

Law Enforcement Emotional Stress: Recommendations for a Stress Debriefing Program for the
Officer and Their Family

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Law Enforcement Emotional Stress: Recommendations for a Stress Debriefing Program for the
Officer and Their Family

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Abstract

Law Enforcement Emotional Stress: Recommendations for a Stress Debriefing Program for the Officer and Their Family

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Under the Supervision of Dr. Cheryl Banachowski-Fuller

Statement of the Problem

Police officers are faced with high risk stress calls throughout their career. Departments have developed effective ways to address a critical stress incident by implementing a critical stress debrief. Some police officers take advantage of the debrief, but some do not. Regardless, opportunities and resources are available to address a critical incident to ensure that there are not long lasting effects of the situation. However, many departments fail to implement a strategy to focus on the everyday wear and tear that builds up through the course of the police officer career. This wear and tear can be detrimental to the police officer, family, friends, and marriage.

Arredondo et al. (2002) stated that the police officer personality sets them apart from the general population, which also allows them to perform their job well. The desire to do their job well, over commitment, action oriented, dire need for stimulation, and a strong desire to be needed are the same personality traits that can be troublesome to their marriage. Furthermore, dominance, authoritarian, suspicious, and cynical are often displayed inside the workplace and can filter into the personal life of the officer, which destroys marriages. Therefore, it is imperative for an organization to take proactive steps to decrease and effectively manage stress. The stress decrease initiative is not only subject to the police officer, but their spouses as well.

By only providing counseling services for one person in the relationship is an ineffective approach to reducing stress inside the family.

Method of Approach

Scholarly and accredited secondary sources that relate to the theoretical, empirical, and practical findings will be utilized for the purpose of this paper. Reputable internet sources and criminal justice textbooks will also be a form of data and literature collection. The sources will focus on the stress that is received in policing, organizational commitments, and the police subculture, which contributes to a high divorce rate. An ideal program and deployment practice to combat stress within the work environment will be researched and recommendations to implement in to the police organization will be discussed. The power and control theory and social learning theory, as it relates to policing, affects relationships within a marriage and additional family members. Many officers learn from each other within their negative subculture. Because of the subculture, problems are not solved appropriately and ultimately cause further decay within a relationship and organization. Therefore, in order to effectively reduce the problem of stress and divorce, officers need to learn a positive coping mechanism that is offered by professionals in the field of counseling, 24-hour crisis line, and the overall feeling of trust that the organization bestows upon their workers. Effective hiring tactics can assist by filtering out those that are at risk to emotional stress and potential collapse of a marriage. It is better to wait for a high quality recruit, rather than risk department endeavors due to convenience. Money and time management inside the ranks of the police department are major concerns. Nothing is more detrimental than ensuring quality recruits are placed within the organization. It is evident that a quality hiring practice results in a good investment.

Results of the Study

Collected evidence from empirical data showed that managing emotional stress results in decreased relationship conflict and divorces. According to some researchers, police officers have the highest divorce rate, in comparison to other professions. Theorists suggest that it is the high level of stress and social isolation that evolves into commitment failures. The suspicious, authoritative, and cynical personality that many police officers develop throughout the course of their career spills into the home, which creates strain on relationships. By not only managing emotional stress for the sake of a successful marriage, it will enhance physical health and commitment to organizational goals. In order for a department to reach and maintain a great status to the community, proactive steps from the organization are needed to be met. Law enforcement officers have the tendency to not engage in counseling services on their own. The perception and involvement with the police subculture hardens the ability to those that want to seek out services provided inside and outside of the organization. Effective leadership styles, organizational support, and a department program mandate officers to involve their family in counseling mechanisms to reduce stress and raise their commitment to each other.

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I. INTRODUCTION: LAW ENFORCEMENT EMOTIONAL STRESS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A STRESS DEBRIEFING PROGRAM FOR THE OFFICER AND THEIR FAMILY

Law enforcement officers come into contact with stressful situations on a daily basis. Potential stressors for police officers could be experiencing a stressful incident with the public, constant vigilance knowing there is always a potential high-risk call, failure to achieve professional advancement within the organization, or experience continuous struggles with peers and supervisors in the department. Gilmartin (2002) relates the stressful policing profession inside and outside of the workforce to an “emotional rollercoaster” that can ultimately be detrimental to their personal and professional well-being. Gilmartin (2002) also suggests that the aforementioned stressors lower morale, decrease motivation, create management obstacles, and can potentially cause personal strife within their personal lives and families.

Discussions of the stressful nature of a law enforcement career have been well documented by numerous sources. Tanigoshi, Kontos, and Remley (2008) stated, “as many as 87% of all emergency service personnel have experienced critical incident stress at least once during their professional service” (pg. 64). Examples of critical incident stress occur when the officer feels that their sense of safety, morality, and ability to effectively cope with a stressful situation is placed into jeopardy. Many research articles focus on stress that specifically relates to the officer and a critical incident, but fail to mention the after effects have a negative impact on their marriage. Furthermore, although critical incidence stress debriefs are an effective approach, it fails to maintain a consistent schedule throughout the career of a police officer. In many cases, the critical stress debrief is offered to the police officer and others that were involved in the particular case. However, many officers and departments do not advocate, or require, officers to attend the meetings. This approach within the police subculture creates

“control, dominance, authority, and lack of sentimentality” (Miller, 2007, pg. 23). Miller (2007) also suggests that the failure to require or promote officers and their families to attend critical incident debriefs lacks emotional connectedness that is needed in a marriage and family structure.

Police officers maintain unconventional schedules that do not consist of the typical 9-5 job with weekends and holidays off (Miller, 2007). In addition, the officer may be called in for mandatory overtime, fill specialty assignments, work late, miss dinner, or have to change weekend plans due to rotating schedules required by the police department. All of which have a significant amount of stress embedded within not only the police officer, but their families as well. The wear and tear factor that occurs on a daily basis is rarely discussed in a police organization, and furthermore, fail to provide adequate counseling methods that address the everyday aspects of the job. Arredondo et al. (2002) notes that it is not uncommon that a course is offered in a recruit class that specifically relates to the ongoing stress during a law enforcement career. In many cases, the class offers spouses or significant others to attend with the recruit in order to fully understand the changing nature of the job. Once the class is concluded, there have been little, if any, further education and counseling methods to deter progressive stress that accumulates throughout the years.

Implementing an effective stress relief program has several positive outcomes; motivational increase within the organization and personal lives, decrease in the low level of morale, suicides, alcoholism, and more specifically divorces among those participating in the profession. Research of the New York police department showed that most divorces occur within the first five years of their job (New York City Patrol Benevolent Association, 1998).

