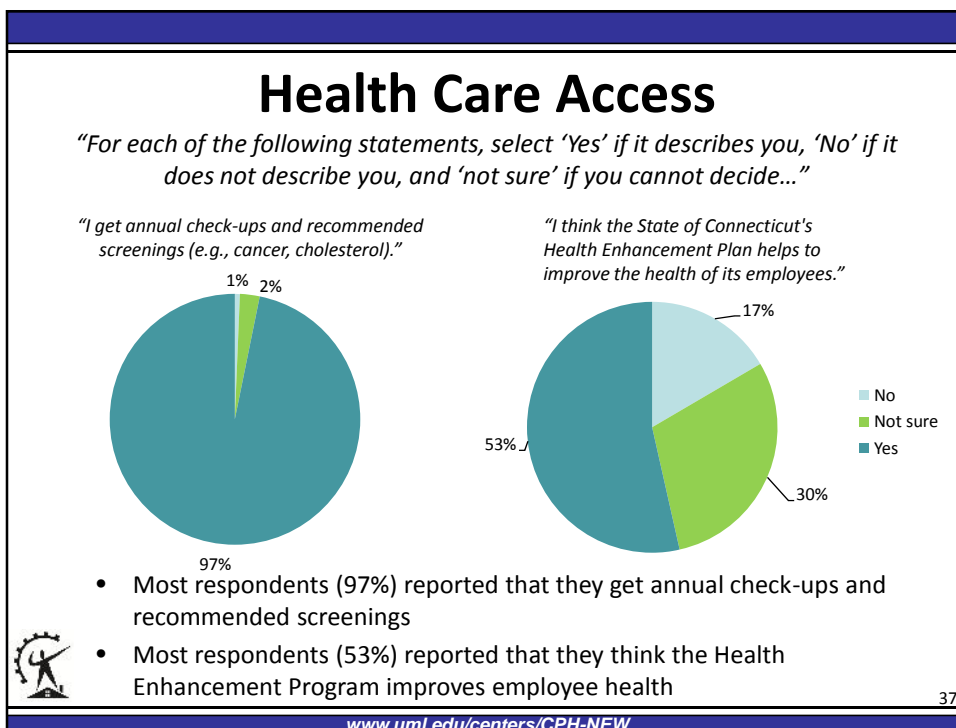
- Ratings on perceived lack of control over one's health were relatively low (rated about 2 out of 5)
- Ratings on perceived responsibility for one's health were relatively high (rated about 4 out of 5)



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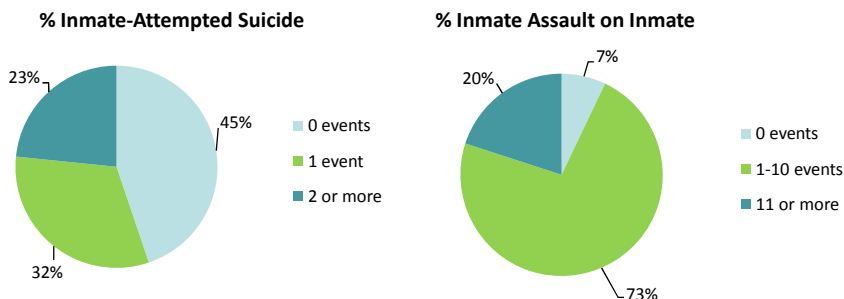
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## Events Experienced at DOC (Per Month)

"In a TYPICAL MONTH, how many times do you witness or experience each of the following..."



- Per month, 55% of respondents reported experiencing one or more inmate attempted suicides; 93% reported experiencing one or more inmate assaults on another inmate

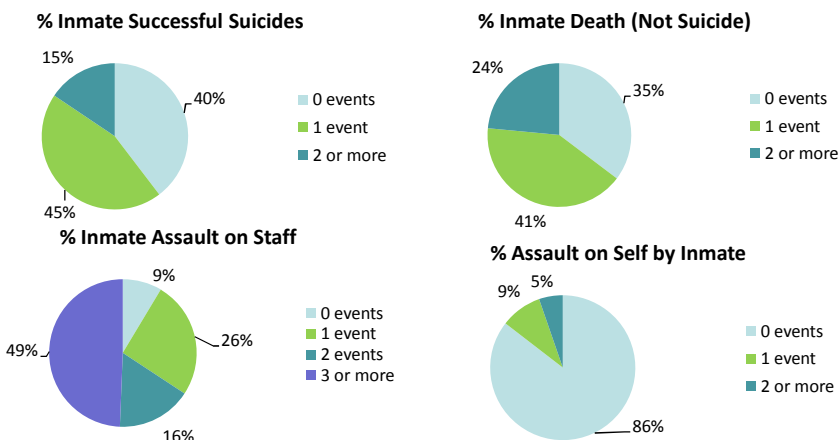


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## Events Experienced at DOC (Per Year)

"In a TYPICAL YEAR, how many times do you witness or experience each of the following..."

