

## TRACKING YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH

### **Sleep**

- About how many hours do you sleep a night? How many hours do you want to sleep per night?
- What parts of your presleep routine are helpful?
- What is one small change you could make to your presleep routine that you think would help you get more hours or better-quality sleep? This might include reducing “self-medication” or just planning ahead for a relaxing activity such as a shower before bed.
- [After you try the change] What differences do you notice in how you feel?

### **Food, Hydration, Supplements**

- About how many calories do you need to fuel a typical work-day or a typical nonwork day when you are active?
- What does your body feel like when you’re dehydrated?
- What strategies do you think might help you improve your diet? Is there one change you can make this week?
- [After you try the change] How do you feel now?

### **Physical Activity**

- What are your favorite ways to get exercise?
- Are there any muscle groups you neglect or want to work out more?
- How can you use your daily work in the community to interact with people, while also getting some activity in?

## COMMON THINKING ERRORS AND TIPS FOR CORRECTING THEM

When an interaction goes sideways, it can help to look back on it and try to figure out if you or someone else in the situation could have fallen into a thinking error. See the list of thinking errors below. Which ones are your “go-to” errors? Clues that a thinking error is in play include

- When you can’t seem to get over feelings such as anger or resentment. Your mind loops the same sequence over and over.
- When you back off a situation and think, “Oh no. Not this again!”
- Fill in the blank: How do you know when you’re trapped in one of the common thinking errors? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

To correct a thinking error, ask yourself the following questions:

Can I rationally support this thought?

Is there any evidence to support this thought?

Is there any evidence to refute this thought?

How would I respond if my work (or home) partner told me this thought?

### **All-or-None Thinking**

This is when you have a thought that lacks nuance. You see something (or yourself) as either completely good or totally bad.

### **Overgeneralization**

This is when you have a thought that is based on one instance, which you generalize to a larger pattern. The larger pattern could be a blanket assessment of yourself or others without adequate evidence.

### **Disqualifying the Positive**

This is when you have a thought after something good happens that it wasn't significant.

### **Jumping to Conclusions: Mind Reading**

This is when you have a thought that you already know what someone else is thinking.

### **Catastrophizing or Minimizing**

This is when you have a thought that magnifies or shrinks the meaning or importance of something instead of seeing things objectively.

### **Emotional Reasoning**

This is when you have a thought that what you are feeling is a fact—for example, "It's the way I feel, so that has to be the truth!" Lots of cops make this thinking error all the time, but they attribute it to their "gut."

### **Unreasonable Expectations**

This is when you have a thought that you should or must do something even when the result is not completely within your control. Similarly, you can have a thought that someone else should or must

do something. This thinking error sets you up to feel guilty if you don't do what you think you should have done and feel disappointed (or angry) if someone else doesn't do what you think they should have done.

### **Personalization**

This is when you have a thought that you were completely responsible for something to which others contributed.

### **Hindsight Bias**

This is when you beat yourself up over a thought that you have after the fact—for example, “If only I knew then what I know now”—as though you would have acted differently back then.

### **Heaven's Reward Fallacy**

Like unreasonable expectations, this is when you have a thought that all your hard work will pay off in the end. In reality, sometimes your struggles are rewarded, and sometimes they aren't. Maintaining this thinking error is an almost surefire way to end up frustrated and disappointed.

### **More Tips and Writing Prompts**

Be curious about what is going on with others. Think, “I wonder what's making him do that?” instead of “Yeah, he probably wants \_\_\_\_\_.”

- Write about a situation when your curiosity, or someone else's, helped resolve a tense situation. OR write about a time when being more curious could have helped resolve a tense situation.

Think about your other identities besides your on-duty self.

- Who are you, in addition to being a law enforcement professional?
- What opportunities do you have to talk to people you encounter on duty about hobbies, families, sports teams, TV shows, and so on?

## DAILY EMOTION QUESTIONS

1. Make time every day to talk about your emotions. If you are single, find someone with whom you can do this activity. It could be before bed, during a meal, or if all else fails, over the telephone. Most of the emotions you'll mention won't be very intense unless you responded to some challenging calls that day. You may need to keep track during the day about what you plan to share.
2. Have your partner ask you "What happened today that left you feeling happy?"

Your response should take the format: "When \_\_\_\_\_ [the event] happened, I thought \_\_\_\_\_, which made me happy." On some days, maybe nothing made you happy, so you have to describe a happy feeling of less intensity, such as amused or pleased or fine. For example, "When a kid gave me a thumbs up today, I thought it was a nice gesture, which made me feel satisfied with what I'd done."

