

OFFICER WELLNESS



Tom Ross 03.26

POLICE CULTURE

Demands that we are not weak.

That we don't show weakness.

That we don't admit to weakness.

MORAL INJURY

RIGHT IS WRONG & WRONG IS RIGHT????

What are the POLICE things we HAVE to dothat hurt us?

- ✓ See dead bodies
 - ✓ Natural
 - ✓ Accidents
 - ✓ Suicides
 - ✓ Homicides
- ✓ Narcan/CPR
- ✓ Warrant arrests
- ✓ Take kids away
- ✓ Tow cars
- ✓ Domestic calls
- ✓ Trafficked girls, prostitutes



TRY NOT TO BE THE CAUSE OF THEIR STRESS

The biggest source
of stress at work is
my boss

35%

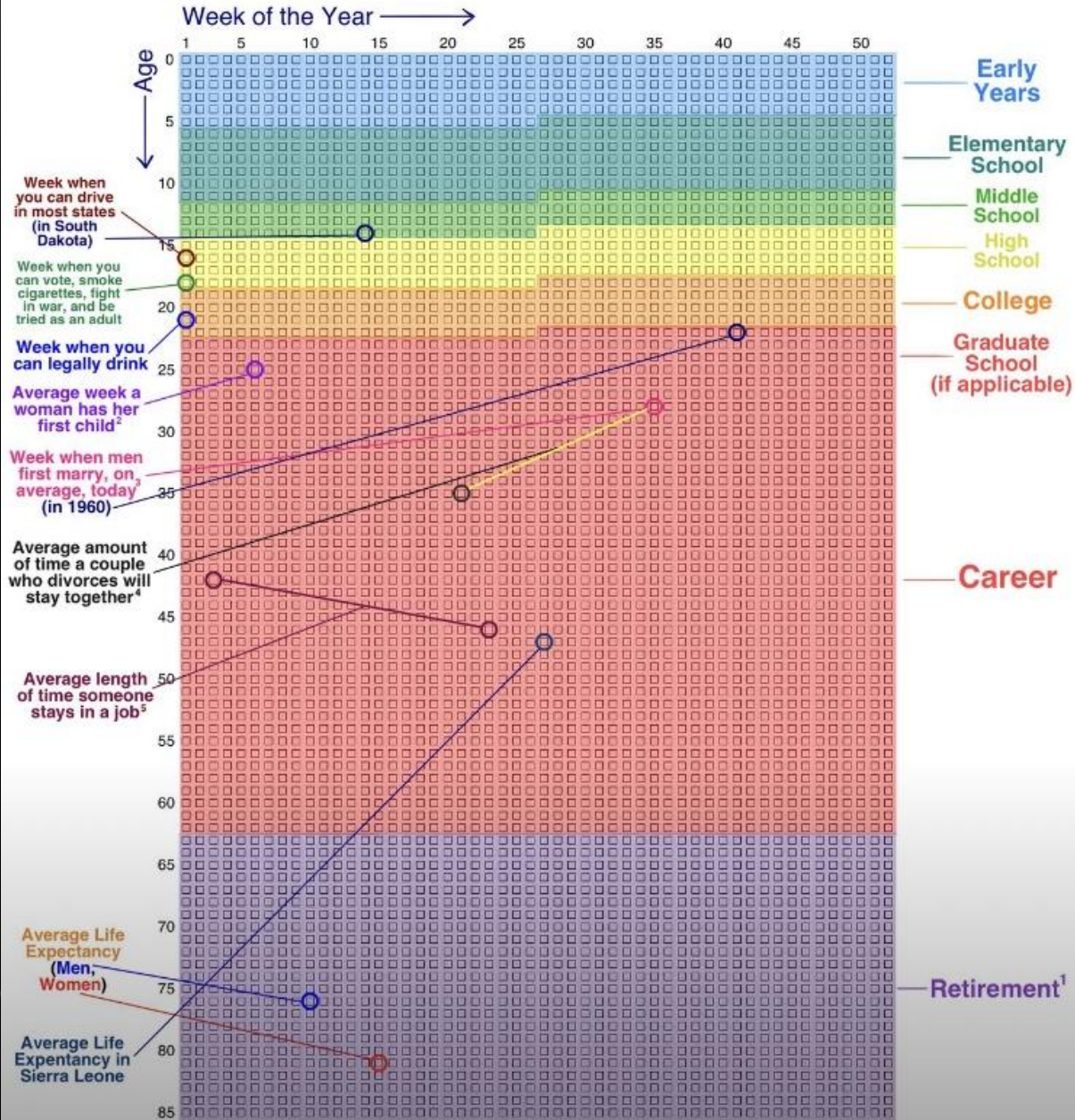




BALANCE

We struggle between professional success and personal fulfillment

The Life of a Typical American



OFFICER WELLNESS

What are the individual benefits of officer wellness?

