



# **Stress Management**

**Annual In-Service Training Curriculum 2026**

Version: NM260014

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## **INSTRUCTOR LESSON**

<b>Version:</b>	NMLEA Accreditation Number: NM260014
<b>Lesson Purpose:</b>	The student will learn what stress is, how it affects them and how to manage it.
<b>Learning Objectives:</b>	<p>During this lesson, students will receive information and instruction on how to do the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Understand the definitions of stress and the effects it has on the body</li><li>2. Identify the types of law enforcement and 911 telecommunicator stressors</li><li>3. List different ways to manage stress</li><li>4. Recognize the facts related to police and 911 telecommunicators suicide</li></ol>
<b>Hours:</b>	1 hr.
<b>Instructional Methods:</b>	Presentation Facilitation, Active Learning, small group discussions, with video content, testing
<b>Required Materials, Aids &amp; Equipment:</b>	Lesson Materials, PowerPoint, Audio-Visual classroom equipment, Flip Chart or Dry Erase Board
<b>Handouts:</b>	None
<b>Testing Requirements:</b>	End-of-course written test

**Videos:****What is PTSD**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lojLqCgQb2Q>

**Recovery Dairies: Detective Rob Davis**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOUziW6SwT4&t=5s>

**Recovery Dairies: Craig Tinneny 911 Dispatcher**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ab7McWKrnbk&t=11s>

**Mindful Breathing Exercise**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfDTp2GogaQ&t=5s>

**How to do Progressive Muscle Relaxation**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nZEdqcGVzo>

**Resilience**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASDBJXDNqvc>

**The Science of Emotion Regulation**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0oG1J2escU&t=540s>

**Suicide Myths**

<https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/8-common-myths-about-suicide>

**The Psychological Toll Of Policing | HuffPost Reports**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CUHLqUamnGY&t=4s>

**Did You Know? - "Dispatcher Stress"**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdXeAqvX8z4>

**The Power of Peer Support for First Responders – Lexipol**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Lw\\_3eX7Spg&t=134s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Lw_3eX7Spg&t=134s)

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02/2026

## Guide Notes

**SLIDE:** Slide, including all text on the slide.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Additional Information for instructor to share or discuss during course

**I. Introduction Stress Management****A. Stress Management**

SLIDE  
Stress Management

**B. Instructional Goal**

SLIDE  
INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS  
The student will learn what stress is, how it affects them and how to manage it.

**C. Objectives**

SLIDE  
Instructional Objectives

1. Understand the definitions of stress and the effects it has on the body
2. Identify the types of law enforcement and 911 telecommunicator stressors
3. List different ways to manage stress
4. Recognize the facts related to police and 911 telecommunicators suicide

**II. Stress****A. Definition of Stress**

SLIDE  
Stress is a normal reaction to everyday pressures but can become unhealthy when it upsets your day-to-day functioning. Stress involves changes affecting nearly every system of the body, influencing how people feel and behave.

By causing mind–body changes, stress contributes directly to psychological and physiological disorder and disease and affects mental and physical health, reducing quality of life.

Adapted from the APA Dictionary of Psychology

<https://dictionary.apa.org/stress>

Instructor Note:

As a law enforcement officer and 911 telecommunicator, you surround yourself with stress. We all want to do a good job and be the best but that may come at a cost. This training will provide tools to help officers before it becomes an issue.

## B. Responses to Stress

SLIDE

Components of Stress

How your brain perceives stress

How your body responds to it

Instructor Note

Stress has at least two components: how your brain perceives the pressure and how your body responds to it. Stress affects many different systems in the body from metabolism to muscles to memory. A threat triggers an acute stress response also called the Flight or Fight response. The fight or flight response is the body's natural physiological reaction to stressful, frightening, or dangerous events. It is activated by the perception of threat, quickly igniting the sympathetic nervous system and releasing hormones, preparing the body to face a threat or run to safety.

<https://biologyinsights.com/what-part-of-the-brain-controls-stress-and-how-it-responds/>

SLIDE

Body's Response to Stress

Instructor Note

The body responds to stress by

Having changes in heart rate, breathing, muscle tension and gastrointestinal issues.

All of this can depress the body's immune system, making us more vulnerable to disease.

Stress hormones such as cortisol are naturally produced every day so we can take on daily challenges.

Long term high levels of stress hormones over time can prompt the brain to function differently leading to memory impairment, cognitive problems, anxiety and depression.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/stress>

### C. Law Enforcement Stressors

SLIDE

What are some stressors Law Enforcement face every day?

Instructor Note

Discussion question or small groups or whiteboard

SLIDE

Law Enforcement Stressors

Poor Management

Inadequate or broken equipment

Excessive Overtime

Rotating Shifts

Regular changes in duties

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10869394/>

SLIDE

Law Enforcement Stressors

Constant Civil Liability

Impending Danger

Dealing with Past or Present Trauma

Public Expectations

The Criminal Justice System Itself

Public Opinion

Having to Control Emotions

Responsibility to Protect the Lives of Others

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10869394/>

<https://www.police1.com/stress/articles/how-police-can-reduce-and-manage-stress-AThewNiseDwMYCcB/>

## D. Telecommunicator Stressors

SLIDE

What are some stressors telecommunicators face every day?

Instructor Note

Discussion question or small groups or whiteboard

SLIDE

Types of  
9-1-1 Telecommunicators Stressors  
Vicarious Trauma  
Immediacy and Responsibility  
Lack of Closure  
Repetitive Exposure

Instructor Note

The 911 dispatcher role has a set of stressors that are different from the experiences of other first responders:

These include:

Vicarious Trauma,

Vicarious trauma is trauma experienced by someone exposed to the trauma of others

For telecommunicators, this includes the auditory trauma of hearing everything, such as the caller's panic and sounds of violence, while not being physically able to intervene, can lead to feelings of helplessness and stress.

Immediacy and Responsibility:

dispatchers must quickly assess situations, Problem solving in real time with limited information, which increases the Mental and emotional workload and stress.

Lack of Closure:

Unlike on-scene responders, dispatchers rarely get closure, disconnecting from a call without knowing if the person survived or if their instructions helped.

Repetitive Exposure:

The high volume of calls and always being in crisis without sufficient time to process leads to high stress levels

<https://www.chatearecovery.com/how-911-dispatchers-handle-stress-and-thrive-under-pressure>

[https://cdn.emergencydispatch.org/AEDR/pdfs/AEDR-2021-1-v6\\_Multilevel-Factors-Associated-with-Stress.pdf](https://cdn.emergencydispatch.org/AEDR/pdfs/AEDR-2021-1-v6_Multilevel-Factors-Associated-with-Stress.pdf)

<https://www.verywellmind.com/vicarious-trauma-the-cost-of-care-and-compassion-7377234>

**SLIDE**

Types of

9-1-1 Telecommunicators

Stressors

Shift Work and Understaffing

Overcommitment

Interpersonal Conflict and Social Support at Work

Instructor Note

The 911 dispatcher role stressors

Long Shift Work and Understaffing: Irregular shifts, long overtime shifts

Disrupted sleep patterns and contribute to adverse health outcomes

Overcommitment – inability to withdraw from work obligations

Interpersonal conflict and social support at work -support from colleagues helps dispatchers to deal with their stress in a beneficial way. Conflict weakens this support system.

<https://www.chatearecovery.com/how-911-dispatchers-handle-stress-and-thrive-under-pressure>

[https://cdn.emergencydispatch.org/AEDR/pdfs/AEDR-2021-1-v6\\_Multilevel-Factors-Associated-with-Stress.pdf](https://cdn.emergencydispatch.org/AEDR/pdfs/AEDR-2021-1-v6_Multilevel-Factors-Associated-with-Stress.pdf)

<https://www.verywellmind.com/vicarious-trauma-the-cost-of-care-and-compassion-7377234>

## E. Consequences of Stress

### SLIDE

First Responders experiencing occupational stress report the following symptoms

Physical (fatigue, headaches, dizziness)

Cognitive (confusion, poor concentration, poor memory)

Emotional (depression, anger, irritability)

Behavioral (antisocial behavior, loss of appetite, increased alcohol consumption)

### Instructor Note

Short Term responses to stress

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8430437/>

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9523087/>

### SLIDE

Consequences of Stress

Cynicism and burnout

Emotional detachment

Aggressiveness and irritability

Alcoholism and other substance abuse problems

Marital or other family problems

Post-traumatic stress disorder

Health problems

Suicidal Ideations and Suicide

### Instructor Note

Just as in any profession, untreated stress can lead to serious consequences. These consequences not only affect the individual officer and

telecommunicator but also those with whom they have daily contact such as colleagues, supervisors, friends, family and the public.

