TAKE 5 FOR SAFETY

INSTRUCTOR'S NOTES

5-MINUTE SAFETY DRILL

Health Issues: Ignoring Depression Doesn't Work

Date:_____

Shift:_____

Dept:_____

Station:_____

Training Code:_____

NOTES:

FOCUS: Firefighters experience the same issues that face society in general. Despite the "larger than life" characterization of firefighters, many suffer from depression. This is an issue that should be addressed through the wellness activities. Education about the problems caused by depression can save a life.

CHALLENGE

It's impossible to escape life's ups and downs. Feeling unhappy or sad in response to disappointment, loss, frustration or a medical condition is normal. Many people use the word "depression" to explain these kinds of feelings, but the truth is that this is really situational depression, which is a normal reaction to events that happen to or around us.

Clinical depression overwhelms and engulfs your day to day life, interfering with your ability to work, study, eat, sleep, and have fun. It is unrelenting, with little if any relief. If you identify with several of the following signs and symptoms, and they just won't go away, you may be suffering from clinical depression.

- You can't sleep enough or you sleep too much
- You can't concentrate or find that previously easy tasks are now difficult
- You feel worthless and hopeless
- You can't control your negative thoughts, no matter how much you try
- You have lost your appetite or you can't stop eating
- You are constantly irritated or become enraged even at small things - and this is new for you
- You have thoughts that life is not worth living, or have a plan for how you would end it (Seek help *immediately* if this is the case)

Learning how to understand depression - including its signs, symptoms, and causes -is the first step to overcoming the problem. Don't be afraid to ask for help, it's all around you!

DISCUSSION

- Have you or anyone you know experienced periods of depression?
- What impact did it have on your professional or personal life?
- What advice would you give someone suffering from depression?
- Do you think depression could pose a safety risk to team members?
- How does your department handle emotional crisis?
- Do you think it's effective?
- What needs to change?

The greatest asset of the fire service is our people; protect them!

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