

VALOR Officer Resilience Training Program Overview

Policing is a demanding occupation that has an impact on an individual's immediate and long-term safety, wellness, and resilience. Prioritize your agency's health and wellness today.

No Cost Training

Why is resilience important? The stressors that police officers face can have serious implications on overall health and wellness. Having the skills to navigate adversity and grow and thrive in the face of challenges and stressors strengthens both mental and physical wellness.

A key focus of the resilience program is optimism. There is a significant body of research on the benefits of optimism on mental and physical health.^{1,2} In one study, optimistic older adults were 48% less likely to develop heart failure four years later.³

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This evidence-based training program has been tailored specifically to police professionals, including dynamic interactions, one-on-one instruction, and engaging activities. The training focuses on empirically validated skills that prevent and decrease anxiety and depression and increase optimism and well-being. This course is available through The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), in partnership with the University of Pennsylvania's Positive Psychology Center, and the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement Officers and Ensuring Officer Resilience and Survivability (VALOR) Initiative. The resilience skills trained in the course, relevant to both personal and professional life, 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** increase gratitude, leverage character strengths, and reduce the fight- or-flight response by practicing deliberate breathing and other strategies.
- 3. Connection skills** strengthen professional and personal relationships. The program teaches how to plan for and engage in difficult conversations, and how to respond to others, building trust and strong relationships.

This no cost one-day resilience course is taught by culturally competent subject matter experts trained through the program. Four primary skills will be taught in the course:

- Learned Optimism – Teaches officers to notice and expect the positive, focus on what they can control, and take purposeful action.
- Avoiding Thinking Traps – Shows officers how to change counterproductive patterns in thinking that undercut resilience.
- Real-Time Resilience – Demonstrates how to shut down counterproductive thinking and build focus and confidence.
- Identify, Describe, Express, Ask and List (IDEAL) Model – Outlines strategies for building trust and connection during difficult conversations.

¹ Alarcon, G.M., Bowling, N.A., & Khazon, S. (2013). Great expectations: a meta-analytic examination of optimism and hope. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 54(7), 821-827.

² Scheier, M. F., & Carver, C. S. (2018). Dispositional optimism and physical health: A long look back, a quick look forward. *American Psychologist*, 73(9), 1082-1094.

³ Kim, E.S., Smith, J., & Kubzansky, L. (2014). A prospective study of the association between dispositional optimism and incident heart failure. *Circulation: Heart Failure*, 7(3): 394-400

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Training Details:

One-Day Direct Training:

The one-day direct training teaches four primary skills that have been identified as most important to police professionals. Attendees will acquire these skills through an interactive, experiential format using role-plays, practice exercises, and discussions.

93.6% of participants in a 2023 training reported that the skills they learned would be beneficial to their personal and professional lives.

- Training can be held regionally to accommodate participants from multiple agencies.

VALOR Officer 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.”

For more information about this training and training availability, please contact OSW@theIACP.org or visit www.theIACP.org/OSW.

This project was supported by Grant No. 15PBJA-22-GK-01406-VALO awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