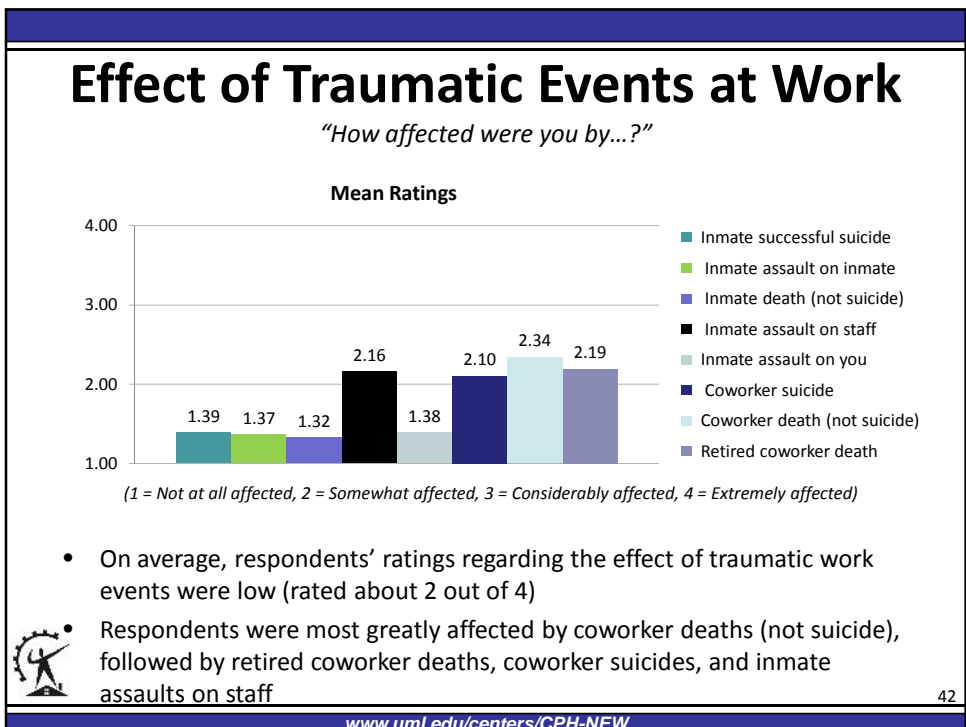
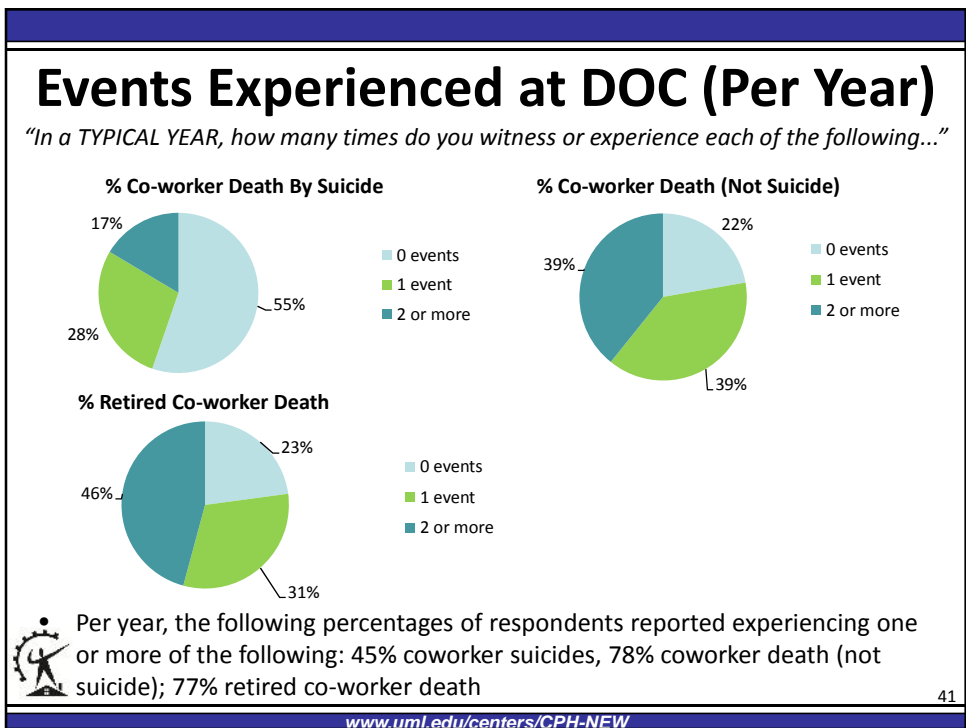


