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TRAUMA AWARENESS FOR FIRST RESPONDERS
TRAFFIR

Work-family fit: the impact of emergency medical services work on the family system

EMS providers are exposed to:

- High-stress situations on a routine basis
- Face challenging environmental forces
- Violent patients
- Work shifts
- Work during holidays
- Unexpected overtime

Their families are also impacted by these stressors.

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- LONG HOURS
- UNPREDICTABLE SCHEDULES
- IMPACT ON HOME LIFE
- IMPACT ON BODY
- CONCERNS ABOUT PHYSICAL SAFETY AND JOB RISK

Everyday Challenges for EMS Families

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1.LONG HOURS
&
2. UNPREDICTABLE SCHEDULES

IMPACT ON CHILDREN

For many children, EMS parent lateness is a source of disappointment, anxiety, or anger.

IMPACT ON CHILDCARE

DISRUPTION OF FAMILY ROUTINES

Rhythm of home life, rotating shifts, sleep pattern, family flexibility, impact on holiday and social activities

IMPACT ON RELATIONSHIP WITH SPOUSE/PARTNER

Changes in marital and parental role (functional marital role, couple's intimacy, most of the parenting falls on partner)

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IMPACT ON HOME LIFE

- EMS workers are often reluctant to talk about their work with a spouse/partner who is not in the same field.
- At the same time, they wish their spouse/partner understood stresses EMS workers face.

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IMPACT ON BODY

- Lack of sleep and work intensity.
- Ongoing work stress can lead to strain and burnout, which is also likely to affect relationships within family.

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CONCERNS ABOUT PHYSICAL SAFETY AND JOB RISKS

- Health risks: physical injury/safety, contagious disease, needlesticks (also exposing children to illness)
- Poor weather, known dangerous call areas, vehicle accidents

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COPING WITH THE IMPACT OF EMS WORK ON THE FAMILY SYSTEM

Popular strategies:

- Emotional support
- Positive thinking to manage stressors
- Negotiating family responsibilities
- Seeking social support
- Developing their own interests

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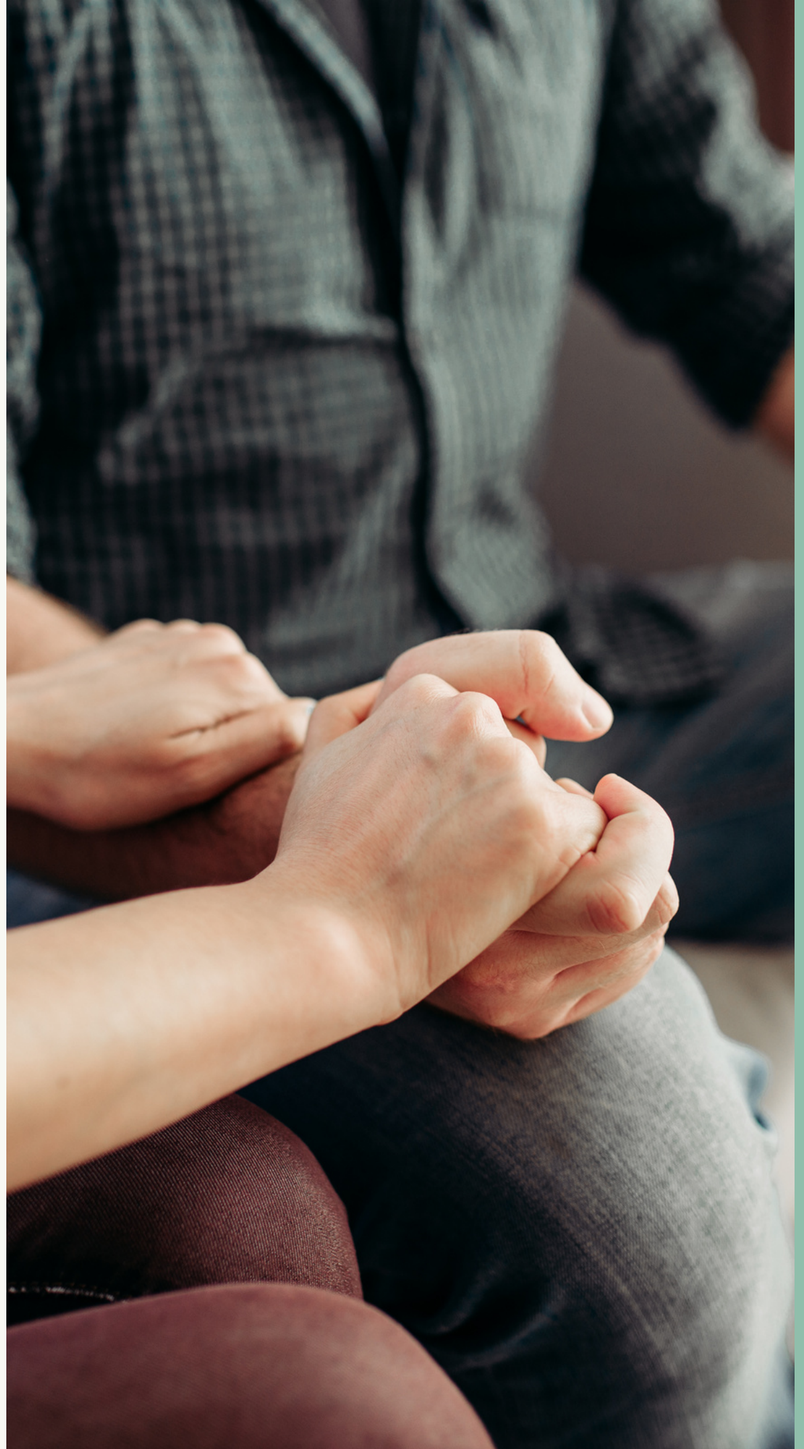

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

- The provision of emotional support to EMS family member through talking and listening or giving “space” to de-stress
- "Being there” – as an emotional resource

COGNITIVE STRATEGIES

- The necessity of accepting the ups and downs associated with stressful shift work
- Mental preparation for disappointment when plans have changed unexpectedly
- Thinking about situation in a more positive way
- Considering alternative reasons for behaviour

NEGOTIATING FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

- The negotiation of role responsibilities with EMS family member is necessary to deal with the demands of EMS work on the family system
- The shift work schedule as a tool to help balance family responsibilities, particularly in participating in activities with the family's children
- Necessary but difficult
- Lack of equity

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SEEKING SOCIAL SUPPORT

- Support from both friends and family as a way to address stressors present in the family system
- Having a support system that includes people inside and outside of the EMS system is a healthy balance for EMS families

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DEVELOPING THEIR OWN INTERESTS

- Importance of developing one's own interests to better balance their lives as a family member of an EMS provider

COVID-19 - unprecedented times

WHAT ABOUT MY FURTHER CAREER?

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Thank you for attention!

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