



Home > Blogs > Inside the Badge

10 Tips for Better Managing Officer Stress

"If you can manage your own internal stress level and overall mental health experience, then you're more likely to be able to stick in this career long term because you're just going to have enough bandwidth to keep going," Dr. Jennifer Prohaska explains.



Wayne Parham • Senior Editor

[Read Wayne's Posts](#)

January 9, 2023

10 Tips for Better Managing Officer Stress



Jennifer Prohaska, Ph.D, shares 10 tips to help officers manage stress.

Credit: PHOTO: POLICE Illustration

Focusing on officer mental wellness is a growing trend and many departments tap into outside experts to help officers manage the stresses encountered during a law

enforcement career. Dr. Jennifer Prohaska, clinical psychologist and founder of Insight Public Safety and Forensic Consulting, has worked closely with more than 50 police departments across multiple states.

She has been a featured speaker for the FBI National Academy Associates-Kansas/Western Missouri Chapter, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, MidAmerican Regional Council, and Central States Law Enforcement Executives seminars.

“Your internal state, be it stressed, be it calm, be it whatever that status is, will directly come out through your actions with the public. We don't operate in just silos and vacuums, our stuff spreads to other people. So, if we don't manage our stress, we are probably going to be passing along that stress and our behaviors in interactions with others,” Prohaska says.

Managing stress can also help promote longevity in a police officer's career. Prohaska **helped create the Tactical Longevity program** that takes a long-term and preventative approach to officer wellbeing at the Kansas City Police Department (MO).

“We know that people leave this career because of, usually, things like burnout and mental health effects of the job. So, if you can manage your own internal stress level and overall mental health experience, then you're more likely to be able to stick in this career long term because you're just going to have enough bandwidth to keep going,” she explains.

Prohaska provides 10 tips that officers can use over the long haul to help **manage stress**. Those tips are:

1. Diversify, Don't Just Be Your Job

This is the same principle as never put all your eggs in one basket. When people are just their job, if something negative happens in the work environment you're going

to get way more bent out of shape because it's the only thing that makes you you. So, it's going to **challenge your identity**, it's going to challenge your sense of who you are in the world if you're only one thing and you have a bad day. If you have lots of things that make you you, you can get through those moments and not get so bent out of shape when something at work goes wrong.

2. Mind your Tribe

The tribe is the people that you collect around you intentionally, so this is the group-belonging thing. We have to be aware that when we are around others socially, they also can carry a certain type of energy about them that we can get sucked into. We're not immune to that. If our tribe is always talking about negative stuff and bringing us down when we're interacting with them, we're more likely to also join in and feel negative. You have to watch what kind of energy people bring to your circle, because it's going to rub off on you.

3. Get Out of Your Own Head

When people are under extreme stress, they tend to get very self-centered. We naturally will do that. It's almost an evolutionary mechanism for resource acquisition. If we're really stressed out, we get really scared about losing resources. So, we start to become obsessed with just what's mine, "what do I need?" When that happens, people tend to get worse. They can get way more depressed too. When we start thinking about other people, we're more likely to expand our viewpoint and include some other things that don't make us feel as bad about ourselves.

4. Watch Your Mental Diet

When we talk about your mental diet, it's the things that you intake. What you are putting into your mind, just like what you put into your body, will directly affect how you physically feel. What you take in through your senses, your eyes and your ears, will directly affect your headspace. If you're always taking in negative content, it's going to be very hard to get out of the negative mood. Purposefully and intentionally take in more motivational content or things that make you feel a sense of pride or excitement about something. Taking in that kind of content will directly affect your mood in a positive way.

5. Become an Intentional Task Switcher

We have to be really aware that whatever task we're doing is going to also directly affect us or directly affect our mood. So, if there are times when you feel like you have low energy and all of a sudden you've got a task in front of you that requires high energy, you're going to start to feel really bad about yourself if you're underperforming. If you have the ability to say, "hey, look, I'm really tired right now, so I'm going to go ahead and take a task that's a little bit mindless but still needs to be done," then do that. And then if you're noticing you have more energy right now, go do something that's a little bit harder because you're more likely to have success and therefore could have a better mood and manage your stress.

6. Upgrade to Better Fuel

What we put in our bodies matters regarding the actual food. The more processed food we eat, the more likely we are to feel poor. So, think about upgrading to healthier, more nutritious things in times where you know you're preparing for higher stress.

7. Novelty - Try Something New

When you force yourself out of a pattern, it will naturally make you look at situations differently, and you may see solutions to problems you didn't see before just merely by activating that sense of newness or creativity.

8. Switch Work Out for Play

One of the things that can happen when people work in law enforcement is it's sometimes easier to just go to work because the little black box in the car tells you what to do. Sometimes people will take on too much overtime. But overtime doesn't give you any energy back, it just drains you more. So, when you switch out an off-duty shift or some extra work shift for something that's fun, something that gives you social connection, we know that people who have solid social connections tend to cope with stress better.

9. Time Block Your Day

It's best to time block your day because you'll feel an increased sense of control. If

the best to time block your day because you'll feel an increased sense of control. If you have the ability, even in your free time, to say, "from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. I'm going to do nothing but yardwork" it makes you feel like you can focus your time and not be spread out all over the place. Many people will say they feel an increased sense of control, which is related to being able to cope with stress better.

10. Communicate Stress

Put in the effort and communicate your current stress situation to your spouse or significant other clearly, and explicitly set reasonable "here's what I need to get through this tough time." Then negotiate what they may need in return to make that happen.

Background

Prohaska's specialty is in officer-involved shootings and other critical incidents that fall outside of the scope of normal daily first-responder activities and she is Force Science Certified. She and her team provide specialized counseling for emergency services personnel and their family members, related to their work and home life, and the variety of stressors that affect them including but not limited to PTSD, anxiety, addiction, depression, and grief.

Topics: [Officer Stress](#) [Managing Stress](#) [Mental Health Wellness](#) [Officer Mental Health](#)
[Evergreen](#) [Handling Stress](#)

Subscribe to Our Newsletter

Email Address *

Country *

Select One

By clicking the button below you consent to Bobit's [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Use](#) and to receive offers, newsletters and other promotional communications from Bobit and its trusted partners. You can withdraw consent at any time. You also consent to Bobit sharing your contact information with the sponsor(s) of the resource so they can contact you directly concerning their product.

SIGN UP

Topic

Command
Investigations
Patrol
Point of Law
Procedures & Policies
Special Units
Technology
Training
Vehicle Ops
Weapons

Resources

News
Articles
Blogs
Magazine
Whitepapers
Webinars
Videos
Products
Jobs

Utilities

Advertise
Cookie Settings
Contact Us
Press Release
Content Guidelines
Marketing Solutions
Subscribe

Connect with us



Sign up for Police News!

Email Address

By clicking the button below you consent to Bobit's [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Use](#) and to receive offers, newsletters and other promotional communications from Bobit and its trusted partners. You can withdraw consent at any time. You also consent to Bobit sharing your contact information with the sponsor(s) of the resource so they can contact you directly.

they can contact you directly,
concerning their product.

SIGN UP



© 2025 Bobit Business
Media. All rights reserved.

[Privacy
Policy](#)

[Terms of
Use](#)

[Terms of
Sale](#)

[Do Not Sell or Share My
Personal Information](#)