

MO VTIP (Vicarious Trauma Improvement Plan)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Problem Statement: Missouri citizens are experiencing trauma while serving Missouri citizens. At least eight state departments encounter higher rates of trauma exposure because of job duties required by the department. Workplace trauma exposure impacts individual quality of life by way of posttraumatic stress, suicide and addiction and chronic health conditions. Organizational quality of function is also negatively impacted and equates to costs in workers' compensation, absenteeism and turnover. The Missouri Turnover Project (2022) reported that six divisions have twice the turnover of the rest of the state. Three factors influencing a state employee's decision to leave their job include: workload size, organizational commitment to workplace safety, and how safe they feel in their jobs day-to-day.

When state employees try to get help for workplace trauma exposure, the Employee Assistance Program falls short. EAP is effective for general needs but not designed for emergency behavioral healthcare or crisis response. During distress, the process is too cumbersome to navigate. Employees may give up before their needs are met.

Proposed Solution: The MO-VTIP proposes three simple, realistic solutions to this challenge.

- 1) Create a cross-departmental team to further develop a MOVTIP 3-5 year plan.
- 2) Enhance current Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services.
- 3) Create and expand Peer Support Teams for state departments.

Value of Solution: Healthier Missouri citizens. State employees working smarter; not harder. Low cost, high return.

Several state departments are addressing occupational trauma independently despite common challenges and potential solutions. MO-VTIP is the first cross-departmental team of its kind in Missouri. Members of this team already work on this problem and can share knowledge, expertise, best practice and resources. This approach saves time and decreases duplicative efforts. It has already resulted in positive changes such as a wellness position, training opportunities, policy templates and Peer Support Team development for state departments.

Online EAP resources specific to workplace trauma can benefit state employees who already access them. Intentional, ongoing collaboration with EAP representatives could help enhance these services.

Creating and expanding Peer Support Teams is one of the most effective ways to address workplace trauma. These are team members with lived experience helping team members resulting in a \$7:\$1 ROI and 90% cost reduction in absenteeism, premature retirement and turnover, according to studies done with nurses, prisons and US Army Corps of Engineers (2009, 2017, 2022). Six state departments already have Peer Support Teams. Information sharing can promote expansion to other departments and divisions impacted by high rates of workplace trauma.

Conclusion: MOVTIP is how we can support Missouri citizens. This is a simple, realistic plan that is easy to implement. It will improve state employee quality of life and state department quality of functioning, allowing them to provide the services Missouri citizens both deserve and expect.



