“How was your day?”

Dennette Janus & Steven Ward
Objectives

• Increase understanding of why communication about your day is important
• Explore how limited or poor communication can damage relationships
• Identify beliefs and behaviors that can be toxic to good communication
• Review tips for quality communication
Because…

• Communication is the most important aspect of all relationships and can always be improved

• Communication is EVERYTHING in Public Safety: someone can get seriously hurt or die, or make a terrible mistake – if communication is not clear, intentional, accurate and predictable.
Disclosure

- Long-term relationship
- Both married before
- Learned many things the hard way
- Both had times our kids hated* us
- Kids have made a few unfortunate choices
- Just as susceptible to communication faux paus
- Constantly working on communication
- Different experiences with communication influence interpretation
## Connection

### Types
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Sexual/Intimate
- Physical affection
- Social
- Financial

### Relationships
- Spouse/significant other/partner
- Children
- Parents
- Friends
- Colleagues
What We Communicate About

• Finances
• Parenting
• What’s going on with other family/friends
• Chores/things around the house
• Downtime/vacation
• Health
• Future plans/goals
What We Struggle to Communicate About

- Finances
- Parenting
- What’s going on with other family/friends
- Chores/things around the house
- Downtime/vacation
- Health
- Future plans/goals
- Sex
Why We Don’t Communicate Well Sometimes

• Exhausted physically
• Mentally and emotionally numb
• Protective of loved ones
• Situations under investigation
• Privacy laws
• Fear
Fears for the Member

- Causing family to be afraid/worry
- Losing colleagues
- Making a mistake
- Retaliation by public
- Being fired/sued/IA
- What the next shift holds
- Being injured / chronic pain
- Divorce/break up of family
- “Losing it” (anger, sadness, disgust, regret)
- Looking weak or emotional
- Others losing confidence in you
- Walking away from job
- Being killed
Fears of Your Loved Ones

About them
• Upsetting you by asking questions
• Not being as important as your job
• Divorce/break-up of family

What walking away would mean

About you
• Being injured/chronic pain
• Making a mistake
• Retaliation by public
• Being fired/sued/IA
• What the next shift holds
• Being killed
Normal Responses to Stress

- Decreased patience
- Decreased tolerance
- Decreased empathy
- Poor attention
- Poor motivation
- Easily frustrated
- Sleep disturbance
- GI problems
Communication in All Relationships is Important

• There is no shame in acknowledging that what you said (or believed) before came from a place of having incomplete information. The world is full of knowledge and experience teaches us.

• It’s never too late to change.

• Everyone needs to feel important.
About Sharing

- Establish rules about what and when
- Have communication routine at home and when on shift
- Be intentional
- Identify your own emotions accurately
- Know your beliefs and values
- Consider your audience
- Practice the words you intend to say
- Use plain language
- Validate their feelings
- Clarify what they heard
- We are all responsible for our own part
A Note About Social Media

• Discuss boundaries of what is appropriate to be shared/said
• Don’t let your spouse/partner/kids hear about things on social media before you talk to them
• Device-free conversations and meals
Maslow’s Hierarchy

- **Physiological** — Food, clothing, and shelter
- **Safety** — Personal and financial security, health, and well-being
- **Social** — Support systems, friendships, family, intimacy
- **Self-esteem**
- **Self-actualization**
Take Care of Yourself

- Work out
- Shower
- Change clothes
- Drink enough water
- Talk with other PS members/debrief
- Take a different way home
- Eat comfort food
- Seek out soothing people/places/music
- Watch favorite comedy’s
- Limit “news”
- Massage
- Aromatherapy
- Meditation
- Prayer
- Sleep
- Counseling
- Have a back-up plan for horrible shifts
- Nurture hobbies and avocations