

## Social Media

Check us out on Twitter  
and Facebook:

Twitter: @MCSAMA911

[https://www.facebook.com/  
MCSAMA911/](https://www.facebook.com/MCSAMA911/)

## MCSA Training Day

March 27, 2019

08:00-17:00

Boxboro Regency Hotel &  
Conference Center

242 Adams Place

Boxborough, MA 01719

## Monthly Meetings

**\*\*No Monthly Meeting in  
March\*\***

April 17, 2019

10:00-13:00

Maynard Police Department

197 Main Street

Maynard, MA 01754

May 15, 2019

10:00-13:00

Cambridge Emergency  
Communications

125 6th Street

Cambridge, MA 02142

## Stress on the Job

As we all know, life as a 911 telecommunicator is often anything but easy. The fact that you balance a workload with consistent multitasking, tough callers, long hours, infrequent thank yous, the pressure for perfection and excellent customer service, and everything else on your plate once your shift ends – inconsistent sleep schedules, bills, home responsibilities, partners and children, health, and well-being – can be ridiculously taxing. Stress happens, and balance is hard. This month's issue is dedicated to briefly highlighting stress, PTSD, and self-care resources when you're struggling to find work-life balance.

This month, we want to highlight an important research study that will be virtually making its rounds throughout the state. Page three of this newsletter details the 911 Family Impact Study more in-depth, but we encourage all current, former, and retired dispatchers to share this study with your immediate family members and close friends. We greatly appreciate your cooperation, and look forward to analyzing the results. Of related interest is Dr. Michelle Lilly's 2012 publication in the *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, which reveals even though not on a critical incident scene, dispatchers can, in fact, experience post-

## this issue

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traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Lilly asserts, "one does not need to be physically present during a traumatic event, or to even know the victim of the trauma, in order for the event to cause significant mental health challenges" (NIU today article 2012). One thing we are exploring with this upcoming study is how that stress (possibly) gets carried over into a dispatcher's home life.

Lilly's study goes on to reflect that oftentimes as a 911 telecommunicator, calltakers or dispatchers will handle some sort of traumatic event, caller in emotional crisis, life or death situation, and then

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“[a]fterward, there’s little time to process what happened [...] [y]ou have to press on and get right back to work.” According to the study, Lilly reports that some of the “most commonly identified worst calls” include:

- Unexpected injury or death of a child (16.4% of respondents)
- Suicidal callers (12.9%)
- Shootings involving officers (9.9%)
- Unexpected death of an adult (9.9%)

Getting right back to work, unfortunately, seems to be the case in a number of PSAPs according to Lilly’s study. Can you think of a time you’ve experienced a tough and/or traumatic call and then your 911 line immediately rings again after you’ve just disconnected? What are some solutions to this?

What can we do to enact better practices to ensure 911 telecommunicators are connected with proper resources, if/when needed? One solution: we can take care of each other and work to better understand the effects of the 911 environment on telecommunicators – the study provided on page three aspires to do this.

Here are a few resources to utilize in the event you are struggling, in any capacity, with the aftermath of handling a traumatic event. Please do not hesitate to reach out to these resources, or MCSA, if you are in need of assistance or further information or support. Remember: you are not alone.



### Boston Area Peer Support

Specifically offers CISM and Peer Support for the 911 Community

Contact: Anthony Landry – (617)- 981-2186



Source: Harvard University Health Services

### DID YOU KNOW?

In Massachusetts, every city and town has a team assigned to provide CISM (Critical Incident Stress Management) / Crisis Intervention services to its public safety personnel, free of charge. For further info:

<http://mystatepeersupportnetwork.org/>

**Test Your Knowledge Answer from February issue:**

Springfield and Cambridge are the only cities to currently utilize the “Safety Toolkit” when 911 is dialed using the Uber app.

**Contact Grace Cohen, Newsletter Editor, with ideas for future issues:**

[outreach@ma911.org](mailto:outreach@ma911.org)

## ADAM TIMM

Adam spent over a decade as a 9-1-1 operator for the Los Angeles Police Department, where he pioneered a stress resilience program that contributed to a 45% decrease in sick time usage. After leaving the LAPD, Adam started his training company, "The Healthy Dispatcher," to bring tools for resilience to this challenging profession.

## ANNE CAMARO

Anne has been working in the 9-1-1 field for over 12 years.

She's worked in three different PSAPs in various positions both in training and operations. She holds a master's degree in Public Administration from Arkansas State University, and a Post Graduate Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management from Suffolk University.

## ELIZABETH BELMONTE

Liz started her career with Cambridge Emergency Communications 15 years ago. While in Cambridge, Liz has worked as a Certified Trainer for 10 years. In 2014 she was recognized by the APCO Atlantic Chapter as "Trainer of the Year". She was promoted to the role of Training Supervisor in May of 2017 and holds a bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management from Columbia Southern University.

## D. JEREMY DEMAR

Jeremy is the Director of Emergency Communications for Springfield, MA. He holds a master's degree in Homeland Security from the Naval Postgraduate School, with undergraduate work in Emergency Management and Fire Protection from SUNY Empire State College and Monroe Community College respectively.



## 911 Family Impact Study

As 911 telecommunicators, we know that more research is needed to fully understand what effects the profession may have on the social and psychological aspects of our lives. With this in mind, a group of us have come together to study the impact the 911 telecommunicator job has on the telecommunicator's family.

Most of us in the 911 industry, never really thought about how our job may affect our families. The reality is that it does, and we hope this study will help us understand and raise awareness to the stress brought upon our loved ones by our chosen career.

We are looking for immediate family members, spouses, and close friends of current and retired 911 telecommunicators to participate in this study.

Participants will receive a link to an anonymous 10-question survey asking them to describe the impact their family member's job has had on their interactions with family and close friends.

Please reach out to your family members and friends, and if they're willing to participate please e-mail [familyimpactstudy@gmail.com](mailto:familyimpactstudy@gmail.com). The data collected will be analyzed and the results will be used for a research article.

We hope to be able to raise awareness to the impact of such a stressful job on social relationships. We also hope to be able to show the need to classify 911 telecommunicators as first responders based on the impact the job has on different aspects of the telecommunicator's life. We appreciate any assistance you may be able to give us in conducting this study, and we ask that you please share this flyer with other telecommunicators.

Best,

Adam, Anne, Liz and Jeremy