

CRJ 201-POLICING

Stress and Safety

INTRODUCTION

- Discuss police culture
- Describe police personality
- Explain the problems associated with police stress

POLICE CULTURE

- Do police officers have their own unique culture?
- A police subculture:
 - Shared norms
 - Values
 - Goals
 - Language
 - Lifestyles
 - Occupations

POLICE CULTURE

- Clannishness
- Secrecy
- Isolation from the Public
- Honor
- Loyalty
- Individuality
- Trust
- Life and Death
- Odd hours
- Odd days off
- Feeling that no one else understands what it's like to do the job
- Don't relate well to anyone in your past life.

POLICE CULTURE

- Does this unique culture lead to a “Blue Wall of Silence?”

View Video: Blue wall of silence

- Blue wall of silence - culture of police officers that protects one another from outsiders, supervisors, or other investigatory bodies that are investigating police wrongdoing.



POLICE PERSONALITY

1. Exposure to danger
 2. Us vs. them orientation
 3. Isolation from friends, family and other members of society
 4. Perceived hostility from media, politicians, and the general public who do not understand the job
- Authoritarianism
 - Personality
 - Socialization
 - Cultural
 - Suspicion of non-police
 - Hostility
 - From and towards media & politicians
 - Conservatism
 - Cynicism

POLICE PERSONALITY

- Police cynicism – the attitude that there is no hope for the world and a view of humanity at its worst, because of:
 - Constant contact with offenders
 - Experiencing people at their worst
 - Exposure to violence, death, disorder
 - Perceptions of miscarriages of justice
 - Dealing with excessive rules and regulations
 - Dealing with laws, the public, politicians and the general public that does not understand the job.

View Video: Maine State Trooper

POLICE STRESS

- Police are constantly exposed to stressful situations in their daily work:
 - Haphazard working conditions
 - Dangerous people
 - Injuries, death, disorder
 - Unpredictable events
 - Boredom and fear
 - Long hours
 - Murphy's Law
 - Being away from friends and family



POLICE STRESS

Stress:

- The body's reaction to internal or external stimuli that upsets the body's normal state.
- The body's reaction to stress is known as the fight or flight response.
- Exposure to stress and the fight or flight response can cause headaches, upset stomach, irritability, etc.

Sources of police stress:

1. External stress:
 - Exposure to threats and dangers
2. Organizational stress:
 - Constant changes to working hours, holidays, weekends, away from family and missing events
 - Strict discipline
 - Organizational justice

POLICE STRESS

3. Personal stress:

- Getting along with others, coworkers, etc.
- Home life
- Family
- Financial
- Children

4. Operational stress:

- Daily confrontation with the negative side of life;
- Criminal element
- Mentally ill
- Violence
- Worry over liability
- Use of force

POLICE STRESS

- What are some reactions to excessive stress in police officers?
 - Emotional detachment
 - Aggressiveness
 - Alcohol use and abuse
 - Marital and family problems;
 - Physical problems;
 - Heart problems;
 - Depression
 - Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
 - Suicide

POLICE STRESS AND POLICE SUICIDE

- Police suicide

Review reading - Police stressors and health: A state of the art review

Review reading – Preventing officer suicide

Review reading – Law enforcement mental health and wellness act

Review website – Blue Help