Some of the more common consequences of longer-term Job-related stress are

Cynicism and burnout

Emotional detachment from various aspects of daily life

Aggressiveness and irritability

Alcoholism and other substance abuse problems

Marital or other family problems (extramarital affairs, divorce, child abuse, or domestic violence)

Post-traumatic stress disorder

Heart attacks, ulcers, weight gain, and other health problems

Suicidal Ideations (suicidal thoughts) and Suicide

<https://www.police1.com/stress/articles/how-police-can-reduce-and-manage-stress-AThewNlseDwMYCcB/>

<https://icjia.illinois.gov/researchhub/articles/understanding-police-officer-stress-a-review-of-the-literature>

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8430437/#sec1PTSD>

**F. PTSD**

Video

What is PTSD

<https://adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/posttraumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lojLqCgQb2Q>

SLIDE

PTSD

People may have a range of reactions after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event, such as a natural disaster, act of violence, or serious accident. Common reactions include feeling anxious, sad, or angry; having trouble concentrating and sleeping; and thinking about what happened. Most people will recover from these symptoms, and their reactions will lessen over time.

People may be diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) if their symptoms last for an extended period after a traumatic event and begin to interfere with aspects of daily life, such as relationships or work. People who have PTSD may continue to feel stressed or frightened, even though they are not in danger.

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd>

[https://www.nimh.nih.gov/sites/default/files/documents/health/publications/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/post-traumatic-stress-disorder\\_1.pdf](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/sites/default/files/documents/health/publications/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/post-traumatic-stress-disorder_1.pdf)

<https://adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/posttraumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd>

## SLIDE

PTSD is characterized by four main types of symptoms:

1. Re-experiencing the trauma through intrusive distressing memories, flashbacks, and nightmares
2. Emotional numbness and avoidance of places, people, and activities that are reminders of the trauma
3. Feeling cut off from others and having negative thoughts and feelings
4. Feeling on edge, including difficulty sleeping and concentrating, feeling on alert and jumpy, easily irritated, and angered

## Instructor Note

Seek Professional guidance to help with these symptoms.

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd>

[https://www.nimh.nih.gov/sites/default/files/documents/health/publications/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/post-traumatic-stress-disorder\\_1.pdf](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/sites/default/files/documents/health/publications/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/post-traumatic-stress-disorder_1.pdf)

<https://adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/posttraumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd>

## Video

Recovery Dairies

Detective Rob Davis

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOUziW6SwT4&t=5s>

## Video

Recovery Dairies

Craig Tinneney 911 Dispatcher

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ab7McWKrnbk&t=11s>

### III Stress Management Techniques

#### A. Tools

##### SLIDE

##### Tools for the Toolbox

The following slides will provide exercises for managing stress short-term, long-term and in the moment.

##### SLIDE

##### Managing Stress

Breathing exercises: Concentrating on breathing in a rhythmic pattern will assist in calming down.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation: this can be done in the unit before taking the next call.

Grounding Techniques: refocusing on what is happening in the present moment.

#### 1. Breathing

##### SLIDE

##### Box Breathing

Box breathing can damp down the body's sympathetic nervous system, which directs our response to dangerous or stressful situations. It also engages the parasympathetic nervous system, which controls the body's ability to relax.

Box breathing also can be used to calm a racing mind when you're trying to sleep and to help soothe pain

This breathwork is used by military and law enforcement personnel to remain calm and collected in dangerous situations

##### Instructor Note

Also called tactical breathing

<https://doi.org/10.1183/20734735.009817>

<https://www.verywellhealth.com/box-breathing-8423967>

## SLIDE

## Box Breathing

1. Gradually take a full inhalation through the nose while counting one, two, three, four. With each count, draw in more air, so when you reach the count of four, you inhale to your maximum.
2. Hold your breath as you count one, two, three, four again.
3. Then slowly exhale through the mouth, again counting from one to four. Release some air with each count, fully exhaling when you reach four.
4. After full exhalation, hold your breath again for a count of four.
5. Repeat the breathing cycle several times

<https://www.verywellhealth.com/box-breathing-8423967>

## SLIDE

## Diaphragmatic Breathing - Deep Belly Breathing

1. Sit or lie down on a comfortable, flat surface.
2. Relax your shoulders, shifting them downward away from the ears.
3. Put a hand on your chest and a hand on your stomach.
4. Without straining or pushing, breathe in through your nose until you can't take in any more air.
5. Feel the air moving through your nostrils into your abdomen, expanding your stomach and sides of the waist. Your chest remains relatively still.
6. Purse your lips as if sipping through a straw. Exhale slowly through your lips for 4 seconds and feel your stomach gently contracting.
7. Repeat these steps several times for best results.

## Instructor Note

Diaphragmatic breathing is a breathing technique that involves using the diaphragm muscle to draw air into the lungs.

Diaphragmatic breathing can improve sustained attention, emotional state, and cortisol levels.

Studies show that diaphragmatic breathing positively impacts mental health and physical health

<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00874/full>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/diaphragmatic-breathing>

## 2. Grounding

SLIDE

Grounding

Look Name three things you see around you

Listen Name 3 sounds you hear

Move Move three parts of your body (ankles, fingers, arms, toes, etc.)

Instructor Note

Grounding techniques are used to help individuals reconnect with their bodies and the present moment, often when feeling overwhelmed by thoughts, emotions, or past experiences. They can be a valuable tool for managing anxiety, panic attacks, flashbacks, and dissociation. By shifting focus to the senses and the immediate surroundings, grounding techniques can help reduce the intensity of difficult emotions and feelings.

<https://www.southdenvertherapy.com/blog/3-3-3-rule-for-anxiety>

<https://www.verywellmind.com/3-3-3-rule-for-anxiety-8660964>

Video

Mindful Breathing Exercise

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfDTp2GogaQ&t=5s>

### 3. Progressive Muscle Relaxation

#### SLIDE

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

One muscle group at a time

Tense each muscle group

Hold this tension for five seconds while breathing in

Release and relax that muscle all at once

Move on to next muscle group

Muscle Group Examples

Fists

Biceps

Triceps

Forehead

Eyes

Jaw

Tongue

Lips

Neck

Shoulders

Lower Back

Buttocks

Thighs

Calves

Shins and Ankles

#### Instructor Note

Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) is a technique that helps reduce stress and anxiety by systematically tensing and then relaxing different muscle groups in your body.

#### PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION EXERCISE

can be practiced in a comfortable position sitting or lying down in a place where you will be undisturbed for 10-15 minutes. Focus your attention on each of the groups of muscles in the list below and work through them one muscle group at a time. Tense each muscle group and notice how that muscle feels when it is tensed. Hold this tension for five seconds while

breathing in. Then, release and relax that muscle all at once. Pay close attention to

the feeling of relaxation when releasing the contracted muscle.

Practice tensing this same muscle group one or two more times but using less tension each time. This helps build awareness of tension in the body and improves the

ability to differentiate between tension and relaxation in certain muscle groups. Make sure not to hold your breath during this practice. If it begins to hurt, cramp, or feel uncomfortable while tensing a certain part of the body, reduce the contraction or stop and move on to the next muscle group.

When going through the Progressive muscle relaxation exercise, it is recommended to start at one part of your body and move systematically. For example, some people start with the feet, others at the face. You may do one side of the body (hand, arm, leg, foot) at a time, or do both sides at the same time.

- Fists – Clench both fists and hold
- Biceps – Bend elbows, tense bicep muscles
- Triceps – Straighten arms, tense muscles in back of arms
- Forehead – Wrinkle forehead in a frown and hold
- Eyes – Close eyes tightly and hold
- Jaw – Gently clench jaw
- Tongue – Press against roof of mouth and hold
- Lips – Press together and hold
- Neck – Gently press neck back and hold. Then bring head forward to chest and hold
- Shoulders – Shrug shoulders as high as you can and hold stomach out as much as possible and hold
- Lower back – Gently arch up
- Buttocks – Tighten muscles in buttocks and hold
- Thighs – Tense by lifting legs off floor and hold
- Calves – Press toes downward, as if burying them in sand
- Shins and ankles – Bend feet toward head and hold

<https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTHLIBRARY/docs/Progressive-Muscle-Relaxation.pdf>[Resiliency](#)

## VIDEO

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Video

How to do Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Therapist Aid. (2014). How to do Progressive Muscle Relaxation. In

YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nZEdqcGVzo>

Instructor Note

Encourage class to participate in this exercise while seated.

