

# POLICE CHIEF

## OFFICER HEALTH & WELLNESS

### INSIDE

A Resilient Mind for Chaotic Times **30**

From Idea to Implementation **36**

Experiencing Awe **42**

Stories Save Lives **48**



# XTU

The XTU Shirt and Pant are our first elite products in 5.11's new V.XI™ collection.

Developed in partnership with top-tier teams from around the world, XTU uniforms provide operators with the most functional mission-ready uniform to date.



Scan for wear test info.



5.11 IS A PROUD DIAMOND ALLIANCE PARTNER OF THE FBINAA

**5.11** 

511TACTICAL.COM

© 2023 5.11, Inc.

V.XI™ PURPOSE-BUILT GEAR™ FOR TODAY'S PROFESSIONALS



Honoring

# National Police Week

Thank You for Your  
Service & Sacrifice



## Because Readiness Saves Lives

Ensure Your Officers Are Trained, Prepared, and Ready



Learn about purpose-built  
technology for officer training  
and preparedness





## OFFICER HEALTH & WELLNESS



30



42

### 30 **A Resilient Mind for Chaotic Times**

Developing a resilient mindset is achievable—and essential for officers—but it is not an overnight process.

STEPHANIE CONN

### 36 **From Idea to Implementation**

The Dallas, Texas, Police Department's new Wellness Unit tackles the challenge of officer wellness from multiple angles.

REUBEN G. RAMIREZ

### 42 **Experiencing Awe**

Experiencing awe can positively impact the professional and personal lives of investigative officers and other police personnel.

JEFF THOMPSON

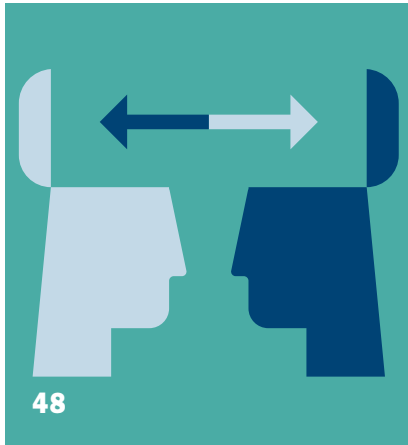
### 48 **Stories Save Lives**

Sharing stories of challenges and resilience reduces stigma and help first responders talk about their own mental health struggles.

JEFF BLUDWORTH, NILS ROSENBAUM, MELISSA SHULTZ



36



48

## LEADERSHIP

- 6 **President's Message**  
**Protecting Our Profession & People**  
JOHN LETTENY
- 8 **From the Principal Deputy AAG**  
**Supporting Law Enforcement Safety and Wellness**  
AMY L. SOLOMON
- 12 **Chief's Counsel**  
**An Officer's Legal Obligation to Intervene**  
Agencies have a responsibility to teach officers the skills to intervene when needed.  
KEN WALLENTINE

## IN THE FIELD

- 16 **Special Report**  
**Enhanced Background Checks for Young Adults**  
The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act requires expanded background checks for firearms purchasers under 21 years old.  
MCKENNA POLEN, WILLIAM BROOKS
- 20 **Focus on Officer Wellness**  
**Diet and Shift Work**  
Shift work can make it difficult to maintain a healthy diet, but these strategies can help.  
RANA PARKER
- 22 **Traffic Safety Initiatives**  
**Leveraging Data Sophistication to Save Lives**  
Agencies can use data to understand crash trends, effectively deploy resources, and prevent future crashes.  
JASON LARUE
- 24 **Informer**
- 27 **Police Week 2023**
- 28 **Spotlight**  
**HEATING Up Community Policing Efforts**  
A pro sports team, a nonprofit, and local police are partnering to build positive community-police relationships.

## TECHNOLOGY

- 54 **Tech Talk**  
**Solving Law Enforcement's Technology and Legislative Challenges**  
Misguided legislation and a lack of funds are two key impediments to the implementation and use of new or advanced technology by police.  
JOHN PIZZURO
- 56 **Product Feature**  
**Which Tool Is the Right Tool?**  
When it comes to diffusing dangerous situations, officers need to access to the right tools, which may include one of the less-lethal devices currently on the market.
- 60 **Exposition**
- IACP WORKING FOR YOU**
- 62 **2023 IACP Officer Safety and Wellness Symposium Recap**
- 64 **IACP@Work**  
**Strengthening Victim Services through Comprehensive Training**  
The IACP's Law Enforcement-Based Victims Services Program *Template Package V: Training* includes training modules and supplemental handouts that cover core victim services content.  
MORGANA YELLEN, BONNIE MILLS
- 67 **IACP Net Bulletin**
- 69 **The Beat**
- 70 **The Brief**  
**Robust and Innovative Wellness Support**  
The IACP OSW Section provides holistic health resources, redefining safety and wellness support for police.  
MANDY NICE
- IN EVERY ISSUE**
- 10 **Dispatch**
- 11 **Perspectives**
- 71 **Calendar**
- 72 **Ad Index**



ARTICLE  
NOTES  
CAN BE  
FOUND  
ONLINE.



### WANT MORE?

Bonus articles are posted weekly at [policechiefmagazine.org](http://policechiefmagazine.org)

# CONTRIBUTORS

**Police Chief** articles are written by law enforcement leaders and experts. See the authors featured in this issue below.

## GUEST EDITOR



**Jeff Spivey**

Jeff Spivey provides executive leadership and strategic management of the Caruth Police Institute and its growing portfolio of projects. He retired as chief from Irving, Texas, Police Department in 2022; he had served with the agency for 35 years (nearly 5 years as chief). He has also served as a board member for numerous organizations.

12



**Chief Ken Wallentine**

Ken Wallentine is the chief of police for the City of West Jordan, Utah; president of the Utah Chiefs of Police Association; and an attorney. He has served as a police officer for over four decades.

16



**McKenna Polen**

McKenna Polen is a writer-editor with the FBI. She has worked for the FBI for nearly five years as a threat intake examiner, management and program analyst, and writer-editor, and she holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, psychology, and gender studies.

16



**Chief William Brooks**

William "Bill" Brooks has been a police officer for 46 years and is chief of the Norwood, Massachusetts, Police Department. He serves on the IACP Board of Directors and represents IACP on the FBI CJIS Advisory Policy Board. He is also a past president of the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association.

20



**Rana Parker**

Rana Parker, MPH, is a registered dietitian nutritionist who has been employed with the Los Angeles, California, Police Department since 2007. She holds a bachelor's degree in foods and nutrition and a master's degree in public health, and her writing on nutrition in law enforcement has been featured in multiple publications.

22



**Jason LaRue**

Jason LaRue is associate vice president at LexisNexis Coplogic Solutions. He has over 30 years of experience in the public safety, airline, health care, and education sectors; in infrastructure, data center, database, customer support, and software design; and in management and consulting. He is an associate member of the Governors Highway Safety Association.

30



**Dr. Stephanie Conn**

Stephanie Conn, PhD, is a former police officer and a licensed psychologist specializing in police stress, trauma, work-life balance, coping, and resilience. She has 25 years of experience working in the first responder field. She works with first responder agencies, promoting wellness through peer support and training, and has presented widely to first responders.

36



**Assistant Chief Reuben G. Ramirez**

Reuben Ramirez currently serves as an assistant chief for the Dallas, Texas, Police Department (DPD), where he is commander of the Tactical and Special Operations Bureau. A 27-year veteran of DPD, he also serves as the agency's legislative affairs coordinator, and he led the development of and oversees the DPD Wellness Unit.

42



**Dr. Jeff Thompson**

Jeff Thompson, PhD, is an adjunct associate research scientist at Columbia University Medical Center. He is a retired New York City Police Department detective, where he was their first-ever mental health and wellness coordinator and, previously, a hostage negotiator. He is also an adjunct professor at Lipscomb University.

48



**Sergeant Jeffrey Bludworth**

Jeffrey Bludworth has been with the Albuquerque, New Mexico, Police Department since April 2012. He is currently a sergeant for the Multi-Agency Task Force. Over the last 10 years, he has served as an advanced training instructor and a detective. In 2019, he became the primary facilitator for the Self-Care Interactive Online Network (SCION).

48



**Dr. Nils Rosenbaum**

Nils Rosenbaum, MD, has worked with the Albuquerque, New Mexico, Police Department (APD) since 2007, and serves as the APD's medical director for behavioral health, as well as a co-responder. He also worked with detectives to help found CIT ECHO, an online training platform for police, and the Self-Care Interactive Online Network (SCION).

48



**Melissa Schultz**

Melissa Schultz is the coordinator for the Albuquerque, New Mexico, Police Department's Peer Support Program. She is a certified trainer for suicide intervention and trained in both individual and group crisis intervention and is recognized as a law enforcement professional lecturer by the New Mexico Department of Public Safety.

54



**John Pizzuro**

John Pizzuro serves as Raven's CEO. Previously, he spent 25 years in the New Jersey State Police, serving the last 6 years as the commander of the NJ Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force. He has trained thousands of investigators on investigative techniques for child exploitation and created a child exploitation investigative framework.

70



**Mandy Nice**

Mandy Nice has over 16 years of experience developing and implementing physical fitness and wellness programs. As the National Strength and Conditioning Association Tactical program manager, she led subject matter experts in the creation of research-based programs and leadership training to advance law enforcement wellness. She now serves as the Lexipol strategic wellness director.

# POLICE CHIEF

A PUBLICATION OF THE IACP

MAY 2023 | VOLUME 90, NUMBER 5

EDITOR Vincent Talucci

MANAGING EDITOR Danielle Gudakunst

GUEST EDITORS Jeff Spivey and Julie Malear

EDITORIAL COORDINATOR Camryn Nethken

PROOFREADER Margaret M. White

CIRCULATION Na Lor Yang

ADVERTISING SALES AdBoom Advertising,  
policechiefmagazine.org/advertising

MEMBER SERVICES Christian D. Faulkner,  
Rizalina Saleh, and Metria Hernandez

DESIGN TGD Creative Strategies and Solutions,  
tgdcom.com

EDITORIAL ADVISORS

Eric Astupenas, Aimee Cheung, Cydnie Davis,  
Sarah Guy, Sarah Horn, Cory Howard,  
Nuyiri Kasbarian, Karen Maline,  
Rebecca Simonelli, Megan Stoltz, Andrea Watson

LEGAL COUNSEL Howe & Hutton, Ltd.

[www.policechiefmagazine.org](http://www.policechiefmagazine.org)

Article notes are available online.

© Copyright 2023, by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, Inc. Reproduction of any part of this magazine without express written permission is strictly prohibited.

*Police Chief* (ISSN 0032-2571) is published monthly by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, 44 Canal Center Plaza, Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314-2357, USA; 703-836-6767; fax: 703-836-4543. Periodicals postage paid at Alexandria, Virginia, and additional mailing offices. Subscription rate of \$30 to IACP members is included in annual membership dues; subscription rate to nonmembers is \$30 per year, domestic and foreign. Single copy, current issue, \$2.50; back issues, \$3, except APRIL Buyers' Guide issue, \$12.50.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Police Chief, 44 Canal Center Plaza, Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314, USA.

Canada Post: Publications Mail Agreement #40612608 Canada returns to be sent to Bleuchip International, P.O. Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2

NOTE: New subscriptions and changes of address require six to eight weeks to process. Subscriptions begin with next available issue; for backdated subscriptions, place separate order for back issues desired. IACP will not be responsible for replacement of an issue if not notified of non-delivery by the 15th of the third month following the month of issue. Please check address label and promptly mail any necessary changes.

Articles are contributed by practitioners in law enforcement or related fields. Manuscripts must be original work, previously unpublished, and not simultaneously submitted to another publisher. No word rate is paid or other remuneration given. Contributors' opinions and statements are not purported to define official IACP policy or imply IACP endorsement.

Printed in the USA.



## Ensuring Integrity.

## Worldwide.

Over 950 public safety agencies in the United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand stake their reputations on IAPro.

They know that detecting performance and misconduct issues upstream before they become serious is a best practice they can't afford to be without.

To learn more about IAPro and proactive integrity, contact us at 800-620-8504 or [www.iapro.com](http://www.iapro.com).

# IAPRO

THE LEADING PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS SOFTWARE. WORLDWIDE.

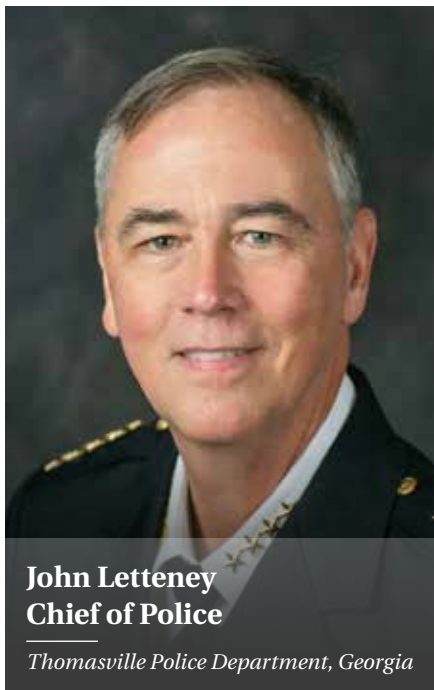
[www.iapro.com](http://www.iapro.com)

## VISIT POLICE CHIEF ONLINE

Readers can sort articles by topic, translate articles using Google Translate, submit manuscripts online, and more!

[www.policechiefmagazine.org](http://www.policechiefmagazine.org)

# Protecting Our Profession & People



**John Letteney**  
**Chief of Police**

*Thomasville Police Department, Georgia*

“  
**These moments where we protect and aid others are what truly define and inspire us as a profession.**  
”

**JUST A FEW MONTHS AGO, THE WORLD WATCHED THE BODY-WORN CAMERA FOOTAGE OF THE HEROIC RESPONDING OFFICERS TO THE TRAGIC AND senseless shooting at the Covenant School in Nashville, Tennessee. These officers demonstrated remarkable courage by putting themselves directly in harm's way, preventing further loss of life and protecting the innocent.**

The valor that we witness daily—from large-scale acts like what happened in Nashville to the small everyday acts that truly embody our profession—is what gives all who wear the uniform that pride and sense of a higher calling to “serve and protect.” While our community members, the media, and others may not witness, acknowledge, or even know about these acts of courage, compassion, empathy, and strength of character unless they gain global attention, we know these events occur daily through the selfless service of law enforcement professionals. These moments where we protect and aid others are what truly define and inspire us as a profession.

While we all know that officers cannot falter when it comes to running toward danger, that only further emphasizes the point that, as police leaders, we need to ensure that we provide those in our charge with the proper training, equipment, safety, and health and wellness support services.

From the moment recruit officers enter the academy throughout their careers, police leaders have an obligation to ensure that officers are receiving continuous, effective training that will equip them to properly handle the dynamic environment that police officers face every day. Meeting this challenge is made increasingly difficult by the reality that public expectations, evolving crime trends, new tactical approaches, and changing laws can significantly impact how our agencies provide police services. It is clear that successfully meeting this challenge will take significant and constant investment, a resolute focus on continuous improvement, and an unyielding emphasis on how important regular training is to the safety of officers.

While training and implementing safety measures, like ensuring our officers have the right equipment and technology, are more in our control as police executives, there are other elements and aspects of policing that require even more complicated techniques, solutions, and programs.

All of us know how police work can take a toll on an officer's physical and mental health and well-being, and, as someone who has been in the profession for over 41 years, I have seen and witnessed this firsthand. From the long shifts and, on many occasions, forced overtime—heightened by the continual recruitment and retention crisis we are in—to the daily pressures of always having to perform at a higher standard, to experiencing and witnessing horrific events—just as those officers did in Nashville—our profession endures and expects so much more from its people than other careers.

This is all in addition to the role we serve as the face of public safety and the most visible arm of government in our communities. This, justly or unjustly, opens us up to enhanced scrutiny and, more often than not, false, unfair, or uninformed perceptions from the media, elected officials, and the public. Partly as a result of this negative narrative, officers are also subject to unjust violence. In 2020, 60,105 law enforcement officers in the United States were assaulted while on duty, an increase of 4,071 over 2019. Tragically, as of 2022, the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Wall in Washington, DC, contains 23,229 names, and another 556 will be added during National Police Week in 2023. While many of these officers gave their lives in service to their communities this past year, others who were previously lost to history from years past will also



be honored during the 2023 ceremony. Honoring our fallen is a timeless responsibility, as is their service and sacrifice.

I have had the opportunity to attend activities during National Police Week in Washington, DC, many times, such as the Candlelight Vigil, 5K Memorial Run, Fraternal Order of Police remembrance ceremony, and others, and I recommend that every officer make it a point to attend these events or similar events in their own countries to honor the fallen at least once in their career.

This May, I am honored to be able to join other police leaders from across the United States during the Candlelight Vigil to read the names of fallen officers who will be added to the Memorial Wall in 2023 and forever remembered. I have also visited the memorial wall and museum during visits to the Washington, DC, area outside of National Police Week and find, in the quiet of the memorial grounds, a solemn opportunity to reflect, remember, and again thank those officers and their families, some of whom I have had the honor to work alongside, for their service and sacrifice. Whenever we have the opportunity, I and others from your Board of Directors have visited the memorials to fallen officers in many countries during our IACP official travels, to join in remembering the service of officers around the globe.

It is very important to remember our fallen, but, more importantly, we also need to do all we can to prevent attacks, assaults, life-endangering traffic incidents, and the events that lead to police suicide. Prevention comes from enhancing training, equipment, and procedures; developing and implementing wellness programs for our staff; and telling the positive story of our profession as we embrace a diverse workforce and enhance trust in our communities, while we also focus on enacting legislation to protect officers and hold accountable those who choose to target police.

The work of policing does not just affect our physical well-being, it also takes a toll on our mental health. In 2022, there were a total of 193 first responders who died by suicide—a deeply concerning trend that the IACP has focused on for several years. That number is far too high and goes to show that the threats our profession faces do not stop at the end of each shift. The effect of the job impacts

every aspect of an officer's life. Just as we protect ourselves and our fellow officers physically, we must do the same when it comes to mental well-being. No officer should feel they must suffer in silence. The National Consortium on Preventing Police Suicide Toolkit, spearheaded by the IACP, provides practical steps for police leaders to take to have a positive impact on this growing problem.

Just as you would look out for your fellow officers in any tactical situation, we need to be cognizant about watching over our peers and noticing when something may be off or wrong and triaging that appropriately by having a conversation; recommending the officer speak to someone they are comfortable with; or involving peer support, an employee assistance program, or a chaplain. While not every agency can invest in a police chaplain or robust peer support program, knowing our people and being that supportive person for them can possibly make a significant difference. Your agency can also partner with another agency who has such a program, and you can use the many IACP wellness resources to assist your staff, both sworn and civilian.

I was recently afforded the opportunity to attend the IACP Officer Safety and Wellness Symposium, an event that began in 2019 with 300 attendees and has grown to 1,200 attendees in 2023, which clearly demonstrates the importance and emphasis the IACP places on officer safety in respect to mental health, physical health, and tactical safety.

As with most topics in policing, officer safety and wellness is a multifaceted issue, and addressing these various aspects requires effort from all of us. Rising to meet the needs of this noble profession means prioritizing our safety and personal well-being and that of our officers. This month, as we honor National Police Week in the United States, and throughout various times across the world, we honor and remember the service and sacrifice of all officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice. It is my hope that police leaders, with the collective assistance of community members and elected officials, can commit to doing all we can to protect the lives of the men and women who work tirelessly to protect the innocent, confront crime, and ensure the safety of our communities across the globe. ♡



## ASSOCIATION OFFICERS — 2022–2023

### PRESIDENT

**John Letteney**, Chief of Police | Thomasville Police Department, GA

### IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

**Dwight E. Henninger**, Senior Law Enforcement Partnership Advisor to the Director | Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

### FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

**Wade Carpenter**, Chief of Police | Park City Police Department, UT

### SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

**Ken A. Walker**, Chief of Police | West University Place Police Department, TX

### THIRD VICE PRESIDENT

**David B. Rausch**, Director | Tennessee Bureau of Investigation

### FOURTH VICE PRESIDENT

**Doug Shoemaker**, Chief of Police | Denton Police Department, TX

### VICE PRESIDENT AT LARGE

**Sean Duggan**, Chief of Police | Chandler Police Department, AZ

### VICE PRESIDENT AT LARGE

**James G. Hicks**, Chief of Police | Natick Police Department, MA

### VICE PRESIDENT-TREASURER

**Ronald A. Sellon**, Chief of Police | Mansfield Police Department, MA

### INTERNATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT

**Liam Price**, Director General | Royal Canadian Mounted Police

### GENERAL CHAIR, DIVISION OF STATE ASSOCIATIONS OF CHIEFS OF POLICE

**Jim Williams**, Chief of Police | Staunton Police Department, VA

### GENERAL CHAIR, DIVISION OF STATE AND PROVINCIAL POLICE

**Matthew Packard**, Colonel | Colorado State Patrol

### GENERAL CHAIR, MIDSIZE AGENCIES DIVISION

**Edward J. Walsh**, Chief of Police | Taunton Police Department, MA

### PARLIAMENTARIAN

**Brandon Zuidema**, Deputy Town Manager | Town of Morrisville, NC

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**Vincent Talucci**, CAE | International Association of Chiefs of Police

### DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

**Terrence M. Cunningham** | International Association of Chiefs of Police

# Supporting Law Enforcement Safety and Wellness



**Amy L. Solomon**  
Principal Deputy Assistant  
Attorney General

*U.S. Department of Justice, Office of  
Justice Programs*

“  
[Officers] deserve  
to know that  
their safety  
and well-being  
are matters of  
deep concern  
for the people  
they serve.”

**THE DANGERS FACED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL ARE TOO OFTEN REDUCED IN THE PUBLIC EYE TO THE DRAMATIC MOMENTS OF A HIGH-RISK ENCOUNTER. ONCE THE IMMEDIATE PHYSICAL THREAT HAS PASSED, OFFICERS ARE SOMEHOW EXPECTED TO MOVE ON, IMMUNE TO ANY SHORT- OR LONG-TERM PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES.**

Police professionals—and anyone with a basic understanding of the effects of trauma—know that this idealized version of emotional resilience and occupational toughness rarely syncs with the unfolding reality. The impact of trauma long outlives the event, no matter who experiences it, and the chronic stress to which public safety officers are exposed takes a serious toll on their physical and mental health.

We hold law enforcement professionals to the highest standards of conduct, looking to them as equal partners—and ideally, as leaders—in the task of building strong communities held together by durable bonds of trust. The mandate for constitutional policing is nonnegotiable, and so, too, is our society’s duty to protect the welfare of those who safeguard our homes and streets.

The U.S. Department of Justice’s (DOJ’s) commitment to officer safety has been long embodied in the work of the Office of Justice Programs (OJP). Since 1999, the Bulletproof Vest Partnership, managed by the OJP’s Bureau of Justice Assistance, has enabled some 13,000 jurisdictions to purchase almost 1.5 million protective vests. And for three decades, the National Institute of Justice has set performance standards and conducted testing and research to ensure that law enforcement agencies have access to life-saving body armor.

These programs are staples of OJP investments, but providing and maintaining effective equipment is only one part—albeit a critical one—of our officer safety portfolio. We are working to fulfill our solemn responsibilities to our law enforcement partners by improving preparedness and resilience, countering stress, and helping them confront a host of social problems that demand more than a public safety response.

## IMPROVING PREPAREDNESS & RESILIENCE

According to FBI data compiled by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, more than 43,000 U.S. officers were assaulted while performing their duties in 2021. More than a third of these officers sustained injuries. Preliminary data for 2022 show that 60 U.S. officers died from felonious assaults, and another 58 died as a result of accidents in the line of duty. The first step in safeguarding the health and safety of law enforcement professionals is to mitigate the grave risks they face each day by helping them to better anticipate threats and reducing their vulnerability to danger in all its forms.