- ✓ Improved job performance
 - ✓ Improved performance of essential physical tasks
 - ✓ Reduced likelihood of excessive force
 - ✓ Prevention of health problems
 - ✓ Longer life
 - ✓ Better daily living
 - ✓ Less risk of disability
-

OFFICER WELLNESS

What are the organizational benefits of officer wellness?

- Reduction in sick time
- Improved productivity
- Reduced health care costs





OFFICER WELLNESS

- **Social Wellness**- is the ability to relate to and connect with **other people** in our world. Our ability to establish and maintain positive relationships with family, friends and co-workers contributes to our Social Wellness.
- **Emotional Wellness**- is the ability to understand **ourselves** and cope with the challenges life can bring. The ability to acknowledge and share feelings of anger, fear, sadness or stress; hope, love, joy and happiness in a productive manner contributes to our Emotional Wellness.

OFFICER WELLNESS

- **Spiritual Wellness**- is the ability to establish peace and harmony in our lives. The ability to develop congruency between values and actions and to realize a common purpose that binds creation together contributes to our Spiritual Wellness - **God**.
- **Environmental Wellness**- is the ability to recognize our own responsibility for the quality of the air, the water and the land that surrounds us. The ability to make a positive impact on the quality of our environment, be it our homes, our communities or our **planet** contributes to our Environmental Wellness.

OFFICER WELLNESS

- **Occupational Wellness**-is the ability to get personal fulfillment from our **jobs** or our chosen career fields while still maintaining balance in our lives. Our desire to contribute in our careers to make a positive impact on the organizations we work in and to society as a whole leads to Occupational Wellness.
- **Intellectual Wellness**- is the ability to open our minds to **new ideas** and experiences that can be applied to personal decisions, group interaction and community betterment. The desire to learn new concepts, improve skills and seek challenges in pursuit of lifelong learning contributes to our Intellectual Wellness.

OFFICER WELLNESS

- **Physical Wellness**- is the ability to maintain a **healthy quality of life** that allows us to get through our daily activities without undue fatigue or physical stress. The ability to recognize that our behaviors have a significant impact on our wellness and adopting healthful habits (routine check ups, a balanced diet, exercise, etc.) while avoiding destructive habits (tobacco, drugs, alcohol, etc.) will lead to optimal Physical Wellness.

THE COM PART MENTAL IZED LIFE

PROFESSIONAL
LIFE

PERSONAL
LIFE

PRIVATE
LIFE

SOCIAL
LIFE

Christian
Life

MARRIED
LIFE

PUBLIC
LIFE

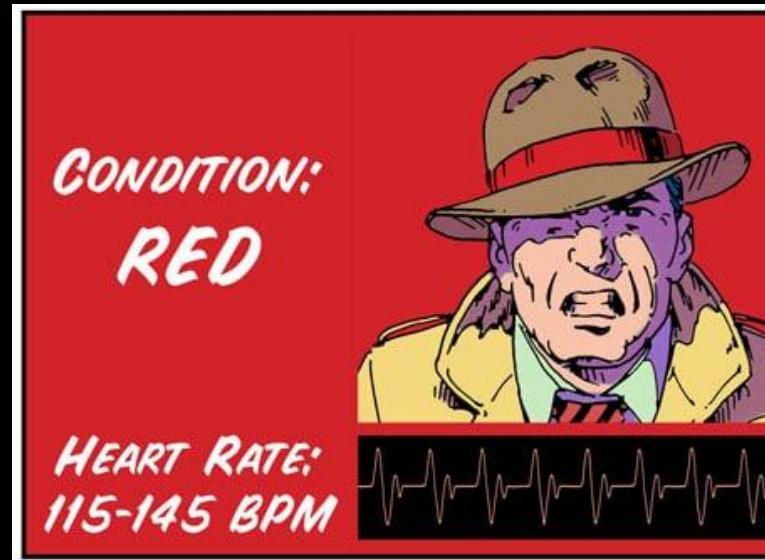
SECRET
LIFE

"OTHER"
LIFE

PHYSICAL

STRESS & HEART RATE

Up to 145 bpm is optimal for sustaining rapid, coherent thinking and quick reactions





EVERY DAY
YOU DON'T
WORK
OUT.....
THEY DO!!!

IT'S ALL ABOUT
DIET & EXERCISE



OFFICER WELLNESS- FITNESS

- Fitness can help combat weight gain and depression in police officers.
- Police officers often operate in a hyper-vigilant state with elevated adrenaline.
- Due to elevated Adrenaline the body produces Cortisol to stay alert.
- This causes excess glucose in the Liver, which causes the Pancreas to produce insulin.

