Officer Wellness and Safety is the final pillar of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing and discusses the importance of law enforcement officers’ emotional, mental, and physical wellness as well as their safety. “The wellness and safety of law enforcement officers is critical not only to themselves, their colleagues, and their agencies but also to public safety” (President’s Task Force, 2015). This pillar covers all aspects of wellness, even the ones officers do not want to acknowledge.

The majority of officer injuries and deaths are actually due to things outside of criminal interactions. Many of them are due to lack of exercise, poor nutrition, sleep deprivation, and substance abuse. These are wellness issues which need to be addressed to improve overall officer safety and wellness.

Emotional wellness is the ability to deal with your emotions effectively. Officers believe they are not allowed to share their feelings because they are viewed as a weakness. Many officers feel if they discuss their emotions, particularly with a mental health specialist, they will be removed from duty and potentially lose their jobs. So the question arises, how do we help officers deal with their emotions but ensure they are not penalized for doing so? Suggestions have included mentor programs, a chaplain program, and a peer to peer program.

Wellness programs would allow for officers to discuss their difficulties without fear of repercussions. The thing to keep in mind is some issues need to be brought to light because they may be harmful to more than just the officer. Officers need to acknowledge when they require more help than just a friend.

The idea of mental wellness is frightening for many officers to address. Mental wellness for individual officers is based on their frame of mind within their job. This is the aspect of wellness where officers need to be willing to admit they are human. In addition, studies have shown that due to a lack of external activities, officers have a low life expectancy after retirement. The best way to increase mental wellness is finding hobbies outside of work to help de-stress. Hobbies allow officers to find time to focus on something outside of their profession and their stress is less debilitating when officers do something they enjoy. Unfortunately, tracking the mental wellness of officers is difficult due to how individualistic most officers are and their unwillingness to admit to having any problems. Without officers willing to come forward about their problems, they may not receive help to attain a more balanced state of wellness.
state of wellness.  
Lastly, physical wellness is perceived as the most important aspect of wellness for law enforcement officers. The combination of poor nutrition, fitness, and sleep deprivation are serious threats to the wellness of officers. Many officers’ errors in judgment can be tracked to fatigue, which increases the likelihood of an incident because tired people struggle to connect with others and control their emotions. Furthermore, evidence suggests the law enforcement profession features stressors which may put officers at high risk for early deaths, heart attacks, and other health-related problems. 

There have been numerous suggestions put forth about how to help law enforcement officers cope with the job. One suggestion from the President’s Task Force was to create a national toll-free mental health hotline for law enforcement officers. Additionally, future research should be done to identify if annual mental health and fitness checks are beneficial for officers. 

Research was also suggested in looking at data about officer deaths, injuries, and near misses. Health, safety, and wellness programs need to be examined for effectiveness. Implementing this type of program is another way to show officers the department cares. 

The “bulletproof cop” does not exist. Officers protect the public but they need to be protected too. Officer health, safety, and wellness are important issues which deserve considerable attention. Law enforcement agencies should collaborate with researchers to develop programs which will be able to improve officer health, safety, and wellness, while ensuring each aspect of wellness is balanced.  

Click HERE for more information.

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**Professionalism in Policing**  
*By Curtis Evans, Intern*

On December 18th, 2014 President Barack Obama signed Executive Order 13684 establishing the Task Force on 21st Century Policing. Before doing so, Obama mentioned the distrust that exists between police departments and countless communities. The Task Force on 21st Century Policing identified the need to build trust between citizens and their peace officers so that all components of a community are treating one another in a fair and just manner, and are invested in maintaining public safety in the atmosphere of mutual respect. This report is comprised of six pillars, pillars which is an excellent way to display professionalism among police officers and communities.

The first pillar, Building Trust and Legitimacy, is supported by many years of research and practice which claim that citizens are more likely to obey the law when they believe that those who are enforcing it have the legitimate authority. This pillar promotes trust and ensures legitimacy through procedural justice, transparency, accountability and honest recognition of past and present obstacles. Transparency is one of the greatest forms of professionalism; the public cares as much about how police interact with them as they care about the outcomes that legal actions produce.

Pillar 2, Policy and Oversight, works only if there is order within the first pillar. The second pillar’s primary focus is to develop comprehensive and responsive policies on key topics while implementing formal checks and balances and data collection and analysis. This identifies different aspects of professionalism, such as being knowledgeable about laws, policies, procedures and regulations as well as being dependable and conscientious.

