

National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing of Police and Emergency Services

David Lawrence



BEYONDBLUE NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING STUDY OF POLICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

RATIONALE



Why is *beyondblue* doing this research?

Limited data currently available on mental health & wellbeing of police and emergency services personnel in Australia

Extremely limited evidence on which interventions & practices actually work

Need for comprehensive understanding – prevalence of common mental health conditions & suicide risk, how stigma operates, help-seeking behaviours, risk & protective factors

Opportunity to achieve significant impact through collaborative sector-wide effort to respond to new evidence that will be generated

WHAT ARE THE KNOWLEDGE GAPS?



- What are the current prevalence rates of mental health conditions among police and emergency services workers in Australia?
- Which police and emergency services workers are at greatest risk of experiencing a mental health condition or suicide?
- What are the levels of stigma around mental health and suicide?
- What are the key barriers to seeking treatment and support?
- Where should we be focusing our efforts to achieve most impact?

Phase 1

What?

Personal stories of police and emergency services personnel and their family members

Why?

To provide an opportunity for individuals to tell their story and to inform Phases 2 & 3

Phase 2

What?

National survey of all police and emergency services personnel in Australia

Why?

To build a comprehensive picture of mental health conditions, stigma & help-seeking behaviours, risk & protective factors

Phase 3

What?

Agency-by-agency engagement, consultation with other key stakeholders

Why?

To translate the findings from Phases 1 & 2 into practical strategies to achieve change

ADVISORY GROUP



- Chaired by Ken Lay AO APM, Chairman of Ambulance Victoria & former Commissioner of Victoria Police
- Membership includes:
 - Executive leaders from agencies & exec-level union leader
 - Academics & clinicians with specialist expertise
 - Representatives of individual personnel & family members
 - Representatives of community support groups

PHASE 1: PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF CURRENT AND FORMER POLICE & EMERGENCY SERVICES PERSONNEL AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS

PHASE 1: PERSONAL EXPERIENCES



Aim

To gather and learn from the personal experiences of current and former police and emergency services personnel and their family members

Objectives

To give a voice to frontline personnel and their families

To validate our understanding of key issues

To inform the next phases of the research

PHASE 1: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE



Conclusions & recommendations

- Reiterates need for national survey
- Key issues to be explored include personal motivations to seek help, available supports and risk & protective factors in workplace
- *beyondblue* may promote the Phase 1 findings to raise awareness, when we are further into the project

PHASE 2: NATIONAL SURVEY OF POLICE & EMERGENCY SERVICES PERSONNEL



Roy Morgan
— Research —

PHASE 2: NATIONAL SURVEY



Objectives and study methodology are informed by the desired outcomes:

- Equipping the sector with essential knowledge by establishing national prevalence rates of wellbeing and mental health conditions
- Supporting agencies to identify practical, evidence-informed strategies for promoting workforce mental health

PHASE 2: NATIONAL SURVEY



Methodology

- Scope: Current employees, volunteers and former employees from every agency – Police, Ambulance, Fire and Rescue, SES
- Stratified random sampling from employee/volunteer lists where possible – aiming to survey 14,000 current staff, 6,000 volunteers and 1,200 former staff Australia wide
- Ethics approval will be sought from UWA Human Research Ethics Committee & through liaison with individual agencies
- Online administration of survey with limited hardcopy forms available on request

PHASE 2: NATIONAL SURVEY



Questionnaire content

- Depression, anxiety, PTSD
- Impact on functioning
- Suicidal thoughts and behaviours
- Alcohol and drug use
- Burnout

PHASE 2: NATIONAL SURVEY



Questionnaire content

- Level of exposure to traumatic events
- Working hours, shift work, impact on family
- Workplace and team culture
- Bullying
- Wellbeing and resilience
- Protective behaviours, connectedness

PHASE 2: NATIONAL SURVEY



Questionnaire content

- Help seeking and barriers
- Stigma and discrimination
- Job related stress
- Workplace programs and practices
- Risk and protective factors

NEXT STEPS (INCL. PHASE 3)



- First stage of communications plan for the Study (March 2017)
- Secure Phase 2 ethics approval (May 2017)
- Pilot the national survey (June 2017)
- Administer national survey (August-Sept 2017)
- Top-line survey findings (Nov-Dec 2017)
- Seek agency-by-agency meetings to discuss & support use of findings (Phase 3: beginning Feb 2018)
- Launch of Study findings (Oct 2018)
- Release confidentialised file for research community

Contact us



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