

The Pain of Pretending

By

Michael John Shell, Ph.D.

Northwestern Theological Seminary

Port Richey FL

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ABSTRACT

In the United States of America, the most common way to earn a living is to go to work or to perform a service for the public trust. To make a better life for one's family, a person often strives to attain a more lucrative position in the workforce. The unfortunate downside to this is that the cost to the person's health or family life may outweigh the benefits of monetary compensation.

This cost is often most evident when the person in question works in a position that is under constant public scrutiny or one is forced to "play the part" in order to maintain a professional position. If the individual in question fails in any aspect, there may be a loss of social status, professional position, or even the individual's job all together.

The author of this text has had personal interaction with clients and interviewees that have had mental health difficulties, mental instability, or physical symptoms that are directly related or linked to the stress of a professional position or job.

It is the intention of the author to prove to the reader professional and public work positions rarely hold the compensation that outweighs the unnecessary and sometimes

devastating effects side effects. The author also intends to prove that wherein those involved are just everyday men and women, those individuals in question and the public at large place these individuals on a pedestal. This adds to the cumulative stress and places unrealistic expectations upon the individuals in question.

Through personal face to face interviews, the author intends to demonstrate the adverse effects and family discord that can result from an individual placed under intense scrutiny and unrealistic expectations; these unrealistic expectations and scrutiny may be self-imposed, externally motivated or both.

The author intends to show that popular media has a negative impact on the professional image of the public servant by creating a difficult, if not impossible image to uphold. The author also intends to demonstrate the need for the public servant to hold the position of public servant even though there may be some negative consequences in the form of physical or mental health ailments, yet this must be weighed on an individual basis as each individual responds differently to external and internal stressors.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PEDESTAL

Within each human being is the desire and need to accomplish or add to the society or community in which he or she resides. This desire is often more pronounced in some individuals and appears to wane or even be non-existent within others. The most common denominator among human beings is the need to be part of a collective or community.

Whereas there are always exceptions to the rule of humans, this paper is designed to address the desire and drive to achieve within the community or social structure and the ramifications of following through with that desire. As mentioned before, each human has a desire to achieve and add to his or her existence. For each individual person, that desire may manifest differently, with different goals and different paths. Each person views his or her achievements in a different perspective, for instance one person may be satisfied with an Associate Degree and a well paying job whereas another person may strive for no less than a Medical Degree and being top in his or her class.

In each individual's life, the measurement of educational and vocational achievement is measured first by the individual and then by his or her perception of the measurement of those in the community and social class that he or she is a member. In essence, the individual places his or herself upon a pedestal with which he or she measures the world. If the individual is grounded enough to not lose him or herself to their lofty goals and dreams for the future; the community and social class in which he or she resides will often compensate and place the individual on a pedestal.

Wherein lofty goals and dreams of the future are not necessarily a bad idea; when an individual is placed on a metaphorical pedestal, there is a high chance that at some point the individual will fall from the pedestal. The placement of the individual on the metaphorical pedestal places the individual in the spotlight when each of the individual's actions are monitored and motivations are often questioned. For example, a Criminal Justice student in college that is studying to one day become a police officer will have his or her friends and social activities compared to current police officers. As such, if the individual breaks the law, he or she is seen as a failure and this failure that he or she has committed will at the very least follow the individual for a period of time and may even

reflect poorly upon other criminal justice students or local police officers. On the same token, if a local police officer is accused of breaking the law, current students in Criminal Justice are often compared to the officer in question and the student's motivations may be questioned due to the actions of someone that they have no current affiliation other than a common career interest.

Whereas the previous example is limited to law enforcement, with modification the same example can apply across the board to individuals in various career paths. The news media is notorious at associating an individual with a title and a pedestal. If an individual is noticed by the media for any reason, he or she is immediately researched and his or her career is placed in the spotlight. Thus, the individual is attached to a social class either directly or indirectly and is now placed in the spotlight of his or her community, for better or worse.

While the concept of achievement is nothing new, the effects of achievement and the negative effects of forced continued performance subject to the public scrutiny has been studied more closely over the past two decades. In fact, one text that studies the effects of continued performance and scrutiny involving church pastors is titled, *Freedom*

from the Performance Trap. This text, while focusing almost exclusively on the Christian and with a direct focus on the pastor of a church, has a broad range of implications for all that are in the helping professions.

The author, David Seamands pens, “The distortion of priorities and values. The superself must prove itself superior, and engages in a relentless search for an area to do so. This is where the twisted values of our sinful culture exert such pressure. The terrible overemphasis on athletics, grades, physical beauty, thinness, sexual attractiveness, fun, success (including false ideas of spiritual success), material wealth, things, clothes, cars- the list is endless-all can become the wrong centers around for which the superself revolves¹.” Here the author explains that the ways in which an individual perceives his or her own priorities and values directly impact the way that he or she performs in their community or social class. Depending in the mental makeup of the individual, the author explains that the overemphasis causes a negative and detracting focus as an outlet for the stress of holding a position upon a pedestal.

¹ Seamands, D.A. *Freedom from the Performance Trap*. Wheaton IL: Victor Books, 1988.

CHAPTER TWO

MONITORING PERFORMANCE AND OFFICE POLITICS

Many businesses and companies today have various methods to monitor the worker's performance. As a standard, most companies perform a yearly evaluation of employees, yet other companies or entities monitor employee production through other methods. Many employees find it difficult to not take evaluation personally. Some businesses have gone so far as to monitor an employee's performance through methods that negatively impact or even humiliate the employee currently monitored. Employees at some companies are required to be at a computer terminal for a certain amount of time and are not allowed to have more than the allotted bathroom breaks. If an employee steps outside of the boundaries outlined by the employer, they face disciplinary action and at times even termination.

One ex-employee that this author personally interviewed reported that she worked for National Electronics Warranty, NEW. This employee reported that at the time she worked for the company there was allotted amount of restroom and regular breaks throughout the day. Any breaks or time away from her computer terminal that was not

authorized by a supervisor was considered a terminable offense. The ex-employee reports that she often faced physical and emotional stress placed on the constant monitoring of her performance and the time spent at her workstation. After this employee resigned from her position, she felt as though "I got my life back" and expressed a positive view of not being continually monitored throughout the day.

Although computer monitoring of an employee's performance and their location occurs in some jobs, employers attempt to condition the employee to accept it as "part of the job." GPS location has become a constant within the realm of delivery. Employers now can have an immediate location of any vehicle that is out for delivery. Although this often saves on costs for the company by a large margin, the ramifications often falls solely on the delivery driver. In the form of computer monitoring, GPS location of the delivery driver points to the driver's exact location at any given time. Some computer databases are set to record some delivery driver's route and times in order to show deficiency or need for remediation. GPS location is also incorporated in some large 911 systems to place the location of available officers to the nearest call for service. This also can be instrumental in assisting an officer who calls for backup.

While these are just a couple of the ways that a company or business monitors employee performance, one of the most notable performance monitors is that of the popular media. Television, newspapers, internet websites, and blogs monitor the performance of all who fall within their monitoring realm. It is unfortunate, but these reporting entities often associate a title with the party that they are reporting on, making the individual appear that they should have been greater than human. This often puts human service workers or individuals that are in a higher stature of a business or employment at odds with life. These individuals are thus required to put on a persona of "perfection" in their live up to that persona without failure both day and night.

As if the stress of performing to the community standards of life both on and off the job was not enough, in every job there are office politics and interpersonal communications and interactions that detract from the work experience. "Heading the list of causes for office stresses were other people. Asked which aspects of their job they would choose to alter because they require excessive effort, 43 percent of workers cited dealing with office politics²." This brief survey revealed that other workers are perceived

² *Office workers say job stress causes physical problems.* Pollution Engineering. November 5, 2006.

as the most common job stressor. The University at Buffalo in Buffalo New York studied police officers over 10 years and found “The pressures of law enforcement put officers at risk for high blood pressure, insomnia, increased levels of destructive stress hormones, heart problems, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and suicide, University at Buffalo researchers have found through a decade of studies of police officers³.” It is been found in several police departments that suicide rates have dramatically increased over the years. Due to the high demands of stress upon the officers both on and off the job, intense office politics, and often a degree of posttraumatic stress disorder all present extreme difficulty in the officer’s livelihood.

Daily commerce in the United States of America requires employers and employees to be working at full speed all day in order to outperform the competition. Unfortunately, to outperform the competition often comes with a price. A record number of individuals within our country suffer from anxiety and panic attacks on a daily basis. A large number of addictions strike millions of people each day. While the aim of this paper is not to focus on effects that Wall Street has had on the American citizen, it is a reality

³ Baker, Lois. *Researchers investigate impact of stress on Police Officers’ Physical and Mental Health.* News Center. Buffalo NY: University at Buffalo. September 25, 2008.

that millions are directly impacted by the requirements that our own perception of society holds.

The true damage that our perception of society causes is upon those that attempt to assist others. Those that go out of their way to make a difference or to lead our society or government often take the brunt of the pain when it comes to explaining why society is not perfect. This pain can come in various forms, most commonly as an addiction or a physical complaint. Physical complaints are often solved by "popping a pill" and more and more Americans are on pain medications and antidepressants due to the continual requirements placed upon them each day.

In the helping professions, it is often more imperative that one is "at the top of his game" in order to perform the best and have the most meaningful impact on those he or she is trying to help. The helping professions are not exempt from the financial and political impacts of modern society; in fact it is often just the opposite. Those that work to assist others often have to do more work with less resources and funds. These helpers often put their heart and soul into their work in order to compensate where needed extra assistance leaves off. By doing this, the helpers often lose themselves in trying to help

others. If the helper does lose him or herself in the work to help others, what is often found is something to fill the now active void: an addiction; a special camaraderie with those that “understand” and a pulling away from family and friends; a desire for seclusion and often an attempt to understand and put the world into perspective.

