



# UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING COMPLEX PTSD IN BRITISH POLICING

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## PTSD v CPTSD

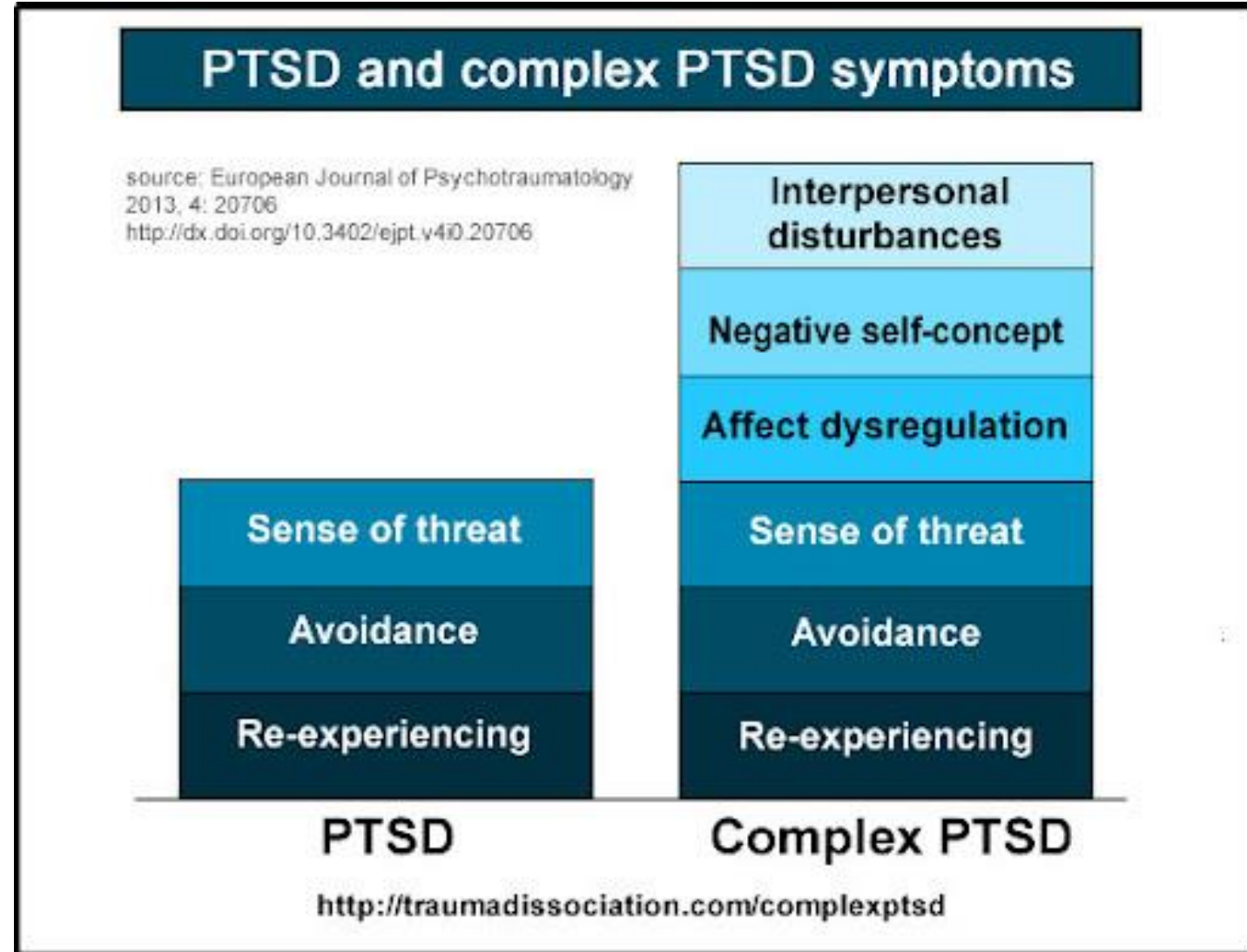
ICD-11 measure of PTSD

### Core features of PTSD:

- Intrusions or re-experiencing of the event
- Avoidance
- Arousal and reactivity or sense of current threat

