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Analysis of Demographic Variables and Levels of Stress in Law Enforcement Officers

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Department of Psychology
Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine

ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND LEVELS OF STRESS IN LAW
ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

Kathleen M. Jansen

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Psychology

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PHILADELPHIA COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Dissertation Approval

This is to certify that the thesis presented to us by Kathleen Jansen on
the 25 day of March, 2004, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Psychology, has been examined and is acceptable in both scholarship and
literary quality.

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Abstract

Employment in a law enforcement profession exposes an individual to potential stressors not experienced in most other professions. Sporadic efforts have been made to design stress management programs to assist officers in coping with the demands of their jobs. Much of the previous research on law enforcement stress has focused on examining the effectiveness of various coping skills; however, the training has focused on teaching a healthy lifestyle. This study seeks to add to the existing research by examining what elements of the job are perceived as the most stressful and what demographic variables, if any, may influence an individual's perception of work-related stress.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

By the very nature of the work they do, police officers risk being exposed to more traumatic events in a month than most members of the general population can expect to encounter over a lifetime (Paton & Violanti, 1996). In addition to potential exposure to trauma, police face a myriad of work-related stressors. Suggested sources of job-specific stressors are often divided into two categories, job factors and organizational factors (Kroes, Margolis & Hurrell, 1974; Symonds, 1969). Shift work, the paramilitary structure of many police departments, the lack of administrative support for individual officers, the unproductive or autocratic management styles, the inconsistent enforcement of rules, the excessive or unnecessary paperwork, as well as equipment deficiencies and shortages are organizational factors most often cited as stressful (Pranzo & Pranzo, 1999). Excessive boredom interspersed with high levels of activity, frequent exposure to violence and human suffering, personal danger, the need to make split-second decisions, and the role conflict between being a “helper” and being an “enforcer” are the job factors most often cited as stressful (Finn & Tomz, 1997; Gershon, Lin & Li, 2002).

In addition, many officers report significant family and relationship difficulties as a consequence of dealing with job stress. The nature of the work, odd schedules, specialty assignments and overtime makes the job compete with the marriage for time and commitment (Pranzo & Pranzo, 1999). In a 1974 study of police stress, 79 of 81 married officers indicated that their work significantly affected their marriages. They cited unusual work schedules, lack of time to spend with children, the influence of job

stress on home life, and loss of non-police friendships as the primary stressors (Kroes, Margolis & Hurrell, 1974).

The intense identification and socialization with peers and the development of an “us versus them” or in-group/out-group mentality experienced by many law enforcement officers affects the marriage relationship as well as other family and social relationships (Kroes, Margolis & Hurrell, 1974). The interpersonal demands on the officer to be sensitive, calm and assertive in work situations, frequently influences his or her role at home where the same behavior may be seen as hypervigilant or suspicious, authoritative, and emotionally controlling (Borum and Philpot, 1993; Wolford, 1993).

The way an individual officer experiences and subsequently copes with job stress varies widely. Previous research has examined both positive and negative coping strategies utilized by police officers to manage job-related stress and its consequences. Positive coping mechanisms include seeking social support, investing in family and intimate relationships, engaging in physical exercise, becoming involved in non-law enforcement related activities, and relying on spirituality (Kaufmann & Beehr, 1989).

Negative coping mechanisms include social isolation, domestic violence, excessive use of prescription and over-the-counter medication, frequent lateness or absenteeism, and substance abuse (Violanti & Paton, 1999). These issues will be examined in more detail as they relate to the effects of cumulative stress, and to positive and negative stress management skills.

Research has suggested that engaging in a law enforcement occupation changes the personality of the individual, beginning shortly after the initial training period. Beutler, Nussbaum, and Meredith (1988) conducted a study that followed police officers

from time of recruitment through two years of service. After only two years on the job, scores on the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) showed significant changes. There was evidence of increased somatic symptoms, anxiety, and alcohol vulnerability.

At an additional four-year follow-up study the mean MacAndrews Alcoholism Scale scores had increased to the critical range. This study, limited by a small sample size of 25 original participants, had only 11 of the original participants available at the 4-year follow-up; however, the implications are of interest.

Stress reactions in general and work-related stress specifically are certainly not limited to the law enforcement profession. The field of occupational stress assessment and intervention has grown significantly over the past two decades. The ensuing sections will discuss what is known about the way humans in general experience and adapt to stress, and the biological and emotional effects of chronic stress over time. Adaptation to work-related stress, in both positive and negative ways as well as the impact of those adaptation mechanisms on law enforcement officers will be discussed.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), as it is defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV – Text Revision (American Psychiatric Association, 2000), refers to a set of symptoms that develops in response to a specific traumatic event. Trauma research, however, has raised the question of whether or not multiple stressful events over time can result in the development of PTSD (McFarlane, 1992). Individuals in high risk occupations, such as law enforcement personnel, would appear to be at higher risk for developing the disorder based on repeated exposure to traumatic events (Mann & Neece, 1990). The development of the disorder, the biological

and cognitive effects, and the potential impact of PTSD in the general population and in the law enforcement profession will be addressed.

The Human Stress Response

Our understanding of human health and illness has expanded significantly in the last century because of advancements in medical science. Our expanding knowledge has resulted in a transition from the “one germ, one disease” philosophy of Louis Pasteur to the understanding that illness is a process influenced by multiple factors. By the year 1960, the primary causes of death in the United States were no longer microbial, and we began to understand that the greatest threat to human health resides in humanity itself (Everly & Lating, 2002).

Biological Model of Stress

The stress response is an innate preservation mechanism that serves a preparatory function, arousing the body in preparation for physical exertion. The primitive goal is survival of the organism. Evolution has redefined the sources of external threat for humans, but the response mechanisms appear relatively unchanged. The biological stress response was first examined scientifically in 1926 by the famous endocrinologist, Hans Selye. During his tenure as a medical student at the University of Prague, he became interested in the significant role that stress appeared to play in many disease processes.

He later conducted pioneering research on the effects of stress in rats (Everly & Lating, 2002). Initially, Selye was involved in a research project attempting to discover additional female hormones. Various chemical solutions were injected into rats, and they were later autopsied to study changes in the ovaries or breasts. Selye noted no such changes, but began to observe that regardless of the chemical injected, all the rats evidenced enlargement of the adrenals, shrinkage of the thymus and lymphoid tissues, and ulcerations in the stomach.

Eventually he began exposing the rats to other adverse conditions and continued to see the same constellation of physical changes. He expanded his investigation to other species of animals and observed the same results. His research eventually determined that the physical changes in the adrenals were the result of increased pituitary stimulation of the adrenal cortex to produce steroids that would reduce inflammation. Increased amounts of cortisone-like hormones created the stomach ulcers and lymphoid tissue shrinkage. Selye confirmed this process by removing the pituitary glands of animals prior to exposure to the noxious stimuli and observing that these changes did not occur.

As a result of his findings, Selye defined the term “stress” to mean the nonspecific response of the body to any demand for change. His selection of the term created some confusion in the scientific community because the word “stress” at that time referred to Hook’s law of 1676 relating to the elastic property of various metals. The impact of external forces on the metal was referred to as “strain”, and Selye later stated that he should have used the term “strain” rather than “stress”. The confusion led to his coining the term “stressor” to refer to the noxious stimuli, and continuing to use “stress” to denote the organism’s response to the stimuli.

Selye (1956) proposed an integrated model for the human stress response known as the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS). He noted that stress, in appropriately mediated quantities, was a necessary and useful component of maintaining homeostasis in humans, a concept attributable to Walter Cannon, whose work paralleled Selye's. Cannon (1953) identified homeostasis as the adaptational efforts of the body to stay in balance and to actively maintain a level of functioning within the limits of tolerance of the systems, in the face of ever-changing conditions. Selye (1956) identified both constructive and destructive stress.

Constructive stress, termed "eustress", is a motivating force that improves the quality of life and protects the individual from foreseeable or predictable harm. Destructive stress, termed "distress" is excessive, inappropriate, and physically damaging stress. Selye noted that there is a relationship between stress and health or performance characterized by an "optimal stress level".

An increase in stress initially increases health or performance to a point of maximum return, after which subsequent increases in stress begin to affect health or performance adversely (Everly & Lating, p. 12). The optimal stress level is very individualized and is a function of genetic, biological, acquired physiological and behavioral factors.

The General Adaptation Syndrome is characterized by three phases Alarm, Resistance, and Exhaustion. The Alarm phase, referred to as the "call to arms" by Selye (1956), is the body's way of preparing for the fight, flight, or freeze response to a perceived threat. Biologically, this phase involves anxiety, the arousal of the sympathetic nervous system, stimulation of the adrenal medullary, increased thyroid and gonadotropin

activity, and the release of adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH), cortisol, growth hormones, and prolactin.

The Resistance phase is the body's attempt to return to homeostasis. There is a reduction in adrenal cortical activity and in sympathetic nervous system activity. The Alarm and Resistance phases are repeated continually throughout one's life; however, disease and dysfunction are thought to occur as a result of the third phase, Exhaustion, which occurs when a stressor is chronic. The individual becomes unable to resist, or resistance mechanisms become depleted, targeting organs or entire systems which are adversely affected. A depletion of resistance mechanisms is one way to characterize the cluster of symptoms present in individuals with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.

Our understanding of stress and its effects on the individual has expanded since Selye's work. Today, there are multiple models proposed to explain the human stress response. Girdano, Everly, and Dusek (2001) identified two primary types of stressors, psychosocial and biogenic stressors.

Biogenic stressors require no interpretation by the individual to be experienced as stressful, but rather possess a sympathomimetic characteristic that causes stimulation of the stress response. These are primarily chemical or environmental stimuli, including caffeine, nicotine, ginseng, guarana, ginkgo biloba, yohimbine, amphetamines, cocaine, extremes of heat and cold, pain-evoking stimuli, or exercise. Intense or chronic exposure to these stressors may pose a significant health risk (Everly & Lating, 2002). Stimulation from these agents bypasses the higher cognitive appraisal mechanisms to work directly on affective and neurological triggering nuclei (Everly & Lating, p. 25).

Given the expanded knowledge of the biology of the human stress response, Everly and Lating have refined previous definitions of stress to “a physiological response that serves as a mechanism of mediation linking any given stressor to its target-organ effect or arousal”. Whatever definition is used, contemporary biological views of the stress response address the involvement of the neurological response pathways, neuroendocrine response mechanisms, and endocrine response pathways.

The body’s neurological response is the first to become activated under conditions of stress. It involves the sympathetic nervous system, the parasympathetic nervous system, and the neuromuscular nervous system. The next physiological step in response to stress is activation of neuroendocrine systems to prepare the body’s “fight or flight” response (Cannon, 1953). Activation of the amygdala has been identified as the point of origin for the neuroendocrine response. There is a downward flow of impulses that activates the hypothalamus, the thoracic spinal cord, and the adrenal glands.

The adrenal medullary secretes two catecholamines, norepinephrine and epinephrin, and cortisol (McEwen, 2001). The result is an increase in blood pressure, heart rate, and blood supply to the brain, stimulation of skeletal muscles and the release of endogenous opioids. There is a decrease in blood flow to the kidneys, the gastrointestinal system, and the skin. The final step in the stress response is stimulation of the endocrine axes, including the adrenal cortical axis, the somatotropic axis, the thyroid axis, and the posterior pituitary axis. These require a greater intensity to become activated and are the most chronic and prolonged stress responses.

The adrenal cortical response is sometimes referred to as activation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal cortical system (HPAC) and is often implicated in the

development of Acute Stress Disorder and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (Bremner et al., 1997; McEwen, 2001; McFarlane et al., 2002). This is the system that is activated when coping is not possible. Although these adrenal steroids have an adaptive effect in the short term, repeated stress is damaging, particularly to the hippocampus.

The hippocampal formation is involved in episodic, declarative, spatial, and contextual learning and memory. The damaging effects of adrenal steroids have been termed “allostatic load”, which is the cost to the body of adaptation to adverse conditions (McEwen, 2001). Four types of allostatic load have been identified in connection with the stress response. They are chronic stress, failure to habituate to chronic stress, failure to shut off the response once the threat has passed, and failure to create an adequate response to threat.

The secretion of cortisol and adrenaline moves immune cells where they are needed to fight an infection. Increased secretion once the threat has passed, however, results in immunosuppression and the body’s vulnerability to infectious disease is increased (McEwen, 2001, p. 45).

Research on rats has demonstrated that the life-long reactivity of the HPAC axis and the autonomic nervous system is heavily influenced by early life experiences, including prenatal stress and postnatal treatment. For ethical reasons, these findings have not been replicated in humans. Rats who experienced high prenatal stress and poor postnatal treatment demonstrated evidence of early and rapid aging of the brain and the body, a decline of the cognitive functions associated with the hippocampus and an increased use of self-medication with amphetamines and cocaine (McEwen, 2001, p. 268).

In a human study, elderly subjects were followed over a 4-year period; those who experienced increases in cortisol levels over the four years showed deficits on tasks measuring explicit memory and selective attention. On MRI studies, those subjects also had hippocampi that averaged 14 percent smaller than matched controls (Lupien, et al., 1994). In a study of concentration camp survivors 30 years after their release, the authors noted substantial evidence of residual psychiatric, neuropsychological, and physical/neurological sequelae dependent upon the nature and duration of the stress conditions (Klonoff, McDougall, Clark, Kramer & Horgan, 1976).

McEwen (2001) notes that with respect to hippocampal atrophy in humans, an individual's response to stress may play a role in making one more vulnerable to his or her own stress hormones. Someone who is exposed to repeated psychosocial stress and fails to habituate to the stressor exposes himself or herself to more cortisol and more stress-related neural activity, putting himself or herself at greater risk for stress-related diseases. Coping plays a critical role in activation and management of the human stress response; this will be discussed in further detail.

Cognitive Model of Stress

Epictetus (as cited in Hunt, 1994) tells us that "Men are not disturbed by things but the views which they take of them". Psychosocial stress represents the greatest proportion of excessive stress in the lives of most individuals. An otherwise neutral event is designated as stressful by the manner in which an individual interprets the event or the meaning he or she assigns to the event (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). A variety of factors influence how an individual will interpret a present event, including the

individual's view of himself or herself, and the world, prior attitudes, conflicts, developmental arrests, personality style, cultural premises, perceived social support, biological predisposition, learning history, and available resources for coping (Horowitz, Wilner, Kaltreider & Alvarez, 1980). Clearly some potential stressors, such as the death of a loved one or the injury of a child, are inherently more stressful than others. However, it still falls to the interpretation of the individual to determine how a stressor will be experienced and how likely it is that the individual will return to homeostasis.

Cognitive appraisal is the meaning that an individual assigns to the events in his or her life, determining his or her perception of the world. Affective integration is the blending of experienced emotion into one's cognitive interpretation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). These factors influence one's experience of environmental stressors. Unlike biogenic stressors, psychosocial stressors have no inherent property that stimulates the stress response. Cognitive appraisal and affective integration combine to create psychological discord. In order for the stress response to be activated, stimuli must be received by receptors of the peripheral nervous system (PNS), and those impulses must travel to the central nervous system (CNS). If the stimulus is appraised as threat, challenge, or aversion, emotional arousal will result via activation of the locus ceruleus, the limbic system, and the hypothalamus, creating a reaction of visceral and neuromuscular activity (Everly & Lating, 2002, p. 28).

In terms of the systems model of coping (Everly and Lating, 2002) essentially the human stress response can be broken down into a seven-step process. The process begins with the stressor event, followed by the cognitive appraisal of the event and the affective integration. If a threat is perceived, neurological triggering mechanisms are activated and

the neural, neuroendocrine, and endocrine responses occur, as previously discussed. The target organ is activated and the individual is faced with the challenge to cope. If coping is achieved successfully, homeostasis is restored. If coping is not successful, dysfunction and disease will occur.

Occupational Stress

Defined

Beehr and Newman (1978) define occupational stress as a “condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs and is characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning”. Economic factors aside, adults who are employed report a higher quality of life than those who do not work (Ruchlin & Morris, 1991).

Full-time employment predicts slower decline in perceived health and in physical functioning for both men and women (Ross & Mirowsky, 1995). Conversely, work stressors are among the most common and upsetting stressors that people report and working adults may be exposed to the health-compromising effects of sustained stress over time (Taylor, Repetti & Seeman, 1997).

In the General Population

Research regarding work-related stress has been ongoing for a number of decades. Much of that research has focused on long work hours and multitasking requirements of many jobs as the primary source of work-related stress (Repetti, 1993). Individuals perceiving themselves as overworked practice poorer health care and have more health

complaints than other workers (Landsbergis, et al., 1992). Pressure to perform on the job predicted ill health and a shortened life span among male workers in one study (House, Strecher, Meltzner & Robbins, 1986).

The research of Caplan and Jones (1975) implicated role conflict and role ambiguity in poor overall physical health and in the development of illnesses. Role conflict is created when there are dichotomous demands about work tasks or standards. In a 1976 study of air traffic controllers and stress-related illness, Cobb hypothesized that responsibility for the safety and well being of others increases job stress and stress-related illness.

In Law Enforcement

The occupational stress experienced by law enforcement officers is arguably different from stress experienced by individuals in other occupations. One factor contributing to the difference is the nature of the work. The other factor has been termed the “police personality” (Mann & Neece, 1990).

Police work, by nature, is highly unpredictable. An “average” shift may involve significant idle time or a high-speed chase; there may be a succession of “routine” traffic stops, or a succession of domestic violence incidents requiring intervention. The potential risk involved in any given shift is significant. For this reason, Pranzo and Pranzo (1999) noted that under the best of circumstances, the psychological strain of being in law enforcement is immense. There is no time when stress is greater than that following a serious confrontation or incident such as a shooting.

Nationwide, in 2002, 147 law enforcement officers lost their lives in the line of duty (National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, 2003). This represents a decrease from the average of 165 deaths per year and a significant decrease from the 230 line of duty deaths in 2001, which included 72 deaths in the September 11th terrorist attacks. The causes of death appear in Table 1. It is important to note that while 59 officers were murdered, the National Institute of Justice estimates that each year, twice as many officers die by suicide than from job-related homicide (Gershon, 2000).

Table 1

2002 Line of Duty Deaths

Number Killed	Cause of Death
55	Shot to death
44	Automobile crashes
14	Struck by vehicle while outside their car
8	Job-related illnesses
7	Motorcycle crashes
7	Aircraft accidents
3	Drowning
2	Struck by train
2	Beaten to death
2	Stabbed to death
1	Bomb-related incident
1	Killed by falling object
1	Accident involving a horse

Mann and Neece (1990) define the “police personality” as personality traits common to law enforcement officers in spite of their individual differences. They define self-control as the common denominator. Officers block emotions to maintain control. They use high levels of self-control to compel others to comply with their directives. They are expected by the public and required by their position to be in control when others are not, and to take control of situations that would otherwise endanger fellow officers or the public. This theory raises the age-old question of nature versus nurture. Is an individual who is high in self-control or who has the need for control drawn to the profession, or does the profession teach one to become controlling?

As previously mentioned, Pranzo and Pranzo have identified the paramilitary structure of many police departments as a significant source of occupational stress for law enforcement officers (1999). Violanti and Paton (1999) draw even clearer parallels between the military and law enforcement, or what they term “civilian combat”. As in military combat, officers face a “continual sense of danger from an unknown enemy; witnessing violence and death; depersonalization of emotion; and lack of public support.”

Violanti (1999) has written extensively about the socialization of individuals into the police role. This role encourages close attachment to coworkers, a level of confidentiality that precludes the sharing of work experiences with family members, psychological and physiological adaptation to excitement and danger, and the instillation of a sense of emotional invulnerability. As a result, officers can develop the tendency to approach life with a sense of learned defensiveness, characterized by hypervigilance and a pattern of learned avoidance to any stimuli resembling trauma.

In a study of social support among police officers, Kaufmann and Beehr (1989) discuss an enculturation process that may shed light on the influence of coworkers on an individual officer. They discuss the concept of the buffering effects of group cohesiveness relative to the police culture. In police work, the communication process among members is critical. The content of such communication can take any form, positive or negative, and can therefore make things seem either better or worse.

Buffering involves group members being able to convince an individual, through regular communication, either that job conditions are not as bad as they seem (positive buffering) or can convince the individual that things are as bad as or even worse than previously thought (negative buffering). It is through this communication network and support structure that the ideas, attitudes, and norms of the group are passed onto new members and viewed as the acceptable standard of behavior and attitude.

In some of the earliest research into whether or not a police officer's job is inherently more stressful than other types of male-dominated jobs, Kroes, Margolis, and Hurrell (1974) surveyed 100 Cincinnati police officers about job-related stressors. Their conclusion was that, although police officers train to be law enforcement experts and view themselves as professionals, other segments of society often do not treat them as such. When the officer's sense of professionalism is violated, the perception of job stress increases significantly. For example, when an officer expends considerable time and energy apprehending a suspect who is later released or treated leniently by the court system, the officer's professionalism can be threatened.

The Cincinnati officers frequently cited the court system as being a source of stress. Being reprimanded by judges, being shown little respect by attorneys, and being

scheduled for court appearances without regard to their personal schedules were the most common complaints. One officer in the study is quoted as saying:

If I do not show up, the case is thrown out of court, no matter what the inconvenience is to me, but if the lawyer wants to go off on a vacation, he just has the case moved back on the docket.

The second threat to professionalism most often cited in the Cincinnati study was related to a lack of administrative support for the work of the officers. Equipment problems, including substandard equipment, and poor repair and maintenance policies were viewed as the administration devaluing or disrespecting the needs of the officer as a professional. As a result of their 1974 research, Kroes, Margolis, and Hurrell concluded that, indeed, policing is an unusually high stress occupation because employment as a law enforcement officer sets one apart from the rest of the community. The officer is responded to not as an individual, but as a stereotype and is at risk of being treated with prejudice, fear, suspicion, and perhaps open hostility.

In addition, policing is one of the few occupations in which an employee is asked to put his or her life on the line and, potentially, to face physical danger at any time (Kroes, Margolis & Hurrell, 1974, p. 154). In spite of those realities, however, it was the failure of the administration and other agencies to respect the officer as a professional that was most often perceived as stressful to the officers in this study.

Effects of Cumulative Stress

Figley (1999) has proposed a model of Police Compassion Fatigue (PCF) that demonstrates the increased psychological vulnerability of officers over the length of service in the police role. The model begins with the empathic ability of the officer. The officer experiences concern for others, is exposed to suffering, and exhibits an empathic police response. Over time, emotional disengagement begins. The officer experiences emotional satisfaction from disengaging and the result is residual police compassion stress. The element of prolonged exposure enters the model. The officer has now developed a cache of traumatic memories. In reaction to these memories, some degree of life disruption is experienced, and police compassion fatigue results.

Pranzo and Pranzo (1999) note that most officers are able to deal effectively with a single traumatic event; however, as the number of events increase, the internal defense mechanisms begin to shred. Feelings of sadness, rage, anxiety, anger, guilt, and fear are internalized until the inner self is filled to the brim. The cumulative effects of repeated exposure to trauma may not become evident for years.

Burke (1994) conducted a study aimed at understanding the work attitudes and the emotional and physical well being of police officers. His sample population included 828 police officers, a larger group than was involved most previous research in this area. He reviewed police stress research that indicated individuals leave police work for a variety of reasons including deteriorating work performance, which was demonstrated by high absenteeism and low morale.

Research also indicated negative psychological states growing over time in service; this was demonstrated by emotional burnout, [Figley's (1999) term] Police Compassion Fatigue, frustration, depression, and anger. Psychosomatic and physical conditions also increase over length of service, most notably headaches and ulcers. Burke's findings indicated that older police officers reported more sick days, greater use of medication, and greater coffee consumption than their younger counterparts. Officers with longer tenure in their present jobs reported more psychosomatic symptoms and more sick days.

Stressful work events were related to higher coffee consumption, higher alcohol consumption, and current use of medication. Police officers who used alcohol and drugs as coping responses also reported more psychosomatic symptoms, smoked more cigarettes, consumed higher quantities of alcohol, and used more medications than those who utilized other coping mechanisms. Similar findings were reported in a study of senior police officers in the United Kingdom (Brown, Cooper & Kirkcaldy, 1996).

In addition to the effects of cumulative stress, a consideration of the effect of multiple stressors is also warranted. For example, research indicates that officers reporting marital problems were 4.8 times more likely to have attempted suicide than officers who did not report marital problems. In addition, officers who had been suspended from the job were 6.7 times more likely to attempt suicide (Janik & Kravitz, 1994).

Coping Strategies

As previously discussed, the way an individual manages stress is unique to that individual and is influenced by a variety of factors. The process of adapting to or managing stress is referred to as coping. Cohen and Lazarus (1979) define coping as:

Efforts, both action-oriented and intrapsychic, to manage environmental and internal demands, and conflicts among them, which tax or exceed a person's resources. Coping can occur prior to a stressful confrontation, in which case it is called anticipatory coping, as well as in reaction to a present or past confrontation with harm.

Coping can be examined in several ways. It can be divided into problem-focused or emotion-focused coping, or into adaptive or maladaptive coping (Patterson, 2000). Problem-focused coping involves an aggressive interpersonal effort to alter the stressful situation or to solve problems related to the stressors. Emotion-focused coping involves using techniques such as emotional distancing, self-control, escape, accepting responsibility, or positive reappraisal of stressors as a means of reducing stress and regulating emotion (Violanti, 2001).

In a review of these two styles of coping, Violanti found that a combination of problem-focused and emotion-focused approaches worked best in most situations, depending on the potential for control of the stressful situation. Under conditions of long term stress, he found that emotion-focused coping techniques are more suitable for short-

term stressors and stressors from which escape is impractical. Problem-focused coping was more effective in situations in which the stressor is likely to be ongoing.

Adaptive Coping

Adaptive or constructive coping strategies reduce stress while at the same time they promote long-term health. When successful coping strategies are used, excessive target-organ activation is reduced or eliminated and homeostasis is reestablished. Individuals who find constructive ways of coping with stress, such as taking direct action or finding meaning in their experience, may be better able to withstand the potential adverse effects of stress (Taylor, Repetti & Seeman, 1997). Adaptive strategies can include such things as exercise, relaxation, utilization of a support system, or proper nutrition.

The use of constructive coping is heavily influenced by an individual's early environment. Even in the most stressful households or communities, the presence of a single supportive and nurturing adult can teach a child effective coping skills. Although coping is an individual task, evidence has shown that cooperative coping among groups of individuals has a positive effect on stress levels of individuals. This process has been referred to as "social capital" or "collective efficacy". Essentially, it has been demonstrated that when people trust their neighbors and work together in community organizations the overall health and well-being of individual members is improved; where hostility and isolation exist, individuals experience poor health, increased mortality, and higher crime rates (Taylor, Repetti & Seeman, 1997).

According to Paton and Violanti (1996) stress awareness for law enforcement officers is a psychologically sound method for helping individuals cope with stress, at both the recruit and the in-service levels. They emphasize the importance of teaching individuals to identify stress, to understand the benefits of physical exercise and proper nutrition, and to improve communication skills. Territo and Sewell (1999) have defined a comprehensive, proactive approach to stress management specifically for law enforcement officers that is designed for implementation in the workplace. They recommend extensive pre-incident education about the physical, psychological, and social impact of stress, as well as methods of adaptive coping. They also recommend implementation of a peer support program. Peer support programs are considered cost effective and “user-friendly” because they reduce the need for formal psychological interventions and bypass the stigma associated with seeking professional help. Territo and Sewell also recommend the use of critical incident stress debriefings after unusually stressful incidents, as well as the development of a comprehensive employee assistance program.

Pranzo and Pranzo (1999) outline a program of stress management for law enforcement that encompasses many of the same elements. They emphasize extensive preparatory training for new recruits about the nature of the job and the critical role that supervisors can play in defusing stressful situations within the department. The use of peer support personnel within the department and the availability of anonymous, officer-specific crisis hotlines are also key components of the Pranzo and Pranzo recommendations.

Maladaptive Coping

Maladaptive coping strategies may reduce the perception of stress in the short-term but serve to erode health in the long term. Maladaptive strategies include drug and alcohol abuse, cigarette smoking, as well as social withdrawal and isolation (Gershon, Lin & Li, 2002). Target-organ activation continues and the likelihood of disease or dysfunction increases. Adults who were raised in high stress environments are especially susceptible to using maladaptive coping strategies and may experience greater autonomic reactivity and poorer health outcomes throughout the life span (Taylor, Repetti & Seeman, 1997).

A high stress environment has been defined as one in which there is low socioeconomic status, high population density, frequent geographic mobility, marital breakup, lack of warmth or emotional support from parents, parent psychopathology, and a violent home or community. Negotiating interpersonal situations which involve frustration and anger is learned in the home. How children learn to manage these situations has a significant impact on how they will tolerate stress as adults. Ineffective parenting and parent-child conflict create problems in social information processing which result in social skill deficits that can lead to poor coping skills in adulthood.

The nadir of maladaptive coping is suicide. According to the National Police Suicide Foundation, a police officer takes his or her life every 22 hours, resulting in approximately 400 police suicides nationwide each year (Hamilton, 2003). Although limited information has been published on the link between occupation and suicide, Stack

(2001) has developed a multicausal model useful in examining the question. He has identified four major factors contributing to an occupational suicide risk: demographics, internal occupational stress, preexisting psychiatric morbidity, and differential opportunities for suicide.

This model pays particular attention to demographic characteristics to ascertain whether or not occupations considered “high risk” remain so after controlling for the demographics of the population. He notes, for example, that the suicide rate tends to increase with age for men; that males have a suicide rate that is four times that of females; and that whites have a higher suicide rate than African Americans. Given that information, studies reporting that police officers have a higher rate of suicide than the general population may be inherently flawed.

The comparison group, he argues, should not be the general public, since the demographic makeup of the law enforcement profession is not reflective of the demographics of the general public. Stack points out, for example, that in a study of police suicides, James (1993) reports a high suicide rate (21 per 100,000) among police officers in New York. In comparison with statistics for the general public that number does, in fact, represent a disproportionately high suicide rate. However, compared with statistics for white males of working age, the rate is actually below the national average.

Other authors have raised concerns about the validity of research on the prevalence of police suicide. Cantor, Tyman and Slater (1995) argue that much of the research on police suicide is based on small sample sizes, bringing the validity and generalizability of the conclusions into question. They reviewed ten studies of police suicide rates and found that four had sample sizes of fewer than ten subjects, and only

two had samples larger than 50. In addition, the studies covered a wide variety of time frames, ranging from 1934 to 1990. Additional discussion of this issue appears later in this chapter.

Some occupations do appear to put an individual at higher risk for suicide, even after controlling for demographic variables. In earlier studies of occupation and suicide, Stack (1996b) found elevated suicide rates in two occupational groups. Dentists, who are predominantly white males, are 6.64 times more likely than the general working-age population to die of suicide. Potential contributing factors include hostile patients, status dilemmas within the medical profession, and the economic pressures of running a small business.

