

TRAUMA RESILIENCE FOR MANAGERS & LEADERSHIP



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**Policing needs its rank and structure
for command and control
and police leadership and management has
some great training behind it.**

But the best trainer is you.

Here, we offer some
fresh thinking
about trauma resilience
for those who manage
others as well as for those
who are managed themselves.



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PRESSURE & POSSIBILITY

TRAUMA RESILIENCE IN UK POLICING IS MULTIDIMENSIONAL **for those who are in management and leadership positions in teams, units, stations, forces or networks.**

There are so many directions from which mental, practical and emotional demands extend, each with their own frequency, pressure and degree of intensity.

We don't often get to appreciate this. We just respond.

OUTWARD FACING: Cultivating resilience for the **sake of those who report to you**, including those who may be exposed to traumatic material in **more discrete areas of function or in staffing** roles (such as digital environments, scene investigation and preparing case files)

INWARD LOOKING: Proactively reflecting on and understanding **your own resilience's** and vulnerabilities

UPWARDLY CONSCIOUS of **political, fiscal and institutional** influences and demands on trauma resilience

SIDEWAYS WATCHING and negotiating our trauma resilience in relation to **our peers, friends, family** and community

EXTERNALLY APPRECIATING the **wider, global Emergency Responder** sector- others working in **adverse conditions** from the military to journalists and peacekeeping agencies

SO, which
direction may
be most
important to
you as you
lead others
in trauma
resilience?

*"Look up
and
look out"*

(Detective Chief Super Intendent
Fiona Bitters)



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PRESSURE & POSSIBILITY

We all have our own way of leading and managing others.

But do we know what it is?

Who looks out for us?

Do we look out for those in positions of rank above us?

TYPICALLY, the policing mind (like any other mind responding to relentless demand and cumulative stress) will develop **its own pattern of response.**

This pattern will also be shaped by ways of thinking that have come **habitual in our development** and the social conditions under which we learned to 'adult'.

That said, we may also develop different styles of leadership according to the policing environment we are currently in (*including what it inherited from earlier local cultures*) as well as **other people's behaviour** and the **vibe of the team** we work with

- let alone the UK's **43 different ways of doing things!**

Much research into Emergency Responder resilience (including the evidence base for **TRIM**, Trauma Risk Management, developed originally in the military) is that **leadership & line management is key to resilience.** This message can feel somewhat onerous as we infer that others' wellbeing lies in our hands.

But it needn't be.

PRESSURE & POSSIBILITY

There's no need for anyone to become a psychotherapist overnight.

There's no need to scrutinise the every move of someone going through a tough time.

There's no need to subtly steer others away from recognizing trauma exposure has impact or to avoid any 'reveal'. There is no Pandora's Box. This is the job.

Thankfully, as UK policing has moved on so much over the past 10 years, there is less drama around trauma .

We don't need a culture to cower from trauma exposure, leaving it to lurk in the shadows.

**We are already
more skillful,
more resourced**



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ALL MANAGEMENT
AND LEADERS NEED TO
DO IS ENJOY THE
EMPOWERMENT OF
THAT.



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PRESSURE & POSSIBILITY

The best way to lead and manage trauma resilience is to start with **YOURSELF**.

If you can't *read your own ways of responding* to the demands of the job, you can't lead others in doing so.

This is an **uncomfortable truth** about good leadership: **It's not about earning rank, it's about learning about people** (and 'people' includes **YOU**)

What is more, you can't **learn** about people **if you don't care to find out** about them

(and again, this means caring enough **ABOUT OURSELVES**)

Success comes in many forms.

Many find out the hard way that most of the time, the **rewards** of a successful life are not found in rank and pensions, but in having a **simple sense of being OK with the way life is**.

In Policing, our brains are **not trained to do that** one bit!
(So, this is our work to do for ourselves)



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LEADING WITH MINDSET



EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY has long shown us that our human **brain needs all its systems to be firing.** We've evolved in **three key stages** as **reptiles, mammals and primates** and those stages equated to:
learning to **be safe,**
learning to **get what we want and**
learning **about others.**

Leadership and management has to be safe before it can be rewarding, and it has to be **both of those things** before it can **really engage insightfully with others and fulfil** COMMAND AND CONTROL.

When making decisions about trauma resilience in your team's performance, tasking, development and resourcing, ask yourself:

Does this promote safety, satisfaction,

YOU COULD ASK YOURSELF.....

RIGHT NOW, AM I (OR ARE THEY) AS SAFE AS THEY REASONABLY CAN BE?

Can I remind myself **others** that it is time to **stand down** because we are safe? When is it that **my body** tells me all is well? The first cup of coffee after a job? The sound of my car door shutting as I leave work? The feeling of my back finally hitting the chair when I eventually sit down?

Is there a message I can give others that they can feel **safe to acknowledge the job is hurting?**

Does my body language look safe to them?

RIGHT NOW, DO I HAVE (OR DO THEY HAVE) WHAT THEY NEED?

