



Who We Are as a Culture?

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How many of you would take a bullet for a fellow Officer?



Where We Are as a Culture?

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How many of YOU would be willing to HELP a fellow officer who may be struggling with Anxiety, Depression, PTSD, and/or have Suicidal Thoughts?



Who You Are?

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How many of YOU would be willing to TELL a fellow officer you are struggling with Anxiety, Depression, PTSD, and/or have Suicidal Thoughts?



The Sounds of STIGMA

"our collective silence only compounds the problem. By ignoring the issue we implicitly promote the unqualified expectation that cops must, without question, be brave, steadfast, and resilient. Our refusal to speak openly about the issues perpetuates the stigma many officers hold... that depression, anxiety, and thoughts of suicide are signs of weakness and failure, not cries for help." - Craig Z. Stecker, Chief of Police (Retired), Fremont, California Police Department



Officer Safety Mitigation: The Standard

- Seatbelts
- Bulletproof Vests
- Firearms Training
- Self-Defense/Ju-Jitsu
- Verbal De-escalation/Verbal Judo



Officer Safety Mitigation: Wait...What?

- Mental Health Screenings
- Mental Health Training
 - Mental Health First Aid-Public Safety
 - QPR- Question, Persuade, Refer
 - Crisis Intervention Team training
 - CALM-Counseling on Access to Lethal Means



A Call for Service...What are the Facts?

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In 2019:

- 134 Officers were killed in the Line Of Duty (Officer Down Memorial Page)
- 166 LODD in 2018
- 354 LODD in 2020
- *126 Non-Covid related



- The average LEO killed in the line of duty:
 - 43 years young
 - Average of 14 years of service
- The average LEO suicide occurs:
 - Male
 - 41 years young
 - Average of 15 years of service



- 228 verified Officers died by Suicide (BLUE H.E.L.P.)
- 172 in 2018
- 177 in 2020

Barriers to Receiving Assistance:

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- Fear of Consequences for Seeking Help
- Lack of Training
- Confidentiality Laws and Policies
- Limited or Unknown Resources
- Lack of Agency Support



"We need to break the cycle, break the silence and change the culture"



Law Enforcement Culture

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We PRIORITIZE Bravery and "The WARRIOR Mentality"



Law Enforcement Culture...However

Mental Health is met with Shame and Stigma



Stigma is Meet With....

- A mark of disgrace or reproach.
- Is a perceived negative attribute that causes someone to devalue or think less of the whole person
- Mental Illness is a MEDICAL condition, not a sign of Weakness
- One in five Americans experience Mental Illness



THREE Types of Stressors

- Operational
- Organizational
- Traumatic



Operational Stress

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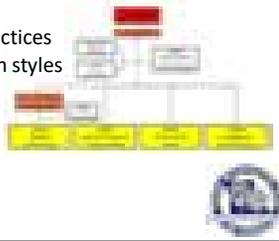
- 24/7 Operations
- High Workload
- Multi-Tasking
- Significant Change in Routine:
 - May include change of duty/shifts
 - Pending retirement
- Policies & Procedures



Organizational Stress

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- Workplace Culture (core group attitudes and behaviors)
- Leadership (generational gap)
- Administrative and Supervisory practices
- Co-Worker relations and interaction styles
- Evaluation practices
- Recognition practices
- Public Image
- Internal Affairs investigations



Traumatic Stress

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- Law Enforcement Officers face an average of three traumatic experiences for every sixth months of service.
- Over 200 traumatic experiences during a 35 year career
- Common symptoms include:
 - Nightmares
 - Aggression and
 - Distressing flashbacks of the traumatic event.
 - May lead to poor sleep, anxiety, depression, and increased risk of suicide.



Identifying the Suspect- Suicide Indicators

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- Feelings of Hopelessness
- Talk of:
 - Wanting to die
 - Burden to others
 - Seeking revenge
- Increased risk-taking behaviors or recklessness
- Emotionless, numb, angry, anxious, enraged, extreme mood swings



Identifying the Suspect- Suicide Indicators

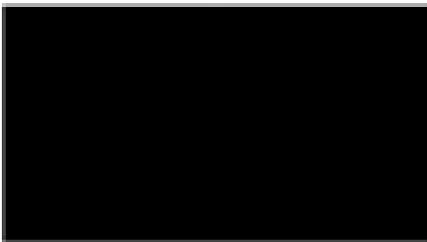
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- Socially isolated or withdrawn
- Loss of interest in once enjoyed activities
- Weight gain or loss
- Sleep deprivation or sleeping too much
- Increased consumption of alcohol and/or drugs



Code 9 Officer Needs Assistance

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uj6lnQp_N1E



Break

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Critical Incident Trauma

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- The shock on the mind of a single incident that threatens the life and/or emotional safety of the individual, such as an officer involved shooting or helplessly watching a person die.
- These are typically "headline" type incidents, which should include appropriate de-briefings, peer support, and therapy.




