



Association of Orange County Deputy Sheriffs

COURIER

Spring/Summer 2020

Official Publication of the Association of Orange County Deputy Sheriffs

Courage, Merit, Lifesaving

Medal of Valor Recipients Recognized in Scaled Down Ceremony



Built Upon a Foundation of Unity, Integrity and Leadership



The Climate of Change

By Nancy K. Bohl-Penrod, Ph.D., Director, The Counseling Team International (TCTI)



I wanted to start by telling all of you, we deeply appreciate everything you do for the department and for the community. These are really tough times. It is heartbreaking to watch such a

wonderful profession be vilified. Since this anti-law enforcement sentiment has risen and brought with it an increase in violence perpetuated against all of you, we wanted to write something that may help all of you manage the stress in a more healthy way. We know many of you may feel an intense mixture of heartbreak, exhaustion, and anger towards the negative portrayal of law enforcement within the media and their communities. Understand the reaction you feel is a normal reaction caused by these events occurring in our country.

Present times are difficult, and you may find it harder and harder to maintain your composure and stay professional. Keep in mind that your reactions can be a positive tool. When expressed correctly, they can protect you from threats to your safety, well-being, happiness and self-esteem, and from jeopardizing your career and future in law enforcement.

Know that you are not in this alone. Your peer supporters, chaplains, and The Counseling Team International (TCTI) are ready to support you and your family.

Bravery is not the absence of fear, but action in the face of fear.
~ Mark Messier, Former Professional Hockey Player

Below is a list of symptoms to be on the lookout for. The more severe the symptoms and the more symptoms experienced may be indications that additional support is necessary.



- Increased anxiety or fear
- Inability to sleep, eat, or concentrate
- Irritability or short temper
- Withdrawal
- Paranoid thoughts
- Nightmares
- Hypervigilance
- Guilt
- Grief
- Panic
- Anger
- Blaming someone
- Poor problem-solving

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If you're an AOCDS member and you have a property, motor home, boat, etc. that you rent out regularly, we'll be happy to advertise it for you free of charge in our new Courier Classifieds section. Just send all the pertinent information to Lynda Halligan, Courier Editor-in-Chief, at Lynda@aocds.org.

And coming soon to the Members Only section of our website, you'll be able to post items for sale.

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Important Notice to All AOCDS Members

Member health, dental, vision and life insurance benefits can be affected by changes in dependent status (i.e. marriage, birth, adoption, divorce, retirement or death) and where you live. When you report a change to your county department, AOCDS is not notified. Please call AOCDS at 714-285-9900 when you have a change in dependent status to avoid any interruption in benefits. Dependents can be added **within 30 days** of marriage, birth or adoption by logging on to aocdsbenefits.org. First-time users will create an account by entering **AOCDS** (in all caps) as the Company Key. Ineligible dependents **MUST** be removed from your coverage **within 30 days** of a divorce being finalized. Your ex-spouse will have coverage only through the end of the month in which your divorce has been finalized. Remember, you can review your benefits any time of the year by visiting aocdsbenefits.org.

AOCDS is Looking for Leaders

AOCDS is currently recruiting area representatives to act as a liaison between our members and the Association. Do you have what it takes? Are you enthusiastic? Are you a good communicator? Are you a team player? If you excel at cooperating and collaborating with others and you know how to disseminate important information and relay it to your colleagues, this could be the perfect opportunity for you. We especially need area reps who work in the jails. This is a great way to get involved and take on a leadership position within AOCDS.

If you're interested, contact Julie Cramer, AOCDS staff representative, at Julie@aocds.org.



Health Hub, cont.

- Poor attention
- Poor decision-making
- Poor concentration
- Disorientation
- Clinging to others

Fortunately, there are things that you and your family can do in order to manage feelings of fear, anxiety, and anger or feeling overwhelmed.

- Participate in activities that are relaxing and enjoyable. It can be difficult to find the time to enjoy life when it feels like it is all falling down around you, but it is vital that you find ways to incorporate self-care.
- Remind yourself that you are only in control of what you are in control over. Limit your exposure as much as possible to the things that upset you.
- Communicate your reactions and thoughts to people you trust. These people can be friends, family members, leaders in spiritual communities, mental health professionals, and peers.
- Avoid or reduce the use of harmful substances such as alcohol and drugs. These tools can be easily accessed, but typically bring about more harm than good. They do not solve problems, but rather intensify them.
- Focus on the quality of your sleep. With the increase of overtime hours and time spent thinking about current stressors, it is common for sleep to be greatly impacted. It is crucial for your mind, body, and spirit to be getting quality and quantity sleep.

STRESS AND FEAR IMPACT THE FAMILY

Your families are equally impacted by this anti-police climate. However, they often keep their concerns to themselves for fear of making things more difficult for all of you. Remember when you joined the sheriff's department, they also joined. Your work is a family occupation; what happens at work spills over into your family, partner, spouse and children.

Conversely, what happens at home spills over to work. Your home life and the support from a positive relationship are key to buffering work stress and maintaining the sense of well-being on the job.



Your family resilience is defined as the ability to struggle well and bounce back in the face of adversity. Resilient families buffer stress, share pain, and offer positive appraisal to each other. They can make meaning out of adversity, maintain an optimistic outlook, dedicate themselves to larger values and purposes, balance stability, change, and be flexible.

They communicate effectively using a range of emotional expression, collaborative problem-solving and conflict resolution.

Building resilience requires modifying the relationship among yourself, your family, and the department.

These are difficult and challenging times for law enforcement, but you will rise to these challenges and make the situation better.

STRATEGIES FOR FAMILY COMMUNICATION

- When bad news happens, don't avoid the conversation. Talk to your family about your thoughts, feelings, and reactions. This will help them see that they can discuss these things as well.
- Try to anticipate the questions your family may ask and prepare your responses in advance.
- Schedule time to talk about non-work-related issues. Assign regular check-ins for when both partners have equal time to talk about what's going on in their lives.

Families are like branches on a tree. We grow in different directions, but our roots remain the same.

~ Unknown

- Talk to your significant other and children about the realities of police work - the things you are doing to stay safe, how the department is managing the threat, etc.
- Allow your family members (including your children) to have a different opinion than you. Give them the freedom

to respectfully express their concerns and thoughts and use this dialogue to bring the family unit closer, rather than divide it.

- Encourage your children to explore the thoughts, feelings, and reactions they have separate from their parents. Create a safe space for them to discuss these things and use this time to either build a connection with them, respectfully educate them, or validate them.

Keep in mind that a growing anti-law enforcement culture can cause your family members to isolate from friends, other family members, colleagues, and peers who have a different opinion. Use this time to draw support from one another and reach out to resources that can assist with this process, including peer supporters, chaplains, and mental health professionals. TCTI wants you to know that you are not alone. When you feel alone, you will want to isolate yourself. Please do not do that. Continue to wear your badge and uniform with honor!



Be Safe!
Doc Nancy



AOCDS, in partnership with The Counseling Team International (TCTI), offers the below listed professional licensed and confidential services to members of the AOCDS Medical Trust, at no additional cost. Please visit TCTI's website at <http://thecounselingteam.com> for details.

**Counseling services can be obtained 24 hours a day,
365 days a year by calling 1-844-655-1035.**

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