Can I remind myself that **we have the resources** and the **training to be OK** in this situation? Can I tap into the **processes that are working well**, the **people who are stepping up**, the **results that are starting to show?**

Do I have to keep pushing myself right now or can I just take a second to acknowledge how today has already gone? What about what is good about **my week, my life** that is nothing to do with being in the police? **What matters to me?**

RIGHT NOW, ARE WE CONNECTED?

Even though I may feel the **weight of responsibility** is on me, **how much of this is shared?** Can I look sideways, around me and beyond this immediate situation and genuinely **tap into a bigger picture** of a wider network of people **all playing their part?** Can I feel myself **integrated into a bigger narrative?** Am I feeling a bit fragmented and pulled in different directions or can I collect myself and **feel some stability in my body and a sense of flow in my mind** as to what I'm doing and what's going on around me?

Can I realise for a moment that this isn't all just on me?

"THE SECRET TO
GIVING A SH**
IS JUST GIVING A
SHI**"

**Assistant Chief Constable
Chris Davison**

**We can forget that a lot of our resolve comes from
our instinct and our passion for a job we also find
hard.**

**When all is said & done,
THAT we care determines how we do it.**



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THE SCIENCE BEHIND UK POLICE TRAUMA RESILIENCE

It's true! There is some. Thanks to the expertise of The University of Cambridge, University College London, sponsorship from Police Dependents' Trust (now Police Care UK), the research team at the Police Federation of England and Wales, the steer of the National Wellbeing Service ...and the **voices of tens of thousands of police** and staff of **all rank**, we have **HARD DATA** that identifies **several management factors** that impact prevalence of **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder** in UK forces.

Our TOP 3 recommendations to reduce PTSD:

- I. **MANAGE TRAUMA EXPOSURE**
- II. **UPSKILL YOUR LINE MANAGERS**
- III. **RECOGNISE THE HUMAN IN YOUR TEAMS**



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THE SCIENCE BEHIND UK POLICE TRAUMA RESILIENCE

MANAGE TRAUMA EXPOSURE

Use the tools available to you, such as the PTEC matrix (Police Traumatic Events Checklist) which has a bespoke guide for Leaders and for Managers. This is part of the national trauma response model and is already used in over 25 forces in the UK. It provides a picture of what are known to be the toughest jobs out there and the factors that can lower resilience. It offers a **simple and accessible** guides to recognise the common ground of trauma and **vital clues** on how to build individuals, teams and forces' response to trauma.

UPSKILL YOUR LINE MANAGERS

Lead on trauma resilience by sharing this guidance and role-modelling conversations on trauma management in honest, practical ways without avoidance and without the drama. Develop a common language and help others to become confident with the uncomfortable truth that trauma exposure **is the job**, and that we have all we need AND **DESERVE** to manage it skilfully

RECOGNISE THE HUMAN IN YOUR TEAMS

According to the research, UK forces where individuals feel they can **take an hour off in a family crisis have 50% less PTSD** than forces where individuals feel they couldn't. This isn't necessarily about magically providing resources for time-outs on a whim, but **by recognising** (verbally if nothing else), **that the job respects that sometimes we need to be able to say that our family might have to come first.** Being able to say that *putting family second hurts* may sometimes be **ALL THAT SOMEONE NEEDS** to do what needs to be done.

ADVICE FOR FORCES



KEEP IT SIMPLE. Integrate trauma resilience at the level of managers and leaders **Business As Usual** by infusing a trauma-informed approach into **all training and comms.**

GET YOUR DATA IN ORDER. Trauma impact hides in sickness data.

If you want to measure trauma resilience, *ask people about their decisions to take time off or retire on ill-health* and look carefully at **where trauma resources are being engaged** with and how successful they are.

IF PEOPLE DON'T FEEL THEY CAN SAY WHAT THEY NEED TO IN TIME, THEY BREAK.

PAY ATTENTION to trauma resilience that plays out **all around you.** *Tune in to how you find resolve* when you need it most. Remind yourself of your values. When we do this, ongoing **external challenges** of politics and budgets might just *begin to look after themselves.* **Enabling you to focus for you.**

FURTHER INFORMATION

The research paper is called “Association between job quality and the incidence of PTSD amongst police personnel” (Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice, 2022)

Click this link for a good summary about police PTSD
<https://tinyurl.com/Policing-PTSD>

The National Police Wellbeing Service are developing work on trauma support nationally, so keep an eye on the **Oscar Kilo website** for further news

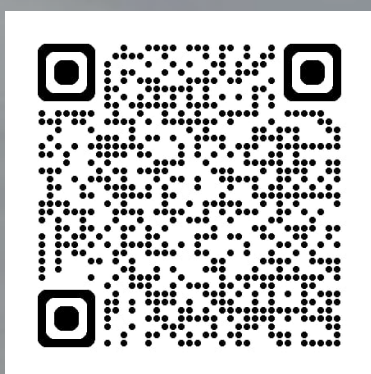
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Many more thanks to the thousands of officers and staff who continue to support by sharing their experience because they care about policing and they care about being human. **It matters.**



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