

The Riverside Trauma Center Peer Support Program

As a First Responder, you're there to protect and serve your community, leading them through many overwhelming situations. The job can lead to personal stress, fatigue, and trauma.

The rates of PTSD, depression, and suicide amongst those in public safety are FIVE times that of the civilian population. First Responders are more likely to die by suicide than in the line of duty.

You can care for your mental health and the mental health of your team through Peer Support.

What is Peer Support?

The goal of peer support is to create a safe and supportive workplace culture that promotes discussions about mental health and opens-up lines of communication for people to talk about the things weighing on them.

A Peer Supporter is:

- Someone who knows the job like you do
- NOT a counselor or psychotherapist
- A person to reach out to confidentially

Peer Support for First Responders

Bringing peer support to your workplace can help you, and your brothers and sisters, feel supported and listened to when they want to discuss mental health and wellness.

To learn about bringing peer support training to your team, contact:

 **Michael Bonadio Jr** LMFT

Program Coordinator

Workplace Suicide Prevention at Riverside Trauma Center

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Detective Sergeant Chris Malinn

"Being routinely exposed to traumatic events can have an effect on somebody's personal life, their professional life, their demeanor, and it can make it difficult for them to live their lives fully, whether that's as a productive police officer or a good parent, a good spouse. That necessitates a need to have some peer-based resources available."

Brookline Police Department

Scott, Captain

"When I'm helping somebody else... stay in their career and live a better life, I'm helping me. That relationship makes me feel more whole in a very profound way."

Southborough Fire Department

Sergeant Derek Harrington

"[It] hit me that I was not in a good place. I reached out to my Lieutenant to get some help and he put me in touch with an officer in a peer support unit. This officer was very supportive. He was able to listen to me, validate my feelings, my emotions, and what I was going through... And he was able to get me back on a path where I could be a productive and successful officer."

Medway Police Department

Riverside Trauma Center

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You Don't Have to Suffer in Silence

Peer support helps build “Emotional Resilience” for you, and your squad.

You *train together* to be ready for the call.
You *fight together* and don't give up until it is done.
Mental health requires the same commitment.
For *you*, and *your squad*.

Training and Consultation

The Riverside Trauma Center helps organizations or departments develop their own peer support program where team members receive training on peer support as needed. The program also offers consultation services, including, but not limited to, regular meetings with peer supporters and team leaders, access to additional resources, and referral information.

More about the Peer Support Program

The Riverside Trauma Center Peer Support program provides:

- A network of trained, supportive First Responders who are there to listen
- Help for individuals facing mental health challenges
- Resources to help individuals and teams build emotional resilience and mental toughness
- Support that focuses on conversations about mental health and wellness that are already happening across departments

Join other First Responders across Massachusetts who are looking out for the mental health and wellbeing of their brothers and sisters.

Mike, Police Officer

“Our peer support team is working to create an atmosphere that removes the stigma of mental health issues and makes sure that everyone knows there is always a place they can go to get assistance. A safe place where they will not be judged, or fear they'll lose their job.”

Hadley

Jamie, Firefighter/Paramedic

“What we're doing has changed the atmosphere within our station. I really think it could do the same for any department.”

Sudbury Fire Department

Nick, Firefighter

“We have all had our highs and VERY low lows. It feels good to know I have somewhere to go if I need help and also that I am there if someone needs a shoulder to lean on.”

Hadley

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For more mental health resources for first responders, visit [Mass.gov/MassMen](https://www.mass.gov/MassMen).

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