

# **An Analysis of a Police Program's Post-Training Tool**

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## **Executive Summary**

### **What is Blue Courage?**

- Blue Courage is a police training program that focuses on the mental and emotional wellbeing of officers, promotes a cultural shift in officers, and evokes themes of nobility and purpose in officers.

### **What is a content analysis?**

- A content analysis is a research method that allows one to interpret and analyze textual information (qualitative data) which can later be coded into quantitative data. (Ex. Magazines, Media Communications, Videos, Articles, etc.)

### **What is Blue Courage Daily Dose?**

- Blue Courage daily dose is a daily email sent out to subscribers that typically has a quote and accompanying photo related to an aspect of the Blue Courage principles.

### **Methodology:**

- The methodology consisted of analyzing and interpreting 30 days' worth (34 quotes) of Blue Courage Daily Dose in terms of the principles of Blue Courage.
- The analysis used 8 categories which were, Police Culture, Nobility, Respect, Practical Wisdom, Positive Psychology, Health and Wellness, Resilience, and Personal Growth.

### **Research Questions:**

- Are there overarching themes present in the Daily Dose?
- Is there a principle of Blue Courage that is favored over others in the Daily Dose?

### **Findings:**

- The Blue Courage Daily Dose does not seem to favor one module or principle significantly. However, the module with the most quotes seemed to be nobility with 7. The module that was not discussed at all was health and wellness with 0.
- There appears to be an overarching theme of Personal Growth and Development present. Nine topics did not fit into one of the main modules and instead evoked a theme of personal growth.

### **Implications:**

- Further research should be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the emails. It would be important to analyze how often the Daily Dose emails are opened, read, and used.

## **Introduction**

This paper works to discuss the process of a content analysis and its implications for Blue Courage. Blue Courage is an in-service police training program that focuses on the mental and emotional wellbeing of officers and promotes a cultural shift towards a guardianship mentality while evoking themes of nobility and purpose in officers. Blue Courage uses the term ‘in-service’ because the training is given to officers while they are employees of their department. The ‘guardianship mentality’ is taught via seven principles in the Blue Courage program: Police Culture, Nobility, Respect, Practical Wisdom, Positive Psychology, Health and Wellness, and Resilience. The Blue Courage “Daily Dose” is a daily email sent out to subscribers which contains a quote and accompanying photo which promotes the principles of Blue Courage. The purpose of these emails is to continue to promote the principles of Blue Courage among officers after many have attended Blue Courage trainings.

## **Methodology**

To analyze the *Daily Dose*, we performed a content analysis. A content analysis is a research method used when describing and interpreting textual and visual information ranging from magazines to movies. Often it allows the researcher to analyze qualitative information and code the information to obtain quantitative data from which to draw conclusions. The purpose in performing this content analysis is to explore two ideas: (a) are there overarching themes present in the Daily Dose? And: (b) is there a principle of Blue Courage that is favored over others in the Daily Dose?

Blue Courage Daily Dose emails were collected and evaluated to answer the questions above. These emails were collected over a 30-day span totaling 35 documents to analyze. One document was eliminated due to the nature of the email being unrelated to the principles of Blue Courage leaving 34 documents to undergo a content analysis. These emails were printed out and

sorted by the initial theme that the quote appeared to evoke. They were sorted into the seven themes of Blue Courage. These included; Police Culture, Nobility, Respect, Practical Wisdom, Positive Psychology, Health and Wellness, and Resilience. One additional topic, Personal Growth, was added as many of the quotes seemed to fit it well. Therefore, 34 documents were sorted into the 8 categories mentioned above. Test-retest was performed to ensure that the emails were accurately sorted into the perspective categories.

## **Findings**

A quick summary of the findings is shown below:

Police Culture: 5	Nobility: 7
Respect: 3	Positive Psychology: 6
Resilience: 1	Practical Wisdom: 3
Health and Wellness: 0	Personal Growth: 9

The Blue Courage Daily Dose does not seem to favor one module or principle significantly. However, the Blue Courage module with the most quotes seemed to be nobility with 7. These Daily Dose emails seemed to evoke themes of nobility and purpose. The module health and wellness was not a topic of any of the Daily Dose emails. Typically, these emails would have evoked readers to focus on a healthy diet, exercise, and proper sleep schedules.

One overarching theme became prevalent as the content analysis was conducted. There appeared to be an overarching theme of personal growth present. Nine Daily Dose emails did not fit into one of the main Blue Courage modules and instead evoked a theme of personal growth and personal development and were therefore placed into their own category. The Blue Courage module “nobility,” which had the most quotes fitting its topic, would be considered another overarching theme. Nobility is a major module that Blue Courage wants officers to focus on. The power of nobility, being a noble officer, is important and appears to be theme of these Daily Dose emails as well.

