
Chapter 8 STRESS

HOW DOES STRESS AFFECT US?

Alarm – The body's natural response to danger

This first stage is the mobilization of the body's defenses. Messages from the nervous system reach the hypothalamus gland which notifies the pituitary gland and adrenal glands. The pituitary-adrenal system pumps hormones into the blood-stream. These hormones have the effect of speeding the heart rate, increasing respiration and stopping digestive activity. The body is ready for a fight!

In animals or primitive man this alarm system triggers physical action (fight) or running away (flight) thus tension is released. If there is neither fight nor flight, then there is no release for all the preparedness. Such a situation can lead to ulcers, headaches, backaches, palpitations, rashes, and various other ailments.

Resistance and Adaptation – the natural defense system

In this stage the invader is fought off or some adjustment is made. If tired, one sleeps. If hungry, one eats. If a large number of microbes are in a wound, inflammation seals off the site from the rest of the body. This defense system works so well that most of the time, we are not even aware of it. We are all bombarded by hostile forces - but we are not all sick; it is only when defense systems break down that illness results.

Exhaustion – Stress without an outlet

A body cannot be under stress all the time; release must occur. Some people believe that illness is the result to stress. The interaction of a hostile condition with stress could be the cause of colds, allergies, asthma, headaches, ulcers, colitis, heart disease, arthritis and other illnesses.

Avoiding Stress

1. Get up 15 minutes earlier. Morning mishaps are less stressful and also less likely when you have time to spare.
2. Prepare for morning the night before. Start the breakfast table, get the coffee pot ready to plug in, make lunches for those who take them. And check to see if the clothes you plan to wear need pressing or mending.
3. Never wear ill-fitting clothes. If shoes pinch, panty hose creep down or a waistband binds, even a stroll to the mailbox can be stressful.
4. Set appointments ahead. If you're always waiting for others, tell them to meet you 10 minutes earlier than you plan to arrive. "When I give a dinner party," one hostess admitted, "I give different times to different guests, depending on whether they're usually prompt or chronically late."

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5. Don't rely on your memory. Write down addresses, directions and phone numbers and take them with you to unfamiliar places. Leave notes on your mirror, refrigerator or car door to remind you of important dates and errands.
 6. Practice preventive maintenance. You'll have fewer breakdowns of automobiles, heaters, air conditioners, washers and other necessary machines if they're cleaned and serviced regularly.
 7. Make duplicates of all keys. Exchange house keys with a trusted neighbor, hide car keys in your garage, keep extras for luggage, storage closets and strongboxes in a safe convenient place.
 8. Rearrange work hours, if possible. A thirty-minute change in arrival or departure times can make a big difference in traffic, crowds and other stress producers.
 9. Say "No" more often, it's amazing how much stress can be eliminated by giving up unrewarding activities, refusing inappropriate requests and turning down invitations from people you don't enjoy.
 10. Never shop for clothes with critical teenagers, skinny friends or those who look terrific in everything. We all have imperfections: why call attention to them?
 11. Take advantage of off hours for banking and shopping. And shop by mail or by phone whenever possible. Why put up with crowded stores, long lines and impatient clerks if you don't have to?
 12. Rearrange mealtimes. If it's a hassle to get dinner ready on time, try postponing it. Your family won't starve if they eat an hour later.
 13. Feed the children separately. It's nice to get the whole family together for meals but not if you have to endure spilled milk, sibling squabbles and cranky remarks about the food. You deserve to eat in peace.
 14. Keep an emergency supply of necessities soap, toilet paper, toothpaste, and dip into it only in emergencies.
 15. Walk everywhere you can. Exercise has a soothing effect especially when it permits you to avoid traffic jams, crowded buses and costly taxis.
 16. Make copies of all important papers and keep the originals in a safe place. Never let go of an original deed, birth certificate, will or important receipt send copies instead. When originals are required (such as securities, passports, insurance policies) send them by registered mail.
 17. Anticipate your needs. Make sure you have plenty of coins for toll collectors and vending machines, batteries for children's toys, pens and pencils that still write, and panty hose without runs. And always stop for gas before you really need it -- especially at night and on holidays.
 18. Don't put up with anything that doesn't work properly. No one needs the aggravation of malfunctioning alarm clocks, key rings that lose keys, radios that buzz and squeak or appliances that smoke. "My mood improved remarkably," one woman told us, "when I treated myself to a new coin purse that doesn't pop open all the time."

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19. Make advance reservation at hotels, restaurants and theaters: reconfirm time, location and other details before you go.
 20. Allow extra time. If it usually takes 30 minutes to get to the airport, allow an hour. It's better to arrive well ahead of schedule than to fret over every stoplight or traffic tie up along the way.
 21. Be prepared to wait. A long line at the post office or a delay at the dentist's office is almost pleasant when you have a good book with you.
 22. Never arrange a meeting place that has no telephone. An unavoidable delay can be a nightmare when there is no way to make contact. It is impossible to meet at a place where you can both call of something goes awry.
 23. Find the humor in it. Every disaster has something funny about it if you look for it. Seeking a taxi in the rain, for example, used to put us out of sorts. But now we remember the passerby who told us, "New York taxis are water soluble," and hardly mind at all.
 24. Keep a "busy kit" handy when you travel. Transportation snafus are easy to ignore when you have a portable tape deck, a favorite magazine or a needlework project with you. "I learned to speak French," one mother told us, "by playing the tapes whenever I chauffeured my three kids around."
 25. Relax your standards. Doing everything perfectly is not only unnecessary, it's boring. Life is a lot easier if you ignore a little dirt, take more shortcuts in the kitchen and let the sheets go a few more days between laundering.
 26. Get help with the jobs you hate. If you find that certain chores always make you tense, such as paying bills, defrosting the refrigerator or scrubbing bathtubs, get someone else to do them. Beg, barter or pay for help if you have to; it's worth it.
 27. Establish a serene place of your own, even, if it's just a comfortable chair in a quiet corner. If the sound of your teenager's stereo, your husband's ball game or the neighbor's barking dog still penetrates, wear earplugs.
 28. Change your perspective. Instead of worrying about what will happen "if," try asking yourself, "So what?" So what if your mother's birthday gift is a few days late? So what if you can't get your best dress dry-cleaned before that party? So what if you actually miss your train or plane? Will it matter next week, or next year? Even if our worst fears are realized, they often turn out to be not so bad.
 29. Count your blessings. No disaster is so bad that it couldn't be worse, and it helps to remember that. After all, you could have burned the entire dinner instead of just the rolls. The doctor could have kept you waiting 2 hours instead of only 20 minutes. And you might have lost a thousand dollar instead of ten.
 30. Keep time fillers by the telephone. You won't mind being put on hold if you can spend that time reading mail or writing a letter. And you'll be more sympathetic to a friend who "needs to talk" if you can do your mending or file your nails while you listen.

