

State of New York
Department of Correctional Services

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**PSYCHOLOGICAL SCREENING PROGRAM
FOR CORRECTION OFFICER APPLICANTS**

1993

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**PSYCHOLOGICAL SCREENING PROGRAM
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OVERVIEW

This eighth report of the Psychological Screening Program for Correction Officer Applicants summarizes the Program's activities for the period from its re-establishment in May 1992 to September 1993. As was noted in the sixth report, the Program had previously been disbanded on December 26, 1990 due to the fact that the Department had discontinued the hiring of Correction Officers. On May 1, 1992, the program was reactivated. For historical background information, please refer to the Program's previous reports. The enabling legislation, Section 8 of Correction Law, sunsets on April 1, 1994, under Chapter 55-Laws of 1992, unless extended.

From May 1992 through September 1, 1993, a total of 1,890 applicants reported for psychological testing and a psychological interview in Albany. Of these 1,890 applicants, 1,875 had final psychological ratings as of December 1993 with only 15 cases pending Appeal Board review. An analysis of these final qualification ratings of the various subgroups of applicants failed to find evidence of adverse impact based on Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission guidelines.

A. Legislative History, Intent and Program History

The objective of psychologically screening Correction Officer candidates is to identify those individuals displaying psychopathology or other psychological limitations which could significantly impair job performance and effectiveness.

The Psychological Screening Program was originally enacted as Chapter 887 of the Laws of 1983. Chapter 887 has subsequently been amended four times. In March 1992, the Psychological Screening Program was again renewed for two years until April 1, 1994. Annual reports of the activities of the Psychological Screening Unit have been generated since 1986.

Since the Department did not anticipate the need to recruit new Correction Officer staff during the balance of Fiscal Year 1990-91 and into Fiscal Year 1991-92, a decision was made to terminate both the Psychological Screening and Background Investigation Units in late 1990 due to the State's fiscal crisis. In December 1991, a group of recruit officers, who had been screened before the program's 1990 disbanding, was hired and trained at the Academy. By March 1992, however, it became clear that the Department of Correctional Services would again need to begin hiring new recruits in order to maintain acceptable staffing levels. Thus, in May 1992, the Psychological Screening Unit was reinstated although in much smaller form. By the end of August 1992, the Independent Advisory (Appeals) Board was also reinstated.

B. Project Staffing and Budget

1. Staffing

Since re-establishment in May 1992, project staffing has remained at a minimum. On a full time basis, there were a Director of Psychological Screening and two Support Staff, a Senior Typist and a Clerk, on loan from other agency locations.

For approximately the first month of operation in 1992, when the candidate interview volume was the highest, psychological evaluations were performed by six Department psychologists who were temporarily loaned to the Psychological Screening Unit. When the volume of candidates decreased, evaluations were conducted by the Director of Psychological Screening, two full time temporary psychologists and two part time temporary psychologists who worked one day each week. At the close of 1992, staffing reverted to the Director and two support staff on loan.

In 1993, the program utilized the following extra-service, loaned and temporary/per diem staff to conduct the necessary psychological testing and interviews:

- (1) Two Department psychologists on temporary loan from facilities;
- (2) Two additional Department psychologists who handled program tasks on an extra-service basis;
- (3) Five psychologists employed by other State agencies (Office of Mental Health, Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities and Department of Social Services) on an extra-service basis; and
- (4) Sixteen temporary and per diem psychological staff.

2. Budget

The 1992 report to the Legislature indicated the program expended \$130,414 from its re-establishment in May 1992 through October 1992. For the subsequent program period from November 1992 through October 1993, the Department's fiscal office reports that \$144,983 in expenditures were attributed to the program.

-Personal Services	\$104,816
-Other than Personal Services	40,167
-Grand Total	\$144,983

Included in the Personal Services expenditures, the Director of Psychological Screening (M-1), is the only dedicated Unit item. This year, the salaries of the Senior Typist and Clerk who are on loan from other agency locations, are not included. Extra service payments to Department and other State Agency staff as well as temporary service and per diem costs were included in Personal Services expenditures.

