



# MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES IN SCHOOLS

## Presenters:

- *Melissa A. Reeves, Ph.D, NCSP, LCMHC*
- *April Rhodes, MBA, LAMFT*



January 13, 2021

*This project was supported, in whole or in part, by cooperative agreement number 2019CKWXK007, awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. The opinions contained herein are those of the author(s) or contributor(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. References to specific individuals, agencies, companies, products, or services should not be considered an endorsement by the author(s) or the U.S. Department of Justice. Rather, the references are illustrations to supplement discussion of the issues.*



# ABOUT THE NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

- NSA was chartered in 1940
- More than 3,000 sheriffs nationwide
- NSA has over 12,500 members



# Webinar Facilitator – Jeff Allison

- Special Adviser for the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA).
- Staffs and serves as the chairperson for the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) School Safety Working Group.
- Served as the FBI Special Adviser for Campus and School Safety
- The FBI nominated Jeff for the Service to America Medal for his work to enhance campus public safety across the nation.





# About the Session

- Participants will:
  - learn the importance of law enforcement engagement in proactively identifying behaviors of concern, including threats
  - identify the various types of adverse childhood experiences and how trauma impacts behavior
  - learn about their role on BTAM teams & the important distinction of making a threat vs posing a threat
  - be introduced to the Standardized Violence Prevention Protocol (SVPP) checklist for targeted school violence
  - learn about the Milestone Project – identifies at-risk and violent youth
  - receive resources for additional training and self-care




# Melissa A. Reeves, Ph.D, NCSP, LCMHC

- Nationally Certified School Psychologist
- Licensed Special Education Teacher
- Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor
- Former District Coordinator SEB Services
- 17+ years in K-12 education
- Advisor - Safe and Sound Schools
- Senior Consultant, SIGMA Threat Management Associates
- Past president - National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)
- Lead author, PREPaRE School Crisis Prevention & Intervention Curriculum
- Member of university's Critical Incident Management Team & College Arts & Science COVID-19 Recovery Team



[drmelissareeves@gmail.com](mailto:drmelissareeves@gmail.com)

 @melissareevessp



# April Rhodes, MBA, LAMFT

## President & Chief Executive Officer

### Spectrum Healthcare Group

Founded 1965 in Cottonwood, AZ

Serving Yavapai County

Behavioral Health Services

Physical Health Services

Mobile Crisis and Residential Treatment

Across all people, across all payers, across the life span

spectrUm   
*for mind  
for body  
for all of you* healthcare

Compassionate care for mind, for body, for all of you.



# Signs and Symptoms of Stress & Trauma



# Traumatic Stress: Defined

- **Positive Stress**

- Moderate, short-lived stress responses. Essential for normal development.

- **Tolerable Stress**

- Potentially harmful, but short-lived acute stressors.

- **Toxic Stress**

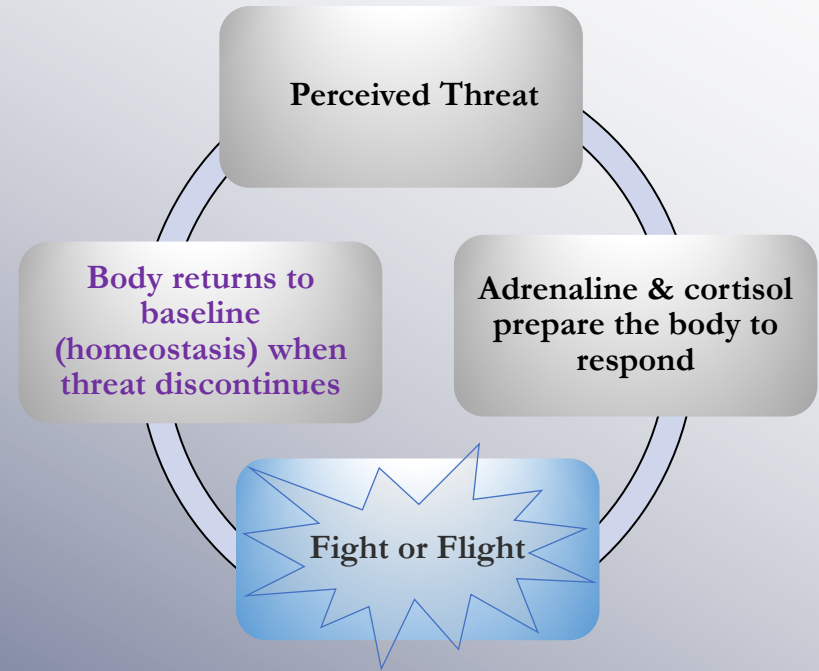
- Strong, frequent, prolonged activation of stress mechanisms.



