

Resilience Strategies for Police Officers

The good news is resilience can be taught and strengthened. There are strategies anyone can practice to strengthen their coping and emotional resilience to the hazards of policing.

Communication

Constant communication is an important part of processing. When individuals have to reiterate their experiences, often it becomes clear how they feel about the incident or how it impacted them. Communication can come in a variety of methods, including journaling, which has been proven to help reduce feelings of stress by incorporating this practice into your daily routine. Carve out five minutes in the morning or before bed, leaving the journal somewhere where you are forced to see it every day. Just write what is on your mind, not putting pressure on the exercise. Let it flow naturally from your head onto the paper.

Peer Support

This is going to seem like an obvious option but it's heavily underused. Other police officers will understand what you've been through and are your best source for advice on how to cope. Turning to your peers for support can also serve to help them too. When you confide in people, they know they can confide in you too. A system of trust and support is created, which only strengthens your working relationship.

Family Support

Any therapist will tell you that you can't hide struggles from your family. At the end of the day, your family needs to know what you're dealing with so they can support you. Additionally, explaining things to your family can feel very therapeutic. Don't try to handle your problems on your own when you have a loving family that wants to help you get through things.

Life Outside of Policing

This one can't be overstated. When you're constantly picking up overtime shifts, extra-duty shifts, hanging out with police officers, and watching cop shows, you can forget that there's a whole other world out there. Make sure that every couple of days, you engage in activities that aren't related to policing. Pick up some hobbies, go to the movies, go on date nights, hang out with your friends, go to a ball game with your kids, or anything else that will simultaneously relax you and get your mind off of policing.

Stress Management Training

Many law enforcement agencies [have begun to offer stress management training](#) for their employees. The fact of the matter is, overstressed employees are not productive and are at risk for making crucial errors on the job. Stress can also lead to prolonged sick leave. It's in the organization's best interest to keep their employees happy and healthy.

Physical Health

A person that exercises often and eats healthy has higher levels of endorphins, feels in control, and is . There is a reason it's the favorite piece of advice from inspirational speakers, it works. Try to incorporate jogging, biking, evening walks, swimming, kickboxing, yoga, or any other form of exercise into your daily routine. And while we can't fault you for grabbing a donut, maybe just avoid having one every day?

Eliminate Other Stressors

Okay, we aren't going to lie, this last one is going to sound almost condescending. I mean, who doesn't want to eliminate the stressors in their life? Easier said than done. Maybe you can't do anything about the typical everyday stressors that come with family and kids, but you can make sure you don't pile more onto your plate. If you're considering upgrading to a bigger home that would be stretching you thin financially and require you to take on a lot of overtime, maybe postpone that decision. Know when it's best to take time for yourself and understand when you're at your limit.