Coronary Heart
Disease is the number
one cause of death in
the U.S.

HEART ATTACKS



SEVEN MAJOR FOOD GROUPS FOR POLICE OFFICERS

- **Caffeine**
- **Alcohol**
- **Nicotine**
- **Fat**
- **Carbs**
- **Sugar**
- **Salt**



OFFICER WELLNESS

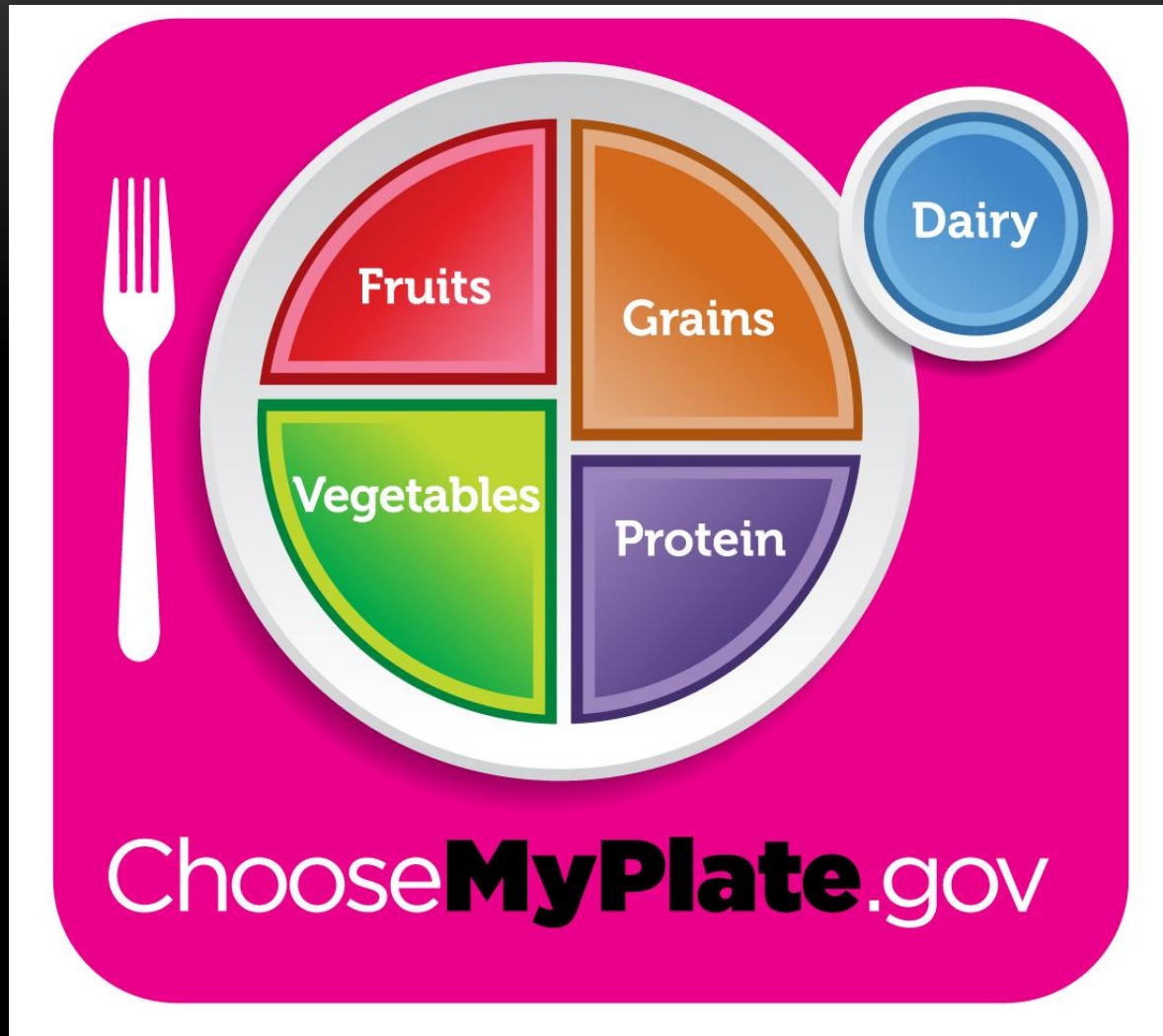
- Police and/or shift work is not conducive to eating healthy. There are many obstacles that get in the way of goals...



OFFICER WELLNESS

Healthy Eating





USDA.GOV

Caloric intake

Simple formula....