## **Discussion**

Blue Courage trainings consist of nine modules that take up an equal portion of the training sessions. Therefore, they are all equally discussed in terms of time that the trainers focus on them. The module that Blue Courage instructors tend to promote highly is nobility. This is important as a tool to engage officers in the sessions to allow an effective learning space to develop for other modules to be considered seriously by training participants. Blue Courage is full of ideas and themes that officers sometimes resist, thereby making it important to engage officers with topics that resonate with them. One of these topics is nobility, which is apparent in the emails that are sent out. Highlighting nobility in the daily does allow Blue Courage trainers to connect with participating officers and signifies the importance of nobility in the law enforcement profession.

There were several Blue Courage module topics that did not receive much attention in the Daily Does. The fact that the health and wellness module was not touched upon is not consistent with the training session itself but is consistent with the goals of Blue Courage. Another important module in Blue Courage trainings that was not much of a focus in these emails is resilience. This was only a topic of one email in the timeframe reviewed and this is odd because in trainings this is the module they truly want officers to engage in and retain information from. This is one of the more difficult modules to force officers to listen to, as it is about stress management and breathing techniques. For this reason, maybe Blue Courage Daily Dose senders decided to focus less on it to hopefully engage more officers in the emails.

Blue Courage Daily Dose is based on and structured by the Empowered Learning Model (ELM). Instructors of the course detail that this model consists of three important phases of learning. The first is pre-event which is where 25% of learning takes place. The second phase is event learning where 25% of the learning takes place. The final phase is post-event where the

remaining 50% of learning takes place. This model supports why the Daily Dose emails are most important to continued learning of the modules. Half of the total information gained during Blue Courage is said to be learned after the event has taken place, making Daily Dose emails crucial to officers. Furthermore, from what we know about adult learning, retention rates are lower in adults and they tend to have an abundance of experience which can inhibit further learning. For this reason, it takes longer for an adult to gain knowledge about a topic. Blue Courage as a two-day training session is simply not enough for adults to learn about the principles and engage in them effectively. This explains the importance of having the Daily Dose as a reminder and a tool to continue to teach the principles of Blue Courage. Through the Empowered Learning Model supported by adult learning theory the importance of the Daily Dose emails is supported and should allow for effectiveness of these emails. However, to be most effective they must be read and understood by subscribers. If effectively used, the emails should work to continue to promote the principles of Blue Courage and allow for post-event learning to occur.

### **Limitations**

Due to the process of a content analysis, there are limitations to be discussed. One such limitation is perception of the analyzer. Discretion must be used in a content analysis because it is quantitative data that is being evaluated by a researcher. It is up to the researcher to pull what is necessary from the analysis and sort the material as needed. This can create differing results as one quote can be interpreted multiple ways based on the discretion of the researcher. Test-retest was conducted to assist with this limitation, but the same researcher conducted the test-retest leaving room for perceptual error. Another limitation is that the daily dose quotes do not always fit nicely into one single category. Some quotes evoke themes from multiple modules making it difficult to place them while others do not seem to have a concrete module to be placed into. This is the main reason why a new category was created during the analysis to allow for certain

emails to have a concrete category. The sample size is another limitation as only 34 emails were analyzed. One month's worth of emails was analyzed which allows a general idea of what topics are focused on but as these are daily emails, some topics may not have been used in this month but were used more in other months. Our conclusions are limited by this sample making it not completely relatable to the general daily dose emails that are sent out as we do not know if the results change monthly.

### **Implications**

Through this content analysis conducted on a sample of the Daily Dose emails, it is understood that the emails slightly favor nobility over other modules and ignore other modules like health and wellness. It would be effective to conduct another content analysis on a different month's worth of Daily Dose emails to see how our results compare. This would allow us a larger sample and a comparison to understand if Blue Courage has any sort of methodology when sending out these emails. Further research is required on these emails in order to determine their true effectiveness. There is currently no way to determine how often these emails are opened, read, or even used by subscribers. We can determine how many people subscribe to the emails, but it is unknown who reads them or how often they are read. This information would be important to further understand if the emails are effective in being a form of post-event training.

### **Conclusion**

The content analysis conducted on Blue Courage's Daily Dose showed that there was not a concrete module that was the focus of the emails. Nobility was not significantly favored over other modules, but it did consist of the most emails, seven, aimed at this principle. The least favored, with zero emails, focused on the topic of Health and Wellness. It was furthermore interesting that Resilience, one of the more focused on models by Blue Courage in training, was

only a topic of one email. Personal Growth was added as another topic for the emails to be sorted into, as it was an overarching theme of the emails. This added topic had the most emails, nine, involved. Blue Courage is based on the Empowered Learning Model where post-event learning is when most of the learning occurs, which supports the need for a tool such as the Daily Dose. Further research on user engagement is necessary to understand the true effectiveness of these emails.