



### **CIPSRT Conference 2025**

Thriving in Public Safety: Research to Action

# POST CONFERENCE REPORT



# SAVE THE DATE

**CIPSRT Conference 2026** 

May 5-6, 2026

Calgary, AB

The 2026 CIPSRT Conference is coming to the Stampede City!

Join us for a conference focused on the mental health and wellbeing of Canada's First Responders and Public Safety Personnel.

We look forward to seeing you there!



### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research and Treatment (CIPSRT) proudly welcomed delegates to Regina, SK for the inaugural 2025 conference, Thriving in Public Safety: Research to Action! The 2025 conference theme emphasized the critical connection between the latest research and practical action, with a focus on fostering wellbeing across all levels of public safety.

Over two days, participants engaged with thought-provoking keynote speakers and presentations tailored to the realities of public safety personnel (PSP), organizational leadership, and the research community. The sessions provided actionable tools, evidence-based strategies, and innovative approaches designed to support the mental health and wellbeing of those serving in public safety.

The conference also featured a vibrant trade show, creating opportunities for direct engagement between exhibitors and attendees from across the public safety landscape, including public safety personnel, public safety leadership, and policy influencers. These interactions enabled attendees to share information and build lasting connections with key stakeholders committed to enhancing wellness in public safety.

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### **SURVEY OVERVIEW**

The post-conference survey was developed and distributed using Qualtrics, an online survey platform known for its flexibility and ease of use in collecting and analyzing feedback. The survey included a mix of quantitative and qualitative questions designed to assess attendees' overall satisfaction, the effectiveness of conference organization, the value of presentations and networking opportunities, and knowledge acquisition. This information was gathered with the aim of informing improvements for future CIPSRT conferences as well as ongoing knowledge mobilization efforts at CIPSRT.

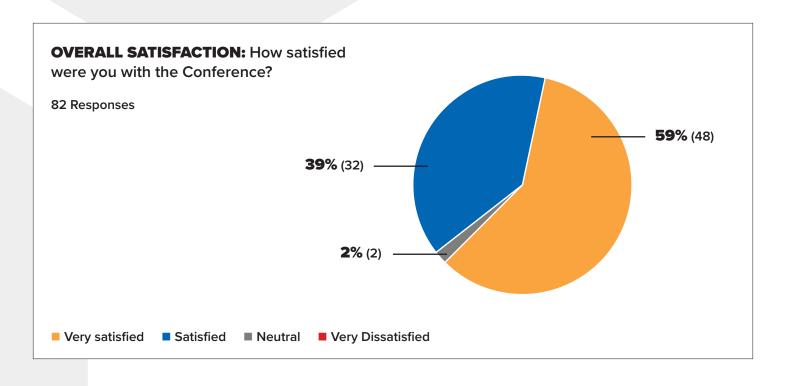
The post-conference survey achieved a response rate of 42.73%, which is significantly above average for voluntary event feedback. This indicates a high level of engagement from attendees and suggests that the findings are likely to be representative and valuable for future planning.

### **ATTENDEES**

Conference delegates included PSP, national organizations, researchers, clinicians, and leaders from across Canada and beyond.

Delegates represented a wide variety of public safety sectors (Table 1.), organizations, and professional and leadership roles (Table 2.).





**Table 1.**Public safety sectors represented by delegates

| PSP Sectors                       | Number of delegates |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Police Services                   | 180                 |
| Fire Services                     | 34                  |
| Paramedic/ EMS                    | 23                  |
| Corrections                       | 44                  |
| Canadian Border Service<br>Agency | 8                   |
| Search and Rescue                 | 3                   |

Note: There is often overlap between sectors, with delegates working within one sector, such as working within both Fire and EMS.

