

DEVELOPING YOUR BOUNCEBACK

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Why This Class?

Stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue play a significant role in the health and well-being of law enforcement professionals.

These issues impact performance and achievement in many areas of our lives.

This class focuses on understanding the physiological and psychological bases of stress as a precursor to learning a number of strategies to regulate your response to stress in order to increase your resiliency.

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Our Objectives

- **Develop a familiarity with the negative effects of a career as a law enforcement professional and the hypervigilance cycle.**
- **Understand the causes of Stress, Burnout, Compassion Fatigue, and PTSD.**
- **Identify what happens physiologically when you experience a real or perceived threat.**
- **Examine the health risks associated with stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue.**
- **Explore strategies designed to reduce the negative effects of Stress, Burnout and Compassion Fatigue, and increase resiliency.**

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WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?



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The Facts of Life for Law Enforcement Professionals

- Law Enforcement Professionals are ranked close to the top among all professions for Heart Disease....Hypertension...and Diabetes (The Police Wellness Project)
- They are more likely to suffer from alcoholism (200% more likely to abuse alcohol than the general public) (Palm Beach Institute)
- Many Law Enforcement professionals develop a mental process of emotional containment and detachment.
“Professional Protective Emotional Suppression” (PPES)
Aka “First Responder Syndrome” or Compassion Fatigue
- LEOs have a life expectancy that is 15 years less than the general population

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The Facts of Life for Law Enforcement Professionals

- Law enforcement professionals have a divorce rate of nearly TWICE the national average at 60%
- They have an extraordinarily high suicide rate.
One suicide very 36 hours

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The Facts of Life for Law Enforcement Professionals

Law Enforcement Suicide Facts

- LEOs = 1.8x that of normal population
- 1/3 of all LEO suicides are RETIREES

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1) Understanding – Know how stress impacts the body, mind, and spirit

2) Recognizing – Realize when stress is becoming dangerous to health and well-being

3) Coping - Implement strategies to develop resilience and produce stress hardiness

FBI STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM ELEMENTS

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Understanding Stress

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Stress Facts

- **Stress can result from past, present, or future events.**
- **The level of stress experienced depends upon one's perception of the event and previous experience with the same or similar events.**

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By its very nature

- **Law Enforcement, by its very nature, calls for an incredible amount of restraint.**
- **Continual restraint.**
- **Draining restraint.**
- **That, by itself, is stressful**

Dr. Daniel A. Goldfarb

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Managing Life's Stressors Assessment

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Stress Symptoms #1

- Emotional – some combination of anger (or irritability), anxiety, and depression, (the three stress emotions).
- Physical – (Musculoskeletal) includes tension headache, back pain, jaw pain and the muscular tensions that lead to pulled muscles and tendon and ligament problems.

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Stress Symptoms #2

- Physical – (Gastrointestinal) Stomach, gut and bowel problems such as heartburn, acid stomach, flatulence, diarrhea, constipation and irritable bowel syndrome.
- Physical – (Cardio) Elevation in blood pressure, rapid heartbeat, sweaty palms, heart palpitations, dizziness, migraine headaches, cold hands or feet, shortness of breath, chest pain, and fatigue.

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Understanding The Stress Response

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General Adaptation Syndrome

- **GAS, is a term used to describe the body's short-term and long-term reactions to stress.**

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The General Adaptation Syndrome

Stage 1

Alarm Reaction

Stage 2 Resistance

Stage 3 Exhaustion

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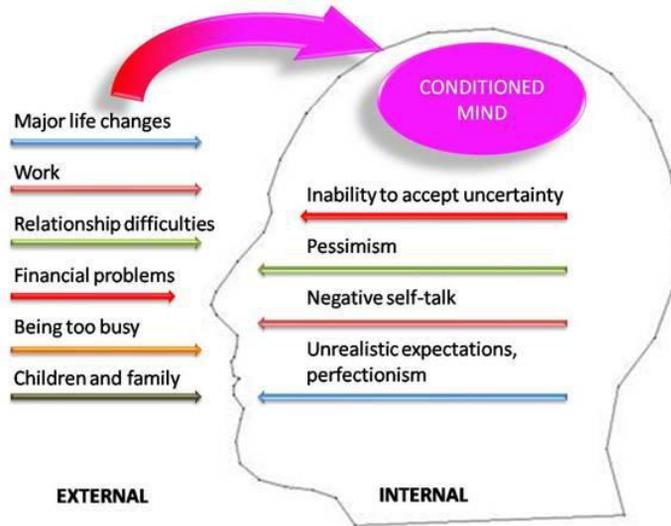
The Stress Response

