



RESOURCES FOR SUPPORTING POLICE OFFICER HEALTH & WELL-BEING

» During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond

Resources

The COVID-19 crisis has created many challenges for you as a law enforcement officer or leader. You need to adapt to new public health recommendations while still protecting your community. The health and safety risks you face at work, combined with increased community needs and increased nonwork demands like child care, can put you under serious mental strain. **It is important for you to do everything you can to protect your health and well-being during this time (and even after life returns to “normal”).** This guide lists some resources to help you do that.



RESOURCES FOR OFFICERS: TAKING CARE OF THE HEALTH & WELL-BEING OF YOU & YOUR FAMILY

» Domestic Abuse Resources

The stress related to public health crises can affect not only officers, but their families as well. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to increases in domestic abuse worldwide. Domestic abuse includes behaviors that physically harm, cause fear, or prevent a partner from doing what they wish or force them to behave in ways they do not want. Increased stress and tension; more confinement to the home; and isolation from extended family, friends, the community, and support resources are all conditions that increase the likelihood of abuse. These conditions may be worse among police officers and their families because officers must continue to work and serve their communities during the health crisis. They are exposed to mental and physical health risks while trying to meet unprecedented challenges in the communities they serve. The [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) (NDVH) provides [help for victims of domestic abuse](#) as well as [resources for abusive partners](#) to keep families safe.

The NDVH offers the checklist of questions on the following page to help assess whether you may be hurting your partner.

If any of these behaviors sound like how you act or how your partner reacts, it could be a red flag that you may be hurting them. If you are questioning your own behavior at all, or if someone else has brought it to your attention, acknowledging it is a step in the right direction. NDVH advocates are available 24/7 to help both victims of abuse and individuals who are concerned about their own behavior at 1.800.799.SAFE (7233) and through [secure online chat](#) in more than 200 languages. All support is free and confidential.

The NDVH offers this checklist of questions to help assess whether you may be hurting your partner:

How do you act toward your partner? Do you...

- » Get angry or insecure about your partner's relationships with others (friends, family, coworkers) and feel possessive?
- » Call and text frequently to check up on your partner, or have them check in with you?
- » Check up on your partner in different ways (such as reading their personal emails or checking their texts)?
- » Feel like your partner needs to ask your permission to go out, get a job, go to school, or spend time with others?
- » Get angry or insecure about your partner's relationships with others (friends, family, coworkers) and feel possessive?
- » Call and text frequently to check up on your partner, or have them check in with you?
- » Check up on your partner in different ways (such as reading their personal emails or checking their texts)?
- » Feel like your partner needs to ask your permission to go out, get a job, go to school, or spend time with others?
- » Get angry when your partner doesn't act the way you want them to or do what you want them to?
- » Blame your anger on drugs, alcohol, or your partner's actions?
- » Find it very difficult to control your anger and calm down?
- » Express your anger by threatening to hurt your partner, or actually physically doing so?
- » Express your anger verbally through raising your voice, name calling, or using put-downs?
- » Forbid your partner from spending money, or require that they have an allowance and keep receipts of their spending?
- » Force or attempt to force your partner to be intimate with you?
- » Blow up in anger at small incidents or "mistakes" your partner makes?

How does your partner react? Do they...

- » Seem nervous around you?
- » Seem afraid of you?
- » Cry because of something you don't let them do, or something you made them do?
- » Cringe or move away from you when you're angry?
- » Seem scared or unable to contradict you or speak up about something?
- » Restrict their own interaction with friends, coworkers, or family to avoid displeasing you?

Mental & Physical Health Resources

Staying well means protecting your own physical health and safety, maintaining your mental and emotional health, and keeping your loved ones safe. The Collaborative Reform Initiative Technical Assistance Center (CRI-TAC), a program of the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office in the U.S. Department of Justice, created a 2-page flyer on [Officer Wellness and Resiliency During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). Here are some of its practical recommendations for prioritizing mental and physical wellness during the pandemic:

- » Take care of your body. Eat healthfully, exercise regularly, practice good sleep habits, and limit alcohol.
- » Connect with others to keep your support system strong. Use phone or video calls, social media, or virtual town halls.
- » Practice mindfulness. [United We Om](#) offers free meditation, breathing, and yoga classes online and is good for beginners.
- » Keep up activities you usually enjoy. Go for a walk, listen to music, read a book, or watch a movie.
- » Avoid too much exposure to the news.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) created a short flyer, [COVID-19: Health and Safety for Law Enforcement Families](#). It provides information about the virus itself and gives practical tips for talking to children about COVID-19 and explaining hygiene practices to children.

The Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) developed a [list of police officer health and wellness resources](#) that are available to officers any time, but are particularly useful in managing the stress and challenges related to COVID-19. The list includes links and information about the following:

Source Name	Contact	Description
VALOR Officer Safety App	https://www.valorforblue.org/VALOR-App	Promotes mental and physical preparation for officers. Available via Apple App Store or Google Play.
1st Help	http://1sthelp.net/	Quick access to resources on mental health and other topics. Answer a few questions to access a database of relevant local and national resources. Additionally, 1stHelp will ship free resource cards to any individual or department that would like to hand them out.
Cpline	https://cpline.org/ 800.COPLINE (800.267.5463)	24/7 trained peer support and referrals for continued assistance. Available at no cost to officers and their families.
Safe Call Now	https://www.safecallnow.org/ 206.459.3020	Confidential 24-hour crisis referral service for public safety and emergency services personnel and their families. Staffed by current and former law enforcement and public safety professionals.
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/ 800.273.TALK (800.273.8255)	24-hour, free, confidential support for people in distress.
Crisis Text Line	https://www.crisistextline.org/ Text HOME to 741741 Contact by Facebook Messenger	Mental health support for stress related to coronavirus, anxiety, emotional abuse, depression, academic stress (which can be especially relevant for officers' children), or other issues

RESOURCES FOR AGENCY LEADERS: SUPPORTING THE HEALTH & WELL-BEING OF YOUR STAFF

» Trusted National Resources for Protecting
Officers During COVID-19

The IACP document, [COVID-19: Health and Safety for Law Enforcement Families](#), contains a section on how agencies can support law enforcement families during the pandemic. Communication is key for alleviating the fears and distresses of officers and family members. Your agency can help.

- » Establish a clear path of regular and frequent communication to law enforcement families, such as an email list, a dedicated social media account, or an online group.
- » Share proactive steps and safety protocols being taken to ensure the health and well-being of officers and their families, including information on health care, mental wellness, and employee assistance programs (EAPs).
- » Engage with family or spousal support groups to disseminate official agency messaging to family members.

Visit PERF's [comprehensive web page](#) to see up-to-date resources for agency leaders about how agencies are responding to the threat posed by COVID-19, as well as more general guidance from PERF and the federal government. The page features daily [COVID-19 reports](#) on varied topics, such as communicating with immigrant communities, managing COVID-19 demonstrations in state capitals, and staffing and scheduling during the pandemic. It also has a [section highlighting effective agency responses](#), such as encouraging personal safety precautions, postponing training, limiting access to facilities, accommodating working parents, and suspending in-person community engagement programs.

The suspensions of those in-person community engagement programs come at the same time that the social distancing required to slow the spread of COVID-19 can cause community members to feel isolated and lonely and make it difficult for them to access much-needed support and resources. You are on the front lines of response and need to know how to help them. RTI International developed [Resources for Police to Support the Community During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond](#). It contains trusted resources for both officers and agencies and tips on both what and how to effectively communicate with community members during this time.

Unfortunately, law enforcement agencies need to prepare officers for the possibility of encountering a COVID-19-related unattended death. To support agencies, CRI-TAC developed [Considerations for Law Enforcement Encountering COVID-19-Related Deaths](#), which includes considerations for communicating, coordinating, and reporting; protecting the physical safety of officers; communicating with family; and media relations.

Local Resources for Supporting Officer Health & Well-Being

In addition to the national resources provided above, there are also high-quality, accessible resources at the local level that can help support the health, safety, and well-being of officers.

Location		Official website link:	
Resource 1 name		Resource 1 link:	
Resource 1 description			
Resource 2 name		Resource 2 link:	
Resource 2 description			
Resource 3 name		Resource 3 link:	
Resource 3 description			

TAKING ACTION » As an individual officer or agency leader, you can

help support officer health and wellness during the pandemic by using these resources and others related to COVID-19 and sharing them widely with peers, other staff, and families.

Many websites, including the IACP page, [Law Enforcement Information on COVID-19](#), provide materials in multiple languages, including some of those referenced above. These materials are formatted for printing, sharing online, or both. Consider sharing information about key resources on your internal website, staff message boards and mailing lists, and other high-traffic communication channels and locations. Normalize and encourage use of available supports and model behaviors for maintaining mental and physical well-being. You can help reduce the stigma of seeking help and support and demonstrate commitment to keeping your colleagues and your staff safe, healthy, and well during COVID-19 and beyond.

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