Among 20,000 retired police officers for New York City, 2,666 were listed as divorced in 1998. In 1997, 986 police officers filed for divorce out of a department of 38,000. The New York police department responded to the increase in divorces and suicides by implementing a program that specifically reduces the stress for the police officers and their families. It is noted that by only establishing counseling methods for the police officer, and not the family, develops a proactive approach that is only 50 percent effective. New York City Patrol Benevolent Association (1998) collaborated with four internal and external sources to help reduce stress within the organization and personal lives of the police officers; the use of volunteer peer support officers, creation of mental health clinicians that are specifically trained on stress issues experienced by police officers and their families, establishment of a 24-hour help line, and interagency and public-private collaborations. Through the efforts that are not just focused on critical incident debrief methods, the New York City police department opened the door to various counseling options for all within the police work environment.

The purpose of this research is to identify a quality stress relief program that can be implemented into an organization on a regular basis. This stress relief program is not only directed towards the officer, but their families as well. As indicated, stress as a police officer affects those that are closest to them that could ultimately join in on the “emotional rollercoaster” that Gilmartin (2002) pointed out. Failure to implement a regular practice provided by services of the organization and external influences creates inconsistencies for the officer, family, and organization. Additionally, failure to launch a program develops an atmosphere that advocates a reactive approach to identifying poor job performance and the well-being of the officer. Expectations have always been set high within the “fishbowl” culture of the profession, which creates stress and further problems at home.

An underline study will be presented to further understand the roots of behavioral problems, suicides, alcoholism, and divorces within the occupation. Gilmartin (2002) notes that it is no coincidence that officers engage in the aforementioned topics. The growing nature of the job allows officers to become cynical of policing practices, deployment, and the continuing control factor that is acceptable and required on the street in the community, but not at home. The control factor that filters into the home life creates a distance that is sometimes not repairable with the spouse or children of a police officer. In turn, the divorce rate is considerably higher among those associated in a police professional career.

The goal of this research is to identify proactive approaches to reduce stress, identify effective leadership strategies, and increase counseling services among law enforcement officers. Ideas presented by other programs in police agencies will be used to uplift the dire need to establish a common counseling practice. This is in hope to better the quality of the organization, family, and individual officer to decrease alcoholism, suicides, and specifically divorces among law enforcement families.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW ON TYPES OF LAW ENFORCEMENT EMOTIONAL STRESS, CAUSATIVE FACTORS, STATISTICS SUPPORTING SRESSFUL OUTCOMES

This section is broken up into three parts. The first section focuses on various types of on the job stress that police officers engage in on a daily basis. These stresses are, but not limited to, excessive hours, law enforcement culture, labor/management problems, organizational conflict, and anticipated stressful case. The second section focuses on causative factors to divorce as it relates to alcoholism and continuance of emotional stress. This researcher will look into the negative affects that occur on family members, friends, and co-workers due to the police

officer role and responsibilities. The personality of the police officer is set apart from the general population. However, the same personality displayed puts police officers at risk.

A. Literature review on causative factors of on-job stress

The profession of a police officer is not a typical job that requires a 9-5 and Monday thru Friday work schedule. In fact, many people outside of the criminal justice system do not realize the strain that the work schedule can have on a police officer and their family. The unconventional schedule often requires police officers to work on holidays, weekends, during special family events, and mandatory or voluntary overtime (Miller, 2007). Therefore, many families will eventually find it rather difficult to accommodate and be flexible with the instability and unpredictability that the law enforcement profession brings.

It is not uncommon for young and inexperienced police officers to work a great deal of hours to accommodate the organization and their personal career. Many young men and women have high expectations for themselves and want to get involved in many different aspects of the job. Their role within the police organization is fresh and they are ambitious to start new things, which can be overwhelming. Due to a great work ethic, police officers will commonly receive praise from their co-workers, promotions, rewards, and access to plum special assignments (Miller, 2007). Miller (2007) refers to this behavior as the “Cop Channel-all cop, all the time” (pg. 26).

However, this type of ambition that portrays a hard worker can backfire eventually through the course of time. The police officer will attempt to justify their workaholic behavior through statements that insinuate they are providing for their families. Ultimately, they are pushing aside their loved ones to professionally achieve greater things. Many police officers will

argue that in order to live a more comfortable life, they have to work the overtime and specialty assignments to make a few extra dollars for the family. However, Miller (2007) suggests that spouses would rather spend extra time with their significant others, rather than having them constantly working. These statements suggest that the greater things in life are not worth having if the family is unable to share them together.

Another factor that correlates with police officers working excessive hours is the idea of having another job when they are on their days off. Again, this is another argument presented by the officer in order to achieve more money and to provide better things for their family (Miller, 2007). Researchers identify this behavior as a workaholic that has the tendency to put their career first, which is consistent with the police subculture. Gilmartin (2002) notes that officers should utilize their time off to supplement the unusual hours spent within the policing profession. The off duty, or secondary jobs, vary in aspect. According to Miller (2007), police officers have the tendency to work with fellow employees while off duty. The connectedness with each other remains constant and shielded from the general population. The formulation of connectedness with fellow employees further identifies and enhances a police subculture.

Workaholic behavior and the police subculture are both very dangerous to the well-being of a police officer and their family. The spouse could get jealous of the special relationship that the officer has with his/her co-workers, which can create strife within the family circle. Johnson, Todd, and Subramanian (2005) acknowledge that the spillover of the police subculture and the on-job stress can be handled in a positive fashion. However, it is imperative for the officer and their family to engage in department counseling methods or seek out the assistance that is needed to better their personal and professional lives. A work balance should focus on the well-being of the officer and their family for the greater good of everyone involved. In order to do that, the

officer must put family first to decrease the sense of suspicion that commonly occurs when officers enter into their professional career.

Cavanagh (2004) also identifies characteristics of the police subculture, which are detrimental to the officer and their family. Overtime the subculture diminishes the wellbeing of the police officer and everyone around them. The “John Wayne Syndrome” promotes “tough, abusive, prejudice, hard drinking, hot tempered, humorless, authoritarian, unattached, bullheaded, fearless, chauvinistic, adventuresome, and emotionless” (Cavanagh, 2004, pg. 81). The authoritarian style, which is also known as “macho man” behavior, creates distance from their spouse (Miller, 2007). Miller (2007) suggests that over time these forms of aggressive behaviors cause marital problems that often result in divorce.

Labor/management problems and organizational conflict

A centralized structure within a law enforcement agency creates stressful conditions. Having a chain of command that relies on an authoritarian leadership model imposes top down communication by means of orders and directives, wields powerful internal control the rank and file of officers, and seeks out strong internal discipline. (Stojkovic et al., 2003). The decisions on personnel actions, planning, formulation of policies and procedures, adjunction of conflict, and other significant issues are made by the managers at the top of the hierarchy. This type of leadership could potentially be a contributing factor to low morale and stressful conditions for officers within the agency.

