

## *Suicide Calls Can Affect You*

Suicide calls can be traumatic. Police are often left feeling powerless to help survivors or victims. Some responders feel sad, some angry, and some may feel numb. All of these are normal reactions.

Factors that may heighten reactions:

- Personal history with suicide loss
- Personal history with suicidal thoughts or behaviors
- Time on scene
- Strong visual images, sounds, or smells
- Reminds you of someone in your life
- Victim is someone you know
- Victim is a child or young person
- The level of violence involved
- Distress of the family or individuals who found victim



*Special thanks to Sarah Gaer and the Riverside Trauma Center, Needham, MA for granting CT permission to adapt their original MA First Responder brochure.*

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This brochure was produced in partnership by:



The Connecticut Alliance to Benefit Law Enforcement (CABLE) is Connecticut's pre-eminent, interdisciplinary source for mental health training and consultation for public safety personnel. Donations fund Public Safety Peer Support, Wellness and Resiliency training.

[www.cableweb.org](http://www.cableweb.org)



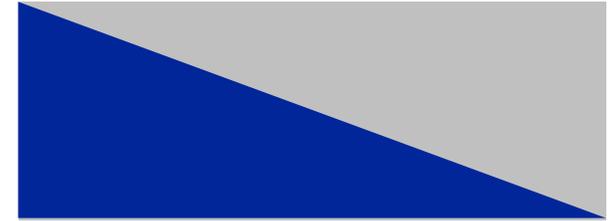
The CT State Troopers Offering Peer Support (STOPS) Program is a statewide peer support program that provides accessible, confidential, mutual peer support among sworn officers to support their overall health and wellness and connect them to support services, including professional counseling, when warranted.

[www.cspunion.org/member-resources/peer-support-program.html](http://www.cspunion.org/member-resources/peer-support-program.html)

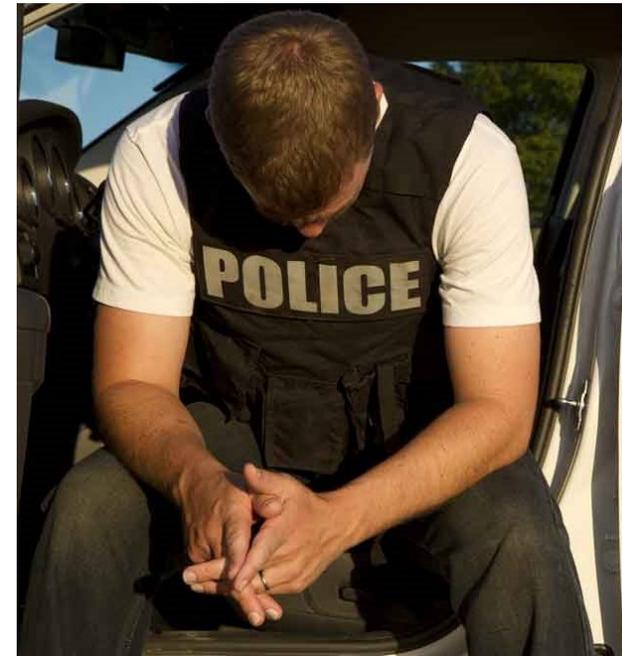


The CT Suicide Advisory Board (CTSAB) is a diverse statewide network with the mission to address the problem of suicide with a focus on prevention, intervention, and response.

[www.preventsuicide.org](http://www.preventsuicide.org)



## *Suicide Death is a Death like No Other: Self-Care After Response*



*“I’ve been in law enforcement for 22 years. You become desensitized to death, but something about suicide just affects you differently.”*

*~ CT State Trooper*

## [Pay Attention to Certain Signs](#)

Many first responders will feel back to normal within a few days of a tough call, but pay attention to any of these behavior changes you may experience:

- Quick to anger and argue
- Increased substance use
- Changes in sleep or appetite
- Upsetting dreams or nightmares
- Isolating yourself from people who are your usual supports
- Increased risk-taking behavior
- Loss of interest in things you like
- Loss of energy
- Increased nervousness
- Self-harm
- Suicidal feelings, thoughts, or actions.

