Dear Family Member,

The role of a police officer inherently attracts a high level of stress. Existing studies indicate that the emotional wellbeing of officers is centred on the close relationships, social networks or social support and family members of police officers are recognised as playing a crucial part in the recovery process when an officer suffers from a mental health ailment.

As a family member of a serving police officer, you are invited to participate in a research study to identify the key factors or common elements that impact on the emotional wellbeing of front-line police officers and their families, thereby facilitating a level of understanding and a social based solution to this phenomenon.

Assistance from the Police Federation of Australia (PFA) is only being sought to facilitate initial contact from potential participants on behalf of Charles Sturt University PhD Student, Ms. Charrissa Chew-Moriarty. This study is seeking the voluntary participation of family members of police officers over the age of 18 years in a 30 – 60 min interview between March and September 2021 to facilitate a level of understanding and a social based solution to emotional unwellness suffered by police officers.

Individual responses derived from interview participation will not be shared with your family member, the employer of your family member or the PFA. All responses go directly to the researcher and data will be analysed in aggregate form only.

Before you decide whether you wish to participate in this study, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following attached information sheet carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.

By participating and sharing your experiences from a family members perspective you will be providing crucial information to facilitate a level of understanding and a social based solution to emotional unwellness suffered by police officers. Outcomes of this study will be made available to all participants.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact PhD Student, Ms Charrissa Chew-Moriarty via email: [cchew-moriarty@csu.edu.au](mailto:cchew-moriarty@csu.edu.au)

Thank you for your interest.

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**Centre for Law & Justice**

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT**

**FAMILY MEMBER**

**Emotional First Aid & Police Officers: Examining the Role of Family Members**

PhD Student:

Charrissa Chew-Moriarty, MA, 11521456, Doctor of Philosophy.

Supervisors:

Associate Professor Phillip Birch, PhD., Associate Professor of Criminology & Policing, Centre for Law & Justice, Charles Sturt University.

Dr John Gaffey, PhD. Centre for Law & Justice, Charles Sturt University

**What is the purpose of this study?**

The purpose of the proposal study is to identify:

* What are the most commonly identified physiological responses experienced by a police officer during an episode of emotional unwellness?
* What emotional first aid frameworks are available, and, of these, which is most applicable to the occupation of a police officer?
* During a period of emotional unwellness suffered by a police officer, in what ways can the application of emotional first aid by a family member prompt emotional recovery?
* How does the application of emotional first aid by a family member prompt emotional recovery deterring negative physiological responses and more complex mental health issues?

**Why have I been invited to participate in this study?**

For this study, we are seeking family members over the age of 18 years of police officers, representing years of service of their police officer family member: Recruits (0-1 years); Probationary constables (up to 2 years); Constables (2-5 years); Senior Constables – Leading Senior Constables (6-15 years); and 15 years + (all other ranks).

**What does this study involve?**

For this study, an interview will be utilised to gather data, this is defined as a series of questions being asked by the PhD Student. These questions can be varied in sequence with the additional capability of asking further questions in response to any significant replies. The focus of the interview is not to ask the question exactly as outlined in the schedule but to pick up on the responses of the interviewees emphasising how the interviewee frames and understands the issue and events associated with the phenomenon being examined. Several key questions to define areas for examination include values, beliefs, behaviour, relationships, emotions, encounters and stories of the interviewee that are shared during the semi-structured interview. The estimated time for this interview is between 30 to 60 mins.

**Are there risks and benefits to me taking part in this study?**

**Risks:**

The risks associated with this study include but are not limited to:

* the disclosure of sensitive and personal information which may result in some discomfort for participants.

**Benefits:**

The benefits of this study include but are not limited to:

* the identification of the essential elements in maintaining the emotional wellbeing of their police officer family member.
* provision of understanding and appreciation of the contribution of family members as part of creating a new treatment culture in the police force when it comes to emotional wellbeing.
* addressing the need of law enforcement agencies to develop sound research-based policy allowing for the manifestation of occupational justice.