Show Me Challenge 2023 - Cycle 7

Rachel Jones- DMH

Meckenzie Hayes- DOC

Sarah Jones- DNR/MSP

Shawn Holzhauser- DPS/MVC

Johanna Bisges- DSS/DYS

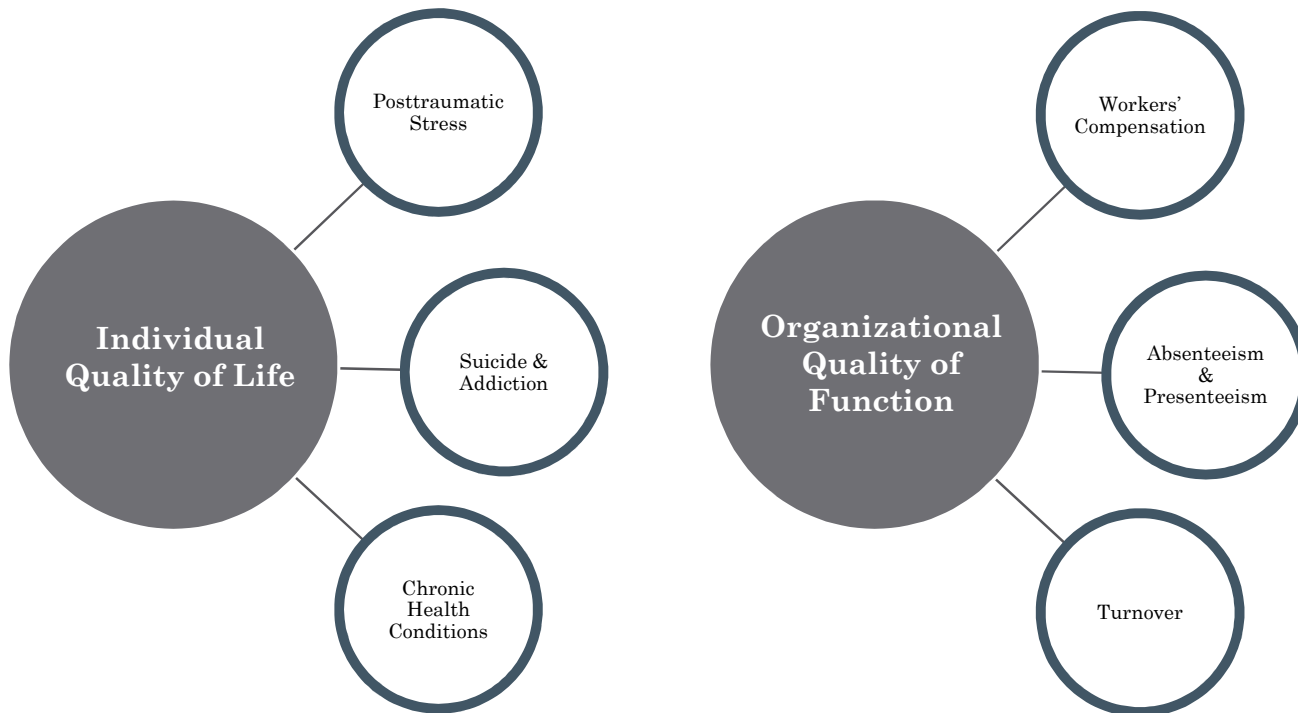
Todd Houf- MDC

Tara Meisenheimer- MODOT

Scott Miller – MONG



Missouri citizens are exposed to trauma while serving Missouri citizens.



\$9.95M	8,121	9,555
In Workers' Compensation Payments FY23	Lost days paid due to injury FY23	Modified duty days due to injury FY23

69% of employees go to work sick and **productivity is reduced by 23%**

6 Divisions have **DOUBLE THE TURNOVER RATE** of the rest of the state.

3 Factors Influencing Resignation:



SOURCES: MO Risk Management Tableau Dashboard (FY23); MO Turnover Project; MO-DOLIR Worker's Compensation Annual Report (2022); MO-DOLIR Safe-At-Work Report (2022); MO Exit Survey Data (2022), National Bureau of Economic Research

When state employees need posttraumatic stress services, the EAP falls short.

EAP Utilization

Designed for general use, not emergency behavioral health/crisis response

When people are in distress, can be confusing to navigate

Feedback on EAP Providers

Mixed reviews, no consistent positive feedback

Advised employees to quit their job or unwilling to come onsite due to nature of work

Challenges

Lack of information due to confidentiality

No intentional focus on the issue, difficult to measure success

Missouri can do three things to face this challenge. And the ROI is high.

Create Cross-Departmental Team

The first group of it's kind in Missouri

Departments already have people working on these issues

Sharing information has already benefited state departments

Enhance EAP

MOVTIP serves as advisory board to explore utilization and effectiveness

Workplace Trauma online resources can be included

Ongoing collaboration can expand EAP Trauma Provider Network

Support & Expand Peer Teams

\$7:\$1 (Nurses)

\$6:\$1 (USACE)

90% Cost Reduction – (Prison)

70-79% positive response to Trauma/Stress Resources (DOC)

75% of Peers spent <5 hrs/mo providing Peer Support (DMH)



SOURCES: Deloitte Mental Health Report (2022); US Army Corps of Engineers (2017); Attridge, A. (2009) The business case for workplace critical incident stress response.; Anderson, et.al (2020) Peer Support and Crisis Focused Interventions to Mitigate Post-Traumatic Stress Injuries Among Public Safety and Frontline Healthcare Personnel

MO-VTIP is realistic and easy to implement. We can do this for Missouri.



