HEALTHY HEARTS FOR ALL OF US

By Major Dan Fitzgerald

Many of us know the top two leading causes of death for police officers on duty are shootings and automobile accidents. What is number three? It is heart attacks.

It seems like we think about the first two a lot. We attend training and we discuss scenarios in roll call. How often do we take time to learn about taking care of our bodies? On our list of priorities, where does personal health rank? Is it even on the list?

Many of us leave the Academy in the best shape of our lives. We are fit and ready to take on the world. Fast forward five years, ten years, or longer. Are we still in great shape or have we allowed the often-times sedentary job of police work to catch up with our health? I know, it’s hard with shift work, lack of sleep, overtime, secondary, kids’ activities, work around the house, last minute this and that. Step back and look around. There are fellow officers who have the same stuff in their lives as you, however, they are in good shape, eat right, and are probably a lot less stressed than you. How do they do it? Why do they do it?

Let’s look at what causes heart attacks. According to an article in the January 2014 Law Officer Magazine by Mark Sherwood, there are eight major risk factors:

- Abnormal blood cholesterol
- Hypertension
- Tobacco use
- Pre-diabetes
- Family history
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Obesity
- Age

If you feel any of these apply to you, or if you are not sure, it may be time to visit your doctor. Take the time for a physical examination. Talk to your doctor about your concerns. You have control over many of the risk factors listed. You need to step up and take charge of your health.

What can we do to help our hearts? It’s easy:

- Increase physical activity
- Eat sensibly
- Manage your stress
- Decrease body fat

Nothing on this list is a surprise. We have heard it often. Then what is keeping us from better health? I

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think it is all between your ears. You have to make a conscious decision that a healthy lifestyle is a priority. You have to develop the discipline to make healthy choices that previously were uncomfortable. The more you practice sensible eating and regular exercise, the more ingrained it becomes in your life. There are so many positive outcomes surrounding that positive choice. You will feel better, have more energy, and be less stressed.

Need some motivation? Let’s start with the mirror. Part of being a successful police officer is looking the part. Another important role of an officer is the ability to actively engage the occasional knucklehead who feels the need to flee or physically disagree with our wishes. Are you able to deal with that person? Can you help your fellow officer when he/she needs your assistance?

What about your family and friends? Can you still actively play with your kids? Play with your spouse? Play with your friends?

Your kids only get one childhood. It goes by in the blink of an eye. Make sure you are an active part of their lives. Also, wouldn’t it be great to model that healthy lifestyle for your family? Just think of the positive ramifications for your family in their future.

If you feel the need to make changes in your life, start today. Start with small steps. Better food choices, half hour of exercise, taking the stairs. In time, build up to a routine that is comfortable for you and your lifestyle. All of our lives are different, and all of our bodies are different. Take the time to figure out what works best for you. Ask others for advice and ideas. Do it for the reasons we listed above, but most of all, do it for yourself.

Major Dan Fitzgerald is the Assistant Chief of Police for Brentwood. He currently chairs the Street Talk Advisory Committee.

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BEHIND THE BADGE: Surviving Relationships

By Sgt. Betsy Brantner Smith

Cops have a notoriously high divorce rate, but divorce statistics are only part of the story. Think about all the engagements, live-in boyfriend/girlfriend situations or same-sex partnerships that don’t work out either. Let’s face it, we tend to be lousy at intimate relationships.

In our Street Survival seminar, we talk about surviving this job not only physically and tactically, but emotionally, and a large part of our survival is dependent upon the success of our personal relationships. I can’t tell you how many officers have come up to me after a seminar and said “All this time, I thought it was all my wife’s fault that we don’t get along, but now I’m begin-
ning to understand that it might just be me.”

The majority of the research and writings on this topic tend to focus on what our spouses can do to make our marriages better. If only our partners would change their attitudes, be more understanding, learn to communicate better, and deal more successfully with the day-to-day stressors that “we,” the cops, face, we’d all be happier. I’m suggesting that those of us with the badge look in the mirror, look into our hearts, and try to figure out what we can do to improve our relationships; here are a few suggestions.

Watch how you talk to and treat those you love. Do you give orders or make requests when you get home? Do you work your tail off to help out a citizen while you’re on duty, but when you get home, it’s just too much trouble to help fold the laundry or take out the garbage? Sometimes we treat strangers, our coworkers or the citizens better than we do our own families. I had a revelation a few years ago during a heated argument with my husband, a former police lieutenant. He said to me, “Don’t talk to me like one of your officers!” And I spontaneously shot back with, “I would never talk to my officers the way I talk to you!” Holy cow! I really like the guys who work for me, but I adore my husband, and yet here I was, talking to him like some incompetent rookie that was about to get terminated. Take a good, hard look at how you communicate with your loved ones. Pay attention not only to your words, but your gestures, your tone of voice, your general demeanor. Do you talk to them like the precious people they are, or do you need to do some work on your communication skills at home?

