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## Stress Reduction Techniques for the Female Officer

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### Introduction

The nature of policework and its inherent responsibilities places a wide variety of physical and psychological demands on the police officer, who as such is expected to maintain calm in the face of danger, scorn or ridicule, and practice self restraint while being mindful of the welfare of others. While enforcing the law expediently, using the minimum amount of force necessary, sworn personnel are expected to perform their respective tasks, effectively, whether it be locating a lost child, alleviating tensions during a family altercation, investigating a brutal homicide or apprehending a fleeing felon. Officers are required to make extremely critical decisions, almost instantaneously, intervening and resolving a vast spectrum of human situations, which invariably have reach crisis proportions by the time law enforcement officers arrive at the scenes of such incidents. Like doctors, who operate to correct a malfunctioning organism, it is an officer's job to correct or remove the deviant behavior that threatens the community as a whole. Unfortunately the police officer's guidelines on procedure are not as clear cut as those of the medical practitioner who operates on one person at a time, with some prior historical background of their patient. Police officers must deal with any number of individuals (having problems) at one time usually with little background depicting the personality of the individual or individuals involved. To handle these situations effectively it is necessary to blend the appropriate amounts of wisdom, understanding, knowledge and discernment. Again like the doctor, because the decisions made, will alter the course of an individual's life to a greater or lesser extent, there is little room for error. In this respect, the police officer can perform his duties with considerable autonomy and authority. Ironically and as a consequence of the powers with which he/she is vested, the law enforcement officer is held directly accountable to three major proponents of law enforcement namely, the Courts, the Police Department and last but certainly not least, the Community.

Unfortunately, of late, the views and policies of these three groups have conflicted. This lack of unity severely hampers the street police officer (uniform, plainclothes and supervisory) in the performance of his duties. It has created doubts and conflicts within the individual officers as to his professional and human worth especially during incidents where he is required to risk his life. Behavior associated with the police officer's symbolic significance is an often overlooked but an important factor that generates stress and operates at a subconscious level. As the symbol of authority he or she evokes the dormant or active ambivalence that many people feel toward authority figures perceived as potentially threatening or punitive. Individuals whose conflicts are significant and largely unresolved, typically react to authority symbols with resentment, hostility and aggression. Not only the individual police officer but the organization as well signifies and exerts symbolic influence over its own members and others in the community.

## The State of the Art

Traditionally, the police organization has relentlessly pursued an authoritarian management approach toward the training and supervision of its sworn personnel, stating that such a semi-militaristic approach produces a better quality police officer. Interestingly, even the military has abandoned their strict adherence to regimentation. A number of enlightened police administrators have come to realize that pursuing this type of curriculum for their trainees in and of itself does not increase professionalism in the law enforcement community. Generally, the officer knows what is expected; specifically he does not. He also knows what to do in the majority of situations, but often he does not know how to get things done and is seldom aware of alternative procedures. In theory, the officer is the first line legal authority. However, because of the present ambiguity of his job, he is perceived and in many instances, subconsciously perceives himself as an authoritarian. Consequently, until recently many have viewed a career in law enforcement as a "blood and guts(?) profession(?)." Fortunately with the advent of a more enlightened society, law enforcement is now reassessing the nature of police work and in doing so, examining the attributes of an effective and competent police officer.

The law enforcement profession demands a great deal of sound reason and judgement and therefore, it cannot measure the true worth of its employees in pounds and inches. Existing statistics reveal that 80-85% of police calls are service oriented, while only a small percentage requires physical force (not strength) on the part of police officers who arrived at the scene of a violent or potentially violent situation. It has been my personal experience that during such violent incidents, applying psychosocial strategies of human interaction and intervention, frequently reduces the amount of physical force necessary. Further, proper psychological and physical training and conditioning in policework, will alleviate and/or totally eliminate the physical and psychological stresses inherent with the job of police officers.