**B. Resiliency and Self-Regulation**

## SLIDE

Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress

Instructor Note

Keep in mind

One of the basic tenets of resilience is social support, which means adversity and trauma are not faced alone.

<https://psychcentral.com/lib/what-is-resilience>

Video

Resilience

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASDBJXDNqvc>

## SLIDE

## Characteristics of Resilient People

## Effective Emotional Regulation

Ability to manage emotions in the face of stress.

## Problem-solving Skills

Ability to look at situations rationally and come up with solutions

## Self-compassion

Having self-acceptance and self-compassion

## Social Support

Having solid network of supportive people

## Instructor Note

Characteristics of Resilient People include:

Effective emotional regulation: the ability to manage emotions in the face of stress. This doesn't mean that resilient people don't experience strong emotions such as anger, sadness, or fear. It means that they recognize those feelings are temporary and can be managed until they pass.

Problem-solving skills: When problems arise, resilient people look at the situation rationally and try to come up with solutions that will make a difference.

Self-compassion: showing self-acceptance and self-compassion. Resilient people treat themselves with kindness, especially when things are hard.

Social support: A solid network of supportive people  
. Resilient people recognize the importance of support and know when to ask for help.

<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-resilience-2795059>

## SLIDE

## Self-Regulation

Reducing the frequency and intensity of strong impulses by managing stress load and recovery

Seeks to identify and reduce the causes of problems in mood, thought, and behaviors

## Self-Control

Inhibiting strong emotional impulses

Happens when the strong emotional impulses arise

## INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Resilience involves the ability to self-regulate.

There is a difference between self-regulation and self-control.

Self-control is about inhibiting strong impulses.

self-regulation is about reducing the frequency and intensity of strong impulses by managing stress-load and recovery.

self-regulation is what makes self-control possible, or often, unnecessary

## Dam analogy

Water is strong emotions

Self-control is holding back the flood waters of strong emotions

Self-regulation is managing the water before it reaches flood levels, while also repairing and strengthening the dam

<https://www.calmsage.com/self-regulation-techniques/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/self-reg/201607/self-regulation-vs-self-control?msocid=2b3317d68cdf69d501de01078d09681f>

### C. Stress Management Strategies

#### VIDEO

##### Emotional Regulation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0oG1J2escU&t=540s>

The Science of Emotion Regulation: How Our Brains Process Emotions

#### Instructor Note

<https://openemotionwheel.com/downloads>

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0956797612443830>

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/self-regulation-for-adults-strategies-for-getting-a-handle-on-emotions-and-behavior>

#### SLIDE

##### Stress Management Strategies

Keep a journal.

Exercise

Eating healthy, regular meals

Establish healthy sleep routines

Avoid excess caffeine

#### Instructor Note

Stress management strategies

Keep a journal. It helps process the day, and including emotional states helps you recognize patterns

Exercise, and make sure you are eating healthy, regular meals.

Stick to a sleep routine, and make sure you are getting enough sleep.

Good sleep hygiene includes habits, routines, and environmental adjustments that promote consistent, restorative sleep and overall health.

Avoid drinking excess caffeine such as soft drinks or coffee. Caffeine affects your sleep hygiene

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/so-stressed-out-fact-sheet>

<https://neurocreativehive.com/practical-self-regulation-techniques-and-strategies-for-daily-life/>

**SLIDE****Stress Management Strategies**

Evaluate your alcohol consumption, cannabis or tobacco use, or other drugs habits

Identify and challenge your negative and unhelpful thoughts

Use positive self-talk

Reach out to others

Recognize when you need more help

**Instructor Note****Stress management strategies**

Seriously evaluate your alcohol consumption, cannabis and tobacco use, or other drugs habits. Is this something you need every day? What does it look like if you don't imbibe or use these items?

Alcohol use – have you recently changed:

from beer to hard liquor,  
increased the number of drinks per day,  
added more times of day,  
increased the size of the containers,  
are drinking in secret, etc....

Identify and challenge your negative and unhelpful thoughts.

Use positive self-talk –

examples:

You've got this,

I am grateful for ...,

mistakes are part of life and I learn from them,

my past does not define me,

I deserve happiness,

I can achieve my goals,

I am worthy of love and respect

Reach out to your friends or family members who help you cope in a positive way.

Recognize When You Need More Help –

If you are struggling to cope, or the symptoms of your stress or anxiety won't go away, it may be time to talk to a professional.

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/so-stressed-out-fact-sheet>

<https://neurocreativehive.com/practical-self-regulation-techniques-and-strategies-for-daily-life/>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/positive-self-talk#identify-the-negative>

**SLIDE**

Resilience Building

Exercise

Write down three things that went well yesterday and why they happened

Instructor Note

If students are comfortable sharing out, ask if anyone would like to share an example with the group

Discuss why this exercise helps to build resilience

Expand on this exercise by

Each night for a week, write down three things that went well that day and why they happened.

<https://positivepsychology.com/resilience-activities-exercises/>

## IV Suicide and First Responders

## SLIDE

## Suicide and First Responders

## Instructor Note

Law enforcement officer rates of suicide are higher than the general population. Relationship problems and job stress are the top variables among officer suicides. Critical events contribute to officers and 911 telecommunicators trauma and stress, increasing suicide risk.

## Links for discussion:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1359178921001038>

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2022/06/10/high-suicide-rate-police-firefighters-mental-health/7470846001/>

<https://www.police1.com/health-wellness/suicide-in-law-enforcement-why-police-leaders-must-confront-myths-and-change-culture>

## A. What is Suicide

## SLIDE

## What is suicide?

Suicide is when people harm themselves with the intent of ending their life, and they die as a result. A suicide attempt is when people harm themselves with the intent of ending their life, but they do not die.

Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States and a major public health concern.

Suicide is not about weakness or selfishness.

## Instructor Note

People of all backgrounds can be at risk of suicide. Suicidal behavior is complex, and there is no single cause.

<https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/data.html>

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide>

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/suicide-prevention>

**B. Suicide Myths**

## Video

## Suicide Myths

<https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/8-common-myths-about-suicide>

<https://nmcrisisline.com/>

[https://988lifeline.org /](https://988lifeline.org/)

## Instructor Note

Have a follow up discussion about the 7 myths about suicide.

What surprised you?

How can you use this information to help those around you?

Myth 1: Talking about suicide increases the chance a person will act on it.

Fact: Talking about suicide may reduce, rather than increase, suicidal ideation. It improves mental health-related outcomes and the likelihood that the person will seek treatment. Opening this conversation helps people find an alternative view of their existing circumstances. If someone is in crisis or depressed, asking if they are thinking about suicide can help, so don't hesitate to start the conversation.

Myth 2: People who talk about suicide are just seeking attention.

Fact: People who die from suicide have often told someone about not wanting to live anymore or that they don't see the future. It's always important to take it seriously when somebody talks about feeling suicidal.

It's important to be kind and sensitive and ask direct questions, including:

"Are you thinking about suicide? "

"Are you planning to kill yourself?"

"What is your plan?"

"Do you have access to a gun ....?"

Myth 3: Suicide can't be prevented.

Fact: Suicide is preventable but unpredictable. Most people who contemplate suicide often experience intense emotional pain, hopelessness and have a

negative view of life or their future. Suicide is a product of genes, mental health illnesses and environmental risk factors. Interventions targeted to treat psychiatric and substance-use illnesses can save lives.

Myth 4: People who take their own lives are selfish, cowardly or weak.

Fact: People don't die of suicide by choice. Often, people who die of suicide experience significant emotional pain and find it difficult to consider different views or see a way out of their situation.

Myth 5: Teenagers and college students are the most at risk for suicide.

Fact: The suicide rate for this age group is below the national average. Although certain groups may be at higher risk, suicide is a problem among all ages and groups.

Myth 6: Suicide always occurs without warning.

Fact: There are almost always warning signs before a suicide attempt.

Here are a few common signs:

Being preoccupied with death, dying or violence.

