

LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

STRESS MANAGEMENT: A PLAN FOR SURVIVAL
IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

A LEARNING CONTRACT
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
MODULE II

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TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
AUSTIN, TEXAS
APRIL 1990



#173

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INTRODUCTION

In today's society it takes a strong will and an absolute determination to succeed in a law enforcement career. Too many police officers have entered the job believing that they possess the ability to manage any difficulty or dilemma that arises. As a result of this overconfidence many marriages, friendships, careers, and lives have been destroyed. When these officers realize that there are problems that can not be solved in most cases there are no avenues of help available. Police officers must face critical and tragic situations on a daily basis. In some areas extremely stressful events are experienced constantly without any form of immediate relief. People under stress must allow themselves time to relax and regain control of their thoughts.

Research has found that because of job-related stress there is an increasing problem with alcoholism, drug abuse, failed marriages, abuse of sick leave, and increased worker's compensation costs among police officers today. When stress continues to be a problem over a long period of time, and no steps are taken to effectively cope with the stress, the officer will begin to show physical, emotional, and behavioral changes. These changes are signs of severe stress that can ultimately lead to serious illnesses and diseases.

Stress management programs are designed to assist police officers in coping with stressors found in law enforcement. Once

the stressor is identified then steps can be taken to either avoid the stressor or use techniques to cope with the situations in a healthy and effective manner.

CHAPTER 1

A BACKGROUND ON STRESS AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress is not a new word. Since the introduction of the word, and what it means, society has repeatedly used the word "stress" to describe a variety of feelings, anxieties, and emotional outbreaks. Doctor Hans Selye, sometimes referred to as the father of stress, began researching the subject of stress in the late 1920's. Selye had no idea that his project would be affecting the way people would approach mentally and physically demanding situations. Stress has been defined by Selye as "the nonspecific response of the body by any demand made upon it." Although this definition has been interpreted in many different ways, the basic meaning remains, when the body encounters an unexpected change it reacts in a manner that is uncontrolled by the individual. Reactions to stress vary, in fact some people do not react to stress at all. Others tend to thrive on stress to help them get through tough or demanding situations.

Normally, reactions to sudden or unexpected changes involve a three stage process. In the first stage, or alarm stage, the body prepares for "fight or flight." The body responds to the stressful incident with a faster heart rate, faster and deeper breathing, the senses become sharper, and the muscles prepare to either flee the situation or to stand and fight. The second stage, or resistance stage, follows. In this stage the body starts to repair damaged tissue and other organs and also

replenishes energy supplies that were exhausted. If an officer is in good health and in good physical condition the ability for the body to repair this damage is intensified. If the officer is in poor health and the exposure to the stressful situations continues, then the body enters the final stage, or the exhaustion stage. It is in this final stage that the signs and symptoms of severe stress become apparent. The body is no longer able to cope and the damaged tissue and other organs cannot be repaired. While this officer remains in this final stage the immune system becomes very weak. In this weakened state the ability to ward off any illnesses or diseases is lessened.

Many sources have considered law enforcement to be one of the most stressful occupations in the world. Police officers must face tragic and very often traumatic situations on a fairly constant basis. It is this constant adversity of the job that causes many police officers to acquire stress and stress related illnesses.

Stress management in law enforcement is essential in providing an outlet for releasing pent up anxieties and frustrations. Although programs for stress management began in the late 1970's, it has only been in the last few years that police departments have started programs for their personnel. Previously, studies were mainly conducted on the specific stressors in law enforcement and not on effective ways to help police officers eliminate or cope with stress. James Sewell reported in an article he wrote that in 1984, even though there was an increasing interest of police stress, only 20% of the

police departments across the country had implemented stress² management programs for their officers. Many of the problems in law enforcement have been traced back to stress; that is, employee alcoholism, divorces, suicides, and a lack of motivation to work all stem from stress and an inability to deal with it. All of these are strong indications that there is a need for stress management programs for all police officers. Good officers are hard to find and it is in the best interest of the police administration to incorporate practical ways to keep these officers in good physical, mental, and emotional condition.