Team Information

Project Name

MO VTIP (Vicarious Trauma Improvement Plan) Enhancing Services for Missouri State Employees experiencing the effects of post-traumatic stress.

Team Members

Minimum: 3; Maximum: 8

	Name	Department/Division	Email address
1	Team Lead: Rachel Jones	Department of Mental Health	Rachel.Jones@dmh.mo.gov
2	Meckenzie Hayes, MSW, LCSW	Department of Corrections	Meckenzie.Hayes@doc.mo.gov
3	Sarah Jones	Department of Natural Resources	Sarah.Jones@dnr.mo.gov
4	Tara Meisenheimer	Department of Transportation	Tara.Meisenheimer@modot.mo.gov
5	Todd Houf	Department of Conservation	Todd.Houf@mdc.mo.gov
6	Johanna Bisges	Department of Social Services	Johanna.Bisges@dss.mo.gov
7	Shawn Holzhauser	Department of Public Safety	Shawn.Holzhauser@mvc.dps.mo.gov
8	Scott Miller	Department of National Guard	Brian.S.Miller38.nfg@army.mil

Your Pitch

What problem are you addressing? (No more than 200 words)

Several state departments are regularly impacted by workplace trauma as a result of services they provide to Missouri citizens. However, the existing Employee Assistance Program (SELF) is not adequately meeting the needs of this segment of Missouri's workforce as they recover from these traumatic events. A cross-departmental team intentionally focused on these issues and an enhanced support system following potentially traumatic events are necessary to help Missouri state employees improve or maintain their overall quality of life and deliver high quality services to Missouri citizens.

What is the root cause of the problem? (No more than 200 words)

State agency services are important to Missourians. Multiple state agency functions require dangerous and stressful work for State of Missouri employees that results in a greater likelihood of trauma exposure. These staff may experience physical and psychological injury that negatively impacts their personal and professional lives putting them in detriment of mental health/substance use problems, suicide and poorer quality of life. Benefits offered through the Employee Assistance Program provide valuable support and aid in reducing stigma for mental health. However, EAP does not sufficiently address the rapid response and elevated needs required to address trauma-related issues within the timeframe necessary to mitigate the effects. Employees are often unaware of the mental health resources available to them through Employee Assistance Program benefits. Higher rates of isolated traumatic events and chronic, compounded trauma exposure without adequate interventions often lead to high turnover rates, creating additional stress on the workforce and impeding an agencies' ability to provide quality services to Missouri citizens. Workplace trauma is treatable, however, if unaddressed, the long-term negative impacts can be felt in personal lives, workplace culture and Missouri's communities.

What is your proposed solution? (No more than 200 words)

Three things would help solve this problem for Missouri government:

1) **Create a statewide team with representatives from state departments and divisions most impacted by workplace trauma to share best practices and develop solutions for all Missouri state employees.** This team would create a 3-5 year MOV TIP for ongoing collaboration and enhancement.

2) **Enhance existing EAP services.** Cross-departmental team can serve as an advisory board to explore and investigate the existing Employee Assistance Program (SELF) services and provide recommendations to a) have a greater number of and caliber of therapists specializing in trauma with these populations; b) improve the timeliness of access to these services following traumatic events; c) improve online resources to include workplace trauma resources, and; d) investigate utilization and effectiveness of EAP.

3) **Provide funding and support to form and sustain Peer Support programs for state departments and divisions.** Support should include the experiences of departments and divisions who already have established such programs successfully.

Which area of impact is your primary focus? (No more than 10 words)

Increase retention, decrease mental health/substance use problems, prevent suicide deaths, improve service delivery to citizens

What is your primary measure for impact?

Primary measure	Current Status	Target
Missouri State Employees impacted by workplace trauma receive timely, higher quality trauma services which helps reduce turnover by 10% within the first year after changes are implemented.	Long term mental and physical injury that impacts workforce output and long-term health. Higher turnover due to lack of timely and quality services.	Improve access to and quality of Employee Assistance Program services and form and sustain Peer Support Teams for Missouri State Employees impacted by workplace trauma within 12 months.

