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9TH ANNUAL **FIRST RESPONDER**

SUICIDE AWARENESS & BEHAVIOURAL HEALTH SYMPOSIUM



Legacy Place
— SOCIETY —

Established in 1998, Legacy Place Society is a Registered Charity and Not For Profit Organization dedicated to providing empathetic support that builds resiliency individually, and within our First Responder, Veteran, and Military Families.

www.legacyplacesociety.com | Registered Charity #891549420RRO001



Calgary, AB

October 1, 2026

9th Annual Calgary First Responder Suicide Awareness and Behavioural Health Symposium

Hosted By : Legacy Place Society

October 1, 2026 | Centre Street Church

Emcee's: Kevin Francois, Calgary Police Service

Jennifer Jimenez, Canada Border Services Agency

Suicide continues to shake our communities, leaving behind deep and lasting impacts. Each tragic loss challenges our core beliefs and leaves families, co-workers, and entire communities grappling with painful questions: Could more have been done? Were there signs missed? While we've made significant strides in de-stigmatizing mental health, suicide remains a deeply difficult and painful reality—especially for those in our first responder and military communities, their families, and society. When tragedy strikes, we're often left searching for answers, struggling to comprehend the actions of those we care about most.

First responders, including law enforcement, firefighters, paramedics, military personnel, correctional officers, 9-1-1 dispatchers, and many others face relentless exposure to trauma. The emotional toll is profound, not only for them but also for their families, who often endure vicarious trauma as they walk alongside their loved ones. These professionals are trained to respond in moments of crisis—but what happens after the crisis has passed? And who is there for them? For their families—the “first responders to the first responders”?

Today, Legacy Place Society, in collaboration with key partners including the Calgary Police Service, Calgary Fire Department, Calgary Emergency Management Agency, Alberta Health Services—Emergency Health Services, Alberta Justice and Solicitor General, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Canada Border Service Agency, and the Union of Correctional Services Canada, we will be co-hosting the 9th annual First Responder Suicide Awareness Conference in recognition of World Suicide Prevention Day.

This important gathering features powerful speakers and courageous leaders who will address the topic of suicide with openness and compassion. Their focus will go beyond the challenges offering hope, healing, validation, shared resources, and practical strategies. It is a day to connect, to learn, and to walk together in pursuit of stronger mental health and resilience—both on the job and at home.

Let this be a day of renewal and shared purpose. Together, we are changing the narrative, raising awareness, reducing stigma, and having the vital conversations about suicide and mental health that must be had. This is a call to action.

On behalf of the entire organizing committee... *welcome*. Your presence matters. Let's continue this work together.



Scan for additional support and resources

Agenda (Subject to minor adjustments)

07:00 – 07:50 *Registration – Please be seated by 07:50*

08:00 – 08:30 *Opening Comments*

Tom Walker – Chief Superintendent, Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Katie McLellan – Chief, Calgary Police Service

Peter Steenaerts – Acting Chief, Calgary Fire Department

Tyler Farkas – Division Chief Calgary, Emergency Health Services

Diana Festejo – Executive Director, Legacy Place Society

08:30 – 10:00 **Dr. Edrick Dorian – Chief Psychologist, LAPD**

Behavioral Science Perspective on Sustaining Healthy & Effective Public Safety Organizations

10:00 – 10:30 **Break – Sponsored By Rising Sun Psychological Services**



Rising Sun Psychological Services in Calgary, Alberta offers general counselling, first responder mental health, and forensic psychology services.

10:30 – 11:05 **Darren Berglind – Superintendant, Calgary Police Service**

No One Should Suffer Alone

11:05 – 11:35 **Karl Sine – Constable, Calgary Police Service**

Finding Meaning in Suffering

11:35 – 12:10 **Natalie Castonguay – RN, & Psychotherapist**

The Invisible Intersection: Navigating Neurodivergence, OSI, & Suicidality in First Responders

12:10 – 13:00 **Lunch – Sponsored By MacCon Public Safety**



MacCon has extensive experience in providing threat and risk management. The reputation of the company continues to be found in its passion, attention to detail, vigilance, and energetic drive.

13:00 – 14:00 **Gwen Krawczyk – Div. Wellness Unit Manager, K-Div AB RCMP**

The Hidden Cost of Helping

14:00 – 14:35 **Ryan Collyer – Retired Adv. Care Paramedic**

Suffering in Silence

14:30 – 14:55 **Break – Sponsored By UCCO**



The Union of Canadian Correctional Officers (UCCO-SACC-CSN) represents over 7,300 members, working in Federal Institutions across Canada.

14:55 – 15:25 **Brian Schafer – PSPNET Operations Mgr, UofRegina**

What is PSPNET?

15:25 – 15:50 **Scott Casey – Balkans Veteran**

Performance Under Pressure

15:50 **Closing Comments**

Resilience – Where Do I Want To Be