Officer Wellness and Safety: An Intentional Priority

September 28, 2019
Purpose

To provide a practical approach for the support, establishment and ongoing maintenance of comprehensive wellness and training programs for public safety professionals predicated upon irrefutable data.
Outline

• The Need: Fact or Fiction

• A Leadership Philosophy: Servant Leadership

• The 21st Century Policing Task Force Report

• A Comprehensive Approach

• Future Recommendations
Outcomes

• Learn it

• Practice it

• Actualize and share the deserved success that these efforts will generate
The Need: Fact or Fiction
The Need: Fact or Fiction

Law enforcement is considered one of the most dangerous, stressful and health-threatening occupations.\textsuperscript{2}
The Need: Fact or Fiction

• A 2011 study found that 98% of U.S. law enforcement agencies do not require their officers to meet physical fitness standards after being hired.\(^9\)

• The Cooper Institute conducted a comprehensive assessment of 1,700 law enforcement officers across the U.S. and found them to have lower than average fitness levels when compared with the general population, based on aerobic fitness, strength, and body fat.\(^3\)

• It is estimated that each in-service myocardial infarction costs $400,000 to $750,000.\(^4\)
The Need: Fact or Fiction

• The effects of job stress are well studied and include increased levels of psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Gershon et al., 2002), and physiological conditions including hypertension (Franke et al., 2002; Ramey, 2003), and CVD (Backe, Seidler, Latza, Rossnagel & Schumann, 2011).

• More than 200,000 days of work for police officers in Scotland have been lost to mental ill health in the last four years. The reasons for absence include anxiety, depression, insomnia and post-traumatic stress.
The Need: Fact or Fiction in Minnesota

• In Minneapolis, 67,000 hours of work time were lost to sick officers or those injured on duty in 2017, resulting in approximately $2.7 million in overtime and worker’s compensation-related costs.\(^9\)

• In Minnesota, disability retirements for both physical and psychological injuries for police officers rose from 128 (2009-2012) to 240 (2013-2016) to 194 (2017-2019*). Most striking is the increase in disability retirements for psychological injuries, which rose from 27 retirements (2009-2012) to 70 retirements (2013-2016) to 91 retirements (2017-2019*).\(^6\)
The Need: Fact or Fiction in Minnesota

• PTSD claims since 2013 total $14.7 million in incurred claim costs; claims from public safety personnel account for $14.6 million of this.\textsuperscript{12}

• PTSD police incurred costs have risen as a share of all police work comp incurred costs:\textsuperscript{12}
  • 2012-2015: 6% of all police work comp costs
  • 2016-2019: 28% of all police work comp costs

• We have seen significant development in PTSD claim costs in the first 6 months of 2019 (all job classes):\textsuperscript{12}
  • Total net incurred costs on PTSD claims rose \textbf{49\%} from December 31, 2018 to June 30, 2019.
  • $2.1 million of the increase was due to new claims
  • $2.9 million was due to development on existing claims (pre-2019)
The Need: Fact or Fiction

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The Need: Fact or Fiction

- Substance Use and Abuse
- Sleep Deprivation
- Obesity
- Chronic Pain
- Divorce
- Psychological Injuries: depression, anxiety, PTSD, etc.
- Suicide
- Morbidity and Mortality
The Need: Fact or Fiction

• Moral and Ethical Obligation

• Deliberate Indifference

• Negligence

• Liability – Parker versus District of Columbia: “Due to the officer’s lack of physical fitness, the officer was unable to use less-harmful defense tactics and resorted to using his firearm, causing the suspect to become paraplegic.” Verdict: “The D.C. Metropolitan Police Department was found to be deliberately indifferent.”

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A Leadership Philosophy: Servant Leadership
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“A servant leader is a person of character, who puts people first, who is a skilled communicator, a compassionate collaborator, who possesses foresight, is a systems thinker and who leads with moral authority.”¹¹
Servant Leadership: Putting People First

A leader must exhibit fairness and civility at all costs when dealing with an organization’s most important assets – its personnel!
You must take care of your troops if you want to carry out your mission.

(Military adage)
The 21\textsuperscript{st} Century Policing Task Force Report

A Call to Action
The 21st Century Police Task Force Report

• Influential Document

• Six Pillars

• Officer Wellness and Safety:

“The ‘bulletproof cop’ does not exist. The officers who protect us must also be protected—against the incapacitating physical, mental, and emotional health problems as well as against the hazards of the job.”10
A Comprehensive Approach
A Comprehensive Approach

• Physical Fitness*

• Mental Fitness*

• Spiritual Fitness*

*For officers, civilian personnel and family members
Mental Fitness

• Mentoring Program
• In-Service Training
• Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)
• Concerns of Police Survivors
• Academy Training
• Financial Fitness
• Peer Support Programs
• Check Up for the Neck Up
The Study
The Study

- Comprehensive and unique
- Led and affirmed by a leading academic research scientist; funded by the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust
- Goal: To reduce the risk of PTSD and other conditions, while optimizing performance under stress using biometric feedback
- The establishment of a personalized stress index is required and achievable
- Conditioning can improve the index and as a result, improve performance
- More studies are warranted
Recommendations

• Call to action—pay now or pay later
• Generate statewide awareness based on empirical data
• Devise and share evidence-based wellness and training programs (pre-service and in-service considerations)
• Fund development and programing through grant options (monies appropriated through the Minnesota Legislature—federal grants cumbersome and typically reserved for large agencies)
• Conduct analyses to assess the benefits and outcomes of programing
Physical Health and Fitness of the Body
“How We Move”

Providers:
- Self
- Peers/Friends/Family
- Professionals

Diet / Exercise:
- *Physical Fitness Programs

Mental Health and Fitness of the Mind
“How We Think”

Providers:
- Self
- Peers/Friends/Family
- Professionals

Diet / Exercise:
- *Peer Support Programs

“A Wellness”

Individual and Organizational

Body

Mind

Soul

(GUT) HEART

A Process of:
- Awareness
- Assessment
- Action

Spiritual Health and Fitness of the Soul
“How We Connect”

Providers:
- Self
- Peers/Friends/Family
- Professionals

Diet / Exercise:
- *Chaplain Programs

Emotional Health and Fitness of the Heart (Gut)
“How We Feel”

Providers:
- Self
- Peers/Friends/Family
- Professionals

Diet / Exercise:
- -

Minnesota Chiefs of Police

PUBLIC SAFETY MINISTRIES
Final Quote

As John Adams once answered to the following question, “If we do all of this, will we be successful?” “No, I can’t assure success, but I can assure you that you will deserve success.”
References


References


References

• ⁸https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/17326597.more-than-200000-police-days-lost-to-mental-ill-health/
References


• 12League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Data, (2019).
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