CHAPTER 2

SOURCES OF STRESS

Those special people that have chosen the field of law enforcement as a career know first hand of the amount of stress that can be experienced from day to day. Through the years study after study has revealed that many police officers have suffered numerous ailments resulting from job stress. One positive step³ towards defeating stress-related diseases is to know exactly what types of job stressors an officer will face. Once these sources have been identified then the necessary steps can be taken to either eliminate the stressor or to help the officer develop appropriate coping skills. In essence, when you know what irritates you then the battle is half won.

Stressors found in law enforcement have been placed into four categories: (1) stressors outside the department, (2) stressors from within the department, (3) stressors from the job itself, and (4) stressors that personally affect the officer.⁴

The first category, stressors from outside the department, relate to outside influences that are beyond the control of the officer and the department. For example, the relaxed prison sentences and cases that are dismissed due to minor mistakes. There is also the treatment received from the court system, lawyers, and judges. The negative attitudes of these people make it difficult to want to follow a case to the end. Other outside tensions result from confrontations with the news media, negative

opinions from the public, racial disputes, city administration decisions, and politicians.

In addition, there are many stressors from within the department. Inadequate training or equipment, unqualified and incompetent personnel promoted to supervisory ranks, insufficient promotional opportunities, and an unlimited amount of paperwork. There are also problems of no support from the administration, no recognition for above average performance, situations involving unequal treatment among the lower ranks, and rules, regulations, and policies that are difficult, if not impossible, to follow.

If that was not enough, there are also stressors that are associated with the job. Inconsistent working hours, constant conflicts between doing the job and still providing fair treatment to both the criminals and the victims, the incessant encounters with the most dangerous people, the most shocking and most brutal crimes, and the responsibility to save the lives and property of the public when needed. This may sound like there is never a dull moment, but in reality the truth is quite opposite. There are also periods of boredom that can cause stress because of the officer's inability to relax, he must be alert and prepared for the unexpected at all times. Finally, with the crime rate increasing by leaps and bounds it is difficult for the officers to keep up to date with the methods and technologies used by the criminals.

The fourth category deals with the individual stressors police officers place on themselves. Each officer has his own personal stressors that are created out of needs, either by

himself or his family. These may include worrying about the ability to do the job duties as expected, their future with the department, the need to be accepted by their peers, an economic need to work an extra job or attend school to further a career, and having to face friends, neighbors, and family members with negative attitudes about police officers. There are also worries about how certain dangerous incidents will be handled and if the right career choice has been made.

Officers may experience a few of those stressors listed, or they may experience all of them; the results from the continual encounters with stressful stimuli will eventually lead to an ineffective and unproductive employee.

Stress management programs are designed to help officers identify the different job stressors and to develop personal coping skills. These programs involve not only the officer but the supervisors and the family. All of the people that are important influences in the officer's life should be introduced to the basic premise of stress management. Police officers need the support and encouragement from those who are close to help overcome the obstacles of stress.

CHAPTER 3

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

If symptoms of stress are caught in the early stages there is a good chance that the officer can begin a personal stress management program to help stabilize his life. In some cases, though, if stress is not handled well or coping techniques are not used then the symptoms can get worse and chances are slim that the effects of severe stress can be reversed. Over a prolonged period of time severe stress will cause irreversible damage to an individual's health; diabetes, ulcers, heart problems, and even cancer have been linked to prolong stress. Stress causes the body to use bacteria-fighting enzymes from the immune system that help to rebuild damaged tissues. This, in turn, causes the immune system to become weak. In its weakened state the body is susceptible to any foreign bacteria that can cause a number of health problems.

Signs and symptoms of stress have been placed into three classes. Signs of stress can be visible through physical, emotional, and behavioral changes. It is important to remember that although an officer may be displaying some of the signs listed it does not necessarily indicate that this officer is suffering from stress. In the same respect, if an officer does not display any of those signs listed that is not an indication that this officer is not suffering from stress.