In addition, employment as an artist appears to place one at relatively higher risk for suicide (Stack, 1996a). Employment as an artist appears to attract individuals at high-risk for suicide; it has been speculated that hypersensitivity, rapidly changing emotions and depressive symptoms have a positive effect on artistic creation. In addition, employment as an artist exposes one to high levels of rejection. In both studies, the suicide rate remained elevated, even when demographic controls were applied. In the study regarding artists, for example, the suicide risk went from a 270 percent increase over the general population to a 125 percent increase when demographic controls were applied. Stack noted that no causal link has been established between either of the occupations and the elevated suicide rate.

Coping in Law Enforcement Personnel

Individuals entering the law enforcement profession, in general, represent a physically and mentally healthy subset of the general population (Mann & Neece, 1990). Whether that is due to the rigorous pre-hiring screening process or is a by-product of those who are drawn to serve in a law enforcement profession is not entirely clear. In a study of law enforcement officers and stress, Diskin, Goldstein, and Grencik (1977) found that police officers reported fewer anxiety symptoms than the general population; however, all subjects in their study had served fewer than 10 years in a law enforcement occupation. They hypothesized that either officers are sufficiently flexible from the outset to sustain the demands of their occupation or, as a result of experience, had developed an inhibition of emotional expression that was functionally adaptive for continuing in their profession.

In terms of adaptive coping, most law enforcement organizations require or strongly encourage participation in an exercise program to maintain a minimum level of physical fitness. The benefits of participation appear to go beyond maintenance of physical well being. In an investigation of the effects of physical exercise on perceived stress, Norvell and Belles (1993) found that officers who participated in four months of circuit weight training experienced a significant reduction in symptoms of anxiety and depression. Improvements were also noted on self-report measures of self-concept, hostility, job satisfaction, and somatization symptoms.

It was not clear whether the changes were due solely to the physiologic benefits of the exercise or due in part to other factors, such as improvement in appearance, regular separation from the work environment or positive interaction with other exercisers. An

additional note of interest in this sample was that prior to engaging in the exercise, participant scores on measures of anxiety and depression scales were an average of two to three standard deviations above the non-patient adult male norms. Subjects were taken from a pool of volunteers, so it is possible that individuals experiencing high levels of symptoms were attempting to improve their psychological as well as physical well being by participating in this study. There was also a very high attrition rate in this sample, with 55 percent not completing the full four months. Those who left the study tended to be older, exercised alone rather than in pairs or groups, had higher pretreatment distress levels, reported more physical symptoms, and were more likely to smoke than those who completed the program.

Previous research has also suggested that obtaining a higher level of education may represent a positive coping mechanism for officers. The original work of Spielberger, et al. (1981) found that higher levels of education predicted lower reported job stress scores on the Police Stress Survey. Other research has suggested that a higher level of education would increase the likelihood of an officer entering into an administrative position earlier in his or her career, which may insulate this group from some types of job-related stress, including exposure to trauma (Violanti & Paton, 1999).

One of the most challenging issues faced by law enforcement personnel in coping with stress is the perceived inability to seek assistance. Baker and Baker (1996) note that law enforcement as a culture cultivates a tendency to deny that an individual is experiencing problems. Help seeking is further impeded by an individual officer's fear of losing his or her job, of being demoted, or of having others find out he or she is

experiencing personal problems. For many officers, the fear of being thought weak, powerless, or out of control is itself overwhelming (Kates, 1999).

One of the most culturally accepted methods of coping within the law enforcement community is alcohol use (Davey, Obst, & Sheehan, 2000). Russell and Beigel (1982) posit that alcohol is viewed not only as a stress reduction device, but also has significant peer approval because it fits with the “macho” image inherent in the police culture. In addition, police organizations have an ambivalent attitude about drinking and drinking-related problems. Social drinking is viewed as a way to relieve tension, a catalyst to socialization, and as a way of fostering camaraderie among the officers. In addition, the culture created within departments is one that discourages one member from exposing the weaknesses or wrongdoing of another member. An officer observing on-the-job drinking or other signs of alcoholism in a fellow officer is highly unlikely to report that behavior to a superior. This maintains the secrecy around the behavior and creates a significant barrier to providing intervention or treatment.

Alcohol abuse represents an important issue in police work, with estimates that in the United States police officers are twice as likely as other adults to abuse alcohol (Violanti, 1999). Deficits in job performance due to alcohol abuse cannot always be easily detected, and, as mentioned, officers who demonstrate a problem are unlikely to be approached or offered assistance by their peers or superiors.

A series of studies in Australia implicated the enculturation of individuals into law enforcement as a risk factor for alcohol dependence. Davey, Obst, and Sheehan (2001) define workplace culture as the learned and shared norms of behavior that emerge at different workplaces for different reasons and take distinct forms.

Peer pressure is the primary means of teaching this culture. Police organizations are often plagued with the absence of a workplace policy on alcohol, lack of workplace education and training on the potentially harmful effects of alcohol, and the lack of alternative support mechanisms for members to deal with stress. In addition, there are many traditional police drinking occasions accepted by the culture. These include celebrations after successful operations, promotions, transfers, debriefings, workshops, and seasonal occasions, such as Christmas. Participation is almost mandatory unless one wants to be viewed as an outsider to the dominant culture. Outsiders are generally regarded with suspicion and mistrust, and officers who refuse to participate in the traditional celebrations run the risk of falling into the “outsider” category.

In one study of the impact of the police culture on individuals, 46 percent of respondents indicated that more than 25 percent of their social and recreational activities involved police colleagues. In that same study, 31 percent of non-drinkers said their colleagues viewed them negatively, suspiciously, or as unsociable for failure to participate in alcohol-related rituals and activities (Davey, Obst & Sheehan, 2001). The series of research studies conducted by Davey, Obst, and Sheehan into alcohol consumption by police officers represents the next generation in investigations of this nature.

Previous studies were limited by small sample sizes in limited geographic regions. These studies included 4,193 officers from across all of Australia (Davey, Obst & Sheehan, 2000). Nearly 88 percent of respondents were male, 12 percent female, which is representative of the gender makeup of the Australian police service. Participants were surveyed using the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT).

Results indicated that although police did not report drinking with greater frequency compared with national statistics, they did drink in far greater quantities. Both male and female respondents reported high rates of binge drinking. Binge drinking rates were noted to be above average, at more than 8 standard drinks per session for females, and more than 12 for males. Previous research on binge drinking was criticized for using a younger population, thought to be at a higher risk for binge drinking. The present study, however, included respondents across the age spectrum; 40 percent of respondents were age 36 and above. Binge drinking is especially detrimental to physical well being. It is associated with reduced cerebral blood flow, which could lead to blackouts, stroke, and impaired cognitive functioning. It also increases the risk of permanent liver or stomach damage.

Not surprisingly, the 18- to 25-year old age group reported the highest level of frequency and the greatest quantity of alcohol consumed. Of particular concern was that 25 percent of officers reported drinking while on duty, 30 percent scored in the “at risk of harmful consumption” range, and 3 percent met the criteria for alcohol dependence. Of those scoring in the at-risk range, 72.5 percent reported that they had no drinking problems, and 60 percent believed that it would be “easy” to stop drinking. Those most liable to fall into the at-risk category were males who were in the 18- to 35-year old category, who were divorced or separated, who operated as street-level officers, and who had 4 to 10 years of time on the job. The demographics for the alcohol dependent category were similar, with the exception that females were equally liable to be included in that category. In comparison with similar earlier studies, indications are that the proportion of at-risk and dependent officers is remaining constant.

When the police sample was compared to the national sample surveyed, it was noted that police personnel drink with similar frequency as the general population. Police are less likely to drink every day than those in the national sample, but also less likely to be abstainers than individuals in the national sample. In the 1995 National Household Survey (NHS) comparison group utilized by the researchers, 24 percent of respondents did not drink, whereas 9 percent of police personnel reported not drinking. The significant difference noted was that both male and female officers reported a greater number of standard drinks per drinking session than males and females in the general population, and in the general population males drank more per session than females.

In terms of length of service, those serving on a police force for fewer than 10 years reported drinking more drinks per session, with 15 percent reporting more than 9 drinks per session. Those officers serving more than 10 years reported drinking more frequently, with 21 percent reporting drinking more than 4 days a week. Overall, the number of years on the job appeared to have a curvilinear relationship with drinking behavior.

Those in police service for over 15 years were the least likely to display at risk or dependent alcohol consumption behavior. Those on the job from 4 to 10 years were most likely to have a drinking problem. It is unknown whether this is due to the fact that those with alcohol problems leave the force, or if alcohol becomes less of a problem over time. Researchers have hypothesized that the stress factors to which police are exposed have not yet impacted the new officers, and the officers in service for longer periods of time have developed other ways of combating stressors rather than using alcohol. Also, new recruits may not have yet been enculturated into the police culture that promotes heavy

alcohol consumption. Additional research, of course, would be required to definitively answer those questions.

In a follow-up of their 2000 research, Davey, Obst, and Sheehan (2001), conducted an investigation regarding police officers' insights into the reasons for their drinking habits, into their attributions regarding job stress and the impact of culture on alcohol consumption. This study involved 749 participants from two divisions, one metropolitan and one regional division of the Australian State Police. The gender make-up was essentially the same as the earlier research, 86 percent were male, 12 percent were female, and several failed to identify their gender. The age of respondents ranged from 18 to 60 with a median age of 33 years old. The instrument requested answers regarding the following: demographic variables, alcohol availability and attitudes in the workplace, impact of coworker drinking on the individual, as well as the individual's drinking habits and attitudes.

In this sample, 63.5 percent of respondents scored in the "no risk of harmful drinking" category, 33 percent scored in the "at risk of harmful drinking" category, and 3.5 percent scored in the "alcohol dependent" range. In terms of impact on the workplace, 23 percent reported being affected by a coworker's drinking in some way during the previous year. Effects included a coworker drinking before duty (44%), drinking while on duty (20%), or drinking after a shift (36%). Only 2 percent of the sample indicated that their own drinking had impacted their work performance. Interestingly, 22 percent stated that drinking on the job did not impact on their work performance, 68 percent said they did not drink at work, and 8 percent said they did not

drink at all. Fourteen percent admitted that drinking outside work hours had impacted their work performance at some time during the previous year.

In an investigation of attributions for alcohol use, officers were given ten potential reasons for drinking previously identified by focus groups, and were asked to rate them in terms of their importance. A factor analysis revealed two primary factors, Stress and Social Influence. In terms of Stress, the items identified were: to help cope with stress, to help relax, to deal with unpleasant emotions, and to wind down at the end of a shift. In terms of Social Influence, the items identified were: to celebrate special occasions, to help meet people, to be part of the team, it is expected, to send off a colleague, and enjoyment of social drinking. The items “to celebrate special occasions” and “to send off colleagues” were the most highly rated, followed by “drinking is enjoyable”. Nearly 25 percent of the sample identified “to be part of the team” as an important reason for drinking, indicating the perceived pressure to drink as a sign of belonging.

The cluster secondarily identified as being important were items associated with stress reduction. When these two factors were used as predictors of total AUDIT scores, they accounted for nearly half the variance in total scores after controlling for demographic variables. While both Stress and Social Influence emerged as significant predictors, Stress was the most important factor in predicting risk of harmful alcohol consumption. So, although the officers gave social factors as the primary reason for their alcohol consumption patterns, the social influence of their colleagues was actually the strongest predictor of harmful alcohol consumption.

Violanti, Marshall, and Howe (1983) attempted to study the impact of occupational demands, of psychological distress, and of coping on police alcohol

consumption. In that study, occupational demands specific to police work were identified as depersonalization, authoritarianism, organizational defense, and danger preparation. Depersonalization, later termed emotional dissonance, is created when incongruity exists between job-demanded objectives and real human emotions. Police are expected to react unemotionally toward unpleasant and potentially very emotional situations, such as injured children or dead bodies. Authoritarian attitudes are used to induce cooperation from others and control situations, but become stressful because they narrowly restrict the officer's range of acceptable behaviors. Organizational defense refers to the system of rules and reports utilized by police departments to protect the organization from outside criticism. Adherence to this system demands strict obedience to rigid, prescribed rules in a generally ambiguous work environment, creating the potential for significant stress.

This study identified cynicism, secrecy and deviance as the three primary coping responses that were used to modify the stress experienced by officers. It was found that alcohol was not utilized to modify the experience of stress, but rather served as a stress containment device. This study concluded that psychological distress was the key factor predicting alcohol abuse by police officers. The most significant type of distress resulted from depersonalization.

The authors stated that the extent to which the officer feels pressure for depersonalization is related both directly and indirectly to stress and alcohol use, and that the indirect effects of depersonalization are greater than the direct effects. This creates a need for effective stress management and coping. The authors noted that although the majority of police officers are fairly successful at stress management, those who have a sense of low mastery over their environment tend to perceive stress as unavoidable and as

something that needs to be controlled rather than eliminated. Individuals with this type of attitude are more likely to use alcohol as a containment coping mechanism.

Follow-up research by these same authors (Violanti, Marshall & Howe, 1985) investigated the direct effects of job demands, mediation coping and stress on the use of alcohol. Results again indicated that stress had a strong positive relationship with alcohol use and that, in this population, alcohol is a management coping response, totally unrelated to mediation style coping responses, such as cynicism. Alcohol use and cynicism are employed at different points in the stress process. Mediation coping, including cynicism is utilized during and in the immediate aftermath of the stressful experience. Alcohol is used subsequent to that process as a “back-up” coping mechanism, in some of the literature referred to as a “life-organizing device” (Dietrich & Smith, 1986). Interestingly, although the function of mediation coping techniques is to lessen stress associated with job demands, in the Violanti study the use of cynicism actually increased stress which, in turn, increased alcohol use.

Kohan and O'Connor (2002) investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and alcohol consumption in police officers. Typically, emotional experiences are characterized by two orthogonal dimensions labeled positive affect (PA) and negative affect (NA). Positive affect exists on a continuum from high PA to low PA. High PA is associated with a zest for life, pleasurable engagement, excitement, social activity and extroversion. Low PA is associated with feeling sluggish, drowsy, fatigued, lethargic, and lonely. High negative affect is characterized by subjective distress, feeling upset, aversive arousal, nervousness, guilt and tension. Low NA is associated with feeling peaceful and relaxed. This study involved 122 officers, 101 men and 21 women. The

mean age was 36.1 years, average level of education was 2.5 years post secondary, and mean time on the job was 11.8 years. Affect was measured with the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule.

Researchers also measured self-esteem, satisfaction with life, job stress, and quantity and frequency of alcohol consumption. Alcohol assessment computed the quantity of pure alcohol consumed per occasion, divided by the respondent's body weight, and then multiplied by the frequency of consumption. The mean number of ounces of pure alcohol consumed per drinking occasion was .91, which is equivalent to 2.3 ounces of 40 proof liquor, and the median frequency of consumption was "a few times a month". Not surprisingly, alcohol consumption loaded clearly on the negative affect component and not on the positive affect component.

In general, positive affect proved to be the stronger dimension by a wide margin. Job satisfaction and intention to leave the job were more strongly defined by PA than by NA, as were life satisfaction and self-esteem. The primary correlates of NA, not surprisingly, were job stress and alcohol consumption.

In another study of the physiological effects of negative affect on police officers and firefighters, Schaubroeck, Ganster, and Fox (1992) found high levels of residual adrenaline in high NA individuals at the conclusion of a work shift. Levels of residual adrenaline were closely correlated with perceived job stress. The authors emphasized the need to include physiological measures as well as the more traditional self-report measures in studying correlations between job stress and affect. They suggested the use of a history of actual illness, of days lost to sickness, of health care utilization costs, of

accidents reports, and of physiologic measures, such as heart rate, blood pressure, and hormone levels.

Policing is a distinct occupation because its members have a high level of authority, accountability, and responsibility. They are often in situations that are dangerous or hazardous to themselves and the public, requiring fast reflexes and quick thinking. In addition, they are exposed to emotionally fatiguing schedules and have constant accessibility to two dangerous weapons – motor vehicles and firearms. Chronic alcohol use impedes reaction time, causes thinking and coordination to become sluggish, and may lead to aggressive behavior in the presence of threat (Davey, Obst, & Sheehan, 2000).

Police occupations are similar to other occupations because alcohol consumption can represent a substantial hidden cost to the organization, including lowered productivity, increased absenteeism, accidents, and increased health care costs. In a survey of 16 occupations in Australia, police reported having the third highest average alcohol consumption level. It was also noted that police alcohol consumption was higher than the general community, and that as many as half of the men and two-fifths of the women in the police service sample reported consuming alcohol excessively (Davey, Obst & Sheehan, 2000).

In addition to issues relating to alcohol consumption, the cost of officers ineffectively coping with stress can be quite high. Civil liability from an officer's stress-related inappropriate behavior can be extraordinarily high, as can the cost of losing an officer who has been fully trained but is no longer able to perform his duties. In a

National Institute of Justice report (Finn & Tomz, 1997) a former chief of the Denver Police Department is quoted as saying:

I am obviously concerned about the well being of the officers, but it goes beyond that. I also look at the financial end of it...at the end of one year...we have probably over \$1 million invested (in a new officer). I don't, quite frankly, think that departments can afford not to have psychological services for their officers.

The common thread running through the research is that not all police officers are experiencing toxic levels of job stress, and not all officers are abusing alcohol as a way to cope with stress or fit in at work. There is ample evidence to suggest, however, that the potential exists because of the nature of police work and the role that alcohol consumption plays in the workplace culture.

Another contributing factor may have to do with the types of individuals who enter law enforcement. The profession tends to draw people who have very high expectations for themselves, who are likely to see themselves as heroes, and who view the occupation as deserving of respect and public appreciation. In order to stay committed to doing a high quality job, these individuals may downplay or ignore difficulties in their personal or professional lives (Hamilton, 2003).

Identifying which job stressors are most likely to be problematic and what types of coping mechanisms are most useful and effective is an important contribution of the research in this field. For example, in a study of correlations between occupational stress, negative mood regulation expectancies, coping, anger, and distress, Mearns and

Mauch (1998) reported that officers who relied on avoidant coping strategies reported higher levels of distress, independent of the other variables.

As previously discussed, suicide represents the extreme in maladaptive coping, but the research on law enforcement suicide is mixed. Quinnett (1998) reported that each year more officers lose their lives to suicide than to homicide. Stack (2001) posited the fact that comparing suicide rates among police officers with suicide rates in the general population is inappropriate.

Violanti, Vena, Marshall, and Petralia (1996) raised similar concerns. In an attempt to clarify the issue, they conducted a study of police suicide rates in Buffalo, New York but used all municipal employees in the same city as the cohort. They investigated the cause of death for all municipal workers who had been on the job between 1950 and 1990 for a minimum of five years. The cohort consisted of 11,256 workers, and data were obtained on 96 percent of the sample via pension programs, retirement records, voter registration records, the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Social Security Administration, city directories, obituaries, and the National Death Index.

A panel of experts was convened to review the records of the deceased to ascertain that the cause of death was appropriately identified for each municipal worker. After extensive review, the panel reclassified the cause of death for four police officers and one municipal worker as suicide in cases in which the cause of death had originally been determined to be accidental or unknown. Historically it has been suspected that police suicides are underreported and often classified as accidental, from natural causes, or as unknown (Wagner & Brzeczek, 1983). It has been postulated that this may be done to protect the reputation of the police officer and the police department, for religious and

insurance reasons, or to protect the officer's family (Brown, 1998; Violanti, 1995a), although there is a lack of empirical studies in this area.

The panel also identified several cases involving both police officers and other municipal employees in which suicide was suspected but sufficient evidence to reclassify the deaths was not available. After reviewing the data, the panel found that between 1950 and 1990, 25 police officers and 13 municipal workers had committed suicide. For this cohort in this geographic location over a 40-year time period, police officers were nearly twice as liable as other municipal employees to commit suicide. The authors cautioned that these results are not generalizable outside of the limitations of the study but suggest further research both on the misclassification of the cause of death for officers and on the suicide rate in policing in general.

In a separate review of this data, Violanti (1995a) noted that police suicides evidenced a consistent increase over the last two decades for which the statistics were available, 1970 to 1990. From 1950 to 1979, officers in the Buffalo, New York study averaged one suicide every 2.5 years; from 1980 to 1990, the rate increased to one suicide every 1.25 years (Violanti, 1995b).

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

History and Definition

Although Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was not included in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) until publication of its Third Edition in 1980, it had appeared in psychiatric and psychological literature under a variety of names for quite some time. Homer referred to

posttraumatic symptoms suffered by Achilles after battle in the *Iliad* (van der Kolk, McFarlane & Weisaeth, 1996). Freud first referred to the term “hysterical neuroses” in his work with females who experienced physical and/or sexual abuse as children and subsequently developed a cluster of physical and emotional symptoms (Everly & Lating, 1995).

The term “war neuroses” or “shell shock” followed World Wars I and II respectively (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 1998) because symptoms were thought to be the aftermath of neurological damage caused by exploding ammunition. In the first American Psychiatric Diagnostic System (DSM-I) published by the American Psychiatric Association, posttraumatic stress symptoms were classified as “gross stress reactions”. Because of diagnostic complexities and a dearth of empirical support, the diagnostic category was removed from DSM-II and the categories of “anxiety neurosis” or “transient situational disturbance” were utilized (Horowitz, Wilner, Kaltreider & Alvarez, 1980). By the Korean War, popular terminology shifted to “battle or combat fatigue”. Returning soldiers who exhibited clusters of symptoms with mixed anxiety and depressive reactions were labeled with “adjustment reactions” or “pathological grief” reactions (Foy, 1992).

In a parallel development, medical practitioners looked for organic explanations, separate from these psychological conditions, to explain the physiological manifestations of exposure to trauma in their soldier patients. Historically, it was considered dishonorable and cowardly to experience negative psychological reactions to battle. In 1889, German neurologist Herman Oppenheim coined the diagnosis of “traumatic neuroses” as subtle molecular changes in the central nervous system to explain post-battle

symptoms in soldiers. Other organic-based diagnoses followed, including “cardiac neuroses”, “irritable heart”, and “soldier’s heart”.

By World War I, terms like “disorderly action of the heart”, “neurocirculatory asthenia”, and “molecular commotion in the brain” were being used to describe symptoms exhibited by combat soldiers. Charles Myers, the British psychiatrist who first began using the term “shell shock” began the movement toward an understanding that without a pre-existing or co-existing organic problem, combat stress was enough to create the psychological and physiological reactions observed in soldiers.

It was in the aftermath of the Vietnam War that an understanding of posttraumatic stress and the psychological devastation it caused began to broaden. “Vet Centers” opened around the country to provide peer counseling and support groups for traumatized veterans (Foy, 1992). In response to this grass roots movement, the Veterans Administration made funding available for research into the psychological effects of war. As a result of the research and the experience of those serving in the vet centers, a more professional model of service delivery began to develop.

Concurrent with the interest in the psychological suffering of war veterans, feminist groups were opening rape crisis centers throughout the country. Their goal was to assist women in dealing with the aftermath of sexual violence, to bring the issue to public awareness, and to study the constellation of symptoms frequently observed in rape victims (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 1998). Out of this evolution, the diagnosis of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was born.

As definitions improved and understanding of the symptom clusters evolved, it became clear that combat exposure was not the only cause of PTSD. Researchers

became aware of similar symptoms not only in rape victims, but also in domestic violence victims, in survivors of natural disasters, and in survivors of other traumatic events (Rauch, Hembree & Foa, 2001). As a result, it has been postulated that events caused by humans, such as violent crime, are particularly likely to invoke symptoms of PTSD, as are events involving severe physical injury, (Rauch, Hembree & Foa, 2001; van der Kolk, et al., 1996).

Diagnosis

With the recent publication of the DSM-IV Text Revision (American Psychiatric Association, 2000), sophistication in the definition and diagnostic criteria for PTSD continues to improve. The significant evolution in the diagnosis from DSM-III-R (American Psychiatric Association, 1980) is that the triggering event precipitating the development of PTSD symptoms is no longer required to be “outside the realm of normal human experience”. In the DSM-III-R, “normal human experience” is defined as simple bereavement, chronic illness, business losses, and marital conflict. The change is in recognition of the fact that events such as domestic violence, rape, and child abuse unfortunately occur with relative frequency in our culture, and can still result in the development of PTSD.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder is distinguished from Acute Stress Disorder, which is a defined cluster of symptoms in the aftermath of a trauma with onset within 4 weeks of the traumatic event, lasting at least 2 days but resolving within 4 weeks of onset. The diagnosis of PTSD describes symptoms that last for more than one month and can be specified as “acute” if symptoms last fewer than three months, “chronic” if symptoms

persist beyond three months, and “with delayed onset” if symptoms appear at least six months after the stressor.

Including the time specifications, the DSM-IV-TR (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) specifies the following criteria necessary to make a diagnosis of PTSD. The individual has been exposed to a traumatic event in which he or she experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others. The response involved intense fear, helplessness or horror. The traumatic event is persistently reexperienced in one or more ways. These include recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, including images, thoughts, or perceptions; recurrent distressing dreams of the event; acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring, including a sense of reliving the experience, illusions, hallucinations, and dissociative flashback episodes, including those that occur on awakening or when intoxicated; intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event; or physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.

The individual engages in a persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and the numbing of general responsiveness that was not present before the trauma in three or more of the following seven ways. There are efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma; efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of the trauma; an inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma; markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities; feelings

of detachment or estrangement from others; restricted range of affect; or a sense of a foreshortened future. The individual experiences two or more persistent symptoms of increased arousal not present before the trauma, including difficulty falling or staying asleep, irritability or outbursts of anger, difficulty concentrating, hypervigilance, or an exaggerated startle response. As with most diagnoses, the final criteria is that the disturbance causes significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

There are several instruments designed to assess the presence and severity of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder symptoms. The Distressing Event Questionnaire (Kubany, Leisen, Kaplan & Kelly, 2000), a 35-item questionnaire, rates the level of symptoms correlating to the diagnostic criteria for PTSD. The Los Angeles Symptom Checklist (King, Kin, Leskin & Foy, 1995) is a 43-item self-report instrument assessing the presence of trauma-related symptoms, but results do not correspond to DSM diagnostic criteria. The Trauma Symptom Inventory (Brier, 1996) is a 100-item self-report instrument that also assesses trauma related symptoms but does not correspond to the DSM criteria.

The Physiologic Perspective

Predecessors of what is now known as Posttraumatic Stress Disorder have appeared in philosophical, medical and, later, psychological literature since the time of Homer (van der Kolk, McFarlane & Weisaeth, 1996). It has been only within the past two decades, however, that researchers and practitioners have recognized a physiologic connection between the effects that an overwhelming experience has on the body and on

the mind. Advancements in the technologies of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and positron emission tomography (PET) have enhanced researchers' ability to trace the effects of stress and trauma through the body and the brain.

Concurrently, the effectiveness of therapies beyond the previously utilized psychodynamic approaches, including cognitive behavioral interventions and pharmacologic interventions, has further highlighted an apparent mind-body connection in the aftermath of trauma.

Psychophysiological Effects

In 1941 Abram Kardiner first defined "traumatic neuroses" to American audiences. He noted that, "the nucleus of the neurosis is physioneurosis...The traumatic syndrome is ever present and unchanged" (van der Kolk et al., 1996). Present day understanding indicates that almost everyone who is exposed to extreme stress will develop intrusive symptoms, but only some develop avoidance and hyperarousal. This cluster of experiences leaves the individual continuously victimized by memories of the event, rather than the event itself (McFarlane, Hons, Yehuda & Clark, 2002).

A 2002 study (Brandes, Ben-Schachar, Gilboa, Bonne, Freedman & Shalev) investigated the relationship between PTSD symptoms and cognitive functioning in the immediate aftermath of a traumatic event. It was discovered that just 10 days after a traumatic event, individual differences in posttraumatic stress symptoms were not only measurable, but predictor variables also emerged. Survivors with high levels of PTSD symptoms had lower IQ scores, and demonstrated impaired attention and immediate recall for figural information. They did not show impairment of verbal recall and

learning. High levels of PTSD symptoms in the trauma survivors were predicted by lower education levels, and elevated scores on the Beck Depression Inventory, the Peritraumatic Dissociation Experiences Questionnaire (PDEQ), and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory. The authors concluded that cognitive impairments observed in recent trauma survivors is not a simple correlate of anxiety or dissociation symptoms, but is accounted for by concurrent depressive symptoms, noting that PTSD and depression are very often co-morbid, particularly in the early aftermath of a traumatic event.

Other research, however, has implicated dissociation in the exacerbation of PTSD symptoms (van der Kolk, 1996). According to van der Kolk, extreme avoidance at the time of the trauma, in the form of dissociation, has been shown in recent years to have a strong correlation with the later development of PTSD. Chronic hyperarousal leads to a cognitive “shutting down”, which results in the avoidance of stimuli that are reminders of the trauma; there is also emotional numbing to trauma-related -- as well as everyday -- experiences. Over time chronic sufferers experience continuing numbed responsiveness to the environment, with periods of occasional hyperarousal in response to trauma-associated stimuli. Stimulus generalization can also occur; this takes place when stimuli not originally associated with the trauma gain the association and can elicit the same hyperaroused state.

In PTSD, emotional arousal and goal-directed activity often become disconnected from one another. Individuals who are frequently physiologically aroused lose the ability to associate the aroused state as a cue to attend to the environment. They automatically move from a stimulus to a fight-flight-freeze response without evaluating the meaning of what is going on. Behaviorally, this can manifest itself as withdrawing from their

surroundings, failing to act when necessary or becoming angry in response to the environment. Secondary to this process, individuals with PTSD can also suffer sleep disturbances and depressive symptoms such as anhedonia, a restricted range of affect, estrangement from others, a sense of a foreshortened future, and difficulty concentrating (Buckley, Blanchard & Hickling, 1998).

Abnormal psychophysiological reactions can occur in two ways, either in response to specific reminders of the trauma or in response to intense but neutral stimuli. A strong reaction to neutral stimuli is referred to as an exaggerated startle response, or loss of stimulus discrimination. Whether precipitated by a specific reminder or by neutral stimuli, the response typically includes increased heart rate, elevations in blood pressure, and an increase in the galvanic skin response.

In the late 1970s, Peter Lang (as cited in van der Kolk, McFarlane & Weisaeth, 1996), proposed that emotional memories are stored as associative networks consisting of sensory elements of the traumatic experience. They are reactivated when a person is confronted with situations that stimulate a sufficient number of the elements making up those networks. Kolb (1987) proposed that excessive stimulation of the central nervous system (CNS) at the time of the trauma might result in permanent neuronal changes that have a negative effect on learning, on habituation and on stimulus discrimination. These changes do not rely on actual exposure to reminders of the trauma for expression. An exaggerated startle response is an example of this phenomenon (Buckley, Blanchard & Hickling, 1998).

