

Resilience as a Community Corrections Officer (CCO)

What does resilience mean for a CCO?

The Community Corrections workplace can be a highly pressured, unpredictable environment. Emotionally charged situations will regularly arise, and we often deal with difficult or controversial issues. CCOs must be able to adapt to stressful situations or crises as they arise, remain calm, composed and act constructively. For a CCO, building and maintaining resilience also includes having a healthy work/life balance, tapping into support networks and using healthy coping mechanisms to process distressing matters to reduce the risk of vicarious trauma and exhaustion.

While the work of a CCO can be highly rewarding, provide great job satisfaction and positively contributes to people's lives, some days can be challenging. Variety, networking and peer support can help you to build resilience and motivation to overcome challenges and setbacks.

What can challenge a CCO's resilience?



Critical and cognitive thinking challenges



Vigilance

is required when interacting with people on supervised orders, in court and on home visits



Assessing risk

is required when interacting with people on supervised orders, in court and on home visits



Deadlines

for case plans, reports and other paperwork, especially for court/parole authority proceedings



Accountability

is required when interacting with people on supervised orders, in court and on home visits



Emotional challenges



Environmental exposure

to emotionally unregulated behaviours (including severely mentally unwell, aggressive and/or substance-affected people)



Exposure to sensitive information

including details of traumatic events (including violence, physical or sexual assault, death, etc.)



Vicarious trauma

from exposure to other people's experiences

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Judgement & decision-making challenges



Time pressures

which require multi-tasking conflicting priorities and meeting deadlines



Escalating issues

and responding to incidents appropriately



Rationalising

person-centred case management decisions based on risks and needs, policy/procedures, professional judgement, and consultation



Interpersonal challenges



Appropriate and respectful interactions

with people on supervised orders, stakeholders, and members of the public



Working independently

day-to-day engaging with individuals and completing admin based tasks



Teamwork

and strong communication with others to support the safety of people on supervised orders and general public

A CCO's physical demands are light

CCOs spend a significant amount of time working on a computer (for report writing, data entry, etc.) and can alternate between sitting and standing to complete these tasks. External tasks such as home visits may require walking and/or driving. Any lifting or carrying of items will not exceed 5kg.

How does a CCO become equipped for these challenges?

All these challenges may seem overwhelming, but do not worry! CCOs are not expected to tackle them without any support or preparation.

Mandatory training as part of the Certificate IV in Correctional Practice qualification will give you the skills and knowledge you need to be effective in the role. It will also introduce you to the Community Corrections' policy and practice framework, which provides tools and guidance to support your decision-making

In the office, your Team Leader (TL) and Manager will support you directly. Your TL will mentor you and review your work, as you build your confidence working with people on supervised orders.

Watch this video to hear more about the job from current CCOs



What further support can a CCO access?

- Counselling provided through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- You can talk to your Manager if you need any workplace support
- Peer support
- Broader Department of Communities & Justice social and professional support networks
- Access to leave such as flex, family and carer, and recreation leave

Your interview is the best opportunity to ask questions about being a CCO, including challenges, training, and support to perform the role.