There are a multitude of physical signs that can be linked to

stress. Research into stress has revealed at least thirty-nine symptoms can be physically displayed by an individual. Goliszek lists these symptoms in addition to those that can be visible emotionally and behaviorally. Specific symptoms that can be physically experienced by police officers include, but are not limited to, the following:

- * headaches
- * cardiovascular disease
- * hypertension
- * digestive disorders
- * ulcers
- * constipation/diarrhea
- * sexual dysfunction
- * dizziness
- * muscle aches
- * respiratory problems
- * insomnia
- * recurring fatigue

It is a well known fact that cardiovascular disease is the number one cause of death in Americans today. Research has found that stress is one of the strongest contributors toward cardiovascular disease. Studies have also revealed that over two-thirds of the police officers that were hospitalized were admitted for cardiovascular and/or digestive problems. Among the digestive disorders that befalls police officers, the most typical is indigestion, Haynes also reports. Two other common forms of physical problems among officers are ulcers and headaches.

Unlike physical signs, emotional symptoms are somewhat more noticeable. Unusual changes in emotional stability can occur at any time. The following signs or symptoms can be an indication of prolonged stress:

- * irritability
- * depression
- * impulsive behavior
- * withdrawal from people
- * feelings of panic
- * insomnia
- * frequent episodes of crying
- * thoughts of suicide
- * feelings of losing control
- * periods of confusion
- * lack of interest in sex

Finally, there are many signs observed in behavioral changes. These symptoms are most likely to be evident to others rather than the officer. Behavioral symptoms include:

- * increased tobacco use
- * increased use of alcohol and/or drugs
- * excessive weight gain or loss in short periods of time
- * persistent absenteeism or tardiness
- * nail biting
- * abuse of sick leave
- * lack of interest in appearance
- * nervous twitching, foot and/or finger tapping

Officers must listen to what friends, family, and co-workers tell them about certain types of behavior changes. Awareness of any changes out of the ordinary will help officers to recognize if signs of severe stress are beginning to show. It is important that police officers stay alert for any physical, emotional, or behavioral changes; the realization that there is a problem can direct the officers toward getting the help they need. "On individual levels officers can decrease the impact of stress by increasing their understanding of the problem they are facing; that is, they should know the type of stressors they will likely encounter in their work and the physical and emotional effects these stressors may have on them." ⁷ This author goes on to say that if an individual maintains an increased self-esteem and self-awareness the ability to recognize the stressors is enhanced and as a result the officer can deal with the problem effectively.

CHAPTER 4

INDIVIDUAL STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Basically there are three primary techniques that an officer can use to respond to stress and stressful incidents. First, the officer can take precautionary steps to eliminate the stressor or to seek alternatives towards reducing the effects of the stressor. Second, the officer can learn to cope with certain stressors by developing specific skills to effectively handle any stressful situation that is unavoidable. Finally, police officers can obtain assistance from other sources such as a department psychologist, peer group counseling, stress debriefing sessions, and special training courses. The first two techniques rely solely on the officer, the third and fourth rely upon the administration of the police department.

As previously noted, once the stressors are identified then the officer can understand who the enemy is and learn to overcome that enemy. Law enforcement stressors were listed in an earlier chapter. This chapter will identify different types of individual stress management techniques that will enable officers to cope with unavoidable stress.

Because police officers have had to rely on their own methods to find ways to relieve stress many have chosen the wrong route. Most of the techniques these officers used did more harm than good; alcohol, drugs, verbal and physical violence, and sexual promiscuity have been used in the past and are still used now to

help many officers cope with stress.