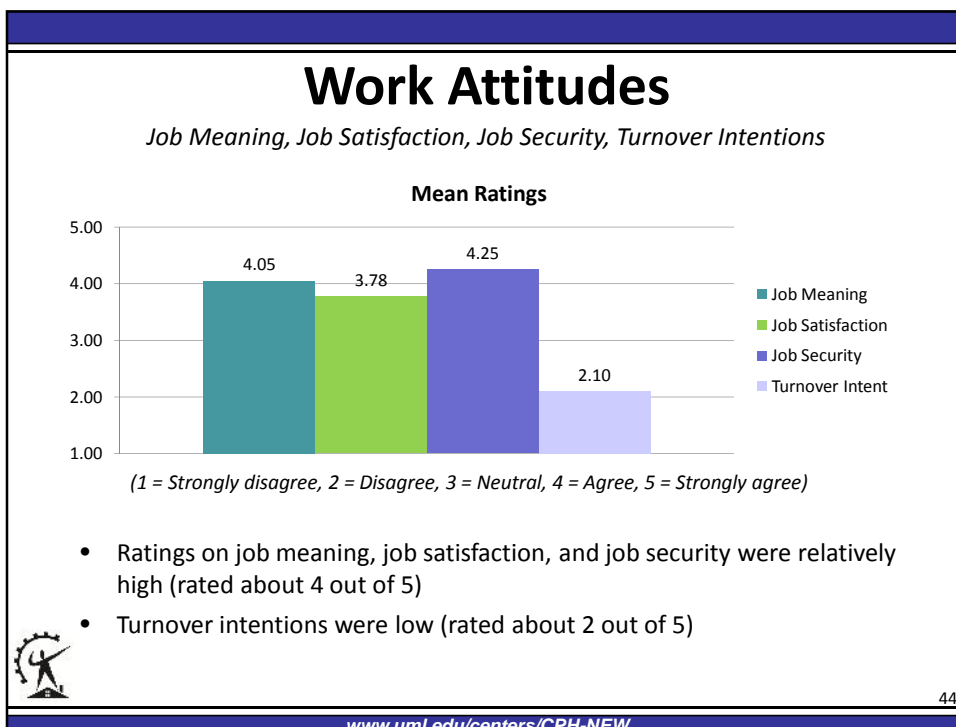
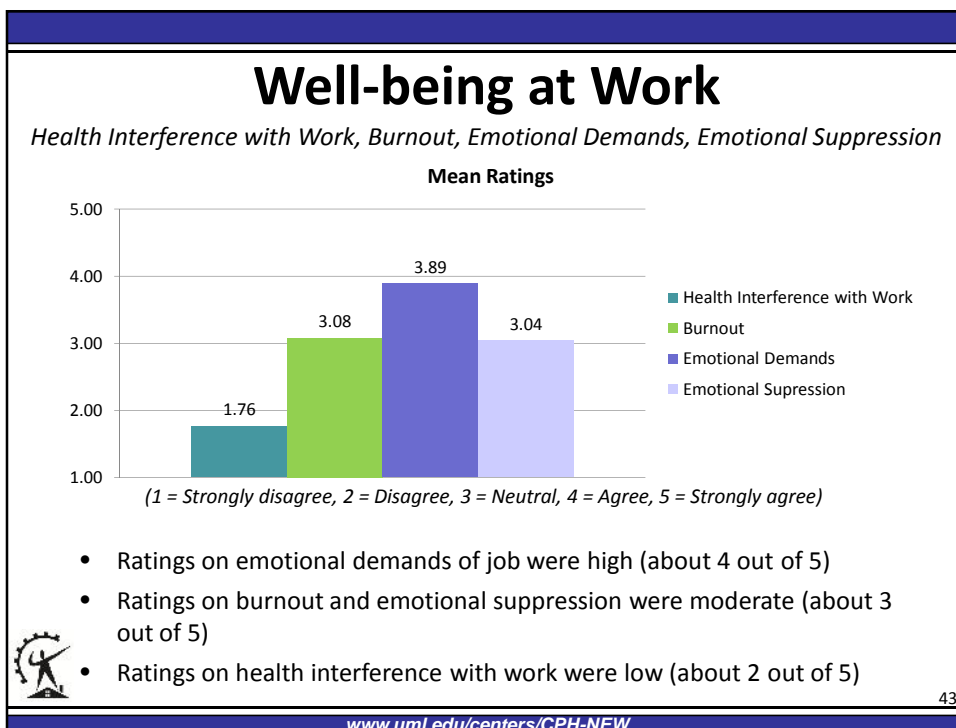
- Per year, the following percentages of respondents reported experiencing one or more of the following: 60% inmate successful suicides, 65% inmate death (not suicide); 91% inmate assault on staff, 14% inmate assault on self

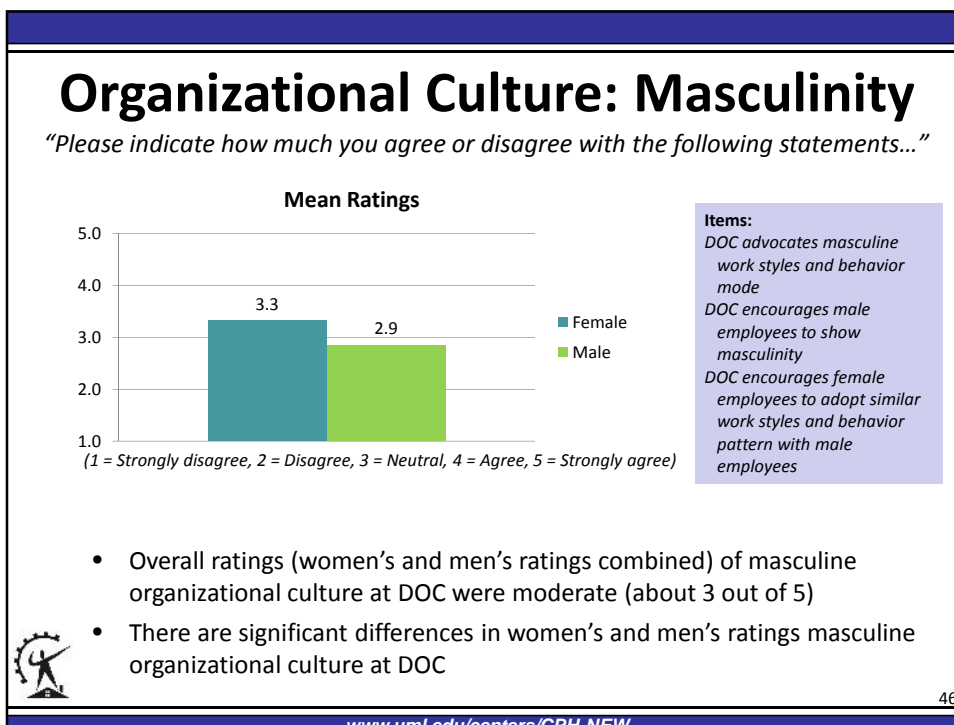
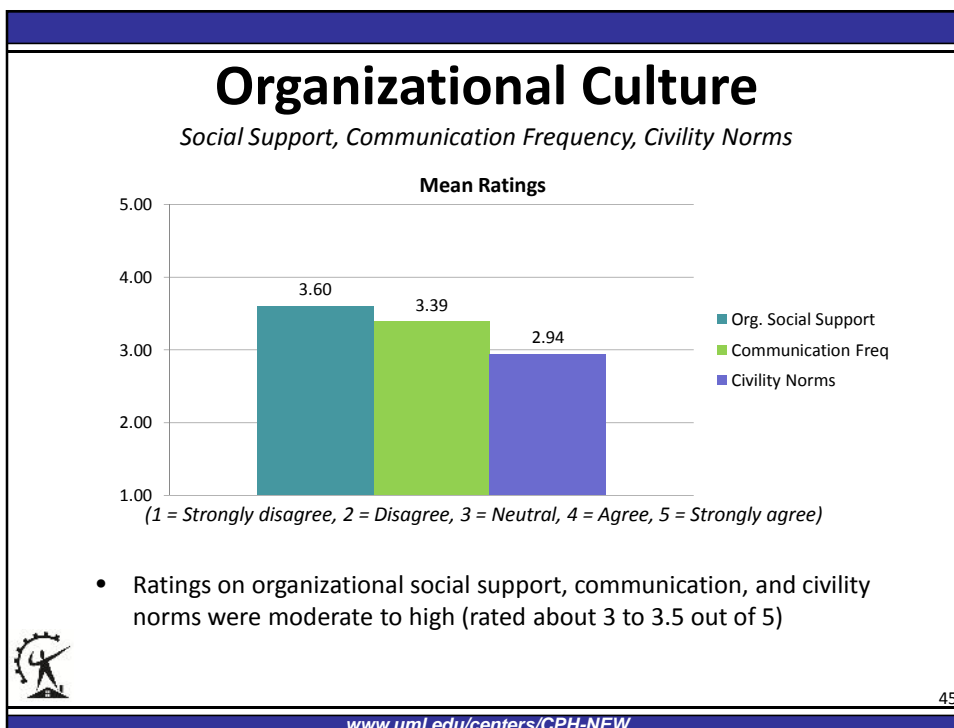


