



# The Epidemic of Depression and Suicide Among the NYPD

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## Introduction & Selection of a Community in Need



An on-going problem within the 5 boroughs of New York City has been mental health and depression among New York City Police Officers, specifically, young to middle-aged, Caucasian, male officers. Many Police Officers are becoming depressed due to the stress of their everyday work environment. The depression that these officers face has led them to potentially commit suicide because they are not reaching out for help. This becomes a problem for the community because we now have less officers patrolling the streets which could, in turn, lead to more crime.

## Community Assessment & Analysis

- NYPD officers have access to a variety of health care plans including, GHI/Empire BlueCross BlueShield.
- The cost of living in NYC is very expensive, especially with a family to support. With that being said, the NYPD yearly salary is sometimes not enough for people to live comfortably, which forces officers to take on a second job.
- The stress of money and having to work a second job, can lead to depression and possibly suicide.
- In 2015, the NYC population accounted for 264 deaths related to mental and behavioral disorders due to use of alcohol. Out of those deaths, males accounted for 4.6% and whites accounted for 3.2% (EpiQuery, 2019).
- Many officers struggle with alcohol abuse, PTSD, depression and suicidal thoughts.

## Problem in the Community



One of the major issues that have taken precedent today among the NYPD officers is suicide. In 2019, there has been an alarming increase in suicidal deaths within this population nation-wide.

- "As of August, of this year, a total of 134 officers have committed suicide with four months of the year still left and unaccounted for. NYPD Commissioner James O'Neill declared a mental health crisis as the city grappled with the suicide deaths of nine police officers. At least six of the nine deaths in the NYPD involved a gun, many using their own service weapon" (Addiction Center, 2019).
- Law enforcement officers are at increased risk of developing a variety of physical and psychiatric health issues related to the stress of their job and the incidents they are exposed to everyday
- These officers are at an increased risk of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), alcohol abuse, depression, increased suicide risk, sleep disturbance, relationship problems, excessively aggressive conduct, ischemic heart disease and disability and premature retirement.
- It is undeniable that law enforcement is a dangerous, stressful, and health-threatening occupation in all countries.
- Officers are exposed to death, traumatic incidents, human misery, inconsistencies in the criminal justice system, and a negative public image, which puts officers at a risk for physical and psychological impairment, including depression and suicide.

## Facts



- 1 in 4 police officers have thoughts of suicide at some point in their lives
- In small departments, the suicide rate for officers increases to almost four times the national average
- More police die by suicide than in the line of duty
- In 2017, there were an estimated 140 law enforcement suicides
- Compared to the general population, law enforcement reports a much higher rates of depression, PTSD, burnout and other mental health conditions (NAMI, 2019)

## An anonymous app:

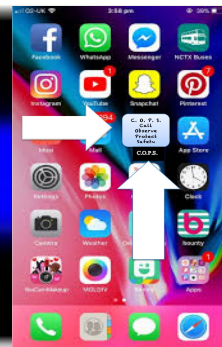
- allows access to mental health assistance
- accessible at any time
- Incorporated in the program will be a workshop that teaches how and when to use the app
- The app will include messaging with therapists and a number to the suicide hot line

## Proposed Solution

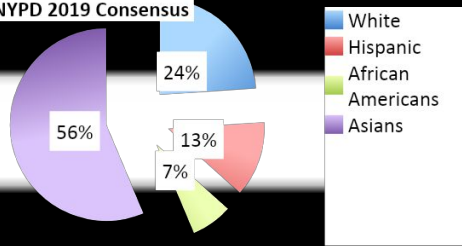
- C- Call
- O- Observe
- P- Protect
- S- Safety

## The goal:

- Decrease number of suicides
- educate officers in New York to learn when and how to express emotions
- end the stigma around mental illness



NYPD 2019 Consensus



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