

# RESILIENT



## *Resiliency Newsletter* *Volume 1* *March, 2020*

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### *A Message from the Attorney General*

<https://youtu.be/5DTr-uspJtM>

### *An Open Letter to Law Enforcement Guardians: During This Time of Crisis, Please Take Time to Take Care of Yourself.*

By:

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and

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Chief Resiliency Officer

*“You can’t pour from an empty vessel.”*

-Japanese Proverb

The coronavirus pandemic has created additional stress, concern, and uncertainty for law enforcement officers, first responders, firefighters, prosecutors, and administrative support staff.

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An already tough job under the best of circumstances, has become even tougher for our men and women in blue. The “new norm” law enforcement officers face can range from new unseen dangers while you answer the call for help; interacting with the public; providing strength during a period of uncertainty; and maintaining peace and order in unsettled times. Maintaining your own wellness and resiliency becomes even more of a challenge during these unprecedented times. Although your first focus may be to do your job and perform your sworn duty to the citizens of this state, prioritizing your personal resiliency is important. Prioritizing your own personal resiliency during a time of crisis benefits the community you serve; your coworkers; your loved ones; and most importantly, you.

Below you will find some practical suggestions and resources to help you in keeping yourself mentally, physically, and emotionally healthy. Some may be more pragmatic for you than others, and that’s okay. Any effort toward self-care is a useful one. Remember that the only way to effectively do all that your job demands of you, particularly during challenging times, is to be aware of your own wellness and take care of yourself.

## **Keep up with the Basics**

- How you sleep and what you eat are foundational. Tactical breathing (tips below) can help you fall and stay asleep, both difficult when stressed. Eating as healthfully as possible, with as many whole foods included as you can, will keep your brain and body machines working optimally.
- Realistically, much of your eating has to be quick, and your options can be limited. Packing snacks in the car can be helpful if possible (a good rule of thumb is a balance of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats; the fewer the ingredients in each food, the better). A piece of fruit, cut up veggies, nuts, cheese, lean meat, and tons of water are all safe bets. Healthy snacks can be found at Wawa, Quickchek, 7-11, etc. and even in a drive-thru (fruit cups, parfaits, grilled chicken, salads, real fruit smoothies, protein boxes, etc.). Keeping a homeostatic state (blood sugar, pressure, heart rate, etc.) boosts our own immunity and effectiveness. Remember that taking care of yourself in this way is an intentional and necessary act of self-care.

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## Control What You Can

- One of the hardest parts of taking care of everyone else is worrying about those who matter most to you. Families being home for social distancing brings new challenges. Below is a link from a NJ pediatrician that gives some suggestions for kids and family (and you). Remember that our families are looking to you for cues as to how to handle panic and uncertainty. Although that adds pressure, taking care of yourself is a way to take care of them, too. As Randy Richert (retired colonel USAF) from the FBI National Academy stated at the most recent Master Resiliency Training “be where your feet are.”  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZqnojHVW20>

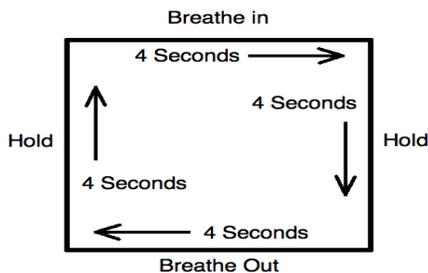
## Practice Self-Care Activities (even on the go) – Use Tactical Breathing

- One of the most effective things you can do to increase your health, longevity, and resilience is to control your breathing. There is a great deal of research to support this, but perhaps the most effective proof is your own experience. Breathing is crucial tactically, and well-being is survival.

Below is a link to a quick tactical breathing exercise, developed specifically for you, and explained by a Navy SEAL Training Commander.

[Jon Macaskill - Managing Extreme Stress For Military And First Responders / The Science And A Simple Exercise \(With Kate Tumelty Felice\)](#)

Here is another simple breathing activity that works for any age, any level:



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Here are some other ideas to support your mental health:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/anxiety-zen/202003/19-ways-support-your-mental-health-during-covid-19>

## Some key points:

- **be aware of the mental health of others and panic-related triggers**
- **use this as an opportunity to practice resiliency skills and techniques**

## Connection and Reaching Out (even with social distancing)

As a Resiliency Officer, there are resources for you to stay and keep others mentally and emotionally healthy. It is important to stress that communications are confidential and aimed at keeping you safe and well. Randy from the FBI National Academy provided another quote at the most recent training that may guide us here. “Connections with other people affect not only the quality of our lives but also our survival.” – Dean Ornish.

For those officers who are dealing with PTSD, anxiety disorders, depression, alcohol issues, drug issues, suicidal ideations, do the hand-off to Cop2Cop or your EAP:

- **NJ Cop2Cop: 1-866-Cop2Cop**
- **Your Employee Assistance Program Coordinator**

Wear your gloves, wash your hands, refer to medical and governmental recommendations, and most importantly, **take care of yourself**. Your resiliency matters. Consider guidelines by your local Office of Emergency Management and Department of Health.

Stay Informed:

- (1) Law Enforcement Guidance During COVID-19 Pandemic (*see attached*)
- (2) AG Directive No. 2020-1 (*see attached*)

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## A Message from Our Friends at Cop2Cop

*(See attached)*

## One Last Thing...

- Resiliency Program Officers and Master Resiliency Trainers, you are not alone. Over 956 of you have answered the call to be the “guardians for the guardians.” Within that number, there are over 147 Master Resiliency Trainers statewide. Please take time to take care of yourself while you take care of the needs of your brothers and sisters in blue. Reach out to each other and support one another during this time of crisis. Reach out to the experts at Cop2Cop if you need to or your EAP program. If an Officer is either quarantined or is diagnosed with Covid-19 reach out to them and their family to check on their emotional wellbeing. Reach out to me, Rob Czepiel, Chief Resiliency Officer. Once again, my cell phone number is (609) 422-7663. I pray that you and your families stay protected and safe during this time of uncertainty and remember “you can’t pour from an empty vessel.”

*---Rob Czepiel Jr.  
Chief Resiliency Officer*

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<sup>i</sup> Dr. Kate Tumelty Felice is an education and psychology professor at Rowan College of South Jersey. She began her career in law enforcement as a major crimes and narcotics detective with the Gloucester County Prosecutors Office. She then transitioned into education with a proactive focus on kids’ wellness. She trains in and incorporates trauma-informed mindfulness with nutrition, nature, and movement, for kids, veterans, and first responders to increase long-term resiliency. She recently attended and completed the New Jersey Master Resiliency Officer training course and is advising the New Jersey Office of Attorney General, Division of Criminal Justice with other academic subject matter experts in the field of resiliency.