

# MIND-BODY CONNECTION

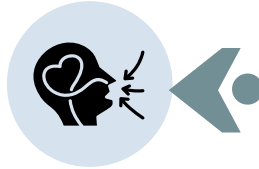
## TECHNIQUES

HOW MUCH  
ATTENTION ARE  
YOU GIVING  
YOUR MENTAL  
FITNESS?



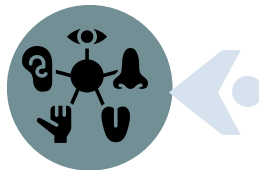
Your mind and body are in constant communication, but how do you connect them?

### SHORT TERM TECHNIQUES



#### TACTICAL BREATHING

This breathwork, sometimes referred to as box breathing, is used by military and law enforcement personnel to remain calm and collected in dangerous situations.



#### GROUNDING EXERCISES

These exercises are simple, immediate tools that help bring your focus back to the present moment when you're feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or emotionally flooded.



#### MEDITATION

Meditation is a general term for practices that help you reach a calm and focused state. There are many types of meditation and relaxation methods that use similar principles, all with the goal of finding inner peace.

### LONG TERM TECHNIQUES



ACUPUNCTURE



CREATIVE  
ARTS



MARTIAL  
ARTS



MASSAGE  
THERAPY



PHYSICAL  
EXERCISE



YOGA



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# RISKS TO OFFICER WELLNESS

## OCCUPATIONAL EXPOSURES

- Secondary trauma from witnessing human suffering.
- Intrusive sensory memories that are difficult to dismiss.
- Difficulty separating work and home life.

Repeated exposure to trauma may cause unseen injuries.

## INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

- Cultural conditioning to mask emotions.
- Limited emotional health preparation in training.
- Emphasis on physical readiness over psychological readiness.

Workplace culture shapes emotional wellness.

## INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

- Pre-existing mental health history.
- Personal trauma or adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).
- Relationship and family stressors.
- Financial pressures.

Personal history and circumstances shape officers' stress responses.

## OPERATIONAL STRESSORS

- Shift work and sleep disruption.
- Constant adrenaline surges
- Exposure to violence
- Rapidly changing conditions

The unpredictable nature of the job brings ongoing stress.



# Five Stages of Burnout



HONEYMOON  
PHASE



ONSET OF  
STRESS



CHRONIC  
STRESS



BURNOUT



HABITUAL  
BURNOUT

**Burnout** is physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion from prolonged stress and high demands without adequate recovery. In high-stress professions, it often develops gradually and impacts performance and well-being.

**● This stage often occurs early in a career, after a new assignment, or following renewed motivation.**

- High enthusiasm and energy
- Strong commitment to the job
- Increased productivity and optimism
- Willingness to take on extra responsibilities

**● As stressors accumulate, early warning signs begin to appear.**

- Increased irritability or frustration
- Reduced productivity or focus
- Neglect of self-care (sleep, nutrition, exercise)
- Feeling pressured or overwhelmed more frequently

**● Stress becomes persistent and begins to affect behavior and performance.**

- Ongoing fatigue and emotional strain
- Cynicism or negative attitude toward work or the public
- Withdrawal from coworkers, friends, or family
- Increased mistakes, policy errors, or decision-making difficulties

**● Burnout is marked by significant emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion.**

- Feeling emotionally numb or detached
- Loss of motivation or sense of purpose
- Chronic exhaustion that does not improve with rest
- Feelings of failure, helplessness, or hopelessness

**● This stage reflects prolonged burnout and may overlap with mental health conditions.**

- Persistent depression or low mood
- Chronic fatigue and low resilience
- Emotional shutdown or complete disengagement
- Feeling stuck, defeated, or unable to recover



