

LEO FAMILY STRESS TRIGGERS



How to recognize, understand and resolve
the four most common family stress
triggers.

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Law Enforcement & Family Life, in collaboration with Priority One Financial Coaching, has compiled the top 4 family stressors that LEO families experience, and how to successfully resolve these triggers.



ROLE STRAIN

1: Identify

Do you find that it's difficult to maintain and dedicate energy to every part of your life as well as you'd like to? Do you struggle to leave work at work and shift your mindset to the other important aspects of your life?

To balance being an officer, parent, and spouse is stressful enough. Incorporating friends, hobbies, and extended family into your life can feel nearly impossible! It's vital for your relationships and mental health to learn how to balance life and mitigate the strain between parts of your life.

2: Understand

With a profession as busy and emotionally draining as law enforcement, it's easy to arrive at home and completely turn off. Choose to stay in control of your life, instead of letting the job control you.

Be careful to avoid putting unnecessary pressure on yourself while still maintaining non-work related identities and hobbies. Communicate needs and desires to those in your support system as you learn how to balance family, work, and parts of life most important to you.

3: Implement

- Set aside time for family - create rituals you can all count on.
- Weekly or monthly one-on-one parent-child dates.
- Prioritize non-work related hobbies & interests.
- Share work experiences with family, as is possible & appropriate.

4: Resources

1. Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement by Kevin M. Gilmartin
2. The Intentional Family by William J. Doherty, Ph.D.
3. A Marriage in Progress by Victoria M. Newman

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COMMUNICATION

1: Identify

Do you find the stress of work spilling over and disrupting effective communication within your family, making it harder, more tense, emotional, and overwhelming? Simply finding the time to put into meaningful communication is stressful.

Communication is one of the most basic parts of family relationships, making it an extremely necessary skill to develop. As you practice better communication, other things in life may begin to fall into place a little more smoothly.

2: Understand

There are two sides to effective communication. The first is understanding how to express your own thoughts, feelings, and plans. The other is listening and seeking to understand the other person.

Communicate your expectations, concerns, gratitude, and strive to focus, be patient, show empathy, and demonstrate understanding as you listen.

Remember that you and your family members are on the same team!

3: Implement

- Take time to counsel as a couple about how things are going for you & your family, what to change or continue, & make plans.
- Use "I" statements with an invitation to solve the problem in question.
- Practice deep listening.
- Take a break when necessary – just communicate it first!

4: Resources

1. [BetterHelp App](#)
2. [RELATE Foundation](#)
3. [The Gottman Institute](#)
4. [Crucial Conversations](#) by Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, & Switzler

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TIME MANAGEMENT

1: Identify

Do you find yourself feeling overwhelmed with everything that needs to get done? Is it becoming harder to remember all of the different schedules in your household?

It can be difficult to juggle work schedules, shift changes, overtime, extracurricular activities, and somehow try to fit in quality family/relationship time and self care on top of keeping the house clean and bellies fed.

The life of an LEO family is busy, but there are things you can do to manage it more effectively.

2: Understand

Our time, when not managed effectively, can cause a great deal of stress on ourselves and our families. Especially when our spouse's job has an inconsistent shift schedule.

It's important for us to take time out of our week to manage the schedule ahead in an effort to mitigate the stress associated with feeling out of balance.

When your family knows what to expect in the days ahead, it helps reduce the sense of chaos that's associated with the unknown.

3: Implement

- Have a monthly schedule calendar that lists everyone's timetable.
- Keep a weekly planner that includes to-do lists.
- Block out time each week for family, relationship & self care time.
- Create a meal plan for the week so it takes the thinking out of cooking.

4: Resources

1. Take Back Your Time
by, Christy Wright
2. Monthly White Board Calendar
3. Erin Condren Planner
4. Weekly Meal Planner

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PERSONAL FINANCE

1: Identify

Have you and your spouse ever justified a purchase (or multiple purchases) based on the availability of overtime? Do you find yourself feeling anxious when it comes time to pay bills? Have you ever asked yourself, "where is all our money going"?

If any of these scenarios sound familiar, personal finances might be a stress trigger in your household. Here's what you need to know.

2: Understand

Finances are the number one stressor for adults in America. And many times, financial stress isn't triggered by a lack of money, it's triggered by not knowing how to manage the money you make.

As LEO families, we have a tendency to justify our spending based on how much overtime our LEO can work. This can ultimately lead to a feeling of chaos when we continuously try to outwork our spending. **What can you do to streamline your finances?**

3: Implement

- Ensure you have adequate life insurance.
- Get on a zero-sum monthly budget.
- Create a debt reduction plan.
- Develop your savings structure.
- Consult with a financial coach.

4: Resources

1. [Zander Insurance](#)
2. [Mint Budget App](#)
3. [EveryDollar App](#)
4. [Debt Snowball](#)
5. [Debt Avalanche](#)
6. [Sinking Funds](#)
7. [Priority One Financial Coaching](#)