



CopsAlive.com Peer Support Program Infosheet

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Peer Support

What is peer support and why do I need it?

The philosophy of peer support as quoted from the **International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Psychological Services Section** states that "The goal of peer support is to provide all public safety employees in an agency the opportunity to receive emotional and tangible peer support through times of personal or professional crisis and to help anticipate and address potential difficulties."

Sometimes this is confused with the concept of **Critical Incident Stress Management** and some agencies only provide support programs for those who have experienced massively traumatic incidents. True peer support can incorporate those needs as well, but it is more comprehensive than that.

So there are two kinds of Formal Peer Support Programs:

Peer Support for Trauma sometimes called Critical Incident Stress Management:

Critical Incident Stress Management, or CISM, is an intervention protocol developed specifically for dealing with traumatic events. It is a formal, highly structured and professionally recognized process for helping those involved in a critical incident to share their experiences, vent emotions, learn about stress reactions and symptoms and given referral for further help if required. It is not psychotherapy. It is a confidential, voluntary and educative process, sometimes called 'psychological first aid'.

First developed for use with military combat veterans and then civilian first responders (police, fire, ambulance, emergency workers and disaster rescuers), it has now been adapted and used virtually everywhere there is a need to address traumatic impact in peoples lives.

Learn more here: **CISM International**
<http://www.criticalincidentstress.com/>

and here:

The mission of the **International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc.** is to provide leadership, education, training, consultation, and support services in comprehensive crisis intervention and disaster behavioral health services

to the emergency response professions, other organizations, and communities worldwide.

The International Critical Incident Stress Foundation

<http://www.icisf.org/>

Regular Daily Peer Support

Here are some guidelines from the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP): “The goal of peer support is to provide all public safety employees in an agency the opportunity to receive emotional and tangible peer support through times of personal or professional crisis and to help anticipate and address potential difficulties. Ideally, peer support programs should be developed and implemented under the organizational structure of the parent agency. A peer support person (PSP), sworn or non-sworn, is a specifically trained colleague, not a counselor or therapist. A peer support program can augment outreach programs such as employee assistance programs and in-house treatment programs, but not replace them. PSPs should refer cases that require professional intervention to a mental health professional”. See the resources below to learn how you can start a Peer Support Program in your agency.

Source:

http://www.policechiefmagazine.org/magazine/index.cfm?fuseaction=display_arch&article_id=1244&issue_id=82007

We recommend the work of Police Psychologist Jack Digliani, Ph.D., Ed.D. Jack was a police officer for 25 years and then became a police psychologist. His Proactive Peer Support training should be the national model. You can learn more about and download his Police & Sheriff Peer Support Team Training Manual as well as his Critical Incident Handbook for free at:

<http://www.copsalive.com/digliani/>

At the Law Enforcement Survival Institute (LESI) we have also pioneered the concept of **True Blue Valor™**. The concept of **True Blue Valor™** is where one law enforcement officer has the courage to confront a peer who is slipping both professionally and personally and endangering themselves, their peers and the public. It takes a system of organizational support and professional leadership to support and foster the concept of **True Blue Valor™**.

You can learn more about TBV and even purchase a license to teach our 12-part roll call training program in your agency at: <http://www.TrueBlueValor.com>

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Here are some links that offer training and resources in the areas of Peer Support, CISM and Traumatic Stress:

The website for "**CopShock: Second Edition: Surviving Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**" by Allen R. Kates, MFAW, BCECR offers some great links at: <http://www.copshock.com/peer-support-for-police-officers.php>

The **Peer Support Training Institute**
<http://www.peersupport.com>

The **International Critical Incident Stress Foundation**
<http://www.icisf.org/>

CISM International
<http://www.criticalincidentstress.com/>

Victim Assistance Online
<http://www.vaonline.org/cism.html>

North American Fire Fighter Veterans Network
<http://firefighterveteran.com/>

The American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress
<http://www.aaets.org/article88.htm>

**The United States Search and Rescue Task Force
Critical Incident Stress Management Team**
has some Stress Survival Suggestions on their page
http://www.ussartf.org/cism_team.htm

The **Suicide Prevention Action Network USA** which is a part of the **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention**
<http://www.spanusa.org/>

In Canada:

The **Centre for Suicide Prevention** which is a program of the **Canadian Mental Health Association** offers resources & training on Suicide Prevention & PTSD. <http://www.suicideinfo.ca/>

Critical Incident Stress Management program dedicated to New Brunswick's Front Line Workers.
<http://www.gnb.ca/0055/cismg-e.asp>

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CanuckCare: effective training and consulting for victims/survivors, professionals and volunteer service providers dealing with trauma.

<http://www.shopdome.com/canuckcare/>

In Australia:

The **Critical Incident Stress Management Foundation of Australia**

<http://www.cismfa.org.au/>

Here is the information about **Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.)** main website: <http://www.nationalcops.org/> and their **Concerns of Police Survivors: Traumas of Law Enforcement Training** link:

<http://www.nationalcops.org/tle.htm>

This is great FREE training but they only have a limited number of courses each year and this year they only run through March so hurry and check it out! <http://www.nationalcops.org/tle.htm>

Our **CopsAlive.com** experience attending this training is described in the following article

<http://www.copsalive.com/the-traumas-of-law-enforcement-there-is-hope/>

Remember: Peer Support is not an EXTRA program but one that should be a part of your daily proactive activities in law enforcement and should be a formal part of your organizations standard operating procedures. If this is not the case maybe you can be the one to start something.

CopsAlive.com was founded to provide information and strategies to help police officers successfully survive their careers. We help law enforcement officers and their agencies prepare for the risks that threaten their existence. We think the best strategy is for each officer to create a tactical plan for their own life and career.

The Law Enforcement Survival Institute (LESI) works with individuals and organizations to help them create and sustain success in their lives and careers as law enforcement professionals. It is the primary goal of The Law Enforcement Survival Institute to become the preeminent source for training, resources and information about how to create and sustain a happy, healthy and successful life and career while providing superior law enforcement service to your community.

If you would like to contact us to learn more about Law Enforcement Survival Institute training for your organization send an email to: info@CopsAlive.com