Of the "Other Than Personal Services" expenditures (\$40,167), the Independent Advisory Appeals Board expended \$20,007.

C. Scoring Procedures

To complete the Psychological Screening Procedure, each Correction Officer candidate appears twice in Albany. On Day One, the candidate is given a psychological test battery consisting of: (1) the original version of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), a widely used and well recognized measure of psychopathology and personality functioning, (2) the Inwald Personality Inventory (IPI), a measure of personality traits relevant to job performance in the fields of corrections and police work and (3) the Correction Officer Interest Blank (COIB) which measures the match between the candidate's attitudes and those of successful correction officers.

Some time after completing Day One, the Correction Officer candidate returns to Albany for Day Two. At that time, the candidate has a face-to-face clinical interview with a staff psychologist who first reviews the candidate's psychological test scores.

Once the interview is completed the psychologist then generates a written report on the candidate. The psychologist also assigns a rating on a five point scale that either "recommends" the candidate for hire (scores of one, two or three) or "does not recommend" the candidate for employment (a rating of four or five). The Director of Psychological Screening or other reviewer (a licensed Psychologist) examines all the psychological screening evaluations produced by this unit. The Department considers these reports to be valid for nine months from the date of testing. After this nine month period, the reports are updated prior to appointment.

A recommendation against hiring, as indicated by a rating of four or five, is subsequently sent to the Correction Officer candidate as a Department psychological disqualification issued by the Director of Psychological Screening.

D. Psychological Disqualification and Appeals Procedure

Psychologically disqualified candidates are notified in writing of this decision and are informed of their right to appeal. The appeals process begins when a candidate writes to the Director of Human Resources Management of the Department of Correctional Services and states his/her wish to appeal the decision of psychological disqualification. A hearing date is then set for the candidate's case to be heard by the Independent Advisory Board.

According to the governing statute, the Independent Advisory Board "shall be comprised of three members who shall be selected by the President of the Civil Service Commission." The Board consists of a board certified psychiatrist, a licensed psychologist and a representative of the Department of Civil Service, who possesses a doctoral degree in education.

The Independent Advisory Board reviews the decision made by the Psychological Screening Unit and, if a candidate decides to appear in person or with representation, meets with the candidate and/or his/her representative. The Board also reviews any additional data or evaluation provided by the applicant. If the Independent Advisory Board affirms a candidate's appeal, he/she is then deemed psychologically qualified and is eligible for appointment if the background investigation and medical exam are passed successfully. A denial of a candidate's appeal by the Independent Advisory Board constitutes the final psychological decision with regard to this applicant.

HOW THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SCREENING UNIT EVALUATES CANDIDATES

Candidates are evaluated by their interviewing psychologists on 11 different rating dimensions which are reflective of overall psychological functioning and adjustment. These areas include:

- Interview Behavior
- Interpersonal Relationships (marital/family/other)
- Employment History
- Arrest History
- Motor Vehicle Infractions
- Military History
- Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) Results
- Inward Personality Inventory (IPI) Results
- Aggression/Violence History
- Alcohol/Drug Abuse
- Psychiatric History

As the interviewing psychologist evaluates the candidate on the above dimensions, he/she is particularly cognizant of the candidate's demonstrated ability to function effectively under stress, to relate effectively to a wide range of people, to relate appropriately to authority and to rules and regulations and to use sound judgment, especially under pressure.

Before the interview begins, the psychologist reviews psychological testing results and information on the candidate developed during the background investigation conducted by the Employee Investigation Unit. The interviewer uses information from this background investigation to generate questions specific to any problem areas that may have been thus far identified.

The psychologist then meets with the candidate and conducts a face-to-face semistructured interview during which time the interviewer records his/her impressions of the candidate and asks the candidate about his/her functioning in the areas outlined above. Concurrently, the interviewer makes a careful assessment of the candidate's current mental status.

At the conclusion of the interview, the interviewer then rates the candidate using pre-established criteria on each of the 11 rating dimensions. The interviewer then combines his/her judgments to arrive at a final overall psychological rating for the candidate.

