

Oklahoma City Police Department's Return to Duty Program

Voiceover

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Welcome to *The Beat*—a podcast series from the COPS Office at the Department of Justice. Featuring interviews with experts from a varied field of disciplines, *The Beat* provides law enforcement with the latest developments and trending topics in community policing.

Jennifer Donelan

00:16

Hello, and welcome to *The Beat*. I'm Jennifer Donelan, your host. We are taking you to Oklahoma City. The Oklahoma City Police Department has a force of 1,169 officers and 300 civilian employees. The department has a central police headquarters and five substations covering over 2,500 police reporting districts averaging a quarter square mile in size. The Oklahoma City Police Department is responsible for protecting and responding to calls within almost 700 square miles. Oklahoma City is the state's largest city with a population of 681,000 and is the 22nd largest city in the United States.

Oklahoma City resides firmly in what is known as Tornado Alley, and it came to international attention following the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building by Timothy McVeigh. That blast and building collapse killed 168 people and injured more than 600. Throughout the United States there are approximately 800,000 officers working in 18,000 state and local law enforcement agencies. On any given day there are officers who answer a call for service that can only be described as traumatic or emotionally taxing. Historically, these officers had few resources to help them cope with these experiences. The result: officers remaining on patrol without the opportunity to first safeguard themselves, which is obviously a terrible position for the men and women of law enforcement to be put in, and it's one that has the potential to negatively impact fellow officers, an officer's family, and the community that these officers serve. So—to say the least about the officer who actually experienced the trauma—the Oklahoma City Police Department has developed a process that we're going to be talking about that changes this dynamic for their officers. And here to speak about it is Lieutenant Don Holland from the Oklahoma City Police Department. Lieutenant Holland, welcome to *The Beat*.

Lieutenant Don Holland

02:23

Thank you. Thank you for having me.

Donelan

02:25

I'm really looking forward to this discussion, but I have to start off with one question that we ask every single person, and that's: What made you decide to become a police officer? Now, before you answer the question, I've got to give you a little bit of background. Nothing is off limits, just know that. We've had guests tell us everything from they've been inspired by family members, to being caught drinking

with friends as a minor and their punishment was a ride along that attracted them to the force. We also had a guest who sued their police department on a whim for gender discrimination only to be offered the job and later to become the chief of police of two very large police departments. So, we can handle just about any answer. So, is yours as dramatic as that?

Holland

03:05

Not quite as dramatic as that, but I was actually influenced as a young man by a Boy Scout troop. I was in the Boy Scouts and one of our assistant scout leaders was an Oklahoma City police officer. And I remember one day we were actually helping to move traffic into a rodeo, of all things, and we were standing at attention and moving traffic and getting people lined up. I was like, "Hey, this is kind of cool. I kind of like this." And then we stood at attention for the color guard as they went by. And then I thought, "This is really neat."

And so, I had a couple of different paths to go down, either military or law enforcement, in my mind. And I thought, "You know what? I kind of think I want to be a police officer." So, nobody in my family ever was. My dad was a mechanic. My mom was a waitress. So, I thought, "I'm going to be the first." And 29 years later, I'm still here.

Donelan

03:49

So, what was Mom's and Dad's reaction?

Holland

03:51

Not very happy at all. My Dad was very upset about it at the time. He said, "This is a foolish decision. You could be making about \$45 an hour as a mechanic right now if you'd just follow my footsteps." And my Mom's just of course beside herself. She had an image in my head of shootouts every night and foot chases and fights and the whole nine yards, which there was a fair amount of that but not quite like she had built in her own head.

Donelan

04:14

I imagine. Well, parents, they just care, right? They want the best for you. Well, we are extremely happy that you chose this path and we're excited to hear more about this process that Oklahoma City Police Department developed in an effort to help their officers. You know, for so long this was just, you know, we didn't talk about... You just went out there. You did your job. It's just part of the job. In recent years though, thankfully, we're talking about it now. We're not only talking about it, we're doing something about it to help these officers because they are, at the end of the day, human beings. You've gone through a lot of training. You put that badge on, it does not mean that you're superhuman. And you hurt like everyone else. You bleed like everyone else, and you suffer from trauma much like everyone else. So, what is the name of your program, and essentially what is it?

