

Law Enforcement Final

12/13/14

Chapter 12: Stress

- No single one definition of stress
- Stress affects different people in different ways → focus on one's perception
- "only if the individual perceives that social demands cannot be adequately handled"
- Burnout: the situation in which what used to be a "calling" becomes merely a job (loss of enthusiasm, excitement and sense of mission in ones work)
- **Burnout:** when there is constant disjunction between job demands and worker resources (as the gap gets bigger, person becomes less effective)
 - Service workers (treadmill effect...more they try the more the gap widens)
- Types of Stress:
 - **Eustress:** good stress, + benefits, realistic training modules, "shoot don't shoot" simulation learn
 - **Distress:** negative results, strain that develops as a person becomes more engulfed in their job role → some people can adapt but eventually produces **HARMFUL EFFECTS**
- Stress Reaction Style
 - **General Adaptation Syndrome:** patterned response of reaction to stress, 3 stages
 - o **Alarm reaction stage:** body responds to threat and increases production of hormones and chemicals, stimulates sympathetic system (heart and lungs), increase heart beat, breathing = quick and shallow, glands activate and produce fuel for the muscles, adrenaline pumps body so it is in a **STATE OF ALERT/READINESS**
 - o **Resistance stage:** increase in hormone production to keep up with level of threat (situation doesn't stop, body keeps making more until at **PEAK** alertness) *final spurt of energy
 - o **Exhaustion:** body runs out of fuel, physically recuperate and get replenished (proper nutrition) *sleep and relaxation typically this form
 - Eustress people enjoy rest period, Distress people just continue doing what they were doing
 - So alarm stage dwindles and exhaustion stage happens earlier than optimal
 - Police work may cease stress repairs → stress reduces B6 (diabetes), C (heart problems) and Zinc (fatal physical dysfunctions)
- Sources of Police Stress
 - 4 majors sources of police stress
 - Intra-Individual Sources:
 - o Stress depends on individuals perceptions and other internal factors
 - o Reaction to the same stressor may change
 - o Personality may be a factor (anxiety prone, laid-back)
 - o Career goals and aspiration form stress → expectations of promotion if work hard
 - o Glass ceiling until someone higher up gets fired or quits **COMPETITION**
 - o **The interaction btw the sources of the stress, how they are perceived and person characteristics determine whether coping or maladaptive behavior will result**
 - Inter-Individual Sources
 - o Stress from interaction between people
 - o Because they come in contact with so many different people → risk of exposure to medical conditions
 - o AIDS checks periodically (gloves with blood, masks with CPR, bio-hazard disposal)

- o Susceptible to diseases or bacteria: skin irritants (lice, impetigo)
- o Also not 100% acceptance of minority officers (**especially black female officers**)
- Organizational Sources
 - o **Shift work:**
 - ➔ because of **rotating shift** (day, evening, graveyard) ➔ fucks up diurnal (day night) pattern
 - ➔ human body has **circadian rhythm** for 24hr cycle with physiological functions
 - ➔ hurts appetite and eating habits and makes **PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT**
 - ➔ entire household needs to adjust
 - ➔ Change to fixed/permanent shifts so officers don't need to readjust (**HEALTHIER**)
 - ➔ **Vila and Kenney**: police fatigue 80hr work week
 - o **Equipment:**
 - ➔ Poor and defective equipment
 - ➔ Patrol car = office (problems = stress)
 - o **Citizen Complaints:**
 - ➔ Regarding officer misconduct or disrespect
 - ➔ Doesn't matter how petty ➔ it will be filed in personnel
 - ➔ Cumulative effect on evaluations, transfer request and promotion opportunities
- Environmental Sources:
 - o **Community:** officers have negative feelings toward the public (feel rejected by those they try to help)
 - ➔ Attempt to shield families from negative perceptions (change clothing, don't list numbers)
 - ➔ Hero = seen as corrupt, unfair and unfeeling
 - o **The CJS:** officers have to make schedules accommodate to subpoenas and court appearances
 - ➔ Officers distrust CJS (bc system emphasizes technical aspects rather than factual guilt)
 - ➔ "Twilight zone", outraged when system fails to punish criminals
 - ➔ Cops are beaten at their own game because they don't know criminal laws + court procedure
 - ➔ **Threat of arrest and punishment is devalued** so officers find alternatives (violence)
 - o **Threat of Danger:** consistently remind officers of their vulnerability (FBI)
 - ➔ "Hall of Heroes" honor fallen comrades, walk through this daily
 - ➔ Police should be consistently alert ➔ preoccupied with personal safety
 - ➔ **HAVE TO ACT STRANGE AND UNFRIENDLY**
 - ➔ **Symbolic assailant:** young, minority males in run-down areas of town (officer behaviors toward them might be due to past experiences)
- **Consequences of Police Stress**
 - Many agencies ignore that police officers are not superhuman and robots
 - Sick time abuse, Offices were impolite, Mishandle discretion ➔ effects of stress
- **Morbidity and Mortality:**
 - Stress linkage
 - **Morbidity:** disease and sickness
 - **Mortality:** causes of death
 - Look at patterns and certain characteristics
 - Police work is **SEDENTARY** (sit while driving, filling out reports ➔ suddenly jump to answer call)
 - Body becomes overloaded with emotional states ➔ health problems