"Current research has implicated psychological stress as an important causal agent of such health problems as coronary heart disease, gastrointestinal malfunctions, dermatological problems, severe nervous conditions, neurosis and a number of other physical and mental disorders. Workers in high stress occupations manifest high rates of some of the above mentioned problems".<sup>2</sup> Having spoken with other officers, male and female, and being a street police officer who has experienced some of the aforementioned physical ailments, since becoming a police officer, I well agree with the findings of current research. Psychosomatic illnesses stemming from high stress occupations are not an exaggeration and are not a rare phenomenon. Therefore serious consideration needs to be given to the development of specific, all encompassing programs that will help the officer to deal with the organizational (administrative) and environmental (community) demands made upon the law enforcement officer.

Such programs and policies, if they are to be effective, must address themselves not only to the "male street officer" but also the new element in many police departments namely the "female street officer." This is not to say that the stress factors relating to the job are totally different for men and women. As I mentioned earlier there are biological and psychological stresses stemming from the job, irrespective of sex. However, it is the degree of stressful situations that are different.

Compound this with the fact, that in many cases, the female police officer must perform her duties in an atmosphere of disbelief on the part of her supervisors and peers, in her ability to physically and emotionally deal with the rigors of street work particularly patrol functions. As is pointed out by Dr. Martin Reiser, Department Psychologist for the Los Angeles Police Department, one of the greatest pressures operating within the police organization is the peer group influence. The desire to be identified as a "good officer" is a strong motivating force and acts as a defense mechanism. "It bolsters and supports the individual officer's esteem and confidence which then allows the officer to tolerate higher levels of anger hostility and abuse from external sources."

For the rookie female officer attaining the approval of her peers, thus becomes a very frustrating task much more so than for her male counterpart. She must surmount the prejudices stemming from societal influences depicting the female as the "weaker sex" in every respect - like her male counterpart, she must overcome her doubts as to her ability to perform her duties effectively. Unlike her male counterpart, for the most part she receives little support from family, friends and least of all from men. She too must deal with the physical confrontations, the sometimes long working hours, changing shifts, disrupted family and social life, isolation and boredom. Then too, there are the job stressors, which are not detrimental to health but do affect disposition, in turn job satisfaction and finally job performance. An example of this is the police officer who must perform his duties, at times laying his life on the line for an apathetic community.

#### Physical Ability and Self Confidence

It takes an emotionally stable person to handle these problems and therefore it is necessary to know, generally speaking, the emotional and physical makeup of the human female. Pound for pound the woman is physically weaker than the man. "An average woman's muscles weigh fifteen (15) kilograms, less than one third of her total 55.3 kilograms; a man's muscles are 26.1 kilograms which is considerably more than one third of his 65.7 kilogram weight." Because of his anatomical build, man will always have a relatively stronger muscular build. A woman is particularly weaker than a man in her chest muscles. A woman can never compete with a man, no matter how much training she receives, when muscular strength has to be provided by the individual alone. However, during exercises involving muscular dexterity, women do equally as well or even better than men where the main force is provided by some other factor. Interestingly in the Federal District Court Case of Smith vs. East Cleveland, the court determined that much of modern police work involves leverage strength (where it is required) or the ability to use the body mass at a particular angle in order to lift or direct the body. There appeared to be no relationship between "brute force" or muscular strength and weight and as indicated earlier modern police work requires little need for such force.

Such factors should be taken into account as part of the hiring and training practices of police departments, especially those employing relatively large numbers of sworn female personnel. The Memphis Tennessee Police Department in consultation with a physical education professor designed a physical agility test for women and in doing so developed a table of relevant physical differences, between men and women.