Post-Traumatic Stress

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- Is a psychological reaction that occurs after experiencing a highly stressful event outside the range of normal human experience. PTS symptoms can happen without a full diagnosis of PTSD; the disorder is diagnosed when a number of PTS symptoms last longer than 1 month following a traumatic event.
- Studies indicate almost 19% of LEO's suffer from PTSD

Defined in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder, 5*



Cumulative Trauma

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- A series of events, often spread over the several years, which continue to build up. "Like rust on a vehicle."
- Continued exposure to violent accidents, dead and mutilated bodies, child abuse, assaults, and suicides.
- On average, a LEO witness over 200 critical incidents during their careers
- Example: "I compare all the things that happened on a regular basis in police work to bee stings: One is tolerable, but as they build up, the pain becomes overwhelming." Sergeant Andy O'Hara (ret.) CHP



If I were an International Scout II

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1996

Current status



Locard's Exchange Principle

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- In forensic science, **Locard's Exchange Principle** holds that the perpetrator of a crime will bring something into the crime scene and leave with something from it.



- How does this apply to the LEO and trauma?



Vicarious Trauma

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- Continuous exposure to victims of trauma and violence. Exposure to the trauma of others has been shown to change the world-view of these responders and can put people and organizations at risk for a range of negative consequences.
- Consider Detectives, Prosecutors, and Victim Advocates



Burnout

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- Is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in emotionally demanding situations. Symptoms may include depression, boredom, discouragement and loss of compassion.



Compassion Fatigue

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- Is a combination of physical, emotional, and spiritual depletion associated with caring for others who are in significant emotional pain and physical distress.



How to Combat the Enemy: Resiliency

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•Is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress, such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors.



How to Focus on Resiliency

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- Focus on what you can control: maintain hobby/interests outside of the job
- Focus on building relationships: family and friends
- Focus on physical fitness: maintain optimal weight
- Maintain you Honor, Integrity and Ethics
- Develop your Skills and never stop Learning
- Take responsibility for your PHYSICAL, MENTAL and FINANCIAL health



Breaking the Silence

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- [Breaking the Silence: Suicide Prevention in Law Enforcement - YouTube](#)



Agency Response: Understanding the Culture

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- Adopt frequent, confidential mental health screenings
- Anonymous Counseling outside the Department
- EAP: Employee Assistance Program
- Develop Regional Debrief Teams/CISM
- Develop trained Peer Support Groups
- Integrate Chaplains
- Training of Upper Level Staff on Officer Wellness: "Walk the Talk"
- Recruit, Hire and RETAIN the Right People



First Responder Provider Network

www.missouricit.org

- Directory of approved culturally competent clinicians and therapist who want to serve first responders
- Specialize in First Responder care/trauma
- Will work with insurance, cash, sliding scale, pro bono
- Currently 25 vetted providers

www.missouricit.org/first-responders



Post-Critical Incident Seminar

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What is PCIS (Post Critical Incident Seminar)?

PCIS is a 3-day intensively focused therapeutic seminar to assist law enforcement personnel suffering from traumatic stress following their involvement in highly critical incidents (such as officer-involved shootings, mass casualties, line of duty deaths, etc.)

*Meals, lodging, and registration fees are at **no-cost** for in-state law enforcement personnel.*



RESOURCES

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- Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement, Dr. Kevin Gilmartin, Ph.D.
- Vicarious Trauma Tool-Kit, <https://vtt.ovc.ojp.gov>
- Badge of Life: www.badgeoflife.com
- Quality of Life Survey: www.ProQOL.org
- Blue H.E.L.P.: www.BlueHelp.org



RESOURCES

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- Copline: 1-800-267-5463
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Safe Call Now: 1-206-459-3020, www.safecallnow.org
- www.1sthelp.net
- www.psf.org National P.O.L.I.C.E. Suicide Foundation



RESOURCES

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BLUE STAR
1-800-747-4444

SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE
1-800-678-TALK (8255)

SAFE CALL NOW
206-459-3020
www.safeinnow.org

NAMI Missouri

AOP
"The AOP's Leader"

RESOURCES-Books

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OVERCOMING THE DARKNESS

MENTAL HEALTH FOR THE WORLD'S YOUNG

NATIONAL HOSPITAL FOR THE UNHINGED

I LOVE AOP

Questions?

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Missouri Crisis Intervention Team
(MOCIT) Council



Thank You



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