PAR360

Family Action Plan

As a busy fire family, it is necessary to plan ahead to keep your family healthy, resilient, and connected. Firefighters call this "pre-planning". Know what to look out for and what you're going to do *before* things get tough.

Communication Strategies

Every couple/relationship needs to talk about talking. Have you and your FF talked about talking?

I will talk to my FF about talking on…. (date) _____

What's our communication strategy about calls?
(if you don't have one, flying blind & hoping for the best won't work)

What I wish I knew about my FF's time firefighting:

What I <u>can</u> handle listening to:
(Ex., PI involving a child …."they may not make it, heavy trauma")

What I don't want to know:
The details of the PI involving a child and the gory details…… what your firefighter saw.

What my FF doesn't want to share:
(What my firefighter saw on the PI involving the child.)

Blind spots I know I need to talk to my firefighter about?

Questions to Ask:

1. Are you content with how, when and where we communicate?
2. How much detail do we want to share with each other?
3. Do you want to (do I want to know) tell me when you've been in danger?
4. Do you want to know when I'm upset?
5. Do you think we solve problems well?
6. Do our conflicts get settled satisfactorily?
7. Is one of us afraid of the other?
8. Do we each feel listened to?
9. Do we both have sufficient airtime?
10. Do our children feel that we listen to them and value their participation in family decisions?

Transition Times:
Leaving for a shift/call or coming home are often the most challenging. Plan ahead of time.

What I need when my FF comes home from a call/shift
(a hug, a question, take the kids, etc., be specific)

What my FF needs when they get home *(a shower, 10 minutes to decompress, a walk, etc.):*
(if you don't know, ask them for specifics, no assumptions)

What I love the most about my firefighter is:

My biggest frustration with my firefighter (or firefighting, the department) is:

What I can do about it:
*Not all things are under our control – the department, the calls, others' behavior. Know what you can change and what you can't. How you deal with it **IS** under your control.*

Warning Signs/Red Flags (talk about this with your FF)

I know when something is off with my firefighter when:

One thing I can do to address this is:
(Do you have a code word between you, do you talk about it, how do you cope?)

What will I say/how will I say it exactly?
(E.g., "I'm noticing you're hanging back more lately, and we talked about this as one of your red flags. I just wanted to check in and see how you are")

I know when something is off in me when:
(Specific behaviors or things I do when I'm overwhelmed)

One thing I can do to address this:

Who are my go-to people when things are stressful? Who do I lean on when my FF isn't available?

Look at the people you mentioned in the previous question – who do you let know the REAL-DEAL, not just the people you give the bits and pieces to?

How do you regularly connect with your people above? Text? Phone? In person?
(Hoping for the best and connecting at random doesn't work!)

My Relationship:

1. What is your Love Language *(Quality Time, Words of Affirmation, Gifts, Acts of Service, Physical Touch)*

2. What is your Spouse/Partner's Love Language? *(take your best guess)*

3. How can you speak more of their "language"? *Be specific.*

4. When do you and your spouse/partner make time to connect, just the two of you in a routine way? *(e.g., daily when we both get home from work, every Sunday morning, etc.)*

5. What is one strategy you learned today that you are going to implement moving forward that would improve your relationship?

<u>Children & Family Life</u>

One strategy I learned today that I can apply to my kids is:

Regularly scheduled family routines are helpful for everyone (e.g., dinnertime together, family meetings, walks, etc.)

Family Ritual and routines that help us feel connected.

1.

2.

3.

Self-Care

What are the obstacles YOU personally face in your fire family?

What are some tangible ways you could address this? *(talk to a friend, go on a daily walk, meditate/pray, plan something fun, etc.)*

What I need more of in my life? (connection, fun, relaxation, adventure, free time, etc.)

One thing I could do to make that happen (small action steps make a big impact):

What do I do for myself when I'm frustrated? (exercise, take a walk, prayer/meditation, music, dance, etc.)