Table 1. Physical Differences Between Men and Women As Related to Physical Agility Tests

Differences	Implications	Test Changes
Women have a weaker pelvis structure (bones)	Greater likelihood for injuries in events where one lands heavily on the feet.	None. This is not a relevant factor since in broad-jump test, jumping is done on a thickly padded mat.
Women have 10% few muscles fibers (cells) per muscle.	A disadvantage in strength activities.	
A greater proportion of body weight in women is fatty tissue, especially in the hips, breasts, and subcutaneous area (due to female hormones).	A disadvantage for women in events where they are required to lift their body weight.	The requirements in these events have been reduced for women.
Women have a lower center of gravity than men because of their weight is below the waist (compared to men).	An advantage for women in balance events.	In events where this is a factor, such as push-ups, and chin-ups, techniques have been modified.
Women are generally more flexible than men because their tendons and other connective tissue are thinner.	An advantage for women in events requiring a great range of movements in joints	An increase in requirements on the balance beam.
Women have:	In addition to inferior strength, these factors give women a disadvantage in endurance events.	An increased standard for the back stretch event.
a. fewer red blood cells per volume of blood.		Increase the time requirement to complete the half-mile run.
b. a smaller heart		
c. inferior capillary function.		
d. increased level of oxygen ( $O_2$ ) consumption per unit of work.		
e. an increased pulse rate per $O_2$ consumption rate		
f. a decreased maximum $O_2$ cib		



There may be any one of a number of methods of performing a certain physical task. Identifying the physical differences between women and men, with regard to physical agility and physical performance will greatly assist police training staff. They can then institute techniques that will develop the incumbent street police officer's physical attributes; thus helping the officer to maintain a more effective level of performance. Specifically as part of their training, female officers must be made aware of their physically weak and strong points. It is necessary that she abide by her stature of physical limitations (which is different for each woman) so that a sudden burst of mental valor does not get her into physical trouble. As part of their indoctrination and in most cases, reorientation, female officers should be trained and become adept in the physical defense tactics and apprehension methods that will utilize the strongest and most agile parts of her body. Kicking is an example. Knowing and being able to execute the holds and moves that are best suited to her physical stature, the female officer will be better equipped in handling a situation involving the application of physical force (not strength). Having the assurance and insurance of knowing what her body is capable and not capable of doing and the training of how to best use her body as a physical defense and in some case offense mechanism, the female officer acquires self confidence in her ability to perform the job in every aspect. I and other female "street officers" concur that this training reduces anxiety with regard to physical abilities and functions as an exercise in physical and ultimately psychological stress, reduction. To my knowledge few police departments have developed physical training programs that include exercises relating to anatomical sex differences.

Correspondingly there appear to be some routine exercises to develop physical endurance in which females do not perform well. I am not referring to exercises which are difficult for her to do because of body structure. I am speaking of such tasks as climbing a rope or scaling a wall. Many females perform poorly on these tasks but this is not due to inherent physical weakness. Through trial and error I have learned that irrespective of sex there is a technique to scaling a wall or climbing a rope. Societal norms permit most men to learn this technique at an early age but until recently, women were scolded for learning such skills. Subsequently police departments must be able to discriminate between skill and innate physical ability.

#### Emotional Stability

While it is essential that an officer be in good health and physically well trained it is far more important that he maintain almost an exceptional level of emotional stability and exercise control in dealing with the daily psychological stresses of the job. As is pointed out by Dr. W.H. Kroes, there are two major sources of psychological stress; first, there are the individual incidents that attack the officer's self image and professionalism; second, there are those factors which arise from the nature of police work. Generally speaking our actions bespeak our thoughts and if thoughts are neither initially and/or subsequently trained to handle the psychological stress of the profession, job performance will be adversely affected and eventually the physical and mental well being will be affected. The psychological stresses stemming from the nature of police work may never be totally eliminated but one can be taught how best to adapt to his or her circumstances. For example rotating shifts will always exist in most departments and to a certain extent, will at various times disrupt family life. Interestingly the officer is better able

to cope with these types of stressors if she is receiving support for the problems that arise in the first class of stressors.<sup>7</sup> To handle both kinds of stresses requires a particular kind of individual to be given adequate informal and formal stress training. For the female police officer this is a more difficult process as her formal and informal training must be preceded by a psychological reorientation. Once she has been reoriented, her new train of thought must be constantly reinforced by herself and other understanding police officers, but more importantly through organizational structures and policies.

