

Project Abstract

Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Grant/Employee Wellness Program/Peer Support

Collin County is the 6th largest county in Texas. Since 2010, the population has grown from 782,341 to an estimated 1,120,889 as stated in the U.S. Census Bureau.

The Collin County Sheriff's Office was established in 1846. The Collin County Sheriff's Office is a full service law enforcement agency employing trained and dedicated officers and civilian staff serving its citizens. A fundamental duty of the Sheriff's Office is to protect and serve the citizens of Collin County with fairness, compassion and respect. They demand excellence in the quality of the officers they employ stressing professionalism, integrity and timeliness so those they serve may feel secure.

The Collin County Sheriffs Office recognizes that its employees are subjected to the harmful effects of stress associated with critical incidents. To minimize the adverse effects of critical incident stress, the Collin County Sheriffs Office established a Peer Support Program (PSP) comprised of a Peer Support Group (PSG). The PSG consists of twenty-four (24) employees (sworn, non-sworn and civilian) and clinicians trained to provide peer support to department employees and family members following a traumatic event. The PSP is meant to be used in concert with the current Collin County Employee Assistance Program, not replace it. The purpose of the new program will be to fund the much needed training and assistance officers need in order to continue to and improve the delivery of and access to mental health services to officers and their families through the implementation of resilience training, suicide prevention, clinician check-ins as well as family sessions to improve wellness.

Objectives

The PSG has utilized a multi-dimensional approach through both a proactive and reactive format. The proactive element educated officers about stress and stress management prior to responding to traumatic events. It also educates the Command staff and supervisors about the appropriate use of the PSG. The program will be reactive by activating the PSG during and

after critical incidents to provide emotional support and professional referrals for those more impacted by these events and needing assistance.

PSP objectives will include but not be limited to: 1. Preventing and mitigating traumatic stress, 2. Intervening to aid in recovery from traumatic stress, 3. Accelerating recovery whenever possible, 4. Restoring officer to pre-incident level of functioning. 5. Maintain worker health and welfare, 6. Providing peer support in stressful situations, 7. Encourage professional counseling services.