# Overview of the study:

Chapman (2009) aimed to investigate the role of emotion labor in police work and how it relates to stress and psychological health. Chapman focuses on police officers in Victoria, Australia.

# Differences in gender, race, or other social identities that surfaced in the research:

According to Chapman, policing is the third most stressful job for men in Australia and the second most stressful job for women. The differences between emotion labor for male and female police officers have not been studied specifically in Victoria or Australia as a whole. However, a study focused on American policing found that female police officers had higher levels of cynicism, potentially because of the pressure to assimilate to the masculine culture associated with policing.

**The challenges associated with this profession:**

The Victoria Police force has attempted to increase community policing, which means that police officers must develop strong interpersonal relationships with individuals in the community. This also means that police officers may be experiencing a “crisis of identity” as their role and attitudes/behaviors are expected to shift from rule enforcer to service provider.

# How workers in this profession perform emotion labor in response to the challenge:

Police officers in Victoria are expected to follow “display rules”: appropriate expressions of emotion in particular situations, no matter what the officer is actually feeling. There are also certain emotions that are expected to be suppressed, particularly those that are negative, such as anger.

# The potential toll emotion labor can take on workers in this profession:

Police officers in Victoria experience high levels of emotional dissonance and burnout because of surface acting. Surface acting is verbal and nonverbal displays of emotions that are not genuinely felt by the person performing them. Suppressing negative emotions, as well as natural reactions to tragic and traumatic events that they witness, can decrease levels of empathy and increase stress.

# Strategies suggested:

Chapman suggests training officers in deep acting. Deep acting, unlike surface acting, is when individuals consciously generate emotions toward other people in order to experience the appropriate, authentic emotion needed for the interaction. Training in deep acting could help officers reprogram their emotions and alter their perceptions of negative situations, such as when offenders are being emotionally abusive or aggressive.

# Discussion questions:

* What challenges do workers in the profession detailed in this case study tend to face?
* How do they perform emotion labor in response to that challenge?
* What toll does emotion labor tend to have on employees in that profession?
* What are the differences in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, or other social identity markers that were identified within the case?
* What strategies for coping for managing emotion labor were suggested by the case study authors?