

# **Building Resilience for Life's Challenges**

## **"Taking Care of Self While Serving Others"**

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# Objectives

Identify	Identify the multiple types of stress that may be experienced by a governmental employee
Describe	Describe potential impacts that this may have upon the individual and organization
List	List strategies and interventions that might be used to mitigate the impacts of stress
Identify	Identify leadership opportunities within high stress environments

# Plan For This Afternoon

- First: This is your session
- Matt's 2 Goals
  - Making the link between our current environment, stress and critical incident/traumatic stress
  - Taking care of communities, ourselves, and our colleagues

# CHPD Crisis Division Overview

- 51<sup>st</sup> Year in existence
- 13 FT Staff
- Programs
  - Co-Response
  - CARE Team
  - Diversion Social Worker
  - Transit Crisis Counselor
  - Department Wellness Coordinator



# Typical Response Requests

- Death Notification
- Domestic Violence
- Family Conflict
- Sex Crimes
- Traumatic Injury MVA
- Violent Crime:
  - Home Invasion
  - Muggings
  - Assaults with injury
- Psychiatric Emergencies
- Elder Issues
- Child Abuse and Neglect
- Armed Robberies
- Structure Fires
- Armed Robberies
- Mentally Ill: victim & perp.
- Barricaded/Hostage
- Critical Incident Scene Management

# **“A Different Normal”**

- COVID Hangover
- World Conflicts
- Dramatic and drastic changes in life the way we know it
- Community impacts on all levels
- Family stresses
- Unknown and mixed messages

# Conversation #1

Currently what are some of the biggest issues impacting:

- Your Organization
- You
- Your Family
- Your Community

What are you feeling?