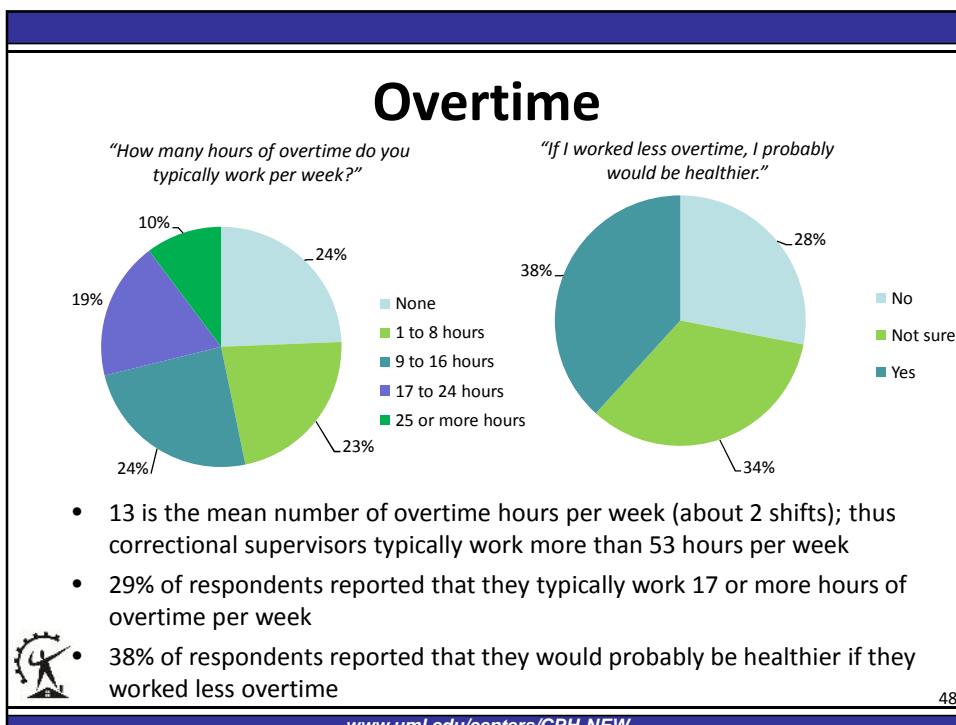
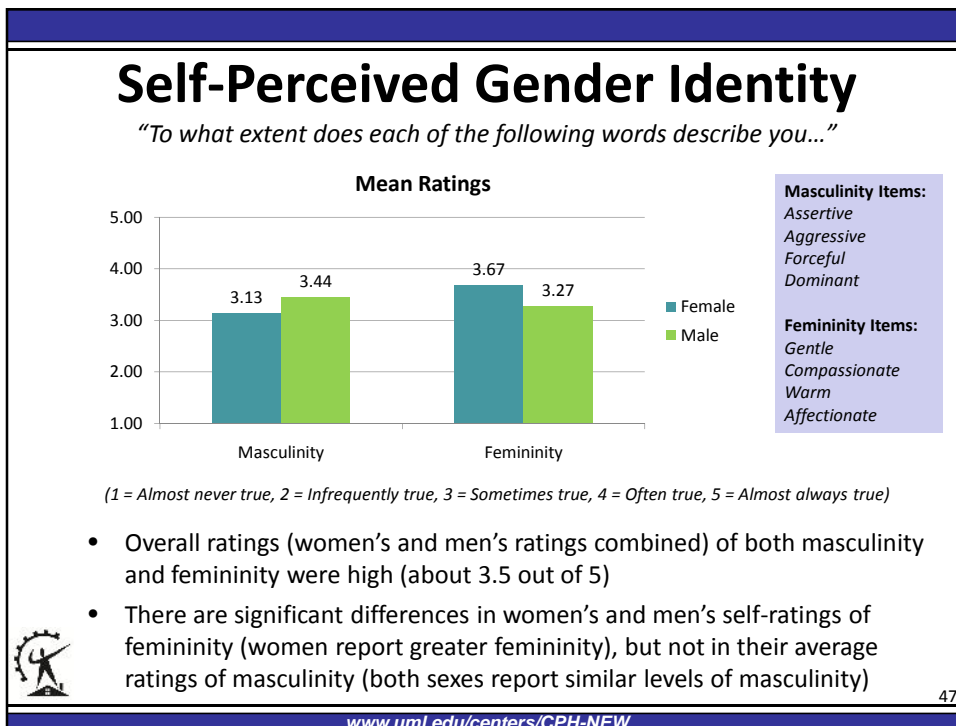
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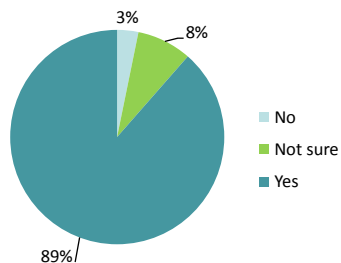
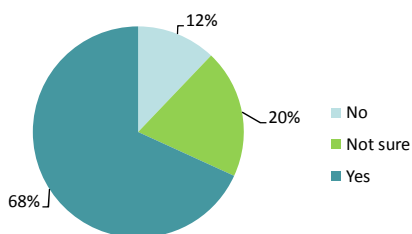