### Complex PTSD also requires:

- Problems in affect regulation (calming down after getting upset)
- Negative beliefs about oneself
- Difficulties in sustaining relationships



# The Impacts of Working in Policing – Officers and Staff

## Impacts can include:

- Danger
- Trauma – mental and physical, circa 600 experiences during their service
- Hours and place of work
- Workplace stress – constant and high
- Family Stress
- Police Conduct proceedings/media
- Relinquish personal freedoms
- Always on duty (officers)
- Public disdain



# CPTSD - Study in UK Policing “ The Job, the Life” Oct- Dec 2018

- Investigated work-related exposure to stressful and traumatic events in police officers, including repeated exposure to traumatic materials
- Predicted that ICD-11 Complex PTSD (CPTSD) would be more prevalent than PTSD
- The effects of demographic variables on exposure and PTSD were examined
- Also whether specific types of exposure were uniquely associated with PTSD or CPTSD
- Carried out by an online survey via social media and official policing channels (Police Care UK) 43 Forces + National Crime agency
- 12,248 Police officers (removed staff, retired, CSO) c7% of serving officers
- 10,401 serving police officers self-identified as having been exposed to traumatic events
- Measurement of PTSD and CPTSD utilised the International Trauma Questionnaire (Symptoms in past month)



## Results:

- The prevalence of PTSD was 8.0% and of CPTSD was 12.6%. (90% officers trauma exposed)
- Both disorders were more common in male officers
- Associated independently with frequent exposure to traumatic incidents and traumatic visual material
- Not linked to verbal abuse, threats, or physical violence
- Compared to PTSD, CPTSD was associated with exposure to humiliating behaviours and sexual harassment
- CPTSD linked with lower rank and more years of service



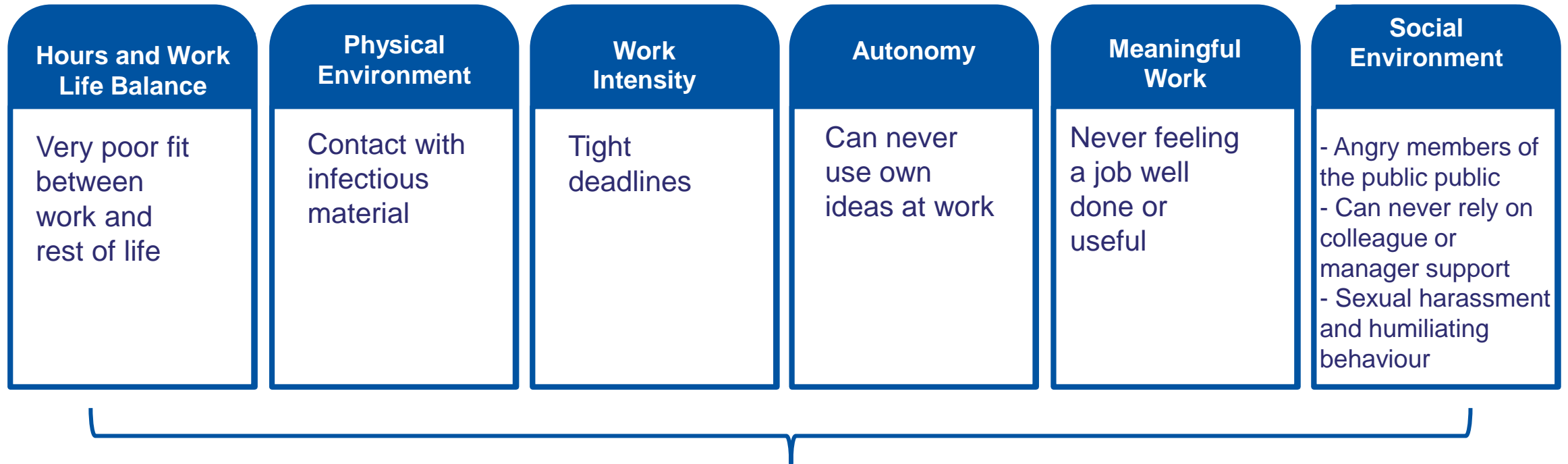
## Conclusions

1. CPTSD was more common than PTSD in police officers
2. Data supported a cumulative burden model of CPTSD
3. Levels of PTSD and CPTSD mandate enhanced occupational mental health services.



