A COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE FOR OFFICER WELLNESS

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OBJECTIVES

- Learn the history of why and how this wellness day program came together
- Understand the need, challenges, and successes in working with the law enforcement community
- Review the outcome data and findings from officer participants
HOW DID OFFICER WELLNESS DAY GET STARTED?

- Inpatient First Responders at Aurora Behavioral Health consistently voiced desire and need for preventative services.

- Laura Magnuson (Aurora) and Angela Schmitt (Animals with Heart) met with Frank O’Halloran (MMIC) and Robert Ferraro (Tempe Officer’s Association) to discuss this message and see what could be done to meet this need.

- A day for wellness was what came out of the meetings to be hosted at Aurora Behavioral Health Tempe.

- Our goal: to help at least one officer feel better and gain new tools & resources.
WHAT IS THE NEED FOR OFFICER WELLNESS?

- Nearly **1 in 4** police officers has thoughts of suicide at some point in their life.
- The suicide rate for police officers is **four times higher** than the rate for firefighters.
- In the smallest departments, the suicide rate for officers **increases to almost four times the national average**.
- More police die by suicide than in the line of duty. In 2017 there were an estimated **140 law enforcement suicides**.
- Compared to the general population, law enforcement report much higher rates of depression, PTSD, burnout, and other anxiety related mental health conditions.
- **Source:** [https://www.nami.org/Law-Enforcement-and-Mental-Health/Strengthening-Officer-Resilience](https://www.nami.org/Law-Enforcement-and-Mental-Health/Strengthening-Officer-Resilience)
For every police suicide, there are a thousand police officers out there, still working and suffering from undiagnosed PTSD. In addition to those, for every police suicide there are another thousand police officers who don't have PTSD but are struggling with other problems brought on by the job--anxiety, depression, alcoholism, marital problems, and more. Source: Badge of Life
By focusing on creating healthier officers (before they get into "trouble"), we not only prevent suicides, but we also reduce:

- Officer deaths from shootings and accidents
- Lawsuits
- Complaints
- Sick leave
- Alcoholism
- Substance abuse
- Criminal/other behaviors
- On and off-job injuries
- Divorces
- Grievances
- Resignations
- Morale problems
and much more.
IN AN OFFICER’S OWN WORDS...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uj6InQp_N1E
COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNITY
OFFICER WELLNESS DAY: SEPTEMBER 30

- First Wellness Day held September 30, 2017 at Aurora Behavioral Health

- Four sessions: Officer Self-Care by Tempe PD Peer Support Lead, Equine Assisted Therapy, Spirituality, and Dimensions of Wellness.

- Massages provided by AZ School of Massage

- All food for day provided by Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care.

- Donations from community were raffled off: gift cards, merchandise, TV.
BREAKDOWN OF SESSIONS

- Officer Self-Care by Tempe PD Peer Support Lead (Mike Carleton)
- Equine Assisted Therapy (Angela Scmitt, Animals with Heart)
- Spirituality (Joel Larson, Chaplain for Aurora Behavioral Health System)
- Dimensions of Wellness (Kelyn Younger, Aurora Outpatient Therapist)
**Officer Wellness Pre-Workshops:**

Please circle what you feel corresponds most accurately with you at this moment.

1. I feel happy, balanced, calm and at peace.
   - 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   - Not at all
   - Absolutely

2. I feel sad, mad, unhappy, depressed, or anxious.
   - 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   - Not at all
   - Absolutely

3. I feel lost, blocked or hopeless in life.
   - 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   - Not at all
   - Absolutely

4. I have had thoughts of suicide.
   - 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   - Not at all
   - Absolutely

5. I felt that my department cares/cared about my overall wellness.
   - 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   - Not at all
   - Absolutely

6. I feel/feel that my department should provide more resources for my wellness.
   - 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   - Not at all
   - Absolutely

7. I use substances/alcohol to relax and decompress.
   - 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   - Not at all
   - Daily

8. I am: male female

9. I am: an active officer a retired officer

10. Add any additional comments you wish to share:

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**Officer Wellness Post-Workshops:**

Please circle what you feel corresponds most accurately with you at this moment.