Carbs

Fat

Protein



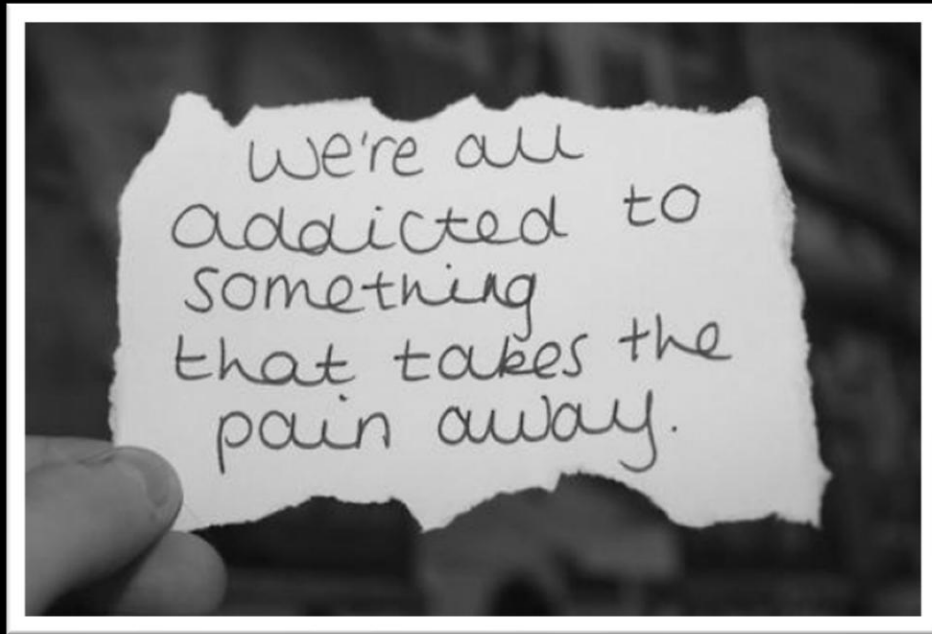
NUTRITION

NOT ENOUGH HYDRATION



- Can make you feel dizzy
- Nauseous
- Light headed
- Anxious
- False sense of hunger

ADDICTION



CAUSES OF ADDICTION

- ✓ Genetic factors
- ✓ Brain Structure (New memory connections)
- ✓ Social Learning
- ✓ Availability

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- Civilians Alcohol Abuse – 10%
- First Responders Alcohol Abuse– 30%
- 90% of Officers consume alcohol.
- At least a quarter are dependent because of job stress

TREATMENT



- Intervention
- Medically – to manage withdrawal symptoms.
- 12 step program
- Faith, friends and family
- Polydrug users have the worst prognosis for recovery

SOCIAL

OFFICER WELLNESS

Relationships

- Being in a relationship as a police officer presents many challenges.
- Many police officers feel like only other police officers understand things they are going through and only turn to them. The reality is your spouse, significant other, or other supporters want you to let them in and help them understand.
- Shift work makes it difficult to maintain relationships (Inconvenient). You have to strive for balance. Meaning no one part of your life can be lopsided.
- Shift work takes planning, communication, and flexibility with your off-time.

HARVARD STUDY

- The Harvard Study of Adult Development, also known as the Harvard Happiness Study, is a long-running, longitudinal study of that began in 1938 and is still ongoing. The study's primary goal is to understand what makes people happy and how to live a healthy, fulfilling life. A key finding is that strong, positive relationships are the most important factor in happiness, health, and longevity.
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BACKGROUND

When scientists began tracking the health of 268 Harvard sophomores in 1938 during the Great Depression, they hoped the longitudinal study would reveal clues to leading healthy and happy lives.

After following the men for 87 years as part of the Harvard Study of Adult Development, one of the world's longest studies of adult life, researchers have collected a cornucopia of data on their physical and mental health.

Of the original Harvard cohort recruited as part of the Grant Study: President John F. Kennedy and longtime Washington Post editor Ben Bradlee. (Women weren't in the original study because the College was still all male.)

In addition, scientists eventually expanded their research to include the men's offspring, who now number 1,300 and are in their 60s & 70's, to find out how early-life experiences affect health and aging over time.

SUBSEQUENT STUDIES

In the 1970s, 456 Boston inner-city residents were enlisted as part of the Glueck Study, and a few of them are still alive. More than a decade ago, researchers began including wives in the Grant and Glueck studies.

Over the years, researchers have studied the participants' health trajectories and their broader lives, including their triumphs and failures in careers and marriage, and the findings have produced startling lessons, and not only for the researchers.

