

Family support news

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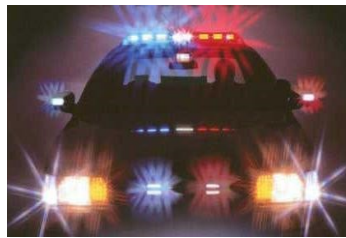


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"Rising from the Flames"

Reflecting back on Oct 26, 2010, it was the beginning of a 'New normal' for our family. What literally took 2 minutes to transpire changed our lives forever. Now when I hear the Fall wind blowing leaves down the street, it takes me right back to that night. My son now arranges his bedroom strategically to be able to see his door & have his back against the wall. My daughter now wakes up at night sleep walking or dreaming that we needed her for something. My husband startles at a loud sound. Watching these take place frustrates me some days because I feel like it's not fair that we have to experience this because of one guys selfishness. Other days I thank God that our family is still complete and it's the appreciation of that I'm happy for. As much as all this has gotten better as time passes, there are still reminders everyday of how life can change in an instant!



It was a cold Fall night with high winds, a male with a vendetta against Law Enforcement had a plan. He set his house on fire to

draw in emergency personnel while he waited in the neighbor's yard with a 12 gauge shotgun and plenty of ammo, for a battle. Chad arrived on scene and 19 seconds later had been shot twice. Once square in the chest (Thank God he always wears his vest!!), second round hit his radio on his belt and ricocheted and hit him in the chest a 2nd time. A good Samaritan was also shot once, grazing his abdomen.

Those listening to scanners, along with an announcement at the football game, local radio announcements to avoid the neighborhood of the shooting, Facebook, texting, and calling spread news and rumors at an incredible pace! My first call came, literally, 5 minutes after Chad walked out of the house from supper. In the ½ hour it took for an officer to arrive at my door I had received 4 phone calls either telling me what they heard over the scanner or wondering if Chad was involved or OK. the furthest from the image of what or how I expected such a notification to go.

Cont. Pg 3

Free Apps Available...

"COZI FAMILY ORGANIZER"



FREE DOWNLOAD FROM ANDROID

WITH SHIFT WORK AND CHANGING SCHEDULES THIS APP WILL HELP YOU AND YOUR FAMILY STAY ORGANIZED. NO MORE QUESTIONING WHEN TO SCHEDULE APPOINTMENTS, MEETING, ETC.

Positive Self-Care

Our article on self-care is included because almost everyone's life is busy. The hustle, bustle, constant changes and demands of life can be very stressful. But for a police officer, stress can be a more dangerous enemy than most of the perpetrators they arrest. Stress can rob an officer of their physical and mental health. The good news is that with a little knowledge and planning, the law officer can effectively combat this issue. The key is regular Self-Care.

Written by Vicki Langemo,
a Licensed Professional Counselor

Vicki is a counselor at Counseling for a Better Life and information about her can be found at www.betterlifetoday.net

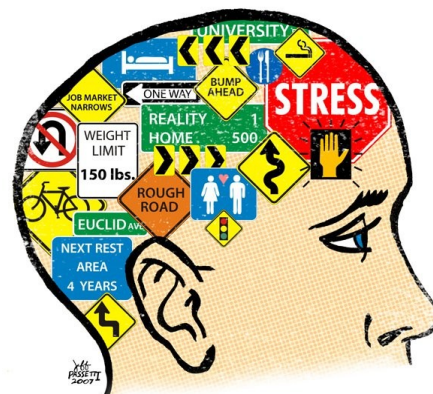
Positive Self-Care

Positive Self-Care contains 6 main components. A good night's sleep, healthy eating habits, exercise, emotional support, stress release and a regular dose of fun. Some researchers have classified police work as the most stressful occupation in America and the divorce rate among our law enforcement is 10 to 25% above the norm. This occupation has a suicide rate that is three times higher than the national average. Our officers are very important and it is crucial that they learn to incorporate self-care into their lives. Just as in an airplane crash, we are taught to put on our oxygen masks before helping someone else; our officers must take care of themselves so they are able to help others.