CRITERIA FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL DISQUALIFICATION OF A CANDIDATE

Section Eight of the New York State Correction Law sets forth the conditions under which a correction officer candidate may be disqualified from further consideration for appointment. Paragraph three, in part, states that:

Persons who have been determined by a psychologist licensed under the laws of this state as suffering from psychotic disorders, serious character disorders, or other disorders which could hinder performance on the job may be deemed ineligible for appointment; provided, however, that other components of the employee selection process may be taken into consideration in reaching the determination as to whether a candidate is deemed eligible or ineligible for certification to a list of eligible candidates.

The Psychological Screening Unit uses a five point scale upon which a candidate is given a final psychological rating. Ratings One, Two and Three are findings of psychological qualification. These ratings indicate the relative psychological fitness of a candidate. These ratings generate a recommendation that the candidate receive further consideration for possible appointment as a Correction Officer.

Ratings Four and Five, however, are findings of psychological disqualification. These ratings indicate that the candidate is not recommended for further consideration for appointment. More specifically, ratings Four and Five are described on the Psychological Screening Unit final rating sheet as follows:

- ___ (4) There is evidence suggestive of character disorder, emotional adjustment difficulties or other psychological variables which would contraindicate suitability for employment.
DO NOT RECOMMEND.

- ___ (5) There is evidence suggestive of psychosis, severe character disorder or other serious psychological impairment.
DO NOT RECOMMEND.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CANDIDATES WHO ARE PSYCHOLOGICALLY DISQUALIFIED FROM FURTHER CONSIDERATION FOR APPOINTMENT AS CORRECTION OFFICERS

It is obvious that any candidate who is currently suffering from a serious mental disorder e.g. schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression, etc. would be considered to be seriously psychologically impaired and thus would not be recommended for further consideration for appointment. However, the vast majority of candidates screened and disqualified by this Unit are not mentally ill. This fact should not be surprising since it takes a relative amount of intactness to be able to pass the New York State Civil Service written exam and to complete the rather lengthy and thorough application and background investigation procedures. Who then are the bulk of individuals who are considered to be disqualified by virtue of psychological reasons?

The philosophy underlying the process of psychological screening is one of risk management. In other words, the overriding mission of the Psychological Screening Unit is conceived as one of screening out the candidates who present the greatest possible risk to the security and safety of inmates, fellow officers, other staff members, and members of the public (e.g. visitors, volunteers, inmate families) in the State's correctional facilities.

Personality variables clearly have a bearing on one's level of risk. For example, those candidates who present a history of acting out impulsively in response to stress or provocation or who present evidence of serious flaws in judgment would likely be high risk candidates in a correctional setting. Other risk factors would include a history of antisocial behaviors, inappropriate aggressiveness, poor attitude toward authority, disregard for rules and regulations and tendencies toward alcohol or substance abuse. Also of concern would be a candidate who presents an unusual vulnerability to stress or one who has a history of significant interpersonal conflict.

Illustrative Case Profiles of Disqualified Candidates

Appendix 1 presents three illustrative case histories of candidates who were psychologically disqualified. These cases were prepared by the Program Director to highlight impact of this program in screening out psychologically unsuitable candidates for further consideration for employment as correction officers.

E. Psychological Screening and Appeals Data

A total of 1,890 candidates (1,693 males and 197 females) completed psychological screening from May 1992 to September 1, 1993.

1. Psychological Disqualifications (May 1992-September 1993)

Psychological disqualifications by the Psychological Screening Unit arising from ratings of "4" or "5" totaled 583 for this period.

2. Appeals of Disqualifications (August 1992-December 1993)

The Independent Advisory Board was re-established in August 1992. As of December 1993, the Independent Advisory Board heard 259 cases. The Board sustained the Department's decision 164 times (63.3%) and overturned the decision on previously disqualified candidates 95 times (36.7%).

As of December 1993, 15 candidates had appeals pending of psychological disqualifications during this report period (May 1992-September 1993).

As such, the following adverse impact analysis is based on an adjusted total of 473 final psychological disqualifications, which excludes the 15 cases pending appeal and the 95 cases subsequently qualified by the Appeals Board.

