



UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING COMPLEX PTSD IN BRITISH POLICING

Professor John Harrison

National Police Chief Medical Officer

&

Liz Eades

Occupational Health Advisor to NPWS







PTSD v CPTSD

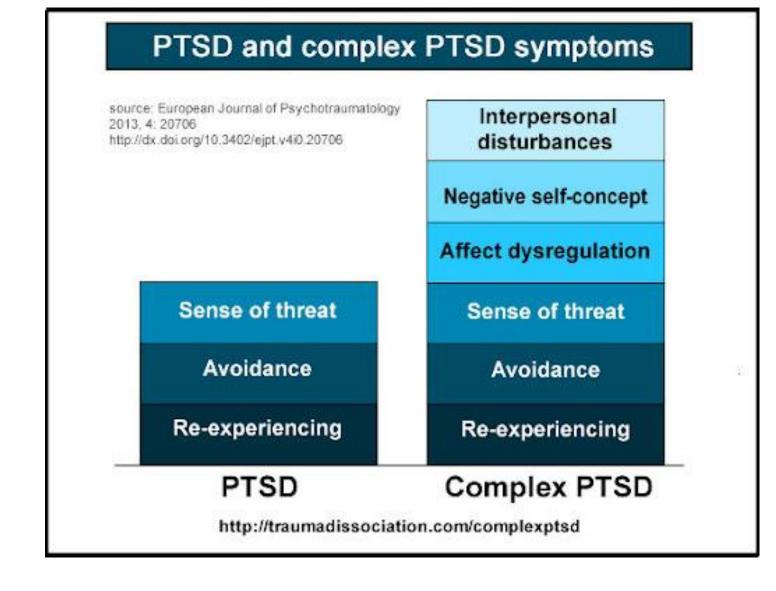
ICD-11 measure of PTSD

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

- CPTSD was more common than PTSD in police officers
- 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

Hours and Work Life Balance

Very poor fit between work and rest of life

Physical Environment

Contact with infectious material

Work Intensity

Tight deadlines

Autonomy

Can never use own ideas at work

Meaningful Work

Never feeling a job well done or useful

Social Environment

Angry members of the public public
Can never rely on colleague or manager support
Sexual harassment and humiliating

behaviour



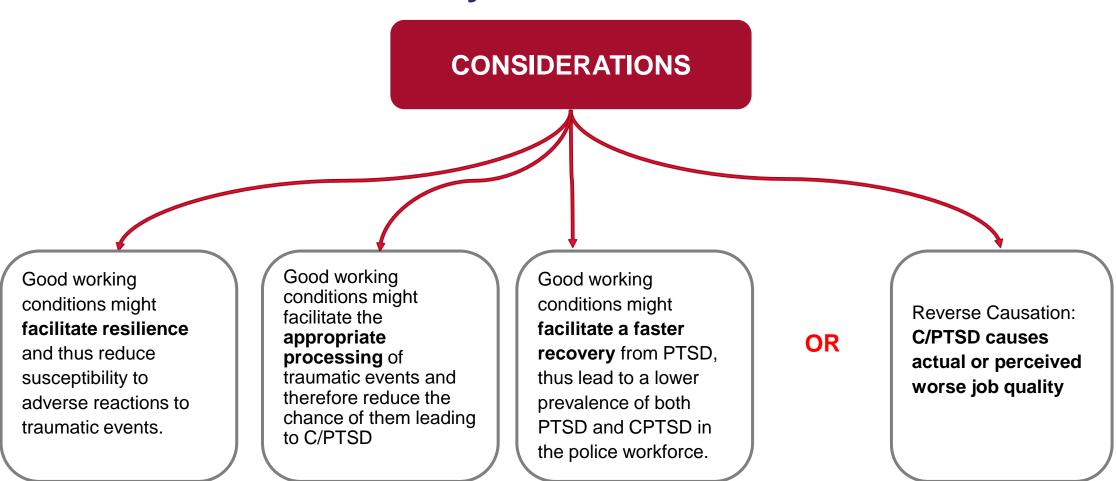
Managing CPTSD in policing







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 illhealth 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

		Α	В	C	D	E	COVID19	A	Α
POLICE TRAUMATIC EVENTS CHECKLIST This matrix shows the most common 'worst' experiences described in UK policing. It also offers situational factors at the time that can exacerbate any event.		Gruesome scenes	Organisation pressure	Cumulative exposure	Being a first person on	Personal resonance	Victim vulnerability	OTHER	None
		(eg disrupted bodies, gory injuries)	(eg resources, bullying, being investigated)	(eg a build up of smaller traumas)	scene	(eg victim was known, it was a birthday, etc)	(eg elderly, deprivation)	(please describe)	
1	Incidents involving children (eg fatalities, abuse or exploitation)								
2	Sudden or unnatural death (eg murder, suicide or hanging)								
3	Road traffic collision or rail incident								
4	Dead bodies (seeing or working with one or several)								
5	Serious injury / physical assault to yourself								
б	Major incident (eg terrorism or transport disasters)								
7	Supporting families (eg death messages, family liaison)								
8	Incidents involving weapons (eg knives, firearms, taser)								
9	Vicarious or secondary trauma (eg calls, files, images, audio, BWW)								
10	Incidents involving fire or explosions								
COVID19	Exposure to toxic or infectious hazards								
	OTHER (please describe)								



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

The psychological wellbeing process begins with an assessment of a role, an officer, member of staff, team, environment or process to identify the risks

Where appropriate some interventions can be provided to support officers and staff. However, there are times when it is more appropriate to refer to more specialist resources



Standardised training of peers and OH practitioners in delivering clearly defined support and interventions ensures everyone. wherever they are received the same quality of support

Identifying the most appropriate level of response is essential. Some support is best provided by a manager or peer, but dealing with more complex problems may need specialist skills





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



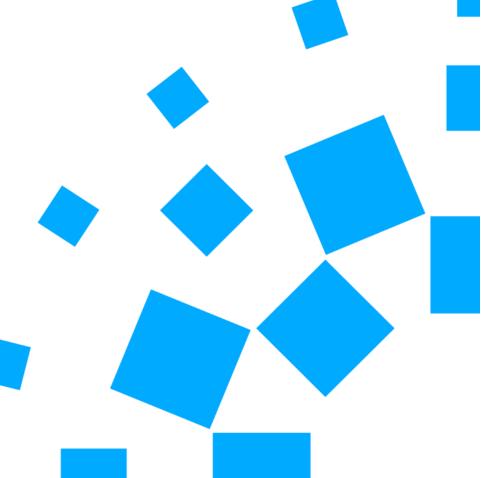
This Includes:

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



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

Competency and Values Framework:

Underpinning standards of behaviour

Police Leadership Standards

Stage 5 - Chief officers

Stage 4 - Senior leaders

Stage 3 - Mid-level leaders

Stage 2 - First line leaders

Stage 1 - Leadership for All - FHEQ Level 6

Stage 1 - Leadership for All - FHEQ Level 4-6

National Policing Curriculum for leadership development

Policing Professional Profiles: expectations/ accountabilities for officer & staff roles

Guidelines on Effective Supervision: evidence-based practice guidance for supervisors

Leadership Expectations: diagnostic tool to identify personal leadership development needs

*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



Thank you

Questions?



