



Burnout in Probation and Corrections:

John T. Whitehead



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John T. Whitehead analyzes the extent and causes of job burnout in probation officers and correctional officers. Challenging models of burnout that focus on individual-level causes, Whitehead demonstrates that the findings support an organization model of the sources of job burnout -- a finding that has significant implications for managerial policy aimed at reducing burnout. Further, Whitehead shows that while burnout appears to be a serious problem for a sizeable minority of workers, it is not a problem for the majority. Ideal as supplemental reading for courses in criminal justice, criminology, and social work, Burnout in Probation and Corrections sheds new light on the incidence, causes, and possible remedies for job burnout in these professions.

Whitehead's study is unique in its analysis of multiple samples from several states and regions and from two different time periods. The study also includes a qualitative analysis of worker comments on the factors contributing to burnout, a comparison of correctional officer versus probation officer burnout, and a comparison of male and female probation officer burnout. Based on his research, he indicates that client contact is not the cause of burnout in probation and correctional officers, a conclusion that contrasts sharply with some of the previous theoretical work in the field. Instead, Whitehead demonstrates, organizational issues such as role conflict are critical sources of burnout. Therefore, managerial policy should center upon organizational improvements to reduce job stress and job dissatisfaction.

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