



Windsor Police Service

# WELLNESS STRATEGIC PLAN

2022





POLICE

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# MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

Working as a first responder is one of the few occupations where individuals are routinely placed in high stress and high risk situations. Specifically, those in a policing profession routinely confront scenarios where they experience threats to both their personal safety and their emotional state. This frequent exposure to occupational stress reinforces WPS's duty to have an effective wellness system in place that provides strong supports and resources to our members. This system should include several components, including: proactive resilience programming; proactive training to counteract existing stigmatization of mental health issues, and responsive mental wellness initiatives to assist those in crisis.

Though WPS is proud of the steps taken in the area of wellness, we acknowledge that continuous improvement is necessary to effectively meet the needs of our members. It is our sincere hope that the approach outlined here represents a strong commitment towards embedding wellness into the foundation of our service. By fostering and supporting a healthy membership, we are better positioned to provide exceptional service to the communities we serve.

Ultimately, we must accept that everyone is accountable for wellness. The Windsor Police Services Board provides administrative oversight and commits funding necessary to promote wellness in the workplace. As Senior Administration, the Deputy Chiefs and I are responsible for championing Service-wide wellness priorities; our goal is to motivate leaders across the Service to integrate wellness principles and priorities into policies and practices, thereby advancing our organizational goals

to create a wellness-focused environment and foster a supportive culture within the WPS.

Despite the fact that employees in law enforcement are required to respond to highly stressful situations stigma continues to be a significant barrier to care for police officers experiencing a mental health issue. The WPS recognizes that an overarching wellness program must not only be reactive, but also preventative and include initiatives designed to address concerns before they manifest into issues of significant concern.

I recognize that our members' wellness journeys are rarely linear; the WPS will commit to evaluating new programs and initiatives as they present themselves to determine if they are an appropriate option for our service.

**Pamela Mizuno,**

Chief of Police

# VISION AND MISSION

## Our Vision

The Windsor Police Service is an organization that proactively engages our members to safeguard and enhance their overall mental and physical health.

## Our Mission

To achieve this vision, the Service's mission is to deliver programming to build and support a healthy and resilient team. We will be supportive and responsive to the health and well-being needs of our employees and their families.



# WELLNESS MODEL

Research demonstrates that three factors impact the wellness of first responders; those being organizational factors (the environment), social elements (culture), and personal care (or individual self-care) (Kliem & Westphal, 2011). The goals in this strategy will be achieved through the adoption of a model called the Ecological Intervention Model (see Figure 1).