# Acute Trauma

- A **time-limited (typically tolerable)** stressor  
e.g., car accident, natural disaster

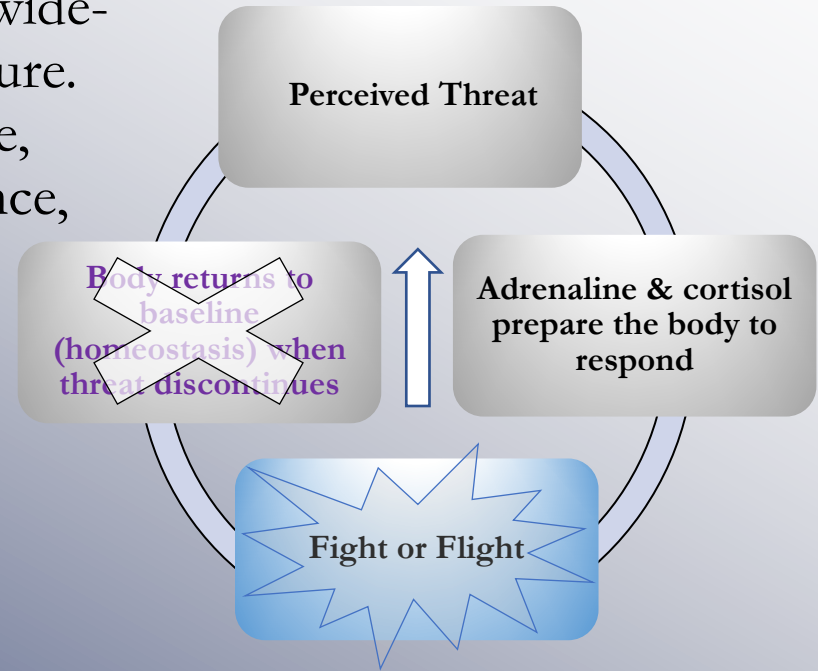
- In response to an acute stressor the body releases stress hormones that decrease digestive & immune functioning and increase heart rate and blood pressure.
- When the threat is gone the body should return to baseline



# Complex Trauma (Toxic Stressors)

- Exposure to **multiple traumatic events**; wide-ranging, long term impact of this exposure. e.g., long-term physical/sexual abuse, chronic/ongoing exposure to violence, bias and discrimination

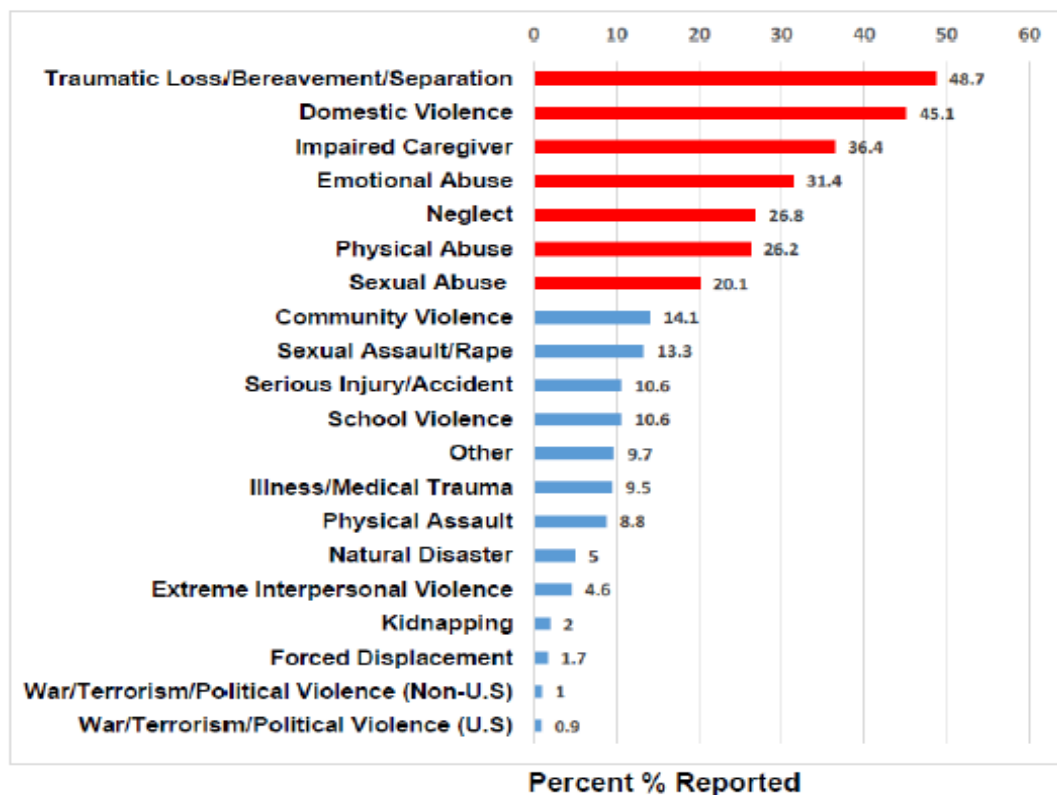
- Frequent/long exposure to stress results in the stress response being activated more easily.
- Body does not return to baseline as quickly.
- Stress hormones negatively effect health, brain development.