The first step is to always try to get a good night's sleep. This may be harder for officers since they are shift workers and their work hours change on a regular basis. But our mind and body needs sleep to recharge and stay healthy. Therefore, an officer needs to try and set aside 8 hours a day for sleep. Normally, a person needs about an hour to wind down before trying to fall asleep. If you do not take the time to unwind and instead fall asleep from pure exhaustion, the brain will still need to wind down before going into a deep R.E.M sleep. Without an hour of wind down time, the natural rhythm of a good night's sleep is disrupted. Therefore an hour before bedtime, all stimulating activities should cease. Turn off the cell phones, computers and texting. Instead, develop a night time ritual that tells your brain that you are getting ready to sleep. Relax, stretch, breath slow and deep, get into your PJ's, sip some warm milk or non-caffeine tea, and spend a half an hour doing something calming like reading a book or meditating. Your bedroom should be a sleep

sanctuary which means it should be quiet, dark and comfortable. If an officer follows these simple steps, it will help them get the important sleep their mind and body needs to stay healthy and combat stress.

Healthy eating is another ingredient in the fight against stress. To simplify healthy eating, your main diet



should contain fresh fruit, vegetables, nuts and a little meat. Try to eliminate or reduce caffeine, drink a lot of water throughout the day, and limit your alcohol consumption. Stress creates chemical toxins in your body. Cont. pg 4

LEFSN Board Members

The LEFSN board would like to hear your input. Please send us an email letting us know what your family or department is doing to help with life as a Law Enforcement family.

Emails can be sent to
myra@lawenforcementfamilysupport.org

Mail can be sent to
PO Box 32831
Fridley MN 55432

“Rising from the Flames” cont.

I felt like everyone knew more than I did. After my first call informing me “Chad got shot in the chest!” I honestly didn’t believe that what I was hearing was correct, (15 years of living with a cop the ‘second guess everything’ mentality has worn off on me) NO body gets anything right that they hear over a scanner and besides that everyone exaggerates details!! I had to find out for myself. I called Chad’s phone, he answered, but he could hardly talk and all he said was “I’ll call your back” I asked, “Are you OK?” he replied, “Yes, I’ll call you back!” and hung up... Now I’m not one that calls dispatch unless there is an emergency that I need to reach Chad, but I needed to know what was going on... I called and was put on hold for what seemed like forever but was about 2 minutes... Then told that he was OK, he had been shot in the chest but he was up walking and talking, and they don’t know if it was someone who shot him or something exploded from the fire. I checked on the kids, put on a sweatshirt, pair of tennis shoes and grabbed the house phone and my cell and stood looking out the front window. I figured either A) Chad will call me back, or a squad will pull up in my driveway. Twenty six minutes after I received my first call an officer arrived at my house. I stepped outside, as of this point my kids did not know anything was going on, I didn’t want them to hear the doorbell so I intercepted the officer on the front step. He basically told me what Dispatch already had as this officer had just been called in, and he didn’t know many details other than Chad was in route to the hospital and I should go there.

Upon arriving at the ER there were a number of people in the waiting room and honestly I can’t tell you if I recognized them or not as it was all a blur. I just remember feeling like, ‘Everyone knows what is going on EXCEPT for me!?!’ I finally got to see Chad very briefly between tests being run. He was in an immense amount of pain, but he seemed to be OK. When they told me they were going to air lift him to Rochester The reality of the event started to sink in. Up until that point it seemed like I was just waiting to hear from him “OK I have the rest of the night off, let’s go home.” Like it was all just a precaution and it wasn’t real. This is the first tears that came to my eyes, I was scared.

One of the local officers took me by the arm and basically didn’t leave me for the next 24 hours. He drove me to Rochester and by the time I got there, there was already a group of officers with my husband. The group changed faces throughout the night but the support was constant! Chad was released the next afternoon and

As we drove back into Fairmont, we were met at the interstate by a string of squads ready to escort us to our house – pretty amazing experience to feel the love and respect by so many!!

The effects of the event have not only changed our family but it’s made Chad and I realize the importance of each other in surviving his profession. There is a lot of codependence of his job and our family and the ability to share with each other our fears, dreams, triumphs and struggles that go along with not only the day to day aspects of his job, but getting through an event such as his being ambushed and shot. From the night of the shooting forward I was very adamant that I wanted to know every detail regarding what happened that night. My fear was that if I didn’t know everything then Chad would try and protect me from further pain by not telling me when he was struggling with something. I wanted him to know I was there for him and we were in it together! It has not been a ‘happily ever after year’, but it has been worth every struggle!!!

One thing Chad and I have decided we want to do for others, is share our experience of what went right that night and after, along with what we’ve learned from going through a critical incident to hopefully bring awareness to others and perspective from both sides. If any Law Enforcement agencies, groups or families would like to see and hear our presentation first hand, please contact me at ssanow05@hotmail.com



Officer Sanow as he receives his new vest

Positive Self-Care Cont.

