

5

**ESSENTIAL
SKILLS**

for successful

**LAW
ENFORCEMENT
COUPLES**

Hi There!

Holding the Line is about making a stand. While a career in law enforcement is not the enemy, the impact of the career certainly is. It has the potential to sneak in undetected and infiltrate your mental and relational health.



Hold the Line is about mitigating the spillover by understanding the biology and psychology that has the potential to impact. It is about YOU determining the course of your relationship, not the spillover making those decisions for you. It's about getting rid of eggshells, miscommunication, and having connection. It is about resilience and, in a way, control.

Whatever discipline you happen to be a part of, much of the information and activities in the this workbook will help you to have a deeper understanding of yourself, your spouse, and your relationship. Consult your book if you have questions about a certain area or topic.

If you still have questions,
reach out to me over email: cyndi@code4couples.com
Thanks for serving your community....both of you. Keep it Code 4!

Cyndi Doyle
Founder of Code4Couples.com
Hold the Line, Author

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

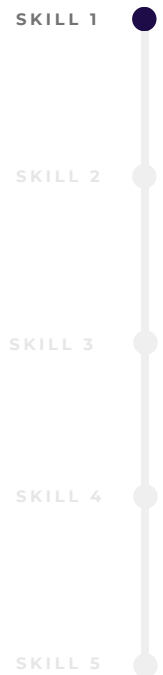


Understand the culture, biological and psychological impact on the relationship.

There are aspects of Law Enforcement Culture that are obvious such as shift work, time away from each other, sleep schedules, lingo, sheepdog mindset, having each other's "six", and the potential impact of a critical incident.

It is important for couples to understand the biological and psychological impact on the officer. Couples need to be familiar with the Hypervigilance Cycle, OODA Loop, and how the officer's brain becomes conditioned to react to situations due to their training. Spouses also are impacted biologically and psychologically. These aspects spill over into the relationship.

Working to understand what it is like and stand in each other's world will increase connection and compassion. Understanding the culture and its impact helps to bridge the couple and feel united.



**I AM THE SHEEPDOG. I
LIVE TO PROTECT THE
FLOCK AND CONFRONT
THE WOLF**

Lt. Col. Dave Grossman

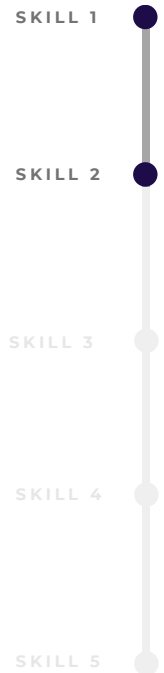
CONNECTION



Understand how to connect by communicating and fulfilling emotional and physical needs.

Connection is difficult because of sleep schedules, shift work, and the impact from the hypervigilance cycle. Connection involves communicating daily events, sharing your world, and getting curious about your spouse. Connection also must include addressing emotional and physical needs which result in building intimacy and trust, vital to the success of relationships.

Successful law enforcement couples understand that connection needs to be different depending on the officer's or spouse's ability to focus and time. Setting up different types of conversations is helpful and can include: 5-10 minute conversations about logistics; 20 minute conversations to share personal daily events, feelings, and needs to be addressed in the future; or longer conversations when time and energy allows to share stories, struggles, address needs, or problem-solve. Connect physically through touching, hugging, and kissing as often as possible. Don't forget to make time for more intimate moments and sex.



**YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE
INTERESTING.
YOU HAVE TO BE
INTERESTED**

Dr. John Gottman

COMPASSION



Apply a positive perspective, generosity, and empathy toward each other and yourself.

The officer's compassion, and sometimes the spouse's, is impacted due to the continual exposure to the negative side of humanity and trauma. Stress from the job and being apart as well as conditioning from the job, spills over into the relationship, and impacts the way couples interpret each other and interact.

Applying a positive perspective to conversation and actions helps couples to counteract the negative impacts and avoid conflict. A generous explanation or thought such as, "I know he/she is tired," can help to provide a safe space for each of you rather than walking on eggshells.

Empathy, which is feeling with someone, helps to express understanding and have each other's "six". Stay away from fixing a problem unless requested or dismissing negative emotions. Instead, listen for emotion in the conversation and share what you hear. Saying, "that sounds like it sucks" is far better than saying, "You know what you should do."



Compassion is not a virtue – it is a commitment. It is not something we have or don't have – it's something we choose to practice.

DR. BRENÉ BROWN

COURAGE



Emotional strength to trust, show up for each other, commitment ,and confront what gets in the way.

Officers must confront situations while others run away. Spouses trust and show courage every time they watch their officer walk out the door. Couples show courage in supporting each other and also in confronting struggles.

Courage involves being strong but also vulnerable. Couples must sometimes be uncomfortable and willing to confront what is getting in the way of having a connected relationship. Courageously confront difficult conversations. Listen to understand rather than to respond or react. Get curious about emotions and experiences of each other.

Have the courage to say "no" to what does not work for your relationship and say "yes" to that which feels supportive and nurturing to the relationship.



**COURAGE IS WHAT IT TAKES TO
STAND UP AND SPEAK. IT IS
ALSO WHAT IT TAKES TO SIT
DOWN AND LISTEN.**

Sir Winston Churchill

COUNTER THE IMPACT



Resilience as a practice.

