



RESILIENT MINDS - BUILDING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STRENGTH OF FIRE FIGHTERS

About the Program

The Resilient Minds - Building the Psychological Health of Fire Fighters is a skill-building program, which addresses the need for education on psychological trauma, mental health problems and building resiliency. The program aims to decrease the risk of developing a stress disorder or other mental illnesses due to workplace incidents and/or unhealthy stress, to mitigate the negative impacts of mental illness and trauma through early recognition and early intervention, to support the public while on the frontline, and to improve the psychological health of fire staff while cultivating resilience and enhancing quality of life. Developed in partnership between the Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services and CMHA-BC Vancouver-Fraser Branch, Resilient Minds is an embedded service delivery model, ideal for fire halls.

Program Outline

Learning Module One: Psychological Trauma – Awareness and Understanding

Duration: 2.5 Hours

The training will begin with the topic of psychological trauma and the various responses and impacts a healthy human may experience during and after a traumatic event. We will define trauma, and build knowledge of assessment tools and intervention practices. Taking action in the aftermath of trauma will be encouraged. Participants will be provided the tools to assist oneself/others to limit disruption and promote growth after traumatic events.

Objectives

- Build an understanding of psychological trauma and the impacts on personnel
- Learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma
- Discuss Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Acute Stress Disorder, and Cumulative Stress
- Encourage early response to psychological trauma
- Promote recovery after trauma

Learning Module Two: Psychological Trauma – Potential Risks and Strategies

Duration: 2.5 Hours

In the second module, psychological trauma will be explored further. Various factors may lead a person who has experienced trauma to remain trapped in destructive thoughts and behaviors that began as natural and healthy reactions to traumatic events. With the introduction of cognitive behavioral therapy techniques, staff will learn to self-manage challenging thoughts and behaviors. Furthermore, staff will identify potential risks and strategies for taking action when posttraumatic reactions are persistent or severe.

Objectives

- Provide an overview of assessment and intervention: The 4R Action Toolkit
- Understand the impacts of unresolved trauma
- Explore Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Discuss and review crisis intervention

Learning Module Three: Responding with Respect – Psychological Distress & Disorder

Duration: 2.5 Hours

In the third module, the focus will shift to mental health problems encountered in the first responder work environment, where it has been acknowledged that staff experience distressing and challenging situations associated with citizens living with a mental health problem and/or addiction. Staff will develop a basic understanding of mental illness and mental health, and will learn to apply the action tool-kit - Recognize, Respond, Refer, Reconnect – to effectively communicate and appropriately respond to a citizen experiencing a mental health problem, crisis and/or addiction. It is understood staff are not to diagnose, but rather to comprehend the behaviors associated with a mental health problem and/or addiction. By equipping first responders with the knowledge and language used for assistance, we dramatically increase

confidence and ability to respond.

Objectives

- Increase understanding and recognize signs of psychological distress & disorder
- Develop effective communication skills to respond and support individuals
- Discuss appropriate and safe responses to challenging/violent situations
- Gain an understanding of resources

Learning Module Four: Managing Workplace Stress and Building Resiliency

Duration: 2.5 Hours

Fire staff will explore the risk factors and impact of workplace and work-life stress and will learn to recognize the warning signs of high levels of stress, in both themselves and in a colleague. This learning module will provide the action tool-kit and resources to support a colleague who may be experiencing a mental health problem such as low mood, stress and anxiety, in addition to building one's own resiliency and strengthening coping mechanisms. Staff will explore skills to enhance and reinforce psychological health.

Objectives

- Recognize negative impacts of work-life stress
- Discuss components of compassion fatigue
- Develop action toolkits to limit work-stress
- Build resilience and strengthen psychological health

Members that have completed the training continue to reference it as some of the best training they have participated in during the course of their careers - Deputy Fire Chief Operations

For questions about the program, contact Amanda Brazil at the Canadian Mental Health Association: Tel - 902-628-3651 Email - a.brazil@cmha.pe.ca

About the Canadian Mental Health Association

As the nation-wide leader and champion for mental health, the Canadian Mental Health Association facilitates access to the resources people require to maintain and improve mental health and community integration, build resilience, and support recovery from mental illness.