Andreski, Chilcoat and Breslau (1998) noted that persons with PTSD report more somatization symptoms than individuals with no diagnosis. Individuals with PTSD

reported twice as many somatization symptoms as individuals with other types of psychiatric disorders. Specifically, individuals diagnosed with PTSD reported higher rates of cardiovascular, respiratory, musculoskeletal, gastrointestinal, pseudo-neurological, and neurological symptoms. The authors noted that it is unclear whether PTSD is associated with these specific types of somatic symptoms or with somatic symptoms in general. The authors concluded that the psychological distress specific to PTSD increases one's vulnerability to somatic problems. They also noted, however, that PTSD was the sole diagnosis in only 20 percent of their sample – the remaining participants had at least one other psychiatric diagnosis in addition to the PTSD diagnosis.

Neurohormonal Effects

The intense stress level induced by a traumatic event is accompanied by a release of neurohormones, including catecholamines (epinephrine and norepinephrine), serotonin, cortisol and other glucocorticoids, vasopressin, oxytocin and endogenous opioids. This cluster of chemicals gives the body extra energy to fight or to flee; it boosts the immune system to ward off infection, and provides natural pain suppression. The body is designed to produce relatively large amounts of these substances in an emergency situation, following which production levels are to return to normal. Because individuals with PTSD exist in a chronic state of hyperarousal, effectiveness of the stress response decreases and desensitization can occur. Animal studies have shown that chronically high levels of catecholamine and glucocorticoid (GC) production can endanger hippocampal dendrites. Long-term exposure, particularly to GCs can cause permanent

loss of hippocampal neurons and eventually atrophy (Sapolsky, 1996). The hippocampus plays a vital role in learning and memory. Although these studies have not been specifically replicated in humans, Sapolsky reports that other research on humans has found significant atrophy in the hippocampi of individuals with PTSD. As of his writing in 1996, however, no specific causal link had been established.

McFarlane et al. (2002) identified three neural network processes that are important to the understanding of the effects of PTSD on brain activity. The processes are iterative learning, pruning of neural interconnections, and top-down activation. Iterative learning results when information is presented repeatedly to an individual who creates neural shortcuts to process additional presentations of the same information more rapidly. This results in the facilitation of some pathways and the destruction or inhibition of other pathways. For example, if the sound of a door slamming is repeatedly followed by a physical assault for a period of time, neural networks will learn to bypass the cognitive appraisal and affective integration of what a door slamming might mean. As a result, the body will automatically react as if a physical assault is a certainty whether the threat of physical assault is present or not, and the PTSD symptom of an exaggerated startle response will occur.

Pruning, also known as selective synaptic modulation, is a result of the iterative learning process. Dendritic connections are modified as a result of competition between neurons for connections. Neural networks can develop an autonomous function whereby they become activated in the absence of environmental cues and at the expense of a more adaptive activation sequence. The result is that the individual becomes unable to coordinate and organize relevant perceptual responses to the environment. In the

example cited above, because the cognitive appraisal and affective integration pathways have become bypassed, the individual fails to consider other causes for or consequences of a door slamming.

This process may also explain why reactions to trauma-related triggers become generalized over the course of PTSD to the degree that stimuli not originally associated with the traumatic event become associated over time. Hypersensitivity to door slamming could generalize to hypersensitivity to all loud noises. This theory builds on the work of Kolb (1987) who hypothesized that if a trauma and/or intense arousal occurs frequently and is of sufficient intensity, sensitization and concomitant changes in synaptic functioning occur. He stated that, "The neuronal synaptic structures affected are probably located in the temporal-amygdaloid complex concerned with agonistic behavior; these structures are stressed by recurrent intensive stimulation. They may recover, be temporarily impaired, or undergo permanent change".

Research with respect to the role of serotonin levels in PTSD is in its infancy. Animal studies have demonstrated that traumatized animals consistently have decreased CNS serotonin levels (van der Kolk, et al., 1996). Depression research has increasingly implicated insufficient serotonin activity as one factor in the maintenance of depressive symptoms. It has been speculated, then, that the depressive symptomology associated with PTSD is similar to the trauma-related dysfunction seen in animal studies. In recent years it has been noted that serotonin reuptake inhibitors are the only known pharmacological agents to demonstrate effectiveness in treating PTSD. The overproduction of endogenous opioids has been associated with the emotional blunting seen in many individuals with PTSD.

In a landmark study of the physiology of trauma, Southwick et al. (1993) were able to increase the severity of the core symptoms associated with PTSD, such as intrusive traumatic thoughts, emotional numbing, and grief. In an effort to activate noradrenergic neurons, the researchers administered yohimbine hydrochloride, which produced a variety of biochemical, behavioral, and cardiovascular effects. The yohimbine produced panic attacks in 70 percent of the subjects with PTSD and flashbacks of the trauma in 40 percent of the subjects. The evidence which was gathered provided support for the hypothesis that sympathetic nervous system dysregulation exists in subjects with chronic PTSD.

While physiological arousal can trigger trauma-related memories, it is conversely true that trauma memories can induce physiologic arousal. Frequent reliving of the traumatic event via nightmares or flashbacks causes a re-release of stress hormones that serves to strengthen the existing memory trace. Van der Kolk et al. (1996) hypothesized that it is this positive feedback loop that causes sub-clinical PTSD, or posttraumatic stress syndrome, to escalate into clinical PTSD.

Neuroanatomical Effects

It is in the area of the neuroanatomical effects of PTSD that the largest body of research on human subjects has been published. Although other regions of the brain have been studied in individuals with PTSD, a significant portion of the research has focused on the impaired functioning of the limbic system, specifically the function of the hippocampus and the amygdala.

The limbic system is the part of the CNS that maintains and guides the emotions and behavior necessary for self-preservation and survival of the species (Kolb, 1987). Signals from the sensory organs continuously travel to the thalamus during waking and sleeping states. From there they are distributed to the cortex, where they affect thinking, to the basal ganglia, where they affect movement, and to the limbic system, where they affect memories and emotions. Much of the processing of sensory information is automatic and only input that is novel, significant, or threatening passes to the neocortex for further attention. People with PTSD over-interpret incoming sensory information as significant or threatening. Recent research has shown limbic system abnormalities in individuals with PTSD that may shed light on the attentional problems.

Within the limbic system, it is the amygdala that is most closely associated with evaluating the emotional meaning of incoming stimuli (Shin et al., 1997). One function of the amygdala is to integrate internal representations of the external world in the form of memory images with emotional experiences associated with those memories. After assigning meaning to sensory information, the amygdala guides emotional behavior by projections to the hypothalamus, hippocampus, and basal forebrain.

The hippocampus records memory in space and time dimensions of experience, and categorizes and stores information in short-term memory for further processing on the path to long-term memory. Damage to the hippocampus can result in deficits in implicit or explicit memory storage. Decreased functioning of the hippocampus can also cause behavioral disinhibition and hyperresponsiveness to environmental stimuli, both potential outcomes of PTSD.

Van der Kolk and others (1996) describe the function of the amygdala and conditioning fear responses, attaching affect to neutral stimuli, and establishing associations between sensory modalities. Damage results in loss of fear responses, loss of meaningful social interaction, and loss of intact declarative memory. Functions of the hippocampus are described as categorizing experience, creating spatial maps, storing simple memory, and creating a summary sketch or index of a situation. Damage results in loss of declarative memory, but retention of skill-based memory and immediate memory.

Bremner, Narayan, Staib, Southwick, McGlashan, and Charney (1999) conducted follow-up of research work by Bremner, et al. (1995) with combat exposed veterans who experienced PTSD; they did this by studying women who had a history of childhood sexual abuse. The earlier research found that Vietnam War combat veterans with the highest levels of combat exposure experienced an average shrinkage of 26 percent in the left hippocampus and 22 percent in the right hippocampus compared with veterans who had combat exposure but no PTSD symptoms. Shrinkage in the hippocampus suggests a loss of cell mass. Whether the loss results from atrophy or from actual cell death remains unknown. Markowitsch, Kessler, Van Der Ven, Weber-Luxenburger, Albers, and Heiss (1998) reported on a patient who experienced neuronal death in memory sensitive brain regions, including the hippocampus, as evidenced by PET imaging, after a single brief exposure to an event that was reminiscent of a stressful event from childhood.

The Bremner et al. 1995 research also found that veterans with PTSD performed 40 percent worse on a test of verbal memory than did non-PTSD participants of a comparable age and gender. In Bremner's 1999 study of sexually abused women, PET

studies showed that women with PTSD demonstrated increased activation in posterior cingulate, anterolateral prefrontal cortex, and motor cortex in response to listening to personalized scripts of abuse memories. There was also a deactivation in subcallosal gyrus region of anterior cingulate, failure in activation in adjacent anterior cingulate, and deactivation in right hippocampus, supramarginal gyrus and visual association cortex when compared with sexually abused women without PTSD. Both groups of women showed activation in the cerebellum, temporal pole, left inferior front gyrus and thalamus, which Bremner et al. interpreted as suggestive of a generalized neural response to memories of upsetting childhood sexual abuse experiences not specific to the development of PTSD.

Posterior cingulate has been found to play a role in emotional processing and in visuospatial processing, making it an important component in preparation for coping with a physical threat, which is heightened in PTSD. The motor cortex activation may represent the neural correlate of preparation for action. The parietal cortex is involved in spatial memory and visuospatial processing. In both the 1995 and 1999 studies, Bremner et al. found greater activation in left inferior parietal lobe in subjects with PTSD. The parietal lobe is involved in the modulation of arousal, and damage has been shown to result in impaired identification of negative emotion. In the 1999 study, there was also increased function in the middle/inferior front gyrus which is implicated in the storage and retrieval of verbal memories; Bremner referenced other unnamed studies showing a lateralization for encoding on the left and retrieval on the right. Increased functioning may represent a neural correlate of the strength of remembrance in PTSD.

Bremner and his colleagues (1999) also found dysfunction of the medial prefrontal cortex, which has inhibitory connections to the amygdale, which plays a role in the extinction of fear responding. Dysfunction of the medial prefrontal cortex, then, may be the neural correlate of the failure of the extinction to fear responding. A decreased blood flow was noted in the visual association cortex of women with PTSD; however, women without PTSD showed an increase in blood flow in the same region.

Bremner et al. hypothesize that women with PTSD may attempt to dispel visual images to a greater extent than do women without PTSD.

Shin et al. (1997) used PET imaging to study regional cerebral blood flow (rCBF) in Vietnam veterans who were combat exposed. This study also demonstrated increased blood flow in limbic and paralimbic regions during a traumatic condition (recalling personal scripts of combat) versus a neutral condition (recalling a personal script, non-combat related). Of particular interest in this study was the involvement of Broca's area. In the control group, there was increased rCBF during the combat condition versus the neutral condition. In the group with PTSD, there was a decreased rCBF during trauma-related imagery. Shin et al. concluded that this decrease might be consistent with diminished linguistic processing individuals with PTSD experience during episodes of re-experiencing the trauma or flashbacks. They note that additional research is needed to support or refute this conclusion.

Gurvits et al. (2000) demonstrated neurologic compromise in individuals with chronic PTSD by studying 41 neurologic soft signs (NSSs), which were defined as subtle abnormalities of language, motor coordination, perception, and other CNS functions. It was noted that NSSs are nonspecific indicators of impairment that do not allow

localization of CNS lesions. The NSSs that discriminated subjects with PTSD from those without PTSD were copying two- and three-dimensional figures, and rhythmically and sequentially touching the thigh with the fist, then the palm, and then the left side of the hand for 15 repetitions.

PTSD in Law Enforcement

According to the American Psychiatric Association (2000) the lifetime prevalence for PTSD in community samples is approximately 8 percent in the adult population. Prevalence among at-risk, trauma-exposed individuals, however, ranges between 33 and 50 percent (Paton & Violanti, 1996). From this data, it is clear that adults who are exposed to a specific traumatic event have a dramatically increased risk for developing the symptoms of PTSD. Arguably, then, those individuals whose professions expose them to traumatic events on a regular basis – police officers, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel – are at risk for developing job-related Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. In light of the physiology of PTSD discussed earlier, the reasons are clear. In response to demands of the job, the police officer's brain frequently orders adrenaline discharged into the blood. The heart rate increases, and blood pressure rises. Over time he or she becomes vulnerable to altered brain chemistry (Kates, 1999). In a study of exposure to traumatic incidents, Buchanan and Stevens (2001) found that 88.7 percent of police officers who were studied reported experiencing one or more job-related traumatic events during their careers, with most officers reporting multiple exposures. The most frequent events reported were assaults (60.5 %), motor vehicle accidents (40.1%), and witnessing a tragic death (31%).

McFarlane et al. (2002) noted that an individual who develops PTSD after a particular traumatic event may then develop intrusive and distressing memories of previously experienced traumatic events that had not led to symptoms at the time they occurred. This was identified as a particular danger to police officers who experience multiple traumatic events and frequently cope effectively on a regular basis. When a single event triggers PTSD symptoms, the amalgamated experience of previous exposures can trigger a destabilization of the schemata of the previously contained experiences.

Traumatic events caused by humans, such as violent crime or events involving severe physical injury are particularly liable to invoke symptoms of PTSD (Rauch, Hembree & Foa, 2001; van der Kolk, et al., 1996). Law enforcement personnel are vicariously exposed to these types of traumatic events regularly over the length of their careers; these are in addition to other job-related stressors inherent to the profession, as previously discussed. Indeed, Mann and Neece (1990) reported a PTSD prevalence rate of 12 to 35 percent in police officers, noting that PTSD symptoms are the fifth leading cause of referral problems presented to police psychologists. These findings were similar to the results of a 1986 study that estimated more than 29 percent of police officers experience severe stress reactions during their careers (Martin, McKean & Veltcamp, 1986).

Although it is generally acknowledged that it is the nature of police officers' work responsibilities that exposes them to repetitive traumatic events, it is also true that emotional injury, most notably in the form of PTSD, is in most states not a compensable work-related injury under worker's compensation laws. Worker's compensation

recognizes three types of mental injuries that workers can experience. These are mental-physical injuries, physical injuries and mental-mental injuries.

Mental-physical injuries occur when a mental stimulus causes a physical injury. Extreme stress that leads to a heart attack is an example of this type of injury (Mann & Neece, 1990).

Physical-mental injuries occur when a physical injury results in mental distress; for example, an officer who is shot and wounded subsequently experiences anxiety and depression. These two types of injuries are uniformly covered by worker's compensation in most states.

The third type, mental-mental injuries, however, occurs when a mental stimulus, such as extreme stress, causes an emotional problem. For example, an officer who is shot at but not wounded, or who witnesses his partner being shot and later experiences anxiety, depression, or PTSD, is unlikely in most states to be eligible for worker's compensation benefits.

In a recent personal experience the author treated an officer who was required in the line of duty to shoot an armed man. Ultimately the shooting was deemed appropriate and necessary. However, he was informed by his worker's compensation carrier that no current or future claims of PTSD or other emotional problems arising from this incident would be compensated because shooting an individual to protect others is considered within the ordinary course of duty for a law enforcement professional. Certainly, if most states do not allow for the consequences of mental-mental injuries brought on by a single overwhelming stressor, allowances for the effects of cumulative stressors over time are unlikely.

Rationale for the Present Investigation

Previous research has focused on identifying the physical and emotional effects that employment as a law enforcement officer has on an individual. Studies have investigated what types of coping strategies are used in response to job-related stress and ways that an individual's body adapts to periods of extreme stress.

The present study seeks to further clarify this growing body of knowledge. In terms of technology, the law enforcement profession has undoubtedly changed significantly over the past few decades. Technology aside, however, the job requirements have not and likely will not change in the foreseeable future. There will continue to be stretches of inactivity interspersed with periods of intense stress, administrative difficulties, dangerous situations, and lack of appreciation from the public. As in any organization, the most valuable asset a police department has is its people. Recruitment and retention are expensive activities that are critical to a department's ongoing ability to provide the services a community requires. Given that we know the job is a stressful one, and that we cannot change the basic nature of the job, our most logical recourse is to educate better, to prepare better and to support better, the people who are doing the job on a daily basis.

This study is an empirical investigation to clarify which factors and experiences of employment in a law enforcement profession are most likely to result in increased levels of stress.

Research Hypotheses

H1: There will be a significant positive correlation between an individual's age and levels of job stress and levels of posttraumatic stress symptoms.

H2: There will be a significant positive correlation between an individual's length of service as a law enforcement officer and levels of job stress, as measured by the Police Stress Survey, and posttraumatic stress symptoms, as measured by the Mississippi Scale.

H3: There will be a significant difference in police officers' levels of job stress (PSS scores) and posttraumatic stress symptoms (MS scores) as a function of the following independent variables: (a) PSS and MS scores will be significantly higher for individual's who are divorced, (b) Stress scores will be significantly higher for individuals with the experience of discharging a firearm at a person, (c) Scores will be lower for individuals with a higher level of education, and (d) Scores will be lower for individuals with a history of participation in stress management education programs.

H4: Police officers with prior military experience will experience lower levels of job stress than officers who have not had prior military experience. There is a potential for higher posttraumatic stress symptoms, dependent on the individual's experience in the military and the types of trauma to which he or she may have been exposed. (MS scores).

Chapter 2

Methods

Participants

Participants included 873 law enforcement officers from 25 police departments in Pennsylvania, Maryland and New York. In total, 29 departments from Pennsylvania, Maryland and New York were contacted to participate in this study. Twenty-seven departments agreed. Of the two departments that declined, one was in the process of disbanding, and one responded, “We’re a very small department, not much happens here. Our officers aren’t subjected to that much stress.” Two other departments agreed to participate, but failed to follow through and did not return any completed packets.

Departments represented varied in size, from departments with six officers to departments with more than 2,000 officers. The departments included those who serve rural, suburban, and urban populations. Officers from each unit within the departments were surveyed, including investigations, street patrol, administration, and community policing.

Measures

This investigation utilized three instruments -- a demographics questionnaire, the Police Stress Survey (Spielberger, Westberry, Grier, & Greenfield, 1981) and the Mississippi Scale for Combat-Related PTSD (Keane, Caddell, & Taylor, 1988). The Police Stress Survey (PSS) and the Mississippi Scale were selected primarily for two

reasons. Both instruments have been used in other studies investigating work-related and traumatic stress in law enforcement officers. Utilizing them in this investigation represents continuity in the ongoing research. In addition, both instruments adequately address the specific job characteristics that make law enforcement a unique profession, as previously discussed in the literature review.

Demographic Questionnaire

The demographic questionnaire is a 20-item instrument designed for this study. It is very similar to instruments used in other research of this type. Items ask questions related to age and ethnicity of the respondent, marital status, length of service, current job assignment, prior military service, and other basic information (See Appendix A). A retired law enforcement officer with 28 years of service served as a consultant in the process of developing this demographic questionnaire. Upon completion of this instrument, it was given to five other senior law enforcement officers and feedback was solicited about their reactions to the questionnaire. These procedures were utilized in order to create a questionnaire that would obtain the desired information and minimize the likelihood of being perceived as offensive to law enforcement officers.

Police Stress Survey

The Police Stress Survey (Spielberger, Westberry, Grier & Greenfield, 1981) is a 60-item questionnaire listing potential sources of job stress specifically related to law enforcement (See Appendix B). It provides an assessment of both the frequency and the

severity of potential stressors. It is used here with the permission of Dr. Charles Spielberger (personal communication, September 4, 2002).

The Police Stress Survey (PSS) was developed in response to the lack of pre-existing research instruments designed to assess sources of stress in law enforcement occupations. The goal in the creation of the instrument was to provide information essential to the development of an appropriate stress management curriculum for law enforcement officers.

Participants in the survey were asked to rate each item on a scale of 0 (not stressful) to 100 (extremely stressful) in comparison with the item "assignment of disagreeable duties" which was assigned a median stress score of 50. Stress scores were added together and divided by the total number of identified stressors to yield a median stress score. This number was useful for determining an individual's overall level of experienced job stress.

Participants were also asked to estimate how many times they had experienced each item in the previous month and in the previous year. This permitted a frequency comparison for each stressful item. The accompanying written instructions advised respondents to base their ratings on their own knowledge and experience, and to take into account the amount of time and energy they felt would be necessary in adjusting to or coping with each event. Research findings from this instrument were based on a large-scale survey of Florida law enforcement officers.

The factor structure of the Police Stress Survey was investigated in a series of factor analyses of the stress ratings of 121 male officers who participated in a mail survey (Spielberger, Westberry, Grier & Greenfield, 1981). The principal axis method was used

in factoring the stress ratings of the survey items, with unity as the communality estimates. Latent roots greater than unit and Cattell's scree test were the technical criteria for determining the maximum and minimum number of factors to be extracted and rotated. The validity of a particular factor solution was judged in terms of its parsimony and simple structure, but psychological meaningfulness was the ultimate criterion for evaluating the factor structure. The latent roots and scree tests suggested that either two or three factors could be extracted. In the two-factor solution, the identified factors were Administrative and Organizational Pressure, and Physical and Psychological Threat. "Inadequacies in the judicial and correctional systems" and "the lack of recognition and support from the department and community" had the highest loading on Administrative and Organizational Pressure.

Items related to the physical and psychological dangers encountered in police work had the highest loadings on the domain of Physical and Psychological Threat. This two-factor solution produced results that are consistent with the findings of Symonds and Kroes, who identified the same two major sources of stress in police work (1972).

The PSS was adapted into the Teacher Stress Survey (Grier, 1982) and eventually into the Job Stress Survey (Spielberger, 1991; Spielberger & Vagg, 1999) to allow for applicability to a wider target population. From the original 60 PSS items, 39 were extracted and deemed appropriate for the teacher population, with minor changes. Questions referring to "police" and "department" were changed to reflect "teacher" and "school". There were 21 new items constructed specifically relating to the teaching profession, so that the TSS was also a 60-item measure.

From the 39 items that were included in both the PSS and the TSS, the 30 considered to be the best generic measures of occupational stress were selected for the Job Stress Survey (JSS). The JSS continues to yield severity and frequency ratings for each item. As with the PSS, two factors emerged as subscales for the JSS, Job Pressure (JP) and Lack of Support (LS). Factor analysis revealed that each test item has a dominant salient loading on either the JP or the LS factor with no dual salient loadings, and the factor structure is remarkably consistent for both sexes (Spielberger & Vagg, 1999). The same items that had dominant salient loadings on the JP factor in the analyses of the Severity items had similar dominant salient loadings on the JP factor in the Frequency and Index scores. Results of the factor analyses of JSS items for diverse and heterogeneous groups of employees are consistent across occupational levels and gender. In a 1991 study of 775 employees of an industrial corporation, Turnage and Spielberger found a correlation of .70 or higher between Index scores and Frequency scores and correlations of .45 and lower between the Severity and Index scores. Significant positive correlations were also noted with Rotter's Locus of Control Scale (1966).

In a study involving 1,588 faculty, administrative, and clerical university employees, internal consistency alpha coefficients were .89 or higher for the Index, Severity and Frequency scale scores and .80 or higher for the JP and LS subscales (Spielberger & Reheiser, 1994).

The possibility of utilizing the JSS rather than the PSS was considered for this study because more recent comparative data are available. However, when conducting an item analysis, the 30 items extracted for the JSS are, as intended, the most generic job stress items. The questions of greatest interest when studying a law enforcement

population are contained in the 21 items addressing potential sources of job stress unique to law enforcement officers. Because policing is such a distinct occupation, it was decided that using the PSS in its original form would yield more useful data for the specific questions under investigation.

The Mississippi Scale

The Mississippi Scale for Combat-Related PTSD (Keane, Caddell, & Taylor, 1988) is a 35-item self-report scale derived from the DSM-III-R (American Psychiatric Association, 1980) criteria and has been adapted for the purposes of this investigation (See Appendix C). Items referring to military or combat service were reworded to reflect service in the law enforcement profession. One item requesting information about the ability to hold a job since leaving military service was eliminated because respondents will still be employed in the law enforcement profession. A similar rewording to reflect law enforcement-specific experiences was utilized in a survey of Los Angeles, California, police officers in an investigation of the aftereffects of the 1992 riots (Harvey-Lintz, 1994). This scale has been utilized in other investigations to delineate a PTSD population from a non-PTSD population of veterans (Bremner et al., 1997). The Mississippi Scale was used in this investigation with the permission of The Hitchcock Foundation (personal communication, September 5, 2002).

The Mississippi Scale assesses traumatic stress in five categories. The first category is exposure to trauma outside the range of usual experience. The second category involves intrusive experiences, which are measured as memories, nightmares, or flashbacks. The third category assessed, avoidance, is indicated by avoidance of

thoughts, feelings, or situations related to military or combat experience. These items were reworded to reflect situations related to law enforcement experience. For example, the item “I try to stay away from anything that will remind me of things which have happened in the military” has been reworded to, “I try to stay away from anything that will remind me of things which have happened at work”.

The fourth category, arousal, is represented by sleep disturbances, anger outbursts, or hypervigilance. The duration of the disturbance is the fifth category assessed.

Items are rated on a five point Likert-type scale. Respondents indicated the extent to which they had experienced the symptoms during the preceding week for each of the 35 items. Each item received a rating of 1 to 5, with 1 representing “never” and 5 representing “very frequently”. On the original version of the Mississippi Scale, endorsed items are added to gain a total score, with 84 as the cutoff score to classify subjects as symptomatic of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (above 84) or asymptomatic (below 84).

The Mississippi Scale was normed on a sample of 491 Vietnam veterans. Data obtained on 362 veterans were assessed to determine instrument reliability. Internal consistency for the scale had an alpha coefficient of .94. Test-retest reliability correlations for 39 of the respondents over a 1-week interval were .97. Comparisons of three groups of Vietnam veterans, including a group diagnosed with PTSD, non-combat veterans with non-psychotic diagnoses, and veterans without psychiatric problems were conducted to determine validity. Classification accuracy and sensitivity of the Mississippi scale was found to be .93, and the instrument correctly differentiated between

a PTSD group and two non-PTSD comparison groups 90 percent of the time (Keane, Caddell, & Taylor, 1988).

Procedures

An introductory letter explaining the scope and purpose of the study was mailed to the Chief of each police department in York County, Pennsylvania (See Appendix D). Because those responses were expected to draw participation from departments who serve primarily suburban and rural areas, letters were also sent to the Chiefs of several departments outside York County who serve a more diverse population. In an attempt to improve the generalizability of any findings from this study, letters were also sent to other geographic locations as well, including Maryland and New York. Two weeks after the initial mailing, each Chief was contacted by phone to obtain permission for the department's participation in the study and to answer any additional questions about the study or the procedures to be followed.

Once permission to conduct the survey was obtained, an appropriate number of survey packets were personally delivered to each participating department. Every sworn officer in the department received a numbered packet containing the demographics survey, the Police Stress Survey, and the Mississippi Scale for Combat-Related Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (titled only "Mississippi Scale"). In each packet the demographic questionnaire appeared first, and the remaining two instruments appeared in random order. This provided a counterbalancing measure to eliminate any effect that may have been caused by either instrument creating a bias in responding to the remaining instrument.

Chapter 3

Results

Responses were first analyzed for the completeness of each packet to determine the eligibility of the results. The demographic questionnaires were then analyzed at the descriptive level to obtain a meaningful definition of the sample. For each eligible packet, a mean Police Stress Survey score was computed, as well as a mean Mississippi Scale Score. Initially, the derived PSS scores were correlated with the MS scores to ascertain whether or not there was significant overlap in the constructs being measured. The results were not significant and it was concluded that, as anticipated, the instruments were measuring separate constructs. The purpose of the data analysis was to determine whether or not any of the demographic variables could be identified as factors that influenced the experience of job-related stress (PSS) or the levels of posttraumatic stress symptoms (MS). Initially, the demographic variables specifically included in the research hypotheses were analyzed. In a follow-up analysis, each item on the Demographic Questionnaire was analyzed for its potential influence on the dependent measures.

Descriptive Statistics

Of the approximately 5,000 surveys disseminated, 1,115 packets were returned, for an overall response rate of 22.3%. It is interesting to note that the larger the department, the lower the response rate. One of the large departments returned only 46

of nearly 1,200 (4%) surveys sent, while many of the small departments' return rates averaged 85 to 100%. This overall response rate is reflective of other studies with this population.

Originally, in order to overcome this obstacle and avoid a potential self-selection bias, it was proposed that the surveys be distributed and collected in a face-to-face fashion, during roll call at the beginning of each oncoming shift. Only 1 of the 25 participating departments agreed to this type of data collection. Other departments indicated a strong preference for self-distribution and a compromise was made in order to obtain a larger number of subjects.

Of the packets returned, 242 had significant portions of the data incomplete and were not able to be used in the data analysis. In order to be included for analysis, a packet was required to have the demographic questionnaire and at least one of the two remaining instruments completed. After an initial screening, 873 packets remained suitable for analysis.

Demographics

For purposes of analysis, responses were coded on the basis of being a small, medium, or large department. A key representative from each participating department was asked whether, by law enforcement standards, the department was considered to be small, medium, or large. When the departmental responses and number of officers were compared with one another, they accurately fell into three categories. Based on that information, in this study, a "small" department is defined as having 25 or fewer sworn personnel (n=139 or 15.9%). A "medium" department is defined as having 26 to 300

sworn personnel (n=205 or 23.5%). A “large” department is defined as having more than 300 sworn officers (n=529 or 60.6%).

The age of respondents ranged from 20 to 62, with a mean of 38.04 (SD=8.7). In terms of gender, 88.3% of the population is male, 11.7% female. The majority of the sample (75.8%) is currently married, with 16.7% single, 1.8% separated, and 5.6% divorced. The overwhelming majority of the sample (90.3%) is Anglo, 5.7% African American; fewer than 3% describe themselves as Hispanic (.7%), Asian American (.7%), and Native American (.5%) ; 2.2% describe themselves as “Other”.

In terms of education level, 42.8% in the sample possess a high school diploma or its equivalency, and 57.2% completed a college degree (22.2% Associate degree, 30.6% Bachelor’s degree, 4.4% Master’s degree). Seventy-four percent of respondents had no military experience, 25.3% served in the military, and 4.6% of those individuals experienced combat.

Years of experience as a law enforcement officer ranged from 1 to 37, with a mean of 14.27 years (SD=8.6). The majority of respondents serve as patrolman/officer/trooper (54.2%); 2.3% describe themselves as “Chief”, 16.6% “Detective”, 4% Lieutenant, 7.8% Corporal, 14.2% “Sergeant”, and .9% “Other”.

It is interesting to note that 66.4% of respondents report having been injured on the job, and 47.7% of those injured reported that their injuries were the result of physical assault or other criminal action by another party.