## Supervisor Concerns about Life Span

*"One of the risks of this job is that I probably will die at a younger age than people in most other jobs."*

*"I am aware that COs have a relatively short life span (i.e., they live an average of 59 years)."*



- 68% of respondents are aware that earlier death is a risk associated with their job; and 89% are aware that COs have a relatively short life span

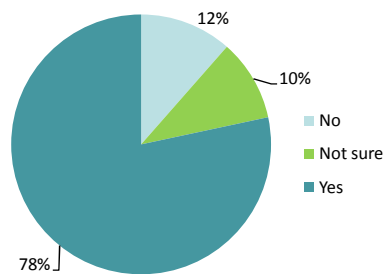
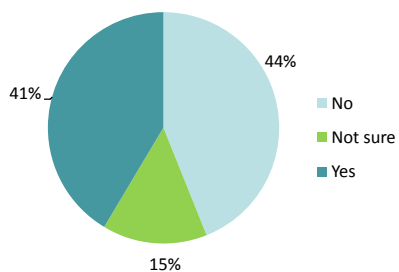


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## Work, Health, and Life Priorities

*"At this point in my life, I have to prioritize my earnings/job over my health."*

*"A person should not put off having a healthy and fun life until retirement."*



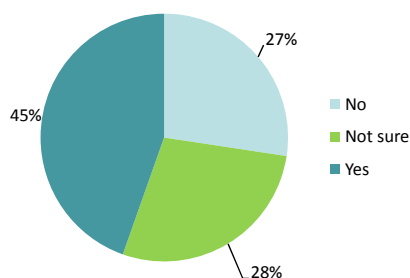
- 41% of respondents reported that they have to prioritize their earnings over their health; 78% believe that a healthy/fun life should not have to be put off until retirement



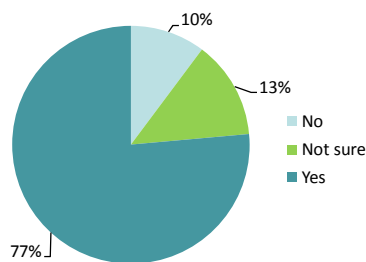
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## Retirement Thoughts and Plans

*"I plan to retire from DOC after working twenty years; I will not stay any longer than that."*



*"I often think about retirement."*



- 45% of respondents reported that they will retire after 20 years of employment at DOC
- Most respondents (77%) reported that they think about retirement often

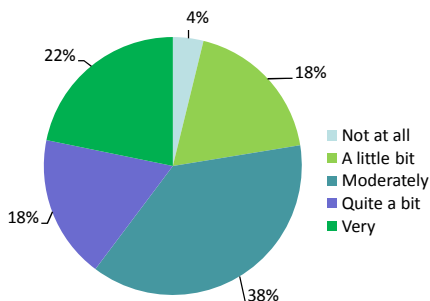


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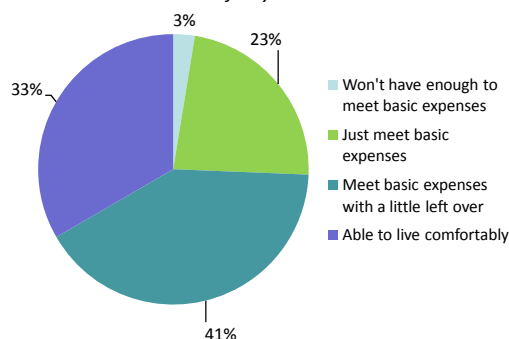
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## Financial Expectations about Retirement

*"How confident are you that you can meet your financial needs after you retire?"*



*"What do you expect your household situation to be after you retire?"*



- 40% of respondents reported that they are quite to very confident that they will be able to meet their financial needs after retirement
- Most respondents (74%) reported that after retirement they will have a little more than they need for basic expenses or will be able to live comfortably

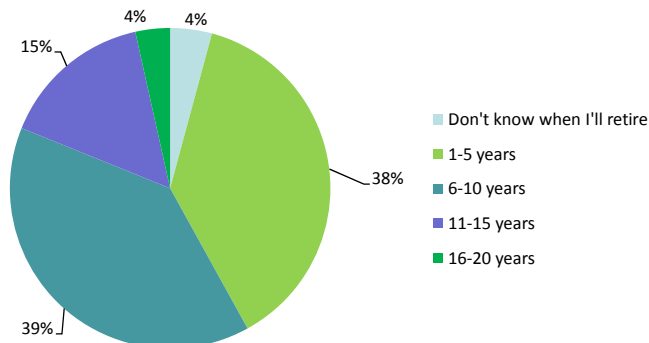


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## Number of Years Until Retirement

