

Building and Sustaining an Officer Wellness Program

Lessons from the San Diego
Police Department



COPS
Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice



POLICE EXECUTIVE
RESEARCH FORUM

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Letter from the Director of the COPS Office

Colleagues:

The men and women who make up our police departments and sheriffs' offices face situations every day that endanger their health and safety and even their lives. The dangers are often mental and emotional as well as physical—and seeking help for that type of illness or injury can be harder than getting treatment for something more observable like a wound that needs stitching up or a broken bone. But officers' and deputies' mental state is just as important as their physical condition, and they need to be well and healthy in both areas to be able to carry out their law enforcement responsibilities.

Agencies around the country are recognizing the importance of monitoring and tending to employees' health and wellness, and this publication discusses the establishment and operation of a dedicated unit at the San Diego Police Department (SDPD) with the goal of promoting a department-wide culture of wellness, providing support and services when they are needed, and keeping the department healthy. More broadly, working toward these goals will also help the department better serve its community.

In addition to an in-depth examination of the SDPD's Wellness Unit, this publication includes a literature review on officer safety and wellness and law enforcement agencies' organizational health. The lessons learned, resources identified, and training and recommendations developed by the Police Executive Research Forum in their observation of the SDPD, will help guide other local agencies that may be interested in setting up similar programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phil Keith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "K".

Phil Keith
Director
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

Letter from the Executive Director of PERF

Dear colleagues,

Policing is a rewarding career, but these rewards can come at a high cost to our nation's officers. When they put on their uniforms, they commit to taking on the physical, mental, and emotional challenges that each shift presents.

Over time, the stressful nature of police work can take a toll on an officer's well-being. Though this stress may strain officer's physical and mental health, many officers are reluctant to come forward and ask for help. Seeking assistance may carry a stigma, and officers may even be concerned that their careers may be derailed if they seek assistance.

The implications of ignoring these issues are well known. Research indicates that when officers' physical and mental health issues go unmanaged, job performance decreases,¹ decision-making abilities are impaired, and agency costs increase.² Everyone has a stake in promoting police officers' wellness, because it has a direct impact on officers' abilities to effectively serve their communities.

In recognition of the critical role that officer wellness plays in police work, law enforcement agencies across the country have created programs aimed at preserving and promoting officers' physical and emotional health.³ These initiatives have been broadly referred to as officer safety and wellness programs. Many programs have been expanded to include civilian employees as well as sworn officers.

In April and August 2017, Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) staff members conducted site visits to the San Diego (California) Police Department (SDPD) to observe its officer wellness program, which is considered one of the top programs in the country.⁴ During the two site visits, PERF staff members interviewed key stakeholders from all of the SDPD's wellness program components. This included Wellness Unit staff (past and present), "help services" providers (police chaplains and members of the counseling team), command staff, peer support members, and members of the department who have used wellness services. PERF also attended wellness-related trainings offered to department members. Through these observations and discussions, PERF identified promising practices, lessons learned, and model policies for other agencies to consider when implementing their own wellness initiatives.

¹ Fox et al., "Mental-Health Conditions."

² Andersen et al., "Mental Preparedness."

³ Kuhns, Maguire, and Leach, *Health, Safety, and Wellness Program Case Studies*.

⁴ Destination Zero, "2016 Officer Wellness Winner: San Diego (CA) Police Department."

While there are clear benefits to creating comprehensive officer safety and wellness initiatives, many departments remain unsure of where to start. This publication outlines a set of policy and programmatic recommendations based on lessons from the SDPD’s wellness initiatives. The purpose of this report is to provide guidance to agencies across the country that are looking to implement wellness programs or to improve upon existing initiatives.

We are incredibly grateful to the COPS Office for their support of this project and its continued leadership on officer safety and wellness issues. This includes its stewardship of the National Officer Safety and Wellness (OSW) Group, which it co-created with the Bureau of Justice Assistance in 2011. The COPS Office creates critical opportunities for law enforcement agencies and researchers to engage with each other on officer safety and wellness issues and provides needed resources and information on promising practices to law enforcement organizations across the country.⁵ Most recently, the COPS Office published *Improving Law Enforcement Resilience: Lessons and Recommendations*,⁶ which discusses the unique stressors that officers face and strategies for building their resilience.

Preserving officers’ physical and mental health plays an integral role in keeping our police and communities safe. Together, we must commit to embedding wellness into the culture of our nation’s police agencies.



Chuck Wexler
Executive Director

⁵ COPS Office, “National Officer Safety and Wellness Group.”

⁶ Spence, *Improving Law Enforcement Resilience*.

Acknowledgments

The Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) would like to thank the COPS Office for supporting this examination of the San Diego (California) Police Department's (SDPD) wellness unit development and operations. The COPS Office deserves credit for recognizing the importance of officer safety and wellness programs in law enforcement agencies; in particular, program manager Nazmia Comrie, provided encouragement and guidance throughout the project.

We are also grateful to San Diego Police Chief Shelly Zimmerman for providing access to the SDPD during our April and August 2017 site visits. Special thanks go to Assistant Chief Sandra Albrektsen and retired Assistant Chief Sarah Creighton, who provided important insights into creating and sustaining a wellness program from a command perspective. We are also thankful for the efforts of Sergeant Ed Zwibel and Sergeant Carmelin Rivera, who connected us with many people involved in the SDPD's wellness initiatives to ensure that we had a well-rounded view of the program. We also thank Ms. Deanna Dotta and Officer Marnie Minton, who have served full-time in the Wellness Unit and who shared their thoughts and experiences with us. All of the practitioners we interviewed for this project were generous with their time and expertise. Their insights shaped our understanding of the wellness-related issues that many law enforcement agencies are facing as well as the promising practices that are captured in this report.

Finally, credit is due to PERF staff members who conducted the site visits, interviewed practitioners, and helped write and edit this publication, including Director of Technical Assistance Jessica Toliver, Senior Research Associate Elizabeth Miller, Senior Research Assistants Madeline Sloan and Adam Kemerer, and Director of Communications Craig Fischer.

Introduction

In 2011, the San Diego Police Department (SDPD) faced a crisis unlike any other in the agency's history.

Between February and August, 10 SDPD officers were investigated for offenses ranging from rape and sexual battery to driving under the influence. Six of the 10 officers were arrested.⁷

As incidents of criminal misconduct mounted, a number of tragic incidents also occurred. On July 18, an SDPD detective and her daughter were killed by the detective's son. In the weeks that followed, the SDPD lost four more of its own, including Officer Jeremy Henwood, who was shot in his patrol car while stopped at an intersection.

The combination of seeing the reputation of the agency and its officers jeopardized by the actions of a few and the traumatic loss of so many of their colleagues in such a short time placed a tremendous amount of stress on the department. In response, the SDPD took action to provide comprehensive support to department members. The Wellness Unit, created in July 2011, was one of the programs that resulted from those efforts. Staffed full time by members of the department, its sole purpose is to provide for the wellness needs of SDPD personnel.

Meeting the challenge

Wellness became a key part of the SDPD's strategy after the department discovered that the officers under investigation had experienced major challenges that had gone unaddressed.⁸ They included substance abuse, divorce, and financial strain.⁹ The urgent need for a more comprehensive approach to wellness was underscored by the series of officer deaths that began in July 2011 and its impact on members of the department.

While the department had long offered wellness-related programs such as peer support, psychologists, police chaplains, and stress management training, these services were decentralized. There were no members of the SDPD whose full-time job was attending to the wellness of the SDPD's officers and staff.

This all changed with the Wellness Unit. Its members serve as a resource by coordinating the delivery of help services and developing wellness programming to respond to department members' needs. This is all in service of the Wellness Unit's larger goal: to create and sustain a robust culture of wellness that prioritizes the physical and emotional health of the SDPD's members. Today, the SDPD's wellness initiative is considered one of the best in the country,¹⁰ and its programs are regarded as models for other agencies.

⁷ PERF, *Police Accountability*.

⁸ San Diego Police Department, *Changing Organizational Culture*.

⁹ San Diego Police Department, *Changing Organizational Culture*.

¹⁰ Destination Zero, "2016 Officer Wellness Winner: San Diego (CA) Police Department."

Conducting a case study of the SDPD's wellness program

In 2016, the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) entered into a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) to conduct a case study of the SDPD's officer wellness program. This case study, detailed in this report, included the following research tasks:

- A review of existing literature on the relationship between officer wellness and officer performance and health
- A review of the SDPD's wellness-related materials (such as brochures, newsletters, and survey results) and operations manual
- Two multiday site visits (detailed in the following sections)

During the site visits, PERF's project team observed three trainings: (1) the Wellness module of Advanced Officer Training, (2) Emotional Survival II Training, and (3) Effective Interactions Training. PERF also interviewed many stakeholders, including current and former Wellness Unit staff members, psychology professionals who work with the SDPD, peer support officers, civilian peer supporters, department chaplains, and members of the department who have used help services.

This report: A toolkit for building individualized wellness programs

This publication is the result of that research. It describes the SDPD's program and the department's promising practices and lessons learned. Its purpose is to help other agencies implement their own successful wellness programs by providing promising practices derived from PERF's study of the SDPD's wellness initiatives.

This goal of this publication is not to propose that all agencies—regardless of size, location, or budget—replicate the SDPD's wellness program in its totality. Rather, we describe the SDPD's program components and outline the benefits of each, so that agencies can replicate parts of this program or otherwise tailor it to their own needs and resources.

The SDPD's wellness program is built on three pillars:

1. The full-time staff in the Wellness Unit
2. Other help services providers and programs (such as peer supporters, psychological services, and issue-specific programs and partnerships)
3. A multi-level training program

This publication largely mirrors that structure, with a literature review followed by a section on each of the three pillars.

Literature Review: Why Wellness Matters

Policing is a difficult and stressful job, with higher physical and mental health risks than many other professions.¹¹ Studies have shown that when officers' physical and mental health issues go unaddressed, job performance decreases,¹² decision-making abilities are impaired, and agency costs increase.¹³ In other words, everyone should be invested in maintaining police officers' wellness, because it has a direct impact on their ability to be effective. In recognition of the critical role that officer wellness plays in police work, law enforcement agencies across the country have created programs aimed at preserving and promoting officers' physical and emotional health.¹⁴ Early evaluations of wellness programs have produced promising results, including increased participation in exercise,¹⁵ healthier eating habits,¹⁶ and reductions in officer stress.¹⁷

Physical health concerns

Law enforcement officers have a dangerous job. With every shift, officers may encounter a situation that poses a threat to their safety. Many departments have worked to reduce these risks to officers by adopting policies barring unnecessarily dangerous vehicle pursuits or foot pursuits¹⁸ and by teaching officers to de-escalate, slow down, and protect themselves in certain types of potentially dangerous incidents that could end in use of force.¹⁹ Many law enforcement agencies also strive to reduce risks to officers by requiring the use of motor vehicle seat belts²⁰ and effective body armor.²¹

¹¹ Hartley et al., "Health Disparities in Police Officers."

¹² Fox et al., "Mental-Health Conditions;" Rajaratnam et al., "Sleep Disorders, Health, and Safety in Police Officers;" Covey et al., "The Effects of Exposure to Traumatic Stressors;" Vila, Morrison, and Kenney, "Improving Shift Schedule and Work-Hour Policies."

¹³ Andersen et al., "Mental Preparedness;" Fox et al., "Mental-Health Conditions."

¹⁴ Kuhns, Maguire, and Leach, *Health, Safety, and Wellness Program Case Studies*; Church and Robertson, "How State Police Agencies Are Addressing the Issue of Wellness;" Garner, "Police Stress;" Fiedler, *Officer Safety and Wellness*.

¹⁵ Kuhns, Maguire, and Leach, *Health, Safety, and Wellness Program Case Studies*.

¹⁶ Kuehl et al., "The Safety and Health Improvement: Enhancing Law Enforcement Departments Study."

¹⁷ Arnetz et al., "Trauma Resilience Training for Police;" Andersen et al., "Applying Resilience Promotion Training;" Chopko and Schwartz, "The Relation between Mindfulness and Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms;" Christopher et al., "A Pilot Study;" Garner, "Police Stress."

¹⁸ Fiedler, *Officer Safety and Wellness*.

¹⁹ President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, *Final Report*; PERF, *ICAT*.

²⁰ von Kuenssberg Jehle et al., "Seat Belt Use by Police;" PERF, *Labor and Management*.

²¹ Taylor et al., *A Practitioner's Guide*; PERF, *Labor and Management*.

While certain types of risks to officers can be reduced by such policies, further action is required by department leaders to more broadly support the physical well-being of agency personnel. A large proportion of officer injuries and deaths stem from poor physical health that must be addressed through the creation of additional services and wellness initiatives.²²

Police officers are subject to a wide array of physical health risks, including sleep disorders and associated fatigue,²³ poor nutrition,²⁴ obesity,²⁵ heart disease,²⁶ and poor physical fitness.²⁷ These conditions put officers at an increased risk of heart disease, which accounts for 20 to 50 percent of early retirements.²⁸ In addition, poor physical health may be a direct cause of significantly lower average life expectancy in officers than in the general U.S. population.²⁹

Officers also report sleep disorders at nearly twice the rate of the public,³⁰ which may be caused in part by shift-work scheduling practices.³¹ In a national sample of officers, more than 40 percent screened positive for at least one sleep disorder.³² Sleep disorders are associated with higher rates of other physical and mental health issues, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and depression.³³

Mental health concerns

The stressful nature of police work can negatively impact officers' mental health. Officers endure long-term stress on the job caused by repeated exposure to high-stress incidents.³⁴ These stressors cause police officers to experience anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at disproportionately high rates.³⁵ High stress levels³⁶ and persistent hypervigilance³⁷ are linked to elevated levels of cortisol in the body.³⁸ Researchers estimate that approximately 10 to 17 percent of

²² President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, *Final Report*.

²³ Violanti, *Shifts, Extended Work Hours, and Fatigue*; Rajaratnam et al., "Sleep Disorders."

²⁴ McCormick, Cohen, and Plecas, *Nutrition and General Duty Police Work*.

²⁵ Kuhns, McGuire, and Leach, *Health, Safety, and Wellness Program Case Studies*.

²⁶ Zimmerman, "Cardiovascular Disease and Risk Factors."

²⁷ Boni, *Exercise and Physical Fitness*; Fiedler, *Officer Safety and Wellness*; Kuhns, Maguire, and Leach, *Health, Safety, and Wellness Program Case Studies*.

²⁸ Zimmerman, "Cardiovascular Disease and Risk Factors."

²⁹ Violanti et al., "Life Expectancy in Police Officers."

³⁰ Charles et al., "Shift Work and Sleep."

³¹ Pearsall, "Sleep Disorders."

³² Rajaratnam et al., "Sleep Disorders."

³³ Rajaratnam et al., "Sleep Disorders."

³⁴ Piazza et al., "Affective Reactivity."

³⁵ Hartley et al., "Health Disparities in Police Officers."

³⁶ Toch, *Stress in Policing*.

³⁷ Gilmartin, *Emotional Survival*; Kimble, Fleming, and Bennion, "Contributors to Hypervigilance."

³⁸ Violanti et al., "Cortisol Patterns."

police officers in the United States demonstrate symptoms of PTSD.³⁹ This disorder may be especially prevalent in officers returning from military service or those who have experienced traumatic job-related incidents.⁴⁰

Although police officers are exposed to many stressors, most identify interpersonal or organizational conflict as the most significant source of stress.⁴¹ Organizational stress can stem from ineffective communication with supervisors,⁴² from poor management practices,⁴³ and from higher workloads due to shrinking public budgets.⁴⁴ Stress induced by organizational factors may be a better predictor of officers' depression, anxiety, and traumatic stress than exposure to critical incidents.⁴⁵ The adverse effects of organizational stress are often magnified in officers who perceive a lack of support from their family members,⁴⁶ and family members themselves may exhibit higher stress levels as a result of negative public attitudes towards police officers or changed behavior of officers in the home.⁴⁷ Depression⁴⁸ and alcohol abuse⁴⁹ are also related to organizational stress among officers. Clinical depression and substance abuse may be the cause or the consequence of work-related stress. Low levels of emotional intelligence, which is associated with increased reactivity to workplace stress,⁵⁰ can also reduce officer perceptions of well-being and job satisfaction.⁵¹

A tragic outcome of the various mental stressors on police officers is officer suicide.⁵² Officer deaths by suicide occur 2.4 times more frequently than deaths by homicide.⁵³ Approximately 25 percent of officers experience suicidal ideations, compared to 13.5 percent of the general population. This imbalance is strongly correlated to the prevalence of PTSD and depression symptoms among police officers.⁵⁴

³⁹ McCaslin et al., "The Impact of Personal Threat;" Carlier, Lamberts, and Gersons,"Risk Factors for Posttraumatic Stress Symptomatology."

⁴⁰ Gershon et al., "Mental, Physical, and Behavioral Outcomes;" Kuhns, Maguire, and Leach, *Health, Safety, and Wellness Program Case Studies*.

⁴¹ Collins and Gibbs, "Stress in Police Officers;" Garner, "Police Stress."

⁴² Andersen et al., "Mental Preparedness."

⁴³ Stinchcomb, "Searching for Stress in All the Wrong Places."

⁴⁴ Fiedler, *Officer Safety and Wellness*.

⁴⁵ Gershon et al., "Mental, Physical, and Behavioral Outcomes."

⁴⁶ Miller, "Stress in Policing."

⁴⁷ Karaffa et al., "Perceived Impact of Police Work on Marital Relationships."

⁴⁸ Amaranto et al. "Police Stress Interventions;" Gershon et al., "Mental, Physical, and Behavioral Outcomes."

⁴⁹ VanMeter, "Leading At-Risk Employees;" McCaslin et al., "The Impact of Personal Threat;" Fox et al., "Mental-Health Conditions."

⁵⁰ Nikolaou and Tsaousis, "Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace."

⁵¹ Brunetto et al., "Emotional Intelligence, Job Satisfaction, Well-Being, and Engagement."

⁵² IACP, *Breaking the Silence*; Violanti et al., "Shift-Work and Suicide Ideation."

⁵³ President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, *Final Report*.

⁵⁴ Violanti et al., "Shift-Work and Suicide Ideation."

Traumatic experiences and lack of family or departmental support in responding to depression may contribute to high rates of suicide among officers.⁵⁵

Impact on officer performance and community relationships

The negative impact of poor mental health extends far beyond an individual officer. Police departments are also affected, as poor mental health can result in increased agency costs⁵⁶ and impaired decision-making.⁵⁷ High stress levels in officers can lead to absenteeism, increased use of workers' compensation and sick days, and increases in early retirement.⁵⁸ Officers with mental health conditions report lower levels of productivity than their peers. This estimated productivity loss costs agencies \$4,000 per year for each officer affected.⁵⁹

In addition to administrative costs, mental health concerns may also impact officers' communication skills. Officers with mental health conditions experience a lack of cooperation among coworkers⁶⁰ and report greater difficulty than their peers in interacting with community members.⁶¹ Job stress may also impair officers' decision-making abilities, particularly in use of force incidents. Officers with PTSD symptoms experience greater difficulty than officers without such symptoms in distinguishing important and unimportant factors in dangerous situations.⁶² These issues pose serious concerns for officer safety, public safety, and overall agency performance.⁶³

Sleep disorders are also a threat to officers' mental health.⁶⁴ Problems with sleep can contribute to decreased officer performance and poor police-community relations.⁶⁵ Officers suffering from sleep disorders report higher rates than officers with healthy sleep of serious administrative errors, falling asleep while driving, safety violations, and absenteeism.⁶⁶ Sleep-deprived officers have greater difficulty assessing risks⁶⁷ and appropriately judging emotionally charged actions.⁶⁸ Fatigued officers may also be a hindrance to strengthening relationships with community members. Officers with sleep disorders are

⁵⁵ President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, *Final Report*.

⁵⁶ Fox et al., "Mental-Health Conditions;" Andersen et al., "Mental Preparedness;" Garner, "Police Stress."

⁵⁷ Vila, *Tired Cops*; Rajaratnam et al., "Sleep Disorders;" Covey et al., "The Effects of Exposure to Traumatic Stressors."

⁵⁸ Andersen et al., "Mental Preparedness;" Garner, "Police Stress."

⁵⁹ Fox et al., "Mental-Health Conditions."

⁶⁰ Gershon et al., "Mental, Physical, and Behavioral Outcomes."

⁶¹ Fox et al., "Mental-Health Conditions."

⁶² Covey et al., "The Effects of Exposure to Traumatic Stressors."

⁶³ President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, *Final Report*.

⁶⁴ Violanti, *Shifts, Extended Work Hours, and Fatigue*.

⁶⁵ Violanti, *Shifts, Extended Work Hours, and Fatigue*; Rajaratnam et al., "Sleep Disorders."

⁶⁶ Rajaratnam et al., "Sleep Disorders."

⁶⁷ Vila et al., "Improving Shift Schedule and Work-Hour Policies."

