

# Thunder Bay Police Service

## Peer Support Team

THUNDER BAY POLICE SERVICE



THERE'S NOTHING STRONGER THAN  
A POLICE OFFICER



WHO HAS  
REBUILT  
THEMSELF

*John Doe*



# Team Composition



- The Thunder Bay Police Service Peer Support Team currently consists of seventeen (17) members.
- Members are a mix of civilians and sworn officers from various units within the service.
- The goal is to have someone for every member to be able to identify with through similar shared experience.
- All members are volunteers and receive no remuneration for their team membership.
- TBPS also has two (2) Psychologists attached to the peer team who volunteer their time to assist in group debriefs and provide guidance to the team when required.



# How Does Peer Support Help?

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It gets members to the help they need, medical or psychological, and **supports them** through the process of healing with reassurance and guidance.

Peer Support is the ear to listen, and the conduit to get members the help they need.

Peer Supporters sign an agreement of confidentiality, so that what is spoken stays between the supporter and member.

Unless there is a risk to the member or others.



# A Visual Representation of Peer Support



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## *Should we be concerned?*

Current Statistics (from “Behind the Badge-Revealing Escalating Mental Health Injuries Among RCMP Officers, February 2024)

**Table 2: Prevalence of Positive Mental Health Disorder Screens**

<b>Mental Health Disorder</b>	<b>2023 RCMP Sample</b>	<b>2018 PSP Sample</b>	<b>General Pop</b>
Post Traumatic Stress	47.7%	23.3%	1.7%
Generalized Anxiety	33.5%	18.8%	5.9%
Major Depressive	44.6%	26.4%	2.2%
Social Anxiety	24.1%	15.2%	3.2%
Panic	21.3%	8.9%	1.5%
Any	64.7%	44.5%	10.1%

Since June 2023

6 police officers in the province of  
Ontario have taken their own  
lives







## Locally??

- Since 2017, two paramedics, one police officer, one police cadet and one firefighter have taken their own lives

**Table 3: Prevalence of Suicidal Behaviours Amongst RCMP, PSP, and General Pop**

	<b>2023 RCMP Sample</b>	<b>2018 PSP Sample</b>	<b>2023 General Pop</b>
Contemplated Suicide (Lifetime)	34.1%	27.8%	~12%
Contemplated Suicide (Past Year)	11.4%	10.1%	2.7%
Planned Suicide (Lifetime)	15.9%	13.3%	~4.1%
Planned Suicide (Past Year)	4.6%	4.1%	0.8%

## Restructuring the Program

- WHY??
- Because we now do more than just “Peer Support”
- The name should encompass three “Pillars”



Peer Support will be the first pillar of support for our program.

All members are to be trained up to Service standard to perform peer support duties safely and effectively.

Training to include ASIST suicide intervention strategies.

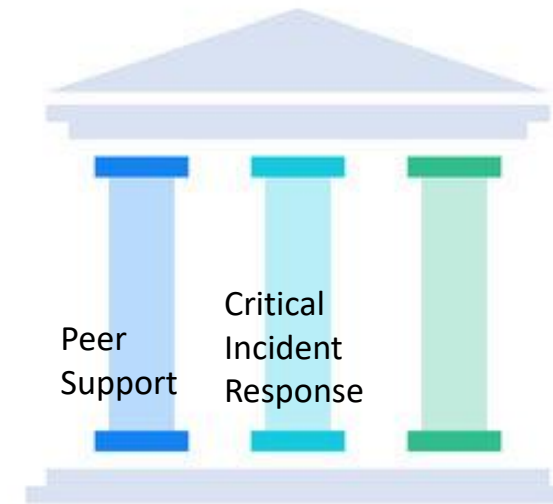


# The Pillars of Support

To assist in understanding this pillar, there are a few definitions to help.

**Critical Incident:** “any tragic or traumatic situation that forces one to face their vulnerability or mortality or that potentially overwhelms one’s ability to cope” (Niagara Regional Police)

**Critical Incident Stress:** A normal stress reaction to an abnormal situation. Critical incident stress will be different and unique to each individual that experiences it, as will their reaction to the stressor be.



## Critical Incident Response: The Second Pillar

## Defusing and Debriefing



- Provides the opportunity to vent the trauma and to learn ways to cope.
- Provides follow up and further help if needed.
- Helps to strengthen the bond of the group and help each other.

# What will the Critical Incident Pillar Do?

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The Critical Incident Response team will be responsible for several areas: Individual Crisis Interventions, Rest/Information/Transition Services (RITS), Defusings and Debriefings

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Defusings occur with a group at the time of or shortly after a critical incident  
Debriefings within 72 hours

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Defusings allow participants to normalize a situation and/or behaviours that can be expected to occur after

Debriefings allow participants to share feelings and reframe their thinking

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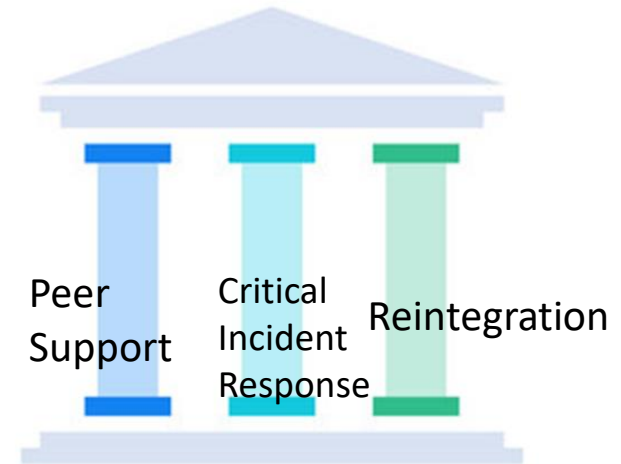
They provide resources for members immediately so members can be aware of issues that can arise, and how to properly deal with them

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The Edmonton Police Service has pioneered Reintegration Training in Canada.

Team Ontario is a collaborative group of Services across Ontario who utilize reintegration training.

Ottawa, Peel Regional, Windsor, York Regional, London, Niagara Regional, and Thunder Bay are all members of Team Ontario.



## Reintegration: The Third Pillar

# What is Reintegration Training?

- Peer driven process based on exposure/immersion therapy
- Provides support to members dealing with stress from a critical incident or repetitive stress
- Integrates exposure, drills and scenarios individualized to the needs of the participating members
- Performed in addition to other supports or programs
- THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX!!!





# NEW DEVELOPMENTS

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# Questions?

**THUNDER BAY POLICE SERVICE**