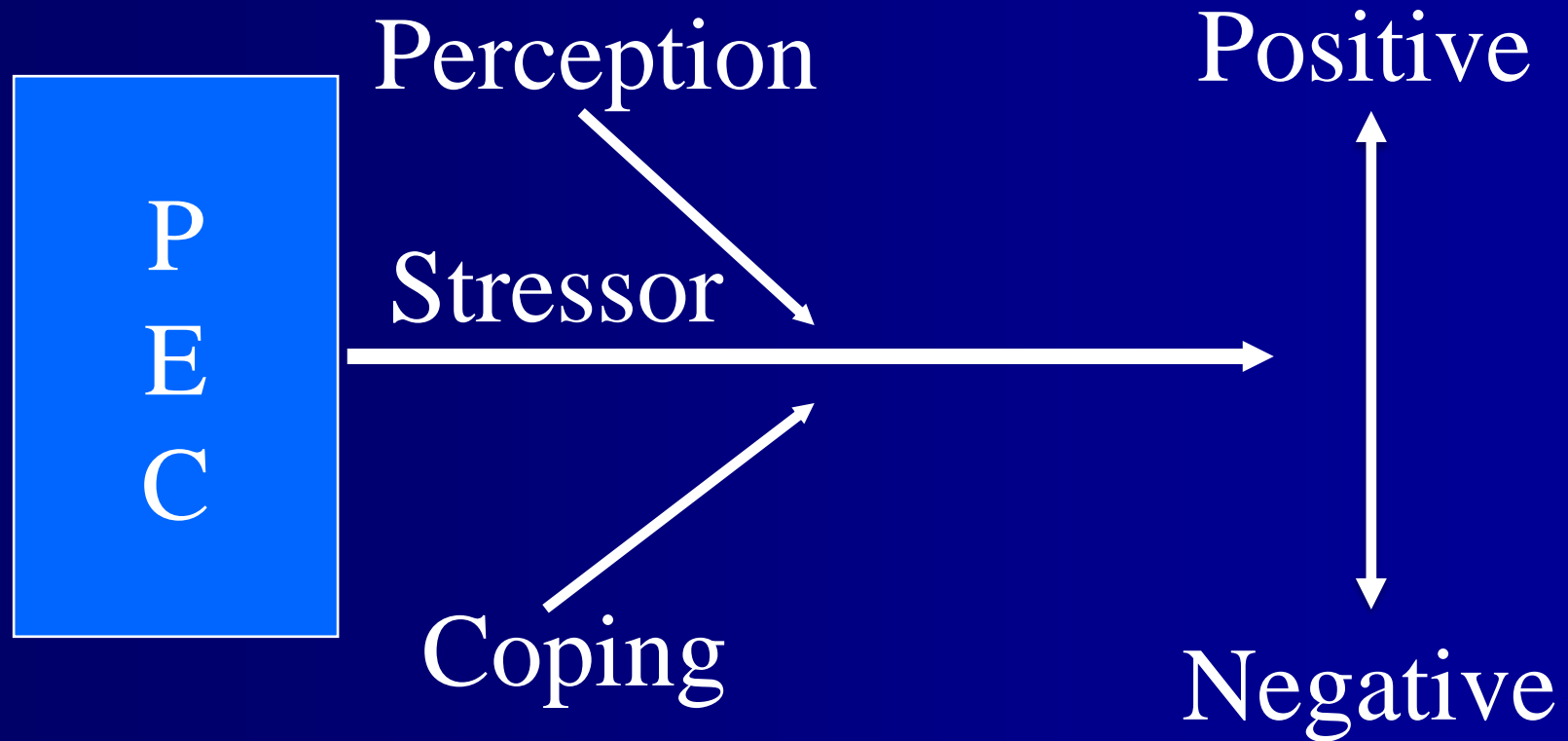
# Stress Generally

- Stress and anxiety are normal states of physical, cognitive, and emotional arousal.
- Individuals experience automatic physical and psychological reactions to a danger or demand.
- Once these changes take place, behavior changes.
- A critical or traumatic incident exacerbates the reactions and behavioral outcomes.
- **An ongoing critical incident or traumatic event adds additional dimensions and concerns.**

# Emotion is also Brain Science

- Amygdala, Insular Cortex, Brainstem
- Cortisol: Body's main stress hormone
- Dopamine: Neurotransmitter sends messages between nerve cells
- Adrenaline: Prepare body for fight or flight
- Noradrenaline: Main neurotransmitter in sympathetic nervous system

# Simple Model to Evaluate Stress



# Ongoing Occupational Stress

**External  
Stressors**

**Organizational  
Stressors**

**Personal  
Stressors**

**Cumulative  
Stressors**

# What (and who) defines a “CRISIS” ?

- An event or series of events that compromise the ability of an individual or system to function within their environment
- These events generate stress that existing coping mechanisms are unable to manage in a productive manner.
- The “crisis” has the potential to exhaust both client and helping professional physically, mentally, and emotionally.
- Individual interpretation, past experience, and resilience (individual and community) have everything to do with defining the crisis.



# Characteristics of Crisis

Unplanned

Individual Interpretation

Individual Reactions

Chaotic

Multiple Parties Effected

Situation Changes Rapidly

Human & Financial Costs

Lasting Effect ('Tide')

Retriggering Aspects

# What about Disaster Crisis?

- Typically individuals (including the responders) have a difficult time maintaining the hierarchy of basic needs.
- These deficits are compounded in many instances by systemic disruptions in both interpersonal relationships and physical infrastructure.
- Follows a predictable series of stages that require a variety of interventions. These can also manifest in the helping professional.

# Four Stages of Traumatic Crisis

- Shock
  - Interventions are typically limited to providing a safe support system for the individual
- Questioning
  - Individuals attempt to construct a rational basis for the trauma frequently resulting in feelings of helplessness and hopelessness
- Integration
  - Assisting individual in incorporating the experience into his or her existence in ways that have some meaning
- Recovery

# Progression through the Crisis

- Pre-Disaster
- Heroics
- Honeymoon
- Disillusionment
- Recovery/Reconstruction

USDHHS-SAMHS

# The Kübler-Ross model: five stages of grief

- Denial (and Shock)
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- (Maybe Testing)
- Acceptance

