



REWIRE⁴ by Roca

PHASE 1 EVALUATION

IN BRIEF

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INTRODUCTION

“We had been working indirectly with public safety officers since our inception. We often facilitated mediations and peace circles between officers and our young adults. We were always struck by how similar their experiences were. They both lived/ worked in the same distressed neighborhoods and were exposed to the same levels of violence and trauma. We knew this exposure impacted behavior.”

— MOLLY BALDWIN, FOUNDER & CEO OF ROCA, INC.

During their careers, public safety officers experience recurrent exposure to stress and trauma. This exposure often has a devastating impact on their physical and mental health, and in their ability to be effective partners with the communities they serve.

In 2022, the Roca Impact Institute partnered with several police and correctional agencies to implement Rewire4, a training program designed to help officers better manage their stress and trauma. Interactions with public safety officers can have a huge impact in young people's lives, so Rewire4 is a key strategy in Roca's comprehensive approach to achieving better outcomes for high-risk young people.

Rewire4 is based on cognitive behavioral theory [CBT], and targeted to help public safety officers improve their emotional regulation. In an interactive 1-day learning session plus 6 months of follow up via text message, officers learn the basics of brain science. They explore how thoughts, feelings, and actions are connected, and they practice “rewiring” their brains to improve decision-making.

EVALUATION: PHASE 1

“Learning ‘why’ rather than just ‘what’ was huge for me. We (officers) are always being told what we are doing wrong. This was the first time I learned why I may be reacting a certain way.”

— OFFICER, MIDDLESEX SHERIFF'S OFFICE

In the early days of Rewire4's implementation, Roca sought to measure:

- **The impact** of trauma and stress on public safety officers;
- **the need** for coping strategies to manage stress and trauma;
- **and the efficacy** of the Rewire4 training.

The first phase of our analysis used a mixed methods design based on pre-test/post-test surveys, course evaluations, and semi-structured interviews. The analysis focused on measuring officers' perceptions of stress, mental resiliency, and their ability to navigate difficult situations before and up to 6-months after receiving the Rewire4 training. This descriptive phase of the evaluation was used to understand the need for and value of Rewire4 **through the direct perceptions of the officers.**

During the 18-month study period (January 2023–June 2024) 5,630 public safety officers (police and corrections) attended the Rewire4 training program. **These officers represented over 21 different agencies across Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maryland, and Ohio.**

KEY FINDINGS

“This class was very useful. As someone who has also noticed that I was not always okay, hearing another colleague say the same thing was comforting. Knowing I am not alone.”

— OFFICER, BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT

1. Public safety officers experience a high degree of professional stress, and this stress affects their behavior.

82% of officers reported they felt highly irritated or stressed about their jobs. Nearly 60% have difficulty controlling their actions when angry or stressed. 20% reported that they had recently lost their temper with a coworker, member of the community, or person arrested for a crime.

2. Officers have a strong understanding of the impact of stress and trauma, but generally lack skills and strategies to effectively manage these challenges.

A substantial number of officers said they lacked strategies to effectively manage job stress. 41% indicated that they did not regularly use skills to remain calm when they felt themselves getting angry or losing emotional control. Less than a quarter of officers reported that they sought help or support when feeling overwhelmed.

3. Officers found Rewire4 helped them develop skills to manage stress and improve their mental resiliency.

Officers described enhanced confidence in managing stress, notable increases in skills to remain calm in difficult situations, and were more likely to seek help when feeling overwhelmed. 85% of officers rated the quality of the Rewire4 training as “excellent” or “above average” and would recommend the class to a colleague.

4. Rewire4 helps officers gain a better understanding of the importance of empathy.

88% of officers found that Rewire4 helped them better understand situations from another person’s perspective.

5. Preliminary evidence suggests that Rewire4 improves emotional regulation in officers, especially in crisis or stressful situations.

Officers reported notable reductions in situations where they lost their temper, used force, and had difficulty managing their emotions up to six months after completing Rewire4.

NEXT STEPS

“I learned to recognize when my bottom brain was in charge and to take a second to recognize my body’s reaction and change the way I was approaching a situation.”

— OFFICER, MEDFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT

The first phase of the evaluation primarily focused on identifying the need, context, and value of Rewire4 directly from the officers who participated in the training program. This was helpful to identify trends within the data and to provide a foundation to better understand the full efficacy of the program.

Phase 2 of the evaluation is currently implementing a randomized controlled trial to compare parallel groups of patrol officers who did and did not receive the Rewire4 training. The analysis will focus on examining how Rewire4 impacts officer performance, wellness, and interactions with citizens.

Full results of the second stage of the evaluation are expected by January 2026.

This data brief is a snapshot of phase 1 of Roca’s internal evaluation of Rewire4. For more information on Rewire4 or the evaluation process, contact: impactinstitutetraining@rocainc.com.