Law Enforcement Resilience Training Program Overview

Through the Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement Officers and Ensuring Officer Resilience and Survivability Initiative of the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, in partnership with the University of Pennsylvania’s Positive Psychology Center, has developed the Law Enforcement Resilience Training Program.

What is resilience, and why is it important? The stressors that law enforcement officers face can have serious implications for overall health and wellness. Having the skills to navigate adversity and grow and thrive in the face of the many challenges and stressors that law enforcement experience could strengthen not only their mental wellness but also their physical wellness.

One key aspect of resilience is optimism, which is a focus of the program. There is a significant body of research on the benefits of optimism on mental and physical health. In one study, optimistic older adults were 48% less likely to develop heart failure four years later.

Law Enforcement Resilience Training Overview

This training is based on the University of Pennsylvania Positive Psychology Center’s evidence-based training programs that have been delivered to military personnel, educators, students, and others. This program has been tailored specifically for law enforcement, to include dynamic interactions, one-on-one instruction, and engaging activities. The training includes empirically validated skills that can prevent and decrease anxiety and depression and increase optimism and well-being. These skills can be applied professionally and personally, and are divided into three core themes:

1. Mind skills harness thinking to drive productive emotions, reactions, and physiology. Officers learn skills to increase realistic optimism and identify and avoid counterproductive thoughts, or “thinking traps,” which can interfere with work and personal effectiveness.

2. Energy skills regulate energy and maintain vitality. Officers learn skills to increase gratitude, leverage character strengths, and reduce the fight-or-flight response by deliberate breathing and other strategies.

3. Connection skills strengthen professional and personal relationships. Officers learn how to plan for and engage in conversations when there are difficulties to address, and how to respond to others’ positive experiences to build trust and strong relationships.

References:
Train-the-Trainer Course:

**Phase 1:**
During the four-day virtual phase one training, attendees learn resilience skills through an interactive, experiential format which utilizes role-plays, videos, practice exercises, and discussions. Participants will learn valuable resilience strategies they can incorporate into every aspect of their lives.

**Phase 2:**
The second phase of the train-the-trainer course is taught in-person over four days and will provide participants the tools to teach resilience skills to others. Following completion of both phases, the IACP and University of Pennsylvania will work with certified agency trainers to develop implementation plans for their agencies based off of the modularized curriculum.

**Direct Trainings:**

Trainings ranging between one to four days are available upon request. The resilience curriculum can be taught in various formats, lengths, and experience levels, and each session is adapted to meet the needs of agencies. These trainings are taught by certified agency trainers and may be held regionally to accommodate participants from multiple agencies.

Law Enforcement Resilience Training Program Participant Testimonials

“This will be a wonderful addition to the overall training tool belt. This program was well planned and well executed. I look forward to introducing this to the entire organization!”

“I’ve learned that although agencies tend to work a little differently, ultimately, we seem to experience the same struggles and stressors in one way or another. Building resilience can help us in not only our day-to-day lives, but also in the career of law enforcement no matter what agency or location.”

“Resilience means being able to weather the storm and being mindful of your emotional and physical well-being. In doing so, it fosters personal growth and allows you to focus on things within your control, saving you time and energy.”

Training participants can include sworn personnel from all ranks, as well as non-sworn personnel, dispatchers, peer support leaders, and mental health professionals. For more information, contact OSW@theIACP.org or visit www.theIACP.org/OSW. To request a training, scan the QR code:

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