31. Memorize your favorite scriptures or poems and recite them to yourself whenever you're forced to stand on a crowded bus or get stuck in line or on an elevator.
32. Keep a supply of individually wrapped candies or sugar free gum handy. "Getting one out, unwrapping it and popping it into your mouth," one writer told us, "is a welcome distraction that takes some of the tension out of bad moments."
33. Travel light. The less you have to keep track of when you're away from home, the easier it is. If you never take more than you can comfortably carry onto an airplane, you can avoid lost luggage, long waits at luggage claim counters and frustration searches for porters.
34. Be prepared for rain. Don't try to outguess the weather man. Stock your handbag, work place and car with rain hats, plastic rain capes, umbrellas, shoe protectors.
35. Ask questions. You're less likely to make mistakes or get lost if you make sure to get detailed instructions first.
36. Take advantage of your body rhythms. If you're at your best early in the morning, that's the time to schedule complicated tasks that require concentration. If you don't reach your peak until later in the day, start with easier things that don't require much thought. It doesn't matter when your peaks and valleys come as long as you plan accordingly.
37. Make contingency plans. A rained out picnic, or sold out theater or a closed restaurant is disappointing, of course, but it won't spoil your day if you've made alternate plans "just in case."
38. Unclutter your life. Get rid of clothes you never wear, objects that just collect dust, furniture you hate, articles you don't enjoy. Anything you can do to simplify your life helps reduce stress.
39. Avoid reliance on chemical aids. Alcohol, tranquilizers and sleeping pills may release stress momentarily, but regular use increases stress in the long run.
40. Get in touch. Hold hands, stroke a pet, hug a loved one, make love. Physical contact is the best stress reliever of all.
41. Take time out to breath deeply, stretch your muscles, nap, meditate or do a few tension relieving exercises. If you can't arrange a brisk walk, try raising your shoulders in a high shrug, hold 10 seconds, release and repeat.
42. Find enjoyable ways to exercise. Experts agree on the benefits of aerobic exercise; the kind that raises your heart rate and makes you breathe hard. But if you hate to jog or jump rope, you'll create as much stress as you relieve. Try swimming, cycling, aerobic dancing, racquet ball or a few fast sets of tennis instead.
43. Get it off your chest. Bottling up feelings just increases stress. If you buy defective merchandise or receive bad service, write a letter of complaint. If a friend lets you down, express your disappointment. If your husband hurts your feelings, tell him. You'll feel a lot better afterward.

44. Talk to a loving friend or relative. A sympathetic listener is always helpful. "When I have a bad day," one young woman said, "I always call my grandmother. To her, I can do nothing wrong."
45. Reward yourself after stressful activities. Stop for a special lunch or snack after shopping in crowded stores. Relax with a favorite television show or book after cleaning house.
46. Take leisurely baths. Showers are more efficient, but a long soak in a hot, fragrant bath is more relaxing (Just unplug or turn off the phone first.)
47. Schedule more fun. Don't give up seeing friends and doing things you enjoy because you "have too much to do." Pleasurable activities are important. And work goes faster and produces less stress when fun comes first.
48. Take a break from the children. Baby-sitters are not just for emergencies or special occasions. You also need time to yourself to listen to music, pursue a hobby or have a heart to heart talk with a friend. If you can't afford to hire a baby sitter, trade child care time with another mother.
49. Have a massage. Tension just melts away under the touch of experienced fingers. But a talented amateur, a friend for whom you perform the same or an equivalent favor, perhaps, can do almost as well. Massage therapists can be found in chiropractic offices and some insurance company cover massages.
50. Unwind before bedtime. Do some stretching exercises to get the kinks out then read, listen to music, do needlework or some other relaxing activity. It helps you sleep better, and that's a great stress reliever.

Common Sense for Stress Management

1. Eat three meals a day, including breakfast.
2. Avoid sugar, salt, animal fat, and processed white flour.
3. Pursue regular program of physical exercise or other leisure pastime.
4. Nurture and maintain friendships.
5. Get enough sleep (6 to 8 hours).
6. Practice abdominal breathing and relaxation.
7. Schedule time and activities alone, and with others to maintain a well-rounded life style.
8. Stop smoking.
9. No alcohol and limit caffeine intake.
10. Pace yourself and allow for an even flow of demands.
11. Identify and accept emotional needs.
12. Recognize early warnings.
13. Allocate time and energy to allow for stimulation.
14. Take appropriate supplements, if needed, for proper nutrition.
15. Avoid self-medication.
16. Take one thing at a time.
17. Give in once in a while.
18. Talk out your worries.
19. Make yourself available.
20. Learn to accept the things you cannot change.

STRESS IS THE PRODUCT OF AN ENTIRE LIFE STYLE, NOT JUST AN ISOLATED INCIDENT**Goals of Stress Management:**

- Realize potential for self-direction.
- Assume self-responsibility as a major factor in health and sickness.

- Minimize detrimental effects of stress.
- Restore sense of harmony with the environment.
- Achieve and maintain a high level of health.