CHAPTER THREE

THE STUDY OF THE PROFESSIONAL

In order to gain a closer understanding of how individuals in our society perceive those that hold a stature that places them in the public eye either by occupation or office, the author of this paper has devised a series of open-ended questions and has selected several individuals that hold a respected position within their community. The author has also selected several family members of individuals that had been previously interviewed to gather information of the family member's perception of the individual and their place within the public limelight.

The study focuses on both physical ailments and mental health ailments of the occupation that may be directly linked to the work of the professional due to the fact that the ailments mentioned impact both the work and private life of the individual.

The study was crafted around face-to-face interviews lasting approximately 15 to 20 minutes per interview. The anonymity of the individuals was guaranteed through name change in the final document. Notes that were gathered involved a digital recording of the interview; specific markers were removed from the recordings including names or

specific work locations. Individuals were required to sign a release statement that provisioned them a specified anonymity and outlined the research guidelines.

The following chapters break down the interviews by profession and occupation. The answers of each interviewee are outlined and quotations specify the verbatim wording by the interviewee as transcribed from audio recording. Whereas some interviewees are more guarded due to the nature of the questions, most interviewees responded favorably under the umbrella of anonymity. The series of questions are presented in bold while the response is presented in plain text encapsulated by quotations. All interviews that examined a person working in a professional or high profile position utilized the primary eight questions listed below; some interviews had followup questions that the author deemed applicable to the interview. The eight primary questions are as follows:

What is your occupation?

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just “ordinary” people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why?

CHAPTER FOUR

EMERGENCY RESPONDERS

4.1 Overview of concerns

Emergency responders are the forefront of the emergency system set up in the United States. Most communities have a “911 system setup” in which one phone call triggers dispatchers that have the ability to dispatch police, fire, and emergency medical response. Thus, these individuals are grouped by the author as “emergency responders” and include the dispatchers that work directly with the emergency responders.

All emergency responders have the potential to suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD, related to directly experiencing traumatic events or through vicarious trauma which is trauma that an individual experiences through the descriptions or recollections of another individual-although the individual in question does not directly experience the event. PTSD is not the only difficulty that emergency responders experience, in a report that studied the effects of stress in Emergency Services it was reported that “It would be a mistake and an oversimplification, however, to think that all EMS job-related stress is due to traumatic incident exposures. In fact, prehospital

emergency medical service personnel, which includes emergency medical technicians (EMTs), paramedics, and other first responders, complain of a wide variety of sources of occupational stress. In many urban settings, professional EMS personnel work 24-hour shifts and suffer the stress and strain associated with shift work. In a large-scale published survey of Washington State firefighters, EMTs, and paramedics, the job stressor that was identified as the most problematic was that of disturbed sleep, including both poor quality sleep and too little sleep. It is somewhat ironic, given this complaint, that many EMS personnel actually prefer assignments at busy stations and fail to recognize the need for rest or reassignment. Another source of stress in EMS is the rigid and authoritarian organizational structure found in most EMS organizations. Poor leadership—especially a noncommunicative and nonempathic style—can aggravate stress and harm morale⁴.”

Although other emergency responders do not necessarily suffer the same difficulties EMS workers suffer, one of the greatest concerns of the mental health of the police officer is suicidal ideation. Depression and suicidal ideation among police officers

⁴ Beaton, Randal. *Extreme Stress*. Northwest Public Health. Fall/Winter 2006. Pg. 8-9.

is difficult to study due to numerous factors as outlined by a study conducted by Violanti et al. “In sum, the present study indicated that depression and gender were positively associated with suicide ideation in police officers. The findings also suggest that marital status modified the association between depression score and suicide ideation in women officers, with a notably stronger association in unmarried women officers than in married women officers. Suicide ideation and completed suicide are complex processes brought about by many external and internal influences⁵.”

Along this same line of thought, stress in police work was studied in the United Kingdom to understand the cost of lost work time due to stress directly related to the job itself. “The Metropolitan Police, the largest force in England and Wales, saw the most working time lost through stress - a total of 27,437 days. A spokesman for the Met said that days lost because of such problems had dropped by 16 per cent over the past four years. He also highlighted advances in training for officers and managers to help spot early signs of stress. The Mail also recently revealed that more than 8,000 police officers

⁵ Violanti, J.M. et al. *Suicide in Police Work: Exploring Potential Contributing Factors*. State University of NY at Buffalo: Buffalo NY. 2008. Pg. 50.

were receiving full salaries while working as little as one hour a day on 'restrictive or recuperative duties' - with a total wage bill of £248million a year. The number of officers unavailable for their normal frontline duties is the equivalent of two medium-sized police forces⁶.”

Emergency Response Dispatchers can also suffer negative and debilitating stress and emotional disorders. Although some stress is through vicarious trauma, for example a difficult telephone call in which a child is missing and the dispatcher feels powerless to assist the caller or responding officers. Other severe stressors include the need to multi-task while remaining calm and collected. Like other occupations, the difficulty of shift work and work related interpersonal communication add to mental stress of the individual.

Firefighters respond to medical calls, hazardous material calls, natural disasters and of course fires, both structural and wild land. Stress is excessively prevalent in fire departments due to the unexpected aspects of the job coupled with the need to be

⁶ Hickley, M. *600 policemen call in sick every day with stress...and it costs the taxpayer £37million.* Daily Mail. Accessed 8/2/09: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1203507/600-policemen-sick-day-stress--costs-taxpayer-37million.html;jsessionid=0BD8E1EB98A089116AFE0844DC242BB2>

continually practicing and updating skills. “Naturally, fire departments are concerned about the effects of stress on the ability of firefighting personnel to function optimally. Firefighting personnel are impacted by mental exhaustion, lack of medical attention during a fire, inappropriate driving at high rates of speed, 24-hr shifts, interrupted sleep, lack of regular meals, and lengthy absences from home. Firefighting personnel are at risk of experiencing psychological stress because of their occupation⁷.”

Although this is not an inclusive list of stressors in each occupation by any means, it is designed to bring the reader to an understanding that each occupation has stressors outside of the general day to day work environment stress. With each occupation, there are select hazards and risks that are inherently specific to that occupation. The hazards, stress and difficulties that emergency responders encounter add up over time and can cause physical and mental ailments that adversely impact the individual in question. Stressors that the individual faces are often difficult to leave at work. This can cause a negative impact on the individual’s home and family life.

⁷ Milen, D.P., *Stress and Coping Abilities of Firefighting Personnel*. Walden University: Los Angeles, CA. 2008.

Aside from the direct negative impact that the stress of being employed as an emergency responder; the public has an unrealistic view of the emergency responder that he or she must uphold while off the job. The public often expects emergency responders to respond to emergencies off the job, such as personal family crises, neighborhood disputes, motor vehicle accidents or medical questions.

The emergency responder is expected to be an upstanding citizen while off the job. In fact, some misconduct if proven is grounds for dismissal; this includes driving under the influence, criminal misconduct, or actions that bring reproach to the employee. Regardless of the fact that these actions do not occur on the job, the person in question faces disciplinary action including termination. Any negative action that is picked up by the general media on the part of an emergency responder brings active reproach on the entire agency.

4.2 Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics speak out

Personal communication-face to face interview, occurred on 7/9/2009.

What is your occupation?

"Paramedic for a local ambulance company."

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

"Three years now."

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

"I think that everybody across the board in emergency services, that includes police, fire and medical, just because of the responsibility that comes with our jobs we are held to a higher standard in the public's eye. Even when we're not at work we come in contact with the public so often with so many different people that I've taken care of at work. The community learns pretty quickly that you are a paramedic and for you are in whatever job you happen to be in. They hold you to that same level of professionalism."

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

"Potentially. I'm sure not the only one that comes back from a nasty call will have dreams about it for several weeks. I know I've had some of the more wicked calls and I've had dreams about 'em."

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

"When I am stressed out I tend to smoke more."

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

"I don't think that it's unrealistic, but if someone in my position were to screw up it becomes a much bigger deal than somebody in a different occupation. I think that those

in our occupation should be held to a higher standard. But on the same token we are just like everybody else. We have a job to do and we go in and we do it, we go work just like everybody else."

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

"I know that if I were to practice what I preach, I wouldn't smoke. If you think about law-enforcement officers have a job to go to and work just like everybody else and if they get in trouble it becomes a much bigger deal because they're the same people that enforce those laws."

Follow-up question: Do you feel that you are defined by your title of paramedic or that you define the title?

"I like to think that I'm my own person with or without the title. I know that most of the time well, 90% of the time when somebody asks what I do I tell them that I'm an

ambulance driver. I don't say EMT, I don't say paramedic, just ambulance driver. A glorified chauffeur. Most people don't have any clue. But I try not to let it be a huge part of who I am.”

Follow-up question: if you were in another field, would you hold yourself to the same standards that you hold yourself to now?

“Probably not, I would be out partying a lot more. I still go out sometimes but nothing like I used to before I got involved in this career field. I try to be a lot more responsible and I think that's a lot of work trying to carry over. I have friends call up and say hey we are going here or we are going to go do this and I tell them no because I don't think that I should be in that type of a situation. Because I know that if something were to happen it is going to come back on me and by proxy the company, and what we do, and all my coworkers.”

Personal communication-face to face interview, occurred on 7/23/2009.

What is your occupation?

"Emergency medical technician."

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

"Two years."

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

"Yes, yes umm, because if you don't, in EMS keep up in everything, and practice it you basically lose your skills."

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

"Yeah, anxiety gets worse the more that I work in this. I get more stressed out quickly even at home and get short my wife or other people. Because of this job as an emergency medical technician can really really push your buttons because you have to deal with such

a variety of people and different personalities and, and yeah, that's my mental health illness that I have and is probably developing more and more each time that I work."

Followup question: Have you ever had a panic attack at work?

"Not a full panic attack. I've had you know, stressful moments you know where I like I looked and I don't feel like I'm in my body it feels like it's kind of like I'm just a zombie. Then I just feel like everything is not real. It's not like a real, but it's my type of a panic attack."

