



Emergency Responder Psychological Wellness

Prepared By:

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Background:

- ◆ Retired from the RCMP in 2013 with over 16 years of service.
- ◆ Brooks, Alberta
- ◆ Prince George, BC – Green Team, Undercover Operations, Team Policing
- ◆ Redwater, Alberta
- ◆ ViClas
- ◆ Project KARE
- ◆ Commercial Crime – “K” Div. HQ

What is a Critical Incident?

- Any personally significantly powerful, overwhelming, distressing event.
- Any event which is powerful enough to overwhelm the normal coping mechanisms of a person.



Critical Incident

Any powerful event that affects the responder



What is Critical Incident Stress?

- ◆ Critical incident stress reactions are normal reactions to an abnormal event.
- ◆ Different people experience different reactions
- ◆ Reactions may or may not occur.
- ◆ Reactions may last anywhere from hours to weeks
- ◆ Some pieces may last longer and be *triggered* by other events.



Operational Stress Injuries

- “Any persistent psychological difficulty resulting from operational duties performed while serving in the Canadian Armed Forces or as a member of the RCMP.”
- “It is used to described a broad range of psychiatric conditions such as anxiety disorders, depression and PTSD. It also includes other conditions that may be less severe, but still interfere with daily functioning.”
- **Not just the physical injuries, but those that injure the mind and the spirit.**

- OSISS Website



MINE

is bigger than yours

Tools in the Toolbox



Tools to Protect our Psychological Well-Being

Peer Support

CISM -
Debriefings

Counseling



Meditation

Physical Activity

Eye Movement
Desensitization
& Reprocessing
(EMDR)

Stigma

Broken

Unstable



Unworthy

Useless

Crazy

Self-Stigma

- ✧ **Occurs when an individual buys into society's (or our group's) misconceptions about mental health.**
- ✧ **Internalize negative beliefs and experience feelings of shame, anger, hopelessness or despair.**
- ✧ **Keeps people from seeking support and treatment.**

Transitioning from the perspective of...

- ***“I suffer from....”***
- ***“I’m a long-time sufferer of...”***
- ***Walking wounded***
- ***Broken***

Post-Traumatic Growth

- Post-Traumatic growth – the constellation of positive changes that people may experience following a trauma or other stressful event.
- **Growth is facilitated and maintained by endorsement rather than absence of post-traumatic symptomatology.**

Support = Resiliency

- ◆ Organized the first War Horse Symposium 2010.
- ◆ Founded the War Horse Awareness Foundation 2011.
- ◆ Special Advisor – Peer Support Services for the Mood Disorders Society of Canada.
- ◆ Certified Equine-Assisted Personal Development Coach – Level 2.
- ◆ Certified Lifestyle Meditation Teacher.
- ◆ Author of National Bestselling book, *“Damage Done: A Mountie’s Memoir”*.
- ◆ **Member of the OSI Steering Committee driven by the Office of the Fire Commissioner.**

Contact Information

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