



# LEADERSHIP AND SUPERVISION VIRTUAL TRAINING: A Proactive Approach to Officer Wellness and Suicide Prevention

**SUICIDE IS PREVENTABLE,  
AND IT STARTS WITH YOU!**



**VALOR**

OFFICER SAFETY AND WELLNESS INITIATIVE

BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE



# FEEDBACK ASSESSMENTS

Complete the applicable form when prompted.

Your responses will help us provide the best training possible  
to your fellow law enforcement officers.

**PRE-**  
ASSESSMENT



**POST-**  
ASSESSMENT



**PARTICIPANT**  
FEEDBACK



# COURSE DESCRIPTION

Once the agency's executive leadership commits to the implementation of a comprehensive wellness and suicide prevention program and paves the way by removing impediments, adopting new paradigms, and initiating policy changes, it is critical that employees who are in leadership and supervisory positions understand the impact they have on the rest of the organization. These individuals are influencers within the agency, and as leaders, they are role models to those under their charge. Duty, empowerment, responsibility, ownership, and accountability are important concepts that these individuals must possess and encourage in those they lead in order to successfully implement the agency's program. This training gives participants the opportunity to learn about the underlying causes of suicide, why National Suicide Awareness for Law Enforcement Officers (SAFLEO) Program principles are needed, solutions to barriers to help-seeking, their vital role in the successful implementation of a wellness and suicide prevention program, and how to nurture the program long-term. In addition, participants are given the opportunity to exchange ideas, strategies, and best practices and will conclude by creating specific and individualized action plans.

## IS HELP NEEDED?

### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and Crisis Text Line**

800-273-8255  
Text "Blue" to 741741

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

### **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**

(800) 662-4357

### **CopLine Hotline**

(800) 267-5463  
[www.copline.org](http://www.copline.org)

### **Veterans Crisis Line**

Text 838255

### **Military Crisis Line**

(800) 273-8255  
Text 838255  
[www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/military-crisis-line](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/military-crisis-line)

### **Cop2Cop**

866-COP2COP (1-866-267-2267)  
<https://njcop2cop.com>

### **Safe Call Now**

(206) 459-3020  
[www.safecallnowusa.org/](http://www.safecallnowusa.org/)

### **Agency's Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**



# UNDERSTAND THE CHALLENGES

**DEATH BY SUICIDE IS ONE OF OUR GREATEST CHALLENGES. HOWEVER, EVERY DEATH BY SUICIDE IS PREVENTABLE. WE NEED TO INVEST TIME AND RESOURCES IN CREATING RESILIENCE IN OUR OFFICERS.**

**Have you had a difficult experience on-the-job that you avoid thinking about? Why do you avoid it?**

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**What do you think are some suicide risk factors for officers?**

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**Where does the majority of your stress (on or off the job) come from?**

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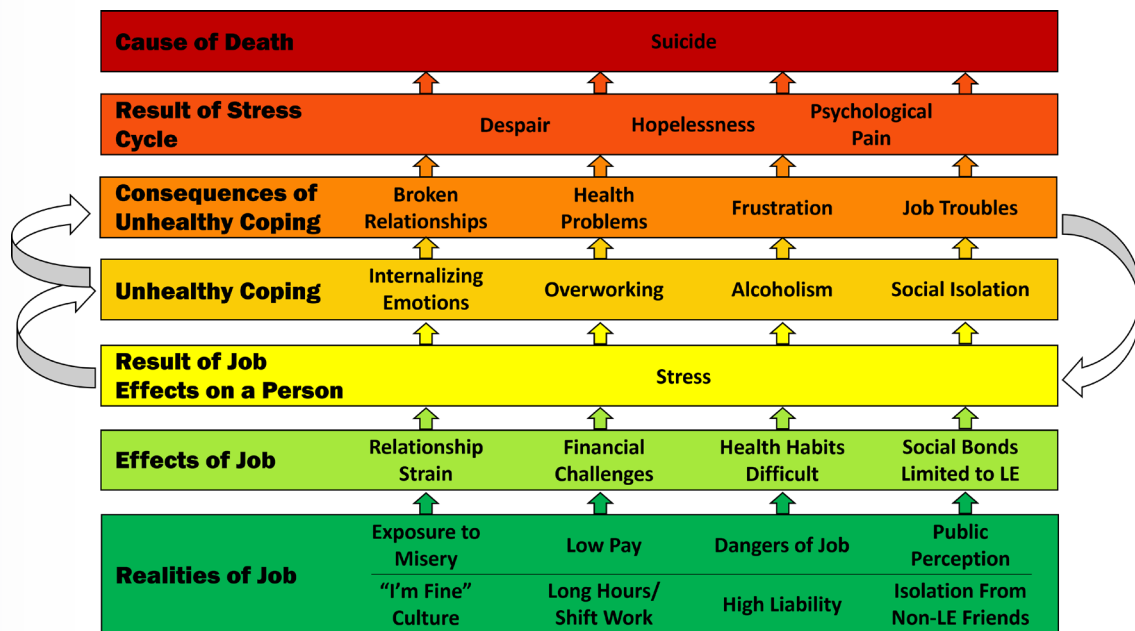
# UNDERSTAND THE CHALLENGES