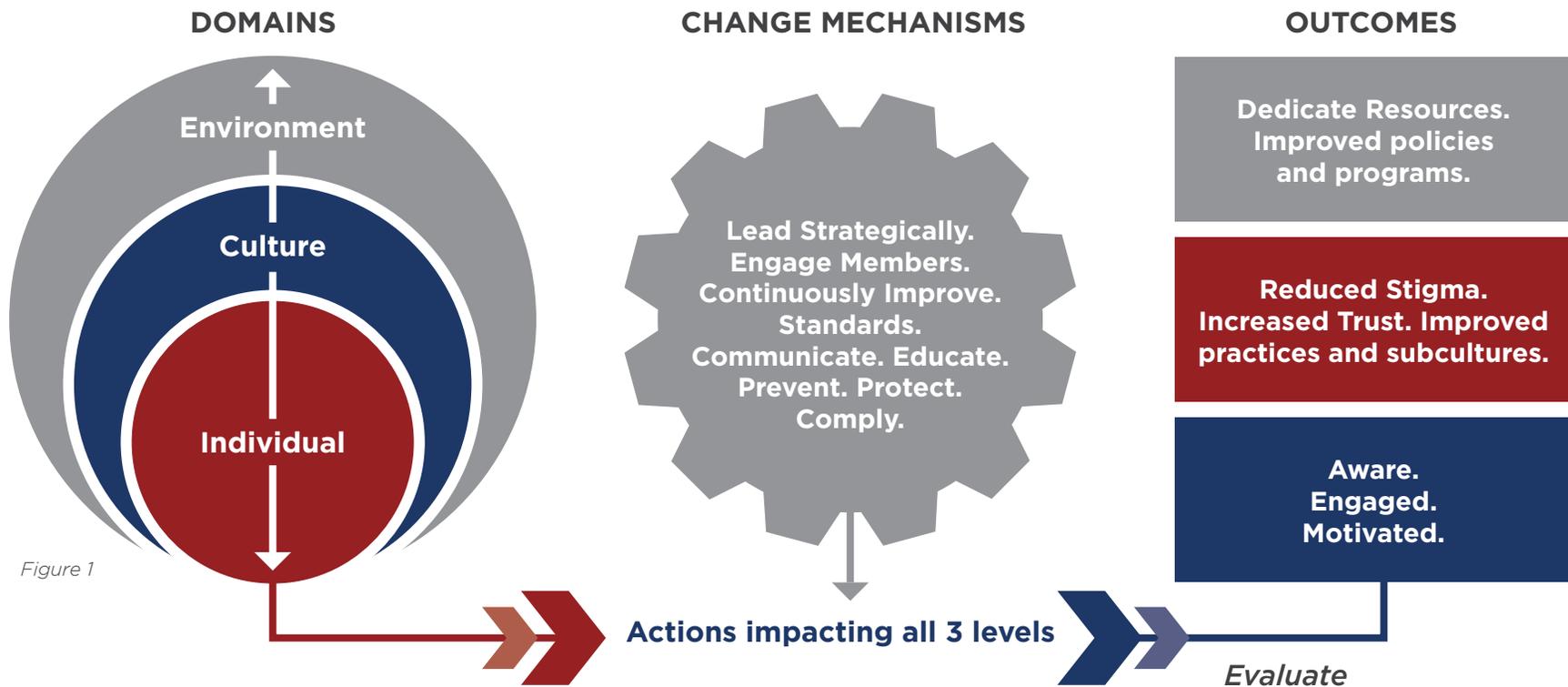


Figure 1

# WELLNESS GOALS

The WPS Wellness Vision Statement compliments the Ecological Intervention Model in that the Vision requires provision of services, in a culture of acceptance that encourages self-care. The Ecological Intervention Model will therefore guide the WPS in achieving its mission by focusing on the following Goals:

**1. Create a Wellness Focused Organizational Environment:**

Develop an **environment** that is led strategically with dedicated resources, and improved policies and programs that support our organization's wellness vision.

**2. Foster a Wellness Focused Organizational Culture:**

Foster a **culture** with increased trust, reduced stigma, and improved practices around wellness.

**3. Deliver Programming and Services that Support Individuals and Their Families:**

Support **individuals** and their families in their wellness journey to be more self-aware, engaged and self-motivated by offering relevant wellness programming, initiatives and services.

**Performance Indicators:**

The above-stated goals will be measured using the following metrics:

- Annual Employee Consultation Survey
- EFAP / Peer Support / PeerConnect Usage
- WSIB / Sick Time Data



# WELLNESS OBJECTIVES



The Windsor Police Service’s ideal system of care will include initiatives implemented organization-wide, providing supports both in and out of the workplace that can be tailored to the experience of each individual member throughout their career and into retirement.

Having regard to the Strategic Goals above, the following objectives were identified as the framework to embed Wellness within the Windsor Police Service. These objectives provide guidance to an action plan that is specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-based (SMART). The following objectives will guide this work:

### **Objective 1: Education and Training**

Training and education will assist in the normalization of participation in mental health initiatives. Members using wellness services will receive training that will provide the foundation for an individualized wellness experience as they progress with the Windsor Police Service. Organizational training and safeguarding will support other internal services including Peer Support, the Chaplaincy Program, or re-integration services, which will be provided as required or on demand and tailored to each individual member's unique experience and needs.

Ongoing assessment of current and available education and training initiatives that proactively provide information to employees about health and wellness.

### **Objective 2: Raising Awareness**

Through increased education and training, members understand what services are available, where to start, and are treated with WPS's value of compassion when they seek support. Training and education programs will also serve to raise awareness of wellness-related matters first responders face to normalize use of wellness programming within a wellness focused environment and culture for individuals and families.

### **Objective 3: Reducing Stigma**

Increased education, training, and actively promoting available supports will assist the Service in creating a culture that is open, accepting and non-judgmental about mental and physical health with the effect that wellness support and services are normalized and, viewed as a core tool available in policing.

### **Objective 4: Broad Coverage**

An open culture will assist the Service in successfully providing a variety of support services for all members, both sworn and civilian, as well as offering components and/or separate services that support family members and retirees.

### **Objective 5: Targeted Services**

Arranging for a variety of wellness services assist in the development of a graduated care spectrum of support. This graduated care system will assist members in identifying more targeted or specific wellness services that are the most appropriate for their needs

# A COMMITMENT TO ACTION

## Wellness Action Plan

It will take the entire WPS community to bring the strategy to life and make it sustainable for years to come. Everyone has a responsibility when it comes to wellness; we challenge each and every member to commit to creating a culture of wellness and actively engage as a champion of wellness. There are many ways you can help create an environment that promotes and supports the health and well-being of our Service.