**Table 2.**Delegate roles

| Delegate Role                               | Number of delegates |
|---|---------------------|
| PSP   | 284                 |
| Academics                                   | 51                  |
| Psychologist/Clinicians                     | 15                  |
| Community Based<br>Organizations            | 10                  |
| Exhibitors                                  | 26                  |
| Sponsors                                    | 14                  |
| National Organizations                      | 21                  |
| Workers Comp                                | 7                   |
| Provincial Government Supervisors/Directors | 14                  |
| Union                                       | 14                  |
| CIPSRT/PSPNET                               | 29                  |
| Unassigned                                  | 6                   |

### ATTENDEE SATISFACTION

### **Overall Satisfaction**

Overall, the CIPSRT Conference 2025 was met with high praise and enthusiasm from attendees, many of whom described it as one of the best professional events they had attended. 98% of delegates who completed the survey reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the conference, and most respondents indicated they would attend (and recommend others attend) another CIPSRT conference. The organization, speaker quality, food, amenities, and networking opportunities were consistently lauded. Keynotes such as Tyler Smith, Dr. Carney, and Evan Bray left lasting impressions, with participants highlighting their ability to connect deeply and meaningfully with the audience. One attendee noted, "This was one of the best and most organized conferences I have been at in a long time," while another remarked, "I would like to share how much I appreciated the incredible attention to detail... Every element made it clear that we, as First Responders, family members, researchers, and all others who attended, truly mattered."

These comments reflect the conference's success in delivering a high impact, professionally executed experience that resonated with a broad cross-section of the public safety community.

### **Opening Ceremonies**

The conference ceremonies featured a number of special guests and dignitaries, including emcees, Casey Ward and Pierre Poirier; Deputy Mayor and City of Regina Ward 3 Councillor, Mark Burton; Dr. Tom McIntosh, University of Regina; Elder Betty McKenna and the Willow Warriors Drum Group; and, a video message from the Honourable Ralph Goodale, High Commissioner for Canada in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. One participant noted, "The Indigenous welcome and message from Ralph Goodale was great," reflecting the importance of cultural inclusivity and leadership presence. Overall, the ceremonies were seen as a strong and respectful start that helped establish a sense of purpose and community.

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FAMILY MEMBERS, RESEARCHERS, AND ALL OTHERS WHO ATTENDED,
TRULY MATTERED."

### **Materials & Resources**

A number of print materials and resources (both French and English) were distributed to the conference attendees and additional resources were available at the CIPSRT booth. These resources included: Sleep ring cards, stickers books, suicide fact sheets, PSPNET and PSPNET Families resources (infographics, pamphlets, one pagers, business cards, QR code card). How to support a co-worker, Six steps to finding a clinician, and Knowledge for You ring cards.

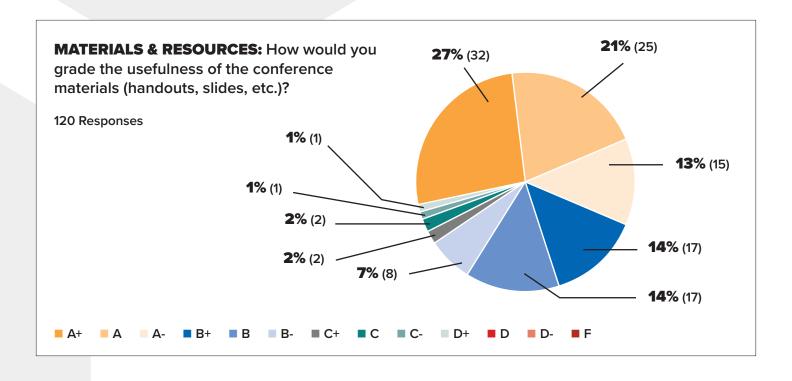
Participants generally appreciated the materials and resources provided at the conference, highlighting items like the sleep tip cards, wellness booklets, and promotional swag as thoughtful and practical additions. Many attendees noted that the available literature and resources from CIPSRT and PSPNET were valuable for both personal use and sharing with colleagues. Attendees commented: "The resources and materials are very useful. I found a lot of them useful to read and remind ourselves", "The sleep cards were eye-opening and have given me insight on my sleep issues." and, "I now have many more resources to help my peers."