## Explore the Risk Factors

DEATH BY SUICIDE IS A COMPLEX BEHAVIOR INFLUENCED BY SEVERAL RISK FACTORS INCLUDING:

- Organizational stress
- Financial issues
- Nature of shift work (e.g., rotating shifts, disruptive sleep patterns, and being off duty)
- Alcohol/substance misuse
- Relationship issues (e.g., family, social, and work)
- Critical incident trauma

### SPIRAL OF DESPAIR



The stress cycle described in this model is not a linear process. But the behaviors can build on each other. Remember this model when interacting with people to recognize the warning signs in yourself and others.



# UNDERSTAND THE CHALLENGES

## Lesson Takeaways



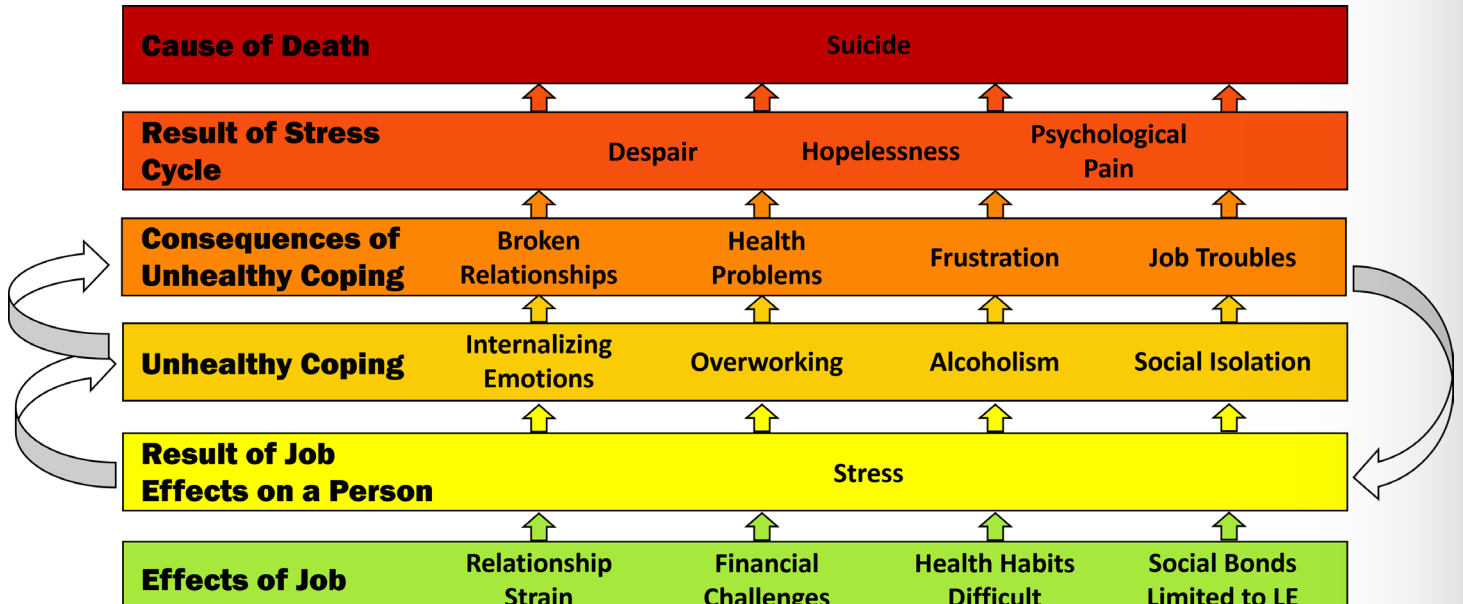
- One of our greatest challenges is law enforcement suicide.
- An average law enforcement career is well-suited to produce post-traumatic stress (PTS) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- How you process stress is important! If not managed properly and brought under control, PTS and PTSD can become risk factors for death by suicide.
- Some allow traumatic situations to become a positive learning experience, which is known as post-traumatic growth (PTG).
- Stigma is a significant barrier preventing officers from seeking mental health treatment for stress management or in response to a traumatic event.
- We must reduce help-seeking stigma at all levels of the agency.