3. Have your partner ask you "What happened today that left you feeling sad?"

For example, "I saw a dead cat in the road. I thought of the kids who will find out that their pet was killed, which made me sad."

4. Have your partner ask you "What happened today that left you feeling scared?"

For example, "I was in the elevator at the courthouse, and it lurched. I thought it was broken, which made me a little uneasy."

5. Have your partner ask you "What happened today that left you feeling angry?"

For example, "When my sergeant told me to revise a report, I thought he was singling me out, which made me aggravated."

BONUS: You can take turns with each of the emotions. After you share your feeling, have your partner share his or hers. In this way, in addition to getting comfortable receiving emotional support, you will train yourself to get better at providing emotional support.

## SOCIAL AND RELATIONSHIP WELLNESS

Use this space to dream a little bit about ways you can unplug from work and spend some time with others.

- What are some fun activities you could do on a weekly basis with your significant other?
- How about vacations or a special overnighter with your significant other? Block off time on your calendar and request vacation days well in advance, then enjoy making plans.
- What are some fun activities you could do more often with your family or your friends?
- What does your ideal vacation look like? How can you make it happen (or at least the parts of the dream trip that are feasible in real life)?
- When, or with whom, are you most likely to fall into “shop talk” when you don’t really want to? How can you make some boundaries around those encounters?
- What are some things you already enjoy doing that you could offer to your community as a way to “give back” or just be involved in a nonpolicing way?



## SPIRITUAL WELLNESS ACTIVITIES

My Mission Statement
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

### Mission Review Questions to Ask Myself

- How am I living up to my guiding principles?
- Where have I fallen a little short of my guiding principles?
- Have I allowed outside influences to negatively affect me?
- What will I do to recommit to my guiding principles and get back on track?

### Nightly Values Check-In

1. What went well today?
2. What did not go so well?

3. What, if anything, could I have done differently?
4. What changes will I make to do a better job being the kind of person I want to be?

### **My Faith and Hope**

I have faith in . . .

My faith helps me . . .

I have hope because . . .

### **Small Wins**

### **Minor Setbacks to Fulfilling My Purpose Today**

### **Recommitting to My Purpose**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

### **My Gratitude List**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

## MY MORAL CODE

My Moral Code
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

1. How willing am I to stand up for what I know to be morally correct regardless of the consequences?
2. What situations might I find myself in that could make it difficult to stick to my principles?
3. Is there anyone who ever pressures me to violate my principles?
4. How have I felt after violating one of my moral standards?

## **Moral Inventory**

Times when I did not live up to my moral code:

1. What were the circumstances when I failed to act in accordance with my moral code?
2. Was I feeling pressure from a peer or supervisor to violate my principles?
3. Did someone just push my button the wrong way, and I reacted by violating my principles?
4. Had something happened at home that was weighing on me when I violated my principles?
5. Was I preoccupied with a previous call or by something else that distracted me, which led me to violate my principles?

## COMPASSION SATISFACTION ACTIVITIES

### **Pay Attention to Small Victories**

During my shift today, I felt good/positive/effective when

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Don't Ignore the Home Runs**

I felt great today when I

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Gratitude**

Someone conveyed appreciation towards me today when

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Self-Appreciation**

I remind myself that

- I work hard to make the community a better place.
- I am proud of myself for facing so many challenges.
- I appreciate my efforts even when it seems like no one else does.

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My Use of Discretion

Showed leniency

Went by the book

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Looking over the incidents listed above, are there any patterns to being lenient or stricter?

1. Are there certain people with whom I tend to be lenient?
2. Are there certain people with whom I tend to be stricter and more uncompromising?
3. Are there calls in which I feel more compassion regardless of who's involved?
4. Are there calls in which I tend to be quite stringent regardless of who's involved?
5. Can I identify reasons why I was lenient or strict in those various situations?

## **Tactical Empathy Phrases**

Practice using these tactical empathy phrases on and off duty and write some of your own:

- I can see where you are coming from . . .
- I want to understand that . . .
- I can appreciate what you are saying . . .
- I can see you are upset. I would be too . . .

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**Practice these deflection phrases and write some of your own:**

- Sir, I can understand where you are coming from, but if I can take a look at your ID, I can get you on your way a lot sooner.
- Sir, I can see you are upset, and I get it, but right now, all we have is a minor warrant to take care of. If you don't comply, unfortunately, you will have additional charges, like resisting arrest. I'm sure you don't want that, and I don't want that for you.
- Ma'am, I can see you are upset. I probably would be too if someone had called the police on me, but I just need to step inside and make sure everyone is okay. Unfortunately, I can't leave until I do that.

