Notice of the Final Oral Examination for the Degree of Master of Social Work of

JASBIR KAUR SHOKER

BSW (University of Victoria, 2006)
Criminology Certificate (Kwantlen Polytechnic University, 2002)

“Stress in Corrections: A Critical Analysis”

School of Social Work

Monday, January 14, 2019
12:30 P.M.
Human and Social Development Building
Room B347

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Mehmoona Moosa-Mitha, School of Social Work, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Billie Allan, School of Social Work, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Marie Hoskins, School of Child and Youth Care, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Nichole Fairbrother, Department of Psychology, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

This study explores the risk and resiliency factors for stress within a correctional environment and how correctional staff are impacted personally and professionally by occupational stress. Employing a qualitative research methodology, this research utilized thematic analysis to examine existing literature on stress in corrections. Study findings revealed that high levels of stress impacted the physical health, emotional well-being, family and relationships of correctional staff as well as the quality of service provided to clients. The risk factors for stress were identified as increased workload, lack of resources, time pressures, performance expectations, the culture of the criminal justice system, job experience/training, inadequate management support and dangerous working conditions. The resiliency factors utilized by correctional staff to cope with stress were divided into the themes of colleagues, family, social activities, career changes, training and organizational support and self-preservation. The themes of race, gender and neoliberalism also emerged throughout the literature and a Critical Race Feminism lens was applied to explore how these themes were interconnected with stress within a correctional environment. A deductive analysis of the themes of race, gender and neoliberalism revealed the further complicated nature of occupational stress and how racism, sexism and the infiltration of neoliberal policies contribute as risk factors for stress.