Cavanagh (2004) reported that 7 out of the top 20 stressors revolve around organizational/administrative problems or inconsistencies. Inadequate support that involves a quasi-military structure often creates communication deficiencies. The quasi-military structure advocates a lack of involvement in the decision making process, unfair disciplinary action, and

an all around authoritarian structure. Cavanagh (2004) reports that high risk stress incidents are solvable by the officer through the course of time and effective counseling methods.

Additionally, high risk incidents come once every great while within the law enforcement career. However, agency stress is constant and occurs on a daily basis, which has a tendency to filter back into the home of the officer. “For the most part, officers must endure it, keep their mouths shut, and ventilate about it privately with their trusted officers” (Cavanagh, 2004, pg. 85). By doing so, the police subculture arises and creates a distance from management and personnel. Distance and lack of trust develops the perception of “they are out to get me” and belief that they are not valuable to the organization or mission.

Cavanagh (2004) suggests that there are two largely unnecessary forms of internal stress; bureaucracy and injustice. Bureaucracy is very different than management. Bureaucracy simply identifies micromanagement techniques and focuses its attention to extremely small detail, which also fails to accept new ideas from line personnel. Injustice primarily gives officers the perception that they are being targeted for a number of reasons. Many start to develop this thought process due to not receiving a promotion, transfer assignment, or due to being counseled on a frequent basis for very small infractions. Other areas of organizational conflict arise to boost the unhealthy lifestyle of the police officer and their family. It would be unrealistic to think that the aforementioned unnecessary forms of stress within the organization do not cause further problems within the personal home of the officer.

To further discuss labor/management stress, Stojkovic, Kalinich, and Klofas (2003) present four types of conflict within the organization; personal conflict, group conflict, intra-organizational conflict, and inter-organizational conflict.

Personal conflict

Personal conflict exists inside of the individual and typically entails failed expectations for themselves. Stojkovic et al (2003) note that the officer must align their expectations with the organization and superiors to fully understand the conflict and reduce the impact it may shed on their personal lives.

Group conflict

Group conflict occurs when individual members disagree on a common interest made by the organization. This form of conflict may cause the group to develop a police subculture that was previously discussed. The interest of this group may be inconsistent of the organization over very small details. A resolution must be achieved to further enhance the quality of the organizational goals and the personal lives of the police officer.

Intra-organizational conflict

There are four roles within the intra-organizational conflict; vertical conflict, horizontal conflict, line-staff conflict, and role conflict. Vertical conflict refers to the rank and file of the organization. The ability to take orders is paramount for organizational goals and well being of the department. Horizontal conflict identifies problems that exist within those of the same rank or position within the organization. Line-staff conflict occurs when staff members supplement their arguments based on the workload of the officer. However, it could backfire and causes friction through policy violations. Role conflict is perhaps the most common within criminal justice agencies. Failure to identify organizational goals develops isolation inside and outside of the organization. Blame on others, to include their spouse, creates distance that often drives police officers to alcoholism, depression, and divorce.

Inter-organizational conflict

Inter-organizational conflict occurs when specialties within the organization disagree on the overall objective or deployment practice utilized to reach goals. It is important to understand that the well-being of police officers do not pertain strictly to line personnel, but to staff operators as well. According to Stojkovic et al (2003), there are many stressors that create problems for staff members within management positions. These stressors can easily filter back into the family life of the police officer just as easily as it could for a member on the patrol unit.

Anticipated stressful case

Gilmartin (2004) states in his book *Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement*, “if I see the world as potentially violent, I’ll be prepared for violence when it does take place” (pg. 33).

Police officers must successfully graduate from a law enforcement academy before being placed on the street with a Field Training Officer (FTO). Although many training tactics are different from department to department, the same philosophy of survival remains constant. According to Gilmartin (2004), in order to be successful and survive through the day, officers ultimately develop hypervigilant behavior. This behavior is considered to be remarkably dangerous to the well-being of the police officer and their family. In many cases, the officer is at the edge of the squad car seat waiting for the “big call”. Many people outside of the law enforcement occupation do not deal with hypervigilance or the risk of getting hurt on a moments notice. Therefore, they do not understand the complexity that this biological behavior brings.

Rarely are officers at a relaxed mode that would require letting their guard down (Gilmartin, 2004). The officer maintaining a ready mode creates a biological effect that allows them to prepare to survive through heightened functions. Gilmartin (2004) identifies seven increased levels of biological influences:

- Increased peripheral vision

- Improved hearing
- Faster reaction times
- Increased blood sugar
- Elevated heart rate
- Increased blood pressure
- A general sense of energy to meet and overcome any threats that are challenging the body's capacity to survive.

The biological effect creates a rollercoaster that is damaging to the officer. Gilmartin (2004) identifies not only the hypervigilant rollercoaster while on duty, but the off duty aspect as well. Because of the extreme level of anticipation, the officer will get emotionally drained when returning home from work. Often times, the officer will revert to the “magic chair”, which is a chair that blocks out events around the house in order to unwind. Ultimately, this develops a lack of communication between the officer, spouse, and their children. Lack of effective communication within an organization creates distance between line and staff officers. The same occurs in the home of the officer, which potentially develops negative behaviors of alcoholism, suicide, depression, and divorce.

B. Causative factors that promote broken homes

Alcohol consumption within the policing profession has been part of the culture for many years (Davey, Obst, Sheehan, and Sheehan, 2001). Davey et al. (2001) indicate that there are two factors that have focused on having a particular role in alcohol consumption to dangerous levels; culture that is conducive to alcohol use and job characteristics leading to occupational stress. Culture has been defined as the learned and shared forms of behavior, and the police

culture has been known to involve drinking alcohol on a regular basis. Frequently, officers gather in groups for specific celebrations such as, successful operations, promotions, transfers, debriefings, workshops, and seasonal celebrations. Although these forms of celebrations are not negative, police officers have the tendency to use alcohol to cope with stress. Both methods used to socialize and cope develops traditions, which would require policy makers to address the potential negative outcomes that spin off of the over indulgence of alcohol consumption. Counseling tools can be implemented at an early stage to eliminate or reduce potential problems the organization or family may face from celebrations and stress.

Job characteristics that lead to occupational stress are also factors that promote alcohol consumption. “Death, trauma, violence, grief, and danger are part of police work and research has found that dealing with these issues can contribute to stress” (Davey et al., 2001). According to Kohan and O’Connor (2002) dealing with an extraordinary amount of stress within a professional career can lead to an excessive amount of alcohol abuse. In particular, the unordinary job function that police officers experience on a daily basis creates a blanket of stressful factors, which allows alcohol to easily be prescribed as “self-medication”.

