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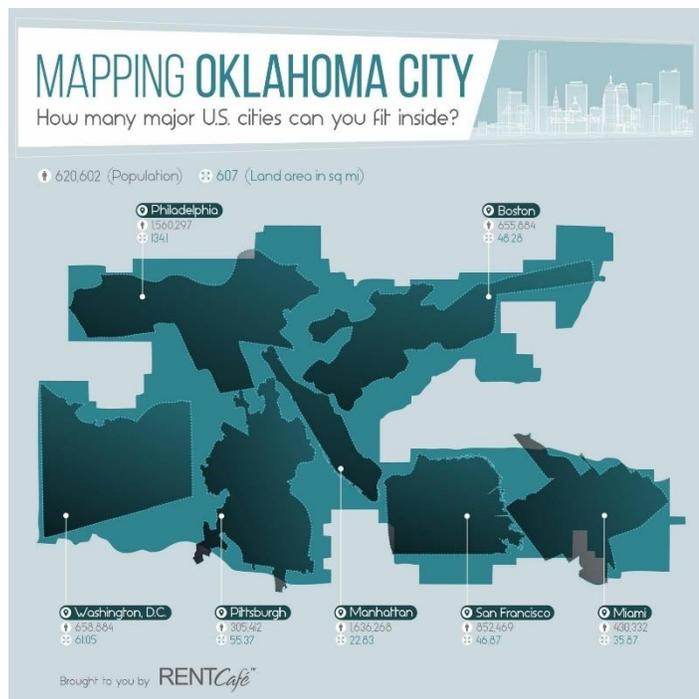
COLLABORATING TO ADVANCE OFFICER SAFETY AND WELLNESS

Oklahoma City Police Department



The Oklahoma City Police Department is the largest police force in Oklahoma. We have approximately 1,230 sworn employees with another 300 non-sworn. We serve approximately 620,000 residents in Oklahoma City. According to the latest U.S. Census, we rank as the 25th largest city in the United States. The City of Oklahoma City covers 607 square miles, making it the eighth largest city by land area.

Wade Gourley was promoted to Chief of Police on July 8, 2019. He has served on the Oklahoma City Police Department for 33 years and has risen from the ranks to become the 50th Chief of Police.



Implementation of the new OCPD Wellness Unit

Agencies around the country are recognizing the importance of taking proactive steps to support the health and wellness of their employees. Studies have shown in order to maintain optimal job performance it is essential for both physical and mental health to be a priority. In February of 2020, Oklahoma City Police Department partnered with Code-4 Counseling, LLC, specialists in Police and Public Safety Psychology. Code-4 assessed and provided feedback regarding the department's current wellness programming as well as made recommendations on how to improve their offerings with the goal of promoting a department-wide culture of wellness.

History of OCPD Wellness Service (formally known as CHAPPS)

In the early 1990s, recognizing the unique challenges and risks of working within a major city law enforcement agency, OCPD realized a need to formalize a series of programs to provide both spiritual and emotional support services to its officers and families. A new program called, "Cops Helping Alleviate Police Problems" (CHAPPS) was born. CHAPPS was comprised of a combination of chaplains (some of them sworn), and officers acting in a Peer Support capacity.



Over the years, CHAPPS evolved into a full-time Chaplain (sworn police officer) and an additional full-time Peer Support Coordinator (also sworn police officer). The Chaplain was responsible for overseeing a pool of volunteer chaplains who ensured spiritual and emotional services were available to officers and their families. The Peer Support Coordinator was responsible for overseeing a group of volunteer Peer Support team members. The team was comprised of sworn employees and civilian employees. The team's mission was to provide support to employees who were going through significant stressors in their life, critical incidents, personal crisis, family crisis, and any other issues requiring their attention.

Over the last 25+ years, OCPD has experienced its share of tragic incidents, including the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in 1995, devastating tornadoes, four line of duty deaths, numerous officer-involved critical incidents, and hundreds of other examples of OCPD employees facing a variety of life's unexpected sucker punches. CHAPPS was there to assist their brothers and sisters during these difficult times. Throughout it all, the Chaplain's Unit, as well as the Peer Support Unit, worked closely together. In fact, both entities, though technically separate units, worked out of the same office.

Over the years, however, there was growing confusion amongst the rank and file as to what the actual mission of CHAPPS was. Because of its name, many believed the program offered chaplain services only, and that every member of Peer Support was a chaplain. This was not the case. This confusion led some to not access Peer Support services because they did not believe they needed spiritual support or guidance.

In an effort to reduce confusion and to encourage full use of both Chaplain and Peer Support services, OCPD decided to drop the CHAPPS name and embarked on an educational campaign to ensure employees understood not only the difference between Chaplains and Peer Support, but also to make sure everyone knew what services each unit could provide.