Gaining Control Over Stress

- Identify stresses: What's bothering me?
- Appraising and Developing Commitment: What am I willing to do?
- Become More Aware of Behavior Patterns: How am I handling it?
- Develop A Plan of Action: What am I going to do about it?
- Try Out The Plan: Put your plan into action.
- What Are The Results: Evaluate your progress.

Stress Response Syndromes

Psychological and Emotional

Anxiety, irritability, restlessness, hyper excitability, feelings of depression, moodiness, periods of crying, anger, blaming, feelings of apathy, diminished interest in usual activities, feelings of isolation, detachment, estrangement, feelings of guilt about surviving, denial or constriction of feelings "flashbacks" or intrusive memories of event, recurrent dreams of the event or other trauma , other sleep problems.

Physical

Headaches , feeling weakness in parts of the body, nausea, upset stomach, other gastrointestinal problems, soreness in muscles, hot or cold spells, sweating or chills, lower back pain, faintness or dizziness, numbness or tingling in parts of the body, heavy feeling in arms or legs, feeling a "lump in the throat", pains in chest, trouble getting breath, exaggerated startled reaction, tremors , fatigue, increase in allergies, colds, flu.

Thought

Poor concentration , mental confusion, slowness of thinking, loss of objectivity, forgetfulness, inability to make judgments and decisions, loss of ability to conceptualize alternatives or prioritized tasks

Behavioral

Hyperactivity, outbursts of anger or frequent arguments, inability to express self verbally or in writing, withdrawal, social isolation, "distancing", increases use of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, avoidance of activities or places that arouse recollection of traumatic event.

SIGNS OF EXCESSIVE STRESS

Psychological Impact	Physical Strain
Apathy	Backache
Anger	Chronic Fatigue
Denial	Clenching Jaw
Futility	Cold Sweaty Palms
Impaired Judgment	Eyestrain
Inadequacy	Headaches
Indecisiveness	Heart Palpitations
Insecurity	Hypertension
Irritability	Increase in smoking, drinking or drug use
Loss of Objectivity	Indigestion/Nausea
Low self-esteem	Insomnia
Mental Confusion	Lethargy
Reduced Confidence	Loss of Appetite
Strained Relationships	Muscle Tightness
Threat	Nervousness/Jittery
Under utilization of skills	Sexual Dysfunction
	Tics
	Ulcers

LAW ENFORCEMENT STRESS

OFFICER DOWN NEEDS ASSISTANCE

Source Unknown

Dave is a detective for a major city police department in the sunbelt. Like many of his colleagues, Dave feels the stress of combining marriage, family life, and police work. "I was doing fine until the new sergeant took command. Now I take antacid pills, yell at the family, and drink too much beer. This guy is always on my back - the tension is unbearable," he laments.

Tina is a police dispatcher for a small sheriff's department in the northeast. As a college graduate she feels overqualified, underutilized, and over stressed. "Every day I hear about things I can do nothing about; I feel like just another secretary at times," she says. But living expenses cause Tina to feel trapped in her job. Distressed, angry, and depressed, she goes from doctor to doctor and begins to overuse prescription medication. Soon she cannot function without tranquilizers, antidepressants, and sleeping pills. Tina becomes so shaky, tearful, and sick that she cannot work or care for herself. The prescription merry-go-round begins to spin faster and faster - too fast for Tina to get off.

These cases illustrate a well-established fact: A career in criminal justice may be hazardous to one's health. Job burnout is probably the greatest life hazard for today's law enforcement personnel. Police officers suffering from burnout are more likely to commit suicide than be killed on the job. Due to stress and its concomitant health problems, police officers have only a ten-year life expectancy after retirement, which typically takes place around 45 years of age.

Identifying Burnout

What is burnout? According to experts on clinical stress and addiction, burnout is a debilitating state of mind, body, and spirit. The causes: unrelieved career stress and career-related stress at home. The symptoms: (1) poor job performance; (2) changes in eating and exercise patterns; (3) extreme risk-taking; (4) personality changes; (5) abuse of alcohol or other drugs; (6) family problems; (7) financial difficulties; (8) physical illness; (9) depression, mood swings, and insomnia; and (10) sexual problems.

Law enforcement personnel are particularly vulnerable to burnout, and they often unknowingly contribute to their own burnout by attempting to live out the myths that surround police work. Among these are the "John Wayne," the "control" and the "lonely at the top" myths.

The "John Wayne" myth. This myth is familiar to most people who work in the criminal justice field. The expectation is that police officers personify the "rugged individualists" portrayed in the movies by actor John Wayne. These larger-than-life characters were always in control, never complained about physical or emotional hardship, and always came out on top. In the most stressful situations, these movie heroes maintained equanimity, triumphed over the bad guys, and rode off into the sunset.

The "control" myth. Both peers and the public have unrealistically high expectations of police officers. They are expected to always be in complete control of themselves, their families, and whatever situations they find themselves in. The officer's desire for control often carries over at home, but spouses and children sometimes rebel when they perceive dad as using too heavy a hand. A vicious cycle begins in which job stress causes increased home stress, which increases job stress, and so on, until burnout reaches a crisis level.

The "lonely at the top" myth. When a veteran officer who was "one of the boys" is promoted to an administrative or leadership position, he or she may suddenly become part of the "them" in confrontations that arise between administration ("them") and line officers ("us"). He or she must now enforce rules and regulations that may be unpopular. Friends do not call, and social invitations drip to zero. Communications channels with friends on the job seem to shut down as stress and tension begin to mount

Stress/burnout as masquerader. One reason stress, burnout is so insidious and dangerous is that it is a slow process which may not be recognized, or it may masquerade as many other problems. Employee assistance program (EAP) professionals should be aware of the signs of job stress and burnout among law enforcement personnel. The following are just a few of the signs that may when considered together, indicate stress/burnout: increased civilian complaints, changes in appearance, lateness, defensiveness, accidents, decreased efficiency, fatigue, violence, staring into space, calling in sick after days off, nervous habits, taking unnecessary chances, family problems and medical problems.

