

PEARL RIVER PARENT CONNECTION

A newsletter brought to you by PRSD Clinical Staff

June 2020

Dear Students & Parents,

We hope this finds you well during these difficult times. The clinical staff at PRSD wanted to share a special newsletter to support families and children of Law Enforcement Officers. We understand that this is a challenging time and your family may be experiencing an increased level of anxiety and stress during these times.

Strategies and Tips To Support Families and Children of Law Enforcement Officers

- 1. Reduce anxiety:** One of the most effective ways to diminish anxiety is to distinguish between what families and individuals can and can't control. When talking with your child, be sure to listen and be empathetic, and help them understand what they're anxious about. The message you want to send is, "I know you're scared, and that's okay, and I'm here, and I'm going to help you get through this."
- 2. Talk about your emotions:** Emotions are normal, and it's important to talk about them. It is best to do so in a calm atmosphere. Expressing support for one another mitigates reactivity and protects sustainable relationships.
- 3. Limit social media and blogs:** Limit the amount of time you and your family spend online. Monitor what your child does on the Internet and help them think critically about what they read.
- 4. Self-care:** It is hard to think clearly or make wise, healthy decisions when in a state of tension. Try to pay attention to your bodies, particularly your breathing. Exercise is the best medicine. Reach out to friends, other family members, and culturally competent professionals who know what police officers do and why. Look down below for other self-care activities you and your family could participate in.
- 5. Address children's concerns:** Help your child distinguish between the possibility and probability. It is possible that a law enforcement parent could get hurt on the job, but not probable, as most LEOs go to work and come home safely every day. Young children are most concerned with issues of separation and safety, while older kids, especially adolescents, are sensitive to being in the spotlight. It is important to remember that parents won't have all the answers, and listening carefully to your child's concerns and reassuring them that their feelings are normal are often enough.

<i>Self-Care for Families</i>		
<i>emotional</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">— watch a good movie— write each other positive notes— verbalize and talk about feelings— draw self portraits— Say "I love you"— spend time writing— have a sing-a-long— tell jokes— try a new craft	<i>physical</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">— dance party— go for a walk— family bike ride— take a hike— play kickball— tag— roller skating— go to the pool— jumprope— kids yoga— wii fit games	<i>Spiritual</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">— a gratitude list— go outside— talk about forgiveness— write thank you's— volunteer— spend time outside or with nature— practice positive self-talk— plant a tree
<i>mental</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">— read together— draw or write stories— kids meditation— find shapes in clouds— practice belly breaths— go on a walk to find new things— make vision boards— try Headspace for kids— create mandalas— make mindfulness jars— play mind strength games like memory	<i>practical</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">— clean up— declutter old toys— assign chores— make a grocery list together— learn about money— make a weekly budget check-in— make a weekly cleaning check-in— homework/study— have a morning & night routine	<i>social</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">— play in the park— call or visit relatives— have family dinner— play boardgames— host a sleepover— invite friends over— plan a bbq— join a team— do a neighborhood food drive— have talks about friendship and how to be a friend.



Observe Children's Emotional State

Some will not express themselves verbally but changes in behavior, appetite, or sleep patterns can indicate anxiety or stress. Seek help from a mental health professional for those with more intense reactions.

Additional Resources :

Books:

- **Increasing Resilience in Police and Emergency Personnel, Stephanie M Conn, PhD**
 - This book illuminates the psychological, emotional, behavioral, and spiritual impact of police work on police officers, administrators, emergency communicators, and their families. Dr. Conn is a former police officer, dispatcher, daughter of a police officer and now works as a therapist in private practice, specializing in police stress, trauma, work-life balance, coping, and resilience. Her book will provide you practical tools and exercises to strengthen your mental armor as you manage the challenges of your role.
- **Law Enforcement Families the Ultimate Backup, James T. Reese, Ph.D.**
 - This book brings home to law enforcement officers and their families an appreciation for what each other are going through and how to foster "mutual support" . Law enforcement developed from simple, uncomplicated functions involving little stress into complex and stressful endeavors requiring highly trained personnel. Authors, James T. Reese, PhD and Cherie Castellano CSW, LPC, have spearheaded the essential psychological services that have become commonplace in law enforcement organizations today. More importantly, this book is an attempt to assist officers and their families in restoring order in their personal lives. This book offers suggestions for solutions. During discussions with law enforcement officers and their families, the authors have learned that without a support system, cops fail. Thus, the theme of this book emerges: our families are our ultimate backup. Without them, we lose, and America loses.
- **A Hero Lives in My Family: A Story for Kids of First Responders (Kids Hero Series)**
 - A Hero Lives in My Family: A Story for Kids of First Responders - First Responders are Heroes! Helping Heroes include: police officers, emergency medical service providers (e.g., paramedics, ER doctors or nurses), firefighters, and military personnel. They save, help, serve, and protect others! This story is for kids of first responders to learn about their Helping Hero's job and the various feelings it can bring about. At the end of the day, the Helping Hero's favorite job is being a parent!
- **DADDY, I WORRY ABOUT YOU BY CLARKE PARIS**
 - Through a heartwarming story, Clarke Paris helps young audiences build the courage to discuss their fears of losing an LEO parent. "Daddy, I Worry About You" is a great tool for law enforcement families to start the dialogue about this real issue.



A confidential 24-hour crisis referral service for First Responders and their families. Speak live with an officer or former law enforcement officer. They are there to talk to you or a family member about the challenges of your law enforcement role. Safe Call provides education, healthy alternatives, and resources to save lives and put families back together.

Call: 206-459-3020

References:

- **Lorraine Green and Ellen Kirschman, On-line Education, Resources, and Support for Law Enforcement Families: Final Report (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 2001).**
- **Ellen Kirschman, I Love a Cop: What Police Families Need to Know, revised ed. (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 2006)**