OJP’s Officer Robert Wilson III Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement Officers and Ensuring Officer Resilience and Survivability (VALOR) Initiative, managed by OJP’s Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), provides no-cost training, customized assistance, research, and other resources designed to improve immediate and long-term safety and resilience.

The VALOR Initiative’s flagship program, the VALOR Program, provides comprehensive officer safety and wellness training, customized assistance, and resources. In-person and virtual training and technical assistance options focus on a wide array of safety and wellness preparedness strategies such as recognizing indicators of dangerous situations; defusing potentially volatile encounters; carrying out rescue tactics; and addressing physical, emotional, and financial wellness.

The VALOR Program’s Survive & Thrive training provides one- to two-day instruction specific to each level of law enforcement—line officers, first-line supervisors, and executives—to enhance

situational awareness and guard against complacency that could heighten exposure to danger. The VALOR Program alone has trained more than 134,000 officers.

### REDUCING STRESS AND PROTECTING MENTAL HEALTH

Stress from mounting daily pressures has taken an outside toll on the law enforcement community. Exposure to gun violence—far too common in our society—along with heightened scrutiny of officers' actions and an often unreasonable set of expectations around the role of policing are hastening burnout and leading to high rates of depression. The upward trend in officer suicide is only one of the most troubling indicators of an expanding mental health crisis in the public safety field.

VALOR's Law Enforcement Advanced Wellness and Resiliency Education Project, or L.E. AWARE, offers training and resources to help officers confront and deal with compassion fatigue, survivors' guilt, vicarious trauma, and post-traumatic stress—often unacknowledged consequences of a job that revolves around danger.

The BJA and the International Association of Chiefs of Police are working in partnership to convene researchers, sworn officers, and mental health professionals to address the issue of officer suicide head-on. The National Consortium on Preventing Law Enforcement Suicide is using data, promising practices, and a growing body of scientific evidence to raise awareness of the issue. The consortium has developed an array of resources to support agencies and officers, including a toolkit designed to help law enforcement departments integrate suicide prevention strategies in their operations.

VALOR's National Suicide Awareness for Law Enforcement Officers Program (SAFLEO) is another resource. SAFLEO offers in-person and online trainings and customized assistance to build

ACCORDING TO FBI DATA COMPILED BY THE NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS MEMORIAL FUND, MORE THAN

# 43,000

U.S. OFFICERS WERE ASSAULTED WHILE PERFORMING THEIR DUTIES IN 2021.

MORE THAN

# 1/3

OF THESE OFFICERS SUSTAINED INJURIES.

PRELIMINARY DATA FOR 2022 SHOW THAT

# 60

 U.S. OFFICERS DIED FROM FELONIOUS ASSAULTS.

# 58

DIED AS A RESULT OF ACCIDENTS IN THE LINE OF DUTY.

awareness and to help prevent officer suicides by teaching officers how to identify stress signals, break the stigma, and protect long-term mental health.

OJP is also working closely with our partners at the Justice Department's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office). A DOJ Officer Safety and Wellness Working Group meets regularly with law enforcement practitioners, national organizations, and other experts to discuss emerging issues and brainstorm strategies and recommendations for the field. The COPS Office awarded more than \$7 million to support 50 projects under its Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act program, and a collection of COPS Office case studies highlights 11 promising mental health and wellness strategies.

### LIFTING THE BURDEN

In the face of soaring rates of drug overdoses, rising homelessness, and high prevalence of mental health disorders, law enforcement officers find themselves serving as stewards of public welfare as much as public safety guardians. Police are often first at the scene of an episode of psychiatric distress or any number of community crises. In some cases, officers are the only available responders, even though many of these calls clearly demand the attention of behavioral health specialists.

Law enforcement has met the challenge admirably, often with only limited options for supporting those in crisis, but the burden should not fall to these professionals alone. Fortunately, many police leaders are making crisis intervention training available to those in their ranks, and a growing number of departments are now engaged as part of co-responder teams, homeless outreach units, and other community partnerships.

OJP awarded more than \$44 million last year to support these efforts and to help communities address behavioral health crises. Grants from BJA's Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program and its Connect and Protect initiative support partnerships among law enforcement, mental health, and substance use professionals to help reduce arrests, divert individuals from the justice system, and deliver the appropriate treatment and other support services to those in need.

Law enforcement professionals do not need to be reminded of the dangers inherent in their work, but they deserve to know that their safety and well-being are matters of deep concern for the people they serve. The OJP will continue to stand by our officers and deliver the moral and material support they need to maintain a healthy mind and body. ♡

# IACPlearn Education Opportunities



- **Intermediate Juvenile Interview and Interrogation Techniques (Training)**

This training provides law enforcement officers with information on best practices and procedures on juvenile interview and interrogation tactics with a focus on age-appropriate methods for improving investigative interaction with children and youth. *Free for members and nonmembers*

- **Identifying and Responding to Elder Abuse: An Officer's Role (Roll Call Videos)**

This IACPlearn product is a six-part roll call video series that enables law enforcement to better identify signs of elder abuse and recognize evidence that can lead to the successful prosecution of criminals. *Free for members and nonmembers*

- **National Law Enforcement Leadership Initiative on Violence Against Women: Language and Police Report Writing in Violence Against Women Crime Reports (Webinar)**

The focus of this webinar is to provide law enforcement officers with promising practices for report writing and the importance of language in written reports when responding to and investigating domestic violence, sexual assault, strangulation, and stalking. *Free for members and nonmembers*

Visit [learn.theIACP.org](http://learn.theIACP.org) to register for these and other training and education offerings.



## Registration Now Open for 2023 IDTS Conference

Registration and housing for the 2023 Impaired Driving and Traffic Safety (IDTS) Conference is now open. This year's conference will be held August 9–11, 2023, at the Hilton Anaheim in Anaheim, California. The IDTS conference will highlight effective and proven approaches for improving road safety, the latest science on alcohol- and drug-impaired driving enforcement, how technology can be leveraged to make communities safer, and how agencies can use traffic safety education to engage and build trust with their communities.

Visit [theIACP.org/IDTSconference](http://theIACP.org/IDTSconference) to learn more or to register.



## Justification Kit Now Available

To help you organize your conference planning and, if needed, assist you in justifying to supervisors or other decision makers your attendance at the upcoming IACP 2023 in San Diego, California, October 14–17, the IACP developed a justification kit you can personalize to meet your needs.

Visit [theIACPconference.org](http://theIACPconference.org) to access this resource or other information about IACP 2023.



## Police Chief Bonus Articles

Every Wednesday, a new bonus article is published at Police Chief Online to give our readers additional content throughout the month. These online-only articles present the relevant, applicable, and high-quality content you expect from *Police Chief*.

### MARCH 2023 ARTICLES

**The Role of PIOS in Violence Reduction Strategies** *By Dionne Waugh*

**Utilizing Red Flag Laws** *By Joseph Lipari*

**Applying the SARA Model in Operation Waterside** *By Rob Simpson & Gina Volp*

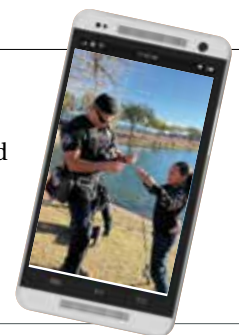
**Preventing Crime Involves Paying Attention to the Little Things** *By Andrew Walsh & William Sousa*

**Interview Considerations—Executive Dysfunction** *By Jerrod Brown*

## Submit Your Photos to Police Chief

The IACP is seeking photos on all subjects for use in *Police Chief* magazine. Send us your best photos related to community-police relations, officer wellness, technology, crisis response, and more, and you might see them in the magazine!

Submit high-resolution photos at [www.policechiefmagazine.org/photo-submissions](http://www.policechiefmagazine.org/photo-submissions).



## Q: What is a key change that police leaders can make to promote a culture of wellness in their agency?



**A:** Police leaders can partner with subject matter experts and clinicians to provide physical and mental wellness services at officers' convenience. The right wellness professionals can provide valuable insight to agency leaders as they develop training and policies that may seem unrelated to officer wellness. Given appropriate support—both material and moral—subject matter experts can give officers the tools they need to care for themselves. These experts can incorporate physical and mental wellness education and self-care training into each academy class and continue to provide career and life stage appropriate education throughout each officer's career.

*Anna M. Sedory, Athletic Trainer/  
Director, Injury Care and  
Prevention Program  
Fairfax County Police Department,  
Virginia*



**A:** The past decade has seen remarkable progress in police officer safety and wellness programming. As this movement evolves, police leadership is uniquely positioned to further this positive change.

Research and practical experience suggest that police leaders consider these key changes:

- Hire an experienced mental health professional familiar with police culture to guide program development and implementation.
- Give strong, public support for the program and insist on participation from the bottom to the top of the department. Like any business, the vision and direction are set by the CEO.
- Make it clear that this is a long-term initiative.

In the end, it's your leadership that must set the tone and provide strong, ongoing support for officer and family safety and wellness. Make this the cornerstone of your department's mission and operational procedures.

*Edward C. Keane, PhD, Police  
Psychologist  
Danbury Police Department,  
Connecticut*



**A:** The wellness of our police officers is just as critical as the diagnostics in the cars they drive. All elements of the body and mind must be working in unison. If our minds could forget what our eyes have seen, our officers may not have suffered that mental and physical punch. A key change that police leaders can make is to promote a culture of wellness in their agencies and to have continuing education for leadership. We often get trained and then become complacent when operations are not being visibly impacted by events that may impact our officers' physical and mental wellness. We must be intentional in our efforts to routinely emphasize awareness of this topic.

*Jaime Ayala, Police Chief  
Edinburg Police Department, Texas*



**A:** Intentional changes to an organization's culture have to be embraced and embodied by leadership. Policing professionals of all ranks are acutely aware of the habits embraced by leadership and use those habits as indicators of behavior embraced by the organization's culture. Wellness is more than physical fitness; it is more than mental health. Wellness needs to be modeled as a balanced approach to life. In that model, leadership should demonstrate balance between their personal and professional lives, show that they care for their own physical wellbeing, and have the courage to display vulnerability by discussing the personal challenges that come with the decision to become part of this honorable profession.

*Matthew C. Packard, Colonel  
Colorado State Patrol*

# An Officer's Legal Obligation to Intervene

## THE ARREST OF FIVE MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE, POLICE OFFICERS JUST TWO WEEKS AFTER THE DEATH OF TYRE NICHOLS ONCE AGAIN RAISED THE NOTION OF THE DUTY TO INTERVENE IN THE U.S. PUBLIC DISCUSSION.

An internal review concluded that the officers not only violated Memphis Police Department use-of-force policies, but also breached policies stating a duty to intervene and a duty to render aid. The IACP swiftly condemned “the failure of any of these individuals to intervene” in the force applied to Nichols.<sup>1</sup>

It is imperative that officers know that a failure to intervene may result in both criminal charges and civil claims. A plaintiff will raise as many claims as possible in the pursuit of monetary damages. It is increasingly uncommon to *not* see a claim of failure to intervene in a lawsuit against an officer and agency.

Before an officer can be successfully sued for failure to intervene, the plaintiff must generally show that the officer violated a constitutional right that was “clearly established” at the time of the alleged violation. U.S. federal courts have ruled for many years that the officer’s duty to intervene in unconstitutional force is clearly established.

It is “clearly established” that all law enforcement officers have an *affirmative duty to intervene to protect the constitutional rights of citizens* from infringement by other law enforcement officers in their presence. An officer who fails to intercede is liable for the preventable harm caused by the actions of the other officers where that officer observes or has reason to know that (1) excessive force is being used, (2) a citizen has been unjustifiably arrested, or (3) any constitutional violation has been committed by a law enforcement official. In order for liability to attach, there must have been a realistic opportunity to intervene to prevent the harm from occurring.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, an officer who fails to intervene may face liability when the officer observes what a reasonable officer would know to be excessive force, the officer has a realistic opportunity to intervene to prevent harm, and the officer

fails to take reasonable steps to intervene.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, an officer cannot be liable for failure to intervene unless there is an actual underlying constitutional violation.<sup>4</sup>

Many states, including Colorado, Connecticut, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Utah, and Vermont, have enacted laws establishing a statutory duty to intervene or report unlawful acts by a fellow officer. Though these laws may be new, there is nothing new about the expectation that officers will intervene. Officers are expected to run toward danger to intervene and to protect against harm.

Many law enforcement policy manuals have plain, simple statements requiring intervention. For example, one policy in widespread use mandates any officer to “intercede when observing another member using force that is clearly beyond that which is objectively reasonable under the circumstances, when in a position to do so.” If officers cannot act for whatever reason, they must report the use of force.<sup>5</sup>

The duty to intervene is most often thought about in the context of halting the use of unreasonable force. But the officers fired in the Tyre Nichols case also stand accused of failing to intervene to render medical attention. A failure to intervene claim may arise from more than the use of unreasonable force, such as failure to halt an apparently unlawful arrest, detention, or search.<sup>6</sup> The duty to intervene also applies in the correctional setting. Not only does a correctional officer have a duty to intervene in the case of reasonably apparent excessive force applied to an inmate, but also if the correctional officer becomes aware of inadequate medical care.<sup>7</sup> At least one court has suggested that an officer might be liable for failing to intervene in the extraction of a false confession.<sup>8</sup>

An officer’s failure to intervene may even lead to criminal charges. The public is demanding that prosecutors

“

*A failure to intervene claim may arise from more than the use of unreasonable force.*

”

intently focus on police accountability. Two former Minneapolis, Minnesota, Police Department officers were convicted and imprisoned for violating George Floyd's constitutional right to be free from an officer's unreasonable force by their willful failure to intervene.<sup>9</sup> Intervening may well keep the officer out of prison, as well as saving the officer's career.

Investigators documenting a use of force not only must discover what happened, when, and how, but they must also assess whether there was an opportunity for officers present to effectively intervene. The use-of-force investigator must discover and document the location, movements, abilities, and perceptions of each officer present at the incident and the individual officers' assessment of the totality of the circumstances.

The duty to intervene must be considered in light of whether there is a realistic and reasonable opportunity

to intervene. Just how an officer should have intervened must be considered. Was it sufficient for the intervening officer to verbally redirect the offending officer? Or should the intervening officer have physically intervened? What other tasks was the officer facing in the moment? How much, if any, of the pre-force event did the officer witness? If the officer was unable to see the alleged unreasonable force, he or she could not have stopped it.<sup>10</sup> Generally, the duration of the incident is the guiding factor in assessing whether a reasonable opportunity to intervene existed. In extended confrontations or events that unfold in stages, it is more likely that a court will rule the duty to intervene was evident: "By contrast, where an incident is momentary, its 'brevity' may 'defeat a ... failure-to-intervene claim.'"<sup>11</sup> If a use of force unfolds so quickly that another officer simply has no time to perceive the unreasonableness of the force and to intervene, the officer will not be liable.<sup>12</sup>

## THE ELSAG MOBILE PLATE HUNTER® ALPR

### Run more plates in less time

Our ELSAG® mobile automatic license plate readers bring incredible efficiencies to managing public safety and combating vehicle crime. Supporting real-time policing, enforcement, and investigations these solutions assist agencies of all sizes with traffic safety, finding missing persons, border security, gathering criminal intelligence, closing cases faster, and much more.



Made in the USA

[leonardocompany-us.com](http://leonardocompany-us.com)



Agencies are responsible for teaching officers the skills and tactics of intervention. It is desirable that officers take care of one another, to be each other's keeper, but how? How can agencies teach and practice effective intervention?

At the West Jordan, Utah, Police Department, training staff explored how to best guide officers to avoid and intervene in behaviors that place an officer's job, certification, mental and emotional health, and possibly even freedom at risk. Equipping officers with effective intervention techniques is one way for leaders to show their officers that the agency and leadership care about them. Likewise, police departments demonstrate their commitment to equitable and constitutional policing to the community through developing a culture of effective intervention.

The West Jordan Police Department partnered with the ABLE Project training to teach officers to recognize and defeat the inhibitors to effective intervention.<sup>13</sup> The ABLE active bystanders model begins with *noticing the need for intervention*. The earlier the intervention, the less harm caused and the easier the intervention. Part of the ABLE training teaches officers to use self-awareness to identify their own triggers. Being aware helps mitigate the inhibitors to intervention.

The next step is for an officer to decide *how to intervene*. This involves pre-planning on how and when to respond in a situation. Trainers encourage officers to do the "what if" exercise as they patrol. Every contact with a fellow officer and a subject is an opportunity to consider "what if" there is a need to intervene.

Next, the officer acts. What kind of intervention would work best for in the situation? During the dynamic event, the intervening officer may choose to delegate, distract, or direct. Distracting may simply be refocusing the officer's attention or giving an assignment to step away from the scene.

Delegating usually involves giving the officer a task that interrupts the possible error. Delegating may also mean asking someone better positioned to deliver the message.

Directing is just what it sounds like. The intervening officer may voice concern, tell another officer to step back, and if possible, frame the behavior as a mistake and communicate that the intervening officer is helping to get the officer back on track. Directing doesn't have to be confrontational.

In the pursuit of continuous improvement, police agencies must level up training on force tools, techniques, and tactics to include effective de-escalation and intervention techniques. Law enforcement can do better and avoid tragic outcomes like the deaths of Tyre Nichols, George Floyd, and others and end the avoidable consequences to communities and police departments. ♡

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>IACP "Statement of the IACP on the Death of Tyre Nichols," press release, January 26, 2013.

<sup>2</sup>Vondrak v. City of Las Cruces, 535 F.3d 1198, 1210 (10th Cir. 2008). Another court succinctly stated the duty to intervene: "A police officer is under a duty to intercede and prevent fellow officers from subjecting a citizen to excessive force, and may be held liable for his failure to do so if he observes the use of force and has sufficient time to act to prevent." Figueroa v. Mazza, 825 F.3d 89, 106 (2nd Cir. 2016).

<sup>3</sup>Jean-Laurent v. Wilkerson, 438 F. Supp. 2d 318, 327 (S.D.N.Y. 2006), aff'd, 461 F. App'x 18 (2nd Cir. 2012).

<sup>4</sup>Lytle v. Bexar County, 560 F.3d 404, 410 (5th Cir. 2009) "If we determine that the alleged conduct did not violate a constitutional right, our inquiry ceases because there is no constitutional violation for which the government official would need qualified immunity."

<sup>5</sup>Lexipol, Use of Force 300.2.1, Duty to Intercede and Report.

<sup>6</sup>But see Harris v. Mahr, 838 F. App'x. 339, 343 (10th Cir. 2020). The court held that the duty to intervene in unlawful entry cases is not "clearly established," noting that Vondrak "recites a broad duty to intervene that lacks any specificity, especially as to unlawful entry and search cases" and that the "constitutional principles surrounding a failure to intervene in an unlawful search" are unclear.

<sup>7</sup>McGee v. Parsano, 55 F.4th 563, 574 (7th Cir. 2022).

<sup>8</sup>Peterson v. Heymes, 931 F.3d 546, 556 (6th Cir. 2019).

<sup>9</sup>18 U.S.C. § 242.

<sup>10</sup>Hunter v. City of Leeds, 941 F.3d 1265, 1282 (11th Cir. 2019).

<sup>11</sup>Ricks v. Shover, 891 F.3d 468 (3rd Cir. 2018).

<sup>12</sup>Lewis v. Downey, 581 F.3d 467, 472 (7th Cir. 2009)

<sup>13</sup>Georgetown Law, "Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement (ABLE) Project."

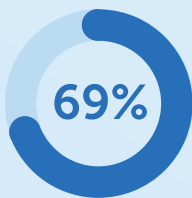
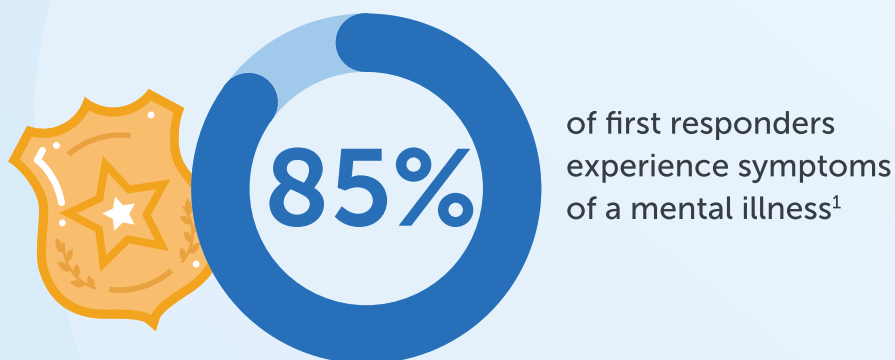
The IACP, in partnership with the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training (IADLEST) and Force Concepts, offers duty to intervene training—Take Action: Make the R.I.G.H.T. Choice & Intervene—through the Collaborative Reform Initiative Technical Assistance Center (CRI-TAC). Visit [www.collaborativereform.org](http://www.collaborativereform.org) to learn more or request the training for your agency.



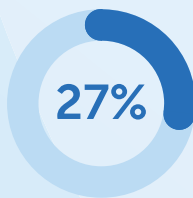
# Law Enforcement Officers' Mental Health

As a police officer, it may be difficult to step back and help yourself first, but your mental health is essential to both yourself and your job.

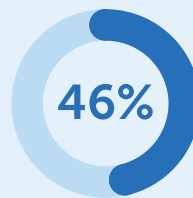
**Focusing on your mental health will allow you to continue to defy limitation, so others can too.**



have experienced lack of sleep<sup>1</sup>



have been diagnosed with depression<sup>1</sup>



have experienced anxiety<sup>1</sup>



have received a formal mental health disorder diagnosis, like depression or PTSD<sup>1</sup>

There are many confidential text and call support lines specific to officers' mental health, but they are not the only option. Long-term confidential options include therapy and participating in clinical trials.

## Confidential Law Enforcement Support Hotlines

Crisis Text Line – **Text HOME to 741741**

CopLine – **1-800-267-5463**

Safe Call Now – **206-459-3020**

Serve & Protect – **615-373-8000**



## More Information on Clinical Trials



You can learn more about clinical trials and current trials being conducted by Otsuka by visiting <https://otsuka-us.com/clinical-trials> or scanning the QR code.

Otsuka is a healthcare company with an unwavering belief of doing more. We are not bound by what others have done before and strive to defy limitation, so that others can too. We do everything in our power to reach our mission in three different categories: Neurosciences, Nephrology, and Digital Innovation.

References: 1. "Eighty-Five per Cent of First Responders Face Mental Health Challenge: University of Phoenix." Blue Line, 8 May 2019, <https://www.blueline.ca/eighty-five-per-cent-of-first-responders-face-mental-health-challenge-university-of-phoenix-5298/>

## BY

McKenna Polen, Writer-Editor,  
FBI's Criminal Justice Information  
Services Division, and William Brooks,  
Chief, Norwood Police Department,  
Massachusetts

# Enhanced Background Checks for Young Adults

## Implementing the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act in NICS

**ON JUNE 25, 2022, THE U.S. CONGRESS PASSED THE BIPARTISAN SAFER COMMUNITIES ACT OF 2022 (BSCA), IN AN EFFORT TO REDUCE GUN VIOLENCE IN THE UNITED STATES.**

One requirement of BSCA is for the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) to expand background checks of prospective firearm transferees who are under 21 years old (U21 transactions).

Chief William Brooks of the Norwood Police Department in Massachusetts noted, "The checks now run on those under 21 provide further safeguards by allowing for the discovery of juvenile and mental illness records that might otherwise have been excluded."

### NICS OVERVIEW

As required by the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act of 1993 (Brady Act), NICS was established to conduct name-based background checks on prospective firearm transferees. Federal and state law enforcement agencies and federal firearms licensees (FFLs) across the United States use NICS to

determine the eligibility of prospective transferees to possess or receive a firearm.

Since NICS became operational on November 30, 1998, the system has processed more than 448 million background checks resulting in nearly 2.2 million federal denials. In 2022, NICS processed 31,596,646 background checks, the third highest annual volume since inception.