Have a “going home” ritual. It can be hard to transition from crime fighter to spouse, partner, or parent. I used to come home immediately after a 12-hour shift to my family who was waiting to have dinner with me. My husband would cook a great meal, hand me a glass of wine as I walked in the door, and ask me about my day. Sounds perfect, right? In reality, it drove me nuts. I’d arrive home still in “cop mode,” either wired or exhausted, and more than a little surly. All I wanted was to go through the mail, wolf down something to eat, and enjoy my glass of wine in total silence and solitude...not exactly the happy homecoming that my family kept anticipating night after night. I had to develop a new “going home ritual” before I no longer was welcome in my own home! Now, a couple of nights a week after work, I go to the gym. On the other nights, I at least take a shower at the police department and change into my favorite sweats before I drive home. I get home a little later, but my family agrees that I’m a whole lot more pleasant to be around, and I’m much more engaged from the time I walk in the door.

Bring your family in to “your” world. Very often cops hide what we really do from our families. We don’t want to worry them or frighten them or make them cynical or paranoid, plus sometimes we just don’t feel like talking. But it’s a mistake to keep your family at arm’s length. Tell your spouse about your frustration with that battered wife, or your teenage son got turned down for the freshman dance by his not-so-secret crush? That stuff is petty compared to the traffic crashes, the suicides, the child molesters, and domestic violence calls you went to today! Obviously, the family needs to get a little perspective! Or maybe you do? It’s easy for your family members’ trials and triumphs to get overshadowed by the serious nature of your profession. In fact, they may begin to trivialize their own issues because they don’t want to “bother” you with them. Take the time to find out about their day, truly listen to what they have to say, ask questions, show empathy, make them feel valued. They’ll be much more ready to listen when you’re ready to talk about your day, which brings me to my next point.

Don’t get too caught up in your own self-importance. On average, less than two out of every 100 police applicants actually get hired, so by the time we get “on the job,” we already feel like we’re pretty darn special. Add to that the public’s fascination with our profession, the danger factor, and the power and authority, and it’s easy for us to lose perspective. After all, how can anyone’s day compare to yours? So what if your spouse had to deal with 25 second-graders on a field trip today, or your partner had an argument with her boss, or your teenage son got turned down for the freshman dance by his not-so-secret crush? That stuff is petty compared to the traffic crashes, the suicides, the child molesters, and domestic violence calls you went to today! Obviously, the family needs to get a little perspective! Or maybe you do? It’s easy for your family members’ trials and triumphs to get overshadowed by the serious nature of your profession. In fact, they may begin to trivialize their own issues because they don’t want to “bother” you with them. Take the time to find out about their day, truly listen to what they have to say, ask questions, show empathy, make them feel valued. They’ll be much more ready to listen when you’re ready to talk about your day, which brings me to my next point.
Mental Health America offers mental wellness seminars on:

- Address Stress
- Busting Burnout (great for those balancing work and family)
- Reaching Resilience (coping with change)
- Care of Self (when caregiving for others)
- Combatting Compassion Fatigue (maintaining compassion for the people you serve)
- Live Your Life Well

Perfect for church groups, professionals, PTO and civic organizations.

For more info, contact Connie Fisher at 314-773-1399 or Connie.Fisher@mha-em.org.
Q: Do CMHLs replace the current 24/7/365 crisis services provided by Behavioral Health Response (BHR) in the eastern region?
A: No. In the eastern region of Missouri, CMHLs and BHR coordinate together and will respond 24/7/365. With law enforcement referrals, the CHML will follow up for a minimum of 30 days to help improve the linkage between hospitals, inpatient and out-patient treatment.

Police departments outside the eastern region of Missouri can connect with their CMHL in two ways.

- Contact your Access Crisis Intervention hotline 24/7/365. If you don’t know the number, use the map and contact info dmh.mo.gov/mentalillness/progs/acimap.htm.
- Contact me at 573-634-4626 or cpatterson@mocmhc.org.

Q: Who should make a referral to a CMHL?
A: Any law enforcement or court personnel.

Q: How does law enforcement make a referral to a CMHL?
A: In the eastern region, call BHR at 1-800-811-4760; they will contact the CMHL serving your county. In other areas of the state, contact the Access Crisis Intervention hotline mentioned above.

Q: Who should be referred?
A: Any person with mental health or substance abuse issues who repeatedly comes into contact with law enforcement.

Q: Can referrals be made after law enforcement leaves the scene?
A: Yes. Call if you want a CMHL to follow up with an individual.

Q: What other services do the CMHLs provide?
A: Call with any questions you have about mental health or substance abuse issues, treatment, services available, etc. Call if you are interested in POST-approved mental health training designed for law enforcement.