F. Annual Adverse Impact Analysis

Since its inception, the Psychological Screening Unit has monitored its psychological evaluations for the presence of adverse impact. According to federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidelines, adverse impact is said to exist when the hiring rate for a protected class is less than 80% of the hiring rate for the largest hired (the non-minority) group.

Appended Tables 1-3 are reviewed in order to conduct an adverse impact analysis on the psychological screening hiring program on all 1,875 candidates with final psychological ratings as well as the 1,678 male and 197 female candidates separately.

These tables exclude the 15 candidates (all white male candidates) whose appeals are pending since that final psychological rating has not been determined.

It should be noted that those candidates who are now qualified psychologically by action of the Independent Advisory Board are contained in these tables as psychologically qualified, while those whose appeals were denied are carried as psychologically disqualified.

Total Applicants

Using the 80% rule of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, adverse impact is deemed to exist if a minority group's qualification rate fails to reach 80% of the qualification rate for the majority group. To calculate this in Table 1, 80% of the White qualification rate of 76.4% yields an adverse impact threshold of 61.1%. The Black (68.0%) and Hispanic (67.1%) qualification rates exceed 61.1% so there is a failure to find adverse impact on these protected classes of applicants.

Male Applicants

Table 2 focuses on male applicants. Under the EEOC 80% rule, 80% of the White male qualification rate, 76.0% yields an adverse impact threshold of 60.8%. Both the Black male qualification rate (64.6%) and the Hispanic male qualification rate (63.8%) exceed this 60.8% threshold. As such, there is a failure to find adverse impact on these protected classes of male applicants.

Female Applicants

Table 3 focuses on female applicants. Under the EEOC 80% rule, 80% of the White female qualification rate of 82.0% yields an adverse impact threshold of 65.6%. The Black female qualification rate (75.9%) and the Hispanic female qualification rate (84.6%) each exceed 65.6% so there is a failure to find adverse impact on these protected classes of female applicants.

In summary, the preceding comparison of the qualification rates of the various subgroups of applicants failed to find evidence of adverse impact based on the EEOC 80% Rule.

PROBATIONARY TERMINATIONS

Departmental hiring data for the period of June through September 1992 provides a perspective on the relative proportion of probationary year terminations.

During June 1992, 147 recruits were hired, and during September 1992, another 149 recruits were hired. Hence, a total of 296 recruits were due to complete probation by the end of September 1993. Only eight or 2.7% failed probation.

These eight probationary terminations were for the following reasons:

- (1) 2 cases of positive drug urinalysis while at Training Academy
- (2) 1 physical agility disqualifications while at Training Academy
- (3) 1 weapons disqualification while at Training Academy
- (4) 4 terminations while at a correctional facility. One officer was AWOL (Absent Without Authorized Leave), failed to call in that day, and remained absent without supplying the requested documentation to substantiate his absence. Another officer was absent following a claimed work-related injury but ceased

providing required medical documentation. A third officer had 15 occasions of absence in a given time period, followed by AWOL for one and one-half months. A fourth officer while on tower duty, discharged a revolver. He indicated that while walking to a bathroom, he unholstered his firearm, then slipped, discharging the weapon in the process.

Although the number of recruits that could be followed for their probationary year was relatively small, the Program Director believes that this very low rate of probationary terminations reflects favorably on the contribution of the psychological screening program.

CONCLUSION

In accord with the statutory requirement, this report concerns the operation of the Psychological Screening Program from its re-establishment in May 1992 to September 1, 1993.

As discussed in this brief report, the program has operated in compliance with the governing statute during this time period and successfully reviewed the pool of correction officer candidates required to meet the Department's personnel needs.

An analysis of the qualification rates of the various subgroups of applicants failed to find evidence of adverse impact based on Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission guidelines.