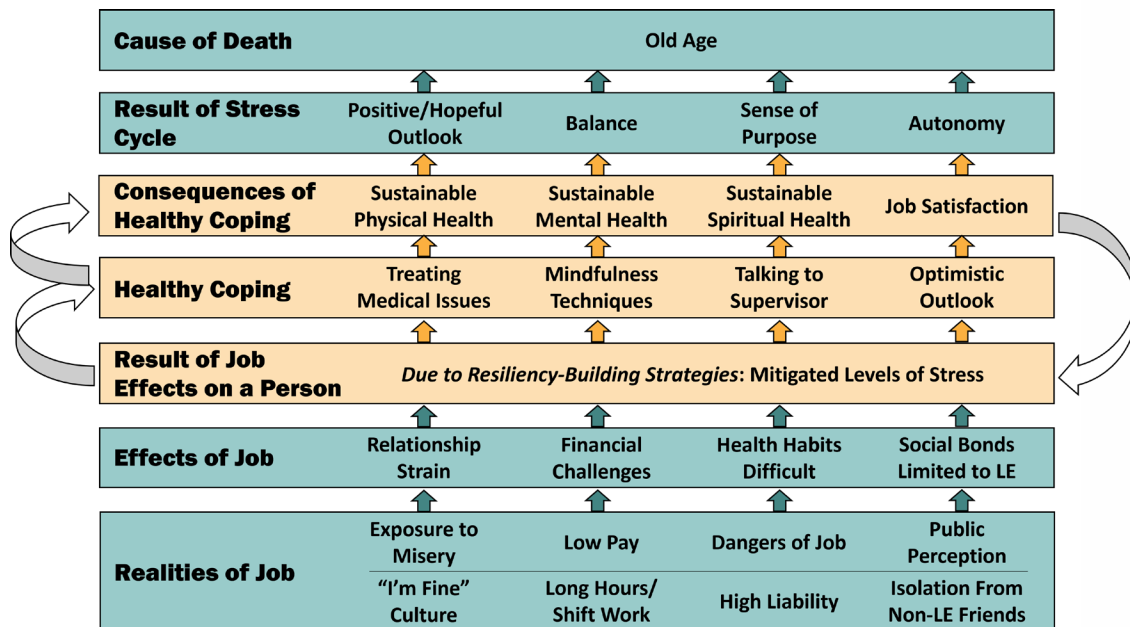
BE A CHAMPION  
OF **GROWTH**  
AND **CHANGE**

# CONSIDER THE SOLUTIONS

## SPIRAL OF DESPAIR PLUS CATEGORIES OF SOLUTIONS AND WELLNESS TIMELINE



## CYCLE OF HEALTH AND RESILIENCE



# CONSIDER THE SOLUTIONS

## Promote Health



### STRATEGIES TO INCREASE RESILIENCE AND AVOID THE CYCLE OF STRESS:

- Partner with family
- Participate in counseling
- Participate in health programs
- Manage fatigue
- Be optimistic
- Be on the lookout
- Engage with purpose
- Encourage peer support
- Reestablish focus

### STOP AND REFLECT

What are one or two takeaways from the Fearless Soul video that stood out to you?

#### List Takeaways

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# CONSIDER THE SOLUTIONS

## Promote Health (continued)

### STOP AND REFLECT

What is your Why?

#### List Why

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### STOP AND REFLECT

What are some strategies you can use to promote your physical, mental health, and spiritual health?

#### List Strategies

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# CONSIDER THE SOLUTIONS

## Promote Health (continued)

### **PARTNER WITH FAMILY**

What will you do to partner with family?

