

Mental Health & Self-Care: Fit to Serve

Moving beyond the physical in law enforcement.

Jevonne "JC" Pollard, Constable
Jefferson County Constable Pct.1

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Class Rules

- ***Have Fun!***

***Respect
Others***

Judgment-Free Zone

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Fit to Serve

Goal

Upon completion of this course, participants will have created a better understanding of mental fitness in law enforcement, empowering them to add mental well-being strategies into their daily routines. This will not only improve their personal resilience and effectiveness but also foster more compassionate and effective interactions with the communities they serve."

Objectives

1. Understand the dual nature of fitness.
2. Identify and challenge common mental health stigmas.
3. Empower with practical mental health tools.

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" How are you?"

"Living the dream....."

Quick Story-

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**Changed the
course of my
life.....**

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Fit to Serve

- **The Mind as a Weapon:** *Understanding the importance of mental fitness.*

- How do you currently define being fit for duty? How can we expand that definition to include mental fitness?

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The Impact of Physical Fitness on Mental Fitness

While different, physical fitness and mental fitness are highly related. So, it's important to reframe the discussion from mental strength vs physical strength to the *relationship* between physical fitness and mental fitness. Apart from physical health, regular physical exercise has many benefits for mental health and well-being:

Reduced Stress and Anxiety

Studies have shown that exercising regularly can help [reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression](#) by releasing endorphins, which are the body's natural mood elevators. Exercise also helps in reducing stress levels by decreasing cortisol levels in the body.

Elevate blog 11/02/23

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Improved Cognitive Function

Additionally, regular physical activity can improve cognitive function, including memory and attention span. Studies have shown that regular exercise can [increase the size of the hippocampus](#), which is responsible for memory formation and storage in the brain.

Furthermore, exercise has been found to improve blood flow to the brain, leading to increased oxygen and nutrient delivery. This can result in improved cognitive function, including better attention span, concentration, and problem-solving skills

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Breaking the Stigma: confronting and Overcoming the stigmas around Mental Health in Law Enforcement

SB 64 Protects Officers License

S.B. No. 64

BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a peer support network for certain law enforcement personnel;

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 1901, Occupations Code, is amended by adding Subchapter B-1 to read as follows:

CHAPTER B-1. PEER SUPPORT NETWORK FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

Sec. 1901.011. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "law enforcement officer" means a person identified as a peace officer under Article V, Article 156, or Article 157a, Code of Criminal Procedure;

(2) "peer" means a person who is a law enforcement officer or retired law enforcement officer;

Sec. 1901.012. Duties, powers, and duties. (a) The commission shall develop a peer support network for law enforcement officers. The network may include:

(1) peer-to-peer support;

(2) training for peer support coordination and peer support facilitation; and

(3) technical assistance for law enforcement, peer support coordinators, licensed mental health professionals, and others;

(b) Identification, retention, and training of licensed mental health professionals.

Breaking the Stigma



Why is that so important?



What are the most common misconceptions about mental health in law enforcement?

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Tools for the Mind- Simple exercises and strategies for maintaining mental health.

Empowerment
Through Mental
Health Tools

Let's look at various mental health tools,¹² from mindfulness exercises to cognitive behavioral techniques.

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Meditation



Yoga

Breathing
Techniques

Exercise

Tactical
Bubbles

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Summary

We've learned that being 'fit for duty' isn't just about our bodies, but our minds too. We talked about some wrong ideas people might have about mental health and found out the real facts. Plus, we looked at some easy tools and tricks to help us feel better mentally every day."

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Recap

"We've learned that being 'fit for duty' means taking care of our minds just as much as our bodies. We've busted some myths about mental health in our line of work and found out what's really true. We've also picked up some handy tools to help our minds stay sharp. We've talked about how our mental health can change the way we work with our team and the people in our community. Lastly, we've learned some cool ways to bounce back from tough times and stay strong.

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Fit to serve II

Goal

Upon completion of this course, participants will have created a better understanding of mental fitness in law enforcement, empowering them to add mental well-being strategies into their daily routines. This will not only improve their personal resilience and effectiveness but also foster more compassionate and effective interactions with the communities they serve."

Objectives

4. Appreciate the power of personal testimonies.
5. Recognize the broader impact of officer mental health.
6. Developing resilience.

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The Power of Your Story

A cool cat named Chad, and a loving father named Shane !

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Your Story:
Appreciating the power of personal testimonies.



How do we create spaces for us to encourage each other and share our struggles in law enforcement?

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Ty Shultz- Deputy

Refugio County
Sheriff's Office

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The Broad Impact of
Officer Mental Health

CONE
OF TRUST

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Fit to serve



- **Ripple Affect:** It's important to recognize the broader effect of mental health in officers.

- What are some ways that an officer's mental health can affect their interactions with the public, family, friends. ?

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DSM-5 is silently struggling with PTSD

Fit to Serve

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Resilience Against Unique Stressors

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Building Resilience



METHODS TO MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE RESILIENCE

1. Calming, Optimism, and Happiness

- Calm the heart and mind and the brain will calm as well.
- Use deep breathing. Breathe in a deep breath through your nose; hold your breath 8 seconds; breathe out all the air through pursed lips. Repeat three times, but rest in between each deep breath.
- Try tensing and relaxing muscle groups. Work from the feet toward the head. Tense a muscle group; hold tight 5 to 8 seconds; release tension.
- Substitute positive thoughts for negative ones. "I can handle this" instead of "I am doomed."
- Maintain optimism even with the odds against you. Try to find something that is positive or an advantage.
- Choose happiness.
- Spend more time with happy people; avoid the chronically unhappy people.
- Smile more.
- Compliment others.
- Be a friend to others.

2. Manage Stress to Build Resilience

- Exercise regularly a minimum of 3 times a week and about 20 minutes at a time
- Sleep about 7 hours a night
- Brief power naps during the day can help
- Add movement to your work time. Do not sit still all the time
- Have adequate sunlight
- Eat brain healthy nutrition (vegetables, fruits, nuts, whole grain breads, proteins, etc.)
- Reduce sugar in your diet; reduce carbohydrates
- Avoid alcohol
- Avoid non-prescription drugs
- Avoid all products containing nicotine

3. Prepare for Crisis

- Train, practice for emergencies, build skills
- Learn to assess, analyze, adapt, and alter plans as necessary
- Understand that emotions will change and be intense during a crisis

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Suicides by Law Enforcement

2018-156

2019-198

2020-149

2021-148

2022-169

2023-118

Highest in 15+ year officers.

Highest in Military Veterans

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We've learned being 'fit for duty' means taking care of our minds just as much as our bodies. We've discussed the stigma around mental health in law enforcement. We've also picked up some easy tools to help our minds stay sharp. We listened to stories from fellow officers about their own mental health journeys. We talked about how our mental health can change the way we work with our team and the people in our community. Lastly, we learned some cool ways to bounce back from tough times and stay strong.

Summary

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