



**Training Advisory  
Council Coursework  
Comments and  
Suggestions**

**HQPT Wellness  
Introduction Training**

**August 12, 2019**



## Table of Contents

1. TAC Participants .....	2
2. High Level Summary .....	2
3. Comments and Suggestions .....	2
4. PPB Contacts .....	4

# HQPT WELLNESS INTRODUCTION TRAINING

August 12, 2019

## 1. TAC Participants

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## 2. High Level Summary

Overall the members of TAC who attended the dry-run were impressed with the course. Portions relating to the physical and mental benefits of utilizing breathing exercises to control stress were viewed especially positively. The presenters were viewed to be both professional and knowledgeable. However, the presentation would likely benefit from better focusing the material on specific police officer needs and experiences.

## 3. Comments and Suggestions

TAC members viewed a dry run of the PPB's new HQPT Wellness Introduction Training, presented by Headquarters Physical Therapy (HQPT) on August 12, 2019. Thank you to the PPB officers and staff who set up this opportunity.

HQPT is a physical therapy clinic based in Portland which focuses on athletes and people with active lifestyles. The focus of the training was to teach short breathing and stretching exercises that officers would be able to utilize in between their day to day duties to reduce stress and improve their physical and mobility and longevity. Overall TAC members were quite impressed with the training and what it is trying to accomplish.

The following items regarding the training were specifically mentioned:

- The presenters did a good job of engaging the audience early with a small group activity. However, it is felt that the presentation needs to be more direct regarding the benefits for officers at the beginning. Rather than focusing on asking who is considered to be an ideal example of good health, the question should be what is the officer's ideal state of health for themselves today, next year, ten years from now, and by the end of their careers?
- The presentation had a lot of excellent interactive sections, where officers were either expected to share their ideas or try a set of breathing exercises or physical stretching. Given the nature of this type of training, it really helped to highlight the benefits of utilizing such tools. However, the setup of the room was constricting to these activities. It is suggested that the tables be removed and chairs setup in a way to allow officers to get up and try the stretches during the interactive portions of the presentation. Though removing the tables can limit note taking, the presentation can be made available online for those interested in reviewing it.
- While it is important to establish the scientific basis for the taught methods, care must be taken as well to avoid making the message too technical. The presentation contained a lot of new vocabulary that was not necessarily needed to convey the intended message to the officers. The introduction of new vocabulary should be limited to the most important terms.
- The presenters did an excellent job of providing real life examples of issues and how the training can help, and they even provided some police specific examples, but it was felt that a greater number of the examples needed to be police specific. The Training Division staff should work with HQPT to better focus on police specific issues and examples.
- The breathing exercise was seen as one of the more important sections of the presentation. The idea behind utilizing a period of controlled breathing to lower immediate stress is viewed as an excellent tool that should be further utilized in the future. Presenting the idea stress has physical symptoms and that officers can physically do something to lower their stress is also seen as a good way of introducing the topic of mental wellness and emotional intelligence to officers resistant to training in that area. The presenters did a good job of discussing how controlled breathing can be introduced into an officer's day to day activities, and also did a good job connecting controlled breathing to wellness programs that may be introduced in the future, such as yoga and meditation, helping to remove some of the stigma officers may have about these activities. It may be worth expanding further upon this section to make it the central focus of the presentation. One way to do this may be to have more information on specific times the officers could utilize the technique, such as in the car between calls, and how it can help the officers prepare themselves for each call and remain calm throughout the day.
- While the portion of the presentation on the importance of short simple stretches and exercises was excellent, the focus on posture seemed to go on too long. Do officers worry about their posture? The more relevant part of the section was the importance of variation of movement and how holding any posture for too long can be detrimental.
- Though it was mentioned earlier in the presentation, it would be good to reiterate near the end how stress can make physical problems worse, which in turn can increase levels of stress.
- While the app is likely an excellent tool, more information needs to be presented about it during the presentation given that a portion of the officers likely will not have downloaded it. One thing that should be specifically highlighted is that the app includes videos of each exercise to help ensure that they are being done correctly.
- The photographer was distracting. It is suggested that the photographer not be present during in-service training.

- Terms like “bad guys” should be avoided in favor of more neutral terms, such as “suspects”.

The following were specifically mentioned as areas to look into for next steps:

- As stated above, the breathing exercises and how they relate to stress reduction were seen as the most important part of this training given that they acted well as an introduction for more in-depth mental wellness and emotional intelligence training in the future. The use of breathing exercises should be an integral part of the Advanced Academy training. While the reasoning behind it can be introduced in coursework, actual utilization should be integrated into scenarios and hands on training situations in order to fully establish the importance of officer's periodically re-centering themselves while carrying out their duties.
- Similarly, the utilization of simple stretching and exercises, as taught in the course, should also be set as the institutional norm throughout the Advanced Academy. Such efforts will make it easier to possibly introduce yoga and other forms of guided exercise, meant to help officers retain fitness and mobility as well as find a calm mental center, in the future.
- The utilization of breathing exercises should also be encouraged by integrating it into in-service training. While officers are less likely to feel actual stress during training compared to recruits at the Advanced Academy, including it in scenarios and other activities, such as being a tool to improve firearm or taser accuracy, will help remind officers of its importance.
- Reminders concerning breathing exercises and other centering techniques should be made a normal part of the officers' day to day activities. Ways to do this include a reminder at start of shift briefings, a quick group breathing exercise at the beginning of the shift (which has the added benefit of being a team building exercise), and training for dispatchers on how to give acceptable reminders when officers deal with several high stress calls in a row.

The TAC believes this course to be an excellent first step towards the institutionalization of physical and mental wellness as key pillar of 21st century police work. The TAC looks forward to working further with the PPB further on such opportunities to improve the lives of officers and their interactions with the community they serve.

#### 4. PPB Contacts

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