Alcoholism within a household can develop a great deal of strain on a marriage. In this case, police officers have developed the reputation, which empirical evidence has provided, to engage in the overindulgence of alcohol and the after affects can be disastrous. Stuart (2006) concluded that “alcohol problems in both partners are important factors in the evolution of psychological aggression and physical violence” (pg. 5). Alcohol consumption brings in a new element of physical violence in the home, which can be contributing factors to divorce among in law enforcement field. Johnson (2000) suggests that heavy drinking may contribute directly to an increased risk of violence against wives because of the negative effect it has on cognition and

perceptions. Additionally, excessive drinking may enhance the ongoing problems within an intimate relationship through mood-altering effects. Johnson (2000) further suggests that alcohol and violence have a direct link to macho behavior and an overbearing self-image.

Police officers typically fill the role of dominance within the community. They have to maintain control of situations when they arise, and as Gilmartin (2004) states, “officers are exposed every day to a series of unknown events, any one of which could be perfectly harmless or lethally dangerous” (pg. 34). Officers have to develop a considerable sense of knowledge and growth within the community. However, the control factor of professional experience commonly filters into home. Individuals that mix an excessive amount of alcohol with a profession that involves dominance, power, and control delivers a dangerous combination to the well-being of health and marriage.

Emotional stress and isolation

There are over 18,000 law enforcement agencies in the United States (Woody, 2006). Within the 18,000 law enforcement agencies, there are a significant amount of officers that are in need of mental health services. If these services are not implemented, officers tend to isolate themselves and serve as an impediment to relationships with family and friends. Therefore, social isolation and the highly demanding employment climate create profound stress for officers and supervisors. Police officers feel that they live in a “fishbowl”, which hypothetically very true. Every move that is made, on duty and off, is certainly up for scrutiny from the general public. Due to the living atmosphere that police officers must adjust to, they develop a suspicious outlook into many factors within the community.

In the face of problems, police officers tend to be emotionally guarded and suppress their feelings while under stress (Woody, 2006). According to Kohan and O’Connor (2002), job

satisfaction was primarily associated with positive affect, life satisfaction, and self-esteem. Job stress is associated with negative affect and alcohol consumption. Social isolation lacks empathy and insight which oftentimes evolves into an inability to accept help from a family therapist or any other professional counseling (Woody, 2006). It is important for the family to intervene with the officer, which then can ensure that the best practices towards success are applied toward the healthy lifestyle for the profession and family. It is imperative to achieve these goals through a team effort. After all, according to Woody (2006), the emotional stress certainly affects the officer and everyone around them.

Supervisors can also adjust their supervising technique to meet the goals and functions of each individual officer and to help develop different attitudes about the profession and their family. Leadership strategies will be discussed further in this research in order to develop an ideal deployment practice that is beneficial for the officer, family, and organization. Woody (2006) understands that the failing efforts to control emotional stress and the affects that it has on families results in further problems in the organization, and more importantly, into the home of the officer.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Just as in any profession, there are a wide variety of personalities and theories associated with the police occupation. Van Maanen (1973) states that most police officers feel as if they are “picking up the trash” within the community, which can be perceived as performing the dirty work in society. Furthermore, Van Maanen (1973) states, “today’s patrolman feels cut off from the mainstream culture and unfairly stigmatized. In short, when a patrolman dons his uniform, he enters a distinct subculture governed by norms and values designed to manage the strain

created by an outsider role in the community” (pg. 64). Theory assists our efforts in predicting behavior (Grana, Ollenberger, and Nicholas, 2002). They are soon developed to identify the police personality and their role in society. As indicated, there might be many differences within the police culture, but many have similar characteristics that can be devastating to the family and organizational structure.

The police personality is described to be authoritarian, dominant, cynical, alienated, and lacking in empathy (Van Maanen, 1973). Unfortunately, many of these personality traits filter into the home of the officer and create a disturbance within their married life. The two theories that will be discussed are the power/control theory and the social learning theory. These theories identify the personality characteristics of the role of police officers and their behavior while on and off duty. As the police profession begins to evolve into a more community oriented approach, expectations are now being enhanced to ensure the most qualified candidates fill the positions, which is geared towards the department organizational values, goals, and structure. The changing times in the police profession are causing personalities to accommodate a more dynamic approach to community concerns.

A. Power and control theory

Power *and* control have features that are very common to each other. Hagen (1989) identifies power and control to the development of an occupation and family. Hagen (1989) contest that behaviors that occur within the workplace influence what happens inside the family and vice versa. Power often refers to the domination in the workplace, as control refers to the domination at home. Domination in the workplace can affect the relationship between the supervisor and supervisee. The hierarchal function of a police organization has caused many

forms of stress for law enforcement officers. In many cases, police officers face the line of stress within their own organization, which filters back into the home (Stojkovic et al, 2003).

The quasi-military function and traditional styles of policing have shown to be ineffective over the years. Departments are starting to change over their deployment style, and by doing so, are required to change over their leadership style as well. It is difficult to expect line officers to engage in a different policing tactic without identifying a more productive style of leadership. The ineffectiveness of the traditional style of policing does not challenge the officers to get involved with the decision making process within the capacity that they are allowed, which creates mistrust, low morale, and low motivation to achieve organizational goals.

The control factor identifies dominance in the home (Hagen, 1989). Dominance can be considered between parents and child or parents themselves. In both cases, there is a concern of the hierarchal structure that runs within the family home, which has potential to cause friction. The sense of patriarchy typically runs true with males that generate the hierarchy structure to maintain control over those within the workplace and homes. However, it should be noted that females also contribute to this idea of management.

Patriarchy is widespread through state agencies such as; police agencies, courts, and correctional institutions. Ultimately, those that deliver this style of approach create a form of government inside their homes that can be devastating to their marriage. Hagen (1989) insinuates that gender inequality of dominance within the home is rooted in the economic inequality. Especially when the husband is employed within a government that has a top down hierarchy structure, and the wife is a “stay at home mother”. The structure, especially if the husband possesses rank and is in control of subordinates, filters into the home while maintaining the same expectations of dominance.

B. Social learning theory

Domestic violence and aggressive behavior has framed much of its context on the social learning theory (Corvo, 2006). Corvo (2006) stated, “social learning theory posits that observing the behavior of significant or influential others generates ideas of how new behaviors are performed” (pg. 117). Observing violence while working in the criminal justice field can potentially generate further ideas on where and when aggression is appropriate. Learning the police subculture from coworkers can possess a great deal of strain on a marriage.

Akers (1994) discusses the social learning theory as it relates to criminals and criminal behavior. However, much of his concepts can be related to those that work within the criminal justice field. Personal and professional problems are created, due to the work environment that filters back into the home. The following are four major concepts of the social learning theory:

Differential association

Differential association refers to when one is exposed to favorable or unfavorable behaviors. These behaviors ultimately influence further actions.

