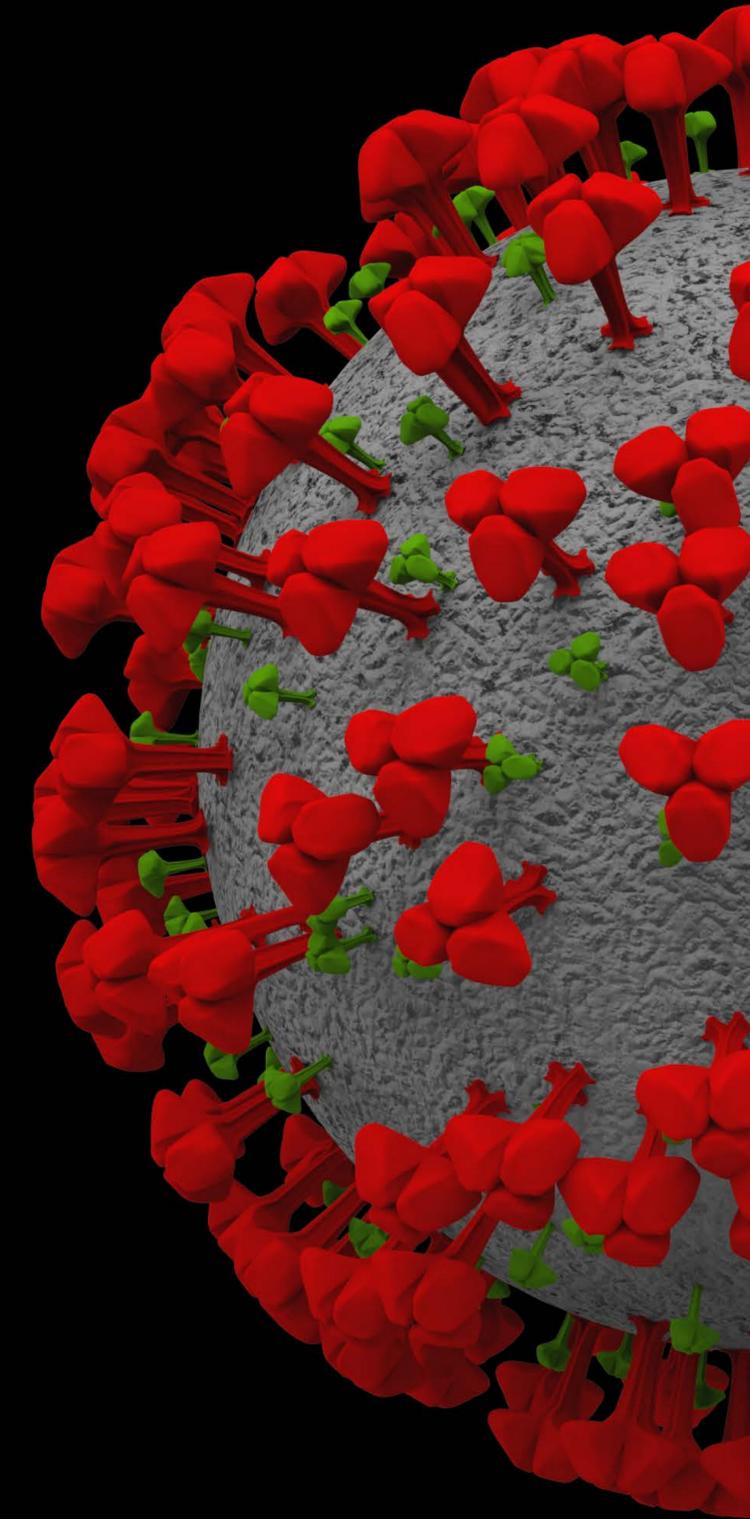




CNA
ANALYSIS & SOLUTIONS



COVID-19
VIRTUAL DISCUSSION: MENTAL WELLNESS
Follow-Up Resources

Introduction

Over the last six months, prosecutors have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as they have had to find new and innovative ways to carry out their duties.

