READY: TO RESPOND

Emergency worker mental health planning

Phoenix AUSTRALIA
Responder Assist

As an emergency services worker trauma can be part of your every day – but did you know that this comes with a significant risk of impact to your mental health?

The good news is that there are ways to prepare and help manage this risk. Whether you're planning for the future, or you need help now, recovery is always possible.

Wondering what a mental health plan might look like? Our template over the page might help.

Of course, you don't have to write your plan down, if that's not for you, but you may like to consider the key areas. Remember, no matter where you're at, recovery is always possible.

Contact Responder Assist for a confidential chat about emergency worker mental health on **1800 329 191** during office hours.

Your mental health plan.

Reduce the risk of trauma-related impacts by having a plan in place that helps you to protect your mental health.

1. What are the risks?

We need to accept that our work role may have a significant effect on our mental health. Maybe you have stressors in other parts of your life that impact your work or general wellbeing. The first step of a plan is identifying the factors that impact your mental health and make them visible. What stressors do you need to be mindful of?

e.g. shift work

2. Plan when we are well

Maintaining social connections is a key part of managing your mental health. What friends or family members will you reach out to? Let these people know that they're part of your plan and you may contact them in need – it is important to have these conversations when we are well, not wait until we are in crisis.

e.g. colleagues; family members

3. Everyday attention

Sleeping, eating, relaxation and exercise are critical to mental health. Make it a priority to focus on the aspects of our plan we can control. What does a good nights' sleep look like? What kinds of exercise will you do? What healthy meals will you prepare? As tempting as they are, try to reduce stimulants such as alcohol and caffeine.

e.g. exercise routine details; healthy meals

4. Work on your plan

Engaging in enjoyable activities can aid your recovery. What makes you feel good? Do you like cooking, painting, reading or hiking? Consider planning some enjoyable activities to give yourself something to look forward to. Understand that these may change over time.

e.g. hiking

5. How will you get help?

Sometimes simply managing your own symptoms, talking to friends, prioritising the basics and engaging in activities you love will allow you manage your own recovery. But other times you may need professional help. How will you know the difference? If you need professional help with your recovery, who will you call? Your agency may also be able to provide assistance reaching out to professional support.

e.g. local GP

Part of your plan may be to contact Responder Assist for a confidential and independent chat on **1800 329 191** during office hours.

www.phoenixaustralia.org/responder-assist/

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