⁶⁸ Violanti, *Shifts, Extended Work Hours, and Fatigue*.

more apt to display unrestrained anger toward civilians and receive more citizen⁶⁹ complaints than their well-rested counterparts.⁷⁰ When exhausted, officers are unable to effectively communicate with community members and may even incite agitation among them.⁷¹

Barriers to treatment

The nature of police work makes officers susceptible to physical and mental health risks. Despite the prevalence of these concerns, many officers are reluctant to seek help. Among officers experiencing PTSD, depression, and alcohol abuse problems, fewer than half seek mental health services.⁷² Unsupportive agency culture and fear of negative work-related outcomes often deter officers experiencing mental distress from seeking help.⁷³ In many departments, cultural expectations dictate that officers must always appear “brave” or “tough.”⁷⁴ Moreover, officers take pride in the belief that others are depending on them. As a result, many officers make efforts to deny—even to themselves—that they are experiencing difficulties with personal wellness and could benefit from outside assistance.⁷⁵

Officers regularly suppress negative emotions to conform to agency norms.⁷⁶ This behavior can exacerbate depressive symptoms.⁷⁷ Cultural standards among police departments often stigmatize asking for help as a sign of weakness, especially for addiction⁷⁸ or emotional problems.⁷⁹ Fear of becoming the recipient of contempt, distrust, or even ridicule from colleagues upon divulging such problems may prevent officers who acknowledge personal difficulties from seeking assistance,⁸⁰ further contributing to a “tradition of silence”⁸¹ around psychological problems in policing.

⁶⁹ This report occasionally uses the word “citizen” to refer to people in the community who are neither sworn law enforcement officers nor government officials. The term should not be understood to refer only to U.S. citizens.

⁷⁰ Rajaratnam et al., “Sleep Disorders.”

⁷¹ Stephens and Mantel, *OSW Group Meeting Summary*.

⁷² Fox et al., “Mental-Health Conditions.”

⁷³ IACP, *Breaking the Silence*; PERF, *Labor and Management*.

⁷⁴ Stoughton, “What a Police Expert Calls.”

⁷⁵ Stoughton, “What a Police Expert Calls.”

⁷⁶ Amaranto et al., “Police Stress Interventions.”

⁷⁷ DeSteno, Gross, and Kubzansky, “Affective Science and Health.”

⁷⁸ VanMeter, “Leading At-Risk Employees.”

⁷⁹ IACP, *Breaking the Silence*.

⁸⁰ Carlan and Nored, “An Examination of Officer Stress;” Rattue, “Serious Health Risks;” IACP, *Breaking the Silence*; Stoughton, “What a Police Expert Calls.”

⁸¹ President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, *Final Report*.

Another reason why officers may be reluctant to seek help from their agencies is that many sources of stress stem directly from supervisors and coworkers.⁸² Lack of cooperation among coworkers correlates significantly with perceived work stress in officers,⁸³ and officers rate criticism from supervisors as one of their most significant sources of stress.⁸⁴ Management insensitivity or indifference has been identified as a major concern by officers who have been assaulted by criminal offenders in the course of their job, leading to distrust of wellness resources provided through agency administration.⁸⁵ Officer concerns with management also extend to physical wellness. Officers report that lack of time and lack of access to exercise equipment are significant obstacles to achieving physical fitness goals.⁸⁶

Cultural and interpersonal factors may also lead officers to fear negative employment outcomes from seeking wellness services, which is one of the most commonly cited barriers to accessing such services.⁸⁷ Officers who admit to suffering from heart disease may not be allowed back on the street if they are determined to be a heart attack risk, and officers receiving mental health counseling can lose access to firearms.⁸⁸ Fear of such outcomes drives perceptions that officers admitting to personal difficulties limit their own opportunities for career advancement.⁸⁹ As a result of these concerns, officers cite confidentiality as a major priority when seeking mental health services,⁹⁰ and service providers have highlighted the need for anonymous services available outside of departments.⁹¹ Law enforcement leaders have recognized the need to ensure that officers receiving wellness services do not experience negative professional impacts.⁹²

Existing wellness services and promising practices

Existing wellness programs in police departments aim to address a number of physical and mental concerns. By 1999, more than half of state law enforcement agencies had wellness-related programming,⁹³ and the proportion of agencies with programming has continued to grow substantially since then. Programs most often focus on cardiovascular fitness, chronic disease prevention, nutrition, stress management, and resilience to trauma.⁹⁴ Many departments currently provide mental health

⁸² Gershon et al., “Mental, Physical, and Behavioral Outcomes;” Garner, “Police Stress.”

⁸³ Gershon et al., “Mental, Physical, and Behavioral Outcomes.”

⁸⁴ Garner, “Police Stress.”

⁸⁵ Crank, *Understanding Police Culture*.

⁸⁶ Kuhns et al., *Health, Safety, and Wellness Program Case Studies*.

⁸⁷ Fox et al., “Mental-Health Conditions.”

⁸⁸ Rattue, “Serious Health Risks.”

⁸⁹ Stoughton, “What a Police Expert Calls;” Crank, *Understanding Police Culture*.

⁹⁰ Fox et al., “Mental-Health Conditions.”

⁹¹ Levenson, O'Hara, and Clark, “The Badge of Life.”

⁹² President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, *Final Report*.

⁹³ Church and Robertson, “How State Police Agencies Are Addressing.”

⁹⁴ Kuehl et al., “The Safety and Health Improvement: Enhancing Law Enforcement Departments Study.”

services through employee assistance programs (EAP),⁹⁵ and most large agencies mandate that officers involved in a shooting or critical incident see medical professionals promptly following the incident.⁹⁶ While some departments employ internal mental and behavioral health professionals,⁹⁷ others refer officers to outside providers.⁹⁸

Physical wellness programming

Recognizing the role that shift work can play in sleep disorders and associated physical and psychological ailments,⁹⁹ several departments have partnered with researchers to determine effective scheduling practices as part of a holistic approach to officer wellness.¹⁰⁰ In studies of shift length, researchers have found that compared to a schedule of five eight-hour shifts per week, a schedule of four 10-hour shifts resulted in workers getting significantly more sleep,¹⁰¹ experiencing less fatigue at the beginning of work shifts,¹⁰² and reducing overtime.¹⁰³ In addition, a schedule of four 10-hour shifts is associated with lower fatigue and higher alertness than a schedule of three 12-hour shifts.¹⁰⁴

In light of these demonstrated benefits, researchers have recommended scheduling officers on 10-hour shifts rather than eight- or 12-hour shifts.¹⁰⁵ Researchers also advise that using permanent schedules instead of rotating schedules can improve officers' sleep and psychological well-being while reducing absentee rates.¹⁰⁶

There is also evidence that police department incentives and education programs promoting physical fitness can improve officer health outcomes and reduce costs for agencies.¹⁰⁷ Physical fitness is associated with fewer sick days, lower rates of disability, and fewer injuries within departments,¹⁰⁸ and researchers have noted that even marginal gains in fitness can yield substantial financial benefits because of the high costs of major incidents such as in-service heart attacks.¹⁰⁹

⁹⁵ Fox, et al., "Mental-Health Conditions."

⁹⁶ PERF, *Labor and Management*.

⁹⁷ Council of State Governments Justice Center, *Mental Health Resources for Law Enforcement*.

⁹⁸ Kuhns et al., *Health, Safety, and Wellness Program Case Studies*.

⁹⁹ Charles et al., "Shift Work and Sleep."

¹⁰⁰ Amendola et al., *The Shift Length Experiment*; Vila, *Sleep Deprivation*.

¹⁰¹ Amendola et al., *The Shift Length Experiment*.

¹⁰² Vila, *Sleep Deprivation*.

¹⁰³ Amendola et al., *The Shift Length Experiment*.

¹⁰⁴ Amendola et al., *The Shift Length Experiment*.

¹⁰⁵ Amendola et al., *The Shift Length Experiment*; Vila, *Sleep Deprivation*.

¹⁰⁶ Vila, *Sleep Deprivation*.

¹⁰⁷ Boni, *Exercise and Physical Fitness*; Kuehl et al., "The Safety and Health Improvement: Enhancing Law Enforcement Departments Study;" Fiedler, *Officer Safety and Wellness*.

¹⁰⁸ Fiedler, *Officer Safety and Wellness*.

¹⁰⁹ Kuhns et al., *Health, Safety, and Wellness Program Case Studies*.

In cases where departments have provided resources and incentives for physical fitness, exercise participation among officers increased.¹¹⁰ For example, a Florida department offering on-duty time for personal physical fitness and department-provided exercise equipment observed increased officer performance on yearly fitness evaluations.¹¹¹ Other weight loss incentives have resulted in significant reductions in the degree of officer obesity.¹¹² Following wellness education efforts, departments have also observed improvements in nutritional intake,¹¹³ which is associated with prevention of illness in officers.¹¹⁴ In addition to the physical fitness benefits, one study showed that randomly selected officers participating in regular exercise demonstrated increased rates of job satisfaction and reductions in perceived stress compared to control groups.¹¹⁵

Mental wellness training programs

Several training programs aimed at reducing stress and promoting officer resilience are associated with improved wellness outcome measures.¹¹⁶ Officers who have received criticism management and stress inoculation training¹¹⁷—a training program aimed at building participants’ abilities to effectively handle criticism and, in so doing, reduce the negative impact that interpersonal conflict-related stress has on their health—report less job stress and fewer health complaints than officers in control groups.¹¹⁸ A trauma resilience training program effectively decreased cortisol (high levels of cortisol are an indicator of stress) and self-reported stress among rookie officers. An adjusted version of the program was associated with reductions in physiological stress responses for special weapons and tactics (SWAT) team officers.¹¹⁹ A psychophysiological intervention program, built on the trauma resilience model, improved officers’ use of force decision-making in a “shoot/don’t shoot” exercise, which researchers hypothesize is the result of enhanced physiological control and situational awareness.¹²⁰

¹¹⁰ Boyce et al., “Police Weight-Loss Competition.”

¹¹¹ Kuhns et al., *Health, Safety, and Wellness Program Case Studies*.

¹¹² Boyce et al., “Police Weight-Loss Competition.”

¹¹³ Kuehl et al., “The Safety and Health Improvement: Enhancing Law Enforcement Departments Study;” Kuhns et al., *Health, Safety, and Wellness Program Case Studies*.

¹¹⁴ Martinussen, Richardsen, and Burke, “Job Demands.”

¹¹⁵ Boni, *Exercise and Physical Fitness*.

¹¹⁶ Arnetz et al., “Trauma Resilience Training;” Andersen et al., “Applying Resilience Promotion Training;” Garner, “Police Stress.”

¹¹⁷ Garner, “Police Stress.”

¹¹⁸ Garner, “Police Stress.”

¹¹⁹ Andersen et al., “Mental Preparedness.”

¹²⁰ Andersen et al., “Mental Preparedness.”

Mindfulness skills are also associated with promising wellness outcomes in officers. In one study, a mindfulness-based resilience training (MBRT) program for first responders was linked to better emotional regulation, less fatigue, and reductions in perceived stress among active-duty officer participants.¹²¹ Greater mindfulness skills can also reduce PTSD symptoms such as intrusive memories and hyperarousal in officers.¹²² Practitioners and researchers have begun to develop¹²³ and evaluate¹²⁴ emotional intelligence training opportunities specifically tailored to law enforcement personnel. This training may improve emotional intelligence and employee perceptions of well-being and job satisfaction.¹²⁵

Comprehensive mental wellness programs have also been linked to increased officer participation in mental health services. One multifaceted training program for officers in Newark, New Jersey, featuring lectures on stress management, PTSD, critical incident stress management, and substance abuse was associated with significantly increased use of a department-provided volunteer mental health hotline.¹²⁶ Further, the Montreal (Quebec) Police Department's "Together for Life" program, which trains officers on how to identify and intervene with suicidal officers, was associated with a 79 percent reduction in officer suicide deaths in a 12-year period, even as other departments in the area experienced an 11 percent increase during the same time.¹²⁷

Peer-led models

There are different models for providing various kinds of wellness services to police officers. Officers may place greater trust in peer-led wellness programming than in models led by department service providers.¹²⁸ Peer-led wellness programming can be especially effective as a form of support following critical incidents.¹²⁹ Researchers studying a peer-led health curriculum focusing on mental and physical wellness for officers in Oregon and Washington state found that the program was associated with improvements in officers' dietary habits, increased sleep quantity, and reduced stress in officers.¹³⁰

¹²¹ Christopher et al., "A Pilot Study."

¹²² Chopko and Schwartz, "The Relation between Mindfulness and Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms."

¹²³ Turner, "Understanding the Benefits of Emotional Intelligence."

¹²⁴ Risan, Binder, and Milne, "Emotional Intelligence in Police Interviews."

¹²⁵ Cherniss and Goleman, *The Emotionally Intelligent Workplace*; Groves, McEnrue, and Shen, "Developing and Measuring the Emotional Intelligence of Leaders."

¹²⁶ Amaranto et al., "Police Stress Interventions."

¹²⁷ Mishara and Martin, "Effects of a Comprehensive Police Suicide Prevention Program."

¹²⁸ Stephens and Mantel, *OSW Group Meeting Summary*; Miller, "Stress in Policing."

¹²⁹ Prati and Pietrantonio, "The Relation of Perceived and Received Social Support; Collins and Gibbs, "Stress in Police Officers."

¹³⁰ Kuehl et al., "The Safety and Health Improvement: Enhancing Law Enforcement Departments Study."

Officers participating in critical incident support groups for first responders report fewer depressive symptoms,¹³¹ indicating that perceived support from peers is a critical factor for officer mental wellness following traumatic events.¹³² To address common fears about confidentiality associated with seeking mental health support,¹³³ officers in agencies such as the New York City Police Department have formed private, volunteer peer support groups organized outside of the agency for increased assurance of confidentiality.¹³⁴

Psychological counseling

Research on the effects of psychological counseling for officers has been inconclusive. In other professions, mental health treatment intervention is associated with increased productivity.¹³⁵ Although some evidence suggests that officers participating in psychological counseling over an extended period score higher on overall wellness measures,¹³⁶ a recent meta-analysis of psychological interventions for officers found limited effects of individual counseling on physiological, psychological, and behavioral outcomes.¹³⁷

Researchers have suggested that instituting mandatory counseling for all officers may improve the efficacy of counseling.¹³⁸ Officers often express confidentiality concerns about department-provided mental health services,¹³⁹ yet officers working in departments where counseling is readily available report both significantly less stress and a greater willingness to use counseling.¹⁴⁰ Periodic, mandatory counseling for officers has been proposed as a technique to reduce stress-inducing stigma associated with counseling while connecting officers to resources they may not otherwise seek out.¹⁴¹ Researchers have also suggested that family counseling may improve perceptions of support among officers¹⁴² and reduce secondary traumatic stress in families.¹⁴³ Despite the identified benefits, family counseling is currently used by fewer than eight percent of law enforcement families.¹⁴⁴

¹³¹ Collins and Gibbs, "Stress in Police Officers."

¹³² Prati and Pietrantonio, "The Relation of Perceived and Received Social Support."

¹³³ Crank, *Understanding Police Culture*; Fox et al., "Mental-Health Conditions."

¹³⁴ PERF, *Labor and Management*.

¹³⁵ Hilton et al., "The Association between Mental Disorders and Productivity;" Langlieb and Kahn, "How Much Does Quality Mental Health Care Profit Employers?"

¹³⁶ Tanigoshi, Kontos, and Remley, "The Effectiveness of Individual Wellness Counseling."

¹³⁷ Patterson, Chung, and Swan, "Stress Management Interventions."

¹³⁸ Carlan and Nored, "An Examination of Officer Stress."

¹³⁹ Fox et al., "Mental Health Conditions."

¹⁴⁰ Carlan and Nored, "An Examination of Officer Stress."

¹⁴¹ Carlan and Nored, "An Examination of Officer Stress."

¹⁴² Karaffa et al., "Perceived Impact of Police Work."

¹⁴³ Arredondo et al., *Law Enforcement and Corrections Family Support*.

¹⁴⁴ Karaffa et al., "Perceived Impact of Police Work."

Conclusion

Police officers are vulnerable to many physical and mental health concerns that threaten their well-being. Law enforcement leaders should recognize the need to address these challenges and invest in the health and safety of department personnel. Wellness programs can improve officers' physical and emotional health, yielding positive outcomes for police officers, their agencies, and the communities they serve.

The Wellness Unit: Laying the Groundwork for Successful Wellness Programming in San Diego

I learned that if your organization thinks something is important, it needs to be on the organizational chart and have the highest-ranking person possible in charge of it. It needs to be a visible, dedicated arm of the organization. Otherwise, it'll fall away.

— *Assistant Chief (ret.) Sarah Creighton, San Diego Police Department*

When the SDPD created the Wellness Unit in 2011, then Captain Sarah Creighton¹⁴⁵ was selected to lead it, and she recruited then Sergeant Tod Bassett¹⁴⁶ to join her. While the tragedies of July and August 2011 made clear how much the department needed the Wellness Unit, Creighton and Bassett had to determine exactly what their mission would be and the specific issues they needed to address to achieve that mission.

The department's needs drive the Wellness Unit's priorities

To begin the process of defining their mission, Captain Creighton and Sergeant Bassett developed a survey to identify the concerns of SDPD personnel. In August 2011, they sent a needs assessment survey¹⁴⁷ to the entire department, including civilians, officers, and volunteers.¹⁴⁸

The survey asked department members a wide variety of specific questions such as the extent to which marital issues interfered with their ability to focus on their jobs. It also asked if they were contending with issues such as chronic back pain, sleep disorders, or high blood pressure.

The results were telling. Many of the more than 700 respondents were very concerned about their financial stability, their personal relationships, and their physical health.¹⁴⁹ They were grappling with stress, anger, depression, and “work turn-off.”

¹⁴⁵ Sarah Creighton retired from the department in 2017 as an assistant chief.

¹⁴⁶ Tod Bassett is currently a lieutenant with the SDPD.

¹⁴⁷ See appendix A for the survey.

¹⁴⁸ SDPD, *Changing Organizational Culture*.

¹⁴⁹ As of 2016, SDPD had approximately 2,500 employees (1,800 sworn officers and 700 civilians).

These survey results offered the Wellness Unit a clearer picture of the critical wellness issues facing the department, and the unit used them to craft its mission statement and define its goals.

Mission and goals

It is extremely important to have an open atmosphere where our department personnel can feel comfortable having truly candid conversations. I want to make sure we're a healthy department, because being healthy means we will be that much better equipped to go out into our community and provide excellent service.

— *Chief (ret.) Shelley Zimmerman, San Diego Police Department*

The SDPD ultimately defined the mission of the Wellness Unit as “reducing or removing interferences to employee wellness, whether personally or professionally induced, by providing help resources, training and intervention.”¹⁵⁰ In order to achieve this larger mission, its specific goals are as follows:

- Identifying and enhancing existing wellness resources
- Developing and providing wellness education
- Collaborating with academic institutions on innovative [law enforcement] studies
- Developing partnerships with health and wellness providers
- Staying abreast of wellness program best-practices through research
- Serving as an advocate for employees enduring personal or professional difficulties¹⁵¹

The Wellness Unit also assembled a panel of experts to provide advice and input on programs and policies.¹⁵² Called the Wellness Advisory Committee, it includes physicians, psychologists and mental health experts, academics, employee union representatives, and police chaplains, as well as civilian and sworn members of the SDPD.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ SDPD, *Wellness Unit Operations Manual*, 3.

¹⁵¹ SDPD, *Wellness Unit Operations Manual*, 3.

¹⁵² The Wellness Advisory Committee meets on an as-needed basis.

¹⁵³ SDPD, *Wellness Unit Operations Manual*, 5.

Overview of services

To support the Wellness Unit’s mission to support the emotional and physical health of SDPD employees, the Unit offers a range of specific services and activities. They largely fall into three categories:

1. Providing services for individuals
2. Agency-wide activities and services
3. Interagency/interdisciplinary activities and services

These services are available directly to all department members. Employees are not required or expected to notify their supervisors or ask for permission to use wellness services. Department members’ families and loved ones may also use these services, all of which are offered free of charge.

Services for individuals

The Wellness Unit’s first broad category of duties is to provide individualized support for members of the police department. Employees who are in crisis or are experiencing a particular personal or professional issue often approach the Wellness Unit staff directly. Other times, an employee’s colleagues or loved ones ask the Wellness Unit staff to check in on the employee. Wellness Unit members also are proactive about engagement; every day, they review major incidents from the previous day and may contact officers who might need wellness services as a result.

Sometimes, the Wellness Unit has found that the only thing an individual requires is someone to listen to him or her. If an employee wants a referral to a wellness service provider or other expert (such as a financial planner or a nutritionist), staff members are trained to connect them with the appropriate resources.

Operational philosophy

Ideally, retired Assistant Chief Creighton said, all employees’ direct supervisors would serve as their “primary caregivers” and offer the sort of individualized support that the Wellness Unit provides. However, in practice, that is not always possible, because some supervisors lack the time or skills to give employees the assistance they need. The Wellness Unit fills that gap. “There has to be some place or some person where a supervisor who doesn’t have the right interpersonal skills—or sufficient amount of time to address the issue—can send employees who need assistance and where employees who need assistance can go if their supervisors can’t provide it,” Creighton explained.

