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## Wellness Week Day 5 – Resiliency and Stress Management

Welcome to our last day of Wellness Week. We hope the information we shared was helpful and supportive. Our goal was to have you pause, breathe, think, and reflect about your overall physical and psychological health and see if there are any opportunities or possibilities to learn, grow, or improve your health, fitness, wellness, and/or performance. All of the Dimensions of Wellness are important collectively. No one dimension alone will be enough to optimize your health, but incrementally and intentionally focusing on each dimension with consistency and persistence will change your life for the better. Health is wealth. We never fully appreciate health or time until they are depleted. Health is not just the absence of illness. It is the ability to live without restriction or debilitation to grow, age, and thrive with strength of mind, body, and soul. By proactively focusing on our health and making a promise to ourselves to increase our Health span, we will positively extend our Life span. Little by little, breath, by breath, and drop by drop we can stretch, expand, and grow better. It will not happen overnight but it can and will happen over time. Patience is part of the process.

Resiliency is a skill set that can be learned. A solid working definition of Resiliency is, the ability to remain robust and skillful in times of extreme stress and change. Most people think of Resiliency as bouncing back after an adversity. That is not wrong, but we challenge you to think of it deeper. Can you not only bounce back, but how about bouncing FORWARD?! When we bounce forward, we rebound and recover. We grow from the experience. This is a form of Post Traumatic Growth that is often not discussed. We typically read or hear about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder/Injury but unfortunately what we don't read or hear about is the growth and Resilience that comes from our stress and struggle. Not all stress is bad. Positive stress, called, eustress, is the opposite of distress. Think of lifting weights. That causes stress on your muscles and on your mind, but that positive stress in the right dose, frequency, and intensity causes growth. Our muscles build strength and our minds fortify, thereby increasing our confidence. There are different levels of stress that exist along a spectrum. Chronic stress is the accumulation of strain that wears and tears us down over time which we must be mindful and aware of because left unaddressed or unprocessed can cause harm and illness. Chronic stress increases cortisol in our bodies and leads to inflammation that harms our heart health, it stores fat, it weakens our immune system, it reduces our ability to make sound decisions and think critically, it impairs our sleep, and prevents recovery from injury or illness and leads to fatigue, burnout, and being overwhelmed. It is also not the stress that harms us, it is our belief about stress. If we look at stress as a challenge and not a threat, we can use it as a teaching moment to grow from.

Our best versions of ourselves are many times born in times of struggle. There is no strength without struggle. We can turn our pain into purpose and make the pain worth it. How do we do that? There are many ways to enhance our Resiliency and manage our stress but it all begins with the vulnerable acceptance and acknowledgement of your current state. It is ok to not be ok. But what we don't think is ok, is staying stuck. Stuckness is precursor to ill health, both physically and psychologically. The root of the word, Vulnerable, comes from the Latin word, *Vulnus*, which means to wound. We all suffer wounds in our lives but when we expose those wounds and when we receive the proper care, attention, and support; our wound(s) will heal. In these times, we must let go of our Self Reliance and we must reach our hand out to accept and receive support with help seeking behaviors. There are times to hold on, and there are times to let go but we must know the difference. Let go of what does not serve us and let go of what harms us, but hold on tight to our health, our life, and the positive protective factors that nourish, replenish, and support us. When confronted with overwhelming chronic stress, think of the acronym, R.A.I.N. Recognize the source, Accept the current state, Investigate your thoughts, feelings, and emotions surrounding the stress, and Nonjudgmentally use your internal and external resources to heal and recover.

By increasing our Resiliency tolerance and expanding our Stress tolerance, we can learn to respond skillfully, rather than react emotionally which will lead to better outcomes. Viktor Frankl, the Holocaust concentration camp survivor said it best, there is a stimulus and a response but in in the middle is a space. In that space we have the ability to choose our thoughts, actions, and behaviors that enhance us, not diminish us.

Check out some of these strategies to enhance your Resilience and manage your Stress. Layer as many on top of each other to build a strong base and foundation of health and skillful response to life's stresses and strains.

We are rooting for you! Stay healthy, strong, and safe and please let us know if we can ever be of service to you in your physical or psychological health, fitness, wellness, or performance.



# RESILIENCY AND WELLNESS DPD STYLE



What does Resiliency and Wellness look like for you as an officer?

## Pursue Protective Factors to Enhance your Resiliency.

Increase your confidence and ability to thrive with each small step. It enhances your skills & response.

### Resources

- Resilience = Resources
- Internal resources: Mental and emotional adaptability and agility in adverse or challenging situations: Problem Solving Skills, Grit, Open Mindedness, and Positive Reinterpretation of negative events enhance Resiliency
- External Resources: Outside perspective, service, and support from trusted sources

### Mental Imagery / Visualization

- Visualize tapping into your reserves of resiliency and strength to imagine a positive outcome.
- Imagine and rehearse the systems, processes, and outcomes to support your goal attainment

### Exercise / Movement

- Physical activity fortifies and nourishes your mind, body, and brain.
- Boosts energy.
- Increases quality of life and extends life expectancy
- A natural antidepressant and painkiller
- Increases self-confidence.
- Builds strength, stamina, and ability to endure life stressors

### Sleep

- Quality sleep is restorative and replenishes the brain and body.
- Improves mood, enhances motivation, helps resist temptation/delay gratification
- Consolidates memory and learning.
- Strengthens immune system to fight off illness and disease

### Mindset and Attitude

- The way we perceive events as either a challenge (Growth Mindset) or a threat (Fixed Mindset) helps determine their impact on us mentally and emotionally
- Reframe your thoughts and shift your perspective to seek opportunities and possibilities to learn, grow, develop, and improve 1% better daily
- Realistic Optimism supports mental health

### Mindfulness

- Focus on the present with full attention and intention without judgment
- Recognize what you can control and release what is beyond your control.
- Respond skillfully. Life is 10% what happens and 90% of how you respond

### Emotional Regulation

- The mind follows the breath. Control your breath to control your mind.
- Reduce amygdala hijacking of your mind with intentional regulated breathwork to settle your nervous system into safety
- Take a Tactical Breath:  
Inhale through your nose (count of 3)  
Exhale through your mouth (count of 5)

### Social Connection

- Support systems are the antidote to stress, fear, anxiety, and depression.
- Humans are social beings with the need for connection and belonging to survive.
- Embrace your crew or circle of safety.

**Stay healthy, well, strong, and resilient.**

**Breathe. Move. Connect. Recover.**

**Bobby Waidler - Sergeant**

Resiliency and Wellness/Peer Support/Chaplain Program/Physical Therapy Program/Reintegration

Desk (720) 913-1373