“The surprising finding is that our relationships and how happy we are in our relationships has a powerful influence on our health,” said Robert Waldinger, director of the study, a psychiatrist at Massachusetts General Hospital and a professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. **“Taking care of your body is important, but tending to your relationships is a form of self-care too. That, I think, is the revelation.”**

Close relationships, more than money or fame, are what keep people happy throughout their lives, the study revealed. *Those ties protect people from life’s discontents, help to delay mental and physical decline, and are better predictors of long and happy lives than social class, IQ, or even genes.* That finding proved true **across the board** among both the Harvard men and the inner-city participants.

Key Findings of the Harvard Happiness Study:

Relationships are crucial:

Individuals with warm, supportive relationships are happier, healthier, and live longer.

Social connections matter:

Strong social networks and a sense of belonging contribute to well-being and resilience.

Good relationships are stress relievers:

Positive relationships help with stress and adversity, resulting in positive physical and mental health.

Happiness can be learned:

While genetics play a role, happiness is not solely determined by unchangeable circumstances.

A sense of purpose is important:

Finding your purpose in life, whether through work, hobbies, or relationships, contributes to well-being.

Better with age:

Individuals tend to become happier as they age, focusing on what matters & letting go of the negative.

FRIENDS



- HAVE FRIENDS YOU CAN TRUST.
- ARE THEY ALL IN LAW ENFORCEMENT?
- DO YOU MAKE TIME FOR THEM?

MAINTAINING OUTSIDE LIVES

- Non-L.E. friends
 - Your faith
 - Volunteer time
 - Be deliberate!
 - Schedule outings
-

EMOTIONAL

MAKE THE COMMITMENT

To maintain balance and emotional health.



OVERSTRESSED

- You lose your ability to think
- Resort to solving the problem as fast as you can
- You compromise your tactics



LACK OF SLEEP (MMMM.....GOOD SLEEPING DAY) FATIGUE

FATIGUE



- Impairs the parts of the brain that are most important for making sound judgments
- Impairs deciding on an appropriate course of action to take.
- Impairs exercising restraint in the face of a threat and provocation.
- Lack of sleep for 24 hours is equivalent to a toxicity level of 0.10 percent.

