



STRESS MANAGEMENT FOR PSP DURING COVID-19

STRESS & ANXIETY FOR PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL (PSP) & THEIR FAMILIES DURING A PANDEMIC

- During a pandemic it is not uncommon to experience strong emotions
- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Significant changes in daily routine can disrupt our ability to access our usual coping strategies and effectively manage our daily stress
- Changes in sleep and eating patterns are common
- Difficulty sleeping and concentrating
- Increased use distractions and numbing
- Family & Spouses of PSP may experience increased anxiety, fear or worry for your safety as you respond to emergency activations in the midst of a pandemic
- Young children of PSP are at higher risk of anxiety as the things they do not understand can often provoke a sense of terror
- When routines are disrupted and the whole family is staying at home for longer periods of time than usual this can lead to irritability, acting out, short fuses, and social conflicts

PERCEIVED HELPLESSNESS

- PSP: like to be in “go” mode, doers, people that like to get things done, take initiative
- During a time of inactivity, PSP may experience a greater sense of restlessness, irritability, and even helplessness as they are asked to stand down and do their part to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by staying home
- PSP commonly perceive this period of inactivity as “a waste of my skills”, “I should be out there helping people”, “how am I supposed to do my part if I’m ordered to stand down and stay home?” When in fact, the most significant contribution anyone can do during a pandemic is to stay home and not become a vector of transmission
- PSP commonly like to take control, be of help, be “on” which goes against their nature when on hold or stood down during a period of inactivity

SUPPORTING CHILDREN & TEENS DURING A PANDEMIC

- Take time to talk to your teen or child about COVID-19 answering their questions and sharing facts in a way that they can understand
- Reassure them that they are safe
- Let them know it is okay to be upset
- Share with them how you cope with your stress so that they can learn from you how to manage their own stress effectively
- Limit your family’s exposure to media coverage on COVID-19, including social media
- Create a schedule for your children even though school may be out it is important to stick to a routine as best you can

STRESS MANAGEMENT FOR PSP & THEIR FAMILIES DURING A PANDEMIC

- Learn about how to recognise the signs and symptoms of stress in your children, your spouse and yourself
- Allow time for you and your family to take a break from the pandemic
- Create a menu of personal self-care activities that you enjoy
- Limit your media coverage of COVID-19 to a maximum of two times a day choosing credible sources only, and follow your media coverage with things that you find uplifting, motivational, inspiring, or enjoyable such as listening to an interesting or funny podcast, your favorite playlist, watching an interesting documentary or a fun show, something that will get your mind off the situation of the pandemic and the negative thoughts that may accompany that kind of exposure.
- Stay Connected: “Social distancing does not mean emotional distancing.” It is important to continue to reach out to your social supports in non-physical ways such as skype, phone, facetime, Zoom and other audio/visual ways