When asked about the amount of stress management education included in their initial training, 69.3% of respondents indicated “0-2 hours”, 17.5% indicated receiving “3-5 hours”, 4.5% received “6-8 hours”, and 8.7% received “8+ hours”. The amount of

stress management education received after the initial period was similar, 70.7% with “0-2”, 12.1% with “3-5”, 7.2% with “6-8” and 10% at “8+”. The majority of respondents (81.2%) stated that they had never sought treatment for any physical or emotional problem related to stress; however, 18.8% stated that they had sought treatment. On many questionnaires, those indicating that they had sought treatment also specified that treatment was for physical rather than emotional problems; the most frequently cited were digestive or blood pressure problems. A smaller majority of respondents (60.7%) believed that their department leadership would be supportive of their seeking treatment for stress-related problems, although 39.3% believed their department would not. In several instances, the answer included the qualification that the department would say they were in favor of employees seeking treatment, but in reality seeking help would be viewed in a negative light.

The last question on the Demographics Questionnaire provided an opportunity for participants to answer an open-ended question, “What effect, if any, do you believe your work in law enforcement has had on you as an individual, on your personality, the way you cope with things or your relationships?” A complete list of responses can be found in Appendix E. Of the 873 respondents, 97.5% provided a written response. In analysis, the responses were divided into four categories.

The largest group (72.6%) included responses that indicated service in a law enforcement profession has had a primarily negative effect on the individual’s life. “I hate everyone!” Another stated, “Has hardened me emotionally, find myself distancing myself from family as I do with subjects I deal with on the job.”

The second largest group (22.2%) included responses that indicated service in a law enforcement profession has had a positive impact on the individual's life. "I feel my work in law enforcement has made me a much stronger person emotionally and helped me to deal with problems in a more rational manner." Another respondent stated, "It has made me confident, more observant and resourceful."

The third largest category, comprising only 4.6% of respondents believed that service in a law enforcement profession had not had an impact on their personalities, on coping or on relationships. One respondent stated, "Overall this job is not as stressful as people think. There are moments of great stress but they pass quickly, usually."

The remaining responses (.6%) indicated both positive and negative effects. "More aware, control emotions, deal with problems better, sometimes stressed after hard days. Shift work hard on families." Another stated, "Made me jaded, used to trust people – no longer do. Used to believe people – no longer do automatically. Have fewer non-police friends. Still cope well, no change there. Believe I am better at relationships."

It should be noted that qualifying responses as positive or negative is, in some respects, very open to interpretation. Law enforcement consultants who were utilized on this project noted that some of the seemingly negative effects which were reported are, in fact, necessary and important aspects of basic police work. Learning to read people, having to discriminate fact from fiction, having to distill basic facts from an abundance of incoming information are all critical job skills that every experienced officer must possess.

As previously discussed, officers are required to make split-second decisions that may have not only a profound and lasting impact on an individual or a situation, but may also be scrutinized by superiors, the public, and the media. This requires that judgments be made. For example, one individual stated, "It has made me a little more skeptical of taking things at face value, and has made me not quite as trusting of people." While this is a critical job skill to possess, taking this same attitude or mindset home to one's family or non-police friends is likely to cause significant discord.

Based on this information it was decided that it would be important to examine how law enforcement personnel would classify the responses when compared with non-law enforcement personnel. As anticipated, there were notable differences in the way responses were interpreted. Non law-enforcement personnel who reviewed the responses tended to classify more of the responses as negative (an average of 80.4%). However, in total, five law enforcement personnel (two retired and three in service) reviewed the responses; their classification of responses was nearly identical to one another. These ranged from negative to positive, both positive and negative, and no effect. It is the law enforcement officers' analyses that have been reported herein.

Many respondents indicated feeling more comfortable with coworkers than non-police friends. "My career has had an effect on my personal life, mainly because of the crazy schedule I have. I have problems keeping in touch with people other than coworkers." Another stated, "Police officers tend to hang around with either one another or no one while off-duty. This is the result of hearing the problems of others all day, every day." One individual explains, "You look at everything differently. You are more

aware of your surroundings. Most of the time, your friends are only police because they relate to how you feel.”

Dependent Measures

Police Stress Survey

For each respondent completing the entire Police Stress Survey, a mean stress score was computed by totaling the 0 to 100 Stress Rating scores assigned to each of the 60 test items and dividing by 60. When the results were first examined in a histogram, it became immediately apparent that there was a strong tendency for respondents to rate items as a “50” on the 0 to 100 scale. It is not clear whether this resulted from a misunderstanding of the directions or from resistance to the task.

As seen in Figure 1, an examination of the mean scores and standard deviations confirmed that scores were tightly clustered ($M = 43.9$, $SD = 16.88$), and concern was raised that this might impair the ability to detect true significance in any subsequent statistical analyses.

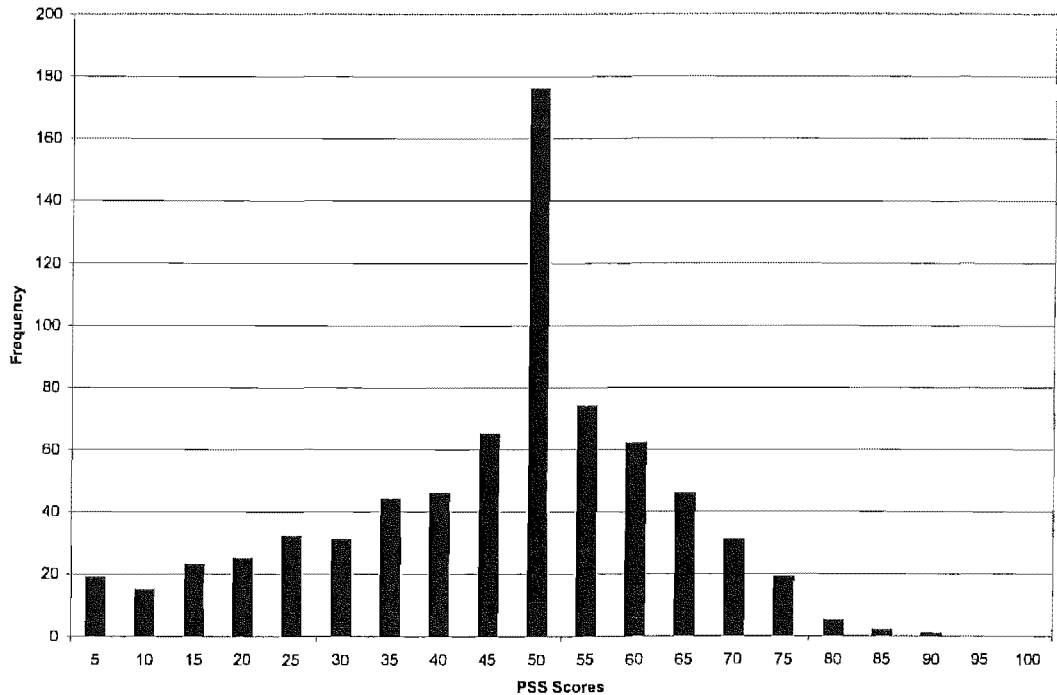


Figure 1. Frequency of Police Stress Scores.

Even with results clustered tightly around the most common response (50), there were ten items that pulled away, and were endorsed as being most stressful by this sample (See Table 2). They were similar to items identified in earlier research utilizing this instrument. Table 2 illustrates the ten items endorsed as most stressful by this sample.

Table 2

Ten Most Stressful Job-Related Events from Police Stress Survey

Event	Mean Score	SD
Fellow officer killed in the line of duty	65.07	35.62
Killing someone in the line of duty	63.24	39.16
Exposure to dead or battered children	60.03	32.34
Insufficient manpower to adequately handle the job	55.69	26.23
Physical attack on one's person	53.02	33.48
Situations requiring the use of force	53.75	29.70
Fellow officers not doing their job	52.97	24.57
Inadequate support by department	51.95	30.51
Responding to a felony in progress	50.11	27.79
High speed chases	50.06	31.53

Mississippi Scale

For each respondent completing the Mississippi Scale, a composite score was derived by totaling the value of the endorsed item, with nine items reverse scored. As seen in Figure 2, a histogram of the results indicated a distribution that was slightly positively skewed. MS scores ranged from 39 to 139, with a mean of 65.49 (SD = 13.25).

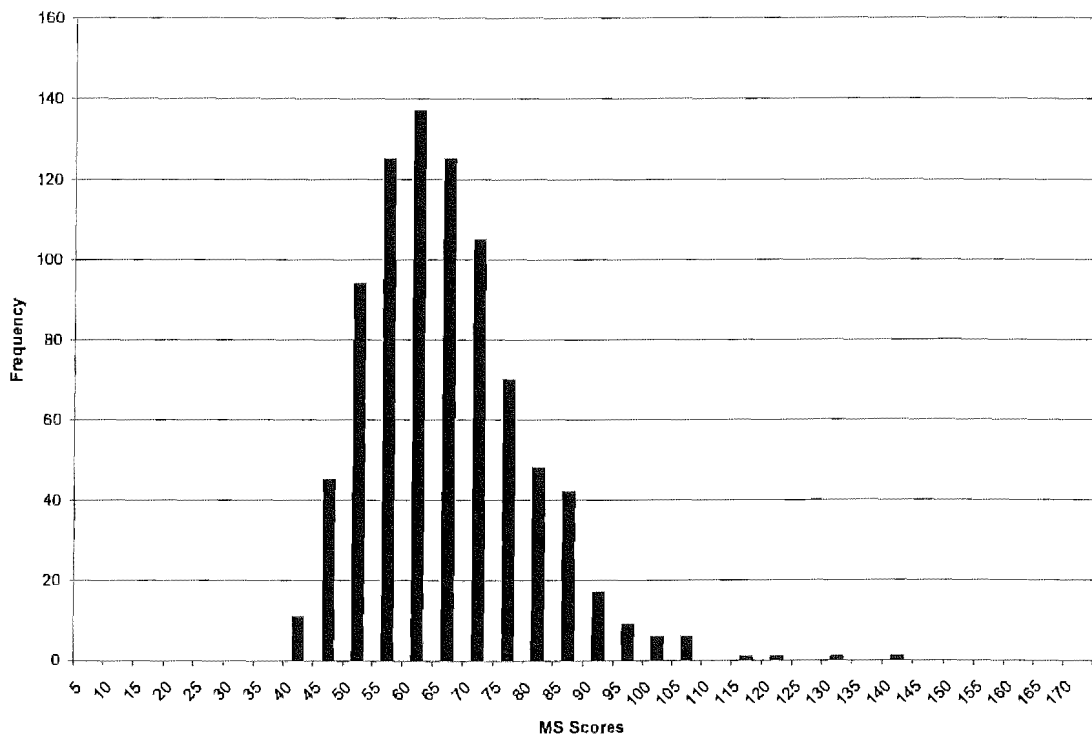


Figure 2. Frequency Distribution of Mississippi Scale Scores.

Mississippi Scale scores for well-adjusted combat-exposed veterans have a mean of 71 (SD = 13). Subjects with non-psychotic psychiatric diagnoses other than PTSD, most commonly, but not exclusively, anxiety or depression, have a mean score of 81 (SD = 21). Individuals who meet the DSM-III-R criteria for PTSD have a mean score of

125 (SD = 13). Applying those criteria to the present sample, 11.7% (n = 99) of subjects scored in the non-psychotic psychiatric disorder range, and .4% (n = 4) of the population scored in the PTSD range.

Summary of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated that there would be a significant positive correlation between PSS and MS scores and age. Utilizing Pearson's bivariate correlations (Table 3), it was determined that there was not a significant correlation between age and amount of job stress measured by the PSS ($r = -.034$, $p = .368$). However, as predicted, a positive correlation existed between age and the level of stress symptoms measured by the MS ($r = .078$, $p < .05$).

Hypothesis 2

There was, as predicted, a significant positive correlation between length of service as a law enforcement officer and MS scores, ($.19$, $p < .01$). There was not a significant correlation between length of service and PS scores ($r = -.031$, $p = .412$). A summary of results appears in Table 3.

Table 3

Summary of Correlations

	<u>PSS</u>	<u>MS</u>
Age		
Pearson Correlation	-.034	.078*
Significance (2-tailed)	.368	.023
Length of Service		
Pearson Correlation	-.031	.118**
Significance (2-tailed)	.412	.001

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3(a) predicted a significant difference in PSS and MS scores as a function of marital status. A significant problem developed in attempting to test this hypothesis. The Demographic Survey asked respondents to report their current marital status only. In retrospect, to test this hypothesis properly it would be necessary to ask not only about current marital status, but number of previous divorces as well. While only 49 respondents (5.6%) reported currently being divorced and 16 reported being separated (1.8%), several mentioned in their responses to the open-ended question about work stress contributing to previous divorces or they made comments about being on their third or fourth marriages. Thus, it is likely that some unknown number of respondents who reported currently being married have experienced a divorce.

An analysis was conducted on what effect, if any, current marital status had on PSS and MS scores. For this purpose, the four marital status categories (single, married, separated, divorced) were collapsed into two dichotomous variables, “married” and “not married”. As seen in Table 4, there was no evidence that marital status had an influential effect on MS scores, $F(1, 842) = .028, p = .867$. Contrary to the premise of the hypothesis, there was also no evidence of an influential effect of marital status on PSS scores, $F(1, 714) = 1.156, p = .283$.

Hypothesis 3(b) predicted that there would be a significant difference in PSS and MS scores as a function of having discharged a firearm at a person. As seen in Table 4, although this variable did not prove to be influential on MS scores, $F(1, 842) = 2.214, p = .137$, there is evidence of a significant effect of a related independent variable, having drawn a weapon, on MS scores, $F(1, 842) = 7.72, p < .01$.

Hypothesis 3(c) predicted that there would be a significant difference in PSS and MS scores as a function of level of education. For the purpose of analysis, the six education categories on the Demographic Survey (high school, GED, Associate degree, Bachelor’s degree, Master’s degree, and Other) were collapsed into two dichotomous variables, “high school” which included the GED and Other categories, and “completed degree” which encompassed the remaining variables. As seen in Table 4, these were examined relative to the MS scores, $F(1, 842) = .844, p = .358$, and PSS scores, $F(1, 714) = 2.021, p = .156$, and no significance was detected.

Hypothesis 3(d) predicted that there would be a significant difference in PSS and MS scores as a function of the amount of stress management education received in the initial training period or afterwards. However, as seen in Table 4, there were no

significant differences detected between the amount of stress management education included in the initial training period and PSS scores, $F(3, 715) = .370, p = .774$, or MS scores $F(3, 843) = .862, p = .460$. There were also no significant differences noted between the amount of stress management education received after the initial training and either PSS scores, $F(3, 715) = 1.006, p = .39$, or MS scores, $F(3, 843) = .862, p = .46$.

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 predicted there would be significant differences in PSS scores and MS scores as a function of an officer's prior military and/or combat experience. As seen in Table 4, analysis revealed no evidence that military service was an influential factor on PSS scores, $F(1, 714) = .084, p = .772$ or MS scores, $F(1, 842) = .005, p = .946$. Similarly, combat experience did not appear to be an influential factor on either MS scores, $F(1, 211) = .165, p = .685$, or PSS scores, $F(1, 174) = 3.54, p = .062$.

Table 4

Analyses of Variance for Specific Hypotheses

Variable	<u>PSS</u>			<u>MS</u>		
	df	F	p	df	F	p
Marital status	1	1.156	.283	1	0.028	.867
Discharged weapon	1	0.066	.797	1	2.214	.137
Drawn weapon	1	1.334	.249	1	7.720	.006*
Education	1	3.063	.081	1	0.844	.358
Stress education						
In initial training	3	0.370	.774	3	2.300	.076
After initial training	3	1.006	.390	3	0.862	.460
Military service	1	0.084	.772	1	0.005	.946
Combat experience	1	3.540	.062	1	0.165	.685

* $p < .01$.

Follow-up Analyses

In addition to the variables already discussed, several other variables from the Demographic Survey were analyzed for their potential influence on the MS scores or PSS scores. Those items analyzed included ethnicity, rank, primary assignment, and discharging a firearm at a vehicle or object; however, none demonstrated any significant influence on MS or PSS scores. A summary of those results appears in Table 5.

Table 5

Analyses of Variance for Non-Significant Variables

Variable	<u>PSS</u>			<u>MS</u>		
	df	F	p	df	F	p
Ethnicity	1	2.021	.156	1	1.827	.177
Rank	6	1.719	.114	6	0.396	.882
Primary assignment	1	1.884	.170	1	.562	.453
Discharging a weapon at a vehicle or object	1	0.355	.551	1	0.967	.326

However, there were several additional variables that did evidence a significant influence on MS and/or PSS scores. A summary of these results appears in Table 6. The size of the department emerged as an influential factor on PSS scores, $F(2, 713) = 6.43, p < .01$, but not on MS scores, $F(2, 841) = .312, p = .732$. A descriptive analysis of the results indicated that small departments report relatively higher stress levels ($M = 47.82, SD = 16.06$) than medium-sized departments ($M = 40.84, SD = 18.92$) or large departments ($M = 44.05, SD = 15.95$). Follow-up analysis utilizing Scheffé post hoc tests revealed that the difference in means between the small and medium sized departments was significant (mean difference = 6.97, $p < .05$). The differences in means between small and large departments and between medium and large departments are not significant. PSS scores were also influenced by gender, $F(1, 714) = 8.69, p < .01$, with females reporting slightly higher rates of experienced stress ($M = 49.34, SD = 17.69$)

than their male counterparts ($M = 43.29$, $SD = 16.68$). The influence on MS scores was not significant, $F(1, 842) = 1.393$, $p = .238$. Analyses of effects on PSS scores were interpreted cautiously because of the potential elevated risk of committing a Type I error, as previously mentioned.

Increased MS scores were influenced by the experience of being injured on the job, $F(1, 842) = 27.13$, $p < .01$, and by the injury being caused by physical assault or other criminal action by another party, $F(1, 717) = 35.02$, $p < .01$. A significant group difference also existed between the MS scores and the reported experience of having been fired at by another party, $F(1, 842.15) = 10.48$, $p < .001$.

The majority of respondents (81.2%) stated that they had not sought treatment for a physical or emotional problem related to stress. This variable demonstrated a significant influence on both MS scores, $F(1, 842) = 55.41$, $p < .01$, and PSS scores, $F(1, 714) = 6.83$, $p < .01$. Further analysis of MS scores indicated the group who had not sought treatment reported higher stress scores ($M = 72.24$, $SD = 13.79$) than those who had sought treatment ($M = 63.88$, $SD = 13.86$).

Whether or not individuals believed that their departments would be supportive of their seeking treatment was also significantly influential on levels of stress symptoms (MS), $F(1, 842) = 38.11$, $p < .01$, but not on PSS scores, $F(1, 714) = 3.498$, $p = .062$. Upon further analysis, individuals reporting that their department would not be supportive ($n = 330$) evidenced higher MS scores ($M = 68.92$, $SD = 14.47$) than those who believed the department would be supportive ($M = 63.27$, $SD = 11.90$).

Table 6

Analyses of Variance for Significant Variables

Variable	<u>PSS</u>			<u>MS</u>		
	df	F	p	df	F	p
Size of department	2	6.428	.002*	2	0.312	.732
Gender	1	8.693	.003*	1	1.393	.238
Injured on the job	1	2.689	.101	1	27.126	.000*
Injury caused by another	1	2.468	.117	1	35.024	.000*
Being shot at	1	0.310	.578	1	10.482	.001*
Sought treatment	1	6.830	.009*	1	55.409	.000*
Departmental support	1	3.498	.062	1	38.111	.000*

* p < .01

Chapter 4

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not any demographic variables or specific job experiences could be identified as having a significant influence on levels of work-related stress or stress symptoms in law enforcement officers. The rate of response from departments who were requested to participate is indicative of interest in the effects of stress on law enforcement personnel. The key strengths of this work are the sample size and the number of variables that were assessed. The information obtained is not only about those findings which are significant but also about those which are not. This is valuable information.

Law enforcement agencies, by practice, have very rigorous screening and selection processes to ensure that new employees are as mentally and physically healthy as possible (Mann & Neece, 1990). This research confirms, however, that, as predicted in hypotheses 1 and 2, no matter how healthy an individual is at the beginning of his or her career, age and years on the job become factors, and stress is likely to take a significant toll. Clearly there are other additional factors that influence this process, as these two factors account for a statistically significant but relatively small amount of the variance (age R -squared = .006; length of service R -squared = .014). Because of the response tendency on the Police Stress Survey, having these two variables so rooted in one score (50), it is very difficult to detect true significance. Nonetheless, the findings are supportive of the concept of cumulative stress from years of exposure to work related

stress and trauma (Burke, 1994; Pranzo & Pranzo, 1999), and of Figley's model of Police Compassion Fatigue (1999).

The significant findings from this research detail a career "road map" explaining how this process happens. The fact that these individuals are strenuously screened to represent a healthy subset of the population at the outset is the starting point; the positive correlation between years of service and increased stress symptoms creates the end point. The other significant influential factors can be viewed as checkpoints along the way. This study identifies several specific events and experiences that relate to the development of increased stress levels. Being injured on the job, injury caused by physical assault or other criminal action, drawing a weapon, and getting shot at are all identified as significant events. The unwillingness to seek help and the perception that the department would not be supportive of an individual's seeking help are also contributing factors.

This study investigated the potential effects of several life experiences outside specific work-related events. It is interesting to note that these were not significant factors influencing the development of increased stress levels. Hypothesis 3(a) predicted that marital status would influence the perception of job stress. Previous research has implicated work stress in the experience of marital discord and divorce (Pranzo & Pranzo, 1999; Kroes, Margolis & Hurrell, 1974). In their responses to the open-ended question on the Demographics Survey, 15 respondents mentioned that their work in law enforcement contributed to their divorces. Anecdotal experiences aside, however, this research did not support a significant effect of marital status on work-related stress or on posttraumatic stress symptoms.

Hypothesis 3(b) predicted that another work-related event, discharging a firearm at a person, would be a factor in the development of increased stress symptoms.

Although this factor was not significant, it is interesting to note that, as mentioned, the experience of drawing one's weapon was a significant factor. This may be explained by the fact that a much larger number of respondents had the experience of drawing a weapon ($n = 841$) than of discharging a weapon at someone ($n = 74$), so significance is more easily detected. Of those respondents who have drawn their weapons, 501 provided an estimate of how many times in their career they have done so. The responses ranged from 1 to 1,300, with a mean of 63.40 ($SD = 133.06$). It is possible that because drawing a weapon is a more common activity with a higher frequency rate, it contributes more to the experience of cumulative stress than the less common and less frequent experience of shooting at another person.

It was predicted in hypothesis 3(c) that level of education would also be a non work-related factor that would have an influence on the perception of job stress. In terms of coping with job stress, the work of Spielberg et al. (1981) and Violanti and Paton (1999) identified a relationship between higher levels of education and lower scores on measures of job stress. That research, however, was not supported by this study. One possible explanation is that there appears to be a more recent trend in law enforcement to require new employees to possess a post high school degree as a condition of employment. Because this is an observation at this time, it may explain why previous research found significant differences but this study did not. Future research efforts should consider examining this trend in hiring practices.

Hypothesis 3(d) predicted significant differences in the perception of job stress and the development of posttraumatic stress symptoms as a function of receiving stress management education. The majority of respondents in this study reported receiving little or no stress management education, defined as 0 – 2 hours, either in their initial training (69.3%) or after their initial training (70.7%). It may be this reported lack of stress management education that explains why no influential effect was detected. This may be an indication that departments would do well to consider providing ongoing stress management education for their employees.

Hypothesis 4 predicted a significant influence on stress levels as a function of prior military experience or exposure to military combat. Pranzo and Pranzo (1999) identified the paramilitary structure of many police departments as a factor relating to increased levels of job stress for officers. Violanti and Paton (1999) draw strong parallels between military service and employment as a law enforcement officer. It was predicted, then, that individuals having prior experience with military structure and command systems would be less likely to find that aspect of the job stressful. Again, this study did not support that hypothesis. This may have been influenced by the fact that a large majority of respondents did not have prior military experience (74.7%).

In this study, nine of the ten events rated by respondents to the Police Stress Scale as being the most stressful are consistent with previous research (Kroes, Margolis & Hurrell, 1974). One difference is that the item “high speed chases” did not appear in the early literature as a highly stressful event. One possible explanation is the recent increase in media attention given to the collateral damage caused by officers engaging in high-

speed pursuits; this is in the wake of several high-profile lawsuits filed on behalf of bystanders who have been injured. Also consistent with that research, the factors in this study fall into the two identified categories of “Job Factors” and “Organizational Factors”, with seven items fitting into the category of “Job Factors” and three reflecting “Organizational Factors”.

If one accepts the definition of law enforcement as civilian combat (Blum, 2000; Everly & Lating, 1995; Kates, 2001, Violanti & Paton, 1999), then it is appropriate to compare the MS scores of the present sample with the combat-exposed veteran population on which the instrument was normed. Several follow-up studies have confirmed the reliability and validity of this instrument with this population (King, King, Fairbank, Schlenger & Surface, 1993; Norris & Perilla, 1996; Watson, 1994) and have utilized this instrument and adjusted norms with law enforcement populations (Harvey-Lintz, 1994).

As previously reported, 11.7% (n=99) of subjects in this study scored in the non-psychotic psychiatric disorder range, and .4% (n=4) scored in the PTSD range. According to the DSM-IV-TR (American Psychiatric Association, 2000), the prevalence rate of PTSD in the adult general population is 8%. Although it is of concern that four individuals in the present sample likely meet diagnostic criteria for PTSD, when compared with the prevalence rate in the general population, the rate in this sample is significantly lower. Additionally, if one combines the number of individuals whose scores reflected non-psychotic psychiatric disorders with those whose scores reflect the presence of PTSD, it is evident that there are 103 individuals of the 844 who completed the MS (12.2%) achieving scores that would identify the presence of a diagnosable

mental illness. According to the National Institute of Mental Health web site (2004), the prevalence rate of mental illness in the adult general population is 22.1%. This confirms the findings of Mann and Neece (1990) that the law enforcement population is a healthier subset of the general population. Nonetheless, there are clear indications that employment as a law enforcement officer, over time, puts an individual at risk of experiencing elevated levels of stress symptoms which have the potential to create physical or emotional problems.

In a purely anecdotal format, this process is reflected in the words of these survey participants. One of the most enlightening aspects of this study is the record of what this job is like, in the words of those who do it. The answers to the open-ended question on the Demographic Survey, found in Appendix E, represent a rare and compelling snapshot of law enforcement officers' perspectives on the impact the work has on their lives.

Overall, this study provides a definition of which experiences and attitudes serve as "red flags" that mark the journey toward elevated stress levels. If the identified events and attitudes can be viewed, not as inevitable "checkpoints" on the journey to increased stress symptoms, but as "red flags" indicating opportunities for intervention, the impact could be tremendous.

Suppose stress management education programs were designed to educate administrators, supervisors and officers about these identified "red flags", combining the recognition with intervention strategies geared toward ameliorating the documented long-term effects? It would be interesting to measure, over time, the impact that such training would have not only on the effects of these identified events, but also on attitudes relating to help seeking and the perception of departmental support.

Another potential use for the data gathered here is the development of a self-test instrument that could be made available to officers every few years, perhaps on anniversaries of the date of hire, or in conjunction with regular performance evaluations. It could encourage them to review their job-related experiences, identify their own potential “red flag” experiences, and provide information on steps the officer could take to protect himself or herself from the long-term effects of stress. It is less likely that this would address help seeking attitudes or perception of departmental support, but individuals and department administrators may more easily tolerate this level of intervention (Kates, 1999; Baker & Baker, 1996).

Limitations

This study does have some limitations. Because of the research design, it was not possible to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between any given variable and stress levels. In addition, the generalizability of the findings of this study is limited. In the population under investigation, the majority of subjects are anglo/white males from a geographically limited area. Soliciting participation from surrounding urban departments, and collecting data from Maryland and New York are attempts to address this limitation. However, replication of this study in a population with more ethnic and gender diversity in a wider geographic range would be recommended.

Any effect from the potential self-selection bias in this sample is not known. Packets were distributed to every sworn officer in participating departments. As previously noted, participation was voluntary, and response rates varied significantly, from 4% to 100%. Why some individuals chose to participate and some chose not to is

not known. Whether or not there is any effect on the outcome of the study is also not known. As noted, an attempt to avoid this potential bias by presenting and collecting data in a face-to-face fashion was met with significant resistance. It is clear, though, that type of data collection would be the best way to avoid any potential self-selection bias.

Another significant problem with the data, as previously noted, was caused by the strong tendency for respondents to rate events on the PSS at “50”. Whether participants did not read the directions, did not understand the directions, or resisted the task is unclear; it is very clear that this tendency exists. Again, in a face-to-face method of data collection, the directions could be read to participants and questions entertained so that those possibilities could be eliminated. In addition, it would be useful to re-examine the collected data by removing those cases in which respondents endorsed all events as having a score of 50, and re-running the statistical analyses. This would result in a much smaller sample size, but would rid the data of those respondents who either did not read or did not understand the directions or who demonstrated resistance to the task. Variability may then be more apparent and statistical significance more easily and reliably detected.

Summary

The goal of this study was to add to the existing research about the effects of a law enforcement career on individuals. Identifying which demographic variables and job-related experiences influence the development of elevated levels of job stress or posttraumatic stress symptoms raises several possibilities, in addition to what has been mentioned.

First, additional research can be conducted geared toward identifying cause-and-effect relationships. For example, a longitudinal study of a group of new officers, with a matched control group of other new municipal employees, could be designed. Officers and controls could be tested on measures of personality, stress, anxiety and depressive symptoms prior to beginning the job; re-testing of these two groups could occur at selected intervals of time. Because of the inherent difficulties associated with longitudinal studies, including expense and attrition rates, it may be preferable to conduct this type of study in a cross-sectional design.

Second, and perhaps most immediately relevant, intervention programs can be geared toward those experiences which are liable to result in elevated stress scores. From this research, we can state that the experiences of being injured on the job, being injured by the criminal action of another individual, and being fired at are factors that influence an increase in stress symptoms. Departments would be well advised to promote some level of intervention in the aftermath of these experiences. Specifically, the potential benefits of peer assistance programs (Pranzo & Pranzo, 1999) and/or Critical Incident Stress Management programs (Territo & Sewell, 1999) following the identified experiences should be considered by department administrative staff.

This research also suggests that cumulative effects of years of service and of drawing one's weapon influence elevated stress levels, as does the resistance to seeking treatment and a department's perceived attitude toward help-seeking. Using this information, stress management programs can be developed that address both the needs and the attitudes and perceptions of officers at highest risk for experiencing stress symptoms.

For example, programs that are more didactic and less participatory are more likely to be tolerated by law enforcement personnel than interactive self-care types of presentations. Programs addressing the stressful nature and potential sequelae of specific job-related events; if they are presented with practical, self-directed intervention strategies, they are more likely to be useful than generic stress management programs. In addition, departments would be wise to include stress management education programs that educate families about the effects of employment as a law enforcement officer and its potential impact on family members. Programs could educate family members to recognize signs that their loved one is in need of intervention, and provide strategies for providing support and caring for themselves.

Creating and maintaining a physically and emotionally healthy law enforcement community is critical, not only to those individuals and their families and colleagues, but also to every taxpayer who funds the service and to every citizen who depends on these dedicated and highly-trained professionals “to protect and to serve” our communities.