# National Child Traumatic Stress Network

## Rates of Childhood Trauma and Adversity

- The original ACES (in red) are among the most commonly reported traumas in studies that look at additional traumas.
- Over 40% of the children and adolescents served by the NCTSN (N = 10,991) experienced 4 or more different types of trauma and adversity.



# Toxic/Complex Trauma:

## *Negative Consequences*

- Attachment & relationships
- Self-concept & future orientation
- Attention & cognition
- Behavior
- Emotional reactivity & regulation
- Physical health
- Detachment

**How Childhood Trauma Affects Health**

**Across a Lifetime**

Nadine Burke Harris

TED-MED:

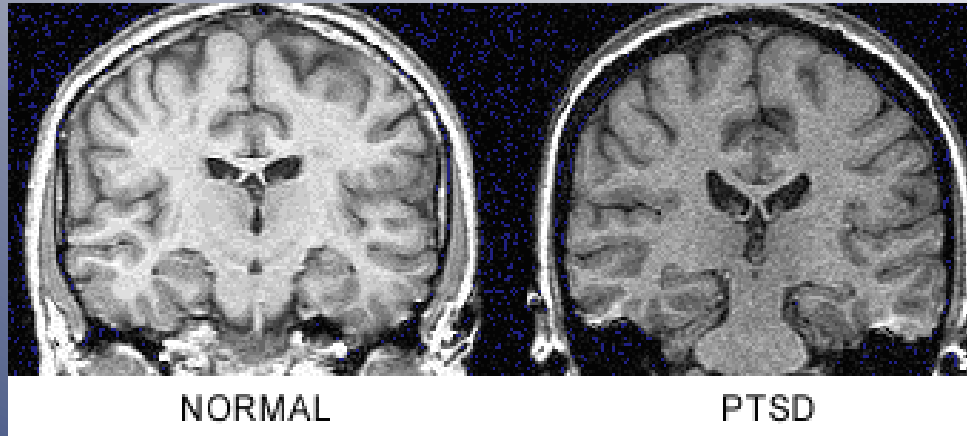
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=95ovIJ3dsNk>



# Traumatic Stress: Neurobiology

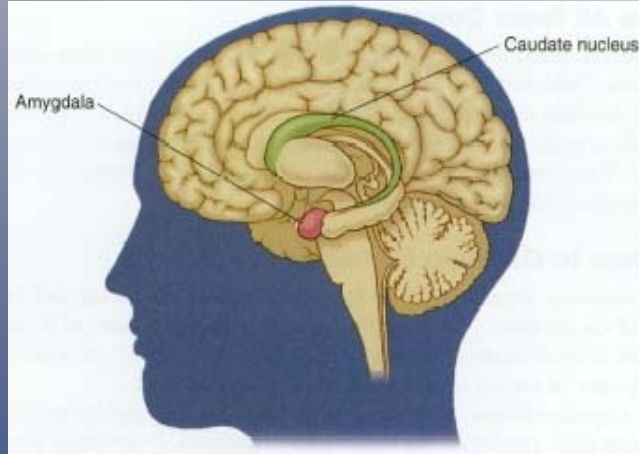
- 3 Areas:

- Prefrontal Cortex (PFC) = “Thinking Center” (underactivated)
- Anterior Cingulate Cortex (ACC) = “Emotion Regulation Center” (underactivated)
- Amygdala = “Fear Center” (overactivated)



# Dan Siegel's Hand Model of Emotional Dysregulation

## Amygdala



## Hand Demonstration of Trauma Response



# Trauma Contributes to Concerning Behaviors



- 60% of those with behavior problems had >2 ACEs
- high rates of trauma exposure in youth with CD
- polyvictimization increases likelihood of CD
- maltreatment predicts adult arrests for violent offenses

*Traumatized students are often focused on survival, which hampers their ability to learn, socialize, and develop the skills needed to thrive. (Cowan & Rossen, 2013)*

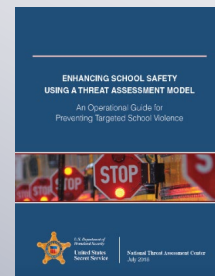
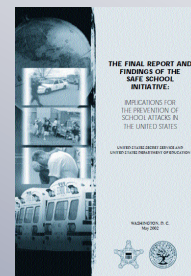


# Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM) - Why Schools Should Use It

- A research-based model, developed from empirical findings about US school shootings:
  - School shooters typically don't "just snap."
  - They plan their attacks beforehand and often tell others.
  - Their planning behavior is often observable and follows a "pathway to violence."
- Often on multiple radar screens
- Violence can be prevented

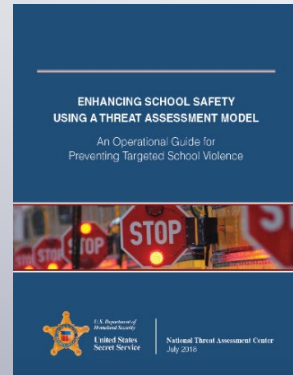
## Sources:

- U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education, *Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of Targeted School Violence in the U.S.* (2002). Washington, DC: Authors.
- National Threat Assessment Center (2018). *Enhancing school safety using a threat assessment model: An operational guide to preventing targeted school violence*. U.S. Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security.



# Multidisciplinary BTAM Team

- Team membership – *Expertise to be represented:*
  - school administration
  - counseling
  - behavior management
  - mental health/ substance use
  - classroom instruction
  - special education
  - law enforcement
  - school safety/ security
  - emergency management, and
  - law enforcement
  - others...



# Pathway to Violence – *Poses* a Threat

**Intensity of Effort**

**Ideation**

**Planning**

**Preparation/  
Acquisition**

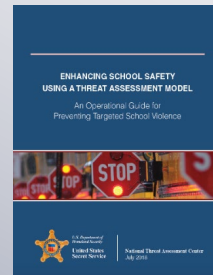
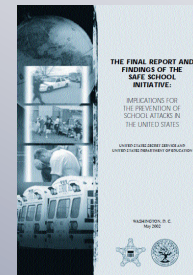
- Means
- Method
- Opportunity
- Proximity

**Implementation**



# Threatening Behaviors and Link to Suicide

- Most had significant difficulty coping with losses or failures, or were suicidal.
- 78% of targeted mass attackers exhibited a history of suicide attempts or suicidal thoughts.<sup>1</sup>
  - Many attempted or succeed at suicide or “suicide by cop” at the conclusion of targeted violence
- 40% of the offenders committed suicide.<sup>2</sup>



# Threatening Behaviors & Link to Mental Illness

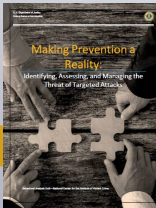
Mental illness is often present but is *not* necessarily the driving force behind targeted violence



Other vulnerabilities, risk factors, stressors



Inhibit or enhance violence concerns & coping



# SVPP Checklist: Targeted School Violence

## *Preliminary Law Enforcement Investigation of Concerning Behavior*

Are there pathway behaviors?