### **Session & Speaker Feedback**

With 26 concurrent sessions (Appendix A), two key-note speakers, and 23 poster presentations, the conference offered three streams of evidence-based presentations for the public safety front line, leadership, and research communities.

The poster presentations included at the conference offered the opportunity to learn about unique challenges facing public safety personnel across various sectors. Presenters included students, academics, and local community-based organizations. A panel of experts reviewed and graded the posters, awarding University of Regina student, Paige Sivel, and York University student, Anthony Battaglia, as the top poster presenters of the conference.

Most attendees rated their acquisition of knowledge from the conference presentations as high and reported that they found the conference content to be varied and impactful. Favoured speakers Tyler Smith, Dr. Colleen Carney, and Evan Bray, were highlighted for their engaging delivery and practical insights. Sessions on wellness, sleep, and peer support were especially well received for their immediate applicability, reflecting attendees' desire for actionable content. Attendees stressed a need for practical tools, real-world case studies, and personal stories as valuable for enhancing knowledge retention and application.



### **Venue & Amenities**

The 2025 conference was hosted at the Delta Regina, with a networking event held at the adjacent Casino Regina. These locations were chosen to offer a blend of accessibility, professional amenities, historic charm, and entertainment in downtown Regina.

The venue for the CIPSRT Conference 2025 received overwhelmingly positive feedback, with attendees commending the Delta Hotel's central layout, professional setup, and seamless logistics. The amenities provided by the Delta Hotel were widely praised and helped facilitate a positive space for networking.

### **Organization & Logistics**

The organization and logistics of the CIPSRT Conference 2025 were widely commended by attendees, who consistently praised the event's professional execution and seamless flow. Participants appreciated the attention to detail, from clear signage and scheduling to thoughtful touches like swag bags, wellness rooms, and timely support from event staff. Many highlighted the smooth transitions between sessions and the overall atmosphere of hospitality and efficiency. One attendee shared, "This was very well prepared and organized, and conference staff provided in-time support to the attendees... Details could be seen everywhere," while another noted, "It was a very well-organized and professionally done conference. Unique and appreciated."

These sentiments capture the hard work and success of the planning team in delivering a structured, thoughtful event that balanced logistics, comfort, and accessibility. Several attendees highlighted opportunities to improve communication and information-sharing related to the organization and logistics of the conference.

### Networking

Networking was a standout feature of the CIPSRT Conference 2025, with attendees consistently highlighting the value of connecting with peers across sectors and regions. The conference format, which included shared meals, wellness activities, informal gatherings, and an evening of comedy, music and food at the Casino Regina Show lounge, created natural opportunities for meaningful conversations and collaboration. Many participants left with new professional contacts and a renewed sense of community. One attendee shared, "Having the opportunity to network and meet others who are facing the same or similar challenges is so beneficial," while another remarked, "I returned home with a handful of new contacts who I know I will keep in touch with for years to come."



"THE RESOURCES AND MATERIALS ARE VERY USEFUL. I FOUND A LOT OF THEM USEFUL TO READ AND REMIND OURSELVES... I NOW HAVE MANY MORE RESOURCES TO HELP MY PEERS."

# Suggestions for Improvement & Additional Comments

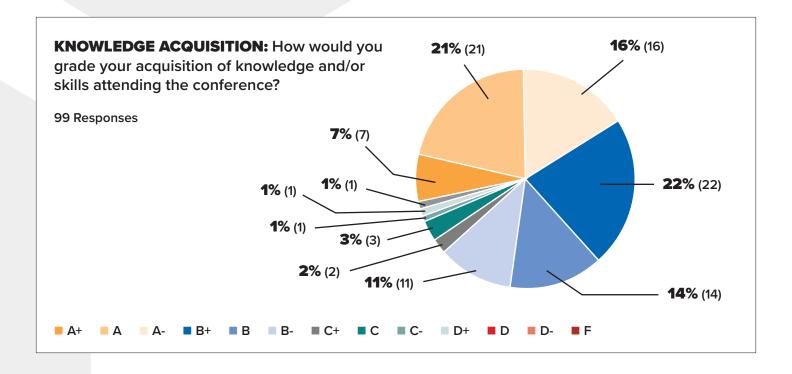
The conference served as a powerful forum for sharing practical strategies, lived experiences, and evidence-based insights, leaving participants inspired and better equipped to support mental health within their organizations. Attendees praised the engaging keynote speakers, professional organization, and valuable networking opportunities that fostered meaningful connections and knowledge exchange.

