



## Icebreakers Agency Guidance

*This infographic will help officers identify mental health warning signs in their fellow officers and provide guidance on how to “break the ice” to start a conversation on how to help. This infographic also provides resources and information to share with the officer in crisis once the conversation has begun. Having the ability to identify an officer who may be struggling and initiating a conversation is the first step in enhancing officer wellness and resilience within an agency. Resilient officers are healthier, both mentally and physically. This allows them to perform their jobs to the best of their abilities, improving both officer and community safety.*

### **Distribution Ideas**

For best use of this infographic, the Bureau of Justice Assistance’s (BJA) National Suicide Awareness for Law Enforcement Officers (SAFLEO) Program suggests distributing it digitally to the officers in your agency so they can review it privately, preferably on their computers or mobile data terminals for best viewing, and posting printed copies in non-public areas. You may also share this with your department chaplain, department groups, and other agency staff for them to share with sworn and nonsworn staff members who may come to them seeking help. Because of the nature of the content, many officers may feel uncomfortable reading it if it is hung on a public wall in the station. For printing, the SAFLEO Program recommends printing in an 11- by 17-inch size and posting in private areas, such as bathroom stalls or locker rooms.

### **Additional Guidance**

A white space is available in the infographic for you to add your local Employee Assistance Program (EAP) contact information. Prior to rolling this infographic out, we recommend contacting your EAP, peer support team, or human resources division to provide them with an advance copy of the resource and to alert them that they may get some extra calls. In addition, let your frontline supervisors know that this is coming out so they can be prepared to have some conversations if the need arises.

- You may have agency policies or protocols that address behavioral concerns, mental health concerns, or suicide prevention. This could be a good time to have supervisors and the department review or be reminded about the policies, services, or resources available to them (and possibly their families or retirees).

Sometimes talking about personal information or behavioral issues can be hard for us. Consider sharing these perspectives with supervisors to help them feel more comfortable with these conversations.

- You may not have an answer about what your agency can or cannot do in terms of treatment or services available. You also may need to talk with leadership about what the most appropriate approach is before discussing specifics with an officer. That is okay. Ensure that any crises are handled with urgency and stay in touch with the officers.
- Listening is most important. It is also important to not try to solve the problem.

BJA believes that the law enforcement community deserves better access to officer wellness resources and suicide prevention strategies. The SAFLEO Program, which is funded under the Officer Robert Wilson III Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement and Ensuring Officer Resilience and Survivability (VALOR) Initiative, addresses law enforcement suicide prevention strategies through training, technical assistance, and resources to law enforcement agencies, staff, and families.

If you would like assistance using this resource or would like to request hard copies of this document or learn more about suicide awareness and prevention resources, please contact the SAFLEO Program at (850) 385-0600 or [info@safleo.org](mailto:info@safleo.org) or visit [www.safleo.org](http://www.safleo.org) or [www.bja.ojp.gov/safleo](http://www.bja.ojp.gov/safleo).

### **About BJA**

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), a part of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, helps make American communities safer by strengthening the nation's criminal justice system. Its grants, training and technical assistance, and policy development services provide state, local, and tribal governments with the cutting-edge tools and best practices that they need to reduce violent and drug-related crime, support law enforcement, and combat victimization. To learn more about BJA, visit [www.bja.gov](http://www.bja.gov).

### **About the VALOR Initiative**

The VALOR Initiative is an effort to improve the immediate and long-term safety, wellness, and resilience of law enforcement officers. Through a multifaceted approach that includes delivering no-cost training and professional education, conducting research, developing and providing resources, and establishing partnerships that benefit law enforcement officers, VALOR seeks to provide our nation's law enforcement officers with innovative, useful, and valuable resources.