Abstract

Law enforcement officers experience enormous job-related stress burdens in comparison to other career fields. Officers routinely encounter stressful situations from sources specific to their occupation, particularly their frequent exposure to dangerous situations, violence, and witnessing human suffering and depravity. Negative effects of occupational stress are exhibited in physical, physiological, emotional, and psychological changes. Law enforcement stress management programs are developed to provide resources to offset the negative effects, provide positive coping strategies to reduce stress, and increase the officer’s quality of life. This project developed program documents, policies, and procedures for the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) and Peer Support Program (PSP), for the Alaska State Troopers utilizing best practice recommendations. The CIRT supports troopers immediately following critical incidents, such as violent crimes, homicides, suicides, or officer involved shootings. The PSP operates in non-immediate ways, helping troopers who experience difficulty coping, in the long-term, with occupational stress.