- **Arousal occurs for physical and non-physical stressors (mental, emotional, & spiritual).**
- **Response occurs if the threat is real (*car accident*) or perceived (*a noise at night*).**

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UNDERSTANDING STRESSORS

CAUSES or TRIGGERS OF STRESS & ANXIETY



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Recognizing
Hypervigilance

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Hypervigilant on duty.... Lethargic off duty...

Profile of the Average LEO

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Hypervigilance

Hypervigilance is the necessary manner of viewing the world from a threat-based perspective; having the mindset to see the events unfolding as potentially hazardous.

This starts out as fun and exciting but is a major factor in the significant change that emotionally effects many Law Enforcement professionals.

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Equal and Opposite Reaction

Because every action has an equal and opposite reaction, the HIGH demand for more elevated alertness that is required for on-duty law enforcement work will produce, unless corrected, an extreme reaction in the opposite direction when off duty.

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Equal and Opposite Reaction

On Duty

Alive, Alert, Energetic, Involved, Humorous

**Normal Range of
Risk**

Tired, Detached, Isolated, Apathetic

Off Duty

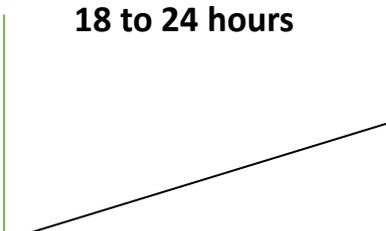
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Self Correcting

On Duty

Alive, Alert, Energetic, Involved, Humorous

18 to 24 hours



Tired, Detached, Isolated, Apathetic

Off Duty

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The Heart Factor

The “Disease of Prolonged Arousal” is caused by hormones that are released during stressful events

- **Increased plaque buildup**
- **Hardening of the arteries**
- **Increased blood pressure**

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Disengagement

Ask Law Enforcement professionals, what they enjoy doing after they return home, and many give a very simple response.

“NOTHING”

Or ***“Kicking Back”, “Relaxing”, “Vegging out”.***

What does this disengagement look like in terms of the hypervigilance rollercoaster?

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Symptoms of the Hypervigilance Rollercoaster

- **The desire for social isolation at home**
- **Unwillingness to engage in conversation or activities that are not work related**
- **Reduced interaction with non-public safety friends and acquaintances**
- **Procrastination in decision-making not related to work.**
- **Infidelity or serial relationships**
- **The I “USTA” syndrome-Loss of interest in hobbies or recreational activities.**

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What is your risk level?

STRESS VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

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Recognizing Burnout and Compassion Fatigue

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Burnout

Burnout is the result of chronic stress.

Burnout is qualitatively different from stress in that it is protective rather than destructive

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Burnout and Attitude

- **Burnout is often accompanied by increased cynicism and negative interactions with others**
- **Burnout is connected to mental and physical exhaustion, work overload, and role conflict at work.**

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Compassion Fatigue Versus Burnout

Compassion fatigue is when Law Enforcement professional lose their capacity to care.

The disorder can resemble burn out, which is not associated with trauma

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Major factors contributing to Compassion Fatigue

1. Poor self-care
2. Previous unresolved trauma
3. Inability or refusal to control work stressors
4. Lack of satisfaction in the work

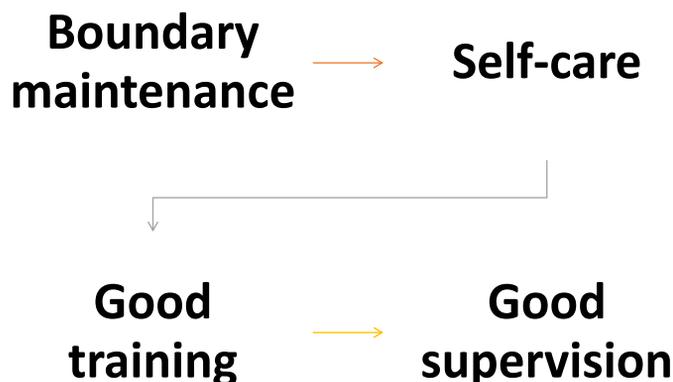
Figley, C. R. (Ed.) (1995). *Compassion fatigue: Coping with secondary traumatic stress disorder in those who treat the traumatized*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.

