
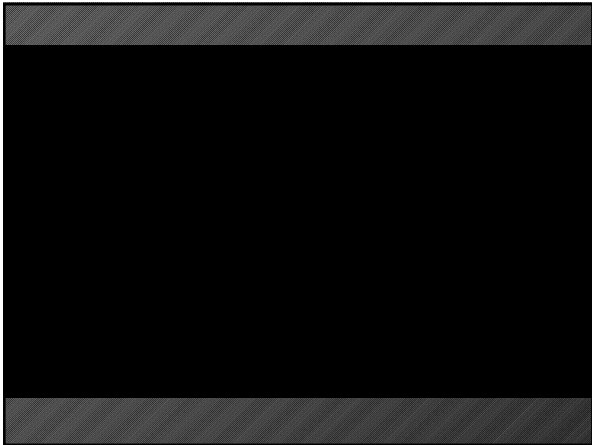


Stress and Trauma in
Law Enforcement

Vernon Herron, MS
Director, Baltimore City Police Department
Officer Safety and Wellness








Course Objectives:

- Stress and Trauma
- Creating Resilience
- Life and Marriage after a Critical Incident
- The Impact, Signs and Symptoms of Trauma
- Keys to Recovering From a Traumatic Events



What is Traumatic Stress?



Trauma is a specific type of stress that reflects exposure to terrible events, generally outside the range of daily human experience that are emotionally painful, intense, and distressing.

Police Officer Stress



- Supervisors/Leadership
- Inadequate or broken equipment
- Work hours/ fatigue
- Stressful working environment
- Constant change in mission of department

Police Officer Stress continued:



Module 12: Coordination Strategies



“The non-specific response of the body to any demand for change.”

Dr. Hans Selye, Endocrinologist—
Coined the term “Stress”



“ That feeling and desire along with the ensuing bodily effects, experienced by a person who has a strong and true longing to choke the living shit out of someone who desperately deserves it, but *YOU CAN'T.*”

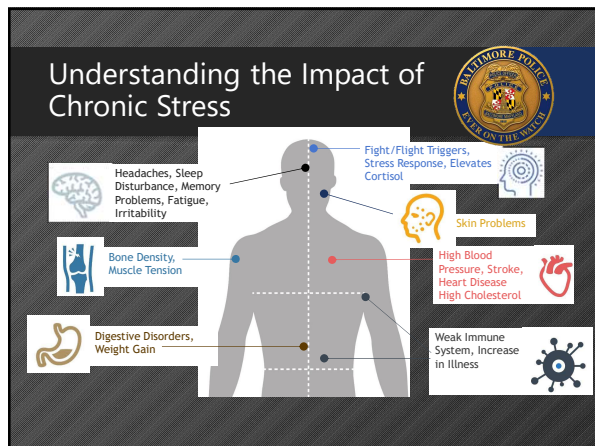
Steven Varnell, Retired State Trooper
(FHP) – Author of “*Criminal Interdiction*”

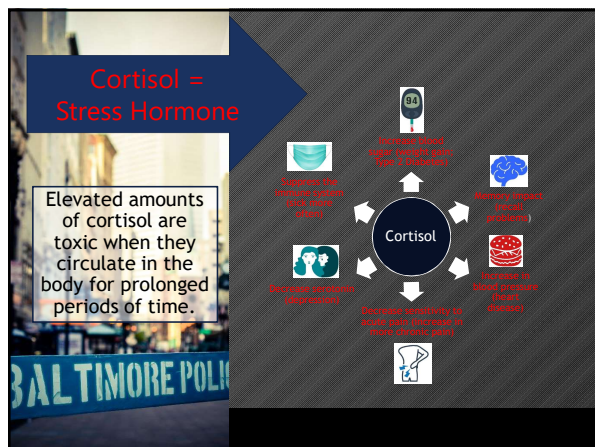
Study: Police Officers and Firefighters Are More Likely to Die by Suicide than in Line of Duty