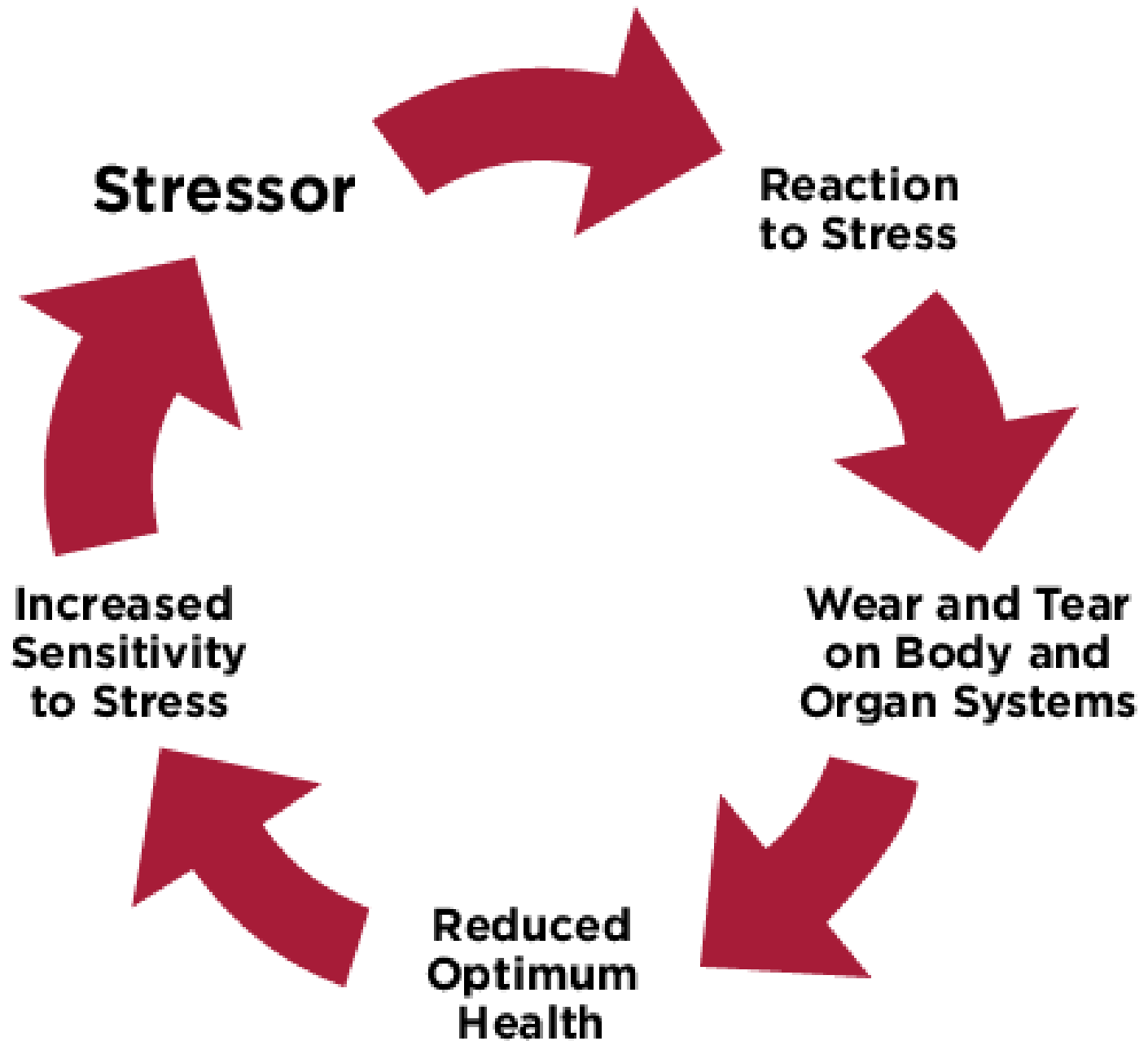
WINNING THE BATTLE

Sleep

Physical Exercise

Nutrition

Hydration



STRESS MANAGEMENT

Three key arenas of social interaction for police officers include:

1. Street level crisis
 2. Professional relationships within the department
 3. An officer's personal relationships
-

IT'S UP TO
YOU.

- Identify it
- Understand it
- Shrink it



SIGNS OF STRESS



- ✓ Easily frustrated / annoyed
- ✓ Weight changes
- ✓ Drinking / medicating more
- ✓ Isolation
- ✓ Irrational anger

Live Leak



Learn to Relax

*WHATEVER
WORKS FOR
YOU*



THE HANDBOOK OF FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY (VOLANTI 1996)

- LEO's see more in one month of their career than a civilian will see in their lifetime.
- By the time officers seek help, it's 3-5 years beyond when they should have reached out.

A critical incident can overwhelm an officer's sense of wellbeing, and can infringe on an officer's ability to cope at home and work.



SUICIDE

*A permanent solution to a
temporary situation.....*

I'M

HEART BROKEN
HATEFUL
OUTCASTED
DISTRESSED
FORGOTTEN
SCARED

IRRITATED
GLUM

REJECTED
OFFENDED
UNWANTED
SICK
CONFUSED
OUTRAGED

IN PAIN
UNHAPPY
ANNNOYED

INSECURE
SAD
TROUBLED
LOW
UPSET
AGGRAVATED
PISSSED OFF
ANGRY

POLICE SUICIDE

People are HURTING

- Common factors:
 - Alcohol. Coupled with an always-present firearm, drinking and depression.
 - Breakup of a relationship or marriage.
 - Stagnated career.
 - An officer under investigation.
- Common warning signs:
 - An officer who starts having a high number of off-duty accidents.
 - A rise in citizen complaints about aggressiveness.
 - A change in personality in which a sullen officer suddenly becomes talkative or an officer who is normally very vocal becomes silent and withdrawn.
 - S/he starts giving away prized possessions or telling friends they will be missed.
 - The officer suddenly writes a will.
 - Attendance, absenteeism, & hygiene --- crying for HELP



SUICIDE 125 – 150 COPS A YEAR

- 50% + higher rate than general public
- 11/100,000 – Public
- 17/100,000 - Cops
- 95% by firearm

BIGGEST CAUSE OF STRESS

1. Financial worries
2. Work issues
3. Family
4. Health concerns

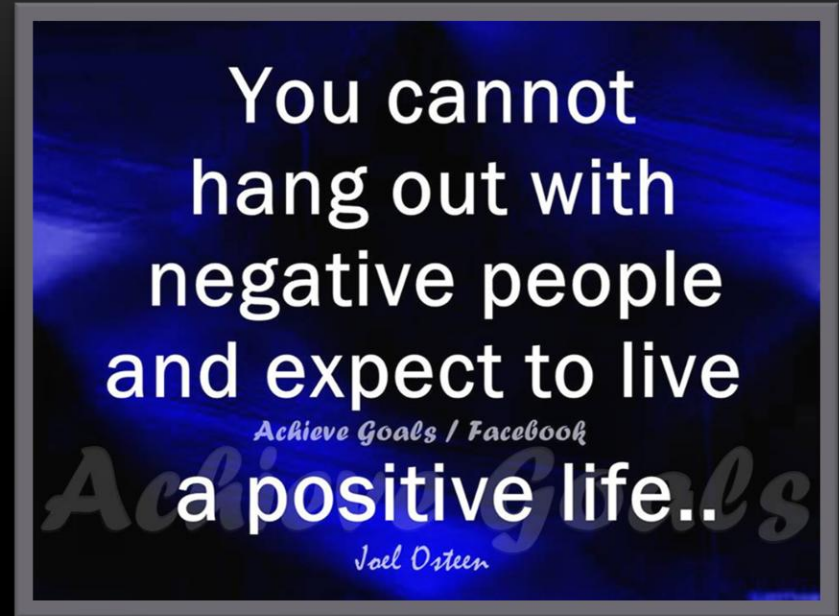
70% of relationships fail because
of finances

