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First Responders in Disaster Management

Recognizing and Treating Mental Health Issues in the Community

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January 2021

AIMS OF THE TRAINING

- Build **awareness** through empathy and scientific references
- Teach about the ways to **identify** mental health issues in FRDM
- Provide strategies how to **approach** mental health issues in FRDM

AWARENESS THROUGH EMPATHY

- Communicate the nature of this **community of toughness**
- **Stories** about experiencing trauma as a FR and refusing to process it
- **Videos** which communicate the experience and the culture in the community
- Live **discussion** with a family of a FR

FIRST RESPONDERS AS A VULNERABLE GROUP

- **Why** do first responders constitute a vulnerable group?
 - Exposure
 - Culture of toughness
 - Data
- **Who** is a first responder?
 - The broad view – hotline responders, coordinators.

MOST FREQUENT MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

- Sleep Deprivation, Alcohol abuse, Anxiety, Hazardous stress, Depression, Secondary trauma
- PTSD
 - Not a principle condition
 - Not a character trait
 - The past haunting the person
- Stressors outside the experience /administration, social pressure, management/

HOW TO IDENTIFY MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS CAUSED BY A TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE

- **What** are the **signs** of trauma or mental health problems?
 - Hypervigilance
 - Loss of sleep
 - Shame, grief, guilt.
- **How** to **notice** them? (symptoms that creep up)?
 - Recognise coping mechanisms
- **Who** will **notice** them?
 - Work closely with the family and close ones

CHALLENGES TO HELPING

- **Minimising** – I am fine as a tendency.
- **Cultural** mindset
- **Refusal** to look for support

MEASURES



- **What we can do?**
 - Buddy system
 - Stress management
 - Responder self-care techniques
- Briefly about **treatments** (e.g. EMDR therapy)
 - If it is important for FRs to go, trainers should know what it constitutes.

CONCLUSION



- A **live discussion** with (the family of) a FR