On September 17, 2020, CNA and the NDAA hosted a virtual discussion on ***Mental Wellness of Prosecutors and Court Staff***. Panelists from Johnson County, Kansas; Missoula County, Montana; and Los Angeles County, California, discussed a variety of issues impacting prosecutors' mental wellness, such as returning to the office, expected workload pressure, and the current perception of the criminal justice system. **View the full virtual discussion [here](#).**

This document highlights resources from this discussion and provides specifics on how agencies are currently managing and responding to these mental health concerns.

[CLICK HERE TO CONTINUE](#)

NAVIGATING THE DOCUMENT

This is an interactive document that allows you to advance through the information provided at will.

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**MENTAL
WELLNESS
RESOURCES**

JOHNSON COUNTY, KANSAS

MISSOULA COUNTY, MONTANA

LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA



JOHNSON COUNTY, KANSAS

Peer Support Programs

Assistant District Attorney Sarah Hill highlighted the peer support program in the Johnson County, Kansas, District Attorney's Office, which was developed in 2017. The program includes individuals from all departments within the office, including supervisors, victim advocates, line attorneys, and support staff. The group addresses work and life stresses, secondary trauma, critical incident debrief, and more, with the aid of mental health professionals. Click the link below to view the full policy.

[PEER SUPPORT POLICY](#)

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Johnson County
Office of the District Attorney
STEPHEN M. HOWE, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

POLICY: PEER SUPPORT POLICY
POLICY NUMBER: 59
ISSUED: SEPTEMBER, 2017

Purpose:

The Johnson County District Attorney's Office Peer Support Team offers assistance and appropriate support resources to employees when personal or professional problems negatively affect their work performance, family unit or themselves.

Goals:

1. Participation in the Peer Support Program is strictly voluntary.
2. Provide emotional support during and after times of personal or professional crisis to employees &/or employee family members who express a need for assistance.
3. Promote trust, allow appropriate anonymity and preserve confidentiality for employees &/or employee family members using the Peer Support Program within the guidelines of the program.
4. Develop Peer Support Team Members who can identify employees who are going through a difficult time or experiencing personal conflicts and provide them with guidance or referrals to professional or alternate resources as required.
5. Maintain an effective Peer Support training and response program.
6. Check on the status of illnesses, injury or family crisis and provide support when desired and/or needed.
7. As mentors, Peer Support Team Members provide support, guidance, and encouragement to all employees.

Peer Support Advisory Committee

1. The Johnson County District Attorney shall create a Peer Support Advisory Committee for the purpose of administering the program. The Peer Support Advisory Committee shall consist of the District Attorney, Director of Administration, a mental health professional & the Peer Support Program Manager.
2. The Peer Support Advisory Committee shall meet quarterly or at the request of the Peer Support Program Manager or the District Attorney.
3. The Peer Support Advisory Committee shall:



MISSOULA COUNTY, MONTANA

Secondary Trauma Group

Chief Criminal Deputy County Attorney Matt Jennings discussed his office’s secondary trauma group, stating that it “starts at the top for us.” The group provides a space for members to discuss some of the challenges of being a prosecutor. The office believes that leadership encouraging employees to join has led to a positive shift in organizational culture. Click the links below to view resources from their office.

Secondary Trauma Group –
The other side of competence: Organizational
resiliency for prosecutors (outline with links)

Kirsten H. Pabst, Missoula County Attorney
For the Women’s Prosecutor Section, NDAA
April 5, 2019

Abstract of Program

The Missoula Col. Montana trauma implemented an resiliency program Trauma Group, it associated with v

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[California’s Rule](#) “competence” t ability reasonabl

With the goal of I competence, the worker who teac have experience

Missoula County, Monta

SECONDARY TRAUMA: AGENCY INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

DEFINING SECONDARY TRAUMA: CUMULATIVE EFFECTS ON WORKERS

The impact of human service work on the humans who do the work has not been fully understood until recently. Formerly described as job stress or burnout, a more accurate understanding confirms that the largest predictor of the effectiveness of human service work has to do with the health, resiliency and effectiveness of the humans who do the work.

