

Suicidal Behaviour of PSP after ERST Training

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How does studying suicidal behaviours support Public Safety Personnel (PSP)?

Public safety personnel (PSP) are frequently exposed to potentially psychologically traumatic events (PPTs). Repeated and occupationally necessary exposures potentiate posttraumatic stress injuries (PTSI), including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which has been linked with an increased risk of suicidal behaviours.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Protocol was designed to mitigate PTSIs using ongoing monitoring and PSP-delivered Emotional Resilience Skills Training (ERST) based on the Unified Protocol for the Transdiagnostic Treatment of Emotional Disorders.

The ERST is a pilot 13-week mental health training program led by a PSP peer and based on the robustly evidenced Unified Protocol for the Transdiagnostic Treatment of Emotional Disorders.



ERST is a 13-week mental health training program based on the Unified Protocol.

The current study

This study estimates suicidal ideation, planning, and attempts among Canadian PSP, and assesses associations with Emotional Resilience Skills Training (ERST).

A 16-month longitudinal design engaged serving PSP ($n=186$, 60.5% men; firefighters, municipal police, paramedics, public safety communicators) who completed PSP-delivered ERST. Participants were administered the structured Mini-International Neuropsychiatric Interview (M.I.N.I.) at three time points relative to the ERST: pre-training, post-training, and 1-year follow-up.

M.I.N.I. responses were categorized according to previous research as follows: suicidal ideation (e.g., "Did you think, even momentarily, that you would be better off dead or wish you were dead or needed to be dead?"); suicidal planning (e.g., "Did you have a suicide method in mind?"); and suicidal attempts (e.g., "Did you take active steps to prepare to kill yourself, but then someone or something stopped you just before harming yourself?").

We would like to thank all participating PSP for their involvement in the study. The Study is made possible by a large and diverse team. We thank each team member, past and present for their contributions to the study. A list of participating PSP agencies, PSP knowledge users, and additional information is available in English at www.ptsslab.ca.

Results

The current study indicates that:

1. Suicidal ideation reduced from pre-training to post-training among completer participants;
2. Suicidal ideation reduced from pre-training to 1-year follow-up among completer participants;
3. At pre-training, women were 3.14 times (females=3.03 times) more likely to report one or more lifetime suicide attempts, to men (males);
4. The odds of reporting one or more lifetime suicide attempts decreased with age;
5. PSP who reported being married or in common-law relationships at pre-training were less likely to report one or more lifetime suicide attempts compared to those who are single; and
6. Paramedics were more likely to report one or more lifetime suicide attempts compared to firefighters, municipal police, and public safety communicators.

Highlights

Past-Year and Lifetime Prevalence of Suicidal Ideation, Planning, and Attempts among the Full Sample:

Suicidal Behaviour	Past-Month	Lifetime
Pre-training	Total Sample ($n=186$)	
Ideation	12.9%	-
Planning	3.8%	-
Attempts	0.0%	6.5%
Post-training	Total Sample ($n=119$)	
Ideation	10.1%	-
Planning	^	-
Attempts	0.0%	7.6%
1-Year Follow-Up	Total Sample ($n=56$)	
Ideation	12.5%	-
Planning	0.0%	-
Attempts	0.0%	^

Note: The symbol "^^" denotes the sample size is between 1 and 4, consequently the data cannot be presented in accordance with data ethics and research guidelines. The symbol "-" denotes that lifetime suicidal ideation and planning were not captured by the M.I.N.I.

**The original wording of the study was changed and condensed for the current research infographic.*

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Read the full study here:

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