Supporting direct managers

The Wellness Unit also addresses this issue by engaging with managers directly. “We tell supervisors and management that they are the primary caregiver for their employees. That’s part of a leader’s role,” retired Assistant Chief Creighton said. “We’ve done training to make supervisors more comfortable in this role, which has been an ongoing educational agenda. This is about a larger culture change. Wellness is about good leadership and helping department leaders become better at providing services themselves.”

Assistant Chief Sandra Albrektsen, who took command of the Wellness Unit upon Creighton’s retirement in early 2017, counts this effort among her top priorities for the Wellness Unit. “We’re working on turning the Wellness Unit more into facilitators, coaches, and teachers,” she said. “We want to use them to develop the wellness-related and interpersonal skills of our executive staff. Our command staff and managers have responsibilities to their people as leaders, and this is part of those responsibilities.”¹⁵⁴

Agency-wide activities and services

The second type of services the Wellness Unit provides is geared toward the entire police department or groups within the department. Developing and delivering wellness training to department members is one example of these duties. This category also includes managing, coordinating, and deploying all of the SDPD’s help resources, including police chaplains, peer support employees, and psychological services personnel. In addition, the Wellness Unit

- provides educational seminars and workshops on wellness-related issues that are important to SDPD employees (e.g., sleep hygiene, financial planning, and nutrition);
- provides wellness-related training to department members;
- keeps a record of wellness contacts to track use and trends in wellness issue areas (no identifying information is associated with these records);
- identifies new help resources to use as referrals for department members.

Interagency and interdisciplinary activities and services

The Wellness Unit also has a third set of duties as part of its mandate: engaging with external partners. In practice, this means developing partnerships with academics and other wellness experts to ensure that the SDPD’s wellness programming is informed by promising practices.

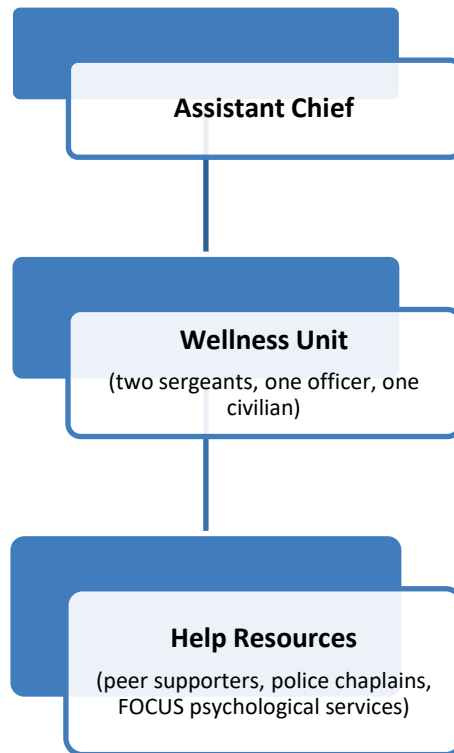
¹⁵⁴ See “Training: Building a Culture of Wellness” beginning on page 47 for more details.

It also includes managing the County Wellness Forum. Created by the Wellness Unit, the forum meets once a quarter. Participants, who include representatives from all of the law enforcement agencies in San Diego County as well as other help resources providers, discuss promising practices, and share resources, which increases access to wellness services across agencies.¹⁵⁵ Each meeting also typically includes an educational presentation delivered by an expert on a wellness-related topic.

Organization

The Wellness Unit has grown since 2011. Today, it is composed of two sergeants, one officer, and one dispatcher, all of whom are under the command of an assistant chief (see figure 1). The Wellness Unit also oversees and manages all of the SDPD’s help resources providers. This includes peer supporters, police chaplains, and Focus Psychological Services, which provides psychological services for employees and their dependents.¹⁵⁶

Figure 1. SDPD Wellness Unit organizational chart



¹⁵⁵ SDPD, *Changing Organizational Culture*.

¹⁵⁶ For detailed information about these programs, see “Help Resources” beginning on page 35.

Help resources

Many help services providers in the SDPD predate the Wellness Unit, but prior to 2011 they were under different commands and had little substantive interaction. The various providers self-deployed to critical incidents and operated largely independently of one another. Bringing them all together under the Wellness Unit ensured that their management, coordination, and training were centralized. “There was no communication among help resources prior to the Wellness Unit,” Lieutenant Bassett explained. “Now it’s automatic that we work together and coordinate deployment if there’s a critical incident or any other need. Because all of the SDPD’s help services are centralized, we are able to send the appropriate resources in the appropriate quantity.”

Organizing all of the SDPD’s help resources under the Wellness Unit also made them a more integral part of the department, said police chaplain the Reverend Chuck Price. “Once the police chaplains were brought under wellness, we got broader visibility,” he explained. “We came in with peer support and the other wellness components. It was nice to have a home and a known advocate within the organization, and it also brought us symbiosis with all of the other help services entities.”

Organizational visibility was one of retired Assistant Chief Creighton’s goals. “We had all of the resources that we needed at the SDPD—chaplains and peer supporters for example—but they were all under different umbrellas and didn’t communicate with each other,” she said.

Civilian representation in the Wellness Unit

Another innovation of the Wellness Unit is that it includes a civilian member of the department. Currently, dispatcher Deanna Dotta, who provides wellness support to civilian and sworn employees, fills that role. She said that her inclusion in the Wellness Unit sent an important message to the department’s nonsworn staff members. “Civilians can sometimes be a second thought in law enforcement agencies, so having a civilian in the Wellness Unit makes the civilian members of the department feel like they’re a vital and valued part of the department,” she explained. “Communications and crime lab personnel experience repeated exposure to trauma. These individuals need emotional support and the opportunity to debrief just as officers do.”

Physical location: Making the Wellness Unit visible

In addition to appearing on the SDPD’s organizational chart, the Wellness Unit is also a visible physical presence in the department. The Wellness Center, which is the Wellness Unit’s main office, is strategically located in SDPD headquarters to encourage officer engagement and reduce any stigma associated with utilizing wellness services. The Wellness Center is usually open from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Moving the Wellness Center to headquarters

The Wellness Center was moved from an off-site location to headquarters in 2012 as part of a larger effort to normalize wellness at SDPD. “We were initially off-site because of concerns that department members would be less likely to come to the Wellness Center if they thought that their colleagues might see them,” said retired Assistant Chief Creighton. “Moving the Wellness Center to headquarters really normalized Wellness as just another resource. It’s just like walking into operational support and getting a battery for your flashlight. It destigmatizes asking for help.”

The Wellness Center is also purposefully designed as a relaxed social space that encourages department members to drop in even if they are not seeking wellness services. It sits across the hall from the cafeteria, offers free coffee and snacks, and is centered on a lounge area with a couch, coffee table, and chairs.

The move to headquarters paid dividends, retired Assistant Chief Creighton said. “We saw a dramatic uptick in utilization once we moved over from our previous off-site location,” she explained. “Having the Wellness Center off-site unintentionally implied that there was something shameful about Wellness. Moving it to headquarters got rid of that.”

Confidentiality

Studies have shown that police officers’ concerns about confidentiality are a significant barrier to seeking mental health support,¹⁵⁷ especially when the support services are provided by the police department.¹⁵⁸ The Wellness Unit worked to overcome officers’ reluctance to seek services by writing and publicizing a clear confidentiality policy and adhering to it.

The Wellness Unit’s confidentiality policy¹⁵⁹ states that the success of the Wellness Unit is predicated on maintaining the confidentiality of employees who use wellness services and requires that the “strictest confidentiality . . . be maintained, within the guidelines of the program.”¹⁶⁰ The confidentiality policy also explicitly describes the limited types of situations that are not covered and that Wellness Unit members are mandated to report, namely when any of the following conditions are met:

- The employee is a danger to him- or herself or to others
- There is suspected child abuse
- There is suspected domestic violence or a fear thereof
- There is suspected elder abuse¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ Fox et al., “Mental-Health Conditions.”

¹⁵⁸ Fox et al., “Mental-Health Conditions.”

¹⁵⁹ See appendix B for the full policy as outlined in the Wellness Unit’s operations manual.

¹⁶⁰ SDPD, *Wellness Unit Operations Manual*, 4.

¹⁶¹ SDPD, *Wellness Unit Operations Manual*, 13.

The following are also specifically described as issues that should be reported to the Wellness Unit commanding officer:

- Narcotics offenses (i.e., using narcotics on duty, committing a felony related to narcotics)
- Felonies
- Felonies committed while on duty
- When the person receiving wellness services requests in writing that information be shared with the Wellness Unit Commanding Officer
- “Matters that would jeopardize the safety of the public or other officers”¹⁶²

“The minute that the confidentiality policy as we’ve outlined it is violated, the credibility of the Unit goes out the window,” said retired Assistant Chief Creighton. “You can ruin years of hard work and building trust by one mishandled incident.”

The Wellness Unit’s policy states that, irrespective of department rules, conversations between department employees and Wellness Unit staff—i.e., the SDPD members who are staffed to the Wellness Unit full-time—are not considered privileged because the members of the Unit are not licensed mental health professionals.¹⁶³ That is not true, however, of all help services providers who work with the SDPD. Focus, for instance, is an outside organization that contracts with the SDPD to provide psychological services for department members and their dependents. Though Focus psychologists work closely with the Wellness Unit, they are independent mental health care providers, so all discussions are protected by patient-provider privilege. “The biggest hurdle when it comes to getting police officers to utilize mental health services is confidentiality,” explained Dr. Jolee Brunton, the chief psychologist for Focus. “On the first day that we sit down with someone from the department, we discuss confidentiality in detail and also describe to them the circumstances in which we’re mandatory reporters: child abuse/neglect, elder abuse/neglect, and Tarasoff situations.¹⁶⁴ We are not mandated reporters of domestic violence. We’re clear and forthright,” she said, “and the officers respond well to that.”

Thus, SDPD employees who need wellness services have access to a wide range of providers who offer different degrees of confidentiality as well as different areas of expertise.

¹⁶² SDPD, *Wellness Unit Operations Manual*, 5.

¹⁶³ SDPD, *Wellness Unit Operations Manual*, 5.

¹⁶⁴ In the California Supreme Court’s 1976 decision in the case *Tarasoff v. Regents of the University of California*, the court found that “When a therapist determines, or pursuant to the standards of his profession should determine, that his patient presents a serious danger of violence to another, he incurs an obligation to use reasonable care to protect the intended victim against such danger.” For the full text of the decision, see *Vitaly Tarasoff et al. v. The Regents of the University of California et al.*, 17 Cal. 3d 425 (1976). https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=263231934673470561.

Recruitment and rotation in the Wellness Unit

Officers' concerns about confidentiality speak to another, practical concern that the SDPD faces when working to make the Wellness Unit successful: SDPD employees will not open up to someone they do not trust. As a result, the SDPD has focused on recruiting for interpersonal skills rather than rank when bringing new team members into the Wellness Unit.

Picking the right people

"The success of the unit is based on picking the right people," retired Assistant Chief Creighton said. "There is no substitute for genuine caring." When discussing why she recruited Lieutenant Bassett for the Wellness Unit, Creighton explained that "he reads people really well and is all about putting others before himself. He's someone who people gravitate to, and he's also a cop's cop. He lent legitimacy to the work, and people knew that they could trust him."

"Gossip can ruin careers," Lieutenant Bassett explained. "I understand that. Before I joined the Wellness Unit, I had a good reputation for not sharing people's private information if they confided in me."

Being nonjudgmental is also critical, said Sergeant Ed Zwibel.¹⁶⁵ "We have people of all ranks calling on us for support. We're outside of their command and they know that we won't judge them," he explained. "They need to know that we're there for them and that we're there to support them as people, not criticize them for what they've done or what they're going through."

It is also important that members of the Wellness Unit "walk the walk," said Assistant Chief Albrektsen. "The credibility of the unit in general is rooted in the credibility of its members. The people in the Unit need to be well themselves."

Recruitment and selection process

To identify new recruits to staff the Wellness Unit, Assistant Chief Albrektsen taps into the knowledge that her captains have of the officers in their divisions. "I wanted the selection process for the Wellness Unit to be transparent," she said, "so I start by asking the captains who they would recommend for the unit and go from there."

When there is a position open in the Wellness Unit, candidates are interviewed informally. "We don't ask them a list of standard questions," explained Sergeant Carmelin Rivera, who is currently in the unit. "We want them to explain why they want to work in Wellness and why they think they would be a good fit. We're also looking for people who have been here for a while and have a good understanding of the organization of the department. Understanding those nuances lends you credibility." Depending on the needs of the agency, other departments may find it useful to create structured interview questions to promote consistency and impartiality during the selection process.

¹⁶⁵ Zwibel was previously with the Wellness Unit.

Lessons from San Diego: Characteristics to look for when selecting members of a wellness team

- **Nonjudgmental.** Someone who knows how to make people feel cared for and who understands that the role of the wellness team is supporting others, not passing judgment on them
- **Compassionate.** Someone who is empathetic and cares for others
- **Experienced.** Someone who is familiar with the department and has a personal understanding of the stress associated with working in a law enforcement agency
- **Proven legitimacy.** Someone whom members of the department already gravitate toward when they are seeking assistance, advice, or support
- **Trustworthy.** Someone who does not gossip about others
- **Demonstrates wellness.** Someone who attends to his or her own emotional and physical health and models that for others

Ensuring the wellness of the Wellness Unit

The serious responsibilities of the Wellness Unit can take an emotional toll on its members, which makes the risk of employee burnout high. “I mandated psychological services check-ins for myself and the other members of the Wellness Unit,” said retired Assistant Chief Creighton. “I also allowed the team to work out while they were on duty, because it was so important that they stay healthy and have effective mechanisms for managing their stress.” She added that members of the Wellness Unit also check in with one another informally on a regular basis to ensure no one is overwhelmed.

Rotating out of the unit: The two-year limit

Assistant Chief Albrektsen formalized in policy a practice of putting a two-year limit on assignments to the Wellness Unit because of how emotionally taxing the work can be. Based on the experiences of former and current Wellness Unit members and the fact that they are essentially on-call 24/7, it was determined that the two-year limit would protect the emotional health and well-being of staff members. The limit also ensures that SDPD employees seeking services can be confident that the unit’s members are emotionally equipped to assist them.

Training for help services providers

All members of the Wellness Unit (as well as all peer supporters) are required to attend a Commission on Police Officers Standards and Training (POST)–certified three-day peer support training.

Dr. Nancy Bohl-Penrod, head of Counseling Team International (CTI) and a POST peer support trainer, said that the training starts with a description of the characteristics of a successful peer supporter (empathetic, nonjudgmental, respects confidentiality, etc.). The training then transitions into a series of topic areas such as active listening, crisis intervention, grief, and substance abuse, each of which is followed by a role play exercise. “We also teach them about when they need to pass the baton to a professional, maintaining boundaries, and when to refer and when to not make a referral,” she said.

The SDPD’s police chaplains complete their own specialized 40-hour POST-certified chaplaincy training.

Availability and assignments

While the Wellness Unit has a physical location with set hours, staff members also meet with employees in need at any time and in any place. SDPD employees do not need to go to the Wellness Center to receive wellness services. Members of the Wellness Unit are available 24/7.

On-call protocol

To accommodate off-hour requests for assistance, the Wellness Unit has an on-call protocol. The Wellness Unit is included on watch commanders’ text lists, and if there is a critical incident or an employee in crisis calls the watch commander, the on-call Wellness Unit member is notified and responds. So that they are able to do so as quickly as possible, Wellness Unit members have assigned cars and take-home privileges when they are on call. If more than one member of the Wellness Unit needs to respond to an incident, whoever is not on call goes to the station to pick up his or her car before going to the scene.

In addition to this on-call protocol, SDPD employees often contact individual members of the Wellness Unit directly because they know and trust them. When that happens, “you take the call,” said Sergeant Rivera, echoing similar sentiments from other members of the Wellness Unit.

“This is a 24/7 job,” said retired Assistant Chief Creighton, “and people need to have access to us at all times.”

Deployment

A critical lesson that the Wellness Unit learned from its first month of operation in 2011 was how to deploy help resources. Waiting for a request from command staff to send help resources to the scene of a critical incident was impractical and delayed response time. Instead, Wellness Unit staff members dispatch these service providers—and respond themselves—immediately.

This nontraditional deployment also extends to the scene itself. During the manhunt following the fatal shooting of Officer Jeremy Henwood in 2011, police chaplains and psychologists were taken to officers' posts to begin providing support to them immediately, even as the search continued.¹⁶⁶

Building awareness of and trust in the Wellness Unit

Ultimately, all of the operational components of the wellness program—the physical location of the unit, the availability of wellness services, the training and education sessions that the unit develops—are intended in part to build awareness of the Wellness Unit. To ensure that services are used and to build department members' trust in wellness services, the Wellness Unit has an active internal outreach program.

Going to lineups

The unit has proactively engaged with SDPD employees since its inception. “We went to lineups,” retired Assistant Chief Creighton said, “to talk to members of the department about who we were, what the Wellness Unit was, and what we wanted to accomplish for them.”

These early efforts were critical to obtaining support, said the Reverend Dale Lowrimore, a police chaplain. “We went to every lineup at every command and gave a presentation to every single person,” he said. “We needed to explain what was changing in terms of the reorganization and what the confidentiality policy was, to overcome fears that Wellness was a ‘tattle tale’ place. We also needed command staff to understand who we were and what we were about.”

Newsletters, brochures, and written announcements

The Wellness Unit also produces written materials to explain its services and publicize its events, including a Wellness Unit Employee Resources brochure¹⁶⁷ and a monthly newsletter, *Wellness News*.¹⁶⁸

The Wellness brochure is a one-page, double-sided quick reference guide that lists all of the help services offered and outlines additional resources that the SDPD provides. The information in the brochure includes the following:

- The mission of the Wellness Unit
- Wellness Unit services
- The names and contact information (office number, cell number, and email) of all members of the Wellness Unit
- A list of the SDPD's peer supporters

¹⁶⁶ SDPD, *Changing Organizational Culture*.

¹⁶⁷ See appendix C for a copy of the brochure.

¹⁶⁸ See appendix D for a copy of the monthly newsletter from August 2017.

- The mission of the police chaplain program
- A list of the SDPD’s police chaplains and their contact information (phone and email)
- A description of Focus Psychological Services, who they serve, and the services that they provide as well as their contact information (email and phone)
- A description of the Alcohol and Substance Abuse Program (ASAP) and contact information (email and phone) for the SDPD’s ASAP counselors
- A list of additional resources and contact information (phone) for the following:
 - Medical assistance
 - EAP
 - The San Diego Police Officers’ Association (SDPOA)
 - The San Diego Metropolitan Employees Association (SDMEA)
 - AFSCME127 (a local labor union)

The Wellness Unit distributes this brochure widely, sharing it at trainings, events, and lineups. Wellness Unit members also give a copy of this brochure to new officers the day they start the academy as part of a strategy to create a culture of wellness in the department by normalizing wellness services among new hires.¹⁶⁹

Wellness News, the Wellness Unit’s monthly newsletter, is distributed using the SDPD listserv. It provides articles on wellness topics, information about upcoming wellness-related events, and wellness tips and resources. The information that it offers is holistic, touching on all aspects of wellness.

The August 2017 newsletter¹⁷⁰ included

- a message from Assistant Chief Albrektsen on the benefits of blood donation;
- an informational flyer about an upcoming blood drive;
- an announcement about the negative effects of neglecting self-care, including the impact on officers’ families;
- a fitness and weight loss success story, with photos, written by a department member;
- an article about wellness, mindfulness, and the Wellness Unit, written by Deanna Dotta of the Wellness Unit;
- an article titled “The Lies We Tell Ourselves—Barriers to Wellness,” written by Sergeant Rivera of the Wellness Unit;
- an announcement about fitness opportunities at the department and workout resources;

¹⁶⁹ This is part of a larger strategy to create a culture of wellness in the department.

¹⁷⁰ See appendix D.

- a list of items that officers should always have in their gear bags, including disinfecting wipes, a first aid kit, and extra gloves;
- book recommendations, including a discount coupon code for one of the suggested titles;
- an SDPD wellness resource list (including contact information for Focus, the EAP, police chaplains, and the Wellness Unit staff).

“The wellness newsletter is fantastic,” said Marie Cuvadar, a police dispatch supervisor and peer supporter, “and they reach a really wide audience.”

In addition to announcing upcoming training and educational seminars in the newsletter, the Wellness Unit sends out announcements to encourage participation. “We’ve put together workshops on retirement, healthy eating, and sleep hygiene,” explained Lieutenant Bassett, “and we always put out department-wide announcements so that people are aware that these events are coming up and these resources are available to them.”

The Wellness Unit also created posters that describe the unit and wellness services and include contact information for the unit and other help resources.¹⁷¹ These posters are displayed around SDPD headquarters and in division stations.

Building trust

The key is when you get someone who has used wellness services and tells someone else that they had a good experience.

