

Wellness Newsletter

SAN DIEGO POLICE
DEPARTMENT



SERVING THOSE WHO
SERVE OUR COMMUNITIES

September 2019 ISSUE 53



SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT **WELLNESS NEWS**

SDPD HOSTS THREE DAY PEER SUPPORT TRAINING



L to R: NE DIV Officers Chuck De La Cruz, David Valdez, and Detective Steve Schnick



50 SDPD PEER SUPPORT MEMBERS ATTENDED CLASS JULY 22-24TH, 2019

50 members of SDPD recently became POST certified Peer Support Team Members by attending the Basic Peer Support Training presented by FOCUS Psychological Services and the Counseling Team International. We are grateful to our sponsors. Cal Coast Credit Union provided Donuts and Coffee each morning. Tony Dao, (SDPD Lab) and owner of Little Caesars Pizza Mira Mesa, provided 14 Pizzas for lunch on day two. The Municipal Employee's Association (MEA) provided gourmet lunch sandwiches on day three.



SDPD CHAPLAINS

Rev. Robert Cobb—Central
rcobb@pd.sandiego.gov

Deacon Guillermo Valdivia—Southern
Guillermovaldivia75@gmail.com

Rabbi David Kornberg-Northwestern
rabbik@betham.com

Rev. Dale Lowrimore-Western
dlowrimore@cox.net

Rev. Mike Macintosh
pastormike@mikemacintosh.net

Rev. Chuck Price-Eastern/Traffic/GST
wixim@cox.net

Rev. Herb Smith-Northeastern
hsmithclef@aol.com

Rev. Erin Hubbard-MidCity
erinhubbard@cox.net

Deacon Freddie Thornton—
Southeastern
rolling-thunder1@cox.net

Past. Mike McBride--Central
mike@parksidesd.org

Past. Carl Rader—Communications
carlrader@cox.net

Fr. Edmundo Zarate-Suarez—
Southeastern
fatherzarate@sbcglobal.net

Chris Clark -Northern
pastor@eastclairemont.org



**Welcome to SDPD's
Newest Chaplain
CHRIS CLARK**

I have been serving in pastoral ministry in varying capacities in churches since 1982. I have served 16 years in student ministry; the last 21 years as a senior pastor at East Clairemont Church.

I have had a growing burden on my heart that we as a church (and myself as a Christ follower) needed to be more engaged in our community, to be a blessing to others. One area that I had some connection to was with the Northern Division's Community Relations Officer (at the time, it was Brandon Broaddus); I thought that might be a good place to ask my questions.

I found out that the new CRO was Melanie Bognuda, who quickly agreed to come sit down and listen to me. My question was essentially, "How can we as a church be a blessing to the officers and staff of Northern Division?" Melanie was a little startled. "Wow, I don't know...I've never been asked that question before!"

I pressed it a little further. "I know, that's not one of the things you have to field too often. Maybe we could work with your chaplain with this request..."

"We don't have a chaplain."

That was when God gave me that nudge.

"Well, do you want one?"

"Yes! That would be so great!"

Four weeks later, I'm being introduced as the new chaplain of Northern Division.

-Chaplain Chris Clark

"Police chaplains aren't there to push a religion on police officers; their role is primarily to listen and offer emotional and spiritual support."

Working Together To Prevent Suicide

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The San Diego Police Department's Suicide Prevention Program includes educating new officers and their families on suicidality in the Police Academy and on Family Wellness Day; educating sergeants on warning signs and resources in the Sergeant's Academy; providing peer support, Chaplains, and professional counseling; and having departmental oversight of employee resilience and mental health through the Wellness Unit. We must keep aware and be responsive to those struggling with suicidal thoughts and break down barriers inhibiting asking for help. Part of awareness is continuing to educate and talk about suicide. This article will address key factors and precipitating events in police suicide, general warning signs, and identification of available resources.

Police officers nationwide kill themselves far more frequently than they are victims of death at the hands of criminals. What is it about police that make them more susceptible to suicide?

Police officers have core values that sanction violence and sacrifice as means to resolve problems. Each of you have made a decision that in certain justifiable circumstances you will take the life of another-or lay down your own life-to protect others. This is a deeply held value shared with the military. For the rest of the population dying in service of others is not typically a consideration.