The white paper study, the Ruderman White Paper on Mental Health and Suicide of First Responders, examines a number of factors contributing to mental health issues among first responders and what leads to their elevated rate of suicide. One study included in the white paper found that on average, police officers witness 188 ‘critical incidents’ during their careers. This exposure to trauma can lead to several forms of mental illness. For example, PTSD and depression rates among firefighters and police officers have been found to be as much as 5 times higher than the rates within the civilian population, which causes these first responders to commit suicide at a considerably higher rate (firefighters: 18/100,000; police officers: 17/100,000; general population 13/100,000). Even when suicide does not occur, untreated mental illness can lead to poor physical health and impaired decision-making.

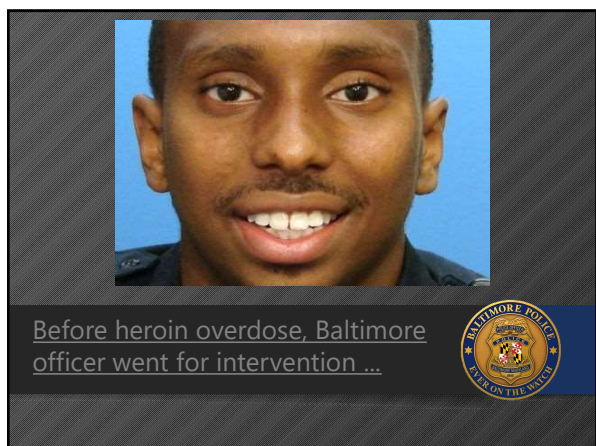
Read the ‘Ruderman White Paper on Mental Health and Suicide of First Responders.’

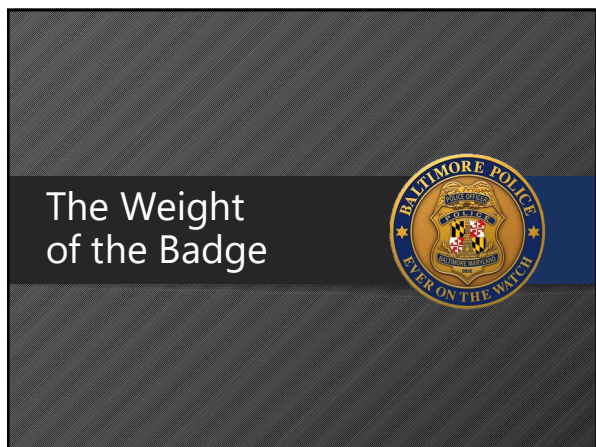
Understanding Stress





- ## Chronic Stress may lead to:
- Medication by the use of alcohol and or drugs
 - Cardio Vascular Disease
 - Family Conflicts
 - Divorce
 - Suicide







What is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder?



Anxiety and flashbacks triggered by a traumatic event

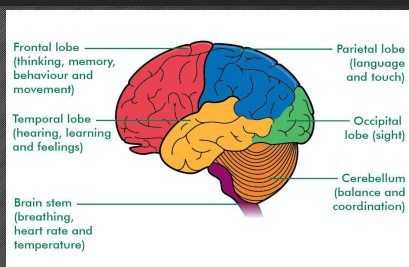


PTSD




- The condition may last months or years, with triggers that can bring back memories of the trauma accompanied by intense emotional and physical reactions.
- Symptoms may include nightmares or unwanted memories of the trauma, avoidance of situations that bring back memories of the trauma, heightened reactions, anxiety, or depressed mood.
- Treatment includes different types of trauma-focused psychotherapy as well as medications to manage symptoms.

The Brain




Parts of the Brain Impacted by PTSD



These structures include the **amygdala** and **hippocampus** (which are part of the limbic system).