Establishing the Wellness Unit

There has been a surge across the country emphasizing the importance of officer wellness and resiliency and reducing stigma associated with seeking mental health support services. Cultural norms within law enforcement have historically prevented personnel from asking for help, seeing it as a weakness. Fear of being seen as weak or receiving ridicule from coworkers has further contributed to a culture of silence in law enforcement. However, like never before, the Oklahoma City Police Department recognizes the importance of not only acknowledging and supporting mental health, but also providing necessary resources to help protect and treat the emotional well-being of its first responders. The leadership of OCPD is clearly aware of the disturbing trend across the country regarding stigma, increasing rates of officer suicide, and other devastating impacts of job-related stress. This includes substance abuse and trauma injury. Command Staff has communicated their commitment to getting out front and taking action to provide quality services and other culturally competent resources in hopes of helping its employees to be as resilient and emotionally healthy as possible.

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Oklahoma City Police Department is proud of its history and accomplishments in providing wellness services to its employees and families over the years. The creation of CHAPPS in the early 1990's was not only innovative, but well ahead of many public safety agencies throughout the country. New leadership recognizes to effectively address the kinds of issues officers face today, and keep up with the ever-changing dynamics, the agency must continue to make bold changes to its organizational structure and take on new initiatives to provide its employees the best services available. This led directly to the disbanding of CHAPPS and the Chaplain programs and the formation of the new Wellness Unit.

Structure

Part of the implementation of the new Wellness Unit was forming a rank structure that was comprehensive and efficient. It starts with a full-time team comprised of the following:

- One Lieutenant, Wellness Coordinator
- Three Sergeants
- One Full-time Licensed Professional Counselor, who also serves as a Clinical Director
- One Full-time Chaplain
- Four part-time volunteer teams consisting of eight to ten sworn team members
- A Civilian Support Team with five members
- Family Support Team, with eight members
- Chaplain Support Team, with thirteen volunteers
- Canine Therapy (Will the Wellness Dog)

“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

Theodore Roosevelt, April 23, 1910



Support

The purpose of the Wellness Unit is to provide holistic support to aid in the wellness of the officers and civilian employees of the Oklahoma City Police Department. The Wellness Unit strives to provide psychological support, as well as promote financial health, physical well-being, and resilience education. Wellness endeavors to identify new and innovative wellness resources for the entire police family.

The Wellness Unit prioritizes the development of partnerships with culturally competent health and wellness providers in the larger community who can provide expert advice and consultation services. This includes, but is not limited to, medical doctors, licensed mental health professionals, researchers, financial experts, retirement experts, fitness instructors and clergy. It is important for unit members to stay up to date on research and best practices related to wellness programs.

The Wellness Unit serves all individuals within the police family, regardless of their personal beliefs, religious affiliation, and/or sexual orientation. The unit members take pride in assisting anyone, and everyone.

Confidentiality is of utmost importance to the Wellness Unit. Each of the unit members are required to sign a confidentiality agreement with the understanding a breach of that agreement will result in immediate dismissal from the unit and the possibility of disciplinary consequences.

The What

When thinking about a holistic approach to wellness we must consider what that encompasses. To know the “what” is to break down where life struggles originate. Below is a comprehensive list of areas where we have made a conscious effort to assist our OCPD family.

- **Critical incident response**

Some incidents offer a critical traumatic experience for officers on the scene. Examples include fatality accidents, child deaths, homicide scenes, and drownings. When an officer is struggling to process what they have seen we offer Wellness Leave. This is time off for them to heal without using vacation or sick time. We work with the affected officers to get them back to work healthy as soon as practicable.

When officers are involved in a critical incident, such as an officer involved shooting, we are called to the scene to begin the healing process. Part of that process is to check on those working the scene such as permitter officers, crime scene investigators, detectives, and the supervisors on scene. Then we focus on the officers directly involved. We start with an explanation of who we are and what we do. Then we focus on what an officer might, or might not expect, in the days to

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come such as sleep deprivation, appetite suppression, nightmares, anger issues, and physiological automatic responses. We then describe the investigation process, giving the officer a general explanation of how it works. Wellness officers then transport the involved officer, or officers, to headquarters to have their firearm examined. After this is complete, the Wellness Unit member will transport the officer, or officers, home. Wellness Unit officers will continue the process of checking on all officers involved. We take it a step further to also include getting our Family Support Team involved by reaching out to a spouse or loved one related to the involved officers.



We then offer a critical incident de-brief for the officer, and a critical incident de-brief for the spouse. We continue follow-up checks until the Wellness Unit officer feels confident in how those involved are handling the situation. Follow up contact is continued even after a person returns to work. The goal is to enable an officer to return to full duty physically healthy, as well as mentally and emotionally strong.