If you have any of these experiences, please seek support, or immediate treatment in a life-threatening emergency.

## [Where You Can Find Support](#)

**Peers:** No one knows the stress of the job better than your peers. Peer support is free and a mutually beneficial experience. Contact your peer team member, CABLE (203)848-0320, or STOPS (860)250-6052.

**Family:** Our family members know us best. You do not have to go into detail about the call itself in order to talk about your feelings. If you are struggling, they probably already know.

**Chaplains/Faith Leaders:** Spirituality is a big part of many people's lives and Chaplains are available to support you.

### **Critical Incident Stress Management Teams**

**(CISM):** CISM teams can be activated to support the LEO 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If your agency does not have a CISM Team, please contact OFC Teresa Velez, CT CISM Regional Coordinator (917)-658-3484, or TFC Joy Owens STOPS (860)250-6052.

**Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** Your employee assistance program can provide confidential counseling to you and your family on personal, financial, relationship, and/or work-related problems that may impact your health, as well as your mental and emotional well-being.

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline/Veterans Crisis Line:** Available 24/7 to provide free and confidential support for people in distress, even if it is not a suicidal crisis: In CT call 211 or (800) 273-TALK (8255). Chat at [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

**Crisis Text:** A free, 24/7, confidential text message service for people in crisis. In CT text "CT" to 741741 or visit [www.crisistextline.org](http://www.crisistextline.org)

**Safe Call Now:** A resource for public safety employees to speak confidentially with officers, former law enforcement officers, public safety professionals and/or mental healthcare providers who are familiar with your line of work. Call (206)459-3020 or visit [www.safecallnow.org](http://www.safecallnow.org)

**COPLINE:** A CONFIDENTIAL 24-hour hotline answered by retired law enforcement officers who have gone through a strenuous vetting and training process to become an active listener. Copline peer listeners provide assistance with the successful management of various psychosocial stressors that impact a significant number of law enforcement officers and their families. Should the caller need further assistance the peer listener has access to vetted clinical referrals to therapists and programs throughout our callers regions to further assist with ongoing stressors. (800) COPLINE (267-5463) or visit [www.copline.org](http://www.copline.org)



## [Self-Care Tips](#)

**Find ways to enhance and prioritize your mental, emotional, and physical well-being.**

**Daily:**

**Sleep:** Long shifts and broken sleep is an inherent aspect of law enforcement. Sleep is imperative for health. Visit [www.sleepassociation.org/sleep-hygiene](http://www.sleepassociation.org/sleep-hygiene).

**Limit caffeine, nicotine and alcohol:** Substances can impact sleep and increase physical stimulation and anxiety levels. Limit them, especially after traumatic events.

**Use medication as prescribed:** Taking medicine as prescribed is important for addressing health conditions, and preventing misuse and abuse.

**Physical activity:** Help reduce stress by doing a type of exercise you enjoy several times a week.

**Mindfulness Meditation:** Supports emotional regulation, planning and problem-solving. It helps enhance rational thinking, reduce impulsivity, and increase empathy for and understanding of others.

**Make time for wellness:** We tend to get wrapped up in our "to do" list and for some reason having fun never makes it on that list. Having fun is an important way to let our mind and body unwind.

**Annually:**

**Physical:** An annual exam with your Primary Care Physician helps determine the general status of your health. It gives you a chance to talk to your provider about ongoing health concerns, pain or symptoms that you are experiencing, and provides an opportunity to develop a plan to address and manage them.

**Check-up from the neck up:** Wellness includes your mental and emotional health, as well as physical health. Your brain is the organ that controls your body, and it is important to support its health as well. Consult with your EAP or another mental health professional for an annual wellness check.