Safety Valves

There are several safety valves that police officers may tap to help alleviate stress before it reaches a critical stage:

Learning to shift gears. The ability to shift from the work mode to home life and leisure-time pursuits is critical. officers often set themselves up for burnout by their inability to switch gears when they leave work. Police and correctional personnel see the dark side of humanity. But officers who carry their tough, suspicious mind-set from work to home ;may find their families in rebellion. The daily exposure to women and children who are victims of crime makes police officers suspicious and, at the same time, overprotective of their own families. Wives and children are "interrogated" and eventually be come another set of "suspects" to be dealt with accordingly. Curiously enough, family members eventually begin to behave like suspects.

Family stress can have devastating consequences - such as chemical dependence, divorce, and suicide - for both the officer and family members. If an officer cannot shift gears on his or her own, professional help is needed!

Getting the proper amount of exercise. Exercise is one of the best strategies for releasing the tension brought about by the "fight or flight" response. Unfortunately, many law enforcement officers do not get the exercise necessary to relieve tension. Instead many get caught up in destructive behaviors such as alcohol or other drug abuse, overeating, oversleeping, and even fighting.

One interesting story is told of a deputy who was suffering from burnout. He became depressed and decided to commit suicide in a most ingenious way. The deputy began jogging and tried to run himself to death; he ran until he dropped, then got up and ran some more. Having reached the point of exhaustion, the deputy could not run any longer. But curiously enough, he felt better. The next day he attempted the same thing and experience the same results. Within a month, the deputy was running several miles a day, feeling much better, and no longer thinking of suicide.

Maintaining a balanced diet. Proper nutrition is essential for alleviating the effects of stress and burnout, but at the same time improper eating habits are common among people who are suffering from stress and burnout. Among the poor eating habits are overeating, periods of not eating at all followed by overeating, bingeing and purging, cutting out nutritious foods in favor of junk food, increasing salt and fat intake, and consuming too much sugar and starch.

Overindulging in chocolate and other sweets can cause many of the same physiological changes that result from abusing alcohol or other drugs. Actually, alcoholic beverages are composed primarily of sugar. "Fast-food syndrome" is rampant among police officers. "Help, I need a cop -- call Dunkin' Donuts" is more than a popular joke within the law enforcement community.

Acquiring hobbies and interests. Getting involved in an interesting, enjoyable activity outside of work is often helpful in alleviating stress. This is especially true of those who are bored, rather than over stimulated, on the job. For example, Jim, a correctional officer, often found himself performing seemingly endless tower and dispatching duties. The long, monotonous hours were creating great stress. By chance, a fellow officer introduced Jim to chess, and he immediately liked the game. Breaks and downtime were no longer the pessimistic gripe sessions they once were; rather they became a challenging contest between players in a game both had grown to love. There is nothing like a new, pleasurable challenge to relieve the stress that leads to burnout.

The Search for Solutions

Stress-relief valves may be helpful in the early stages of the stress/burnout process. However, ongoing stress, leading to burnout, must be addressed by measures other than self-reliance. There are several approaches that have helped criminal justice officers cope with serious stress/burnout.

EAP services. EAP services in a criminal justice setting may take a variety of forms. All are subject to federal confidentiality regulations and to the impaired officer regulations and policies of each department. The optimal system for fostering utilization by officers is a contracted EAP located off department premises, run by persons who are not seen as part of the "department premises, run by persons who are not seen a part of the "department system."

Peer counseling. Many large police departments have staff members who are available for counseling distressed officers. Often, the counselors are themselves officers or retirees. The services are almost always confidential, so information divulged in counseling sessions cannot be obtained by the department.

Some police departments have confidential "stress units" that utilize an officer-to officer day treatment approach, based on the theory that many officers have trouble trusting non officers. Modeled after Eddie Donovan's Boston Police Department Stress Unit, the police stress unit is a self-help model that utilized the 12-step principles of AA

Police impatient units. This novel, progressive approach is based on the principle that police officers need a program designed especially for them. Such programs are responsive to the fact that law enforcement officers distrust "outsiders" by providing clients with the services of clinically trained counselors who have personally experienced the stress of law enforcement. Police impatient units may provide complete medical evaluation, treatment for alcoholism and other drug abuse. stress management training, biofeedback, nutritional counseling, education about stress and its psychological and physical symptoms, trauma groups, death and bereavement groups, depression groups, post traumatic stress disorder groups, family groups, referral for financial counseling, parent effectiveness training, and recreation and exercise therapy. Clients are self-referred or can be referred by a supervisor, union member, peer counselor, police psychologist, family member, friend, physician, or chaplain.

Conclusion

The needs of the criminal justice officer underscore and further all of the traditional arguments for implementation and utilization of an effective EAP. Few members of society have more power to do harm or good than the men and women who patrol the streets and guard the cell blocks. It is an irony that those who have the courage to face high-speed chase and shoot-outs may find that seeking help for themselves is the toughest battle of all. The criminal justice EAP, when properly constructed, can guide those who protect and serve others in protecting and serving themselves as well.

PEER COUNSELING **Source Unknown**

The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), like many large city departments, has full-time psychologists on staff, in addition to several of the employee assistance programs discussed above. They have also taken the lead in the initiation of a program of peer assistance or peer counseling. The LAPD is the first department in the country to develop and implement an integrated and fully department-supported peer counseling program using regularly employed officers and civilians on a large scale. It defines peer counseling as "a group of employees who have been to a three day school and have volunteered to give direct, simple support to people who are hurting." There program began during the summer of 1981 in response to the major psychological trauma suffered by 2 LAPD officers as a result of their involvement in shooting incidents. It is important to note, however, that the program goes far beyond providing assistance to officers involved in shootings. Monthly statistics indicate that the majority of counseling time - 70 % - is spent on issues involving personal relationships, discipline, and career problems.

