



Most people who live with mental illness have been blamed for their condition. They have been called names & their symptoms have been referred to as “a phase” or something that can be controlled. “You just need to get over it” is a common reaction when they tell someone that they are dealing with a mental health condition.

Mental health should be treated with the same importance we give physical medical attention. Emotional well being is a priority.

Stigma causes people to feel ashamed for something that is out of their control. It prevents people from seeking the help they need.

All of us need to raise our voices against stigma.

END THE STIGMA, LOOK FOR HELP!



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MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

May is Mental Health Awareness Month and Advocates & Law Enforcement Agencies across the nation will raise awareness on this very important subject. Talking about mental health among the professionals that deal with trauma and crime is imperative. We must address vicarious trauma, burn out and mental exhaustion in these professions. We need to take care of our first responders & caretakers so they can have a good quality of life to continue to serve those in need.

WHAT IS VICARIOUS TRAUMA?

Vicarious trauma is an occupational challenge for people working and volunteering in the fields of victim services, law enforcement, emergency medical services, fire services, and other allied professions, due to their continuous exposure to victims of trauma and violence. This work-related trauma exposure can occur from such experiences as listening to individual clients recount their victimization; looking at videos of exploited children; reviewing case files; hearing about or responding to the aftermath of violence and other traumatic events day after day; and responding to mass violence incidents that have resulted in numerous injuries and deaths.

Anyone working with survivors of trauma and violence is at risk of being negatively impacted by the varied effects of vicarious trauma. Factors that may make employees or volunteers more vulnerable to this occupational risk include.

- Prior traumatic experiences
- Social isolation, both on and off the job
- A tendency to avoid feelings, withdraw, or assign blame to others in stressful situation
- Difficulty expressing feelings
- Lack of preparation, orientation, training, and supervision in their jobs
- Being newer employees and less experienced at their jobs
- Constant and intense exposure to trauma with little or no variation in work tasks
- Lack of an effective and supportive process for discussing traumatic content of the work



En Español:

Las enfermedades mentales son más comunes de lo que muchas personas piensan.

El Congreso de EE.UU. declaró mayo como el Mes de la Concientización de la Salud Mental hace más de 60 años para aumentar la concientización entre el público y recordar la prevalencia de la enfermedad mental en la sociedad.

Los CDC estiman que solo un 17% de los adultos estadounidenses tiene un estado excelente de salud mental. Más del 26% de los adultos estadounidenses padecen de depresión.

De acuerdo a las estadísticas de la Organización Mundial de la Salud, uno de cada 5 adultos tendrá una enfermedad mental diagnosticable en año dado y el 50 % de los estadounidenses cumplirán los criterios de una enfermedad mental diagnosticable en algún momento de su vida.

Además, la mitad de estas personas desarrollarán condiciones antes de los 14 años.

Es muy importante llevar una rutina de prevención para la salud mental. Si tiene algún síntoma consulte con su médico y pide ayuda.

La salud mental es primordial para todos!

Rosie Martinez, CA

Vicarious Trauma

What Are Some Common Negative Reactions to Vicarious Trauma?

Each individual may experience the effects of vicarious trauma differently. Some of the potential negative reactions include, but are not limited to:

- Difficulty managing emotions
- Feeling emotionally numb or shut down
- Fatigue, sleepiness, or difficulty falling asleep
- Physical problems or complaints, such as aches, pains, and decreased resistance to illness
- Being easily distracted, which can increase one's risk of accidents
- Loss of a sense of meaning in life and/or feeling hopeless about the future
- Relationship problems (e.g., withdrawing from friends and family, increased interpersonal conflicts, avoiding intimacy)
- Feeling vulnerable or worrying excessively about potential dangers in the world and loved ones' safety
- Increased irritability; aggressive, explosive, or violent outbursts and behavior
- Destructive coping or addictive behaviors (e.g., over/under eating, substance abuse, gambling, taking undue risks in sports or driving)
- Lack of or decreased participation in activities that used to be enjoyable
- Avoiding work and interactions with clients or constituents
- A combination of symptoms that comprise a diagnosis of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)



The Vicarious Trauma Toolkit

<https://ovc.ojp.gov/program/vtt/blueprint-for-a-vicarious-trauma-informed-organization>



- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-8255**
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Spanish) (888) 628-9454**
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Options for Deaf and Hard of Hearing) (800) 799-4889**
- **Crisis Text Line Text HELLO to 741741**
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline (800) 799-7233**
- **Veterans Crisis Line (800) 273-8255**

FUNDING FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

The LAW ENFORCEMENT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS ACT (LEMHWA) PROGRAM Fiscal Year 2021

LEMHWA Program funds are used to improve the delivery of and access to mental health and wellness services for law enforcement through the implementation of peer support, training, family resources, suicide prevention, and other promising practices for wellness programs.

The FY21 LEMHWA program will fund projects that develop knowledge; increase awareness of effective mental health and wellness strategies; increase the skills and abilities of law enforcement; and increase the number of law enforcement agencies and relevant stakeholders using peer support, training, family resources, suicide prevention, and other promising practices for wellness programs.