All members can effect change through their circles of influence, and those in formal positions of leadership will have an even greater opportunity to make a difference. Although all members have a role to play, accountability for progress on the Wellness strategy falls to the senior leadership, as well as certain members tasked with particular Wellness-related mandates. Advancing Wellness priorities will require comprehensive organization wide efforts to influence personal, structural and cultural change. Key metric and performance indicators of progress will be identified and monitored as part of the Wellness Action Plan.

The following wellness initiatives and actions will be implemented to further the above-listed Objectives:

### **Action 1: Education and Raising Awareness**

Enhanced training and education will raise awareness regarding the importance of building resilience against, and seeking assistance after experiencing, mental trauma. The following educational and training strategy will be adopted:

#### **Implementation of Wellness Onboarding Training**

Already in place, all new employees will be required to take Mental Health Wellness and training specifically addressing first responders.

Timeline: Currently in effect.

#### **Road to Mental Readiness (R2MR) Training**

R2MR exists to build awareness of mental illness and operational stress injuries (OSI's) through education, to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness, and to increase understanding and support for these conditions. The goal of R2MR is to improve short term performance and long term mental health outcomes by building member resiliency.

In 2016, 14 members of the Windsor Police Service were trained as instructors in order to deliver the R2MR program. Another three were trained in January of 2020.

Timeline: The feasibility of R2MR is currently under review. R2MR may be incorporated into regular training in 2023 pending the outcome of review.

#### **Peer Support Training**

The Peer Support Team currently consists of 55 members including sworn and civilian, both active and retired who act as resources for members and facilitate group debriefs after critical events. Peer Support Members have been trained in the areas of stress management, active listening and responding skills, and can help fellow members connect with many specialized support programs in the community. All Peer Support members have taken part in a 40 hour training program facilitated by a consulting clinical psychologist.

In order to prevent burnout, the Service is committing to meet with Peer Support leaders in the first six months of 2023 to establish a rotation such that peer support members also have time off from these duties while ensuring continuity of the important service that they provide.

Timeline: December 2023

### Reintegration Training

The WPS currently uses reintegration to facilitate members' return to work after being involved in critical events, or after lengthy absences from the workplace, as required. The reintegration program is a streamlined, peer-driven return-to-work program for police officers and other public safety personnel, featuring an interactive process.

The Service is committed to training additional members when training is available in 2023 in reintegration to ensure this program is used to the fullest extent possible.

Timeline: February 2023

### Virtual Learning Opportunities

CPKN and OPVTA both have videos available in their respective libraries which bring awareness to the stressors faced by first responders and offer hope that there is help and support for members when they are experiencing mental health related issues.

The Health and Wellness Coordinator will identify relevant training available for members, details of which will be found by accessing the Employee Wellness and Peer Support tab on the Infonet.

Timeline: August 2022 and ongoing

### Health and Wellness Coordinator

The Coordinator position is required to establish and maintain current knowledge of industry standards and practice and remain abreast of research, gathering, and communicating lessons learned in physical and mental health and well-being matters in order to support the WPS Wellness Strategy. The Coordinator will continue to assess education and training opportunities for the Service and provide information sessions regarding existing offerings.



# A COMMITMENT TO ACTION

## Wellness Action Plan

### Action 2: Reducing Stigma and Initiating Culture Change

In addition to providing members with the tools to recognize and address mental health concerns through the education and training initiatives listed above, education will also assist in moving toward a culture that recognizes that seeking assistance with mental health matters shows strength of character and a commitment to one's overall wellness. The following initiatives will be implemented to normalize mental wellness and raise awareness in Windsor Police Service members:

#### Chaplaincy Program

WPS recognizes the importance of spiritual care as a core component of wellness. Our partnership with five community chaplains offers members guidance and support from a variety of religious perspectives.

Chaplain contact information will be available to all members through the Infonet; the Service commits to the recruitment of diverse spiritual leaders to address all members' needs.

Timeline: The Service continues to seek volunteers from additional faith and religious based communities.

#### Peer Support

The Peer Support Team will continue to deploy following critical events, regardless of whether they have been specifically requested by any given member.

Timeline: Currently in effect.

#### Reintegration Program

Reintegration considerations will inform all members' return to the workplace following lengthy absences, regardless of whether the absence was a result of a critical incident.

Timeline: October 2023

#### Employee and Family Assistance Plan (EFAP)

The Windsor Police Service's EFAP program, provided by Family Services

(FSEAP), offers members 24/7 access to a full suite of programs and services to support their wellbeing. These services include everything from financial resources, legal services, fitness programs, child and elder care support, and online parenting classes, all accessible by phone, online, or via a mobile app available to WPS members and their families.