#### **List Strategies**

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### **PARTICIPATE IN COUNSELING**

What are the impediments to you seeking counseling?

#### **List Impediments**

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### **PARTICIPATE IN HEALTH PROGRAMS**

What health programs will you participate in?

#### **List Impediments**

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# CONSIDER THE SOLUTIONS

## Promote Health (continued)

### MANAGE FATIGUE

What solutions will you use to manage fatigue?

#### List Solutions

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### BE OPTIMISTIC

How can optimism promote health?

#### List Responses

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### BE ON THE LOOKOUT

What behaviors should you lookout for that indicate someone may be in distress?

#### List Behaviors

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# CONSIDER THE SOLUTIONS

## Promote Health (continued)

### ENGAGE WITH PURPOSE

What can you do to purposefully engage others?

#### List Strategies

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### ENCOURAGE PEER SUPPORT

What will you do to encourage peer support?

#### List Responses

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### REESTABLISH FOCUS

What strategies will you use to reestablish your focus during a crisis?

#### List Behaviors

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# CONSIDER THE SOLUTIONS

## Promote Health (continued)

### LESSON TAKEAWAYS

- Protective factors can help officers cope with stressors in a healthy manner and keep them from getting caught in the unhealthy cycle that may lead to suicidal thoughts and behaviors.
- Proactively promote your physical and mental health and that of your colleagues to mitigate risk factors and stress.
- Build resilience and encourage your colleagues to do the same by adopting healthy coping behaviors.

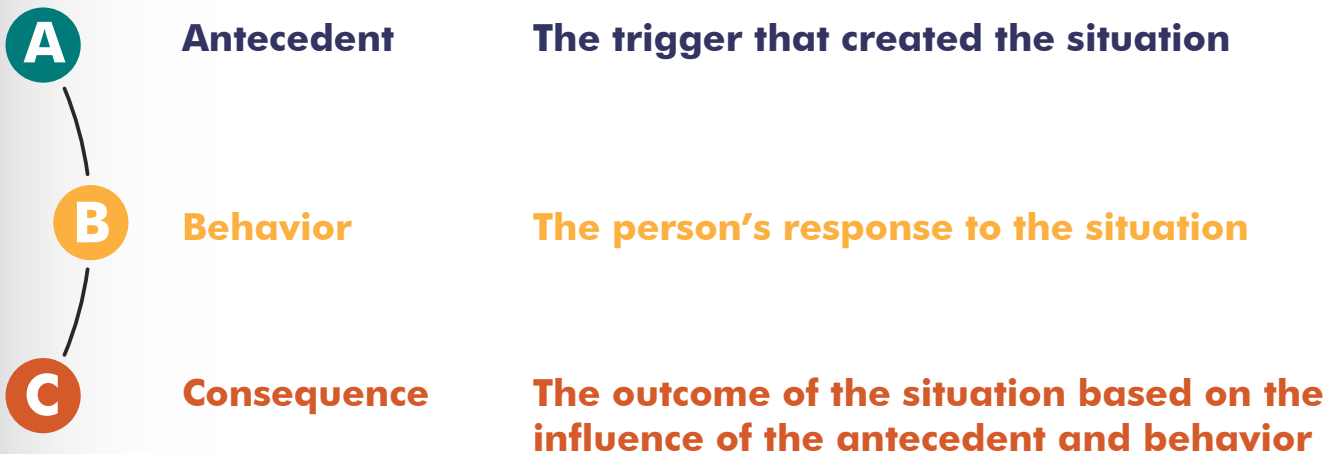
# CONSIDER THE SOLUTIONS

## Treat the Issues

### STRATEGIES TO TREAT ONGOING ISSUES AND EFFECT BEHAVIORAL CHANGE:

- Seek help when needed
- Remove impediments
- Have the difficult talk
- Intervene, when needed

### ABC MODEL - EFFECT CHANGE



# CONSIDER THE SOLUTIONS

## Treat the Issues Notes for My Action Plan

### THREE WORDS VIDEO

What are one or two takeaways from the Three Words video that stood out to you?

#### List Takeaways

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### STOP AND REFLECT

What is one unhealthy behavior you can change to improve your mental health?

#### List Responses

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### STOP AND REFLECT

How can you minimize the stigma associated with seeking help?