Holland

05:04

Sure. So, we've got a couple of different facets of our program. The general program that helps our men and women—the Oklahoma City Police Department's Wellness Unit. And we started in basically May of 2020. We actually had a couple of programs prior to, that... It had a lot of problems. We had some splits between our chaplaincy and our peer-support team. So, when we had our new chief, Chief Gourley, he saw that we had an issue, that we were basically checking a box to try to help officers, but we really weren't helping anybody.

So, he actually hired a company, Code 4 Counseling, out of Colorado, and they came in and did an assessment of our department, and they were pretty brutal in their assessment and telling us the good, the bad, the ugly, what we got right, what we got wrong, and how we need to change it. Now we used their assessment and kind of formulated our own plan on how we're going to implement some of their suggestions. We couldn't implement them all, but we did a lot and we changed our entire unit from the format. We fired everybody that was in the prior peer-support unit, chaplaincy, and started from ground up, from scratch, of building a unit. And I was the very first one to get it started.

Instead of just checking a box, we wanted a holistic approach of helping our officers. Nothing just to do with critical incident—that is our bread and butter and that's what we do, but we wanted to make sure that we were helping officers in every facet of their life, from sleep to fitness, to finances, to retirement, and to include critical incident response.

Donelan

06:30

You bring up such a good point about the sort of 360-degree view of a person's life, because in this profession and many professions—but this one especially—it's not just eight hours, it's complete dedication. And a lot of things in a normal person's life, what you'd expect to be normal—finances—fall to the wayside. You just so focused on the job at hand, it can consume you. So, I love that it wasn't just, "Well, you had a traumatic event. Let's deal with this." You're dealing with the whole person on a day-to-day basis so that when they hit that traumatic event, they're in a better situation, I would assume.

Holland

07:09

That's exactly right. And you know, we knew that we had officers who were overextending themselves, or working extra jobs, and working themselves to the bone to try to make ends meet. Or they were buying the toys that they couldn't afford and relying upon extra duty assignments or extra jobs to be able to afford that. Well, you come along and you get into a traumatic event here in Oklahoma City, you're involved in an officer-involved shooting or an in-custody death, or maybe a fatality accident where somebody is killed because of your response, or you're directly involved in that fatality accident—you're going to be put on what's called administrative leave.

Well, administrative leave means you don't get to work any extra jobs. There are no extra duty employments. You get your base salary. And if it is of a criminal nature, you don't get paid at all. The chief can make the decision to put you on administrative leave without pay depending on the situation. So, we really wanted to preach to the officers: be prepared, don't rely upon extra jobs, don't rely upon these extra duty employment to be able to get you by, and here's how we can help. We actually have a master planner with Dave Ramsey. We've got a couple other resources that we use and we resource them out to be able to help officers to get a budget and plan together so that if they're put in those positions, it's not near as stressful as it would be otherwise.

Donelan

08:22

Well, to me that also sounds like you're taking stress off of them, you know, just on the day-to-day. When you're carrying debt and you're worried about how to pay the bills, that's causing stress on you, stress on your family, and you're not performing at your level best just on any call, I would assume. Have you seen positive outcomes just talking now about the financial and maybe the fitness, you know, the pieces that we don't necessarily think about on that day-to-day basis?

Holland

08:49

Yeah, absolutely, we have. We've had a lot of people take us up on our offer. Being able to get a budget together free of charge and be able to help their finances. I mean we have people that come into our office and just, head in hands, just, "I don't know what to do." And that's when we feel really blessed to be able to say, "We do. We've got the resources to be able to help you to get through this. This is not the end. It's not hopeless, helpless. I'm glad that you came and saw us. And here we go. This is how we're going to fix this." And being able to turn some lives around. And you're right: It changes everything in their work because if they're not tired from working extra jobs, well, you know, on their regular duty, they go work a 10-hour shift. We work eight days on, six days off, 10-hour shifts. And let's say they go pick up another extra job five hours after that, then they're going to work tired, lethargic, not their sharpest, and we want our officers to be their absolute sharpest when they're out there on the street.

It also alleviated a lot of stress at home with the spouses worried about not only extra jobs but making ends meet and being able to keep up with their bills. So, we teach it in the Academy. We start right from the very beginning. We teach in the Academy on financial peace and how you can be financially stable, and we take it all the way to retirement and how starting now is important. And that gives them something to look forward to and a goal to have whenever they leave. We do it with officers as well.