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

"I think, uhh, like ulcers, I'm afraid I'm going to get ulcers from this job just due to the stress level."

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

"I think that they have the wrong perception of what we do. I think that most of the public has a wrong perception. I think that at work we portray a different... We don't stand up for ourselves we don't use what EMS is really about. Instead we use it for hauling calls that absolutely do not need an ambulance and we basically enable ourselves and we portray it to the public and they have the wrong perception of what we do."

Follow-up question: what do you feel that the public's perception of EMS is?

"I think that their perception is fueled by the fire department as well, I think that their perception is that we show up and we transport. We don't have people that can save a life and, uhh, we are just basically a taxicab. I've been on numerous calls where we show up and they are like 'don't do nothing, don't do anything just take her to hospital.' You just look at them and your like 'well you can just take them to the hospital to.' I think it's fueled by the fire department thinking they portray to the public that they are medical and that they get into the ambulance with us and that they do all the medical."

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

"Yes, because I think that they are basically a role model for the public especially police officers and even doctors. People look at these icons and say to themselves there is my safety there is my medical safety, yes I think they should be held to a higher standard, and they should feel that too."

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just "ordinary" people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why?

"Yes, yes I do. I think that comes with occupation. Those occupations need that untouchable look so that people can go to these people for help. I think that if you didn't then everything else would be pretty corrupt."

Personal communication-face to face interview, occurred on 7/25/2009.

What is your occupation?

“Paramedic”

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

“I have been a paramedic for six years. Err. Five years sorry.”

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

“Yeah. For myself, it’s an education thing. Umm. Basically keeping up on the newest treatments, patients that present with difficult symptoms; I feel that it is my responsibility to continue researching to make myself better. Now the public, I think the expectations that they put upon us, like when we show up to be professional and umm.. Basically to help them in their time of need, which is usually some sort of crisis. If it’s not a crisis, they at least believe it is.”

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

“No.”

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

“No.”

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

“For the most part, no. I don’t think they have unrealistic expectations.”

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“Yes. I think it is important as they are public figures and they are setting examples of a community, whether it be a healthcare community, a public safety community, political party, or just a community, I think the public figure sets a precedence for that. So I think the standards for those individuals.. Umm... Should be a little bit higher.”

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just “ordinary” people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“Right, people are going to be people, are going to be people. The position and titles change how they are going to be viewed by others. I think it’s like human nature or evolutionary... Whatever, that people have hierarchy. Ya know the old saying, when leadership fails to lead, new leadership will arise. Somebody will usually take that position.”

4.3 Fire Fighters speak out

Personal communication-face to face interview, occurred on 8/5/09

What is your occupation?

“Fire fighter engineer.”

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

“Four years.”

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

“I do, I think that we have to constantly be involved in furthering our education and understanding how to respond to emergencies both to maintain our certifications and understand and be competent in what we do.”

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

“I have nightmares sometimes, sometimes I can’t sleep. We had a pretty big fire a few years back and I was part of the entry team. It’s a different place in there. Sometimes when I just fall asleep I dream that I am back there.”

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

“No.”

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

“Yes, I guess they are unrealistic. We are expected to know how to handle every situation from medical calls to hazardous spills to fires. When off duty we are expected to be the best people in the community. It all falls back on what our title is. If I was... Say a captain or a chief I would be held to an even higher standard.”

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“I do, they are the ones that direct the community, the ones that make the decisions that impact lives. I think that even in my position it is important that I have a good moral character. I think its important for everyone that works in the community to put their best foot forward on and off duty. That’s how we make a better community.”

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just “ordinary” people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“Yes, if we are in that position, we chose to be there, no one forced us to be there. Any day we can leave the position. It is important that we live up to the oaths we took and the responsibilities that we have burdened ourselves with.”

Personal communication-face to face interview occurred 8/20/09.

What is your occupation?

“Right now, Acting Captain and Paramedic.”

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

“Ten years.”

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

“Oh, I guess so. We train a lot, and we have to take tests each year to prove we know what we are doing. No more than any other job I guess.”

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

“Just stress, my wife and I fight a lot, a lot of it has to do with my work schedule or the stress from work.”

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

“I think I might have had a minor heart attack working a fire a couple years back. I probably wouldn’t have had that working at McDonalds. I think it was from the heat and exertion.”

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

“Well, no, not off work. I haven’t had that much of a problem when I’m off work. At work it seems like everyone, even the Brass expect us to solve every little problem from leaky fire hydrants to wires in trees. Then they want us to shine the truck.

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“On duty, yes. They are the driving force behind society. Off duty it shouldn’t matter what they do as long as they are not causing widespread chaos. They have a life to live just like everyone else and they have privacy that should be respected.”

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just “ordinary” people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“Only when acting in a professional capacity. The world is built on hierarchy and if that’s how we want the world to exist we have to have those that step up to take responsibility. If we don’t, then we need to find another way to live.”

Personal communication-face to face interview, occurred on 8/26/2009.

What is your occupation?

"Firefighter paramedic."

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

"15 years."

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

"Yes, we're always expected to know techniques of knocking down fires, dealing with hazardous materials, and also medical assessment and treatment."

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

"None that I can think of."

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

"Not so much physical difficulties or ailments, but it is an extreme stressor on the home life with my wife."

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

"I do. I'm expected to be the best person in the community, the best husband at home, and never crack under pressure. Neighbors that know that I am a firefighter expect me to be more of a moral person than the guy that works at the bookstore downtown. I'm always expected to be there for the community. If there's a major fire or disaster, more than just an ethical or moral obligation required by my job I am pretty much to come in at a moments notice. That's not always fair. But in hindsight I guess that's how the world works."

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

"Yes I do, they're allowed to direct, influence, and mold basically our world and I feel that they should be held to that higher standard. I don't always think that is fair, but if

there was not a standard without obligation to perform, I think would be in a lot more trouble than we actually are."

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just "ordinary" people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why?

"Yes, as I stated before, these people run our world basically. If they are not accountable for their actions both on and off the job why should they be in a position of such power and decision-making ability?"

4.4 Police Officers Speak Out:

Personal communication-Face to face interview, occurred on 9/18/2009

What is your occupation?

"Police officer, patrol division."

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

"Seven years."

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

"I need to stay in shape, I always have to be one step before those that I am investigating.

I have to know all the laws, I have to know traffic laws inside and out, the public constantly quizzes you and expects you to know everything about everything."

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

"I do drink a lot more than I used to. I am more judgmental than I used to be. I am less tolerant of other people have become more jaded over the years."

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

"Not really, not physical ailments."

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

"Yes, we always have to know what everybody is up to. We're expected to handle any situation that anybody calls for, even if it's just an argument between two people. We are expected to be the judges of those people. We are always supposed to be there when a crime is committed and if we are not it is held against us. We have to be the most moral upstanding people in the city, or that is held against us. If we see somebody we have dealt with on the street and we're not on duty, we are still expected to be on the job. My family life is always in jeopardy because of the people that I deal with on a daily basis."

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

"Being in the question itself, I have to say that I do not feel we should be held to such a higher standard off duty. Simply, everybody gets to have a life but those who choose to help others. If you want to do better or to direct the community, you unfortunately have to give up part of your life. I don't necessarily feel that that is good or positive motivator."

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just “ordinary” people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why? (Question omitted by researcher due to being answered in previous question.)

Personal communication-face to face interview, occurred on 9/21/09

What is your occupation?

“Patrol officer, shift supervisor.”

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

“I have been a police officer for about four years and I have been an interm shift supervisor for five months.”

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

“Yes, we are expected to uphold the law regardless of if we are on duty or off. I can’t even count the number of times that neighbors have come up to me to ask if I would deal with a situation for them. You constantly have to be trained to understand what is happening on the streets. I come from a smaller venue, and a lot of the problems and issues that we face have been occurring elsewhere. We can usually have a leg up when we deal with the problems. Our problem is that its difficult to continually be trained. So, in order to be effective in what we do, we have to continually be trained. That is both for the public’s benefit and our own safety.”

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

“Over the years I have had odd rashes, much like Shingles develop. During times of intense stress I sometimes lose my focus and become dizzy. I know that my perception of people has changed over the years. Even in the short period of time that I have been doing this, I can see a dramatic change within myself. Sometimes I wonder if it was even worth it to try to make a difference because it seems as though I am the one losing out in the end.”

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

“I carry my stress in my shoulders so my shoulders are always sore, that is also where I have rashes and skin problems when I am really stressed.”

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

“Oh yeah, yeah they do. We are supposed to always help the one that called us, even if they were the instigator and they have warrants out for their arrest. We always have to know the law. We are expected to make split second decisions that impact the lives of the community and we are expected to make them right the first time and Heaven forbid if we screw up. Not only do we risk losing our job if we make a mistake, we risk losing our home and any money we have invested because of a possible lawsuit.”

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“On duty I can see that it is necessary. Off duty it is ridiculous to expect someone to perform as they would at work. It is completely irrational to require someone to not have their own life just because of a title they hold within the community.”

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just “ordinary” people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to

higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why? (Omitted by researcher due to previously being answered.)

CHAPTER FIVE

MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

5.1 Overview of concerns

Medical and mental health professionals are those that local communities view as having almost “godlike” powers of perception and treatment. Physicians are expected to treat everyone in a kind and caring manner while finding the exact nature of the patient’s complaint. Patients expect that a physician will diagnose their ailment and be able to effectively treat the individual with medications.

