

Ontario's Integrated Approach To PSP Mental Health and Wellbeing

CIPSRT Symposium - Together We Are Stronger: Showcasing
Collaborative Efforts to Support the Wellbeing of all Public Safety
Personnel

March 20, 2024

Staying Visible, Staying Connected, For Life – Directing Ontario’s Way Forward

In 2018, nine known deaths by suicide occurred among serving and retired police officers in the province of Ontario.

In June 2019 Ontario’s Chief Coroner assembled an expert panel who presented **14 main recommendations outlining 36 actions and specifications.**

First among the recommendations was a call for the formation of an Ontario Police Members Mental Health Collaborative to serve as a standing body that would initiate, guide, monitor and report on an urgent and comprehensive plan of action in Ontario.

In February 2021 the Government announced the creation of four tables for police, fire, corrections and emergency health services.

Report Recommendations

1. Provide more equitable access to trauma informed mental health professionals
2. Support the development of comprehensive mental health and wellness strategies to advance a no-wrong-door policy across the province, with a view to reducing barriers to members in need of immediate access and care
3. Develop best practice guidelines to support people managers in addressing mental health related issues like accommodations and return-to-work decision processes
4. Support broad knowledge sharing through a web-based PSP/families mental health portal to make available information/resources to support open and informed conversations about mental health and well-being
5. Address stigma and organizational culture through programming aimed to normalize mental health challenges and reduce stigmatizing behaviours and assumptions

Our Scope - Public Safety Personal Across Ontario

PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL*				
MCCSS (Includes Youth Justice Employees)	MOH (Includes municipal Paramedics and Ambulance Communications Officers)	SOLGEN (Includes provincial Corrections and provincial Police)	OTHER SOLGEN PSP **	Municipal/First Nations Services (Fire and Police)
~790	~11,600	~15,600	~845	~50,000
TOTAL				78,835

**Numbers are approximate*

***Includes coroners, forensic pathologists, fire investigators, forensic scientists, emergency field officers, animal welfare inspectors*

Our Plan for Action

Vision	Mission	Commitment
To build an integrated safety net that provides the right mental health supports at the right time for all personnel in public safety organizations across Ontario.	To significantly improve the mental health and well-being of all public safety personnel and the organizations in which they work.	To strive for the availability of equitable and sustainable mental health supports and services across all public safety personnel sectors.
Strategic Goals		
Through partnerships , support sustainable and integrated mental health services customized to the needs of PSP	Reflect the broad diversity of the public safety sector and provide equity of services and supports	Enable access to the continuum of mental health services and supports with a focus on mental health promotion and resiliency
Implement mental health programs and services based on robust evidence from emerging and current best practices	Champion a culture that reduces the stigma of seeking mental health supports	Coordinate the collection of available mental health data and build a robust framework focused on results and impact
Areas of Focus		
Individual - Every PSP in Ontario has access to a range of evidence-based supports when and where they need them.	Organizations - Every PSP workplace establishes a supportive culture and develops greater awareness of the impact of MH injuries on their employees.	System - The mental health system is more efficiently aligned across orders of government and all PSP sectors to build an integrated mental health safety net with a focus on mental wellness and resiliency.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge and leverage existing and ongoing work to support the mental health of personnel in PSP organizations Measure processes, outcomes, and collective accountability for the mental health and wellness of employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on mental health promotion Align and integrate a whole-of-sector approach that engages families and personnel in PSP organizations with lived experience Deliver new and improved services through innovation 	

Critical Roles in Achieving the Mandate

OVERSIGHT

Deputy Solicitors General
(Community Safety & Correctional Services)

SolGen Executives Mental Health Steering Committee

- Associate Deputy Minister
- SolGen – executive representation from Animal Welfare, Coroners, Corrections, Fire, Forensic Science/Pathology, Policing (OPP/Public Safety Division) – Ad Hoc members as needed
- Ministry of Health – Emergency Health Services Division
- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services – Youth Justice Division

SUPPORT/
COORDINATION

SolGen Mental Health Secretariat

The Secretariat supports mental health initiatives for PSP and employees within SolGen as well as the Ministry of Health. It provides support to the mental health collaboratives (Corrections, Emergency Health Services, Fire, Police and leverages supporting tables to provide expertise and lived experience.