Attendee feedback reinforced a need for future conferences that provide practical, accessible presentations that emphasize actionable strategies for PSP in a less academic format. Attendees also suggested strategies for improving participation and engagement, increasing attendance from PSP and stakeholders from across Canada, increasing the number of speakers who share their lived experiences, and ensuring that presentations deliver immediately applicable tools and strategies for supporting mental health that are tailored to the needs of PSP.

These improvements, if implemented, could make future conferences even more impactful and inclusive for all attendees.

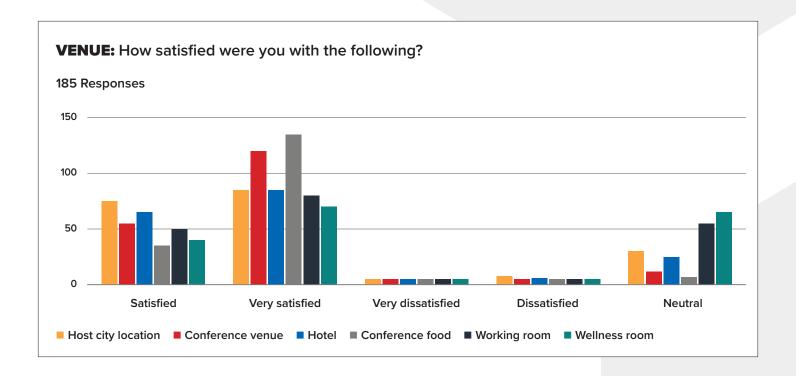
In closing, as one participant stated, "This conference was great... The connection to action and involvement of the people the work is meant to support was evident and admirable." This spirit of collaboration, purpose, and commitment to meaningful change defines the success of the CIPSRT Conference 2025 and sets a strong foundation for future gatherings.











"THIS CONFERENCE WAS GREAT... THE CONNECTION TO ACTION AND INVOLVEMENT OF THE PEOPLE THE WORK IS MEANT TO SUPPORT WAS EVIDENT AND ADMIRABLE."

### **APPENDIX A**

### **Concurrent session summaries**

Implementing Psychoeducation and the Canadian Psychological Standard in Public Safety organizations to improve employee mental health and wellbeing

### **Greg Anderson**

Public Safety personnel are at an increased risk of developing mental health challenges due to the job's nature and being exposed to psychologically traumatic events. However, by increasing resilience, the likelihood of developing mental health challenges may decrease and improve wellbeing. Three psychoeducational resource courses were developed by focusing on three pillars of resilience: the individual, family, and the workplace. The courses were delivered alongside the implementation of the Psychological Health & Safety in the Workplace standard, a management system focusing on workplace psychosocial factors that impact mental health, to different agencies. Two fire and three police agencies' progress were documented over three years. Most agencies improved their implementation of Psychological Health & Safety in the Workplace standard with workplaces moving towards a positive environment that supports wellbeing.

### Overview of Mental Health Among Quebec Paramedics in a Post-Pandemic Context

### Sarah Bourget & Isabelle Cindy Légaré

Paramedics are a crucial part of patient care, playing a vital role in prehospital care during a crisis. The study aims to provide an overview of the psychological health of Quebec paramedics in a post pandemic context by using validated questionaries. The study contributes to Quebec's scientific knowledge by determining the proportion of paramedics experiencing symptoms of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and levels of burnout. Results confirmed symptoms of depression and anxiety; 18% of respondents would benefit from treatment for PTSD, 44% being affected by burnout, 69% with depersonalization, and 65% with moderate to low self-accomplishments. Further research is needed for certain trends like male respondents scoring higher than female respondents (except for anxiety) and lower scores in self-accomplishment.