The reality of a physician’s work is that they are also subject to stress and PTSD. In fact, many physicians are plagued by the reality that in the litigious society we live in they stand a potential to lose everything they own if a mistake is made. “What is less well known is that chronic stress may be punctuated by episodes of terror, even acute stress reaction and post traumatic stress disorder when a mistake is discovered or a lawsuit ensues⁸.” Barg continues to explain that, “Do you know that a significant percentage of

⁸ Barg, J. *Turning Physician Stress into Physician Empowerment*. Physician’s News Digest. September 2006.

medical students have suffered major trauma prior to entering medical school and that they are primed to having their traumas retriggered when they enter training – described by one author as resembling "an abusive and dysfunctional family system?" When they encounter patients with psychological trauma they may try to rescue those individuals or avoid exposure to them. Unfortunately, rather than finding themselves in a healing profession, they find one that is soul-denying and soul-destroying⁹.” These are often overlooked concerns when the public looks to a physician for assistance.

Whereas all humans are prone to make mistakes from time to time, errors by physicians can result in serious bodily injury that can last a lifetime or even death. Thus with each patient seen, there is a minor amount of stress that occurs. In fact, a study that observed the effects that error had on the stress of physicians reported that, “The results of the study pointed out that it does not take a serious medical error to occur in order for physicians to experience a negative impact; minor mistakes and near miss medical errors also lead to physicians to experience stress. The study notes that the level of stress

⁹ Barg, J. *Turning Physician Stress into Physician Empowerment*. Physician's News Digest. September 2006.

increased with the seriousness of the error. The results of the study also found that after a medical error 61% of the physicians experienced increased anxiety regarding future errors, 44% of the physicians experienced loss of confidence, 42% of the physicians experienced sleeping difficulties, 42% of the physicians experienced feeling of reduced job satisfactions, and 13% of the physicians felt that their reputation had been harmed¹⁰.”

Nurses are often viewed as the hands of the physician and carry out the orders that are written or verbalized. Nurses often perform the initial assessment, triage, and if medications are needed, administer medications. Thus nurses are often subject to similar stressors that physicians come in contact with. Nurses that work in areas outside of the emergency room or clinic often work with patients long term. These nurses may become strongly attached to their patients and when the patient is discharged or passes on, the nurse in question may enter depression.

Along with physicians Mental Health Counselors, Psychologists and Psychiatrists are expected by communities to be able to take away the problems and concerns that the

¹⁰ Maxwell, R. *Medical errors result in physician stress*. Associated Content. July 2007. Accessed from: http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/319162/medical_errors_result_in_physician.html
Accessed on August 9, 2009.

individual presents with. Unfortunately, much like physicians, these mental health professionals often have past experiences that directly and adversely impact the day to day stressors of the mental health professional.

Much like the emergency responders mentioned in the last chapter, these medical and mental health professionals are subject to rigorous scrutiny off the job. These professionals are expected to hold a professional demeanor both on and off the job. Any negative reporting by the news media may cause the professional to lose his or her position in a company. Aside from the possibility of losing a position within a company or agency, the individual that was faced with the negative reporting often faces disciplinary action with his or her medical or mental health license.

5.2 Physicians speak out

Personal communication-face to face interview, occurred on 9/24/2009.

What is your occupation?

“Physician in an Emergency setting.”

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

“Six years.”

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

“Keeping my license current, knowing the latest treatments and medications.”

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

“No.”

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

“Ulcers, I have small ulcers that occasionally occur when its really stressful at work.”

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

“At work, everyone expects me to cure them and not need to be hospitalized. So many expect me to be their primary care physician. Off the job, it’s not such a big deal.”

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“I don’t know that we direct the public trust, but I think that we should be regarded as those that ‘set the standard’ so that society doesn’t fall apart around us. Those that actually lead the community or nation should feel the same. They don’t need to be always enacting change, but they need to be able to look good so they can be a model of beneficial activity. One of the greatest problems is popular media, they always wait for the worst events to happen and then make it into a huge catastrophe. That way they can show everyone the world is going downhill and society is spiralling out of control.”

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just “ordinary” people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“Not in their off time, I don’t. They should be held accountable for what they need to do while they are on the job though.”

Personal communications-face to face interview, occurred on 9/12/2009

What is your occupation?

“Private practice Pediatrician.”

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

“I have been a licensed physician for fourteen years.”

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

“Keeping up on the medical license and new medications that come out each day.”

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

“Nope.”

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

“No, I don’t.”

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

“I used to work in a clinic and then a hospital so then I was expected to know everything and be up on everything. I spent a lot of nights on call and even more nights coming in because my patients were ill. When I began my own practice I began learning how to say ‘no.’ My free time became my free time again. I am no longer at the mercy of everyone’s

beck and call and I don't have to pull those call shifts each month. Occasionally I have a late night call from a family that's child is having an emergency, but that is not very often."

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

"Well, after living that life, always being the 'go to' guy, I don't think that anyone needs to do that. It was terrible and there were times that I hated my job and I hated everyone I was supposed to treat. I think we all should understand our place in the community and strive to make life better for all, not just rely on those in positions that can make changes to set the example."

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just "ordinary" people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to

higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why? (Question omitted by researcher as already answered.)

Personal communication-face to face interview, occurred on 8/03/2009.

What is your occupation?

"Primary care physician."

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

"17 years."

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

"Yes, I do, we have to constantly be aware of the changing science in the medical field, we have to be aware of this medication issues and interactions, are expected to know just about everything."

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

"No not really."

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

"None that I can think of."

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

"Yes, expect me to know exactly how to treat them and how to diagnose them when maybe requires a specialist to take a look at the situation. A lot of times I lose credibility in the eyes of the patient because I have referred them to somebody else that has more knowledge about a particular subject or event is occurring in his or her life. It's ridiculous to expect that one person would know how to diagnose and treat every disease or ailment

known to man. When I'm not at work, a lot of times the same rules still apply. Family and friends expect that I'm available to treat them, clients call through the answering service and expect me to be able to diagnose them over the phone and don't want to set up a regular office appointment. It's absolutely ridiculous what people think that we should be doing for them."

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

"Not off duty. We all need our own time away from everything. It's crazy to think that one's life should be scrutinized by four hours a day yet that seems to be the expectation anymore."

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just "ordinary" people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why?

"Again, I don't think that when somebody away from the job that they should be expected to perform at the same caliber they do while they're at work."

Personal communication-face to face interview, occurred on 7/29/2009.

What is your occupation?

"Cardiologist."

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

"Eight years."

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

"Yes, continuing education and understanding how medications interact and affect not only the heart but the various organs that the heart supplies, I have to understand and be able to diagnose even the slightest little flutter in the stomach or anywhere in the body in

the event that it may be cardiac related and referred pain. People are always looking for someone to sue for malpractice in the event that anything goes wrong at all, and the trick is to not be the one that they are able to sue. "

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

"I think just anxiety."

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

"I don't think so."

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

"Yes, I think that they expect that I'm perfect and that I will always perform without flaw.

Off the job, I don't see anybody and my friends know that I am not a doctor when I'm off duty."

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

"Uhh. To some degree yes, there's a bunch people will expect us to be able to reform like Superman, which obviously does not happen. But if people don't have someone to look up to our own society would degrade into chaos. I think that somebody will always step up to the plate and set the example for the rest of society. I try to be good person when I'm not at work, and I make a clear distinction when I am at work and when I'm not at work. I do not like to take my work home with me."

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just “ordinary” people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why?

"Yes I do, I just think that everybody is looking for a hero and a few people out of the many should always stand up and take that role."

5.3 Counselors, Psychologists, and Psychiatrists speak out

Personal communication-face to face interview occurred 7/15/2009

What is your occupation?

"I am a licensed Psychologist."

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

"Twelve years."

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

“Continuing education. Also, I feel it benefits my clients most if I understand the latest scientific theory or belief structure, not so I can necessarily incorporate it into practice, but so that I can understand what my clients are hearing in the world.”

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

“An aversion to attachment to people. In layman’s terms I find it difficult to form a deep bond with some people because my position requires me to objectively evaluate and clinically diagnose and treat the client. Therefore, I find that it is difficult to form attachments that are long lasting.”

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

“No.”

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

“Yes, I am expected to be on the job all the time by family, friends and clients. The court system thinks so too. I have to be able to be reached or have my clients referred to another Psychologist or risk abandonment. Then, if I don’t have all the answers right away, clients and families become upset, its so stupid.”

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“Well, not off duty, but they sure seem to be. Like you said they direct the public trust, but they are people like us. They shouldn’t be expected to be perfect.”

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just “ordinary” people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“While on duty yes. They are in a position, often with an advanced knowledge or degree, thus they are trained higher than the average citizen. Therefore, they need to be held accountable to be an example, they should be willing to lead and with leadership comes accountability and responsibility.”

Personal communication-face to face interview, occurred 8/9/2009

What is your occupation?

“Professional counselor for a Mental Health Center.”

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

“Four years.”

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

“We have to continually train and further our education with clock hours for the state license. “

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

“No.”

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

“None.”

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

“Not the public, no. I think that sometimes our management expects us to be angels, which we aren’t. I personally know of two other counselors that have been reprimanded for what seemed like minor occurrences on their time off. Crazy, I know but they were written up for something they were not even on the clock for.”

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“Uhh... To a point, They are supposed to be the pillars of the community, sometimes its laughable, but really, they are supposed to be. So we should hold them to that if they took that position, then they should be held to that standard.”

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just “ordinary” people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“Well... Yes, I understand they are fallible, but.. I still think they need to be responsible for guiding the populace.”

Personal communication-Face to face interview, occurred on 9/24/2009

What is your occupation?

“Addiction counselor.”

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

“Two years.”

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

“Yeah, I need to understand different coping mechanisms that people use and ways that they try to cover additions. I need to keep up with licensure and the latest techniques to use with addiction counseling. I need to keep up my networking and make sure I have a

valid referral base so that I can keep up my practice and make sure that my clients get the best care possible.”

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

“None that I am aware of.”

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

“Nope.”

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

“Not while I am off work. While I am at work I have to be able to pretty much help everyone. I need to be able to be able to treat just about everyone. Lots of people have various addictions and problems, many times there are underlying problems that no one

even tells you about that you just find out later on after you treat the client for a while. So when I see a client I am expected to be able to discern everything going on in their life and then cut through the crap to figure out how to treat them. Then if the treatment doesn't quite pick up with the client, the client usually feels that I am ineffective. That word spreads throughout the community and then I get a bad wrap. I get less referrals and then my client base collapses. So it comes to a point that rather than treat the client, you have to treat the community. It is all very confusing."