Q: Can a CMHL drive someone to the hospital?
A: No, because of potential safety risks. We ask that law enforcement or EMS transport. CMHLs can assist with coordinating treatment once at the hospital.

Q: Will CMHLs be able to solve all mental health or substance abuse issues?
A: No. The creation of the CMHL position is a good first step, but there are no new beds or additional services. What the CMHLs can do is follow up with people referred to them to improve access to beds and services that are available. Ultimately, the services available for people with mental health issues and substance abuse problems need to be expanded.

Christine Patterson, PhD, works for the Coalition of Community Mental Health Centers, a membership agency of Community Mental Health Centers and Substance Abuse providers across Missouri. Christine is the state-wide coordinator of the Community Mental Health Liaison Initiative. For questions or comments, contact her at 573-634-4626 or cpatterson@mocmhc.org.
You’re called to a drowning of a three-year-old, who is transported to the emergency room, with a parent in route from work to meet with YOU.

A mother watches a television broadcast of a motor vehicle accident just down the road, recognizes it is her son’s friend’s vehicle and responds to the accident scene. That is when she tries to run past you to the vehicle.

All of these types of sudden unexpected deaths can take an emotional and mental toll on the officer assigned to make the notification. With little, if any, training provided while in the academy or through in-service training, the officer often resorts to the on-the-job training of having watched other officers make the notification. So what are some of the steps we can use to assist us through this difficult assignment in law enforcement?

**Make the Notification in Person.**
A phone call notification is just not acceptable. If you or your agency cannot make the notification, request another law enforcement agency make the notification. Make sure you pass as much detail to the officer making that notification. If this is not done, you can cause further stress to the family, which will be passed on to you when the family vents their frustration on you and your department. Whenever possible, make the notification in a private setting.

**Be Informed.** Prior to making a death notification, make sure you have the relevant details and dynamics of the incident. The family is going to ask for accurate and useful information. Make sure you have all the information needed to convey this difficult information in a professional manner. Make sure you are clear in explaining that their family member has died. They did not “pass”, or are “no longer with us.” Explain to the family in simple terms what they can expect from the legal bureaucracy and how to navigate a course without too many points of contact. Anticipate they will ask questions.

**Be Human.** It is acceptable to show emotion. By making a notification which shows empathy and compassion, you will show the family that you would wish to be treated, if you were the one standing on the other side of that door. Don’t make the error of standing at the door’s threshold, tell them that their family member has “passed”, and give them a general phone number to nowhere. If there is a point of contact after the initial notification, give them that person’s name and direct phone number.

**Have a Buddy.** Have another officer or detective with you upon initial contact with the family. Another alternative is to utilize Chaplains within your department. They are a great resource and can help bridge the gap until the family can notify their preferred clergy member. You may request a hospital’s Trauma Intervention Program volunteers/chaplain when making the notification at a hospital. Other organizations such as MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) or ICPC (International Conference of Police Chaplains) have training modules that can be used during in-service training.

**Debrief with Other Officers after a Difficult Notification.** There is no shame in admitting that a particular incident was troubling and traumatic to you. To deny it may set the stage for further issues at a later time for you and your co-workers.

So to help yourself, while helping a family through that most traumatic time, try these simple ideas and lower the anguish we all feel when we knock on that next door.

Be safe.

Lt. Mark O’Neill is a Patrol Division Watch Commander for the St. Charles County Sheriff’s Department. He also serves as the Commander for the St. Charles County Regional Crisis Negotiation Team. In his work with the Crisis Intervention Team, he is the Chairman of the St. Charles, Lincoln and Warren County CIT Council.
I’ve often made the argument that the outcome of a police-citizen encounter depends strongly on the resilience of the police officer. Intuitively, we understand that the presence we bring to an encounter heavily influences the behavior of the person(s) we deal with. A criminal justice professor at the University of South Carolina published a study that demonstrated the officer’s demeanor could enhance or degrade the final outcome (Alpert, 2009). This research is a great reminder that our capacity for emotional regulation is a key “tool” in our police tool kit.

The difficulty is that police work constantly chips away at our ability to regulate emotion and be well. Many social and cultural forces act upon our well-being, most often in ways that erode our physical, mental and spiritual health. Borrowing from neuroscience lessons over the last decade and from training practices in the U.S. military services, I propose that mindfulness training (MT) in policing offers a foundation from which we can mitigate the forces acting against our strength and health and work toward greater holistic wellness in mind, body, and spirit.

Training in holistic wellness will create opportunities for us to thrive as whole persons (Feemster, 2010). Mindfulness training at the foundation of a preventative resilience model has tremendous potential to improve the police-citizen encounter and enhance community relations and community goodwill. Mindfulness training promises to nurture the body, mind and spirit of our police warriors. Research has shown that mindfulness enhances emotional regulation, empathy, cognitive performance and working memory (Jha, et al, 2010). These are the ingredients for an effective police encounter and a battle-ready, empathic police officer.