The third pillar, Technology and Social Media, has been improved immensely. Technology has been dramatically improving, and has drastically been changing the way law enforcement is seen today. Implementing new technologies can give police departments an opportunity to fully engage and educate communities in a dialogue about their expectations for transparency, accountability, and privacy.

Pillar 4, Community Policing and Crime Reduction, is molded around professionalism, because it is encouraging the implementation of policies that support community-based partnerships in the reduction of crime. As previously mentioned, being knowledgeable of policies and laws is key to professionalism.

The fifth pillar, Training and Education, emphasizes the importance of high quality and effective training and education through partnerships with local and national training facilities. To build a police force capable of dealing with the complexity of the 21st century, agencies need to place value on both educational achievements and socialization when making hiring decisions.

The sixth and final pillar, Officer Wellness and Safety, is probably one of the most, if not the most important pillar, endorses the practices that support officer wellness and safety through the re-evaluation of officer shift hours and data collection/analysis to help prevent officer injury. This ties in with professionalism, because policy makes sure proper protocol and procedure was taken to ensure not only the citizen is safe, but also the police officer is safe and well. This also ties into the physical nature of the officer. Poor nutrition, as well as fitness, is also a serious threat to an officer. This could affect judgement, which traces back to fatigue; this makes it harder to connect with people and control emotions. Ways to help this would be from the administrative aspect, such as reducing work shifts can improve officer’s feelings and well-being, and the implementation of mental health strategies can also lessen the impact of stress and trauma.

Overall, when analyzing the signed Executive Order 13684, which established the Task Force on 21st Century Policing, it is clear that as long as this policy is followed, we will be able to build trust among the citizens and peace officers. This can not only help improve the safety of the community, but also build a bridge of safety and wellness for all law enforcement officers.

Click HERE for more information.
Police Executive Role in the 21st Century

Session M-223

Police Executive Role in the 21st Century is a comprehensive and challenging program designed to guide law enforcement leaders in the right direction with professional development necessary for successful management and leadership of today’s law enforcement agency. Participants will be challenged to think strategically and with vision to take their organization to the next level.

When
Week 1: October 17-20, 2016
Week 2: November 14-17, 2016
Week 3: December 5-8, 2016

Where
Oswego Police Department
Oswego, Illinois

Registration Deadline: September 12, 2016
Registration Required. Enrollment is limited!

Tuition
Tuition Free!
Tuition for Illinois local law enforcement is provided by the ILETSB Executive Institute. A non-refundable administrative fee ($150) is due for persons accepted into the class by October 1, 2016.

Contact
Emilie Payne (Registrar), ILETSB Executive Institute
(309) 298-2646 or registrar@iletsbei.com

Effective Police Supervision

Transformation to Leadership

This course focuses on the first-line supervisors’ function, effectiveness, proficiency, and influence on creating an effective criminal justice agency. A hybrid learning experience, participants will meet for three weeks of traditional classroom instruction with individual and group participation, online learning modules, and written assignments including case studies, the SARA model, personal leadership philosophy, and comprehensive supervision plans. Persons successfully completing the course will receive 200 hours of training credit.

When
Week 1: October 10-13, 2016
Week 2: November 14-17, 2016
Week 3: December 5-8, 2016

Where
Belleville Police Department
720 W. Main
Belleville, IL 62220

Registration Deadline: September 18, 2016
Registration Required. Enrollment is limited!

Tuition
Tuition Free!
Tuition for Illinois local law enforcement is provided by the ILETSB Executive Institute. A non-refundable administrative fee ($150) is due for persons accepted into the class by October 1, 2016. All other expenses including transportation, meals, and additional expenses are the responsibility of the participant and/or the nominating department.