— *Assistant Chief (ret.) Sarah Creighton, San Diego Police Department*

While these materials make department members aware of wellness resources, ensuring that employees use the resources depends on trust. “It has taken a lot of meetings and a lot of groundwork to build an understanding of what Wellness does,” said the Rev. Lowrimore. “Wellness has a great reputation because we hold confidentiality in the highest possible regard.”

Retired Assistant Chief Creighton said that building a reputation for discretion takes time. “It’s slow going convincing people that you respect confidentiality, even when you have the best people on your team,” she said.

Lieutenant Bassett underscored the importance of individual interactions in building trust, person by person, over time. “In the beginning, people would fish and ask who I was going to tell about our conversation,” he said. “I would say that the only person who could tell anyone was him or her.”

¹⁷¹ The poster has been modified since PERF’s research into the SDPD’s Wellness Program.

What using wellness services looks like in practice: A scenario

Officer Adams is going through a difficult divorce. Since proceedings began, he has been increasingly irritable. He has told his friend, Officer Smith, that he is having trouble sleeping, and Smith is worried that Adams may be starting to drink more than normal after his shifts. Smith tries to talk to Adams about how he is coping with his divorce, but Adams rebuffs him.

Smith is familiar with the Wellness Unit because of the training the Wellness Unit provided in the academy and after field training. He knows that he can get the contact information for anyone in the Wellness Unit from several places, including the SDPD intranet, brochures, and posters located throughout headquarters.

Smith calls the Wellness Unit and asks one of the sergeants to check in on Adams. The Wellness Unit sergeant calls Adams at the end of his shift. She explains the services that the Wellness Unit provides and that the Wellness Unit is there as a resource for him. She says that she can connect him with anyone who might be helpful to him, including financial counselors, psychological services, and peer supporters who have had similar experiences.

The sergeant also encourages Adams to visit the Wellness Center. He agrees to stop by the next morning. While there, she gives him the contact information for two service providers and several peer supporters and says that she will call to check in on him the following day.

The sergeant underscores that Adams can reach out to her at any time if he needs to talk. Adams calls one of the peer supporters that afternoon, and they talk several times over the course of the week. Two weeks later, on advice of his peer supporter, he makes an appointment with a financial counselor recommended by the Wellness Unit sergeant as well.

Metrics for success

The only product we produce as an agency is our employees, and all of their work is improved if they're well.

— *Sergeant Ed Zwibel, San Diego Police Department*

The Wellness Unit uses several mechanisms to measure its success: surveys, utilization reports, and a quarterly management report (QMR). For a unit that operates under a confidentiality policy, these metrics are especially critical in demonstrating the success and impact of their efforts. “There is all of this hidden work that we do that most people never know about unless they’re using wellness services, and that’s exactly how I hoped it would be,” explained Sergeant Ed Zwibel.

Utilization reports: Recaps

Each month, the Wellness Unit produces a report, called a recap, on the number of wellness contacts (i.e., one-on-one contacts—in person, on the phone, via text, via email, etc.—that they have with department members) made that month. Each report contains the following information:

- Number of individuals served
- Type of service they received
- General demographic information
- General description of the issue(s) for which each individual was seeking assistance

Every member of the unit and every help services provider is required to submit a “recap sheet”¹⁷² on the 10th day of the month that captures this information. The Unit then combines these submissions into a single report.

Importantly, recaps contain no identifying information about the employees who use wellness services. Their purpose is to assist the Wellness Unit in identifying themes and trends; to inform their outreach, events, and training protocols; and to keep track of how many department members are using help resources.

Quarterly management report (QMR)

The Wellness Unit prepares a report for the chief’s executive committee every quarter. It documents the following:¹⁷³

- The number of employees who provided wellness assistance and the number of hours they spent on wellness contacts
- The issue areas they addressed with department members, ranked from most to least prevalent
- The training that the Wellness Unit and help services provided
- Any new or ongoing projects and community partnerships
- Summaries of critical incidents

¹⁷² See appendix E for a recap sheet.

¹⁷³ SDPD, *Changing Organizational Culture*.

2013 survey

At the close of its first two years in operation, the Wellness Unit also conducted a survey¹⁷⁴ to assess its progress. The 240 respondents said the following:

- 78 percent felt like there was a lot more discussion about issues like suicide, substance abuse, and other ineffective coping behaviors than two years earlier.
- 70 percent felt that the stigma associated with asking for help was decreasing.
- 89 percent trusted that if they had a personal issue that was interfering with work or home, they could ask for help and receive help.
- 79 percent said that they would feel comfortable walking into the Wellness Center regardless of the reason for their visit.

Sustainability planning

While the Wellness Unit has proven critical to the department, Assistant Chief Albrektsen said that sustaining it long-term depends on demonstrating that it saves money. “Partnering with other first responders and working with risk management in the city is what makes this work in the long term,” she said. “You have to work with other agencies and demonstrate a dollar savings for the city, showing that this is preventing all sorts of negative outcomes related to poor physical and emotional health in the department.” Indeed, poor physical and mental health among officers can lead to absenteeism, increased usage of workers’ compensation and sick days, and increases in early retirement,¹⁷⁵ which has proven to be a costly burden for agencies.

Promising practices: Building and sustaining a wellness program

First steps

- Conduct a department-wide survey to ask employees what they need and what their primary wellness concerns are. Use that information to guide the development of wellness programming and services.
- Have a clear, written confidentiality policy, communicate it to department members, and adhere to it. Ensure that reporting requirements and exceptions are understood, such as information indicating that an employee may be a danger to himself or herself or to others or that domestic violence or child abuse may be occurring. Some providers, such as clinicians, may be bound by more stringent confidentiality rules than police department employees. Ensure that employees understand these differences and understand the confidentiality rules that bind each category of help services providers.

¹⁷⁴ See appendix F for full survey and results.

¹⁷⁵ Andersen et al., “Mental Preparedness;” Garner, “Police Stress.”

- Locate your wellness office or center in headquarters or another high-visibility location to reduce any stigma that employees may feel about seeking help.
- Your department’s help resources providers should be in close communication with one another and should work together to deliver wellness services. This includes
 - having a common mission and messaging so that they are working together toward a shared wellness goal for the overall good of the department;
 - communicating with each other to coordinate responses to critical incidents.

Outreach and engagement

- Make wellness services visible on your organizational chart to demonstrate their importance.
- Go to officer roll calls to explain wellness services.
- Develop materials to publicize the services and how to access them, including
 - brochures;
 - newsletters;
 - posters.

Recruiting

- When recruiting people for wellness-related programs, look for interpersonal skills, not necessarily rank. Wellness unit staff members should be
 - compassionate;
 - nonjudgmental;
 - experienced in the organization;
 - trustworthy;
 - respected by colleagues.

Training

- Mandate that help services providers receive formal training—for example, POST-certified peer support training—to ensure that they have the right tools to be successful in supporting their colleagues.
- Provide opportunities for help services components to train together. This improves team building and ensures that all providers share common messaging and goals.

Operations

- Do not neglect civilian employees. Include them in wellness services as providers and as recipients.
- Wellness providers need to be available 24/7. Crises are not confined to business hours.
- In addition to serving as a resource during regular business hours, wellness services providers should be able to meet with employees seeking help at the times and locations that work best for them.
- To accommodate off-hour requests for assistance, develop an on-call protocol for the wellness services providers and advertise to department employees.
- Assignments for wellness providers should be made based on relationships and trust. Often, whether at the scene of a critical incident or when someone walks into the Wellness Center, an employee wishes to talk to a specific help services provider.
- Establish a policy that allows wellness services providers to deploy help services during or immediately after a crisis without needing to wait for a request from command staff.
- Wellness services providers should check in regularly with those who use their services and follow up on anniversary dates as well.

Maintaining the wellness of help services providers

- It is important to ensure that employees who provide wellness services are themselves in good physical and emotional health. Be aware that assignment to a wellness unit can be stressful, and be mindful of the wellness of help service providers. Adopt policies and protocols to promote their physical and emotional health. Examples include
 - having mandatory psychological service check-ins;
 - allowing wellness workers to exercise while on duty.
- Have a protocol for rotating wellness service providers out of help services roles to prevent burnout. This might include one (or both) of the following:
 - A policy limiting the amount of time that someone can spend in a wellness-related role
 - A form that wellness service providers can fill out and submit without penalty asking to be relieved of wellness-related duties

Metrics for success

- Develop a mechanism for tracking the use of help services, such as the monthly recap report that the SDPD's Wellness Unit compiles every month based on recap sheets (see appendix E) completed by each help services provider.
- Survey the department after wellness services have been in place for a year or more to determine their levels of visibility, employee trust, and use. Modify your approach as needed based on results.

Sustainability planning

- Make it clear that a successful wellness program is good for the financial health of your law enforcement agency—i.e., keeping officers physically and emotionally healthy is a cost-saving measure in the long term—to secure support for wellness programming from city government.

External partnerships

- Draw upon the expertise of people outside of your organization. This might include
 - a nearby law enforcement agency that already has wellness services;
 - academics with experience in wellness-related topics;
 - police psychologists.
- Partner with mental health providers, academics, and other outside experts to refine wellness program methods and initiatives and provide needed services to department members.

Help Resources: Providers and Programs

The help resources that the Wellness Unit manages—police chaplains, peer supporters, and psychological services—are critical components of the SDPD’s wellness program. Many providers said that while these programs predate the Wellness Unit, their efficacy has increased now that they are working together under one command and toward a common goal.

Pooling knowledge improves the delivery of wellness services to those in need.

— *Police Dispatch Administrator Mellissa Santagata, San Diego Police Department*

“If we have an issue that we haven’t encountered previously, it’s likely other wellness providers often have seen it, and the Wellness Unit can give us the information and referrals we need without us having to reinvent the wheel,” Mellissa Santagata, a police dispatch administrator and peer supporter explained. The SDPD’s individual wellness initiatives are interconnected and serve as force multipliers for one another.

Peer Support Program (PSP)

The SDPD’s Peer Support Program (PSP) encompasses the following:

- **General peer support.** Support provided by civilians and officers to department members and loved ones experiencing difficulties in their lives
- **Officer involved shooting (OIS)/in-custody death peer support.** Support provided by officers to officers involved in a shooting or in-custody death

All members of the peer support program provide general peer support. When there is an OIS or an in-custody death, however, sworn peer supporters who have themselves been involved in a shooting or an in-custody death respond. Peer supporters who do not have this experience are not assigned to supporting an involved officer in the wake of a shooting or in-custody death.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ This is generally true, though in extraordinary circumstances such as a mass casualty incident, as many peer supporters as needed would be mobilized to respond regardless of status.

Before the Wellness Unit was created, and indeed until 2016, general peer support and OIS peer support were two distinct programs. The former was called the Member Assistance Program and the latter was called Peer Support. They were combined to align the program with the IACP's recommendations on peer support as well as standard practice in California.

Training

All peer supporters at the SDPD are required to attend POST-certified three-day peer support training.

In addition to the POST peer support training, the SDPD's peer supporters are also required to attend two refresher training sessions every year. These sessions, held quarterly, are organized by the Wellness Unit and are each dedicated to a different wellness topic such as mindfulness and sleep hygiene. The SDPD invites outside experts in to present during these trainings.

OIS peer support

OIS peer support is a service provided to officers who are involved in a shooting or an in-custody death by other officers who have had the same experience. The goal of OIS peer support is to provide officers who have been involved in or have witnessed a shooting or in-custody death with emotional support and help them navigate the post-incident investigative process.¹⁷⁷

Recruitment

There are approximately 30 peer supporters who provide OIS-specific support (OIS peer supporters) in the SDPD Peer Support program. The eligibility requirements to provide this type of peer support include the following:

- Being a nonprobationary POII, POIII, or sergeant
- Having met departmental performance standards
- Having experience of a shooting or in-custody death (which must have occurred more than 12 months prior)
- Being a good listener and good with people
- Being available at all times (both on duty and off) to respond to critical incidents as needed
- Having a recommendation from his or her commanding officer¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ SDPD, *Wellness Unit Operations Manual*, 11.

¹⁷⁸ SDPD, *Wellness Unit Operations Manual*, 9.

As Sergeant Rivera explained, “OIS peer supporters are vetted. We ask them to apply to be a peer supporter and if they happen to have a qualifying incident, we take them through an extra interview process to determine if they would be the right fit for providing peer support during OIS incidents.” These interviews, said Dr. Bohl-Penrod, are done by a licensed clinician and one or two members of the Wellness Unit.

Operations

If they are responding to a scene as an OIS peer support officer while they are off duty, or if they work past the end of their shift because they are doing so, OIS peer supporters are paid overtime.¹⁷⁹

Deploying to the scene

All officers involved in a shooting or an in-custody death receive an OIS peer supporter. While they do self-deploy, Sergeant Rivera explained, it is the responsibility of the supervisor on-scene to request peer support. The first OIS peer support officer who arrives at a shooting is responsible for assessing the scene to determine if additional OIS peer supporters are needed. Ideally, said Detective Sergeant Jeff Sterling, there is a one-to-one ratio of OIS peer supporters to shooting and witness officers. If that is not possible, OIS peer supporters always maintain a one-to-one ratio with shooting officers.

If the officer involved would like a particular peer supporter, that request is honored as a matter of policy and practice. “If I get to a scene and the guy knows another OIS peer supporter already and wants to talk to him or has a good relationship with him, I’ll let the other peer supporter know and just stay there with the officer until the other peer supporter shows up,” explained Detective Sergeant Sterling. Sergeant Michael Shiraishi agreed, saying, “We ask the officer if they know anyone on peer support they’d rather talk to. There’s no ego there. If there is and they would, we make the call.”

Activities on scene

As officers who have been in similar circumstances themselves, OIS peer supporters have a comprehensive understanding of the post-shooting investigation process, and they begin to help officers through it once they arrive on scene. “We sit and talk to them about what is going to happen next and what the process looks like, but it’s a fine line because we don’t want to take a statement,” Detective Sergeant Sterling said. “Our role is to give them information, drive them, get them in touch with their attorney, wait with them while they’re doing their walk-throughs on scene, wait while they’re doing their detailed interviews, and drive them home when they’re all done.”

Follow-up activities

Officers involved in shootings and in-custody deaths participate in mandatory critical incident debriefings that are facilitated by a Focus psychologist. OIS peer supporters are not currently involved in those debriefings, but they do provide continued follow-up and support to officers.

¹⁷⁹ SDPD, *Wellness Unit Operations Manual*, 9.

OIS peer supporter Detective Nestor Hernandez described his method as following up within the first 24 hours, then every two days for the first two weeks, and then letting the officer determine their level of contact once the two weeks have passed. Sergeant Shiraishi said, “After the debrief, one of the things that I ask them about is their home life. I talk to them about signs they should look out for, like if they become hypersensitive to their kids or if they have more tense interactions with their significant others. I’ve had officers reach out to me after the fact to say that they’re noticing that kind of stuff, and I drive them down to the psychologist at Focus to get them an appointment to talk to someone.”

Peer support (non-OIS)

The SDPD’s Peer Support program also includes peer supporters who do not provide OIS-specific support. These peer supporters include sworn and civilian members of the SDPD. Their purpose is to provide support to department members and their loved ones who are grappling with challenges in their lives.

Recruitment

There are approximately 40 sworn peer supporters and 13 civilian peer supporters at the SDPD in addition to the peer supporters who provide OIS-specific services. Eligibility criteria for becoming a peer supporter include the following:

- Having met departmental performance standards
- Having a reputation as someone whom others already seek out for informal peer support and who can keep information confidential
- Being a good listener and good with people¹⁸⁰

Making peer supporters accessible: The intranet directory

All peer supporters have a profile on the SDPD’s intranet that includes their photo as well as a description of the particular issues with which they have experience, such as divorce or the death of a loved one. Their profiles also include their contact information. Members of the department can review these profiles and reach out to the peer supporters who can speak directly to their issues and concerns.

Operations

Peer supporters are volunteers, providing assistance on their own time and without compensation. As a result, the policy of the peer support program is that departmental and regular duties are a peer supporter’s first priority. It states that peer support work should not take peer supporters away from their jobs or negatively impact their performance.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ SDPD, *Wellness Unit Operations Manual*, 12.

¹⁸¹ SDPD, *Wellness Unit Operations Manual*, 12.

Police chaplain program

The SDPD's police chaplain program was created in 1969. It is a volunteer corps of faith leaders from the community who offer emotional support and spiritual guidance to police employees and their families. They do not proselytize, and the support they offer is nondenominational.¹⁸²

Police chaplains, the Reverend Lowrimore said, are a critical component of wellness programming. "Wellness programs should address the mind, body, and spirit, and without chaplains they're not well-rounded in my view," he said. "Additionally, a lot of officers won't necessarily go to a psychologist, but they will speak with a chaplain."

The SDPD's police chaplain program has undergone an evolution since 2007, the Reverend Chuck Price said. "For many decades we defaulted into crisis-driven chaplaincy," he said, "and there was no training, policy, or organization" to the program. In an effort to change this, the Reverend Price and the other active members of the program researched chaplaincy programs and developed a written policy, based on established standards, for the program.

Recruitment

SDPD currently has 11 police chaplains and space for nine more. "It's a challenge to fill 20 slots," said the Reverend Lowrimore, "because all of the agencies in this area are drawing from the same pool of resources. Many of us are already doing double and triple duty with different agencies."

The eligibility requirements for those who would like to join the chaplain program include the following:

- Chaplaincy recognized by a religious body and approximately five years' experience in ministry
- Current involvement in a ministry, congregation, or church-related organization in San Diego County
- Pass an oral interview and a background check
- Master's degree from an accredited graduate institution or a denominational equivalent
- Demonstrable experience and training in counseling and theology¹⁸³

The emphasis on faith leaders with experience, said the Reverend Lowrimore, is intentional. "We look for senior people," he said. "We want people who have experience and who have been in ministry for a long time. We deal with life and death every day, so having a minister who is young and somewhat inexperienced doing this work may not be a good fit."

There are particular personality types to look for in recruiting for the program, the Reverend Price explained. "We've learned that we really need to look for humility. We have some people who come in humbly and want to learn how to do this, and those are the ones who do well."

¹⁸² SDPD, *Wellness Unit Operations Manual*, 16.

¹⁸³ SDPD, *Wellness Unit Operations Manual*, 16.

“The biggest lesson I’ve learned is that police chaplains have to be tenacious,” said the Reverend Lowrimore. “As chaplains, we have to keep going. We’re not always everyone’s cup of tea, and that’s fine—we just keep going.”

Training

The SDPD’s police chaplains are required to complete a 40-hour POST-certified chaplaincy training program. In addition, they have bimonthly meetings that include an educational component. “At our meetings we tend to have a training of some sort, or at least a debriefing about major incidents,” explained the Reverend Lowrimore. “We may hit something specific like death calls, including what you should do when you get there, what you should have with you, and what your role should be. Police chaplains need to know what they’re doing.”

Duties and assignments

Police chaplains are asked to dedicate at least 10 hours per month to providing support to the SDPD with the understanding that they are available at all times as a resource. Responsibilities include the following:

- Responding to an OIS and other critical incidents
- Participating in next-of-kin notifications as a resource for officers and family members
- Serving as a support system for officers in crisis¹⁸⁴

Unlike any other help resources at the SDPD, police chaplains are all assigned to specific divisions. The Reverend Lowrimore, for instance, is responsible for the SDPD’s Western Division. “If something happens with someone in Western Division and I get a call, I go,” he said. While officers are encouraged to rotate among divisions every five years, police chaplains typically stay where they are assigned for long periods of time.

As a result of these assignments, chaplains often get to know personnel in their divisions on a personal level. Relationships of trust are established from hours spent in cars together during ride-alongs and the familiarity that develops from seeing someone day in and day out. Sometimes officers call police chaplains whom they know from their previous positions. “They might want to talk to their previous chaplain, and that’s fine,” the Reverend Lowrimore explained. “We want whatever is best for the officer.”

Building trust: The role of ride-alongs

As both the Reverend Price and the Reverend Lowrimore underscored, building trust takes time. A critical component of that effort for police chaplains at the SDPD has been participating in ride-alongs with officers in their divisions. “They help build rapport, and the more time that I spend with officers,

¹⁸⁴ SDPD, *Wellness Unit Operations Manual*, 16.

the more trust I build,” the Reverend Price explained. The Reverend Lowrimore echoed him, saying, “It’s all about building bridges, and we do it one officer at a time. When we’re on a ride-along, whatever they do, we do, and whatever call they go on, we go on. We’re out there in the blood and the guts and the vomit with them. It helps us understand them and it shows them that we’re committed to them.”

Focus Psychological Services

Focus is an independent group with whom the SDPD contracts to provide counseling services to department members and their loved ones free of charge. Focus is “law enforcement–oriented,” chief psychologist Jolee Brunton said. “We know the population, and we remove every barrier possible to get them through the door.” Focus also provides counseling services for San Diego Fire-Rescue workers, the San Diego State University Police Department, the University of California San Diego Police Department, and other fire and law enforcement agencies in San Diego County.