COLLABORATION/
ALIGNMENT

Mental Health Collaborative
Table
Police

Mental Health Collaborative
Table
Fire

Mental Health Collaborative
Table
Corrections

Mental Health Collaborative
Table
**Emergency Health
Services**

EVIDENCE
GENERATION

Joint Knowledge Sub-Committee for Public Safety Personnel

Peer Support Task
Team

Family Task Team

Web Portal Task Team

Anti-Stigma Task Team

What has our Work Enabled?

Funding

Through the Ontario 2022 Budget, SolGen secured \$45.2M, over three years, to develop and implement programming to support the mental health and wellness of public safety personnel across the province.

The program will deliver on a systematic, province-wide approach for promoting equitable access to effective and evidence-based mental health services and create an online knowledge sharing platform for wellness leads across all sectors.

Leveraging Research and Expertise

Worked with CIPSRT to better understand existing evidence base and are sharing the findings through a MH Programming Framework.

In addition to the Mental Health Collaborative Tables, Ontario has created supporting tables that are able to bring needed advice and expertise to the work. Tables include:

- Joint Knowledge Sub-Committee
- Anti-Stigma Advisory Table
- Inclusion Advisory Table
- Evaluation Advisory Table, and
- Key Government Partners Table

Developing Cross-Sectoral Resources

[Ontario.ca Resource Page](#)

Promotion of access to guided navigation supports along the full mental health continuum, encourages open and informed conversations to reduce mental health stigma and widely disseminates information and resources on the significance of mental health and wellness.

Providing More Comprehensive Access to Available Programs

PSPNET

Province-wide promotion of a culturally competent, trauma informed, evidence-based mental health programming for all serving and former public safety personnel.

PSPNET is a free, confidential, internet-based Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (iCBT) program that supports the mental health needs of current and former public safety personnel.

Before Occupational Stress (BOS)

Province-wide promotion of an equitable, evidence informed program that builds mental health resiliency, skills, and knowledge for managing stress related to traumatic experiences.

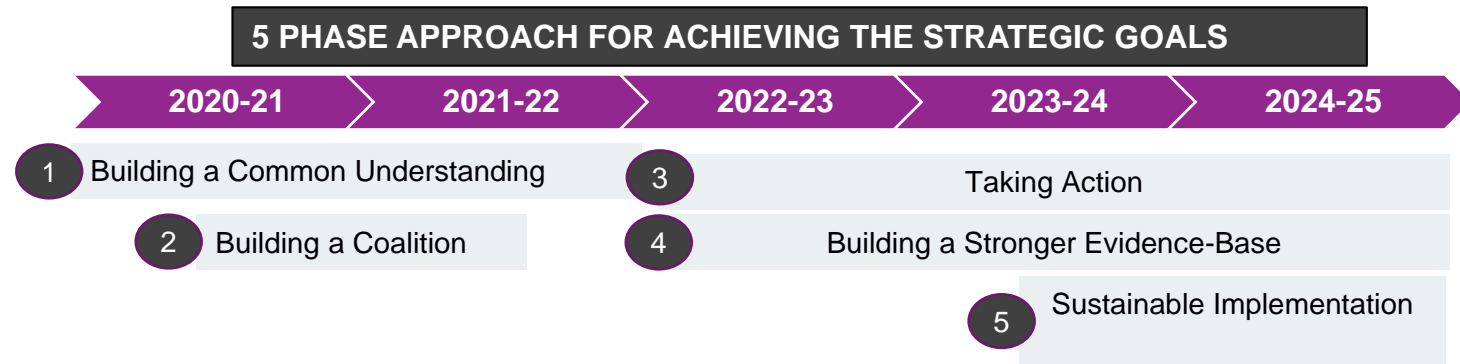
BOS combines educational and experiential training to mitigate the effects of operational stress and educate public safety personnel about potential mental health challenges.

PeerConnect Pilot

Leveraging available COVID – 19 funding, Ontario launched a one-year pilot to provide public safety personnel with peer support services, resources and tools that are considered effective in coping with Occupational Stress Injuries. Over 40 services have participated in the pilot, representing approximately 10,000 PSP across Ontario.

What We've Learned

- By focusing on wellness, resiliency and early intervention we are reducing direct and indirect costs to PSP, their families and the organizations in which they work
- Performance measurement and evaluation is hard and takes time – pilot programs where necessary to better understand program outcomes and make changes
- So much work is underway – leverage what exists and adapt when necessary
- Broadly engage all impacted individuals and take a systems approach to better integration of programs and services
- Take a phased approach. Building a strong foundation at the outset has been critical to our success.



- Continue to evolve to maintain engagement with stakeholders, PSP, their families and the organizations in which they work

Contact us anytime

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