### Co-designing recommendations to improve crisis line services for public safety personnel: Results from a national mixed methods study

#### Allison Crawford

Public safety personnel (PSP) experience higher rates of mental health distress, exposure to traumatic events, and risk of suicide. Crisis lines may assist in filling the gap in mental health services. The study reviewed crisis line data, reasons individuals accessed crisis lines, interaction of dynamics, and outcomes experiences by public safety personnel. Through a national survey, the study explored the needs, preferences, and barriers for PSP to access crisis lines. Semi-structured interviews were held with PSP who accessed or thought of accessing crisis lines to further understand their experiences. Focus groups with crisis sector staff were conducted to gain insight into training and resources. Data confirmed that PSP do access crisis lines when experiencing suicidal behaviour. PSP prefer to speak to crisis line staff who understand their mental health needs, context of work, and technical language. PSP experience complex barriers to accessing crisis lines, fear of stigma, and skepticism of mental health services. The study creates an opportunity to refine crisis line services to better serve the unique needs of PSP.

### PAWSitive Support: Exploring the Role of Canines in High-Risk Policing and Human Health and Wellbeing

### Colleen Dell

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police's (RCMP) Sensitive and Specialized Investigative Services (SSIS) has a health and wellness training program that trains employees on how to incorporate health and wellness into their everyday life. Different strategies to promote health and wellness are shared, including the incorporation of therapy dogs. Research indicates dogs have a positive impact on human health and wellbeing. The presentation provides a distinction between therapy, facility, and service dogs and their contribution to policing at the organizational, managerial, and individual level.

# Research into post-trauma interventions in police organizations; what are the best practices?

### Andrée-Ann Deschênes

Police officers are at a significant risk of developing stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, and psychological stress due to attending critical events like crisis situations, mass tragedies, and events involving children. Studies show that by attending a potentially psychologically traumatic event (PPTE) can significantly impact the psychological health of police officers. To understand

how to counter the psychological impact of PPTE, research was conducted over three years using a quasi-experimental pre-post design with an experimental and a control group to evaluate the impact of a one-month psychological support pathway. Sixty-four PPTEs were tracked across 96 police officers from 13 Quebec police organizations. Results indicate a significant effect of support pathways when provided by the organization after PPTE exposure, which can reduce self-reported post-traumatic stress symptoms and improve cohesion among employees.

### Public Safety Personnel in Crisis: A Review of the Gap Between Well-being Programming and Formal Mental Health Services

### **Janet Ellis**

Public safety personnel (PSP) are disproportionately exposed to traumatic events compared to other populations. PSP being exposed to traumatic events can create mental health challenges. Although PSP have high rates of suicide and mental health challenges, there is little literature on effective interventions for PSP in crisis, before accessing mental health services. The review sought to find interventions that were neither formal mental health services nor routine well-being programming. Interventions reviewed were psychological first aid, mindfulness, internet delivered CBT, critical incident stress debriefing, CBT-based text messages, cumulative stress debriefing, eclectic psychotherapy, narrative exposure therapy, EMDR, psychosocial support programs, and others. Results found that although there are interventions available, there is not enough research on interventions for high-risk PSP in crisis.

### **UK Perspectives**

### Matt Fossey, Sam Lundrigan, Chris Webber, Faye Acton, Emma Williams, Sarah McLachlan

Professors Matt Fossey and Sam Lundrigan, and researchers from Angelia Ruskin University in Chelmsford England presented on a range of topics including: the new Centre of Excellence for Equity in Uniformed Public Services, psychological safety, sexism and sexual harassment, police wellbeing, impact on children and families and the transition from public service to civilian life, all across the Uniformed Public Services.