Services

Focus’s primary service is counseling, which can be related to any issues facing department members and their loved ones regardless of whether it is associated with police work. Focus also provides specialized training for department members as needed and participates in delivering wellness-related training with the Wellness Unit, including the wellness module of Advanced Officer Training and Effective Interactions training for new officers.¹⁸⁵ Focus teaches a five-hour block to new sergeants on topics of critical incident stress, suicide prevention, and recognition of stressful life and work events (for example injury, discipline, retirement, deployment). In addition, Focus provides consultation services for special teams and leads critical incident debriefings (which take the place of fitness-for-duty exams at the SDPD) for the department.

Staffing and training

Focus currently has nine psychologists, two of whom are former law enforcement officers who were recruited specifically because of their experience as officers. All Focus psychologists have developed an understanding of policing because of Focus’s onboarding protocol. “Most people don’t have an expertise in police psychology, so when I take people on, in their first year I have them do ride-alongs, witness debriefings, meet with families, and go to lineups until they feel comfortable in the position,” Dr. Brunton said.

¹⁸⁵ See Training section beginning on page 47 for more details about these trainings.

Breaking down barriers for officers to take advantage of services

As clinicians, Focus psychologists are bound by legal privilege. “We are very clear about our confidentiality policy,” Dr. Brunton said, “because if cops don’t think we protect confidentiality, they won’t use our services. We’re mandated reporters for certain things as medical professionals, but we are completely transparent with officers. The first day they come in, we discuss confidentiality and when we’ll report something.” Officers, she said, respond well when psychologists are forthright.

Focus psychologists are also flexible about where and when they will meet with department members. “I have people who don’t want to come through the door to our offices, so we’ll schedule them at a time that no one is in the office, or we’ll meet them off site, or do whatever we need to do to get them services,” Dr. Brunton explained. This includes making every effort to see department members within a day or two of hearing from them, she said, to make it more likely that they will keep their appointment.

Thinking creatively about communication has also proven successful in overcoming barriers to utilization. “I make myself available via text,” Dr. Brunton said. Focus has also seen an uptick in engagement through their website. “It’s amazing,” Dr. Brunton noted, “how many people will text or email even if they won’t call.”

Once I started giving out my cell number and telling officers that they could text me, our utilization increased dramatically. I get more texts than phone calls.

— *Dr. Jolee Brunton, Focus Psychological Services*

Last, she said that she emphasizes that Focus is not part of the SDPD. “It’s critical to draw the boundary with officers that we’re an external entity and that command staff don’t get access to our records and who uses the service.” The only information that is communicated to the department is the monthly number of hours of use.

Use

Use of services has increased significantly since the creation of the Wellness Unit, according to Dr. Brunton. “Since we’ve had the Wellness Day with new recruits and their family members,” she said, “the new recruits are much more likely to come in and use services.” In 2016, Focus dedicated 6,000 hours to providing services to SDPD members.

Anecdotally, associating with psychologists also seems to be less stigmatized in the department. “I’ve noticed a big increase in people actually making eye contact with me, talking to me, and talking about wellness since the unit was created,” Dr. Brunton said. “We’re working hard to normalize the experience

and say, ‘There’s nothing wrong with you, but this is a unique job with unique challenges and we’re here to help you do your job. If you’re a tennis player, why would you practice doing a bad backhand? Why not learn how to do it right?’”

What using wellness services looks like in practice: A scenario

Officer Brooks is struggling after the sudden death of her brother. She has noticed that it is more difficult for her to concentrate, and she is increasingly short-tempered with her colleagues and community members. She feels exhausted all of the time and has lost interest in the hobbies that used to occupy most of her free time, like hiking and camping.

Though Brooks joined the SDPD before the Wellness Unit was created, she learned about it through the police chaplain at her division, Wellness Unit presentations at roll call, and the monthly Wellness newsletter. She calls an officer in the Wellness Unit one day after work and asks if he is free to meet her at a coffee shop near her apartment. He drives over and they talk for two hours about the issues she is facing in the aftermath of her brother’s death.

The Wellness Unit officer helps Brooks make an appointment with Focus Psychological Services for the next day and offers to drive her there. Brooks declines, so instead the Wellness Unit officer calls her before her scheduled appointment time to ensure that she made it to the Focus office. He reiterates that she can call him at any time if she needs to talk and that he will call to check in on her later in the week. He does, and he also reaches out a month later on the anniversary of her brother’s death. Brooks and the Wellness Unit officer continue to communicate regularly via text, phone, and in person during the following year.

Alcohol/Substance Abuse Program (ASAP)

Among the specialized services that the SDPD offers is an Alcohol/Substance Abuse Program (ASAP). The primary goals of the ASAP are to help department members and their family members recover from substance abuse and, in so doing, to decrease the incidence of substance abuse overall at the SDPD. Deanna Dotta, a 911 dispatcher in the Wellness Unit, is also the SDPD’s ASAP counselor. Her duties include the following:

- Providing alcohol and substance abuse information, counseling, training, and direct assistance to management, employees, and family members
- Liaising with Focus, the municipal EAP, the Public Safety Fellowship (a 12-step program), other government agencies, and treatment centers and substance abuse counselors
- Assisting with the coordination of inpatient and outpatient treatment
- Providing internal presentations and articles on ASAP and substance abuse issues¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ SDPD, *Wellness Unit Operations Manual*, 20.

“There are two [Alcoholics Anonymous] groups in the county that are for first responders only,” Dotta explained. She is also expanding the range of providers available to SDPD department members. “I’ve been building a network with treatment facilities in the greater southern California area beyond San Diego, because officers are often reluctant to go to the local treatment centers,” she said. “There is a real possibility they’ll run into people they may have arrested. Also, a lot of places don’t have the training and expertise to understand police work and the types of stressors that officers are under. I’ve also looked for facilities that provide a level of extra confidentiality, and that understand police officers’ concerns about that.”

In order to facilitate department members’ treatment for substance abuse, the SDPD allows employees to donate their leave time to others anonymously. “We have people donate their hours for catastrophic leave without knowing who they’re donating it to,” explained retired Assistant Chief Creighton. “That is important because it helps people get the treatment they need, and it shows them that the rest of the department cares.”

Recruitment and training

The SDPD’s ASAP counselors have all completed training at the Navy Drug and Alcohol Counseling School. Dotta graduated from the program in 2006.

The SDPD makes specific provisions regarding recruiting those in recovery to serve as an ASAP counselor. Policy states that a counselor may be someone who has not had an addiction problem¹⁸⁷ or someone who is a recovering alcoholic with at least three years of continuous sobriety and who attends the Public Safety Fellowship or other 12-step program.¹⁸⁸

Promising practices: Help services and programs

Peer support

- When creating a peer support program, start small if resource constraints are an issue—the important thing is to start providing the service. Having a formal system for providing peer support and ensuring that helpful services are delivered are critical for department members’ wellness.
- Designate someone to be in charge of overseeing peer support activities to ensure that peer support is helpful and is offered according to protocols.
- Wellness services supervisor(s) should interview all applicants to ensure they are suitable for the role.
- Peer supporters should be required to complete formal peer support training. This standardizes the delivery of peer support services and ensures that the services are helpful to officers.

¹⁸⁷ SDPD, *Wellness Unit Operations Manual*, 20.

¹⁸⁸ SDPD, *Wellness Unit Operations Manual*, 20.

- Have a mechanism in place that allows peer supporters to leave the program at any time (for example, if they can no longer dedicate time to participating).
- Establish protocols for removing peer supporters if there are performance issues.
- Provide peer support services for civilian staff in addition to sworn staff. This includes inviting dispatchers to critical incident debriefings.
- Create a database that includes information about peer supporters, including the topics (such as divorce or death in the family) with which they have experience, so that department members can seek out a peer supporter with a first-hand understanding of their particular needs.

Peer support specific to an OIS or in-custody death

- When recruiting for OIS peer support, look for maturity, credibility, and active listening skills.
- Require a qualifying incident for OIS peer support officers.
- If possible, have a combination of uniformed officers and investigators as peer supporters to provide a wide range of relatable experience.
- Have a mentoring system in place for OIS peer supporters. This includes mentoring in the field: Senior, experienced peer supporters should show up on scene to help new OIS peer support officers fulfill their duties.
- OIS peer supporters should be attentive to officers' basic needs—getting them water and food if appropriate, for example.
- Communicate to the officers involved what the investigation and debrief process will look like in practice (i.e., what their days will be like immediately following and potentially for months) so that they are prepared.
- Follow up with officers after they have slept and have had an opportunity to decompress.
- If the officers involved have existing relationships of trust with a particular OIS peer supporter who is not the first OIS peer supporter to arrive on a scene, call that peer supporter so that he or she can take over.
- OIS peer supporters should follow up with the officers involved in an incident on a regular schedule and use multiple methods (such as phone calls, text messages, and in-person meetings) to ensure adequate outreach and support is conveyed to the officers.

Chaplains

- When recruiting for a police chaplain program, look for humility, credibility, and experience.
- Police chaplains should not proselytize.
- Police chaplains should go on ride-alongs to get to know the officers and to build an understanding of their jobs and the stresses and challenges they face.

Psychological services

- Use multiple forms of communication—including technologies like text messaging and email or online appointment request forms—for making appointments and engaging with department members. This has the potential to dramatically increase use of services.
- Many psychologists do not have an expertise in police psychology. Build psychologists' understanding by directing them to go on police ride-alongs, witness critical incident debriefings, attend lineups, etc. as part of their initial orientation to working with police employees.
- If resources permit, try to ensure that officers seeking psychological wellness services do not have to wait for a significant period of time to get an appointment.
- Be absolutely clear about confidentiality rules.
- Be flexible in where and when you will meet with officers.

Alcohol/Substance Abuse Program

- Designate a qualified department member to serve as the primary coordinator or liaison for substance abuse–related programming and outreach.
- Develop a network of local substance abuse treatment providers, looking specifically for providers who specialize in helping first responders.
- Develop a mechanism for members of the department to donate their leave time, if they would like, to other department members who need inpatient treatment. This system should maintain the anonymity of the person receiving treatment.

Training: Building a Culture of Wellness

One of the core duties of the Wellness Unit has been developing and implementing a training program that can embed wellness at all levels of the police department.

Reaching new officers

The heart of training for wellness is reaching new officers early and often to normalize wellness services. Normalizing means trying to ensure that SDPD officers and other employees see nothing unusual in asking for these services, just as they would apply for any other benefits of employment.

The SDPD Wellness Unit tries to achieve normalization by

- distributing the Wellness Unit Employee Resources Brochure to new officers the day before they start the academy;
- delivering training in the academy on Emotional Survival;
- facilitating a Wellness Day—officially titled Psychological Preparedness Training for New Officers—immediately after graduation from the academy, which includes programming for officers and their family members;
- delivering a two-day training on Effective Interactions immediately after field training.

Engaging with senior staff members

New members of the police department are not the sole focus of wellness-related training. To reach senior officials, SDPD has

- made a wellness module part of mandatory advanced officer training;
- made awareness of wellness issues a requirement for promotion (e.g., members of the department must read and be tested on Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement to be promoted to lieutenant, sergeant, detective, or senior officer);
- made a wellness module part of command training.

The Wellness Unit also provides specialized training and coaching to supervisors on wellness-related issues so that, as the primary caregivers for the employees who report to them, they are able to effectively address wellness concerns in their own commands. This includes leadership training for civilian supervisors, developed and delivered in mid-2017, said Assistant Chief Albrektsen.

Responding to emerging issues

One of the defining features of the SDPD's wellness training and educational program is its adaptability. Training is modified as needed—sometimes in the moment during a scenario-based exercise—in order to ensure that it is effective and provides employees with the greatest benefit. The Wellness Unit also offers free-standing educational programming, such as seminars on nutrition or financial planning, as needs are identified.

Emotional Survival Training: (four-hour training delivered in the academy)¹⁸⁹

The Wellness Unit created the SDPD's Emotional Survival training based on the work of Dr. Kevin Gilmartin.¹⁹⁰ The goal of Emotional Survival training is to equip new officers with tools to recognize and manage the unique stressors that are associated with a career in law enforcement. The Wellness Unit and the SDPD's help services providers deliver the training in the academy. It is offered near the end of officers' time in the academy so that they are more aware of law enforcement culture and can relate more directly to the training material.

Topics

In the two-hour block of Emotional Survival training that PERF observed, which was the second of the two blocks into which the training was split, the curriculum emphasized the need to manage stress, cynicism, anger, and burnout. The training began with a discussion of Dr. Gilmartin's book, *Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement* and a discussion among the new officers about how they have changed since entering the academy. Recruits were asked to identify different coping strategies such as engaging in physical activity, talking with friends and family, investing in hobbies, and using the resources of the Wellness Unit. The instructor also discussed how hypervigilance and repeated exposure to critical incidents can induce symptoms of PTSD. Warning signs of stress such as social isolation, infidelity, and procrastination in off-duty decision-making were also presented.

The training also addressed the leading causes of death among police officers, including heart disease and suicide. The importance of physical fitness and regular exercise to mitigate these risks is stressed. The training concluded with the recruits dividing into small groups to discuss the symptoms and long-term effects of stress and anger, followed by suggested coping strategies.

¹⁸⁹ During the period of PERF's observation of the SDPD's wellness program, the Emotional Survival training was four hours in total and recruits were not required to read Dr. Gilmartin's book. That has now changed: The training is six hours in total, and recruits are required to read the book and be tested on it.

¹⁹⁰ Dr. Gilmartin is the author of *Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement: A Guide for Law Enforcement Officers and Their Families*.

Format

This two-hour block of Emotional Survival training was interactive and centered on group discussions. The instructor used a conversational tone, shared her own “war stories” from patrol, and asked questions to elicit participation from the class.

Psychological Preparedness Training for New Officers: (one full day immediately after graduation from the academy)

Since we’ve had the Wellness Day, new recruits are much more likely to come in and use psychological services.

— *Dr. Jolee Brunton, Focus Psychological Services*

The Wellness Unit began offering its 10-hour Psychological Preparedness Training for New Officers, known informally as its Wellness Day, in 2014. The goal of the Wellness Day, which includes officers and their families,¹⁹¹ is to set realistic expectations about the emotional impact that police work may have on officers¹⁹² and to underscore the importance of wellness and utilizing wellness services to long-term career success. The Wellness Day gives help service providers an opportunity to reach officers’ family members, familiarize them with the wellness services the department offers, and establish direct lines of communication with officers’ loved ones.

Topics and format

The Wellness Day is divided into two parts.¹⁹³ During the first half of the day, officers and their families are separated. They are brought together in one large group for the second half of the day. As Sergeant Rivera explained, the day is split like this for a few reasons. “For officers it’s a 10-hour training day and a work day, but that’s too long for family members to commit to,” he said. “Also, there are certain things that we discuss with our officers and some language that our presenters use when talking about the trauma they’ve experienced and their utilization of services in a way that we might have to tone down if

¹⁹¹ Specifically, family members older than 15 years are encouraged to attend.

¹⁹² SDPD, *Wellness Unit Operations Manual*, 5.

¹⁹³ See appendix G for sample agenda.

family members were present. When we bring everyone together, we focus on that connection between officer and family, so we can accomplish everything we need to with the families in half a day.” Focus facilitates the training, which includes presentations from help services providers (such as the Wellness Unit and police chaplains), stories from members of the department who have experienced significant trauma or personal crises¹⁹⁴ and who used help resources, and stories from the families of current department members.

Effective Interactions training: (two full days after field training)

The longest single block of training that the Wellness Unit provides, lasting two days, is Effective Interactions training, which is mandatory for all new officers. The goal of the training is to help officers develop their emotional intelligence to make them more successful in their work and better able to manage the stressors associated with policing.

The Wellness Unit developed the initial iteration of its Effective Interactions training in partnership with Dr. Daniel Blumberg, a police psychologist who is developing strategies for agencies to prevent and respond to police misconduct. Training programs such as the SDPD’s are a critical part of prevention efforts and give officers tools to be successful.

The Wellness Unit offers Effective Interactions training immediately after officers complete their field training. This timing is intentional, explained Sergeant Rivera. “We wanted them to have some experience before doing this training,” he said, “so that they didn’t consider it an extension of the academy and so they can apply some of their experiences and stories to the training to make it more real for them.”

Facilitators

The Wellness Unit facilitates Effective Interactions training in partnership with Focus and senior members of the department who are involved in academy training.

Day one: Topics and format

During the Effective Interactions training that PERF observed, the first day of training was centered on a discussion of emotional intelligence and included presentations, videos, group discussions (large and small), and breakout exercises. Facilitators arranged the room in clusters rather than classroom style to encourage discussion and participation.

¹⁹⁴ SDPD, *Changing Organizational Culture*.

Anonymous polling: Emotional intelligence

The day began with anonymous, real-time polling of the new officers: Questions were posed on a screen at the front of the room using an online polling program, officers responded using their phones, and the results were captured and displayed. The facilitator put the following questions to the class, asking them to identify a percent range in which their skills fall:

- What is your proficiency with firearms today?
- What is your proficiency with the Emergency Vehicle Operator Course (EVOC)?
- What is your proficiency in defensive tactics?
- What is your proficiency in emotional intelligence?

While most officers rated their skill levels for the first three questions as high, they rated themselves lower in emotional intelligence. This was expected; the purpose of this exercise was to demonstrate to new officers that emotional intelligence is a skill that they need to develop in order to be successful police officers. As one facilitator said, “We don’t have a qualification phase to test your emotional intelligence. Your qualifications phase for this is when you’re on the street every day interacting with the community.”

Including a discussion of the science of emotional response, said retired Assistant Chief Sarah Creighton, helps officers to understand why it is important. It is not unusual for people to respond badly to stressful situations. “We need officers to understand that humans are wired in a certain way and how to work with it,” she explained. “The science gives us permission to not feel badly, but rather to understand the ‘why’ and how to work past it.”

The remainder of the morning on the first day of training was split among

- presentations on topics such as the core components of emotional intelligence; the science of emotional response to stressful situations; and the challenges that police face in engaging with the community;
- videos of officers engaging with community members (some positive, others negative), followed by facilitated small-group discussions of the videos and then a debriefing with the entire training class;
- group scenarios in which the class acted out positive and negative versions of the same community interactions (such as a traffic stop) and discussed the outcomes.

The latter half of the first day was dedicated to interactive breakout sessions that demonstrated the effects of stress, exhaustion, and hypervigilance on the mind and body. Then, students were presented with tools to mitigate these effects in the course of their duties. The class was divided into five groups, which rotated among stations at which facilitators discussed one of five topics:

1. Self-awareness
2. Self-management
3. Social awareness
4. Relationship management
5. Communication with peers

At the self-management station, for example, the facilitator asked the officers to do 20 burpees (a strenuous exercise routine) and then attempt to thread a needle. The purpose of this exercise was to demonstrate the effect that physical exertion and adrenaline have on fine motor skills, and how fitness and stress-management techniques like tactical breathing can improve officers' performance in the field.

Day two: Topics and format

The second day of Effective Interactions training was dedicated entirely to five interactive scenarios, performed by community volunteers and facilitated by sworn SDPD members. Some of these SDPD members volunteer; others were recruited by the Wellness Unit. "What we look for is someone who has a history of community engagement and outreach," said Sergeant Rivera. "We also want people who have teaching experience."

Community volunteers

The Wellness Unit recruited its community volunteers from a variety of sources, including the Civilian Complaint Review Board; clergy members; and CRISIS, a civilian crisis response team. This community involvement is critical because it gives community members an opportunity to contribute to and learn more about their police department while giving new officers a chance to engage with community members in an educational setting.

Scenarios

The class was divided into five groups, which rotated among the following five scenarios:¹⁹⁵

1. Responding to a large party
2. Parking in the red zone outside a 7-11 to take a break and being confronted by a community member
3. Responding to a disturbance call involving two community members
4. Stopping a jogger running late at night in an area where car break-ins have been reported
5. A traffic stop

Every officer (or pair of officers, depending on the scenario) went through each exercise, one by one. The group members who had not yet completed the scenario were kept out of sight and hearing so that they were not able to prepare for the scenario before going through it themselves. Officers were told not to talk about the scenarios with one another on their breaks.

After each officer completed the scenario, the community members shared their thoughts about the interaction, and the facilitators provided constructive feedback. Officers who had completed the scenario then remained nearby to observe the other members of their group and learn from the feedback that they received as well.

While the scenarios were in progress, the Wellness Unit sergeant rotated among them, observing and sometimes modifying the scenarios to provide the greatest learning opportunity for officers. (These modifications might include asking a community member to be more confrontational, for example, or changing the facts of a scenario to explore different responses.) Floating among scenarios also afforded the Wellness Unit sergeant the opportunity to observe the new officers and identify and address any problematic behaviors.

Advanced Officer Training (AOT)

In addition to its training for new officers, the Wellness Unit also delivers a half-day wellness module during the department's week-long Advanced Officer Training (AOT). The wellness module covers the following topics:

- Leadership
- Police suicide statistics
- The importance of maintaining a balanced life
- Coping skills and techniques

¹⁹⁵ See appendix H for the scenarios.

- Retirement planning
- Anger management
- Substance abuse awareness and prevention

It can be a tough group but humor is really helpful in getting through to people. You reach people you never thought you would. We're often approached afterwards by people who ask us to check in on their friends and colleagues.

