FIRE SERVICE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH RAPID RESPONSE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOWING A MASS VIOLENCE INCIDENT

PRE-PLANNING

GOAL: Preparation, improve coping

➢ 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.
  • Provide information on behavioral health and mass violence related mobile apps (WWW.POCKETPEER.ORG).
  • Include a behavioral health representative in trainings and events to show importance of behavioral health.

➢ Conduct drills on how your department will respond to mass violent incidents including:
  • Las Vegas
  • Rural settings (Texas Church Shooting)
  • Coordinated attacks (London Subway/Paris Stadium and theater shootings); and
  • Develop an action plan that includes the behavioral health needs of the members.

➢ Review courses on the Fire Hero Learning Network (WWW.FIREHEROLEARNINGNETWORK.COM) such as:
  • Stress First Aid and
  • Responding to Violent Incidents.

➢ Learn about common reactions to potentially traumatic events and behavioral health resources.

➢ Implement a buddy system among members (i.e., ensure physical and behavioral safety of one another).

IMMEDIATE (0 - 48 HOURS)

GOAL: Survival, communication

➢ Establish that basic needs have been met by assessing the members’ safety and security.

➢ Remain calm and communicate.
  • Hold an operational meeting with members – recognize aspects that were successful; provide information about details and next steps; answer questions from members.
  • Assess communication with family, friends, 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).
  • Check in that members are eating healthy, avoiding abusing alcohol, getting plenty of sleep.
  • Inspire members to talk to peers.
**FIRE SERVICE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH RAPID RESPONSE:**

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOWING A MASS VIOLENCE INCIDENT**

- Identify someone to conduct a “walk-around.”
  - Enlist a team of people on the ground offering a supportive presence and monitoring emotional states (e.g., peer, chaplain).
- Review the Seven Cs of Stress First Aid and encourage members to look after each other.
- Contact experts to provide supportive behavioral health services.

**RESCUE (0 – 1 WEEK)**

**GOAL: Adjustment**

- Conduct a needs assessment with a confidential survey or informally talking to department members.
- Coordinate psychological stress resources by facilitating meetings with local peer support teams or other local resources.
- Have resources available for family members.

**RECOVERY (1 – 4 WEEKS)**

**GOAL: Appraisal, planning**

- Monitor the recovery environment.
  - Hold follow-up meeting with members – provide additional information and reduce behavioral health stigma.
  - Sponsor relevant support groups and trainings (i.e., family, coworker, and grief support; coping skills).
  - Provide information on behavioral health and mass violence related mobile apps like [WWW.POCKETPEER.ORG](http://WWW.POCKETPEER.ORG).
- Foster resilience and recovery.

**RETURN TO LIFE (4 WEEKS – ONGOING)**

**GOAL: Reintegration**

- 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/TRAINING-FOR-FIRST-RESPONDERS](http://WWW.FIRSTRESPONDERCENTER.ORG/TRAINING-FOR-FIRST-RESPONDERS)