

# First Responder Curriculum Development Project: Mental Health & Resiliency-Building

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# Agenda

First Responder Mental Health

Recent Call to Action

First Responder Mental Health Coalition (FRMHC)

First Responder Family Member Mental Health Survey

First Responder Curriculum Development Project

- Overview
- Needs Assessment Plan
- Preliminary Discussion Topics
- Next Steps

# First Responder Mental Health

1

- A national Canadian survey found that 44.5% of first responder participants reported one or more symptoms consistent with mental health disorders (Carleton et al., 2018).

2

- It is estimated that over 70,000 Canadian first responders have experienced PTSD in their lifetimes (Wilson, Harminder & Georgi, 2016).

3

- 11% of first responders have reported suicidal thoughts as a result of the job (Canadian First Responder Suicides Stress Vital Need for Support, 2016)

4

- In 2016, 23 first responders and 5 military members died by suicide (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2016).

# Call to Action: WSIB and OHSPIP

- ❖ In 2016, the Ministry of Labour (MOL) amended the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act (1997) with Bill 163: Supporting Ontario's First Responders Act, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (MOL, 2016).
- ❖ In 2017, the MOL issued a call for proposals as part of the 2017-2018 Occupational Health, Safety, and Prevention Innovation Program (OHSPIP). Focus areas for Priority #1 (Supporting Workplace Mental Health) were:
  1. Training and education for occupations (e.g., first responders) where on-the-job traumatic mental/post-traumatic stress can be prevalent (MOL, 2017)
  2. Development of programs or services to support workers dealing with mental health issues (MOL, 2017)



# First Responder Mental Health Coalition (FRMH)

- ❖ In 2017, several first responder organizations and other agencies across Windsor-Essex County (WEC) formed a First Responder Mental Health Coalition.
- ❖ The purpose of the coalition was to prepare an OHSPiP program proposal for an integrated, collaborative, and unified approach to mental wellness support for first responder and affiliated agencies in WEC.
- ❖ The program proposal, *An Innovative Approach to Promoting and Supporting Mental Health in Windsor-Essex County First Responders*, was submitted and approved for funding by the Ministry of Labour.



# First Responder Mental Health Coalition (FRMHC): Six Partnership Objectives

1

Conduct an environmental scan of first responder mental health programs, services, resources, capacities, and gaps in WEC.

2

Work with representatives from St. Clair College to investigate the feasibility of developing a common mental health module to be included in all first responder programs offered by the college.

3

Establish a mental health peer support sub-committee with representatives from each first responder organization to develop a clinician-guided peer support model, which can be tailored to each organization.

# First Responder Mental Health Coalition (FRMHC): Six Partnership Objectives

4

Identify regional first responder mental health training needs (from the environmental scan), as well as efficient, effective, and sustainable strategies to address those needs.

5

Assess the need for mental health support services among immediate family members of first responders. Based on the identified needs, offer and provide education and awareness, education, and skill-building opportunities using a cross-section of proven delivery methods.

6

Explore and pilot various animal support programs (e.g., K9 or Equine) to use with first responders experiencing occupational stress or job-related mental health issues.

# First Responder Mental Health Coalition (FRMHC): WECHU'S Role



Support the Canadian Mental Health Association – Windsor-Essex County Branch (CMHA-WECB) and first responder organizations in writing the OHSPiP Grant Application.



Develop and host a First Responder Family Survey that assesses the mental health needs of first responder family members.



Develop a mental health literacy and resiliency-based training module to embed into first responder curricular systems at local post-secondary institutions in WEC.