— *Sergeant Ed Zwibel, San Diego Police Department*

Videos were integrated into the module that PERF observed, including a video about the dangers that alcohol can pose to an officer's career and how it is incumbent upon members of the department to ensure that colleagues do not put themselves and others in danger because of alcohol. The video was shot and edited by SDPD members with SDPD members acting roles in it.

Interactive exercises were also an important component of the training. For example, Dr. David Bond, a former police captain and current police psychologist with Focus, asked the class to write down what their ideal retirement looked like and who they would like to have with them in their retirement. Then he collected the responses and read them aloud, using them to launch a conversation about what the officers could do in the present to achieve their retirement goals and the role that wellness plays in securing their future.

Educational programming tailored to emerging issues

The Wellness Unit responds to emerging trends at the SDPD, creating programming as needed to fill gaps and address employees' concerns.

Series for Growth: Training for civilian supervisors

One such program, created in 2017, is the Series for Growth, which is intended for civilian supervisors. "I discovered that there was a lot of conflict in the ranks on our civilian side," Assistant Chief Albrektsen said. "When we examined it in detail, we believed supervisory mentorship and training could be beneficial."

To address this, Assistant Chief Albrektsen and the Wellness Unit developed a series of classes designed to improve civilian managers' communication and leadership skills. "We've put together a management academy for them, which covers everything from management theory to the practical conflicts that they're encountering," Albrektsen said. Attendance is voluntary, and the class is held in the middle of the day to make it as easy as possible for department members to attend.

According to Dotta, the benefits of the Series for Growth extend beyond skill building. “It shows civilians they’re a valued part of this organization,” she explained. “It shows that the SDPD cares about all of us.”

Stand-alone workshops

In addition to developing new, long-term training programs, the Wellness Unit also organizes stand-alone educational opportunities. The topics of these workshops are suggested by department members or are identified by the Wellness Unit in response to emerging trends. Past workshops have discussed financial planning, retirement, healthy eating, and sleep hygiene. The Wellness Unit identifies outside experts to make presentations and publicizes the workshops through the department listserv and the Wellness newsletter.

In identifying locations for these meetings, retired Assistant Chief Creighton said, the Wellness Unit often needs to think creatively. “We don’t have a budget for renting facilities,” she said, “so if it’s a big training, we ask our community partners if they have space we can use for free. Churches are great, for example.”

Promising practices: Training to build a culture of wellness

- Draw upon vetted external experts, such as academics and psychologists, to develop wellness-related training.
- Include an explanation of the science of emotional wellness and psychology in this training.
- Develop a plan for reaching new officers immediately with wellness-related training, which may include the following activities:
 - Providing them with information about wellness services before they begin the academy
 - Incorporating a wellness module into academy training
 - Delivering a wellness training class after the academy
- Involve officers’ loved ones in wellness training and awareness-building activities. For example, host a family wellness day after officers graduate from the academy to familiarize officers’ loved ones with available wellness services and to normalize the use of wellness services.
- Use scenarios, discussions, exercises, and other interactive techniques in delivering wellness training.
- Include a wellness module in advanced officer training.

- Tie wellness to career advancement by making awareness of wellness issues a requirement for promotion—e.g., members of the department must read and be tested on *Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement* to be promoted to any supervisory position.
- Create educational programming such as stand-alone workshops or ongoing brown-bag round tables that addresses emerging issues in the department. Examples of topics include sleep hygiene, leadership skills, or financial planning. Identify and involve outside experts to deliver presentations during these workshops as appropriate.
- Think creatively when looking for meeting spaces in which to hold training and educational programming at low or no cost. For instance, consider reaching out to partners such as faith-based and community organizations to see if they have available facilities.

Conclusion

Unaddressed physical and mental health issues can take a toll on officers both on and off duty. As a result, law enforcement agencies should proactively promote officers' wellness through innovative programming. Because personal wellness is multifaceted, promoting wellness requires an inclusive and holistic approach. Addressing wellness is not limited to simply improving physical fitness or offering psychological counseling services. Although these are crucial components of wellness, agency leaders should consider other important topics such as promoting financial health, improving nutrition, and extending support to family members.

Implementing a wellness unit or developing wellness services is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor. Agencies must tailor their wellness initiatives to meet their specific needs. Ask department members what their wellness-related concerns and issues are and build programming around those topics. Also, engage with external partners to expand expertise and consolidate resources. Developing partnerships with academics and other wellness experts ensures that wellness programming is informed by best practices. Collaborating with help service providers and representatives from other law enforcement agencies also allows for the sharing of resources and access to wellness services across agencies.

One of the most important lessons from the case study of the SDPD's wellness initiative is that wellness programs only work when the members of the department are invested in them. "The biggest single piece of advice that I have for other agencies is that people want to feel like they're co-creating the wellness program," said retired Assistant Chief Creighton. An SDPD officer expressed a similar sentiment, saying, "This is a program for officers, and it's officers who need to sell it. I don't need my captain to sell me on it, I need my partner to."

Achieving a high level of acceptance of wellness programs requires time, patience, and persistence. "It will take a long time, even if you have great ideas, because you have to break down the stigma that's associated with seeking help," said Sergeant Rivera. Normalizing wellness within the agency will reduce the stigma associated with seeking help. Wellness providers and programs should be visible in the agency to encourage officer engagement and increase the use of wellness services. Build awareness through active internal outreach. Promote wellness initiatives by presenting at roll call, offering training and education sessions, and producing written materials (e.g., newsletters, brochures, and written announcements) to publicize services and events.

When conducting outreach to encourage use of the wellness resources, agencies must remember that confidentiality is paramount in establishing trust and legitimacy. Building a reputation of trust takes time and is done by respecting confidentiality. A clear confidentiality policy should be publicized and adhered to absolutely. In addition, internal and external wellness providers should explain confidentiality guidelines to department employees prior to offering services.

The results of an internal SDPD survey issued to department members two years after the Wellness Unit's inception demonstrate that these strategies work. Not only did a majority of respondents say they had heard about the services offered but 70 percent also felt that the stigma associated with asking for help was decreasing, and 79 percent said that they would feel comfortable walking into the Wellness Center regardless of the reason for their visit. Focus psychological services also reported a significant increase in the use of counseling services since the creation of the unit. These outcomes reflect a broader culture change facilitated by the Wellness Unit's devotion to normalizing wellness and destigmatizing seeking help.

Another important takeaway for agencies just getting started is that to effectively promote the health of department members, wellness must be embedded within the culture of an agency. An agency-wide commitment to wellness relies on the support of every employee. As such, wellness services and resources should be extended to all department personnel. Exposure to trauma is not limited to sworn employees—civilian employees, such as dispatchers and crime scene technicians, encounter unique stressors and should have access to wellness resources and support systems.

Finally, according to the Reverend Lowrimore, agencies simply need to get started. "People procrastinate, but agencies should start moving on wellness, because officers need someone to talk to and to offer them help," he said. "And there are people like us in every jurisdiction who will help. You just need to ask."

Summary of Promising Practices

Building and sustaining a wellness program

First steps

- Conduct a department-wide survey to ask employees what they need and what their primary wellness concerns are. Use that information to guide the development of wellness programming and services.
- Have a clear, written confidentiality policy, communicate it to department members, and adhere to it. Ensure that reporting requirements and exceptions are understood, such as information indicating that an employee may be a danger to himself or herself or to others or that domestic violence or child abuse may be occurring. Some providers, such as clinicians, may be bound by more stringent confidentiality rules than police department employees. Ensure that employees understand these differences and understand the confidentiality rules that bind each category of help services providers.
- Locate your wellness office or center in headquarters or another high-visibility location to reduce any stigma that employees may feel about seeking help.
- Your department's help resources providers should be in close communication with one another and should work together to deliver wellness services. This includes
 - having a common mission and messaging so that they are working together toward a shared wellness goal for the overall good of the department;
 - communicating with each other to coordinate responses to critical incidents.

Outreach and engagement

- Make wellness services visible on your organizational chart to demonstrate their importance.
- Go to officer roll calls to explain wellness services.
- Develop materials to publicize the services and how to access them, including
 - brochures;
 - newsletters;
 - posters.

Recruiting

- When recruiting people for wellness related programs, look for interpersonal skills, not necessarily rank. Wellness unit staff members should be
 - compassionate;
 - nonjudgmental;
 - experienced in the organization;
 - trustworthy;
 - respected by colleagues.

Training

- Mandate that help services providers receive formal training—for example, POST-certified peer support training—to ensure that they have the right tools to be successful in supporting their colleagues.
- Provide opportunities for help services components to train together. This improves team building and ensures that all providers share common messaging and goals.

Operations

- Do not neglect civilian employees. Include them in wellness services as providers and as recipients.
- Wellness providers need to be available 24/7. Crises are not confined to business hours.
- In addition to serving as a resource during regular business hours, wellness services providers should be able to meet with employees seeking help at the times and locations that work best for them.
- To accommodate off-hour requests for assistance, develop an on-call protocol for the wellness services providers and advertise to department employees.
- Assignments for wellness providers should be made based on relationships and trust. Often, whether at the scene of a critical incident or when someone walks into the Wellness Center, an employee wishes to talk to a specific help services provider.
- Establish a policy that allows wellness services providers to deploy help services during or immediately after a crisis without needing to wait for a request from command staff.
- Wellness services providers should check in regularly with those who use their services and follow up on anniversary dates as well.

Maintaining the wellness of help services providers

- It is important to ensure that employees who provide wellness services are themselves in good physical and emotional health. Be aware that assignment to a wellness unit can be stressful, and be mindful of the wellness of help service providers. Adopt policies and protocols to promote their physical and emotional health. Examples include
 - having mandatory psychological service check-ins;
 - allowing wellness workers to exercise while on duty.
- Have a protocol for rotating wellness service providers out of help services roles to prevent burnout. This might include one (or both) of the following:
 - A policy limiting the amount of time that someone can spend in a wellness-related role
 - A form that wellness service providers can fill out and submit without penalty asking to be relieved of wellness-related duties

Metrics for success

- Develop a mechanism for tracking the use of help services, such as the monthly recap report that the SDPD's Wellness Unit compiles every month based on recap sheets (see appendix E) completed by each help services provider.
- Survey the department after wellness services have been in place for a year or more to determine their levels of visibility, employee trust, and use. Modify your approach as needed based on results.

Sustainability planning

- Make it clear that a successful wellness program is good for the financial health of your law enforcement agency—i.e., keeping officers physically and emotionally healthy is a cost-saving measure in the long term—to secure support for wellness programming from city government.

External partnerships

- Draw upon the expertise of people outside of your organization. This might include
 - a nearby law enforcement agency that already has wellness services;
 - academics with experience in wellness-related topics;
 - police psychologists.
- Partner with mental health providers, academics, and other outside experts to refine wellness program methods and initiatives and provide needed services to department members.

Help services and programs

Peer support

- When creating a peer support program, start small if resource constraints are an issue—the important thing is to start providing the service. Having a formal system for providing peer support and ensuring that helpful services are delivered are critical for department members' wellness.
- Designate someone to be in charge of overseeing peer support activities to ensure that peer support is helpful and is offered according to protocols.
- Wellness services supervisor(s) should interview all applicants to ensure they are suitable for the role.
- Peer supporters should be required to complete formal peer support training. This standardizes the delivery of peer support services and ensures that the services are helpful to officers.
- Have a mechanism in place that allows peer supporters to leave the program at any time (for example, if they can no longer dedicate time to participating).
- Establish protocols for removing peer supporters if there are performance issues.
- Provide peer support services for civilian staff in addition to sworn staff. This includes inviting dispatchers to critical incident debriefings.
- Create a database that includes information about peer supporters, including the topics (such as divorce or death in the family) with which they have experience, so that department members can seek out a peer supporter with a first-hand understanding of their particular needs.

Peer support specific to an OIS or in-custody death

- When recruiting for OIS peer support, look for maturity, credibility, and active listening skills.
- Require a qualifying incident for OIS peer support officers.
- If possible, have a combination of uniformed officers and investigators as peer supporters to provide a wide range of relatable experience.
- Have a mentoring system in place for OIS peer supporters. This includes mentoring in the field: Senior, experienced peer supporters should show up on scene to help new OIS peer support officers fulfill their duties.
- OIS peer supporters should be attentive to officers' basic needs—getting them water and food if appropriate, for example.

- Communicate to the officer involved what the investigation and debrief process will look like in practice (i.e., what their days will be like immediately following and potentially for months) so that they are prepared.
- Follow up with officers after they have slept and have had an opportunity to decompress.
- If the officer involved has an existing relationship of trust with a particular OIS peer supporter who is not the first OIS peer supporter to arrive on a scene, call that peer supporter so that he or she can take over.
- OIS peer supporters should follow up with the officers involved in an incident on a regular schedule and use multiple methods (such as phone calls, text messages, and in-person meetings) to ensure adequate outreach and support is conveyed to the officer.

Chaplains

- When recruiting for a police chaplain program, look for humility, credibility, and experience.
- Police chaplains should not proselytize.
- Police chaplains should go on ride-alongs to get to know the officers and to build an understanding of their jobs and the stresses and challenges they face.

Psychological services

- Use multiple forms of communication—including technologies like text messaging and email or online appointment request forms—for making appointments and engaging with department members. This has the potential to dramatically increase use of services.
- Many psychologists do not have an expertise in police psychology. Build psychologists' understanding by directing them to go on police ride-alongs, witness critical incident debriefings, attend lineups, etc. as part of their initial orientation to working with police employees.
- If resources permit, try to ensure that officers seeking psychological wellness services do not have to wait for a significant period of time to get an appointment.
- Be absolutely clear about confidentiality rules.
- Be flexible in where and when you will meet with officers.

Alcohol/Substance Abuse Program

- Designate a qualified department member to serve as the primary coordinator or liaison for substance abuse–related programming and outreach.
- Develop a network of local substance abuse treatment providers, looking specifically for providers who specialize in helping first responders.
- Develop a mechanism for members of the department to donate their leave time, if they would like, to other department members who need inpatient treatment. This system should maintain the anonymity of the person receiving treatment.

Training to build a culture of wellness

- Draw upon vetted external experts, such as academics and psychologists, to develop wellness-related training.
- Include an explanation of the science of emotional wellness and psychology in this training.
- Develop a plan for reaching new officers immediately with wellness-related training, which may include the following activities:
 - Providing them with information about wellness services before they begin the academy
 - Incorporating a wellness module into academy training
 - Delivering a wellness training class after the academy
- Involve officers' loved ones in wellness training and awareness-building activities. For example, host a family wellness day after officers graduate from the academy to familiarize officers' loved ones with available wellness services and to normalize the use of wellness services.
- Use scenarios, discussions, exercises, and other interactive techniques in delivering wellness training.
- Include a wellness module in advanced officer training.
- Tie wellness to career advancement by making awareness of wellness issues a requirement for promotion—e.g., members of the department must read and be tested on *Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement* to be promoted to any supervisory position.
- Create educational programming such as stand-alone workshops or ongoing brown-bag round tables that addresses emerging issues in the department. Examples of topics include sleep hygiene, leadership skills, or financial planning. Identify and involve outside experts to deliver presentations during these workshops as appropriate.
- Think creatively when looking for meeting spaces in which to hold training and educational programming at low or no cost. For instance, consider reaching out to partners such as faith-based and community organizations to see if they have available facilities.

Appendix A. 2011 Needs Assessment Survey

NOTE: This appendix has been slightly modified to conform to COPS Office publishing standards.

This is the survey that the SDPD's Wellness Unit sent to the entire department in 2011 to determine department members' needs and concerns. The Wellness Unit used this information to craft its mission and goals.

Survey letter

Dear SDPD member:

As you are probably aware, the department recently formed a Wellness Unit. The unit's primary mission is to assist you, the employee. It is our belief that by removing obstacles from your work environment and providing resources to help with preoccupying personal issues, you will better serve yourself, your coworkers, and your family. We recognize that we cannot fix everything, but we are committed to providing feedback to management (City and internal) in the interest of making any changes we can and to provide resources for you for any personal issues that you may want to address. As you are aware, several effective resources have been in place for a long time. In the survey we ask that you rate any services you have used and that you answer questions about your experiences at work and at home that will help us identify services that should be made available. It is our hope to add services as indicated by your responses. We recognize that anything we build should be based on the needs and desires of our employees and volunteers for maximum effectiveness and utilization.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and your individual responses will be held strictly confidential. Your responses will not be traced to you. For those of you completing the survey online, simply submit your completed survey as instructed. To ensure confidentiality for those submitting a hard copy, the Police Officers Association (POA) has provided their ballot bags and will have a volunteer pick them up and deliver the contents to us in mass so that no division or unit will be specifically identified. Demographic information captured on the survey is only intended to assist us in tailoring services to a particular population (i.e., sworn vs. civilian) and may be used to assist University of California San Diego (UCSD) Medical School as pilot data for a future study on law enforcement wellness.

The POA, Local 127, and Municipal Employees Association (MEA) fully support the wellness effort in the police department and have been consulted on the survey and other aspects of the program. A member of each organization will be represented on our advisory board.

If you have any questions about the survey, please feel free to call the Wellness Unit.

Survey questions

- What personal issues, if any, present a challenge to your general wellness?
 - Finances
 - Controllable health
 - Marital/relationship
 - Time management
 - Care of family/parents
 - Chronic health issues
 - Children
 - Other
- Rate the level of challenge the following job related issues have on your general wellness (1=Not a challenge; 2=Rarely; 3=Occasionally; 4=Significant; 5=Overwhelming):
 - Benefit changes
 - Underappreciated
 - Stress
 - Ignored
 - Layoffs
 - Exposure
 - Wasteful practice
 - Supervisor pressure
 - Turn off work
 - Physical dangers
 - Timelines
 - Other
- Rate the level of interference the following personal issues have had on your ability to focus on your job (1=Not an interference; 2=Rarely; 3=Occasionally; 4=Significant; 5=Overwhelming):
 - Financial
 - Divorce
 - Anger
 - Depression

- Alcohol
- Domestic violence
- Drug use
- Suicide
- Other
- Rate the following personal issues that interfere/or have interfered with your immediate coworkers' ability to focus on their job (1=Not an interference; 2=Rarely; 3=Occasionally; 4=Significant; 5=Overwhelming):
 - Financial
 - Divorce
 - Anger
 - Depression
 - Alcohol
 - Domestic violence
 - Drug use
 - Suicide
 - Other
- What coping mechanisms do you regularly rely on when dealing with stress (circle all that apply)?
 - Exercise/sports
 - Family
 - Vacations
 - Hobbies
 - Friends
 - Faith
 - Shopping
 - Self-medication
 - Meditation
 - Counseling
 - Extreme sports

- Gambling
- Group programs
- Other
- Do you have any of the following?
 - Chronic back pain
 - Sleep disorder
 - High blood pressure
 - Digestive problems
 - Chronic headaches
 - Obesity
 - Frequent colds/flu
 - Diabetes
 - Ulcers
 - Heart disease
- Would you participate in any of the following programs or support groups if they were offered?
 - Incentive fitness
 - Incentive wellness
 - Retirement planning
 - Rec sports league
 - Health fairs
 - Faith-based programs
 - Spousal support
 - Support groups
 - Smoking [cessation]
 - Other

Appendix B. Wellness Unit Confidentiality Policy

NOTE: This appendix has been slightly modified to conform to COPS Office publishing standards.

The acceptance and success of the San Diego Police Department's Wellness Unit will be determined, in part, by observance of confidentiality. It is imperative that the strictest confidentiality of all information learned about an individual be maintained, within the guidelines of the program.

The policy of the San Diego Police Department Wellness Unit is to maintain confidentiality. Communication between Wellness Unit personnel and a peer is considered confidential except for matters that involve the following:

The employee is a

- danger to oneself;
- danger to others;
- suspected child abuse;
- domestic violence;
- factual elder abuse.

The following issues should be reported to the Wellness Unit commanding officer:

- Narcotics offenses (e.g., sales, transportation, cultivation, or manufacturing)
- Felonies (crimes against persons)
- Felonies committed on duty
- When a peer requests, in writing, the information be divulged
- Matters that would jeopardize the safety of the public or other officers

Personnel should keep in mind that communication between Wellness Unit personnel and employees is not privileged conversation under the law, regardless of departmental policy, because peers are not licensed mental health professionals. As a result, courts may require disclosure of this information.

Appendix C. Wellness Unit Employee Resources Brochure

The following pages contain the Wellness Unit Employee Resources brochure.

