

# CRISIS PREVENTION

## MODULE FOURTEEN

Awareness of mental health issues and effective communication can sometimes prevent problems from escalating to the point of being a crisis. Strategies that correctional officers can use on a daily basis in working with incarcerated persons with mental disorders include:



- **Keeping incarcerated persons informed about changes to routine operations or situations that may affect them.** This can reduce unnecessary anxiety that may result from not knowing what is going on. Information about routines such as meals, visitation, phone calls, mail, recreation, commissary, etc., can help provide structure in the correctional setting.
- **Getting to know the person's daily routines and concerns.** In this way, the correctional officer has a sense of the individual's "normal" behavior that can serve as a basis for comparison when behavior changes occur.
- **Using reflective listening, constructive feedback, and encouragement** in response to daily concerns. This can provide the incarcerated person with an opportunity to vent and can build rapport, which can assist in coaching the individual toward more appropriate behavior. This might include encouragement to participate in activities or to utilize networks of support like family and friends.
- **Adhering to appropriate boundaries of communication.** Trying not to take things personally and keeping emotions in check can help convey a sense of calm, direct professionalism that will enhance daily communications between correctional officers and incarcerated persons.