TABLE 1

FINAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SCREENING DECISION
1992- 1993 CORRECTION OFFICER CANDIDATES
BY ETHNICITY

FINAL PSYCH DECISION	TOTAL	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC	OTHER
Qualified	1,402 (74.8%)	1,154 (76.4%)	187 (68.0%)	55 (67.1%)	6 (75.0%)
Disqualified	473 (25.2%)	356 (23.6%)	88 (32.0%)	27 (32.9%)	2 (25.0%)
TOTAL	1,875 (100%)	1,510 (100%)	275 (100%)	82 (100%)	8 (100%)

TABLE 2

FINAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SCREENING DECISION
1992-1993 MALE CORRECTION OFFICER CANDIDATES
BY ETHNICITY

FINAL PSYCH DECISION	TOTAL	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC	OTHER
Qualified	1,245 (74.2%)	1,072 (76.0%)	124 (64.6%)	44 (63.8%)	5 (71.4%)
Disqualified	433 (25.8%)	338 (24.0%)	68 (35.4%)	25 (36.2%)	2 (28.6%)
TOTAL	1,678 (100%)	1,410 (100%)	192 (100%)	69 (100%)	7 (100%)

TABLE 3

FINAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SCREENING DECISION
1992-1993 FEMALE CORRECTION OFFICER CANDIDATES
BY ETHNICITY

FINAL PSYCH DECISION	TOTAL	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC	OTHER
Qualified	157 (79.7%)	82 (82.0%)	63 (75.9%)	11 (84.6%)	1 (100%)
Disqualified	40 (20.3%)	18 (18.0%)	20 (24.1%)	2 (15.4%)	0 (0.0%)
TOTAL	197 (100%)	100 (100%)	83 (100%)	13 (100%)	1 (100%)

APPENDIX 1

WHO GETS PSYCHOLOGICALLY DISQUALIFIED?

ILLUSTRATIVE CASE EXAMPLES

Three cases will be presented which illustrate some of the dimensions assessed by the psychological screening procedure. It must be noted that, in every case presented, the applicant had been both medically and background qualified and would have been appointed if not for the psychological screening decision.

Case One

Candidate One was a thin and unassertive male who spoke in a very quiet voice. His mood appeared depressed and he made only intermittent eye contact with the interviewer. Candidate One appeared to have very low self esteem and it was difficult to imagine how this man would be able to command the respect of inmates.

Psychological test results revealed that Candidate One adopted a considerably guarded and defensive response style in which he tended to minimize the existence of personal problems. Nevertheless, there were indications noted to suggest that Candidate One could be quiet and withdrawn yet exhibit sudden outbursts of anger and hostility which may come as a surprise to others. Psychological testing also revealed additional evidence to suggest that Candidate One may tend to deny and suppress feelings of frustration and anger only to more suddenly erupt with anger in response to some additional provocation.

Candidate One described a discordant and chaotic relationship with his former girlfriend who is the mother of his 11 month old son. Candidate One reported that issues concerning the visitation of his son have caused numerous recent arguments with his former girlfriend, some of which have resulted in charges of Harassment and Criminal Contempt being lodged against him. In fact, it was noted that his former girlfriend had obtained an order of protection against Candidate One.

In recounting more of the history of this discordant relationship, Candidate One acknowledged that things really began to deteriorate after he was charged with child abuse by the local county child protective services agency after Candidate One had allegedly slapped his former girlfriend's six year old daughter across the face and caused her nose to bleed. Candidate One reported that, as a result of this incident, he and his former girlfriend were referred to counseling. However, Candidate One only attended three sessions before dropping out because he felt that the therapist was stirring up issues rather than resolving them.

As Candidate One continued to describe the history of this relationship with his ex-girlfriend, a cyclic pattern emerged in which he would ignore many of his girlfriend's provocations only to erupt with anger at further provocations. Although he denied ever assaulting her, Candidate One did state that, on one occasion, he "threw her out of the way" after an argument had begun so that he could leave their dwelling.

Candidate One described a history of relatively recent arrests for such charges as Harassment, Aggravated Harassment and Criminal Contempt. He stated that all of these charges were related to the difficulties that he was having with his ex-girlfriend and her family.