- **Return to Duty**

Normally after a critical incident the officers involved must spend some time on Administrative Leave. This means they suddenly cannot work extra jobs, are removed from normal comradery, and they will have little contact with the police department other than friends and Wellness Unit members. Once the criminal investigation is concluded and a final disposition from the district attorney is determined, we initiate the Return to Duty protocol.

The Wellness Unit and Reality Based Training Unit work together to form a training strategy that will help the officer to return to duty with a high likelihood of success, minimizing possible traumatic responses. The Return to Duty protocol allows the involved officer to wear their uniform, shoot a non-qualification course of fire without scoring, run through shooting drills, then move to another location for scenario-based training using simunition and role players.

The Wellness Unit is there during the training event to assist if some thoughts or feelings need to be discussed. We also provide lunch to the entire crew as a safe place for comradery and improving the Esprit Dé Corps. We have found easing officers back into police decision making scenarios in a safe, controlled environment is much better than just sending them back out to patrol cold or without reintegration.

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- Financial Wellness

In looking at what has caused our OCPD family significant struggles, we discovered the officers' financial wellness played a large role in their lives and wellbeing. Officers that did not live within a budget or with a financial plan had a much more complicated home life. Officers frequently worked extra jobs, long hours, and were not taking care of responsibilities at home.

“Live differently from everyone else in the present so you can live differently from everyone else in the future.”

Dave Ramsey



We partnered with a Dave Ramsey master financial coach to assist our officers with their financial well-being, free of charge. We assist officers with financial goal setting, as well as establishing boundaries. We start early in the academy teaching recruits about building personal “margin” or capacity and how extra jobs can negatively affect a relationship. We show examples of what financial responsibility looks like and how to achieve financial peace.

- Sleep

In December of 2020 we released an hour-long in-service video regarding sleep. We interviewed Dr. Mellissa E. Milanak, a licensed clinical psychologist. We sent a questionnaire to our department asking about sleep, then used that information to discuss what would benefit our employees most.

- Fitness

As part of the 2020 in-service, we also interviewed some of our fitness experts within the department. Prior to the in-service we discussed fitness plans, supplements, and water intake.

The Oklahoma City Police Department maintains seven different gyms located throughout the divisions, headquarters, and the Training Center. The City has partnered with Golds Gym to make automatic discounted withdraws from pay checks for individual and family memberships.



We are also in the process of hiring a Readiness Coordinator within the Wellness Unit. This will be a civilian fitness and dietary expert. They will be responsible for all gym equipment maintenance and upkeep. The Readiness Coordinator will also work with the Wellness Unit to assist those wanting to improve their physical fitness. Many studies have shown a direct correlation between mood improvement and physical fitness.

The Wellness Unit was able to create a new policy enabling officers to work out on duty. Many officers have family obligations that hamper their ability to stick with a workout plan. Now they can take time during their shift to work out if call volume permits.

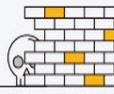
- **Family Support**

Wellness understands the importance of a happy, healthy home life. To that end we have started a program called What About Me, (W.A.M.). W.A.M. is specifically designed for and limited to the spouses of officers. This program is directed by a Gottman level II certified Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). It is a small group training program with the goal of providing healing, understanding, and healthy communication before irreparable damage is done to an officer's relationship. This is a six-week training session in a small group therapy setting, every Tuesday from 6pm to 7:30pm. We host two six-week sessions per year.

W.A.M. covers the following:

- Recognizing your own needs
- Improving communication with the emergency responder in your life
- Marital/relationship/parenting issues
- How to better understand the thought process of emergency responders
- What's behind the anger
- Co-dependency
- Substance abuse and self-medicating issues
- How trauma affects intimate relationships

THE FOUR HORSEMEN AND HOW TO STOP THEM WITH THEIR ANTIDOTES

<p>CRITICISM Verbally attacking personality or character.</p> 	<p>GENTLE START UP Talk about your feelings using "I" statements and express a positive need.</p> 
<p>CONTEMPT Attacking sense of self with an intent to insult or abuse.</p> 	<p>BUILD CULTURE OF APPRECIATION Remind yourself of your partner's positive qualities and find gratitude for positive actions.</p> 
<p>DEFENSIVENESS Victimizing yourself to ward off a perceived attack and reverse the blame.</p> 	<p>TAKE RESPONSIBILITY Accept your partner's perspective and offer an apology for any wrongdoing.</p> 
<p>STONEWALLING Withdrawing to avoid conflict and convey disapproval, distance, and separation.</p> 	<p>PHYSIOLOGICAL SELF-SOOTHING Take a break and spend that time doing something soothing and distracting.</p> 

The Gottman Institute

Modalities used include:

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Trauma Informed Care
- Trauma Based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Gottman Couples Method, Four Horsemen, Flooding
- Mindfulness and relaxation training

We have scheduled spousal events, such as a spousal de-brief after the riots in 2020 and a professional speaker from Code 4 Couples in 2021. We are scheduling another training event regarding finance and retirement for the end of 2022. These events are held at our Fraternal Order of Police and food is provided by generous donations from residents and the FOP.

