

LATEST NEWS

Crisis Line For Police & First Responders Reports 20% Rise In Calls So Far This Year

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NASHVILLE, TN (April 20, 2016) - Serve & Protect, a non-profit international organization dedicated to facilitating trauma resources for public safety professionals and their families, has seen a dramatic 20% rise in calls to their confidential crisis hotline (615-373-8000) so far in 2016, according to Rob Michaels, a former police detective who founded Serve & Protect.

The confidential Serve & Protect crisis hotline helps to find mental health services for police, firefighters, EMS providers, 911 dispatchers and other public safety professionals who suffer from PTSD symptoms, addictions, or thoughts of suicide. Although PTSD is commonly associated with military veterans, published statistics show that 85% of first responders experience some elements of PTSD, and every 17 hours a law enforcement officer commits suicide.

Michaels believes the 20% increase in calls to the crisis hotline is a result of continued crime in inner cities and a highly charged presidential election cycle with candidates and groups such as Black Lives Matter "fueling the fire with their absurd politically and racially biased rhetoric."

"Being a police officer or other public safety professional today comes with a huge toll on one's mental health," says Michaels. "Officers are getting attacked from all sides – some segments of the community turn on them and our politicians publicly berate them. Some of the media sensationalize whenever an officer shoots a young person -- whether justified or not -- but at the same time never tell us about the lives these officers save. If an officer is diagnosed with emotional trauma, which is a perfectly normal response to witnessing the kinds of horrific things these heroes see, it is too often seen as a stigma and too many administrators do everything they can to try to fire them."

However, according to Michaels, help is available and effective if sought out.

"The good news is that through proper counseling, psychological trauma or emotional wounds like this can be addressed, treated and healed. That's why we founded Serve & Protect, for when 911 needs 911."

For more information please visit: <https://serveprotect.org>

About Serve & Protect: Founded in 2011 in Brentwood, Tennessee, Serve & Protect is a registered 501(c)(3) whose mission is to facilitate trauma services for public safety professionals with PTSD symptoms, addictions, or thoughts of suicide. Whether through residential care, trauma therapists, chaplains, or related services including service dogs, equine therapy or other means, Serve & Protect has helped more than 2,500 public safety professionals to date in the United States as well as Canada, Norway, Brussels and Ireland.

About Rob Michaels: Robert Michaels first served in law enforcement with the 229th Military Police Battalion of the Virginia Army National Guard from 1970 - 1976, then with Norfolk (VA) Police Department, both on patrol and in the detective bureau 1973 - 1978. He subsequently spent 33 years working in the music industry in Nashville, TN, prior to founding Serve & Protect in 2011. Rob is currently a member of the American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress, National Center for Crisis Management. Rob also serves as Chaplain for the FBI Memphis Division, State Chaplain for Tennessee Fraternal Order of Police, and is Second VP for FOP Morris Heithcock Lodge 41 in Williamson County TN. He serves as Chaplain on call for several departments in Middle TN, and is a member of the Middle TN Veteran's Support Group. Rob holds a B.A. from Columbia International University '81 and a M.A. from Wheaton College (IL) '84. Michaels was honored to serve as Guest Chaplain for the U.S. House of Representatives on September 9, 2015, nominated by Congressman Marsha Blackburn.