Course Title: Law Enforcement Family

Course Number: B-8

Class Time: 1.5 Hours

By
Chaplain Jim Crowley

*Training Objectives*

*Provide an understanding of the particular stresses of the law enforcement family*

*Provide an understanding of the prominent issues within the law enforcement family such as divorce, communication, real and imagined abandonment issues and control at home*

*Provide an understanding of drugs and alcohol on the family*

*Provide an understanding of stresses which sometimes may be released by anger or violence*

*Provide an understanding of why the demands of the job differ from the private sector*

*Provide an understanding of fears of both the officer and family members that result from the job*

*Who is the Law Enforcement Family?*

- Officers
- Administration
- Employees
- Department volunteers
- Families
- Retirees

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1. *Training Objectives*

2. *Training Objectives*

3. *Training Objectives*

4. *Training Objectives*

5. *L.E. Family Defined*

6. Chaplains need to be evitcaorP in supporting the families of law enforcement officers!
Relationships Training Relationships ......

The Biological Rollercoaster

Alive - Alert - Energy - Involved - Humorous
Work

Tired - Detached - Isolated - Apathetic
Home

There is often little in common between life at work and life at home.

The Biological Rollercoaster

Over - Involved
Alive - Alert - Energy - Involved - Humorous
Work

Under - Involved
Tired - Detached - Isolated - Apathetic
Home

Friends

Hobbies

Values

Goals

Beliefs

Sense Of Self

Work Role

Interests

Sports
Challenges
- Family disruption due to rotating shifts
  - Child care issues
  - Holidays
- Children’s events
- Unpredictable work environment
  - Fear of injury or death
- Job related personal change and family relationships
  - Officers exposure to crisis and tragedy
  - The longer they are on the job, the greater risk they have of changing attitudes and personality

Challenges (Continued)
- Community expectations and demands
  - Officers are held to a higher standard
  - Neighbors and friends see them as an officer
  - They are asked to take care of neighborhood problems
- Intrusion into family life
  - It is easy to take the job home

Altruism to Cynicism
- Why does this happen in law enforcement?
  - Officers deal with the extremes of life
  - They rarely see completing of a work project
  - They deal with the same 6-20% of society
  - They often do not get organizational support
  - They are constantly under a microscope
  - In-grouping - they hang with other officers
  - They tend to be paranoid and distrustful
  - They tend toward self-medication
- Personal beliefs that conflict with reality.
- Disappointment and loss of interest in the job.
- Performing worse than personal expectations.
- Excessive desire to do a perfect job.
- Excessively high personal standards and goals.
- Willingness to take serious or dangerous risks.
- Driven toward immediate satisfaction.
- Excessive detail orientation.
- High need to be in control.
- High need for exciting activity. Easily bored.
- Strong need to be needed and to rescue others.
**Family-Related Causes of Stress**
- Death, serious illness, accidents, moves, changes in the environment, damage to home.
- Family conflict and poor communications.
- Differences in values, needs and goals.
- Child rearing issues especially with special physical or mental needs.
- Important decisions made without the approval of family members.
- Financial difficulties.
- Differences or inequalities in household responsibilities and procedures.

**Work-Related Causes of Stress**
- Administrative hassles and poor leadership.
- Demanding bosses or too many bosses.
- Poor internal communication.
- Conflict with colleagues.
- Shift work or work overload.
- Low pay and poor advancement.
- No or limited health and other benefits.
- Uncertain job future or uncertain requirements.
- Frustrating contacts with the public.
- Personal danger and responsibility for others.

**Traumatic Stress “Terrible Ten”**
- Line of duty death.
- Serious injury to an operation person.
- Suicide of a colleague.
- Killing or wounding a colleague or innocent person.
- Disaster work.
- Events with extreme personal threat.
- Deaths or serious injuries to children.
- Knowing the victim personally.
- Events with excessive media coverage.
- Any unusual or extremely stressing event.

**Medication**
- Alcohol
- Impulsiveness
- Anger
- Caffeine
- Tobacco
- Prescribed
- Non-prescribed
- Workaholic
- Authority Complex

**Relationships**
- Training
- Relationships ......

**Family survey of officers and spouses**
**Question?**
How can chaplains support families of Law Enforcement officers?
Q: Have you been supported by a Chaplain?

**POSITIVES**
- Initiated a spousal support group
- Offered their offices for meetings
- Supported through marital & spiritual struggles
- He was a good listener & was sympathetic!
- Great support & comfort when my husband died
- He helped me with funeral arrangements and contacted me for several weeks afterwards.
- Verbal encouragement, being undivided
- Retreats
- Helped paint my house
- Being there for us – being out there with us, and not waiting for us to come to you.

**NEGATIVES**
- Incorporate spouses in the Chaplaincy program.
- Our chaplains are sworn officers and think like an officer.
- They do not always understand the pressures and stresses of the law enforcement family.
- Chaplains do not know what it looks like to be a spouse.
- Visit outside a traumatic incident – just stop by for a chat.
- We call for them and they either never show up or come after we no longer need them.
- They only come for the big stuff.

Q: Are there things you would like your chaplain to do?

- Conduct family critical incident debriefings during critical incidents
- Deal with family issues
- Family & marriage workshops
- Marriage & family stress issues
- Interaction groups for wives (spouses)
- Ongoing couple groups
- Workshops on the "changing" or "evolving" characteristics of the police officer due to the job
- Conferences that provide opportunities to build relationships
- Peer support programs, especially related to stress
- Home visits
- Bible studies
- Prayer before each shift with those officers who request it

*My Heart for Chaplaincy*

It is a Culture -

It is a Calling -

It Mandates Compassion -

*References:*

- International Critical Incident Stress Foundation: Stress Management for the Trauma Service Provider by Rachel E. Kaul, LCSW, CTS and Victor Welzant, Psy.D.
- Psychological Body Armor by George S. Everly, Jr., Ph.D., ABPP
- Stress Management for Emergency Personnel by Chevron Publishing Corporation
- Stress Management for Dummies by Allen Elkin, Ph.D.
- ICPC Training Materials
- 21 years of Chaplain Experiences
References:

- The First 48 Hours - Cisney & Ellera
- The Insider - Petersen & Shamy
- Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement - Gilmartin
- Take Up the Shield - Miano
- I Love a Cop - Kirschman