



The Rising Rates of Burnout Among Public Safety Personnel



Burnout is an occupational phenomenon that may occur when someone experiences chronic workplace stress.

Public Safety Personnel (PSP) are among the first to arrive at the scene of an emergency and assist individuals following a traumatic event. Without the appropriate resources, these challenging conditions may erode the mental health and well-being of PSP and increase their risk of experiencing burnout.

For PSP, the demands of COVID-19 heightened levels of emotional exhaustion and cynicism, and negatively impacted feelings of accomplishment and/or professional efficacy. These experiences continue to cause large-scale burnout among PSP. The following list includes pandemic-related situations which contribute to increased rates of burnout among PSP.

1. Throughout the pandemic, PSP have received a significantly increased number of calls. Decreased rest and increased job demands elevate the chances of developing burnout.
2. PSP that have more frequent contact with ill and dying COVID patients may have increased feelings of sadness and powerlessness. These experiences may decrease self-perceptions of professional efficacy.
3. Routine work and decision-making processes are impacted by additional pressures associated with COVID-19.
4. In some cases, PSP did not/do not have access to adequate resources throughout the pandemic. Resources are tools that help achieve work goals, reduce the physical or psychological impacts of job demands, and stimulate personal growth, learning, and development. Inadequate resources cause an accelerated depletion of physical and psychological reserves within individuals.



Before COVID-19, the average rate of burnout among PSP was 35%.



High job demands combined with inadequate resources increases the chances of PSP developing burnout by 10x.



Responding to 20+ calls per week increases the odds of developing burnout by 2.5x.

Burnout among PSP must be treated seriously by leaders and managers.

Sources

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