### NICS PROCESS

When an individual attempts to purchase a firearm, the prospective transferee completes the ATF Form 4473, Firearms Transaction Record. The FFL provides some of the prospective transferee's biographical information to NICS electronically or by phone. Once the prospective transferee's information is entered into the system, NICS searches NCIC (National Crime Information Center), III (Interstate Identification Index), and the NICS Indices for records matching the prospective transferee's biographical information to determine ineligibility to possess or receive a firearm.

The NICS Indices contains information that may be excluded from NCIC or III, such as involuntary mental health commitments, admitted use of an unlawful controlled substance, and some protection orders. A match to biographical information in the NICS Indices will result in an automatic denial of a firearm transfer and could also be used to revoke or deny a state firearm permit. The NICS Indices contain more than 28.8 million active records.

The Brady Act allows NICS to delay firearm transactions for up to three business days in order to conduct additional research to determine a prospective transferee's eligibility to possess or receive a firearm.

**TABLE 1: NICS CHECKS OVER PAST THREE YEARS**

Year	NICS checks
2020	39,695,315
2021	38,876,673
2022	31,596,646

*Since inception, the top three highest volume years for processing NICS checks, initiated by the FBI and state agencies, were 2020–2022.*

## SECURE LINK-AND-PIN CONNECTION

Agencies should send an email address to NICS Liaison@fbi.gov to receive U21 requests via email with a secure link-and-pin connection. NICS staff highly recommends that agencies provide a shared email address that can be accessed by multiple people rather than providing a specific person's email address. Once the email address is verified, agencies will receive an email from NICS\_U21@fbi.gov that contains a link to a secure web portal to access the U21 request. Then, law enforcement personnel can either click on the link

or copy and paste it into a web browser. The individual will be prompted to enter the pin from the email into the secure portal. This will open the U21 request. After completing internal database searches for juvenile information for the prospective transferee, law enforcement personnel can select the appropriate radio button to respond, add any comments or attachments, and submit their agency's response in the portal.

NTN XXXXXXXXX

- Records/Information found
- Please contact the following agency/agencies
- No additional juvenile records
- Unable to share due to state law

In accordance with the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, when individuals under 21 seek the transfer of a firearm through a federal firearms licensee, the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Section is required to contact your agency for information. We are primarily reaching out to you seeking relevant juvenile information on the subject below. However, if you have knowledge of or possess any information that could impact the subject's eligibility to receive a firearm, we request you provide this information. Please respond to this request within three business days. Please indicate whether your agency does/does not possess prohibiting records or whether your agency has knowledge of potentially prohibiting records.

Submit

An example of a U21 request as displayed in the secure portal

During these three business days, NICS may send requests seeking additional or clarifying information to judicial or local law enforcement agencies. If NICS does not receive additional information to make a final determination, federal law allows the FFL to transfer the firearm after three business days at the FFL's discretion.

### BSCA PROCESS

BSCA requires enhanced NICS checks for U21 transactions. BSCA allows NICS to extend the delay of U21 transactions up through the 10th business day, as necessary, if there is a reason to conduct further research to determine if the prospective transferee has a disqualifying juvenile record. NICS notifies the FFL when it extends the delay of a U21 transaction. At this point, unless NICS notifies the FFL that the transaction has been denied or may proceed,



Prospective firearms transferees complete ATF Form 4473, Firearms Transaction Record, when they attempt to purchase a firearm.

“

*Law enforcement agencies can help NICS process checks on gun buyers under 21 by establishing a central email address and then quickly turning around requests for records.*

—Chief William Brooks

”

the FFL is prohibited by federal law from transferring the firearm until after the 10th business day.

To adhere to the recent legislation, NICS will delay U21 transactions and immediately contact the following agencies with jurisdiction over the residential address the prospective transferee provided to the FFL:

- local law enforcement agencies
- state criminal history repositories or juvenile justice information systems
- state custodians of mental health adjudication records

NICS' contacts with these agencies are called U21 requests. Although not mandatory, it is important for

agencies to respond to U21 requests within three business days whether they find relevant information or not. By responding within three business days, agencies may provide NICS the ability to (1) permit the firearm transfer if no prohibitors exist or (2) notify the FFL of the extended delay of the transfer, which can help prevent a firearm from being transferred to a prohibited person.

#### U21 REQUESTS

The purpose of U21 requests is to determine whether a prospective transferee has a possibly disqualifying juvenile record. NICS will send U21 requests, and agencies will be asked to respond back to NICS stating they are prohibited by state law from providing the requested information or they found or did not find relevant information.

Agencies can receive U21 requests either through an email containing a secure link-and-pin connection or an unsolicited NCIC message. An email with a secure link-and-pin connection is the preferred contact method as it allows agencies to connect to a secure FBI portal to access and respond to U21 requests. This secure connection protects prospective transferee's personally identifiable information provided within the request.

After receiving a U21 request, unless state law prohibits an agency from providing the requested information, agencies should search their internal databases for possibly disqualifying information on the individual. This expanded outreach is intended to help reveal any disqualifying juvenile records, but agencies are encouraged to share any possibly disqualifying information they possess. Possibly disqualifying juvenile—or adult—information that can be submitted as an agency's response to a U21 request may include any criminal or delinquent acts conducted or any mental health adjudications or commitments, such as the following examples:

- Arrests for, admittance/known use of, and/or a positive test of unlawful controlled substance (to include recreational and medical marijuana)
- Active warrants
- Interactions involving mental health concerns
- Known felony or serious misdemeanor offenses/arrests
- Active protection orders/extreme risk protection orders
- Court-ordered firearm restrictions
- State prohibitors (e.g., emergency risk protection order, conviction of domestic abuse)

## HOW CAN LAW ENFORCEMENT HELP?

1. Create a shared email account that is not tied to a specific person and is checked every business day.
2. Send the shared email address to [NICSLiaison@fbi.gov](mailto:NICSLiaison@fbi.gov) to receive U21 requests directly via email with a secure link-and-pin connection.
3. Respond to U21 requests within three business days, regardless of your database findings.

## BSCA KEY FACTS

- NICS is required to seek possibly disqualifying juvenile information when processing U21 transactions.
- NICS will send specified state and local agencies U21 requests for possibly disqualifying juvenile information.
- If an agency receives a U21 request, unless prohibited by state law, personnel should search the agency's internal records and databases for possibly disqualifying juvenile records.
- Law enforcement should send responses to NICS within three business days, even if the response is no records found or cannot share due to state law.



*A depiction of a background check with no prohibitors, which allows NICS to proceed firearm transfers.*

How agencies receive U21 requests will determine how they respond to these requests. If agencies received the U21 request via email with a secure link-and-pin connection, agencies should respond within the secure portal. If agencies received the U21 request via an NCIC message with “\$.H.U21” at the top, agencies should email their response to [NICS\\_U21@fbi.gov](mailto:NICS_U21@fbi.gov).

To receive future U21 requests via email with a secure link-and-pin connection, agencies can send their preferred email address to [NICSLiaison@fbi.gov](mailto:NICSLiaison@fbi.gov). NICS staff encourages agencies to provide an email account that multiple people can access to allow more than one person to respond to these urgent requests.

#### **LAW ENFORCEMENT’S RESPONSE IS CRITICAL**

Responding to U21 requests is a matter of public safety. Unless disqualifying information is in NCIC, III, or NICS Indices, NICS will not know that an individual should be prohibited from possessing or receiving a firearm.

If local law enforcement agencies provide information regarding juvenile justice history or mental health adjudications or commitments during U21 requests, NICS can potentially prohibit the transfer of a firearm to a disqualified individual, which could reduce gun violence and save lives. ♡

## **U21 REQUEST SUCCESS STORY**

As of the writing of this article, NICS has sent more than 59,000 U21 requests, which have resulted in 80 denials. One denial occurred in the fall of 2022 when an individual under age 21 attempted to purchase a firearm at an FFL outside of the individual’s residential state. NICS sent U21 requests to appropriate agencies, as required by BSCA.

The initial NICS check showed an arrest in 2021 for driving under the influence (DUI), which met the BSCA criteria for an extended delay (to determine if the DUI was based upon unlawful controlled substance use). Upon further research, it was found that the subject was under an active felony indictment, disqualifying the person from purchasing a firearm. Subsequently, the subject was denied the firearm transfer and entered into the NICS Indices. If the indictment had been in III, the firearm transfer would have been automatically denied. Because BSCA required enhanced research and permitted the extended delay, NICS was able to conduct further research, locate records that were not initially available, and prevent a firearm transfer to a prohibited person.

## **RESOURCES**

To learn more about the expanded BSCA requirements or U21 requests, agencies can visit the NICS Resources Community on the JusticeConnect network via the Law Enforcement Enterprise Portal. Scan the QR code or visit [fbi.gov/nics](https://fbi.gov/nics) for more information about NICS. Agencies can contact NICS experts at [NICSLiaison@fbi.gov](mailto:NICSLiaison@fbi.gov) or 1-844-265-6716 with any questions or to request a secure link-and-pin connection.



# Diet and Shift Work



**EATING HEALTHY IS TOUGH ENOUGH FOR PEOPLE WORKING IN LAW ENFORCEMENT. ADD IN THE CHALLENGE OF SHIFT WORK: THE LATE NIGHT AND EARLY MORNING HOURS WHEN MOST RESTAURANTS AND STORES ARE CLOSED, WHEN THE BEST FOOD CHOICES COME IN PACKAGES OF FLAVORED FAT, SALT, AND SUGAR. IT'S A RECIPE FOR A POOR DIET.**

Poor diet surely plays a part in some of the negative health effects that shift workers experience, including poor blood sugar control, an increased risk of type 2 diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, and even certain cancers. Beyond health effects, the alterations in normal circadian rhythms caused by shift work can wreak havoc on performance, from driving skills and mood alterations to feelings of fatigue.

While more research is needed into the topic of diet and shift work, the current results point to several ways that a shift worker's diet differs from those who work standard days. Surprisingly, the cause isn't due to eating more calories but rather the following factors:

- **Late-night eating:** It's a habit that's almost inevitable with shift work, one that can cause a greater increase in blood sugar than eating earlier in the day—even when eating the same food. Triglycerides can also become more elevated for late night meals.
- **Snacking:** Studies show that many shift workers snack or graze rather than eating meals, and snacks tend to have lower nutritional quality than meals.
- **Large meals:** Snacking all night may not be particularly healthy, but neither is having a large, high-fat or high-sugar meal, especially in the late night and early morning hours. It may even negatively impact driving performance.
- **Eating duration:** Multiple studies have shown that shift or night workers tend to have a longer eating duration, meaning they eat for more hours of their "day" and have less time between their last meal and

the next day's first meal. This longer eating duration may be due to less sleep; more waking hours leads to more time for eating, according to a recent study in male military police officers.

- **Unhealthy choices:** Shift workers tend to drink less water and eat less fruits, vegetables, and foods high in fiber than those working day shift.
- **Lack of sleep:** Changes in appetite and food cravings can occur due to poor sleep quantity and quality.
- **Social pressure:** Social influences, like eating when family and coworkers are eating, also impact eating duration and mealtimes.

## STRATEGIES

The news is not all bad for all shift workers. Anecdotally, some people report *better* eating habits when working at night. Knowing there are limited food options at night, they plan and pack their meals in advance rather than eating out with colleagues. Some find that there are less opportunities for "mindless" eating at night than during the day, when food is more widely available.

But for most people, eating healthy at night remains a challenge for the many reasons listed previously. Tackling each of the contributing factors can help individuals and law enforcement organizations adapt and improve eating habits and overall health.

### STRATEGY 1: TIMING IS (ALMOST) EVERYTHING

Researchers agree that more real-world studies are needed to determine the optimal mealtime for shift workers. Based on



current evidence, the following routines are recommended:

- **Limit late-night eating:** If possible, avoid late-night eating altogether. Eat the largest meal earlier, either before the start of watch or early in the evening.
- **Shorten eating duration:** Set a cutoff time for eating so that the time elapsed between the last meal of the previous “day” and the first of the next day is at least 12 hours.
- **Keep a consistent mealtime:** Whenever possible, plan to eat at about the same time each “day.” The same goes for one’s sleep schedule. If an individual is hungry just before bed, eating a light meal or snack is recommended; as anyone who has fasted can attest, it can be difficult to fall asleep with a growling, empty stomach.

#### STRATEGY 2: MAKE HEALTHIER CHOICES

Making healthier choices may be even more important for shift workers.

- **Eat light:** Avoid heavy foods that are high in fat and high in sugar. One study showed that eating a smaller snack did not raise glucose or insulin levels as much as larger meals consumed during a night watch.
- **Protein:** Some studies show that eating more protein and less high-carb foods at night may help with alertness.

- **Focus on healthy foods:** Fruits; vegetables; and other high-fiber foods like nuts, seeds, beans, and whole grains should be prioritized. A study done with health care workers showed that providing healthy snacks and bottled water to shift workers led to a better mood and less fatigue.

#### STRATEGY 3: HYDRATE

Dehydration may contribute to feelings of fatigue and decreased alertness.

- **Wake up with water:** Drink a large glass upon waking.
- **Be smart about caffeine:** Avoid high-caffeine intakes of over 400 milligrams per day.

Hydrating throughout the “day” with water or other unsweetened beverages, such as herbal tea, green tea (green tea has less caffeine than coffee or black tea), or even a low-sodium broth may be a good solution. Also, consider snacking on fruits and vegetables; these foods contain the most water, so they are both hydrating and nourishing.

With some good tactics and planning, it is possible to eat healthy with shift work and rotating schedules, while also staying alert and ready. And it’s worth the effort. ♡

### HEALTHIER OPTIONS FOR SHIFT WORKERS

- Select fresh fruit like apples, oranges, and bananas when buying snacks at 24-hour convenience stores.
- If eating at a late-night diner, include a fresh fruit or veggie (not fried) side with the entrée, or a vegetable-based soup.
- Pack healthy snacks, such as trail mix, fruit, protein bars, meal replacement shakes.
- Pack bottled water or a thermos with hot water for green or herbal tea or a low-sodium broth.

# Leveraging Data Sophistication to Save Lives

**BY**

Jason LaRue, Associate  
Vice President,  
LexisNexis Coplogic  
Solutions

**WHILE CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES ACROSS THE UNITED STATES ARE SETTING THEIR SIGHTS ON ACHIEVING VISION ZERO, ON JANUARY 9, 2023, THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION (NHTSA) RELEASED ITS LATEST PROJECTIONS FOR TRAFFIC FATALITIES IN 2022.**

Nearly 31,785 people died in traffic crashes on U.S. roadways in the first nine months of 2022, a 0.2 percent decrease as compared to the 31,850 estimated fatalities during the same time in 2021. Although individual behavior cannot be controlled, there are steps that can be taken.

Data sophistication can help better identify traffic issues and trends to develop a preventive strategy against future crashes. In fact, Vision Zero is built on the premise that crashes are preventable, which is a shift from conventional thinking that crashes are generally inevitable. Data sophistication in action can help law enforcement agencies develop strategies that can continue to influence this downward trend, saving more lives and tapping into important resources that can assist them in rebuilding community trust.

**WHAT IS DATA SOPHISTICATION?**

Data sophistication is the ongoing normalization, automation, and use of structured and unstructured data. By increasing the automation and integration of key processes, like crash and citation reporting, agencies can evolve from a reactive safety strategy to a proactive, and even preventive, strategy. This approach makes it easier for the agency to transform data into meaningful insights and visualizations that help them address the real-world issues they are facing. Those data-driven agency decisions can then be used to save more lives—in communities and on roadways. Additionally, applying the tenets of data sophistication beyond the command staff and beyond the streets to the agency communications or public information arm can serve as a catalyst to improving community relationships. Data sophistication can empower agencies to effectively and transparently communicate where, when, and why tickets have been written—alongside the resulting traffic-safety outcomes—essentially providing the ability to explain how they are keeping residents safe on the roadways.

**REAL-WORLD APPLICATION**

By funneling actionable data and analytics, law enforcement agencies can do more than simply provide clear reports on crashes that have already happened. They can leverage data sophistication to help them prevent future crashes from happening.

For example, imagine you live in Driveton, USA. Data has indicated there have been several red-light citations at the intersection of A Street and B Street. This intersection happens to be where many high school students cross the street after school. Leveraging these data, agencies can proactively develop a plan of action to prevent any possible fatalities in the area. The plan of action could include such remedies as increased patrol during the school's dismissal or working with the state's department of transportation to make infrastructure changes, such as a speed bump or roundabout to route cars more safely around the pedestrian crosswalk. Data sophistication empowers agencies to proactively mitigate these types of problems and other safety issues that can be significantly complex in nature rather than reactively responding when the worst has already happened.

What's more, leveraging data sophistication ultimately results in significant resource optimization. Data visualization allows agencies to pinpoint where additional services are required and quickly pivot to redeploy assets based on the data. This saves the agency and community both time and money.

For example, multiple robust dashboards highlight crash and traffic trends by cause, time of day, age, and other factors that offer a better, more holistic understanding of the root causes of different incidents. The ability to sort by cause and weather condition make it possible to automate decision-making that can lead to improved traffic safety in ways that help agencies save more lives and take steps toward achieving their Vision Zero goals.

Embracing the promise of data sophistication can position agencies as traffic safety leaders at a time when that leadership is needed most. By collecting data electronically at the crash site and enabling



“

*By recognizing and understanding trends, law enforcement agencies can intelligently deploy resources based on peak or recurring activity for the most effective allocation.*

”

mapping, trending, reporting, and analytics, agencies can more quickly and efficiently advance their strategy and recognize trends to significantly reduce traffic fatalities.

By recognizing and understanding trends, law enforcement agencies can intelligently deploy resources based on peak or recurring activity for the most effective allocation. In addition, they can identify detailed crash statistics to support federal grant applications or special initiatives. Today's law enforcement agencies are being charged with the need for greater transparency and accountability. Data insights can help to clearly document the factors behind enforcement decisions and the results of those decisions to help agencies provide evidence of the good work they are already doing and the steps they are taking to build on that foundation.

The data sophistication journey begins with the understanding that no matter where an agency is currently on the continuum, advancing the automation and integration of key processes that enable data-driven decisioning is vital to an ongoing strategy specific to a community's needs. Every level attained toward data sophistication is positive progress in proactively improving traffic safety, reducing the number of crashes, limiting severity, and creating better outcomes—outcomes that all lead to Vision Zero becoming a reality in a community. ♡

## We Build Community



Designing facilities to enhance the health, safety, and wellness of our first responders.



[FGMARCHITECTS.COM](http://FGMARCHITECTS.COM)



**FGMA**ARCHITECTS

## Research abounds on topics related to law enforcement and criminal justice, and it can be difficult to sift through it all. Informer breaks down three studies for law enforcement leaders to help keep them up to date.

### OSW AND MARKSMANSHIP

An intervention that has serious implications for all involved, marksmanship is a facet of police activity that demands accuracy and precision. This study examined breathing patterns in relation to shooting performance.

Researchers obtained measures of respiratory muscle strength, pulmonary capacity, and shooting performance from a sample of 167 police cadets from a police academy in Turkey. Shooting performance was based on 20 untimed shots taken at 10 meters with a 9mm caliber pistol.

Results revealed a significant relationship between respiratory muscle strength and shooting performance. Despite positive correlations, the association between breathing capacity and shooting performance was not statistically significant.

The results of this study lend credence to holistic mind and body wellness, implying that strong pulmonary function may be necessary for exemplary shooting performance. Researchers assert that respiratory muscles are important to stabilizing posture, especially in times of stress, and stable posture contributes to shooting performance. These results demonstrate the interrelatedness of psychological and physiological stress responses and their impact on performance. Healthy habits such as using breathing exercises to manage anxiety, exercising regularly, and refraining from smoking may be important to maintaining excellent performance on the job.

Emre Karaduman, et al., "Pistol Shooting Performance Correlates with Respiratory Muscle Strength and Pulmonary Function in Police Cadets," *Sustainability* 14 (2022): 7515.

### RISK REDUCTION THROUGH HIGH-VISIBILITY APPAREL

High-visibility safety apparel (HVSA) is designed to reduce the risk of injury or fatality to officers working on or near highways, yet many police officers do not wear HVSA as often as is recommended. This study relied on survey research of 98 officers from a cluster of four cities in Arizona, who were required to use HVSA in their roles, to explore attitudinal factors related to wearing HVSA.

The survey measured safety attitudes, negative preconceptions, perceived benefits, and actual time spent wearing HVSA per month. Results indicated that strong feelings toward safety ethics and concerns over professional appearance were most strongly associated with time spent wearing HVSA. Other factors—including safety education, occupational risk, and functionality—were also associated with the decision to wear HVSA or not; the factors of visibility and comfort were not influential.

Based on these findings, establishing a culture of safety may be important to influencing officers' behavior. Officers may become desensitized to tasks that they perform routinely, but recurring risk awareness training and education can help to counter this. Such training should include both statistical and anecdotal evidence of the benefits of wearing HVSA to appeal to officers' hearts and minds in shaping their behavior toward a culture of safety.

Mijin Kim and Christina Soyoun Song, "Understanding Police Officers' Usage of High-Visibility Safety Apparel: The Roles of Safety Ethics and Professional Appearance," *Safety* 7, no. 1 (2021): 15.

### OSW CONCERNS FROM POLICE OFFICERS' PERSPECTIVES

The safety and wellness of police officers encompass a variety of topics—from body armor to cardiovascular health to post-traumatic stress disorder. This study solicited concerns related to occupational health, safety, and wellness from police officers in Québec, Canada, to understand which issues are most pertinent to them.

This study examined the responses to a single open-ended question from a broader survey, resulting in a convenience sample of 404 officers. Responses focused on five themes. The first theme was work schedule; respondents found it difficult to recover between shifts and balance responsibilities outside of work—especially among female officers with children. The second theme was occupational stress, including stress and anxiety, which is sometimes brought on by a perceived lack of support from superiors and public scrutiny. The third theme was that of the work environment and the chronic pain that resulted from wearing the duty belt and spending long hours in the patrol car. The fourth theme was a lack of agency incentive for health and physical fitness. Finally, the fifth theme was that of physical safety concerns, especially when patrolling alone.

These results can help direct future interventions related to officer safety and wellness by offering a better understanding from officers themselves of what their most pressing concerns are.

Sébastien Poirier et al., "Health, Safety, and Wellness Concerns Among Law Enforcement Officers: An Inductive Approach," *Workplace Health & Safety* 71, no. 1 (2023): 34–42.

# 2023 CALENDAR

Are you looking forward to reading about a certain issue in law enforcement or thinking about submitting an article to *Police Chief*? Look below to see some of the topics we are covering in 2023!

JANUARY	Contemporary Issues in Policing
FEBRUARY	Innovations in Law Enforcement Training
MARCH	Violence Reduction Strategies
APRIL	Using Data to Drive Policing
MAY	Officer Safety and Wellness
JUNE	Policing with Vulnerable Populations
JULY	Media Strategies
AUGUST	Mentoring & Development
SEPTEMBER	Police Innovation
OCTOBER	Leadership & Accountability
NOVEMBER	Contemporary Issues in Policing
DECEMBER	Partnerships in Public Safety

Do you have innovative solutions or experiences that you want to share with the policing community? Take a look at our manuscript guidelines on [www.policechiefmagazine.org/article-guidelines](http://www.policechiefmagazine.org/article-guidelines). Articles can be submitted online at [www.policechiefmagazine.org/submit-an-article](http://www.policechiefmagazine.org/submit-an-article).