Contact
Emilie Payne (Registrar), ILETSB Executive Institute
(309) 298-2646 or registrar@iletsbei.com
Corrections Center

Corrections Stress: Peaks and Valleys

In June of 2016, the National Institute of Corrections hosted an internet broadcast, Corrections Stress: Peaks and Valleys. The broadcast focused on what corrections stress looks and feels like, being able to identify and acknowledge corrections stress, and identifying resources for healthy individuals, correctional environments, and workforce (NIC, 2016). Corrections professionals need to be able to balance work and life issues outside of work so identifying the different stressors at an operational, organizational, and traumatic level can help corrections staff determine and manage their stress. Individual functions such as social, physical, intellectual, environmental, and emotional wellness can improve the sense of meaning toward work and assist in decreasing the potential for burnout. Corrections agencies can focus on services such as peer support, preventative programs, mentoring, and the use of Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) to assist their staff in promoting resiliency in the workplace. The participant guide for the broadcast is available through the National Institute of Corrections and covers more detailed information about how corrections staff and organizations can work together to create a balance that will promote healthier workplaces in a challenging environment.

The guide is available at the National Institute of Corrections website: http://nicic.gov/library/032605

Pokémon Go and Safety

By Rebecca Hickey, Research Associate

At the beginning of July, Niantic, Inc. released the Pokémon Go app, a game where people can use their cellphones to catch Pokémon characters. The game uses a form of geocaching to have Pokémon pop up based on an algorithm, along with pokéstops, where items can be gathered, and gyms, where players can go to train Pokémon and earn coins.

Since its release, the game has had both positive and negative impacts on the community. It has increased public interactions with law enforcement officers in a more positive way as well as having allowed for members of the community to improve their own lives through social interaction and exercise. However, members of the law enforcement community have concerns because of the mishaps which may occur. Law enforcement agencies have had some success through social media expressing support for the game but cautioning players as well.

The game has exponentially increased foot traffic in many areas and has become a potential hazard due to lack of attention from players to outside stimuli as well as a higher opportunity for crime in public places. There have also been issues with individuals playing the game while driving, which can lead to accidents. Although cases have already occurred where community members are being injured or are committing crimes in the course of the game, this does not mean the game itself is bad. Nonetheless, people need to understand that the game does not allow them to violate laws and they may suffer consequences from unlawful or inattentive gameplay.

These risks have been noted by many law enforcement agencies and decisions need to be made about how to address the game from a policy standpoint. The question now is what are agencies going to do to ensure the safety of their communities. What policies or releases have agencies developed to address the game? If you have suggestions for other departments, examples would be greatly appreciated. Email info@iletsbei.com
Online Learning Network

The Executive Institute recognizes budgetary constraints or a tight schedule can limit officers from attending a traditional classroom course. That is why we introduced a series of cost-free online courses that gives the officer the flexibility to learn from home or at work. Click HERE for more information.

The Online Learning Network:
- Provides opportunity to work from a location with an Internet connection anytime, anywhere;
- Has interactive learning activities;
- Has built-in learning and knowledge assessments;
- Meets current statutory requirements;
- Has a library of relevant topics for law enforcement;
- Tracks and retains officer training records;
- Provides a Certificate of Completion for training records.

Law Enforcement Executive Forum

The Law Enforcement Executive Forum provides the criminal justice community with best practices and emerging technology for law enforcement leaders. The Forum is written for and by criminal justice professionals and scholars to share their opinions and success with others.

Published quarterly, the journal provides readers with current issues, trends, and evidence-based practices in the field of criminal justice.

Subscribe to the Law Enforcement Executive Forum today!

Welcome! New ILETSBEI Staff Members

Amy Lanenga is a Law Enforcement and Justice Administration graduate student at Western Illinois University. Amy is the president of WIU’s National Criminal Justice Honors Society, Alpha Phi Sigma. While at the Executive Institute, she is looking forward to attending the Problem-Oriented Policing Conference and any other conferences. After Amy receives her master’s degree, she plans to pursue employment with the FBI investigations division.

Curtis Evans is an undergraduate at WIU working towards a Bachelor of Science degree in LEJA. He is a founding member of Western’s Preeminent Gentlemen’s Society and president of Phi Beta Sigma. While at the Executive Institute, Curtis wants to learn more about the law enforcement field. After Curtis graduates, he wants to become a parole officer.

Garret Covington is an undergraduate at Western working on his Bachelor of Science degree in LEJA. Garret is a WIU basketball player and the vice president for WIU’s Student Government Association. He is also the president and the national representative for Western’s Chapter of the Student Athletic Advisory Committee. While interning, Garret wants to gain information about what the institute does and how it benefits schools, students, and officers. After graduation, Garret wants to become a crime scene investigator.