Police officers are desensitized to violence. Again, most people go through their lives never experiencing physical violence of any kind, much less homicides, being attacked or shot at, or drawing a weapon and having to make a split-second decision to shoot or not to shoot. It changes your perception of what's normal in the world.

Police officers have a steep lethality learning curve. You've all been to unsuccessful suicide attempts. You know what method works and what doesn't work. You know where to place the barrel of a gun to get the desired result.

Police officers are decision makers, problem solvers, action takers. Once you've come to a decision, you've been trained to act. Self-reliant, you don't always ask others for input, especially if it makes you vulnerable.

Police officers are prideful, rightfully so. You are looked at as heroes by the vast majority of our community, held to the infamous "higher standard." But that also makes you extremely susceptible to shame. Shame, humiliation, public exposure of wrongdoing, and vulnerability can seem unbearable to someone whose self-esteem is built around being heroic.

Police officers in pain often self-medicate with alcohol. Research suggests the majority of police suicides occur when under the influence of alcohol. Alcohol impairs judgment and lowers inhibition. Suicidal thoughts that are manageable when sober become an irrational call to action after a few drinks, and lowered inhibition disengages the part of the brain that stops you from acting on the thoughts.

Police officers are averse to being a burden to others. As stated by Laura L. V. King, Chief, McHenry County Conservation District, Illinois, in Police Chief Magazine: "Police can have a difficult time moving from the professional role as "helper" to the personal role of "one needing help" and may feel vulnerable in this situation. In addition, if a police officer believes he or she would become a burden, he or she might intentionally seek out ways to prevent this, thus creating another obstacle to intervention."

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Police officers have great familiarity and ready access to extremely lethal means-guns. This may be the most influential factor. The decision for suicide can be made and carried out in an instant.

In addition to the predisposing factors there are precipitating events common to police suicide:

- Marital/relationship discord
- Perceived loss of status in department and/or community
- Prolonged or severely debilitating illness
- Cluster effect of time and location-when there is one suicide in a department it potentiates others

Most, if not all, officers share predisposing factors and many go through precipitating events, but few make the choice of suicide. Suicidal feelings are complex. Having suicidal thoughts doesn't necessarily mean someone is mentally ill or clinically depressed. Suicidal thoughts can occur in almost anyone given the right combination of circumstances. Below is a list of behaviors that signal someone may be struggling.

- Thoughts or threats of suicides
- Profound feelings of sadness, despair and loss
- Lack of interest in the future
- Self-destructive activity
- Tunnel vision, not being able to see alternatives or to problem solve
- Irritable, hostile and agitated behavior
- Self-hate and blame
- Putting affairs in order
- Farewell to loved ones
- Securing and/or possessing lethal means
- Significant personal loss
- Severe depression/anxiety
- Alcohol and/or other drug abuse, including prescription medication
- Irrational thoughts and statements
- Social isolation
- Loss of employment
- Brain injury or disorder
- Serious illness, especially with chronic pain

If you hear yourself or someone else say “My children (mother, father, wife, husband, girlfriend, boyfriend) will get over my suicide, they will be better off without me,” it is a serious red flag. This is never true and indicates distorted thinking.

The more symptoms present, the more severe, and the more prolonged, the higher the risk. If you or anyone you know experiencing any of risk indicators for suicide, it is a clear sign that help is necessary. What can you do if you have suicidal thoughts? Call Focus. Call Wellness. Speak to a chaplain. Call your medical doctor. Contact peer support. Ask a friend or family member to help you. There is confidential help available with no negative effect to your career. *Continued on next page*

If you are in crisis, help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You've heard the cliché that suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem? As cliché as it is, it is also true. Most who truly explore suicidal feelings recognize they don't want to die, they want the pain to stop. Treatment can and does stop the pain.

If you are concerned about someone else, take action. Talk to them, ask them if they are suicidal. Listen. Don't leave them alone. If you're uncomfortable with that, find someone who can and will intervene. You can call Wellness, the Chaplains or Focus to assist you. We know we can't save everyone from the demons they wrestle with, but we have to make sure we do everything in our power to try.