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

"Uh, I do think that there should be some accountability. I think that someone needs to be responsible for the things that go on in this country, but I don't really think that they should have to always pay for it in their off time. I think that everyone should be able to have their own life, but that isn't how it always goes is it? If you want to make yourself a target by taking a position like that then you are just asking for it."

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just “ordinary” people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“Yes, I do. They are trained or schooled in order to deal with the complexities of leading the world so they should be able to hack it. If they aren’t able to do what they need to do, then they need to get out of there. I don’t have much sympathy for those in public office.”

Personal communication-face to face interview occurred 7/7/2009.

What is your occupation?

“Clinical counselor.”

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

“Two years.”

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

“Just education, but that is owed to keep up with the changing times and my clients deserve it.”

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

“Anxiety. Sometimes I feel anxious when meeting with a new client. Its because I always wonder if I’m going to be able to help them or not, whether I will make good judgments or not.”

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

“Sometimes I get stomach cramps, that goes along with my anxiety.”

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

“I know my friends all think I work all the time and they always call me up whenever they have a fight with their spouse. They expect me to be able to make sense of everything that is going on or to be able to add insight on the situation. If I see a client on the street, sometimes they will expect me to have a session right there even if I am with my husband or kids. It’s very ridiculous.”

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“Yes, they represent us as a community, as neighbors with shared goals. If they act poorly on their off time, it makes us not want to hold ourselves responsible for our actions.”

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just “ordinary” people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“I understand that, but it is important that those that lead us know that we are always looking to them for guidance and support. If it is an elected position, it is important for them to know we are the ones that put them there. If it a police officer or a doctor, it is important that they adhere to their oaths. We are all responsible to someone or something, always it should be the greater good.”

Personal communication-face to face interview, occurred on 9/27/2009.

What is your occupation?

“Counselor.”

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

“Eight years.”

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

“Just licensing. I like to keep up with different therapeutic models but that is just something for me to do and understand, it’s not really a required part of the job. It is a good idea.”

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

“Nope.”

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

“No.”

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

“A lot of times I have friends call up asking for advice when I am off work. Because I work in private practice, I really don’t get bothered too much at home. When I worked for the clinic it was a different story. Each counselor had to do so many rotations on call and it was less than fun. Most of your nights you spent on the phone with someone who just wanted attention. I began to really hate the position and all the stupidity that came with it.”

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“Yeah... I think that there should be a higher standard. I think that while you are at work there is an expectation that you will perform in a certain way and the public holds you to that expectation. When you aren’t at work I think you should be able to blend in. I know that my time at the clinic was terrible because I saw so many clients on the street that I

had previously dealt with. It made it really hard to differentiate from work life and home life. It wasn't really that enjoyable in that way. Also, the call rotation was not fun and you really couldn't go off and do what you wanted to do when you wanted to. Time after five was still work time and so it wasn't enjoyable. Knowing that, I don't think that anyone should be held to that."

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just "ordinary" people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why? (Omitted by researcher due to previously being answered.)

Personal communication-face to face interview occurred 8/23/2009.

What is your occupation?

"Montana State Licensed Psychiatrist."

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

“Six years.”

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

“Obviously to keep current on the latest medications and treatment programs. Aside from that, you have to keep up on billing and coding procedures just to make sure that you can make ends meet. You have to be on certain panels to make sure you have clients and you have to be able to be in the community to make sure you exist the following year.”

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

“Not directly, no. The stress I know probably affects me one way or the other... But, I don't really notice it much anymore.”

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

“I have a twitch in my left hand, this wasn’t there when I began my practice, but no one has been able to definitively diagnose it.”

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

“I have to be available. I have very little time with my family or for myself. A couple of times I have participated in drug testing trials and especially when putting a new client on a new medication, I have to be able to be reached. In all honesty, other doctors don’t know my patients the way that I do, so it falls on me to be able to be reached regardless of the time of day.”

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“No, not really. We all have a job to do to add to the community. I think we all should be held to the same standard. I don’t think that anyone else should be more responsible for what they do in their off time than another person.”

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just “ordinary” people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“No, I don’t. Like I said before, we all contribute the same amount.”

5.4 Nurses speak out

Personal communication-face to face interview, occurred on 8/05/2009.

What is your occupation?

“I’m a Registered Nurse in an Emergency Room.”

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

“Four Years.”

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

“I do, especially working in an emergency room setting. I feel that where I work we’re the best nurses and the best trained because we have to be able to expect to treat anything that comes in the door, and be able to handle the situation as best as possible. Which requires us to have certifications in various things that other people in my profession don’t really need. If we don’t have those certifications we may not be able to handle those sort of situations.”

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

“I do, I think at times I lean towards alcoholic tendencies. I probably drink a heck of a lot more than most people my age just due to... You know if I have a stressful day at work when I come home one of the first things I do is crack open a beer or a couple beers or you know, have a couple of drinks just due to the stress involved at work just to cool off. Other than that, I think I am fairly stable when it comes to that.”

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

“Chronic back pain from lifting and moving people on the stretchers, off the stretchers, off the floor, doing CPR, bending over, getting into awkward positions to do procedures. I constantly just have backaches all day long, everyday when I wake up in the morning, even when I’m not working.”

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

“I guess so, yeah, even if I’m not at work and I’m at the grocery store with my family or something and somebody crashed out and somebody knew I was a nurse they would expect me to be able to do something even outside of the environment, it would be a requirement of me being a nurse to do that. Ya know, I think that at work I think they have unrealistic expectations all the time. Like ‘why can’t you get rid of my pain?’ or ‘why can’t you find out what’s wrong with me?’ or they expect me to treat them with the kindest care in the world but they treat me like garbage. I feel really awkward when I’m out in the community with my family and I recognize someone from work and I am thinking, ‘oh they are going to recognize me’ what are they going to say or what could they do? Like some of the retaliation that could come towards me or my family just from where I work.”

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“On duty yes, off duty, no. I guess I kind of look at the political figureheads and I figure that what you do in your home is your business, umm... ya know if I go home and I decide to whatever.. whatever I do at my house on my time is fine, and a political figurehead or police officer if they are at home then its their business as long as it’s not endangering the welfare of their family or something like that ya know. Whereas while they’re at work or something I wouldn’t expect them to lie or cheat. If you look at politicians, ya know, if they’re going to smoke dope in their off hours that’s fine.. Or if they’re cheating on their wife in their off-duty hours that’s their business. Umm.. I don’t see how that’s affecting their job. It’s not interfering with their job, ya know. I wouldn’t want somebody to tell me that ‘because you’re a nurse’ I can’t do what I want in my house. I can’t raise my kids like this or I can’t have a beer after work ya know. I don’t want somebody to tell me that because I’m a nurse that I’m different and I can’t do what I want in my life. I think that the public in general holds everyone too higher standards,

especially when it comes to policemen. They don't look at them like their a person, like you and I, they look at them like 'you have a title and you shouldn't be able to do certain things.' I guess I disagree with that, I think what you do in your time is your business. Unfortunately some people that are in certain positions that are more public it becomes more public because of it. But if you're off duty from work and you were to accidentally hit somebody with your car or somethin' like that I think that you should be treated just like someone else. I don't think that you should get special treatment. Umm, which I think oftentimes because of the work environment that I work in and the people that I know, I could get special treatment or I could get out of certain things because 'oh, I remember you from the Emergency Room and you did this and this for me, we'll just wipe the slate clean.' I guess that's how I look at it."

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just "ordinary" people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why? Omitted by researcher as answer was combined with previous question.

Personal communication-Face to face interview, occurred on 7/05/2009.

What is your occupation?

"Licensed professional nurse in a nursing home."

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

"Eight years."

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

"Not really, we have to have so many clock hours to renew our license, but other than that no."

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

"None."

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

"Not caused by the stress, just back pain from lifting and twisting."

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

"Families do. They expect us to be perfect and treat the residents as though there's only one and not as many as we have. Aside from that, the public does not really have strenuous expectations."

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

"Yes, these people are our leaders, the people that we look up to and we are supposed to model our lives after theirs. If they are doing that they are supposed to be doing, why should we be trying to make a better impact on society?"

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just “ordinary” people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why?

"It still doesn't matter, they chose the profession that they decided to follow, no one's holding a gun to the head and making them stay there. They need to do what's right where they need to move out of that position."

Personal communication-face to face interview occurred on 9/01/2009

What is your occupation?

“Registered nurse, I work in a clinic.”

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

“One year.”

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

“Just gotta keep up on my license and do what the doctor says. Other than that it’s not too bad.”

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

“Nope.”

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

“Not yet.”

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

“Not really, I work in a nice environment, its like we’re a family. When I’m not at work, most people don’t know I’m a nurse so it isn’t a big deal.”

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“Yeah, they are the one’s leading us. They need to set the example, they wanted to do what they do, to be where they are now, they need to be the ones to show us how we should act towards each other. If they do cheating on each other or shooting coke, then that is the model that we have to look up to.”

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just “ordinary” people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“I understand that, I think that if we are to live one way, then those at the top of the food chain should live that way also. You can’t expect us to be all nice to each other when they go around bein’ jerks or drinkin’ and driving. They need to lead us in the right direction.”

Personal communication-face to face interview, occurred 8/28/2009

What is your occupation?

“Licensed Practical Nurse.”

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

“Ten years.”

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

“I have to keep current with the meds and I have to know the latest nursing treatments.

Really, there is a lot that I have to keep up with to make sure that I help my patients out the best.”

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

“Just a lot of stress. It’s difficult sometimes to keep up with the workload and everything that they want me to do. It isn’t very easy or that much fun most of the time.”