October was Financial Awareness month. We sent out several flyers. We got in contact with the entire department via email to let them know, "Hey, we're here with you." We actually utilized one of the programs that Code 4 Counseling had suggested was an app. And we chose Lighthouse. Well, they send us a monthly newsletter and that month's newsletter for October happened to be nothing but financial

stuff. So, I forwarded that out to the entire department, and we had a tremendous response. So, these men and women are listening, they're hearing it, they're seeing it, and if they need it, most of them—I would say a good portion are—are taking advantage of it.

Donelan

10:36

You know, that department buy-in too is huge. That's going department wide and that means a lot. That is a mission. That's really showing a lot of support for these officers. Kudos to you on that. So, let's talk more about when you started this. What was that like? Was it met with resistance? For those of our listeners who are thinking about launching similar programs, how could you save them some time and stress as they're planning theirs?

Holland

11:03

So, you're right. And it does take buy-in, not from just the department but also from your command staff. We're very fortunate that we had a chief that realized that we had a problem and that we needed to get it fixed. You've got to have buy-in from your command staff and they've got to understand that the employees, when they're happy and they're taken care of, their jobs are a lot easier. It takes a lot of stress off of my chief when I'm able to handle personal problems, instead of it reaching to the chief level as far as criminal conduct or misconduct or administrative conduct. You know, having a good wellness program actually helps that out. I would say having a command staff that is very supportive and backing of the efforts of your wellness team is crucial. You've just got to have it.

Donelan

11:45

That makes a lot of sense to me. Let's just start from basics here. Is the name of the program Return to Duty? Am I correct?

Holland

11:51

Yes, that's one of our aspects of what we do. So, if somebody's actually involved in a critical incident, let's say an officer-involved shooting, we will try to get them back to where they were before. We will immediately go out to scene. We will talk them through some of the things that they may be feeling, some of the things that they may be going through in the next few days, some of the things that might pop up in their heads, sleep deprivation. We tell them to watch their alcohol consumption, their anger, their mood. And we kind of go over what their spouses may be feeling.

We will actually... We've got a family-support team and we will assign one of those folks to the spouse of that officer who's involved, be it male or female. And they'll reach out to the spouse. And these are spouses of officers who have been involved in critical incidents and can tell them what's going to happen and what the process is and what they should be feeling. What should they say, what should they not say, and stuff like that. So, we think that's really beneficial for our officers to have that education and know.

Now, once they do that, they're off for a couple of sets. We usually will give them a little bit of time. And I always contact them, ask them if they're ready to come back to some kind of a restricted duty status. That restricted duty gets them back in the mix of things. Maybe report taker or detective, something downtown. They're not in an enforcement role at that point, but they're doing something that is productive for the city, to kind of get them eased back into it.

Once we get a letter from our District Attorney stating that there's no criminal charges being filed, we will set up what's called the return to duty protocol. I will contact them. We will work with our reality-based training unit, set up a date, and with us and reality-based training, we will send them out to the range to start off with. And we just ease them into it, you know, maybe it might be a month, two, three months before they put a uniform on or since they've actually listened to the radio or been around other police officers.

So, we have them put a uniform on. We want them to hear that Velcro going together again and feel the weight of that gun belt. And, you know, see if that maybe invokes any kind of emotion that they just weren't ready for. That's mainly the reason that we started this whole thing was we had officers who, they would maybe drive through an intersection and have flashbacks about what had happened in that intersection. Or maybe every time that they put their hand on their holster, it would remind them of that night. They just keep replaying it over and over again.

Or maybe the smell of gun powder, the first time they went out to the range, they're like, "Wooh, that took me right back to that night. I can't believe I'm right there. How did that happen?" So, we want to prep them for that possibility of that happening. We take them out to the range, we do a qualification course, but we don't do it for quals, we just run them through it, motions so that they get the feel of the trigger, they can smell the gun powder, they can hear the pop, they can feel the recoil, and their first time back isn't in another officer-involved shooting.

Then we run them through some scenario-based training and we're checking on them throughout the day to make sure that they're okay. This is not a form of role-play therapy. We don't want to re-enact their traumatic event. We're just getting them ready to be productive back into law enforcement. So, we're easing them into that in the most controlled environment that we possibly can.