The question now arises as to what are the characteristics of the emotionally stable police officer and does the emotional makeup of a female include and/or tolerate such characteristics. In defining the emotional stability in terms of the law enforcement profession, there aren't any clear cut rules of conduct. People have varying and often self contradictory expectations regarding the law officer's role. During their training both male and female officers should constantly be made aware of the inner conflicts these contradictions will cause. But this is no cause to be overly concerned. These differences in opinion will always exist and as one police officer I know there is little you can do to instantaneously change the attitudes of an individual or group. But the officer can set the example by administering the law equitable as much as possible. It is necessary to be mindful of the fact that police officers too are creatures of habit and will tend to identify with the expectations of the people he holds in esteem or the persons who hold the most power over him. The important factor is not to allow this part of our human behavior interfere with the enforcing of the law. To this extent the law enforcement requires an individual who displays the qualities of intestinal fortitude and professional integrity. This means an individual who is willing to practice his beliefs despite most certain opposition from a wide spectrum of people, including family and friends. In an age when people are passing the buck and in spite of social protest still hanging with the crowd, the pressure becomes great on a person who is invested with authority and not an independent thinker committed to his beliefs and the rule of law. There is a little room for this type of individual in a profession that separates but does not isolate itself from the community in a unique way. The law enforcement officer is a different type of individual working for a different type of organization. People naturally focus their attentions on and criticize that which is different. This is an important matter that should be discussed seriously with male and female police applicants who for the most part and until recently has been reared in a society that frowns on the independent woman, not inclined to totally depend upon "men" for her physical well being and self development.

The minority female officer has the extra burden of dealing with pressures in addition to those with which she is confronted because of her sex. Does she perceive herself as an individual who is genetically and psychologically linked to a race or nationality but not necessarily totally bound by its traditions and therefore able to deal with people on an individual basis? Or does she view herself as inseparable from the group? The degree of inseparability will definitely affect her performance and until such matters are more thoroughly and openly discussed, periodic racial incidents will continue to occur in police departments around the country, utilizing large numbers of minority officers.

It will also continue to be a stress factor particularly for the minority officer, male or female, who must bear the brunt of the persecution. Differences such as cultural background, personality, physical build, general health, social

class and basic temperment, results in a variety of ways of meeting the expectations of police work. It is those qualities that improve performance which should be encouraged.

The true test of a police officer's emotional stability especially during periods of stress is not what such a person feels, (even though this is important) but what one does especially in adapting to the physical and psychological stress situations. Consequently the emotional stable police officer is one who is generally calm and even tempered, neither unduly excitable or overly sensitive. Such a person is self confident and self controlled to point where his or her emotional reactions are appropriate but not excessive to the situation. A police officer's behavior is therefore professionally attuned to the problems on hand. Some police administrators contend that the above definition necessitates the elimination of women from the patrol function (vice, tactical squads and investigative units included). They maintain that coming in contact with the sordid sides of life on a regular basis is simply too much for females who as a group, are supposedly too emotional, at times irrational, persistently illogical and lacking in objectivity. This makes her inadequate at handling the psychological stresses of a career in law enforcement. But is this in fact true? Leading psychologists indicate that this characterization is hardly the case.

#### Emotional Make Up of "WOMAN"

Women have lived and worked in a masculine dominated society, the norms of which condition her to assume the attitude that she is not able to cope with the stress of life. Convention dictates that the woman must leave it to the man, who is usually her husband, to protect and sustain her or at least make a pretense of doing so. The facts indicate that this is a ruse conjured by a male dominated society appearing to suffer from varying degrees of deficiencies in the development of ego. Unfortunately a number of women working in a male dominated occupation (and the police function fits in this category) feels that to function in a specific occupation they have to do a man's job. This is self defeating for the woman who by her very nature is different from a man and therefore handles a situation differently. When she tries to do the job "like a man" severe inner conflicts result. Most women pursue an occupation not to compete with the masculinity of a man but to perform a task that can be completed irrespective of sex. They are introducing a feminine aspect in the solving of a problem. Many women and men have underestimated themselves by allowing an occupation to wholeheartedly determine their respective femininity and masculinity.

