

A Strategic Asset for Officer Wellness and Operational Readiness

New Jersey State Policemen's Benevolent Association Peer Response Team (PRT)



Policing places relentless psychological and emotional strain on officers—demands that, if left unaddressed, can erode performance, well-being, and readiness. Reducing mental health stigma begins with leadership setting the tone—when those at the top openly prioritize and support mental wellness, it fosters a culture where seeking help is accepted and encouraged.

The NJSPBA's Peer Response Team (PRT) is a vital force in addressing that reality head-on. It elevates officer performance, safeguards personnel health and safety, and fortifies organizational resilience. By uniting trained peers, chaplains, and clinicians, the PRT provides a comprehensive, integrated support system—one that meets officers where they are and responds to the full scope of their needs with strength, compassion, and precision. **The NJSPBA PRT** is provided at no cost to the officer or the department as a membership benefit.

1. Early Intervention and Operational Readiness

Confidential peer support—outside the chain of command and beyond their department—encourages officers to seek help early, before stress escalates into burnout, misconduct, absenteeism, or serious mental health concerns. Early intervention preserves decision-making, reaction time, and overall job performance.

NJSPBA's PRT provides access to a vetted network of trained peers and chaplains, as well as to inpatient and outpatient mental health and substance abuse treatment facilities.

2. Resilience and Performance

Peer support offers practical coping strategies, such as stress regulation, emotional regulation, and healthy routines. These skills improve consistency and effectiveness in high-pressure situations.

NJSPBA's PRT offers departmental training on topics such as sleep, depression, and anger management and coping skills to address these issues.

3. Critical Incident Response

After traumatic events, peer teams provide immediate support and follow-up, reducing isolation, normalizing stress reactions, and identifying when additional care is needed. This helps enable faster, healthier returns to duty.

NJSPBA's PRT has rapid-deployment teams dispatched for on-scene support in the immediate aftermath of a critical incident and for structured post-incident debriefings.



4. Morale and Retention

Peer support programs signal that leadership prioritizes well-being, strengthening trust, morale, and retention—particularly among experienced officers.

NJSPBA's PRT has secured funding for counseling sessions after a critical incident. The NJSPBA was instrumental in passing legislation that provides 12 Workers' Compensation-funded counseling sessions following critical incidents, with clinician choice.

5. Confidential Access to Care

Peer support serves as a trusted bridge to professional services, maintaining strict confidentiality and reducing barriers to care.

NJSPBA's PRT has secured confidentiality for conversations between peers and officers. Legislation backed by the NJSPBA provides legal protection for confidentiality between officers and peer supporters.

6. Whole-Officer Readiness

Personal stressors affect job performance. Peer support addresses the full scope of officer well-being, recognizing that readiness depends on the whole person.

NJSPBA's PRT comprises a diverse, statewide network of peers and chaplains who share lived experience.

Conclusion

The **NJSPBA PRT** is essential infrastructure for modern policing. By enabling early intervention, building resilience, and supporting officers through critical incidents, it enhances performance, strengthens culture, and ensures a healthier, more prepared workforce.

If interested in learning more about the **NJSPBA PRT call Luke Sciallo 732-904-5660.**



Clinical Services

Recognizing the mental health challenges that face members on a daily basis, both personal and professional, the New Jersey State PBA formed the Peer Response Team.

<https://njspba.com/clinical-services/>