Understanding Suicide and Suicide Risk in Specific Inmate Groups: Lifers, Females, and the Severely Mentally Ill
Robert Horon, PhD
Justine Schmollinger, JD, PhD
Amber Carda, PsyD
Track: Clinical
Level: Intermediate
Room:
CE: CPA/BBS/BRN (1.5)

Narrative
This presentation will feature three integrated talks regarding risks for suicide that are specific to certain groups of inmates. First, one panel member will discuss the unique vulnerabilities to suicide of inmates with major mental illness, incorporating findings from a large study of patients in a correctional inpatient hospital. Next, a second panel member will present research on male inmates with life crimes, noting the distinguishing suicide risk factors in the group from both a research and clinical perspective.   Third, a panelist will discuss differences in suicidal behaviors in female inmates based on interviews and analyses of suicide attempts in women's prisons. The presentation will conclude with a discussion of implications in working with each group and a question and answer session.

BIO
Robert Horon, PhD
Justine Schmollinger, JD, PhD
Amber Carda, PsyD
Amber began her career in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) in 2006, and has maintained active involvement in suicide prevention initiatives throughout her career. Amber developed statewide suicide prevention policies and procedures for CDCR, as well as other juvenile facilities. She has conducted evaluations and consultation for suicide prevention practices in both adult and juvenile correctional facilities offered in other states. Amber developed and implemented a variety of statewide suicide prevention trainings, and has trained and certified numerous suicide prevention trainers within the department. She provided trainings that not only focus on direct suicide prevention approaches, as well as indirect and proactive means such as crisis intervention, trauma informed care, and suicide risk assessment and formulation. Amber has developed the training and mentoring program for all suicide case reviewers in CDCR. She has conducted hundreds of suicide case reviews, to varying degrees and she shares her expertise thorough guidance and consultation in CDCR, as well as providing consultation to other correctional departments.

Amber is actively involved in projects and data collection involving the evaluation of self-harm and suicide among incarcerated females, and the understanding of unique characteristics associated with incarcerated females. Amber has personally conducted reviews on all deaths by suicide within CDCR, among incarcerated females since 2016. In 2017, Amber conducted interviews will all incarcerated females who attempted suicide. The information gleaned during these evaluations has been instrumental in identifying differentiating factors of suicide risk among incarcerated females.

Amber serves as the CDCR Statewide Suicide Response Coordinator, where she coordinates the suicide prevention practices for all CDCR facilities and provides direct consultation to issues involving suicide prevention. In this role, she is involved in developing and modifying suicide prevention policies and procedures, conducting trainings and webinars, assisting with assessments conducted by the courts, conducting suicide case reviews, and providing statewide guidance to the suicide prevention teams within the CDCR institutions.

Learning Objectives
1. Identify specific times when inmates with serious mental illness are at heightened risk for suicide, from temporal and symptomatic indications as well as risk evaluation findings, as measured by group responses to multiple choice questions posed within the presentation.
2. Describe specific markers in life-term inmates that may suggest vulnerability to suicide attempt, as measured by audience responses during large group discussion.
3. List the major differences in suicidal behavior of female inmates, discussing the implications of presented information to institutional suicide prevention practices in female institutions, as measured by group responses to multiple choice questions posed within the presentation.