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Appendix A

Demographic Survey

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: Male Female
3. Current marital status:

<input type="checkbox"/> Single	<input type="checkbox"/> Separated
<input type="checkbox"/> Married	<input type="checkbox"/> Divorced
4. Which of the following describes you best:

<input type="checkbox"/> Anglo/White	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian American
<input type="checkbox"/> African American	<input type="checkbox"/> Native American
<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
5. Highest level of education completed:

<input type="checkbox"/> high school diploma	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree
<input type="checkbox"/> GED	<input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree
<input type="checkbox"/> Associate degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____
6. Have you ever served in the military?
Yes No
7. If yes, in what years did you serve? 19__ to ____
8. Did your military service involve combat experience (other than training exercises)?
Yes No
9. Years of service in law enforcement: _____
10. Current rank _____
11. What is your primary assignment (i.e. uniformed patrol, administration)

12. What percentage of time do you currently spend in each of the following areas?

<input type="checkbox"/> crimes against children	<input type="checkbox"/> property crime
<input type="checkbox"/> domestic violence	<input type="checkbox"/> sex crime
<input type="checkbox"/> nuisance calls	<input type="checkbox"/> narcotics
<input type="checkbox"/> juvenile crime	<input type="checkbox"/> homicide
<input type="checkbox"/> vehicle and traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> administrative work
<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) _____	
13. Have you ever been injured in the line of duty?
Yes No
14. If yes, were any of your injuries the result of a physical assault or other criminal action by another party?
Yes No
15. Have you ever done any of the following as part of your employment, other than for training purposes (check all that apply). If yes, please indicate approximate number of times.

<input type="checkbox"/> drawn a firearm
<input type="checkbox"/> discharged a firearm at a vehicle or other object
<input type="checkbox"/> discharged a firearm at a person
<input type="checkbox"/> been fired at by another person

16. Approximate number of hours of stress management education **included in** your initial training:

- 0 – 2 hours
- 3 – 5 hours
- 6 – 8 hours
- 8+ hours

17. Approximate number of hours of stress management training/continuing education received **after** your initial training:

- 0 – 2 hours
- 3 – 5 hours
- 6 – 8 hours
- 8+ hours

18. Have you ever sought treatment for any physical or emotional problem related to stress?

Yes No

19. Do you believe your department leadership would be supportive of you seeking treatment for emotional stress?

Yes No

20. What effect, if any, do you believe your work in law enforcement has had on you as an individual, on your personality, the way you cope with things or your relationships?

Appendix B

Police Stress Survey

Developed by:

Charles D. Spielberger, Kenneth S. Grier, Charles S. Salerno, and Joel M. Pate

It is generally recognized that law enforcement is a highly stressful occupation and that stress can have serious effects on the lives of police officers and their families. The purpose of this survey is to determine *your* perception of important sources of stress in police work. This survey contains a list of job events that have been identified by police officers as stressful. Please read each item and rate it on the following dimensions: (a) *amount of stress* associated with the event, and (b) *frequency* of the occurrence of the event in your own experience in the *past month* and during the *past year*.

Please indicate the relative amount of stress that you feel is associated with each event. In making your ratings, use all of your knowledge and experience, and take into account the amount of time and energy that you feel would be necessary in adjusting to or coping with the event. In other words, base your ratings on your personal experience as well as what you have learned to be the case for other officers. Since some people adapt to change more readily than others, please give *your opinion* of the average amount of stress and readjustment that you feel is associated with each event rather than the extreme.

The first event, "Assignment of disagreeable duties" has been given an arbitrary rating of 50. Compare each event with the stress produced by being assigned disagreeable duties. For those events that you feel are more stressful than the "Assignment of disagreeable duties" please rate that item proportionately larger than 50. If you feel an event is less stressful than being assigned disagreeable duties, you should assign a number that is lower than 50. *A number from 0 to 100 must be assigned for each event.* The larger the number, the more stressful the event.

Next, for each event please circle the number in the appropriate column that approximates the number of times *you personally* experienced the event in the *past month* and during the *past year*. Please make certain you respond to each item. Your cooperation in assisting to complete this important project is greatly appreciated.

Police Stress Survey

<u>Job Event</u>	<u>Stress Rating</u>	Circle the Number of Times This Event Occurred:											
		<u>In the Past Month</u>						<u>In the Past Year</u>					
1. Assignment of disagreeable duties	<u>50</u>	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
2. Changing from day to night shift	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
3. Assignment to new or unfamiliar duties	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
4. Fellow officers not doing their job	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
5. Court leniency with criminals	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
6. Political pressure from within the department	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
7. Political pressure from outside the department	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
8. Incapacitating physical injury on the job	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
9. Working a second job	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
10. Strained relations with non-police friends	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
11. Exposure to death of civilians	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
12. Inadequate support by supervisor	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
13. Inadequate support by department	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
14. Court appearances on day off or day following night shift	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
15. Assignment of incompatible partner	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+

<u>Job Event</u>	<u>Stress Rating</u>	Circle the Number of Times This Event Occurred:											
		<u>In the Past Month</u>						<u>In the Past Year</u>					
16. Delivering a death notification	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
17. Periods of inactivity and boredom	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
18. Dealing with family disputes and crisis situations	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
19. High speed chases	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
20. Difficulty getting along with supervisors	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
21. Responding to a felony in progress	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
22. Experiencing negative attitudes toward police officers ..	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
23. Public criticism of police	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
24. Disagreeable departmental regulations	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
25. Confrontations with aggressive crowds	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
26. Fellow officer killed in the line of duty	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
27. Distorted or negative press accounts of police	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
28. Making critical on-the-spot decisions	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
29. Ineffectiveness of the judicial system	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
30. Ineffectiveness of the correctional system	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+

Circle the Number of Times This Event Occurred:

<u>Job Event</u>	<u>Stress Rating</u>	<u>Circle the Number of Times This Event Occurred:</u>											
		<u>In the Past Month</u>						<u>In the Past Year</u>					
31. Personal insult from citizen	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
32. Insufficient manpower to adequately handle a job	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
33. Lack of recognition for good work	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
34. Excessive or inappropriate discipline	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
35. Performing non-police tasks	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
36. Demands made by family for more time	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
37. Promotion or commendation	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
38. Inadequate or poor quality equipment	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
39. Assignment of increased responsibility	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
40. Racial pressures or conflicts	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
41. Lack of participation in policy-making decisions	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
42. Inadequate salary	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
43. Accident in a patrol car	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
44. Physical attack on one's person	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
45. Demands for high moral standards	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+
46. Situations requiring use of force	_____	0	1	2	3-5	6-9	10+	0	1	2-5	6-10	11-24	25+

Appendix C

The Mississippi Scale

Please circle the number that best describes how you feel about each statement.

1. Before I entered law enforcement, I had more close friends than I have now.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all True	Slightly True	Somewhat True	Very True	Extremely True

2. I do not feel guilty over things that I have done on the job.

1	2	3	4	5
Never True	Rarely True	Sometimes True	Usually True	Always True

3. If someone pushes me too far, I am likely to become violent.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Very Likely	Extremely Likely

4. If something happens that reminds me of my work, I become very distressed and upset.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

5. The people who know me best are afraid of me.

1	2	3	4	5
Never True	Rarely True	Sometimes True	Frequently True	Very Frequently True

6. I am able to get emotionally close to others.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

7. I have nightmares of experiences on the job that really happened.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

8. When I think of some of the things that I have done at work, I wish I were dead.

1	2	3	4	5
Never True	Rarely True	Sometimes True	Frequently True	Very Frequently True

9. It seems as if I have no feelings.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all True	Rarely True	Sometimes True	Frequently True	Very Frequently True

10. Lately, I have felt like killing myself.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all True	Slightly True	Somewhat True	Very True	Extremely True

11. I fall asleep, stay asleep and awaken only when the alarm goes off.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

12. I wonder why I am still alive when others have died in the line of duty.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

13. Being in certain situations makes me feel as though I am still at work.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

14. My dreams at night are so real that I waken in a cold sweat and force myself to stay awake.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

15. I feel like I cannot go on.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all True	Rarely True	Sometimes True	Very True	Almost Always True

16. I do not laugh or cry at the same things other people do.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all True	Rarely True	Somewhat True	Very True	Extremely True

17. I still enjoy doing many things that I used to enjoy.

1	2	3	4	5
Never True	Rarely True	Sometimes True	Very True	Always True

18. Daydreams are very real and frightening.

1	2	3	4	5
Never True	Rarely True	Sometimes True	Frequently True	Very Frequently True

19. I have trouble concentrating on tasks.

1	2	3	4	5
Never True	Rarely True	Sometimes True	Frequently True	Very Frequently True

20. I have cried for no good reason.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

21. I enjoy the company of others.

1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Sometimes	4 Frequently	5 Very Frequently
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22. I am frightened by my urges.

1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Sometimes	4 Frequently	5 Very Frequently
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23. I fall asleep easily at night.

1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Sometimes	4 Frequently	5 Very Frequently
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24. Unexpected noises make me jump.

1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Sometimes	4 Frequently	5 Very Frequently
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25. No one understands how I feel, not even my family.

1 Not at all True	2 Rarely True	3 Somewhat True	4 Very True	5 Extremely True
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26. I am an easy-going, even-tempered person.

1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Sometimes	4 Usually	5 Very Much So
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27. I feel there are certain things that I have done on the job that I can never tell anyone, because no one would ever understand.

1 Not at all True	2 Slightly True	3 Somewhat True	4 True	5 Very True
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28. There have been times when I used alcohol (or other drugs) to help me sleep or to make me forget about things that have happened while I was at work.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Infrequently	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

29. I feel comfortable when I am in a crowd.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always

30. I lose my cool and explode over minor everyday things.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Frequently

31. I am afraid to go to sleep at night.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost Always

32. I try to stay away from anything that will remind me of things which have happened at work.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost Always

33. My memory is as good as it ever was.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all True	Rarely True	Somewhat True	Usually True	Almost Always True

34. I have a hard time expressing my feelings, even to the people I care about.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all True	Rarely True	Sometimes True	Frequently True	Almost Always True

Appendix D

164 Pickett Road
Dover, PA 17315
(Date)

Chief
(address)

Dear Chief (name):

I am writing to request your department's participation in a research study regarding the effects of stress on law enforcement personnel. Conducting and reporting on the results of this research is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for obtaining my Doctor of Psychology degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine.

I have served as a member of the South Central Pennsylvania Critical Incident Stress Management Team since 1994. In that capacity, I have conducted many debriefings with law enforcement personnel from a five-county area. I became very interested in the cumulative effects of job-related stress on the people with whom I have worked. The purpose of my research is to identify what elements of the job create the most stress for people and whether there are any demographic factors that predict or correlate with the level of stress experienced by officers. It is my hope that the results of my study will contribute to the literature on the effects of working in a law enforcement occupation, and aid in creating or enhancing stress management programs for both new and experienced officers.

Participation in this study is, of course, voluntary, and all information is entirely anonymous. Each participant will be given a survey packet containing a demographic questionnaire, and two survey instruments designed to measure stress levels in law enforcement personnel. The packet takes approximately 20 minutes to complete.

I would like to contact you within the next two weeks to discuss your department's participation in this important project. I would be happy to answer any questions or address any concerns that you have with regard to this study. If you have immediate questions or wish to contact me before that time, I can be reached at (717) 848-3535 or at kathleenj@pcom.edu.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Kathleen M. Jansen, M.S.

Appendix E
Respondents' Verbatim Answers to Demographic Survey Question #20

Has made me stronger and weaker at the same time. Sometimes initially stresses bother me but I am able to rationalize and become stronger through it all. As years go by I believe that I'm much stronger than the average person for having gone through the trials and tribulations.

I feel my work in law enforcement has made me a much stronger person emotionally and helped me to deal with problems in a more rational manner.

Being a cop is a 24/7 job and my fiancée didn't like that nor did she like the shift work, she couldn't take me not being there at night to be with: we split. I also tend to look at people as "us vs. them" and I have become more cynical.

I have become more alert of my surroundings, try to sit with my back to the wall.

Less willing to deal positively with negative stress.

More paranoid of becoming a victim of crime, more paranoid of children becoming victims of crime, more skeptical of people, untrusting.

I have gained an attention for detail in all areas of life. Detail in listening and speaking is acute. I also have become semi-cynical even though I'm aware of that predisposition with this occupation. I have less tolerance for people who are disrespectful to and jeopardize the safety of others.

I feel it has changed the way I react to everyday issues. They seem more trivial and unimportant. I usually try to forget work when I am off-duty.

I believe working in law enforcement has cost me some friends. I also feel that my relationships are superficial, in the fact that I try not to get too close to anyone outside of my immediate family. As an individual I have become very skeptical and have trouble trusting people.

The general public has no idea concerning the real work police officers do and the emotional impact our work has on us and our families.

Law enforcement causes one to be suspicious of others and, as a consequence, cautious in dealing with people.

I do not get wound up about small things-few things bother me, at least significantly, outside of police work.

Just beginning my law enforcement career, it is hard to get used to the swing shifts and new sleep patterns. It is also hard to explain to family and friends why I enjoy the job and why I make all the sacrifices I do; not being able to attend family events, working holidays, etc. Being a police officer is a 24 hours day, 7 day a week job. People know who you are and it can be stressful to know people are watching your every move, on duty or off.

Just started

General numbness towards feelings of others.

Has hardened me emotionally, find myself distancing myself from family as I do with subjects I deal with on the job.

Used to trust people-trust very few these days, makes you very hard and very emotional at times

The dedication and commitment required for a career in law enforcement has a very negative impact on family and relationships

The effects have been profound. I came into law enforcement as a jockey jock, naïve that society was good and people were mostly reasonable. Rude awakening occurred quickly as many confrontations proved to me that people don't think twice about hurting people in general-including cops. But all the apathy a cop sees or experiences made me a person devoutly devoted to family. I so value friendships, relationships with people in general, including strangers and a great appreciation for life knowing how frail and fleeting it may be. I have killed a man on the job and have suffered 6 broken bones, 2 blown disks, and many injuries yet other than those work comp days off I've had very few sick days in 29 years. Only one who loves their job can claim that. However with all these bad things I have suffered the most stress due to political interference in police work, inept supervisors, and a lack of support from above. I'd much rather have a steady diet of gun calls rather than the 3 things above.

I'm cynical, don't trust people, believe that people are lying when they speak to me and until I prove otherwise

Very suspicious of just about everything and read too much into everything

Major

Changed me from naïve to realistic, trusting to not, gullible to not, and never take family for granted again.

I love this job but I am guarded about my personal life and my family. My wife hears all the details of my job. She has a masters in counseling so we cope beautifully.

Made me jaded, used to trust people-no longer do. Used to believe people -- no longer do automatically. Have fewer non-police friends, still cope well -- no change there. Believe I am better at relationships.

Huge

More cautious, seeing things in general as a negative way.

I have become more assertive, outgoing, untrusting, and ignore or diminish stress. In some ways I'm more laid back and tend to appreciate life more, however in some ways I'm more intense and less focused.

Very guarded in relationships both friendship and intimate.

Made me cynical toward people in general.

I believe my outlook about people in general is more callous.

I am far more rigid in my interpretation of right and wrong. My world is very black and white with little gray involved.

Able to see things and problems in better perspective to how serious or not serious the situation is.

More cynical and suspicious of people.

It's made me more cynical. Shift work makes family life difficult. When I was a child abuse investigator I was overly concerned with my kids surviving the night. Some of the things I saw still bother me.

Has made me confident, more observant, and resourceful.

Its has had a detrimental effect on my health, the many shift changes per month wreaks your personal life and helps to ruin marriages and/or relationships.

Since I started when I was 22 years old it made me grow up (mature faster). I have become more vocal, able to talk to more people. The job has increased confidence and self-esteem as far as being able to talk to other people. The job has created stress when dealing with relationships. People outside the job don't seem to understand the hours worked and/or the calls police handle and deal with. It has put a strain on my social life.

Very short tempered and fail to have time to listen to other people's problems.

I don't think that it has had any effect.

I keep in mind that there is good out there. In our job all we ever see are bad things. No one invites you to stop in to share a cup of coffee and say everything is all right. I feel I manage my stress real well. Blood pressure is always 111/80. I have a wood shop that I use to relieve my stress as well as exercise and other things. The only thing that I have become aware of is death, due to all the suicides, DOA's, homicides, and autopsies that I have been involved in. Its usually is when I'm sleeping that I'll wake up thinking I was dead.

I have no doubt my job has affected my personal life. I am very cynical and believe that most of the people, other than officers, that I deal with are lying in some way. Due to the extensive amount of time both on duty and off duty that I put into the job to be a success. My relationships have suffered a great deal.

I have been fortunate to be married most of my years as a police officer. My wife has always been very supportive and a good listener. Although I believe the job has affected me by being less trusting of people. It has also made me more reserved and quiet in social settings. The thanks I have seen and heard make me try really hard to avoid those patterns.

By the very nature of police work, I have changed in my feeling, emotions towards my family and friends. The job becomes the major focus of the person's personality. I do have a problem shutting off thinking about "work" during my off duty time.

Enlightened me to many of the pitfalls of urban society. Too many freeloaders on the government food chain, not enough people working. This provides too many people with too much time on their hands. This is frustrating to me sometimes to know that while I'm working hard to make a living, and spending little time at home with my wife, others are enjoying life to the maximum at our expense. Also, way too many criminals and far too few working police officers thanks to our pathetic criminal justice system.

Administration does not care about the patrol officers or lower ranks. You try not to take the job home with you. You become non-verbal with others, you don't care about anything! Mainly at your job! Because the administration does not care about the ranks below lieutenant!

Made me cynical and distrustful.

I've been in law enforcement since I was 20 years old (42). It's made me to keep my guard up when dealing with the public. It has not altered my personality – I won't let it. I'm always upbeat and try to keep it that way.

Learned to cope with stress and crisis situations.

Feelings become hardened.

I've become skeptical of individuals and their stories, less sympathetic at times, less patient, easily irritated.

More aware, control emotions, deal with problems better, sometimes stressed after hard days, shift work hard on families.

I've become stronger mentally and able to handle things with greater ease.

Mentally exhausted, very moody, zero tolerance level, demanding, greater road rage towards public, no family life-job is now first and family is second. Marital relationship is very stressed and like a roller coaster effect.

I realize now how important it is to live each day to the fullest because you never know if it will be your last.

Lessening of emotion, job focused, preoccupied with work, most friends are law enforcement officers, very realistic, nothing surprises me, challenges relationships.

Very callous emotions, very little patience for family problems, tend to "police" the family.

I've been hardened to crime and probably have learned to "shut out" factors that before entering law enforcement would have tended to upset me. Police work had been hard on my marriages, I'm on my third and final one.

A stronger than average sense of enlightenment regarding humanity in general, both positive and negative.

My career choice has affected me in many ways, both positive and become more cynical and have a general negative outlook towards people or situations. I have become very callous with my feelings and with dealing with people. My job has given me a feeling of success. I love it. What I do, where I work, and all things about being a police officer. I get to do what many people wish they could. But it has come at a cost. Most people couldn't even image the personal stress that comes along with the job.

I have to work hard to stay positive in daily life. I have to take things as they come and work hard not to worry about things. I see some wrong things being done. I have no control over them and it creates stress.

I have become more authoritative, less trusting, and more likely to stand up for myself.

I am more sensitive towards violence on not involved bystanders.

Law enforcement experience has helped me to deal with physically, mentally, and emotionally stressful situations in positive ways. I am more self-confident and comfortable with myself and my decisions. I cherish my relationships with my wife and children. I enjoy only casual relationships with most people including coworkers.

Makes you a "harder" person, things no longer effect you the way it would a normal person.

I believe that law enforcement work has had a very great deal of effect on my moral and ethical behavior. My personal life and my relationships are always controlled by my beliefs, and my training and education. It has taught me to be fair and responsible in my duties.

I have become pessimistic due to constantly dealing with people, usually in a negative way.

More cautious and distrusting of average people, less tolerant of excuses and lies, critical of people and situations, frustration with the system.

The work hours, shift work, and dealing with the type of people we come in contact with, have been very stressful with my family life.

Jaded emotions.

Probably less sympathetic towards repeat victims, especially in domestic violence, more fatalistic, less trusting, value honesty much more than before. Schedule had made maintaining relationships more difficult.

None, I leave work at work and when I go home I am fine.

More cynical of other peoples intents/motives.

It controls my off-duty life as well as my duty life. I'm slowly losing site of control of minor situations.

Quick to make decisions, not tolerable of people's problems, can converse with most types of people, not trusting of people, suspicious of most activity.

I believe that after you deal with the public for a few years you tend to become suspicious, mostly because everybody or the majority of people lie to you on a daily basis.

Distant, paranoid, question everything but I live with it.

As an individual I believe I have not changed, law enforcement is an act, nothing personal. Personality – the only thing I can think of is I'm not afraid to confront people when the situation calls for it. The last part, I can cope with a lot. I have sports to fall back on to relieve myself of stress, but for the most part I plan and organize my life and activities so I'm always one step ahead.

Sarcastic, hard to believe/trust people.

After only 5 months I don't believe it's had time to make any serious changes.

I believe that being a police officer has helped me in coping with my everyday life better. After seeing how poorly others deal with problems I can adjust how I would deal with a similar problem. It also helped me realize that most people create their own problems, and then they do not communicate well so the original problem manifests into a bigger problem. I think this has helped me communicate with my wife to avoid the problems. I do also believe that law enforcement has made me more of a control-oriented person which has positives and negatives.

It has matured me in some aspects of my life. I'm more tolerant of minor issues that are problems for civilians. It has also given me a negative perspective of most of society, I think mostly because no one calls the police when they have a good day, only when there is a problem. My personal life has suffered, as law enforcement is "who I am" and not "what I do", and I'm forced to always be "on duty" and also subject to scrutiny professionally for personal issues and problems. There is virtually no support network outside of informal relationships I've formed with other officers. It's hard to cope or ask for help coping from the person who practices "do as I say, not as I do".

I feel working in this job hardens you and makes you not trust people. You always look beyond faces and think other people have negative intentions.

I believe law enforcement has strengthened me as an individual, however has often given me a callous look at situations, people, etc. As far as my personality I believe it is for the most part unchanged and I remain grounded and have not forgotten where I came from and what it took to get here. Law enforcement is a brotherhood and this helps when it is time to deal with stress by having a close bond and tight knit group of people to talk with. I believe this profession strengthens relationships due to everyday seeing and dealing with how other people live.

I have been around law enforcement all my life. It has made me very sarcastic and I tend to be paranoid in most situations. I also realized how well I had things growing up with the family I had.

I am a pessimist. I always feel like people are lying to me. I have trust issues.

Distrust of people.

Organizational changes for no known reason cause more stress than a gunfight.

It's kind of screwed me all up. I wish I had never gotten involved in this kind of work.

Over the years I have become short tempered with family and friends.

I love my job but law enforcement has caused a great deal of stress and my life has changed. I don't trust people and I don't like a lot of people. I am very suspicious of people and their actions. I have seen many people die. This job takes a terrible toll on a person.

I trust no one.

- Better dealing with problems in general
- feeling that my problems are nothing when compared to others

- Hard to relate to other non-police individuals
- Stressful on family (kids and spouse)
- I worry about everything because of what I've seen on the job

Hypertension

Yes, detached, untrusting, insensitive, lack of tactfulness.

Law enforcement is stressful from the standpoint of dealing with the criminal element and lie administration. Most "worker bee" police officers feel that criminals and administrators are out to get them.

After 15 years in uniform I began to experience burnout. Depression, hopelessness, frustration intensified and caused me to seek medical treatment. My doctor excused me from work as part of my treatment during which time I endured repeated calls to my home from supervisors who were wanting to know when I planned to return. My blood pressure was out of control and medication seemed ineffective. I was eventually transferred to a non-uniform position and almost immediately my blood pressure returned to normal and I no longer have to take medication.

- Tend to see the less positive side of most people
- More suspicious

Has had some effect on me.

It has made me sarcastic, sometimes emotionless. Usually empathetic.

Has caused some insensitivity, at times.

I'm an angry person now, sometimes it's very hard to control.

Becoming a law enforcement officer has made me more organized, observant, strict and/or even-tempered. Working patrol was less stressful than administrative work. At least on the road you knew where dangers were and who you were responsible for.

When you are a law enforcement officer you have less/fewer rights than most civilians. You can not afford to openly argue or express displeasure of services with neighbors or storekeepers as they know who you are.

More understanding.

With everyday dealings with the public, you become harsh and hard... When you deal with criminals and subjects that do not care about laws, you begin to treat everyone as if they were criminal... Long hours, few days off begin to increase our stress level. The road schedule is the worst schedule ever put together. Nights, to late to early shift all in one month is crazy... Sleepless nights increase and bad health problems continue to grow on you.

Working in Wash. DC. For 11 years as a medic changed my personality and molded my emotions and survival guards. This job is less stressful than that was.

I have more stress associated with the administration of this agency than I do with my actual job duties. I love my job, I would just like to do it.

I am less emotional, less likely to react to injuries or death, less likely to cry.

Stress

Lack of Trust

Department Racism

Has interfered with relationships, i.e.-control etc.

A substantial effect overall!

More cynical

Less willing to compromise

Less willing to listen

Much more assertive

Demanding

Positive sometimes, even appreciative for what I have after seeing how cruel people are!

A most profound and negative impact.

I am viewed as someone who is preoccupied with work, always worried about the next crisis and unable to relax. I am told my sense of humor has disappeared, my threshold for anger has diminished and close friends are few.

Made me more insensitive.

The job has had a huge effect on my personality and my relationship with others. I am not as naive or trusting as I was before I got on this job. I feel as though I am a lot less emotional when it comes to death in general (including children). I am fortunate enough to be married to another police officer so I feel relationship wise this job is a plus. We can relate to each other. It makes me and my husband realize that life is short and we don't take our loved ones for granted.

Makes it harder.

Law enforcement careers place you in a constant state of holding in your emotions, while performing your job. After a short period of time, you either withdraw from loved ones or you "vent" on them when you come home. Personally, I'm pissed off at everybody, both bad guys, coworkers, the judicial system, wife, etc. There is no relief. Just, constant pressure, more arrests, restrict overtime, lack of manpower, out dated equipment, do more with less. At home, I expect loved ones and everyday business people to be as responsible as I have to be. I have little or no patience anymore. I don't, but I understand why cops drink and personal relationships don't last. No one wants to be around someone who expects them to jump every time they bark, is mad all the time, or, at times, totally withdrawn. Cops, including me, feel like no one except other cops understand the pressure. Leadership offers treatment or help for stress, but no one asks, because of the same old feeling; if you're stressed, then you're a time bomb, therefore, you're unstable and not fit for the job, so you'll be transferred, placed on light duty, labeled, all adding to the stress. This may or may not be true, but it's generally perceived. Cops should have mandatory 20-year retirement with 100% pension. At least there would be light at the end of the tunnel.

Makes you cold hearted to some. And overly protective of your family and children.

My personality has become "hard" at times at work & home due to job related experiences (death, trauma etc.). I tend not to have the sympathy I had for "people" prior to police work. I have become more organized and structured on an every day basis.

It has made me a little more skeptical of taking things at face value, and has made me not quite as trusting of people.

- Patience is gone
- Stress is always high
- Causes problems with personal and home life
- Irregular sleep patterns causes exhaustion

- Bad mood a lot
- Lethargic at times
- Easily angered by simple things

Less patience

Less tolerant of aggravation/adversity off-duty (I expect aggravation/adversity on duty and deal with it; but when I come down from my high tolerance level of on-duty stress when off-duty, I don't want to be bothered with problems of mine or others.)

Less sympathetic to others (I see people with true, serious problems while others simply complain. Plus, the public has no idea what law enforcement goes through on a daily basis, but they rarely say anything good about you.)

I believe law enforcement makes you cold to other's feeling, simply because we see so much dramatic crime that we take it out on our loved ones. Law enforcement has helped me cope with problems and made me a better problem solver.

Since being in law enforcement I'm more aware of my surroundings. I do not take anything for face value without a thorough investigation, I don't trust a lot of people. I'm more security conscious now than I've ever been. My relationship with my family has not changed. I don't burden them with always talking about what I do on my job. If they ask I'll tell them if not then so be it.

My career has caused me to develop high blood pressure/hypertension. I don't believe it has affected my personality but has changed the ways I cope with things, i.e., I am more assertive and have developed an analytical way of solving problems. As for relationships, this job probably cost me my first marriage due to the shift work and change in lifestyle.

It has not had any effect on my personality. It has had a minor effect on the way I cope with things, because I am even more understanding of people's lives than before.

Become "hardened".

Sometimes I see everyone as a criminal or up to no good.

There are times when I am very hard on my wife and children. She describes me as going into "cop mode". It is a reflex action taken when stress occurs at home. I have very few friendships outside of work. I tend to be an observer when in large crowds of non-cops.

Out of my 12 years on the job, I served 7 on the road or patrol. During this time, I worked shift work, was on our entry team for drug searches (first one through the door), and served as a K-9 officer for 3 years. I was one of only 4 explosives teams in the state and responded to numerous bomb threats and calls. I also had a drug dog and worked

drug investigation with the DEA, and other federal and state agencies. Most of these 7 years were involved in “high risk” entries and drug stops serving on criminal addiction teams. Most of this did not stress me. The administrative duties I have been assigned over the last several years have created the most stress. The level of responsibilities that I have and consequences of something going wrong creates the stress. In addition, the department has assigned the duties of 2 or 3 full time positions to me for the last 2-3 years. Because I write well, understand politics and get the job done, the department has increasingly assigned more and more duties to me. Although I have continued to perform these functions, the level of stress on me has drastically increased. This has caused me to become more tired, irritable (as my family has noticed) and to have increased sleeping relating problems.

I hate everyone!

Police work by its very nature is negative. No one ever calls the police to tell them they are having a nice day. We baby-sit thousands and thousands of people but we only come into contact with the few who are having a “problem or a bad day.” After years of this load it tends to harden you. To compound this an officer is constantly backstabbed by the administration at (department name deleted).

When I worked the road/patrol my only issue was the rotating shifts. We would work 7 days of 7AM-3PM, 7 days 3PM-11PM, and 7 days of 12AM-7AM. When I worked general investigations it was more conducive to family life because it was primarily day work. More responsibility, inept supervision, and no increase in pay. Our unit needs more investigators.

Homicide investigators are like being on an emotional roller coaster, yet interesting. Quality supervisors, however, you work 400 plus hours of overtime a year and no increase in base pay. Outside of the law enforcement family it is a thankless job with tremendous amounts of pressure/stress. Pressure from bosses, victims’ family, media, Prosecutor’s, defense, and allied law enforcement agencies. Our base pay for (department name deleted) has remained the same for at least 4 years. The overtime is better for my family, however, the stress is affecting me.

I’m tired all the time.

