

# ASHER MODEL 7-POINT APPROACH TO A CULTURE OF WELLNESS

by

[Chief Neil Gang](#)

# ASHER MODEL

## 1 AWARENESS

Create an environment where, "It's OK to not be OK." Have open, honest discussions with employees by bringing these conversations out of the shadows and into the open.

## 2 SOLUTION-FOCUSED APPROACH

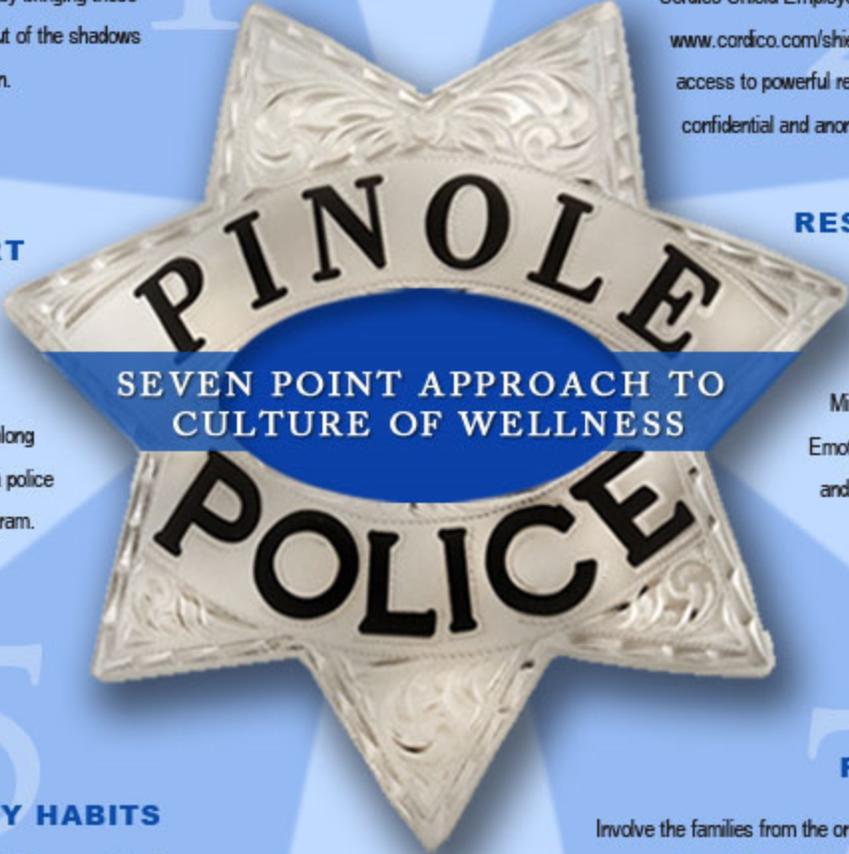
Focus on solutions and not the problem. Cordico Shield Employee Wellness App. [www.cordico.com/shield/](http://www.cordico.com/shield/) 24/7/365 access to powerful resources, all confidential and anonymous.

## 3 PEER SUPPORT

Create a proactive, trained Peer Support Team, along with CISM and a police therapy dog program.

## 4 RESILIENCY

Educate employees on Resiliency, Mindfulness, PTSD, Emotional Intelligence and solutions such as yoga, breathing exercises.



### SEVEN POINT APPROACH TO CULTURE OF WELLNESS

## 5 HEALTHY HABITS

Encourage physical fitness and healthy eating habits. Allocate budget funds to build or update a fitness facility and discourage candy and unhealthy snacks around the department. Also remove unhealthy choices from vending machines and substitute healthier options.

## 6 SPIRITUALITY

Develop a Police/Clergy Coalition, Chaplain Program and programs such as "Pray with the Police."

## 7 FAMILY

Involve the families from the orientation process forward. Provide books on key topics for employees and families (i.e. Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement by Dr. Gilmartin). Provide relationship, financial wellness and retirement preparation resources; from rookie to retirement all available via Cordico Shield.