The point to be made is that for years women have withstood the pressures of life. For a woman to withstand the psychological and physical stresses indicative of the police profession presents a challenge but one that can be met. "Doctors and psychologists confirm that the average woman can endure more mental and emotional stress than a man can endure without mental or physical breakdown,"<sup>9</sup> In his book, "The Difference Between A Man and A Woman," Mr. Theo Lang gives example of two affections of present day society that are directly related to the stresses of modern life, namely alcoholism and drug addiction. These conditions arise out of the emotional and or mental weakness of the individuals involved, most of whom according to Mr. Lang are men (ratio of 7 to 1). The same can be said of disorder of a psychological origin. Con-



sidering that much of a police officers difficulties are of a psychological origin, conditions appear to be favorable for the succes of the female officer's ability to cope with stresses of types. Still another example reported by Mr. Lang concerns the woman who during her year of marriage appears to need the protective guidarce of her husband but then suddenly becomes a widow having to do for herself. If she does not remarry, she copes with the anxieties of life alone and does so magnificently. On the other hand in the case of a man who suddenly becomes a widower his life crumbles.

"While a woman is more sensitive to pain, meaning she can feel pain more actively than a man, she suffers it with greater fortitude than a man. Inevitabiyl the explanation given for this feminine attribute is that due to her physical and psychological make up and her biological function in life, she is destined to suffer a degree of pain in her first sexual consummation and later she will suffer labor pains."<sup>11</sup> Mr. Lang further implies that women are more easily frightened or startled. Further, some women may exhibit more terror than men at the threat of pain or immediate danger but eventually they bear the actuality of the pain with greater fortitude. If and when the need arises a woman can withstand greater fatigue with more endurance than a man. Therefore the oft times long working hours, lack of sleep and disruption of family life would pose an inconvenience and in some cases a problem but this would not be something new for the female officer, but more of an adaption. Considering the test of your emotional stability is what you do and not what you feel, the aforementioned observation of psychologist per reported in Mr. Lang's Book "The Difference Between Man and Woman," indicates that contrary to general opinion, the woman would be quite able to handle the stresses of police work. This is particularly applicable to the psychological demands which are usually the most difficult to alleviate as they affect our emotional stability and physical health.

There are two other aspects of the female character which Police Department Training schools might do well to look at in terms of training their male officers and emphasizing the training of their female officers. It is generally held that all women become too emotionally involved especially in crisis situation, some even to the point of hysteria. It has been my experience that a number of women initially do react to a crisis situation in this way. However, as all men cannot assume the responsibilities of being a police officer, neither is this possible with all women. In any case as there are some men who can perform the job, the possibility exists for an equal number of women who are not necessarily physical superwomen, to perform the job. Men and women exhibit different ways of expressing their feelings. It seems that a woman's feelings are more overt or externalized while a man's feelings are more covert or internalized. There is no room in police work for extremes (other than the aforementioned behaviors ) but there should be a balance of both. There has to be some kind of behavioral outlet for feelings that are initially internalized. Men (who are ridiculed for expressing their emotional feelings) will allow their emotional feelings and frustrations to build up to the point that when feelings are finally externalized they are uncontrollable. In contrast women accept their emotions or feelings and deal with them on a daily basis and looks for acceptable (not harmful) ways of ventilating her emotions. For example, in our society crying is an acceptable behavior for adult women but not adult men. However, it should be remembered that crying is an emotional outlet and therefore it acts as a stress reduction factor. This is not to say crying in public is to be encouraged....by no means. The nature of our society does not permit such especially for men. But in privacy crying can actually make the indivi-

dual feel better. I see nothing wrong or harmful in it. More men should consider this emotional release. Another stress reduction technique is participation in some physical (usually sports) activity. Such activity ventilates "pent up" emotions in an acceptable way. Many male officers utilize this technique. More female officers should seriously consider it. It is important to be mindful of the fact that, men and women are complimentary to each other physically and mentally; any attempt to argue that either is superior or inferior to the other especially in terms of police work is as pointless as arguing whether the key or the lock is inferior or superior in the job of securing a door.