- I feel like I’m barely keeping my head above the water
- No time now to work out/exercise-(gaining weight)-skipping meals
- Not seeing my family as much (always working)-vacation canceled
- My wife is supportive (but I miss her and my son)
- I’m always in a rush and everything I deal with is life and death.

Shortly after being on the job, I quit trying to figure out why people do things they do and to the best of my job write what resources are available.

As an individual: Stress, mostly from supervision has contributed to: high blood pressure, acid reflux.

There are times when I have a greater appreciation of my wife and family yet I apparently don't show it. The job got more stressful with rank and associated responsibility. I have little tolerance for stupid people and no tolerance of aggressive people especially those who victimize the innocent and helpless. I have great sadness for those who have put their life on the line and lost their lives protecting and serving others. I have witnessed the loss of a friend to murder and I can't shake the sight and sound. I try to think positive and act positive, using all of my experiences to cop and help others cope with all of life's challenges. In some ways I am a far better person but it has and continues to take a toll on my body. I am blessed, I suppose, to have experienced so much but I look forward to retirement. I just want to repay my family and treat myself to time gone by and make up for the sacrifices. I never leave the job. It is with me almost 24/7.

More cynical.

I have very few deep feelings. I can't remember ever crying about anything since I have been a police officer. I felt like I was going to cry when my daughter was born but I never did. I always prevent myself from feeling too deeply about anything.

- more cynical
- less patient
- more irritable
- more callused
- more appreciative of my wife and kids
- deeper faith in God
- more sarcastic
- get to the "point" quicker (look for the "bottom line")

The way things appear no matter if it is wrong or right others above you dictate the outcome of events.

My work in law enforcement has had an effect on all the above, each in a different way.

Ruined my life.

When I take this uniform off and get away from this job I don't seem to suffer any ill effects. However, I really have learned to "hate" people.

Less tolerant at home.

There is a direct link between my personal life and the amount of stress at the work place. If it has been a bad day and I do not recognized it and address it personally then it will often follow me home.

Mostly negative-including impatience, repetitive, menial tasks. Assignment of tasks which do not contribute to a substantial mission lead to a self-analysis of non-worth, despite the proven ability to handle effectively more challenging tasks and responsibilities. No recognition of a good job done, but overt criticism of minor oversights, i.e., accentuating the negative, overlooking the positive.

Relationships suffer because stress lingers well beyond the immediate shift ends. The work load on supervisors.

My career has had an effect on my personal life mainly because of the crazy schedule I have. I have problems keeping in touch with people other than coworkers.

I've become much more introverted!

Angrier at times, basically law enforcement steals your life if you're female. Luckily, I have a wonderful & understanding husband.

Less time with family and friends
Less patient-more aggressive
Tired most of the time
Insomnia
Poor eating habits

It has made me less open with my emotions. Learn to deal with problems within.

More realistic.

Minimal effect on personality.

Makes my personal problems, look like they are not problems.

Stay at home more, less patience with people, less tolerant of people.

Makes me a hardened, cynical individual.

Lost touch with most friends because of unusual working hours and last minute schedule changes.

Sexual harassment and favoritism to under-qualified male counterparts causes me to have a negative attitude and want to give up.

It has affected but mostly positive.

Worn me out!!

I feel this job was one of the major factors in the termination of my marriage. The department feels this is the only thing that should matter. Your life should revolve around the department and nothing else should effect that.

I have much greater control over emotional responses to situations.

I am more cynical and do not take things at face value.

I am confident that I can handle almost any problem or situation.

I believe the stress of the job and the schedule have a direct effect on the way I treat my family at times. I believe that I have gone through periods of depression or something like it due to the stress. A lot of stress in this agency comes from two places. 1. The internal stress related to the micro-management and politics. 2. The stress that a conscientious officer gets from dealing with the current. A third stressor is the fact that this career causes you to become very cynical towards family and society in general.

Overall physical health has declined/more aggressive personality/slight change in relationship problems.

Less compassionate and sensitive to people.

-more critical of information, circumstances at times-cynical

-less trust for people in general until you know the person

-less social activities to avoid confrontations

Internalize/suppress feelings & emotions

Increased alcohol use

High blood pressure

Mood swings

I do not get close to people anymore. I have mood swings more often. I do not keep close friends.

I am a much stronger person since becoming a trooper both emotionally and physically. My relationships stink, however. Law enforcement fosters a culture of infidelity! I can't stand the mentality of "Do as I say, not as I do!" Cops have the attitude of being above the law... "Because they are the law!" If I had known the corruption before hand...I would never have chosen this profession.

Shift work makes you moody and irritable.

It has made me meaner/no feelings for people other than friends and family.

You need to live each day as it is your last. You need a close family to talk with to keep your sanity.

In some ways it has made me more organized and better prepared to handle situations. In other ways it has made me very regimented and rigid.

More short-tempered, more restless sleep.

My career has taught me to deal with personal crisis better by not over reacting and making clear, thought out decisions.

Lack of sleep cycle--due to shift work -- irritability.

It makes you dislike people and drive fast.

Learn to turn feelings off.

You're hard with little emotions.

Losing the ability to trust someone is the biggest change in my life since becoming a law enforcement officer. Over the years the dealing with tragedies (especially with children & during holidays) has become more of a stressor.

It has made me very suspicious of everyone to include my supervisors. I have become very paranoid.

1. Learn not to trust anybody and everybody is a suspect.
2. You become a "take charge" person
3. I have become more analytical
4. Other than the stress of working shift work and holidays, no effect on relationships.

It makes you become very cold and emotionally disconnected.

How would actions look to my employee and/or what effects on reputation?

Since coming into law enforcement, the job has made me less emotional.

Attempting to be perfect.

Attempting to be the problem solver for everyone you know.

Thinking you should be able to solve all problems yesterday.

Very little.

It is very stressful on a family and your personal health.

Helped to foster a strong sense of right and wrong. A sense of pessimism or pessimistic sense of reality/life and society in general. I can't tolerate incompetence of people in other jobs like fast food etc....because society expects us to be perfect. If I screw up at my job someone may die. I feel that many in society and the media are quick to second-guess police agencies without truly knowing about the dangers and the stress of working in law enforcement.

My spouse tells me I am less tolerant of others and of when others make mistakes. The shift work and reluctance to pay overtime which causes changes in the schedule are not healthy. Lack of manpower helps foster an increased workload for those on the road, which obviously raises one's stress level. As for my relationships I am less compassionate and have a "Just deal with it" attitude.

Shift work, along with the constant workload of dealing in a field that never seems to show improvement or positive impact, makes it hard to connect with those that do not know how unending the day to day, minute to minute stress is.

Individual:

- suspect everyone
- ask more questions regarding truth
- negative attitude toward administration & politics
- animosity

Personality:

- callous
- unemotional

Coping with relationship:

- at times accusative
- test trust at times
- reclusive

Individual-has lessened my "shock factor". I have seen so many things that the general public does not see/understand that I am not surprised by unexpected events.

Relationships: I do not tolerate (not as easily "conned") by my children. I am not afraid to punish my kids in order for them to learn a particular lesson. I have seen how ineffective parents' kids turn out. I spend more time with my children and am willing to punish (I do not spank/hit my kids as part of the discipline).

Keep thoughts and emotions within.

Law enforcement limits your interaction with other professionals. People are always suspicious of your intention. Subsequently, you're constantly more with other people in the law enforcement community. Moreover, you appear to be suspicious of everyone you meet. The #1 thing I would recommend would be that policemen obtain friendships outside of law enforcement.

I have to keep a good image. No room for errors.

Negative effects. Increased anxiety and stress. Increased intensity of fight/flight response to most situations.

Initially, law enforcement work made me cynical and disbelieving of others. Tired and frustrated after 7 years in law enforcement. However, since becoming a CISM peer counselor, cumulative stress management has become a recognized part of my habits through physical and emotional enrichment endeavors.

My attitude and behavior is the most positive time of my career. My wife of 21 years and my spiritual/emotional support mechanisms are very solid/strong.

A strain at times. However any job is a strain at one point or another.

Explode quicker due to build up.

Frustration from stress on the job and lack of sleep from shift work.

Short and lose patience.

I cope with stress by doing lots of things with family, boating, fishing, hunting, vacations.

The most difficult side of law enforcement has not been from confronting hostile members of the public, but rather the internal pressure created by command positions within the department, specifically commanders that have achieved their rank based upon external or non-command abilities such as sexual orientation, ethnicity or sex. This is not a classic, "white man's gripe", but rather the observations of a decorated, motivated, public servant that enjoys the job. These commanders are given rank without knowing the nuts and bolts of long-term uniform field work, and they end up leaving a trail of disheartened, injured, stressed officers behind as they bounce from assignment to assignment on the path of their political career. We are trained officers, we don't need extra therapy, we need supportive, competent leadership to guide us in difficult times.

Increased levels of stress -- moody, less tolerant of people and their explanation(s).

Shift work has put an incredible amount of stress on the physical body. Became very cynical about life. Unable to donate time to church and charities.

I've always needed a large amt. of time to myself.

The work hasn't necessarily increased that, but I need the time now to decompress. I exercise intensely and regularly as a coping strategy. I also devote as much time as possible, even to the extent of some sleep deprivation to make the time, for my children and grandchild. We try to do as much as possible as a family.

If anything, the job has made me a stronger individual, and due to constant exposure to high-stress situations, I respond better to similar levels of stress better and under more control in my private life.

Very cynical, however, I have kept a sense of humor! I have cried before on the job, after something very serious has occurred. I cope with stress well.

-Cynical

-Confidence

-Increased anger level

-Appreciation for family & friends

More paranoid about people in general, overprotective of family.

A huge effect on my personality by being cold, emotionless towards family members/friends. Not able to go out with friends because of crowds. Sometimes not able to communicate and being withdrawn from society.

Increased my ability to handle stress.

Dealing with people has helped me develop patience with my relationships.

Some family members claim they notice a change of sensitivity or that I have become less emotional. Shift work and the frequent change of shifts result in a lack of energy and has its effects on my marriage. I believe I have become more aware and more alert to my surroundings both on and off the job.

I have become suspicious of everyone.

It's a stressful environment with emotional highs & lows

Made me:

Less tolerant

Less prone to emotion

Less caring

Never thought about it.

I see others have life worse than I do, but it's usually by their own choice.

A good effect.

I have become extremely cynical; my patience is very short. My temper is much shorter than it used to be. I tend not to trust or believe people as much as I used to.

Makes you numb to things.

I am very untrusting.

1.) In order to be capable of performing the duties of a police officer, you must develop an emotional on/off switch so that you can put your emotions aside and do your job. This is an effective way to deal with the job, however, this emotional shut off carries over to your personal life and is disabling in personal relationships.

2.) Police officers tend to hang around either one another, or no one while off duty. This is a result of hearing the problems of others all day everyday. This job gives you an unrealistic view of how incapable people are at handling their own personal affairs/problems since we typically interact exclusively with troubled individuals! Most officers would prefer to live alone atop a mountain choosing when and where to interact and socialize.

Has made me more critical of people.

This could be a lengthy essay -- I have a lot of thoughts on this topic.

At times I have been quick to argue, shortened patience, too critical of others.

I believe that my law enforcement career so far has made me be more objective towards situations. I am always trying for a quick solution to any problem that comes up. I also used my everyday work experience to tutor my family on what to look for in day to day dealing with people. It's definitely a good job.

I am very straightforward now.

Working in law enforcement is a 24 hr. job. It takes up most of your life and involves a lot of time away from family -- hard on relationships.

Being a police officer has made me a harder person. It's harder to trust people. My personal life was made hard by not seeing my children grow up when they were little by working shift work. I have always put this department first.

It's made me a better person.

Medically -- high blood pressure, lack of patience dealing with everyday problems including the family.

I believe the most outstanding effect this job has had on me is my not wanting to have any children. When I got married 9 years ago, I made it clear to my wife (before we were married) that I absolutely wanted nothing to do with raising children in today's society. Primarily due to the stress I am under all day at work, when I come home I need to have quiet and be able to relax. You never have that with a small child in your house. Secondly, I see what this world is really like and it is not a place to raise children. The constant crime and violence and lure of drugs and alcohol would be too much for me to try to protect my kids from.

It has been positive for the most part.

As far as relationships, it's difficult.

A spouse who is a "stay home", lacks education (for lack of better words) on common sense issues. Most cops see the wrong things in domestic incidents and learn from the past. ("job handled domestics")

People tend to fall away from you and you have to live your life under a microscope.

Law enforcement has had a definite effect on personality. What an officer sees on a daily basis forces that officer to form an opinion (largely negative) about the citizens he comes in contact with on a daily basis. Contacts with "good citizens" are rare, as no one calls 911 just to "say hello" to a cop. In order to be successful and balance the work life with the home life, this negativity must be left at work. Relationships will suffer and/or fail if that balance is not achieved. Personally, that is not a lesson easily learned, but once it was, "Life is good".

I am always on guard, even off duty. I got more upset with people than I used to, as time went on as a law enforcement officer. Sometimes I drink alcohol after a stressful day.

The rotating schedules and rotating shifts (day work-night work) destroyed my first marriage. People can not understand, or deal with our crazy schedules. I believe I have become a little more cold towards people; thinking the worst in them. Also, my tolerance to stupidity has become minimal.

It has made me somewhat cynical.

I am a person who is a police officer. When I am at work I am professional and will work my hardest. When I am off duty, I enjoy my time off. If I am off duty and I have to take action as a police officer, I will.

Very stressful and has affected my personal life. I'm very skeptical of most people.

Tremendously

Most of your friends are other police officers. You lose contact with other friends due to shift work. Our schedule is very different than most.

I was divorced about 3 years ago. Ex-wife's primary complaints were related to my job. Long hours, danger, emotionally distant. I became unconcerned with my personal life and as things degraded at home I spent more and more time at work to avoid confrontations at home.

I have developed an ulcer and take daily medication now. I have been talking with my current wife about problems with depression and I have seen my work performance suffer as my motivation falls.

My wife tells me I am unable to let go of work and be "off duty". I love being a police officer but I will not lose another wife to this job.

The job makes you more stoic and thick skinned. Not as capable of displaying emotion.

Made me more cynical and suspicious.

It may have made me more negative in my outlook on people

I tend to focus on the negative side of things more than I used to.

Large effect

I'm more cynical since becoming a police officer. I see people at their worst.

Has made me a more outgoing, outspoken individual.

Has assisted in development of self-esteem and confidence.

Has helped me to respond more calmly to stressful situations and emotional situations.

Has contributed to a sometimes black and white or judgmental outlook on things -- right vs. wrong, etc....

Put things in perspective.

It makes you question everything you used to believe.

Majority of feelings are internalized.

Makes me look at most victims of crime as someone who could have taken steps to reduce their chance (very easy steps). People don't take the advice given to them and follow through on their part.

The job really has no affect. I like it and it pays well. I see it as a job only.

Not as trusting. See the negative side of things.

A lot. You tend to lose personal feelings over the years of seeing the worst things in life (homicides, drugs, poor, homeless, etc.). You tend not to believe anyone. You become cold hearted.

Job has helped communication skills when dealing with all types of people.

Almost all good. I would not change my life for any other job. This department has been good for me and to me.

I feel my experience as a law enforcement officer has effected me in several ways.
I am cautious of people, especially those I don't know well.
I have a tendency to be cynical of people I don't know.
I feel my experiences have made me more able to cope with stressful events in my personal life.

Lack of trust in people

I tend to see all things in a negative way until I look into further.

It has taught me to cope with situations better and made me appreciate life more!

I find myself trying to make things just in all areas. I am saddened by the lack of justice in the court systems.

You look at everything differently. You are more aware of your surroundings. Most of the time, your friends are only police because they relate to how you feel.

It has never effected any personal relationship with my family or friends but there was a period of time where certain stress at work affected my working relationship with others as well as my attitude and physical health as far as causing headaches, etc.

On third marriage.

Quite an effect. Not necessarily bad though.

Sizable

Don't sweat the small stuff. Look at the big picture.

I have a hard time separating work from home life. I always have to be in control of things.

Working in law enforcement shows you how the world truly operates. If nothing else, it has hardened me towards the world.

It has made me quick to judge even though I realize that is the Lord's job. I am very conservative however I was so before joining law enforcement. I believe that right is right and wrong is wrong and there is no such thing as a gray area.

Cynical outlook
Suspicious of everything
Cold feelings
Withdraw and hold things inside

Some effect

- Some days I'm very short with my wife and kids
- I'm tired most of the time
- Probably die at a young age
- Don't trust anyone

Lack of trust with people.

I am less trusting

Have become very callous.

I have become somewhat cynical about people and more aware of my surroundings.

Cynicism, Outrage

Just realization of just what kind of goofs people are. Cynical, watchful, careful, profane.

Pessimistic, not empathetic.

More callous attitude in home matters. Bothered slightly by trivial matters.

I am very protective of who and where my kids are. I don't socialize a lot with people outside the department.

Contributed to my divorce

Become more cynical

I don't trust strangers or people I've just met until I get to know them and their background. I'm more security conscious about my family, home, and on outings around malls and inner city areas. I've prided myself on being able to leave "work at work" and "home at home".

Helped me recognize symptoms-ability to defuse stress level

Less trusting, cynical of people, upset with system.

I have received a great deal of satisfaction and stress from my job. I was aware of the stresses prior to my employment and have taken steps to cope with the stress.

Become more apathetic or cynical after a long time on the job – but then I overcome that by spending time with my family and doing hobbies that I enjoy.

I believe my work as a law enforcement officer has had a major effect on all aspects of my life. I also believe that the effects are positive as well as negative. While I'm not the "warmest" person to be around, I still offer clarity, responsibility and a broader perspective on many topics. I believe I'm a better person since becoming a law enforcement officer.

Law enforcement has had a mostly positive effect. Like my years teaching, I believe law enforcement work is very rewarding. While it is true you observe many traumatic events, you also witness the best in people.

I've become cynical in many ways but still try to keep a positive attitude. The little things in life that tend to upset other people do not phase me. It has created conflict with my spouse who gets highly upset over very minor issues, while I do not.

-no problem at all?

-has created however a type A personality

-I'm very skeptical

Positive in most ways. The only negative is that I'm probably more cynical than I otherwise would be.

Less tolerant on certain classes of people.

I have always internalized things, but feel through my participation in psychology classes offered by the Department, I am better able to locate avenues through which I can deal with stress.

I am very private-don't discuss issues.

Individual/Personality: More hard, short tempered, less empathetic, more trusting, more negative, less social, like to be able to have some control with things/relationships, less trusting, less demanding, direct, not political, more accepting of things I can't control.

Individual/Personality: Short tempered, become hardened, cynical, less empathetic, less trusting, more cautious of my surroundings, more negative, diminished social life.

Coping/Relationship: Become more direct, less trusting, more demanding.

More critical and less tolerant of stupid stuff.

I used to be a more positive person; I believed most people were good. Since my seven years of law enforcement, I am suspicious and I don't trust many people. On the other hand I've learned to appreciate my life more after seeing the way that some people live their lives.

Not to sweat the "small stuff".

Identify important issues in life and pursue them.

Distrusting of people

No respect for criminal justice system

Law enforcement has a cumulative effect on an individual. Often you don't realize the amount of stress you are under until you leave an assignment or retire. I think it has contributed to physical illness in my case, but not to disabling effect. I do not drink, smoke, etc. I try to eat right and exercise regularly.

It has made me more skeptical of people. Sometimes more standoffish. It has hardened my emotions towards my wife and children.

Makes one much more in tune with reality. As opposed to people living in a fantasy land believing the liberal media.

Stressful. I see how my disposition has changed over time. I used to have a lot of patience, now I'm very short tempered sometimes.

It makes me really mad that you can't get help without the attached stigma.

More cynical

Who knows!!

SRT should not be forced on anyone

More exposure to the problems of the world has given me a better understanding of the world.

I don't get upset at things other family members do. I am very cynical about others.

Law enforcement has made me somewhat more cynical. My job has also made me much more suspicious about the honesty of the people who are involved in my life. While the job has enhanced my ability to communicate with people, it has been a detriment in my communication with my spouse.

I was a more friendly person before the job. It has made me notice things more, more observant. Try not to be, but become cynical.

Reduced my patience, compassion and trust. Severely dampened my outlook on this world and the people in it!

It has made me a good people person.

More introverted, more cynical, less trusting of others, internalize issues rather than discussing true feelings with others, fewer close friends or family.

I don't trust people the way I used to.

This job has changed me in many aspects of my entire life. There is not enough paper in this survey to state these aspects, and effects.

Cynical

Makes it hard to believe anyone. Makes you not feel compassionate.

Positive

I've become more cold when dealing with situations of death.

Lost trust in people I don't know. Lose temper at home easier.

Negative and positive.

Distrustful of everyone.

You become hard to what is around you.

I am less trusting towards others.

I am less sensitive towards others on and off the job.

As with most officers that I spoke with, I am reserved. I was accused of an incident that did not occur. This was investigated by Internal Affairs and found to be not sustained. As a result of the year plus investigation I had to seek treatment for emotional stress.

Makes me more tolerant.

I don't have as much intimate or close emotional connection with people outside of law enforcement. It's an experience that only another cop can understand.

Individual/Personality

- Sleep deprived
- Friendships (hard to maintain)
- Dating life (have to work weekends and night work)
- Due to hours seems like I can't accomplish anything around the house
- I see how people live both good and bad
- More of a loner
- Less trustworthy of friends
- Feel I don't experience things that regular citizens do
- Working holidays, unable to spend with family and friends
- Can't take vacation with family and friends
- Miss things related with children
- Spending time with girlfriends or boyfriends (strain on relationships)
- Explaining why I can't go out on Sat. night, got to work
- People have a lack of respect for police (mostly the younger crowd 16 yrs.-25 years old)
- Ask why do I keep this job (reasons are job security, pay, family of police officers, helping others, excitement, only thing know how to do)

More understanding but less tolerant.

Made me a hardened person. I feel that I could in fact handle stress far better because of our training and expertise. The people around me in my job has made me at times pretty sarcastic and cold; however, I feel that I can still be compassionate when needed.

Even though, this is a very rewarding career it does take an enormous toll on your personal life. Relationships are very unstable along with the lack of support from supervisors. The pay is very low and morale has been its lowest in five years. People just don't understand that we are expected to put out own lives and problems aside while we deal with theirs. Whether it be an argument with a family member, clean up after snow/hurricane. It's not that easy!

It's not the job, it's the administration putting us unfairly under the microscope and then dealing unfairly with its officers. There are huge double standards.

It makes me look at people different from prior to when I was a police officer.

This job has contributed to my sarcastic personality.

I tend to view things differently than others. I analyze every situation as a possible threat without consciously knowing it.

Rotating hours

Shorter temper

After nineteen years of experience, yes I believe that this job wears your mind and body down after years of doing it. I worked 10 years in detectives including Internal Affairs and sex crimes and eventually was subjected to harassment in the agency to which nothing was done. It altered me and my relationship with my husband who is also a police officer. In fact it is why I'm not working a desk job. I also needed medical services and other services as a result and now, take medications for problems. I don't even drink.

Less trusting of anyone not an officer.

Become very insistent on people taking responsibility for themselves. People cause a huge number of their own problems & then want others to take care of their mess. Also realize that people use the police department to try to get things done that they are unwilling or too lazy to do themselves.

Cynical

It has made me very cynical. Also, I have difficulty trusting people and I'm bossy.

It has actually helped me cope as I have built up a shield which allows me not to become emotionally attached, in many situations.

- 1.) Significant effect (both positive & negative) with the way I address problems.
- 2.) Significant negative effect on personal and family relationships.

I am more on the 'offensive' side of my personality in my personal life.
Loss of family time and time in my personal relationships.

My job has little to no effect as I learned long ago to leave the job at the job.

A big effect on all aspects. The biggest problem is to remain the solution and not let your life become part of the problem.

To be fair in this survey, I left sexual child abuse to go to warrant task force. My stress level has gone significantly down.

I had run out of emotion and didn't realize it until my husband asked me to leave the unit.

Law enforcement has caused me to be a bitter individual. It has caused numerous problems in my personal life, including divorce. Due to working various hours I am

unable to plan anything and have no regular friends due to these schedules. I am currently heading for my second divorce!

Don't trust people because the department is always out to get you. Don't have patience with people.

I'm more attentive.

Less sensitive towards people and their problems when the problem seems ever so small.

We cope everyday!

I've become insensitive to the what some would consider destitute individuals (i.e. homeless, poor, people living off the current welfare system). Luckily I've been able to distance my personal and professional life and my decisions and handling of personal relationships is different for each circumstances. Shift work and sudden expectation of overtime, sometimes strain relationship of family for a brief period.

I'm cynical. Overly careful about becoming a victim and very observant of suspicious activity when off duty. Definitely interpret activities of others differently than civilian parties.

It has helped me become more aware of my surroundings. It has also helped me to read people. I have also learned how to communicate with people more.

You have to come out here and deal with other people's problems on a daily basis. Then go home and deal with your own problems. The department itself adds to the level of stress.

You deal with the worst people and no one is ever happy with us. This makes you very jaded against dealing with other people for any reason.

I rearrange my whole schedule so I shop at off times, I rent movies instead of going out to see them. Loathing and distrust of anyone I don't know.

No problems -- just tell yourself it's a job.

It takes many years to learn to place more emphasis on personal and family relationships. Law enforcement over years will have a roller coaster effect on your personality. This is caused by changes in the upper ranks. Changes are made as political figures change.

I find I appreciate things more – example, family (due to seeing people in turmoil).

Become very jaded, tired of hearing same complaints about you and coworkers. People either love you or hate you. No in between. Less patience.

Current supervisor has increased the level of emotional stress.

Police officers cope with things objectively and try not to let emotions persuade them.

Initially changed my actions in personal relationships. I later adjusted and matured in the job which gave me a better understanding of my reactions.

More cynical

Less interested in personal relationships with others not in law enforcement.
Less tolerant of helpless, non-motivated persons.

Police work draws your world very close. Your circle of friends and associates diminishes. You're exposed to the darkest side of humanity and by the time you reach eligibility for retirement-nothing in the world is a surprise. There's no freshness-no luster, only what you have in you (that you've buried) and what you surround yourself with.

Very cynical, suspicious, untrusting.

I am very protective and skeptical about others very suspicious when it comes to everyday events that occur. You tend to build a protective wall around your loved ones.

Police tend to be more negative-we don't trust people. On call/working conditions are hard on relationships. It is hard to have friends that are not police.

Keep me uptight

Work more on solving the problem than getting emotional about the problem.

No effect, other than lack of sleep.

I feel that my job has caused numerous problems in my life including one divorce. It has caused my temper to become much shorter. The insecurity of assignments and job duties also causes stress and problems within my home life. I have become much more suspicious of people over the years, even away from the job. I have much more distrust for people now than I ever have had in the past.

I'm probably less patient with people.

Somewhat creates cynicism. Trust issues.

I think more before I react.

Minimal effect.

It has made me a strong person. The job is high stress so my personality when not working is caged back. I value my personal relationships with family and friends because I see everyday how messed up many other peoples relationships are.

Negative

Have become more cynical with the world

Don't like being around other people unless it is family, friends or coworkers

Most people don't understand the complexity, situations, or stresses that go with the job. Even when off-duty and not in uniform, those who know you're an officer still come to you with their problems and complaints.

More confident

It has made me more aggressive and more take charge at work and home.

It has been hard at times not to take things home with me. A lot of my work has been to help people, but there have been times and situations that I will replay in my mind and try and play out ways the situation could have went. I don't like to do that.

Suspicious of others. Cynical. Want to always be in control. Frustrated. The public/media distrusts police, which in turn causes me to limit friendships to other police only most of the time. I cope with stress by exercising as much as possible.

Positive and negative influences. Mainly positive.

I feel you become more guarded in everyday life.

It has made me appreciate what I have and realize how quick it can be, through an accident or some other event.

Everything.

I would say that decision making, reasoning, etc. are influenced greatly by known fact and/or common sense and that emotion is not a factor. Personal discussions are conducted and influenced by my perception of what is right and wrong, based on common sense, experience, etc. I have also become more conservative in my opinions, particularly with regard to crime/punishment, domestic issues (i.e. immigration, illegal aliens). I believe that having worked in law enforcement for 18 years, I have become more cynical with regard to the plight of the lower class and believe that without a 110% effort to help yourself, why should I or my tax dollars go to helping you. I also don't understand how as a society, we are comfortable playing a baseball player millions of dollars to play a sport, but we don't pay policeman/firefighters/teachers millions of dollars to protect and teach our children. What or where did we get moved off course? Oh well, here's a little more apathy.

Need to be right all the time. Emotional detachment from life outside of law enforcement. Suspicious of everybody and everything. Need for secondary employment.

Strong sense of mortality. Sleeplessness.

I am no longer naïve.

As an individual it has allowed me to grow personally and professionally. Increased confidence. Afforded opportunity for advancement.

Relationships-about the same. Only change would be improved interpersonal skills.

As for your demographics I spent 12 years in Patrol and Detectives. My last 4 years in Administration.

I see things differently than other people. More alert to things going on, more observant.

At work, I distance myself from situations and people. I do this to remain objective and to try not to take negative situations personally. I find myself doing this in personal relationships also, which sometimes leads to communication issues, and the perception that I'm numb or withdrawn.

Same sex relationship for 7 years/talk about stress! Should do a survey on same sex relationships that are not provided with health insurance and would be fired if employer found out. Add 2 kids to that.

As an individual, probably more distant at times. Personality wise, more open. I take a more laid back approach to things, gather all information before making a final decision, take the time to think things through.

Become more cynical, less trusting.

Less sensitive to many things in life.

Sought medical attention for chest pains-diagnosis Anxiety (unsure if work related)

Untrusting of strangers

Presume guilty instead of innocent

I am more suspicious of everything around me.

I am more cynical of life.

I tend to see all issues as black or white, with few gray areas.

I am more demanding of people close to me.

I am more concerned and protective of people close to me.

Don't trust anyone.

Overprotective of family

Always looking for criminals on/off duty

The glass is half-empty and broken...

My career in law enforcement has had a profound effect on my life. Unfortunately most of it is not good. This job tends to make you very suspicious of everyone, which in and of itself is not a bad thing in this day and age. You have a tough time trusting in people you've known your whole life. You see things and have to deal with things that no one should ever have to over and over again. I've become very protective of my family always thinking something bad is going to happen to one of them. You want to help police officers, educate the public on what it is really like to do this thankless job. The hours, working weekends/holidays, never being able to even eat a real meal while working. And if that's not bad enough, work for a country who chooses to cut our health benefits and not give us a pay raise. Yet the same people who make these decisions call 911 at the drop of a hat and expect one of us to put our lives on the line for them! How dare they! There are aspects of the job that are satisfying: like taking a bad guy off the street. Yeah, that sounds like pie in the sky, but its true. For some of us this job is a calling, not just a job. There are many aspects of this job you have to be a police officer to understand.

Cynical

- 1.) Disillusioned with the court process
- 2.) I feel like we are fighting a losing battle (crime).