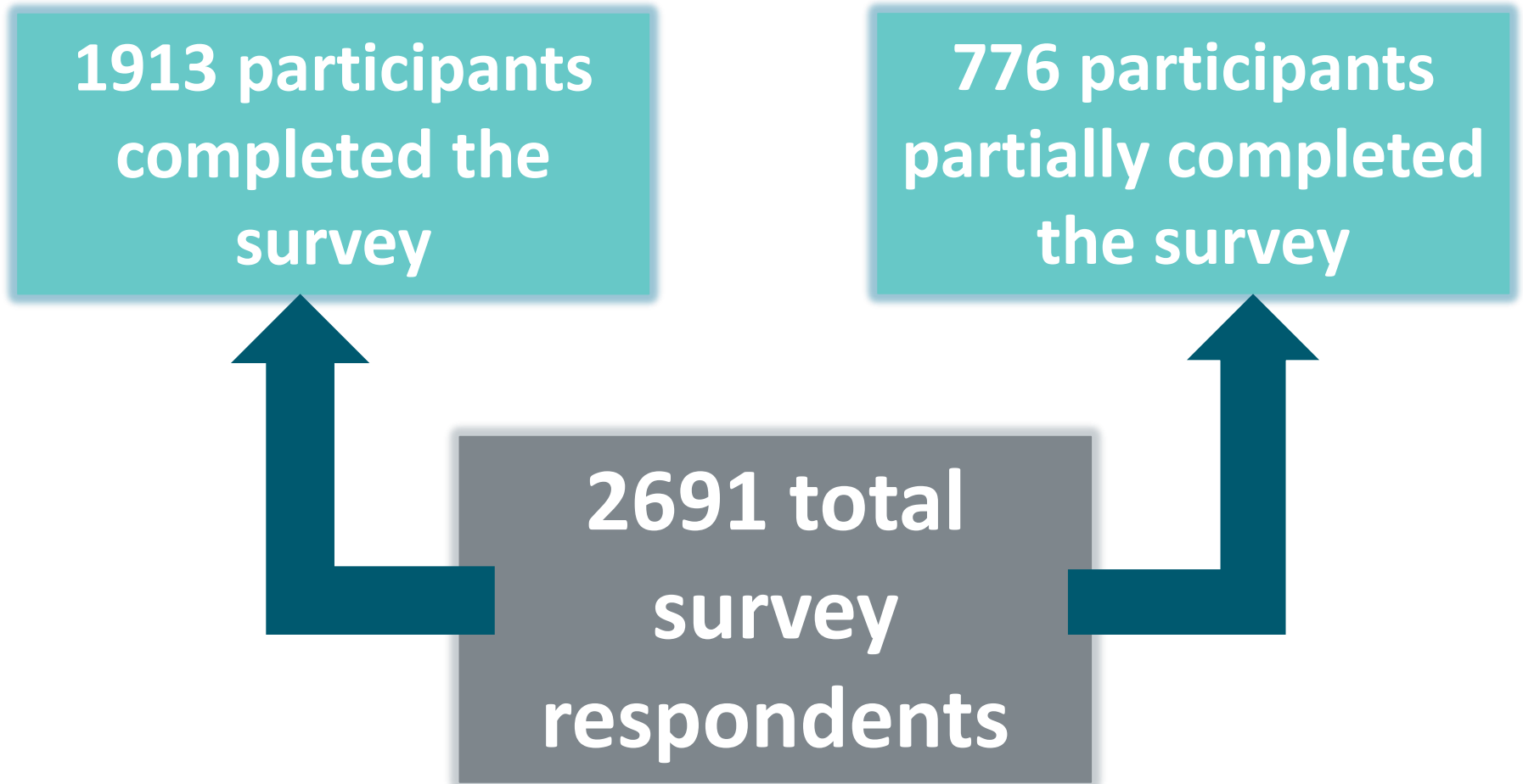


# First Responder Family Member Mental Health Survey

## First Responder Family Member Mental Health Survey

<b>Fall of 2018</b>	WECHU collaborates with the First Responder Mental Health Coalition to develop a needs assessment survey for first responder family members.
<b>March 19th, 2019</b>	WECHU hosts and launches the first responder family member mental health survey.
<b>May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019</b>	WECHU closes the first responder family member mental health survey.
<b>June, 2019</b>	WECHU organizes a data transfer to Family Services Windsor-Essex (FSWE).
<b>June, 2019 – Present</b>	FSWE facilitated the data analysis and will be presenting a final report to the FRMHC on October 17 <sup>th</sup> .

# First Responder Family Member Mental Health Survey: Response Rate



# **First Responder Curriculum Development Project: Mental Health Literacy & Resiliency-Building**

# First Responder Curriculum Development:

Why develop a mental health literacy and resiliency-based module?