Donelan

14:55

And from what you're saying it sounds like it's the officer's personal progress that drives sort of the speed through which they return to duty. Or are there targets, like, we are trying to get them there in three months? And then after the three-month mark we move them to phase two. Like, how does the timing of it all work? Because I assume, speaking realistically, at some point you've got to get them back on the street, if that is the game plan. Correct?

Holland

15:21

Yes, and you know what? I haven't found that limit yet. Honestly, my chief has told me that however long it takes, that's how long it's going to take. We haven't pushed that envelope or that limit yet. After a couple of months, most officers are really ready to come back. Very few have ever had a problem with coming back or an issue. They're ready to get back to work. They're anxious to get back to work.

But if we do have somebody who needs more help, who needs maybe some kind of therapy that they didn't realize they needed to get back, we're going to wait for as long as it takes to get them healthy and back to work. We're going to get them all the therapy and or whatever it is that they may need to get them back healthy and being a productive officer. So as of right now, my chief has not given me a time limit on how long it's going to take. What he wants is a healthy officer back to work. Period.

Donelan

16:10

And that is the bottom line, right? I mean, that's what we're trying to do, is get these officers healthy and in a good space. Let me ask you this: Who makes up the group, for use of a better word? Is it all fellow police officers? Do you have any mental health experts in the mix? How does that all work? Is it one of you? Is it you that's running all this, doing the checks, making sure? How does the process from the organizational end?

Holland

16:34

Oh gosh, no. Thank God it's not just me. I would burn out in about a month. You know, 1,100 officers plus 300-plus civilians, and we're taking care of all their family, there's no way that one man can do this. Staffing is important. When I started off, it was me and part of the assessment was us actually bringing two full-time officers in to help me, the coordinator. What we found shortly is if you build it, they will come. We marketed ourselves out there, we did a phase three in-service on what we do with the new unit, who we're here to help, how we're here to help you, and before we knew it, we were overwhelmed with assisting officers, which is a great problem to have. We wanted that.

So, I had to hire another sergeant. So now I've got three sergeants plus myself. We also have a part-time unit, a volunteer unit, and that's made up of about 40 officers that are spread all throughout the department, from detectives and patrol. They work part-time. They help up with on call, after hours, and on the weekends. We will assign them to people sometimes if we are just too overwhelmed inside the full-time office.

And then I have a family support unit like I mentioned earlier. Those are spouses of officers that are part of the wellness unit. And then I have a civilian support team that is volunteer. Those are dispatchers and office assistants that have went through our training—and I'll go over our training here in just a minute. And then we have a 16-men volunteer chaplaincy team that also assists everybody. So, I've got lots of back up; I've got lots of help to be able to get this accomplished. We do a lot of office visits. We do a lot

of line up visits. We do a lot of hospital visits, home visits. We're a very active team. We really try to make sure that the men and women of Oklahoma City Police Department know that we're here for them.

Donelan

18:12

That is quite an investment. And this is an action that requires that level of investment. Let me ask you, let's return to that word "full time." So yourself and your sergeants—are you solely dedicated to this? Is this what you do sunup to sundown? Are you assigned to other job and when the call comes, you sort of activate? How does that work?

Holland

18:32

No, ma'am. This is my full-time job; mine, and the three sergeants that work with me. We have our own office. It's in a corner of headquarters, kind of tucked out of the way so if somebody wants to come in and visit us, it's not a big production, nobody notices them coming in and out. We are full-time wellness, that is all we do. That's it. We don't do anything else.

Donelan

18:52

That's awesome. And you're right about providing that "cover" for privacy. That's real. Some people won't come forward because they don't want people to, you know, think about them a certain way and perceive them as, you know, damaged in some way, and that could be embarrassing. So that does allow for their privacy, which is great. And then your volunteer team—that almost sounds like a peer-support team. Is that what I would equate it with?

Holland

19:16

That's exactly right. It's a peer-support team. They've been trained in critical incident stress management. That's our base starting point of our training. You have to have that before you can assist anybody else. And then that's just the tip of the iceberg. We go in depth on suicide prevention. We're real big proponents of Gottman Method couples' communication. We really feel like that if the home life's not good, work life is not good. So, we try to really take care of our spouses as well as our men and women of our department.

