

CR-TTAC April 2020 Newsletter

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Policing During a Pandemic



A Framingham Police cruiser dons a mask while blocking the entrance to the police station.

To say that COVID-19 has turned our world upside down is an understatement; the way we operate has changed drastically and policing is no exception. Requests for drive-by birthday parades have become the

new normal. Colorful chalk messages of hope and thanks to first responders line the driveways and sidewalks of neighborhoods.

Holliston Police shared pictures on their FaceBook page of messages of hope and gratitude that they found in their community.



Once open 24/7, police stations across the country have locked their doors to the public. Now there are intercom systems and individuals are being asked to call in rather than visiting the station. As usual, police are responding to emergency calls but are having to suit up in gloves, masks, and in some cases protective gowns before entering homes. Roll calls are being held outside in order to allow proper social distancing, and shifts are short-staffed due to illness and quarantine. Policing is a difficult job during "normal times" with daily exposure to violence, trauma, and death; now added on top of that, officers are constantly exposing themselves and their families to COVID-19.



Police in Lynn holding a socially distanced roll call outside. Photo Credit: Jennifer Waczkowski, a Co-Responder for the Lynn & Wakefield Police Departments

We know this is an exceptionally stressful time for law enforcement, so we have included some helpful resources below including Advocates Law Enforcement Counseling and ResponderStrong which is a national collaboration of resources for first responders. The National Police Foundation has put together a COVID-19 Situational Awareness Dashboard that allows law enforcement agencies to share policies, resources, and information with one another. Additionally, the American Society for Evidenced-Based Policing (ASEBP) has released a very comprehensive list of resources for law enforcement on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Law Enforcement Counseling](#)

[ResponderStrong](#)

[COVID-19 Situational Awareness Dashboard](#)

[ASEBP COVID-19 Resources](#)

COVID-19 Co-Response

Co-Responders are on the front lines of this pandemic as much as any other first responders. Co-Responders are still reporting to police stations, getting their temperature taken before entering, and wearing face masks and gloves for every call they respond to in the community. When appropriate, clinicians are using telehealth methods to assess and

follow up with clients having interactions with police. Unfortunately for many of those individuals, access to telehealth proves challenging therefore, in-person responses are the only way to assist.

Having officers and clinicians show up to homes wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), adds an extra level of anxiety and paranoia for individuals and their families. It also takes away the element of human to human compassion that comes from seeing a warm and friendly face.



The way Co-Responders and Law Enforcement used to offer their compassionate support, as shown above, is no longer a safe way to respond to individuals in crisis in our communities.

One of the most vital roles our Co-Responders play is assisting the police with death notifications. Under normal circumstances supporting individuals and/or families that have just lost a loved one is a difficult

part of the job but one that we all recognize as an honor; to sit with people in their darkest moments can only be described as a privilege.

Clinicians responding to these calls now are faced with this heartbreaking dilemma of knowing that the way they would usually provide compassionate support to families is hindered by N95 masks and surgical gloves. Unfortunately, taking their PPE off is potentially putting themselves, their families, and the people they are trying to support at risk of exposure to COVID-19.

These are challenging and unprecedented times for us all and we want to thank all of the Co-Responders who are still helping their communities in whatever ways they can.

Mental Health Workers: The Other First Responders

Mental Health Providers are being under-recognized as heroes on the front lines of COVID-19. The increase of anxiety, stress, depression, isolation, death, and trauma that is associated with this pandemic is monumental. We will see the effects of it on the mental health system long after we've "flattened the curve." You can read more about what mental health professional Courtney Lenora calls the "other first responders" in her article below.

Image by [Mohamed Hassan](#) from [Pixabay](#), featured in *Mental Health Workers: The Other First Responders in this Pandemic* by Courtney Lenora.



Mental Health Workers: The Other First Responders in this Pandemic

Shout Out to All the First Responders

Often these days, we are seeing the phrase "Not all Superheroes wear capes," and that could not be more true in our current world. To all the...

- Police
- Firefighters
- EMS Personnel
- Dispatchers
- Military Personnel
- Doctors
- Nurses
- Social Workers/Clinicians
- IT Personnel
- Psychiatrists
- Pharmacists
- Grocery Store Personnel
- Teachers
- Nursing Home Personnel

- Corrections Officers
- Gas Station Attendants
- Hospice Workers
- Residential Staff
- Government Workers
- Transportation Personnel
- Steam, Water, Petroleum, Natural Gas, and Electric Workers
- Construction Workers
- Financial Personnel
- Manufacturing Personnel
- Public Works Personnel
- Food & Agricultural Workers

...and the many other essential superheroes out there, since this list is unfortunately not all-inclusive, we want you to know that we are grateful for you. The bravery, courage, commitment, and sacrifices you are making every day are not going unnoticed. We see you, and we thank you for all that you are doing every day to get our communities through COVID-19.

THANK
YOU  **TO THE**
HELPERS.



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