

PACE Conference 2015

Peer Support – How to be “there” for your team

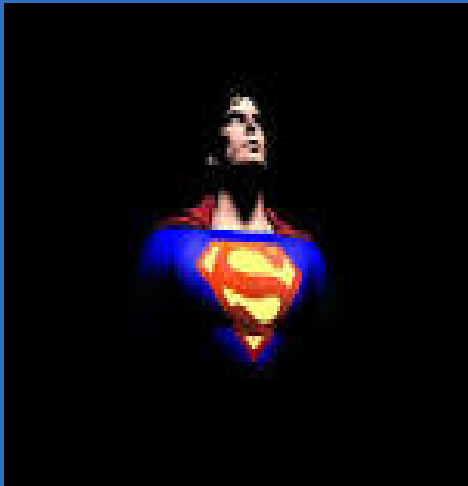


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Every Day Heroes

- Emergency services – triumph to tragedy
- No two days are the same
- Takes a special person...but still human.



Heroes but not superhuman.



- *What is your “kryptonite”?*

The Terribles....

- Significant events or death involving children
- Multi-casualty incidents
- Events that are prolonged and end with a negative outcome

The Terribles....

- Events in which the victim is known to the personnel
- Events with a high degree of threat to personnel
- Disasters or other large scale events

The Terribles....

- Traumatic death of a colleague
- Line of Duty death

Sometimes these events leave imprints...

Imprints....

– On the body...



Imprints....

– On the mind...



Imprints....

–On the heart...



Imprints....

–On the soul...



Darkness...

- Anger... "It could have been different."
- Trauma... "The worst"
- Numb... "So many"
- Grief... "Unbelievable"
- Helplessness... "If only..."
- Isolation... "No one else..."

Shadows...whispers.... "Am I the only one?"

Or Life “Happens”....

- Relationship breakdown
- Personal loss
- Work challenges
- Health crisis
- Family challenges

“Where do I go? Who do I talk to?”

How many?

- “The Firsts”
- “The Terribles”
- Rookie
- Seasoned
- Saturation

Softening the imprints...

Fighting the darkness...

HOW?

EMPATHY

COMPASSION

UNDERSTANDING

PEER SUPPORT

Why Peer Support?

- Same “boots”
- Tattered T-shirts
- Frustrations and tears
- “Firsts” and “Worsts”
- Appropriate, timely support provided by the *right people for the right people* can prevent loss of productivity at work and home

Why Peer Support?

- When the group possesses a unique culture
- When group members perceive themselves as unique, little understood, misunderstood
- When the group extends minimal trust to those outside the group
- **Credibility and Confidentiality**

Trained Peer Support

- Targeted – all levels
- Tailored – experience and exposure
- Training – standardized
- Tactics – multi-component, systematic
- Team – local, provincial, interagency

Leaders from the Floor...

- Proactive and responsive
- Informal and formal
- Individual and Group

Because they are there....

Bring Light to the Shadows...

- **Minimize exposure**
- **Mitigate distress**
- **Activate survival tactics**
- **Engage resources**
- **Maximize recovery**

Because they care....

Support

From the Floor...

Peer Support...is Strong

- EMS
- Emergency Communication Officers
- Firefighters
- Police
- Search & Rescue
- Military

A gateway...to hope...

Gateway to Resources...

- Spiritual support
- Psychological support

The possibility for change...

Together ... we fight...

- To raise awareness**
- To increase early recognition**
- To intervene early**
- To prevent or mitigate long-term problems through appropriate support**

Lights in Shadow Land

“And with a vision in sight, a new trend created
Bringing Lights to the dark, and fears are abated.
Where apathy, judgment and stigma are banned
And why our world needs the Lights for Shadow
Land.”

Advocates for Change...

- In attitudes... *"We understand."*
- In behaviors... *"We can help."*
- In responsiveness... *"Help is here."*
- In culture... *"We care."*

Final Comments

Thank you to ALL peer support team members from EMS, ECO, Fire, Police within Alberta...



...For your **compassion and dedication** to make a difference.



**It is honor and
privilege
to serve all of you.**

Thank you
Careen Condrotte
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