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- Recognize the symptoms of compassion fatigue
- Learn to ask for help
- Take “time outs” during the day
- Take short vacations at least twice a year
- Try to change little things that gnaw at you and accommodate to those you can't change
- Admit compassion fatigue is a real problem for you and don't try to cover it up
- Distinguish between stressful aspects of your job or home life that you can change, and those you can't change. **CHANGE WHAT YOU CAN!**

What You Can Do!

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What You need to ward off Compassion Fatigue

Radey, M. & Figley, C.R. (2007).
The Social Psychology of Compassion. *Clinical Social Work: 35(1):207–214*

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Compassion Satisfaction

Compassion satisfaction is the ability for First Responders to derive a great sense of meaning & purpose from their work

It may be an important buffer in managing and transcending alterations in belief systems and physiological or emotional reactions due to compassion fatigue

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Coping (Becoming Resilient)

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BECOMING A PUBLIC SAFETY "ATHLETE"

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THE "BIG FOUR"



MINDFULNESS



EXERCISE



SLEEP



NUTRITION

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DEVELOPING A HEALTHY APPROACH

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- **Develop a resilient mindset (mindfulness)**
- **Exercise**
- **Eat a nutritionally balanced diet**
- **Hydrate (avoid excessive caffeine)**
- **Sleep a minimum of 8 hours in every 24**
- **Develop your own support team**

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- **Schedule time for yourself**
- **Take vacations**
- **Designate time for hobbies**
- **Have a complete annual physical including testing for cholesterol, lead, and all high-risk blood-borne diseases**
- **Get an annual “skin check”**
- **Have an annual mental wellness check**

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The Relaxation Response

What is it?

A physical and mental state that is the opposite of the fight-or-flight response. The relaxation response results in reduced blood pressure and blood glucose levels, and lower breathing and heart rates.

Pioneered by Herb Benson, MD, a Harvard internist, the Relaxation Response involves attaining a state of deep relaxation whereby a person can counteract the ill effects of pain, anxiety and stress.

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Spirit

- How has the job affected you?
 - How have you changed over the years?
 - How has it affected your view of people?
 - How has it impacted your overall quality of life?
-
- Why should a career in a helping profession produce such damaging results in those who enter it with the best of intentions?
-
- These are questions of the SPIRIT!

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NINE WARNING SIGNS OF SPIRITUAL INJURY

- Isolation
- Irritability
- Difficulty sleeping
- Increased anger
- Emotional apathy, numbness, disengagement with life
- Lack of communication
- Cynicism, distrust, loss of work satisfaction
- Depression
- Drinking to satisfy a perceived need and other addictive/compulsive behaviors

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GETTING YOUR BOUNCE BACK

- **Serve with compassion and make a *difference***
- **Remember you are more than your job**
- **Remain involved with your outside interests**
- **Practice your faith**
- **Be active with *others***
- **Let go of the need to control**
- **Consciously practice gratitude and contentment**
- **Speak positively**
- **Develop your sense of sincere purpose**

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Remember Your “*Purpose*”

- **Why am I here now?**
- **What is it I ultimately want to achieve?**
- **What power do I have?**
- **Where am I “in” purpose, or “out” of purpose right now?**
- **Will any of this matter to me on my deathbed?**

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Words of
Wisdom

*Keep your sense of
humor*

*Your life is the most
important asset you
have*

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**Remember Tough Times Don't
Last....Tough People DO!**

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BE KIND TO YOURSELF

REMEMBER...PERFECTION IS NOT
MANDATORY!

NOW, TAKE A LONG,
DEEP BREATH...

SMILE,

AND GO ENJOY YOUR LIFE!

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THANK YOU!

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