One of the most frequently used stress relievers is alcohol. Through the years the tradition of alcohol abuse has been passed on from one generation of police officers to the next. Alcohol abuse has been attributed to approximately 25% of the police force in some departments.⁹ Alcohol abuse leads to other work related problems such as tardiness, high rate of absenteeism, and abuse of sick leave. But alcohol is not necessarily a problem that is related only to law enforcement. The National Council on Alcoholism states that about 10% of the nations work force is affected, in one way or another, by alcoholism and 25% of the employee's annual salary is the loss to the employer.¹⁰

Drug abuse, family violence, and suicide are other concerns that need to be given attention. Now is the time for police officers to realize that safer, more effective ways must be designed to help combat stress. The world has lost too many good officers by the use of dangerous stress relief techniques.

It is important to remember that people are different and react differently in the same situations, in some cases more than one technique will need to be used. The following stress management techniques are designed to help officers relax and to develop skills that will successfully allow each officer to remain in control of his reactions.

Attitude is the first step in breaking the stress habit. A positive attitude is imperative in making the necessary changes in current lifestyles to beat stress. Goliszek explains that making changes in our lives is not an easy thing for people, as a result

opportunities for personal improvement are missed.

A program to help manage stress can not and will not be successful if an individual does not believe it will work. It is the same as in any other type of assistance program. For example, Alcoholics Anonymous requires that each member must admit to being an alcoholic and having a drinking problem before the program can be of any help to them. Then, and only then, will the self help technique work for the individual. An officer must be ready and willing to take the time and adjust his current lifestyle; the goal is to aim his life towards a more productive and effective direction.

Getting started and believing that help is needed is probably the hardest part of the entire program. It is not easy to rearrange routine patterns of living. Self-motivation will be the key. Negative attitudes must be changed; a choice must be made to improve one's health and to increase one's ability to cope with life's most difficult moments. It costs nothing and the benefits are great.

Natural reactions to relieve stress include laughing, crying, throwing or kicking objects, cursing, yelling or screaming, eating, or smoking. These reactions are only temporary, though. There are other methods that can relieve the stress and help the body to overcome future stressful situations. Deep breathing exercises is one of the most convenient methods.

Breathing exercises can be performed at any time and in any location. The key to deep breathing is oxygen. Oxygen is essential for relaxing tightened muscles and allowing the heart to beat slower. "Taking a few deep breaths is one of the handiest

tools we have for controlling anxiety right on the spot." ¹² It only takes ten to fifteen minutes of deep, slow breathing to help calm nerves and cool tempers.

Another technique is progressive relaxation. This method requires the tightening and relaxing of muscle groups throughout the body. Starting from the feet and working up the body each muscle group is tightened, held for a few seconds, and then released. The more this method is used the less time it takes to relax. It is especially beneficial to use this type of relaxation ¹³ method before an expected stressful encounter. Muscle relaxation has been found to be an effective treatment for beginning signs of tension or stress.

Breathing exercises and muscle relaxation techniques are excellent "instant" methods, but long term programs for police officers are just as important. Physical exercise is one of the most beneficial ways of preparing the body, both mentally and physically, for stress. In fact, physical exercise is currently the most popular form of stress relief. Any type of exercise is encouraged, but aerobic type exercise is the most useful in promoting the release of the natural tension reliever chemical "endorphin." Endorphin is a chemical that is produced by the body. This type of exercise increases the heart rate and makes both the heart and lungs work harder, thereby making the heart and lungs stronger and more resistant to stress. Jogging, walking, bowling, softball, tennis, swimming, golf, bicycling, aerobics, and the list goes on; physical activity allows the body to strengthen resistance against cardiovascular diseases and provides

an outlet for tension release.

