

## Critical Incident Stress and the Family

Brenda Donner  
Washington State Concerns of Police Survivors

info@WASstatecops.org  
425-522-COPS (2677)

WASstateCops.org  
NationalCops.org

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## Critical Incident Stress and the Family

### Topics:

- Statistics
- Benefits
- Death
- Critical Incident Stress



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## Police Victimization

- Assaults/injuries
- Body armor
- Death
- Post Traumatic Stress

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**LODD:**  
Line of Duty Death

**PSOB:**  
Public Safety  
Officers' Benefit



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## Benefits

- Federal
- Washington State
- College tuition & fees in-state school benefits

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## Law Enforcement Myths

- LEOs:
  - Take care of our own
  - Always part of the law enforcement family
- GENERAL PUBLIC:
  - Families are prepared to lose officers in the line of duty
  - Family will be rich when a death occurs



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## Law Enforcement Suicide



- Stigma
- Funeral
- Follow Up

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## 2008 NY Officer and Taser



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## Survivors' Stress



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## PTS symptoms



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## Survivors

- Spouse
- Children
- Parents
- Siblings
- In-Laws
- Significant others
- Extended family
- Co-workers

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## Grief



- Acute
- Chronic

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## Additional Issues

- 9/11
- Hepatitis C
- HIV/AIDS
- 2 reasons OSHA requires baseline blood test?

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## Officer's Personal Checklist

- Gather all personal papers in one place
- Review personal insurance benefits including beneficiary information
- Review emergency notification info at least once per year (when setting clocks back?)

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## Critical Incident Stress Management



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### Critical Incident Stress "Terrible Ten"

- Line of duty death
- Line of duty serious injury
- Multiple casualties
- Death or serious trauma to children
- Victim known to the responders
- Fellow worker suicide
- Prolonged incidents
- Excessive media incident
- Emotionally significant events
- Officer involved shootings

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### Crisis—The Family

- A state of turmoil
- An emotionally significant event
- A turning point for better or worse

#### Special Consideration

What elements of the job emotionally affects families?

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### Family Systems

- Established rules
- Established roles
- Traditions and a rich history
- Unique communication styles
- Unique coping mechanisms

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## LEO Personality Trait Profile

Need to be in control

Obsessive (desire to do a perfect job)

Compulsive (tend to repeat same actions)

Highly motivated by internal factors

Action oriented

High need for stimulation

Have a need to see results (immediate gratification)

Easily bored

Risk takers

Rescue personality

Highly dedicated

Strong need to be needed

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## LEO Personality Traits vs. Critical Incident Stress Reactions

- Need to be in control
  - Display reactions to grief = weakness
  - Dependence on others = anxiety
- Obsessive (desire to do a perfect job)
  - Something unexpected will go wrong
  - The unexpected will happen
- High need for stimulation
  - Grieving creates numbness
- Rescue personality
  - I failed, there is nothing I can do

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## LEO Personality Traits vs. Critical Incident Stress Reactions

- Compulsive (tend to repeat same actions for similar events) — traditional
  - Unusual death/loss requires flexible reactions and new adaptations
- Risk takers
  - Judgment affected by grieving
- Need to see results (immediate gratification)
  - Life is on hold
- Easily bored
  - Complete lack of energy

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### LEO Personality Traits vs. Critical Incident Stress Reactions

- Action oriented
  - Can't speed things up, i.e., trials, grieving, administrative decisions
- Highly motivated by internal factors
  - Reluctance to finish projects or meet new people
- Strong need to be needed
  - Loss of a person who needed you
- Highly dedicated
  - Feelings of guilt, inability to focus on areas of responsibility

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### Work / Family Balance Summary

- ✓ What affects you on the job affects your family and quality of life
- ✓ Know the risks/dangers of your job
- ✓ Know the signs/symptoms of
  - Stress and stress overload
  - Suicidal thoughts



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### Work / Family Balance Summary

- ✓ Incorporate into your daily life the regimens of stress release
- ✓ Keep your personnel records up to date
- ✓ Have your affairs in order
- ✓ Have a sensible financial plan
- ✓ Talk with your family about the risks of your job
- ✓ Make your home your refuge



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