

# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH RAPID RESPONSE: SUICIDE

## PRE-PLANNING

**GOAL: To promote behavioral health in terms of preparing for major events**

- > **Lead by Example: Promote the importance of behavioral health.**
  - Communicate the importance of behavioral health to members.
  - Sponsor behavioral health trainings and encourage attendance.
  - Establish and/or support local peer support teams by encouraging involvement.
  - Include a behavioral health representative in trainings and events to show importance of behavioral health.
  - Provide information on suicide prevention mobile apps and behavioral health apps ([WWW.POCKETPEER.ORG](http://WWW.POCKETPEER.ORG)).
- > **Learn about common reactions to potentially traumatic events, suicide prevention, and behavioral health resources.**
  - PocketPeer.org
  - Stress First Aid on [WWW.FIREHEROLEARNINGNETWORK.COM](http://WWW.FIREHEROLEARNINGNETWORK.COM)
- > **Research clinicians firefighters and their families have used in the past.**
  - Anonymously survey the department to find clinicians firefighters and their families have used.
- > **Implement a buddy system among members (i.e., notice changes in behavior or if someone does not show up to work)**
- > **Provide all members with information on the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255) and Crisis Text Line (Text: 741741)**

## IMMEDIATE (0 - 48 HOURS)

**GOAL: Survival, communication**

- > **Establish basic needs have been met by assessing the members' safety and security.**
- > **Remain calm and communicate**
  - Identify members who were involved in the call or may have responded to the scene.
  - Hold an operational meeting with members – provide information about details (when appropriate).
  - Listen to concerns and follow up as needed.
  - Identify members the firefighter worked with and state clearly that it's not their fault.
- > **Encourage self-care and buddy-care.**
  - Give the members autonomy to decide when and where to rest (i.e., at home vs station).
  - Encourage members to get enough sleep – prolonged time in the incident increases stress.
- Check in that members are eating healthy, avoiding abusing alcohol and getting sleep.
- Inspire members to talk to peers.
- > **Contact experts to provide supportive behavioral health services and provide information on suicide related mobile apps.**
- > **Be prepared to provide information about behavioral health programs locally or local clinicians with a good reputation among fellow firefighters.**

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## RESCUE (0 – 1 WEEK)

**GOAL: To support immediate needs and encourage communication**

- > **Conduct a needs assessment to determine how well needs are being addressed.**
- > **Review the Seven Cs of Stress First Aid and encourage members to look after each other.**
- > **Coordinate psychological stress resources**
  - Facilitate meeting with local peer support team
  - Provide resources on local services and resources
- > **Have resources available for family members**

## RECOVERY (1-4 WEEKS)

**GOAL: To support immediate needs and encourage communication**

- > **Establish that basic needs have been met by assessing the members' safety and security.**
- > **Remain calm and communicate.**
  - Conduct an After Action Review.
  - Develop an action plan to address operational improvements (if appropriate).
  - Assess communication with family, friends and community,
  - Listen to concerns and follow up.
- > **Encourage self-care and buddy-care.**
  - Give the members autonomy to decide when and where to rest (i.e., at home vs station).
- > **Contact experts to provide supportive behavioral health services.**
  - Review the Seven Cs of Stress First Aid and encourage members to look after each other.
  - Check in that members are eating healthy, avoiding substance abuse and getting enough sleep.
  - Inspire members to talk to peers by talking about personal experience talking to peers.
- > **Contact experts to provide supportive behavioral health services.**
  - Provide contact information to Employee Assistance Programs or peer support programs.

## LONG TERM (4 WEEKS – ONGOING)

**GOAL: Appraisal, planning**

- > **Monitor the recovery environment.**
  - Hold follow-up meeting with members – provide additional information to help reduce behavioral health stigma.
- > **Foster resilience and recovery.**
  - Sponsor relevant support groups and trainings (i.e., family, coworker, and grief support; coping skills).
  - Provide information on behavioral health and suicide prevention related mobile apps like [WWW.POCKETPEER.ORG](http://WWW.POCKETPEER.ORG).
- > **Reduce stigma by supporting and encouraging behavioral health treatment.**
  - Continue to provide handouts on resources and services.



For more information on Stress First Aid, visit  
[WWW.FIRSTRESPONDERCENTER.ORG/](http://WWW.FIRSTRESPONDERCENTER.ORG/)  
TRAINING-FOR-FIRST-RESPONDERS

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