- **Wills & Trusts**

The Wellness Unit saw a need for information and practical resources for wills and trusts. Officers did not know where to start and questioned the importance of such documents. We provide training and a resource to afford the appropriate level of protection for officers and their families.

We have teamed up with a law firm that will assist officers with wills and trusts at a discounted rate. They walk officers through the process of making a will and protecting their assets. This is also something we go over in the academy with the new recruits.

- **Retirement**

We teach recruits in the academy about retirement and the prep work that goes into a healthy, happy, and financially stable retirement. We discuss plans for working, or not working, after OCPD. We give financial advice regarding our 457(b) deferred compensation program and our pension system. We used real world examples of the benefits of the 457. We also explain what an IRA is and how diversity is important in a financial portfolio.

We are available to assist those going through the process of retirement and talk them through what to expect.



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- Family Academy

During our recruit training academy, we have a family academy the Wellness Unit facilitates. This is located at the training center and is held one day a month, 6pm-8pm, on Wednesdays. We go over everything the Wellness Unit does, so spouses and family members are fully aware of our capabilities and how we can help. We have tailored classes for the spouses, parents or loved ones that want to attend.



Topics covered include:

- Couples' communication
- Financial wellness
- Emotional survival
- Retirement now
- FTO Information

- Lighthouse App

We hired Apex Mobil to create our very own app on the Lighthouse platform. This is a holistic wellness app that has customized information specifically for the Oklahoma City Police Department. The app is a great resource for employees wanting to be completely anonymous. They can seek our resources and examine the app without anyone knowing. They can read about the Wellness team members, vetted counselors, wellness articles, as well as having access to self-care evaluations, EAP information, financial fitness, physical fitness & health and emergency suicide prevention phone numbers. The app is free and available to employees as well as family members, retired officers, and civilians.

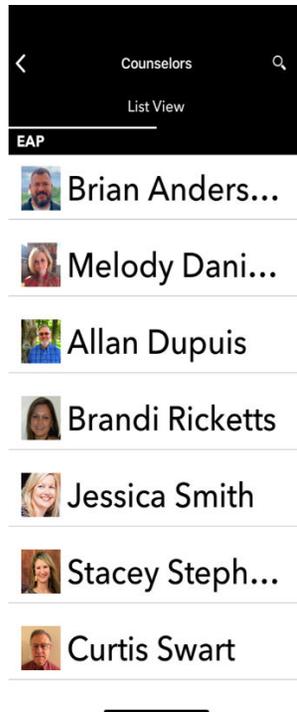


“You didn’t come this far to only come this far.”

Jesse Itzler

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Training for Wellness

To deliver the full range of services we provide we must have a well-trained team. Through a COPS grant we have been able to offer extensive training opportunities for our Wellness Unit members. In the past two years we have had the opportunity to receive training in the following areas:

- Critical Incident Stress Management
- Critical Incident Stress Debrief
- Psychological 1st Aid
- Gottman Method Couples Communication
- Code 4 Couples
- Road to Mental Readiness
- Financial Peace

Scheduled training to be completed in 2022 includes:

- Suicide Prevention
- Road to Mental Readiness

COVID/Flu Mitigation

The Police Department's Emergency Management Unit works closely with the Fire Department to issue COVID vaccines as well as Flu vaccines. The Emergency Management Team has created a 25-page COVID Protocol instructional guide to help keep employees safe during the pandemic. This instructional guide covers everything COVID related so if an employee has a question and/or needs a resource they can find it in the COVID Protocol guide. This is a working document that is updated often.

Summary

This is an overview, but not a total view of the things the OCPD Wellness Unit does to help the men and women of our department. One of the real-world benefits to our new unit is the day-to-day visitation. This interaction is tremendous in building trust and assisting those in personal crisis or work crisis should those situations arise.

In conclusion, I would like to offer a personal observation. In my 29 + years working with the men and women of the Oklahoma City Police Department I can say I have never seen more training and resources available for our sworn and non-sworn employees. We have a command staff that truly cares for the mental health of their employees. We no longer just check a box for employee wellness. The department has invested in employee wellness with the new full-time unit, new volunteers, new training opportunities, new LPC, new canine therapy, new Chaplain, new wellness leave protocols, and new standards for assistance and confidentiality.

These innovative initiatives have built a program the department members have embraced, which has allowed us to expand our possibilities for providing meaningful assistance. We have seen high participation and received positive feedback. I believe our Wellness program can be replicated by other agencies with a commitment to holistic employee support.



"Success is not final; failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts."

Winston Churchill