Makes you jaded towards others.

In every way possible. You become so "jaded" you mistrust everyone, you're lied to about everything from everybody including most of all department leadership. Putting up with this for an extended period of time can't help but spill over into your personal life. In a nutshell, this job sucks! And no amount of stress management will fix it. If we stuck to locking up bad guys and not playing politics we'd all be much better off. It's not the stress of the job that's bad. Hell, I signed up to lock up bad people. I know, as most of us do, that your going to get into sticky situations. Hell, that's the fun part of it, it's exciting, it's neat to put a true asshole behind bars. (e.g. a wife beater, murderer, burglar, etc.) That's what I, and most of us signed up for. That's not the stressful part! The stressful part happens when your Monday morning quarterbacked by a pack of idiots who wear gold above the rank of Lt. and have lost touch with officers in the field and forgot where they came from. Their decisions are so ridiculous that if they defy logic and realm of common sense. If they would start being supportive of officers and supervisors in the field and not so critical a lot more stress would be relieved. But then again over the years the upper management has become so out of touch that they've become the laughing stock of the agency. And the best part is they don't realize it. They think they're great, just ask them! If half of those morons wanted to commit suicide all they would have to do is jump off their own ego! That's the stress of this job, not the criminals, they're easy to deal with. The stressful part of this job is wondering which idiot with gold from Captain on up is going to make a politically correct decision that has far ranging effects on the officer, his/her family, career, finances, etc. and not car what happens. Because

they truly don't care. They all think that they are a bunch of CEO's for a major corporation, but they're not. We're not in the money-making business, we're civil servants, that's it! I'm sure that after reading this, the handwriting experts and ninhydrant exam will be conducted to discover my true identity. Cause one of them will really want to stick up my ass because they're "offended". Just keep in mind, you people asked me what I felt. I didn't ask you! It goes back to the old adage if you don't want to know the answer to the question, don't ask the question. I don't mean to lump all commanders into this category because there are a few decent ones left. Unfortunately, they've melted into the crowd. Thank you.

I believe you form a barrier around yourself because of all the negative things you deal with. I keep myself active with extra curricular activities to reduce stress.

I see the negativity in everyone and become suspicious of everyone and everything. Very non-trusting.

It's made me a more angry person. I have little to no patience for trivial matters. The one thing I look forward to is going home to my family. When I am home, I don't think about work and I do not discuss it AT ALL!!

I feel it has made me more of a controlling person than I used to be. My dedication to the job assisted in the break up of a marriage. I have become extremely defensive in relationships. There is no loyalty from the department as a supervisor there is a tendency to second-guess your decisions, as you do not get the support needed as a supervisor from the higher ranks. The department has a way to make self-motivated employees marginal employees. The only reason I remain self-motivated is because of my own expectations of myself.

It has made my sense of humor more macabre. Situations that should evoke emotions of sadness or sorrow usually cause me to think of it in a humorous way. I sometimes get upset at home when family members seem to "panic" over certain situations. I seem to no longer have the luxury of emotions. I have to confront situations from car crashes to armed robberies. People are naturally upset and panicked and I have to be the calming force to show stability and help people return to normalcy and closure. This carries over to home when my wife gets upset because my daughter scrapes her knee and is bleeding, I get more upset with my wife's reaction to the event and calmly handle my daughter's wound.

I've become more conservative, quick to jump to anger.

Less emotional

Being a police officer has made me more critical of people. I care less about others feelings.

Takes its toll.

If you haven't done it, you'll never get it.

Less emotional and sensitive

I tend to be reserved, distrustful of strangers. I keep my distance in close adult relationships, but am very affectionate & protective of my children. Probably drink a little more than I should.

More assertive

I believe it has helped cope with personal dilemmas and being a better mediator.

It makes a person more cynical.

It has caused two divorces but it has helped me keep a level head in. I can think on my feet when in danger due to my training as a law enforcement officer. Also if I see someone who needs help I usually assist them off duty, where if I was not an officer, I probably would not get involved.

Learned not to trust people. Has made me abrasive. My emotions about death have changed, on this job you see a lot of death and you can't show emotion in front of family members of the deceased, you have to be strong for them. This "not showing emotion" has trickled into my personal life". Has made me quiet around people, I learn to take everything in that's going on around me.

Learn not to trust everyone.

It has caused difficulty in personal relationships by not allowing me to separate my professional skills from my home life.

You become very cold in certain types of tragedy.

It has made me more focused as an individual.

Become hardened, less caring, less trusting in others.

Made me cynical, negative at times. Untrusting of people in general. Use exercise to cope with stress.

Dealing with people has shown me how people really are. I have learned how to tell what kind of person someone is by his or her actions.

I have become cynical of all strangers and fellow employees. You build walls so that no one can peer inside you, to see your real feelings. They have become marked to illustrate someone who is untouched by emotion, when inside you're overwhelmed with hurt. You become anti-social and isolate yourself from others, so as not to have the opportunity to see their pain, and in doing so cannot share their joy.

I am much stronger mentally. I carry less fear day-to-day.
Personality-I'm easier to be around, more outgoing and all-around friendlier. This comes from my appreciation of life after dealing with the harsh existence I witness of the citizens of (location deleted).
Way I cope-- much easier through my experience in law enforcement.
Relationships-- I'm much closer to my family and friends.

I have become very cynical of just about everything. It has been a strain on relationships with family and friends.

Made me rather callous in my everyday dealings.

It has enhanced my leadership and awareness in everyday situations. It does put stress on personal relationships.

I only see the negative side of things. Rarely do I have a positive outlook on life.

I am more aware of my surroundings and strangers whom I have contact with. I do not trust anyone (repairmen, waiters, etc.) unless I know them on a personal basis or have had enough time to evaluate them. I am constantly worried about someone injuring or raping my wife and children. I feel that I cope with problems better now. I will confront anyone if I believe they are lying to me or trying to "beat around the bush". This applies to if I'm arguing with my wife or making a purchase from a salesman.

Law enforcement work has changed my personality and the way I cope with things. For example, when meeting new people outside of the work environment people pre-judge me as a police officer which depends on their experience with police. I cope with daily personal problems better than the average Joe do to the fact I've dealt with other peoples' problems and get them advice.

Changed how I look at people at times. Instead of seeing or looking for the good at first, I find myself looking for the negative then the good.
I find it very frustrating when you try and help someone and for whatever reason this will not or cannot do what it takes to make their situation better.

I tend to keep my feelings to myself and only feel comfortable with others in law enforcement.

I've become very skeptical of people and less trusting of nearly all people. I am also less tolerant with certain situations.

Too many people have supervisory duties and know nothing about supervision. You have individuals promoted to ranks with NO experience. This affects everyone in the workplace. When you bring this to management's attention, you become a target for unnecessary harassment.

It caused my divorce and strained relations with my children. The (department name deleted) continue to add additional stresses, i.e. unwanted transfers, mandatory physical fitness without providing physical education or work time to attend physical fitness training. Rule through intimidation tactics. Make you feel guilty for taking a day off.

It has made me less tolerant of mistakes, things outside the norm and persons that ride the fringe of rules, regulations and laws. It has, at times, made me more cynical and moody. The discrimination practices followed by the agency against white males has had an overall adverse affect on my view of the department, respect for rank and the promotional systems used throughout the years. The transfer practices at times have assisted in relieving stress and at times been harmful. One transfer eventually caused the dissolving of a 20-year marriage. The current administration has caused even more stress by continuously threatening transfer, demotion and other punishment style actions while committing actions much worse than those of their subordinates.

Relationships suck. Health downhill.

It has made me more critical of the public as well as less tolerant with civilians.

Significant effect on my personal perspective; manner in which I communicate, relate and manage my personal relationships and affairs. I tend to respond to life issue with a higher level of rigidity and lower level of tolerance. Job stress tends to impact me personally which in turn is transferred to family, friend, neighbors, associates, etc.

When I first became a police officer my family noticed an immediate personality change. Primarily in the way I interacted with others. The change was not noticeable to me. Later, I was able to observe a difference. I attributed it being on the road and having to constantly be in control of every situation. As I have progressed in my career the stress I feel is mostly from supervision.

Unwilling to become emotionally involved.

My work in law enforcement has made me appreciate my life more, especially when compared to a lot of the individuals that I encounter. However, due to the fact that I encounter mostly negative situations/individuals, my patience levels have definitely diminished. I've definitely become more short tempered and can't tolerate as much as before. This has effected me overall and therefore, affects my relationships and the way I

cope with things. I find myself having to concentrate on maintaining my cool and being patient. I'm more closed in as well, not really expressing myself as much.

Has hardened me and suppressed emotions.

I believe it has made me very distrustful of people in general. I don't even trust most of the people I work with. I feel that it has caused me to be depressed and generally unhappy at home. I know that I am much less tolerant of my children and wife than I should be. I find myself complaining constantly at home to "get things off my chest". The only thing I look forward to is retirement! I feel like I want to be more involved with my children but when I try it seems as though I'm rushing around and creating more stress! I entered the job being lead to believe I was entering a "brotherhood". What I found was, with a few exceptions, a group of "power hungry" back stabbers who treat their gun carrying subordinates like babies or worse than criminals. The law enforcement community needs to revisit its psychological screening procedures and refocus their recruitment efforts to find more "fair minded" people. I am highly discouraging my children to get involved.

Become distant from certain situations. Major problems to others do not seem as important.

Due to lack of support from the leadership, I suffer from anxiety disorder, sleep difficulty and eating disorder. I have lost some interest in doing family events, have had suicidal thoughts over the disappointment in the department, i.e.: my vest is only good for 5 years. The MSN stated that due to budget constraints, it is now good for 7 years, yet (department name deleted) spent thousands of dollars for a "civilian" agency to decide what we need to do for a physical training test, then thousands more to give all members a "Body for Life" book, then threaten to fire us in 2005 if we do not pass this test. The Department makes these things up without the input of road troopers. These policies are made up by my people who have not worked as a Police Officer for years, but went to (name deleted), made rank, and forgot about us, the road officer. Why does this department look for more reasons to fire me than to help me? I am one of the top producers at my barracks. These feelings stem from the (name deleted), not my barracks.

I believe police work has made me able to deal with stress related problems at home; however year after year the job has been more stressful. I believe this stress takes years off your life.

It has made me, at times, very cynical and pessimistic about people and human nature. It has caused me to keep many things to myself in my relationships with my family members.

I am not as trusting as I once was. I am always trying to read people to determine their level of sincerity.

In a nutshell...

The law enforcement career has been partially responsible for the way I conduct my relationship with my (ex) wife and children. It may have had a major effect on the factors leading to my divorce.

I've got to go-I've got a call for service _____

I'm not able to trust anyone, not as open as I used to be, not as naïve as I used to be.

I feel that I deal with stress much better than most of my civilian friends. The job has enabled me to put my personal life into perspective, things I deal with at home aren't half as bad as what I see other people dealing with in society.

I learned to separate my work life from my home life in that I leave work at work rather than creating homework. Any effect that my work in law enforcement has had on my personality or my relationships have been nil or minor in nature. I still enjoy coming to work knowing that any situation can have a successful conclusion.

Control emotions and handle situations in a calm, professional manner.

Isolation from society, isolation from my agency

Administration-extreme self reliance

Constantly changing work shifts causes sleep disorders-my agency refuses to address changing work shifts.

Police work has taught me to quickly assess/evaluate events and react to them in a positive way

Major effect on personality, see things in more negative aspect than positive, seems no end to problems, no support from upper management, tend to keep thoughts to myself, rather than express relationships definitely suffer.

It's "hardened" me to my surroundings.

I feel that my emotions sometimes are turned off by the job experiences. I tend to be able to move on to another task easily after setbacks or losses.

I try to separate myself physically and emotionally from confrontations, to think logically. This helps me to think ahead. Think before I act or speak.

Increased confidence and maturity in everyday situations. Heightened skepticism of human motivations. Higher expectations of personal morals/ethics.

I believe the shift work involved with (department name deleted) policy has had a detrimental effect on my marriage.

I tend to see events as “black” or “white”. There is no gray area. Due to my changing work schedule, working days, nights, weekends, holidays, etc. I find that I have few close friends. The friends I do have I am not able to keep in regular touch with due to my schedule and their schedule conflicting.

I have noticed that I have a bit of a wall up and that I’m very reluctant to get to meet and know new people. The people I used to trust prior to law enforcement I don’t trust the same. I question their honesty. I’m always looking over my shoulder for trouble or danger. I’ve definitely become more aware of my surroundings and more proactive towards protecting myself and my family.

If you are doing research on law enforcement, you already know. This job is or will kill me.

Shift work, all three shifts never longer than a week, often changed.

Stress, this job ranks at the top.

Would you like an application?

Makes me feel indifferent to others.

Do not trust anybody.

I feel that I have become more “hard headed” when dealing with situations and my actions as a Police Officer tend to follow me home at times. This causes some heated arguments in my personal life with family members.

Shift work does have stresses (midnights) on family, sleeping habits.

Changed dramatically. Have become cold, calm, and unfeeling.

Communication more limited.

Not as sociable as once was.

It has made me see things for what they really are. Makes me appreciate things, family, wife more so now because you see how bad some people really have it in the real world.

The effect on personal and professional life is the 24-hour of always being an officer. Shift work big influence on biological effect. Heightened adrenaline produces highs and lows. Read Bio-Chemistry of Police. Administration that has been appointed has increased stress in this department. I was given two days notice to transfer back into uniform. No reason was given to me on why the transfer took place. People who in their personal lives were just having babies and dying parents were also transferred for no

reason. CIST, Critical Incident Stress Team, are not being called out as they once were. People are being called at home and asked why they didn't write more tickets. Very stressful.

I don't think it has changed me but when I asked my wife she felt that it has in all ways.

Everybody is a suspect. Even your wife and kids -- everybody lies to you and you can't trust anyone.

Negative impact. You build walls around yourself and isolate yourself from anyone that is not a cop. Extremely hard to maintain relationships because of being so cynical.

I don't think you can measure the effect.

Negative

Working as a law enforcement officer has been very rewarding. Along with the rewards of a fulfilling career comes stress. From the time I entered the Police Academy, my instructors advised me that stress would play an important role in my career. Stress from shift work, family, serious call for service, administrative matters, etc. We were told how to cope with stress through physical fitness (exercise), relaxation techniques, and additional stress management courses.

My current assignment has a lot of stress. I am married with two small children which compounds the stress. Time is probably the biggest stressor, deadlines, appointments, etc.

My department does nothing to monitor stress. As with all law enforcement we are reactive, not proactive. I believe that stress is not dealt with until it manifests itself in the form of hypertension, heart attack, or worse, death.

I've become very cynical. People are liars, thieves, etc. I have very little, to no, respect for this agency. You can't trust anyone.

I vent my stress and frustrations, caused and created by work and the agency, in various ways. Some ways don't effect anyone and some ways it effects everyone. Added to this stress is the shift work and constant changing of the work schedule. It has been proven that the (department name deleted) work schedule inflicts harm on the human body and various alternatives have been suggested and developed only to be shot down for one reason or another. The higher ranks don't remember what its like to be a real police officer and do real work and work shift work and they just don't care about employee's physical well being. They are only concerned with tickets, tickets, tickets!!!

It has given me an overview of society and has instilled in me higher morals and standards, and a deeper appreciation for human life and dignity. My law enforcement career has allowed me the opportunity to deal with adversity and stress and molded my personality into one of tolerance and compassion for social injustices. My occupation has afforded a deeper appreciation of family values and the importance of a relationship.

I am able to cope with problems and do not let the job stress me out.

Slightly less tolerant of insignificant things.

Not as sensitive, have had to establish a "tough shell". In a relationship, you've got to have an understanding partner otherwise, forget it!
Beginning to fall into the health issues-no time to work out, not as physically fit as I want to be! (overweight) High blood pressure, chest pains.

You become hardened to the bad things that you see.

Law enforcement has made me cold-hearted. I have less sympathy for people.

It has changed the way I feel about the majority of the civilian population. I guess the term "tough skinned" would be appropriate.

It has decreased my sensitivity and emotions.

Major part

Experiences have caused me to become more protective of my family and friends. I have become more aware of the possibility that you may be here today, however, the possibility remains you may be gone tomorrow!

I have become confident, proud and sure of my abilities as a result of my work in this field.

I am more tolerant of the feelings of others as well as understanding others.

Has made me hard on the outside, not trusting. However, being away from the everyday patrolling since I no longer work the road, I feel I have become less of those things. But people who know you as a police officer still look at you differently. Which is why when I first meet someone, I prefer that they get to know me before I tell them what I do for a living. I don't know if its because they are being judgmental or they feel we are towards them. I would like to think that my personality has not been influenced by my line of work. But I guess my family and friends would know best.

As a newer officer I believe the job and its stresses had a big role when coping with issues and or relationships. When on the road, patrol function you're operating at. 100% mentally all the time trying to prove yourself to the agency and your coworkers. As you move on in your career and you have proven yourself you can look at the larger picture and figure out you need to do some things for yourself and family. The agency is no longer the most important thing in your life.

I have a lower tolerance threshold. I care less about people outside my family and law enforcement community. I'm often tired from constant changes in shifts and court related duties when scheduled to be off.

I believe I cope well with the day to day calls for service. I still treat the public respectfully, but when I'm assaulted or verbally abused by someone in the public, I have "zero" hesitation in taking command of the situation, be it physically or by demonstrating my authority through verbal commands. My objective each day is to go home without having been harmed during my tour of duty. I always plan to achieve this objective, even at the cost of taking another one's life.

Very removed from dealing with people and the general public.

Has affected everything, values, social values, relationship and entire life.

It has taken a negative effect when concerning time with family. The constant shift change, missing many important events with the family. You only live once and we let a job dictate the time we have with our family. There is no consistency. I do believe being a cop has made me stronger at dealing with issues.

I basically hate dealing with the general public. I only socialize with other law enforcement personnel because the citizens can't be trusted-but then again, neither can most of the people I work for be trusted. The public is always out to try to "sue" the police for trying to fairly do their job, at least the minorities are anyway! I hate my job, but with 8 years on I can't afford to leave. Not many jobs in my area would allow me to make \$90,000 a year (with overtime of course).

*Also, shift work has absolutely got to be one of the worst parts of the job -- especially working for the (department name deleted)!!

After seeing so much you develop a warped sense of humor. You become cold to things and rarely show emotions. It makes me a cold distant person. People have to pry things out of me. The only person who seems to get through to me is my daughter. She seems to bring out my happier side.

More rigid, less flexible and more serious because I've seen where situations can go wrong.

Extremely negative in all areas of your life.

Less tolerable in some situations-hardened.

Strain.

The level of stress associated with police is tremendous. I have become a different person over the last couple of years. Probably the most thought about concern is having something go wrong on my watch. I have learned to leave work at work once I'm off. Luckily my job is not one of the ones that have on call status. I think if I had to sit around waiting to receive a call during my on call status I would be even more stressed. The pressure and stress have affected my relationships greatly.

Have become more aggressive, mistrusting of others, has not affected marital relationship, sometimes become impatient, don't want to talk.

You stay very closed. Don't let people in other than those who can relate.

Terrible for marriage and kids. Not enough time at home. No close personal friends.

Sometimes you think everyone is bad. You just need to leave work at work and relax on your days off.

I've become very suspicious of everyone, more tolerant of mistakes, cynical about death, emotionally hyper and stressed out most of the time. Short tempered with those close to me, commanding. I'm always exhausted and very impatient.

Law enforcement has caused much of my stress, divorce, loneliness.

I handle stress better than ever.

Has an effect on your personality because you always want some kind of control over a situation.

It has adversely affected me in several ways. Shift work, particularly night shift (11 p.m.-7 a.m.) leaves one physically and emotionally drained. I have also seen persons promoted whose moral character was that of an alley cat. This makes one question the values of an agency that likes to boast being (state deleted) finest. The newer breed of officers are resume builders not caring who they step on to get what they want. The public demands kindness and compassion while your superiors encourage you for toughness and statistics. It is very difficult and trying to please both sides. The constant scrutiny of all the ACLU and others has (an officer) reluctant to act when he should for fear of being unsupported. Since being a police officer I never sleep through the night. I can't wait for days off and I loathe the thought of going to work. I am irritable and suspect of every criminals and superiors.

I am extremely distrustful toward people I don't know. I am impatient with disobedience and deceit. I have developed a very aggressive personality.

Short temper!

- 1.) Makes you less trusting of people
- 2.) Makes your attitude toward public "cooler"
- 3.) More stress that you end up taking home to loved ones.

2 marriages, high blood pressure, suffered heart attack (mild one), can't relax, on medication.

Become less sympathetic/emotional to some things.

To my knowledge-no personality change.

Job hazard-the job makes you pay particular attention to the point of any given subject. I find myself dissecting what people say to get their exact meaning. This was hurtful in my marriage because it made my ex-wife feel like I was interrogating her (mostly in arguments). Her favorite line was "I'm not one of your criminals, don't do that to me".

Quick tempered, not wanting to deal with family problems/questions when I come home from work or during the week.

Scheduling and constant schedule changing on short notice creates a very stressful situation with your family.

Only made me a better person. This occupation gives you an ability to look at life as it really is. You see people and society at their best and worst.

Angry at home.

Generally I do not trust most people and don't really want to be bothered by them. I have a very close circle of friends and anyone outside that circle is just that, an outsider. I do not take work issues home unless it's really important. I am married to a police officer which makes thing easy to talk about when necessary. Our marriage is great and we have a strong faith in God!! I also refuse to wear a pager on my days off. Don't get me wrong I have allowed a few people in my circle and I am nice to people but I've found that many are just not trustworthy.

I sometimes feel I have chosen the wrong career. I have become more reflective, quiet. Most stress on the job comes from the internal workings of the dept.

Not as sensitive about things.

Law enforcement made me a strong independent person who has little to no social life.
Cope with things by the book

Been married 20 years -- very strong relationship, enjoy every minute with my family, (2) sons ages 15 & 12, (1) daughter age 7, because in law enforcement you never know if crisis will arise!!

The job makes you a person that does not want to deal with public situations since you have dealt with others problems during your tour of duty. The job makes you harder. The relationship with my family has not changed other than I am cautious with certain situations I put my wife and children in.
I tend not to discuss my job with my wife or children.

It has made me more cynical. I enjoy going out with my friends and my wife, but when I'm at work my mantra is "people are stupid!" It amazes me what normal people do on a daily basis and they think it's great. I truly hate drunks, probably because I used to do those same things before I was a cop. They fight, wreck their cars, etc. and I have no sympathy at all. I've definitely become more aggressive, a shorter fuse you might say. Although at 6'5" I rarely get into fights. I'm still a kid at heart off duty, but in this day and age I take my job very seriously.

I was a paramedic for 20+ years before becoming a cop so I've learned to cope with tragedy and other things that would normally bother people.

Makes you not trust anyone or very few
Makes you a "hard" person (lack of emotions)
Makes you a negative person

I can be very short with people (wife and kids). If people don't do what I want them to do on the road, I get hurt. First rule of police work is go home safe at the end of your shift.

This job has made it a struggle (at times impossible) to have a normal family life, because of the shift work and overtime, due to extension of daily shifts.

The shift work affects me to the point I am tired ALL the time. I can not get organized or a routine going. The shift work and red tape from Administration are what makes this job really bad.

This job has taught me to be a better judge of character, and how to handle people with tact. I do not take this job home with me. At home I am a mom and a friend.

Shift works plays a major role on home life. Having the administration treat us like children puts a lot of stress on you at work.

I have a closer relationship with Christ.

A lot

None. Work is work and home is home. I leave my job at work when I leave.

It has made me become more removed from emotional experiences that would affect most people. Mostly I see this in black or white-there are no gray areas.

Less tolerant, more critical, incensed.

Don't sweat the little things, lose sensitivity

I am more short-tempered.

Marital problems

I find myself to be more authoritative than I should be and having to control most situations before me

It is slowly destroying my marriage and my relationship with friends due to working weekends and working 6, 7, 8, 9, or even 10 days in a row. I am emotionally burning out!

Not having any degree of empathy or caring to the extent and degree of excluding any actions to aid others beyond scope of my employment. I do not care about anyone beyond friends or family.

"Police officers are psychologically prepared to deal with major stress issues, emergency calls, high-speed pursuits, people with guns and such. However, the day-to-day small stressors that occur tend to overload the officer. For example, the multitude of domestic disturbances and inter-department issues seem to be more stressful. Police officers relieve stress through their actions but the constant small stressors rarely call for action but happen more often than emergencies which allow officers to release stress. As a result, officers tend to allow the various stressors to add up, like a cup overflowing. They are not able to express their feelings to anyone, especially their peers.

It has changed my overall look at life. It has also had an effect on my parenting skills. I am a more cautious person due to what I see and know. Possibly I can cope with more things due to my experiences.

1. Lack of trust in others
Bitterness towards others
Lack of patience for others
Pessimistic towards others

It makes me more tolerant of people and situations that happen to me when I am off duty.

Have become more distrusting of people. More hardened towards my own children, for fear they may become like the juveniles I deal with. Work interferes with home life, harder on spouse.

I believe that over the years I have learned to deal with situations and people in a non-emotional way. In a way I believe I am hardened to people's feelings.

The poor way the agency treats its (officers) makes me rely heavily on family for support

I'm all bottled up. The only release I get is from working out. By seeing firsthand how so many people deal with their problems in the wrong way I tend to avoid stressful problems at home.

You become a skeptic. I became negative and expect the worst usually. I don't seek new relationships outside my job due to my family life. I try to use what I learn on the job to improve my family's lives. I feel I cope with things better because of my police training. I have a tendency to be more physical when it comes down to discipline with my children -- more so than my wife.

More suspicious of others

Shift work and stress have contributed to many health problems. Personality changes include an inherent distrust of many people. Police work has made me value my family even more because of what we see (and how quick things can happen). Also, most friends are police...rarely someone outside of police work, as other people often don't understand police and may even dislike police due to poor media practices.

Somewhat withdrawn, suspicious of everyone, not as outgoing as I used to be.

Whenever involved in a critical incident, it can take days or weeks to get it off your mind affecting every part of your life. Even the daily stress is always on your mind. Stress has become a daily part of my life just like eating and sleeping, so it is difficult to estimate the total effect. Overall I am a happy person.

More suspicious of people's motives, stronger family ties.

It has made me very distrustful of people.

Law enforcement affects ALL aspects of a police officer's life. That's why statistics are the way they are, divorce, suicide, alcohol. Police rank very high on all these. Police work is why I am single.

It has weakened my friendships as I do not work a “regular” schedule. I’m always working when friends or family are doing something.

I am much more sure of myself and take control of a situation quickly now that I am a police officer. I no longer allow anyone to take advantage of me and in most cases stand up for myself. I used to be, prior to my law enforcement career, very “sappy” and emotional. I still am to a degree but nothing like before. My personality hasn’t changed at all except to say that I have more confidence in myself.

- rotating shifts aided to bring on my divorce – not being at home during evenings, holidays, birthdays and special events.
- after a stressful shift, bringing home the stress from work, sometimes come home angry
- brought on physical illness. Intestinal disorders found to be very common with this department.

I have become short and impatient.

Higher tolerance for difficult people and situations.

Shift work wears on the body, continual changing shifts creates an exhausted condition. Currently I only work between day work and evening work – and only 5 days in a row. This has certainly allowed my body and mind to be more in line with “normal” work shifts. Law enforcement forces policemen to see the “other side” of life. Relationships with family are more precious having seen many other families.

I feel that my work in law enforcement has affected my personality in several ways. I am less apt to fall to peer pressure. I notice that it takes a while to build trust in someone I don’t know. I question things more when I’m not sure of where a situation or what the results of something might be. I see things in a different light than I used to. I think that it has made me more trustworthy and more dependable. I have grown in compassion for people, and became more open in talking to people.

It has desensitized me towards people. I am always judging people and trying to analyze what they are saying. It has put a strain on my marriage to include some of why I m separated. Shift work has strained my body and social life. The stress of the job has attributed to my health problems, IBS.

Made me more cynical of people and situations. Have trouble accepting anything “just because!” Must investigate why things occur and how people let things happen to them and how they react to them. Also will tend to block out anything that I don’t want to hear/believe. It’s really hard being nonjudgmental or taking a side on a particular issue, because someone else has already done it/tried it, and the “evidence” is pointing initially into the direction of “here we go again!” As a police officer, the job inherently gives you a “dark side” of an issue. In simple terms you don’t get invited to the party – you get “invited” to calm down the neighbor’s party! Then you’re the “bad guy”.

- not as happy-go-lucky
- short and stern
- distrustful
- constantly tired

Prior to law enforcement I had been a very patient person. Over the years I seem to have become very short with my family and friends.

I believe the job has made me tougher and less forgiving!

My wife said that I have become more intense in all that I do. I believe this to be true. I also value my personal life more now than ever. Most of the friends I had before I was a police officer I seldom see or speak with. I “value” my family more than ever.

A lot – I could write for hours. I will try to summarize. At the end of the day I am so exhausted from case overload (asked to continually do more work while they deplete our work force) that it takes away from the quality of time and energy devoted to my family. Sometimes when I’m really feeling extremely stress my chest gets tight and my breathing is a little restricted. I lose my temper (patience) with my life a lot (getting better). The volume of crime we deal with over-educates you on the way human beings hurt, scam, lie, deal with each other. This gives you a negative slant toward most people from the beginning. Overall I think I still have maintained what is good about me/my personality, but it is a daily uphill battle that is never met with viable solutions that could assist us. All we get is lip service that goes nowhere. I worry a lot about how the long-term stress of the job will affect my life expectancy with my family. I just had my first child 9 months ago and hope I will be alive to see my children grow old and have kids.

“ I believe it has had a significant impact on my outlook on life and how I deal in personal relationships.

I have become much more sarcastic and my initial perception of people is that of suspicion and hesitation. I can tell that I have become much more paranoid when it comes to situations I am not familiar or comfortable with. My relationships are a mess for the most part, I am too inquisitive of my significant other, judgmental and impatient. Everything is an investigation or better yet, an interrogation. I have lost a great deal of sensitivity towards certain situations that in the past I would have maybe cried, laughed or other...

Working in the law enforcement field definitely has had an impact on all aspects of my life. I feel everyone starts this profession thinking you can “save the world”, but over time this changes to feelings of “hopelessness” to some degree because you see how people really treat each other and truly see the “evil” of society. As an officer, you see things that no one should have to see. This impacts your personal life because it is hard to explain to others what you experience. “If you are emotional...you are weak – if you

are stoic...you are uncaring". Very hard to answer the question, "How was your day?" Over time I have tried to remain positive and have learned to appreciate the time I can spend with loved ones...due to shift work, missed family events and working holidays. I have learned to cope with things mainly by spending time with family, other officers, or by myself "in the mountains" at my cabin. It's hard to accept that although a police officer gives unselfishly of his/her time and body (risking injury/death) every day (on duty and off), people do not appreciate the work done. "Everyone knows how to do our job better and know more than us"...but they don't dare tell a dentist how to extract a tooth. No one will admit "We fight what they fear!"