In stating his conclusions regarding his evaluation of this candidate, the interviewing psychologist noted that:

Very serious concerns are raised with regard to Candidate One's apparent tendency to deny or suppress lower levels of anger only to respond more abruptly and angrily to additional levels of provocation. This notion appears to be illustrated most clearly in his highly discordant relationship with his ex-girlfriend and, particularly with regard to his own admission of slapping his ex-girlfriend's daughter on one occasion and, on repeated occasions, engaging in behavior which resulted in criminal charges being lodged against him. It is also noted that the psychological testing results suggest that Candidate One could continue to behave in this manner when provoked sufficiently. Moreover, it is noted from the interview that Candidate One normally presents as a quiet, passive and unassertive young man who, under usual circumstances, would appear to have great difficulty in commanding the respect of inmates.

The interviewing psychologist concluded his report by linking his observations to the likely impairment of job related abilities which are viewed as being essential to the effective functioning of a correction officer:

Thus, were he to be appointed as a Correction Officer, Candidate One would be expected to display the following job related impairments: The ability to make sound and appropriate decisions regarding security and safety in emergency situations, the ability to perform effectively and efficiently under stress, the ability to demonstrate sensitivity to the needs of others, the ability to identify and deal effectively with potential or actual disruptive situations and the ability to relate effectively with staff and inmates alike. Thus for the above reasons, Candidate One cannot be recommended for further consideration for appointment at this time.

Case Two

Candidate Two presented for his interview as a casually dressed 23 year old male who was noted to be wearing some rather ostentatious jewelry and other items. For example, he wore a very conspicuous gold medallion engraved with his name and prominently displayed around his neck. Candidate Two also had a very large ring of keys hooked to his belt loop. This ring of keys jangled and made considerable noise when he walked and caused office personnel to take a special notice of him and to comment about him. It was also noted that Candidate Two's left arm was in a sling and he related how he had fallen at work this past week while attempting to jump over a conveyor belt.

Candidate Two's mood was noted to be rather expansive and some of his thought content was noted to be grandiose in nature. His judgment was noticeably impaired. For example, it was relatively easy for his interviewer to get him to boast about his many shoplifting "accomplishments" and his attempts to outwit store security systems. Candidate Two also inappropriately revealed and boasted about his proclivity for having sex in unusual and public places. In general, Candidate Two's interview behavior gave the impression that he is an impulsive risk taker who engages in many activities for the sheer thrill of committing these acts.

Psychological testing results clearly suggested that Candidate Two presents the potential to be overactive, emotionally unstable and impulsive and to have an inability to delay gratification. There were also indications that Candidate Two may have outbursts of temper if sufficiently provoked. Other test evidence suggested a history of drug use, vehicle and traffic infractions and job difficulties.

Candidate Two displayed a rather problematic job history as noted by the occurrence of two job terminations within the three years prior to his interview. He had been fired from his job as a swimming pool life guard after first being asked to resign and he was also terminated from another position after only three months of service when he became involved in an argument with his supervisor. Several other employments were noted to be of relatively short duration.

Candidate Two reported that he was charged with Petit Larceny and Criminal Possession of Stolen Property after he had attempted to shop lift an electric jig saw from a department store but was stopped by the store's security personnel after Candidate Two was spotted attempting to leave the store with the unpaid for jig saw under his arm. The interviewing psychologist noted, however, that this larceny was only the "tip of the iceberg" as he was subsequently able to get Candidate Two to admit to a six year history of shop lifting "for the thrill of it". Candidate Two went on to state that he liked the challenge of attempting to beat stores' security and alarm systems. With some prompting from the interviewing psychologist, he was boastful

about the number of items taken and their value. Candidate Two revealed that he had taken items without paying for them on some 25 to 30 occasions and estimated the value of these items to be between \$1500.00 and \$2000.00. In addition, he revealed that, on occasion, he had enlisted the aid of a friend to help him in his larcenous activities. Moreover, Candidate Two admitted to knowingly purchasing stolen property from others in the past.

It is noteworthy that, despite Candidate Two's admissions of an extensive history of thefts, his criminal record contained no convictions. This fact prevented the Employee Investigation Unit from immediately disqualifying him. Candidate Two's records revealed that he had been afforded the opportunity to participate in a shoplifting diversionary program and thus had avoided further prosecution and convictions for both the charges of Petit Larceny and Criminal Possession of Stolen Property. In fact, Candidate Two's charges were actually dismissed and his records were sealed.