# Common Conditions Experienced by Law Enforcement Professionals

Condition	Definition	Causes	Signs	Interventions
Stress	Body and mind's response to perceived threat or pressure.	Workload, shift strain, critical incidents	Irritability, fatigue, sleep issues	Breathing, rest, peer support
Trauma	Emotional and physiological response to distressing events.	Repeated or prolonged exposure to distressing situations, ACEs	Repeated or prolonged exposure to distressing situations, ACEs	Intrusive memories, avoidance, overwhelm
Post Traumatic Stress (PTS)	Short-term stress response after trauma.	Single traumatic incident, witnessing violence	Flashbacks, avoidance, shame, irritable	Normalize reaction, routine, grounding exercises
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	Prolonged, disruptive response to trauma.	Direct trauma, repeated exposure, vicarious trauma	Prolonged flashbacks, avoidance, negative beliefs, hypervigilance	Professional support, peer support, grounding techniques
Moral Injury	Emotional exhaustion from exposure to others' suffering.	Repeated trauma exposure, lack of recovery	Irritability, numbness, reduced empathy	Breaks, self-compassion, reconnect with purpose
Hypervigilance Cycle	Shifts between on-duty high alert and off-duty crash.	High-risk environments, adrenaline surges, sleep disruption	Withdrawal, irritability, cynicism, loss of interest	Transition rituals, controlled breathing
Burnout	Emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion from prolonged stress.	Long hours, staffing shortages, repeated crisis exposure	Cynicism, withdrawal, exhaustion	Rest, workload adjustments, peer support



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## WELLNESS STRATEGIES

### PEER AND SOCIAL SUPPORT...

provides emotional support, reduces isolation, and strengthens resilience.



#### Peer Support Programs

Peer support provides trained colleagues who understand the job and offer confidential help.



#### Regular Check-ins

Talking with peers after difficult calls strengthens trust and promotes early support.



#### Support Groups

Support groups offer shared experiences, coping strategies, and connection to reduce isolation.



#### Family and Friend Networks

Family and friend support helps decompress, gain perspective, and recharge.

### PERSONAL WELLNESS STRATEGIES...

help first responders manage stress, maintain readiness, and support long-term physical and mental health.



#### Exercise and Movement

Regular movement supports physical readiness, reduces stress hormones, and improves mood and sleep.



#### Nutrition

Good nutrition supports energy, focus, immune function, and recovery - especially during long or irregular shifts.



#### Sleep Hygiene

Quality sleep is critical for decision-making, reaction time, emotional regulation, and long-term health.



#### Mind-Body Techniques

Mind-body strategies help manage stress, improve focus, and build emotional resilience during and after critical incidents.

### PROFESSIONAL CARE AND TREATMENT OPTIONS...

are essential when self-care and social support are not enough.

#### Individual or Group Therapy

Offers confidential support to address stress and emotional challenges

#### Specialized Therapies

Helps process trauma and critical incidents while developing coping skills.

#### Medical or Psychiatric Support

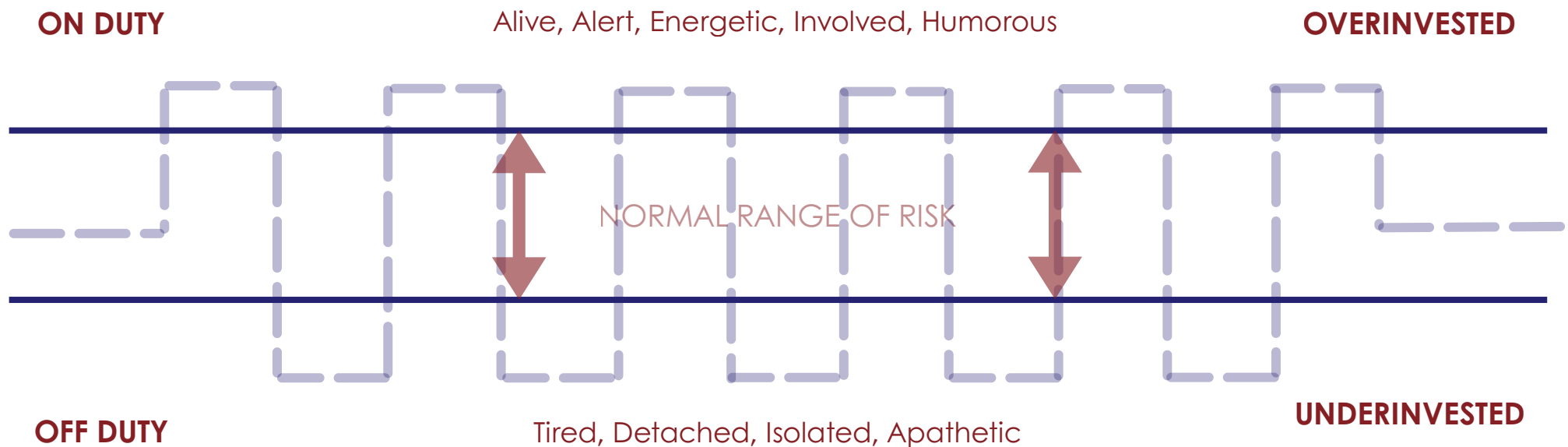
Helps when symptoms interfere with daily life through assessment and medication.