Dr. Jolee Brunton, PhD
 Chief Psychologist, FOCUS Psychological Services
 Email: joleebrunton@mac.com
 FOCUS 858-565-0066 www.focuspsychservices.com

5 Action Steps for Helping Someone in Emotional Pain

 ASK "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"	 KEEP THEM SAFE Reduce access to lethal items or places.	 BE THERE Listen carefully and acknowledge their feelings.	 HELP THEM CONNECT Save the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number 1-800-273-8255.	 STAY CONNECTED Follow up and stay in touch after a crisis.
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For more information on suicide prevention: www.nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention

  National Institute of Mental Health

Wellness Unit via Watch Commander after hours 619-531-2205

National Suicide Lifeline 800-273-8255

COPLINE 800-267-5463

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"A semicolon is used when an author could've chosen to end their sentence, but chose not to. The author is you and the sentence is your life."

SDPD's Journey to Mindfulness

“Mindfulness is paying attention, on purpose, in the present, non-judgmentally.”

-Jon Kabat-Zinn



**Great App for Mindfulness
on the Go**



<https://www.headspace.com/>



**MINDFULNESS & MEDITATION
LINKS**

<https://www.mindful.org/meditation/mindfulness-getting-started/>

<https://chopra.com/articles/guided-meditations>

<https://www.heromovement.net/blog/free-guided-meditation-resources/>

Change within the law enforcement community at times can be challenging. Being asked to consider a wellness resource that we have not been exposed to can be frightening and uncomfortable. As mindfulness meditation techniques slowly work their way into mainstream law enforcement, it has at times been met with some resistance. However, to fully understand the benefits of mindfulness let's discuss some of the science surrounding this mental training technique.

“Research shows that people spend nearly 47% of their waking hours thinking about something other than what they are currently trying to accomplish. In other words, many of us are distracted, reactive and operating on autopilot. Operating on autopilot in our environment can create costly mistakes. However, practicing mindfulness can diminish some of the time that we spend on autopilot.

Mindfulness is centered on two skills: focus and awareness. Focus is the ability to concentrate on what you're doing in the moment, while awareness is the ability to recognize and release unnecessary distractions as they arise. For example, police range staff often refer to focusing on your front sights. That is a form of mindfulness. If your mind is racing with random thoughts, focusing on that front sight can become difficult. I play a lot of golf, a game that is said to be primarily mental. I know if my focus and awareness are not only on the present shot that my performance will suffer greatly. This is the power of mindfulness. Military Special Forces, professional sports teams, and large successful corporations all utilize mindfulness training with their employees in an effort to create successful outcomes.

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“Science shows, quite clearly, that training the incessantly thinking mind is not only possible, but that mindfulness training can improve our working memory, cognitive agility, self-awareness, emotion regulation, sleep, pain management, cortisol regulation, and a number of health metrics that all contribute positively to an ethos rooted in a relentless pursuit of personal and professional development. In short, mindfulness training is about human performance optimization through training the mind, heart and body.”

***Lieutenant Richard Goerling
Hillsboro, Oregon
Police Department.***

**View Video of Lt. Gorling
teaching Mindfulness at
Los Angeles Police
Department**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BXvGhfnSOXc&feature=youtu.be>

Begin practicing mindfulness by following the steps listed below:

1. Find a quiet and comfortable place. Sit in a chair or on the floor with your head, neck, and back straight but not stiff.
2. Try to put aside all thoughts of the past and the future and stay in the present.
3. Become aware of your breath, focusing on the sensation of air moving in and out of your body as you breathe. Feel your belly rise and fall, and the air enter your nostrils and leave your mouth. Pay attention to the way each breath changes and is different.
4. Watch every thought come and go, whether it be a worry, fear, anxiety or hope. When thoughts come up in your mind, don't ignore or suppress them but simply note them, remain calm and use your breathing as an anchor.
5. If you find yourself getting carried away in your thoughts, observe where your mind went off to, without judging, and simply return to your breathing. Remember not to be hard on yourself if this happens.
6. As the time comes to a close, sit for a minute or two, becoming aware of where you are. Get up gradually.

The Wellness Unit recently started a pilot program called ***Mindfulness for Law Enforcement***. The program consists of guided meditation centered on breathing awareness. Southeastern Division is hosting the pilot program. The command staff and the officers have been supportive of our efforts. The idea is to assist the officers with mitigating any thoughts and/or distractions that they may be struggling with prior to their shift.