Your own inner critic

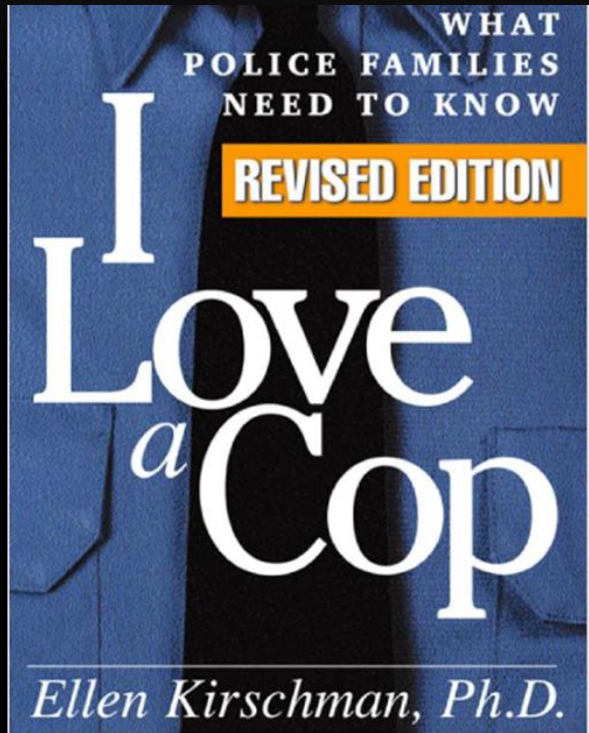
People who are draining

People with chronic problems

Secondary stress is just as stressful



STOP THE NEGATIVITY!!!



OUR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Confronting a Culture of Silence

- There is currently a shift in police culture from suppressing feelings to seeking help.
 - Traditionally officers tend to not reach out for help due to fear of being perceived as weak.
 - Two common law enforcement fears, which can lead to undue stress if left unrecognized are: the fear of trusting too much and the fear of controlling too little.
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SPIRITUAL

EMOTIONAL SURVIVAL FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT



A Guide for Officers
and Their Families

Kevin M. Gilmartin, Ph.D.

"If you want to make it through to retirement, wear your vest, wait for your backup, and read Gilmartin's book."

Sergeant Weaver J. Barkman
Twenty-five-year law enforcement veteran
Tucson, Arizona

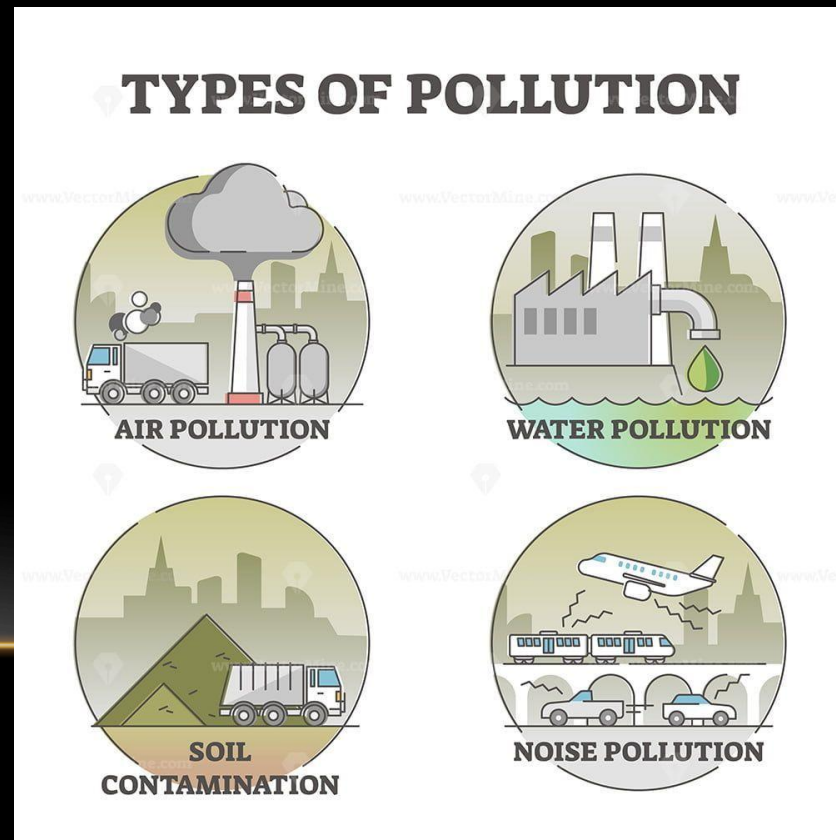
"I can handle the assholes on the street I just can't handle the assholes running this agency."

