

Building Organizational Resilience:

(The Correlation between Risk Mitigation and Officer Mental Health)

One of our major responsibilities as law enforcement leaders is to mitigate risk, right? Strategic planning, scenario-based training, threat assessment, situational awareness...all necessary components of solid risk mitigation. Candidly, ensuring our mental well-being should be no different. Here are some best practice suggestions if you are looking for solid measures to enhance your officer wellness resources...even if your funds are limited and you're confused on where to start?

Below is an excerpt from an article I wrote which appeared in multiple publications (including the FBINAA's Associate Magazine and FLEOA's National Magazine) which includes a "readiness checklist" for agencies seeking to establish meaningful, effective measures as a path to organizational and officer wellness.



- ✓ Do you have an EAP?
- ✓ Do you have peer support resources?
- ✓ Do your employees have an external, confidential source to go to for assistance?
- ✓ Are your supervisors trained to recognize signs of chronic stress or an adverse reaction to an event?

- ✓ What does your insurance benefit cover in terms of substance use disorders and/or mental health issues?
- ✓ Are you self-insured (you may have more leverage securing treatment for a member than you realize)?
- ✓ What are the out-of-pocket costs, if any, associated with treatment?
- ✓ Do you have resources (preventative measures) available that contribute to the physical/mental health of your members? (Think resilience education and a culture that understands and promotes self-care)
- ✓ Do you have a mechanism in place for spousal support?
- ✓ Are you aware of the state regulatory guidelines with respect to first responders and mental health treatment?
- ✓ Do you have a best practices model in place to assist personnel after a critical incident?
- ✓ Have you located, vetted and spoken with mental health professionals in your area that specialize in treating first responders?
- ✓ Are you disseminating information on a department-wide level that reinforces your support of personnel seeking help and are you doing that consistently? (Conversation + education = reduced stigma)
- ✓ Do you have a chaplaincy program to assist with employee outreach?
- ✓ Are you making all of this information available to police recruits in the academy?

If you are having difficulty answering any of these questions, please reach out to me for assistance.

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Bill now works for Acadia Healthcare as a Strategic Account Manager and Public Safety Liaison with the Treatment Placement Specialists® Initiative, which provides specialized treatment guidance for public safety personnel, first responders and their families who may find themselves in a personal crisis as a result of a mental health issue or substance use disorder.