



Join the Movement: Aspiring Towards Zero Suicide in Colorado

Closing Keynote – John Coppedge Lieutenant, Denver Police Department; Co-Coordinator of Denver Police Department Peer Support Team

Date: Friday May 19, 2017

Location: Lowry Conference Center

Time: 2:30pm – 3:30pm

Title:

Peer Support and Suicide Prevention in the Workplace and Law Enforcement

Abstract:

Law Enforcement as a profession has, much like other male dominated professions, experienced a high suicide rate. Officers are generally more resilient than members of the public they serve. However, the repeated exposure to trauma, coupled with a negative work environment, and a culture that says you do not ask for help, create a cumulative effect that leads to an elevated rate of suicide. A comprehensive, and administratively supported, peer support program coupled with competent mental health oversight has proven to be an effective strategy to combat the high risk of suicide found in the profession. A successful peer support program requires sound clinical oversight by psychologist that understand the workplace culture they are serving. Additionally, the selection of the right peers to act as counselors is important. John will present information on how to identify the right personnel to act as peer counselors. His presentation will detail the importance of confidentiality, that is imbedded in policy, in building a program that employees will utilize and trust.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of the session, participants will be able to:

- Understand the role of peer support as part of a comprehensive strategy to reduce workplace suicide.
- Understand how to conduct a suicide intervention with a co-worker.
- Understand the importance of confidentiality in a work place peer support program.
- Understand the types of behavioral traits that make an effective peer support counselor.

Presenter Biography:

John Coppedge has been a police officer for over 24 years, currently serving as a Lieutenant supervising the training division. In his professional life, John oversees his police departments recruit officer training, in-service training, professional development, and resiliency programs. In addition to those responsibilities, since 2001, he has volunteered as a member and co-coordinator of his agency's Peer Support team where he has been involved in counseling fellow officers and their families. John was a member of the development team that created the police departments employee substance abuse intervention program and has worked with the city of Denver to develop employee wellness programs for all city employees. He has conducted training internationally on vicarious trauma, stress, peer support, resiliency and suicide. He has presented those topics to first responders, district attorney's, victim advocates, psychologist at the American Psychological Association conference, and many other groups. John has consulted with the International Association of Chiefs of Police and law enforcement agencies on best practices for building and establishing peer support programs. In his personal life, John has been married for 30 years, he and his wife have four adult children and one granddaughter. In addition, John is currently pursuing his master's degree in counseling. Contact information: jcopp817@gmail.com

Citations:

Chen, S., Westman, M., & Hobfoll, S. E. (2015). The commerce and crossover of resources: Resource conservation in the service of resilience. *Stress and Health: Journal Of The International Society For The Investigation Of Stress*, 31(2), 95-105. doi:10.1002/smi.2574

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Mitchell, J., & Everly, G. (1997). *Critical incident stress debriefing: An operations manual for prevention of traumatic stress among emergency services and disaster worker*. (2nd Ed.) Ellicott City, Maryland: Chevron Publishing Corporation.

Slover, C., Tasci, D. (2013). *Trauma recovery handbook*. (2nd Ed.) (pp. 70 – 72). Denver, CO. Debra Tasci. ISBN 978-0-615-85996-5

Territo, L., & Sewell, J. D. (Eds.). (2007). *Stress management in law enforcement*. (2nd Ed.) Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.

Violanti, J. M. (2006). *The police: Perspectives on trauma and resiliency*.

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