# Job Quality and CPTSD may be connected (study extended to force level)

## Factors



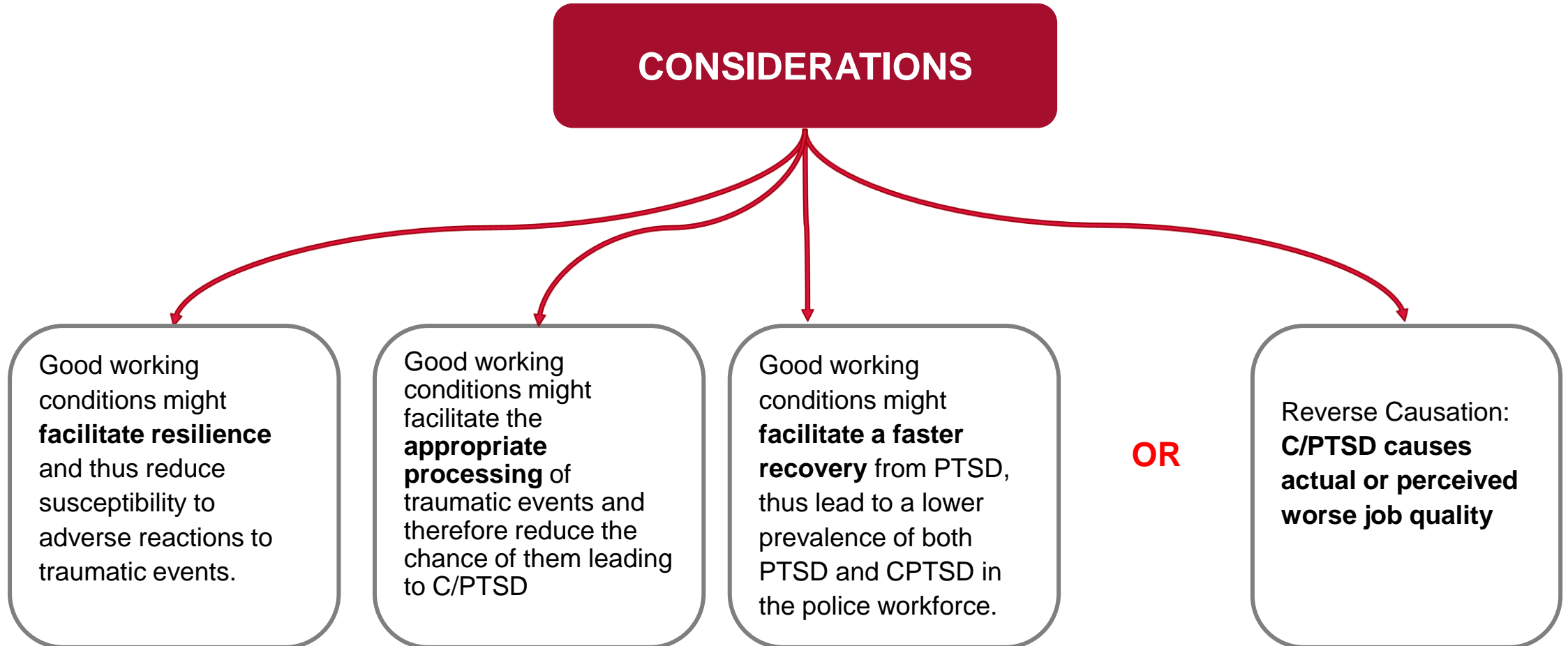


# Managing CPTSD in policing





# The Effects of Job Quality



## Translating working conditions into everyday life decisions

Trauma exposure management

Police identity

Trauma informed management and peer support

Meaning in policing

Leadership: *not a 'wellbeing' nice-to-have*

Codes of practice ?