# IACP

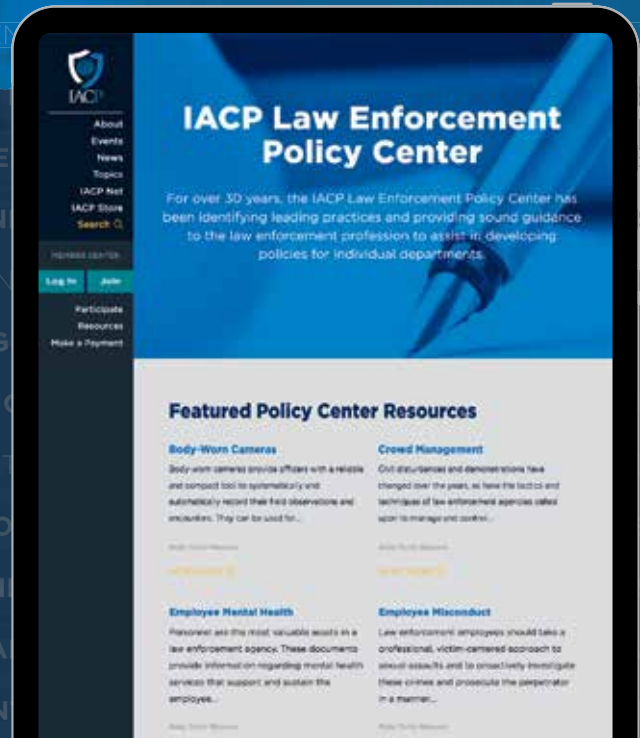
## LAW ENFORCEMENT POLICY CENTER

The IACP identifies leading practices and provides sound guidance to the law enforcement profession to assist in developing policies for individual departments.

### WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Contact the Policy Center at  
[policycenter@theIACP.org](mailto:policycenter@theIACP.org)  
or visit the Policy Center  
website at  
[theIACP.org/policycenter](http://theIACP.org/policycenter)

- ✓ Each document is written and **peer-reviewed** by two separate and distinct groups made up of experienced leaders in law enforcement, policy, and law.
- ✓ IACP members have access to documents on over **130 topics!** Learn about the latest evidence-based procedures for Active Shooters, Body-Worn Cameras, Hate Crimes, and more.
- ✓ **DID YOU KNOW** that the IACP Policy Center continually selects topics to update based on **member interest** and demand?





# POLICE WEEK

---

## 2023

**EACH YEAR DURING POLICE WEEK, COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE UNITED STATES** hold memorial services in remembrance of police officers who have made the supreme sacrifice for their communities. Also during this week, police departments hold open houses, conduct tours of their facilities, and hold community activities to celebrate police officers and their duties. May 15 has been designated National Peace Officers Memorial Day.

**POLICE WEEK:** On October 1, 1962, U.S. President John F. Kennedy signed Public Law 87-726, a joint resolution of the 87th Congress:

*Pursuant to 36 U.S.C. 136–137, the President designates May 15 of each year as “Peace Officers Memorial Day” and the week in which it falls as “Police Week.”*

**FLAGS AT HALF-STAFF:** In 1994, U.S. President William J. Clinton signed Public Law 1030322, a joint resolution of the 103rd Congress directing that the flag of the United States be flown at half-staff on all government buildings on May 15.

Most local communities incorporate a resolution into their municipal code designating days for Police Week and indicating that flags will be flown at half-staff on May 15. Once local governments have identified the appropriate days, businesses and others tend to follow suit. Police executives are encouraged to ensure that May 15 is observed in the local jurisdiction’s ordinances. Law enforcement might consider conducting a local campaign to inform businesses of this observance.

### 2023 NATIONAL SERVICES

<b>Thursday, May 11</b>	National Police K-9 Memorial Service
<b>Friday, May 12</b>	Police Unity Tour Arrival Ceremony
<b>Saturday, May 13</b>	35th Annual Candlelight Vigil
<b>Sunday, May 14</b>	National Police Survivors’ Conference (Day 1)
<b>Monday, May 15</b>	National Peace Officers Memorial and Wreath Laying
<b>Tuesday, May 16</b>	National Police Survivors’ Conference (Day 2)

 Visit [www.policeweek.org](http://www.policeweek.org) for more information.

# HEATing Up Community Policing Efforts



**“WHAT IS THE MOST PRESSING ISSUE FACING LAW ENFORCEMENT?” THIS IS THE QUESTION THAT HAS BEEN AT THE CENTER OF MANY PRODUCTIVE CONVERSATIONS IN A SOUTH FLORIDA METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY.**

Through a partnership formed from a friendship, the Miami HEAT basketball team and Dedication to Community (D2C) nonprofit organization had been searching for a way to enhance community outreach efforts. D2C’s goal to help law enforcement agencies develop and sustain meaningful, safe, and mutually supportive relationships with the public and the death of George Floyd served as a catalyst to collaborate with the local police. The proposed initiative was a series of training workshops in which community members could sit down with officers to have open and honest dialogue.

With the basketball team’s hosting capabilities, D2C’s training and experience, and the openness of officers and community members, the pilot program began with the City of Miami Police Department in September 2020. Due to the program’s initial success, the Miami HEAT executives contacted the Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD) to discuss an expansion of their community partnership. Director Alfredo “Freddy” Ramirez III approved the new initiative, and the first workshop with the department was held in 2021.

The workshops place a focus on developing interpersonal skills. “The objective of the workshops is to improve the day-to-day interactions our officers have with the public, whether it be through traffic stops, calls for service, or random encounters with citizens,” said MDPD’s information officer, Brian Ballou.

Although the breakout discussions are the core exercise of the workshops, Quentin Williams, the founder of D2C



Does your agency have an initiative or project you'd like to see featured? Email us at [EDITOR@THEIACP.ORG](mailto:EDITOR@THEIACP.ORG).

and a former FBI agent, leads every session by speaking on his personal experience with law enforcement to encourage discussion. Embedded in his story is a distressing interaction that he had with officers during his early life. The director of statewide programs and senior instructor at D2C, Kim Varner, follows with his own experience of merging his role as a deputy with his role as a father and a mentor. The officers and community members then break off into small groups to explore the community's perception of current policing methods. The Miami HEAT basketball players and staff also participate in the conversation and speak on the importance of the workshops.

**MOVING FORWARD**

Following the open dialogue, the participants also pose potential solutions. A summarized report from the sessions is forwarded to the MDPD command staff, explaining problem areas and solutions that the community would like to see implemented. Although it is still too early to see tangible training or policy adjustments, the command staff have made a point to address some of the less complex concerns.

For example, one issue that came up during the workshop was that community members were unsure of how best to contact the police if they had useful information or witnessed a crime. Through the MDPD's close relationship with the

Miami HEAT, the phone number to Crimestoppers is now displayed on the scoreboard, as well as on other displays within the arena.



Illustration by The\_AA's/Shutterstock

The MDPD continually strives to improve its relationship with the public through open dialogue and partnerships. Several training workshops are lined up through 2023, and additional methods of community policing are being considered within the MDPD's Neighborhood Resource Units.

Police reform is a hot topic sweeping the globe, but many departments often struggle with deciding how to best effect change in their community. Sometimes, the simplest place to start is with a conversation. ♡

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Miami-Dade Police Department suggests the following recommendations for creating an open dialogue forum:

- The messaging to officers and agency personnel should be clear, and they should understand how the conversations can benefit them.
- Don't do it alone. Consider a partnership with well-known stakeholders to draw more participants to the workshops.

# LMU | Lincoln Memorial University

## Master of Science in Criminal Justice

### Take the *next* step in your career



100% Online  
 30 Credit Hours  
 Can be completed in **16 months**  
 No GRE required  
 Enroll in January, May or August

**Choose from *three* tracks**

- Administrative
- Applied Professional
- Research


Learn more

Values | Education | Service



**A RESILIENT MIND FOR**  
**CHAOTIC**  
**TIMES**



**BY**

Stephanie Conn, PhD, Licensed  
Psychologist, First Responder  
Psychology

**POLICING HAS ALWAYS BEEN A CHALLENGING PROFESSION, BUT THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY HARD ON POLICE OFFICERS.** Between COVID-19, the rise in anti-police sentiment, soaring violence against officers, rising crime rates, and mental health crises, officers' minds have taken a hit. Fortunately, a resilient mindset is still achievable for police professionals. In fact, resilience is forged through adversity.

### UNHEALTHY MINDSET

An unhealthy mindset limits a police officer's ability to be effective on the job and happy at home. The hallmarks of unhealthy mindsets can be remembered with the acronym, C.A.N.T., which stands for closed, avoidant, negative, and toxic.

**FIGURE 1:** UNHEALTHY MINDSET

## C.A.N.T.

- CLOSED
- AVOIDANT
- NEGATIVE
- TOXIC



### Closed

Most people do not like people who contend they know everything. Yet, some of the same people who dislike those know-everything types also have that characteristic. They believe they intuitively know what will not work. For example, beliefs that yoga is for hippies or counseling is for weak people are sometimes espoused by people who have not tried either one. They believe that they know the right answer even though they do not know much, if anything, about the topic. When agencies start wellness programs, these officers forecast the programs' failure because they do not want to try anything new. Their fear of the unknown locks them in place.

Officers who are struggling with trauma and overwhelming stress also tend to be close-minded, as their survival instincts will make them less likely to try anything new, since that would be risky. They play it safe by staying in their comfort zones, even if that "comfortable" place is filled with stress and trauma. They become comfortable with the discomfort they already know.

### Avoidant

Policing is a historically stoic profession. Traditional police culture dictated that officers shut down their natural responses to events. However, what starts as operationally necessary while handling a call (maintaining emotional distance) often spills over into the aftermath. Police believe that allowing themselves to be sad about a sad situation is weak and will ultimately be their undoing. There are many negative terms used for having an emotional response to something—e.g., breaking down, having a meltdown, or falling apart.

This view of emotional responses results in avoiding feelings and thoughts about traumatic or troubling events. Some police officers also avoid

addressing personal issues, such as disagreements in their relationships and symptoms of underlying health issues, allowing those issues to worsen. It is odd to think that police officers who routinely confront life-and-death scenarios at work will avoid conversations with their loved ones. Police personnel tend to suppress most emotions, aside from anger. It is a common misconception that thinking about a problem is dwelling on it, but there is a wide gap between avoiding and dwelling on problems, leaving room for healthy expression of emotions. It is almost impossible to sweep problems under the rug and not trip on the bumps that strategy creates. If people directly address these issues and truly process their experiences, they can get relief.

## Negative

To promote survival, the brain is wired to pay more attention to the negative than the positive. If humans pay more attention to the garden than the snake in it, they are more apt to die. This negativity bias is further exacerbated by police work, where calls for service or cases investigated exaggerate the perceived frequency of these events, leading officers to believe that they and their loved ones are in constant danger. This leads to significant mistrust in others and the world at large, and the belief that one must always both expect the worst and prepare for it. This belief is logical except that negative people don't take note of how rarely the "worst" truly occurs. This mindset fails to consider all the times that negative predictions did not come true and things turned out well or not as badly as predicted.

Making matters worse, officers tend to rehash the negativity in their work, complaining about the public, supervisors, coworkers, and politics, among other topics. Former Navy Seal Eric Greitens summed it up nicely when he said, "Pain does not result in suffering. Repeatedly thinking about pain results in suffering." The pain is hard enough in its own right, without adding to the pain by dwelling on it.

Another form of negative thinking that has interfered with a resilient mindset was coined "incident envy." Police will compare how they are doing in the aftermath of a call or case with their peers. If one responder perceives that another officer had a more difficult role in the call, the individual will believe that he or she has no right to feel a certain way and that the other person is more worthy of

support. For example, officers who were present during an officer-involved shooting but did not shoot will downplay their own feelings and reactions because they believe the shooter had it worse. While that might be true (or not), it does not negate the difficulty of every other person's role on the call. A powerful metaphor that captures incident envy is "You're just as dead from drowning in seven feet of water as you are in twenty feet of water."

Similarly, when officers compare how they are doing after a call and see that someone is doing better than they are, those officers will judge themselves as not measuring up or as being weak. There are many problems with this tendency. First, it is a comparison of one's inner feelings, thoughts, and symptoms with another person's outer display of theirs. Police officers are notorious for hiding their feelings, giving others the impression that they are unaffected by the call or the work altogether. Yet, if another person appears to be doing worse than them, it does not make officers feel any better. Personnel may feel bad because someone has it worse than they do and, again, it diminishes their perceived right to have any negative reaction. It's a no-win situation.

## Toxic

Chronic exposure to stress and trauma can impact an officer's mindset. As discussed earlier, when the survival brain is in charge, officers will be close-minded, avoidant, and negative. Therefore, despite officers' best efforts to manage their trauma, they may need to consider professional help for brain-based trauma treatment such as Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), Brainspotting, neurofeedback, or neuromodulation.

Unhealthy lifestyles also lead to a toxic brain and, consequently, a toxic mindset. Officers that eat the standard American diet (SAD), which includes highly processed junk food, devoid of nutritional value, tend not to fare as well as those who recognize food is either the medicine or the poison. Health research supports that an unhealthy diet leads to inflammation in the brain and an imbalance of the good and bad bacteria in the gut. This, in turn, leads to increases in depression, anxiety, PTSD, low libido, fatigue, and poor memory and focus, among other cognitive difficulties. Similarly, lack of exercise and poor sleep also contribute to an unhealthy brain. Some officers'

excessive use of caffeine, including energy drinks, intensifies their anxiety, agitation, and impatience. It also interrupts their sleep, further compromising their ability to think and act in a healthy manner.

## BUILDING A RESILIENT MINDSET

Developing a resilient mindset is essential to surviving a career in policing. It can also help officers to thrive in their work and in life. Luckily, building a resilient mindset is also quite doable. Aptly, a healthy mindset can be remembered with the acronym, G.R.O.W.—goal and growth oriented, reflexive, optimistic and open, and well cared for.

### Goal & Growth Oriented

A resilient mind is always being challenged, in a good way. One cannot build muscles without lifting weights, and the brain is no exception. A goal- and growth-oriented mindset is the opposite of a closed mindset. Setting goals for growth in their work can keep officers' minds sharp and their motivation strong. Such goals might include learning leadership skills to be promoted or specific skills, such as computer forensics or breaching tactics, to obtain a specialized assignment.

Having nonwork goals is equally important. These goals might include learning new skills such as woodworking, speaking another language, or trading stocks. There are even brain-training programs designed to help with focus and memory if one wishes to grow in those areas.

A resilient mindset recognizes that its capabilities are not fixed. It is growth oriented. Psychologist Carol Dweck's research on fixed versus growth mindset suggests that being capable is not a matter of having a talent or not having it but, rather, is the product of *becoming* capable. Growth is the pursuit of excellence and capability. Resilient people do not expect to be automatically endowed with some capability, nor are they critical of themselves if someone else is more capable than they are at a given skill. Instead, resilient individuals set goals to learn and develop the skill.

To have a growth mindset, intentionality is key. The average person acts based on what they feel like at the moment and that, in turn, ultimately dictates their identity. For example, "I feel lazy, so I'll be lazy. Therefore, I am a lazy person." A resilient person reverses the order, acting with

intention. They determine the identity they want; act in accordance with that; and, in turn, see themselves in that way (e.g., "I am a resilient person and resilient people persevere." This leads to feeling pride in perseverance).

### Reflexive

A resilient mindset is reflexive and flexible. Similar to an after-action report or operational debriefing of a call, it makes sense to reflect on how a conversation with a loved one went. Were there things that could have been done better or said differently to minimize hurt feelings? Was the timing right? Why or why not? Once a person has reflected on his or her approach to the situation, flexibility allows for needed adjustments. This is standard practice in operational debriefings, which allows officers to become increasingly more skilled in their work. The same holds true for all other situations in life. Part of the reflective process involves getting feedback from trusted others. In this way, officers can address their blind spots.

FIGURE 2: RESILIENT MINDSET



## Optimistic & Open

Positivity has gained a lot of popularity in mainstream culture in the last several years. Yet, it is difficult for officers who are keenly aware of the negativity in the world. Positivity may seem to turn a blind eye to the reality officers experience daily. However, there is a dual reality in police work. The first reality includes violence, abuse, unfortunate accidents, crises, cheating spouses, organizational betrayal, and unfair promotional practices. The other reality is overshadowed by the salience of the first. The second reality includes people getting along well; children obeying their parents, eating their vegetables, and getting good grades; spouses who are loyal, trustworthy, and loving; and supportive supervisors and well-deserved promotions. It takes effort to remember to consider the second reality.

Optimistic realism is a better, more palatable mindset for officers. It allows for a balanced view of people and situations. It considers the possibility of the good and the bad. It allows the typical officer an approach of planning for the worst, but also identifies why things went well when they do so. Was it because the danger or problem was overestimated? Or did the situation go well because the officer managed it well? Both are important pieces of information to have.

Optimistic realism is different than realism in that there is a slight degree of hope that accompanies a candid view of the problem. The Stockdale Paradox, named after Admiral James Stockdale, the longest held prisoner of war in Vietnam, is summed up as, “You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end—which you can never afford to lose—with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be.” Officers’ lives sometimes depend on their awareness of the brutal aspects of reality. However, if officers lose faith in themselves, they lose everything. Resilient officers know to look for examples of goodness in the world and know that they will find what they are looking for.

Stockdale’s concept of faith (which is belief without proof) is related to hope. Hope consists of belief and expectation. This includes the belief that taking some action can be helpful (belief in self, a person, a treatment, behavior, etc.) coupled with the expectation of recovery, wellness, or other positive outcome. Again, it is rooted in realism, so this is no place for false hope or toxic

positivity (positivity that denies one’s emotions or ignores the reality of negative experiences).

Being open is a mental and behavioral endeavor. Behaviorally, it involves being willing to try new things. Openness is embedded in the growth mindset previously discussed. Trying new things strengthens the brain. It is equivalent to adding another 10-pound plate to the weight bar or changing up the workout routine altogether. It takes some additional effort to get through it, but the challenge results in growth.

Mentally, being open means accepting being wrong, and a willingness to be coached and adapt one’s mindset. It also means trusting: trusting the person, the process, or one’s own self. Being mentally open includes being curious about a situation. It is important to examine a thought for its accuracy by seeking the information needed to determine if a thought is trustworthy. If it is not accurate or if it is unverifiable, the next question to ask is “Is it helpful to continue to think this thought?” This questions if the line of thinking is generating a game plan—if the person’s thought process is focused on the solution or simply ruminating on the problem. Ruminating on the problem is not constructive and is both cyclical and useless. Officers with growth mindsets know that complaining about problems they cannot fix does not help them or anyone else. Resilient individuals focus their energy on situations where they have influence.

## Well Cared For

Officers cannot expect to run well on a broken leg and, similarly, they cannot think well with a brain that is sick. It must be well cared for to be optimally useful. In contrast to the unhealthy habits that lead to a toxic brain, resilient officers eat healthy diets, exercise, limit consumption of alcohol and other substances, and prioritize sleep. Also, routine check-ups with health care professionals to monitor health indicators such as blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol levels, vitamin levels, and hormone levels, among many others, are vital to remaining healthy. Just as taking the car in for routine maintenance instead of waiting for smoke to start billowing out from under the hood, checking physical and mental health levels in a proactive manner is best. It is easier to make smaller changes to correct problems discovered early on than to reverse damage that has occurred over time.

## CONCLUSION

Having a resilient mind for chaotic times is both vital and achievable. Changing one's mindset is not an overnight process. The first step is to recognize which of the C.A.N.T. factors are eroding the mind. Then, find ways to curb those behaviors by implementing some of the G.R.O.W. factors. Find the G.R.O.W. factor that corresponds with the C.A.N.T. factor to make a small change in perspective and, subsequently, behavior. For instance, eliminate or reduce a behavior that contributes to a toxic brain (e.g., excessive use of caffeine) and add a healthy behavior (e.g., schedule a physical with a doctor). With time, patience, and commitment, any person can build a more resilient mind. ☪

### IACP RESOURCES

- Law Enforcement Agency and Officer Resilience Training Program
- Resilience Strategies for Your Role  
[theIACP.org](http://theIACP.org)
- Supporting Resilient Reintegration Following the Use of Deadly Force  
[policechiefmagazine.org](http://policechiefmagazine.org)

**REDUCE  
LIABILITY**

the **AUTOMATIC DOUBLE LOCK**  
*SpiderCuff*



## ALL CHIEFS BEAR THE RISK OF HANDCUFF LAWSUITS

SpiderCuff's **Automatic Double Lock (ADL)** eliminates your officer's requirement to use their key to prevent over-tightening.

**ADL** is a simple innovation activated with low, "safe" pressure on the wrist.

**ADL** is the best way to make virtually every Neuropathy lawsuit a thing of the past.

Visit [SpiderCuff.com](http://SpiderCuff.com) to see the new level of  
Less forceful restraints.

Equip your officers with the best tool  
for the job at **SpiderCuff.com**

[info@spidercuff.com](mailto:info@spidercuff.com) (413) 781-9001 | [SpiderCuff.com](http://SpiderCuff.com)





# FROM IDEA

# TO IMPLEMENTATION

BY  
Reuben G. Ramirez,  
Assistant Chief of  
Police, Dallas Police  
Department, Texas



# Dallas Police Department Wellness Unit



**THE TOPIC OF OFFICER MENTAL HEALTH IS, WITHOUT QUESTION, RECEIVING MORE ATTENTION THAN EVER BEFORE IN POLICING.**

This attention to such a critical issue is overdue and well deserved. Still, despite the constant discourse, it can be difficult for police leaders to know where to start when it comes to building or providing true wellness support for their officers and staff. Initiatives, programs, and products are springing up in agencies across the globe to address this dire need, but are they really strong enough to change the generations of policing culture that has contributed to the problem? Are these efforts enough to finally influence and guide police professionals to sustainable mental health? Do these solutions truly provide the support needed to keep officers from turning to the unhealthy coping techniques they've resorted to in the past?

In the fall of 2021, the Dallas, Texas, Police Department (DPD) tackled these questions after the command staff held multiple disciplinary hearings that led to officer terminations for misconduct and alcohol-related issues.

As a result, DPD began reviewing all its available alcohol and mental health support resources to determine if they were being utilized and what the overall state of wellness was in the department.

*Photo courtesy of Dallas Police Department, Texas.*



Over the course of three months, focus groups were conducted throughout the police department to get feedback and gather information from officers. The focus groups included patrol officers, investigative detectives, special operations, and command staff group discussions.

Simply put, the findings were not encouraging. Some officers expressed bottled-up frustrations due to a lack of support in the past, and other employees voiced concerns about previous inadequate efforts to help officers heal or the historical difficulty of understanding the burdens carried by police officers.

Many DPD employees mentioned the source of their frustrations resulting from the July 7, 2016, ambush where 12 officers were shot and 5 killed during a downtown protest. Other officers shared concerns about the demands of the job, as well as a perceived lack of support or trust from department leadership and its resources. The discussions revealed layers upon layers of suppressed frustration, with many officers doubtful that an attempt to better support their mental health would result in any significant actions by the department.

In February 2022, DPD decided to develop a full-time Wellness Unit to better support its employees and began identifying the staffing needs to move forward.

In March 2022, a core group of officers came together to review all the information gathered during the focus group discussions, including assessing what resources were needed to better support DPD employees, and to begin mapping out the model that would eventually become the Dallas Police Wellness Unit.

By May 2022, the department identified five officers, one sergeant, and a lieutenant who would lead the new DPD full-time Wellness Unit. The model the core group developed was heavily based on the need to reestablish trust and address the hardened culture that seemed to have settled in at DPD. Although the department had long offered peer support and access to police psychologists and police chaplains, these programs were not broadly supported or utilized by the rank and file. The DPD Wellness Unit would build a proactive approach to reach officers with empathy, compassion, and support prior to the officers being involved in a crisis.

## FIVE-PRONGED APPROACH TO WELLNESS

The Wellness Unit is structured around a multi-pronged approach to wellness that includes the DPD's flagship program called "Checkpoints." Checkpoints are designed to check on officers each time they respond to a call the department deems potentially unhealthy. These are the calls that have previously been looked at as "routine" or "just part of the job," including calls like homicides, suicides, and fatal crashes.

The checkpoint includes an unsolicited call and show of support from a designated checkpoint officer. The checkpoint officer's proactive contact with the employee is designed to offer empathy, compassion, support, and resources, which includes encouraging professional counseling or therapy as part of an overall healthier approach to mental wellness. During these checkpoint contacts, the opportunity to connect with a mentor and develop a network of support within the DPD is also created.