Program Goals

- 1. To help fellow employees through the temporary crisis situations that are a common part of our lives;*
- 2. To develop a readily accessible network of employees trained and willing to be of service to their fellow employees who have expressed a need for assistance;*
- 3. To develop an awareness among employees that they are not alone, that people are willing to listen to them, and that others care about them and their problems;*
- 4. To develop among employees an awareness of the self-help alternatives that are available to them;*
- 5. To develop a system of referrals which can provide, in ;more serious cases, appropriate professional care; and*
- 6. To increase the availability of employees, thereby increasing organizational efficiency, through a program of intervention which can assist in defusing problems before they reach a point of crisis and result in the loss of work time.*

Officer Reaction

Professional in-house psychological services have been available at LAPD and other larger law enforcement agencies for years. However, many police officers who experience psychological problems do not consider obtaining professional help. This is seen by some to be a reflection of the officer's stereotypical belief that people who seek professional help are seriously ill, out of

control, unmanly, or unfit for work. because police organizations tend generally to be close-knit, officers experiencing personal problems often feel more comfortable discussing these matters with a fellow officer rather than a mental health professional.

Peer Counsel Training

It is often believed that the counseling process requires extensive training and can only be conducted by specialists with advanced degrees. The opposite, however, appears to be true. Professional mental health training does not appear to be a necessary prerequisite. Paraprofessionals are rated by the studies reviewed at least as effective as and often better than professionals.

LAPD's training program for peer counselors is conducted over a 24-hour period by a team consisting of a licensed psychologist, an experienced peer counselor, several guest speakers, and role players. Topics include reflective listening, general assessment skills for distinguishing chronic from short-term problems, problem solving skills, alcohol and drug abuse problems, the issue of death, dying and relationship termination, suicide risk assessment and management, and when and how to refer. New counselors are given instruction in crisis counseling with maximum emphasis on the practical application of a simple but effective model designed to assist the employee in solving his own problems. During training sessions, new counselors assume alternately the roles of counselor and employee, first with classmates and later with trained, experienced peer counselors who take the role of an employee in need of help. By participating in these work counseling situations, the new counselor is able to see his own strengths and weaknesses, and with coaching, improve his skills.

Problem-solving Model

A three-phase crisis counseling model is presented to the new counselors. In the first and most important phase, the hurting employee is given as much time as is necessary to express his feelings. The counselor is taught to provide a non judgmental, emotionally supportive atmosphere using simple, positive listening skills to facilitate the employee's full discussion of the problem. In the second phase of this model, the counselor assesses the problem presented by the employee and verbally summarizes the points he has heard. This ensures that the counselor has fully heard the employee and that they are in agreement on all of the issues. In the last phase, options are discussed. In most cases, these options are selected by the employee who also makes his own decision concerning which option seems to be best.

Role of Management

The role of supervisors and administrators in this program is extremely important. they should be aware of how the program operates and must believe it to be beneficial to both their subordinates and the organization. Employees involved in counseling will need support and sometimes guidance from supervisory personnel, making it imperative that management at all levels be familiar and supportive of the program. it is also crucial that managers recognize that this program belongs to employees. Its success at LAPD is, in part, due to the fact that it was organized at the "grass roots level" by employees for employees and is not a management tool used to control employees or a conduit for information to be passed to management. In an interview, Chief Gates addressed the issue, saying, "I must tell you I'm kind of letting this thing grow on its own. I haven't reached down and tried to direct it because I think I could very quickly ruin the whole program just by saying, 'Okay, now I'm going to take control over it and we're gong to do it my way.' I may not have the intention but it might appear that way. I've let it develop on its own."

Confidentiality Issue.

Peer counselors have no legally protected privilege of patient confidentiality as do most members of the mental health profession. Even without this legally recognized privilege, a high degree of confidentiality in a program of this type is necessary for its success. The regulations that govern the operation of the LAPD's Peer Counseling Program state that counselors have a responsibility to insure the confidentiality of their communications with employees, with the exception of situations involving criminal acts or violations of departmental regulations. This limited confidentiality is considered central to the effectiveness of the program.

Conclusion

The time between when an employee begins to experience the minor problems caused by the daily stresses of life and those problems developing to the point where the employee must seek help from a mental health professional is vast. During this period, the employee experiences pain and may make many bad decisions. It is also during this period that a network of peer counselors, acting as paraprofessionals, can step in to give early aid in assisting the employee in resolving his problem, or in severe cases, refer the employee to appropriate professional assistance.

Many acts committed by employees that require a disciplinary response from management are "cries for help." These acts may include shoplifting, drug abuse, alcoholism, or other equally undesirable activities. While peer counselors would be expected to refer these more complicated problems to full-time professionals, they are in a position to detect them early. Early detection and referral has the obvious benefit of preventing major problems later on.

Alcoholism programs involving peer counseling focus on one major issue - alcoholism. With a peer counseling program of the type the LAPD instituted, the focus is expanded to include a wider range of employee problems. These programs can increase productivity, reduce absenteeism, reduce grievances and the need of the disciplinary action, and improve employee morale. Improved employee morale is considered by many to be the most important benefit derived from such programs. A peer counseling program gives concrete evidence to employees that management does care.

Informal peer counseling is common among employees in law enforcement as well as other professions. Employees discuss their problems with their peers, from the most insignificant daily insures to the major life traumas. A study of officers involved in shootings indicates that "a significant phenomenon is that every police officer interviewed was, within 48 hours, back at the station to speak with his fellow officers." Without proper training, however, the results of these peer contacts can be less than desirable. A Salt Lake City study showed that officers involved in shootings talk with their fellows 85% of the time. Results show that fellow officers without proper training were reported to be of assistance in 59% of the cases, and in 41% of the cases surveyed, other officers were reported to be major source of aggravation.

Employees who experience short term crises need to be heard, need to have the opportunity to feel understood, and need to receive peer recognition of the extent of the problems they face. Peer counseling offers a means of effectively providing this support to employees who are under stress. With careful planning and implementation, an organization can provide a workable support network of peer counselors at a low cost to support fellow employees and the organization as a whole in resolving significant problems with a resulting increase in organizational efficiency and employee well-being.