Several parts of the prefrontal cortex (PFC); the **mid-anterior cingulate cortex** and the **right inferior frontal gyrus**.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder



Co-Occurring Symptoms

Post Traumatic Stress and Traumatic Brain Injury

PTS

TBI

Flashbacks

Avoidance

Hypervigilance

Nightmares

Re-Experiencing Phenomenon

Fatigue

Insomnia

Depression

Irritability

Anxiety

Headache

Dizziness

Nausea & Vomiting

Vision Problems

Sensitivity to Light/Noise

brainline.military

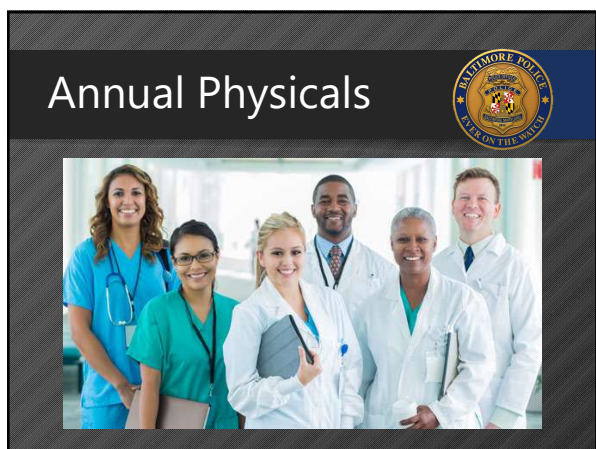


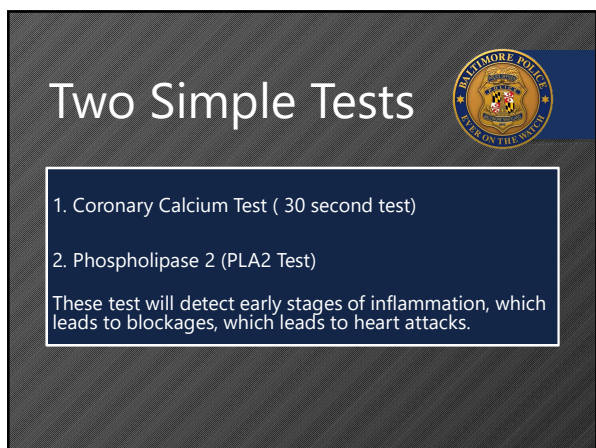












Regular Fitness Activities



Start Slow



4 FUNCTIONAL
EXERCISES FOR
BEGINNERS



Attempt to manage those traumatic events that have gone unresolved before you joined the Police Department.

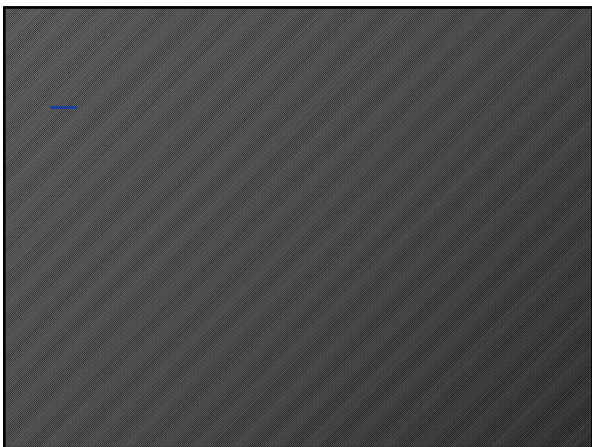


- Unexpected Death of a Family Member or friend.
- Incidents when you were victimized. (My greatest fear when I took the psychological entrance exam.....).
- Stop punishing yourself for incidents that were out of your control.



Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (**EMDR**) therapy is an interactive psychotherapy technique used to relieve psychological stress. ... During **EMDR** therapy sessions, you relive traumatic or triggering experiences in brief doses while the therapist directs your eye movements.