Changing regular routine, including eating or sleeping patterns.

Developing personality changes or being severely anxious or agitated, particularly when experiencing some of the warning signs listed above.

Doing risky or self-destructive things, such as using drugs or driving recklessly.

Feeling trapped or hopeless about a situation.

Getting the means to take your own life, such as buying a gun or stockpiling pills.

Giving away belongings or getting affairs in order when there is no other logical explanation for doing this.

Having mood swings, such as being emotionally high one day and deeply discouraged the next.

Increasing use of alcohol or drugs.

Saying goodbye to people as if they won't be seen again.

Talking about suicide — making statements such as, "I'm going to kill myself," "I wish I were dead" or "I wish I hadn't been born."

Withdrawing from social contact and wanting to be left alone.

Myth 7: Talk therapy and medications don't work.

Fact: Treatment can and does work. One of the best ways to prevent suicide is by getting treatment for mental illnesses, such as depression, bipolar illness or substance abuse, and learning ways to cope with problems. Finding the best treatment can take some time, but the proper treatment can significantly reduce the risk of suicide.

If a friend or loved one talks or behaves in a way that makes you believe they might attempt suicide, don't try to handle the situation alone:

Encourage the person to call a suicide hotline number.

Call the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org to reach a trained counselor.

Get help from a trained professional as quickly as possible.

The person may need to be hospitalized until the suicidal crisis has passed.

You're not responsible for preventing someone from taking their own life, but your intervention may help them see that other options are available to stay safe and get treatment.

<https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/8-common-myths-about-suicide>

### C. Suicide numbers for First Responders

SLIDE

Number of Reported Suicides 2020 to 2025

Law Enforcement 79% or 654 reported deaths

Instructor Note

Data from <https://bluehelp.org/the-numbers/>

NM data

<https://ibis.doh.nm.gov/indicator/summary/SuicDeath.html>

US data

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/suicide-rates-by-state>

<https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/rates-by-state.html>

SLIDE

How are stressors connected to high law enforcement suicide rates?

What other factors contribute to high suicide law enforcement suicide rates?

Instructor Note

Discussion or small groups activity

#### D. Suicide Warnings Signs

SLIDE

Warning Signs of Suicide

The behaviors listed below may be some of the signs that someone is thinking about suicide.

Talking about:

Wanting to die

Great guilt or shame

Being a burden to others

Feeling:

Empty, hopeless, trapped, or having no reason to live

Extremely sad, more anxious, agitated, or full of rage

Unbearable emotional or physical pain

Instructor Note

Click animation

SLIDE continued

Changing behavior, such as:

Making a plan or researching ways to die

Withdrawing from friends, saying goodbye, giving away important items, or making a will

Taking dangerous risks such as driving extremely fast

Displaying extreme mood swings

Eating or sleeping more or less

Using drugs or alcohol more often

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/warning-signs-of-suicide>

#### Instructor Note

If these warning signs apply to you or someone you know, get help as soon as possible, particularly if the behavior is new or has increased recently.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Call or text 988

Chat at 988lifeline.org

#### E. Helping someone having thoughts of suicide

##### SLIDE

##### 5 Action Steps to Help Someone Having Thoughts of Suicide

Ask “Are you thinking about suicide”

Be There

Help Keep Them Safe

Help Them Connect 988

Follow up

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/5-action-steps-to-help-someone-having-thoughts-of-suicide>

#### Instructor Note

##### What to do if A peer is At Risk of Suicide

Here are 5 steps you can take to help a peer who is having thoughts of suicide:

**ASK:** “Are you thinking about suicide?” It’s not an easy question to ask, but it can help start a conversation. Studies show that asking people if they are suicidal does not increase suicidal behavior or thoughts.

**BE THERE:** Listening without judgment is key to learning what the person is thinking and feeling. Research suggests acknowledging and talking about suicide may reduce suicidal thoughts.

**HELP KEEP THEM SAFE:** Reducing access to highly lethal items or places can help prevent suicide. Asking the person if they have a plan and making lethal means less available or less deadly can help the person stay safe when suicidal thoughts arise.

**HELP THEM CONNECT:** Connecting the person with the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (call or text 988) and other community resources can give them a safety net when they need it. You can also help them reach out to a trusted family member, friend, spiritual advisor, or mental health professional.

**FOLLOW UP:** Staying in touch with the person after they have experienced a crisis or been discharged from care can make a difference. Studies show that supportive, ongoing contact can play an important role in prevention of suicide.

From

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/5-action-steps-to-help-someone-having-thoughts-of-suicide>

Video

The Psychological Toll of Policing

The Psychological Toll of Policing | HuffPost Reports

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CUHLqUamnGY&t=4s>

Video

Did You Know? - "Dispatcher Stress "

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdXeAqvX8z4>

Video

Dispatch Wellness | Critical Incident Stress Management, edited

Ashley Valenzuela, The Raspy Dispatcher

Full video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ID8rvBeDqa0&t=716s>

## F. Peer Support

### Video

The Power of Peer Support for First Responders – Lexipol

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Lw\\_3eX7Spg&t=134s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Lw_3eX7Spg&t=134s)

### SLIDE

#### Peer Support

Peer support programs for officers and 911 telecommunicators provide a confidential and supportive environment where they can connect with their peers to discuss difficult experiences, gain emotional support, and navigate challenging situations.

Contact your agency to see what resources are available.

## IV Conclusion

### SLIDE

What will I do today to manage the stress in my life?

### Instructor Note

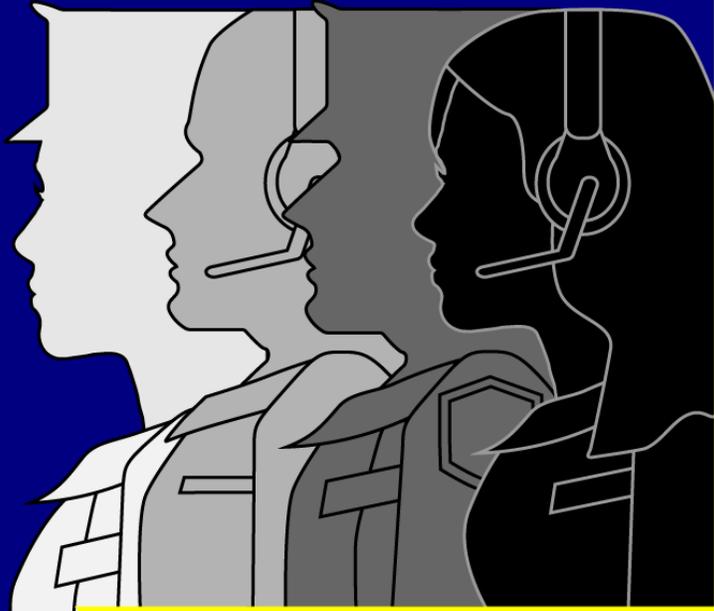
Discussion or journaling activity

### Conclusion

Stress management should be something thought about every day. Law enforcement and 911 telecommunicators should be asking themselves, “what can I do today to minimize my stress levels or remove some stress from my life.” Use the tools discussed in this training to focus on coping with on-the-job- stress and become more resilient. Ask for help and support.