**How is this study being paid for**?

This research is funded by Charles Sturt University and has no input in the research results allowing for independence and influence from any law enforcement agency.

**Will taking part in this study (or travelling to) cost me anything, and will I be paid?**

Interviews will be conducted via free communication applications such as Zoom, FaceTime and Skype available on mobile devices therefore no participant additional costs expect for the participants time. Participants are required to volunteer, and no fees are paid for their involvement.

**How do I return the information to the researcher?**

All information will be returned to the research during verbal interview over the course of the interview process.

**What if I don’t want to partake in this study?**

Participation in this research is entirely your choice. Only those people who give their signed informed consent will be included in this study. Whether or not you decide to participate, is your decision and there is no disadvantage to you.

**What if I participate and want  to  withdraw later?**

Participants initially have a right to refuse to participate in the research project by either not signing the consent form. During the interview participants can choose to suspend the interview at any time or not answer a question. Withdrawal from the study can occur up to two weeks after participant verification of their interview transcript.

**How will my confidentially be protected?**

Transcripts and recordings will be anonymised, and a log of all replacement aggregations will be created and then stored separately to allow for the isolation of the anonymised data and once the allocated time period of data retention has expired, all data will be securely destroyed. Confidentiality is further protected within the data security requirements of this study and includes the confidentiality of individual records and the data collected from research participants will be achieved in the following manner:

* all notes taken in the interview will be typed up using the audio recording to facilitate the transcription, any interpretations of the face-to-face interaction will be inserted into this transcript.
* during the analysis of the data all audio material will be placed on a CD and encrypted.
* interview notes along with the typed transcription will be stored in a locked filing cabinet only the PhD Student has access to.

Note: if there is a possibility of illegal activity and behaviours by participants during the study the PhD Student may be obliged to report the information to the Police.

Confidentiality of participants data and information will adhere to the CSU Research Data Management Policy (2020), Australian Code of the Responsible Conduct of Research (2019), the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and CSU Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

**What will happen to the information that I give you?**

Aspects of the information gathered in this study may be used for the purpose of and publication of a thesis. Further dissemination of study findings will reflect the distribution of information and materials to police organisations, policy makers and practitioners within the law enforcement arena, to reduce the impacts of emotional unwellness and develop sound research-based policies allowing for the manifestation of occupational justice. These findings will not be classified however data results as indicated in the methodology section will be anonymised to protect participants identity.

**What should do if I want to discuss this study further before I decide?**

Any further information and questions relating to this study can be obtained from the PhD Student, via the following contact details:

Ms. Charrissa Chew-Moriarty

Charles Sturt University

Centre for Law and Justice

Telephone: (02) 4824 2573

Email: [cchew-moriarty@csu.edu.au](mailto:cchew-moriarty@csu.edu.au)

**Management of Risks - Support Services**

Should anything be disclosed in the interview process that infers a risk of harm participants will be referred to specific organisation support agency, Blue Hope 1300 BLUE (2583) and other support agencies such as:

* Lifeline 13 11 14
* MensLine Australia 1300 789 978
* Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467
* Beyond Blue 1300 22 46 36
* Headspace 1800 650 89

**Who should I contact if I have concerns about the conduct of this study?**

Charles Sturt University’s Human Research Ethics Committee has approved this project. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this project, you may contact the Committee through the Ethics and Compliance Unit via the following contact details:

Human Research Ethics Committee

Ethics and Compliance Unit

Locked Bag 588

Wagga Wagga NSW 2678

Telephone: 02 69334213

Email: [ethics@csu.edu.au](mailto:ethics@csu.edu.au)

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

**Conclusion**

Thank you for considering this invitation, your participation is crucial, and your response will greatly assist in facilitating the understanding of and providing a social based solution to ailing mental unwellness suffered by a police officer. At any time if you or your family member need assistance please contact the support services provided above.