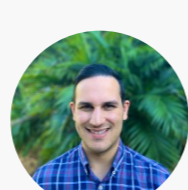


ACAP

BEYOND BARS: LEWIS INSPIRES POSITIVE CHANGE AMONG INMATES



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The positive impact of a correctional officer can extend beyond improving the lives of offenders; it can keep families and wider communities safe. Lewis Coluccio is an ACAP criminology graduate. Lewis provided an insight into how ACAP prepared him for the real world, where he helps change the lives of inmates at one the largest remand centres in NSW.

“As part of a wider team it is up to me to ensure the safety and security of the centre facility, so being able to collaborate, provide feedback and achieve quality outcomes is what I do on a daily basis,” Lewis explained.

Lewis sees up to 40 new inmates a day entering the correctional centre and he revealed some of the daily challenges he experiences.

“The main aspect of the job is accountability, and that means making sure you’re accountable for where you’re posted in the centre. There is a lot of rapport building with stakeholders, and with that there’s a big emphasis on case management.”

“There can be a lot of tension with new inmates entering the facility, so that’s one of the aspects of the role that you have to manage. There is certainly a part of my position that is to be friendly, but not too friendly - you need to put the ball in their court, so inmates recognise their own self-determination.”

A part of Lewis’ role is education, and one of the programs that he is involved in supporting inmates with is a victims awareness course, which he’s seen positive results from.

“It is more or less a crash course in victimology that teaches them the techniques of how to avoid risk adverse situations without causing further victimisation and harm to others. When inmates are met with these concepts, I do genuinely see it as a lightbulb moment.”

At ACAP, Lewis studied the [Bachelor of Criminology and Justice](#). The degree provides graduates with expertise in criminology, criminal psychology, crime prevention, law enforcement, corrections and justice-related issues. The degree, Lewis said, prepared him for some of the scenarios he’s faced in the real world.

“In my first year at ACAP, I studied a unit on drug crime, and that gave me a greater awareness of people’s behaviours and what they’re going through. In addition, the degree gave me an understanding of the judicial system, which has been important when engaging with inmates.”

Lewis explained that he found the hybrid learning model to be advantageous and applauded his lecturers on their availability and willingness to support him through his education journey.

“I really enjoyed the learning flexibility the course brought. Once I had started a new job, I was able to do the evening classes online. To be able to communicate with the lecturers almost 24 hours a day was really helpful for my learning.”

With a passion for crime prevention through environmental design, Lewis has aspirations to propel his career in this field in the future.

“The principal of it is to unconsciously influence behaviour through the building of community focused neighbourhoods with natural surveillance. Madrid is one of the leading cities in this area, as they deal with heavy traffic and it is very much a walkable city, so it is certainly something I’d be interested in exploring.”

For those who are weighing up a career as a correctional officer, Lewis explained how the role can provide purpose and be professionally fulfilling.

“It’s important to know what you experience in the job is not personal, but if you go down this career path, just know that there is the opportunity to inspire change in people and that can be rewarding.”

ACAP offers accredited courses online, on-campus and through hybrid delivery.

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