# Clinical Perspective and the Role of PSPNET in Supporting the Mental Health of Public Safety Personnel

### Amélie Fournier

Public safety personnel (PSP) face numerous stressors therefore it is important for PSP to be equipped with tools to manage their psychological well-being. Skills like being able to identify clinical symptoms, harmful thoughts, emotional distress, and having access to programs like PSPNET are important in addressing anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorders. The presentation explored symptoms management strategies based on internet delivered CBT, intervention strategies and the impact on resilience and psychological wellbeing and learn early symptoms that may indicate a need for accessing support.

# Police Work in Indigenous Contexts: Psychological Health Challenges at Work

#### **Annie Gendron**

In Quebec, Indigenous police forces are facing a staffing shortage impacting operational capacity and placing pressure on officers. Policing in Indigenous communities pose unique challenges for Indigenous police forces. Indigenous police forces are exposed to high rates of crime, suicide, interpersonal violence, and psychosocial problems while trauma from assimilation and acculturation in Indigenous communities present unique challenges for Indigenous police forces. Repeated exposure to social issues and stress can lead to psychological distress and burnout. 38 officers in various Indigenous contexts participated in five consultation groups using a group analysis method to further understand challenges officers face and practical solutions. During the consultation groups a range of issues appeared (resources, training, professional career, and interpersonal relationships) that point to a need for psychological support in the workplace.

# Peer support guidelines for Veterans, military, public safety personnel, and their Families Leo Goudal & Laryssa Lamrock

The Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families established the National Peer Support Community Network (PSCN) through partnership with the Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research and Treatment (CIPSRT). The PSCN goals are to advance best practice guidelines, create space for peers and support networks, and facilitate knowledge on peer support. The PSCN's guidelines are designed to assess and adapt existing peer support programs in organizations and provide a national evidence-based approach for new peer support

programs. Literature review and feedback from PSCN members, 12 evidence summaries were created that formed the sections of the guidelines. Consensus on summaries were achieved by two rounds of a modified Delphi survey were conducted on 49 statements. 42 reached consensuses in the survey, while remaining statements were finalized in PSCN meetings. Draft guidelines were reviewed by members of PSCN and other key stakeholders with guidelines being published in March 2025. The presentation explained how the guidelines were developed and current literature and expert consensus on best practice peer support with a focus on veterans, public safety personnel, and their families.

# Testimony After Trauma for Public Safety Personnel

### **Amanda Griffith-Conway**

From the lived experience of public safety personnel, including those who have provided support to colleagues undergoing investigation and court after a critical incident, there is an understanding for the need for continuous support following a critical incident. Focusing on eight dimensions of consideration: risk factors when testifying, courtroom preparedness, support during testimony, post testimony, of family members, challenges of investigation, processes of discovery, and the role of a trauma-informed courtroom. By offering support beyond the critical incident and well into the investigation and court procedure, additional harm may be reduced.

### A Journey of Hope: Strengthening Family and Mental Health in a Public Safety Career

### **Cynthia Hamilton Urquhart**

With a career span of over a combined sixty years in the RCMP, Cynthia Hamilton Urquhart and her husband have experienced the challenges and rewards of a career in public safety. In 2012 and 2013 at the end of their careers, Cynthia and her husband were diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. During their time of service, mental health challenges in public safety were hardly recognized. Sharing their story and journey towards healing, Cynthia, and her husband hope to inspire other public safety personnel and their families.

### Evidence into Action: Building Occupational Awareness Training for First Responders

### **Matt Johnson**

Matt Johnson, a full-time firefighter and mental health professional, provides an overview of the Fire Fighter Occupational Awareness Training (FFOAT) Program. The FFOAT program is a mental health initiative aimed at preventing psychological injuries in firefighters. Since 2023, the FFOAT program has enrolled over 10,000 participants. The FFOAT program builds on insight from the First Responder Resiliency Program (FRRP), which has been in operation since 2017. With findings from Dr. Duncan Shields, adjunct professor at the University of British Columbia, results from over 300 first responders who participated in the FRRP indicate significant reductions in PTSD, depression, and anxiety. The presentation emphasizes the importance of collaboration between stakeholders, management, educators, and frontline advocates for the program's successful implementation.

