

Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training

Basic Curriculum Lesson Plan

LESSON TITLE: STRESS MANAGEMENT FAMILIES PART I - 1.6

SUBJECT:	Stress Management, Families Part I
AZ POST DESIGNATION:	1.6
HOURS:	2
COURSE CONTENT:	A discussion of the sources, manifestations and stages of stress, plus techniques for managing stress and keys to emotional survival. This section is designed to educate family members as to the stresses their loved one will be experiencing while they are training to become a police officer.
PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:	
NOTE OF INTEREST:	Stress inoculation (exposing recruits to stress) in a controlled setting may help them to be able to increase confidence for working the street. When recruits are exposed to a tense environment that includes physical exercise, where things are regimented, timelines are necessary, and attention to detail is demanded, then it gives them the opportunity to inspect their physiological response (increase in heart rate, increase in breathing, increase in blood pressure, internal messaging to their brain). This environment can help strengthen resolve, causing recruits to focus, work together, and accomplish tasks with tight deadlines. This can lead to increased confidence, and help them to utilize effective coping strategies (breathing). Family members will be introduced to what their loved one is experiencing on a daily basis while at the academy. How their lives have changed and how it will impact their lives in turn. The understanding of how their loved ones respond to their training will open dialogs to the life of a law enforcement officer.

DATE FIRST PREPARED: October 2023

PREPARED BY: SME Committee

REVIEWED – REVISED:

DATE:

AZ POST – APPROVAL: Lori Wait

DATE: October 2023

INSTRUCTOR REFERENCES: “Emotional Survival” by Dr. Kevin Gilmartin (Book and AZ POST telecourse videotape). Physical evidence of police officer stress, Emerald, 25 (2), 399, Anderson, G. S., Litzenberger, R., & Plecas, D. (2002, June)

CLASS LEVEL: Student

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY: Interactive lecture, class discussion and demonstration.

SUCCESS CRITERIA: 70% or higher on a written, multiple-choice examination.

COMPUTER FILE NAME: 1.6 Stress Management, Families Part I

DATE RELEASED TO THE SHARE FILE: October 2023

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Instructor – (self) introduction.
- B. Preview of performance objectives.

II. CLASS RECOMMENDATIONS AND LOGISTICS

- A. Recommendation is to have the class at the completion of an academy day. This allows for families to not have to take off work and is easier for day care issues when it is after hours. Academies have seen success with scheduling this at the end of the week during the evening of the last day of that week.
- B. Recommendation is to have a dynamic and engaging speaker, preferably not academy staff as the stress of the academy is still ongoing, but someone who is familiar with the academy and also has knowledge of teaching Stress Mgmt.
- C. Recommend to allow the recruits to be in plain clothes so they can relax and be more involved in the discussion.
- D. Family guests should be limited to spouses, significant others or whoever the recruit confides in or considers their support system (best friends, mentors, loved ones). If possible, young children can be a distraction and should not be present during the presentation.
- E. If possible, have water, coffee, and snacks available for the families. This also helps to create a more relaxed atmosphere where families will be more involved and engaged. For most of them, like the recruits, this is their first time in a law enforcement setting and anything you can do to help ease the nerves is beneficial.
- F. Music or a loop video playing as guests arrive also helps. This music should be played during the break as well.

III. CLASS TOPICS RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Focus is on stressors of the academy (what to expect)
- B. Recommend giving a brief tour of academy grounds so families have a visual reference of what is going on when their recruit is discussing the day
- C. Also recommend showing a previous academy class video so there is another visual reference to the families on what goes on day to day

- D. With instructors introductions, academy tour, and class video, that should take up approximately the first 45 minutes.
- E. Allow for break
- F. Upon returning from break, a good ice breaker is to have each recruit introduce who they brought with them to the class. This gives the instructor a better understanding of the audience and how to direct statements and questions for the remainder.
- G. Suggestion for curriculum covered for the second hour could be a brief overview of the original AZPOST Stress Mgmt material. Discussion on what stress is and how to manage it. This education is good for the families to understand.
- H. Important points to emphasize with the family support systems are proper nutrition, rest, hydration, exercise, study time, uniform maintenance, weapons in the house and how to keep safe, sacrifices that may take place during the academy due to the demands of the academy.
- I. Discuss any prior experiences that have been observed with recruits and how they handled those. For example pregnancy, weddings, divorces, child custody, deaths.
- J. Discuss how the academy can possibly support the recruit and the family through the circumstances listed above.
- K. Recommended to leave at least 15 minutes at the end of the presentation to take Q&A from the families.
- L. Suggested closing is to remind the families that there will be another class at the end of the academy they are all invited to where the focus will be on how to handle the stressors of the career they are about to enter into.

IV. CONCLUSION

- A. Review of performance objectives.
- B. Final questions and answers.
- C. Instructor closing comment(s).