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

“Back pain, just from lifting people all the time.”

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

“Not unrealistic, no. I think sometimes they just want things their way. I don’t think that the standards are too tough.”

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“Oh yes. My husband and I got into it one day. We all need someone to look up to. We need, as a society, those that will lead us and show us how to live. ‘If no one else is doing it, why should we do it?’ I ask. Most people don’t understand how important it is to have a leader that you can look up to. It is really important I think and those people always better show their best colors if we are to look up to them.”

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just “ordinary” people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“Yes, they are just regular people, but we need to have them held accountable. If we don’t hold them accountable, then we are just setting ourselves up for failure. And that failure is of all of society, not just a few of us. If they aren’t held accountable, who will be. Why should I be held to a higher standard if the Feds aren’t held to a higher standard. Pretty ridiculous and scary if you ask me.”

CHAPTER SIX

RELIGIOUS LEADERS

6.1 Overview of concerns

The contribution that religious leaders provide to society is often overlooked. Religious leaders work tirelessly to lead the populace to a chosen deity. For this study, Christianity will be the primary focus, although the reader should understand that the same concerns voiced among Christianity can apply to all religious fields with some variances.

Many religious leaders are called to ministry due to a highly personable and giving nature. It is unfortunate that many ministers lose themselves while trying to care for their flock. Often, if a minister or religious leader is working wholeheartedly with his or her congregation, his or her family is often left behind. The added stress of marital conflict and devotion to the congregation can often open up hidden addictions.

Society perceives that religious leaders need to live a pious life, both on and off the job. If a religious leader fails to uphold the perceptions of the public and is reported to

his or her superior, there is a potential to be defrocked. Even minor events, such as a “slip of the tongue” can lead to a religious leader’s personal standing to be called into question.

6.2 Religious leaders speak out:

Personal communication-Face to face interview, occurred on 8/06/09

What is your occupation?

“I’m a Catholic Priest.”

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

“Thirty-five years.”

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

“Definitely, continuing education is one. Umm.. Also, working under the supervision of others, sort of one step on the ladder with people that I supervise myself as well as being

supervised by others can sometimes be a real burden when it comes to the expectations that I need to create or have been created by the people that I work and minister with and supervise as well as expectations that might change depending on who my supervisor might be. So far I've had four different Bishops that I have worked with and each one has a different style and different set of expectations and so that becomes a bit of a burden."

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

"I'm not sure if it's directly related or not, but I have dealt with anxiety issues. Those have come and gone. I don't know if that is my personal self, growing up maturing and going through my own stages of development. I tend to lean towards that as it's not been particularly stressful for me in the ministry itself."

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

"No."

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

“Oh certainly, certainly. I think their expectations are two-fold, one set of expectations I would probably call unrealistic in terms of performance. As a minister one is kept up on a pedestal in a sense and better stay there. Ya know.. and sometimes that just not possible to deal with those types of expectations, you’re still just a human being and subject to sin and whatever. To be honest with them, they shouldn’t be shocked. That’s not a particular concern for me, but I do think it’s an expectation that does create a certain amount of stress; I might call it a negative expectation. In other words, ‘you be a good boy.’ On the other hand, there is a set of expectations that are very positive as well, and very affirming. An expectation that if there’s an illness or death in the family, we want you there, we want you to share in that. If there’s a marriage, a birthday or anniversary, again an expectation that you should be there in a joyful sense, not that you’re ordered or commanded or something like that but it’s a very positive affirmation. It’s also an expectation that as a pastor or a minister you will participate in these events as well. Not

only will you keep your nose clean, but on the plus side it's an honor to have you with our family as part of this celebration, or our grief, that's an honor. And so it's a two way street with those expectations as I've experienced them."

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

"I would hesitate to say so because they do have private lives. I'm not married myself, but those who are married, and knowing what difficulties can occur in a marriage or definitely with one's children once they hit a certain age and its hard to have control over, I don't think that's necessarily the public's business. I think that's very much an issue that they have to deal with themselves professionally or through counseling or whatever. On the job however, I think each of us is expected to perform to the level of trust that goes with the job. The cashier at the local casino, I don't think that's the same as a city judge or Federal judge in terms of the expectations or accountability. So professionally I believe the level with what people trust their lives to you commonly dictates the degree

of accountability you offer back. As a minister again, as a judge, as an attorney as a doctor people are entrusting private information, disclosing things that they would not disclose to neighbors or a newspaper or something like that. That's a certain area of trust, I think, a level of accountability on the part of the professional that he or she should be held to and accountable for. Privately, I don't want to get into that."

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just "ordinary" people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why? (Question omitted by researcher as answered in previous question)

Personal communication-face to face interview occurred on 7/09/2009.

What is your occupation?

"Rector of a Christian church."

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

"31 years."

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

"Yes, I'm expected to be there for every family in my congregation and I'm also expected to lead the parish in a positive direction. I'm expected to be on call twenty-four seven. I have to answer to the Bishop. I'm also expected to act like a minister whether I'm on the clock or not. This requirement extends my family and my own family is put under the pressure of performing in the public's eye."

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

"Yes, severe anxiety and sometimes have a tendency to drink a little more than I should."

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

"I have chronic back pain related to the stress and how I deal with the stress related to this position."

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

"Definitely. We are expected always to do what's right. We are expected to act by every law in the Bible. I'm often expected to know the Bible inside and out and from time to time if I don't know the answer to particular question it counts against me."

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

"While on duty yes. Off-duty is a different story, everybody is entitled to their own private lives and privacy should be respected regardless of their position or status. No one

is perfect, and the public should not hold every person as though he or she is perfect.

Granted, a person's private life should not be destructive to his or her professional life, but I do not believe that it should always be brought to the forefront like it often is in news media."

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just "ordinary" people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? Omitted due to being answered in previous question.

Personal communication-face to face interview, occurred on 8/07/2009

What is your occupation?

"Church pastor."

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

"Eight years."

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

“Well, not really too much. I think most of it is just working with the congregation.”

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

“Some anxiety, not anything else that I can think of.”

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

“No, I don’t.”

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

“The public and my congregation expect me to be perfect, whereas I represent to them, God, they expect in return that be infallible, which is impossible.”

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“Well, yes and no. I think that they should always be held to a high standard when they are in the public’s eye. But, I also think they should be allowed to live their own life. It’s kind of a tough question.”

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just “ordinary” people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“I do sort of think that because they are the leaders, they are the ones that should be guiding us to a utopian plane. While we look towards Christ for perfection, we still must rely on our earthly human leaders to help us today.”

Personal communication-face to face interview, occurred on 9/6/2009.

What is your occupation?

“Pastor of a Christian Church.”

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

“One year.”

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

“Yes, I have to maintain my ordination and make sure that I am able to keep up with the events and needs of the congregation.”

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

“Just anxiety and some stress I guess.”

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

“Not really, my back is sore some mornings. I don’t know if that is related to being a Pastor or to getting older.”

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

“Yes, they expect me to always be perfect and never have any problems. They expect to be able to call me at any hour and expect that I will always be able to help. They expect that they can ask me any question and that I will answer how they wish to hear. If I am at the grocery store, they expect that I will be able to help them as if I was in my office and they had an appointment. It’s very frustrating.”

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“Well, in one respect, yes. I think that if they are in that position they should be pillars of the community. I also know how difficult it is to uphold that idea of perfection. I don’t wish that on anyone. I sincerely hope that they do try their best but I know that they are not perfect.”

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just “ordinary” people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“Yes, because I know that we all look to someone for guidance and when we need it the most. We look to mortals first and those that stand out the most need to be the ones that do the best job to help those in need. It is unfortunate that we often know about someone’s faults and misgivings before we know the person.

Personal communication-face to face interview, occurred on 8/12/2009

What is your occupation?

“Bishop over fourteen Christian churches in three states.”

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

“I have been a priest for thirty years and a bishop for twelve.”

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

“Oh yes, I have to know what my pastors are doing and be able to assist the various Parishes at a moments notice. I have to keep up on conflict resolution and I have to be tuned into what popular culture is into. I have to have a business understanding and knowledge. The church is likened to a large business. We have to make ends meet in order to exist next year. If I have to move resources from one church to another, I have to

know the best way to do that. If I should fail at these tasks, it would be easy for me to be moved or replaced.”

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

“Anxiety, loss of sleep, and uhh.. I just have overwhelming nervousness from time to time.”

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

“No.”

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

“Well, a lot of the public is not really in on what a Bishop really does, so in my actual capacity, no. Whereas the public knows that I am a Christian and that I still hold the

office of Priest, they do expect me to always do what is right. It used to be very difficult when I was younger, but it is not such a huge concern anymore. I can usually go without swearing or saying hurtful things to another. I don't believe that the expectations are so bad."

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

"No, not really. I think that everyone should be accountable for what they do and how they do it. I don't think that anyone should be held to a different standard just because of some title. I think that if everyone strove to be the best person that they could be, this would not even be an issue for anyone to resolve. Unfortunately, those in power are full of sinfulness like the rest of us. Just because they are in power does not exempt them from being responsible, just like it does not exempt them from carrying on sin."

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just “ordinary” people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“Again, they should not be held to some higher standard because of a title. We as a people should be able to show that. I have the title of Bishop, but I am still a priest, I am still a follower of Christ, and I am a part of the community. I think that if I have to hold myself to higher standards, I feel that everyone else should be held to the same standard.”

Personal communication-face to face interview, occurred on 10/03/2009.

What is your occupation?

“Assistant Pastor.”

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

“Eight months.”

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

“I have to be above sin. I have to be sure that I practice what I preach, literally.”

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

“No, I haven’t been in it very long though.”

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

“No.”

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

“A little, I guess. I am supposed to be filled with the Holy Spirit at all times, but sometimes I feel all alone. I am not supposed to feel that way; anyone you ask will tell you that. I am supposed to know everything about the Bible, I don’t. People expect a lot from me. I don’t know that they always get it.”

