



# Warning Signs: How to Recognize Burnout Implementation Guidance

## Description

Law enforcement officers across the country are facing stressors in all aspects of their lives, especially on duty, where it seems that everyone is asked to do more with fewer available resources. Many officers need help but may not admit it or know where to find the appropriate resources. Assistant Chief Michon Morrow of the Lincoln, Nebraska, Police Department and retired Chief Lori Luhnnow of the Santa Barbara, California, Police Department discuss ways to recognize officers who may need support and share ways to assist them.

## Suggested Activities for Executives and Wellness Team Staff

1. Listen to this podcast.
2. Distribute or assign this podcast to agency executives and command staff members.
3. Lead a discussion with your command staff members and executive leadership regarding the effectiveness of your agency's current resources for officer mental health and wellness. Use ideas from this podcast and your own research to propose and implement new wellness strategies and programs.
4. Develop strategies to encourage officers to support their peers.

## Takeaways

1. In many cases, an officer needing help will not admit that they need help, but other officers may see physical or behavioral changes or cues that the officer is struggling.
2. It is difficult for officers to give more when they are burnt out and experiencing compassion fatigue.
3. Empower your supervisors and frontline officers to ask about and dig deeper into the well-being of fellow officers and to show compassion.
4. When you use wellness resources, share your experience so that you can serve as an example for your officers.
5. Wellness for officers should start in the academy.

6. Consider the families of your officers when creating wellness resources.
7. Focus wellness programs on all members of your agency that may experience trauma, including evidence technicians, property and evidence units, dispatchers, and records professionals.

## Speaker Biographies

**Assistant Chief Michon Morrow** has served with the Lincoln, Nebraska, Police Department since 1995. She started her career in the victim/witness unit before becoming a commissioned officer in December 1997. During her tenure, she has served as field training officer, domestic violence investigator, sergeant, and duty commander. Her law enforcement experience includes victim advocacy, patrol, criminal investigations, domestic violence, employee wellness, community policing, and coordinating crime prevention and crime reduction initiatives among community groups and city departments. Assistant Chief Morrow is currently the commanding officer of the southwest team. She is also the coordinator and a facilitator for the International Association of Chiefs of Police Leadership in Police Organizations Program for 16 agencies in eastern Nebraska, as well as serving on multiple boards, community committees, and task forces. Assistant Chief Morrow holds a master's degree in forensic science with an emphasis in behavioral science and a bachelor's degree in psychology with minors in Spanish and criminal justice, both from Nebraska Wesleyan University.

**Chief Lori Luhn** is a 27-year veteran of the San Diego, California, Police Department and the current Police Chief of the Santa Barbara Police Department. She is the first woman in the department to lead more than 140 sworn officers and 90 civilians, with a budget exceeding \$40 million. Previously, in her position as captain, Chief Luhn headed the San Diego Police Department's traffic, patrol, investigations, and special operations divisions. She also directed operations for the city's Family Justice Center and oversaw the Domestic Violence Unit. She has received numerous awards, including the Women in Blue Award and the Sutin Civic Imagination Award, both of which focused on community outreach; the Tribute to Women and Industry Award for innovation and leadership; and the Exceptional Performance Award. Chief Luhn holds a master's degree in organization management and a bachelor's degree in communication. She also has her Advanced Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) certificate and is a graduate of the POST Supervisory Leadership Institute.

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