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On July 1, 2019 the Georgia Department of Public Safety's Office of Public Safety Support (OPSS) was officially launched. This office was established by HB 703. The duties of the Office of Public Safety Support included providing psychological first aid to all of GA's Public Safety personnel, to include law enforcement, fire fighters, emergency medical workers, corrections, and 911 dispatchers. This aid, which is provided by experienced peers, will be available to public safety personnel who have experienced a Critical Incident which could be job related or a personal incident.

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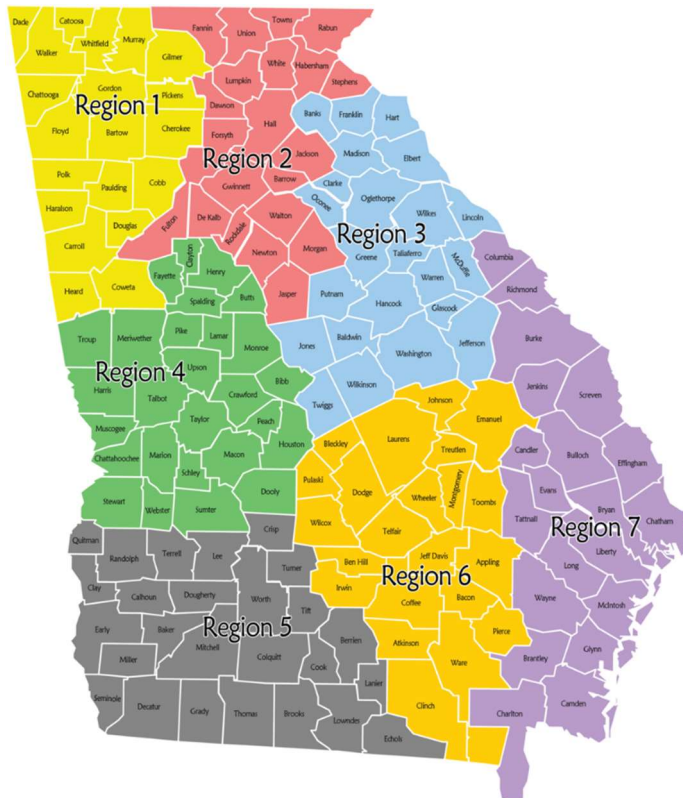
### OPSS Mission Statement

The Office of Public Safety Support was established to mitigate the potential psychological impact that critical incidents or traumatic events can have on the members of the State of Georgia Public Safety community. Using Peer Counselors as well as Mental Health Professionals, OPSS will strive to provide the necessary support that personnel need to help alleviate the reactions to critical or traumatic events. OPSS strives to provide the most effective care for our men and women in public safety. The

Department of Public Safety's core beliefs of trust, fortitude, compassion, and professionalism will be mirrored by the Office of Public Safety Support.

### Examples of Critical Incidents

- A. Line of Duty Death
- B. Suicide of an Officer/Family Member
- C. Multi-Casualty Incident
- D. Significant Event Involving Children
- E. Knowing the Victim of an Event
- F. Serious Line of Duty Injury
- G. Officer Involved Shooting
- H. Prolonged Incident with Loss
- K. Any Significant Event involving Public Safety Officers



### Office of Public Safety Support Regional Peer Counselors

#### Region 1

Lisa Montcalm (470) 955-0391  
lmontcalm@gsp.net

#### Region 2

Heather Perry (404) 625-8164  
hperry@gsp.net

#### Region 3

Shane Smith (404) 395-4378  
cssmith@gsp.net

#### Region 4

Keegan Merritt (404) 216-5544  
kmerritt@gsp.net

#### Region 5

Ken Davidson (470) 936-1603  
kdavidson@gsp.net

#### Region 6

Michael Fedrick (770) 570-9621  
mfedrick@gsp.net

#### Region 7

David James (470) 808-9179  
drjames@gsp.net

For afterhours/weekend requests please contact  
the GSP Communication Center at (404)624-  
6077 for the On Call Peer Counselor

## Post Critical Incident Seminar (PCIS)

The PCIS is a three-day training seminar, hosted by OPSS, for first responders who have been through highly traumatic events. The event is experiential in format, providing officers the chance to talk through a particularly horrific or troublesome event in the presence of their first responder peers. The group receives training in public safety survival of traumatic stress and coping as well as one-on-one support from members of the PCIS Peer Team. If you wish to speak with an officer who has been through the PCIS, names and numbers are available upon request. We also help facilitate sending Georgia Officers to seminars in neighboring states.

## Basic CISM and Peer Support

The Office of Public Safety Support, partnering with State and local peer support teams, offer small group and individual support for personnel and agencies coping with stressful situations. Many prefer a confidential alternative to mental health professionals when dealing with a traumatic event. While the teams do not attempt to replace psychotherapy, we do offer a "I have walked in your shoes" perspective that many officers relate well to. With team members spread throughout the state, we are available to quickly support any Public Safety Officer in need. It is our sincere hope that our services will prevent officers from turning to negative or dangerous coping methods when they experience a critical incident.

## PEER SUPPORT IN PUBLIC SAFETY

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The Normalization of Reactions Through  
Shared Experiences



## O.C.G.A. 24-5-510

- ***Communications between a public safety officer and a peer counselor shall be privileged.***

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Main Office- (404) 624-7638  
Email- [publicsafetysupport@gsp.net](mailto:publicsafetysupport@gsp.net)  
Website- [dps.georgia.gov](http://dps.georgia.gov)

## Training

OPSS administers and oversees the training required to be recognized by the State of Georgia as a Peer Counselor. For training inquires please check our website or contact OPSS at the number/email above.

## CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT FOR GEORGIA PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS



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Provided By:

Georgia Department of  
Public Safety's

Office of Public  
Safety Support

