



Rural ND EMS Resiliency

ND Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program
ND Emergency Medical Services Association

5.2.22 TASC webinar, *Fostering a Culture of Resilient Rural EMS*

The Need: Building Resiliency in ND EMS

How the need was identified:

- 2018 - an EMS agency had a call where a personal close acquaintance of the responder passed away. The EMS provider didn't feel their agency had plans, services or resources to handle the gravity of the situation.
- A need to be proactive versus reactive in equipping EMS agencies with tools to handle situations before they occur, not after, was identified.

The Need: Building Resiliency in ND EMS

Goal: Equip EMS agencies and providers with resiliency and wellness tools to live their best lives personally and professionally.

Multi-faceted approach:

- Self-care education – *Body, Emotion, Engagement and Relationships*
- Coordinate support and education for providers who are involved in stressful patient care experiences
- Develop, educate and sustain a Regional Peer Support Trainer Program to utilize principals of self-care and resiliency education to take locally to EMS agencies

Center for Rural Health



TIMELINE

- Mental Health Committee Formed
- Taking Care of Our Own Presentations

- Mental Health First Aid Offered
- EMS Provider Wellbeing and Mental Health Summit
- Caring for Your People 2 Day Workshop
- Provider Wellness and Wellbeing Team Formed

2018

2019

2020

2021

2022

- Need Identified
- To be proactive rather than reactive in the mental wellbeing of first responders

- Building a Culture of Wellness and Resiliency Trainings

- Psychological Trauma in EMS Patients
- Annual Keynote at EMS Conference
- Conversation Starter Videos
- Handbook
- EMS Friendly Mental Health Provider List

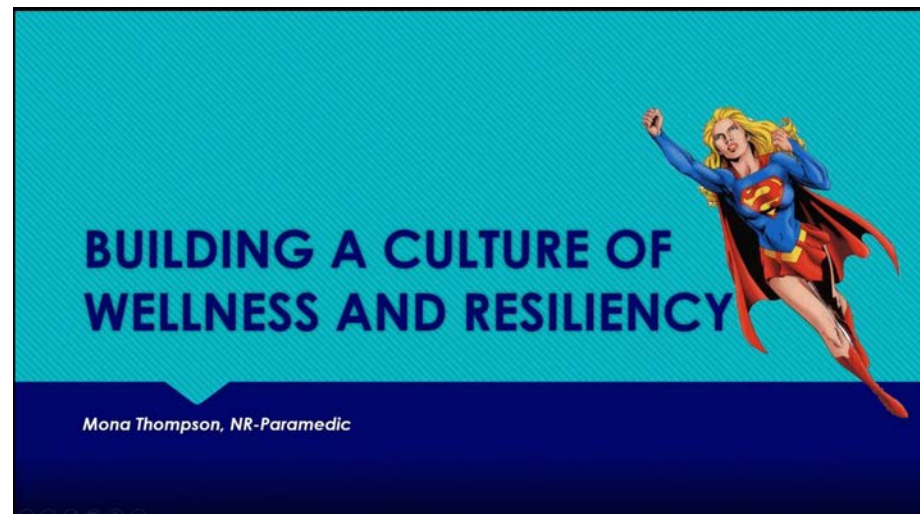


Center for Rural Health

University of North Dakota
School of Medicine & Health Sciences

Timeline of Activities

- **May 2019:** Initial funds from another source and volunteer time was used to provide 56 trainings titled: *Taking Care of Our Own*. The focus began on PTSD then transitioned to prevention of PTSD.
- **2020:** Building a Culture of Wellness and Resilience Trainings



Timeline of Activities, continued

- Wrote activities into Flex 2021-2022 workplan and utilized carry forward funds
 - **Mental Health First Aid annual education** – brought suggestion to host PTEP classes. February 8, 2021 – 18 attendees; February 15, 2021 - 6 attendees
 - **Psychological Trauma in EMS Patients (PTEP)** – how to handle situations on being a better care provider in difficult situations. March 12, 2022 Medora – 12 attendees; March 21, 2022 – 20 registered

Timeline of Activities, continued

- **EMS Provider Wellbeing and Mental Health Summit** with John Becknell: six hour summit bringing together health care providers to discuss the impact and treatment of opioid addiction, mental health disorders, suicide, and a panel discussion of local experts. July 26, 2021 – 38 attendees
- **2-day workshop for leaders entitled “Caring for your People” Leading emotional and psychological wellbeing in first responders** to allow leaders to regain their motivation and lead wellbeing efforts within their organization. May 21-22, 2021 – 27 attendees
- **Annual ND EMSA Conference Presentation** – John Becknell presentation on upcoming trainings and why resiliency is important. April 8, 2022 - 470 attendees

Timeline of Activities, continued

- **Resource Creation: Current Work**

- **Videos**: for conversation starters within each agency to normalize check-ins with each other. John Becknell to interview local people in videos. Example: Armor up and Armor down when preparing for work and returning to home life after your shift.
- **Handbook**: The handbook will be designed as a reference guide for EMS agency leaders and providers. It will be aimed at guiding each local agency in developing wellbeing as part of their everyday culture. The handbook will specifically address the challenges of small-town EMS, such as caring for known or related patients, being constantly on call, and developing communal practices that support wellbeing.
- **Mental Health Provider listing**: Working to provide list of mental health providers who are familiar with the EMS profession and understand the complexities of work-related calls. Eases burden of explaining EMS job prior to receiving counseling, whether counseling need is work-related or not.

Workplan Monitoring

- Detailed workplan with dates of completion have been outlined
- Administrative support for the committee work and projects
- A project manager has been assigned to keep the project on task
- ND EMSA Mental Health committee meets monthly
- ND EMSA and Flex program meet quarterly to monitor workplan. Flex program reports outputs/outcomes on workplan, PIMS.
- Surveyed agency managers on the current status of mental health resources for their services
- Evaluations are collected at every NDEMSA sponsored conference and educational event

Challenges:

Initial Buy-in:

- Who should own the work (originally deferred to Critical Incident Stress Management/Debriefing (CISM) which is debriefing based, not resiliency based).
- Resiliency strategies, planning and funding

Buy-in:

- Engaged agencies, overcoming culture and mental health stigma
- Follow-through once buy-in is achieved

Oversight:

- “None of us are mental health providers or are doing great at being well and balanced”

EMS work load:

- Making sure the schedule is full, staffing, training etc., but know addressing the mental health need is there



Results so far:

- Wellbeing Support Team members have begun introducing the concepts to their local agencies and students.
- An increase in provider willingness to talk about tough calls has been observed within these agencies. The providers are sharing wellbeing check-ins and gratitude with each other.
- Increased interest in further training like the PTEP course and Mental Health Summit.



Contact us for more information!

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