Checkpoint officers are a team of trained, well-respected officers who have distinguished themselves throughout their career. These are the officers others look up to and want to talk to and who are willing to help mentor and guide their police department colleagues to improved mental health.

While Checkpoints is the flagship program, DPD has built a comprehensive approach around the Checkpoints program that includes

- a full-time staffed unit composed of one lieutenant, one sergeant, and five officers;
- a quarterly survey to gauge department employees' needs and solicit feedback on the wellness program;
- a digital online newsletter called the *Officer Wellness and Longevity Newsletter*, the OWL, that highlights employees who have strong mental health routines and gives contact information for all department resources;
- education and training throughout an employee's career, including basic academy training, in-service training, and training for newly promoted officers; and
- family outreach, which includes providing training, resources, and support to all family members of police department employees.





“It’s cops taking care of cops, and because of that connection, it’s having results.”

Overall, the DPD wellness program is designed to bring proactive support to all DPD employees. A heavy emphasis is being placed on proactivity because previous models of support within police organizations were initiated only after an officer was involved in a critical incident or traumatic event, which could easily lead to a mental health crisis immediately after the incident. This can no longer be the standard in today’s world of policing. The goal should always be to help police employees *before* they are dealing with a crisis.

### The Cumulative Effect of Emotional Trauma

Each area of focus within the DPD’s Wellness Unit was designed to address the cumulative effect of emotional trauma. This type of emotional trauma is an area of focus that is often not discussed or is dismissed as not worthy of warranting support or resources. Layers upon layers of emotional trauma throughout an officer’s career from “small” or “minor” incidents can have an even greater impact on a person’s mental wellness than one major critical incident. The profession’s failure to consider this reality forces officers to bury any discomfort or negative emotions they may have felt after a call for service just to keep up with their peers and not look inferior. This response can leave officers with unsettled feelings that result in emotional scars. The lack of proper awareness of this cumulative effect, combined with the inconvenience of accessing resources, leaves officers with thoughts and memories that may be taking a larger toll on police employees than was previously understood. This likely contributes to the stigma around suicide, PTSD, depression, anxiety, and divorce that have plagued the profession for years.

### Alcohol Rehabilitation Procedure

Alcohol dependency and abuse have been challenges for some officers and staff in policing for many years. Driving while intoxicated and other alcohol-related incidents have cost police officers their reputations and careers and damaged departments’ credibility in the communities they serve. While there are no excuses for breaking the law, there is a strong indication that alcohol has become a source of coping, escape, or solace to quiet the emotional trauma that lingers in the minds of many law enforcement officers. Recognizing this problem, the DPD created an alcohol rehabilitation procedure (ARP) that offers

those who come forward (sworn or non-sworn) prior to being involved in an alcohol-related incident the opportunity to receive 30 days of paid leave to attend an inpatient alcohol rehabilitation treatment center. DPD’s Wellness Unit has identified treatment centers throughout the state and region that specialize in treating first responders. Officers who come forward receive assistance from the Wellness Unit with the on-boarding process, insurance confirmation, and transportation to the inpatient facility. The Wellness Unit has also identified several nonprofit groups that will assist officers in covering the deductible cost so that an officer experiences no out-of-pocket expenses for attending the program. Since the inception of the program, eight officers have entered and completed the 30-day program. One of the officers who recently completed the ARP gave a heart-wrenching testimonial for the Assist the Officer Foundation’s *Bridging the Divide* podcast in December 2022.

### The OWL Newsletter

Owls represent wisdom, knowledge, and change, which are all characteristics of what those in law enforcement aim to embody. As part of the organic development and commitment to the DPD’s new Wellness Unit, the OWL logo was designed and sketched by DPD’s very own sketch artist. The newsletter itself is built by DPD officers, and it’s designed to highlight officers within DPD who exemplify officer wellness. Each month, a different DPD officer is selected to share his or her stories of encouragement, support, and health strategies with the department. The newsletter also aims to be a one-stop online resource guide officers can use to find help any time they need. The newsletter and the DPD Wellness Unit are homegrown. It’s cops taking care of cops, and because of that connection, it’s having results.

### DATA AND EARLY RESULTS

The DPD Wellness Unit has been operational since July 2022. The unit and its checkpoint officers conducted more than 800 checkpoints in the first six months following its inception, and 11 percent of the officers who received outreach during that



time frame responded with interest in mental health and wellness services or resources. In the first three months of 2023, checkpoint officers conducted 600 checkpoints with 14 percent of the officers responding with requests for or expressing interest in resources. Judging by the number of officers and employees who have followed up with the Wellness Unit and checkpoint officers, employees are feeling better about discussing wellness within DPD. This feedback is extraordinary when compared to initiatives of this type in the past and includes comments such as “Please tell the chief of police he saved my life,” and the initiative has encouraged officers to come forward to tell their own personal stories of struggle, therapy, and recovery in the *OWL* newsletter.

## TRANSFERABLE BEST PRACTICES

While every police department is unique and what works for one agency might not be what’s best for another, DPD has developed a few first considerations and best practices that can have a big impact on building a wellness program.

- Review behaviors and conduct within the agency for indications of emotional and trauma fatigue.
- Hold focus groups to meet with officers and do an overall assessment of officers’ needs.
- Assess resources available through the agency and how they are being utilized.
- Start to identify influential members of the agency and look for change agents. These informal leaders will need to take ownership of the program for it to succeed.

Understanding the rate of “harmful” incidents that an agency’s personnel are exposed to is also a good first step. Pulling those data and taking a good look

at what officers are seeing, hearing, and responding to each day and over the course of the year provides an eye-opening perspective. The profession has also often looked at resilience as a fixed characteristic rather than considering the possibility that resilience exists on a moving scale depending on what an officer may be going through in his or her personal life at any given time. Family health, death, divorce, and several other personal life events often play the biggest role in how resilient a person is and how a call for service might affect a specific officer. Finally, it’s vital to understand that policing is a very emotional profession—arguably the most emotional profession there is. Officers are human, no matter how superhuman the work they do each day is. Recognizing that truth is essential to moving forward effectively in the area of officer wellness.

Each pillar of support is equally important: mental, physical, financial, and spiritual. They are all vital to the overall wellness of officers. DPD saw the greatest need in the mental health support of its officers, and the department responded accordingly. There’s much more work to do to better support the mental health of the people who protect and serve their communities each day, but DPD is committed to doing all it can do to correct the flawed support models of the past and better protect the minds of those in law enforcement.

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The goal of the DPD and the Wellness Unit is to normalize the discussion about wellness and break down the stigmas that have plagued the police profession for generations. Police personnel are suffering—agencies have recruited them into a life of service, which officers fulfill honorably each day, but have failed to adequately prepare personnel for the constant barrage of emotional trauma they would face. Offices are trained and prepared to physically survive but given minimal tools to mentally survive. Discussions about police work are constantly occurring, but any discussion surrounding mental health rarely (if ever) makes it into roll calls, detail reports, or command staff meetings. The profession lacks in-place systems to proactively support its people. Meanwhile, the statistics on suicide, depression, PTSD, anxiety, and divorce just keep rising.

Those serving in law enforcement deserve a proactive system to support their wellness. It is

## Interested in learning more?

DPD is happy to share information about their wellness program and related procedures.

WELLNESS UNIT

[DPDwellness@dallaspolice.gov](mailto:DPDwellness@dallaspolice.gov) | 214-671-4716

ASSISTANT CHIEF REUBEN RAMIREZ

[reuben.ramirez@dallaspolice.gov](mailto:reuben.ramirez@dallaspolice.gov) | 214-998-3573



imperative that leaders understand how to better serve those who protect and serve their communities each day. Officers answer every call their communities ask of them, striving to address homelessness, truancy, broken homes, addiction, and mental illness, in addition to crime and disorder. Officers serve as counselors, therapists, warriors, guardians, and everything in between. The challenge now faced by the profession is the protection of officers' mental health, and it's going to take everyone to meet this call. Law enforcement is a big ship, and it won't turn on a dime, but together leaders and personnel can shift the profession in a more positive direction. It's time to set a course in a direction that better supports the mental health of police personnel and their families and helps improve first responders' quality of life—a direction that keeps them whole and keeps them safe.

There's no better time to get serious about wellness than now. For those who are serious, but are not sure what to do, DPD is here to help. All the procedures DPD has developed are available to any agency that's interested, including the standard operating procedures, the Checkpoints program model, and the alcohol rehabilitation procedure. Officers and their families are worth whatever it takes to safeguard their wellness. The profession depends on it, and, judging by the statistics seen in policing, officers' lives do too. ♡

#### IACP RESOURCES

- Employee Mental Health and Wellness
- Police Psychological Services Section  
[theIACP.org](http://theIACP.org)
- Developing and Utilizing Empathy in Police Organizations  
[policechiefmagazine.org](http://policechiefmagazine.org)

# REVOLUTIONARY RESTRAINTS

STOP the STRUGGLE FASTER  
*SpiderCuff*



#### INCREASED OFFICER SAFETY

14 inches of dynamic extension gives you faster tactical control with less force

#### AUTOMATIC DOUBLE LOCK

Prevents the cuffs from over tightening without any officer actions, reducing injuries and litigation

#### OTHER FUNCTIONALITIES

- Ratchets back to chain cuff
- Ergonomic Pistol Grip
- Double sided lock release

#### SEE THE INNOVATION

Experience next generation restraints  
**SpiderCuff.com**

[info@spidercuff.com](mailto:info@spidercuff.com) (413) 781-9001 | [SpiderCuff.com](http://SpiderCuff.com)



# EXPERIENCING AWE

## An Innovative Approach to Enhance Investigations and Wellness

**BY**

Jeff Thompson, PhD,  
Detective (Ret.),  
New York City Police  
Department, New York;  
Research Scientist,  
Columbia University  
Medical Center

**INNOVATIVE ADVANCEMENTS ARE NEEDED TO DEVELOP ACTION-BASED INITIATIVES TO LOOK AFTER THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY IN POLICING—THE PEOPLE SERVING IN POLICING AGENCIES.** Research has shown that experiencing awe, when viewed as a strategy to enhance resilience, can benefit police officers in their work and in their personal lives. The concept that awe can play a pivotal role in people's lives might catch some off guard, yet that is one of the many positive attributes of awe—it can promote open-mindedness.

In comparison to the public, law enforcement officers have higher rates of mental health conditions such as alcohol and substance abuse, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress. Suicide rates in policing remain alarmingly high, and organizational stress is often listed as a leading wellness challenge for officers. Stress and its associated conditions not only negatively impact officers' personal well-being, but can also adversely influence officers' ability to serve the public effectively.

Now that the obvious (or what should be the obvious) has been stated, the question becomes—what can be done about it to support the workforce in a meaningful way? This is especially important for those police personnel working in specialized units such as homicide and special victim investigation. Given the nature of their work, these officers are often confronted with the worst of humanity on nearly a daily basis. This includes being exposed to death, seeing the victims of horrific mental and physical attacks, interrogating those suspected of these crimes, and interviewing victims and witnesses. Additionally, these investigators bear the burden of being the ones responsible for closing the case.

The exposure to each of these situations includes experiencing it directly, such as being present at crime scenes, while also encountering it indirectly by engaging with suspects, victims, and witnesses.

The best support for officers working in these specialized units are approaches that can enhance their investigatory skills while also supporting their



personal well-being. How can that be done? One answer is evidence based and it involves eliciting awe. Yes, awe.

Again, being caught off guard by this concept is a good thing. Experiencing awe can lead to this type of surprise, and it can also help to identify gaps in knowledge. In addition, homicide and special victim investigators are finding that experiencing awe is helpful both in their investigatory work and in supporting their personal resilience.

## AWE EXPLAINED

*Awe* has been described as a complex emotion people experience in the presence of something or someone extraordinary, and it challenges their current thinking. Awe can be elicited from events in different categories, including those related to space, nature, music and the arts, spirituality, other people, and personal accomplishments of both the people experiencing it and those observing those accomplishments. This can happen through direct, in-person experiences; in virtual and augmented reality; through sharing, reading, and listening to awe narratives; through viewing photos; and by watching videos.

Awe is often a positive experience. Experiencing awe carries vast benefits, as demonstrated by numerous research studies. These benefits are displayed in Table 1, and it should be noted that each benefit can support both investigators' work and their personal resilience.

Importantly, experiencing awe is not limited to a once-in-a-lifetime

experience such as visiting the Great Barrier Reef, the Grand Canyon, or the Great Pyramids. As much as these moments can be awe inducing, awe can also occur on a daily basis if one approaches life with a certain perspective. Awe researcher Marianna Graziosi describes this dual approach as awe being an ordinary response to something extraordinary, while, importantly, it can also be an extraordinary response to something ordinary. Another awe researcher, Dr. Kirk Schneider, suggests not specifically *looking* for awe moments, but instead *being open* to experiencing them.

**TABLE 1: POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF EXPERIENCING AWE**

Connectedness (with others and nature)
Creativity
Critical thinking
Curiosity
Decision-making
Emotional regulation
Health/immune system improvement
Humility
Identification of knowledge gaps
Learning
Mood improvement
Open-mindedness
Optimism
Prosocial behaviors
Stress reduction
"Slow-down" of time
Ability to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty

## AWE & RESILIENCE

Researchers have described awe as one of many options for enhancing resilience. It has also been suggested that a person needs to have access to a variety of resilience practices instead of relying solely on one. Research has established the relationship between experiencing awe and other resilience and well-being practices, including those identified in Figure 1.

Suicide continues to be a distressing and alarming concern in policing and for other first responders, and it is worth noting how experiencing awe can support suicide prevention efforts. Research has identified some of the results of experiencing awe as relating to protective factors frequently promoted in suicide prevention programs: gratitude; hope, and optimism; meaning and purpose in life; and social connectedness. Therefore, the existing literature supports the potential benefits of implementing awe-promoting practices in policing.

## AWE & POLICING

As much as awe might sound unusual to policing, in reality, the implementation of awe practices in the policing profession is not new. Further, the literature has recently suggested that awe practices can support police leadership as well as elite units such as hostage negotiators.

Awe practices have been implemented by this author in a variety of contexts within policing. This includes as part of a broader resilience program

**FIGURE 1:** RESILIENCE PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH AWE



that has been provided to police personnel in numerous countries. A version of this same program has been implemented in the New York City Police Department’s (NYPD) Police Academy. Elements of it have also become part of its Executive Commanders College curriculum and training for newly promoted supervisors (sergeants, lieutenants, and captains), field training officers, specialized units such as the emergency services unit, and peer support personnel. Importantly, this includes the civilian workforce as well.

Versions of this program, including awe practices, have also been provided at numerous police conferences, workshops, and trainings. Participants have come from many agencies, including the Australian Federal Police, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New Zealand Police,

Police Scotland, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and Swedish Police Authority.

More broadly, the concept of awe as a form of supporting personal resilience and well-being was the key theme of the 2021 Resilience Symposium cohosted by the NYPD and the Department of Psychiatry at Columbia University Irving Medical Center. This virtual event featured leading awe researchers and more than 1,600 participants registered from over 30 countries from diverse professions beyond policing.

Finally, the Awe Project, which is the focus of this article, was created in part to provide police personnel with awe practices that are both practical and evidence based. Recent research on this program has suggested that participants overwhelmingly found it useful.

As with all training, investigators involved in homicide and special victim incidents need training specific to their unique work. Also, given the varying demands of agencies, continually assigning investigators to training is not practical for numerous reasons. Therefore, practical and innovative ways to implement resilience, well-being, and suicide prevention concepts need to be explored. This includes incorporating these practices into established trainings.

## THE AWE PROJECT EXPLAINED

The original, standard version of the Awe Project involves a virtual cohort of participants watching 10 videos designed to induce awe over the course of five days. After watching each video via their mobile devices utilizing the Google Classroom application, they are prompted to share brief reflections and answer short questions relating to other resilience practices such as cognitive reappraisal, gratitude, meaning and purpose, optimism, and social connectedness. The videos are preceded by a one-minute controlled breathing practice as well.

The program was modified to be incorporated into the 10-day Homicide Investigators Course and the 5-day Special Victims Course provided by the NYPD’s Detective Bureau Training Unit. Even though the NYPD hosted the training, it included participants from numerous other agencies including the U.S. Marshals Service, the U.S. Postal Police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Port Authority Police of New York and New Jersey, and the New York City Department of Corrections.

For each day of both training programs, 30 minutes of the first training module was dedicated to the Awe Project. On the first day, the module included a segment on the scientific benefits of awe, as well as a one-minute breathing exercise followed by the first video. At the end of the video, the screen directed the participants to reflect quietly on their own about what they had just watched. Then, with the mini notebooks that were provided specifically for the Awe Project, they were instructed to write

down their answers to two questions on the screen. Finally, after completing this task, the facilitator (the author) had the participants engage in a group discussion regarding those questions.

The format remained the same for each of the remaining modules: one minute of controlled breathing, the awe video, self-reflection, a writing assignment, and then the group discussion. The questions for each day were related to both the video and the previously mentioned resilience practices.

A qualitative data analysis methodology, including thematic analysis and phenomenology, was utilized to develop a post-program survey to gain the insights and potential impact the program had on participants. The data were collected from four different training courses (two from homicide courses and two from special victim courses) with a total of more than 300 participants. The majority of participants were investigators; however, some had different roles relating to homicide and special victim investigations (e.g., social workers, psychologists, and employees from medical examiner's offices).

Overall, the results indicated that participants found the Awe Project supportive of their personal well-being, and they also saw a direct relevance between the program and the investigatory work they do with respect to homicide and special victim cases.

## PROGRAM FEEDBACK & REVIEW

Considering that phenomenological methodologies informed the analysis of the data, the participants were first asked to describe the Awe Project in one word to gauge their personal perspectives. Phenomenological research is concerned with the individual experience of each participant, which allows for themes to emerge.

Consistent with previous awe research, the participants described awe as eliciting a profound reaction, and participants' one-word responses were equally profound: amazing, enlightening, inspirational,

life-changing, spectacular, and transcending. The following additional, positive terms were used to describe the program: helpful, necessary, eye-opening, refreshing, and relaxing.

When asked what type of impact the program had on them, one participant stated:

*It's a project that leads you to stop what you're doing to see what else is going on around you, while giving you the time and space to process your thoughts, feelings, and emotions. All to achieve one purpose—self-awareness, freedom, and joy in our day-to-day life.*

Other participants shared how meaningful the Awe Project was for them, and the profound impact it had, describing it as:

- An eye-opening experience, which makes you view your problems and the world in another way
- A necessary tool to help you deal with everyday life
- Something that we need as humans
- A philosophy that can improve you as a person in all aspects of your life—better person translates to better investigator or whatever you dedicate your life to
- A profound impact on how I can go about work/life on a daily basis and handling different situations in the best way possible

Various themes emerged from the data analysis. The themes are listed in Table 2, followed by in-depth explorations of select themes.

### Acceptance

Resilience practices involve a term called "acceptance," which refers to not ignoring tough and stressful moments, but instead, acknowledging them. Importantly, participants were able to practice this acceptance by taking part in the program.

*We are exposed to a lot of terrible things. Sometimes, we don't take a moment to forget about the daily stressors that occur in our day-to-day lives. With awe, it gives you that moment to forget about things that are enough to haunt us, even in our dreams.*



Notebooks provided for participants of the Awe Project.

Related to the previous comment, the following feedback demonstrates the importance of creating a healthy balance by making time to acknowledge the positive moments in life:

*It is very different and allows you to reflect on the good within life and within yourself, which is a nice change of pace from all the negativity that you have to deal with on a day-to-day basis.*

### Cognitive Reappraisal

Cognitive reappraisal is an important resilience practice. It refers to applying a different perspective to a situation in which you try to take something positive from it, regardless of what occurred. The following comments demonstrate how the Awe Project allowed some participants to engage in cognitive reappraisal (without being prompted):

- "Amazing way to detach from work and relax. Great way to stop for a few minutes and realize the good things happening around you."
- "I'm starting to think of how my long traffic-filled commute benefits me instead of how much I hate NYC traffic."

### Empathy

Empathy is widely regarded as a necessary quality for police officers, including investigators, to be effective,

particularly when interacting with suspects or victims. One participant explained how the program provided support in acknowledging how important empathy is as it allowed them to think of others:

*Taking a brief period of time out of your long day to think about someone else other than the stresses in your life.*

Participants also noted that the change in perspective is not limited to their work but applies to life in general by helping them to adopt a different point of view and see things in a more positive light.

## Handling Discomfort

Homicide and special victim investigatory work requires investigators to handle uncomfortable and unsettling

situations. One participant explained how the Awe Project supported this and more:

*“Life begins outside your comfort zone” and [the Awe training] shows you what that quote even means. It demonstrates how different perspective[s] we all have. It was amazing seeing everyone’s perspective shift as the days went on. Homicide investigators actually digging deep and sharing something vulnerable, which is not common practice in law enforcement.*

Other participants described how taking part in the Awe Project helped them to be more comfortable with the uncertainty and discomfort of their work, saying that the training “will teach you that being uncomfortable is okay” and that being uncomfortable “helps you open your mind.”

## Meaning & Purpose in Life

As previously mentioned, having meaning and purpose in life is critical to flourishing and to overall well-being. With respect to work, having meaning and purpose can help to counter people’s feelings of cynicism, burnout, and other negative emotions. Participants recognized the importance of maintaining a sense of purpose as police personnel, with one participant stating,

*“I think the Awe Project is needed in the law enforcement community because at times some tend to forget why they took this oath.”*

Finding meaning and purpose is not limited to work either, as another participant pointed out:

*“[The Awe Project] just helped me realize that there are other things in life that deserve my attention and focus.”*

**TABLE 2: EMERGENT AWE PROJECT THEMES**

Acceptance	Working in the [unit] is very overwhelming. It reminded me to take time to disconnect.
Cognitive reappraisal	A portion of the day where we get to decompress and learn how to look at life from a different perspective.
Empathy	Cases seems to be the same in nature. But it may the first time a victim endures it. This project provides perspective to not fall into the cycle of treating cases like just another case.
Future action	Made me look for more hobbies to engage in and relieve myself from everyday duties.
Gratitude	The questions...made me appreciate life.
Handling discomfort	A way to get you out of your comfort zone and open you up to something new.
Impact—work	I could use some of these strategies to help victims too.
Impact—personal life	Helped me not only at work but at home.
Meaning & purpose in life	Yes [the program had an impact]. To not lose sight of who I am. At the end of the day, we are all human beings. We can’t let our job taint our views, where we can’t see the good in people or the little things.
Open-mindedness	As an investigator, it hammered down the idea to be mindful of open-mindedness and how it can help broaden my perspective of the people I come across.
Self-care (self-compassion)	It made me realize I need to slow down and take a few minutes for myself each day.
Self-efficacy	[I] feel better about the choices I make now.
Self-transcendent	I hope to continue being positive and spreading positivity every day.
“Small”	This Awe Project allowed me to focus on the “little things” in life and to appreciate their value and worth in the grand scheme of things.
Suicide prevention (and overall mental health)	I love that this [program was] incorporated, and this will save the lives of police officers, if it hasn’t already.
<b>PROGRAM-RELATED</b>	
Breathing practice	I will begin to use the breathing technique to stop and reflect on my stress levels at work and try to relax and refocus.
Expanding the program	Please incorporate the awe program in department-wide training.
Gratitude for participating	Thank you for opening our eyes to other ways of seeing things and showing me how to approach situations differently.
Group discussion	It gave me an opportunity to share with others.
Practical design	A quick way to adjust your thinking in the right direction.