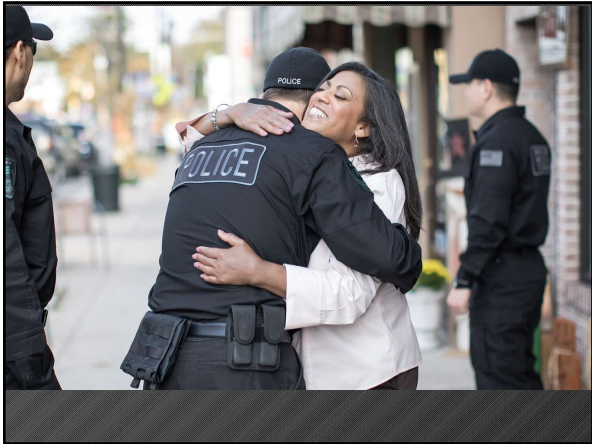
EMDR

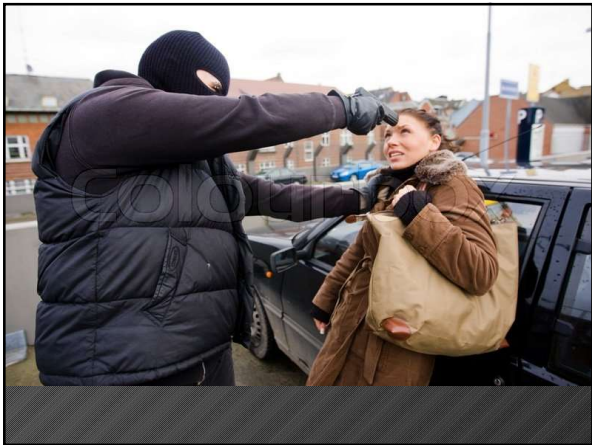
















Personal Action Plan

1. Understand that you can't control the stress or trauma associated with police work, but you can control how you respond to it.
2. Don't be afraid to ask for help, the stigma associated with police officers seeking help from a mental health professional is the fault of "police departments" and not the officers.
3. As much as you love police work, (and you should) it's what you do and not who you are. Separation anxiety is experienced by officers who can't reconcile the fact that they will one day have to surrender their badge and police powers to the jurisdiction that bestowed them to you.


Are you at risk of being an Alcoholic?

- 1. Have you ever felt you needed to Cut down on your drinking?
- 2. Have people Annoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
- 3. Have you ever felt Guilty about drinking?
- 4. have you ever felt you needed a drink first thing in the morning(Eye-opener) to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover?



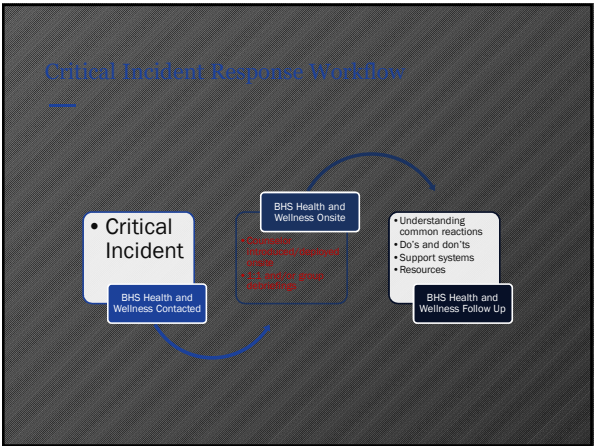


Mindfulness



“Stress divided is stress mitigated.”
Lindsay Betromer, Retd. Police Officer

- Set an Intention @ the start of the day
- Mindful Breathing
- Brain Training
- Moment to Moment Awareness



Maryland House Bill 736

COPY OF HOUSE BILL 736

1 TITLE.

2 (B) EACH LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY SHALL DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT PROVIDE ACCESS TO

3 AN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OR MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM FOR ALL POLICE OFFICERS THAT THE

4 LAW

5 ENFORCEMENT AGENCY EMPLOYS.

6 (C) THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM REQUIRED BY THIS SECTION

7 SHALL PROVIDE POLICE OFFICERS ACCESS TO CONFIDENTIAL LOW-OR-MID-LEVEL

8 MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, INCLUDING:

9 (1) COUNSELING SERVICES;

10 (2) CRISIS COUNSELING;

11 (3) STRESS MANAGEMENT COUNSELING;

12 (4) MENTAL HEALTH EVALUATIONS; AND

13 (5) PEER SUPPORT SERVICES FOR POLICE OFFICERS.