- Means
- Opportunity
- Motive
- Intent

Other considerations:

- Mental/Behavioral Health
- Stressors
- School performance & behavior
- Justice system involvement
- Social Media



Developed by Jeff Allison

Adapted from guidance provided by the U.S. Secret Service, National Threat Assessment Center, and the FBI Behavioral Threat Assessment Center

# Resources



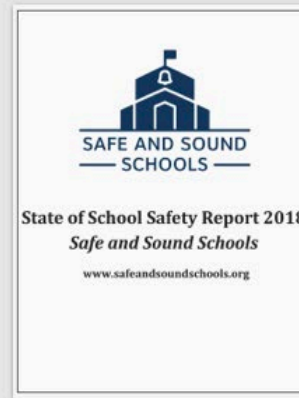
# Safe and Sound Schools



Resources



Programs



Reports



Trainings

[www.safeandsoundschools.org](http://www.safeandsoundschools.org)



# NASRO: National Association of School Resource Officers

- <https://www.nasro.org/>
- Trainings
  - Basic
  - Advanced
  - Adolescent Mental Health
  - Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)
  - School Safety Officer
  - SRO Supervisors and Management
- Legal Updates by Dr. Bernie James



# SIGMA Threat Management Associates

National Leader in K-12 BTAM Trainings & Case Consultation

- 703-286-2274
- 888-957-4462
- [Training@SigmaTMA.com](mailto:Training@SigmaTMA.com)
- [www.SigmaTMA.com](http://www.SigmaTMA.com)
- Twitter: @SigmaTMA



# Resources

## **NASP COVID-19 Resource Center**

- <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/covid-19-resource-center>

## **Care for the Caregiver: Guidelines for Administrators and Crisis Teams**

- <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/mental-health-resources/care-for-caregivers-tips-for-families-and-educators/care-for-the-caregiver-guidelines-for-administrators-and-crisis-teams>

## **Self-Care Lessons From the Field**

- <https://www.nasponline.org/professional-development/a-closer-look/self-care-lessons-from-the-field>

## **Self-Care for School Psychologists (and other professionals)**

- <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/mental-health/self-care-for-school-psychologists>



# PREPaRE Crisis Prevention & Intervention Curriculum

- **Workshop Descriptions & Target Audiences**
  - *WS1: Comprehensive School Safety Planning: Prevention through Recovery*
  - *WS2: Mental Health Crisis Interventions: Responding to an Acute Traumatic Stressor in Schools*
- **Program Evaluation Data**
- **Upcoming Trainings**
- **List of Local Trainers**
- **FAQs**



• <http://www.nasponline.org/prepare/index.aspx>



# Take-Aways

- It starts with relationships!
- When trust is broken it takes time to connect and trust.
- Punishment alone does not replace behavior!
  - Must build relationships and teach replacement skills!
- Need to teach life skills and help escape toxic environments.
- *We must also take care of ourselves* – adults have trauma histories too!

***Don't give up! We can and do make a difference!***



# Melissa A. Reeves, Ph.D., NCSP, LCHMC

Nationally Certified School Psychologist

Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor

License Special Education Teacher

Associate Professor, Winthrop University, SC

Senior Threat Manager, SIGMA Threat Management Associates

**[drmelissareeves@gmail.com](mailto:drmelissareeves@gmail.com)**

 [@melissareevessp](https://twitter.com/melissareevessp)



<https://www.linkedin.com/in/melissa-a-louvar-reeves-388b97bb/>





## THE MILESTONES PROJECT

The Milestones Project is designed to identify young people who are extremely high risk for violence either in schools, their homes, or within the community. The goal for the project is to involve parents or guardians with Milestones Project partners and community resources in interventions designed to prevent such violence.

This guide is a collaborative effort of the following:

- Public and Charter Schools
- Juvenile Court
- Local Law Enforcement
- West Yavapai Guidance Clinic
- Spectrum Health Care
- DES/Child Protective Services
- Community Counts
- You, the Parent!

[Milestones Brochure](#)

[Project Manual](#)

[Admin Login](#)

[Milestones Process](#)



## The Milestones Project

The Milestones Project is designed to identify young people who are extremely high risk for violence either in schools, their homes, or within the community. The goal for the project is to involve parents or guardians with Milestones Project partners and community resources in interventions designed to prevent such violence.

This guide is a collaborative effort of the following:

- Public and Charter Schools
- Juvenile Court
- Local Law Enforcement
- West Yavapai Guidance Clinic
- Spectrum Health Care –Verde Valley
- DES/Department of Child Safety
- Community Counts
- You, the parent!