## Open-Mindedness

Being open-minded helps one better tolerate ambiguity, uncertainty, and discomfort. Being open-minded, while also thinking creatively and critically, is necessary for investigators to be effective—and it is related to another important trait: curiosity. The following remarks by participants show how the program supported each of these attributes:

*The Awe Project gives you the ability to take time to reflect and gives you a different perspective on life.*

## Practicality of the Program

When designing resilience, well-being, and suicide prevention programming in policing, as much as it has to be evidence based, it also has to be developed so that it is not overly time-consuming. A participant shared how the brevity of the program was valued:

*[The program is] an opportunity to take five minutes out of your day and apply self-care, awareness, accountability to yourself, which will help you in your personal life and professional career.*

**TABLE 3: SUPPORTING SUICIDE PREVENTION AND OVERALL MENTAL HEALTH**

There are people that care. Sometimes, when we're at our lowest points, we don't realize that. Things like the videos and the talks help to remove you from your problems. It's a very good feeling.
A very simple but incredibly important reminder on what is important. If enough people adopted this, it could prolong many lives of LEOs.
I would describe it as something [participants] have to go into with an open mind. It's not going to be for everyone, which is fine, but if there's one thing that no one can deny at the end is that there really are people that truly give a shit about you, whether they know you or not.
[This is] a program to teach you the tools you need to offset the damage the stress does to you.
The Awe Project is a way to get individuals to be open-minded and puts everyday life into perspective. It's a great mental health course.
I have anxiety and get in my head a lot. The exercises this week have made a difference for me in a positive way.
It's a great way to take a mental break, and when things become overwhelming, it helps you bring yourself back to ground.
It's an activity that allows you to slow down all the racing thoughts in your mind and just take some time to breathe and appreciate the miracle that we all are.
I think we need more of this, and the job should made more of this to prevent mental illness.

## Suicide Prevention and Mental Health

As previously discussed, police suicide remains a critical concern in agencies across the world. Table 3 demonstrates participants' views on how this course can support efforts in preventing suicide as well as countering common suicide risk factors.

## GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The group discussions at the end of the module were purposely designed for various reasons, including exposing participants to similar and varying perspectives, group interaction, social connectedness, and light-hearted conversations as a way to balance the rest of the day's more serious modules. Participants responded positively to this element of the module, saying "I enjoyed the conversation, more than the videos themselves," and "I found value in hearing others' perspectives."

## CONCLUSION

Although the data collected and analyzed demonstrate that the program

positively impacted participants both professionally and personally, it must also be viewed as exploratory. Additional research is needed to examine further the potential value awe practices can have for police in general, as well as the specific units discussed herein. For example, researchers should continue to use qualitative research methodologies when studying awe and resilience. However, quantitative studies should also be implemented in the future as well. This will ensure that diverse methodologies can properly examine this complex emotion and its impact on officer resilience.

For policing to evolve to meet modern demands, new strategies are required to adapt to and address emerging concerns. Now is the time to implement new, evidence-based methods to support the workforce at all levels. As shown by the feedback shared in this article, awe practices offer a novel way to support police personnel with their work while also, and equally important, support their mental health and overall well-being. It is only fitting to conclude with one last comment from a participant that demonstrates the importance of this:

*The Awe Project has been very eye-opening for me. As a detective, we spend our time destroying ourselves to help everyone else. This has gotten me to think that I need to take care of myself first in order to help others. ☺*

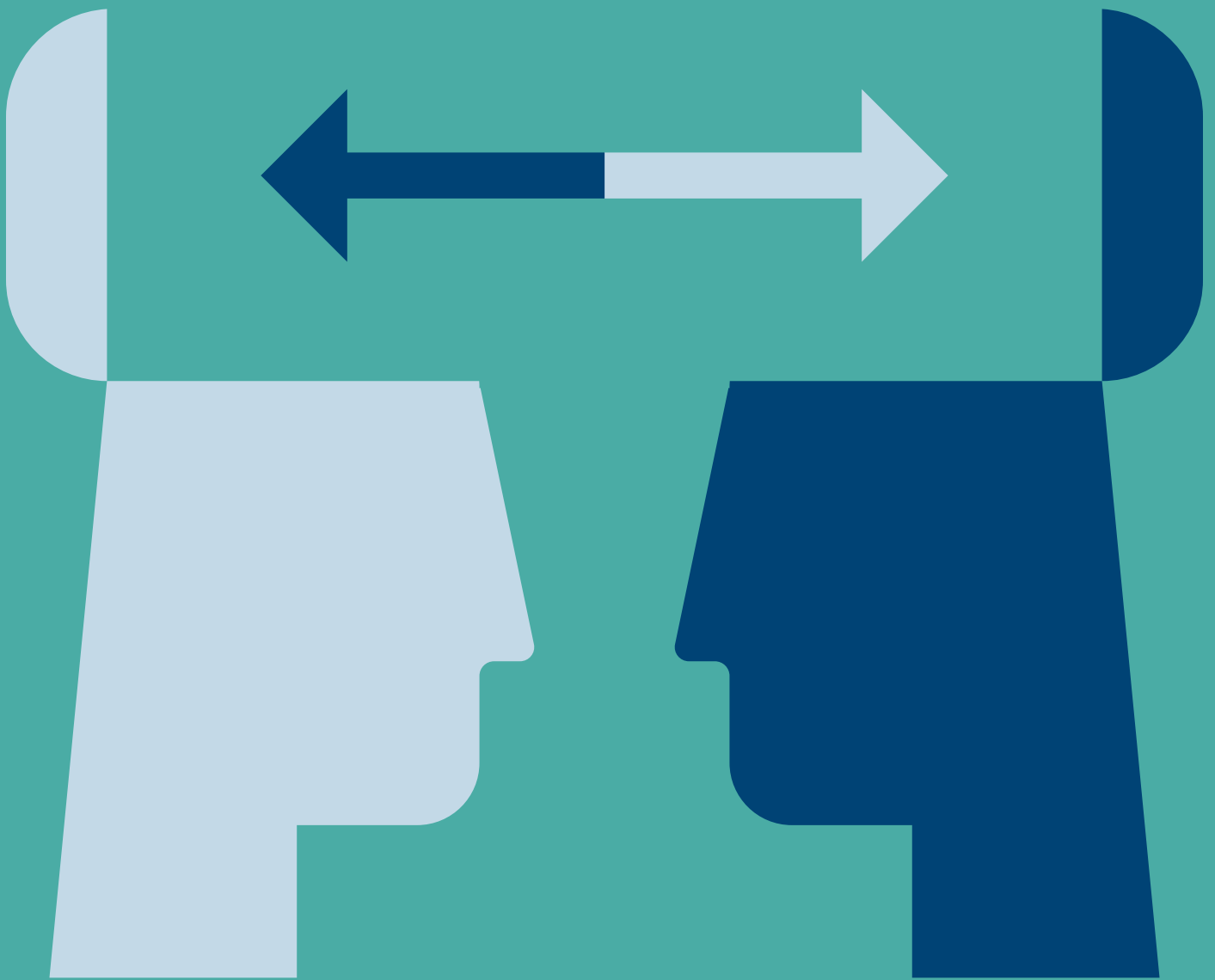
### IACP RESOURCES

- Enhancing Officer Wellness and Resiliency in Policing

#### theIACP.org

- Spiritual Wellness
- Resilience, Your New Superpower

[policechiefmagazine.org](http://policechiefmagazine.org)



# STORIES SAVE LIVES

**REDUCING STIGMA AND  
INCREASING WELLNESS  
THROUGH STORYTELLING**

**WHEN PEOPLE HEAR A STORY, IT RESONATES WITH THEM. IT REMAINS IN PEOPLE'S MINDS AND MEMORIES MUCH LONGER THAN A LECTURE.** Listeners are able to relate to the story and recall what helped and what did not. During stories of struggle and resilience, the listeners feel the speakers' emotions, and the stronger those are felt, the more impacted people are. Every time a first responder tells a story of a death in their ranks, a struggle with disease, or difficulty with substance use, other responders relate the story to their own lives, reflect on their own struggles, and feel the pain and difficulty the person is conveying. From this, people learn (or relearn) that they are not alone. Everyone has difficulty and pain. Suffering is not permanent. There is no shame in mental illness, and there is no place for stigma. These are the powers of storytelling, both for the storyteller and the listener.

Stories have been told around the campfire to convey information for hundreds of thousands of years. The modern campfire is the glowing computer screen. The Self Care Interactive Online Network

**BY**

Jeff Bludworth, Sergeant, ADA Community Ambassador; Nils Rosenbaum, MD, Psychiatrist; and Melissa Schultz, Peer Support Specialist, Albuquerque Police Department, New Mexico

---

(SCION) is a program developed around this concept. First responder stories centered on mental health challenges and shared online can have a significant impact on the lives of those gathered around their computer screen. SCION is a free service for all first responders. Each month, a first responder tells their story online through Zoom about struggle and resilience. The story is preceded by a brief 15-minute lecture presented by a psychiatrist with the Albuquerque Police Department (APD). The lecture aligns with the main topic the first responder is going to share. This helps the participants recall the information as they hear the story being shared.

The concept for SCION came about when the authors realized that more could be done than simply sharing behavioral health resources with law enforcement officers during regular trainings. There needed to be a platform where officers could share their own stories with each other while still learning about behavioral topics and resources.

## THE FIRST STORY: OFFICER BRYANT

SCION officially began in 2019 when an APD officer decided to share his story. For the purpose of this article, he will be referred to by the pseudonym “Officer Bryant.” Like many first responders, Officer Bryant’s story does not involve a single incident, but rather many incidents over the span of his career. In his first year on the job, Officer Bryant was present during an officer-involved shooting. He was young, only five days past his 23rd birthday. He was recently married, and his wife was pregnant with their first child. In the days following the incident, he met with a therapist, as per policy, before returning to duty. He told them he was not sleeping well and had just been feeling “off.” At the time, he attributed these emotions to being away from work and feeling restless at home. The therapist recommended that Officer Bryant schedule another appointment to continue talking about his experience. Feeling invincible and being naïve, like many young officers, Officer Bryant chose not to do this. He decided he would push through his feelings.

Back at work, Officer Bryant found himself taking on extra overtime. He allowed himself to be fully consumed by the job. Any free time he had—he was working. He loved to be around friends at work, and he loved being an officer. Working as much as he did, he began making extra money. This allowed him to live beyond his financial means, and he came to rely on overtime to pay his bills. Within a few years, he sustained two different

injuries that required surgery. He was placed on injury leave status and was being paid only his base salary. Without the income from overtime shifts, he began to fall behind on his bills, causing additional stress on him and his young family. Officer Bryant had already been in one officer-involved shooting, had two young children at home, and had been married only for two years. Now, he was placing his family in financial hardship.

Officer Bryant began to distance himself from his family and friends. He damaged friendships as he quit responding to messages, stopped going out, and believed no one would ever understand what he was going through. He believed the sentiments commonly shared by many, including “Just suck it up and quit having a ‘pity party’ for yourself.” He lost all interest in his hobbies and other activities that he frequently participated in. He was treading water, metaphorically, and close to drowning.

However, once he recovered from his physical injury, Officer Bryant quickly went back to working as much overtime as was allowed. Despite being consumed by the job, he began to thrive at work. He received many commendations, including an officer of the month award. But while he was winning at work, he was losing at home. His personal life was slowly falling apart as he put more effort into work rather than family. Then, for the second time, Officer Bryant encountered an officer-involved shooting. This was his tipping point. He could no longer hold in his emotions. He could no longer play along at work as if nothing were wrong. He went to a trusted supervisor and asked for help. That supervisor was able to get him an appointment with a therapist the very next day.

After meeting with a therapist, Officer Bryant was diagnosed with depression. It was then that he decided to meet with a psychiatrist to be assessed for medication. He was able to work with the psychiatrist to find the right antidepressant. This is when Officer Bryant’s life began to turn around. While he was not his “old self,” he found a new normal. He was able to get back into meaningful, healthy, personal relationships and find balance at work. He used therapy and found new hobbies to remain resilient, and he avoided slipping back into his old ways of holding in emotions and distancing himself from others. During this time, he regularly met with his therapist and psychiatrist. He was not “hiding” anymore. He was able to continue his normal working duties and was even promoted. Officer Bryant continued his career as a police officer, but he knows that had he not opened up to his coworkers and started therapy,

*Interested in attending, either as a participant or a SCION presenter? You can receive more information through [goscion.org](https://goscion.org) or contact the SCION team directly. We invite everyone to attend our monthly meetings.*

things would look different. Officer Bryant was one of the first people to share their stories on SCION. The idea to create the program came about when he agreed to discuss the challenges he faced throughout his career during an officer wellness block at a crisis intervention team training. Parts of his story resonated with many in the audience. It was then that members of APD's Behavioral Sciences Department realized the impact storytelling could have on reducing stigma and encouraging people to seek help.

## RELATABLE THEMES

Law enforcement readers probably recognize elements of Officer Bryant's story from their own careers or those of their colleagues. Job-related injuries, reliance on overtime pay, denial of mental health challenges, neglecting family and friends, and overextending oneself at work—these are unfortunately common experiences or “themes” for many first responders. This does not include the day-to-day cumulative traumas and work-related stressors that build up over time. The occupational stressors unique to a policing career can have an impact on the mental health of those who serve. A literature review published in 2020 found that the worldwide prevalence of law enforcement mental health problems is higher than the general population—and this is a population that is screened for mental pathology before they take the job. The authors looked at data from over 24 countries and found that one in four law enforcement officers met criteria for hazardous drinking, one in seven for post-traumatic stress disorder and depression, and one in ten for anxiety disorders and suicidal ideation. According to the nonprofit First H.E.L.P., which collects available data on first responder suicide in the United States, 190 first responders died by suicide in 2021.

The data are startling. And yet the stigma surrounding mental health persists, which ultimately leads to fewer officers getting the help they need. Research shows that the most common stigma-related concerns for first responders seeking mental health treatment are fears regarding confidentiality of services and fears that seeking treatment would have a negative impact on one's career. Programs for first responder mental health and wellness are critical. When creating and maintaining mental health and wellness programs, agencies must consider how stigma-related fears can influence participation. It is not enough to create these programs.

Agencies must reflect on how their departments can be contributing to a culture of stigma and actively seek ways to reduce it, promoting an environment in which employees know that seeking mental health treatment or resources is normal and confidential and will not result in the loss of their career.

## CONNECTING STORIES TO SOLUTIONS

Stories are a great way to reduce stigma. Most importantly, they help first responders become more comfortable with talking about their own mental health struggles with their coworkers. Real-life stories show officers that they are not alone, while increasing their connection to their peers.

The SCION program began using stories paired with didactics in 2019 as a way to reduce stigma and encourage officers to seek out mental health resources when they need them. The format is simple. Once a month first responders, both active and retired, gather to hear a personal story shared by a fellow first responder. The meetings last approximately 60–90 minutes and are held over Zoom. Meetings are open to any first responder in the United States and occasionally, when allowed by the speaker, to civilians as well. With permission from the speakers, meetings are recorded and then posted on the SCION website. First responders can then register for access to the website where they can watch past SCION stories. Prior to each session, marketing efforts are decided in collaboration with the speakers to ensure their comfort with who has access to their stories. Typically, marketing efforts include emails to APD officers, emails to first responders registered through the SCION website, and social media posts. A promotional flyer is created and shared through these emails and platforms.

During the session, the department psychiatrist provides a brief 10- to 15-minute lecture on a behavioral health topic. Then the first responder shares his or her story, usually taking about 45 minutes to an hour. The story must be related to the speaker's experiences as a first responder. Speakers have shared stories on a variety of topics, including officer-involved shootings, traumatic calls for service, on-the-job injuries, substance use, depression, divorce, and the transition into retirement. For most first responders, these topics are likely to be relatable personally or in reference to a colleague who has had a similar experience. During their stories, the speakers must also address positive coping techniques they utilized to help them get better or increase their resiliency. This is an important component of the model. Sharing stories is beneficial, even therapeutic, for the speakers and the listeners, but it is critical that the speakers share what helped them get through their mental health challenges so that the listeners are educated on healthy coping tools. For example, many SCION speakers point to the benefits of therapy and talking to coworkers, friends, and family

to help them throughout their struggles. What makes the storytelling model most useful for first responders is ensuring that the stories presented include not just the challenges faced, but a roadmap to feeling better.

Prior to speaking, all speakers must meet with the department psychiatrist and a peer support manager to make sure they feel comfortable with sharing their stories. During this briefing, speakers are also given tips on how to frame their stories. The typical story format is divided into three parts: describe how the individual was before the event or challenge, then describe what the event or challenge was, and finally discuss how the event or challenge changed the storyteller, including what he or she does now to stay healthy and resilient. At the end of the SCION session, participants are provided with both local and national mental health resources. A follow-up email is also sent to all participants with website links and phone numbers for the resources mentioned during the session. After the presentation, the department's peer support manager contacts the speakers to see how they are feeling after sharing their stories. For some first responders, this may be their first time discussing mental health challenges in a public format. The contact information for the peer support manager is also shared in all follow-up emails in case a participant would like to reach out directly.

## IMPACTS & OUTCOMES

The SCION team began tracking data on the storytelling and didactic format in 2022 after receiving a Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. The program is measuring its impact with quantitative and qualitative methods. An anonymous online survey is shared with all participants after they attend a SCION session. A second survey is shared with participants once they have attended three or more sessions. These two surveys help determine the effectiveness of the SCION model, its impact on people who attend (e.g., benefits of attending, connection to peers, and resiliency), and areas of improved knowledge of behavioral health topics.

The evaluation is still ongoing, but preliminary data show positive results. Out of 172 responses to the post-session survey, 90 percent of participants believe SCION is a secure environment to participate and share personal experiences in. Among the 24 participants who have completed three or more sessions and responded to an online survey, 100 percent believe attending SCION sessions is beneficial. In the same survey group, 100 percent also reported that hearing first responders share their stories made them feel more connected to their peers, and 96 percent affirmed that hearing first responders share their stories makes them feel more resilient. In addition to surveys, interviews with past SCION speakers and participants are being collected. Interviews were with law enforcement officers (active

and retired) and civilian staff. The interview questions focused on the impact of storytelling on the speaker and participants. On the impact of sharing one's story, one speaker had this to say:

*I'm not a mental health professional, but this was therapeutic for me. I had people there that wanted to listen to me. Nobody is being forced to attend. Everyone was there for the same purpose, improving officer wellness and mental health. It helped me [not only with] talking about the incident but also knowing that I could potentially be helping someone.*

Many times, sometimes a week or more after a session, someone will approach a member of the SCION team and state how important that particular SCION session was for him or her. The participants would state they hadn't realized that they or someone they loved was so clearly in need of help. But seeing other first responders talk about their struggles and hearing the doctor discuss interventions, and learning that there are resources readily available made them change their minds and behaviors. Because of the SCION session, they had insight, approached someone they were concerned about, changed their own behaviors, or had the courage to seek professional help for themselves.

One survey response described the impact to someone who is listening to a SCION session:

*There's always going to be somebody that is listening that really needs to hear this but they are too afraid to ask for help or to say they need to hear it. And with Zoom you can have a group of people listening in and they don't necessarily have to say anything or stand up, but they get the message. And one thing could catch their attention and change their life.*

This quote captures what the SCION program aims to achieve. If SCION has an impact, even if it is on just one first responder, then the efforts of this program are worthwhile. Stories can destigmatize mental health, increase connection to peers and peer support, and improve resiliency. These goals are not easy, but they are important. Improving the mental health and well-being of first responders should be a priority for all entities who employ them. ♡

### IACP RESOURCES

- National Consortium on Preventing Law Enforcement Suicide Toolkit  
[theIACP.org](http://theIACP.org)
- The Brief: Breaking the Stigma: Recommendations from IACP Police Psychological Services Section
- FBI Leads Effort to Understand and Prevent Suicide Among Law Enforcement Officers  
[policechiefmagazine.org](http://policechiefmagazine.org)

# 130 YEARS

**MEMBER-TO-MEMBER  
DRIVE 2023**

# \$130



**Celebrate the IACP's  
130th anniversary by  
sponsoring a new  
member for \$130\***

2023 marks the 130th anniversary of the IACP and we would like to give you the opportunity to sponsor a police professional for \$130\* during the 2023 Member-to-Member Drive.

IACP membership is open to everyone involved in the criminal justice field—both sworn and civilian.

If you sponsor five (5) new members by June 30, 2023, you will receive a complimentary registration to the IACP 2023 Annual Conference and Exposition. New members should use the specially coded membership application, or when joining online, enter the coupon code M2M23-130 in the checkout page, to receive the discounted dues rate of \$130\*.



**JOIN  
TODAY!**

[theiacp.org/membership-criteria](https://theiacp.org/membership-criteria)

#### 2023 IACP MEMBER-TO-MEMBER DRIVE RULES AND INFORMATION:

1. Application must be received at the IACP headquarters by **June 30, 2023**.
2. Renewing members do not qualify for this drive.
3. All membership types across the tiers will be discounted by 32%. (\$190 Tier One memberships will be \$130).\*
4. One complimentary Annual Conference and Exposition registration will be granted per member when sponsoring five or more new members.

 **IACP**  
International Association of  
Chiefs of Police

# MEMBER TO MEMBER APPLICATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
*First Middle Initial Last*

Title/Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency/Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip, Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Residence Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip, Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Send mail to my  Business  Residence Address

Business Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you previously been a member of IACP?  Yes  No

Date of Birth: (MM/DD/YYYY) \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ I am a sworn officer.  Yes  No

My primary language (and dialect, if applicable) is: \_\_\_\_\_

The IACP currently offers many materials in five languages. Please select which language you would like to receive IACP communications:  Arabic  English  French  Portuguese  Spanish

I have an Active Member Sponsor (required). Their name and member number are: \_\_\_\_\_

I do not have an Active Member Sponsor. The IACP will review the application. Additional time will be required to process the membership.

Tier One Memberships includes a subscription to *Police Chief* magazine valued at \$30.

Tier Two, Three, and Four Memberships will receive online translated access to *Police Chief* magazine. Or you may add a mailed printed version for \$30.

Amount to be charged \_\_\_\_\_ (U.S. dollars only)

I have enclosed:  Purchase order  Personal check/money order  Agency check

Charge to:  MasterCard  VISA  American Express  Discover

Cardholder's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ CVV# \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder's Billing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

By joining the IACP, I have reviewed and agree to the IACP's Privacy Policy which can found at [www.theIACP.org/privacy-policy](http://www.theIACP.org/privacy-policy).

All memberships expire December 31 of each calendar year. Applications received after August 1 will expire the following year. Return completed application via mail, fax (703.836.4543) or email ([membership@theIACP.org](mailto:membership@theIACP.org)). Questions? Contact Membership at 800.THE.IACP.

## Membership Categories

Information on membership categories and global tiers can be found on the IACP web site [www.theIACP.org/membership-criteria](http://www.theIACP.org/membership-criteria)

### Active Member Dues (sworn command level)

- Tier One \$130 ~~\$190~~
- Tier Two \$85 ~~\$125~~
- Tier Three \$41 ~~\$60~~
- Tier Four \$14 ~~\$20~~

### Associate Member:

#### General and Academic Dues

- Tier One \$130 ~~\$190~~
- Tier Two \$85 ~~\$125~~
- Tier Three \$41 ~~\$60~~
- Tier Four \$14 ~~\$20~~

#### Service Provider \$340 ~~\$500~~

#### Sworn Officer Dues (sworn non-command level)

- Tier One \$51 ~~\$75~~
- Tier Two \$34 ~~\$50~~
- Tier Three \$14 ~~\$20~~
- Tier Four \$7 ~~\$10~~

- Student \$21 ~~\$30~~

University name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Optional Working Group Memberships

(Membership in the IACP is a prerequisite for joining a working group. Additional qualifications for working group memberships may apply. Please see the website: [www.theIACP.org/working-group/sections](http://www.theIACP.org/working-group/sections)):

- Capitol Police \$50
- Defense Chiefs of Police \$50
- Drug Recognition Expert (DRE)—(initial processing fee) \$50
- Human Resources \$50
- Indian Country Law Enforcement \$50
- Intl. Managers Police Academy & College Training \$50
- Law Enforcement Information Technology (LEIT) \$50
- Legal Officers \$50
- Midsize Agencies Division \$50
- Officer Safety and Wellness \$50
- Police Chaplain \$50
- Police Physicians \$50
- Police Psychological Services—(initial processing fee) \$50
- Police Research Advancement \$50
- Private Sector Liaison \$50
- Public Information Officers \$50
- Public Transit Police \$50
- Railroad Police No Charge
- Retired Chiefs of Police \$50
- Smaller Department \$50
- S&P Police Alumni No Charge
- University/College Police \$50

# Solving Law Enforcement's Technology and Legislative Challenges

BY

John Pizzuro, CEO, Raven

## LAW ENFORCEMENT IS AT A CROSSROADS. TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP AGENCIES MAKE THINGS MORE EFFICIENT TO MEET THE INCREASED WORKLOAD.

