

# “I NEED SIX-MINUTES”

Working in a correctional environment presents unique challenges that can take a toll on your mental and emotional well-being. Staff face high-stress situations daily, and the weight of responsibility can lead to feelings of isolation and burnout.



With the realities of this work, it becomes crucial to acknowledge and address the struggles that correctional staff endure. Supporting one another in this demanding field is essential for maintaining a healthy, resilient workforce.

We want to introduce "I Need Six Minutes" Suicide Prevention campaign at DOC. The program is designed to create a culture of mutual support among staff. The campaign creates a clear, simple way for staff members to reach out when they are struggling or in need of help.

The story behind this program emphasizes the importance of recognizing warning signs and not missing opportunities to support colleagues in distress. The phrase "I got your six," meaning "I've got your back," is adapted here to encourage staff to give time to each other when needed, even for just six minutes, as that short time could potentially prevent a crisis.

The goal is to build a network of trust and support to ensure that no one feels alone in their struggles, potentially preventing situations where people feel they have no other option but to end their life. Let's make asking for help as easy and encourage a proactive approach to peer support within the department.

## **The story...**

Recently, a DOC staff member attended a celebration of life for a colleague lost to suicide. During the event, a close friend shared a powerful story about another friend who had survived a suicide attempt. When he asked why this friend hadn't reached out for help, the response was heartbreaking:

*"I did. Look at your texts. Three days ago, I said you should stop by. Two days ago, I texted that we should meet. I tried calling, but you were busy."*

In that moment, he realized he had missed the signs—the urgency hidden in those messages. If only he had understood the depth of his friend's struggle, he would have been there without hesitation. Moved by this experience, they made a pact: moving forward, they would send a simple text saying, "I need six minutes." This simple message would signal the need for support, ensuring that no one felt alone in their darkest moments.

Let's work together because if this campaign helps just one staff member, it will be a success. Remember, if you are in need, please contact CISM or text a close work friend, I need 6 minutes.