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It's the early morning hours of May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1993 and I was awoken by the jarring sound of the phone ringing; on the other end was a friend of mine and fellow squad member. Sounding distraught he declared "Asher is dead!" referring to another squad member of ours and an academy classmate and friend of mine. Immediately my thoughts turned to Asher being shot and killed in the line of duty. Police Suicide never crossed my mind, why would it? This man was a six year veteran of our agency and a decorated U.S. Marine; so many thoughts, so many unanswered questions. The next morning, the headlines in the Sun Sentinel newspaper read:

### **PINES OFFICER KILLS HIMSELF IN HIS CRUISER**

Just before sunrise, Police Officer Asher Rosinsky parked his cruiser along the edge of the Florida Everglades and alone in the darkness, he held his .40-caliber semiautomatic duty weapon to his chest, and then pulled the trigger. A fellow officer and friend of mine observed the parked cruiser and found Asher dead with one bullet hole center mass. How could this have happened? Why didn't we see the red flags that, in reflection, were right in front of our eyes? What could I have done to prevent this from occurring? Why didn't he just reach out before taking this drastic and devastating action? This man was married and had two young sons; one was three and the other just 18 months.

What ensued in the days after will prove to have the most profound impact on my professional career. So what occurred immediately afterward that was so impactful? NOTHING. Asher was buried the next day and as in any traditional Jewish burial ceremony; we all took turns grabbing a shovel and literally proceeded to bury our brother in blue, by shoveling the dirt onto his casket. No big fanfare, no well publicized traditional police memorial service, NOTHING. When we returned to work it was business as usual, "25 Alpha 4, I'm 10-08." I mean, we are mentally tough warriors, sworn to protect and serve, what would we need? NOTHING!

Back in those days, Peer Support, CISM, Critical Incident Stress Debriefings or EAP programs weren't really a part of the law enforcement landscape. If you needed assistance or wanted to speak to someone, you were considered weak or maybe even unfit to be an

officer. EAP, you mean “Expose and Punish,” no thank you, I’m not getting labeled or sent to the “Rubber-Gun Squad.”

Fast forward to 2019, so much technology, so much awareness, yet more officers still die by suicide than all other “in the line-of-duty” deaths combined. The numbers are staggering and the experts estimate the numbers are being underreported by up to a factor of 2.5. These numbers fail to even address our retired brothers and sisters, or support staff such as dispatchers, crime scene techs, etc. Something drastic needs to be implemented to stop this epidemic from continuing. Every 44... A recent study discovered that every 44 hours an officer dies by suicide.

Then it happened, an epiphany. I was blessed with an introduction to Dr. David Black, President and Founder of Cordico. Dr. Black was presenting his [CordicoShield Officer Wellness App](#); a tool that would provide 24/7/365 access to powerful resources right at our employees fingertips with total anonymity and confidentiality. Finally, something of merit that targets solutions, not just addresses the problem and as Chief John Carli of the Vacaville Police Department stated, “This is a game-changer, and there’s nothing else like it.”

In April, I traveled to New York City to attend the Police Executive Research Forum Symposium on Law Enforcement Suicide, hosted by the NYPD. The symposium was very well attended with over 350 attendees from all over the world; from subject matter experts to practitioners to law enforcement executives.

Finally these conversations are being brought out from the shadows and into the open. So much great work and effort is being done in the area of officer wellness. As a result of the symposium, there were many great takeaways; the most impactful for me, the need to have a multifaceted approach for any chance of being impactful and successful. We must have a call to action, a paradigm switch; where innovative, action-focused, problem solvers take a stand to focus on solutions and not just address, or raise awareness, to the problem. We need partners who are willing to make a concerted effort in creating a culture of wellness within our organizations. Create an environment of, “It’s OK, to not be OK”; along with a multifaceted approach that provides resources from all angles and targets solutions.