Suggested Stress Management Class Outline

Which of these is stress?

- You receive a promotion at work.
- You get in trouble at work or even fired
- Your car has a flat tire.
- You get engaged the man/woman of your dreams
- You have serious marital problems and are getting divorced
- You go to a fun party that lasts till 2:00 a.m.
- Your dog gets sick all over the house.
- Your new furniture is being delivered.
- Your best friend from high school and his wife come to stay at your house for a week.
- You get a bad case of hay fever.
- You win the lottery
- All of the above.

Different kinds of stress:

- Eu-stress
- Distress
- Critical Incident Stress
- Emotional Stress
- Argument with your spouse or a good friend
- Allergic Stress

- Allergic reactions cause physical changes in our bodies that cause our bodies stress
- Cumulative Stress
- Any kind of change in our physical bodies, or our surroundings can be considered stress. Imagined change, or worry, can be just as damaging as actual change. The “What ifs...”

Critical Incident Stress vs. Cumulative Stress

Here is an example of a traumatic event which is known as Critical Incident Stress: “A great white shark will kill and eat you in one gulp. At the other spectrum, is an example of cumulative stress: Little ducks walking down a path toward you begin to nibble away at you. It may take a lot longer for little ducks to nibble you to death, but the final result is still the same.

An example of cumulative stress: Bad day, spill coffee, late for work, boss is mad – three days in a row, etc.

Stress is like walking down the street when someone walks up and shoves you in the back. Your body and mind will react instantly to try to regain your balance. If you are shoved hard enough, your arms will go out to try to break your fall and protect your face. Your whole body reacts to the attack. The same thing happens with stress, it impacts the entire body.

Three relaxation techniques

Combat Breathing

Breathing is both automatic, and can be controlled. By controlling breathing, you can slow down your heart beat, lower blood pressure, etc. In a "Fight or Flight" situation, adrenaline will be dumped into your system, and your stress level will dramatically increase causing your heart beat to race, and your blood pressure to increase. The result of the increased heart rate and blood pressure is that your fine dexterity ability will decrease. Some common professions this technique is used:

- Used and taught by military
- Used by athletes – basketball player getting ready for a free throw

Muscle Tensing

Tensing and un-tensing muscle groups – including and finishing with your face.

- Used by athletes
- Used by business professionals

Visualization

This is an exercise you would use somewhere private. Sitting in a comfortable chair, sit straight up with your hands on your knees. Close your eyes, and your imagination. Visualize all of your energy oozing out through your eyelids. Start with the feet and slowly move up the body, imagining all of the energy in the feet and moving up the body oozing out through the eyelids, until the whole body is totally relaxed.

- Used by actors
- Used by motivational speakers
- Used by teachers

Why is stress so bad?

The body responds to stress on two levels – physically (starvation, auto accident, enduring severe weather) and psychologically (emotional, mental stressors like loss of a loved one, inability to solve a problem, difficult day at work). Our bodies, however, can not distinguish between stressors and natural reactions and may physically react the same way to joy as it may to fear.

The term General Adaptation Syndrome¹ describes the body's short-term and long-term reactions to stress and follows a three-stage response to stress: the alarm reaction (AR), the stage of resistance (SR), and the stage of exhaustion (SE).

Stage 1: The Alarm Reaction (AR)

The first stage of General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) is the immediate reaction to a stressor. This has often been referred to as the “fight or flight” response stage. This stage prepares the body for physical activity; however, this phase can also decrease the effectiveness of the immune system, making a person more susceptible to illness.

Stage 2: The Stage of Resistance (SR)

The second phase is also referred to as the adaptation stage. If stress is continuous, the body may adapt to the stressors and changes will take place in order to reduce the effect of the stressor. An example is starvation; an active person may lose the desire for physical activity due to the body's need to conserve energy and maximize the absorption of nutrients from food.

Stage 3: The Stage of Exhaustion (SE)

In the third phase, the stress has continued for some time and the body's resistance to stress may be reduced or may collapse quickly. This means that the body's immune system (ability to resist disease) may almost be eliminated. Patients who have experienced long-term stress may find increased possibilities of heart attacks or severe infection due to reduced immunity. An example is a person with a stressful job; If long-term stress of the job is not controlled the person might develop high blood pressure and eventually a heart attack.

All Stress is not Negative.

It should be noted that Dr. Hans Selye did not regard stress as solely negative. “Stress is not even necessarily bad for you; it is also the spice of life, for any emotion, any activity causes stress.” Some later researches coined the term “eustress” or pleasant stress. Eustress refers to positive experiences such as a desired job promotion, completing a degree or training program, marriage, travel, and many more events which are also stressful. Dr. Selye also pointed out that human perception and responses to stress is highly individualized. A job that one person finds anxiety-provoking or exhausting might be quite appealing and enjoyable to another person. Observing one's responses to specific stressors can contribute to better understanding of that person's particular physical, emotional, and mental resources and limits.

The three stages of the General Adaptation Syndrome may be summarized as follows:

How Does Stress Affect Us? (See Appendix E - Handout 1)

Stage 1: “Flight or Fright” Response

¹Originally described by Dr. Hans Selye (1907-1982), an Austrian-born physician who immigrated to Canada in 1939.

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- a. Body: This is the alarm phase. When the body senses a threat – allergy, emotional, fear, all are a threat – the body is energized to either fight or run.
 - b. Mind: The mind is presented with a situation (stressor) that is not familiar and reacts with surprise and anxiety.

Stage 2: Resistance Phase

- a. Body: Continues to resist and provide energy until either the threat is gone, or all of the energy has been depleted.
- b. Mind: Learns to cope with the task effectively

Stage 3: Exhaustion

- a. Body: If the demands continue over a period of time, and all of the energies are depleted, the body becomes physically and psychologically exhausted. At this point, a person is very susceptible to illness, and if not checked may actually die from exhaustion.
- b. Mind: You come to a state of emotional fatigue.