One of the things we do, we started a program called What About Me? And it is a six-week program that is six to eight women in a group therapy-type setting that goes over nothing but Gottman Method couples' communication skills. And we do that two times a year and it's been a real success of getting spouses in there to be able to learn how to communicate with their law enforcement loved ones.

Donelan

20:09

But, you know, I've got to ask: You got any husbands in there?

Holland

20:12

Not yet. We haven't done any males yet. It's all been females so far, but we're definitely not opposed to it. And I can foresee in our future that actually happening.

Donelan

20:21

Because we have law enforcement leadership who listen to the podcast, is there a price tag that we can kind of wrap our head around? Or do you know, like, what this generally cost the department a year?

Holland

20:33

As far as staffing, you'd consider—the way that my staff works is I'm a lieutenant, so I make normal lieutenant pay, and three sergeants—

Donelan

20:38

Right, so a lieutenant, three sergeants—

Holland

20:41

Yeah, but what we have done is we actually applied for a LEMHWA grant through COPS. And we were able to afford a lot of extracurricular training because of that LEMHWA grant. It has provided us to be able to do road to mental readiness, Gottman Method training, to be able to do emotional survival for law enforcement books, to be able to do psychological first-aid training, to be able to do suicide prevention training. So, we went above and beyond with these grants to be able to really arm our wellness people and give them the tools they need to be able to help our officers.

Donelan

21:18

All right. Well, forgive my ignorance, can you tell me a little bit more about the method that you continue to refer to that you're using?

Holland

21:24

As far as critical incident and stress management?

Donelan

21:27

Gotham?

Holland

21:28

Oh, Gottman. It is a science-based couples communication program that the Gottmans have been doing it for several decades. It's a therapy model that enables men and women to communicate and not become flooded, not become overwhelmed with the communication, also to understand when somebody shuts down and what they're feeling, what they're thinking. So, this just gives couples tools to be able to communicate more effectively and with each other and their kids. So, we've had a lot of success with the Gottman Method and we teach it a lot.

Donelan

22:00

That's awesome. Let me ask you, in terms of the application of it, and someone who's been on the receiving end of it—I don't mean to pry into your life—have you ever been on the receiving end of this? Anyone close to you that you've been able to sort of see it from the other side and what it is to experience it?

Holland

22:17

Well, yes and no. I was involved in a shooting. I was, been on the department for 29 years. I was on the tactical team for 18 years as a sniper. I've done about nine years of undercover work. In my career I've been shot at about eight times, and I was involved in an officer-involved shooting while in a sniper position on the tact team in 2000. I can tell you the program now is a lot different than it was in 2000. I was back to work within about five days. I did my interview after staying up all night. I did my interview at like three o'clock in the afternoon, completely exhausted. I think somebody took me home. I can't even remember.

And I had lots of telephone calls from friends but the department itself, the only thing they did was come and get my car and my badge and kind of left me dangling in the wind, which was not very conducive for my mental health and surely wasn't for my wife's. She thought that symbolism of taking my car was me getting fired. And so, we've changed our ways a lot. We don't do that or work that way any longer. We have somebody standing by and checking on these officers a lot after the fact, especially if we see that somebody is struggling with it. If we see somebody is doing good, then we back off our pressure or our checking. If we see somebody struggling, we get them help and we amp up the assistance that we can give.

Donelan

23:34

That really sounds thorough.

Holland

23:36

Well, I don't know if your listeners have attested to this or not, but something that we're trying to get accomplished right now as we speak is we're hiring a full-time licensed professional counselor to be embedded with our police department. What I found is a lot of officers, they still have that stigma of wanting to go to talk to someone. "If you force me to do it, I guess I'll have to, but I'm not reaching out to anybody."

Well, they don't know them, they don't know who they are, they don't know what therapy is, or, they're just uneducated in it. So, we are actually going to hire a full-time licensed professional counselor to be part of the OCPD family. They are going to be a part of critical incident debriefs, they're going to be part of diffusing, which we do quite often on horrific scenes like child deaths and drownings and what not. They're going to be a part of our memorial services. They're going to be part of everything that we do so we can gain that trust.