Calculated by subtracting current age from expected age of retirement



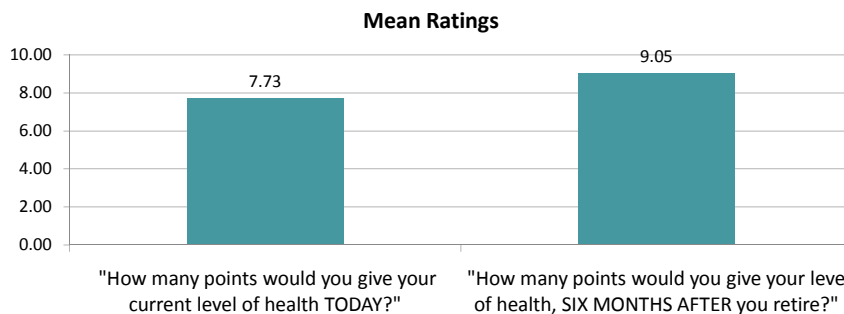
- Most (77%) of respondents reported that they will retire in 10 years or less; about half of this group will retire in 1 to 5 years and about half will retire in 6 to 10 years



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## Current and Post-Retirement Health

"Assume that your health AT ITS BEST has a value of 10 points..."



(0 = You are in the worst health possible; 10 = You in the best health possible)

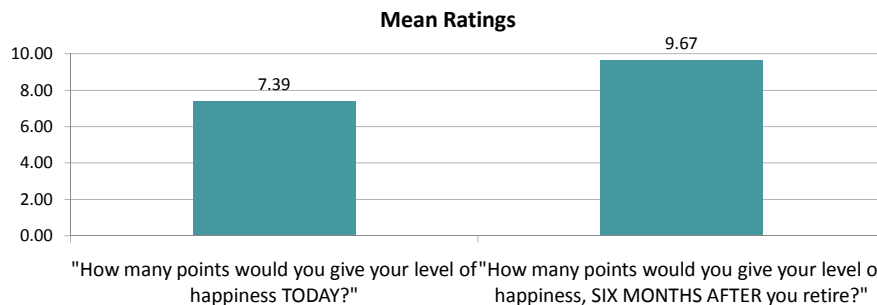
- Ratings on current health and post-retirement health are relatively high, but respondents expect to be healthier after they retire than they are currently



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## Current and Post-Retirement Happiness

"Assume that your happiness AT ITS BEST has a value of 10 points..."



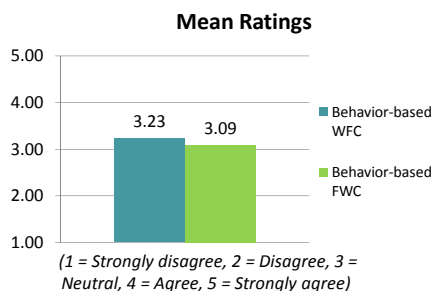
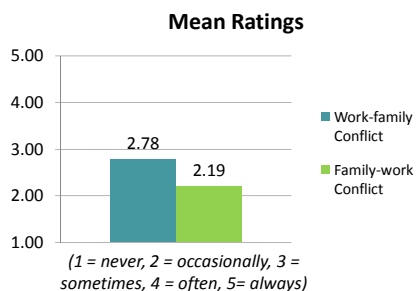
(0 = You are in the worst health possible; 10 = You in the best health possible)

- Ratings on current health and post-retirement happiness are relatively high, but respondents expect to be happier after they retire than they are currently



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## Work-Family Conflict & Family-Work Conflict



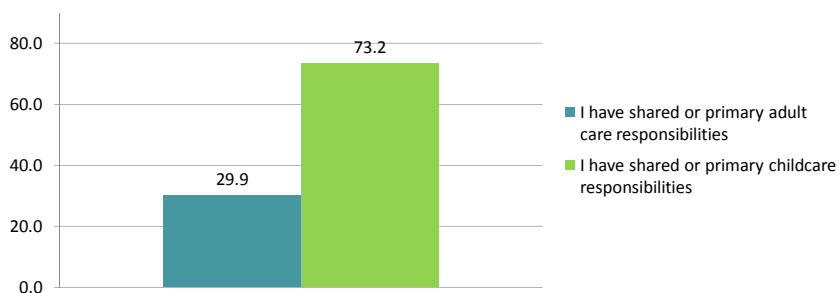
- Ratings on overall work-family conflict (WFC) and family-work conflict (FWC) are relatively low (about 2 to 2.5 out of 5)
- Ratings on behavior-based WFC and FWC are moderate (about 3 to 3.5 out of 5); behavior appears to be a strong driver of WFC and FWC
- Overall, respondents indicated that work interferes with family more than family interferes with work



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## Dependents (Child and Adult Care)

% reporting Dependent Care Responsibilities



- 29.9% of respondents reported having adult care responsibilities (13% are primary caregivers)
- 73.2% reported having child care responsibilities (12% are primary caregivers)

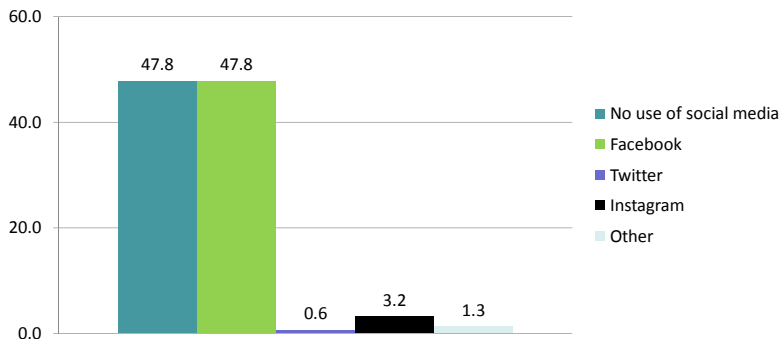


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## Use of Social Media

*“What form of social media do you use most frequently?”*

% Reporting Use Of This Social Media



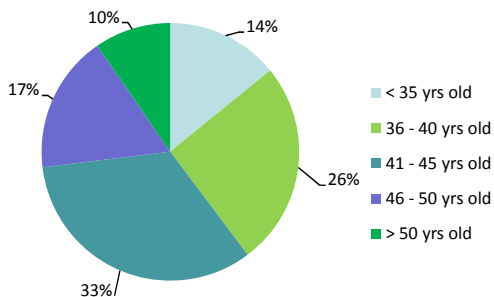
- 47.8% of respondents reported that they do not use social media and the same number reported that they use Facebook
- Respondents report very little use of Twitter, Instagram, or other forms of social media