Definitions

Definitions refers to the individual behavior, as it relates to morals, rationalizations, and ethics. The individual behavior is attached to the police subculture behavior and ultimately develops into a positive or negative performance while on or off duty.

Differential Reinforcement

Differential reinforcement refers to balancing out the rewards or punishment that will soon follow after a certain behavior is displayed. Implementing a thought process of whether or

not taking a certain risk will generate rewards that are perceived to be beneficial. However, this same risk could create a distance between the officer and organization or family.

Imitation

Imitation is simply engaging in similar behavior after it is observed. In the police culture, many officers engage in “choir practice”, which is consuming a great deal of alcohol after the shift is complete (Gilmartin, 2004). As indicated, alcohol consumption develops the subculture into a stronger bond, which ultimately creates problems with the spouse. Additionally, behaviors that are observed in corruption, illegal acts, and inappropriate actions towards superiors, all generate a great deal of stress for the officer and their respective supervisor.

IV. PROGRAMS UTILIZED TO RESPOND TO STRESSFUL BEHAVIOR

A partnership inside and outside of the organization should be established with highly trained personnel that can assist in the reduction of stress, due to the wear and tear nature of the occupation. This research should not be mistaken to overtake critical stress debrief methods. In fact, a partnership of the two should be collaborated for the greater good of the officer, family, and organization. Both counseling methods provide evidence to a fundamentally sound organization that cares for not only the employee, but their family as well. Therefore, mandating the officers to engage in critical stress debrief, as policy should suggest, would ultimately assist those that are apprehensive to attend such meetings.

The New York City Patrol Benevolent Association (1998) developed a method that ensures confidentiality through emotional stress debriefing efforts that occurs through the course of their career. These acts presented by the police department allow the officer to communicate with confidence on the ever changing structure that they are faced with on a daily basis. As

indicated by research, stress can be a controllable factor in a professional and personal life. It only needs an effective measure to adequately manage inadequacies and filter it into a positive method.

This section will examine two police departments and their efforts to reduce stress within their agency; New York City Police Department and four Arizona Native American and campus police departments. Both studies presented information supporting that the wear and tear of everyday stress can be damaging to the relationships that the officer has with their spouse. Therefore, proactive approaches have been identified to reduce the gap that commonly exists between police officers and their marriages.

A. New York City Police Department Patrol Benevolent Association (1998)

In October 1998, a New York City (NYC) police couple died in a murder and suicide incident, which left their two young children orphans (New York City Patrol Benevolent Association, 1998). This incident helped support the dire need to effectively and efficiently evaluate the causative factors to ongoing stress within the New York Police Department (NYPD), and measure effective ways to reduce stress for the greater good of the organization and personal life. The New York City Benevolent Associations (NYCBA) stepped up and targeted different ways to combat stress inside and outside of the organization. The program noted that in order to effectively resolve or reduce stress, it would be a team effort with the spouse/family, organization and outside influences. Therefore, NYCBA established three areas to direct their efforts; volunteer peer support, family training seminars, and a referral network to counseling services.

Volunteer peer support

History and research has shown that police officers maintain a suspicious mentality in order to do their job effectively. Suspicion has not only been geared toward community concerns, but the organization as well. The development of a volunteer peer support team initially created many pessimistic attitudes because the police officers believed that the support services had the potential to betray confidentially matters. Therefore, the Members Assistance Program (MAP) took a systematic approach and developed a volunteer peer support program to help break down barriers that police officers typically build and to help them regain the ability to trust. In order for the program to be effective, the implementation process consists of “partnerships, creation of new departmental policies, and the development and creation of new resources especially designed for police officers” (New York City Patrol Benevolent Association, 1998, pg. 8).

The MAP director created an application process in which officers had to fill out their background, education, experience, and reason wanting to be apart of the volunteer peer support team. In 1995, 105 applications were submitted and the first class of 50 officers (men and women) was introduced to the Manhattan Counseling and Psychotherapy Associates (MCPA) to begin their training. Since that time, over 150 volunteer peer support officers have been generated. Training consisted of an intense two weeks, followed by nine additional meetings within six months. The twelve topics covered were:

1. Trust building and communication/listening skills
2. Confidentiality issues
3. Ethical issues
4. Problem assessment
5. Problem solution and resolution

6. Crisis intervention and management
7. Stress management
8. Alcohol and substance abuse
9. Suicide assessment techniques
10. When to seek professional Mental health consultation and intervention
11. Family and relationship issues
12. Depression and burnout

Many objectives have been met through the use of volunteer peer support; handbooks, training seminars, counseling sessions, and scenario based training. The NYPD credits the volunteer peer support program in reducing suicides, marital problems, and alcohol abuse. Volunteers were available when needed, and approached officers they felt were in need of counseling. Previous research has suggested that law enforcement officers typically do seek out counseling support. Therefore, the volunteer peer support team sought them out to achieve the goals of the organization and personal well-being of the officer.

24-hour helpline and family training seminars

The implementation of the 24-hour helpline reaffirmed that the main conflict for NYPD officers were marital problems. Among 20,000 retired police officers, 2,666 are divorced. In March 1997, statistics revealed that 986 current NYPD officers are divorced. A vast majority of those divorces happened within the first five years of employment.

Selected peer support officers received additional training for family support seminars. Again, this was in conjunction of the MAP and MCPA. The training consisted of a one day seminar that discussed group leadership skills and guidelines for leading support groups. Once trained, the peer support team, MAP, and MCPA proceeded in their counseling practice, which

consisted of three seminars at four hours a piece. Flyers were sent out to police officers and their families within a two county radius, and the turnout was better than anticipated. Ordinary stress problems were covered within the first two hours and an open discussion was held in the second two hours. This gave spouses an opportunity to reach out and talk about the stress that they have experienced, which is known as secondary stress from the police officer occupation.

The group was broken down into smaller groups and the volunteer peer support officers took roles in leading further discussion to reduce stress and actions that would assist in maintaining a healthy marriage. In the remaining two seminars, many topics were covered to reduce the level of stress and social isolation that police officers commonly experience. Over 155 police families have attended the seminars. Feedback provided showed to be positive and had a significant impact on their marital concerns.

Referral network of mental health professionals

A computer driven database was created by NYPD officers to store and access information of mental health clinicians. Ronnie Hirsh, Ph.D., of the MCPA oversaw the marketing of clinicians within NYC and the metropolitan area. The MCPA updated information on available clinicians, placed information, maintain software, hardware, and database. The volunteer peer support team was trained to identify those in need of professional counseling services and made the appropriate recommendations. As indicated earlier, the volunteer peer support team strategically sought out those that have either been involved in a critical incident or have shown to have a decrease in motivation/morale and delivered the necessary services or referrals. This database provided groundwork for officers to work with and made it user friendly to seek out necessary stress debriefing or counseling sessions needed.