# The Mental Health and Wellness of Police Officers in Self-Administered Police Services

### Nick Jones & Daniel Bellegarde

Officers and civilian employees working in Self-Administered Police Service in Indigenous communities face unique challenges and additional stressors compared to RCMP and municipal police forces. The presentation offered insight into the unique challenges, mental health stressors, and promising development to mitigate stressors. Awareness of the unique challenges and stressors, along with proper funding are crucial in ensuring the level of police professionalism that is guaranteed under the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program.

# A path forward: An action plan on mental health and criminal justice in Canada

### Sandra Koppert & Howard Sapers

The Mental Health Commission of Canada is leading the development of a plan to support the mental health of individuals in contact with the Canadian criminal justice system and those who work for the Canadian criminal justice system. The action plan was created in response to calls from individuals with lived experience, employees of the justice system, and experts advocating for action that will produce change at the individual, societal, institutional, and systemic level. The action plan draws insights from various research, two research reports that look at national and international frameworks, widely distributed survey, input from advisory committee and working groups, and knowledge exchange to capture

diverse perspectives. The action plan is set to be released in 2026. The presentation provides insight into the draft action plan, overview level of the scope, and examples of recommendations and calls to actions.

# Working in CSC's Structured Intervention Units Laura McKendy

On November 30th, 2019, Structured Intervention Units (SIU) were implemented in Correctional Services of Canada (CSC). SIUs are an intervention-based accommodation for inmates who cannot be safely managed within mainstream units. Dynamics of the workplace in SIUs and staff experiences were examined in a larger field study of four SIUs. Results found numerous operational and organizational factors that impact workplace health and wellbeing. Staff reported heavy demands and timelines, complex inmate needs, population dynamics, and exposure to critical incidents. Staff also reported mental health challenges and high turnover as issues regarding human resources and staff wellbeing. The presentation spoke on these challenges and strategies to address challenges to mental health and wellbeing.

### How: What about the families? Lead to: What about the kids? Understanding the PSPNET Families Trajectory

### **Nathalie Reid**

Public Safety Personnel (PSP) and their families encounter unique challenges due to the career of public safety compared to non-public safety personnel families. PSP and their families must balance the challenges of the occupation and family that impact family wellbeing. Dr Reid gave an overview of resources available through PSPNET Families and the development of Public Safety Personnel Youth and Kids (PSPYK).

# Implementing SKY Resilience within the RCMP and VPD

### Seema Sharma

Behind the Badge report high rates of mental health disorders in RCMP members compared to the general population and other public safety personnel. Police officers need programming to support mental wellbeing. The SKY Resilience program has been implemented in police forces internationally, demonstrating effectiveness in improving mental health and resilience. Through a quasi-experimental program evaluation of SKY Resilience in collaboration with the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) and RCMP, self-report program data were collected using standardized and validated scales. Participants

included 67 participants from four cohorts from the VPD and 29 participants from one cohort from the RCMP. Results from all four cohorts of VPD participants include: 26% increase in positive effect, 30% decrease in negative effect; 43% increase in work vigor; 34% increase in work dedication; and 22% increase in work absorption. Data from one VPD cohort demonstrated a 53% reduction in perceived stress and a 37% improvement in sleep quality. With comparable results from RCMP. The SKY Resilience program may improve mental health and work-related outcomes across various police organizations.

### A view from the Responder Community of support excellence... How do we make it easy in a crisis Scott Wright

For Search and Rescue (SAR) responders, SAR work related events begin with the team. Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) is an approach many jurisdictions use, but a new approach, the Road to Mental Readiness (R2MR) has gained popularity. R2MR provides self-care training and personal resilience. It is important for program designers, advocates, practitioners, trainers, and clients to build understanding.

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