#### List Solutions

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# CONSIDER THE SOLUTIONS

## Treat the Issues Notes for My Action Plan

### SEEK HELP, WHEN NEEDED

What resources are available to you and your colleagues either in your agency or elsewhere?

#### List Resources

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### REMOVE IMPEDIMENTS

What are some solutions to overcoming impediments?

#### List Solutions

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# CONSIDER THE SOLUTIONS

## Treat the Issues (continued)

### INTERVENE, WHEN NEEDED

#### Misconceptions

- **Asking someone if he or she is suicidal will “plant the seed.”**

**False.** Asking if someone is suicidal often opens up a line of communication that the person in crisis is either unable or unwilling to initiate.

- **Someone threatening suicide will not go through with it. He or she just wants attention.**

**False.** Most people who ultimately take their own lives do not want to die; they just want to stop the pain (e.g., physical, emotional, or psychological). Take any and all threats regarding suicide seriously.

What strategies can you use when an intervention is needed?

#### List Strategies

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# CONSIDER THE SOLUTIONS

## Treat the Issues (continued)

### COMMUNICATION TIPS

Offer advice only if someone asks for it. Most people just want to be heard.

#### STATEMENTS TO AVOID

- I know how you feel.
- It's not that bad.
- That was God's will.
- God won't give you more than you can handle.
- Others have it much worse.
- At least . . .
- It will be better tomorrow.
- Be strong.

#### HELPFUL STATEMENTS

- I'm sorry.
- That really sounds hard/confusing/tough/difficult.
- How can I help you through this?
- I wish I had the right words; just know that I care.
- I'm available anytime for you.

#### TIPS FOR ONE-ON-ONES

- Sometimes nothing needs to be said; just be an active listener.
- After listening to someone, ask what you can do to help him/her through this.
- Be aware of your body language.

#### TIPS FOR ONE-ON-ONES (continued)

- Show no judgment.
- Explain that it is normal to have certain reactions to stressful events.
- Ask what rejuvenates him/her when he/she is depleted.
- Ask if it would be okay to check in with him/her in the next couple of days.

#### QUESTIONS TO ASK AFTER A DIFFICULT CALL

- It sounds like that was a rough call. What can I do for you? Do you want to talk?
- Have you noticed any changes in yourself? Has your spouse noticed any changes?
- Who do you have to talk to about issues like this? Have you talked to that person?
- What coping mechanisms have helped you in the past?
- Do you think it might help to see someone, maybe talk to a counselor?

# CONSIDER THE SOLUTIONS

## Treat the Issues (continued)

### COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING OTHERS

<b>NONCOMMITTAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Encourages more sharing</li> <li>■ Short words and sounds should be used.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Examples:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I see.</li> <li>• Hmmmm.</li> <li>• Oh.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>PARAPHRASING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Communicates interest, understanding, and empathy</li> <li>■ The person's main points are summarized in your own words.</li> <li>■ Starters:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So in other words . . .</li> <li>• What I'm hearing you say is . . .</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Examples:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual: My spouse just lost his job, and I worry about our finances. I feel so down.</li> <li>• Response: So, you're worried about how you're going to make ends meet with only one income.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>REFLECTING EMOTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identifies the individual's feelings based on verbal/nonverbal clues</li> <li>■ Attempts to accurately label the experienced emotion of the person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Starters             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You seem really . . .</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Examples             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual: That person is just so stubborn. He/she never listens and is always complaining.</li> <li>• Response: You sound frustrated.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>BODY LANGUAGE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Communicates interest, caring, and patience through:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good eye contact</li> <li>• Leaning gently towards the person</li> <li>• Facing the person squarely</li> <li>• Open posture, arms and legs uncrossed</li> <li>• Appropriate responsive body movement, head nodding, facial expressions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tip: Avoid distractions such as phones, clocks, papers.</li> <li>■ Tip: Use touch if/when appropriate.</li> <li>■ Remember: Actions speak louder than words.</li> </ul>
<b>SILENCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Creates space for listening and for the other person to process</li> <li>■ Requires patience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tip: Be careful not to overutilize or let it go on for too long.</li> </ul>
<b>NONJUDGMENTAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Builds trust and empathy</li> <li>■ Is open and does not incorporate judgment one way or the other</li> <li>■ Requires a loving, compassionate attitude that does not condemn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tip: Be objective and do not allow personal feelings or opinions to influence your words.</li> </ul>

# CONSIDER THE SOLUTIONS

## Treat the Issues

### LESSON TAKEAWAYS

- Help remove impediments and effect change to promote health.
- Give yourself permission to be human. It is okay to not be okay.
- Seek help and be there for others. It's the courageous thing to do.

