



Resiliency & Mental Wellness

First Responders

What is a Crisis?

A state of heightened emotional arousal to some powerful stimulus or a demand.

Psychological crisis: An acute response to a trauma, disaster, or other critical incident wherein: psychological homeostasis is disrupted, usual coping mechanisms have failed, and there is evidence of distress or impairment.

Crisis and Stress

Crisis impacts us emotionally, mentally and physically all at the same time. We always live in stress, whether good or bad, mild or extreme. You can have stress with no crisis, but you can't have a crisis without stress!

Critical incident stress: heightened cognitive, physical, emotional and behavioral arousal that accompanies crisis.

Crisis is inevitable, especially for First Responders as they manage a balance between their professional careers and their personal life.

Compared to the general population, First Responders are at a heightened risk of depression, PTSD and suicide.

Why?

- Many officers work hard to disguise symptoms for fear of being perceived as weak
- Stigma of mental health
- Often do not seek help
- Inherent risk of homicide or accidents overshadow psychological danger
- Knowledge of emergency petitions
- Fearful of losing job
- Poor coping strategies (Such as substance use, family disruption, and work deviance)

Risk Factors

- Relationship Problems – Family Stress
- Department Stress, Officer Stress (Shift work, "extremes," fear of injury or death, alcohol abuse, mistrust in management)
- Financial Problems
- Isolation or Separation
- Illness or Injury
- Depression
- Trauma
- Involvement in high profile critical incidents
- Access to Firearms

Protective Factors

- Restricting access to highly lethal means of suicide
- Easy access to a variety of clinical interventions

Data adapted from "Resiliency & Mental Wellness for First Responders", a webinar originally held on 1/11/21. Presented by Lt. Steven Thomas and Michelle Warshauer.



NAMI Maryland can help.
Visit www.namimd.org or
call 410-884-8691 for more
information



NAMIMaryland



NAMIMaryland



NAMIMaryland





Resiliency & Mental Wellness

First Responders

Crisis Intervention

Temporary, active and supportive entry into life situation during extreme distress to help stabilize or mitigate crisis response.

Crisis intervention targets the RESPONSE, not the EVENT.

The goal of crisis intervention is to foster natural resiliency !

Best Practice

- Assessment and psychological triage should be common practice, usual/expected/routine vs. a rarity when extreme symptoms begin to appear.
- Strategic planning and a use of a integrated multi-component crisis intervention system like CISM
- One-on-one crisis intervention
- Small (Interactive) group crisis intervention
- Large (Informational) group crisis intervention
- Follow-up and referral

The ultimate goal of these practices is to promote post-traumatic growth in first responders after they have been involved in a crisis situation.

Solution Model: Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

A comprehensive, phase sensitive, and integrated, multi-component approach to crisis/disaster intervention.

Six core elements that can be used at any point given the situation:

1. Strategic Planning
2. Informational Group Crisis Intervention
3. Interactive Group Crisis Intervention
4. Assessment and Psychological Triage
5. Individual Crisis Intervention
6. Personal Resilience and Self-Care

The challenge in crisis intervention is not only developing TACTICAL skills in utilizing these interventions but it is also in knowing WHEN to best STRATEGICALLY use the most appropriate intervention for the situation.

Data adapted from "Resiliency & Mental Wellness for First Responders", a webinar originally held on 1/11/21. Presented by Lt. Steven Thomas and Michelle Warshauer.



NAMI Maryland can help.
Visit www.namimd.org or
call 410-884-8691 for more
information



NAMIMaryland



NAMIMaryland



NAMIMaryland