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“Only while off duty. I don’t think that while they are spending time with their family they should always be worrying about how they look to the public. I also believe they should be moral upstanding people to. The news has a way of finding things out about you.”

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just “ordinary” people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why?

“I know they are regular people, but they need to be there for our community, especially our children so that they can experience life like we have without all the terror that is beginning to come into play.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

7.1 Overview of concerns.

Local government acts as an extension of federal government in the United States of America. Local government comes in the form of state, county, and city management and many public servants hold various offices within these various forms of local government. Much like those involved in healthcare or law enforcement these individuals deal with the public on a daily basis many times completing activities that change not only the lives of single individuals but families and even generations to come.

Local government leaders strive to promote a community and utopian like atmosphere, unfortunately they must be sensitive both to the needs of the many and the needs of the few. On top of this they are expected to be perfect role models and perfect citizens in order to show the people how they are to act. Should an individual act poorly, popular media tends to scrutinize that individual, that individual family life, and being deeply into his or her past to find more problems.

Local government leaders often scrutinize every move they make as their actions tend to always offend at least one person. Government leaders often have little sense of accomplishment or positive feelings towards their occupation. This in itself can lead to higher stress levels and burnout. Another event that is not examined in this paper is a possibility of corruption, this tends to be more noticeable at the level of government leaders and officials to the point in which the American public almost "expects" it to occur.

Needless to say, the life of the local government leader is difficult at best. This researcher had a difficult time finding any government leaders willing to participate in the study. Many government officials disclose as little information as possible about themselves due to the ramifications of the popular media. Thus, the information provided below should be taken with a grain of salt due to the closed nature of the interviewees.

7.2 City commissioners speak out.

Personal communication-face to face interview, occurred on 10/1/2009.

What is your occupation?

"City commissioner over a medium populace."

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

"Four years for commissioner, 20 years in politics itself."

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

"Yes, you have to understand people. You have to understand what is best for them, even when they are requesting something else. You have to be able to understand how the decisions you make will affect not only the people you're talking to, but those silent people in the background. Many times you don't even hear from those silent people, some just move away or others work in the dark to unseat you. It's almost unnerving from time to time, you never know who's on your side and who isn't. Even others work in the same offices you may have goals that are conflicting with your own, thus even they work to

unseat you from time to time. The media is the absolute worst, and any little thing you say the twisted around and brought back to haunt you, not necessarily today or tomorrow but maybe even 15 years down the road. Sometimes just a personal interview is political suicide. It's unfortunate, because the public deserves to know who the elected or how that person is faring in office. The way that the world is simply detracts from this makes it more difficult both on the side of the people and on the side of the government.

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

“Just anxiety from dealing with all various policies and procedures. You never know the next time you come up for reelection if you'll even have a job. Its like going through the interview process the regular worker goes through, unfortunately with this interview process you usually spend thousands upon thousands of dollars and then if you said one wrong statement that it has brought to light, you may just be out of a job anyway.”

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

"No."

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

"Yes. They expect us to make everybody happy. They expect us to be infallible and able to fix every minor glitch in the world. They expect us to be pristine in news interviews, and they expect us to have our family life in absolute order. I haven't met a single person that is able to achieve all that. Yet, that is what is expected. Even when I'm at home with my wife, I'm expected to live a perfect life, we can't have a disagreement. It almost makes sense to invest in property far away from populace in order to live without such scrutiny, unfortunately, then they would say that we make laws and ordinances don't have to apply to us and then we be chastised for that. There really is no way to win."

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

"Not while off duty. Especially living it myself I understand that you need time away to be your own self. The expectation of perfection 24 hours a day seven days a week is outrageous. Yet, it seems to be what we expect from those that lead us. Both on and off duty we are expected to be the model citizen if we are wronged, if we are slighted, are expected to be able to handle it with the utmost tact. Unfortunately that is completely outrageous."

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just “ordinary” people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why? (Question omitted by researcher as already answered in previous question.)

Personal communication-face to face interview, occurred on 10/4/2009.

What is your occupation?

"City commissioner."

How long have you been employed in this occupation?

"Six years."

Do you feel that your occupation or status places specialized expectations or requirements upon you in order to maintain occupation or status? If so, please describe.

"Oh yes. Oh they do. He expected to know everything about business law, business and law, human relations, and every ordinance for your municipality. Need to understand how those ordinances impact every single individual person, you need to understand why those ordinances were created and put in place so that you don't change something that needs to be there. I would say that there are some special expectations in place."

Do you have any mental health ailments that you believe may be directly related to the stress of this position?

"Stress. This is the most absolutely crazy stressful job."

Do you have any physical difficulties or ailments that you believe may be directly involved or created by the stress of this position?

"No."

Do you feel that the public has unrealistic expectations or views of how you should perform on a daily basis, regardless of whether you are at work or not?

"Yes, they expect to be able to solve all their problems. More than just individuals, businesses and even entire police departments expect that I'll be able to solve their minor dilemmas. You would not believe the amount of times that people tell me that I'm wasting their tax dollars by just sitting around and not doing anything, and this is just during the weekend. Whenever anybody sees you and recognizes you, they always bring up something that you screwed up; as if the whole world is your fault."

Do you feel that those employed in a capacity that directs the public trust (such as police officer, physician, commissioner or Governor) should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty than the regular citizen? If so, why?

"Only while on duty. You have to be able to get away from all the craziness at least a little bit. There is no reason that you... that anybody should have to live with the stress and difficulty of their work every hour of every day. There's no reason why anybody should be under the microscope every single hour of every single day either."

With an understanding that those that hold the public trust position are just "ordinary" people like you and me, do you still feel that they should be held to higher standards than the regular citizen? If so, why? (Omitted by researcher due to previous answer.)

CHAPTER EIGHT

FAMILY MEMBERS

8.1 Overview of concerns

Family members are often the silent victims of the stress and difficulties that one faces in his or her place of employment. Family members often see the residual day-to-day effects of stress and concern of the public servant. Some family members may even take the job of the public servant themselves, thus creating a twofold impact upon the family. It is difficult at best to estimate the actual impact of stress has from the public servant upon his or her family, but often the signs are there.

In the United States, skyrocketing divorce rates have been present for the last 30 years and have grown steadily in that timeframe. Statistics of abuse of family members and domestic partners have risen throughout the last two decades. Church attendance has dropped while recreational drug use has increased.

Realistically, the examples mentioned do not necessarily reflect the stress of the public servant, yet are indicators of economic and societal breakdown. The direction and

goal of this research paper is aimed at understanding the effects that society has on the public servant. In understanding the effects that are directly felt by the public servant, it was felt by this researcher that several family members of the primary research subjects should be interviewed as well in order to give a clearer picture of the life of the public servant.

Following the same format as the primary research individual, the following questions were asked of each participating family member, of note, this researcher was only able to elicit the assistance of spouses:

What is your spouse's occupation?

Do you work as a public servant?

How does your spouse's occupation as a public servant impact your family?

Have you had any negative experiences with the public while spending time with your family that is directly related to your spouse's occupation as a public servant?

8.2 Spouses speak out:

Personal communication-Face to face interview, occurred on 9/30/2009

What is your spouse's occupation?

"Police officer."

Do you work as a public servant?

"No."

How does your spouse's occupation as a public servant impact your family?

"It has definitely strained our marriage. He has a difficult time leaving work at work. It is almost as though his job creates a different world, one in which his family does not even exist nor is allowed to intrude. If work calls he always puts life on the back burner. He tries to talk about work with me but I don't understand what's going on, and it frustrates him makes him very angry."

Have you had any negative experiences with the public while spending time with your family that is directly related to your spouse's occupation as a public servant?

"Only a couple of times. We have run into a couple of people that he has had dealings with or arrested on the street. Although they haven't turned into anything too bad, it's very intimidating both for him and for me. A lot of times I don't like to go in the public with him if there's going to be a lot of people around, because it seems like everybody knows him. I fear for our children and I don't want people that he has arrested to know who our children are or what they look like."

Personal communication-Face to face interview, occurred on 9/23/3009.

What is your spouse's occupation?

"Emergency room physician."

Do you work as a public servant?

"Yes, but not in the capacity of my spouse does."

How does your spouse's occupation as a public servant impact your family?

"First off it provides for the family; although it often interrupts family time because he spends so much time on call. He sometimes brings work home with him and he seems pretty stressed out, other than that he doesn't really impact us."

Have you had any negative experiences with the public while spending time with your family that is directly related to your spouse's occupation as a public servant?

"No."

Personal communication-Face to face interview, occurred on 9/26/2009.

What is your spouse's occupation?

"Paramedic."

Do you work as a public servant?

"No."

How does your spouse's occupation as a public servant impact your family?

"He brings a lot of work home with him. He tends to drink more, and he doesn't earn what he should so we have a lot of stressors in our family. A lot of times he takes things personally interviewed had a bad call he attributes it to his inability to perform or know more. A lot of times he tries to talk to me I can't understand what he's saying. I thought of taking EMT classes just so we can both be on the same wavelength."

Have you had any negative experiences with the public while spending time with your family that is directly related to your spouse's occupation as a public servant?

"None that I can think of, we have had a couple of ones where people on the street will recognize him and thank him."

Personal communication-Face to face interview, occurred on 9/18/2009.

What is your spouse's occupation?

"Clinical counselor."

Do you work as a public servant?

“Yes, as a teacher.”

How does your spouse’s occupation as a public servant impact your family?

“She likes to volunteer and do a lot of different things throughout the community. A lot of times it seems like our family takes a back seat to her work. It seems like she is so busy working with others that she forgets the family that she has now.”

Have you had any negative experiences with the public while spending time with your family that is directly related to your spouse’s occupation as a public servant?

“None that I can think of.”

Personal communication-Face to face interview, occurred on 9/25/2009.

What is your spouse’s occupation?

“Fire fighter.”

Do you work as a public servant?

“Yes.”

How does your spouse’s occupation as a public servant impact your family?