## GRIEF WORK ACTIVITIES

### **1. Acknowledge the Loss**

Don't sweep any loss under the proverbial rug. Tell your significant other about what happened, describe your sense of loss, and explain the emotions you are feeling. If you are single, do this with a trusted friend. In the least, write it down in a journal.

### **2. Embrace Your Humanity**

A loss may force you to confront your mortality. For some young officers who feel invincible, the death of a colleague or loved one bursts their immortality illusion. After each loss, take a step back and appreciate that you are still alive. Take extra good care of your health with fitness and nutrition, even though you may not feel motivated to do so. And, be careful to avoid self-medicating; alcohol will just intensify the painful emotions.

### **3. Connect With Loved Ones**

Despite what may be intense feelings of grief and a desire to isolate from others, it's especially important after a loss to reach out to those closest to you for support. They may not fully appreciate what you are going through, but you don't need to try to make them understand. They aren't there to fix anything; they are just there to love you.

### **4. Connect With Others Who've Been There**

Some of your fellow officers have experienced similar losses. They may or may not have felt the same way you feel, but it will help you to know that there are people who completely understand what it's like to go through what you are experiencing. At the same time, there are some losses that you directly share with some colleagues. You were

at the same gruesome accident with multiple fatalities. No one who wasn't there could exactly imagine the horror you witnessed. After these incidents, it's important to debrief your emotions together. These debriefings are an important step toward processing your intense feelings and not bottling them up.

### **5. Drop the Tough Guy Act**

Even if you are not that bothered by most on-duty tragedies anymore because you've pretty much seen it all, there will be losses from time to time that really hit home and can knock you for a loop. These are the incidents when it is not a good idea to act like it is just business as usual. When you ignore the intense emotions from one of these losses, you are more likely to make a mistake or get yourself in some trouble because the emotions may be clouding your judgment. You have vacation days for a reason. Take a day or two off after one of these significant losses.

### **6. Practice Spiritual Wellness Strategies**

It's especially important following a loss to increase the frequency and intensity of the strategies presented in Chapter 5 of *The POWER Manual*. In fact, because loss is inevitable in police work, it is vital for you to establish these skills early in your career; without them already in place, it is more difficult to learn them for the first time following a loss.

### **7. Strengthen Your Resilience**

Resilient officers cope best following any kind of loss.

What helps you strengthen your resilience?

## STRESS MANAGEMENT

### **How I Handle Stress Now**

Take a look at how you tend to react to a particularly stressful call or after a distressing day.

- What are your go-to stress management skills?
- Do you have any coping strategies that could be considered bad habits?
- Make a list of your healthy stress management strategies and your less healthy ones.

Now think about an event that was very stressful. How were your thoughts, behaviors, emotions, and body involved in reacting to the event? Were you able to do anything in any of these areas—thoughts, behavior, emotions, body—to lower your stress in the moment? If you wish, fill out one of the blank CBT charts provided to help you analyze what happened.

### **A Few Examples of Stress Management Strategies**

#### HANG TEN

Bruce Lee used to say, “Be water, my friend.” When you face a difficult situation that cannot be changed, imagine yourself as a surfer. Paddle out past the breakers, see a big wave coming, hop on your board, and hang ten as the water carries you to shore.

### POSITIVE SELF-TALK

Don't underestimate the value of reassuring yourself from time to time. At randomly stressful times and especially after a rough situation, give yourself a verbal pat on the back.

- I will be okay.
- I am a good cop.
- I know I can do this.
- I did the best I could.
- It wasn't my fault.
- Things will get better.

### USE PHYSICAL SENSES

Use each of your senses to help de-stress. For example,

- Sight. Look up at a star-filled sky; watch a baby, dog, or cat video on YouTube; identify a couple of specific photos on your phone that always bring a smile to your face.
- Sound. Find one song you can play that calms you down every time you hear it, listen to a child laughing hysterically (again, YouTube has a bunch), identify some sounds of nature, such as birds chirping or waves crashing that help you relax.
- Smell. Identify smells that relax you, such as the aroma of a certain food cooking, cinnamon, coffee, or freshly mowed grass.
- Touch. Find a tactile sensation you can use to calm yourself quickly, such as petting your dog (or cat), snuggling with your kids, slipping into an old sweatshirt, and so forth.
- Multiple senses. Some situations can quickly make you relaxed by impacting multiple senses, such as sitting by a fireplace with a roaring fire or lounging in a hammock on a spring day.