# Conversation #2

## **THE LOSSES WE GRIEVE**

# What about Traumatic Stress?

Simply:

"Normal reactions to very abnormal events"

Can lead to growth

Can also be toxic

# Physical Outcomes

- Nervousness/Twitching
- Headaches
- Muscle Tension
- Ulcers
- Heart Attack
- Stroke
- Allergies
- Lack of energy



# Psychological Outcomes

- Confusion
- Depression
- Anxiety Related Disorders
- Sleep Disturbances
- Substance Abuse
- Memory Loss
- Relationship Conflicts

# Critical Incident Stress Reactions

- Nausea
- Tremors
- Chills
- Profuse Sweating
- Chest Pains
- Confusion
- Intrusive Visual Images
- Depression
- Feeling "Lost"
- Rapid Breathing
- Headaches
- Nightmares
- Gastro-Intestinal Problems
- Muscle Aches
- Guilt
- Feeling "Numb"
- Feeling "Abandoned"

# POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- Constant Hypervigilance
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Substance Abuse
- Occupational Dissatisfaction / “Burn Out”
- Impaired Decision Making and Judgement
- Relationship Conflict and Discord
- Boundary Problems

# Ongoing Traumatic Stress Exposure

- There must be opportunities for discharge of the stress.
- "Always on" creates potential physical and psychological negative outcomes.

# CHECK-IN

Think about your personal experience.

Anything familiar?

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

# Compassion Fatigue

- Emotional and or physical exhaustion that leads to a diminished capacity to empathize.
- Signs
  - Feeling burdened
  - Blaming others for their suffering
  - Physical and mental fatigue
  - Emotionlessness
  - Frequent complaints about work or life
  - Job performance issues

# Assessing Compassion Fatigue

- I feel overwhelmed. I can't finish projects or routine tasks.
- I find it very draining to accomplish even small things.
- My personal and professional lives seem blurred.
- People don't seem to understand me.
- Trauma affects me significantly and I have difficulty recovering after traumatic experiences or associations.
- I feel significant personal stress.
- I feel hopeless and vulnerable.

# Possible Signs of Compassion Fatigue

- Substance Abuse
- Blaming
- Chronic lateness
- Headaches
- High self-expectations
- Hopelessness
- Hypertension
- Inability to maintain balance
- Sleep disturbances
- Anger
- Depression
- Exhaustion
- GI Problems
- Less ability to “feel”
- Irritability
- Loss of objectivity
- Workaholism
- Eating Disorders



# Addressing Compassion Fatigue

- Know the symptoms
- Learn to ask for help
- Maintain daily discipline
- Know and accept your limitations
- Identify and eliminate minor stressors, and develop ways to live with those you can't
- Take regular breaks during the workday
- Vacations
- Don't try to cover or pass
- Identify and mitigate stressors
- Organization

# US Department of Justice: OVC

- “Blueprint for a Vicarious Trauma Informed Organization”
  - Employee Empowerment and Work Environment
  - Leadership and Mission
  - Staff Health and Wellness
  - Training and Professional Development
  - Management and Supervision of Staff

# Traditional Traumatic Stress Prevention/Mitigation

Pre-Incident  
Education

Proactive Stress  
Management  
Skill Building

“Roll Call”  
“Critical  
Incident  
Briefing”

Health and  
Wellness  
Initiatives

Demobilization  
Information  
Briefings

Diffusing

1-1 Intervention

Group Meetings

Follow-up

Family  
Initiatives

# Interventions/Initiatives

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Components
- Resiliency-Based Management and Support Models
- Mental Health First Aid
- On-going and Proactive Stress Management Programs
- Employee Wellness Initiatives, Mandated Fitness Program
- Work-Life Balance Initiatives
- Roll Call/Staff Meeting on Mental Health Topics
- “Old School” Validation from the Dinosaurs