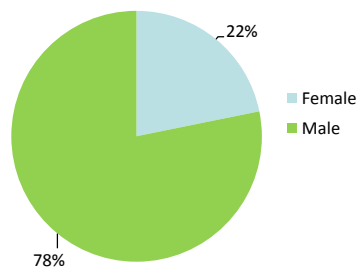
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## Age and Sex of Respondents

"What is your age (in years)?"



"What is your sex?"



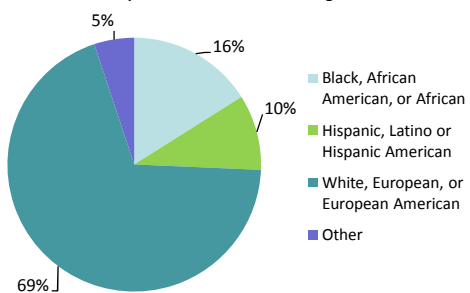
- Mean respondent age is 42 years old; most respondents (59%) are between 36 and 45 years of age
- 78% of respondents are male



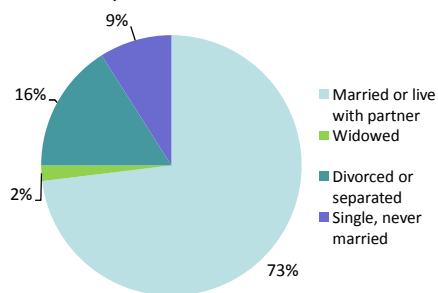
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## Race/Ethnicity and Marital Status

"What is your racial/ethnic background?"



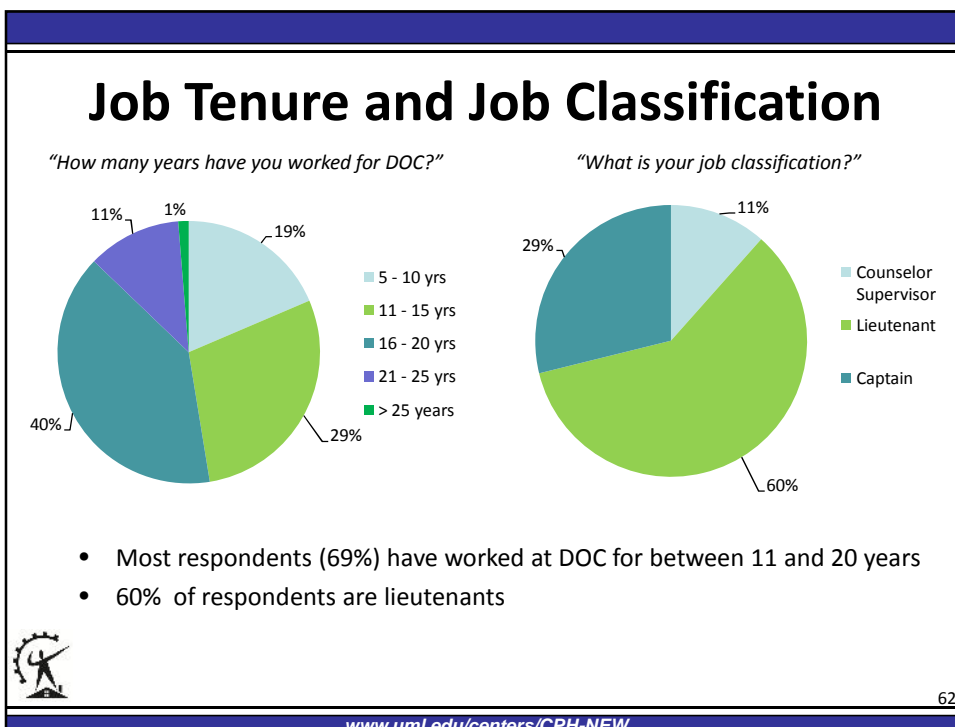
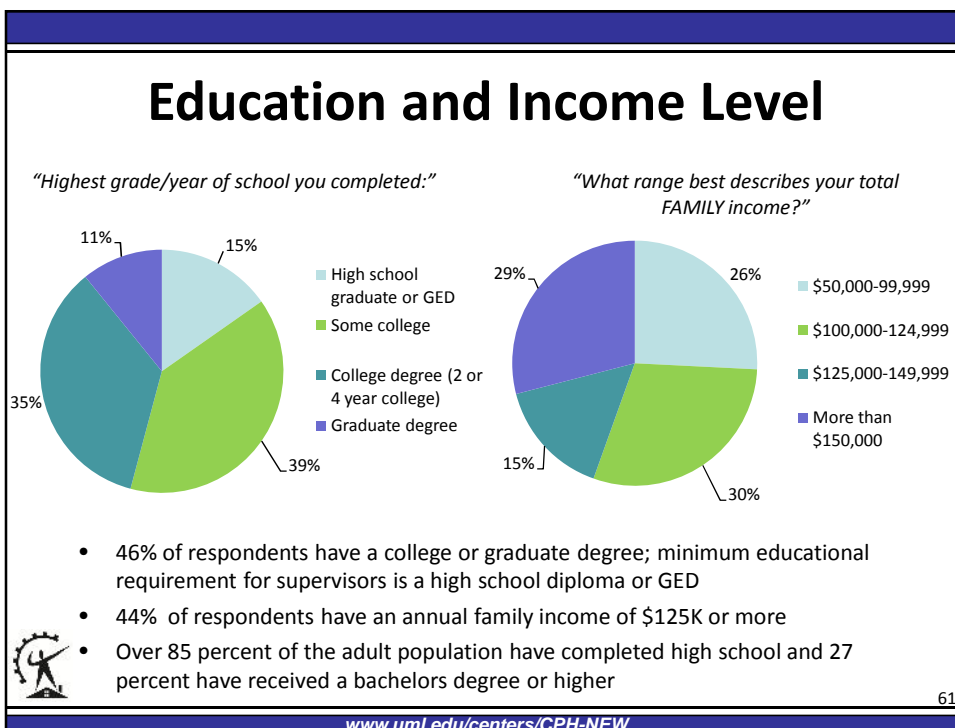
"What is your current marital status?"