Becoming physically fit helps the officer to cope better with stress because the body has more energy and is able to revitalize itself. Exercising after an unusually stressful day releases the endorphin chemical which gives a feeling of well-being, a natural high. Along with exercise, the right diet and nutritional intake are equally important. Many vitamins and minerals are lost when under stress. Good nutrition replaces those lost vitamins and minerals while helping the body to relax and unwind. "Officers' diets, because of job demands and shift changes, are often nutritionally deficient. Eating the proper amount and type of food aids health, reduces the effects of stress and enables the officer to perform effectively."¹⁴

Time management is another long term technique that can reduce stress and provide opportunities for economic uses of our time. Managing time is probably one of the most neglected, and yet one of the most beneficial, ways of controlling stress. Time determines how much pressure you place on yourself and on others, we tend to work faster and/or longer hours just because we are running out of time to do something important. In some cases, in order to compensate for the lack of time, there is a tendency to work ourselves to death to get tasks accomplished. This, in turn, creates an atmosphere for stress. Merrill and Donna Douglass write that "once you accept the fact that you cannot do everything and have stopped living as though you can,, you have taken a big step toward becoming an effective time manager."¹⁵

Managing time can be effective for both the home and the job.

Fourteen rules have been listed by Ellison and Genz to follow when
an officer wants to begin a time management program:

1. The basic goal is to accomplish a balance, allowing for unexpected interruptions and emergencies.
2. Remember that you cannot do everything. Make specific choices based on your values.
3. A single solution will not be possible for everyone.
4. Plan each day separately, planning is the key to control time.
5. Write down what you want to accomplish for that day and make a deadline for each item.
6. Do the most important tasks first, you generally have more energy in the morning.
7. Once the important items are out of the way decide which of the minor tasks should be completed first. There is no need to rush on items that are low priority.
8. Avoid procrastinating. Take that initial step toward that big project, get help when you need it, reward yourself for a job well done. Remember that you cannot change overnight, concentrate on one thing at a time.
9. Take a break. Use this time to refresh yourself.
10. Handle each piece of paper once. Pick it up and put it where it needs to go. Then go on to something else.
11. Don't be afraid to say no. Don't take on more from others when you have enough work of your own.
12. Schedule certain periods of the day to plan.
13. Eliminate nonproductive activities.

14. Accept the fact that you will make mistakes. No one is perfect. Set an acceptable standard and stick to it.

One idea that has proven to be successful is to write a "to do" list every morning. List the tasks you want to complete for that day, schedule your time to allow for the completion of those specific tasks, and reward yourself. Keep several of these lists so as to prepare for upcoming activities or projects. When making your "to do" list make sure that the items on the list are prioritized and do the most important items first.

Increasing an individual's ability to cope with stressors that cannot be changed or removed is the primary goal of stress management. Stress can severely damage an officer's mental and physical health. Using coping capabilities helps to remove the initial reaction to the stressor and allow the body to return back to its normal state, without causing internal damage. Using relaxation techniques is one way of eliminating the chemicals that can do this kind of damage. Physical exercise is another method that provides stress relief. A combination of all the techniques listed can provide police officers with a less stressful environment and an easier daily schedule.

CHAPTER 5

DEPARTMENTAL STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Stress management should not rely solely on the police officers. The administration of the police departments need to provide support for the officer and his family. Department programs are necessary; officers need to know they are not fighting the battle alone. "The most important ingredient to any of these programs is the administration's attitude and approach toward the employee."¹⁷ Police administrations must recognize that job-related stress is a growing concern and positive steps must be developed to help police officers with that stress.

Training is the number one method in helping police officers learn about job stressors and acquire the skills to cope with these stressors. The more that an officer is exposed to potential sources of stress the more likely the officer will prepare himself to face these stressors in a positive manner. Training can provide role playing and other interaction exercises that will introduce the cadets and rookie officers into the actual situations, from there they can learn to understand what stress¹⁸ is and how they can reduce its effect.

Training also provides an additional advantage for the department, training about stress and providing information as to what stress management programs are available to the officers shows that the administration cares about them. Officers then know that the department supports them in what they are doing and

is ready to provide care in the form of counseling and peer group sessions.

After the police officers obtain the support and encouragement from their administration and departmental programs have been developed, negative coping habits should be revealed and replaced with positive skills. Jane Clark stated that, "you have to treat the source of stress, not the symptoms." ¹⁹ The main objective of any program offered to police officers is to boost the officer's self-esteem and give him the assurance that the department cares about his health and welfare.

