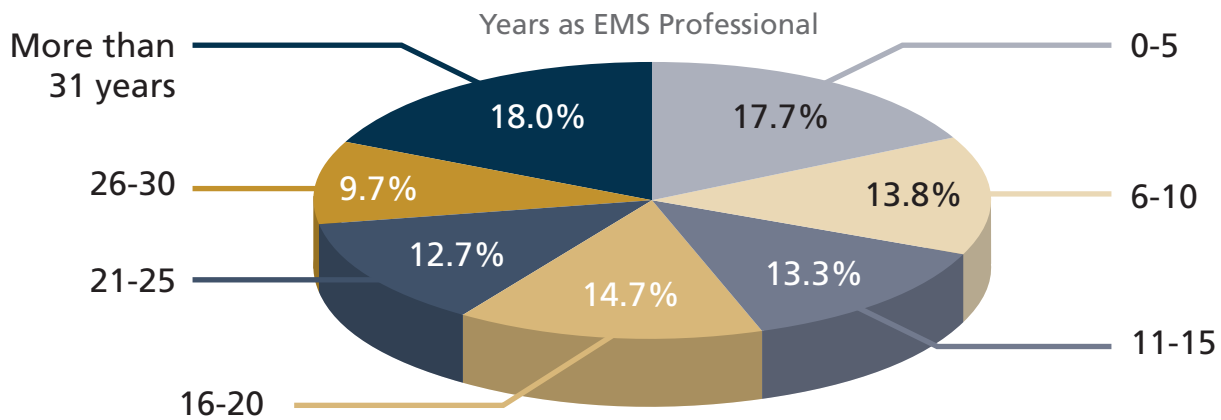




RIDOH Mental Health Temperature (MHEAT) Assessment: Insights into Rhode Island Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Professional's Mental Health

From May 2024 – July 2024, 834 Rhode Island EMS professionals completed the MHEAT assessment. Results of the MHEAT assessment represent EMS professionals at all stages of their careers in the EMS field from 0-5 years to more than 31 years.



About 1 in 2 EMS professionals who completed the MHEAT assessment said they had problems with work or their daily life due to emotional problems, such as feeling depressed, sad, or anxious, in the last 12 months. To address this:

- Normalize the conversation about mental health by checking in with colleagues and staff regularly.
- Encourage employees to use Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), if available.
- Access Rhode Island Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM) after responding to major incidents by calling **401-763-2778**.



A little more than 1 in 7 Rhode Island EMS professionals who completed the MHEAT assessment said they had suicidal ideation in the last 12 months. Some resources that can help are:

- 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org)
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) [afsp.org/talk-saves-lives](https://www.afsp.org/talk-saves-lives)
- [PreventSuicideRI.org](https://www.PreventSuicideRI.org)

988

SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

15% of EMS professionals who completed the MHEAT assessment did not know what 988 is. To encourage use of 988 by staff, you can:

- Explain that 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline provides chat, text, and phone support, available 24/7, for people experiencing suicidal ideation, mental health or substance use crises, or emotional distress.
- First responders may be hesitant to use 988 because of an assumption that their colleagues may be dispatched to their location. Since less than 2% of 988 calls result in first responder dispatch, this is unlikely.
- Normalize the conversation about mental health by checking in with colleagues and staff regularly.



44% of EMS professionals who completed the MHEAT assessment felt comfortable talking about their mental health with a colleague. You can capitalize on this by:

- Encouraging participation in Mental Health Resilience Officer (MHRO) courses.
- Support currently certified MHROs in setting up programming and/or engaging in conversations about mental health.

RIDOH Can Help

- Providing email templates to promote awareness of EAP, 988, and other resources with staff.
- Coordinating with American Foundation for Suicide Prevention – Rhode Island Chapter to provide *Talk Saves Lives* for staff and management.
- Connecting Fire Chiefs to 988 to get educational materials and training information about 988.
- Providing mental health and suicide related data to inform prevention initiatives.
- Hearing your thoughts, concerns, ideas, and working with you to implement solutions.



The data shared in this document contain sensitive information about suicide. If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis, or are in emotional distress, you can call or text 988 or chat with 988 at 988lifeline.org. Trained crisis counselors are available 24/7 to listen, support, and help.

For guidance on implementing suicide prevention strategies within your workforce, please contact Kelsea Tucker at kelsea.tucker@health.ri.gov or **401-222-7635** or Megan Umbriano at megan.umbriano@health.ri.gov or **401-222-2597**.