This position is going to be a lot like a clinical director. We use culturally competent LPCs that we have vetted ourselves—we sat down with and vetted. And we have a list of those that we send out to officers all the time. Here are the people that we know are good for policemen. And that's very important. We do have an EAP program—Employees Assistance Program—that is pretty good. We had six free visits to a clinician. And then after that, insurance kicks in. So, we really try to do a lot to try to help our OCPD family, and that does include children and spouses as well in those visits.

Donelan

24:58

And, you know, the whole time you've been talking, I've been wondering about that counselor aspect with this, because I know some departments have counselors on staff as it stands. Did you have that prior to the position that you're hiring now and you're just hiring one specific for your particular unit? Or is this going to be the first time you're bringing a licensed counselor on board to the department?

Holland

25:19

This is the very first time. I'm not going to lie. I'm a little nervous. I'm hoping that I picked the right person. That is crucial. That's crucial for my position and it's going to be crucial for LPC. You've got to hire the right person to be able to do that. So, I am very nervous about it. I'm hoping that we do pick well. I'm relying upon the National FOP to help me in the vetting process of being able to pick the right person. Sherri Martin with the FOP, she's fantastic. She's got this down pat, being able to do this. So yeah, we're going to rely upon others to help us to get the right person in to help.

We've kind of got a short list already put together of some folks that have been stepping up and really going above and beyond to help our program. So, I'm hopeful that that will be very successful for us. Another thing that our chief really wants is a full-time chaplain. We haven't had a full-time chaplain in a

long time, and he feels like it's very important for us to have that chaplaincy here on the department as well. So, I will be a coordinator for both of those positions as well as the volunteer squad, as well as the full-time sergeants.

Donelan

26:17

It's investing in the physical, psychological, and spiritual of your officers. That's great. Let's go back to, we got of some the, you know, the practical cost. Let's talk about some of the benefits and maybe the benefits that we can't measure in dollars. Are you seeing any of that in terms of, I don't know, drops in citizen complaints, better interactions between officers and residents? Is there anything that you could give us some insight to on unseen benefits, the type that we can't capture with a figure?

Holland

26:45

I believe so. It's hard to quantify what we do in measurable terms, but I would like to brag a little, maybe, I don't know if I can or not; it's hard to say. You and the whole nation, the whole world, knows 2020 was a tough year, from civil unrest, to the COVID vaccine, to wearing masks, to all of it, and really the officers handled it pretty well. We had to deal with a lot of worried spouses, especially when we had civil unrest here in Oklahoma City. They were worried about their loved ones going to work every single night and what might happen to them, what could happen to them.

So, we had to deal with a lot of that emotional trauma each and every night that they left not knowing they're coming back, or they come back with a black eye, or what. So, we ended up, our FOP—fast forward to 2021—ended up doing a survey. They wanted to know what the morale was like for the Oklahoma City Police Department, and the results of that survey, I thought, were very telling. Our morale was actually up, which I did not expect. And I was kind of hopeful that because that I feel like I'm kind of chief morale officer in charge. You know, I'm trying to help officers to keep them motivated and encouraged and help them whenever they're down. So, I was kind of hopeful but with a bad year like that I wasn't very optimistic. So, to my surprise, morale was actually up. Our officers were actually happier. They were actually doing quite well.

Donelan

28:05

You can feel free to brag away on that because when it comes to boosting morale, any hint to the secret sauce, we're all going to jump on. So, we appreciate you offering us that insight and that's not bragging and, quite frankly, everyone is looking for assistance with that. Not to say all departments are suffering from low morale, but it is an issue that you face at some point or another. And if this helps with that, well, that's money in the bag.

Holland

28:32

Well, I agree with you. And what it really does is it shows that we care, shows that our command staff cares, and that we have officers—brothers and sisters on this department—that do care. You know, unfortunately, we have had two suicides under my watch and both of those were really tough; they were going through some stressful situations, and you know, those we take really, really hard. But we've also had officers that we saved.

One of the things that we're doing right now is we're working on a video of an officer that he wants to give testimony and maybe this is another one of those things that you can quantify as something really good. But he wants to give testimony on how we were able to help him to save his own life. So, we're working on that now and it's in production and we're going to release that to the department hopefully soon with approval of the chief. But it's very motivational, it's very moving, and it's very eye opening on the despairs of when officers think that they're all alone and they're absolutely not. And having a program like this that shows that you care, that's really, I think, of asset to any department.