Timeline: Effective immediately, contact information for the EFAP will be added to the Employee Wellness and Peer Support tab on the Infonet.

#### Blue Armour

The proposed Blue Armour program will incentivize members who complete a physical checkup and a mental health checkup on their own time from a qualified professional. The Blue Armour program helps to reduce stigma by encouraging members to build a relationship with a mental health provider that they have had positive contact with and trust. WPS would receive confirmation that the member attended for the checkup but no personal health information. The program encourages members to be proactive with both their physical and mental health.

Timeline: February 2023

#### Wellness Assessment

The Windsor Police Service will provide opportunities for members to engage in an assessment of Wellness initiatives through the Annual Employee Consultation Survey, which will allow the Service to update the Wellness action plan and adapt to the changing needs of our members.

### **Action 3: Provide Broad and Targeted Wellness Services**

The Windsor Police Service will, with assistance from the Health and Wellness Coordinator, identify services that will enhance members' health and wellness.

#### **Expanded Safeguarding Project**

The Safeguard Project is a program involving mandatory psychological screening with a psychologist for members at increased risk for exposure to potentially traumatic stressors in the course of their duties in specialized divisions. The project is undergoing review to extend to members beyond WPS ESU, Ident and ICE units.

Timeline: Expansion of the current Safeguarding Program will continue. An RFP for counselling services will be completed and posted by September 2023.

#### **Peer Connect Application**

Peer Connect is a one-to-one peer support application that provides members with instant access to peer support, wellness tools, self-assessment, mental health programming and educational resources. Peer Connect contains anonymous metrics which provide valuable information on numbers and types of peer support interactions. WPS is participating in a fully funded one year pilot project using Peer Connect which ends April 1, 2022. Peer Connect has received extensive positive feedback from users, especially supervisors, who are able to quickly and easily facilitate peer support connections for our members.

Timeline: Evaluation ongoing. PeerConnect Services will continue.

#### **Extended Benefit Coverage**

WPS currently offers a broad range of supplemental benefits through Green Shield to assist members in building and sustaining a healthy lifestyle. One of the key elements of this package is \$8,000 of annual coverage for mental health services with a psychologist or social worker for WPS members and their direct family.

Timeline: Currently in effect.

#### **Fit-Pin Test**

The Fit-Pin Test encourages physical fitness within the Service. Sworn and civilian members are eligible for 4 hours (time off) should they complete the Ontario Police Fitness Award Pin test. Action will be taken to promote the Fit-Pin test.

Timeline: Currently in effect.

#### **Early Intervention Program (E.I. Pro)**

Implement the Early Intervention Program (E.I. Pro). E.I. Pro is intended to proactively identify patterns in one or more areas of operations and critical incidents. The program monitors calls for service by gathering data from Versadex and CAD. E.I. Pro will identify specific members based on their exposure to certain high priority calls at a rate which is above a pre-established threshold. E.I. Pro will assist the organization to scan and identify situations where conversations with our members may be beneficial to their wellbeing.

Timeline: Currently in the testing phase, with implementation by end of 2023.

# CONCLUSION

Changing culture will take time. Research, development, and implementation of a comprehensive wellness strategy will also take time, and will likely involve some trial and error. Although the Windsor Police Service has a number of programs in place and attitudes surrounding wellness are beginning to shift, there is much work to be done, not only to ensure that attitudinal change continues to progress, but to accelerate this change and enhance the wellness, and ultimately the working and home lives of Windsor Police Service members.

The proposed strategy is specifically designed to develop an environment that is lead strategically with dedicated resources and improved policies and programs that support the Windsor Police Services' wellness vision; that is, to foster a workplace culture in which increased trust, reduced stigma, and respect for mental wellness allows for the support of individual Windsor Police Service members as we all participate in our wellness journey to become more aware, engaged, and motivated.

It is anticipated that as the Windsor Police Service strives to improve the awareness around mental wellness issues and reduce stigmatization in the workplace, the organization will see change in use of sick time, decreased WSIB claims for mental stress, and a reduction in LTD claims. However, aside from these potential benefits to the Windsor Police Service, the most important benefit will be demonstrating to its members that the Windsor Police Service is concerned for their welfare by making a positive and significant investment in their health and wellness.

## References:

Kleim & Westphal (2011) Mental Health in First Responders: A Review and Recommendation for Prevention and Intervention Strategies. American Psychological Association, DOI: 10.1177/1534765611429079



HONOUR IN SERVICE

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