

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.



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GRANT PROGRAM - FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY GRANTS.

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> **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.

> **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 mass violence related mobile apps like WWW.POCKETPEER.ORG.

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