HB 736 Continued

13 (D) AS IN ADDITION TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF § 3-516 OF THIS

14 SUBTITLE, AS PART OF

15 THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM REQUIRED BY THIS

16 SECTION, EACH LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY SHALL PROVIDE TO ALL

17 POLICE

18 OFFICERS THE AGENCY EMPLOYS A VOLUNTARY MENTAL HEALTH

19 EVALUATION CONSULTATION OR COUNSELING

20 SERVICES

21 BEFORE THE POLICE OFFICER RETURNS TO FULL DUTY FOLLOWING ANY

22 INCIDENT

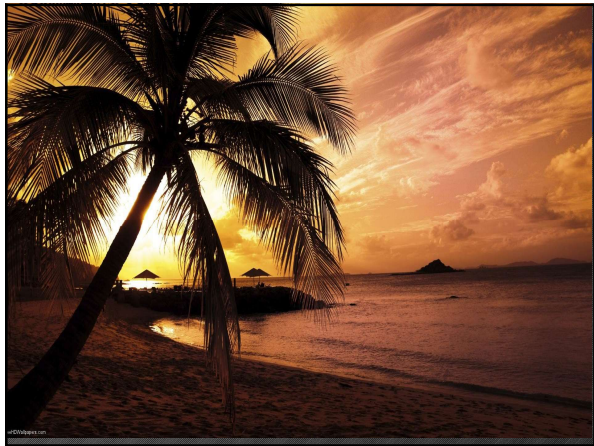
23 INVOLVING:

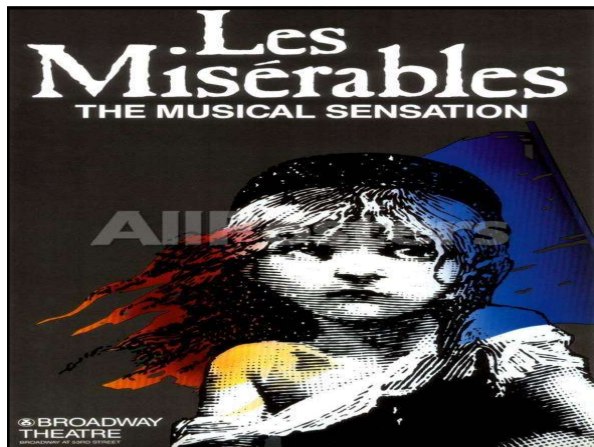
24 (1) A SERIOUS INJURY TO THE POLICE OFFICER;

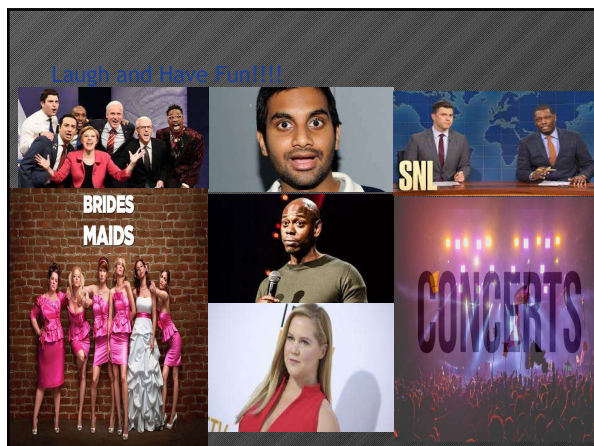
25 (2) AN OFFICER-INVOLVED SHOOTING;