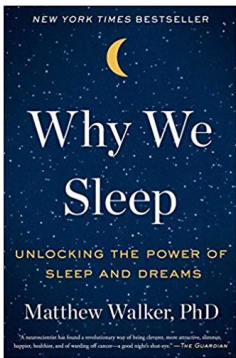
We understand that practicing mindfulness in uniform with your peers can be uncomfortable. However, results from a post-survey of our officers showed that over 70% found value in the mindfulness meditation training sessions. I practice this daily and it has changed my perspective and response to certain situations in a positive way. The benefits of practicing daily mindfulness may include: decreased anxiety, enhanced self-control, clarity of mind, improved concentration, and stress reduction, thereby, creating a more resilient human being.

A mindful police culture can change how we show up at a radio call. It allows us to meet our community and their suffering without bringing our own unregulated emotions. Enhancing the great customer service that we already offer throughout our city. Practicing mindfulness can and will change how we lead ourselves and how we lead others.

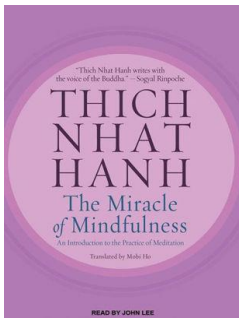
-Edwin Garrette, Sergeant, Wellness Unit

GOOD READS

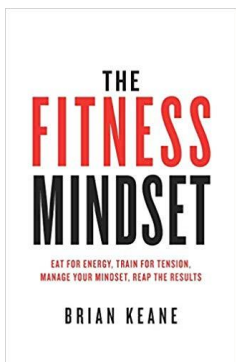
SLEEP HYGIENE



MINDFULNESS



OVERALL FITNESS



Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu for Law Enforcement Officers

Free exclusive class (no membership necessary) once a month for law enforcement officers only. No experience needed and all levels welcome. Dress code all black with no stamps.

RSVP via email at info@graciebarrasandiego.com to receive flyers for future classes. You can call them directly to get further information at (858) 924-8500.

This class is exclusively at Gracie Barra, located at 3952 Clairemont Mesa Boulevard in San Diego.



Pictured above: SDPD officers Malwina Kielbus, Shane Franken, and David Yellin regularly attend Gracie Barra Jiu-Jitsu.

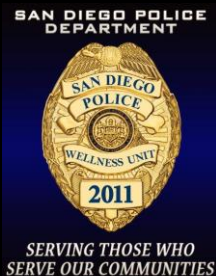


Pictured above: Officer Malwina Kielbus subduing Officer Shane Franken.

Contact Us

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VISIT US ON FACEBOOK AT SDPD WELLNESS UNIT

SERGEANT EDWIN GARRETTE
619-531-2243

EGARRETTE@PD.SANDIEGO.GOV

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619-531-2740

DSPURLOCK@PD.SANDIEGO.GOV

OFFICER DANI RESCH
619-531-2246

DRSCH@PD.SANDIEGO.GOV

911 DISPATCHER DEANNA DOTTA
619-531-2244

DDOTTA@PD.SANDIEGO.GOV

SDPD EMPLOYEE RESOURCE LIST

FOCUS PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES 858-565-0066
WWW.FOCUSPSYCHSERVICES.COM

**ALCOHOL & SUBSTANCE ABUSE HELP
(DEANNA DOTTA)** 619-857-5005

SDPD HUMAN RESOURCES 619-531-2126

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE 619-531-2124

LABOR GROUPS:

SDPOA (POLICE UNION) 858-573-1199

MEA (CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES) 619-300-3888

AFSCME127 619-640-4939

SDPD CHAPLAINS

*CHUCK PRICE 619-249-2229 WIXIM@COX.NET

*HERB SMITH 858-442-6417 HSMITHCLEF@AOL.COM

*DALE LOWRIMORE 619-916-9632 DLOWRIMORE@COX.NET

*SDPD FAMILY RESOURCE TEAM 619-796-4415

LEFAMILYRESOURCETEAM@GMAIL.COM

COPLINE 800-267-5463

COPLINE is devoted to encouraging officers and their families to reach out for help when they need it, and to ensuring user-friendly access by providing a single point of entry to law enforcement peer counseling crisis services through innovative telephony and internet-based technologies. This offers callers readily available and highly specialized resources any time of the day or night.

SADDLES IN SERVICE 626-252-3833

TAMMY@SADDLESINSERVICE.ORG

SADDLES IN SERVICE IS LOCATED JUST OUTSIDE OF SAN DIEGO IN ALPINE, CA. IT IS A FREE PROGRAM FOR ALL FIRST RESPONDERS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

SADDLESINSERVICE.ORG