* Measures should follow SMART principle: Specific-Measurable-Actionable-Relevant-Time bound.

[OA's guidance on performance metrics](#)

Project Plan

What are the major activities and milestones to deliver your solution? (Additional steps may be added)

	Activity	Milestone or deliverable	Due date
1	Convene state-wide team with representatives from state departments/divisions most impacted by trauma to align efforts and share best practices.	1) Initial meeting scheduled with purpose, structure and frequency of meetings decided by group. 2) Develop a 3-5 year MOV TIP for ongoing collaboration and enhancement.	3 weeks after project start (Oct, 2023) 3-5 year plan developed and disseminated within 6-8 months (July 2024)
2	Collaborate with Missouri Employee Assistance Program representatives to discuss options for 1) expanding trauma therapy network, 2) improving caliber of providers who can relate to MO state employees exposed to workplace trauma and 3) improve timeliness of EAP provider availability, 4) investigate utilization and effectiveness of EAP	1) Establish a triage system to support employees between time of incident and start of EAP services. 2) Conduct surveys, data collection strategies and analysis for EAP utilization and effectiveness. 3) Make process improvement and/or contract revision recommendations.	Begin 4 weeks from project start and completed in 6-8 months. (July 2024)
3	Identify departments/divisions that currently have Peer Network established, existing funds to support their efforts, successes, gaps and needs.	1) Provide executive summary with recommendations for funding amount needed and best practices with existing Peer Support Teams in state departments.	Begin 4 weeks of project start and be completed in 4-6 months. (May 2024)

Required Resources and Support

What is the expected project duration? Choose one from the list below.

Long term (> 6 months)

How many people will be required to finish the project in the given duration? Choose one from the list below.

Large (>6 people)

Does your project require any specialized skills to complete? If so, explain. (No more than 100 words)

Specialized clinicians already included in this team to provide content expertise and guidance

Does your project require any statutory change to complete? If so, explain. (No more than 100 words)

No, project scope has been narrowed. However, 3-5 year MOV TIP may include State of Missouri Employee Workers' Compensation statutory update reflective of 1) The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA), "Federal Parity Law", which requires health insurers to apply similar processes and restrictions for treatment and coverage of mental health and substance use disorders as they would for medical and surgical benefits, and 2) inclusive language of all State of Missouri employees exposed to trauma in addition to First Responder and Law Enforcement Officer populations.

Can you implement your project with your current resources? If not, explain. (No more than 50 words)

Strongly recommended: Provide a cost breakdown in your additional materials.

No. State departments lack funding to dedicate staff/resources to support their traumatized workforce. While Peer Teams can be mostly volunteer-run, cost for Peer Team training and staff to coordinate and evaluate effectiveness for sustainability varies depending on size of workforce and frequency and severity of trauma exposure.

Are there other factors critical to design and implement your project? (No more than 50 words)

State agency partnerships and collaboration, combined best practices and guidance

Additional Materials

Please list any additional materials you have provided.

Brief description

Appendix A - Overview of Types of Trauma and Job Classifications Impacted by State Department

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- **What is Trauma?**

Trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being. It may include direct experience, witnessing or learning of an event, or repeated or extreme exposure. (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative, 2012)

- **What is the potential Return on Investment for MOV TIP?**

Returns: Healthier Missourians, cross-departmental exchange of knowledge, experience and best practices, improved online EAP services, expanded Trauma Provider Network, up to \$7:\$1 ROI and 90% cost reduction in areas such as absenteeism, premature retirement and turnover and development of a 3-5 year plan for ongoing improvement. (Attridge, 2009; Anderson, 2020)

Cost: Funding for training and staff time to attend collaborative meetings, coordinate Peer Team response, evaluation and outcomes for sustainability.

- **What are the direct and indirect costs included in the ROI?**

Direct costs: Absenteeism, turnover, premature retirement, productivity, time for individual to recover/return to full functioning 3-4 days, saving 9,288 hrs.

