Firefighter Mental Health – A systematic approach - Resiliency

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Mission:

Africa Fire Mission is a 501(c)(3) committed to increasing the sustainable capacity of fire departments across Africa. We accomplish this through training, empowerment, support and encouragement.

Core Values: + Partnership + Community Ownership + Development + Transformation + Sustainability + Advocacy + Innovation
COMMUNITY & INDIVIDUAL TRANSFORMATION
AFM Opportunities

- Train – weekly online trainings, in person trainings
- Empower – networking group
- Support – networking group, community fire prevention program development, leadership development
- Encourage – networking group
Introductions

• Name
• Rank/ Role
• What is your biggest concern about your mental wellbeing as a firefighter
What can we do about firefighter stress and trauma?

Collaborative Grid Approach
What can we do about it?

Individually:
1) Take care of ourselves on and off the job.
2) Acknowledge what we are experiencing
3) Tell someone we trust about what we are experiencing and get support

At the fire station:
1) Notice if someone doesn't' seem to be themselves.
2) Let them know that you noticed and ask them how they are doing and if there is anything you can do for them or that they need to talk about
3) Support each other – even if someone doesn’t seem to want support find ways to support them.
What can we do about it?

As a fire department:
1) Acknowledge that members of the fire department may experience stress, burnout, trauma and secondary trauma
2) Provide a supportive environment where staff can share what’s happening and get the support that they need
3) Provide formal and informal opportunities to talk about shared experiences on the job.
4) Identify ways to meet the needs of members
5) Consider developing a chaplain program
6) Identify professional counselors/social workers that can assist in more difficult situations.
Prevention of a traumatic response:

Are you getting all of your needs met?

SPICES of life!

Social
Physical
Intellectual
Creative
Emotional
Spiritual
Prevention of a traumatic response:

Take care of ourselves on and off the job:
- Self-Awareness
- Faith
- Hope
- Adaptability
- Empathy
- Acceptance
- Flexibility
- Vulnerability
- Connection
- Compassion
- Self-care
Prevention of a traumatic response:

**Exercises to STRENGTHEN YOUR RESILIENCE MUSCLES**

**POSITIVITY**
Take time each day to find something to be thankful for.

**CREATIVITY**
Spend 5–10 minutes each day drawing or writing something just for fun.

**CONNECTION**
Take one action each day to build a new relationship or strengthen an existing one.

**EXPERIMENTING**
Each day, do one new or unfamiliar thing.

**CONFIDENCE**
At the end of each day, identify something new you learned.

**STRUCTURE**
Spend 5–10 minutes each day organizing or planning something.

**PRIORITIES**
Each morning, identify your three most important goals for the day.
Firefighter Mental Health - A systematic approach

- Prevention
- Psychological First Aid
- Peer Support (formal and informal)
- Crisis Incident Stress Management
- Professional Mental Health Supports
- Fire Department policies and procedures for member mental health care