## NPWS-What we do

Oscar Kilo, the National Police Wellbeing Service (NPWS) provides support and guidance for all police forces to improve and build upon wellbeing within their organisation. Our services have been developed for policing, by policing and they are designed to meet the unique needs of officers and staff.

- **Clinical Governance and Occupational Health** -sets strategic direction for and delivers priorities in relation to medical and occupational health policy and standards. Included in this work is suicide prevention and postvention
- **Healthy Living** – brings together the work Oscar Kilo is doing in the areas of sleep, nutrition and physical health
- **Operation Hampshire** - provides a strategy, processes and guidance to help us respond more effectively to assaults on police officers and staff.



## NPWS – What we do

- **Peer Support for Wellbeing** – a training programme to implement a robust and fully functioning peer support network
- **Psychological and Trauma Risk Management** -aimed at assisting police officers and staff who are at risk of, or are experiencing, work related or work affecting mental ill-health and/or trauma related exposure.
- **Wellbeing Dogs** – OK9 wellbeing and trauma support dogs
- **Wellbeing Vans** - The wellbeing outreach service is a fleet of bespoke fitted vans providing a platform to deliver physical, psychological, and financial health checks for officers and staff.

## Trauma Informed Management and Peer support

The results also point to the importance of forces to create a sense of support and safety within the policing community. Like any family, if that community is strong, it facilitates resilience against the stresses and threats faced in police work, but if **there are threats from *within* that environment**, for instance, from unsupportive peers or management, or sexual harassment from other officers, **that betrayal increases the risk of PTSD and CPTSD”**

# Trauma Exposure Management

## PTEC ( Police Traumatic Events Checklist)

A police-specific checklist includes police-specific items that describe incidents and jobs known to be traumatic in the main. Types of incidents already understood to be traumatic include:

- ✓ Child deaths, abuse or suffering
- ✓ Fatal road traffic collisions
- ✓ Sudden deaths
- ✓ Injury and threat to life to self or colleague





# Trauma Exposure Management

## Trauma Tracker

- There is a need to adopt a more holistic approach to trauma prevention and support which brings together all the different activities and interventions which the majority of forces deploy.
- To achieve this we have been working with several forces to describe a trauma support model (TSM) which follows the career cycle from joining to serving to leaving.
- To ensure we are using a data driven methodology to identify early intervention opportunities NPWS has been piloting trauma tracking with 4 forces
- Our goal is to provide simple and flexible guidance which forces can lift and shift to track and intervene early.

# Trauma informed management and peer support



# Stress and trauma-informed care and treatment (STRICT) guidance





## **This Includes:**

- 1. Psychological Risk Management Surveillance**
  
- 2. Peer Support**
  
- 3. Post incident support**
  - **Demobilising**
  - **Defusing**
  - **TRiM**
  - **Critical incident debrief**