OIS PEER SUPPORT

Phil Bozarth
 Mark Brenner
 Michael Chinn
 Anthony Creazzo
 Blaine Ferguson
 Linda Griffin
 Chappie Hunter
 Quinton Kawahara
 Chris Leahy
 Brian Lenahan
 Nicholas Nguyen
 Franklin White

Andres Ruiz
 Tristan Schmotlach
 Steve Schnick
 Michael Shiraishi
 Jeff Sterling
 Mark Zdumich
 Patrick Hall
 Nestor Hernandez
 Chuck Marciniak
 Kerry Mensior
 Kelly Stewart
 John Thompson

Todd Turner
 Chris Velovich
 Terrance Bryan
 Jeff Gross
 Robert Heims
 Kellen Jackson
 J.R. Pearson
 Arthur Scott
 John Sullivan
 Nathan Whann
 Travis Whipple
 Jared Wilson

PEER SUPPORT

SWORN

Bernie Colon
 Geoffrey Burr
 Desiree Spurlock
 Kelly Stinnette
 Anthony Dupree
 Richard Hinz
 Mike Miranda
 Maria Humes
 Kenneth Impellizzeri
 Edward Kaszucki
 Robert Korbecki
 Andrew Korenkov
 Lawrence Cahill
 Jonathan Lowe
 Michael Brown
 Chris Luth
 Corissa Pich
 Cory Gilmore

Andrea Myers
 Kimberly Norcia
 Patrick Murphy
 Ricky Castro
 Robert McDonald
 Victor Rodriguez
 Paul Salas
 Pepper Kelly
 Robert Stinson
 Jared Thompson
 Tod Bassett
 Mariam Sadri
 Scott Barnes
 Steve Schnick
 Al Ambito
 Charles De La Cruz
 Lisa McKean
 Bryan Castillo
 Nate Parga
 Meghan Bisesto
 Eric Portnoy
 Mario Larrea
 Nina Medina

SPOUSES

Patsy Bell
 Dena Brown

CIVILIAN

Betty Alvarez
 Carl Rader
 Marie Cuvadar
 Deanna Dotta
 Jennifer Duffy
 Laura Manasan
 Mellissa Santagata
 Rebecca Spradley
 Roxanne Cahill
 Dantelle Schule
 Nancy Brown
 Liz Cavanaugh
 Phet Guiney

San Diego Police Chaplains

Rev. Christopher Chadwick—Comm
chris.chadwick@sanjosecatholicdiocese.org
 858-204-1565

Rev. Robert Cobb—Central
robcc@mvcf.com
 619-300-5020

Deacon Guillermo Valdivia—Southern
Guillemovaldivia75@gmail.com
 619-289-1796

Rabbi Barney Kasdan—Northern
bkasdan@kehilatariel.org
 858-204-2174

Rabbi David Kornberg—Northwestern
rabbik@betham.com
 858-354-2533

Rev. Dale Lowmore—Western
dlowmore@cox.net
 619-916-9632

Rev. Mike Macintosh—Northwestern
mike@horizonsd.org
 858-518-5155

Rev. Chuck Price—Eastern/Traffic/GST
wixim@cox.net
 619-249-2229

Rev. Herb Smith—Northeastern
hsmithc1e@aol.com
 858-442-6417

Rev. Erin Hubbard—MidCity
erinhubbard@cox.net
 619-933-7889

Past. Kendrick Neal—Northeastern
kneal@fbcmm.org
 703-508-7017

San Diego Police Department Chaplain Program

Mission of Chaplains: To provide a presence of spiritual and emotional care and counseling for all SDPD personnel.

SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

WELLNESS UNIT



EMPLOYEE RESOURCES

(See "Wellness Unit," SDPD Intranet, for more info)

SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT WELLNESS UNIT

Sgt. Ed Zwibel
Office (619)531-2243
Cell (619)569-6189
email: zwibele@pd.sandiego.gov

Sgt. Carmelin Rivera
Office (619)531-2740
Cell (619)743-1151
email: crivera@pd.sandiego.gov

Off. Marnie Minton
Office (619)531-2246
Cell (619)218-2062
email: fminton@pd.sandiego.gov

Deanna Dotta
Office (619)531-2244
Cell (619)857-5005
email: ddotta@pd.sandiego.gov

Wellness Unit Mission

“The Wellness Unit is committed to removing and reducing interferences to employee wellness.”

Wellness Unit Services

- **Resource Identification**-we will help link you to a resource that best fits your needs whether in answer to a personal or professional issue.
- **Check on employees**-we will call anyone you are concerned about but may not feel comfortable calling and let them know the services we have available. Your request will be kept completely confidential at your request.
- **Provide answers when we can.** We will check on the status of any personnel investigation you may be under and provide you with a status update or rough timeline of when you can expect to hear from the investigator. We will not, however, insert ourselves into the details of the investigation or make recommendations to the investigator about how to handle the investigation.
- **Provide educational seminars and workshops.** We will facilitate workshops around the issues that are important to your well-being and health.
- **Share important Law Enforcement studies and collaborate with academic institutions** willing to partner on studies important to our department.
- **Rally immediate debriefing and intervention resources** for all employees impacted by significant critical incidents, officer deaths, or other spontaneous events where employees would benefit from a variety of help resources being immediately available.
- **We will continually recruit and train prospective peer support personnel,** and provide coordination for the department's chaplain services.
- **Identifying and enhancing existing resources**
- **Developing and providing wellness education**
- **Collaborating with academic institutions on innovative LE studies**
- **Developing partnerships with health and wellness providers**
- **Staying abreast of wellness program best-practices through research**
- **Developing and administering a fitness and preventive health incentive program**
- **Serving as an advocate for employees enduring personal or professional difficulties**

FOCUS Psychological Services

FOCUS offers confidential counseling services to all San Diego Police Department employees-sworn, civilian, retired, and their dependents are eligible. The following is a list of available counseling: Individual Counseling, Marriage/Relationship Counseling, Child/Adolescent Counseling, Family/Step Family Counseling, Post Traumatic Incident Counseling, Habit Control (Weight/smoking), Alcohol/Substance Abuse Counseling, Stress Management, Anger Management, Treatment of depression/anxiety, Grief resolution, Divorce Counseling.

(858)565-0066 www.focuspsychservices.com

A.S.A.P. (Alcohol Substance Abuse Program)

Trained counselors with experience in 12-step recovery programs. Available to provide alcohol/substance abuse information, counseling, training and direct assistance to all department employees and their families. Access to closed AA meetings for first responders.

Deanna Dotta (Communications)
619-857-5005 ddotta@pd.sandiego.gov

Mark Zdunich (SWAT Armory)
619-972-4589 mzdunich@pd.sandiego.gov

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Medical Assistance
(619) 531-2124

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
(619) 236-6373

SDPOA
(858) 573-1199

SDMEA
(858) 300-3888

AFSCME17
(619) 640-4939

Appendix D. *Wellness News* Newsletter

This is the August 2017 edition of the *Wellness News* newsletter, which the Wellness Unit creates and distributes to SDPD on a monthly basis.



A Message from Assistant Chief Sandra Albrektsen

The Benefits of Donating Blood



Everyone has their own formula for what works best for them when it comes to health and wellness. One way is donating blood which can benefit you and someone else. Like any other health or wellness program always check with your primary physician to ensure you are a candidate.

For those who can donate blood (studies show fewer than 10% donate) there are huge benefits. According to an article in The Good Life, April 2017, there are some big positive outcomes:

Strengthening your Heart-Too much iron can stack up in your body causing people to have an elevated risk of cardiovascular disease and heart attacks.

Free Check Up-Before any blood is drawn your vitals are checked. After you give blood, your sample will be tested for West Nile, Hepatitis, and Zika. You will be notified if anything were to come back positive.

Smile-Your donation could save as many as three people's lives; everything from premature babies in need of a transfusions, cancer patients mid-treatment or car accidents.

How It Works:

As soon as you donate your red & white blood cell counts start to drop, this sends a signal to special cells in the kidneys to secrete a hormone (erythropoietin) into the bloodstream.

This hormone travels to your bone marrow where it kick-starts the production of new cells.

Your bone marrow churns out about 2 million red & 115,000 white blood cells every second (pew!), so within a few days or weeks your levels will be back to normal. Most people who are properly hydrated are back to normal within a few hours.

The Red Cross makes donating easy by having centers all over the county with weekend and night hours. Where I donate, in El Cajon, I pick my time online, check in, and I'm out within one hour. **Please consider giving on September 19 in Room 213, HQ.**



American Red Cross Blood Drive



**San Diego Police Department & The American Red Cross
Invite You to Join Forces
To Deliver The
Most Successful Blood Drive to Date!**

WHEN:

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19TH
10:00-4:00PM**

WHERE:

**SAN DIEGO POLICE HEADQUARTERS
1401 BROADWAY, RM 213.**

**Register Online Now With the Red Cross to
Reserve Your Preferred
Appointment.**

Just copy & paste the link below:

**[https://esibelarecprod.redcrossblood.com/eevents_enu/start.swe?
SWECmd=Start&SWEHo=esibelarecprod.redcrossblood.com](https://esibelarecprod.redcrossblood.com/eevents_enu/start.swe?SWECmd=Start&SWEHo=esibelarecprod.redcrossblood.com)**

WARNING

THE
EFFECTS OF NEGLECTING YOUR
OWN SELF-CARE.



**HYPERVIGILANCE. UNWILLINGNESS.
BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS.
DENIAL. ANGER. CANCER. HEART ATTACK.
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE.
PTSD. FEAR. DEPRESSION. SUICIDE.
POLICING IS NO JOKE. THIS JOB AFFECTS NOT ONLY
THE OFFICER, BUT THE OFFICER'S ENTIRE FAMILY
AS WELL.**



SELF-CARE SHOULD BE YOUR #1 PRIORITY

Success Stories ...

My Story, My Secret

By Steve Willard

Two years ago I weighed 301 pounds. Now I'm 181. As one might guess one of the most asked questions I get is, "how'd you do it?" Stay tuned, you may not like the answer.

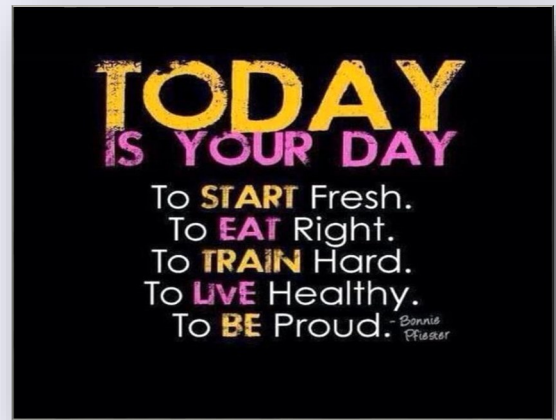
According to the National Institute of Health, more than 2-3 adults are overweight or obese. More than 1-20 adults have extreme obesity. Now for something really scary. There aren't a lot of obese senior citizens because the associated illnesses have killed them. Those who are alive are often on a slew of medicines.

Are you overweight? Men, if your waist size doubles to less than your height then you're fine. At 6 feet tall I'm healthy. Two years ago I needed to be 7 foot 3.

Now for my secret:

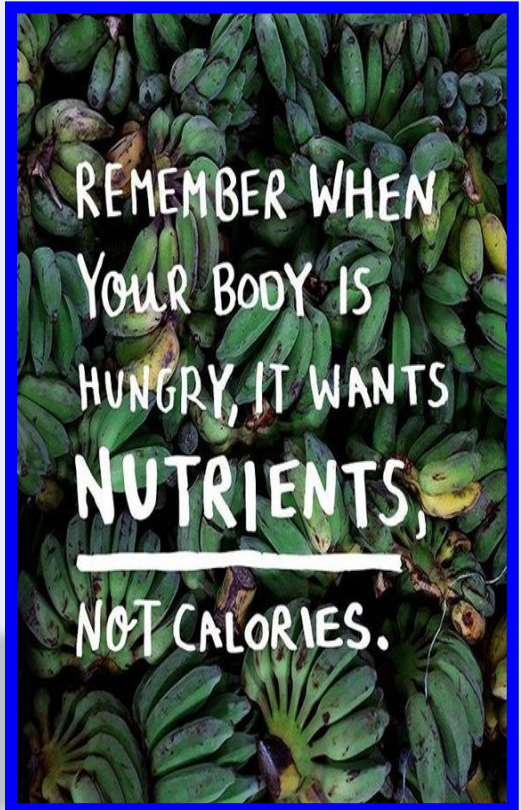
1. You're in for a long journey of hard work. Weight loss isn't easy.
2. Come to terms with why you're fat. For me that meant some counseling.
3. No more lies. Once, when I had to physically compete with some coworkers, I feigned injury so they wouldn't see I couldn't keep up. In the end I was only making an idiot out of myself.
4. No more diets. Diets are temporary plans to deliver temporary results. You need a new way of life. For me I eliminated sugar and meals after 6 pm. My portions were cut in half. When I deviate I add a half an hour to my next workout.
5. Exercise. Then, as you lose weight, dump your bigger clothes. This eliminates the scenario when you discover you pants are too snug so you grab the bigger pair.

The five rules caused my weight to drop. When my pants became too big they went to the Goodwill. I was there so often they started greeting me by name. The same at Nordstrom. I spent a fortune on clothing but the compliments came rolling in. That helped with motivation.



CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Today, I'm completely different physically, mentally and emotionally. I feel great! I can run the P.A.T. in under 3 minutes and I can run several miles without being winded. When I first began my journey I couldn't do 3 pushups. I can now easily do 40. Sit ups are almost double my pushup count. Please don't take this as bragging. It's not. It's simply my story of sacrifice and it's what's kept me from allowing the weight to return – something that happens 85% of the time with diets. If you need to lose weight please look at my journey like this: If an average guy like me can do it, so can you. Good luck. I hope this helps. Feel free to contact me if you need more specific advice. We're all in this together.





The term **“Wellness”** is used frequently within different forms of media. There are books, seminars, conferences, DVD’s and more selling the idea of Wellness. Health Insurance companies use it, doctors use it, QVC uses it, pharmaceutical companies holler wellness through medicine. Pursuing Wellness is a choice, and it’s one that *will* impact our lives in a vital way should we choose to embrace, and pursue it’s fundamentals. Wellness requires action in order to achieve it. Action starts with **“Mindfulness.”** Mindfulness is a way to periodically “reset” yourself so that you can focus on one thing (the thing you are currently doing) instead of five things simultaneously. It can be done in minutes. Since the majority of us are rarely without our electronic devices, it’s safe to say that “hyper connectivity” is alive and well. For first responder’s, its one more feather in your hat of hypervigilance. How many times do you check your phone? Worried that you may miss a call or a text while you were busy doing your job? The more we strive for connectivity, the more we pile on opportunities for stress to increase.

Wellness, Mindfulness & You:

No one among you is exempt from the health affects of your job. There is **no good** that comes out of unmanaged stress, unresolved conflict, sleep depravation, poor eating habits, repeated exposure to traumatic incidents, and constant hyper vigilance. No one questions the cost emotional trauma can take on the mental and physical health of law enforcement officers. It’s already proven. Left untreated, these lead to obesity, alcoholism, heart attacks, cancer, strokes and more. As a result, health professionals agree that standard stress management techniques do not work for police. What is needed, is a new cognitive response to managing stress in law enforcement. Tools to be accessed at any time or place. Tools that are found in the practice of Mindfulness. Mindfulness will lead to Wellness which means improved health all the way around.

Moving Ahead

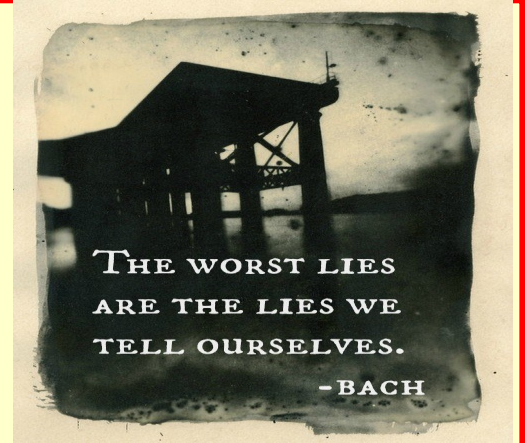
The Wellness Unit is committed to continually searching out Best Practices in Wellness and Mindfulness as it pertains to Law Enforcement. We have already seen Sergeants and other first-line supervisors become more proactive with their employees. The effective supervisors both sworn and civilian, are the ones who take the time to know their employees, to understand who they are individually. In short, supervisors develop a knowledge of those who they are tasked to lead and develop. They are the supervisors who notice when something is off. Secondly, these supervisors are reaching out to their employees and having crucial, candid conversations with them. No longer is it, (or should it be) okay to ask officers, detectives etc., to “suck it up” and move on. Law Enforcement Agencies understands the need to take better care of it’s members. Supervisors who are mindful and effective communicators, will be instrumental in bringing SDPD back to center, and back to being America’s finest. It’s one component of many to be implemented as we move north in change and progress.

-Deanna Dotta

The Lies We Tell Ourselves – Barriers to Wellness

Sgt. Carmelin Rivera, Wellness Unit

Part one of a two-part series



One of the most powerful things we can do is teach people that it's okay to be human. The trauma, both physical and emotional, that police officers and civilian/professional staff encounter in this profession tends to be much greater than that of the average citizen. We have made great strides as a profession to diminish the impact of all the junk and messiness that we see, feel, and encounter daily at work, compounded by what we experience in our personal lives. We are still slowly unmasking many of the underlying causes of trauma that we experience in this profession. While we are no different than any other people outside our profession, those that experience life without ever walking in our shoes only see the things that we see in their nightmares, where they have the option to wake up and horror immediately vanishes. We have tendencies to cope in negative ways at alarming rates. It is impossible to walk through years of this profession and come out unscathed. It's difficult to walk in the shoes of police officer or civilian employee from our profession.

We also need to recognize what our civilian employees encounter. Consider who are the individuals in our department who receive the emergency calls and dispatch police officers to critical incidents? Who are the employees who are dealing with angry citizens who want their impounded property back? Who are the members in this department who are racing against time to identify a DNA profile to help investigators identify a serial rapist? Who is photographing and collecting the evidence from horrific crime scenes? Who is dealing with difficult customers wanting access to their police arrest records? These questions are just a sampling of the types of questions we need to ask ourselves to help us recognize the staff that supports much of our daily activities as police officers and help serve our communities.

Now let us recognize the lies we tell ourselves that are barriers to the wellness of all employees. In this newsletter, we identify the first five lies that end up insulating us from the truths we need to achieve wellbeing in this chaotic career.

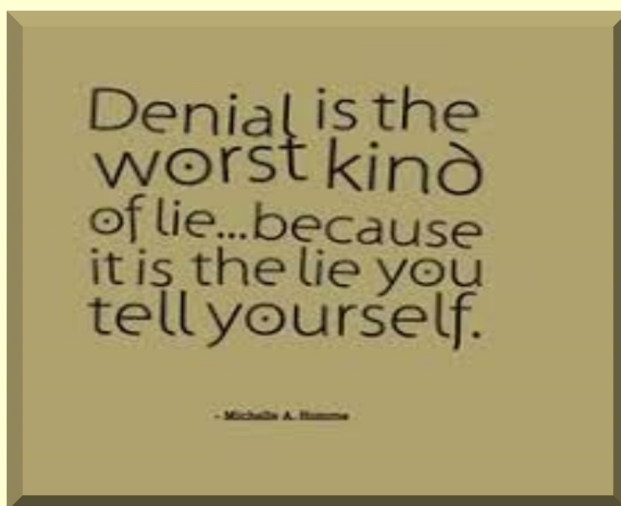
1. I am in control. In this profession we are trained to always be in control...of everything. When we lose control that is sign of weakness, so we tell ourselves that we can master everything. Instead, we should recognize that there are many things out of our control, and we spend too much time trying to gain control over them that we often fail at the most basic things. Focus on the things you can control and let the rest go.

2. I can do this on my own. We train to handle incidents as a team in the field, but often fail miserably when we try to tackle emotional survival by ourselves. No one does anything alone. No matter what accomplishments you have achieved, you didn't do it completely on your own. It takes a great team, a wonderful group of talented people to make an impact. Ask yourself who has contributed to your success? Emotional wellness is a team activity and this department has a Wellness Unit, FOCUS psychologists, chaplains, and peer supporters to help you navigate through whatever you are going through. *(continued on next page)*

3. If I ignore it, it will go away. Many employees ignore the root causes of many of their challenges. Some individuals ignore their injuries and force themselves to work when they should be on light duty. They excessively drink alcohol because it helps them deal with their pain or emotional trauma, ignoring the cause of the trauma to begin with. Most of the time what we ignore grows bigger and becomes even more cumbersome. Whatever is happening, seek resources to help you deal with it. You can't change what you refuse to confront.

4. Everybody does it. We are influential people and we often model the way for others. We know the difference between right and wrong, no matter what anybody else says or does, yet we justify our actions based on others' behaviors. If we are at a bar or someone's home with other employees and recognize that someone might have had too much to drink, the appropriate action to take is to not let that employee drive away drunk. Yet, we reflect on what we believe everyone else does in these situations (in the past it has been to not be confrontational and let the person drive away) – so we allow the person to drive away. We need to model the correct way for each other and do what we know is right.