TREATING ISSUES REQUIRES A **HIGHER LEVEL** OF ENGAGEMENT AS THIS IS THE PHASE WHERE A PERSON HAS BEGUN DISPLAYING **UNHEALTHY COPING BEHAVIORS** AND COULD POSSIBLY BE HEADING TOWARD NEGATIVE RESULTS OF THE STRESS CYCLE. THIS IS THE TIME TO **BE PROACTIVE AND ENGAGE.**

# CONSIDER THE SOLUTIONS

## Respond Appropriately

STRATEGIES FOR RESPONDING TO SUICIDE, INCLUDE:

- Prepare yourself
- Seek support
- Participate in follow-up reviews
- Use available resources

## Notes For My Action Plan

### PREPARE YOURSELF

How can you prepare mentally and emotionally to respond to an officer suicide?

#### List Strategies

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# CONSIDER THE SOLUTIONS

## Respond Appropriately Notes for My Action Plan



### SEEK SUPPORT

**Where can you seek support to deal with the trauma of a fellow officer's suicide, and how can you support others?**

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### PARTICIPATE IN FOLLOW-UP REVIEWS

**How would participating in follow-up reviews and seeking resources help you and others after a suicide?**

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# CONSIDER THE SOLUTIONS

## Respond Appropriately

### LESSON TAKEAWAYS

- Intervene if someone needs help.
- Have a plan to respond appropriately to the suicide of a fellow officer, partner, family member, or member of the community.
- Ensure that you have prepared yourself emotionally and intellectually, so you can be available to assist others.
- Take care of yourself. It is okay to not be okay. Understand that you are not alone and that seeking help and allowing others to reach out to you are a critical part of the healing process.
- Begin the process right away.

# IMPLEMENT BEST PRACTICES



## BEST PRACTICES TO IMPLEMENT INCLUDE:

- Be an early adopter
- Be a champion for growth and change
- Empower your officers
- Be the “trip wire”
- Acknowledge
- Decide how to decide (command, consultation, vote, or consensus)
- Put decisions into action (implement decisions that have been made into the day-to-day operations in your agency)
- Refer when needed (know what processes are used to disseminate resources to staff in your agency and who you can refer officers to if there is a need)
- Prepare yourself and your people (you and your officers need to be the calm in the storm)
- Send the right message (implement messaging consistent with policy and ensure that leadership’s messages are communicated to the officers while, encouraging them to do the same with their peers)



# IMPLEMENT BEST PRACTICES

## Develop an Action Plan

### ACTIVITY: WHAT IS YOUR ACTION PLAN?

#### INSTRUCTIONS

Using the information that you have learned and the notes you have been taking, write down a list of **specific** strategies for each category (Promote Health, Treat Issues, and Respond Appropriately) that you plan to implement both on and off the job. Include implementation dates. Be prepared to share some of your strategies with the class, so others can benefit from additional ideas.

THE **STRATEGIES** THAT I PLAN TO IMPLEMENT  
THAT WILL **PROMOTE HEALTH** INCLUDE:

Handwriting practice area with 10 horizontal lines.



# IMPLEMENT BEST PRACTICES

Activity: What Is  
Your Action Plan? *(continued)*

THE **STRATEGIES** THAT I PLAN TO IMPLEMENT  
THAT WILL **TREAT ISSUES** INCLUDE:

A large rounded rectangular box with an orange border, containing ten horizontal lines for writing.



# IMPLEMENT BEST PRACTICES

## Activity: What Is Your Action Plan? *(continued)*

THE **STRATEGIES** THAT I PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THAT WILL  
HELP ME **RESPOND APPROPRIATELY** INCLUDE:

A large rounded rectangular box with an orange border, containing ten horizontal lines for writing.



## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### **Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)**

[bja.ojp.gov](http://bja.ojp.gov)

### **National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF) Destination Zero Program**

[destinationzero.org](http://destinationzero.org)

### **International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)**

[www.theiacp.org](http://www.theiacp.org)

### **National Consortium on Preventing Law Enforcement Suicide**

<https://www.theiacp.org/projects/the-national-consortium-on-preventing-law-enforcement-suicide>

### **VALOR Initiative**

<https://bja.ojp.gov/program/valor/overview>

### **VALOR Program**

[www.valorforblue.org](http://www.valorforblue.org)

### **SAFLEO Custom-Focused Technical Assistance**

Submit a request at [safleo.org](http://safleo.org).



