

IN THE KNOW

Statewide training updates

In the Know

- RapidSOS Rocks Dispatchers' World
- PTSD and Emergency Telecommunicators
- Dispatchers Participate in Basic Training
- Upcoming Trainings
- Connect With Us
- Events

RapidSOS Rocks Dispatchers' World

This past fall, the PSC State 911 Department hosted a webinar/demonstration of the new advanced emergency technology company RapidSOS. The company works to improve location accuracy in 911 centers free of charge to Public Safety entities.

About a month after the training, we received information from the Chase County Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) of what looks to be the first RapidSOS integration in Nebraska. Read on as Chase County's Head Dispatcher describes the incident.



Life at the Screen

That moment happened, it finally happened!

Every 911 call, you try to be fast, because you know seconds count, what if they hang up and you can't get them back. You know what I mean. Then there are those calls where you are fast enough on, and the number plugged in and hit search...nothing, so you try again, nothing. Then you pout just a little and when the call is over you say out loud "why don't you get a new phone with the updates so I can get this to work!"

And then it happens, it magically happens, you get this call, someone is crying, begging for help, you get all the information tell them to stay on the line help is coming but I am going to stay right here for you. You advise your deputy, go back to your call, tell them help is coming, and think *ok one more time*. While checking where all the subjects are is everyone still doing ok...plug in the number and...it happens. It magically happens poof! There it is, this green marker appears, all the info starts showing up on the left and you just go YA (and hope you muted your phone: then you really mute your phone and say "*It's working! It's working!!! It's really working!*") Then you sit and just watch the info repopulate every 10 seconds or so and do a little happy chair dance with your hands in the air. Afterwards you go back to your call and just watch in amazement as it updates constantly and how cool and valuable this tool is.

This program is called "Rapidlite" and it just rocked my world!

A big "thank you" to K. Bartholomew CCJ1, Head Dispatcher at the Chase County Sheriff's Office for sharing her experience. Is your PSAP interested in learning more about RapidSOS and the services it provides? Visit their website @ <https://www.rapidsos.com/> .



RAPIDSOS

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PTSD and Emergency Telecommunicators



Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder that develops following frightening, stressful or distressing life events. In 2010, Dr. Michelle Lilly, developed the first study focusing on PTSD and telecommunicators. Below is an excerpt from a story by Anna Raskin interviewing Dr. Lilly.

Q: What symptoms stood out among dispatchers in the study in your opinion?

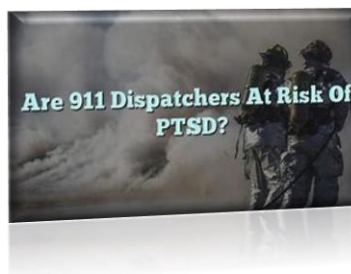
A: *I reviewed the study data prior to this interview and will explain the data regarding symptoms. PTSD has four symptom clusters: 1) avoidance (avoiding thoughts, memories, or feelings that bring back memories of a particularly upsetting call); 2) numbing (feeling detached, feeling as though the world has changed or that the world is a bad, malicious place); 3) hypervigilance (having a strong startle response, feeling on edge all the time, having trouble concentrating or sleeping); and 4) re-experiencing (flashbacks, unwanted thoughts, thoughts about the call that come up repeatedly).*

So, when I looked at the data, the most commonly reported symptom by telecommunicators was hypervigilance: feeling keyed up or agitated; feeling on edge; trouble concentrating and sleeping. Some of that is related to the job—being on high alert all the time. I was surprised because I thought that avoidance would be necessary to do the job, as burying certain experiences could be helpful when having to handle similar calls. In fact, it turned out to be one of the lower symptom clusters. Hypervigilance really stuck out. Given that, telecommunicators who present as really keyed up and who can't calm down and may use alcohol and drugs to fall asleep stand out as having some of the bigger warning signs when looking for telecommunicators at risk for PTSD.

What was very interesting was data that seemed to link job longevity with positive beliefs about the world. Assumptions about the benevolence of the world and people seem to be more positive in veteran dispatchers than in new hires. That said, veteran dispatchers also have the highest rate of PTSD and the lowest job satisfaction. It might suggest that they hold onto those assumptions in order to stay in the job. It also might suggest that people who don't have compassion or feel that the world is a terrible place cannot survive in the job because their assumptions are attacked on a daily basis.

You can read the whole story on page 25 of the *Journal of emergency dispatch* July 2016 @ <https://www.iaedjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Journal-JulAug-2016.pdf>

For more information about PTSD and dispatchers checkout; "Within the Trenches" podcast #157. This podcast features an interview with Tracy Eldridge, former 911 Dispatcher/ Director and a PTSD survivor @ http://www.thejabberlog.com/2017/11/13/within-the-trenches-ep-157/?subscribe=success#blog_subscription-3



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PSC State 911 Dept. Holds First APCO Public Safety Telecommunicator Course

The Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center in Grand Island was the site of the PSC's first training course for Public Safety Telecommunicators (PSTs). Held November 26-30, 2018, the course was designed for the new hire or as a refresher for existing staff.

During the weeklong course, 21-telecommunication specialist from across the state received training in communication skills, call taking and radio techniques. The PST course incorporates the most up-to-date information on technology and work related issues in Public Safety Center.

The course, which meets or exceeds the American National Standards as contained in the ANSI approved Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators (APCO ANSI 3.101.2.2015) was taught by former PSC State 911 Department Field Coordinator Troy V. Cordle, ENP.



PST Courses Planned in 2019

December 2-6, 2019

Course Information & Registration [Here](#)

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