“He tends to have anger issues and he drinks more than he used to when we first got together. With his schedule it is hard to really plan anything, he thinks it isn’t that difficult, but I have news for him. It is hard to connect with him sometimes. I think it’s just as hard for other spouses, at parties there is a fireman’s corner and a spouse corner. A lot of times I feel that I am left out of everything that is going on.”

Have you had any negative experiences with the public while spending time with your family that is directly related to your spouse’s occupation as a public servant?

“If there is a fire and it doesn’t go well, I get flack at work and I know that he takes it personally. Everyone expects the fire department to save the home or building, but it doesn’t always go that way. They should know that by now.”

Personal communication-Face to face interview, occurred on 9/23/3009.

What is your spouse's occupation?

"Paramedic."

Do you work as a public servant?

"Yes, in the healthcare field."

How does your spouse's occupation as a public servant impact your family?

"It stresses him out. He doesn't make even close to what I make, but he went to school for about the same amount of time. I think that hits his self esteem and it impacts our relationship. He used to do the job because he enjoyed it but that was years ago and it wore off. When he looks at the bills and realizes he can't support his family he gets pretty upset. There is a lot of times that I want to suggest that he goes into another part of the healthcare field, I think he's thinking about it now."

Have you had any negative experiences with the public while spending time with your family that is directly related to your spouse's occupation as a public servant?

“Not really, we seem to have had pretty good luck. I have heard stories from other spouses that previous callers have gone off on them in public. I haven’t had that happen and I’m grateful for that.”

Personal communication-face to face interview, occurred on 10/1/2009

What is your spouse’s occupation?

"City commissioner."

Do you work as a public servant?

"No."

How does your spouse’s occupation as a public servant impact your family?

"She carries around a lot of anger and has difficult problems with anxiety and all that..

On more than one occasion we fought just because of the stress of her job."

Have you had any negative experiences with the public while spending time with your family that is directly related to your spouse's occupation as a public servant?

"Yes, it actually happens very often. Anytime we go out in public somebody always seems to recognize us and then let's us have a complaint about something she's done.

Seems as though we can never get away from her job. Nobody ever seems happy with her and in turn to she never seems happy with the job she's done. Many times it's difficult to figure out where we should even go before going out in public, we try to find the place where we would have the least amount of conflict, or if we do have conflict with someone, where the scene would not be huge. I hate her job, but I understand why she does it."

CHAPTER NINE

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS OF STUDY

9.1 Introduction.

Of those interviewees that participated in the study, both the primary subjects and the family members interviewed showed an interesting view on the stressful occupation of public servant. Several primary subjects reported physical or mental health ailments that they attribute to the position that they hold serving the public. The true test is to understand if the trade off between mental health and physical ailments is worth the positive impact of leading society towards a more utopian community. The study does not examine the potential for corruption or abuse of power as a mental health ailment, thus is somewhat limited for those that remain in a position of power for a lengthy period of time.

What follows is a summery of the interview sessions previously examined. The question of whether each primary interviewee believed that his or her position holds specialized expectations or requirements in order to maintain that position is not

examined due to the fact that each individual interviewed believed that his or her profession required specific ongoing training or requirements.

9.2 Mental health and physical ailments.

The most common mental health ailment reported by participants in the study is anxiety, with one interviewee reporting “severe anxiety” when completing tasks.

Whereas anxiety is not necessarily life threatening or life altering, it can have a negative and detrimental effect on the quality of life experienced by the interviewee.

Alcohol dependence and use comes in as the second most reported mental health ailment attributed to the position of public servant. Whereas alcohol use in itself is not alarming, when coupled with mood changes or difficulties in interpersonal relationships, concerns for the mental health of the individual grow. \

Of the primary interviewees that participated in the study, back pain was the most common physical complaint. The difficulty with back pain as a physical complaint related to the position of public servant is whether the back pain is caused from performing a job such as lifting, which may be accomplished in a similar field outside of

public service or is the back pain directly related to performance of the public service which would not have occurred in another profession. Of the responses from primary interviewees, the most concerning physical ailment that was reported was the potential that one of the interviewees may have suffered a possible heart attack several years ago during a fire.

9.3 Unrealistic views of position.

With the primary focus of the study being on whether or not the job of a public servant outweighs the detrimental or negative effects caused by the position can be easily measured by the feeling of the public servant of whether the public has unrealistic views of the position or title held by the public servant. It is expressly interesting to note, only six of the primary interviewees report that they do not feel that the public has unrealistic expectations for their position, one of these interviewees reported that he was facing unrealistic expectations in the past, but since changing his primary occupation from an in-hospital physician to private practice pediatrician, the stress and unrealistic expectations have since been removed from his lifestyle. Only two primary interviewees reported that

unrealistic expectations exist only while on the job; and that they do not feel their life is scrutinized apart from their profession.

It is interesting to note that the majority of those interviewed feel that they themselves are placed on a pedestal and that the public holds unrealistic expectations of their performance both on and off the job. Most of these individuals express that they feel that they are contributing to society, unfortunately, also feel that they are losing a part of themselves.

9.4 Should public servant be held to a higher standard on and off the job.

An interesting figure presents itself with the question of whether a public servant should be held to higher standard both on and off the job. The majority of primary interviewees' report that public servant should be allowed to have a family life or be allowed to live a life with less scrutiny. Only two respondents reported that public servant should not be held to any type of higher standard than any other member of the community. Most respondents reported that the public servant should be held accountable while on duty in their profession, but that while enjoying family life or time away from

work, and they should not be held to such a high standard as they are while they are at work.

The same question was posed a second time, reworded to allow the interviewee to consider a different approach to the question. During some interviews, it was felt by this researcher, that the question was directly answered and only needed to be asked one time. The second time around more primary interviewees responded that public servants should be held to a higher standard both on and off duty. The most resounding reason for the public servant be held to a higher standard as stated by the primary interviewees was that the public servant made the decision to be there and to be in a position that he or she chose, and could leave at any time.

The second most common reason stated by the primary interviewees for choosing that they should be held to a higher standard was that public servants are there to guide and set the standard for the rest of the public to follow, and that without the standard or guidance, the unfortunate end result would be utter chaos.

9.5 Spousal and family concerns.

In an attempt to create a more round view of the world of the public servant, research was sought to understand the ramifications of the position of the public servant upon his or her family life. Due to the intense nature of the study itself, few primary interviewees felt comfortable allowing family members to be interviewed, and those few public servants that did allow family members to be interviewed limited interviews to the spouse only.

Of the spouses that did participate in the interview process only one reported that the impact of the occupation was positive in that it provided monetary compensation that would otherwise be difficult or non attainable in another occupation. Much like the interviews of the primary research subjects, anxiety and anger are the two most common impacts upon the family due to the life of the public servant.

Most spouses reported no negative experiences with the public in regards to spousal involvement in public service. Only one spouse reported that there was a negative experience that occurred very often and often limited family activities in public. In fact, this interviewee reported that even before going out into public with the family a mental

review of the place and possible conflicts that could occur are discussed before even treading outside.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

The office of the public servant is one held by numerous members of communities across the United States. The public servant works in many different positions, no one position deemed greater than the other, all equal in that they provide a benefit to the community that another office or position cannot provide. It is an unfortunate end result that the duties of the public servant take a toll on the individual in question.

The underlying question is whether the positive impact on the community is worth the toll taken on the public servant. This is a difficult question to answer due to the fact that the human mind is extremely resilient and adaptable. Beyond this, each person responds to stress differently and processes events in life differently. Thus, there is no “across the board” answer that can definitively provide a result.

The results of the study provide that most individuals believe that those that hold the public trust or that perform a service that is in the direct eye of the public should be

held accountable to a higher standard. The line is drawn at the fact that most primary research subjects report that the individual in question should be able to have time away from work and scrutiny. A small sample of subjects report that as the individuals are in a position to direct the public and set an example, these individuals should be held accountable for their actions off the job in such a form that their professional life may be jeopardized by the private activities that they partake in.

The direct transcribed interviews of face to face personal conversations with the researcher provide a view that those that hold a position providing public service understand the fundamental value that they themselves are held to a higher standard. Though some may not feel that their work or position influences the course of community development or cohesiveness in the same way that a government official's work does, on some level the realization that he or she is working towards a common goal of a Utopian society impacts the individual.

The stresses of the various positions manifest common difficulties with the individuals. As noted in the previous chapter, anxiety and back pain are the two most common complaints. During interviews with the spouses of the primary research

subjects, spouses often reported a stress upon the relationship that they feel would not normally be present if either individual did not work in the public service field. Thus, some underlying problems, either mental health or physically related may not be fully realized or accepted by the individual in question but noticeable by close family members or friends.

Therefore, with the limitations of this specific study outlined, it is apparent that the benefits of public service do outweigh the stress, anxiety and most physical complaints reported to this researcher. The need for the public servant in our communities is great, and the need for a leader and trend-setter that is able to lead by example is great.

To serve the public without desire for monetary gain or notoriety is a great challenge. Much is to be said for the individual that is able to retain a service position in the limelight of the media and weather the storm while still creating a viable impact upon the community. Although not a direct focus of the study, it is to be mentioned that after years of service to the public in a low paying position can provide opportunities and temptation for possible illegal activities. Although research exists that some individuals

may be more predisposed to illegal, immoral or criminal activities, this again is not the focus of this paper.

It is the wish of this researcher that the public understand that individuals that hold a position as a public servant and direct the public trust are not infallible, in fact with the common everyday stressors coupled with the demands of the public and media, these individuals may have an even greater difficulty with remaining a positive example for the community.

In the end, it is important to realize that the office of the public servant, in whichever discipline it exists, it exists for a reason, to positively impact and create a better community. Whereas some have special licensure or degree requirements, all hold a position that requires diligence and garners respect. Members of the community and popular media should hold a special place for these individuals that take it upon themselves to put others first and work towards making our community and world a better place.

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