Some of the most productive programs designed to help are usually the methods that are easily overlooked. Several of the programs that have been developed and have proven successful are peer group sessions, stress debriefing, family assistance, and professional counseling by a staff psychologist.

Peer group sessions were originally developed for Vietnam Veterans in the late 60's. Men returning from Vietnam were having problems readjusting back into civilian life. Peer group sessions allows the officer to talk to fellow officers that had gone through the same types of situations and had felt the same kinds of stress. Kroes indicates that support from a police officer's ²⁰ peers is advantageous toward reducing job stress. Another benefit to using peer groups is that there is practically no additional cost to the department since its own people are used for the group. Although the members of the groups are not professional counselors they still provide an important service to the officers. There is a comfortable atmosphere and the officers

are at ease with the group.

Stress debriefing is another successful program that assists officers in relieving stress. This program is provided at the end of each shift to allow the officers to get together and talk about problems or stressors they have encountered during the shift. This program is designed for officers that find the every day confrontations causing tension and anxiety. Stress debriefing provides an immediate outlet for getting rid of built up stress before the officer takes it home.

Family assistance programs can include marriage counseling, alcohol treatment, family group sessions, and stress management programs designed for the families of police officers. Marital problems seem to be one of the downfalls that is associated with being a police officer. Stress from the job is inevitably brought home. There was a time when family problems were of no concern to the department until the job performance of the officer became affected. Today police departments across the country have taken action and are initiating programs to assist not only the officer but his family too. More police departments need to join in this endeavor.²¹ Police families must understand exactly what the job is all about and what types of stressors are involved. Territo and Vetter also state, "...the spouse who understands her (or his) husband's (wife's) work, the nature of its responsibilities, and the types of personality and behavioral changes it may cause will be more supportive, patient, and understanding, thus increasing the possibility of a successful marriage" if the family assistance programs succeed.²²

Professional counseling is a must. It is important that police officers have the opportunity to seek professional help when the need arises. Although some people argue that there would be a lack of confidentiality and personnel files would have these visits recorded, it is still recommended by many researchers that some form of professional counseling be made available to police officers.²³ In the past professional psychologists have been used on occasion for officers that had been involved in serious traumatic incidents. The problems that have been created from using these outside counselors stemmed from the fact that these people were not familiar with the job and therefore were not able to provide much assistance.²⁴ Many large departments have the capability and the finances to hire a full time staff psychologist. In some cases this departmental psychologist assists officers from other agencies. The benefit of having a psychologist on staff is that the officer has someone available on a 24 hour basis to provide immediate help if necessary. Doctor Gerald L. Fishkin explains that those officers that do seek help on their own are more apt to recover and make the necessary adjustments more easily than officers that are ordered to go by the administration. "The individual seeking treatment must feel the need and importance in his life strongly enough to want to make a change."²⁵

In the summer of 1988, Doctors David Welsh and Barbara Neal offered a free one day session for any Dallas police officers that were interested in talking about any problems they may be having due to job stress. These two doctors did not expect many officers

to respond to the invitation, but a large number of officers did attend, in fact many had to be turned away due to lack of seating space. During this session the doctors discovered that the officers wanted to talk about their fears and frustrations but they were reluctant. It was their belief that no one cared enough to want to hear about it.²⁶ Many studies were conducted on the subject of job stress in law enforcement. It is known that there are certain job stressors that cannot be changed or avoided. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the police department and its administration to provide programs to help their officers cope with these stressors effectively so that the officer's health and job performance does not begin to deteriorate.

Because of a growing concern about stress management for police officers, Forero states that there is a consensus that these programs should become a mandatory requirement.²⁷ If these programs were made mandatory then officers would not be as reluctant to attend knowing that all officers were required to go. Mandatory attendance removes the labeling by peers as being weak or unable to cope with the demands of the job, officers would not lose their dignity. Police administrations must take the first step in showing their officers that the management cares and is willing to provide assistance for those that need it.