This same effectiveness becomes compromised when workers are exposed repeatedly or poignantly to the suffering and traumatic experiences of their clients. In order to effectively engage clients, workers must establish relationships of listening, aligning, and helping. Exposure to the horrific content of many of the crimes, incidents of traumatic abuse and neglect, and overwhelming human suffering are potentially traumatizing events. Recently, the diagnostic manual for mental health workers was revised to include this type of trauma as a signifier of *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*.

It is often the most effective workers who are most deeply impacted by secondary trauma because they take the professional risk to come close to their client’s experiences in order to understand them more deeply. The mirror neuron system in the human brain that allows for empathy also conducts toxic trauma right into the physiology of workers.

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

Agencies that do not address secondary trauma, in effect, are not doing good resource management. It is the human resource that is the most important one in human service work. Unaddressed, secondary trauma contributes to the unsustainability of the work force. This impacts the nature of the work environment as well as the home environment for a traumatized worker. Physiological distress such as chronic illness, neurological disease, weight gain, eating disorders, and early death are negative impacts of unaddressed secondary trauma. It also damages the energetic systems and emotional systems of workers and creates emotional disorders like anxiety and depression, conflict and anger in the home and work setting, and leads to disruption in social relationships including family and relationship discord.

It is the largest predictor of work force recidivism.

Secondary trauma is also a large cause of the use of addictive substances by professionals in order to manage the regulatory distress created by secondary trauma.

Our philosophy is that it is the responsibility of the agency to provide opportunities for workers to be trained in and to practice secondary trauma resiliency skills. They can then track the worker’s progress with this as they would any other work skill. Unfortunately, other models wait until workers are burned out and then encourage self-care to return to work healthy and ready to work. We believe that secondary trauma resiliency is a shared responsibility between the agency and the worker.

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Missoula, Montana 59808 E-mail: laue@blackfoot.net Andrew R. Laue, LCSW

SECONDARY TRAUMA: AGENCY INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCY FOR PROSECUTORS



LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Helping Others Pursue Excellence (HOPE) Committee

Professional Responsibility Advisor Cynthia Nakao of the Los Angeles, California, District Attorney's Office discussed their HOPE Committee, a grassroots volunteer group that started in March 2019. It focuses on self-improvement in all facets of employees' lives through in-house speakers, sponsored lunches, and guided discussions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, HOPE pivoted and partnered with the office's peer support program to begin check-ins with staff. Click the link below to view more information about the program.

[HOPE COMMITTEE](#)

Los Angeles District Attorney's Office Peer Support Program

Program Purpose

- To provide support/assistance to employees in times of personal or professional crisis
- Meant to augment professional services, not replace
- Primary function: LISTEN, ASSESS, REFER

Member Selection

- Nominated by Peers
- 4 Lieutenants, 6 Supervising Investigators, 3 Professional Staff, 22 Senior Investigators
- Agree to maintain confidentiality

Training

- Provided by The Counseling Team International (TCTI)
- Topics covered:
 - Grief/Bereavement
 - Relationship Issues
 - Depression
 - Suicide Ideation
 - Illness
 - Alcoholism
- LASD Psych Services

Confidentiality

"Communication between the peer supporter and the person seeking support is considered confidential, except for matters which involve the following:

- Danger to self/others
- Child abuse/Elder abuse
- Domestic violence
- Possession and/or use of illegal narcotics
- Serious/Dangerous violations of the law
- Serious misconduct (Policy violations that could lead to termination)
- Where divulgence is requested by the peer"
- Agree to maintain confidentiality

[BACK TO MENTAL WELLNESS RESOURCES](#)



THANK YOU

<https://ndaa.org/covid-19/>