Police officers and PTSD

DCI Jim Foley Metropolitan Police
and Kristina Massey
Canterbury Christ Church University
What is PTSD?

• Adjustment disorder caused by exposure to exceptionally stressful event
• Characterised by sensitivity, hypervigilance, difficulty with sleep/concentration
• Used to be believed that this was a reaction to 1 extreme trauma
• Recent research shows cumulative effect and history increase prevalence
Stress, distress and previous experience

• Recent research shows PTSD exacerbated by stress after trauma exposure
• DSM 5 recognises cumulative effect of trauma (type 2 or complex PTSD)
• Individual factors such as childhood trauma affect likelihood of indiv developing diagnostic levels of PTSD
Why is this a problem in policing?
Prevention and Intervention
Prevention and Intervention
Thank you for listening


• kristina.massey@canterbury.ac.uk
• James.Foley2@met.pnn.police.uk