Marketing efforts, as it would be in any police organization, was a difficult task to overcome. In order to achieve goals, all five police union leaders passed information along to union members during their regular meetings; articles were placed in journals and newspapers, a marketing video was completed, and direct mail flyers and letters were sent to the homes of officers and their families. The collaboration of many organizations, public and private, reached a positive outcome from their continuous efforts. This cooperation has broken a long tradition in the NYPD. Now, more so than ever, police officers have been seeking out counseling services through the program provided by MAP. This program recognizes that their efforts are maintained in the best interest of the officer and their family. As a result, it is anticipated that there will be a tremendous decrease in marital problems and suicides.

B. Arizona Native American and campus police departments

In 1998, the Fraternal Order of Police in Tucson, AZ, were awarded a grant from the National Institute of Justice to develop an effective program to reduce stress and enhance marital relations in two Native American police departments and two campus police departments; White Mountain Apache Tribal Police Department, Tohono O’Odham Nation Police Department, University of Arizona Police Department, and Pima Community College Department of Safety (Morris, Morgan, and Easton, 2001). The primary focus in the deployment process was to develop and implement peer support teams that decreased behavioral and emotional stress related symptoms and increase marital satisfaction.

The methodology consisted of five major components; liaison with command staff and other administrators, officer and family member involvement, peer support team member

selection, peer support team member intensive training, and peer support team member supervision.

Liaison with command staff and other administrators

In each jurisdiction, formal and informal meetings were held between the command staff and other administrators. Objectives were discussed in order to implement an ideal peer support team that best represents each organization. Some of the departments were having organizational conflicts that created problems of trust and commitment to shared goals, which ultimately resulted in low turnout in the initial phases of the program. Through the course of effective communication methods, departments were able to break down barriers for the greater good of the organization and wellbeing of the police officer and family. It was noted that confidentially was assured and organizational support maintained an overwhelming status.

Officer and other family member involvement

For the four police departments, this was the most crucial aspect of the program. Without involvement, the program simply does not exist. White Mountain Apache Tribal Police Department received lower than anticipated involvement. The study indicated that there was current organizational strife. Some members believed that department management failed to provide the necessary amount of information on the background of this study within a timely fashion. In essence, department personnel were apprehensive in involving their loved ones to participate because of unknown information. Therefore, stress management techniques were strongly advocated through all ranks of all police officers and information readily flowed in both directions while at the meetings. Although the focus of the department research was to improve marital and family support, it was not restricted to those with spouses. Other objectives include;

reducing overall stress, provide knowledge and literature on the causative factors of stress, domestic violence education, and identifying alcoholism.

Meetings for all four jurisdictions were set up over a period of several months. Locations for these meetings were near department facilities and had one to two hour blocks of sessions. Departments relied heavily on the natural flow of information among the troops and supervisors advocating for the program. Without positive feedback from the word of mouth, the program would have trouble meeting their overall objectives.

Peer support team member selection

Six peer support team members were selected by each of three departments; White Mountain Apache Tribal Police Department, University of Arizona Police Department, and Pima Community College Department of Safety. The Tohono O’Odham Nation Police Department selected eleven peer support team members. Basic information of the program was sent out to all personnel, and the employees were able to select, in order of preference, those that they would like to see involved with the peer support team. The reason behind this was to develop a sense of trust within the organization by allowing line personnel control over those that would engage in their confidential wellbeing and marriages.

Peer support team member intensive training

Program staff soon implemented a three phase training objective for the new members of the peer support team. Training techniques were offered by the program staff; didactic, demonstrations, group exercises, dyad exercises, informal discussions, questions and answers, and audiovisual materials. Nine total days were needed for the intense training and many topics were covered to reduce stress within the law enforcement profession; five days for phase one and two days each for phases two and three. Some of the topics in the phases were; active listening

skills, detecting stress, intervention strategies, and understanding the intensity and complexity of traumatic stress. The intent of the training was to provide a fundamentally sound background for the peer support team members to effectively do their job. Qualified psychologists and with over 20 years of experience provided the training sessions under the guidance of the program staff.

Peer support team member supervision

A demonstration project staff member was assigned to each of the peer support teams. The demonstration project staff member was responsible for coordinating and supervising peer support team members and directing them to critical incidents as they occurred. Monthly meetings were set up to ensure peer support team members were engaging with their respective clients on a regular basis. Information was relayed for further advise and handling of a situation. Additional training was also implemented through the process to educate on up to date material and changes within the program.

Program evaluation

Members of the peer support team relayed an overwhelming positive response about the program. Members of the team positively acknowledged the content of training to be specific to the needs of those that they counseled. Without adequate support from the peer team supervisor, they would not be able to create a fundamentally sound deployment practice to reduce stress. Surveys were also sent out to the participants in this study and deployment. Participants of the study from the White Mountain Apache Tribal Police Department and Pima Community College Department of Safety stated that the program was either *good* or *very good*. The Tohono O'Odham Nation Police Department and University of Arizona Police Department rated the program to be *average* or *unsure*. However, the vast majority of all departments indicated that the information was relevant to their individual and family needs. Based on the overwhelming

positive response from all the departments, the program was soon implemented permanently. However, the agencies recognize that it will take three to four years to see positive change. They are committed to being on the right track to reduce stress and enhance family relations.

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Research has consistently shown that failure to manage stress and emotional survival techniques results in diminished happiness in their personal lives. Therefore, the specific focus was to reduce the divorce rate. In order to do that, research was generated on the significant amount of stress police officers face on a daily basis. The constant wear and tear that happens within the police profession has been well documented by scholarly and empirical sources. Therefore, it is noted that police officers, with the help of an organization program, must make a commitment to manage stress for the well-being of their marriage. Many researchers suggested that police officers have a higher divorce rate than any other profession. The vast majority of the researchers consistently indicated that high levels of stress and the unique nature of the police subculture commonly exists within police departments. Stress simply equals problems at home. If police officers take the time to manage stress, marriage commitments will soon enhance.

Earlier in this research, it was noted that effective leadership styles needed to be practiced to ensure quality work and participation within the organization. Furthermore, a healthy organizational deployment process within the rank structure develops a high level of morale, motivation, and quality work ethic towards customer needs. In many cases, work spills over into the home and can potentially destroy marriages, family relations, and creates isolation.

Part of the responsibilities of a supervisor is to ensure that the healthy lifestyle of the employee is maintained and balanced inside and outside of work. By deploying an effective

leadership style, it will create a climate that fulfills the personal and professional needs of the employee. There are three leadership methods that have shown to promote empowerment among the ranks and develop ownership; dispersed leadership, situational leadership, and shared leadership. Effective leadership strategies inside the organization are not the only key components to a healthy police department or marriage, but it certainly assists in their everyday efforts and gratification. Therefore, the following three mechanisms of leadership are recommended for a police organization to move in a positive direction and enhance personal well-being.