- 69% of respondents are White/European or European American
- 73% of respondents are married or live with a partner



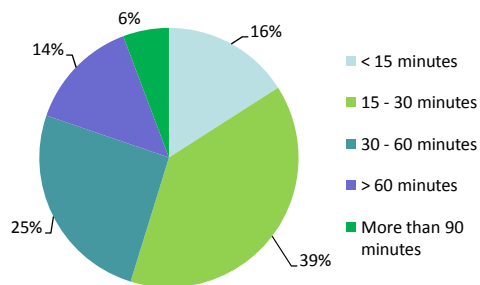
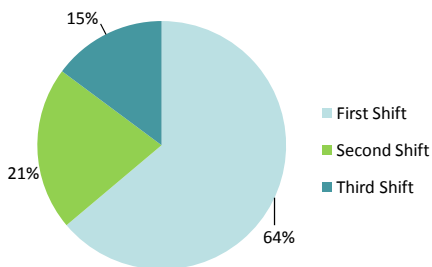
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## Work Shift and Commute Time

"What shift are you assigned to?"

"How much time do you spend traveling to and from work each day (round trip)?"



- Most respondents (64%) work on the first shift
- 55% of respondents spend 15 to 30 minutes per day traveling to and from work

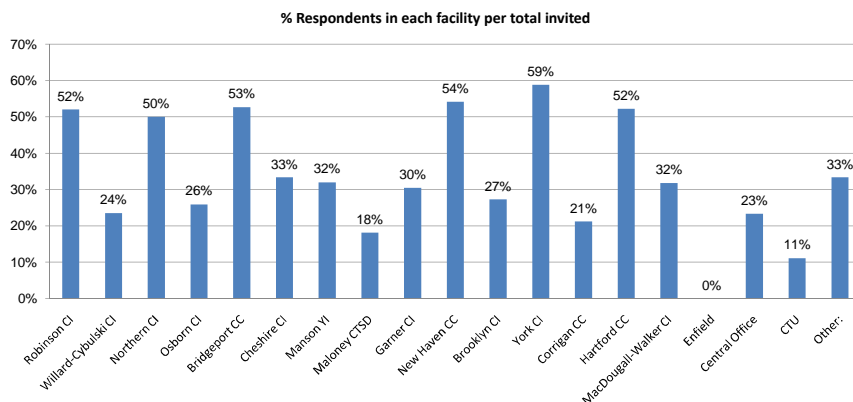


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## DOC Facility/Work Location

"What DOC facility/location do you work in?"



- Overall response rate across sites was 35% (157 participants out of 444 invites)
- The facility with the highest response rate was York (59%); the facility with the lowest response rate was Enfield (0%)



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## Top 10 Pieces of Advice for Recruits

*“What advice would you give to a new recruit about how to stay a healthy and happy person in this career?”*

Advice Themes	Frequency (%)
Eat well and exercise	18.4
Do not let stress from work spillover into home/personal life	7.4
Be positive and happy every day	6.4
Prioritize your health and family over the job	6.0
Detach from work people/Have friends outside DOC	4.3
Keep strong boundaries between work and home/personal life	4.0
Keep job in perspective, it is not the most important priority in life/Job is what you do, not who you are	4.0
Work less and limit your overtime	3.7
Travel and have hobbies	3.3
Have family/friends who care about you and provide social support	3.0
Other	39.5

- 60% of the advice provided to new recruits was related to the ten themes listed above



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## Conclusions/Notable Findings

- Most correctional supervisors (89%) recognize they have a shorter life expectancy and two-thirds think they will die younger than workers in other jobs.
- Stress levels are high at work (82%) and at home (53%).
- The amount of sleep during a workweek is 6 hours or less (57.6%), 7 hours of sleep (32.3%) and only 11.1% with the right amount of sleep.
- Average overtime is 12.8 hours per week, which means that a typical correctional supervisor is working in a stressful situation for more than 50 hours per week.
- Percentage of supervisors characterized as overweight or obese is 89%. On the positive side, obesity can improve by changing health behaviors that supervisors want to work on: Reducing stress (79.7%), Sleep (71.5%), Better eating habits (66.5%), Working out/physical activity (62%), Weight loss (58.9%).



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## Conclusions/Notable Findings, *continued*

- Other interesting or unexpected findings from correctional supervisors :
  - They experience their jobs as being meaningful.
  - They have a lot of support from their coworkers and supervisors at work.
  - They often think about retirement (76%).
  - They are a well-educated group. Although the minimum qualification for their job is a high school diploma or GED, only 15.2% report this as their terminal degree. 46.2% report their terminal degrees is a college degree; 10.8% have earned a graduate degree.
- Overall, it appears that the life of correctional supervisor at present is not very healthy or long, but the good news is that they are willing to participate in activities to change their health.



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