I have become more cold toward people and situations – more withdrawn from family. "I am always right" attitude.

I'm a completely different person than I used to be. I view things and see things much differently. Being honest about it, I can't wait to retire, period!

I feel that I handle things in a coarse and non-emotional manner – much more than I did prior to my law enforcement career.

I am able to speak of events freely with associates. However, I am not always able to speak of these with friends and family. I am often short-tempered with family members. It has also taught me to use my family for support.

It's extremely hard to separate your career as a law enforcement officer to your personal life. I realize that if I would resort to alcohol or any addiction that would affect me greatly, and I stay away from anything that may affect me mentally. I deal with stress by going to church as it gives me a positive outlook on life outside of work.

Thicker skin, less tolerant, less patience.

The work nearly broke me as a person, an officer, et cetera. I started attending church and was saved. If I was not saved, I would be lost now.

- don't take people on face value, skeptical of everyone until they prove they can be trusted
- not too outgoing, don't show a lot of emotion
- when you work for a police department like (name deleted) every day is stressful as soon as one walks through the door – severe manpower and staffing problems leads to extreme stress.
- personal egos before professionalism, i.e., mayor

Stresses out your relationship with your family

- you become a "professional hater"
- you come to distrust people – you take work stress home and put it onto your family

- The police mortality rate shows what the job does to you – cops die much younger than the general population. More cops die from suicide than being killed by criminals
- have become much more cynical
- appreciate my relationship with my spouse more now

Police work has made me cynical and mean

To be more patient, respectful, communicate more effectively, better listening skills

Able to cope better because of more patience

Minor sleeping problems when work is busy or cases are open

I believe stress is very much a way of life for a police officer. For me personally I had back problems, lost my hair, grinded my teeth, and had insomnia due to work related stress. Once I learned how to deal with stress the proper way and not to internalize it, my life is now worry free. Some people think that the stress of being a police officer comes from dealing with criminals, but in my experience most of the stress comes from the internal politics of a police department.

Has made me a stronger person

I think this job has given me a more calm approach to life. Everyday things don't seem as "major" to me as they do to others.

I have been greatly affected by my job, the department and its lack of support for the people it employs. The training is minimal in most areas, the department is understaffed and overworked. We are constantly asked to do more with less. The stress level around there has increased every year due to the complete lack of initiative and dedication by the senior officers and management of the department. The breakdown in discipline and decline in motivation due to the improbability of promotion or recognition by the department has worn down the core of the department and brought morale to an all-time low. I am not the only officer to feel this way. It would be easier to say who is happy with the department than to list the unhappy people. I think it speaks volumes when a disproportionate number of younger police officers who shouldn't be jaded and disgruntled are also frustrated with the void in leadership exhibited by the command structure.

I believe it is the cause of my early age hypertension.

It's made me more suspicious of people's motives. It definitely changes relationships...shift work is mostly to blame for this (in my mind anyway).

Law enforcement changes your personality over the long term. The job generally makes you less trusting of people and situations. You become more self-reliant. The job brings about both positive and negative changes. It can help you to think outside the box to cope with problems. Scheduling and work hours are a constant strain on relationships. In addition you tend to see people at their worst. Even otherwise good people are usually angry, in pain, or victims, therefore we must deal with and sometimes defuse many strong emotions. It is impossible to totally walk away from that at the end of a shift. There are positive ways to cope; however it is a constant process. Our families do suffer right along with us and are just as much a part of our work as we are. I believe we are just scratching the surface of understanding the physical and emotional toll law enforcement exacts on both officer and family. On the bright side, law enforcement does allow us to have and make positive influence and change. We are out on the front lines fighting the battle, not just sitting on the sidelines complaining about society's problems.

At times I find myself evaluating people as I would evaluate a subject in an investigation.

I am not as shy as I used to be growing up. This job puts you in a position where you must interact with individuals and groups of people almost on a daily basis. I believe it has put a certain amount of strain on our family relationships because I tend to expect more at home from family members to fulfill that "perfect" family role model in public. It has certainly made the way I cope with things easier because we in law enforcement are "problem solvers" and are aware of all of our resources, which number many.

Compassion to certain victims, very apathetic towards others.

Since becoming an officer, I'm very cynical and pessimistic

My ex-wife stated in our divorce proceedings that I became cynical, did not fight fair and that I would interrogate her.

Have become cynical of everyone and everything. Do not trust anyone very much. Have become more distant in personal relationships.

High blood pressure

Suspicious of everyone and their motives

Tend to "snap" at wife/kids quicker than should sometimes

Irritability at times

Positive effect.

Stress misunderstood by others. Makes me very moody/grumpy

I believe it's hard on spouse and family! Mainly the hours worked.

More decisive, objective and higher ability to handle problems.

I'm sure it has created change, just not sure as to what changes. I do know that it has caused a negative in my ability to show emotion (caring/loving). You learn to shut off your emotions while working stressful scenes. You then find yourself shutting off your emotions during stressful times during your relationships. This causes the appearance of not caring for or loving someone.

Extra precautions

Increased skepticism

Makes any type of relationships difficult

Short temper

Stress

Tense

Aged (physically, premature)

Time schedules, shift work

This job has made me lose faith in others. Too many people lie and deceive us and others. Defense attorneys are ruthless and mistrustful. The executive core of the department does more to hurt patrol than in building patrol. Patrol itself hurts itself by each individual not pulling his own weight in day to day activities. There are too many in patrol that abuse the system instead of working together to make it better for all.

Not trusting with people I don't know. More strict as a parent with my kids. More demanding for others to follow rules, especially my family. Unknowingly tend to be authoritative with coaching, political views, personal opinions. No tolerance for people who have drug problems, self imposed. Always want to help people in all situations. Can talk to anyone, very openly friendly. Do not feel comfortable sitting with my back to doors, people walking behind me I do not know, especially in uniform. Very protective of family and friends. Take pride in my job, and trying to be a good citizen. Tend to be very calm and take control in stressful situations.

It has prepared me to deal with difficult situations without getting emotional or upset. It has helped me to focus on the task at hand and it has also showed me that things can always be worse.

My work in law enforcement has made me cynical and distrustful.

I tend to deal with stress by working harder. This has led to marital problems at times, but has been the best solution for me over the long run.

Law enforcement was an exciting career choice for me but after several years on the job, it is not as exciting. To me, there is more stress dealing with people in the department and the courts than people on the street. The court system is broken and inefficient. The department continues to promote people to positions who are not qualified because they can't promote people based on work performance. This causes the most stress because a lazy officer can read a book, score well on the test, and be promoted. While a supervisor is supposed to evaluate the candidate for promotion, hardly any will be denied. With this stress in mind, it usually takes me an hour to unwind when I get home and I can be short with my wife. I definitely keep to myself more about how I feel.

Debilitating effect on the body. Unreasonable hours put tremendous physical stress on the body, draining the life away. The job makes you old before your time. Emotionally destructive. The public is anti-police. Obviously, the criminals have no love for us. Extremely disappointing is the administrative lack of concern and pressure. Officers are only numbers to them. Political pressures and media influence job assignments and emphasis is on getting numbers for statistics. Real police work has been relegated to a second afterthought. Numbers, numbers, numbers. This takes away discretion, officer's decisions to overlook community interaction, officer friendly presence is now compromised to getting a traffic stop, even a trivial violation just to get a number. Poor police work to get the numbers to make the supervisors/administration look good.

I was much more laid back before the job. I tend to be more easily irritated.

Positive

My ability to handle situations has improved, more confidence.

“ It makes you “cold” sarcastic, distrustful, and angry.

Not very good effects.

Police work and being subjected to negative people, definitely has a bearing on changing your perception of people. Negative effects on my personality. Has caused me to become more suspicious of people. Cold hearted in some ways, more aggressive when coping with problems and emotions.

I am very suspicious of people in general.

It has changed me as a person; it has made me colder to things, people and situations. It has changed my personality, noticed by my family over the years. The easygoing person that I was has changed. Because I have been so active, very aggressive, and dedicated to my profession it has allowed me to see more than most officers. I get involved in more, and has put me in numerous life or death situations. Working undercover, going into the unknown, has always put me on edge. You need to be mentally prepared for the

unknown, the unexpected, physically fit and prepared to combat any problem as you are faced with.

It's turned me into an anti-social person that's suspicious of everyone and their motives.

Narcotics work frequently involves substantial amounts of overtime. On many occasions, I have been called away from my family for work related situations. As a result, I have missed many of my children's sporting events, holidays, etc. I personally know that my current job assignment has caused me to be stressed out much of the time.

Makes you somewhat cynical. Makes you desensitized.

It has made me cynical, and non-trusting of others. It has also increased my personal prejudices.

Interdepartmental doings has led to stress, that has carried home, leading to a period of depression.

Suspicious, insensitive.

Made me internalize emotions.

None. I was set in my ways before.

Has made me cynical. Parents say I have changed for the worse.

It has ruined many of my relationships, as a result of the stress of the job. It has taken a toll on me physically, emotionally, and personality wise.

I don't trust people!

At first the adjustment was difficult, and my relationships suffered. But that has since changed. Very suspicious of individual's intentions. Very judgmental of others.

I am much less tolerant of incompetence. Keen awareness of liars, "salesmen". I am more confident/quick with decision making.

Developed a lack of caring for fellow man.

Shortened my life, how long you're supposed to live. No patience.

With all of the scenes we respond to I have found myself to be “cold” when these things happen to people in the community. The general public only views these incidents on the news. Police officers experience them almost on a daily basis. You have to detach your personal feelings when responding to calls. I have found I detach myself from situations while off duty as well.

As an officer it is your responsibility to be in control of every situation, and sometimes it carries over into your personal life.

I can't cope with things. I shut down. The department has turned its back on guys like me.

This job makes having a marriage very difficult. With switching shifts, stress and never being home.

Just fine.

Well a lot, before I joined I never saw homicides, little children being beat, things of that nature. What I see at work stays at work. I don't bring it home with me. My personality has stayed the same since high school.

It's helped me become more out spoken, and more alert to my surroundings even when off duty.

Personality- I've gotten sort of used to seeing/hearing about the bad things that happen to people, and am less sensitive to it. I don't mean that I don't care about these victims, but I'm just used to it.

As a peace officer you tend to see things as white or black; no gray area. I've found that type of thinking {mentality} has stressed my personal relationship with my wife. After living, breathing and eating law enforcement for 19 years I have found the white/black mentality has probably saved me a lot of stress on the job, cutting to the chase/bottom line, but has hurt my marriage.

Untrusting of people. Tired of people and their problems. Cynical 100%. “Now after your affirm story, tell me what really happened.” Untrusting of all government bullshit.

Very judgmental of others. Strict with children. Keep problems to my self.

In general, I am fairly passive. I have a relaxed approach to most/ all of my daily chores and responsibilities. Several years ago, I noticed myself becoming too serious about simple, everyday matters. My family alerted me to that change as well. Since, then, I make sure I have a good stance or relaxed demeanor. It seems to be helpful and keeps my outlook in perspective.

Low salary for the quality of work provided. Low income-big bills!

Sometimes when I have been involved in a particularly bad situation at work, it can follow me home.

It has made me a better person in all aspects of my interactions with others.

Help me deal with people more effectively.

I have become more cynical, and less trusting of people.

I really don't see much of a change in the way that I am now as opposed to how I used to be. I could say that I probably am more confident and have an ability to control situations more so than I used to. One of the biggest stressors I have encompassed on this job is the scheduling. Being a 24-hour job has caused me to miss many holidays, weddings, family events etc. Also last minute schedule changes cause child care issues and place added stress on the employee.

I have become much more cynical. I trust people a lot less.

The constant look at reality is a sobering experience, and makes one look at things in a different light.

Made me a much more cautious and negative person. Us-vs- world attitude sometimes.

A lot.

It has made me more assertive and aggressive in my dealings with other people, especially people I don't know. In coping with things, I tend to take more of a problem-solving approach. I take control instead of feeling helpless.

It puts a large strain on the family, missing holidays, family gatherings, off on the weekend every four months, and only for one month.

I feel that law enforcement has made me a less emotional person as well as less sympathetic towards tragic events. As a law enforcement officer you are constantly being put into others personal affairs which often become highly emotional events for the people involved. As a peace keeper you are asked to be fair, impartial, etc. in order to best resolve the issues at hand in a unbiased manner. This task alone requires you to put your emotions on the back burner, so that your decisions are founded on fact and not a knee jerk reaction of being caught up in the emotions of the event. Obviously this behavior would carry over to your personal life, because you can't turn your problem solving, dealing with emotions, and the like on and off like a switch.

Stress from the job causes many mood swings, which effect the ways I choose to handle problems.

Short tempered and played a part in first marriage (divorce) and currently plays a part in current marital problems.

Depending on the assignment, can cause some minor stress in relationships as the assignment/investigation/operation can consume your thoughts even when off-duty.

Changed my outlook on people.

It makes me more of a control freak (have to be in control of situations) Harder to communicate to spouse, lower tolerance.

The job has made me more inactive. I used to play a lot of sports. Now the only real exercise I get is when I chase someone or when I run to my car for a call. I think I have an emotional block now. Emotionally I don't think that I react the way a normal person would. My communication lacks any feeling. I can tell you what I think, but don't ask how I feel about a problem. I don't have an answer. It really takes a lot to make me happy, sad, etc. My girlfriend even told me that she can't even tell if I'm enjoying sex.

Have less patience with people and situations. Developed a sense that most people have the potential to be dishonest, no matter how slight. On the plus side of the equation, the profession has taught me to evaluate situations more thoroughly and arrive at more sensible conclusions. I also value my relationship with my wife to a great degree.

I have much better anger management. I don't allow factors out of my control or influence cause me stress. If I do my best, I am satisfied. This comes in handy when investigations I work hard on get bargained away by prosecuting attorneys or minimized by unsympathetic judges. I perform better in stressful situations than under normal circumstances.

I remain distant from most except for family.

I came back to this question after completing the survey. I don't believe that my work in law enforcement has changed me that much (no more that any other job) I do feel that the questions asked in the survey imply that police do improper or illegal things.

Very defensive, look for negatives before positives.

It has made me more decisive. I can quickly evaluate a situation and make a firm decision, although I am willing to adjust my decision if necessary. Police work has also made me a better husband/father in that I see what stress and conflict can do to people -- especially children and I strive to have a stress-free environment at home. I appreciate every moment I spend with my family.

I tend to befriend fellow officers more quickly than other citizens thus making it more of a struggle to make non-police friends. The difficult schedule also amplifies this problem.

Must feel like you have to take control of critical situations, not work related. Stress in family life, wife and family is worried for my safety, plus switching of shifts. See the bad side of a lot of people outside of work, it's just the mindset you get into from dealing with crime and bad people. I am now more outgoing to talk to people, especially people I don't like or get along with. Worrying that I might run into someone that I had dealt with while at work. I feel like I have aged (more mature) from the day I became a police officer. Overall becoming a police officer has been positive.

Law enforcement work has definitely changed my outlook on the world and people in general. I have developed somewhat of a cynical attitude toward the public. The job has also driven me to change my thoughts on some areas I used to ignore or overlook (like politics and societal viewpoints). As for the way I cope with things, that has changed as well, though not drastically. I seem to almost work hard to hold things in because I don't want the job to spill over into my personal life; but it usually does anyway. Personal relationships probably have seen the biggest changes. If for no other reason than time constraints and shift rotations, many of my pre-law enforcement friendships have faded or at least weakened. The majority of my current flourishing friendships are job-related (with others in my field) or remain strong because of extremely understanding counterparts.

Suspicious of others.

Sometimes at home, if you take your job home try to keep job at work.

Show less emotion, keep a lot of things to myself. Try to be professional, most people feel I'm cold and uncaring. Never had nor wanted close friends. Lost a very good friend in Vietnam. Will not allow myself to be close to a fellow employee again. Some think this means I dislike them, which is not true, I just don't want to be close to them.

I believe law enforcement has changed the way I interpret someone. I tend to not believe what people say unless they can prove they are telling the truth. You sometimes think people are hiding something they don't want to tell you. I tend to look at things in a negative fashion, because when people call you, it is usually about a negative problem they have. They usually don't call you to thank you for helping them. I believe my position has affected my friendship with people from high school. These friends now

realize that I keep to myself and I rarely go out to party. I still keep in touch with them, but the amount of social time we spend together is somewhat limited.

I do not believe that my work in law enforcement has had any effect on my personality or relationships. I have only been on the job for one year, however. So far I have had no problems leaving work at work.

I am very result oriented, feelings, etc. usually don't concern me.
I am very intolerant of B.S.... "Don't waste my time because you're stupid."

Basically, you become cynical of people, and have a tendency to be overly cautious when entering into any type of financial agreement.

So far, I have not noticed a big difference.

It's screwed up my schedule, my relationship life sucks.

Trust is hard to accept. Critical of persons attempting to change way of life.

Not always willing to trust others. Am willing to work things out to correct a problem. Friends don't stay around long when they find out I'm police. I have no personal relationships with anyone of the opposite sex.

Negative impact.

It has taught me to deal with problems directly, to listen to and observe people carefully.

Pessimistic. Cynical. Find worst in most everyone.

Desensitized to various elements: Accident scenes, deaths, etc., also to victim/suspect's emotions to incidents.

Too great to mention, both good and bad. You notice how different you are and the way you think/look at things when you talk to someone who has no involvement in law enforcement.

It has taught me how to deal with stress.

I believe as a parent and a husband I have less patience.

I don't trust anyone.

Sometimes have a short temper.

It has changed my way of dealing with my family and home.

Positive.

Shift hours put a strain on marriage.

It's screwed them (relationships) up.

Numb to a lot of things; not aware of personal feelings, had many unsuccessful relationships.

You definitely need some sort of support outside of work, emotional release.

Keep things to myself emotionally, but made me more forward/blunt with other aspects of mannerisms and conversation.

You are more accustomed to dealing with crisis, lots of stressful situations.

Strong effect.

I view life in a different perspective.

I don't let things I can't control bother me. I'm pretty protective with my children.

Law enforcement has had a huge effect on my personality. I am much less tolerant towards people.

Causes you to tend to avoid acting stressed (you tend to keep it inside).

“ It has had a negative effect, trouble at home, short temper, possibly shortened my life.

Higher stress due to poor leadership, schedule issues, shift work.

Increased stress and increased apathy.

Between the military and my law enforcement career, you learn to “Suck it up and drive on”!

I have become very cynical. I don't trust people and I am short tempered.

Do not want to be in crowds, more to myself.

More cynical about life in general.

Better able to handle stressful situations.

More critical, cynical

I've become harder in my views toward others. I have become more calm during stressful situations. I try to do things that do not involve police or police work off duty. My family, friends and God are what keep me stable. Police work is a job, not who I am.

State things that are true reality of life. No one likes truth about life.

It has made me more assertive. Overall has had a positive effect.

- handle stressful situations better than other people
- more decisive
- appreciate family time more than others
- realize how important it is to raise good children, i.e. polite, respectful, studious
- use humor to cope with some situations

I don't like people outside law enforcement. I cope through humor. I was married for 28 years before being divorced.

I tend to be in more control of my feelings and emotions.

None. Overall this job is not as stressful as people think. There are moments of great stress but they pass quickly (usually).

Changed the way I look at people.

I have become more strict with my children.

I have become sarcastic. Sometimes I am tired from long hours of shift work.

I do not bring my police work home to my family.

I am a calmer person since becoming a police officer.

I no longer see the positive side of people. All negative!

It is an incredible strain on any relationship dealing with shift work, dealing with public, dealing with supervisors, dealing with midnight shift, lack of departmental support when dealing with situations, bad eating habits (health issues), does not promote fitness.

Fitness helps one dealing with stress issues Every precinct should have an updated gym! Very important.

A bunch. It has made me harder, harsher, and more cynical.

Low tolerance

You become hard, families suffer and marriages are destroyed and NO ONE CARES.

Don't care about things as much as I should.

Changed entire concept of human beings, how they interact, treatment of each and how they react to stress. Made me less trusting of anyone.

I think I am more aware of my surroundings and take nothing at face value. I feel I have grown up on this job. It has greatly influenced who and what I am.

Don't trust people.

It helped.

I tend to internalize; hard to talk about it at home. Work demands/time at work has strained my relationship at times. My "do good" nature has caused others to view me as self-righteous at times. The politics has caused a great deal of frustration. The hypocrisy of "untouchable" upper level management makes you cynical.

My family and friends tell me I have become cold and unsympathetic to people now as opposed to the way I used to be before I came on the job. I find that I do not enjoy the company of other people unless I have selected the people myself. I also used to be very optimistic towards life, but now I'm more pessimistic. In general I do not like who I have become since I have become a police officer. My wife even says I don't care as much as I used to. For the most part whereas I used to be a lot more fun loving with people in general, I would much rather be home alone trying to relax.

Very calm in high stress situations. Exposure to violent crimes keeps small problems in perspective. Jaded towards criminal justice system (courts, judges, etc.). Callous attitude, suspicious of people and motives.

I believe that my work has taught me to cope with stress even better than the average person. The stress and pressures of my job do affect my personality and relationships at times; however, it is the ability to develop coping mechanisms and the ability to communicate that makes the difference.

Tremendous.

Individual: developed confidence, assertiveness.

Personality: Don't trust anyone, always making judgments, tend to hide emotions to support others.

Relationship: Took a long time (8 years) to settle down and trust a mate that I felt close to.

It is a life-changing job. You never see anything the same way again. As for relationships, it is a killer.

This question may be better answered by husbands, wives, friends, close associates. However, I'll give you my perspective.

As an individual: I've become less trusting and skeptical of others through my years of service (administrative and general public). It has been increasingly more difficult to let work issues at work. I find myself not wanting to talk "shop" with friends and family, although they find the profession interesting.

On personality: I truly enjoy doing things alone. It's refreshing to be out of the limelight (no justification, no one to answer to). I find myself just wanting the facts from people. I've enjoyed developing my interviewing techniques and using them to solve cases. "Bad guys" know when you are "real" with them. Job related stress and rotating shifts (days, nights, weekends and holidays) make it difficult to provide structure and routine in the family environment. I find myself being more critical of people. I expect a lot of family members and coworkers. Nothing seems to surprise me.

On coping: I constantly remind myself that relationships (spouse, family issues) and the decisions surrounding this dynamic need to be dealt with in non-law enforcement ways. When my law enforcement perspective surfaces, it usually causes problems. I feel better (stress) when I exercise.

Being a new officer, I have not seen any effects at this point.

More assertive in relationships.

" The little things in life don't bother me after seeing and dealing with other people's problems.

I have become very pessimistic in my view of others.

Large effect

Negative. Gives you a piss poor attitude towards people in general. You realize just how stupid the general public really is and how out of touch with the real world and how people really are.

1. Feel nervous and uneasy in large crowds, shopping malls, fairs, crowded city streets.
2. Feel desensitized to certain emotions.
3. More careful in how you speak and friendships you make.

You learn to become cynical towards people.

Law enforcement has changed my personality. I feel that I have become less trustful of others and tend to not believe what many people are telling me. Law enforcement has made me much more aware of my surroundings. My job has caused stress and problems in my marriage, though I cannot say that my job has caused all of the problems in my personal life. My family believes that my job as a police officer has changed me.

Learned not to sweat the small stuff.

I have become more cynical towards people/things. Also, because more authoritative, causing two divorces.

My listening skills have weakened. I don't listen to people's bullshit as easily as I used to. It has carried over into my off duty conversations.

It takes a toll on your patience in dealing with complainants and defendants. The work makes you tense and feeling of failure when not catching criminals who have committed crimes within your area. The feeling of failure is a burden that many of us do not realize we have.

Law enforcement has made me more confident and a better decision maker.

Made me look at things differently. More aware of what's going on.

I feel confident that I can handle stressful situations in a low stress condition due to many experiences I have encountered over the years in law enforcement.

Has made me more cautious and wary of people in general and more aware of the unpredictability of human beings.

Colder character, not as warm.

I realize that many things that people get upset about are really unimportant.

I have become less trustful and more cynical in my dealings with people.

I believe I have to hold myself to a higher standard than many I grew up with. I find I am quick to judgment but in the long run more compassionate and accepting.

It's made me more realistic in my expectations of others.

Law enforcement has made me very sarcastic, very skeptical, hardened to everyday problems, just to name a few. I could go on and on, but the most traumatic event in my life did not occur because of law enforcement. Besides the extreme pressures of my job, I am also a grieving parent and trying to cope with the depression associated with that.

Always cautious. Don't believe what anyone says, thoroughly look into matters. After the shooting, I tend to be jumpy when I hear loud sounds.

Great amount.

A negative effect on all parts.

Law enforcement has opened my eyes to the inability of many people to cope with everyday life. In many ways it has made me more tolerable in certain way and in other ways it has made me more intolerable of people at times.

Keeps me in control of things.

Makes it very difficult.

I realize how lucky I am.

Less sensitive in certain situations.

Generally enables you to cope with things better than a civilian. Hardens you to things that others would find disagreeable or tragic.

It has made me more cynical.

Toughest part is shift work; working 2 weeks of 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., 2 weeks of 2 p.m. to 10 p.m.

If anything, I am more tolerant of people because of my career in law enforcement.

You start to see things in black and white. You are either wrong or right. There is no in between. You always analyze, second guess or wonder about new people you meet. As far as coping, people you are the police, you are tough, you are held to a higher standard than everyone else. You aren't expected to become emotional. You are better than that, it's your job.

It allows you to maintain discipline, integrity and fairness.

Not very trusting. Don't want to be bothered by minor things. I have been in church for some time now. It helps me deal with all the stress from the job. Most officers seek stress relief from alcohol, sex, buying expensive items, etc. To me this is part of the problem. Kind of like a Band-Aid, doesn't fix the problem, just covers it up.

Working as a police officer/detective has hardened my feelings when dealing with drug abusers, especially. I used to feel sorry for addicts. Being on the force for 13 years has thickened my sensitivity level. On and off duty I am leery to trust anyone, assuming they

are gonna steal from my family or me. My theory is “People have a choice to be or do good in life and if they choose the wrong road in life, then they have to pay the consequences.”

You become hardened and callous to other individuals and one has less sympathy toward personal hardships of others.

Total effect. Law enforcement people act differently in all phases of life.

This job has resulted in a general bitter feeling toward society as a whole. Conflict within the department continues to add to the level of stress that I feel. The separation that exists between the patrol officer and the upper level command staff results in a feeling that the top level has forgotten what it is like to be a patrol officer. I cope with the effects of this job by continuing to exercise daily. In addition, I spend a lot of time with my family, coaching my kids’ soccer and softball team, and taking short vacations frequently

More suspicious of people less trusting. Harder

I’m not as emotional as I was before I became an officer. I don’t tend to show my emotions to anyone.

Very suspicious of others

Very little. I separate work stress from home stress

I don’t believe it has affected my personality or relationships

During my off duty hours I prefer to be away from people the exception being participation in sports with people I approve of and small parties with those I choose

I believe that this job has directly affected my personal relationships (including marriage). I view people differently than my friends do, which causes them stress. I’m too overprotective of friends/family because of this job. I also have problems with meeting men – not initially, not at all, but once they find out I’m a cop, they come up with reasons to not date me. Because of this, I usually date other cops. (My husband was not a cop).

It has made me more cold and cynical.

Less tolerance for errors, mistakes and deliberate poor decisions by family. More tension is revealed to family members related to job stress. I have become more cynical as was predicted at my orientation. My oldest daughter resents my rigidity in issues dealing with her. On a positive sense, I have been using weight training and cardiovascular training to improve health and attitude.

A more negative outlook on life overall.

Patience

I have become more protective of my family because I realized a reality of how vulnerable people are to risks

Much more skeptical on society – not as social with public off-duty. Still have strong family relationships.

The styles and problems you deal with at work have caused my sensitivity in personal life to decline, therefore causing many problems at home with personal problems.

Has changed my personality extremely. More aggressive at home, worse temper but also see how precious life is. I feel as though I almost live in a bubble because nobody understands what I go through at work, which sometimes causes me to be paranoid. I feel as though, because of the way my job has shaped my personality, I need my wife to be more affectionate towards me so that I feel safe and secure. Like always it's me and that point is never understood.

Often do not show emotions.

More apathetic toward public. More concerned about family problems but less time to deal with them. Cope with stress by denial, try not to take things home but short temper at home – easily aggravated with complicated tasks. Increased use of alcohol.

Greatly increased level of cynicism and mistrust in people.

Police work, if left to consume you, can destroy your life. We work strange hours for little money. We put our lives on the line for little to no money, recognition or overall public appreciation. We sacrifice our health, marriages, and sanity for nothing more than an average paycheck and a lot of hassle. We fight for every benefit we receive to only get another one taken away. How many other jobs do you work 7 days a week because of court. Driving to court to find out it is a plea bargain and your not needed. I will retire the day of my 20-year mark and will find a job that is not so drama-filled, outwardly and inwardly.

Stronger, better problem solver, more understanding after exposure to so many less fortunate people.

I leave what happens at work at work. I don't bring home any problems from work

You have ups and downs.

Appreciate the people that are good in their deeds and how they live their lives.
Appreciate family and friends.

Increased blood pressure. Increased weight gain. Withdrawn from people outside of police work.

More untrusting.

The job has caused much stress on my personal and professional life. The long hours of overtime, court, lack of leave, and working all holidays has placed a lot of stress. All of the above has been a large part of my recent divorce. I am currently involved in a new relationship, the job and its demands are again placing a lot of stress on our relationship.

Very much of an impact. I am very protective of my children – I always want to “be in charge” which can sometimes cause marital discord – between my wife and I – I am the worrier – I think because of the many difficult things I have seen and experienced on the job

Greatly increased my level of cynicism and mistrust in people.

It has helped.

I have to take time away from my family to complete paperwork at home.

My job has made me more observant, cynical, caring, patient. I am emotionally closer to coworkers than extended family members. Having experienced the physical manifestations resulting from stress, in particular chest pain, stomach upset, etc., I have learned to utilize stress-reducing techniques to create balance/harmony. I have learned to “adapt to any situation. For the most part I don’t get stressed over things I can’t control. Physical activity is a major part in eliminating stress in my life. I have learned to identify and separate emotional reactions in handling problems.

Too much alcohol.

I am not naïve to the many possible things that can happen to a person. Many of my peers (middle aged women) are, I think. I am much calmer than I would be had I entered a different career path. When “crisis” strikes my personal life I tend to handle it much like I would a work event, i.e., “something has happened now I have to deal with it, mediate it, try to prevent future occurrences”. Relationships have been rocky. I’ve been called “bossy” and I guess I am. I finally found someone bossier than me and that seems to be working.

Become impervious to many everyday situations.

Made more cynical; less trusting of strangers, more judgmental.

Tend to see a lot of things, and keep the emotions bottled up.

Core of friends basically belong to the law enforcement community.

Has constantly made me aware of my surroundings.

Very choosy in the people I associate with.

Become very judgmental.

Has made my family very important.