Informal consultations with representatives from the FRMHC offer consistent anecdotal evidence that first responders desire more mental health and wellness education/training.

This is desired because first responder students often encounter critical incidents that challenge their coping resources.

# Mental Health Literacy and Resiliency-Based Training Module

To enhance resiliency in first responder students and early-career first responders, the WECHU will develop a curriculum module to equip students with more knowledge about:

**Mental Health**

**Mental Illness**

**Resilience**

**Occupational Stress**

**How/where to seek help**

**Self-care**

**Confronting and reducing stigma**

# Mental Health Literacy and Resiliency-Based Module

The intent is to embed the mental health literacy and resiliency-based training module into first responder programs offered at St. Clair College, the University of Windsor, and first responder organizations, including:

**Pre-Service Firefighter Education Programs**

**Paramedic Programs**

**Police Foundations Programs**

**Nursing (B. Sc. N.) Programs**

**Physician Programs**

**First Responder New Hire Orientation Programs**

# Mental Health Literacy and Resiliency-Based Training Module: The Needs Assessment

A needs assessment has been underway to develop understanding about the following key concepts:

1. The mental health literacy needs of student and early career first responders.
2. The barriers and facilitators to embedding the training module into first responder education programs
3. Considerations for sustainability and scaling of the training module.



# Needs Assessment: Orienting Questions

- 1) What are the mental-health related issues in the first responder and allied healthcare professions?
- 2) What are the training needs around mental health for first responder students?
- 3) What delivery method(s) are most practical and effective for fulfilling the training needs of first responder students?
- 4) How does a mental health curriculum module best fit into the existing workflows for educators, recruiters, and employers?
- 5) What supports, resources, and practices currently exist (e.g., training, education) for students, new hires, and/or family members?



# Needs Assessment: Data Collection Methodology

The chosen data collection method for the needs assessment was key informant interviewing:

- Stratified sampling approach
- In person or telephone interviews
- Approximately 60 minutes in length

# Needs Assessment Consultation Plan: First Responders

## First Responder Interview Consultees:

1. Senior administration members of first responder organizations in WEC
2. Peer support members/experienced leaders at first responder organizations in WEC
3. Front line first responder staff at first responder organizations in WEC.



# Needs Assessment Consultation Plan: Post-Secondary Institutions

## Post- Secondary Interview Consultees:

- Senior administrators of first responder programs in WEC
- Program/department heads or coordinators of first responder programs in WEC
- Professors/course instructors of first responder programs in WEC

# Needs Assessment Consultation Plan: Healthcare Organizations


## Healthcare Interview Consultees:

- Senior administrators of healthcare organizations in WEC
- Emergency room nurses/physicians at healthcare organizations in WEC.

# Needs Assessment Consultation Phase

To date, interviews have been held with 23 consultees:

- 20 first responders
- 5 educators
- 1 public health professional
- 0 healthcare workers



The total number of interview consultees (n=23) is less than the total number of interview consultees by occupation (n=26) because some individuals represented more than one occupation (e.g., first responder and educator).

There are approximately 13 interviews left to complete.

# Preliminary Discussion Topics

## Mental Health Concerns

- Mental illness
- Occupational stress, burnout, compassion fatigue
- Critical incident exposure

## Resilience

- Coping
- Recognizing triggers
- Debriefing/accessing support

## Self-Care

- Emotional intelligence
- Self awareness and self compassion
- Self care activities/planning

## Stigma Reduction


- Barriers to accessing support
- Mental health literacy and awareness building
- Reducing barriers to seeking help

# Next Steps

1. Analyze result findings from the needs assessment consultation interviews.



2. Write a final results report for the needs assessment consultation phase.



3. Develop the mental health literacy and resiliency-based training module(s) based on data collected through the needs assessment.

# Next Steps


4. Review the training module(s) with the FRMHC.



5. Pilot the training module(s).



6. Disseminate and implement the training module(s) into post-secondary/training programs for first responders.



7. Evaluate the training module(s).



# Questions?

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