

NATIONAL WELLNESS SURVEY

FOR PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL



8,710

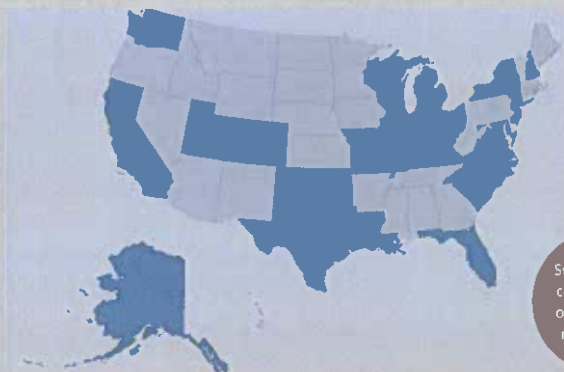
TOTAL RESPONDENTS

165

AGENCIES PARTICIPATED

24

STATES REPRESENTED



Sworn Officers
comprise 70%
of total survey
respondents

PROFESSIONAL STRESSORS

Most commonly reported work-related stressors by sworn officers



84%

Negative media
about their
profession



75%

Concerns about
exposure to
COVID-19



71%

Negative attitudes
from the public
about their profession

Stressors associated with depression, anxiety, PTSD, suicidal ideation, & intent to leave their jobs include:

- > Dissatisfaction with role/assignment
- > Low morale in the workforce
- > Leadership doesn't understand the challenges you deal with

WELLNESS

Symptom severity reaching clinical significance, determined by self-reporting on validated mental health questionnaires

6% moderately severe to severe depression

16% moderate to severe anxiety

11% may benefit from PTSD treatment

7% reported thoughts of passive or active suicidal ideation within the past month

NIMH estimates public rates of depression to be 8.4%, anxiety 2.7%, PTSD 3.6%, and suicidal thoughts/behaviors 4.9%. Comparatively, sworn officers exhibit elevated rates of anxiety, PTSD, and suicidal ideation.

OVERVIEW

The National Wellness Survey was developed to assess the impact of public safety work on individual wellness and capture effects of the current climate on personnel. Respondents include individuals serving in any type of public safety role between November 2020 and November 2021, with the majority being sworn law enforcement officers, fire & rescue personnel, and dispatchers.

Findings from the survey are being used to guide needed changes in policy and legislation, strengthen the focus on wellness, inform prevention and intervention strategies, and assist in understanding what cultural changes can be made to reduce stigma involved with seeking mental health treatment.

FINDINGS

Exposure to Trauma

Traumatic experiences with the most notable associations to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) were endorsed by sworn officers who reported some degree of exposure to the following events:

- Life-threatening illness, or suffering from natural causes or substance use
- Serious assault, intentional injury, or severe suffering
- Accidental death not caused by their actions
- Serious injury or harm caused by their actions

Job Satisfaction

Indicators of job satisfaction revealed the strongest associations with wellness measures. Items are categorized into two groups based on their association with symptom severity.

⚠ **Risk factors** represent an association with wellness in a negative way (i.e., if the respondent chose the item, they were more likely to disclose symptoms of depression, anxiety, and/or PTSD).

- *This job has made me a more negative person*
- *I assume the worst about people I meet*
- *As a result of my work, I have a difficult time trusting people*

♥ **Protective factors** represent an association with wellness in a positive way (i.e., they were less likely to disclose symptoms).

- *I feel good about myself when I am at work*
- *I feel a sense of personal fulfillment at work*
- *I enjoy the work I am involved in*

Behavioral Health Resources

Respondents were asked about reluctance to seek behavioral health resources in the past. Of those who expressed interest in services, these were the most common reasons for not doing so:

- Fears it would impact their career or future employment
- Wanting to handle it on their own
- Concerns about confidentiality
- Stigma