**NEW MEXICO  
LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY**

**D  
P  
S**



# **Stress Management**

NMLEA Accreditation: NM260014

**Course Goal:**  
The Student will learn what stress is, how it affects them and how to manage it.

**Course Objectives:**

- **Understand the definitions of stress and the effects it has on the body**
- **Identify the types of law enforcement and 911 telecommunicator stressors**
- **List different ways to manage stress**
- **Recognize the facts related to police and 911 telecommunicators suicide**

# Stress



**Stress is a normal reaction to everyday pressures but can become unhealthy when it upsets your day-to-day functioning. Stress involves changes affecting nearly every system of the body, influencing how people feel and behave.**

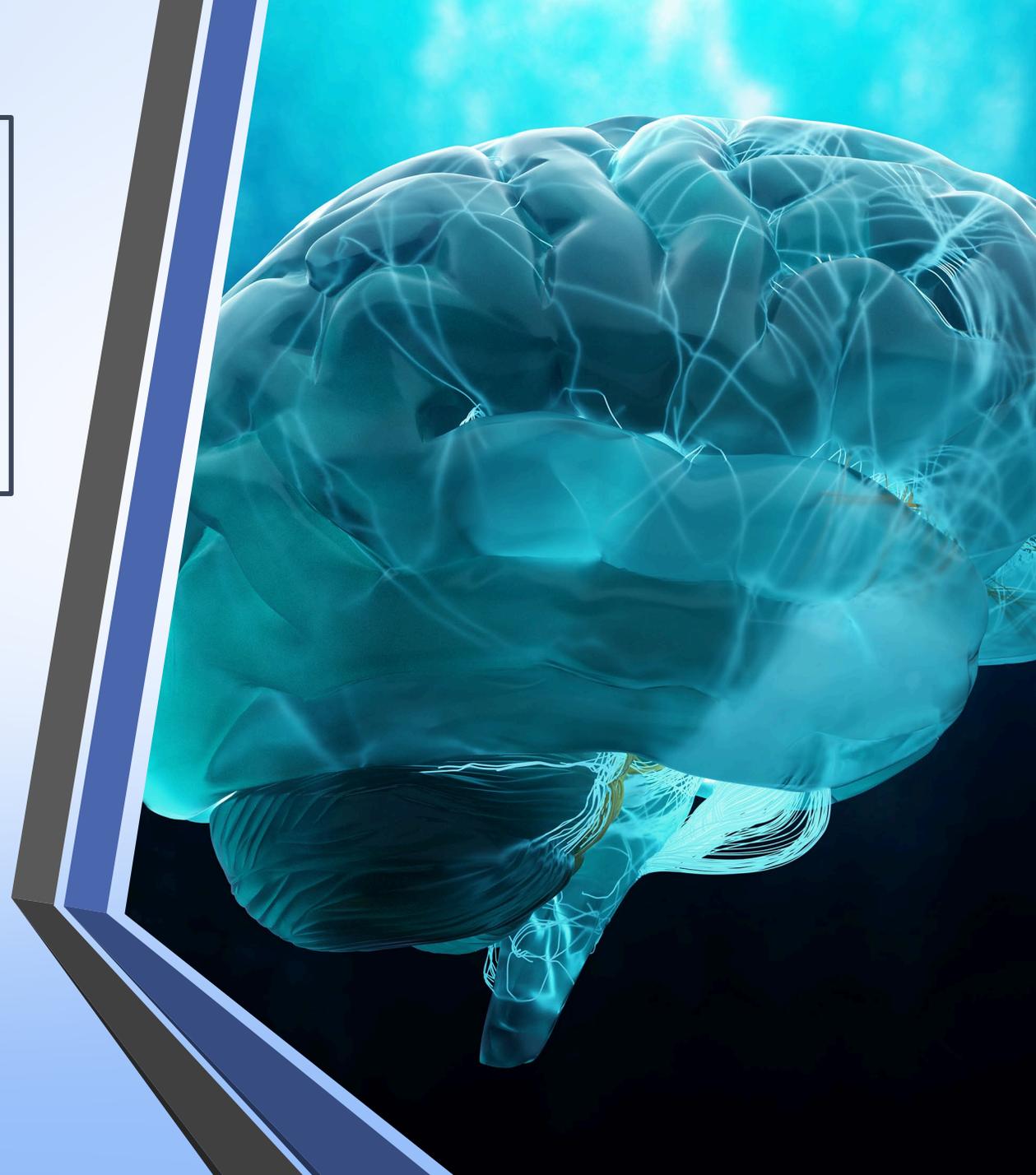
**By causing mind–body changes, stress contributes directly to psychological and physiological disorder and disease and affects mental and physical health, reducing quality of life.**

Adapted from the [APA Dictionary of Psychology](#)

