



Dear Parent(s) of a Police Officer:

Someone recently asked me what things that I wished I had known to help prepare me for having my son, Adam, involved in a critical incident. I have thought about this long and hard, only to come to the conclusion that there's nothing that could've prepared me for these events. I drew strength from all that were around me at the time.

We were surrounded by the support of the police department. I have always heard about the bond that officers have with one another. To see it up close and personal was tremendous. I shared hugs with many an officer. Officers gave their business cards—I had accumulated a pocket full and knew that I could call upon any one of the officers if necessary. I was especially grateful that the police community was there for my son, from the top of the ranks to the patrol officers. He had a support group that included not only the police, but family and friends. The support was apparent from having officers shovel Adam's driveway and sidewalk, family members that filled his freezer with meals, and visits, phone calls, and emails of support and caring from friends. The need to talk is great for the involved officer and his family.

I knew my son was independent but not as strongly independent as I found out. Upon release from the hospital, he was determined to take care of himself. It was difficult for me because the "mom" in me had kicked into full gear. I had to step back and respect his decision, helping wherever possible.

Helpful reading is *Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement; A Guide for Officers and Their Families* by Kevin M. Gilmartin, Ph.D. We all know what a dangerous profession that our son/daughter has chosen. The book gave me a lot of insight into what my son may or may not encounter in his years on the force. I found it very helpful both before and after the critical incidents to have read this book.

After my son was shot, I had gone through a very emotional period. I went and talked to an officer that knew Adam well. I shared my feelings with him. He listened. He gave me a book, *The Enlightened Gardener* by Sydney Banks. It was the perfect read for me at the time. It settled me.

I checked various websites. One in particular that I found helpful in understanding what my son was going through was [http://officer.com/web/online/Police-Life/Critical-Incident-Stress/17\\$38344](http://officer.com/web/online/Police-Life/Critical-Incident-Stress/17$38344).

I hope that not another son/daughter will be involved in a critical incident but, unfortunately, in these times, that is an unrealistic hope. I will make myself readily available if any family member that goes through such an incident would like to talk, receive a hug or have their hand held—whatever I can do. Please contact me at the email address below.

Sincerely,

Barb B.
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