BLUE PEAK CONSULTING

Your department has responded to a traumatic incident, here are some suggestions for how you can help:

1. Give them **space and time to talk**, in consideration of a recent event or possible cumulative stress/trauma. Help them to create a "Safe Space" where they can talk about it.

2. After a traumatic incident, let them know **It is OK to NOT be OK**…….. for about 4-6 weeks. If they are not progressing through it, they should reach out for help.
   - **Follow up** with them, especially if they are not acting like themselves.
   - Encourage them to **drink lots of water and get plenty of exercise**. They just had a huge adrenalin dump with a lot of toxins. Flushing their system would be extremely helpful.
   - **OUTDOOR activities** are highly encouraged! Get away from the pager, technology, Facebook, TV, etc. Many cannot "stop the thoughts, the images, or turn their brain off" from the events of the call. If they can find an activity that will physically exhaust them, a long/fast run, or a hard workout, this can give them a sense of relief physically where they cannot find it mentally or emotionally.

3. Be mindful of **sleep patterns** – ***optimal is 6 -7 hours uninterrupted*** sleep
   - It is normal to have images, bad dreams, and nightmares after a traumatic incident. **This is a normal reaction to an abnormal situation.** If these last longer than 4-6 weeks, they should seek help.
   - Think of ways to better your sleep environment
     1. Take a hot bath/shower before bed
     2. Do not eat late at night
     3. Do not drink alcohol or caffeine after 2pm
     4. Keep your sleeping area at a comfortable temperature
     5. Dim lights
     6. Stay away from technology/devices after dinner to help your mind wind down
     7. Keep bedroom time for sleep and intimacy. If you need to make yourself tired, go to another room and read a book, otherwise you give your body conflicting messages of when to sleep.

4. Stages of Grief – Grief in First Responders and Family Members
   - ***Shock / Denial / Bargaining / Anger / Depression / Acceptance***

   In the instance of a fatality, a life was lost. It is a normal human reaction to have the need to find resolution. If you/they do not see progress through the stages of grief, they may become "stuck" in the incident. Encourage them to talk about this or reach out for help.

5. Be mindful of **alcohol/substance use** – healthy use vs. what they are consuming. **Are they drinking for the wrong reasons**?
   - Many people can have a drink to "take the edge off" and do not develop an issue with drinking. But if someone does this on a regular basis to "make the pain and faces go away", it can turn into something else.

6. Let them know you are **always** available to talk or help them find resources.

https://bluepeak.one | Dr.Gavian@bluepeak.one | 612-924-1911 | info@bluepeak.one

BLUE PEAK CONSULTING

RESOURCES

MnFIRE Initiative **(reactive support for Firefighters)**
888-784-6634 |#2 Peer Support (voicemail activated line, call returned within 60 minutes 7am-10pm).
100% confidential

Blue Peak / Dr. Margaret Gavian / MnFIRE Clinical Director / **(proactive support)**
612-924-1911 / dr.gavian@bluekpeak.one
Resilience Training for Chiefs/Command Staff/Firefighters/Police Officers and their Families.

- PAR360/HarborBlue is a resilience training and consultation service offered to department **leaders, firefighters, police officers and their families**.
- It is offered as a yearly subscription program with the goal of overall reduction in suicide rates, reducing stress levels, and enhancing resilience to protect first responders from the occupational emotional hazards being a first responder brings.

Included in the PAR360/HarborBlue program are:

- Online resilience training for all firefighters/officers and leadership staff.
- Annual individualized resilience "check-ins"/ pre-planning for firefighters/officers by a mental health provider.
- Workshops for Chief/Command Staff and Family Members
- Resources for how to recognize warning signs
- Referral resource to vetted trauma therapists who work with first responders

PAR360 Invisible Danger VIDEO: click here | https://vimeo.com/491388889
(**warning** – this video may be highly **sensitive** to some)

Video / Hayden Hurst's Second Chance in Life / Breaking the Stigma Around Mental Health
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQl-n2cLTKs

These are some websites that may also offer some good advice to share with your folks.

Take Care of Your Body/Mind/Family/Career ResponderStrong
Grief in First Responders and Family Members SafeCallNow
27 Tips to help you sleep better, starting tonight C/NET
First Responders – Dealing with Substance Abuse and Mental Health TruVida
When to stop drinking alcohol, water, or caffeine before bed for better sleep C/NET

Margaret Gavian, PhD
Founder & Director
Dr.Gavian@bluepeak.one
Direct: 612-924-1911

Frankie Jo McNallan
Program Manager
fjmcnallan@bluepeak.one
Direct: 763-337-0479