

TRAUMATIC STRESS OF MULTIPLE MURDER INVESTIGATIONS

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The phenomenon of serial, spree, and mass murders has become pronounced and publicized in the United States within the last few decades. With the response to and investigation of such crimes come significant and unique stress to law enforcement personnel. The violence and dehumanization often associated with these crimes, both in terms of magnitude and multitude, exceed preparation given the typical responding law enforcement officer or even a well-prepared and experienced homicide investigator. Such visual and emotional stress is magnified by organizational stressors, including administrative pressure to solve the crime and conflicts within an officer's role and responsibility, and event stressors, especially those relating to an inability to bring closure to the crime.

The impact of such unique traumatic stress has been subjected to little analysis and, more especially, empirical research. Utilizing a theoretical framework developed for training violent crime investigators and drawing from the experiences of Special Agents within the Florida Department of Law Enforcement assigned to a major multiple murder investigation, this presentation will attempt to empirically analyze the perceived trauma associated with multiple murders.

With the understanding offered through such research, agencies can better respond to the needs of their personnel. Successful management of this unique type of law enforcement stress requires a strong organizational commitment, specific management programs involving training and critical incident debriefing, and community support.



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**STRESS IN THE
90'S:
A CHANGING
WORKFORCE IN
A CHANGING
WORKPLACE**

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