CHAPTER 6

THE BENEFITS OF STRESS MANAGEMENT

Perhaps the most important benefit that is derived from stress management programs is the cost factor. Matteson and Ivancevich have made an estimation that the price of job-related stress has cost the employers of America approximately \$150 billion a year.²⁸ Stress has been found to be the cause of increased absenteeism, lower production rates, the hiring of replacement employees, legal expenses, and medical and insurance costs.

Another benefit would be the increased morale of the police officers. Employees would work together easily, a majority of minor disagreements would disappear, there would be more cooperation and mutual respect between the officers and the supervisors, and less stress would be taken home. Those officers that begin a physical exercise program and practice good nutrition habits will present a healthier and more acceptable attitude toward the job and the public. This will reflect on the administration. The use of time management techniques will keep the paperwork overloads from becoming a major obstacle.

With a psychologist available in the department there is the benefit of saving marriages and saving police officers their careers. Professional help can bring about issues that have not yet been discussed, officers ready to give up will find a second chance on life, self-respect and self-confidence will be

evident among the officers. Attitudes will change and a more stable relationship will occur between the officers and the supervisors. Stratton believes that before any program can be successful the administration of the department must have a positive and caring attitude toward their officers.²⁹

The main benefit is a happier and healthier police officer that is capable of handling any situation knowing that he has the resources available to help him through any problem. A study was conducted on the police officers of the Dallas Police Department. It was discovered that the officers that had incorporated an exercise program into their daily routine were using less sick days and had fewer days off.³⁰ This is a good indication that stress management works. Other police agencies have initiated monetary rewards for those officers that continue to stay in shape and meet certain levels of physical fitness.

Knowing what stress is and learning how to combat the deadly effects are essential in providing police officers longer, healthier lives.

CHAPTER 7

LEGAL ISSUES

As a result of the interest in stress and stress related diseases, more and more employees throughout the United States are filing claims against their employers. These claims state that the job-related stress they have experienced has caused some form of disability. It has been estimated that between 1980 and 1982 job stress was listed as the cause of 11% of occupational claims against employers.³¹ John Jones and David DuBois state that more

law suits against employers will be filed in the future because of³² four reasons:

1. Research suggests a relationship between stress and injury/illness.
2. Many state workers' compensation laws specify compensation for injuries, both physical and mental, resulting from job stress.
3. More employees are prompted to file stress claims because they believe in the stress-loss connection and know that fellow employees have received workers' compensation for it.
4. Finally, lawyers, judges, and physicians are becoming more familiar with this type of claim. It is more easily diagnosed and

more often used to receive legal and
monetary restitution.

In 1975, it was found that workers' compensation claims for police officers was estimated six times higher than any other claim from any other occupation.³³ 30% of these claims were for back pain and 50% were for high blood pressure, this in itself shows that job-related stress has become more than just an officer with a problem. It involves costs to the administration and to the public. Because of the type of traumatic situations police officers must confront job-related stress diseases may be looked at by court systems as legitimate claims against workers' compensation.³⁴

Implementing stress management programs for police officers can possibly reduce these types of claims, thus saving both the department and the administration time and money. Encouraging officers to maintain a physical fitness program and to practice individual stress management techniques will also benefit in the long run. Taking the necessary steps now to protect police officers will reduce future problems resulting from job-related stress.

CONCLUSION

There is a need for programs that are designed to help police officers cope with the daily hazards and stress that are associated with the job. We need to have a little stress in our lives; small amounts of stress give us the challenge to complete daily activities. Large amounts of stress can eventually cause physical and mental disabilities or possibly contribute to an early death. We cannot completely eliminate stress from our lives but we can take steps to reduce the effects and learn to cope with the job stressors we must face.

A combination of individual and administrative stress management programs can be an effective treatment in preventing stress from destroying an officer's career and family life. Although we cannot live in a stress free society, it is reassuring to know that there are alternatives available to help an individual survive. It only takes a little time and effort for officers to be able to help themselves and manage the stress in their lives.

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