A. Implement effective leadership styles

Dispersed leadership

In today's society, police leaders can not achieve a common goal on their own. Leaders at all levels must be established and dispersed throughout the department. A greater distribution among leadership roles within a police agency is more desirable than containing leadership within a few persons (Timperley, 2005). Dispersed leadership has characteristics that are consistent of shared leadership, and would ultimately be of value to the organization by allowing officers of all ranks to understand their importance.

Prince, Hesser, and Halstead (2006) provided five characteristics of dispersed leadership; shared understanding, commitment to shared goals, flexible and adaptable training for a wide range of leaders, develop leader skills and knowledge, and determine where an organization and its individuals are developmentally as leaders. Shared understanding allows all members within the organization to provide information based on their equal level of commitment and goals (Prince et al., 2006). Commitment to shared goals requires all members inside the organization

to stay synchronized on the mission, values, and goals within the agency. Flexible and adaptable training for a wide range of leaders advocates a great degree training to ensure a visionary work ethic by those involved in the decision making process.

Developing leader skills and knowledge requires leaders to push their subordinates to the maximum and retrieve great results. Determine where the organization and its individuals are developmentally as leaders by assessing and maintaining accountability through all members in the organization.

Situational leadership

The role and the style of leadership are important factors to determine when overseeing a department or within the middle rank (Farmer, 2005). Situational leadership gives the ability to adapt to an environment that is well diverse, such as a police organization. Therefore, officer's ability, willingness, and readiness to perform will influence the outcome of a leader's actions. In order for situational leadership to be effective, department heads need to understand and evaluate their relationship with their officers, as well as the structured tasks that are ongoing. Supervisors have the ability to examine the developmental level and associate that with their particular leadership style, which would be of benefit to the individual officer and department. Once the developmental level has been established, the supervisor would revert to four styles of leadership to fit the individual officer.

Shared leadership

Shared leadership in an organization promotes individuals of all ranks and positions to get involved in the developing process (Wuestewald and Steinheider, 2006). By doing so, it will maintain a healthy police department, improve organizational commitment, pride, morale, motivation, productivity, leadership development, and acceptance of community policing

initiatives. Furthermore, implementing shared leadership would eliminate the gap that often exists between line and staff personnel. This style of management and leadership promotes individuals of all ranks and positions to get involved in the developing process while on the path to success (Kerfoot, 2006). The combination of effective leadership styles helps employees receive a sense of pride and positive attachment to the law enforcement family. As indicated earlier in this research, employees that feel a sense of positive commitment to the organization and empowerment among work detail, help assist in a better personal life through professional satisfaction and development.

Effective leadership mechanisms are certainly advantageous when implementing stress reduction initiatives to officers and their families. Engel and Worden (2003) insinuate that the influence of the supervisor holds a great deal of weight when associating with their troops. Furthermore, officers hold their goals consistent with their supervisor. In essence, if the supervisor advocates wellbeing to their personal lives and holds family as a high priority, the officers have a greater chance in embracing those same concepts.

The following topics are recommendations, supported by research, which can be implemented inside and outside of the organization. The focus is to educate future police officers in recruit school and provide continuous training and counseling efforts to officers and their families to reduce stress throughout their career, promote effective hiring mechanisms, and advocate for outside and inside stress management resources. All of which will enhance marriage commitments and the overall well-being of the police officer and organization. Departments that employ these practices will see an enhancement of motivational efforts and lift the status of morale. Therefore, quality investments will develop stronger bonds in the

organization to achieve goals and maintain a foundation that advocates ethical decision making, goal-orientated, focus on community needs and family.

B. Collaborate with law enforcement academies

New recruits joining the police occupation have high expectations of themselves and their career. The excitement of that the profession as displayed through the media and conversations with local police officers created a sense of urgency to apply and become apart of this unique culture. Law enforcement academies cover a wide variety of topics; criminal law, juvenile procedures, Defense and Arrest Tactics (DAAT), weapons training, and motor vehicle laws (Hickman, 2005). However, not all academies offer stress reduction services or stress management training with significant others during the recruit school, which has a median of 720 hours.

The Police Family Life Education Project (FLEP) is funded by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and conducted a survey on the effectiveness of families that attended a stress management program with their significant other in the academy (Carre, Linde, Appel, and Broder, 2001). Reports show that 90 percent of the people would now recognize stressful behavior and seek out necessary counseling services to combat the problem. Many of those did not know that EAP services are free and that the knowledge obtained was certainly helpful to them and their family. The overwhelming response to this program was labeled as good or excellent.

Based on this research, it would be advantageous to collaborate efforts with local law enforcement academies to implement an ideal program into their curriculum. Statistics presented earlier in this research showed that there are many negative effects of emotional stress and

failure to acknowledge or accept available counseling services. With the assistance of law enforcement academies, officers and their families have the ability to recognize and educate themselves on the future effects of stress and marriage commitment at an early stage in their career.

C. Practice quality hiring procedures

The screening process for any police organization is extremely important to hire the most ethical, productive, and psychologically healthy officer (Cavanagh, 2004). All elements of the hiring process are equally important; assessment of applications and forms, physical agility test, oral and written examination, background investigation, psychological examination, and medical screening. It is critical to eliminate those that do not possess the emotional and stable well-being to engage in police activity. Furthermore, it is not within the best interest of the individual and their family to become police officers if they do not cope or seek out stress reduction initiatives. As it stands from an organizational standpoint, it is far more economically resourceful to refrain from hiring a person that falters in the hiring process, rather than spending thousands of dollars on a later date when an officer leaves an agency.

Hiring practices should not be rushed through. An in depth look into the character of the applicant is worth the time. It is difficult to know how an individual will act five years on the department, but some accurate generalizations can be made. Robert Mallory, a staff writer for the International Association for Chiefs of Police, stated that there are two things that leaders can not do; leaders can not predict human behavior and they can not change people. However, through effective leadership styles and hiring practices, behavior can be modified for the greater good of the person, family, and organization.

D. Identify several ways to combat stressful behavior inside and outside the organization

A pager system that is staffed by volunteers specialized in stress management has many positives. This opportunity offers services available at all hours to ensure a contact person for those that are experiencing emotional distress. This service is not to be limited to the officers alone, but to their family members as well. “This service greatly enhanced the accessibility and utilization of psychological support services by officers and their families” (Deisinger, 2001, pg. 8). The New York City Patrolman’s Benevolent Association (1998) strongly advocates the use of the 24-hour crisis helpline. However, understands that the use is not just restricted to crisis management, but the everyday wear and tear of stress that builds up. The formulation of this helpline by outside resources has shown to effectively manage the stress in marriages and work spillover.

