

# Stress Management or Russian Roulette



**PUBLIC SAFETY TRAINING CONSULTANTS**  
**KEVIN WILLETT**  
**KEVIN@PSTC911.COM WWW.PSTC911.COM**



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**Critical Incident Stress**

- Any situation faced by emergency service personnel, that causes them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions, which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function, either at the scene or later.

*Jeff Mitchell PhD*  
*International Critical Stress Foundation*

**“Law enforcement is one of the very few professions that drastically change a personality”**

**Guy Schiller**  
**International Critical Incident Stress Foundation**

Something you should already know...

“DISPATCHERS ARE THE FIRST RESPONDERS”

- We are there with the crime victim
- We are inside the house fire
- We are at the scene of the car accident
- We are with the crying child
- We are with the fight in-progress
- We are with the shooting victim
- We are there for someone’s last words



Types of Stress

Delayed Stress

Buried internally for a period of time



Cumulative

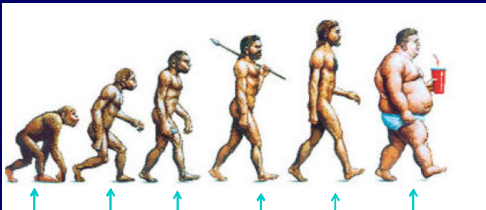
From a variety of sources over a period of time

Occupational

Job related stressors. Both internal and external  
(9-1-1 calls, co-workers, policy, politics, schedules)



The Ascent of a Dispatcher



Applicant  
New hire  
Released on Phones  
Released on Radio  
3-5 years  
10+ years



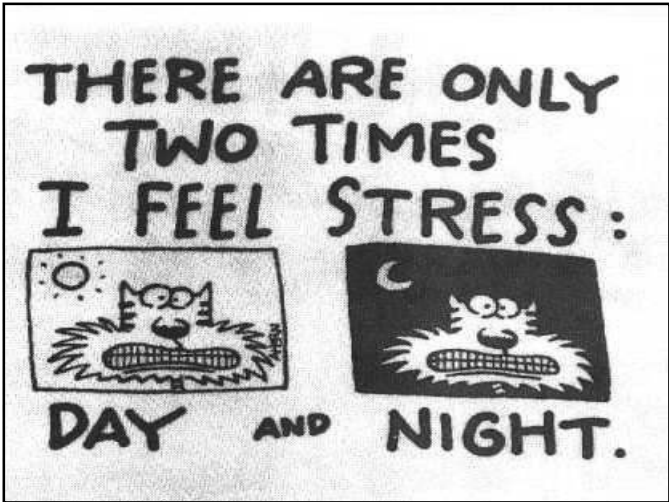
What is Stress?

A physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension and may be a factor in disease causation



GG Stress TRT 2:00





**Negativity Breeds Negativity**

- Becoming negative becomes addictive – “misery loves company”
- Negativity follows you home and affects you in your personal life
- The lens through which you view the world becomes skewed



**Express Yourself!**

People who repress their anger have elevated levels of cortisol (stress hormone) and are 31% more likely to suffer from a heart attack, cancer or high blood pressure.



**Get Moving!**

Mild depression affects approximately 5% of the population. Depressed patients who participate in physical activities saw more improvement in symptoms afterward than those who did not exercise.





Stress Myths

- Just “get over it”
- It’s all in your head
- It could have been worse
- It doesn’t bother me...why should it bother you?
- It wasn’t that big of a deal
- It all turned out OK



Wellness & Stress Management is Essential

- Your 9-1-1 Team Deserves Care, Understanding and a Commitment to Wellness by Their Employer
- If You Expect Low Turnover and Staff Dedication, You MUST Provide CISM!



Healthy Stress Pattern

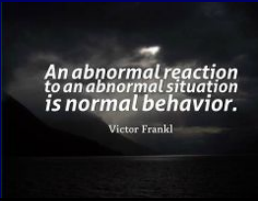


Unhealthy Stress Pattern





**Personalization**

**You are having a normal reaction to an abnormal event**




*An abnormal reaction to an abnormal situation is normal behavior.*  
Victor Frankl





**Personalization**


**Remember  
A response to  
any critical incident will  
be different for every  
individual**




**Critical Incident Stress**

- 1/3 have acute reaction
- 1/3 have moderate reaction
- 1/3 have little to no reaction
- Symptoms may be delayed up to a few months after the event...








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*"Saving the lives of those who protect us"*

**We're not just a cause...  
We're a movement.**

**Personal Crises**



Statistics indicate that somewhere between 2-6 times more officers kill themselves each year than are killed by the bad guys.

*—American Police Beat*

**Self**



## Critical Incident Stress

- Does *your* Department have access to a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing team?
- Are Dispatchers Automatically Included in all De-Briefings?
- ◆ Do you have qualified Peer Counselors or De-Briefers?



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Take Care of Your Team



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