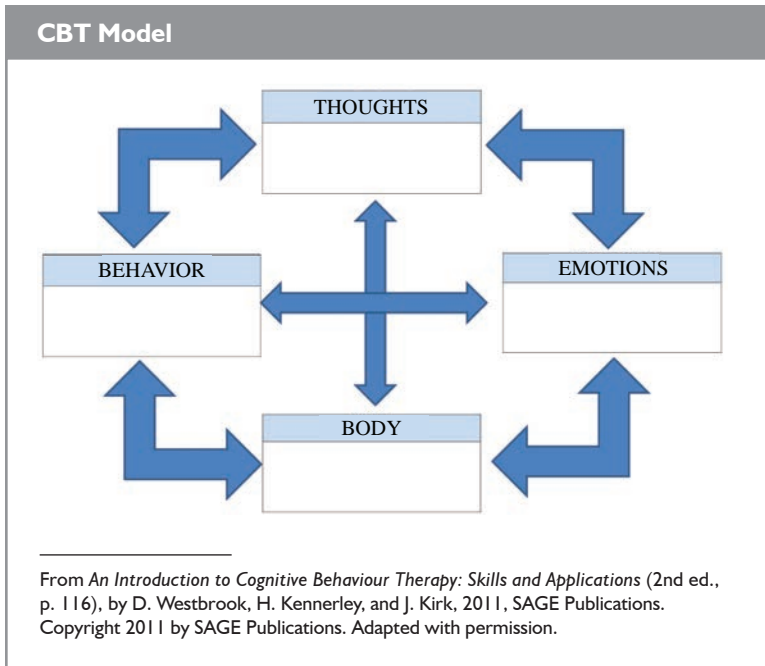
## **Stress Management Techniques**

Tactical breathing  
Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR)  
PMR with focused imagery  
Mindfulness  
Grounding  
Hang ten  
Positive self-talk  
Sight, sound, smell, touch  
One thing at a time

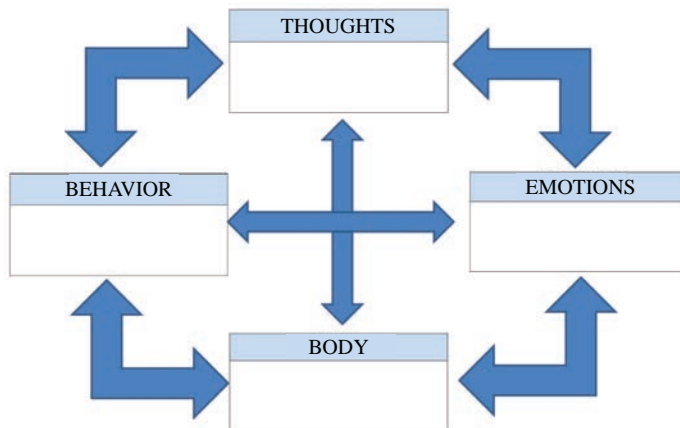
## **Stress Management Activities**

When you try any of the techniques, take a moment to notice how it impacted your thoughts, behavior, emotions, and body. If you wish, describe each aspect of your experience by filling out the CBT chart on the next page.





### CBT Model



From *An Introduction to Cognitive Behaviour Therapy: Skills and Applications* (2nd ed., p. 116), by D. Westbrook, H. Kennerley, and J. Kirk, 2011, SAGE Publications. Copyright 2011 by SAGE Publications. Adapted with permission.

## POSTINCIDENT DEBRIEFING

When you've experienced a potentially traumatic incident, it can help to go through each step of it, from before receiving the service call to after its conclusion. It's your chance to analyze your actions objectively.

### **Don't just replay the event; review it strategically**

For each incident you want to look at again, answer the following questions:

- Did you do everything you could, were trained to do, and expected of yourself?
- How do you rate your performance?
- Would you do anything differently if you had it to do over again?
- What can you learn from the incident to make you an even better cop when something like this happens again?
- What changes will you make based on what you learned?

### **Explore your emotions**

- when you got the call,
- during the call,
- immediately following the call (i.e., for the rest of the shift),
- when you got home, and
- for a few days afterward.

What emotions did you display to others? For example, you might have felt some uncertainty but showed only confidence.

**Reframe the incident or try other techniques, such as:**

- Apportioning blame
- Imaginary dialogue
- Making amends
- Self-forgiveness
- Forgiving others
- Letting it out and letting it go