5. Emotion is weakness. This is where we have made some breakthrough as a profession – identifying that being emotional is being human. Yet many of us remain in the Dark Ages of policing and we continue to lie to ourselves, proclaiming – at least publicly – that showing emotion should be banned from this profession. We lie to ourselves that emotion gets in the way of safety. Nobody in our profession will argue that when we are dealing with the public and handling critical incidents, our professional face should be on display and we should not allow our emotions to take over. However, how do we cope afterwards when those emotions creep up – while we are in bed trying to sleep; when we are asleep; in our relationships; with other co-workers? Sharing our pain, fears, and emotional discomfort and making ourselves vulnerable is not comfortable – and not safe for many of us – so we hold ourselves beyond emotion to appear strong. Getting past this lie that we tell ourselves is difficult for many. Accepting that being emotional is human is a critical step to acknowledging that we may not be in control as we think we are, we may need others to help us deal with the anguish, we have been ignoring the best practices that will actually make us address the real issues that we are dealing with, and we can now stop rationalizing our poor coping mechanisms.





ALL AREA STATIONS AND HEADQUARTERS HAVE FITNESS ROOMS.

HQ HAS **A LOT OF STAIRS TO WALK UP AND DOWN**, (THEY DON'T GET STUCK UNLESS YOU STOP).



A CLASS AT HQ IN ROOM 213 ON TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY FROM 1630-1730. THIS A IS CONDITIONING CLASS USING CALISTENICS & CARDIO.

CONTACT BERNIE IN RECORDS FOR FURTHER INFO AT 619-531-2949.

RIGHT ACROSS THE STREET AT **INVICTUS CROSSFIT** IS A CLASS CALLED "**BURN 30**". FROM 12-1230 MONDAY, WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY. WE ALREADY HAVE

EMPLOYEES WHO ARE PARTICPATING! VIVIAN HAMMI FROM DATA SYSTEMS IS A PARTICIPANT AND LOVES IT! YOU CAN CALL HER FOR INFO AT 619-531-2650.

******* PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU HAVE ANY FITNESS CLASSES OR INFO YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE FOR OTHER EMPLOYEES*******

RESOURCES:

5 Minute Workout:

<https://thegoddess.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/29-Office-Workout.jpg>

5 Minute Workout:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eR1AWOp6t30>

ADDITIONAL FITNESS RESOURCES & EVENTS

24 Hour Fitness: <https://citynet.sandiego.gov/employee-discounts/24hourfitness>

AquaVie Fitness + Wellness Club: <https://citynet.sandiego.gov/employee-discounts/aquavie>

Balanced Fitness & Health: <https://citynet.sandiego.gov/employee-discounts/balanced>

YMCA of San Diego County: <https://citynet.sandiego.gov/employee-discounts/ymca>

In addition, don't forget that our Park and Recreation Department offers 55 recreation centers, 13 pools, five skate parks and many other recreational facilities that serve all ages, abilities and income levels.



ITEMS TO KEEP IN YOUR GEAR BAG:

**1. DISINFECTING WIPES
(FOR DIRTY STEERING
WHEELS)**

2. LEATHERMAN TOOL

**3. NIGHT VISION
MONOCULAR**

**4. VICKS TO PUT
IN YOUR NOSE WHEN
YOU SMELL
SOMETHING BAD.**

**5. YOUR OWN FIRST AID
KIT FILLED WITH WHAT
YOU WANT.**

6. TYLENOL

7. TUMS

**8. \$10—\$20.00
Emergency Cash**

9. Hand Wipes

10. Extra Gloves

Good Reads

1. *ARMOR YOUR SELF*

How To Survive a Career in Law Enforcement

Written by John Marx.

The author wrote this book to offer guidance and support for officers and their families.

Author John Marx has given out a coupon code to discount the book from \$24.95 to \$20.00.

Code is: AYSF&F2017

Available at <http://www.CopsAlive.com>

This book is highly regarded by
Lt. Col. Dave Grossman Ph.D.

The author of
On Killing

and

Kevin Gilmartin, Ph.D.

Author of

Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement

2. *CHASING RELEVANCE*

6 STEPS TO UNDERSTAND,

ENGAGE, AND MAXIMIZE

NEXT-GENERATION LEADERS IN THE WORKPLACE

Written by Dan Negroni

SDPD WELLNESS RESOURCE LIST



444 CAMINO DEL RIO SOUTH,
SUITE 215

SAN DIEGO, CA 92108

• PHONE: (858) 565-0066

• FAX: (619) 291-4662

EMAIL:

INFO@FOCUSPSYCHSERVICES.COM

SDPOA 858-573-11999 sdpoa.org **SWORN MEMBERS**

SDMEA 858-300-3888 sdmea.org **CIVILIAN MEMBERS**

SDPD CHAPLAINS

CHAPLAIN HERB SMITH (858) 442-6417
CHAPLAIN DALE LOWRIMORE (619) 916-9632
CHAPLAIN CHUCK PRICE (619) 249-2229

<http://sdpd/documents/chaplainpics/pdf>

SDPD HUMAN RESOURCES: 619-531-2126

SDPD MEDICAL ASSISTANCE: 619-531-2124

CITY OF SAN DIEGO
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
(FOR ALL CITY EMPLOYEES)

619-533-3460

<http://citynet.sannet.gov/riskmanagement/eap>

YOUR WELLNESS STAFF:

**SGT. CARMELIN RIVERA
(619) 531-2740**

TUES-FRI 0700-1700

CRIVERA@PD.SANDIEGO.GOV

**OFFICER DANI RESCH
(619) 531-2246**

TUES-FRI 0600-1600

DJACKSON@PD.SANDIEGO.GOV

**911 DISPATCHER DEANNA DOTTA
(619) 531-2244**

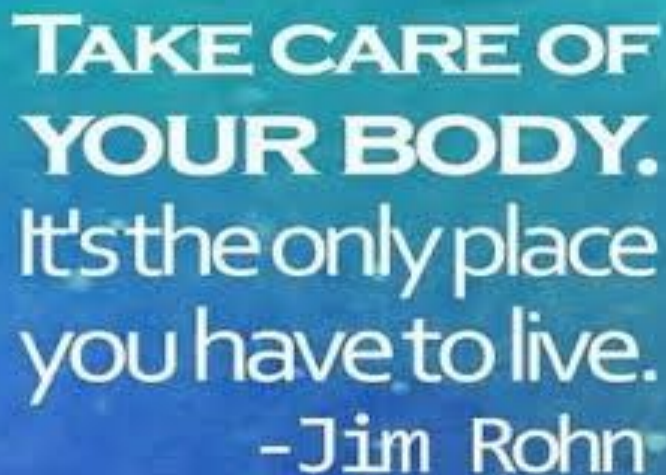
MON-THURS. 0800-1800

DDOTTA@PD.SANDIEGO.GOV

**ALCOHOL & SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAM
COORDINATOR**

thewellnessunit@pd.sandiego.gov

WE WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS.



**TAKE CARE OF
YOUR BODY.
It's the only place
you have to live.
-Jim Rohn**

Appendix E. Sample Recap Sheet

NOTE: This appendix has been slightly modified to conform to COPS Office publishing standards.

This is an example of the log that SDPD help services providers use to keep track of and report their wellness contacts.

SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Peer Support Program and Alcohol Substance Abuse Program

Name:

Month/Year:

“X” the box unless otherwise noted.

| Department Member | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Sworn | | | | | | | | | | |
| Civilian | | | | | | | | | | |
| Family member | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | | | | | | | | | | |
| Female | | | | | | | | | | |
| ISSUES: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Alcohol abuse | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bereavement | | | | | | | | | | |
| Career concerns | | | | | | | | | | |
| Children / child care | | | | | | | | | | |
| Coworker | | | | | | | | | | |
| Critical incident / trauma | | | | | | | | | | |
| Dating | | | | | | | | | | |
| Depression | | | | | | | | | | |
| Disability | | | | | | | | | | |
| Disciplinary issues | | | | | | | | | | |
| Financial concerns | | | | | | | | | | |
| Marital | | | | | | | | | | |
| Medical/Health problems | | | | | | | | | | |
| Parents | | | | | | | | | | |
| PTSD | | | | | | | | | | |
| Retirement concerns | | | | | | | | | | |
| Spiritual / Religious | | | | | | | | | | |
| Stepchildren | | | | | | | | | | |
| Stress issues | | | | | | | | | | |
| Subordinate | | | | | | | | | | |
| Substance abuse | | | | | | | | | | |
| Suicide | | | | | | | | | | |
| Supervisor | | | | | | | | | | |
| Walk-in | | | | | | | | | | |
| Old case | | | | | | | | | | |
| New case | | | | | | | | | | |
| # Personal contacts | | | | | | | | | | |
| # Phone/email contacts | | | | | | | | | | |
| # Referrals | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total hours of contact | | | | | | | | | | |

Appendix F. 2013 Wellness Survey

NOTE: This appendix has been slightly modified to conform to COPS Office publishing standards.

This is the survey that the Wellness Unit created and administered in 2013 to gauge the effectiveness of their programs and their organizational visibility.

Wellness Unit Services Survey

Since the inception of the Wellness Unit in July 2011, I have heard about the services offered via:

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| 1. Advanced Officer Training | yes___ no___ |
| 2. Supervisor's update training | yes___ no___ |
| 3. Civilian Resiliency Training | yes___ no___ |
| 4. Unit or division meetings | yes___ no___ |
| 5. Patrol Line-up or supervisors meeting | yes___ no___ |
| 6. Wellness Newsletter | yes___ no___ |
| 7. Department Intranet | yes___ no___ |
| 8. Word of mouth | yes___ no___ |

Resources

I have personally utilized the following service(s) offered by the Wellness Unit:

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| 9. Focus | yes___ no___ |
| 10. Peer Support | yes___ no___ |
| 11. Chaplains | yes___ no___ |
| 12. M.A.P. (Member Assistance Program) | yes___ no___ |
| 13. Biometric Screenings (Kaiser or Sharp) | yes___ no___ |
| 14. Health and Wellness Lectures (Nutrition, meditation, financial) | yes___ no___ |
| 15. Guest Speakers (Kevin Gilmartin, David Grossman, Clarke Paris, Jack Enter, Bobby Smith, Robert Douglas) | yes___ no___ |

Only IF YOU HAVE utilized the listed services **within the last 2 years** please respond to the following:

Peer Support

16. I felt my peer support officer was compassionate. yes___ no___
17. I felt my peer support officer was knowledgeable. yes___ no___
18. I felt there was value in having an assigned peer support officer. yes___ no___
19. I felt that the psychological debrief was useful for me. yes___ no___
20. I felt that the psychological debrief was useful for others involved. yes___ no___

MAP (Member Assistance Program)

21. I felt my MAP person was compassionate. yes___ no___
22. I felt my MAP person was knowledgeable. yes___ no___
23. I felt my MAP person was interested in helping me with my issues rather than telling me their story. yes___ no___
24. I felt my MAP person was knowledgeable about resources available to me. yes___ no___

Focus

25. I was easily able to get an appointment when needed. yes___ no___
26. I know how to get in touch with Focus on my own. yes___ no___
27. I felt the psychologist was compassionate. yes___ no___
28. I felt the psychologist understood the demands of law enforcement. yes___ no___

Chaplains

29. I know and regularly see the chaplain(s) assigned to my unit or division. yes___ no___
30. I feel comfortable having a chaplain ride with or visit me at work. yes___ no___
31. It is comforting to me to see a chaplain during the aftermath of a critical incident. yes___ no___
32. I know how to contact any of our chaplains after hours if needed. yes___ no___

Wellness Unit

33. I have contacted the Wellness Unit and asked them to reach out to someone I was concerned about. yes___ no___
34. I have visited the Wellness Unit on a social call. yes___ no___
35. I have visited the Wellness Unit to ask for resources or seek assistance. yes___ no___
36. The resources or assistance provided were beneficial. yes___ no___

IF YOU HAVE NOT utilized the above mentioned services, please answer the following:

- 37. Although I have not utilized a MAP person about any issues, I would if the need arose. yes___ no___
- 38. I have seen the M.A.P. Profile book at my division. yes___ no___
- 39. Although I have not utilized Focus about any issues, I would if the need arose. yes___ no___
- 40. Although I have not utilized a chaplain about any issues, I would if the need arose. yes___ no___
- 41. I know how to contact any of our chaplains after hours if needed. yes___ no___
- 42. Although I have not utilized the Wellness Unit about any issues, I would if the need arose. yes___ no___
- 43. I know of people who have utilized the services of the Wellness Unit. yes___ no___
- 44. I do/would feel comfortable walking into the Wellness Unit regardless of the reason for my visit yes___ no___
- 45. I am aware of ASAP. yes___ no___

Stigma and Attitude Change

- 46. I feel like the stigma associated with asking for help is reducing. yes___ no___
- 47. I feel like there is a greater awareness of employee wellness and resiliency building in the department. yes___ no___
- 48. I feel like there is a lot more discussion about issues like suicide, substance abuse, and other ineffective coping behaviors than two years ago. yes___ no___
- 49. I trust that if I had a personal issue that was interfering with work or at home I could ask for assistance and receive help. yes___ no___
- 50. I am: sworn_____ civilian_____
- 51. I am: male_____ female_____

Optional:

Division/ Unit _____

Additional comments or suggestions:

Appendix G. “Wellness Day” Agenda

This is the agenda from the Psychological Preparedness Training for New Officers (known as “Wellness Day”) held on November 4, 2017 for new officers and their loved ones.

WELLNESS DAY

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 4, 2017

0700-1700

WATER DEPT TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT AUDITORIUM

5510 KIOWA DR., LA MESA 91942

0700-1130: OFFICERS ONLY W/FOCUS AND WELLNESS STAFF:

1. 0730-0900 FOCUS INTRO, BACKGROUNDS, DISCUSSION

0900-0910 BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK

2. 0915-1045 GUEST OFFICER'S SHARING CRITICAL INCIDENT EXPERIENCE

0915-1000

1000-1045

1045-1055 BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK

3. 1100-1130 WELLNESS STAFF/FOCUS

1130-1230 LUNCH BREAK LUNCH BREAK LUNCH BREAK LUNCH

4. 1230-1330-FOCUS W/OFCRS ON PATIO

5. 1230-1330: FAMILY INSIDE WITH WELLNESS STAFF & CHAPLAINS.

1330-1340 BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK

1. 1340-1400 CHIEF
2. 1400-1415 ASAP
3. 1415-1500 GROUP & OUTSIDE INTERACTION (ROCKS & HYPERVIGILANCE)
- 4.

1500-1510 BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK BREAK

5. 1515-1600: MARRIED COUPLE TESTIMONY
6. 1600-1615 FAMILY RESOURCE TEAM

1615-1700: WELLNESS STAFF

Appendix H. Effective Interactions Scenarios

These are descriptions of the scenarios used during day two of Effective Interactions training for new officers.

Scenario 1. Large party

Officers respond to a large party in the back yard. The party goers are celebrating a quinceañera and it is now 3:00 a.m. The officers need to make contact with the owners of the residence and use effective interactions skills to diffuse the situation and help shut down the party. This upsets the 15-year-old birthday girl.

Scenario 2. 7-11 parking

An officer goes to a 7-11 convenience store to take a break from patrol. The officer parks on the red curb outside the store. An adult customer and his/her fifteen-year old son/daughter drive into the 7-11 parking lot and see where the officer parks. The son/daughter is confused because the adult recently received a parking citation for parking in a red zone. The angry adult confronts the officer as he/she is leaving the store, and questions the officer on the double-standard that seems to permit police officers to park in a red zone when there is no emergency while community members are cited for the same offense.

Scenario 3. Disturbance and authority

Officers respond to a disturbance call involving neighbors who are arguing over a civil dispute. Also present is a clergy member or teacher. The clergy member/teacher tells the officer that he/she knows the individuals well and has intervened in their prior disputes, resulting in peaceful resolutions. The officer should recognize the authority that clergy member or teacher holds in the community and should ask them for guidance in resolving this dispute.

Scenario 4. Jogger matches the description

A community member contacts an officer to describe a suspicious jogger at a park late at night. The community member is vague, but alludes to the fact that the jogger might be casing cars to break into them. Moments later, a jogger who matches the description goes by and the officer makes contact. The jogger is angry because he/she feels the officer is “just harassing” and “profiling” him/her, as this is the third time he/she has been stopped in a month and always seems to “match the description” of an alleged criminal offender in the area.

Scenario 5. Traffic stop

An officer stops a car for a stop sign violation. The stop is made in front of the adult driver’s residence. The driver’s father/mother comes out of the house with a cell phone camera, wanting to record the officers “harassing” his/her 18-year old son/daughter. The parent yells at the officer. The officer now has two individuals to deal with and must interact with both effectively.

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About PERF

The **Police Executive Research Forum (PERF)** is an independent research organization that focuses on critical issues in policing. Since its founding in 1976, PERF has identified best practices on fundamental issues such as police use of force; developing community policing and problem-oriented policing; using technologies to deliver police services to the community; and evaluating crime reduction strategies.

PERF strives to advance professionalism in policing and to improve the delivery of police services through the exercise of strong national leadership, public debate of police and criminal justice issues, and research and policy development.

The nature of PERF's work can be seen in the titles of a sample of PERF's recent reports. (Most PERF reports are available without charge online at <http://www.policeforum.org/free-online-documents>.)

- *The Police Response to Homelessness (2018)*
- *Executive Guidebook: Practical Approaches for Strengthening Law Enforcement's Response to Sexual Assault (2018)*
- *The Police Response to Mass Demonstrations: Promising Practices and Lessons Learned (2018)*
- *The Changing Nature of Crime and Criminal Investigations (2018)*
- *The Revolution in Emergency Communications (2017)*
- *The Unprecedented Opioid Epidemic (2017)*
- *The "Crime Gun Intelligence Center" Model: Case Studies of the Denver, Milwaukee, and Chicago Approaches to Investigating Gun Crime (2017)*
- *The Utah Model: A Path Forward for Investigating and Building Resilience to Cyber Crime (2017)*
- *Hiring for the 21st Century Law Enforcement Officer: Challenges, Opportunities, and Strategies for Success (2017)*
- *Policing Issues in Garrison Communities (2016)*
- *Guiding Principles on Use of Force (2016)*
- *Identifying and Preventing Gender Bias in Law Enforcement Response to Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence (2016)*
- *Advice from Police Chiefs and Community Leaders on Building Trust (2016)*
- *Gun Violence: Regional Problems, Partnerships, and Solutions (2015)*

- *Implementing a Comprehensive Performance Management Approach in Community Policing Organizations: An Executive Guidebook (2015)*
- *Labor and Management Roundtable Discussions: Collaborating to Address Key Challenges in Policing (2015)*
- *Constitutional Policing as a Cornerstone of Community Policing (2015)*
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- *Defining Moments for Police Chiefs (2015)*
- *Local Police Perspectives on State Immigration Policies (2014)*
- *New Challenges for Police: A Heroin Epidemic and Changing Attitudes Toward Marijuana (2014)*
- *The Role of Local Law Enforcement Agencies in Preventing and Investigating Cybercrime (2014)*
- *The Police Response to Active Shooter Incidents (2014)*
- *Legitimacy and Procedural Justice: A New Element of Police Leadership (2014)*

In addition to conducting research and publishing reports on our findings, PERF conducts management studies of individual law enforcement agencies; educates hundreds of police officials each year in the Senior Management Institute for Police, a three-week executive development program; and provides executive search services to governments that wish to conduct national searches for their next police chief.

All of PERF's work benefits from PERF's status as a membership organization of police officials, who share information and open their agencies to research and study. PERF members also include academics, federal government leaders, and others with an interest in policing and criminal justice.

All PERF members must have a four-year college degree and must subscribe to a set of founding principles, emphasizing the importance of research and public debate in policing, adherence to the Constitution and the highest standards of ethics and integrity, and accountability to the communities that police agencies serve.

PERF is governed by a member-elected President and Board of Directors and a Board-appointed Executive Director.

To learn more, visit PERF online at www.policeforum.org.

About the COPS Office

The **Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)** is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing begins with a commitment to building trust and mutual respect between police and communities. It supports public safety by encouraging all stakeholders to work together to address our nation's crime challenges. When police and communities collaborate, they more effectively address underlying issues, change negative behavioral patterns, and allocate resources.

Rather than simply responding to crime, community policing focuses on preventing it through strategic problem-solving approaches based on collaboration. The COPS Office awards grants to hire community policing officers and support the development and testing of innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders, as well as all levels of law enforcement.

Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested more than \$14 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing. Other achievements include the following:

- To date, the COPS Office has funded the hiring of approximately 130,000 additional officers by more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies in both small and large jurisdictions.
- Nearly 700,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations.
- To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than eight million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs and flash drives.
- The COPS Office also sponsors conferences, round tables, and other forums focused on issues critical to law enforcement.

COPS Office information resources, covering a wide range of community policing topics such as school and campus safety, violent crime, and officer safety and wellness, can be downloaded via the COPS Office's home page, www.cops.usdoj.gov. This website is also the grant application portal, providing access to online application forms.

Law enforcement agencies around the country are recognizing the importance of monitoring and tending to employees' physical and mental health and wellness. This publication discusses the establishment and operation of a dedicated unit at the San Diego Police Department with the goal of promoting a department-wide culture of wellness. Working toward this goal will also help the department better serve its community. The Police Executive Research Forum, working with the SDPD under a cooperative agreement from the COPS Office, identified lessons learned and recommendations that will help guide other local agencies that may be interested in setting up similar programs.



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To obtain details about COPS Office programs, call
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