How Vulnerable Are You To Stress?

Take the Stress Test and find out your “Stress Score”. (See Appendix E - Handout 2).

Flying Squirrel Story

Two boys went on a camping trip with their dad up in the Canadian wilderness. Boys went to gather fire wood. Took an axe to an old dead tree. The first boy swung at the trunk of the old hollow tree while the other boy watched. A little furry face popped out of a hole in the tree. A flying squirrel popped out, to their delight, and jumped out to glide to a far away branch. The little squirrel misjudged the distance however, because he didn't have time to get his pre-flight calculations. He fell to the ground and was slightly dazed.

One of the boys quickly snatched up the little flying squirrel. He was nervous about being bit, so he held on to the soft, furry little creature very tight in his hand to keep it from moving, as he rushed over to show his brother. The little flying squirrel was terrified, and paralyzed from fear. After a few moments, the squirrel simply went limp and lifeless.

The boy wasn't sure what happened. The little flying squirrel appeared to be dead. Did he do something to harm it when he snatched it up? Or was it hurt from its fall?

What the boys didn't realize was that flying squirrels are very gentle and friendly little creatures, and would probably not bite even if it was given a chance. Because they are so fragile and shy, excessive pressure or fright will cause them to terror stricken and paralyzed with fear. The flying squirrel doesn't have the ability to cope with excessive pressure. Instead of fighting to escape, the gentle creature will simply give up. Its paralyzing fear will cause it to go into shock and die.

We are not flying squirrels, but we do have a limit to how much stress we can take before we are overwhelmed by it.

Being overstressed will make a person sick. It is like running your car engine past the red line, or leaving your toaster stuck in the on position. Eventually something will break down, or burn up.

Murphy's Law Of Police Work (See Appendix D – Handout 3)

Break Out in Groups and discuss the following questions:

1. What are some of the signs that you are being overstressed?
2. What are some of the things that cause you to feel stressed?

This summary is from a recent article in a scientific paper about a primitive cave used by Native Americans for what is estimated to be several thousand years. In studying the archeology of the place, they could see each technological advance, and estimate the time between these advances. They could see where the Native Americans began using mostly basic tools. Over about a period of a thousand years, they saw the revolutionary change of using a spear for hunting. The next revolution, of again about a thousand years, showed the use of a sling shot. A thousand years after this, they developed and began using the bow and arrow....It took a thousand years for this tribal group to change their tools or make an advance. How many advances have been made, just in your life time? Microwave, CDs, VCR, DVDs, personal computer, cell phones – to name just a few.

Serotonin, Noradrenalin, and Dopamine

There are three chemicals in our bodies that help us keep functioning, and when any of the three are out of whack, can cause us problems:

Serotonin – What allows us to sleep. Causes changes in our body that make us sleepy, and allow us to fall to sleep. Serotonin sets our body clock. If Serotonin is not doing its job, you will not be able to fall asleep no matter how you try.

Serotonin helps to re-set your body clock, adjusts your body temperature (cooler when you are sleeping), stress fighting hormones, and your sleep cycle.

Noradrenalin – Gives you energy. A cousin to adrenalin. People who do not have the right level of Noradrenalin will be sluggish and lethargic. They don't have energy to do anything. It is like running a car with a bad alternator. It will drain the battery until the car dies.

Dopamine – Sets your pleasure and pain threshold. Dopamine is linked to Endorphins. When Dopamine is not functioning properly it causes the body's natural pain killer to shut down, causing aches especially in the chest, neck, shoulders and back areas. Dopamine is also the body's pleasure center, which allows us to feel pleasure. With a low Dopamine level, our bodies will feel achy, and we will not be pleasant to be around.

Symptoms of being overstressed:

1. First your body clock will stop working. You will have a hard time falling asleep, or waking up depending on where your body clock is stuck. You will wake up not feeling rested at all.
2. You will have a notable lack of energy.
3. Aches and pains
4. Lack of enjoyment in life and in things you once enjoyed.
5. You may feel anxious, or think maybe you are having a heart attack. You may even fall into a sense of panic. Shortness of breath, feeling light headed, stomach upset, diarrhea, ulcers, etc.

Avoiding Stress

1. Get up 15 minutes earlier.
2. Prepare for morning the night before.
3. Never wear ill-fitting clothes.
4. Set appointments ahead.
5. Don't rely on your memory.
6. Practice preventative maintenance.
7. Make duplicates of all keys.
8. Rearrange work hours.
9. Say "no" more often.
10. Never shop for clothes with critical teenagers, skinny friends, or those who look terrific in everything.
11. Take advantage of off hours for banking and shopping.
12. Rearrange mealtimes.
13. Feed the children separately.
14. Keep an emergency supply of necessities.
15. Walk everywhere you can .
16. Park your car further from the store entrance and return the store cart to the proper area (you will feel good about helping out the store clerk and you benefit from the additional walking).
17. Make copies of all important papers and keep the originals in a safe place.
18. Anticipate your needs.
19. Don't put up with anything that doesn't work properly.
20. Make advance reservations.
21. Allow for extra time.

Reducing Stress / Getting back to Normal

Here are a few tips for reducing stress:

1. Be prepared to wait
2. Never arrange a meeting place that has no telephone
3. Find the humor in it.
4. Keep a "busy kit" handy when you travel.
5. Relax your standards.
6. Get help with the jobs you hate.
7. Establish a serene place of your own.
8. Change your perspective.
9. Count your blessings.
10. Keep time fillers by the phone.
11. Memorize your favorite poems.
12. Keep a supply of individually wrapped candies or sugar-free gum handy.
13. Avoid pick-me-ups such as caffeine or sugar. It will actually cause more stress on the body and prolong the problem.
14. Travel light.
15. Be prepared for rain.
16. Ask questions.
17. Take advantage of your body rhythms.
18. Make contingency plans.
19. Un-clutter your life.
20. Avoid reliance on chemical aids.