Donelan

29: 28

Any department. And that's why I know there are going to be people out there that would like to learn more from you about how you put this all together, your dos and don'ts, your lessons learned, the training, et cetera. So, if someone wanted to get in touch with you to learn more about all aspects of your program, can they reach out to you?

Holland

29:48

Absolutely. Yeah. We're an open book. We want to be able to help as many people as we can. And I definitely don't know everything, I have definitely got a few knots on my head; I'm learning the hard way on things to do, not to do. So, I wouldn't mind guiding somebody through that as well.

Donelan

30:02

Well, you know we learn from each other and I'm a proponent of understanding what you know and being completely open about what you don't know, right? And it's all a learning process but lives are truly on the line, it doesn't matter which department you work for or where in the country. And that's what I love about this program is that we get to learn from someone like you about what you're doing in Oklahoma City and who knows, maybe someone in New Jersey's listening to this and this is exactly the medicine they were looking for. We cannot thank you enough for joining us. Last question to you: Is there anything I missed that you want to make sure you leave our listeners with?

Holland

30:37

You know, I'll start with just... Want to reiterate about what you kind of started with on the question of Return to Duty. We work hand in hand with our reality-based training unit and that's been a very influential program in our department that gives specifically reality-based training not just to those that are trying to return to duty but to men and women out in the field. And, basically, it's a high-speed, reality-based training platform that enables officers to be put in positions that are uncomfortable and work their way out of it. So, if you have a department that's thinking about a reality-based training unit, also somebody to touch base with, our Lieutenant Doug Grady does a fantastic job, one that's been really, really helpful for our officers.

Donelan

31:17

You know, you thought of everything, right down to the sound of Velcro ripping. That's real. Someone who has gone through a traumatic event, really, truly, I know, appreciates the thought that you've put into this.

Holland

31:30

Thank you. You know, we've learned this from some of our debriefings. We are a proponent of debriefings. One of the other things that I changed is every time that we do a debriefing now after a critical incident, we bring a licensed professional with us. We make sure that we have a clinician on board so if we need to do a break-out session or do EMDR—we're also a very big proponent of EMDR. EMDR is Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing. It's fantastic. It's if an officer or a human being gets something stuck right there in the front of their brain. So, you go to bed at night and you see this shell casing that's flying through the air. And that's what you see, time and time again. Or you see the impact of your bullet on a body part. We have officers who literally see that, and it's just stuck, and it just is on replay all of the time, that's all they see. We can move that. We can reprocess that through bilateral stimulation and move that to a memory that's not right there in front. It doesn't make the memory disappear, but it will change it from being right there in their forefront and them seeing it all the time, to somewhere in the back of their brain that they can choose to see it when they want to. And it's not just pound them right between the eyes all day long.

We've had a lot of success with that. It's good stuff. When we bring a clinician with us to a debriefing, we absolutely want somebody that's trained in EMDR. What we have discovered too is that military is using clinicians with EMDR certification and they're getting their folks that are on the battle line that reprocessing done immediately, because the longer it's stuck in there, the harder it is to get to move. So, we want it done as soon as possible.

Donelan

33:00

Lieutenant Holland, I cannot thank you enough for joining us.

Holland

33:02

It's been my pleasure. Would you like for me to give my email out or telephone number or is this the proper time that you ask?

Donelan

33:06

Yes. You just took my next question out of my mouth. How do people reach you?

Holland

33:10

Alright. Donald.Holland@OKC.gov. And that's D-O-N-A-L-D-dot-H-O-L-L-A-N-D-at-O-K-C-dot-G-O-V. Telephone number here in our office is 405-316-5000.

Donelan

33:32

We wish you the best of luck with your program and that you continue to make the great strides and you continue saving lives.

Holland

33:38

I appreciate that and thank you for what you do in spreading the word. I look forward to visiting with some other folks throughout the United States and being able to either help them or steal from them. I am not opposed to that at all. Anything to help our officers.

Donelan

33:49

Well, thank you. And thank you to our listeners for joining us here on *The Beat*.

Voiceover: *The Beat* Exit

33:53

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Voiceover: Disclaimer

34:51

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