

May Newsletter

CR-TTAC Newsletter

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Note from the Director

Given that May is 'National Mental Health Awareness Month,' we decided to examine the issue of law enforcement wellness in this month's newsletter. By highlighting the frequency of officer suicide and the stigma/barriers to treatment encountered, our hope is that these resources will be useful to our law enforcement friends and partners. I hope you enjoy this month's edition of the TTAC newsletter!

Sincerely,

Sarah Abbott Ph.D.
Jail Diversion Program Director

Police Officer Wellness

Police officer wellness is garnering international attention; with scholars and practitioners alike focusing on the health and wellbeing of law

enforcement. Earlier this year a, local news channel reported that Chicago has lost 5 of their officers to suicide in the past 6 months; while a news outlet in Ohio reported, "stress has forced more than 90 Cleveland Police officers to take sick leave in the past year." Strikingly, police officer suicide is occurring at twice the national average for the general population.

Law enforcement officers need to be able to process and mitigate the stress of repeated traumatic exposure. Popular country artist George Strait recently released a song supporting law enforcement officers titled, "Weight of the Badge." It speaks to the strength of police officers and their determination to protect and serve regardless of the challenges they encounter. One of the most poignant lines reads, "It doesn't weigh a lot until you put it on, and the weight of it is staggering."

Weight of the Badge

Blue H.E.L.P.

Blue H.E.L.P., standing for *Honor. Educate. Lead. Prevent.*, is a national non-profit organization seeking to decrease stigma surrounding police mental health and suicide, and to raise awareness about the importance of stress management for law enforcement. They are the only organization in the country that



tracks police suicides and supports surviving families.

Blue H.E.L.P. reported that between 2016-2018, the verified number of completed police suicides increased nationally from 140 to 163 and there have already been 79 verified in 2019 (550 total to date since 2016). Given the stigma around reporting suicides, it is likely that these numbers are representative of an even more widespread problem.

Every day, police officers respond to crisis situations including fatal car crashes, medical emergencies, domestic violence situations, accidental drownings, suicides, homicides, and calls involving individuals in acute emotional crisis. Responding to traumatic events are indeed a part of the occupation; however, officers, just like the rest of us, are human.

Exposure to consistent trauma generates intense emotions, yet officers face stigma for seeking help and are often concerned about their employment status. Officer wellness is therefore an area that needs more attention from our mental health colleagues, police administration and the community at large. Currently there is a large gap in treatment availability for police officers and other first responders due to the perceived (or real) risk of losing their job if they seek treatment.

In Massachusetts, we have some excellent first responder-friendly treatment options and we have highlighted two of the larger law enforcement specific treatment providers; McLean Hospital's 'Leader Program' and 'Onsite Academy' below.

Advocates is also responding to the growing demand for treatment

options for first responders. Launched this month, we are offering outpatient counseling for law enforcement officers at our Harvard Outpatient Clinic. The licensed clinicians providing this service all have experience being embedded in police agencies through the co-responder Jail Diversion Program. Their firsthand understanding of police culture coupled with the experience they have co-responding to 911 calls, prepares them to offer therapeutic counseling for this population. Our clinic is located in a discreet location, most insurances are accepted, and there are day and evening hours available. If you or an officer you care about needs support, please click below for more information.

[Advocates Law Enforcement Outpatient Counseling](#)



First Responder Mental Health Resources

McLean Hospital's **Leader Program** offers mental health and addiction services to men and women in uniform (Law Enforcement, Active Duty, Emergency Responder).

Onsite Academy offers treatment for all law enforcement, fire service, EMS, or other human service personnel who are themselves temporarily overwhelmed by the stress of their jobs,

what they have seen, and what they have been through.

[More Information: McLean Leader Program](#)

[More Information: Onsite Academy](#)

Massachusetts Juvenile Police Officer's Association (MJPOA)



Dr. Sarah Abbott

and our Hudson/Sudbury co-response clinician Taylor Hayden, partnered with School Resource Officers (SRO) Kathy McGrath (Framingham) and Kim Walch (Sudbury) to present at this year's Massachusetts Juvenile Police Officers Association (MJPOA) conference. The presentation focused on the ways in which the Co-Response model partners with School Resource Officers.

Panel members offered vivid real-life examples of the ways co-response clinicians have collaborated alongside SROs to keep juveniles out of the criminal justice system and diverting them from unnecessary trips to the emergency department. By providing rapid, on-scene crisis assessment, JDP clinicians offer SROs more appropriate clinical alternative options that help avoid arrest or disciplinary action for youth in crisis.



Pictured from left to right, Taylor Hayden, LCSW; Sarah Abbott Ph.D.; SRO Kathy McGrath & SRO Kim Walch.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) for Public Safety Trainings

We are offering the following MHFA trainings this summer:

Location: Hopkinton Police Department

- June 12, 2019 from 8:00am-4:00pm

Location: Hudson Police Department

- July 10th, 2019 from 8:00am-4:00pm
- August 21st, 2019 from 8:00am-4:00pm

To learn more about the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) trainings, please visit www.jaildiversion.org or email Katelyn Dehey.

[Request More Information](#)

Jail Diversion Statistics

Data from the current Jail Diversion programs reveals...

Total # JDP Interventions (2003-current) 21,701

\$16,595,500 estimated cost savings from diversion activity

Arrest Diversion

2,752

ER Diversions

2,159

\$6,880,000 Cost Savings

\$9,715,5000 Cost Savings





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