Candidate Two also described a significant history of vehicle and traffic infractions. He reported that, since 1986, his New York State operator's license has been suspended four times. Candidate Two added that, at any one time, he has had as many as 14 points accumulate on his license. Among other charges, he admitted to two charges of passing a red light, speeding 78 miles per hour in a 55 mile per hour zone, operating a motor vehicle with no insurance, reckless driving, driving on the wrong side of the street and operating a motor vehicle with no license.

Candidate Two attempted to minimize his consumption of alcohol. However, he reported a relatively high tolerance for alcohol suggestive of significant regular consumption. Candidate Two also minimized his use of illegal substances in reporting that he only experimented with marijuana once in 1985. He denied the use of any other illegal or controlled substances. However, his responses to some of the psychological test questions reveal that Candidate Two endorsed items indicating that he has used cocaine and perhaps other hard drugs. He also endorsed items indicating that he had sold a small quantity of drugs to a friend and that he has smoked marijuana more than two times in a week.

In summarizing the findings of the psychological evaluation of Candidate Two, the interviewing psychologist stated:

Very serious concerns are raised with regard to Candidate Two's apparent potential to be impulsive, emotionally labile, to have a short temper and a relative inability to delay gratification. It is also noted that he has exhibited a history of very poor judgment. In addition, very serious concerns are raised with regard to this candidate's history of numerous petit larcenies and his boastfulness and delight in describing to this interviewer the details of his adventures. Moreover, Candidate Two has a very problematic driving record and he appears to be an impulsive risk taker who would prefer to act out his psychological problems and conflicts rather than reflect on them and attempt to think them through.

In concluding his report, the interviewing psychologist indicated:

Thus, were Candidate Two to be appointed as a Correction Officer, one would expect to see impairments in the following job related requisite abilities: The ability to make sound and appropriate decisions regarding security and safety in emergency situations, the ability to follow directions, the ability to perform effectively and efficiently under stress and the ability to demonstrate sensitivity to the needs and interests of others. He also may be expected to display impairments in the ability to identify and deal effectively with potential or actual disruptive situations and the ability to relate effectively with staff and inmates alike. Thus for all of these reasons this candidate cannot presently be recommended for further consideration for appointment.

Case Three

Candidate Three presented as a tall and thin balding male in his mid forties who appeared uncomfortable throughout his psychological interview. His speech was often slow and hesitating. At times he had difficulty finishing thoughts and, at other times, Candidate Three's verbal productions were quite circumstantial and lengthy. His mood appeared to be both anxious and depressed and Candidate Three's range of emotional expression was noted to be constricted. Eye contact was made only intermittently and Candidate Three appeared to be neither sufficiently assertive nor decisive enough to effectively perform in the position of Correction Officer. Intelligence appeared within the average range. Judgment appeared to be marginal.

Psychological test results revealed evidence of chronic maladjustment and psychological discomfort and portrayed Candidate Three as likely to suffer from chronic depression, social introversion and discomfort around others. It was noted that individuals with similar test profiles often display feelings of inadequacy, shyness and isolation in social settings. Further, there was evidence noted to suggest that Candidate Three would likely be passive and display a corresponding lack of social skills in interpersonal interactions. Test item endorsements indicated that Candidate Three revealed a background of job difficulties and work attendance problems and that he may be rigid and stereotyped in his view of the world and of others. Candidate Three also admitted to a number of stress related physical conditions as well as to having a number of phobic symptoms. Moreover, it was noted that Candidate Three presented evidence of suffering from current symptoms of depression and that he demonstrated a clear pattern of interpersonal difficulties in his history.

Candidate Three reported that he had been married twice. His first wife became seriously ill and died eight years ago. Candidate Three reported that it was extremely difficult for him to adjust to and cope with the loss of his wife.

Candidate Three married his second wife two years prior to his interview. He described her as being a kind of psychological crutch for him as she helps to motivate him and helps him cope with a variety of stressors and psychological symptoms. It was noteworthy that his description of her was devoid of much warmth and intimacy.

