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St. Johns County Sheriff's Office Takes Part in Peer -to-Peer Training Led by FSU's Institute for Justice Research and Development

Training addresses on-the-job, daily stress law enforcement face & teaches actionable steps to provide mental well-being support to peers

Tallahassee, Fla. - The Florida State University's Institute for Justice Research and Development (FSU IJRD) and the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office (SJSO) partnered together this week to deliver 24 sheriff's office personnel and 25 others peer-to-peer support training.

Law enforcement officers are exposed to violence and suffering every day, which can cause emotional stress and impact the brain and body, resulting in post-traumatic stress. The training, conducted by FSU IJRD, aims to give law enforcement officers a deeper understanding of how the mind and body react to on-the-job stress and learn actionable steps they can take to help support others who are suffering.

“We are grateful to FSU IJRD for developing this one-of-a-kind training that is critically important to our law enforcement personnel who are constantly exposed to violence and suffering, which, in turn, manifests as post-traumatic stress,” said St. Johns County Sheriff Robert A. Hardwick. “This program will ensure they have the skillset necessary to identify this stress and take action to handle it not only in themselves, but with their peers.”



Photo: FSU IJRD & SJSO personnel during peer-to-peer training

The full two-day training took place at St. Johns County Sheriff's Office on Monday, April 26, and Tuesday, April 27. Those who participated in the training gained a firm foundation to provide healthy peer support to colleagues in need and suggest action if someone needs further mental well-being support.

“We developed this program because we know the trauma caused by the on-the-job stresses law enforcement face all the time - from seeing the most painful and terrifying events in citizens' lives to being confronted with dangerous, imperiling circumstances,” said Carrie Pettus, founder and executive director of FSU IJRD. “We believe equipping them with the training we have developed through in-depth research and field testing, will ready them to better identify and manage this stress, leading to more effective job performance.”



Photo: SJSO personnel participate in a working session during peer-to-peer training

Learn more about the peer-to-peer training offered by FSU IJRD [here](#).

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About the Institute for Justice Research and Development

The mission of the Institute for Justice Research and Development at Florida State University is to use science to improve lives, communities, and institutions by developing and researching innovations that reduce unnecessary reliance on the criminal justice system and by offering solutions that produce equity and prosperity across race, socioeconomic class, and behavioral health status. We believe achieving a justice system that is equitable and effective, promotes thriving individuals and families, and ensures public health and safety, is possible utilizing IJRD's science-backed research and data-driven solutions. For more information on IJRD, please visit ijrd.csw.fsu.edu.