MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Grant Award Summary

Model Resilience Training Curriculum FY 2016

Grant Type: Competitive

Grantor: U.S. Department of Justice, Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)

Grant Period: September 1, 2016 to August 31, 2017

Award Amount: $108,540

Match Required: N/A

Fiscal Agent: MPD

MPD Sub-Awardee: Sandra Ramey, Ph.D., University of Iowa

Allocation Purpose: Develop and implement an innovative resilience training curriculum administered by the Milwaukee Police Academy; independent researcher and related support staff and equipment

Partners: N/A

Applied Theories: Community-oriented policing

Research & Evaluation: Sandra Ramey, Ph.D., Yelena Perkhounkova, Ph.D., University of Iowa

Program Goals

The goal is to successfully develop and implement an innovative training curriculum administered by the Milwaukee Police Academy. The components include: 1) Deliver a resilience training program; 2) Build organizational capacity via mentorship; 3) measure psychological and physiological variables pre and post intervention; and 4) Conduct focus groups with recruits. The success of this project will facilitate its implementation of training protocols in other police departments.

Programmatic Summary

Many law enforcement officers enter the profession in good physical condition and health. However, job related stress may adversely affect the health of law enforcement members. Research indicates that compared to the general population, police officers tend to have a higher prevalence of cardio-vascular disease and risk factors associated with declining health (Hartley, Burchfiel, Fekedulegn, Andrew, & Violtani, 2011; Ramey, Downing & Franke, 2009; Ramey, Perkhounkova, Downing & Culp, 2011; Wright et al., 2011). Since stress is inherent to the law enforcement profession, it is essential that officers develop the ability to recover and cope with recurrent stressors to maintain proper physiological and psychological health (Johnson, et al., 2014). This process, or capacity to prepare for, adapt and recover from stress, adversity or challenge is defined as resilience (McCraty & Atkinson, 2012).

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The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015) identified training to sustain resilience as a priority for research and evaluation. These interventions should equip officers with the tools to self-regulate during challenging situations and provide techniques that enable officers to quickly regain psychological and physiological balance. Improving performance, decision-making, and effective communication impacts future interactions with the public. Moreover, research suggests that pre-intervention is a more effective stress management tool than post-event intervention techniques. Thus, current resilience training tools that focus on modifying an officer's physiological and psychological response to stress have shown marked success in facilitating the ability to prepare for, react to and recover from stressful events (Collins & Gibbs, 2003; McCraty & Atkinson, 2012; Anderson, Papazoglou, Koskelainen, Nyman, Gustafsberg, Arnetz, 2015; Anshe & Brinthaupt, 2014).