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) also provides a 24 hour helpline if officers do not feel comfortable utilizing members within their organization. It will be mandated for supervisors to advocate within the department counseling sessions to combat the feelings of mistrust and betrayal in an organization.

Mandatory annual counseling sessions for department employees

Historically, police officers would prefer not to seek out counseling service because of their “macho” personality (Woody, 2006). It is believed that officers would feel inferior or not “in control” with their emotional well-being if they sought treatment. Furthermore, seeking treatment is another term for being “weak” in the mindsets of many police officers. Based on the research, it is understood that many officers would not take advantage of opportunities when

they arise. Therefore, it would be imperative to mandate officers to counseling sessions with their spouse or significant other once a year.

Partnering with the Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) services that provide sessions for free would not affect budget restraints. EAP has been around for many years and has provided outstanding work/life and wellness counseling services (Elliot and Shelley, 2005). The 24/7 access to their services has also been beneficial to many employees that have strain on their marriages and workload spillover. Elliot and Shelley (2005) acknowledge that given the opportunity to counsel a person or marriage, affords the opportunity to develop referrals and continuous services necessary.

Implement stress management training at annual police in-service

Most departments have an annual in-service to maintain their police certification. Typically, in-service last for 24 hours (3 days) and many different topics and updates are covered. The police department should utilize their trained volunteers to fill one of the blocks of training. In addition, the spouse is encouraged to attend, but it is understandable that time and dates can possibly create time management conflict.

In many cases, annual in-service training has had problems thinking up topics to cover. Much of the material is the same from year to year; legal update, Force Options Training (FOT), firearms, and juvenile procedures. To change the setting that is geared on an approach that focuses on emotional well-being would be beneficial. Too much training focuses on how to stay safe on the street, and very little counseling services are provided to reduce stress from those situations. A reactive approach through critical stress debrief is certainly helpful, but to take a progressive stance to eliminate or reduce potential stress problems that officers experience on a day to day basis is educational.

Offer continuous training opportunities and organizational support

Dr. Kevin Gilmartin (2002) travels throughout the United States and provides an eight hour block of emotional survival for police officers and their spouse. Police departments receive invites to the training seminar and it is at a reasonable cost. Dr. Bobby Smith also travels throughout the United States and offers the same opportunity to police organizations. Supervisors that set their priorities within emotional survival will soon find that officers will follow suit (Engel and Worden, 2003). The theoretical framework suggested that police officers are influenced by others within the organization to defend the “norms” of the culture. The power and control theory and social learning theory both have an underline meaning, which is to say that police officers will act out in a fashion that is consistent with those around them. Therefore, through organizational support and effective leadership styles, the department can overcome this obstacle by providing a positive work environment that embraces family oriented concepts.

Organizational support develops a sense of trust that has been lacking throughout the years in the police profession. It has been because of mistrust that led officers to interact with the negative aspects of the police subculture, thus creating a distance between line and staff personnel. Although training opportunities fall within the problems of budget constraints, it would be beneficial for organizations to invest in emotional well-being for the sake of achieving organizational goals and commitment to family ties. Police officers must understand that the organization does not see counseling services as equaling the term “weak”, but instead as “strength”. Acknowledging that a problem is present, taking necessary steps to reduce stress, and maintaining a healthy personal life only benefits the organization even further.

Provide physical fitness incentives

Deisinger (2001) notes that health and physical fitness go hand in hand in emotional well-being and stability of police officers. Not only does this extracurricular activity provide officers with the ability to function on the job better, but it also serves as a positive component to reducing stress and maintaining a healthy personal life. Fatigue is a very serious problem that needs to be address by all agencies. There are several causative factors to fatigue; shift work, stress, extensive hours, waiting to testify, commuting, and shift assignments (Vila and Kenney, 2002). Fatigue is just another spin off of stress that correlates with the job. Therefore, Vila and Kenney (2002) suggest staying in physical shape to prepare for long hours, irregular work, and maintaining personal wellbeing. Otherwise, fatigue not only puts the officer at risk, but the community as well.

Many police departments offer incentives for being in shape. It is recommended that every agency offer those same benefits. Incentives can lead to higher salaries. For example, a three level scale of fitness can be established. Officers engage in the physical agility test and receive a score. Based on the score, the officer will receive a two percent increase on their salary. Vila and Kenney (2002) recognize that incentives provide motivation for police officers to stay in shape. A higher statistic of physically fit officers will show that incentives do work and is well worth the cost.

E. Suggested future research

As indicated, much research focuses on critical stress debrief and the affects it has on a family. However, little research focuses directly on the day to day wear and tear of emotional stress that police officers experience throughout the course of their career, resulting in divorces. Finding data that directly relates to a critical incident is rather easy, but locating studies that

provide information on the everyday stress aspects of a police officer is difficult. Most researchers are consistent on their definitions of the police personality, isolation, alcoholism, high divorce rate, high suicide rate, police subculture, labor/management problems, dominance, authoritative, and cynical. In many cases, research articles are very similar to each other, but with different authors.

It is clear that a problem persists within the law enforcement culture and action is needed to effectively address the stress situation and marital strain that is very common. More research needs to be done on what specifically accounts to divorces in police families. Simply put, solutions are needed. Some officers manage their emotional well-being adequately, but still experience marital problems. Many pure assumptions and speculations are made by researchers that insinuate that it is the stress of the job. Frankly, studies show stress is a causative factor to the increase of divorce, but other components must be researched within the law enforcement field to provide solutions.

It is rather very surprising that some law enforcement recruit academies do not offer stress management courses within their curriculum for the officer and their family. A progressive stance would conduct a changing environment within these specific academies to educate those that will soon engage in the police profession. The New York Patrolmen's Benevolent Association (1998) study noted that police officers do not always know where to go for counseling services. Perhaps the reason stands, due to the inadequate educational environment that is displayed within some law enforcement academies. Knowledge is power, and the ability to adapt to stressful situations reduces a number of ever changing events that could potentially occur in a short career.

Data obtained through the course of this research provided studies that ranged from one month to six months on stress management initiatives. Follow up surveys were commonly conducted by the researchers a year later to evaluate the negative or positive affects that were obtained through the counseling sessions provided. Research that was conducted showed that stress management was not continued through the course of the career, but lasted for a matter of a few months. As time goes by, and police officers start to move back into their stressful and isolated rut, stress management techniques will need to be utilized. It is recognized that this type of counseling is effective, but not a concrete method of approach. It is recommended that police officers continuously engage in counseling services through the course of their career, and not for just a few months at specific times. Not all members within the police profession are the same. However, police officers are all apart of the same team, and by working together they can overcome major obstacles through support, teamwork, and an overall commitment to family and friends. After all, without those two, success and happiness is certainly difficult to achieve.

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