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21. Set your schedule like “clock Work”. Go to bed at the same time every night, even if you don’t want to.
 22. Every morning make a list of things you want to get done today, then cut off the bottom half of the list.
 23. Lighten your social calendar – delegate – or if unable to delegate say NO more often.
 24. Postpone making changes in your living environment – don’t move, remodel, etc at this time.
 25. Cut back your number of hours at work or school.
 26. Eat a balanced diet with proper amounts of minerals and vitamins.
 27. Exercise.
 28. Don’t take sleeping pills or self medicate (see a doctor before stopping or starting any medications).
 29. Work on your self talk. Don’t think ‘I have to get this done’, or ‘something terrible will happen if...’. Change that kind of thinking.

Group Exercise: Break into groups and discuss the following:

What are unique stressors to Law Enforcement Personnel?

What are signs and symptoms to watch for that a cop is over stressed?

What can we as Chaplains do to help?

Relieving Stress

Some things to do to relieve stress include:

- Get in touch with friends/family who bring you joy
- Take time off
- Find enjoyable ways to exercise
- Talk to someone you trust – “Get it off your chest”
- Reward yourself after stressful activities
- Take leisurely baths
- Schedule more fun
- Take a break from the children
- Have a massage
- Unwind before bedtime

Challenges:

How to help

Changes in personality

Irritability

Sleepless or Sleeping much more than usual

Loss of appetite or unusually large appetite over a period of time

Crying

RED FLAGS OF EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION

How can you tell when your energy level is slipping to dangerous levels? What signals emotional and physical exhaustion? Here are a few significant pointers.

Answer the questions below as you consider the last two or three weeks of your life. Give yourself a score for each:

2 if your answer is "often" 1 if it is "sometimes" 0 if it is "rarely"

Question	Often	Sometimes	Rarely
Are you spending an unusual amount of time by yourself, withdrawing from friends, family and work acquaintances?			
Are you becoming more negative, pessimistic, critical, or cynical about yourself and others?			
Are you forgetting appointments, deadlines, or activities and not feeling concerned about it?			
Are you more irritable, hostile, aggressive, angry, or frustrated than usual?			
Are you sleeping either much more than usual or significantly less?			
Do you suffer from gastrointestinal problems (indigestion, stomach discomfort, diarrhea, or colitis)?			
Are you waking up feeling tired or fatigued?			
Are you spending a lot of time thinking or worrying about your work, people, the future, or the past?			
Do you have an overwhelming feeling of being overloaded, that too many demands are being imposed on you?			
Do you find yourself focusing on relatively petty things or persevering with nonproductive or ineffective actions?			
Do you feel that nothing you do is effective in coping with your life, or that you are helpless to control the outcome of anything?			
Are you experiencing headaches, muscle tension, or stiffness in your shoulders and neck, or increased pain anywhere in the body?			
Does your heart thump or race, or do you get irregular heartbeats when you lie down to rest?			
Do you get dizzy or lightheaded (especially when you are under pressure)?			
Have you become aware of increased anxiety, worry, fidgeting, and restlessness?			
Column Totals			
Total Score			

Interpretation – Scoring the results

The fifteen items of this test cover the most significant, subtle signs of overwork, such as repeatedly waking up tired in the morning. Other symptoms include withdrawal, negative thinking, forgetfulness, and irritability, as well as an assortment of hysterical problems, such as stomach discomfort, headaches, and lightheadedness.

Although this simple self-test is not intended to yield conclusive results, your score might caution you to take a second look at the stressors most recently influencing your life.

Score Possible Stress Level

25-30	Your stress level is dangerously high. You are probably experiencing distress in your nervous system, cardiovascular system, muscular system – just about every major physical and emotional system of your life – even if you don't recognize it. It would be advisable to consult a physician right away and seek some good stress-management counseling.
17-24	Your stress level is high and you are more than likely showing severe signs of distress. This would be a good time to change your life style or make some drastic changes to reduce your stress level. Seeking help from a professional might be beneficial.
11-16	Your stress level is at a moderate level and may simply be from too many things happening at once. If you can ease up a bit, or do activities that will reduce the physiological effects of stress (exercise, rest, enjoyable activities).
6-10	Your stress level is showing mild signs of distress. It might be helpful to ease up a bit.
0-5	You are living a relatively stress-free life and appear to be coping well with the pressures of daily living.

STRESS RATING SCALE

Think of what has happened to you in the past year as you read through this test. Jot down the point values for events that apply to you in the column at the right, then add up your score. If your total for the year is under 150, you probably will not have any adverse reaction. A score of 150-199 indicates a "mild" problem, with a 37% chance you will feel the impact of stress with physical symptoms. A score of 200-299, you qualify as having a "moderate" problem with 51% chance of experiencing a change in your health. And a score of over 300 could really threaten your well-being.

Rank Life Event	Stress Rating Score	Your Stress Score
Death of Spouse	100	
Divorce	73	
Marital Separation	65	
Jail Term	63	
Death of close family member	63	
Personal injury or illness	53	
Marriage	50	
Fired from job	47	
Marital reconciliation	45	
Retirement	45	
Change in health of family member	44	
Pregnancy	40	
Sex Difficulties	39	
Gain of new family member	39	
Business readjustment	39	
Change in financial state	38	
Death of a close friend	37	
Change to different kind of work	36	
Change in number or arguments with spouse	35	
Mortgage over \$80,000	31	
Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30	
Wife begins/stops work	26	
Begin or end school	26	
Change in living conditions	25	
Revision of personal habit	24	
Trouble with boss	23	
Change in work hours or conditions	20	
Change in residence	20	
Change in school	20	
Change in recreation	19	
Change in social activities	18	
Mortgage or loan less than \$80,000	17	
Change in sleeping habits	16	
Change in number of family get-togethers	15	
Change in eating habits	15	
Vacation	13	
Christmas	12	
Minor violations of the law	11	
Total:		