

Guided Crew Discussion Session Following The Suicide of a Member

This session is to be led by the captain of each crew as a means to facilitate a discussion regarding grief and suicide. It is your responsibility to ensure every member on your crew has the opportunity to fully participate. This is a necessary process to ensure we reach as many of our employees as possible with a message of suicide prevention.

Prior to the meeting, write the phone numbers of resources available on the white board at each hall:

BC Crisis Line 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433) www.crisislines.bc.ca

The purpose of this session is to:

- provide a structured peer-led discussion regarding the passing of a member
- provide the known facts surrounding the member's passing, as we know them to be at this time
- identify services available to members and enhanced ways to access resources
- reassure members that this is the first stage in a host of strategies and services available to members in the coming days and weeks

Overview:

Discussion to be led by the senior Captain:

"We will be discussing the sudden passing of [name of member]."

"At the same time, I (the captain), am not a mental health professional and we are in service. Therefore, we are in the position of having to acknowledge the shock of this incident while at the same time, being expected to contain these reactions if and when we respond to calls."

*"For the next 30 minutes, all crew members are encouraged to actively participate in this discussion. Participation is voluntary; however we encourage you to contribute your thoughts and coping strategies to deal with this loss. **Your participation may assist another crew member in dealing with the impact of this event.**"*

"Does everyone agree to this discussion?"

Facts surrounding the member's passing: (Please state these to your crew). Include:

- Name and position of deceased member.
- Date and cause of death.
- How/when and by whom the death was discovered.
- If there was a suicide note.
- Details about the member's work status at the time – e.g. active duty, on leave etc.
- Age of the member.
- Brief career history with department and previous.
- Marital status and family information.
- The fact that this is not considered a Line of Duty Death by the Local or the City
- Context – acknowledge other recent suicides or significant traumas experienced by the crew.

Preamble to Questions:

"I have been instructed to ask our crew four questions surrounding the death of [member's name]. Each question is designed to put no one on the spot and we will each take turns talking about our own experience. When I ask the question, I will start on my left and we will go clockwise. I am also part of this crew and I will share my experiences as well."

"If you find this discussion is too difficult for you, we ask that you call the number on the white board, an MFAP team member or the EFAP number to speak with a mental health professional."

Questions:

*Be comfortable with silence as crew members may take time to process the question asked. Ask one question at a time and allow each member the opportunity to speak before asking the next question.

"Just a reminder, I will ask one question at a time and start to my left"

1. How has this death impacted you?
2. What kind of thoughts do you have regarding the death?
3. Would anyone like to share additional thoughts or comments about the loss of [name of member]?
4. What has worked for you in the past that will help you through this kind of loss?

Wrap-up:

"Remember that you do have access to mental health professionals through MFAP, FSEAP and the suicide crisis line. A list of recommended counsellors is maintained by the Local. If you require help in finding a service provider, it can be requested from any MFAP team member. I also encourage you to take a look at your Wellness Program Manual for resources and contact information."

"Please continue this discussion amongst yourselves, your friends and your support network over the next few weeks. We cannot let this discussion end. Let me know if you have any concerns that I can assist you with. While I may not have the answers, I will assist you in getting your concerns addressed."

"Lastly, take note of the number on the white board to have direct contact with a mental health professional. Please put the following information into your phone now so it is available in case someone you know needs it:"

BC Crisis Line 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433) www.crisislines.bc.ca

"Thank you for your participation"

If you have had difficulty facilitating this session or feel your crew needs immediate attention, please use any of these resources.

- Our MFAP team. See the phone list on the bulletin board. It is also available on the intranet and the Fire Fighters' website.
- FSEAP 1-800-667-0993 24/7/365 crisis support and EFAP referrals (City EFAP)
- Victim Services (RCMP) 604-507-5986
- WorkSafe CIR program 1-888-922-3700