

“ DSAs are frustrated ...by poor training for their current positions, especially as it relates to emotionally taxing situations.

In addition, a majority of the participants reported exposure to materials and/or experiences that involved PPTe. Such exposure is experienced as

vicarious trauma and is compounded by the fact that in small rural communities, more often than not, DSAs know the victim and those criminalized...”

SYNDICAT DES EMPLOYÉ-E-S DE LA SÉCURITÉ ET DE LA JUSTICE

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UNION OF SAFETY AND JUSTICE EMPLOYEES

The Union of Safety and Justice Employees (USJE) represents over 6000 public service employees working within the RCMP across Canada.

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Mental Health and Well-being of Detachment Services Assistants in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police



A leading public safety academic, Dr. Rosemary Ricciardelli, was commissioned by the Union of Safety and Justice Employees to conduct a study into the safety and well-being of RCMP Detachment Services Assistants (DSAs).

DSAs play a crucial role within the RCMP, as a first point of contact, but they don't receive the same support as RCMP members.

They interact with highly distressed members of the public, they transcribe victim and witness statements, and view graphic images from violent incidents.

Yet their essential role within the organization is often disregarded, access to mental health supports are fleeting and training opportunities have been limited to non-existent.

Dr. Ricciardelli's report, ***The Mental Health and Well-being of Detachment Services Assistants in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police: A Qualitative Investigation***, outlined 12 recommendations to improve the safety and well-being of Detachment Services Assistants in the RCMP.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recognize the unique roles of DSAs.
2. Develop transparent, fair and equitable career paths for DSAs.
3. Increase and improve training opportunities.
4. Include DSAs in critical incident debriefings.
5. Create safer workplace environments (e.g., install bulletproof glass at front counters).
6. Recognize and provide support for routine exposure to potentially psychologically traumatic materials.
7. Improve relations between and across staff.
8. Look for workplace efficiencies to address workload volumes and staffing shortages.
9. Increase awareness among RCMP members of the role and value of DSAs.
10. Explore e-healthcare delivery models to support rural/remote staff.
11. Improve access to and increase caps on health benefits.
12. Develop a policy on mandatory psychological evaluations for DSAs (particularly those working in units that require regular exposure to PPTs).