To flush those toxins out of your system, it is important to eat healthy and drink plenty of water. Fresh fruit and vegetables contain powerful ingredients that produce the body building elements to fight disease and stress. So make a point to nibble on your favorite fruits or greens throughout the day.

Another way to flush out those stress toxins is to exercise. Exercising can be anything that gets your body moving. So find something fun that you like to do that puts your body in motion. It can be walking, biking, swimming, dancing, yoga, tai chi, gardening, mowing your lawn, or playing with your kids or a pet. Just keep in mind that you need to move that body every day.

It is important to develop an emotional support system. Talking out your problems, having someone who cares, or just laughing and joking around can help an officer with their stress. So an officer needs to have a good social network.

It can be friends, family, a counselor, religious advisors, a sport's team or belonging to an organization. But it is very valuable to develop relationships with people who you can lean on when you are feeling overwhelmed. A police officer's job is very demanding. Sometimes, it can take over your life if you aren't careful. In law enforcement, an officer often witnesses the worst of humanity. Therefore to counter balance this part of the job, an officer must make a mental note not to push away the people who are important in their lives but instead take the time to make relationships a priority.

Incorporate stress relief into your life. Laugh, Cry or yell when you need a release. Nature gave us these tools to help us get relief. There is nothing wrong with a good cry, a belly laugh or letting off some steam (as long as you are not hurting someone else). Another method is breathing deep and slow which is nature's way of relaxing the body. Another anti-stress tool is to write a list of pleasant memories or fun daydreams that will cause you to smile. Just the image of a happy thought will help you to unwind. Positive self-talk is a valuable tool.

Resources for Officers and Families



COPS Alive

CopsAlive.com was created to help law enforcement officers successfully navigate their careers and build happy and healthy lives.

We offer resources, training and information on how to create and sustain total wellness while confronting the hidden dangers of law enforcement. Dangers such as police officer suicide, alcoholism, and cumulative stress are killing more cops than the bad guys.

Visit CopsAlive.com today to learn how we can help you!



Family Trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Trauma and PTSD not only affect the person who experienced the trauma but also their loved ones. Loved ones will benefit from knowing:

What to expect after someone goes through a traumatic event

[What PTSD is](#), and [what it is not](#)

What to do to help someone who experiences a traumatic event

The Center offers printable [Fact Sheets](#) about the effects of trauma on families, children, relationships

<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/>



MN Association for Injured Peace Officers

Minnesota peace officers become injured on duty as a result of shootings, car accidents, assaults, and other incidents. Serious injuries lead to critical medical problems which require extensive medical care and rehabilitation.

The association maintains a support system . We provide a mentor who has previously experienced a similar injury. The knowledge and experience is invaluable in helping the injured officer and family.

<http://www.officerneedshelp.com/>

You can tell yourself that it will be alright, you are in control or things will work out. A hot bath or calming music may also do the trick. If you need a little extra help in this area, there is a wonderful meditation CD called **Relax, Unwind & Sleep: A Relaxation Meditation and Positive Visualization Journey**. A relaxation CD is a simple way to calm down. Just pop it into a player and listen. It can be ordered from www.betterlifetoday.net or downloaded from iTunes. Pay attention to your stress and take simple, regular measures to help relieve it.

Finally, always remember to add a dose of fun to your life. What small, quick, healthy things can you do that bring a little joy into your day? It is actually important to sprinkle your week with fun activities. Read a good book, go for a walk, watch a funny show, take a hot bath, sit outside sipping your favorite beverage, play a game, participate or watch a sport, listen to music that you enjoy, call a friend, pet an animal, dance or sing. Whatever is your pleasure...make a point of adding these activities into your life each week to reduce your stress and enrich your life.

A police officers occupation is not an easy one. But it can be very rewarding as long as the officer takes the time to relieve his/her stress. By getting a good night's sleep, eating healthy, exercising, having a support system, actively reducing your stress and having a little fun each day, our officer's in blue will enjoy a happier and healthy life.

Written by Vicki Langemo, a Licensed Professional Counselor

Vicki is a counselor at Counseling for a Better Life and information about her can be found at www.betterlifetoday.net



Core Beliefs: The public safety profession is a vital component in society providing the invaluable service of ensuring safe, peaceful and prosperous communities.

Core Values: We have developed a deep understanding of the demands placed on public safety officers and their families. We offer support without discrimination, judgment, bias or intolerance.

Core Services: We advocate for intentional family education & support as a strategy designed to improve the overall health and wellness of officers and their public safety families.

We provide education & resources designed to be used by officers and their families, in departments and profession wide to address the issues that impact families behind the badge

Recommended Reading