First, let’s define mindfulness in the context of our profession. I like to describe mindfulness as the graduate school of tactical breathing and situational awareness. Jon Kabat-Zinn defines mindfulness as “the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment” (Kabat-Zinn, 1991). Sounds far out, right? Initially, probably so for many of us, yet mindfulness practice resonates with our warrior ethos and has far-reaching implications for our health, performance and capacity to thrive through our careers.

To this end, I partnered with Pacific University (Oregon) and the Hillsboro Stress Reduction Clinic (Oregon) to develop a pilot training program for police professionals called Mindfulness-Based Resilience Training (MBRT). We trained three separate cohorts of police officers and professional staff over nine months, wrapping up our final course in March 2014. Preliminary results look promising, yet our final analysis of research data will be complete about the time this article goes to press. A number of police agencies in the U.S. and Canada have begun integrating MT into their organizations.

Mindfulness has been shown to improve the neuroplasticity of our brain and the unconscious resilience that results creates pathways for conscious resilience of hand, heart and mind (Stanley, 2010). This training develops the capacity for police officers to respond through trauma, and after a period of adjustment, land stronger than when they started (also known as post-traumatic growth). Improvements in self-awareness, empathy and emotional regulation that can be achieved with mindfulness training lend toward more grounded outcomes in the police-citizen encounters. While our research strives to test these desired outcomes, much work remains to be done as mindfulness training in policing evolves to meet the unique culture and operational environment of policing.

Training mindfulness toward holistic wellness will also forge a culture of resilience that fosters positivity and civility. These are key ingredients to a thriving workplace and building strong bonds with our community. As police leadership becomes more mindful of health and wellness, we will be more inclined to lead in ways that support and cultivate both individual and organizational wellness.

With more than 18 years in law enforcement, Lt. Goerling serves as patrol lieutenant in Hillsboro, OR. He has spearheaded the introduction of mindfulness training into policing as part of a cultural shift toward a preventative and holistic wellness model, delivering presentations across the country as a leader in police officer resilience. He teaches in the Criminal Justice program at Portland Community College and has developed groundbreaking curriculum for “Leading Police Resilience.” Follow his blog at leadingresilience.org.
CIT CORNER: NEW TRAININGS OFFERED

By Sgt. Jeremy Romo

Interest in the 40-hour Basic CIT training continues to be strong, with class sizes in the St. Louis County training consistently reaching 55 or more officers. It’s important to remember that the various CIT Councils in the area offer additional training about current issues involving mental illness or based on input from CIT officers who request more in-depth training on particular topics. It’s also important to note that each year the topics of the 8-hour Advanced training change to address the most recent training concerns.

The 2014 St. Louis County 8-hour Advanced training includes modules on HIPAA, Substance Abuse, Suicidal vs. Non-Suicidal Self-Injury, Law Enforcement Officer Self-Care, and a CIT Case Study. The 24-hour Youth training is designed to benefit School Resource Officers, Patrol Officers and Supervisors. Finally, all St. Louis Area CIT Councils are working in collaboration with the St. Louis area Veterans Administration to develop a 24-hour Veterans training to be held in the fall.

40-hour Basic CIT Course

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<td>April 7 - 11</td>
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<td>Sept. 22 - 26</td>
<td>St. Charles, Lincoln and</td>
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<td>Warren Counties</td>
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<td>Oct. 6 - 10</td>
<td>St. Louis County</td>
<td>St. Louis County &amp; Municipal Police Academy</td>
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<td>Oct 27 - 31</td>
<td>Jefferson County</td>
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<td>Dec. 1 - 5</td>
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8-hour Advanced CIT In-service

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24-hour (3-Day) CIT Officer In-service on CIT Response to Youth in Crisis

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<td>August 4 - 6</td>
<td>Open to all departments</td>
<td>St. Louis County &amp; Municipal Police Academy</td>
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24-hour (3-day) CIT Officer In-service on CIT Response to Veterans in Crisis - Date/location TBD

For more info and registration
St. Louis County/City – Sgt. Jeremy Romo at jfromo@stlouisco.com
St. Charles, Lincoln & Warren Counties – Sgt. Kyle Dooley at kdooley@lakesaintlouis.com
Jefferson County – Cpl. Ernie Howell at ehowell@jeffcomo.org
Franklin County – Officer Mike Joyce (Union Police Dept.) at updjoyce@hotmail.com

Sgt. Jeremy Romo is the CIT Coordinator for St. Louis County. He has been with the St. Louis County Police Department since 1999, serving in various precincts and in the Tactical Operations Unit. Jeremy also serves on the Street Talk Advisory Committee.