**988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE  
CALL 988**



## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES (continued)

### **Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)**

<https://cops.usdoj.gov>

- *Breaking the Silence on Law Enforcement Suicides: IACP National Symposium on Law Enforcement Officer Suicide and Mental Health*
- *Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Programs: Eleven Case Studies*
- *Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act: Report to Congress*

### **Officer Suicide Post-Event Guide: Emerging Issues, Recommendations, and Considerations**

[https://safleo.org/ResourceLibrary/Resource/  
04e36bd4-fdb0-40f5-051f-08da32b2ade0](https://safleo.org/ResourceLibrary/Resource/04e36bd4-fdb0-40f5-051f-08da32b2ade0)

### **Officer Suicide: Understanding the Challenges and Developing a Plan of Action, An Executive Summary**

[https://safleo.org/ResourceLibrary/Resource/  
408f43c8-72c3-4c8b-ee19-08da3dc34503](https://safleo.org/ResourceLibrary/Resource/408f43c8-72c3-4c8b-ee19-08da3dc34503)

**Other Participants: Take time to exchange contact information.**



**CRISIS TEXT LINE  
TEXT BLUE TO 741741**

# ABOUT SAFLEO



**Effective suicide prevention training** must have a comprehensive approach, focusing on occupational risks and support from law enforcement agencies, colleagues, families, and friends. To combat law enforcement suicide, agencies must place a priority on officer wellness, with the same level of attention as tactical training. This goes beyond being just an agency responsibility; we all must place this issue as a priority. It is critical and could mean the difference between life and death.

**BJA believes** that the law enforcement community deserves better access to officer wellness resources and suicide prevention strategies. It has created a multifaceted approach to address law enforcement suicide. The SAFLEO Program is one of two critical pieces under this work and is funded under the Officer Robert Wilson III Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement Officers and Ensuring Officer Resilience and Survivability (VALOR) Initiative. BJA, through SAFLEO, provides training, technical assistance, and resources to law enforcement agencies, staff, and families, to raise awareness, smash the stigma of help-seeking, and reduce and prevent law enforcement suicide.

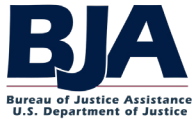
**SAFLEO closely collaborates** with the National Consortium on Preventing Law Enforcement Suicide (Consortium), BJA's second critical program in its work to reduce and prevent law enforcement suicide. SAFLEO uses the Consortium's findings and outcomes to ensure that the latest information and strategies in suicide prevention are being addressed in SAFLEO's curriculum and resources.



[SAFLEO.ORG](https://www.safleo.org)



## The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), a part of the U.S. Department of Justice's



(DOJ) Office of Justice Programs, helps make American communities safer by strengthening the nation's criminal justice system. Its grants, training and technical assistance, and policy development services provide state, local, and tribal governments with the cutting-edge tools and best practices that they need to reduce violent and drug-related

crime, support law enforcement, and combat victimization. To learn more about BJA, visit [www.bja.gov](http://www.bja.gov). You can also follow BJA on Facebook and Twitter.

[BJA.OJP.GOV](http://BJA.OJP.GOV)

## The SAFLEO Program is provided through the BJA Officer Robert Wilson III Preventing



Violence Against Law Enforcement Officers and Ensuring Officer Resilience and Survivability (VALOR) Initiative. The VALOR Initiative is an effort to improve the immediate and long-term safety, wellness, and resilience of law enforcement officers. Through a multifaceted approach that includes delivering no-cost training (professional education),

conducting research, developing and providing resources, and establishing partnerships that benefit law enforcement officers, VALOR seeks to provide our nation's law enforcement officers with innovative, useful, and valuable resources.

[BJA.OJP.GOV/PROGRAM/VALOR](http://BJA.OJP.GOV/PROGRAM/VALOR)



MANAGED BY  
**IIR**  
Institute for Intergovernmental Research

**SAFLEO** 

National Suicide Awareness for  
Law Enforcement Officers Program

**SAFLEO**.ORG



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