The day of tracking tasks and investigations on a spreadsheet has given way to predictive analysis, digital storage, and case management systems. Technology and technological solutions have changed the world and the way officers seek and obtain evidence.

As a former investigator, the author started with wiretaps of pay phones, pagers, and emails to infiltrate the dark

net. The constant was the increase in the use of technology and finding an investigative way to obtain digital evidence. Technology has continuously advanced and grown since then. New solutions are created every day to meet the challenges of modern policing. Law enforcement is often forced to rely on other entities to develop solutions as most agencies need to employ personnel to innovate. To be efficient in today's law enforcement world, technology needs to be a part of it. So, how do agency leaders leverage technology to protect the innocent?

## UTILIZING TECHNOLOGY EFFECTIVELY

Technology has become part of the very fabric of law enforcement and society's existence. Look at the smart doorbell cameras, vehicle computer systems, phones, body-worn cameras, and even thermostats and refrigerators. Officers cannot police effectively without using some technology; criminal investigations cannot be conducted without it. Today, there needs to be training mechanisms to educate every officer on handling electronics and rudimentary forensics just because of the volume of phones



“

*There is a treasure trove of digital evidence that could effectively provide law enforcement with the knowledge needed to protect victims and solve investigations.*

”



being used every day. Unfortunately, technology has presented some new challenges, which most agencies have become reactive to.

Cybercrime and online child exploitation have directly resulted from the reliance on technology. Today, there's not one crime or incident that does not deal with digital evidence. The advent of social media has allowed application developers, electronic service providers, and companies to obtain volumes of data and information on their users and the public. There is a treasure trove of digital evidence that could effectively provide law enforcement with the knowledge needed to protect victims and solve investigations.

How does law enforcement keep people safe when everything about everyone is stored digitally? One must have rudimentary skills to find open-source information. Data breaches can even expose usernames and passwords to infiltrate any account. This requires agencies to train their personnel from a technological standpoint.

The amount of data that has been collected and that is available through online storage is staggering. One big question is how to retain the amount of data and how to process that data for an efficient policing model. From a law enforcement perspective, the challenges of today have become end-to-end encryption, facial recognition, and privacy. The argument against law enforcement has always been that they shouldn't be able to access others' information. Companies like Meta, Amazon, Google, and Apple have more information and abuse users' privacy than any law enforcement agency can imagine. Yet, law enforcement struggles to get the information needed for an investigation even when they obtain the legal process requested. Agencies are forced to fight the perception that they are misusing data, and legislation is being introduced to limit their use.

The question becomes how to effectively police and protect in a digital world. What is someone's reasonable expectation of privacy? What information can be obtained with the legal process? Agencies also have the additional challenge of keeping up to date on, acquiring, and implementing the technological solutions available in order

to remain effective. Law enforcement needs help to fight perceptions and misguided legislation to get the tools they need to be successful.

### CHALLENGES

There are two primary impediments that law enforcement agencies face today when it comes to the implementation of technology, whether it is for administrative or investigative solutions.

The first challenge is legislation. Legislatively, as more technology is developed to find and locate suspects and protect victims, some lobby against using that technology, stating it violates a person's rights and privacy. They advocate that law enforcement should not have access to those tools. This has caused legislation to limit the scope of these tools' use. Facial recognition is an example of an outcry that law enforcement is violating someone's privacy. Yet, those photos are posted to a public forum with everyone able to see, such as TikTok. Lobbying groups lack the intimate knowledge to be impactful, and police personnel seldom have the voice to impact the requisite support that law enforcement agencies need.

The second challenge is funding. With the increased costs from salary to vehicles to office space, agencies are forced to cut their budgets and forgo pricey technology. Law enforcement is faced with several dynamic factors to meet the demands of the increased reliance on technology, as well as the ability to protect citizens from an ever-increasing breach of their lives. As inflation has soared, so have the software and technological solutions that agencies have relied on in the past. In many cases, agencies are now forced to reduce the amount of software licensing due to increased pricing.

During his time as a retired commander of the Internet Crimes Against Children Task (ICAC) Force in New Jersey, the author saw software costs double and triple in the last six years. With funding and budgets frozen, cut, or even with nominal increases, it leaves an agency choosing which tools to maintain—and potentially, as a result, which crimes they can address effectively.

When running a task force, the primary challenge is always funding. For example, "The Protect Our Children Act," which created the ICAC Task Force, set a funding amount of \$60 million in 2008. The ICAC task force has never seen that amount. That specific funding amount was set before the advent of smartphones, tablets, and endless volumes of memory.

When one looks at funding through federal, state, and local grant programs, there needs to be more programs devoted to aid agencies with technology. Funding technology and its solutions has become highly paramount, whether for case management systems, regional intelligence centers, computer forensics, or automated license plate readers. The most considerable expense is the ability to store the vast amount of data within the confines of an agency or organization.

Funding these technological solutions and software has become difficult. State and local governments need to understand the gravity from a technical standpoint and, therefore, must adequately provide commensurate funding. When looking at the landscape of policing and technology, one must look at legislation and the resources given to today's police agencies and organizations. ♡

**Raven, a 501(c)4 organization, is dedicated to protecting children from victimization by raising awareness of the threat of online child exploitation, increasing resources and funding to law enforcement, and lobbying for policy and legislative changes on the local and federal levels in support of law enforcement.**

# Which Tool Is the Right Tool?

**ONE AFTERNOON, THE LOSS PREVENTION ASSOCIATES OF A LOCAL GROCERY STORE NOTICED A 17-YEAR-OLD JUVENILE TAKE FOOD FROM THE SHELVES AND PLACE THE ITEMS INTO HER BACKPACK. AN ASSOCIATE NOTIFIED OFFICERS OF THE POTENTIAL THEFT AS THEY TRACKED THE INDIVIDUAL THROUGH THE STORE SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS. THE YOUNG FEMALE WAS APPROACHED BY A LOSS PREVENTION ASSOCIATE AND APPEARED COMPLIANT UNTIL THE LOCAL POLICE ARRIVED ON SCENE. AS THE OFFICERS NEARED, THE SUBJECT BECAME COMBATIVE. SHE BEGAN TO FLEE THE STORE ON FOOT.**

The next morning, a dispatcher notified police officers of a call from an elderly woman. She called 911 claiming that her son was having a mental health crisis and acting irrationally. The mother feared he was a danger to her and himself. When officers arrived on scene, they see the described individual standing on the porch with a knife declaring that he will kill anyone who comes near.

In both scenarios, officers must assess and decide which tool in their belts is the correct one to use in order to defuse the situation. From officer presence, verbal communications, and hands-on techniques to pain-inducing methods and lethal options, many officers are trained to use the minimum amount of force necessary to achieve their objectives. They are, however, also trained to prioritize the safety and well-being of all involved—themselves,

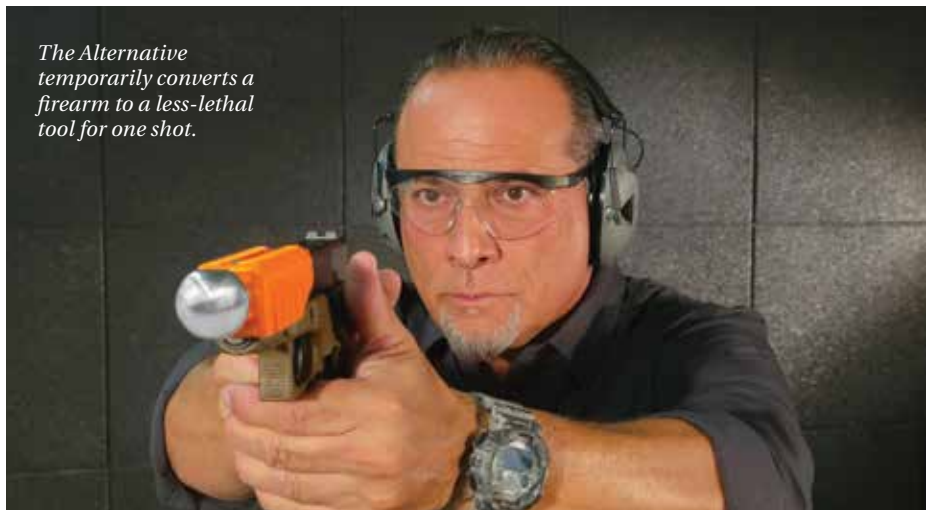
the subject, and bystanders. For the above situations, officers may determine that a less-lethal tool is an appropriate use of force, and there are a variety of options within that category that they could use to maintain control.

## LESS-LETHAL ALTERNATIVES

From pepper spray to batons to electronic control devices, there are many less-lethal alternatives to firearms on the market. One company based out of Las Vegas, Nevada, believes in the mission of providing these options so much that they named their product after it: The Alternative.

Oftentimes, de-escalation equipment, such as the 40mm and the beanbag shotgun, can be bulky and is generally carried by tactical teams or in patrol cars, which creates limited availability when officers need them. Noticing a

*Images courtesy of Alternative Ballistics*



*The Alternative temporarily converts a firearm to a less-lethal tool for one shot.*



*The Taser 10 gives officers the ability to deploy up to 10 individually targeted probes.*

*Images courtesy of Axon*



critical gap in law enforcement encounters in which an officer responds to a noncompliant subject that presents a threat of violence with a weapon other than a gun, Alternative Ballistics developed The Alternative to provide officers with an option that can always be carried with them and immediately available as a de-escalation tool when the need arises. The two-ounce unit can be carried on a vest, leg holster, or duty belt. “Being able to provide an option—an alternative if you will—for officers to potentially have a step in front of absolute lethal force could be invaluable. Lives could be saved,” said Retired Chief Alex Perez, who is the strategic law enforcement consultant at Alternative Ballistics.

The Alternative temporarily converts a firearm to a less-lethal tool for one shot; once the round is deployed, the unit disengages from the weapon, and the firearm instantly returns to its normal function. This provides an officer with lethal cover without having to transition to and from separate devices.

The unit is composed of two parts: (1) a bright orange dock and (2) an aluminum sphere projectile. The dock mounts to the top of a firearm’s slide and around its muzzle. The projectile (already assembled onto the dock) has retaining pins and is aligned with the barrel of the firearm to catch a bullet. Once fired, the bullet embeds inside the projectile and is carried downrange at 20 percent the velocity of the bullet.

When signing on to use The Alternative, an agency is also signing on to the required one-day training program. The program can be conducted at a specific department or officers can be sent to the Alternative Ballistics facility in Las Vegas. “The training component is as important as the technology we are putting forward,” said Chief Perez.

One of the most well-known names in electronic control devices has revamped its less-lethal alternative. In line with its focus to provide safer, more reliable tools to stop threats, Axon has an ongoing commitment to improve upon its products to meet the needs of public safety. This includes TASER energy weapons.

In response to the rise in gun-related deaths during police encounters over the past few years, Axon has accelerated investments to advance their less-lethal technology. The TASER 10 was the first key technology advance following the announcement of the company’s moonshot goal, which is to cut gun-related death between police and the public by 50 percent before 2033. “By disrupting our thinking about how TASER energy weapons should operate and what they should do, we were able to come up with creative ways to give the officer more time and distance to make critical decisions,” said Axon’s head of training, Andy Wrenn. “Most importantly, officers simply needed more chances to stop a threat as soon as possible.”

This is why one of the key improvements to the technology is the ability to deploy up to 10 probes. This is a step up from the previous four probes, which only gave one or two opportunities to be effective. The device also has a tone that differentiates a good connection from a bad connection. When compared to the previous need to deploy two probes simultaneously, individually targeted probes enable a user to create their own spread. These probes now have a range of up to 45 feet, creating more time and space for decision-making. The TASER 10 also features a 1,000-lumen pulsing light, loud audible alerts, and LASER pointing that warns a subject to comply prior to probe deployment.

“*Officers often make situational decisions based on the tools that they have available.*”



*The BolaWrap deploys a Kevlar tether to temporarily restrain a subject.*



*Images courtesy of Wrap Technologies*

Wrap Technologies (WRAP) believes in a world where community members openly trust and rely on law enforcement to protect personal safety and well-being. This has allowed them to think beyond less-lethal and strive toward a “no-harm” alternative. This is achieved through the BolaWrap 150.

Officers often experience hesitation when considering the use of pain-inducing techniques to restrain individuals. “With the growing scrutiny on the use of force, officers may fear for their careers when resorting to such measures,” said Kevin Mullins, chief executive officer of WRAP. “However, the BolaWrap eliminates this hesitation.”

The idea of the BolaWrap started with exploring the use of sound to distract and cause an individual to pause, giving officers time to safely approach and apprehend the individual. When verbal communication is no longer effective, officers can restrain an individual from a safe distance without harming the individual or themselves by using the BolaWrap 150.

The patented handheld remote restraint device deploys a seven and a half foot Kevlar tether to temporarily restrain a subject from distances of 10 to 25 feet. The BolaWrap 150 emits a startling sound upon deploying the tether to distract a subject, allowing officers to quickly restrain an individual and ensure the safety and well-being of everyone involved.

“For situations where physical force would be undesirable or feel excessive... using non-pain compliance techniques can help to defuse tense situations, build trust, and foster more positive outcomes,” said Mullins.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Officers often make situational decisions based on the tools that they have available. “We all have different mindsets and different backgrounds and different ways of processing stimuli put before us,” explained Chief

Perez. Using lethal force can affect not only the officer and subject involved but also the subject’s and the officer’s families. Providing less-lethal alternatives to assist during a noncompliant encounter can help save the emotional well-being—and life—of all involved, including the subject, officer, and bystanders.

So, think back to the scenarios mentioned in the beginning of this article and consider one question: which tool is the right tool? With all the options on the market, officers will always have an answer. ♡

## SOURCE LIST

Please view this article online for contact information.

- Alternative Ballistics Corporation
- Axon
- Battle Rifle Companies
- Byrna Technologies
- Compliant Technologies
- Laser Ammo, USA
- Superhailer
- Transcend Robotics
- Wrap Technologies

## Stay Current on Law Enforcement Trends

- Hear from police leaders about trends and challenges they're facing before it's too late.



“IACPnet has been a great resource for our agency. As the Accreditation Manager I have utilized the platform to assist in developing policy and procedure. More recently I have been able to gain a great deal of information and resources for our Officer Wellness Program that has given us a sound foundation for the program. As an agency we will continue to utilize IACPnet to further our professional development.”

**William Dunleavy**

Captain

Medford Township Police Department, NJ

Online resources, tools, and e-libraries available on IACPnet:



**191**

GRANTS



**400**

EVENTS &  
TRAINING  
OPPORTUNITIES



**3,255**

FORMS



**6,633**

POLICIES



**68,382**

RESOURCES



Sign up for your free demo! [www.IACPnet.com](http://www.IACPnet.com)

**Stay up to date on new products and advances in technology to ensure your officers are equipped with the tools they need.**

## **BRINGING DIGITAL EVIDENCE MANAGEMENT TO THE NEXT LEVEL – DELIVERING ESSENTIAL EVIDENCE IN EVERY CASE**

A Versatile, intuitive platform for collecting, analyzing, and managing digital evidence POLARIS by Utility delivers integral analysis and case management from any source in one CJIS compliant platform. With a comprehensive chain of custody and data agnostic flexibility, POLARIS focuses on technical capabilities and security to reduce your IT burden.

- **ONE PLATFORM:** All digital evidence in one common platform
- **CUSTOMIZABLE:** Scalable, role-based user permissions with customizable system configurations
- **REAL-TIME AWARENESS:** View feeds from fixed cameras, in-car cameras and body-worn devices all for situational awareness

**SMART REDACTION:** AI-driven, in-application redaction tools for all media and document file types



Utility, Inc., is an innovative technology-enabled service provider specializing in creating groundbreaking digital systems for frontline professions. Utility's products and services are designed to effectively capture, analyze, manage, and release digital evidence using a variety of cameras, sensors, and devices, as well as situational awareness software solutions. Utility's universe of intuitive solutions provides a range of cutting-edge technologies that enable frontline public safety professionals to work more efficiently and effectively. To learn more about Utility's technology solutions, please visit [utility.com](http://utility.com).

<http://bit.ly/434eyU0>

### **Radio Switch**

PRYME Radio, a premier provider of audio technologies, offers tactical communication accessories to serve the heavy-duty needs of law enforcement. PRYME offers communication accessories for two-way radios and cellular devices in professional-grade for surveillance or tactical-grade for SWAT, law enforcement, military, and other operations. For example, PRYME's Hockey Puck PTT (push-to-talk) is offered in both professional-grade and waterproof tactical versions. The PTT Switch is especially unique in that it enables officers to communicate via a microphone or headset with the press of a button. This is particularly important for SWAT teams who can push the button with an elbow while keeping a finger on the trigger.

[www.pryme.com](http://www.pryme.com).



### **Flexible Light Bar**

Code 3 offers its CD3793 MegaFlex, a flexible exterior warning light that can be mounted on flat or curved surfaces up to 72° with self-adhesive, very high bond tape. The light is part of the CD3790 MegaFlex series of lights. Its dual-color LEDs provide exceptional output with combinations of amber, white, blue, and red colors. The lights' heads are protected in a clear, silicone housing that can flex while resisting yellowing and warping and is ideal for police, fire, EMS, or any other emergency vehicle application. A two-bolt bezel is also included for easy installation on flat surfaces.

[code3esg.com](http://code3esg.com)





### Body-Worn Camera

Utility, Inc., introduces the newest iteration of the company's Eos body-worn camera. The update provides new capabilities to further enhance the technology, utilizing artificial intelligence to create situational awareness and facilitating policy-based, high-speed data collection that delivers instant, clear, and secure intelligence when time and truth are critical. Eos features include the ability to quickly capture images of drivers' licenses; an enhanced playback mode that includes video thumbnails of recognizable faces or subjects, giving officers the ability to identify videos when managing metadata more easily; the ability to add notes to pictures using speech to text; and more.

[www.bodyworn.com](http://www.bodyworn.com)



### AI Communication Platform

Smart Response Technologies announces enhancements to the firm's patented cloud-based intelligence communication SaaS platform, Delphini. Delphini's artificial intelligence (AI) delivers first responders instant audiovisual cues that shave life-critical minutes during stressful, noisy phone and radio communications. The platform's live mapping and patented AI communication enables dispatchers and their supervisors to monitor multiple radios at once in a simplified dashboard. It transcribes speech on radio exchanges during active shooter events, fires, foot chases, raucous entertainment events, and the like. With the enhanced AI, the real-time voice-to-text transcription model can highlight "predictor" words that provide early warnings for potential greater problems.

[smartresponsetech.com](http://smartresponsetech.com)



### LCD Monitor

TRU-Vu Monitors, Inc., a leading supplier of industrial-grade LCD monitors and touch screens, has released a 21.5" sunlight-readable LCD display designed to operate in direct, bright sunlight or in other high ambient light conditions: the SRMH-21.5Z. These monitors feature 1920x1080 full HD resolution; 1,500 nits of brightness, producing bright, clear images; and an auto restart after power loss function. The painted steel enclosure ensures that the monitor will withstand shock, vibration, and rugged environments. Additionally, these monitors can be customized to specific needs from a wide range of available options. They are ideal for use in law enforcement vehicles.

[tru-vumonitors.com](http://tru-vumonitors.com)

### Lab Workspace Enclosure

The VSE Balance Enclosure for critical procedures involving powders and liquids is offered in 24-inch, 36-inch, and 48-inch widths to accommodate an analytical balance and other small-scale lab processes. Constructed of chemical resistant metal framing and quarter-inch thick clear acrylic side panels and viewing sash. Efficient air flow design with airfoil and bypass directs contaminants to baffled exhaust, providing air flow and containment performance for user protection. The viewing sash is angled at 15 degrees for ease of viewing comfort. Sash swings up to provide 20 inches of access opening. Two service ports are in the lower right and left rear wall.



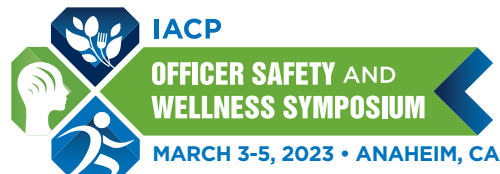
[www.hemccorp.com](http://www.hemccorp.com)



### Access Management System

Vector Flow is setting new benchmarks in physical identity and access management (PIAM), threat intelligence, and security intelligence with modern AI data-driven solutions that automate multiple access provisioning and management disciplines in a single platform. Vector Flow's next generation PIAM automation aggregates enterprise data related to identities, credentials, and permissions to provide data-driven insights and actionable intelligence. The automation solution applies data from conventional PACS, as well as all available and applicable business systems. These data can include access history, employment status data from HR software, and data from other systems. The aggregated data intelligence provides enterprise-wide visibility to all identities.

[vectorflow.com](http://vectorflow.com)



## 2023 IACP OFFICER SAFETY AND WELLNESS SYMPOSIUM *RECAP*

This year, the IACP welcomed attendees from across the globe to the **2023 Officer Safety and Wellness Symposium** in Anaheim, California, from March 3 to March 5. Through hybrid programming, dozens of workshops on a wide range of topics were offered both in person and as prerecorded videos on an online platform. Total registration numbers were the highest ever for this annual event, with 1,040 attendees joining us on-site, 140 users logging into three live-streamed general sessions, and 136 individuals accessing the on-demand content available online. Participants were provided with opportunities to network with other members of the law enforcement community, hear directly from exhibitors at tabletops and solutions presentations, and collect helpful resources to take back to their agencies.

Attendees participated in several activities, including meeting therapy K-9s; morning yoga and Pilates; wall-sit, plank, and push-up challenges; stretching/posture exercises; and dance/movement therapy. Most important, symposium participants were able to engage in meaningful conversations, benefit from hearing new perspectives, and explore the latest law enforcement innovations to continue improving the culture surrounding officer health and wellness in their own communities. We appreciate all participants' dedication to the worthwhile pursuit of prioritizing the physical and mental well-being of those in the policing profession.

### Attendees

**1,040** In-person

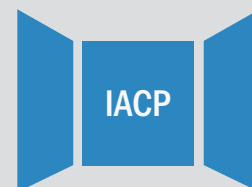


**270** virtual



**69**  
Workshops

**42**  
Exhibitors



**6**  
Activities



**125**  
Attendees from  
**10 countries** outside  
the United States

**154**  
Participants in the  
Wellness Challenge





## WELLNESS CHALLENGE WINNERS

- **Wall-Sit Challenge:** Sergeant Sarah Keith, Denton Police Department, Texas (24 minutes)
- **Plank Challenge:** Efren Garcia, Program Manager, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (10 minutes)
- **Push-Up Challenge:** Mandy Nice, Strategic Wellness Director, Lexipol/Cordico (61 push-ups)
- **20,000 Wellness Challenge Points:** Nancy Panza, Professor/Clinical Psychologist, California State University – Fullerton
- **30,000 Wellness Challenge Points:** Officer Edyta Zak, United States Capitol Police, Washington, DC
- **Overall Wellness Challenge:** Lieutenant Chris Watson, Scottsdale Police Department, Arizona (162,355 points)



Recognizing the 2022 IACP/DuPont KEVLAR Survivors' Club honoree are Kentucky State Police Chaplain Cory Elliott, Captain Doug Carter, Trooper Billy Ball (Honoree), and Lieutenant Kyle Nall.