Countering the impact of law enforcement lifestyle and culture must be a practice to minimize potential mental health challenges for officers and spouses. Couples need to remember policing is only a part of what defines them.

Resilience is not about "bouncing back" but rather the ability to recover and adjust to change or misfortune. It is not about going back to the way something was but rather about moving forward in a new direction.

Encourage each other to take care of and move your bodies. Take care of your mind by dispelling negative thoughts and replacing them with empowering ones. Look for humor in situations and ways to play. Find positive aspects of humanity and give back to your community.

SKILL 1

SKILL 2

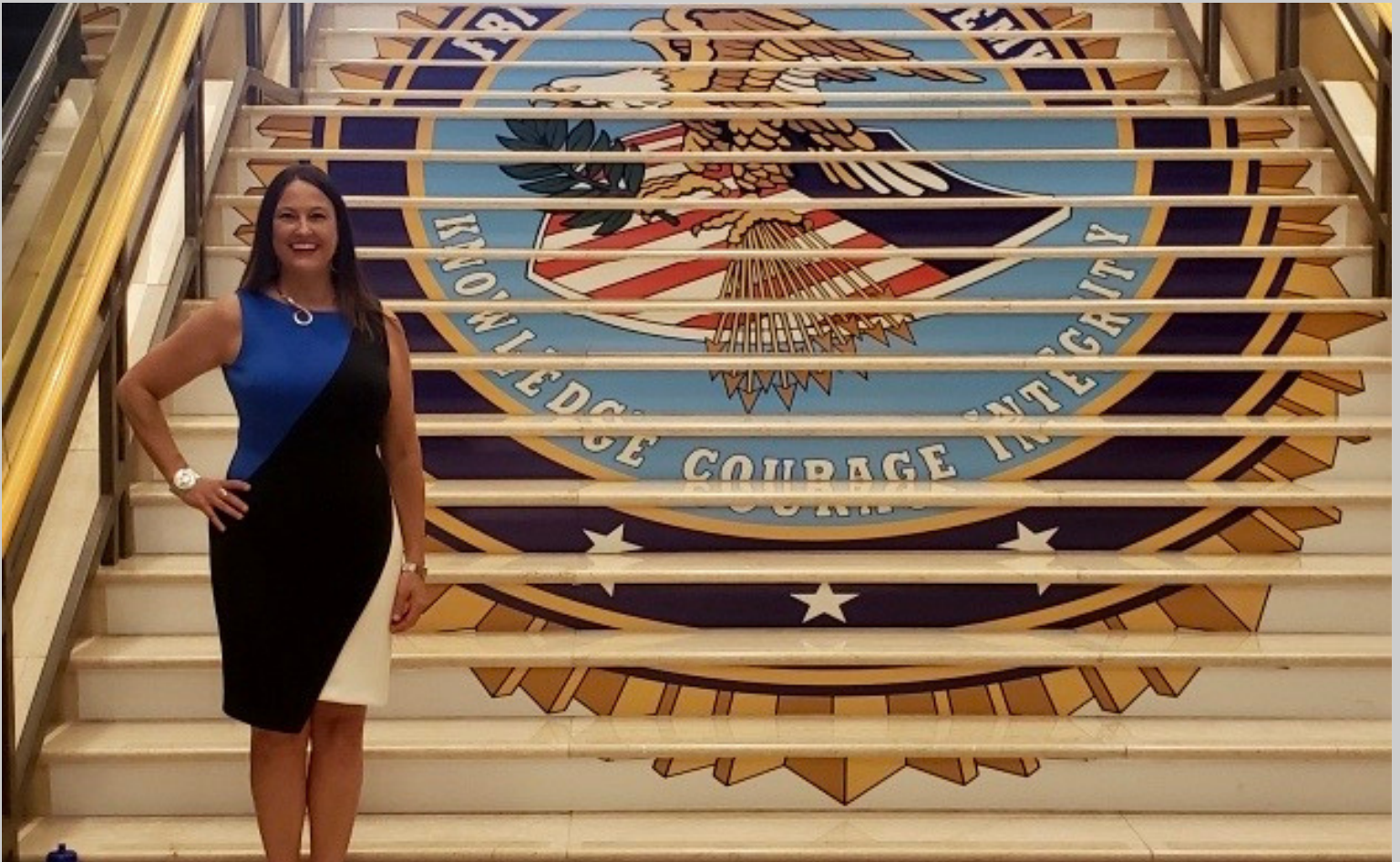
SKILL 3

SKILL 4

SKILL 5

Survivors place the central issues in their lives in their own control

DR. KEVIN GILMARTIN



MEET THE AUTHOR

CYNDI DOYLE, LPC-S, NCC

Cyndi Doyle is a Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor, National Board Certified Counselor, author, speaker, podcaster, and law enforcement spouse. In her clinical practice, Cyndi specializes in countering the stress, trauma, and impact that law enforcement has on an officer, their spouse, and their relationship. She has presented widely to officers and spouses, sharing her knowledge of police mental health, the impact on relationships, and solutions to counter the impact. Cyndi has presented at the FBINAA Conference, multiple IACP conferences, and keynotes for multiple regional and local police conferences. She was awarded the Samuel T. Gladding Unsung Heroes Award by the American Counseling Association in 2020 for her work in the first responder community.

“Your relationship is the best resilience to the impact from a career in law enforcement .”

WANT MORE INFORMATION
OR CYNDI TO SPEAK?

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