

FIRE SERVICE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH RAPID RESPONSE: SUICIDE

PRE-PLANNING

GOAL: To promote behavioral health in terms of preparing for major events

- > **Lead by Example: Promote the importance of behavioral health.**
 - Communicate the importance of behavioral health to members.
 - Sponsor behavioral health trainings and encourage attendance.
 - Establish and/or support local peer support teams by encouraging involvement.
 - Include a behavioral health representative in trainings and events to show importance of behavioral health.
 - Provide information on suicide prevention mobile apps and behavioral health apps (WWW.POCKETPEER.ORG).
- > **Research clinicians firefighters and their families have used in the past.**
 - Anonymously survey the department to find clinicians firefighters and their families have used.
- > **Implement a buddy system among members (i.e., notice changes in behavior or if someone does not show up to work)**
- > **Provide all members with information on the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255) and Crisis Text Line (Text: 741741)**
- > **Learn about common reactions to potentially traumatic events, suicide prevention, and behavioral health resources.**
 - PocketPeer.org
 - Stress First Aid on WWW.FIRSTRESPONDERCENTER.ORG

IMMEDIATE (0 - 48 HOURS)

GOAL: Survival, communication

- > **Establish basic needs have been met by assessing the members' safety and security.**
- > **Remain calm and communicate**
 - Identify members who were involved in the call or may have responded to the scene.
 - Hold an operational meeting with members – provide information about details (when appropriate).
 - Listen to concerns and follow up as needed.
 - Identify members the firefighter worked with and state clearly that it's not their fault.
- > **Encourage self-care and buddy-care.**
 - Give the members autonomy to decide when and where to rest (i.e., at home vs station).
 - Encourage members to get enough sleep – prolonged time in the incident increases stress.
- Check in that members are eating healthy, avoiding abusing alcohol and getting sleep.
- Inspire members to talk to peers.
- > **Contact experts to provide supportive behavioral health services and provide information on suicide related mobile apps.**
- > **Be prepared to provide information about behavioral health programs locally or local clinicians with a good reputation among fellow firefighters.**

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RESCUE (0 – 1 WEEK)

GOAL: To support immediate needs and encourage communication

- > **Conduct a needs assessment to determine how well needs are being addressed.**
- > **Review the Seven Cs of Stress First Aid and encourage members to look after each other.**
- > **Coordinate psychological stress resources**
 - Facilitate meeting with local peer support team
 - Provide resources on local services and resources
- > **Have resources available for family members**

RECOVERY (1-4 WEEKS)

GOAL: To support immediate needs and encourage communication

- > **Establish that basic needs have been met by assessing the members' safety and security.**
- > **Remain calm and communicate.**
 - Conduct an After Action Review.
 - Develop an action plan to address operational improvements (if appropriate).
 - Assess communication with family, friends and community,
 - Listen to concerns and follow up.
- > **Encourage self-care and buddy-care.**
 - Give the members autonomy to decide when and where to rest (i.e., at home vs station).
- > **Contact experts to provide supportive behavioral health services.**
 - Review the Seven Cs of Stress First Aid and encourage members to look after each other.
 - Check in that members are eating healthy, avoiding substance abuse and getting enough sleep.
 - Inspire members to talk to peers by talking about personal experience talking to peers.
- > **Contact experts to provide supportive behavioral health services.**
 - Provide contact information to Employee Assistance Programs or peer support programs.

LONG TERM (4 WEEKS – ONGOING)

GOAL: Appraisal, planning

- > **Monitor the recovery environment.**
 - Hold follow-up meeting with members – provide additional information to help reduce behavioral health stigma.
- > **Foster resilience and recovery.**
 - Sponsor relevant support groups and trainings (i.e., family, coworker, and grief support; coping skills).
 - Provide information on behavioral health and suicide prevention related mobile apps like WWW.POCKETPEER.ORG.
- > **Reduce stigma by supporting and encouraging behavioral health treatment.**
 - Continue to provide handouts on resources and services.



For more information on Stress First Aid, visit
WWW.FIRSTRESPONDERCENTER.ORG

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