Secondly societal norms have restricted women from expressing frustrations by using physical force especially during altercations. This being the case most women exhaust every other means to dissolve a problem and utilize physical force as a last resort. In this way women become more adept in psychologically dealing with individuals, with the intent of alleviating the emotional pressures of a difficult situation. This is quality that should be systematically ingrained in every officer, especially men, who have a tendency to resort to force much more quickly. Unfortunately the past performance of police officers seems to indicate that this quality was not stressed during training or on the job.

To have feelings is a universal human characteristic, that can not be avoided even by police officers. Sworn personnel should be instructed that they are not expected to be totally unemotional but rather that they are expected to behave like a professional and in doing so keep their behavior under control. Personal feelings, likes, dislikes, beliefs, and values should not be of a caliber that hinders your administration of and conformity to public policy. When one becomes a police officer, one needs to be made aware of the fact that he or she is taking on a job that will have many difficult and emotion charged moments. In light of this female officers should keep the following in mind and be trained and counselled accordingly by qualified personnel:

#### Specific Psychological Stress Reduction Techniques

1. Very few people will understand what you're doing; therefore, it becomes an exercise in futility to judge yourself completely by others standards. This includes your friends, the public and in a limited sense, your peers.
2. Prior to entry, a female must decide what is morally right and wrong for herself and determine if her views "get with" departmental codes and policies.
3. Become familiar with what is lawfully right and wrong. If you can't accept initially, don't think a great change will come.
4. It is most important that any police officer, particularly females, be able to account for his or her actions and be able to accept and cope with the consequences, whether they are fair or unfair; whether you like them or not. This takes a particular type of individual from the outset. However officers, both male and female, can be trained along these lines.
5. For the most part, it will be necessary for the female to limit her associations but she should keep in mind the increased quality of her remaining friendships.

6. Above all it is necessary to be truthful with yourself. Assuming the job of a police officer will affect every aspect of your life particularly family and/or social life. Many times the effects will be adverse and the degree of adversity will depend upon your flexibility to unusual circumstances. Before any woman becomes a police officer, she should discuss this decision with her fiancé or husband. This occupation has far reaching effects on the officer and anyone who is emotionally involved with her. Therefore for the purpose of avoiding future marital difficulties (as there are bound to be some anyway) the decision should be a joint one.

Female officers must not equate emotional stability with respect to police work with unresponsive coldness. This has been done in the past and has proved unsuccessful. With the exception of anger, normal human expressions of feelings within reason, are certainly desirable. This is especially true in incidents of a non volatile nature. Officers and particularly field supervisors who notice changes in an officers behavior, disposition or performance of duty should not wait for an emotional crisis to develop before counselling this individual. Such a person is dangerous to himself and others. A change in assignment or a few serious encouraging talks maybe all that is necessary in preventing the emotional stability of the male or female officer from tottering. If the problem persists, clinical help should be sought. Commander and supervisors must also be alert to the signs of battle fatigue, and emotional fatigue. This is a normal function in that such a condition acts as a safety value and signal to the officer that his mind and body needs rest. It is psychologically exhausting to carry a heavy emotional burden for prolonged periods. Physical exhaustion and emotional exhaustion go hand in hand. Subsequently as men and women require physical rest, male and female officers require emotional rest. To prevent suffering from the effects of acute and chronic battle fatigue. This would imply that in certain stressful areas of police work (i.e. patrol) police officers be required to periodically take a certain amount of time off and time away from the job.

During training female officers and their male counterparts should be constantly reminded that people react differently to symbols of authority. Some are cooperative, others are extremely defiant and express this through verbal abuses and/or violent physical attacks upon them. When you lose psychological control you've lost the battle already. To stress the importance of this, police officers should be put into situations (while in training) where he can see this for himself. In actuality these persons are not attacking the police officer personally but the authority with which he is vested as a police officer.