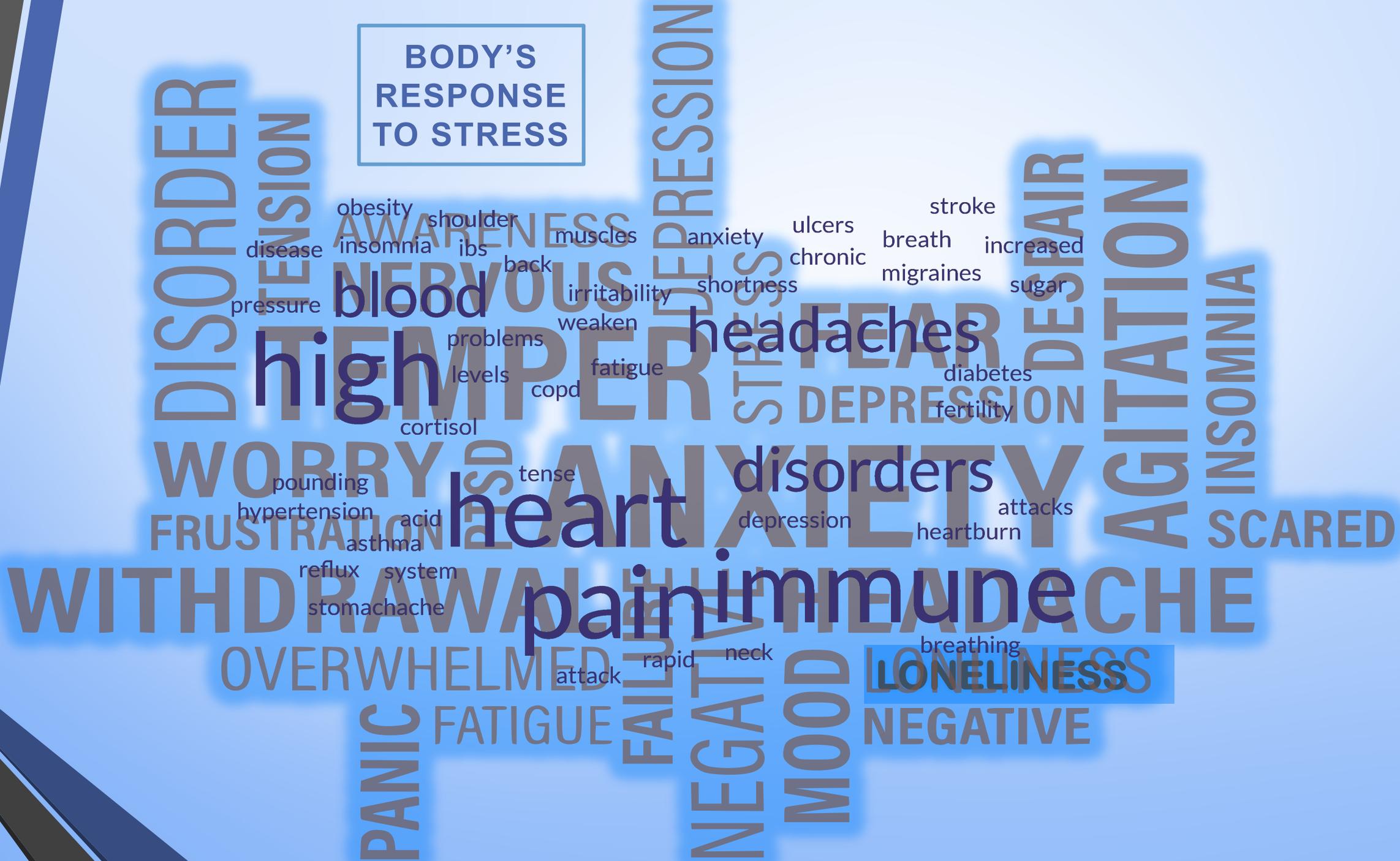
# Components of Stress

How your brain perceives stress

How your body responds to it



BODY'S  
RESPONSE  
TO STRESS





**What are some stressors  
Law Enforcement face every day?**

**LAW  
ENFORCEMENT  
STRESSORS**



Poor Management



Inadequate or Broken Equipment



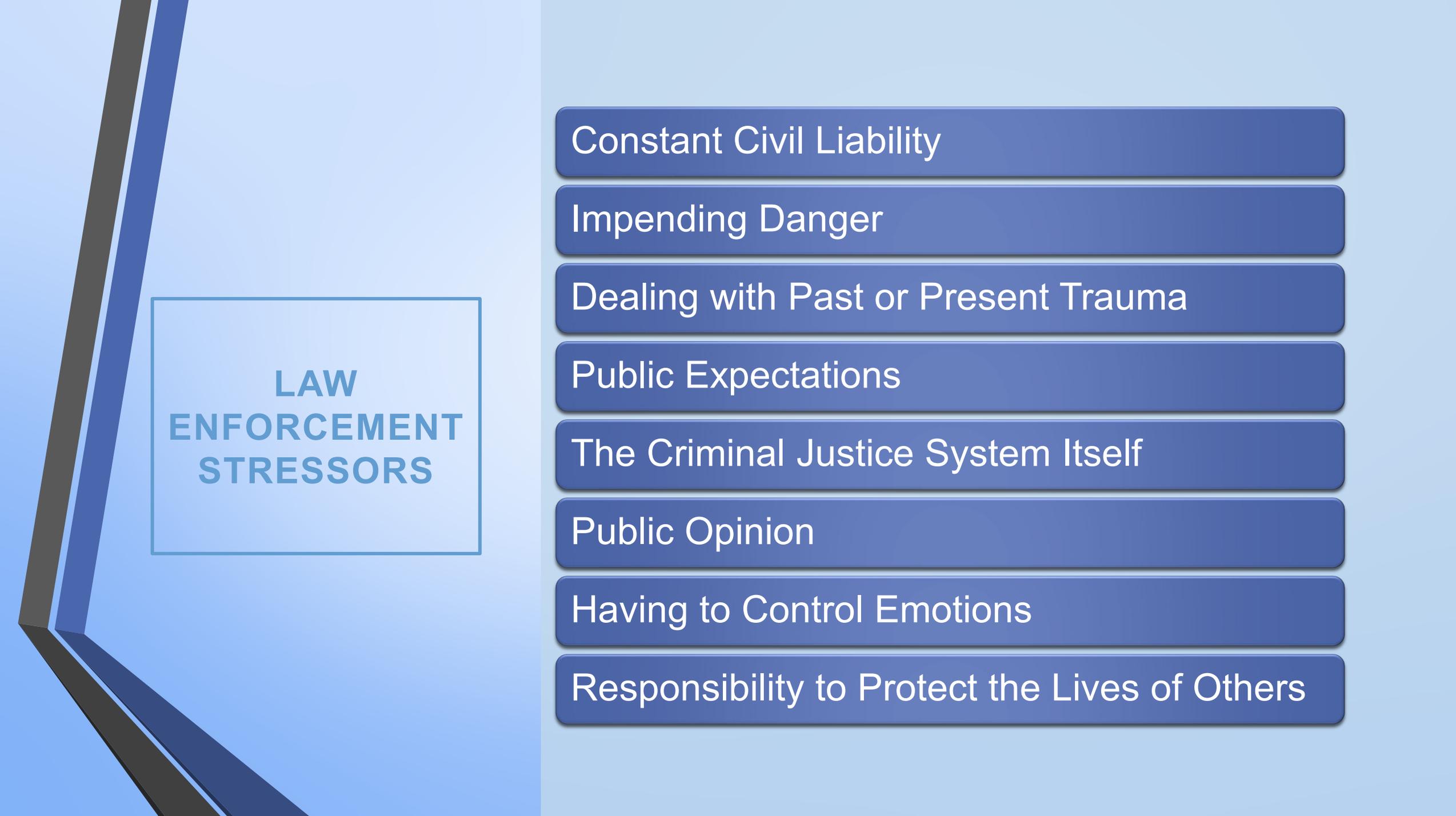
Excessive Overtime



Rotating Shifts



Regular Changes in Duties



**LAW  
ENFORCEMENT  
STRESSORS**

Constant Civil Liability

Impending Danger

Dealing with Past or Present Trauma

Public Expectations

The Criminal Justice System Itself

Public Opinion

Having to Control Emotions

Responsibility to Protect the Lives of Others



**What are some stressors  
Telecommunicators face every day?**

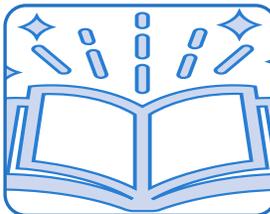
**TYPES OF  
9-1-1  
TELECOMMUNICATORS  
STRESSORS**



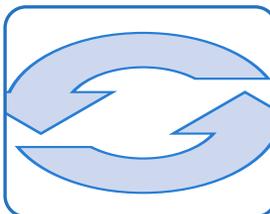
**Vicarious Trauma**



**Immediacy and Responsibility**



**Lack of Closure**



**Repetitive Exposure**

TYPES OF  
9-1-1  
TELECOMMUNICATORS  
STRESSORS



**Shift Work and Understaffing**



**Overcommitment**



**Interpersonal Conflict and Social Support at Work**

First  
Responders  
experiencing  
occupational  
Stress report  
the following  
symptoms

**Physical** (fatigue, headaches,  
dizziness)

**Cognitive** (confusion, poor  
concentration, poor memory)

**Emotional** ( depression, anger,  
irritability)

**Behavioral** (antisocial behavior, loss  
of appetite, increased alcohol  
consumption)



## Consequences Of Stress

- Cynicism and Burnout
- Emotional Detachment
- Aggressiveness and Irritability
- Alcoholism and other Substance Abuse Problems
- Marital or other Family Problems
- Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
- Health Problems
- Suicidal Ideations and Suicide

# PTSD

People may have a range of reactions after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event, such as a natural disaster, act of violence, or serious accident. Common reactions include feeling anxious, sad, or angry; having trouble concentrating and sleeping; and thinking about what happened. Most people will recover from these symptoms, and their reactions will lessen over time.

People may be diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) if their symptoms last for an extended period after a traumatic event and begin to interfere with aspects of daily life, such as relationships or work. People who have PTSD may continue to feel stressed or frightened, even though they are not in danger.

**PTSD Is  
Characterized  
By 4 Main  
Types Of  
Symptoms:**

**1**

**Re-experiencing the trauma through intrusive distressing memories, flashbacks, and nightmares**

**2**

**Emotional numbness and avoidance of places, people, and activities that are reminders of the trauma**

**3**

**Feeling cut off from others and having negative thoughts and feelings**

**4**

**Feeling on edge, including difficulty sleeping and concentrating, feeling on alert and jumpy, easily irritated, and angered**

# Tools for the Toolbox



The following slides will provide exercises for managing stress short-term, long-term and in the moment.

# Managing Stress

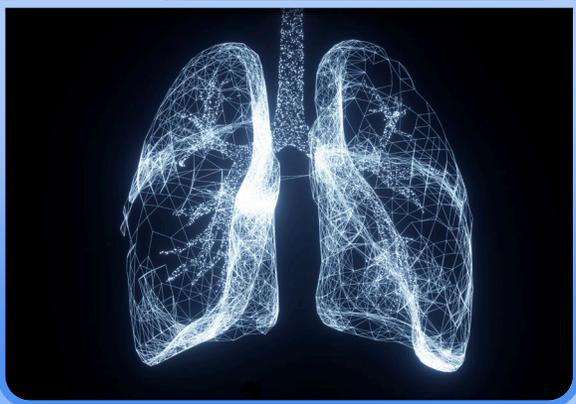
**Breathing exercises:** Concentrating on breathing in a rhythmic pattern will assist in calming down.

**Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** this can be done in the unit before taking the next call.

**Grounding Techniques:** refocusing on what is happening in the present moment.



# Box Breathing

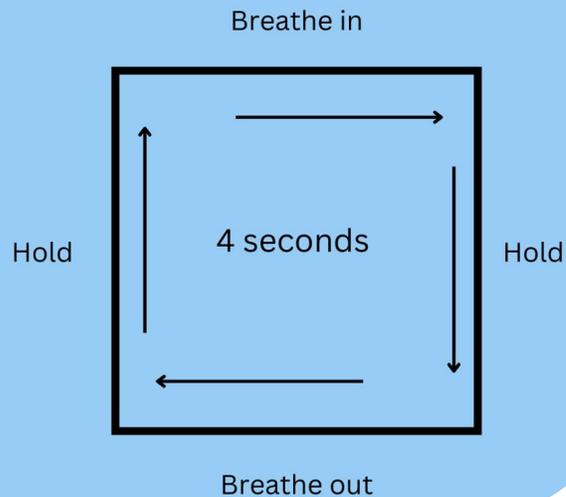


Box breathing can damp down the body's sympathetic nervous system, which directs our response to dangerous or stressful situations. It also engages the parasympathetic nervous system, which controls the body's ability to relax.