At the Pinole Police Department we developed the “Asher Model – A Seven Point Approach to Creating a Culture of Wellness.” This was developed as a multifaceted approach to the police suicide epidemic; it correlates to the seven point star badge that is worn in the Bay Area and each of the seven points on the star correlate to a point in our proactive approach to employee wellness. We feel the most crucial point in our model is providing our employees with the [CordicoShield Employee Wellness App](#).

Here are the seven points of our approach as it relates to creating that culture of wellness:

1. **AWARENESS** – Creating an environment where, “It’s OK to not be OK.” Open and honest discussions with our employees; bringing these conversations out of the shadows and into the open.
2. **SOLUTION FOCUSED APPROACH** – Focus on solutions and not the problem. [CordicoShield Employee Wellness App](#). [cordico.com/shield](http://cordico.com/shield) 24/7/365 access to powerful resources, all confidential and anonymous.
3. **PEER SUPPORT** – Create a proactive, trained Peer Support Team along with CISM and police therapy dog program.
4. **RESILIENCY** – Educate employees on Resiliency, Mindfulness, PTSD, Emotional Intelligence and solutions such as yoga and breathing exercises
5. **HEALTHY HABITS** – Encourage physical fitness and healthy eating habits. Allocate budget funds to build or update a fitness facility and discourage candy and unhealthy snacks around the department. Also remove unhealthy choices from vending machines and substitute healthier options.
6. **SPIRITUALITY** – Develop a Police/Clergy Coalition, Chaplain Program and community outreach programs, such as “Pray with the Police.”
7. **FAMILY** – Involve the families from the orientation process forward. Provide access to books to key topics for employees and families (i.e. Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement by Dr. Kevin Gilmartin). Provide relationship, financial wellness and retirement preparation resources; from rookie to retirement. All available with [CordicoShield](#).

We certainly understand that our model represents a way, not necessarily, “The Way,” in creating that important Culture of Wellness for our employees; hopefully our efforts will ultimately save one of our brothers or sisters in blue.

Good luck and God bless.

#Creatingthatculture #Stoppolicesuicide



### **About Chief Neil H. Gang**

Police Chief Neil H. Gang began his career with West Windsor, NJ Police Department in 1988. After several stops along the way to include Pembroke Pines, FL and Surprise, AZ, Neil was selected to become the Police Chief for the Pinole Police Department in 2014. With over 30 years of experience at all levels of a full service agency, Gang's policing strategy is progressive and innovative. He is an action-oriented problem solver who believes that leadership is all about building relationships and relationships build trust; without a community-oriented focus and partnerships, success could not be achieved.

Gang's philosophy toward community engagement is his main focus, most notably seen through his development and effective use of Community Outreach programs. His most relevant work focuses on innovation and community engagement, and in 2019 his agency was first in the Nation to create a Video Reporting program that allows citizens to utilize different platforms to report crimes remotely and still receive officer engagement. Neil also was the first in the Nation to partner with ThinBlueOnline for their online de-escalation technology and training software.

Neil has been involved in Special Olympics throughout his career and now in Northern California, where he is a member of the Northern California Executive Advisory Board. He also participates in the annual Torch Run kick-off Conference, Bike the Bridges, Law Enforcement Torch Run, Tip-a-Cop, the Bay Area Games and the opening ceremony for the

Northern California Summer Games. In 2016, Neil was awarded the Special Olympics Northern California Chief of the Year.

Neil is a graduate of the prestigious Northwestern School of Police Staff and Command, where he was both the president of the class and the recipient of the Franklin M. Kremel Award for excellence in the field of leadership. Neil has a Bachelor's of Applied Science Degree in Administrative Justice from Wayland Baptist University and is a graduate of the California POST Management School. He is also member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, Police Executive Research Forum, International Hostage Negotiators Association, California Police Chiefs Association and the National Association of Police. Neil was also a past Northern California representative on the California Peace Officer Memorial Foundation Board and the Chairman of the West County Police Chief's Association.