



# Peer Support Team

## April 26, 2017



# First Responder Peer Teams

- Critical Incident Stress Management
- Peer Resource Teams
- Peer Support Teams



# Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

- Early 1980's
- Focus is on a critical incident



# Peer Resource Teams

- Focus is on providing a referral or reference



# Peer Support Team

- Follow any of the 11 models described by the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC)



# York Region Paramedic Peer Support Team

- Informal workplace peer
- Lived experience or close experience with someone who has experienced a mental health illness



# What is peer support?

**Peer support** occurs when people provide knowledge, experience, emotional, social or practical help to each other. It commonly refers to an initiative consisting of trained supporters (although it can be provided by peers without training), and can take a number of forms such as peer mentoring, listening, or counseling. Peer support is also used to refer to initiatives where colleagues, members of self-help organizations and others meet, in person or online, as equals to give each other support on a reciprocal basis.

Peer support is distinct from other forms of social support in that the source of support is a *peer*, a person who is similar in fundamental ways to the recipient of the support; their relationship is one of equality. A peer is in a position to offer support by virtue of relevant experience: he or she has "been there, done that" and can relate to others who are now in a similar situation.

Mental Health Commission of Canada



# What is peer support?

Peer support is about caring  
for and about a peer!





# Who we are

- Operational paramedics
- Someone who you would confide in and trust



# Selection Process

- Peer nominated
- Psychological screening
- Initial interview
- Testing
- Board interview



# Training Process

- Psychological First Aid
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training
- Mental Health First Aid
- Resilience & Boundary Building
- Continuous, ongoing
- Always looking for future training!



## How we do it

- Operational paramedics – 24/7
- Available for any “crisis”
- Building bonds, gaining trust
- Available Rapid Response Unit (RRU)



# What we have done so far

- Comparison with similar size service



# Peer Support Activity

	<b>Service 'B'</b>	<b>York</b>
<b>Total Employees</b>	651	651
<b># Peer Support Team Members</b>	27 members + 4 administrative	20 (includes Coordinator) oversight by Deputy Chief.
<b>Time Frame</b>	Past 21 Months	Past 11 Months
<b>Employee Contacts</b>	322	
<b>Follow Up Contacts</b>	64	
<b>Work Related</b>	322	



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<b># Peer Support Team Members</b>	27 members + 4 administrative	20 (includes Coordinator) oversight by Deputy Chief.
<b>Time Frame</b>	Past 21 Months	Past 11 Months
<b>Employee Contacts</b>	322	8,563
<b>Follow Up Contacts</b>	64	893
<b>Work Related</b>	322	4,479 (52%)



# Our teams future

- Additional team members
- Employee & Family Assistance Program
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
- Branching out
  - Wellness
  - Training
  - Return to work
  - Anything we can!





"A key element to the successful management of a contemporary Paramedic Service is a comprehensive staff wellness strategy inclusive of a robust and appropriately resourced peer support program with strong linkages and guidance with mental health practitioners"

*Division Chief / Director David Eeles  
November 2016*



“no paramedic should ever feel alone”

*Chief Norm Barrette*  
*March 2016*



# Questions

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