Box breathing also can be used to calm a racing mind when you're trying to sleep and to help soothe pain

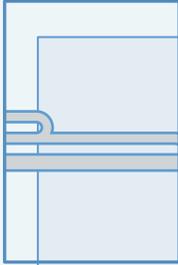
This breathwork is used by military and law enforcement personnel to **remain calm and collected in dangerous situations**

### Box Breathing

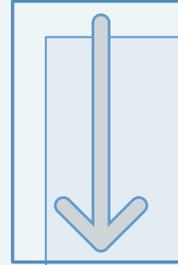


1. Gradually take a full inhalation through the nose while counting one, two, three, four. With each count, draw in more air, so when you reach the count of four, you inhale to your maximum.
2. Hold your breath as you count one, two, three, four again.
3. Then slowly exhale through the mouth, again counting from one to four. Release some air with each count, fully exhaling when you reach four.
4. After full exhalation, hold your breath again for a count of four.
5. Repeat the breathing cycle several times.

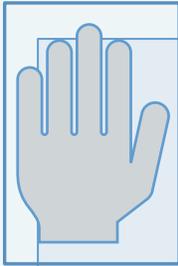
# Diaphragmatic Breathing - Deep Belly Breathing



Sit or lie down on a comfortable, flat surface.



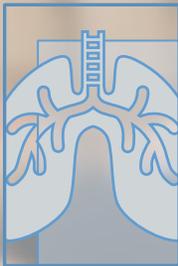
Relax your shoulders, shifting them downward away from the ears.



Put a hand on your chest and a hand on your stomach.



Without straining or pushing, breathe in through your nose until you can't take in any more air.



Feel the air moving through your nostrils into your abdomen, expanding your stomach and sides of the waist. Your chest remains relatively still.



Purse your lips as if sipping through a straw. Exhale slowly through your lips for 4 seconds and feel your stomach gently contracting.



Repeat these steps several times for best results.

# Grounding



**Look**  
Name  
three  
things you  
see around  
you

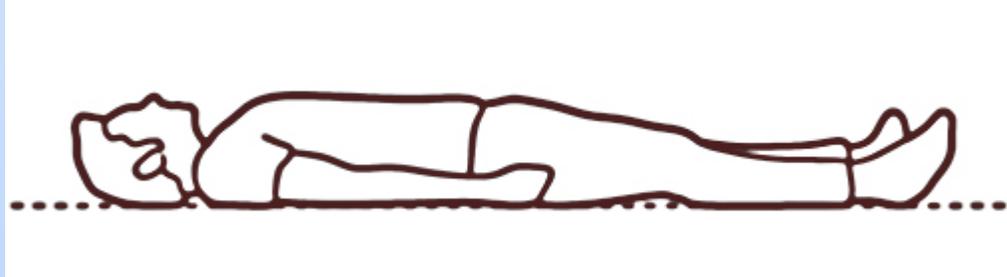


**Listen**  
Name  
three  
sounds  
you hear



**Move**  
Move three  
parts of  
your body  
(ankle, fingers,  
arm, toes, etc.)

# Progressive Muscle Relaxation



**One muscle group at a time**

**Tense each muscle group**

**Hold this tension for five seconds while breathing in**

**Release and relax that muscle all at once**

**Move on to next muscle group**

## Muscle Group Examples

- Fists
- Biceps
- Triceps
- Forehead
- Eyes
- Jaw
- Tongue
- Lips
- Neck
- Shoulders
- Lower Back
- Buttocks
- Thighs
- Calves
- Shins and Ankles

# Resiliency

Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress



# Characteristics of Resilient People

## Effective Emotional Regulation

Ability to manage emotions in the face of stress.

## Problem-solving Skills

Ability to look at situations rationally and come up with solutions

## Self-compassion

Having self-acceptance and self-compassion

## Social Support

Having solid network of supportive people

## Self-Regulation

- Reducing the frequency and intensity of strong impulses by managing stress load and recovery
- Seeks to identify and reduce the causes of problems in mood, thought, and behaviors

## Self-Control

- Inhibiting strong emotional impulses
- Happens when the strong emotional impulses arise



# Stress Management Strategies



- Keep a journal.



- Exercise



- Eating healthy, regular meals



- Establish healthy sleep routines



- Avoid excess caffeine

# Stress Management Strategies

- Evaluate your alcohol consumption, cannabis or tobacco use, or other drugs habits
- Identify and challenge your negative and unhelpful thoughts
- Use positive self talk
- Reach out to others
- Recognize when you need more help

# Resilience Building Exercise

Write down three things that went well yesterday and why they happened



# Suicide and First Responders

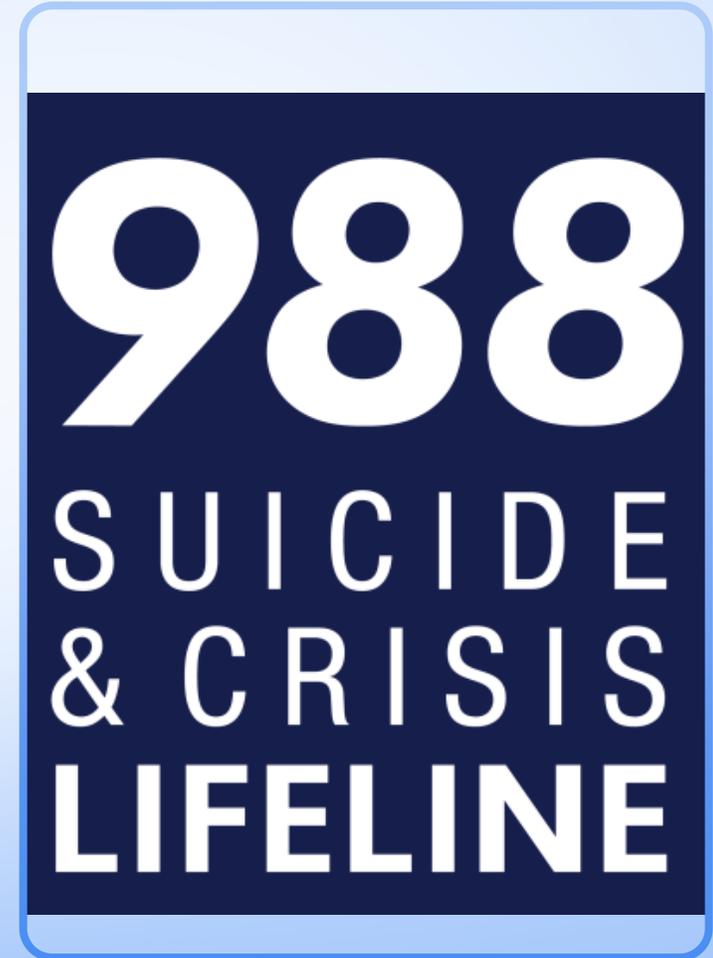


# What is Suicide?

Suicide is when people harm themselves with the intent of ending their life, and they die as a result. A suicide attempt is when people harm themselves with the intent of ending their life, but they do not die.

Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States and a major public health concern.