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# The Hypervigilance Rollercoaster



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# Create a Safety Plan



## IDENTIFY PERSONAL WARNING SIGNS

Recognize thoughts, feelings, or situations that signal risk is increasing.

## IDENTIFY REASONS FOR LIVING

Clarify what matters to you and what helps anchor you during distress.

## FIND AND PRACTICE COPING SKILLS

List internal strategies you can try on your own to reduce distress.

## CREATE A SUPPORT NETWORK LIST

Identify trusted people you can reach out to for help or connection.

## LIST EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Include crisis lines, local emergency services, or professionals.

## MAKE THE ENVIRONMENT SAFE

Reduce access to means or unsafe situations when risk increases.

## MAKE A SPECIFIC COMMITMENT TO ACTION

Clearly state what you will do if warning signs appear (step-by-step).

## MAKE THE PLAN ACCESSIBLE

Ensure the plan is easy to find (phone, wallet, printed copy).

## SHARE THE PLAN

Review it with trusted people so they know how to support you.

## KEEP THE PLAN CURRENT

Revisit and update the plan regularly as circumstances change.



# BUILDING RESILIENCE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT PROFESSIONALS

Resilience is the ability  
to adapt, recover, and  
thrive under stress or  
adversity.

## DOMAINS AND STRATEGIES

### Mental

- Mindfulness
- Work-life balance
- Cognitive Reframing
- Common humanity

### Physical

- Sleep
- Exercise
- Nutrition
- Self-care

### Spiritual

- Values and purpose
- Gratitude
- Faith practices

### Social

- Support networks
- Healthy boundaries
- Communication

## Types of Stigma

- **Self:** Internalized shame
- **Cultural:** Fear of judgment
- **Structural:** Lack of access

## Stigma Reduction Strategies

- View stress as strength
- Talk openly about mental health
- Model healthy coping skills
- Use respectful, non-shaming language

## Organizational Support

- Leadership supports wellness
- Mental health training
- Peer support programs
- Check-ins after critical incidents

## TIPS

- **Daily:** mindfulness, sleep, exercise, hydration
- **Weekly:** social connection, hobbies, journaling
- **After critical events:** peer check-ins, counseling, tactical breathing

“A single or one-dimensional effort is hardly enough to support the myriad of different things that officers are experiencing.  
*Checkpoints: The Blueprint to Emotional Health for First Responders*”



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# WHAT WE SAY VS. WHAT IT MEANS

COMMON PHRASES	WHAT IT MAY SIGNAL	RESILIENCE REFRAME
<b>"People suck."</b>	Repeated exposure to people during crisis, emotional fatigue shaping worldviews.	"I mostly see people in crisis, not at their best."
<b>"No good deed goes unpunished."</b>	Expectation that positive actions lead to negative outcomes.	"Outcomes aren't always controllable, but effort still matters."
<b>"Everyone lies, don't trust anyone."</b>	Persistent threat detection and learned distrust - hypervigilance prioritizing safety over concern.	"I can be cautious without being closed off and still assess the situation."
<b>"Civilians don't get it."</b>	Social withdrawal and identity separation.	"They don't have the same exposure I do."
<b>"It comes with the job."</b>	Normalization of chronic stress and trauma exposure.	"Exposure is part of the job, but suffering doesn't have to be."