Yavapai County



Education Service Agency

<http://ycesa.com/teachers-and-administrators/milestones/>

## Milestones Principles

- Parents are primarily responsible for the safety of their children.
- Parents deserve a voice and, when appropriate, consent in any direct intervention into the lives of their children.
- The violent child is usually a troubled child.
- The violent child usually exhibits observable symptoms prior to acting out.
- Response to youth violence improves when community partners work beyond traditional roles.

**Are you concerned about your youth engaging in or being hurt by violence?**

## A Parent's Guide to Understanding Violence



**Warning Signs**  
*What do I look for?*



**Tips for Parents**  
*What can I do?*



**Resources**  
*Who can I turn to for help?*

*Help them find the right path*



## YOUTH IN TURMOIL

An Arizona county's comprehensive response helps kids who may be prone to violence

By April Rhodes, MBA, LCMFT



Abby<sup>®</sup> is a young teenager who is navigating her way through "the

efforts of one system are disconnected from the efforts of the others, causing gaps, duplicate efforts, and bottlenecks.

In Arizona's Yavapai County, however, The Milestones Project is ready to identify young

juvenile courts, local law enforcement, local behavioral health treatment providers, child protective services, community courts, and other community resources. The result is a network in which multidisciplinary coordination is made available to the student and

- Being a victim of violence and/or living in a violent home

Referrals can be made by anyone who becomes aware of a potential threat. Because many community leaders are involved across multiple sectors, the referral process tends to be seamless. Typically, it is a school official who initially recommends a student for Milestones review.

The participants involved have committed to prioritizing review of referrals immediately, aiming for referral within 24 hours at the longest. During this process, the case is reviewed and staffed to determine level of need and safety. If appropriate or necessary, services and resources are dispatched immediately to the youth and family. Once the immediate situation is stabilized, a release of information is obtained for all parties (community partners, parents, family members, behavioral health providers, the justice system, etc.) and a large representative team of all those involved meet to discuss the case with the family to strategize and plan for both the immediate and long-term needs of the youth, family, and community at large.

If determined to meet its criteria, The Milestones Project follows the case closely, with frequent follow-up for all involved. The Milestones Project continues to staff and follow up on the care of the young person until there is active engagement in care, an improvement in overall status, and a decrease in the frequency of threatening behaviors.

with a behavioral health provider. As collaborative services continued, Abby's behaviors improved. Her angry behavior lessened, and she has had no more threatening or violent actions.

The Milestones Project brings together a unique blend of resources designed to reduce the stigma associated with seeking

Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS). The opinion contained herein are those of the author(s) or contributor(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. References to specific individuals, agencies, companies, products, or services should not be considered an endorsement by the author(s) or the U.S. Department of

Custom  
Printed

## Badge Stickers for Kids Put A Smile On Their Face!



Our junior deputy badge stickers will bring a smile to a child's face no matter what type of situation, whether your deputies are responding to a domestic violence call, an automobile accident, a crisis situation, an emergency or visiting a school. For just a few pennies per badge sticker it can put a smile on a child's face! Please visit our website for sticker prices and to see our many badge designs that can be customized with your department's name.

**Ideal for Community Events,  
Fairs, Festivals and School Activities.**

**www.policestickers.com**

Telephone: 508-892-1555 • Email: sales@policestickers.com

## CASE STUDY – ABBY



# Questions?



## Contact Information:

April Rhodes, MBA

Licensed Associate Marriage and Family Therapist

President and CEO, Spectrum Healthcare Group

Email: [aprilr@spectrumhealthcare-group.org](mailto:aprilr@spectrumhealthcare-group.org)

Phone: 928-634-2236



# Q&A

Please write your questions in the chat box and remember to stay muted at all times. Email [kbarksdale@sheriffs.org](mailto:kbarksdale@sheriffs.org) if your question doesn't get answered during the live presentation.





Website: [sheriffs.org](http://sheriffs.org)

On Twitter: [@nationalsheriff](https://twitter.com/nationalsheriff)

On Facebook:  
[facebook.com/Nationalsheriffsassociation](https://facebook.com/Nationalsheriffsassociation)

Q&A Kristi Barksdale

Project Manager

O: 703-838-5353

C: 845-545-5090

E: [kbarksdale@sheriffs.org](mailto:kbarksdale@sheriffs.org)