1. I feel happy, balanced, calm and at peace.
   - 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   - Not at all
   - Absolutely

2. I feel sad, mad, unhappy, depressed, or anxious.
   - 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   - Not at all
   - Absolutely

3. I feel lost, blocked or hopeless in life.
   - 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   - Not at all
   - Absolutely

4. I believe I can apply what I learned in the workshops today to my everyday life.
   - 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   - Not at all
   - Absolutely

5. I would attend this event again or on a regular basis.
   - 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   - Not at all
   - Absolutely

6. I think my department should provide wellness workshops.
   - 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   - Not at all
   - Absolutely

7. The session that I felt was the most applicable/helpful for me was:
   - Equine Officer Self-Care Spirituality Holistic Wellness/Mindfulness

8. I am: male female

9. I am: an active officer a retired officer

10. Add any additional comments you wish to share:
OUTCOMES OF FIRST OFFICER WELLNESS DAY

- 9 Officers and 1 spouse, 7 men and 3 women, attended who reported:
  - Increase in feeling happy, balanced, calm and at peace (+ 1.14)
  - Reduction in feeling sad, mad, unhappy, depressed, or anxious (-1.86)
  - Reduction in feeling lost, blocked, or hopeless (-1.29)
  - High score to police departments should provide wellness workshops (9.57)
  - High score to attendees can apply what they learned to everyday life (9.14)
  - Workshops most liked in order: Officer Self-Care, Equine therapy, Holistic, Spirituality
  - Sample comment: “At first I felt like the behavioral health facility was a major road block for me and other officers due to all of the negative associations we have with mental health, but I felt by the end of the day, I was desensitized to the mental health stigma.”
LESSONS LEARNED

• We were on the right track
• Data and comments were all positive
• Once Officers arrived the stigma and anxiety seem to lessen
• The community really does support officers and wants to give back
• Officers need and want opportunities like this
• Need to involve more departments for higher attendance
• Family life also needs to be involved
• Not a big connection with chaplain/spirituality session
• Officers need to be heard and supported
• Officers and first responders need support as soon as possible after trauma or event to "Bridge" the gap between event and crisis to prevent a crisis
• Officers need to be told that it is OK, normal and healthy to have support
Second Wellness Day held April 28, 2018 at Aurora Behavioral Health

Five sessions to choose from: Officer Self-Care, Equine Assisted Therapy, Yoga, Trauma, and Family Life.

Spouses & Probation invited as well

Massages provided by Gilbert Chiropractic Clinic

Breakfast donated by Chic-fil-A, Dunkin Donuts, and Canyon State Academy. Lunch provided by Tempe Officer’s Association and Outback Steakhouse.

Donations from community were raffled off: gift cards, merchandise, laptop.

Post Certified Credit Provided
BREAKDOWN OF SESSIONS

- Officer Self-Care by Tempe PD Peer Support Lead (Mike Carleton)
- Equine Assisted Therapy (Angela Schmitt, Animals with Heart)
- Yoga (Kerri Zelich, One Tribe Yoga and Wellness)
- Trauma and Physical Affects on Body and implementing Trauma Informed Care (Lindsay Rothschild and Chris Holcomb from Aurora Behavioral Health Outpatient Department)
- A Child’s Perspective on Growing up in a Law Enforcement Family (Laura Magnuson, Cigna)
Gilbert Chiropractic Clinic

Thank you for having our backs! We've got yours! 😊
OUTCOMES OF SECOND OFFICER WELLNESS DAY

- 22 Officers and 4 spouses, 9 men and 17 women, attended and who reported:

- Increase in feeling happy, balanced, calm and at peace (+ 1.32)

- Reduction in feeling sad, mad, unhappy, depressed, or anxious (-1.88)

- Reduction in feeling lost, blocked, or hopeless (-1.52)

- High score to police departments should provide wellness workshops (9.12)

- High score to attendees can apply what they learned to everyday life (8.68)

- Sample comments:

  “Still an amazing day. Started day stressed out/anxious-now calm, cool, collected. Thank you! Thank you!”

  “This wellness day was amazing and I will be letting my unit at work know how great and beneficial the training was. I would recommend this to all my coworkers and plan on taking advantage of some outside therapy to help cope with stress and anxiety.”
LESSONS LEARNED

- We are still on the right track, and getting closer
- Data and comments were all positive
- Equine therapy could be an effective treatment for this population
- Officer Wellness programs are needed from PDs
- We still need to market better to police departments and officer relief organizations to increase participation
  - Anecdotally, this population is insular, resistant to seeking any assistance for anything
  - It will take time to build participation
- This is the right thing to do
- That officers participated in all or most of activities, including Yoga
- Even when multiple department involved in planning meetings, did not mean there was participation/attendance from those departments
- Maricopa County Adult Probation was huge player in getting attendance increased including the police departments that they worked with=personal connections are what drove attendance not an email blast
- At least one department felt it was competing with their wellness program
- Unclear: location, day of week, plays a factor in attendance. Should fire be included?
NEXT STEPS

- Another Officer Wellness Day is planned for January 2019
- Aurora/Cigna had table at Gang Conference and had several conversations to promote the next day: several officers were interested and reported the need
- Plan a more effective way to get word out about the day
- Continue to seek donations/donors
QUESTIONS?

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- Angela Schmitt: animalswithheart@gmail.com
SOURCES

Badge of Life: http://www.policesuicidestudy.com/id5.html

NAMI: https://www.nami.org/Law-Enforcement-and-Mental-Health/Strengthening-Officer-Resilience