To complete the process of adapting to stress, it is necessary for police officers to be properly trained in stress reduction techniques. To this end, role playing and inducing stress situations during the course of completion of routine tasks should be instituted as part of the regular curriculum some stress factors to be considered are:

1. Superior-inferior relationships between incumbent street officers and training officers. Such relationships should include maximum supportive interaction. This introduces the female officer to the procedures of usually a semi-militaristic police organization.
2. Loud harsh discipline experience. This helps the officer particularly the female, to become accustomed to the verbal abuse she will suffer working on the street.

3. Strenuous physical training for mistakes increases physical and emotional endurance.
4. At regular intervals, police officers, especially female officers, should be required to perform at a level approximating their capacity. Again this is an exercise in endurance.
5. Female officer should periodically be required to take command and control of a class. This aids her in being readily able to take control of a situation when working on the street.
6. In addition and of particular importance female and male officers should be placed in various situations (stress and non stress) where in order to accomplish a goal they must work together. In this respect sensitivity training should also be a part of the regular curriculum. Such training will identify for both male and female officers the area of their behavior that needs to be reoriented, as respects to job performance. Special orientation classes should be conducted for male and female recruits. Women need to be made aware of the problems they will encounter upon entering a predominantly male occupation. As I mentioned earlier, peer group acceptance plays an important part in being able to cope with the external, psychological stresses. Female officers need not become overly concerned when their male counterparts attain acceptance more readily. Confidence in oneself plays an important part in this regard. Most important is that a female officer earn the respect of her co-workers. Approval will follow.
7. Specifically female officers should be placed in stressful situations where they have to think and act for themselves. This will condition her away from the idea that there will always be a man around.
8. Mock Courtroom Dramas (role playing) are also a necessary part of stress training. Many a police officer has a dreaded fear of testifying in a criminal proceeding court mainly because he or she does not know how to "state the facts" or what to expect from criminal defense attorneys many of whom have become quite adept at undermining the creditability of a female officer, based on the misconception that she is again, the weaker sex in every respect. When properly trained in filling out arrest forms and preparing a statement of facts, women, who generally speaking, have good memories for details, can use their sex as a definite advantage. Knowing how to conduct oneself for courtroom testimony significantly reduces the anxiety of the male and female officer confronted with this task. Even if the defendant in a particular case obtains a verdict of not guilty the officer is disappointed at times frustrated but confident that he or she for his or her part, has done his or her job well.

Departmental physicians need to place more emphasis on maintaining the physical health of sworn personnel. They can discern when an individual is taking in the proper diet or getting sleep and/or rest. He should not wait for the physical symptoms of these deficiencies to appear before prescribing a treatment. Unfortunately the latter seems to be the rule rather than the exception. When officers are physically unhealthy their whole disposition and job performance are affected. Maintaining the proper diet and rest will minimize some of the effects of physical ailments stemming from the nature of the job. In addition and where requested, family counselling for the police officer, his wife (or her husband) and children would be made available. In particular wives of police officers should be given counselling where requested, concern-

ing their adjustment (if there is any) to the fact that their husbands may be working with a female. The same holds true for the husbands of female officers as there are already incidents of adjustmental difficulties for the husbands of female officers. For a number of wives this adjustment is difficult and often times she will express her discontent to her husband. This can create anxieties for married male officers and may affect his performance and attitude toward his female partner.

To insure that sworn female personnel are treated as police officers operational guidelines should be sent to all commanders in each police department. This will reduce the tendency of male officers to believe that female officers do not perform the same functions and will reduce resentment on the part of male officers. In turn this will facilitate the male officer's acceptance of the female officer as his professional equal, thus reducing tension between the two.

### Summary

In minimizing the stresses (particularly psychological stresses) inherent and stemming from the nature of the occupation of a police officer, stress reduction techniques are essential in developing the required discipline, organization of time, increased physical and emotional endurance, developing the ability to take command and maintaining emotional and physical control under stressful situations. In addition, the officer, male or female, who survives the stresses from within himself, from the organization and from his working environment, he or she benefits from the experience. The resulting individual having coped with a variety of crisis situations achieves a level of maturity, poise, sound judgement and increased self confidence that is seldom equaled in any other profession. You have become an unusual individual, a female officer in an unique profession.

# FOOTNOTES

- 1  
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