

To my fellow officers and to the community we serve,

Law enforcement is a profession built on responsibility, restraint, and service. Every day we step into situations that are unpredictable, emotionally charged, and sometimes dangerous, with the expectation that we will remain calm, professional, and in control—no matter what we're carrying internally. It demands constant vigilance.

While it is what we do, it is what we become. We are always officers – 24 hours a day. What often goes unseen is the cumulative weight of this work. The long hours, constant scrutiny, critical incidents, exposure to trauma, and the pressure to make split-second decisions that can change lives—including our own. We are trained to manage crises for others, but many of us struggle quietly when it comes to our own stress, mental health, and sense of isolation.

Stress is part of the job. When the stress impacts our sleep, our relationships, and our view of the world, it does not mean we are unfit for duty, and asking for help does not mean we are weak. It means we are human. Too many of us have suffered in silence, believing we have to handle everything alone. Suicide has touched law enforcement agencies across the country, and each loss is a painful reminder that toughness without support can become a burden too heavy to carry.

Sometimes, we are expected to be both counselors and warriors... at the same time: a hammer sent to tap a nail. Our interactions are almost always with people who are in trouble... or causing trouble. It is this constant exposure to trauma and the dark side of humanity that impacts our view of the world – and us in ways that we are sometimes not aware of.

That is why building mental resilience – or armor – is so important. We must work hard at keeping balanced. So, we don't get into a "circle the wagon" mentality, we must seek friendships and activities that are outside of law enforcement. This helps us to be people who happen to be law enforcement, as opposed to law officers who happen to be people.

If we are struggling, we must reach out—to a partner, a supervisor, a peer support officer, a counselor, or a trusted someone. Speaking up is not a failure of strength; it is an act of courage. Looking out for one another must include checking in beyond the surface and being willing to listen without judgment.

Like any other profession, we are not perfect. Indeed, we are very human. We go home to families, carry memories of scenes we can't forget, and feel the impact of public perception—both positive and negative. Support, understanding, and open dialogue matter more than you may realize. When trust and empathy flow both ways, it strengthens not only officer wellness, but the safety and health of the entire community.

We are committed to serving with integrity and professionalism. To do that well, we must also commit to caring for ourselves and each other. No job is worth a life, and no one should feel alone in carrying the weight of this work. Most of us come to this job to help and protect our community. We are accountable to our community, and also must be to ourselves – to be in top physical and mental form.

Thank you for listening, for supporting one another, and for helping build a culture where it's okay to ask for help.

Respectfully,

A law enforcement officer