



Officer Wellness

Columbus Safety Commission Meeting
January 23, 2019



Best practices:

- Comprehensive officer wellness programs focus on psychological wellness, spiritual wellness, and physical wellness.
- CPD has:
 - City of Columbus Employee Assistance Program
 - Peer Assistance Program
 - Chaplaincy Program
 - Physical Wellness



Employee Assistance Programs: A CALEA Standard

- 22.1.7
 - The agency makes available to employees an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) designed to assist in the identification and resolution of concerns or problems (personal or job related), which may adversely affect an employee's personal or professional well being or job performance. These personal concerns may include, but are not limited to, health, marital status, family, financial, substance abuse, emotional/stress, and other personal matters.



Stress? Stigma?

- Officers have high stress tolerance and high resiliency to ward off stress
- And yet, stress happens to everyone
- When an agency reduces the stigma of “getting help” by normalizing, and educating their officers about common and expected stress reactions (both cumulative and critical incident stress);
- And provides readily available and accessible support options, officers will recognize stress symptoms and seek help earlier.
- This results in less need for intervention and reduced impact on the job.



City of Columbus EAP

- City EAP founded in 1980's, and is a confidential and HIPPA medical program of Columbus Public Health. Reporting structure is to Health Commissioner Dr. Roberts
- MISSION: To help city employees achieve: healthy behaviors, healthy lifestyles and optimum job performance



EAP-Scope of Practice

- EAP Services are for city employees/significant others, and include:
 - Assessment
 - Short term counseling
 - Referral
 - Training
 - Partner with peers and Chaplains



Reducing stigma of “getting help”

- Partner with Peer Assistance Program
- Partner with Chaplaincy program
- “Bridge” an officer to most appropriate place
- Research and seek out providers skilled in and familiar with law enforcement

Questions about EAP?



Columbus Division of Police Peer Assistance Team (PAT)









Peer Assistance Team-Mission

The Columbus Division of Police Peer Assistance Team is a voluntary group of trained personnel that provides assistance in times of crisis for Columbus Police personnel. The focus of the group is to minimize the harmful effects of stress, particularly those arising from crisis. In order to minimize these effects, the group will utilize one-on-one peer support, pre- and post-incident education, and/or group incident debriefings or defusings. It is not the function of the group to replace on-going professional counseling, but to provide crisis intervention or support with a pathway to professional resources when needed.



Facts

- Trained in Critical Incident Stress Management through the International Critical Incident Stress Management Foundation*
- Similar to the team that CFD has had for over 20+ years
- Established in August 2012
- Gradually added members each year through free training offered by the state FOP (90 members)
- Team members volunteer their time to assist fellow officers

*<https://icisf.org/>



Why is peer support necessary?

- To build **RESILIENCE**—Officers gain an understanding about stress and how to respond to the inevitable effects in a healthy and positive manner
- **Chronic & traumatic stress**—physically and emotionally affects officers
 - Adrenaline “dumps”
 - Life expectancy reduced 7-8 years
- **Vicarious Trauma**—Repeated exposure to victims experiencing a traumatic incident results in both acute and cumulative trauma (longitudinally)*



Types of Responses

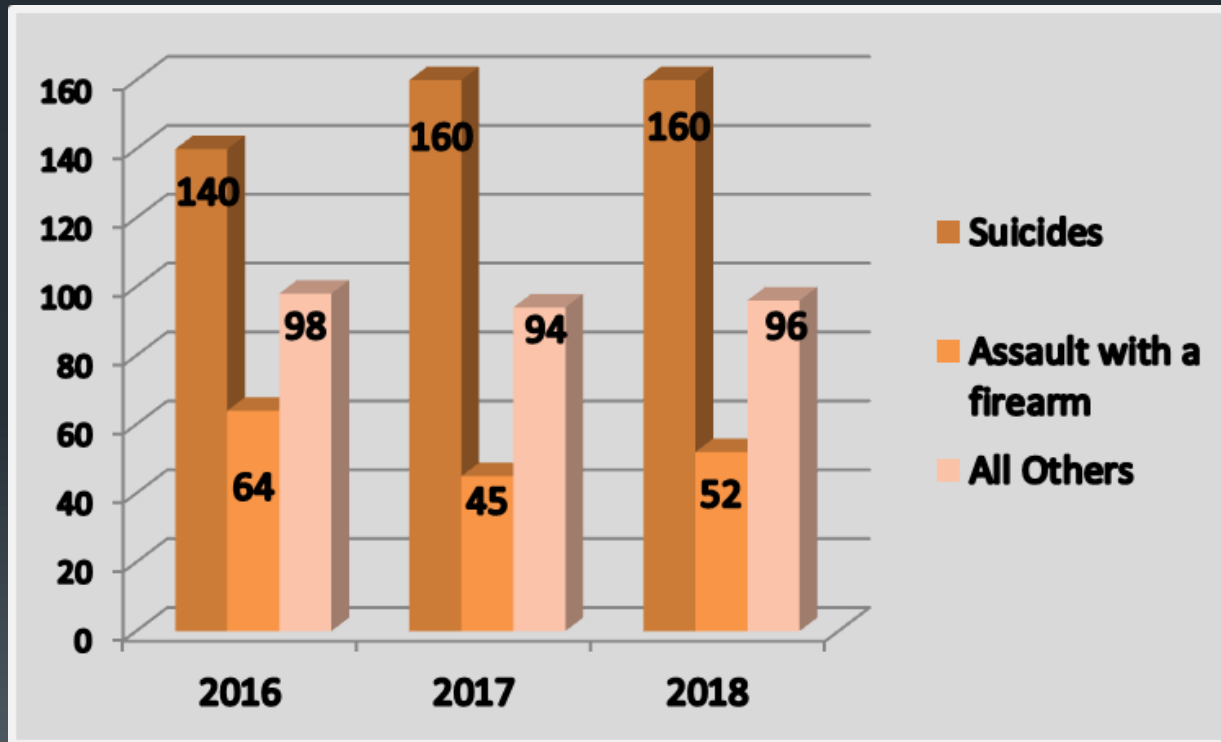
- **One-on-One Support**--A contact between one officer and one Peer Assistance Team Member.
- **Defusing**--A small group discussion following a critical event. Typically occurs within 8-12 hours of the event. Goals are normalization, set expectations, provide information, discuss coping methods, identify those who need additional support.



Responses, cont'd.

- **Debriefing**--Refers to the “Mitchell Model” (Mitchell & Everly, 1996). Seven phase, structured group discussion, usually provided 1-10 days post-crisis, and designed to mitigate acute symptoms, assess the need for follow-up, and if possible provide a sense of post-crisis psychological closure.
- Pre-/Post-incident education, supervisor training, recruit training
- And, despite efforts across the profession...

Police Suicides 2016-2018



*Statistical data compiled from Bluehelp.org and Huffingtonpost.com.