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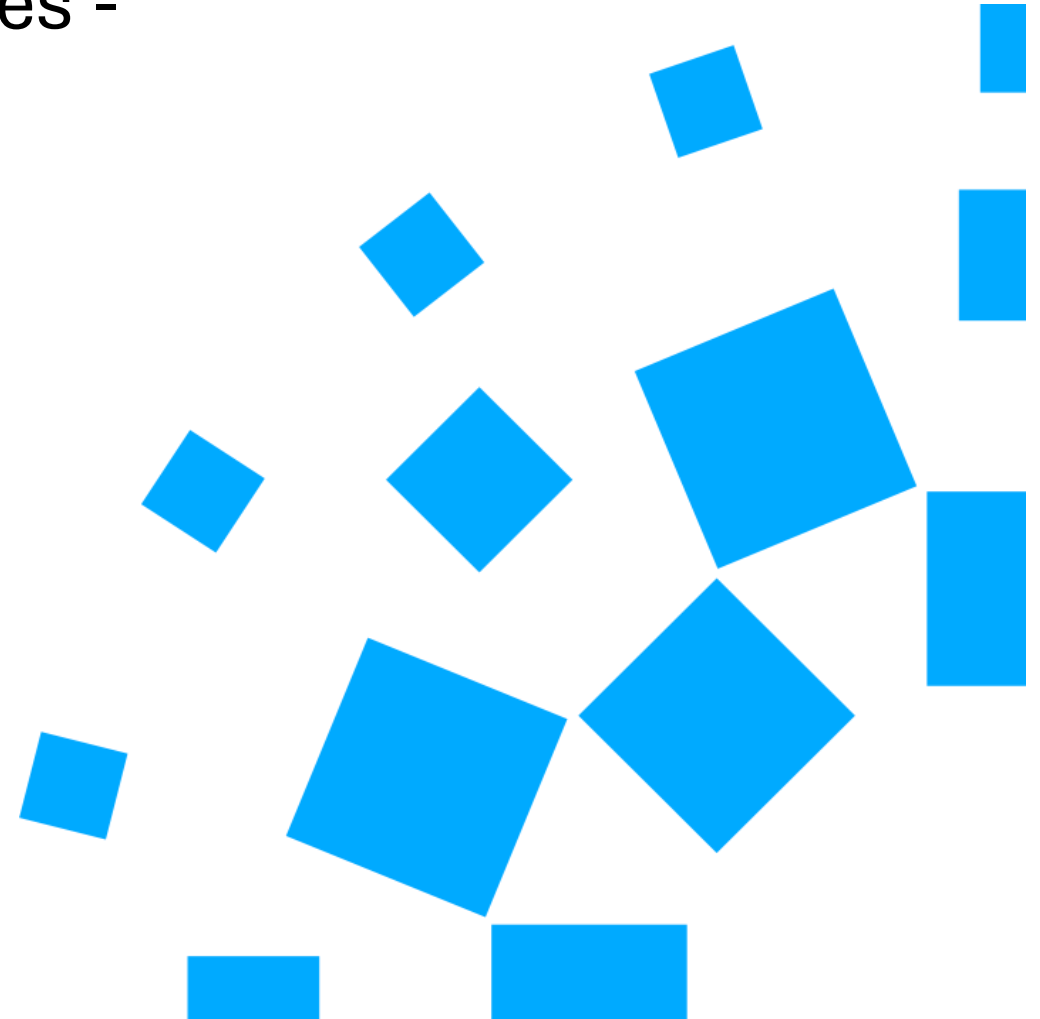


**The National Police  
Wellbeing Service**

Working together  
to prevent crime

# Trauma Impact Prevention Techniques - TIPT

- **A set of strategies designed to aid healthy cognitive processing of difficult life events**
- **Personalised resilience building**
- **Specifically designed for Police services**



# Leadership -systemic trauma management

## Wellbeing isn't a 'nice-to-have'

This is daily operational life, dealing with it needs to be daily operational life, systemic, integrated

### National Centre for Police Leadership



\*Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)



# Code of Practice

## Authorised Professional Practice (APP) for workforce health and wellbeing

- APP is authorised by the College of Policing as the official source of professional practice on policing.
- APP is defined as operational guidance on how to deal with different types of crime or incidents from first response through to investigation, legal issues and public protection.
- The development of APP is based on identified threshold criteria. APP must support interoperability at a national level, contribute to the mitigation of ‘high risk’ activity or reinforce the Strategic Policing Requirement.
- An APP for workforce health is currently being developed
- All APP goes through a long process. Significant work has been completed to create an evidence based and affordable approach
- There are currently 24 APPs. This is the only “inward” facing APP

# TREAT

## Intensive Trauma Therapy (ITS)

- Intensive 2 week therapy and exercise programme, running in 2022 and 2023
- Residential at Police Treatment Centre
- Based on extensive (10yrs) research from Netherlands
- Pilot stage in forces
- 45 officers so far (small numbers)
- Evidence that it has potential
- 93% (22) and 100%(23) return to work

## NEST – Network of Emergency Services Therapists

- Launched in November 2023
- A new initiative that aims to establish a sustainable national network of experienced psychotherapists
- Aims to deliver effective and bespoke mental health treatment tailored specifically to the needs of emergency responders.

Sponsored by the Royal Foundation





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**Thank you**  
**Questions?**



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