*Thank you to our presenting sponsor!*



## TOPICS COVERED

- Comprehensive wellness program development
- Financial wellness and retirement planning
- Innovative approaches to injury reduction and physical fitness
- Leadership engagement and culture change
- Multidisciplinary and sustainable peer support and mentorship models
- Post-traumatic growth and personal resilience practices
- Strengthening family wellness and community trust
- Suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention
- Vicarious trauma, post-traumatic stress, and mental health support strategies



Join us next year at the 2024 event on March 1-3 in Louisville, Kentucky!

BY  
Morgana Yellen, Project  
Associate, and Bonnie Mills,  
Project Coordinator, IACP

# Strengthening Victim Services through Comprehensive Training

**LAW ENFORCEMENT–BASED VICTIM SERVICES PERSONNEL PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN HELPING VICTIMS NAVIGATE THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM, WHILE PROVIDING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AND COMPASSION.**

The treatment that victims experience in the aftermath of a crime plays a key role in their decisions about remaining engaged with the criminal justice system. Many law enforcement agencies have established victim services programs to provide victims with information and support as soon as possible after a crime occurs.

The Law Enforcement-Based Victims Services Program (LEV Program) was established in 2018 by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime. This program provides foundational knowledge and targeted support to law enforcement agencies who wish to establish a new, in-agency victim services program or to enhance a previously existing program.

To date, more than 70 agencies across the United States have received training and technical assistance (TTA) from the IACP through the LEV Program. The LEV Program remains the only national-level TTA program in the United States focused exclusively on law enforcement–based victim services.

## **TEMPLATE PACKAGE V: TRAINING**

The LEV Program encourages agencies to invest in continuous, high-quality training for all victim services personnel, regardless of prior education or advocacy experience. This ensures that all victim services personnel at an agency operate within a uniform framework and have the tools they need to best serve victims.

Developing a victim services training program from the ground up requires time and resources. To assist agencies in this process, the IACP released *Template Package V: Training*, the latest publication in the customizable Template Package series. Agencies can refer to this publicly available resource for guidance when developing and enhancing a victim services unit.

*Template Package V: Training* comprises three main components: (1) 12 training modules with supplemental handouts, (2) 5 activity workbooks, and (3) a set of overview documents.

## **TRAINING MODULES AND SUPPLEMENTAL HANDOUTS**

The training modules and supplemental handouts cover core victim services content, including but not limited to—

- Criminal Justice
- Critical Needs of Victims
- Ethics in Victim Services
- Crisis Intervention with Victims
- Crime Victim Compensation
- Boundaries and Professional Wellness in Victim Services

These modules are intended to be taught by trainers from a variety of disciplines. For example, an assistant prosecutor could cofacilitate the Criminal Justice module with a law enforcement–based victim services trainer. Similarly, a program manager from a local community-based domestic violence agency could cofacilitate the Crisis Intervention with Victims module. By using trainers with varying backgrounds, victim services personnel can learn through a multidisciplinary lens.



### ACTIVITY WORKBOOKS

Interactive activity workbooks supplement the training modules by guiding victim services personnel to connect prior knowledge and learned material to real-world situations. Rather than simply memorizing information, victim services trainees can focus on building and honing core skills.

### OVERVIEW DOCUMENTS

Finally, the overview documents offer guidance on facilitating training. The *Trainer Manual* provides an overview of the training and assists with preparation, while the *Training Plan* outlines the recommended timeframes and materials for each module. In addition to the provided content, these resources encourage further self-paced learning through the Office for Victims of Crime's Victim Assistance Training Online (*VAT Online*) and in-person shadowing with colleagues.

Like all publications in the Template Package series, *Template Package V: Training* is designed to be adapted to the needs of each individual agency. Because of this, the materials outline places where agencies should add state-, tribal-, local-, or agency-specific information. Agencies should consult with

their legal counsel and human resources staff to ensure that the materials meet all requirements within their jurisdiction.

### CONCLUSION

Victim services personnel can help support victims throughout their involvement in the criminal justice system. Whether an agency's victim services program is well established or is still being developed, these training materials will help ensure that all victim services personnel are providing a consistent level of service to victims across a jurisdiction. For further guidance on developing a strong victim services program, agencies can access other resources, including recorded webinars, topic-specific resources, and additional template packages, on the IACP's LEV webpage. ♡

For more information on *Template Package V: Training* or the LEV Program, please contact [LEVproject@theiacp.org](mailto:LEVproject@theiacp.org).

## IACP Impaired Driving & Traffic Safety Conference

AUGUST 9-11, 2023  
ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA



The Impaired Driving and Traffic Safety (IDTS) Conference combines expanded education on promising practices and current trends in traffic safety, as well as the science and information on alcohol and drug impaired driving.

- **LEARN** promising practices to engage communities to facilitate road safety
- **LEARN** the latest on alcohol- and drug-impaired driving to develop comprehensive cases for prosecution and adjudication
- **NETWORK** with traffic safety professionals and drug recognition experts



Registration  
opens  
**APRIL 2023**



[www.theiacp.org/IDTSconference](http://www.theiacp.org/IDTSconference)





Lower your shipping costs.  
Not your expectations.  
Save up to **50%** every  
time you ship.

**Office DEPOT.  
OfficeMax®**

IACPreferred members can  
receive up to **75%** off  
on more than **93,000**  
supplies.



Travel Savings Center

**Save** on brands Avis/  
Budget, Wyndham and  
other hotel discounts.



GE APPLIANCES STORE

**Save** with members-only  
access to the GE  
Appliances Store!

# UNLOCK *your* EXCLUSIVE MEMBER BENEFITS !

**Are you using your benefits to the  
fullest potential?**

As an IACPreferred member, you can take advantage of a variety of discount opportunities only extended to you as an IACP member. Access these benefits for business or personal travel, supplies, shipping, appliances and SO MUCH MORE!

Maximize the return on your investment through  
IACPreferred at  
[www.theIACP.org/member-discounts](http://www.theIACP.org/member-discounts)





IACPnet is the top resource for effective practices, case studies, and other information to support police leaders as they navigate the ever-changing public safety landscape. Learn more and request a demo by visiting [theIACP.org/IACPnet](https://theIACP.org/IACPnet).

Reflects February 2023 activity.

PAGE VIEWS

19,106



MEMBER AGENCIES

Police professionals from agencies of all sizes utilize IACPnet

1,439

to enhance programs and operations, to develop data-driven solutions, and for professional development.



NEW DISCUSSION POSTS

15

The IACPnet Discussion Board provides a **forum for users** to network, ask questions, and provide valuable expertise and guidance.

TOP RESOURCES

- > **National Consensus Policy and Discussion Paper on Use of Force**  
—Resource from the IACP
- > **Response to Resistance**  
—Policy from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina, Police Department Interactive Directives Guide
- > **De-Escalation: Guidelines for How to Begin Evaluating Your Agency's De-Escalation Practices**  
—Guidelines from the IACP/UC Center for Police Research and Policy

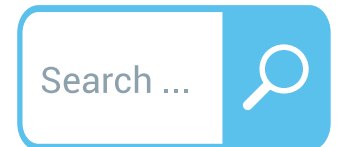


RESOURCES ADDED & UPDATED

202

The Resource Library contains **policies, forms, and other publications**. Search results can be refined by criteria such as type, country, population, date, and more.

TOP SEARCHED TERMS



- > RIDE ALONG
- > SEARCH AND SEIZURE
- > STRIP SEARCH

FEATURED RESOURCE

**Mass Attacks in Public Spaces: 2016–2020**

This five-year study analyzes 173 targeted attacks that occurred from 2016 to 2020 in public or semi-public locations in the United States, including businesses, schools, houses of worship, open spaces, and other locations where people live their daily lives.



Access these resources and more at [theIACP.org/IACPnet](https://theIACP.org/IACPnet). For more information, call the IACPnet team at 800.227.9640.

REAL  
INSIGHTS



IACP 2023

OCTOBER 14-17 | SAN DIEGO, CA  
San Diego Convention Center

# THE REAL ADVANTAGE

IACP 2023 is **October 14-17 in San Diego, California**. Register today and begin planning for four days of first-class education, engagement, and connections to further your knowledge, progress in your career, and help shape the future of the policing profession at home and around the globe. You can count on the IACP Annual Conference and Exposition to provide you with the real advantage to achieve your goals.

**NEW SCHEDULE ANNOUNCED!** | [theIACPconference.org](https://theIACPconference.org)



REAL  
SOLUTIONS





## TOP IACP BLOG POST



### The Law Enforcement Marriage: Knowing When It's Time to Get Help

There are some factors of having a spouse working in law enforcement that might impact the harmony of a marriage. In many instances, couples are not prepared for, or educated on the psychological impact that the job could have. It is critical for the couple to recognize when it is time to seek help and receive care.



Read this and other blog posts at [theIACP.org/blog](https://theIACP.org/blog).

## TWEET



# of the month



The IACP  
@TheIACP



IACP President @ChiefLettney and IACP 4th Vice President @DShoemakerDPD met with the Colombian National Police here at #IACPOSW.



## POPULAR IACP RESOURCES



- » OFF-DUTY ARRESTS (POLICY CENTER RESOURCE)
- » THE OATH OF HONOR
- » BARRICADED INDIVIDUALS (POLICY CENTER RESOURCE)



Find these and other important resources at [theIACP.org](https://theIACP.org).

## THIS MONTH'S QUOTE



Stories can destigmatize mental health, increase connection to peers and peer support, and improve resiliency.



*Stories Save Lives*  
48-51

## FEATURED ITEM IN IACP MONTHLY MARCH NEWSLETTER

### Peer Support Guidebook for Small and Rural Agencies

The IACP, with support from the COPS Office, released a new guidebook detailing how an officer peer support program can be attainable regardless of agency size or location. *Implementing Peer Support Services in Small and Rural Law Enforcement Agencies* explores leading practices from the field on policy, structure, and training to encourage officer participation and program sustainability.



Visit [www.theIACP.org/resources/document/officer-safety-and-wellness](https://www.theIACP.org/resources/document/officer-safety-and-wellness) to access this and other officer wellness resources.

## TOP POLICE CHIEF MARCH BONUS ONLINE ARTICLE



### The Role of PIOs in Violence Reduction Strategies

By Dionne Waugh, PIO,  
Boulder Police Department,  
Colorado



Read this and other online articles at [policechiefmagazine.org](https://policechiefmagazine.org).

**BY**  
Mandy Nice, Chair,  
Physical Wellness  
Committee, IACP Officer  
Safety and Wellness  
Section

# Robust and Innovative Wellness Support

## New IACP Section Leads the Way

**LAW ENFORCEMENT PROFESSIONALS ARE SOME OF THE MOST COURAGEOUS, SELFLESS, NOBLE, AND HEROIC PROFESSIONALS IN A COMMUNITY, AND THEY DESERVE THE VERY BEST SAFETY AND WELLNESS SUPPORT.**

Time has proven that while their job won't get easier, law enforcement professionals *can* become stronger. They can beat the stats on depression, anxiety, physical injuries, heart attacks, suicide, and more. However, it won't happen unless decisive action is taken to *make* it happen. It's time to strengthen the law enforcement commitment to creating the culture of wellness that every police professional deserves. That is why the new IACP Officer Safety and Wellness (OSW) Section has been launched. This section is led by Retired Chief Jeff Spivey (Chair); Pinole, California, Police Department Chief Neil Gang (Vice Chair); Michael Harper, MEd (Board Member at Large); and Mandy Nice (Physical Wellness Committee Chair). Every IACP member is invited to join.

### WHY PRIORITIZE WELLNESS?

Wellness can be an officer's greatest strength or most deadly threat. Although many of the threats that officers are trained to handle (whether from suspects with guns, blades, or any number of other weapons) are visible, the equally deadly *invisible* wellness-related threats (such as heart disease and suicide ideation) have all too often remained hidden and unaddressed until it's too late.

Analyses show that while most law enforcement academies and agencies have robust testing systems in place to ensure officers enter the profession with above-average levels of physical fitness and psychological health, years of exposure to trauma combined with high rates of physical injuries take a heavy toll on officers. It's clear that many officers

feel overwhelming pressure to demonstrate an unwavering, herculean capacity to withstand the sights, sounds, smells, and terrors of the most horrific tragedies that communities face today—no matter how physiologically and psychologically impossible that may be. Even the most noble attempts have still manifested in today's officer health statistics.

### OUTSMARTING & OVERCOMING WELLNESS THREATS

The OSW Section chair, Chief Spivey states:

*Law enforcement wellness program design, implementation, maintenance, and innovation may seem like daunting tasks, but agency leaders need not take it on alone. The IACP OSW Section is designed to provide guidance, evidence-proven best practices, and resource recommendations that will pave the way for each agency's success.*

Agencies launching a new wellness program or optimizing a current program can turn to the industry-leading toolkits offered by the IACP:

- IACP Officer Health and Wellness Agency Assessment Tool and Action Planning Roadmap
- Introducing the IACP's New Health & Wellness Assessment Tool and Action Planning Roadmap: Your GPS for Success

- National Consortium on Preventing Law Enforcement Suicide Toolkit
- Practical Law Enforcement Fitness & Nutrition Solutions for Powerful Results
- Peer Support Guidelines

These resources are only a small sample of the IACP's full suite of wellness resources. The IACP OSW Section will continuously help add new holistic health resources based on the needs of section members and the industry at large. Ultimately, the section's mission is to innovate and upgrade the definition of "safety and wellness support" for law enforcement professionals, their support staff, and their families throughout the world.

### INVITATION TO JOIN

Joining the IACP OSW Section is simple. Please visit [www.theIACP.org](http://www.theIACP.org) to renew your IACP membership and select the option to join the section (for a \$50/year fee). As a section member, you'll have the opportunity to network with one of six professional committees of members who share wellness interests and goals—suicide prevention, mental health, physical health, legislation, gun violence prevention, and partnerships.

We encourage you to get involved! Our officers' lives quite literally depend on it. ♡

Chair—Chief (Ret.) Jeff Spivey: [jspivey623@gmail.com](mailto:jspivey623@gmail.com)

Vice Chair—Chief Neil Gang: [ngang@ci.pinole.ca.us](mailto:ngang@ci.pinole.ca.us)

Board Member-At-Large—Michael Harper: [michael.harper@dps.texas.gov](mailto:michael.harper@dps.texas.gov)

Physical Wellness Committee Chair—Mandy Nice: [mnice@lexipol.com](mailto:mnice@lexipol.com)



# CALENDAR

## 2023

AUG  
9  
—  
11

### IACP Impaired Driving and Traffic Safety (IDTS) Conference, Anaheim, CA

The IACP IDTS is the largest training conference for drug recognition experts and traffic safety professionals. Join traffic safety professionals from around the world to share knowledge about improving road safety, alcohol- and drug-impaired driving enforcement, leveraging technology, and using traffic safety education to engage with communities.

[theIACP.org/IDTSconference](http://theIACP.org/IDTSconference)

OCT  
14  
—  
17

### IACP 2023 Annual Conference and Exposition, San Diego, CA

The IACP Annual Conference and Exposition is the pre-eminent law enforcement event of the year. Public safety professionals from across the globe come together to network with their colleagues, learn new techniques, advance their careers, and equip their departments for ongoing success.

[theIACPconference.org](http://theIACPconference.org)

## 2024

MAR  
1  
—  
3

### Officer Safety and Wellness Conference, Louisville, Kentucky

This conference is for law enforcement professionals to learn from experts in the field about resources and best practices when developing comprehensive officer safety and wellness strategies. Participants will learn about building resilience, financial wellness, injury prevention, peer support programs, physical fitness, proper nutrition, sleep deprivation, stress, mindfulness, suicide prevention, and more.

[theIACP.org/OSWconference](http://theIACP.org/OSWconference)

Visit [theIACP.org/all-events](http://theIACP.org/all-events) to see more upcoming events.



## DESIGNING POLICE FACILITIES FOR OFFICER SAFETY AND WELLNESS

Proudly supporting National Police Week

 **Dewberry**  
[www.dewberry.com](http://www.dewberry.com)

### POLITORCH™

With 3,000-Lumen brightness, this flashlight reaches more than 400 yards to leave the other tactical flashlights in the dark. Three brightness levels operate between 2.7 to 35 hours via Lithium rechargeable battery, and two modes of strobe, all with one-hand activation. The safe-to-touch tip of the flashlight has a Nano-ceramic glass breaker. It is made of Type III military grade anodized scratch resistant material. See our website for other models.



**POLIFORCE**  
[www.POLIFORCE.com](http://www.POLIFORCE.com)

**POLISTER™** is a quick-draw holster made for flashlights with 1" to 1.25" diameter. It allows 360-degree rotation with 16 locking positions to allow hand-free use of your flashlight. It fits belts of up to 2.17" wide.

The advertisers in this issue can help equip your department with the most efficient tools available today!

Always mention **Police Chief** when contacting our advertisers.

**5.11**  
949.800.1592  
www.511tactical.com..... C2

**Dewberry Architects, Inc.**  
703.849.0100  
www.dewberry.com ..... 71

**FGM Architects**  
630.574.8700  
www.fgmarchitects.com ..... 23

**IACP 2023**  
800.THE.IACP  
www.theiacpconference.org..... 68

**IACP Law Enforcement Policy Center**  
policycenter@theiacp.org  
www.theiacp.org/policycenter..... 26

**IACP Member Benefits**  
800.THE IACP  
www.theiacp.org/member  
-discounts ..... 66

**IACP Member-to-Member Drive**  
800.THE.IACP  
www.theiacp.org/membership  
-criteria ..... 52-53

**IACPnet**  
800.227.9640  
www.iacpnet.com..... 59

**IAPro**  
800.620.8504  
www.iapro.com ..... 5

**IDTS Conference  
(Impaired Driving & Traffic Safety)**  
www.theiacp.org/IDTSconference ..... 65

**Leonardo Company**  
336.478.3241  
www.leonardocompany-us.com/lpr ..... 13

**Lincoln Memorial University**  
865.279.2006  
www.lmunet.edu ..... 29

**Otsuka Pharmaceuticals**  
301.424.9055  
www.otsuka-us.com ..... 15

**Police Chief 2023 Editorial Calendar**  
800.THE.IACP x 7321  
www.policechiefmagazine.org ..... 25

**POLIFORCE**  
www.poliforce.com..... 71

**Salsbury Industries, Inc.**  
800.562.5377  
www.lockers.com..... C3

**SpiderCuff USA**  
413.781.9001  
www.spidercuff.com..... 35, 41

**Utility, Inc.**  
800.597.4707  
www.utility.com..... 60, C4

**Vector Solutions/Acadis**  
800.840.8046  
www.acadis.com..... 1

**ADVERTISE WITH POLICE CHIEF**

Police Chief has opportunities to meet all needs and budgets.

Visit [www.policechiefmagazine.org/advertising](http://www.policechiefmagazine.org/advertising) to view our 2023 media kit and to learn more about our print, digital, and multichannel advertising opportunities.



Please contact **AdBoom** at [www.policechiefmagazine.org/advertising](http://www.policechiefmagazine.org/advertising) if you are interested in or have questions about advertising in **Police Chief** magazine.

The IACP does not recommend, endorse, or accept responsibility for the proper performance of any product advertised in these pages.

**lockers.com**  
1-800-LOCKERS

**SALSBURY**  
INDUSTRIES

People Committed to Quality Since 1936



*Scan to request our 2023 Locker Catalog*



**Salsbury Industries**

18300 Central Avenue, Carson, CA 90746-4008

**Buy Lockers  
Factory Direct!**

**1-800-562-5377**

# 4 STRATEGIES

## YOUR AGENCY COULD BE IMPLEMENTING FOR BETTER OFFICER MORALE

We convened three executive-level law enforcement professionals: Chief Thedrick Andres (Henderson NV PD), Captain Brendan Laflamme (Hollis PD) and Brian Churchill (Retired Chief of Police and current Business Manager at Utility, Inc.) for a discussion to share their unique perspectives on how they're addressing this feedback and the strategies they are implementing to build positive morale.

### EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

1 It is highly important that agencies prioritize effective communication to prevent what Chief Andres calls "the disconnection cycle". This is caused by the failure to ensure the administration all the way down to the line level officers understand the why behind decisions that are made. It is imperative that first line supervisors be transparent with their team and not be reluctant to address things as they occur.

Officers, just like employees at other organizations, appreciate clear lines of communication and transparency within their agency across the board. This fosters mutual trust which impacts overall morale.

### EMPLOYEE WEIGH-IN

2 Communication goes both ways and should never feel one sided. Officers must feel that they are heard and given a venue to be consistently heard by their superiors. Captain Laflamme stated "Our people want to know that they have a voice in which way the agency is going. We put out a yearly anonymous survey asking the tough questions 'What can we do better?', 'What are we doing well?', 'What are your concerns with the agency?' and that starts conversations because people are empowered to say whatever they want to say and they do feel heard,".

Chief Andres explained that his larger agency spoke with supervisors, both sworn and professional staff employees on a consistent basis to determine areas of improvement. These meetings not only empowered his staff to share areas of improvement within the organization but the ability to establish KPIs related to these improvement goals. Initiatives such as these affirm their importance in the organization resulting in increased levels of morale.

### QUALITY OF LIFE

3 It goes without saying that Officers are human beings too. They have entire lives and families outside of the badge. Agencies that realize this and accommodate their officers will continually see success. "Our officers usually voice their quality of life issues that speak to scheduling concerns, staffing levels, and being able to flex their schedules," Captain Laflamme shared. "It goes a long way and they appreciate the efforts that we make to accommodate them. That helps with their attention because it's a culture that a lot of places don't have. Listening to them and accommodating those kinds of things is a huge payoff." Laflamme concluded.

Chief Andres shared that his agency looked into prioritizing the mental health of their officers to further promote positive morale. "We worked with our City Manager's Office to hire a Public Safety Wellness Manager and bringing in that Mental Health clinician has been a game changer for us as well. It's very important for us to make sure that we have some support systems in place so they have an outlet for them to work on their mental health and wellness," Chief Andres concluded. Showing our officers we want them to have a healthy work-life balance and giving them the tools and the flexibility to do so sends a clear message of unique value to our officers.

4 **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)** What gets measured gets managed. While it is important to speak with staff on effective moral boosting strategies, it is equally important to follow up by measuring the effectiveness of these strategies and maintaining accountability within your agency. No matter the size of the agency, this should be prioritized. Chief Andres's large agency created morale KPIs based on employee feedback to measure their effectiveness. "At least once a month we're meeting as a senior

management team looking at all of those KPIs and the senior management team is required to report out on what KPIs they accomplish and what blocking factors that may be there so everyone in the organization can see that we all have skin in the game,".

These key performance indicators may also extend to community engagement efforts according to Laflamme. "When morale was down we saw less community engagement. And now it's like part of every day and we don't even think about it. Our officers are happy when they go out. They greet the public, they're happy to be out there and the public recognizes it. I can't tell you how many times we get phone calls or emails from members of the public about the good our officers do. That's certainly an indicator that we're doing something right here,". Keeping track of how your employees feel about your organization in this way reinforces to officers that you take their concerns and experiences seriously.

### EMPLOYEE VALUE AND GROWTH PATH

5 Recent studies reveal it is now commonplace for officers to leave an agency, or the profession, if they do not feel valued. Experts say the best way to improve officers' feeling of value at their agencies is to actively acknowledge their efforts, invest in them and invest in their career path. Approximately 78% of officers stay with an employer because of a benefits program that includes career track programs. Speak with your team and find out the types of training they would be interested in and look into offering it. Examine their career goals and create a clear career track that officers can follow. In addition to creating career paths, agencies should form programs to actively build strong relationships that acknowledge employee value.

Taking an active approach rather than a passive approach towards improving morale with these strategies communicates to our officers that we do care and we are listening. Employee retention then becomes less of a strain for agencies because their employees feel like a valued member of their organization. When overall employee morale is high, they are better producers and agencies get better results which in turn will trickle down to the communities they serve.



Visit [utility.com/blog](https://utility.com/blog) for more learning resources.

brought to you by  
**UTILITY**  
800-597-4707 | [Utility.com](https://utility.com)