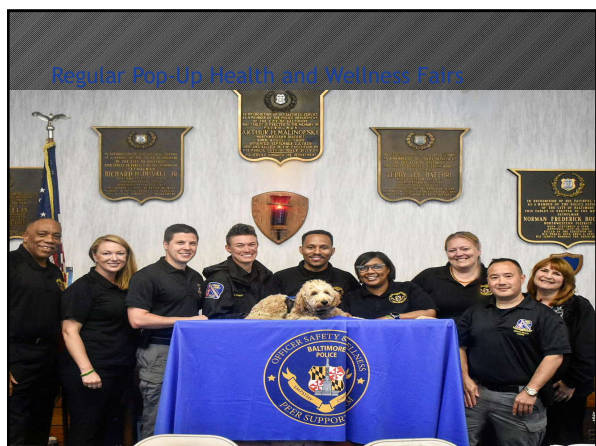
26 (3) AN ACCIDENT RESULTING IN A FATALITY; OR

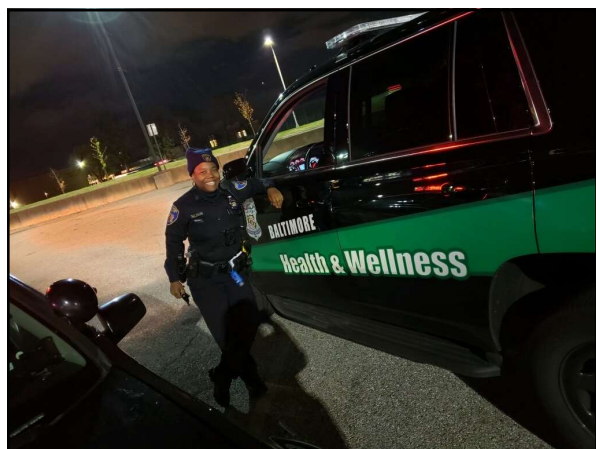
27 (4) ANY USE OF FORCE RESULTING IN A FATALITY OR SERIOUS











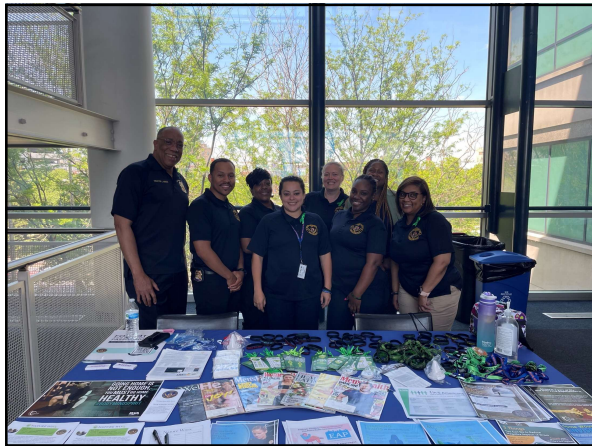
Stress Less Strategies

- Evaluate your “toxic busyness” or need to be connected to police work
- Take an electronic break
- Make time for your family and friends (communication matters)
- Prepare in advance for the next day (getting organized)
- Commit to being active 30 minutes a day x 5 days a week (increased activity improves blood flow, increases oxygen, activates endorphins)
- Evaluate nutritional choices














Summary

- Stress is inevitable
- Chronic stress elevates harmful cortisol levels
- Recognize signs of stress in self and others
- Understand how stress impacts our health
- Learn ways to decrease the stress responses and know what's in your control
- Review resources to mitigate stress and improve health and wellness

Peer Support



CNN Report



Lt. Shiflett

Baltimore Police Family Health and Wellness Fair

Leadership and Managing Stress

- 1. Recognize the signs of stress in your employees
- 2. Acknowledge your employees not only when they do something bad but also acknowledge good actions.
- 3. Mail a letter or call an employee when:
 - A. Death in the family
 - B. Birth in the family
 - C. Birthdays/Anniversaries



Continued

- 4. Release employees to go home early when appropriate or necessary. (Son's football game)
- 5. Know the phone number to EAP or mental health support.
- 6. Organize team outings but be mindful, everyone doesn't play golf.
- 7. Never forget the stress that was inflicted on you by your supervisor when you were an officer and break the cycle.



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