



Pre-Deployment, Deployment, and Post-Deployment Stressors for the Police Officer who is also a Military Reservist and Stigma of Psychological Treatment within Law Enforcement



April 2011

For duplication & redistribution of this article, please contact the Public Agency Training Council by phone at 1.800.365.0119.

Article Source: http://www.llrmi.com/articles/legal_update/2011_cipriano_rothlein.shtml

Printable Version: http://www.patc.com/weeklyarticles/print/2011_cipriano_rothlein.pdf

©2011 Public Agency Training Council

Dr. Robert J. Cipriano Jr., Florida Licensed Psychologist

Steven Rothlein, Expert Witness, Legal & Liability Risk Management Institute

Stigma is a significant factor that the general public experiences whenever the words “psychological treatment” is introduced.

Unfortunately, psychological treatment is even more stigmatized within the law enforcement culture predominately because it infers the police officer cannot perform his/her job duties. This issue may become more complex if the police officer is experiencing any mental health symptomatology upon his/her return from military duty. Each police department within our country handles this issue differently. Some departments elect a psychological fitness for duty evaluation depending on the egregious behaviors of the officer in question. The International Association for Chiefs of Police, Psychological Services Section has a set of guidelines to aid an agency with such a decision when warranted.

Other departments may have a policy put in place that requires that before a police officer returns to duty that he/she meets with a mental health professional. The role of that professional would be to aid the officer in understanding mental health reactions to trauma and stress as well as provide a venue of support during the adjustment period. Maintaining a healthy “balance”, at one end of the spectrum, between support and at the other end, mandating a police officer to receive a psychological evaluation is a variable that can strengthen or alleviate the dynamic of stigma for receiving psychological treatment within the law enforcement culture.

There is more awareness and education today on the signs and symptomatology of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and post trauma stress reactions than there was five to ten years ago. One of the factors contributing to this occurrence is partly due to the number of tours of duty our military veterans have experienced during Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and the Global War on Terrorism that increase the risk of a returning veteran having a psychological reaction within the spectrum of trauma and stress. It is more than just experiencing combat in war that places extraordinary stress on our veterans.



FOLLOW THESE FREE ARTICLES ONLINE AT
PATC.COM/NEWS

Email | Mail | RSS | Facebook | Twitter | LinkedIn

©2011 Article published in the free PATC / LLRMI E-Newsletter: 800.365.0119

Link to Article online: http://www.llrmi.com/articles/legal_update/2011_cipriano_rothlein.shtml

<http://www.patc.com> | <http://www.llrmi.com> | <http://www.fsti.com> | <http://www.school-training.com> | <http://www.patctech.com/>

The family system is in complete disequilibrium and what affects one person within that system clearly affects others. Here is a listing of the pre-deployment stressors that our veterans experience: a “roller coaster” of high emotions- the family prepares for the deployment, the family separates, and the “fear” response experienced by family members that something may happen to their loved one being deployed such as suffering from a severe injury and/or dying is real and consistent.

Some of the deployment stressors that a veteran experiences include: the family attempts to move from crisis to a level of equilibrium; the emotional stressors continue to occur; responsibilities shift and roles change within the family; many families feel they are alone in their survival; some families isolate, some remain in crisis, some stabilize, and some experience triggers that lead to feelings of guilt.

Some of the post-deployment stressors that our veterans and family experience: the equilibrium is disrupted again and requires an adjustment; there are high emotions once again similar to the pre-deployment “roller coaster” analogy; attempts to renegotiate roles; adapting to routines and responsibilities that alter the family system and the degree of it; and not losing sight that our veteran can be re-deployed, warranting a sustained and heightened level of vigilance of returning to combat for both our veteran and his/her family.

One veteran returning to police work informed me, “two months ago I was hunting Al Qadi, I’m now writing traffic tickets. It takes some getting used to coming back to civilian life. One minute you are living on the edge, the other; back home, things seem so trivial and routine. I’m still having a hard time sleeping, being in crowds, and connecting with my family and friends.” Cultivating a law enforcement culture of awareness for receiving mental health support is the first step in “normalizing” reactions to the multitude of stressors our police officers face during all phases of deployments, especially post-deployment. This healthy cultivation for support can “open” the door for those to accept help and potentially mitigate a contributing variable of stigma within the law enforcement culture.

REFERENCE:

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in the Returning Combat Veteran, Rene A Poveda, M.D. & Sherrill K. Valdes LCSW, BCD; Department of Veteran Affairs, Sunrise, Florida, 2010.

SEE RELATED ARTICLES: Browse All Articles at <http://www.llrmi.com/articles>

Conducting Integrity Tests on Law Enforcement (2010 Legal Update)

http://www.llrmi.com/articles/legal_update/le_integrity_tests.shtml

The Economy and Potential Unexpected Employee Issues (2009 Legal Update)

http://www.llrmi.com/articles/legal_update/2009_economy.shtml

Noble Cause Corruption (2008 Legal Updates)

http://www.llrmi.com/articles/legal_update/noble-cause-corruption.shtml

Tracking Group Behavior Via Early Intervention Systems (2008 Legal updates)

http://www.llrmi.com/articles/legal_update/tracking-group-behavior.shtml

©2011 Article published in the free PATC / LLRMI E-Newsletter: 800.365.0119

Link to Article online: http://www.llrmi.com/articles/legal_update/2011_cipriano_rothlein.shtml

<http://www.patc.com> | <http://www.llrmi.com> | <http://www.fsti.com> | <http://www.school-training.com> | <http://www.patctech.com/>