- Analyze **death certificates**: patient's history, physical remains, autopsy if necessary, cause of death, birth place, race, age, sex and last known occupation (*used to analyze morbidity and mortality patterns)
- **Fell, Richard and Wallace**: look at death certificates and hospital records when seen as "stress related" or not → **POLICE OFFICERS HAVE SHORTER LIFE SPAN**
- **Officers more likely to die from stress-related causes than other workers**
- *Leading cause of death = circulatory or heart disease
- Non-fatal disease: stress-induced disorders, digestive tract maladies (ulcers, colon cancer)
- **Vena and Marshall**: look at people in NYPD for 5 years → Officers = higher death rate from cancer (stomach types), longer you were an officer, more likely to have circulatory/heart disease
- **BEING A POLICE OFFICER = INCREASE ODDS OF PREMATURE DEATH FROM HEART DISEASE AND STOMACH CANCER**
- Mortality rates link to dietary patterns → fast foods (high-fat content) gulp down food and caffeine (hurt digestion) + stress + adrenaline
- **Alcohol Abuse:**
 - Remedy for 2 work problems:
 1. Demands of the job, like dealing with death or gruesome cases
 2. Physical and social adjustments of shift work (everyone else on human time)
 - **Self-medication**
 - 3 types →
 - 1) **Normal drinker**: drinks on typical circumstances, doesn't have cravings
 - 2) **Alcohol-dependent person**: drinks daily, doesn't consider self to be 'hooked', drink too much (belief that they can stop if they want to)
 - 3) **Alcoholic**: lost self-control, drinks excessively, alcohol dominates life
 - Many young officers start drinking after especially terrible experiences
 - Use alcohol to adjust to shift work → when they get out at 1am can only go home or stay with comrades
 - Used as **COPING MECHANISM** to decompress → but continued abuse = problems
 - Survey: ¼ officers have a daily minimum dosage of 3 drinks
 - ½ officers admit to drinking on-duty
- **Suicide:**
 - More officers die yearly by this than those that are killed by criminals
 - **Top 10 reasons for police suicide:**
 1. Death of child/spouse
 2. Loss of child/spouse through divorce
 3. Terminal illness
 4. Responsibility for partner's death
 5. Kill someone out of anger
 6. Indictment
 7. Feel alone
 8. Sexual accusation
 9. Loss of job bc crime conviction
 10. Locked up
 - NYC Cops → higher rates of suicide than normal residents (3x than those in London)
 - National average has declined to ½ of what it was in the 1950's (** better salaries, training programs, greater administrative willingness to control stress managing programs = attribution**)
 - **RATES EXCEED EVERY OTHER OCCUPATION**
 - May be because:
 - 1) More direct access to fire arms
 - 2) Dating of statistics
 - 3) Police selection is better...avoid those with psychological diseases with tests
- **Marital Tensions:**
 - 2/3 Will be separated/divorces over the next 3 years
 - Problems of → shift work schedule (meals, officer attitudes, socialization with neighbors/friends, children don't see parents)
 - Circle of friends decreases → families of other officers replace them