Indirect costs: Higher morale, healthier and happier employees, system-wide education on typical stress response, prevention efforts, saving 5,388 hrs. Better work environments equate to better home environments for employees and their families. (USACE, 2017)

- **What is a Peer Support/Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team?**

A trained group of state employees with lived experience who volunteer their time to be available 24/7 to respond in the aftermath of critical incidents involving other state employees.

- **Which Departments already have Peer Teams?**

DOC, DMH, DNR/MSP, DPS/MSHP, MDC, DHSS, MODOT (Peer Team currently in development)

- **What results are MO State Departments seeing with Peer Teams?**

Employees return to work faster with fewer negative effects and feel cared for and valued by the department. 2023 DMH Peer Network data indicated 86% used Peer Supports only, 14% used Peer Support + EAP and 75% of Peers spent <5 hrs/mo providing Peer Support. 2020-2022 DOC Wellness Survey results indicated three-year trend of positive responses that trauma/stress resources help reduce impact on staff, resolve incident, prevent similar incidents, promote recovery from trauma, and manage work-related stress.

- **Who would be responsible for identifying Peer Network/CISM Funding?**

Departments already accessing training funds would continue to do so and share those opportunities across MOV TIP cross-departmental team.

- **Who did MOV TIP consult with to gather relevant information?**

MCHP, ComPsych, OA/WC Dashboard, Strive for Wellness, MO First Responder Network, MO-DOLIR

Peer Support Teams – State of MO Departments

Missouri currently has 7 peer teams among the 17 executive departments. Ranging from DOC with team in place for last 21 years through MODOT currently adding a team in 2023. A common goal of peer support is to provide emotional and tangible support for our fellow state employees through personal or professional crisis.

1-Department of Corrections: Meckenzie Hayes, MSW, LCSW

Name of team: DOC PACT (Peer Action Care Team)

Number of members, Distribution across system: Each institution has a PACT Leader and a minimum of 4 Peers per shift. Each Probation and Parole Region has a PACT Leader and a minimum of 6 Peers. The program is overseen by a Peer Support Coordinator. In total, the team has approximately 350 PACT Members. Just over 100 PACT members are trained in Critical Incident Stress Management in addition to the initial PACT Training, allowing them to facilitate debriefings alongside a mental health professional.

2-Department of Mental Health: Rachel Jones, M.Ed., LPC

Name of team: DMH Peer Network

Number of members, Distribution across system: 110 total CISM trained Peers, 75 joined in 2023. Equally distributed across Divisions of Developmental Disabilities and Behavioral Health. Based in 24/7 programs and hospitals and regional offices. Recruitment plan through 2025: 160 new members per year on various shifts

3-Department of Natural Resources/Missouri State Parks: Sarah Jones

Name of team: DNR CISM Team

Number of members, Distribution across system: 9 members throughout the state in MSP and other divisions of DNR. The MSP Wellness Coordinator coordinates the team's response. Requests for the team come from Supervisors, Program Managers, and/or Individuals near or at the incident.

4-Department of Conservation: Captain Todd Houf

Name of Team: MDC Peer DEFENSE Team (Defending Employees From the Effects of Negative Stressful Events)

Number of members, Distribution across system: 7 members across the state and range from field agent, lieutenants and captain.

5-Department of Public Safety/Missouri State Highway Patrol: Lieutenant Trois Maloney

Name of team: DEFENSE (Defending Employees From the Effects of Negative Stressful Events)

Number of members, Distribution across system: Roughly 140, this includes commissioned officers (mainly troopers), radio operators, chaplains, CBHL's (community behavioral health liaison) throughout the state.

6-Department of Health & Senior Services: Robin Pendleton

Name of team: CAST (Crisis Assist Support Team)

Number of members, Distribution across system: 5-10 DHSS staff members. Created their own program combining PASS (Peer Assist Shoulder to Shoulder) and ASAP (Assaulted Staff Action Program).

7-Department of Transportation: Currently forming Peer Team