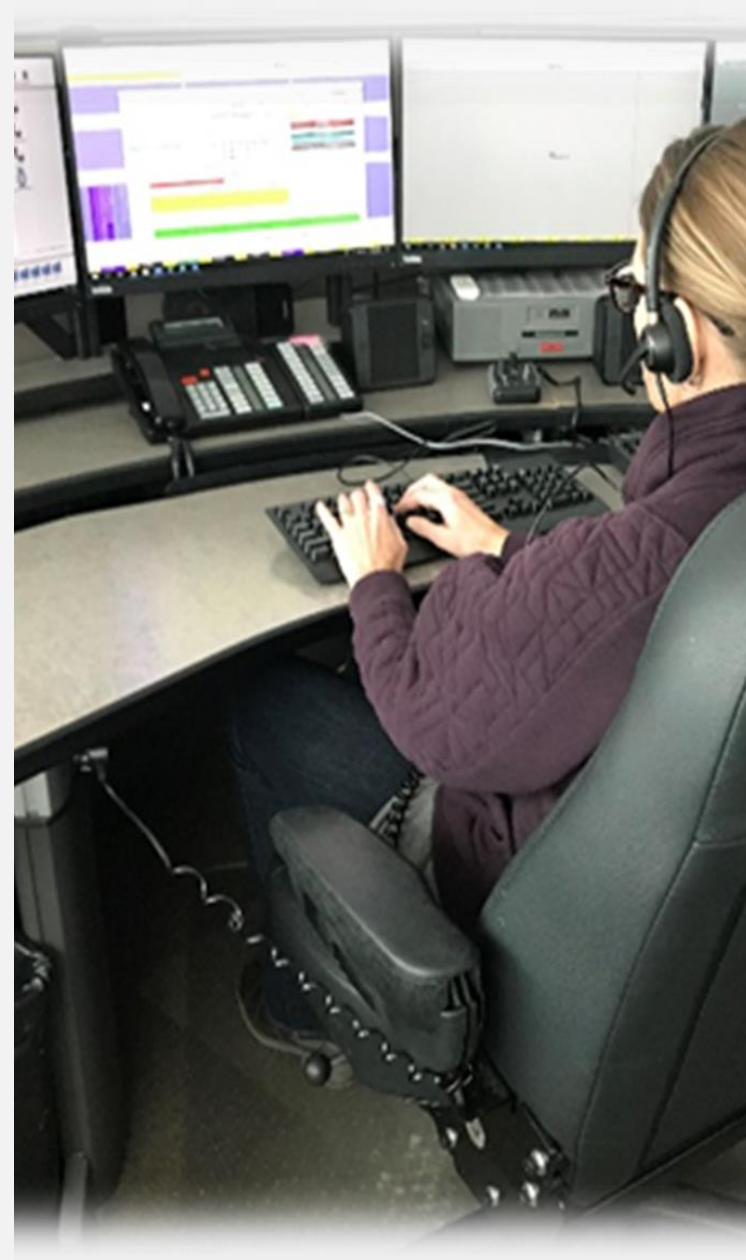


CIPSRT Town Hall

THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP
BEHAVIOURS ON THE
MENTAL WELL-BEING OF
PUBLIC SAFETY
COMMUNICATORS

Nadine Leduc



PUBLIC SAFETY
COMMUNICATORS

911 Operators
Dispatchers
Call Takers

- “events experienced by others that are learned about” (DSM-IV-TR)
- “experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event” (DSM-5)

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

- “a set of structures, routines, rules, and norms that guide and constrain behavior”
- Is formed through member interactions, shared experiences, and is **shaped by the behaviours of its leaders**

**PUBLIC SAFETY
COMMUNICATOR
SURVEY**

OBJECTIVES

1

Improve our understanding of communicator mental health

2

Characterize workplace stressors

3

Examine the impact of organizational culture

SURVEY PARTICIPATION

696 responses

- 27 French and 669 English

329 responses to
Question #1

Representation
from all provinces
and territories!

Great response
from police
communicators 😊

Poor response from
fire communicators
😞

Mixed response
from paramedics 😐

COMMUNICATOR STRESSORS

Constant exposure to duty-related secondary trauma

Demands of high-pressure environments

Excessive workloads

Frequent overtime

Downstaffing or understaffing

Lack of meaningful downtime

Inadequate debriefing after calls

Inadequate training

Inappropriate training for mental health calls

**SIX
EMERGENT
THEMES**

1. Organizational Affect

2. **Management and
Supervision**

3. Morale and Staffing

4. Division and Exclusion

5. Colleagues

6. Gender

MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION

The most responses (n=189)

The most subthemes (n=9)

1. Positive (n=24)
2. Don't understand communicator roles (n=32)
3. Ineffective management (n=33)
4. Less valued than uniformed members (n=7)
5. Unsupportive management (n=17)
6. Unclear chain of command (n=20)
7. Poor communication (n=9)
8. Abusive/toxic leaders (n=12)
9. Insufficient recognition of mental health issues (n=19)

**MANAGEMENT
BEHAVIOURS**

POSITIVE



Supportive

Respectful

Inclusive

Acknowledge

Forward thinking

ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITIES

**Excellent
peer
support
teams**

**Policies
to
remove
stigma**

**Proper
allocation
of
resources**

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Safe
spaces
for new
hires

Encourage
self-care

Stress
and
trauma
validated

COMMUNICATOR SENTIMENTS



Feel valued and supported



Contributions are appreciated



Motivated



Boost morale

**MANAGEMENT
BEHAVIOURS**

NEGATIVE

- Quick to punish
- “Suck it up”
- Sexual harassment
- Preferential treatment of uniformed responders
- Permitting poor treatment from responders
- Dismissing operational impacts of decisions
- Dismissing operational stress injuries

IF YOU PERMIT IT,
YOU PROMOTE IT

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Psychologically unsafe work environments:

- Conflict
- Toxic
- Bullying
- Harassment
- Gender bias

**COMMUNICATOR
SENTIMENTS**

Belittled

Devalued

Unheard

Excluded

Minimized

Fearful

EXPRESSED FEAR

- Asking questions
- Disclosing mental health struggles
- Appearing weak
- Feeling judged
- Losing respect from peers

**FEAR IS THE ENEMY OF
FLOURISHING**

IMPACTS TO ORGANIZATION

- Increase burnout and turnover
- Increased spending on sick leave/training
- Cyclical stigma
- Cyclical patriarchy
- Limited diversity
- Erosion of trust
- Health and safety of public at risk

IMPACTS TO COMMUNICATORS

- Increased workload
- Insufficient training
- Increased stress
- Lack of meaningful downtime
- Increased prevalence of OSIs
- Risk of developing PTSD
- Lasting impact on morale
- Well-being impacted away from work

DISCUSSION

- **Tacit group norms guide behaviour**
- Stigma surrounding mental health remains rooted in the tacit culture
- While organizations formally endorse mental health initiatives, **supports are commonly absent**
- Communicators feel hopeless, devalued, and forgotten

CONCLUSION



Behaviour aligned with value statements =
supportive and inclusive culture



Effective leaders + adequate resources =
supportive culture



Supportive cultures can mitigate impacts of
stress and regular exposure to potentially
psychological traumatic events

THANK YOU!

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