



STRUGGLE WELL

TRANSFORMING THE CULTURE OF THE TUCSON POLICE DEPARTMENT:

CASE STUDY

A NEED ARISES: In 2021, Tucson Police Department (TPD) was facing a severe crisis: COVID-19 pandemic, civil unrest, significant staffing shortages, a surge in community violence, and the loss of two officers to suicide within two months. Despite having a BSU, a mental health support team, and 2 department psychologists, it wasn't enough to address the issues.

TPD & BOULDER CREST

FOUNDATION: TPD partnered with Boulder Crest Foundation to implement Struggle Well — a Posttraumatic Growth (PTG) based training program focused on normalizing struggle for the first responder community. The impact included sustained cultural transformation, increased officer wellness, and improved interaction with the broader community.

CASE STUDY GOAL: To identify and understand the perceived benefits, impact, and best practices of a 3-year department-wide immersion of Struggle Well in TPD.

RESEARCH METHODS:

- Participant Observation
- One-on-One Interviews
- Reviewed Archival Data

IMPACT ON AGENCY:

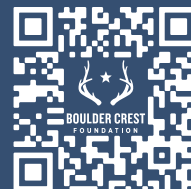
- Better retention; longer tenure
- Greater sense of trust towards the Agency and command team
- Improved acceptance of the potential for struggle in all ranks
- Positive shift in culture towards team mentality
- Improved Police engagement and connection with the public
- Increased use of Mental Health Services
- Increase in the officer-driven expansion of wellness opportunities

PARTICIPANT DATA REPORTS:

- **Posttraumatic Growth Inventory:** Post-training surveys reported a 69% increase in growth from Jan '22 - Jan '24
- **Cantril Ladder Wellbeing Score:** Struggle Well participants reported an increase in “positive outlook on life”
- **TPD Early Intervention Program (EIP):** EIP — a system of tracking behavioral indicators of potentially dangerous levels of stress among officers — reported a 20-25% drop in problem scores



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TUCSON CASE STUDY:

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I. HOW DO I KNOW IF MY AGENCY COULD BENEFIT FROM STRUGGLE WELL?

Struggle Well has aided agencies experiencing the following difficulties:

- Retention issues
- Trust of agency leadership within staff ranks
- Underutilized wellness initiatives
- An institutional feeling of fear to report struggle or difficulties
- Poor engagement with peers, family, and community

2. HOW DOES STRUGGLE WELL INTEGRATE WITH AGENCY WELLNESS INITIATIVES?

Struggle Well has been reported to fit well within an Agency's wellness strategies by:

- Improving the use of an Agencies existing wellness resources
- Creating an atmosphere of normalizing wellness strategies as the go-to for officers experiencing difficulties
- Increasing the use/trust in the Agency Psychologist and existing wellness strategies
- Improving the buy-in and officer-driven expansion of wellness opportunities within the Agency

3. WHAT ARE THE KEY FACTORS THAT MAKE STRUGGLE WELL WORK IN TUCSON AND OTHER AGENCIES?

The Struggle Well program is rooted in the concept of individuality and building a PTG program that meets your Agency's culture and needs; however, the following common tips have been found to help most agencies build a sustainable Struggle Well model:

- Shifting your narrative from a negative perspective of PTSD to a positive perspective of PTG, communication, and trust
- Developing a top-down, agency-wide planning model to include all executive command and leadership in the planning and implementation of the SW training
- Maintaining the fundamental element of confidentiality as the priority of an Agency's Struggle Well program plan
- Creating a culture of intentional program saturation across all training and staffing platforms from basic training through retirement
- Blending participants across ranks/roles within each training to build cohesiveness

4. HOW DO I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT BRINGING STRUGGLE WELL TO MY AGENCY?

- Please visit us at bouldercrest.org/program/struggle-well/ for more information

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