

**For information
on 2 June 2015**

**Legislative Council Panel on Security
Training on psychological quality of police officers**

Introduction

This paper provides information on matters in relation to the training on psychological quality of police officers.

Training on psychological quality

2. The Police have all along attached great importance to training on psychological quality and emotion regulation of police officers. Starting from foundation training, new recruits are provided with courses on psychology in policing and stress management.

3. To further enhance the psychological quality of police officers, the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) piloted psychological competency training in 2004 and introduced it as a key project under the Strategic Action Plan 2005-08. In 2010, the Police rolled out a pilot training programme on emotional fitness, which has been fully implemented since 2014. In 2013, a training programme known as “T.A.K.E. Model – Psychological Preparation for Large-scale Public Order Events” was developed by the Psychological Services Group (PSG) of the HKPF. Details of the various above-mentioned training programmes are as follows.

(I) Psychological competency training

4. Having conducted a study on psychological competency in 2002, the Police had a trial run of psychological competency training in 2004, which was then fully implemented in 2005. To achieve a sustained and long-term effect on this front, the Police College co-operated with Police Clinical Psychologists (PCPs) and clinical psychologists from local universities in an effort to develop training materials for and provide training to police officers, so that training materials on psychological competency could be incorporated into foundation, development and promotion training courses. Psychological competency refers to a set of psychological knowledge and skills, behavioural patterns and lifestyle

management skills, i.e. a set of people-oriented skills essential to the effective performance of modern policing tasks. Psychological competency training has already become one of the compulsory courses for all police officers, covering various aspects such as conflict management, emotion regulation and adjustment, as well as coping with stress arising from police work etc.

5. According to the training effectiveness survey by the Police College in end-2008, 70% of the trainees pointed out that psychological competency and job satisfaction of themselves and of their colleagues had been enhanced through psychological competency training. At the same time, the majority of trainees considered that psychological competency training should be retained in the course. As such, psychological competency training has become a regular training, with around 10 000 new recruits and serving officers undergoing different aspects of psychological competency training each year. In 2009, the HKPF's psychological competency training even won an Excellence in Practice Award from the American Society for Training and Development.

(II) Emotional fitness training

6. In view of the notable results of the above-mentioned psychological competency training as well as officers' aspirations for further training on emotion regulation and adjustment, the Police College launched a pilot training programme on emotional fitness in 2010. With its content designed in accordance with empirical studies in positive psychology, the programme aimed at building positive emotions in police officers through development of their living, behavioural and cognitive habits. According to a joint study by the HKPF and the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2013, upon completion of this programme, officers have made obvious progress in various areas such as psychological resilience, cognitive flexibility, happiness and satisfaction, as well as in enhancing relationship with colleagues and family members etc.

7. As the effectiveness of the training was validated by research findings, starting from 2014 the Police College have developed training packages based on the content of the emotional fitness training programme, and begun to introduce this training to all officers at the ranks of Police Constable and Superintendent of Police in phases from August 2014 to June 2015. Up to now, over 20 000 officers have already received such training. The Police are now planning to provide this training to officers at the ranks of Senior Superintendent and above.

(III) “T.A.K.E. Model – Psychological Preparation for Large-scale Public Order Events”

8. In 2013, the PSG has developed the “T.A.K.E. Model – Psychological Preparation for Large-scale Public Order Events”, which covers caring for one’s body and mind during operation, appreciating meaning in work, understanding crowd psychology and emotion regulation. Major training contents of the “T.A.K.E. Model” include the following four elements:

- Treat your body
- Appreciate your role
- Know your people
- Endure hard feelings

9. Since the formal implementation of the “T.A.K.E. Model – Psychological Preparation for Large-scale Public Order Events” in December 2013, a total of some 1 300 police officers have received such training. The training programme has also been incorporated into regular training of the Police Tactical Units. In June 2014, the PSG made the programme into a 45-minute training video, which was also uploaded onto the police intranet and is available for self-learning by all frontline officers. The HKPF will continue to conduct the “T.A.K.E. Model” and online self-learning course.

Psychological support for Police’s large-scale operations

10. During the illegal “Occupy Movement” from September to December 2014, the Staff Relations Group of the HKPF, in collaboration with the PSG, sent various encouragement messages to police officers via mobile phones and computer network, and gave advice on self-care and emotion adjustment. At the same time, the PCPs visited frontline colleagues in their staging locations to offer them assistance in emotion adjustment and understand their morale. The PCPs also provided psychological support services to officers in need. Furthermore, the PSG offered individual psychological counselling to officers affected in the operation, while the Welfare Services Group of the HKPF provided welfare support to police officers who sustained injury at work during the operation.

11. After the end of the illegal “Occupy Movement”, the HKPF’s Personnel Services and Staff Relations Branch organised 165 Positivity Workshops with the theme “Shoulder the Challenge, Stride Toward 2015” for over 7 000 police officers involved in the operation, as a means to encourage them to conclude their emotions and feelings during the illegal occupation with a positive attitude and to build team spirit.

Conclusion

12. The HKPF has been actively promoting a caring culture and has established a well-developed training and info-educational system on stress management to enhance police officers’ resilience. The Police will continue to provide training on psychological quality and emotion adjustment for police officers as well as psychological support for large-scale operations. In addition, vigorous promotional efforts will be made by the Police in the application of positive psychology, thereby enabling officers to maintain positive work attitude and positive emotions.

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