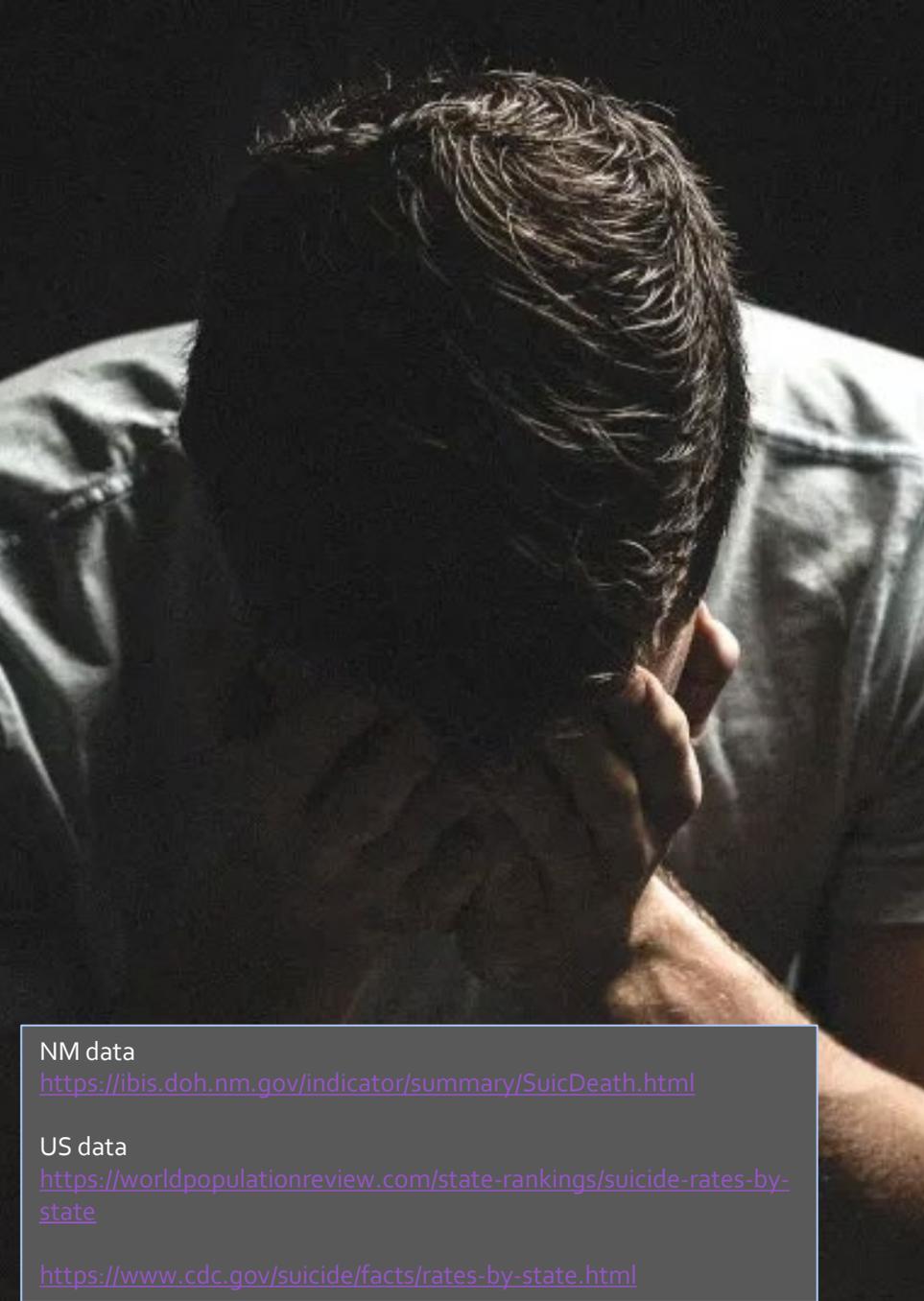
Suicide is not about weakness or selfishness.



<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/suicide-prevention>

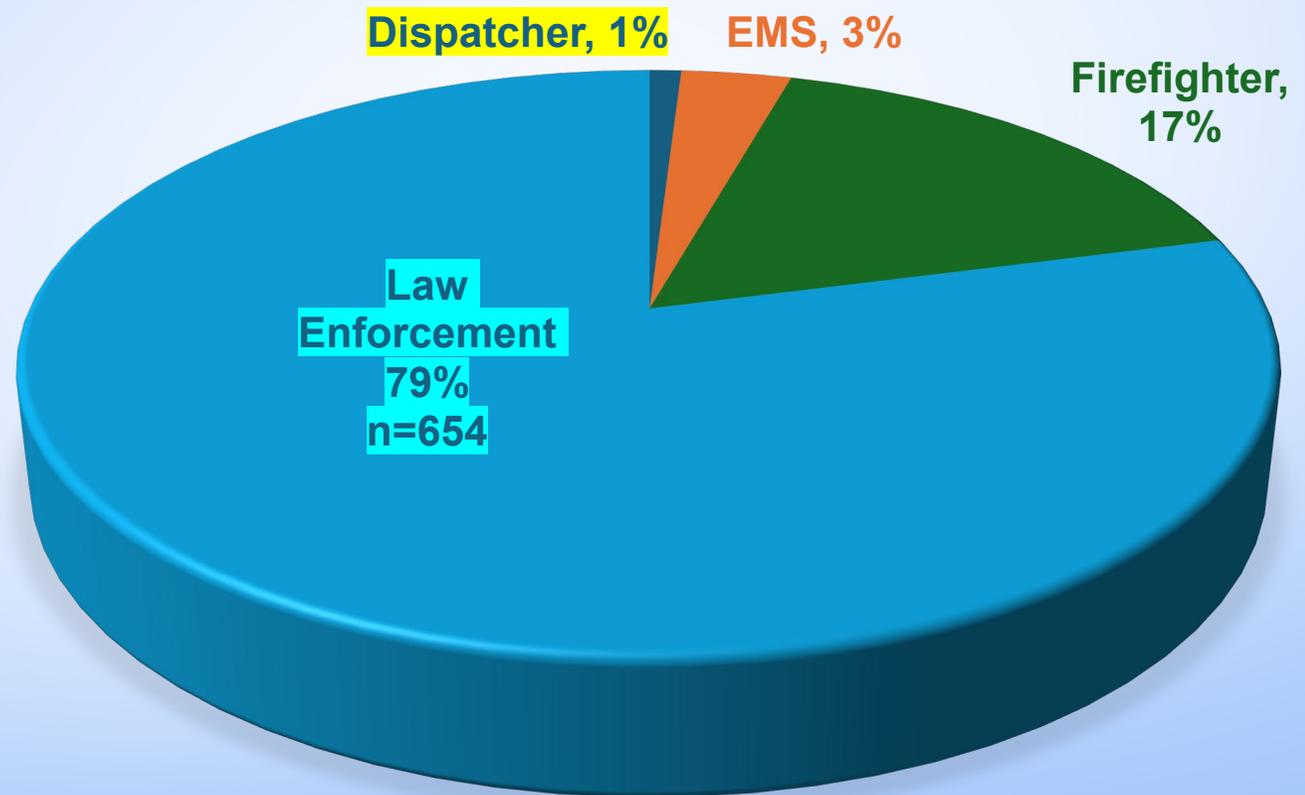
<https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/data.html>

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide>



# Number of Reported Suicides 2020 to 2025

TOTAL (827)



<https://bluehelp.org/the-numbers/>

NM data

<https://ibis.doh.nm.gov/indicator/summary/SuicDeath.html>

US data

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/suicide-rates-by-state>

<https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/rates-by-state.html>



How are stressors connected to high law enforcement suicide rates?  
What other factors contribute to high suicide law enforcement suicide rates?

# WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE:

The behaviors listed below may be some of the signs that someone is thinking about suicide.

## TALKING ABOUT:



- ▷ Wanting to die
- ▷ Great guilt or shame
- ▷ Being a burden to others

## FEELING:



- ▷ Empty, hopeless, trapped, or having no reason to live
- ▷ Extremely sad, more anxious, agitated, or full of rage
- ▷ Unbearable emotional or physical pain

# WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE:

The behaviors listed below may be some of the signs that someone is thinking about suicide.

## CHANGING BEHAVIOR, SUCH AS:



- ▷ Making a plan or researching ways to die
- ▷ Withdrawing from friends, saying goodbye, giving away important items, or making a will
- ▷ Taking dangerous risks such as driving extremely fast
- ▷ Displaying extreme mood swings
- ▷ Eating or sleeping more or less
- ▷ Using drugs or alcohol more often

# 5 Action Steps to Help Someone Having Thoughts of Suicide

**Ask** “Are you thinking about suicide”

**Be There**

**Help Keep Them Safe**

**Help Them Connect  
988**

**Follow up**

# 988 LIFELINE

**If you need to talk, the 988 Lifeline is here.**

At the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, we understand that life's challenges can sometimes be difficult. Whether you're facing mental health struggles, emotional distress, alcohol or drug use concerns, or just need someone to talk to, our caring counselors are here for you. You are not alone.

 **Call**

 **Text**

 **Chat**

 **Deaf/HoH**

<https://988lifeline.org/>

# PEER SUPPORT

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Peer support programs for officers and 911 telecommunicators provide a confidential and supportive environment where they can connect with their peers to discuss difficult experiences, gain emotional support, and navigate challenging situations.

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Contact your agency to see what resources are available.



What will I do today to manage the stress in my life?

## CONCLUSION

Stress management should be something thought about everyday. Law enforcement and 911 telecommunicators should be asking themselves, “what can I do today to minimize my stress levels or remove some stress from my life.”

Use the tools discussed in this training to focus on coping with on-the-job- stress and become more resilient. Ask for help and support.