Candidate Three had served for seven years as an aide at a psychiatric center run by the New York State Office of Mental Health. He was still employed in this capacity at the time of his interview. His statements suggested that this position had been quite a strain for him and that, at times, he has had difficulty feeling motivated enough to go to work. In fact, Candidate Three reported that he was disciplined three years ago for the abuse of sick time and that, within the past year, he has received a supervisory warning for the same problem. In describing his job duties, Candidate Three's statements suggested that he tended to avoid much contact with his patients and that watching and monitoring them was a task that he disliked. It was noted by the interviewing psychologist that many of the duties of his present job about which he complained would be similar to the duties of a Correction Officer.

Apparently being unable to function effectively, Candidate Three reported being asked to resign from a prior job where he worked with developmentally disabled adults. Candidate Three's job history also revealed that he encountered considerable stress and difficulty in three other jobs which required considerable interpersonal contact and good social skills.

Candidate Three reported receiving both inpatient and outpatient psychiatric treatment about nine years prior to his candidacy for the position of Correction Officer Trainee. He had been hospitalized for treatment of depression and other stress related symptoms as well as obsessive compulsive symptoms and ritual behaviors. Candidate Three also was seen for several months as an outpatient. He also described having been prescribed both antipsychotic and antidepressant medications. Despite the fact that Candidate Three denied receiving any mental health treatment for the past nine years, he did describe experiencing recurring periods of depression.

In forming his conclusions, the interviewing psychologist noted that:

Very serious concerns must be raised with regard to Candidate Three's present level of psychological functioning. It is noted from psychological testing results, interview presentation and past history that Candidate Three has had much difficulty withstanding the stresses of various work situations and particularly so when interacting with others. The present psychological testing shows much evidence of chronic depression, social introversion and isolation and considerable

discomfort around others, especially those who Candidate Three does not know well. There are other indications of excessive feelings of inadequacy, shyness and passivity as well as a relative lack of social skills. Psychological testing results also showed considerable evidence of job adjustment difficulties.

Candidate Three's past history of work adjustment difficulties is of major concern as it is noted that he has experienced difficulties in withstanding the stresses of a variety of positions involving interpersonal interaction. Moreover, it appears that many of the problems for which Candidate Three received psychiatric treatment are still in evidence today. In addition, it is noted that some of the aspects of Candidate Three's current job which he finds most distasteful and stressful are quite similar to tasks which would be required of a Correction Officer.

The interviewing psychologist concluded his report by describing the deficits which would likely be displayed by Candidate Three if he were to be hired:

Given the above mentioned evidence, it is felt that Candidate Three would likely display the following job related impairments were he to be appointed as a Correction Officer. The ability to make sound and appropriate decisions regarding security and safety in emergency situations, the ability to perform effectively and efficiently under stress, the ability to demonstrate sensitivity to the needs and interests of others, the ability to identify and deal effectively with actual or potential disruptive situations and the ability to relate effectively with staff, inmates and others. Thus for these reasons, Candidate Three cannot presently be recommended to receive further consideration for appointment.

OVERVIEW

The above three cases illustrate the kind of problems that are often noted in cases of psychological disqualification. In many cases there is considerable evidence of a serious problem. For example, problematic psychological testing results and a candidate's troublesome history tend to confirm each other. Additional evidence for psychological disqualification may also be noted from a candidate's interview behavior.

These three applicants had been both medically and background qualified. Thus, were it not for the psychological disqualifications performed by the Psychological Screening Unit, candidates such as the three individuals described above would, by law, have to be appointed as Correction Officer Trainees. If such candidates then proved to be problematic employees, the Department of Correctional Services would have to wait until sufficient evidence was available to effectively remove such employees.

In the highly charged and stressful atmosphere of a correctional facility, a problematic or performance impaired Correction Officer could cause such difficulties as breaches of security, threats to the safety of staff, inmates and others, disruptive situations and frequent absenteeism. Such an officer could cause the pain, suffering and mistreatment of others as well as incur significant liability costs on the Department of Correctional Services before he or she could be removed from service. Thus, the psychological screening procedure is viewed as being an essential part of the applicant qualification process.