# What is resiliency?

- Respond
- Recover
- Spring Back
- Elasticity
- Grow
- Mitigate
- Prevent

## Question #3

**WHO IS THIS RESILIENT  
INDIVIDUAL???**

# **A STORY OF RESILIENCE**

# Building Individual Resilience (Think: Mind/Body/Sprit)

- The losses we grieve...
- Mantra: Normal Reactions
- Proper Nutrition
- Exercise
- Connection
- Proactive Stress Management
- Control/Confidence
- Meditation, Yoga
- Routines are important
- Journaling
- Emotion Regulation



# What is a Resilient Community?

## WHAT COMMUNITY?

- Resilient Communities need healthy individuals
- Sustained ability: to withstand, adapt, and recover from adversity.
  - A process not an outcome
- Collective behavior of community members to an outcome

# Resilient Communities

- Social Connectedness and Relationship
- Acknowledgement, Attention, Appreciation, Affection
  - (Medicine of the Cherokee: the way of right relationship: J.T. Garrett and Michael Garrett (1996 Bear & Company))
- Six Domains to consider  
(<https://www.resilience.org/>)
  - People, Systems Thinking, Adaptability, Courage, Transformability, Sustainability

# Some Frameworks/Resources

- Communities Advancing Resilience Toolkit (CART)
  - Pfefferbaum RL, Pfefferbaum B, and Van Horn RL (2011).  
Oklahoma City, OK: Terrorism and Disaster Center at the  
University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.
- RAND Corporation
- The Los Angeles County Community Disaster  
Resilience (LACCCR) project
- SAMHSA

# Advance Crisis Planning

- Emergency Operations Plans
- Emergency Action Plans
- Disaster Preparedness Plans
- School Crisis Plan

Assessment of capabilities and resources, and defines role and responsibilities in Crisis

# Thoughts About Self-Care

- Emotional Regulation Skills
- Proactive Stress Management, yoga, meditation
- Pre-planning, Personal and Professional
- Ongoing mental health supports must be in place for the service providers
- Providers must have a keen sense and maintain clear strong boundaries
- Maintain communication with personal social supports
- Routines are important
- Journaling
- Nutrition, sleep, rest, etc. (mandatory down time)
- Mourn losses without feeling guilty.

# **“Three Blessings/Good Things” Exercise**

- Martin Seligman
- At the conclusion of each day think of three good things that happened that day.
- Write them down.
- Explain the “why” and your role in making them happen.

# Taking Care of Each Other

- Recognize potential problems with stress in your co-workers...
- Respond to your observations...
- Where appropriate, react to support or help...
- Reach out if you feel that the situation is one that is of a critical nature
- PS: YOUR LIFE OR THEIR LIFE MAY DEPEND ON IT

# Some Lessons

- Manager, Fire Chief, Clerk, Deputy Manager, Director, Doctor Social Worker, Counselor, \_\_\_\_\_ Know Thy Self
  - Strengths and Limitations
- And Know Thy Discipline
- Culture
  - Involves more than gender, ethnicity and class
- Will your involvement favorably change the outcome?
- What Is Your Motivation?
- Take Care of Yourself... BUT.... It's Not About You!!
- Have Reasonable Expectations.
- Get Your House In Order
  - Personal and Professional



# A Few Words About Leadership

- Organizational trust is more important than ever
- Recognize the strain and stress experienced by employees
- Evaluate expectations
- Share information
- Engage employees in decision making where possible
- Listen
- Working from home dynamics (PTO)
- Recognize the disparities illustrated in our environment

# JOY

What is your JAM?

# **THE TALE OF TWO WOLVES**

He who fights monsters must  
take care, lest he thereby  
becomes a monster. For as  
you gaze long into the abyss,  
so too, the abyss gazes into  
you. – Fredrich Nietzsche

# **COMPASSION AND ZEITLANG**

**HOPE**

Faith is the bird  
that sings to the dawn  
while it is still dark.

- Rabindranath Tagore

# Reframing

What have I learned, experienced, started doing, after or while experiencing \_\_\_\_\_ that I want to incorporate into my life moving forward?