There is approximately **\$8 million** in funding available through the FY 2021 LEMHWA program. Each award is two years (24 months) in duration for a maximum of \$125,000 per award. **There is no local match.**



Please visit the link below, to learn more about this funding opportunity

<https://cops.usdoj.gov/lemhwa>

This Month's Q&A Technology Tips

Q: Did you know that there is a software that will allow you to complete a week's worth of paperwork & grant reports in 30 minutes?

A.: Victims Services Tracking Software was created by Advocates for Advocates. They understand the importance of having more time to provide victim services and not be stuck doing paperwork. You can manage multiple grants with one software and have multiple users inputting data at the same time. The software can be used in the office, on-site, at home or

Anywhere the Advocate has to provide the direct care. It is user friendly and can be used in English, Spanish and French. During this unprecedented times due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, having the necessary technology and software to work remotely is essential for victim service providers.

You can get a 14 day free trial so you can test the software and you can also do a self guided tour by visiting:

<https://vstracking.com/>



NAMI In Our Own Voice presentations change attitudes, assumptions and ideas about people with mental health conditions. These free, 40-, 60- or 90-minute presentations provide a personal perspective of mental health conditions, as leaders with lived experience talk openly about what it's like to have a mental health condition.

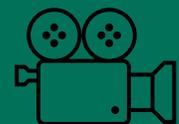
This presentation provides:

An opportunity to hear open and honest perspectives on a highly misunderstood topic

A chance to ask leaders questions, allowing for a deeper understanding of mental health conditions and dispelling of stereotypes and misconceptions

The understanding that people with mental health conditions have lives enriched by hopes, dreams and goals

Information on how to learn more about mental health and get involved with the mental health community.



Video Link:
<https://youtu.be/7h5oyiKc-B0>



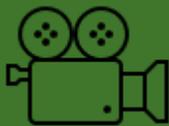
GET TO KNOW COPLINE

The internal emotional/psychological struggle of Law Enforcement officers is immense and unfortunately, more often than not, goes by unspoken or unnoticed.

They offer the world's only 24/7 and 100% completely confidential helpline for officers and their families. On the other end of each phone call is a vetted retired police officer to ensure your voice is not only heard but understood.

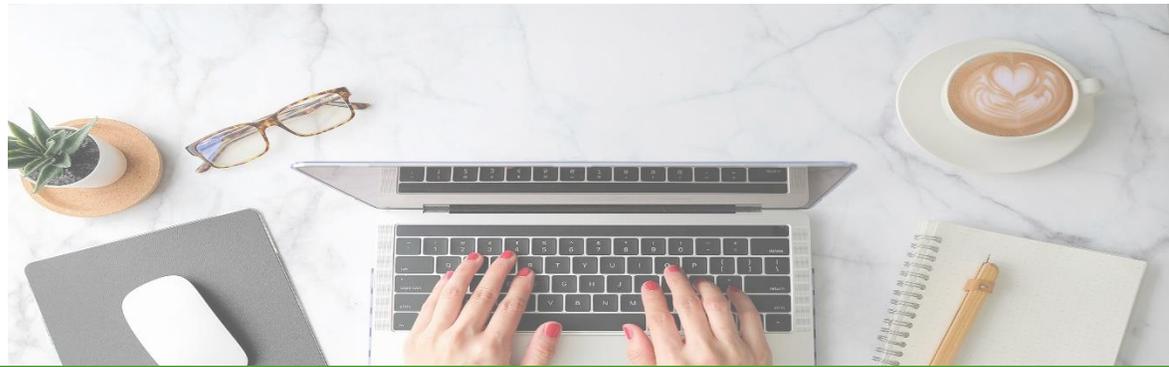
They are a not for profit company built on the foundation of volunteers who just want to give back to their police family.

Learn more about Copline:



Video Link:

<https://youtu.be/Dlk2x1Q2Vr4>



REGISTER, soon space is limited:

www.VSTrainingEDU.com

Upcoming FREE Webinars in May 2021

- **Child Sexual Exploitation Investigations, Human Trafficking, Internet Safety for Kids & Victim Assistance**

Collaborative training conducted by Subject Matter Experts from Homeland Security Investigations, Forensic Interviewers, ICE Community Engagement- IGuardian Program & VSTrainingEDU

FEE Based Live Webinars

- **Immigration Relief for Undocumented Victims of Crime**

Learn about the immigration relief options, such as, U-Visas, VAWA Self Petitions, T-Visas and the other non-adjustment options like Continuous Presence, that can be used while the case is being investigated and prosecuted.

- **Best Practices for Grant Writing, Grant Management, Budget Adjustments**

This all day course will teach how to write grants and manage them and the process to follow in order to comply with federal and state grant guidelines.

Upcoming Free Webinars in June 2021

- **Strangulation Investigations & Forensic Exams**

Collaborative training with DHR Forensic Exam Unit & Valor Training & Consulting Services

- **Legal Advocacy Services for Elder Abuse Victims-**

Collaborative training with the Hidalgo County Criminal District Attorney's Office. Learn how to provide legal advocacy services for elder abuse victims and how to assist the elderly with mental health services



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