- Emotional Survivalpg 29

ENVIRONMENTAL

ENVIRONMENTAL (OUR WORLD)

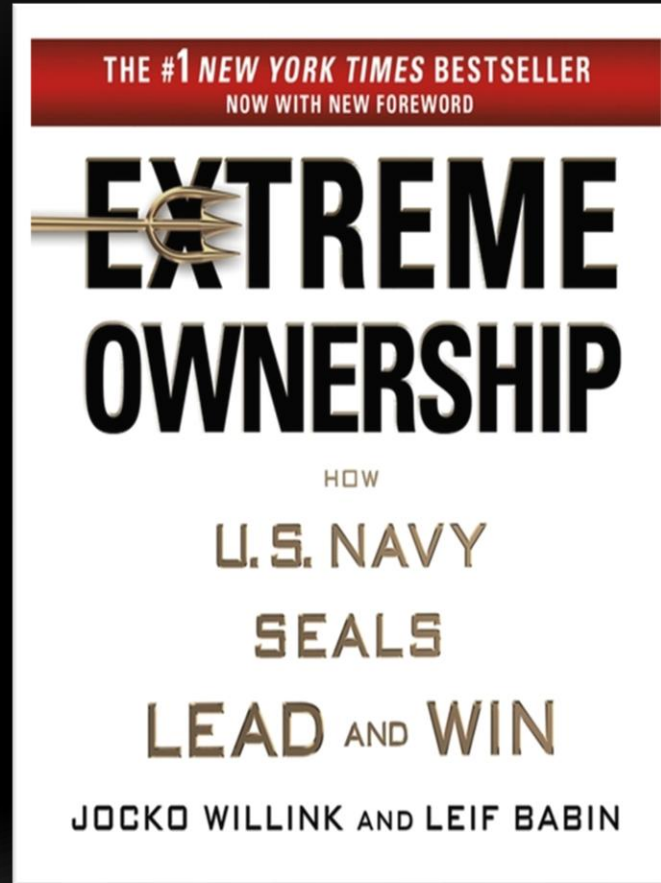
- You **HAVE** to get involved in outside (of police work) activities!
- **COMMUNITY**
 - Neighborhood
 - Town
 - Friends



- Nature
 - Recycling
 - Going “Green”
 - We only have ONE planet!
-

INTELLECTUAL

READ READ READ



WHAT CAN YOU DO TO EXPAND YOUR MIND?

- You **HAVE** to get involved in outside (of police work) activities!
 - Visit the library
 - Read books
 - Take a class
 - Get that degree
 - **TEACH** a class!



OCCUPATIONAL

BE A PRO!

- Work/Life Balance
- Train
- Equipment
- Hydrate
- Sleep
- Study
- Teach
- Join
- Be **AMBITIOUS**



**NOBODY
SAID
IT
WOULD
BE
EASY**

OFFICER WELLNESS

Sleep & Shift Work



OFFICER WELLNESS - SLEEP

- Sleep disorders are twice as prevalent among police officers compared to the general public.
- However sleep disorders largely go undiagnosed or acknowledged.
- Studies showed that a 10 hour shift was most beneficial to officer wellness, with officers reporting an extra 30 minutes of sleep per night (or 150 hours per year) as compared to 8 and 12 hour shifts.

OFFICER WELLNESS

- Insufficient sleep shuts down the pre-frontal cortex and can cause or exacerbate a number of psychological conditions, ranging from anxiety to PTSD to depression
 - Not sleeping for 24 hours was equivalent to a toxicity level of 0.10 percent
-

OFFICER WELLNESS

Research shows that officers that are fatigued:

- Use more sick leave
 - Are more likely to use inappropriate use of force
 - Become involved in more motor vehicle crashes
 - Experience more accidental injuries
 - Have more difficulty dealing with community members and other law enforcement agencies
 - Have a higher likelihood of dying in the line of duty
-