PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID (PFA) INNOVATIONS IN NPS

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Yosemite Search and Rescue
Individual and team finishes the ‘season’
Trending Green
Leadership awareness and training

Awareness training - PFA, Stress Injuries, Continuum

Planning - Green choices, personal continuum use

PFA into operational language and practice

Stress Continuum into operations and rescue culture

Personal risk awareness - Continuum Use

Post incident support using the continuum and PFA language

Monitoring and evaluation

Phase 2 Planning
STRESS CONTINUUM FOR THE TEAM

READY

REACTING

INJURED

ILL

Mission satisfaction/ Mission Drift
STRESS CONTINUUM FOR THE TEAM

READY
- Resources adequate if not ample
- Open to Opportunity & Innovation
- Meeting emergencies with a well-oiled, capable team
- Mission Alignment

REACTING
- Resources stretched
- Open to opportunity in theory, “but not now, we’re busy”
- Coping with emergencies – barely
- Some Mission Questions

INJURED
- Resources scarce
- Rigid perspectives
- Closed to opportunity
- Emergencies strain the system and are survived rather than dealt with capably
- Major Mission Questions

ILL
- Resources absent
- Calcified perspectives
- Communication channels closed
- Sense of doom
- Mission Drift: “why are we doing this?”

Mission satisfaction/ Mission Drift

McGladrey & Madden 2019
CONTINUUM CHECK AND GREEN CHOICES
Hopelessness
Anxiety
Depression
Intrusive thoughts
Feeling lost or out of control
Insomnia
Thought of suicide
Self blame
Hiding out
Broken relationships
Careless mistakes
Panic

Sense of mission
Spiritually and emotionally Healthy
Physically Healthy
Emotionally Availability
Healthy Sleep
Enjoying Sense of Joy/Vitality
Room for complexity

Cynicism
Work avoidance
Loss of interest
Distance from others
Short fuse
CHANGE

Life feels ‘bleh’
Lack of motivation
Fatigue/weariness
Sleep Disturbance

Sleep disturbances
Numbing and avoiding
Burnout
Nightmares
Trapped

Distant from life
Exhausted
Physical Symptoms
“I usta”

Hopelessness
Anxiety
Depression
Intrusive thoughts
Feeling lost or out of control
Insomnia

Thought of suicide
Self blame
Hiding out
Broken relationships
Careless mistakes
Panic

Change in worldview
# Green Choices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health</th>
<th>At work</th>
<th>Outside of Work</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Survival Tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sleep 8 hours a night (5 days a week)</td>
<td>1. Don’t talk shit about patients</td>
<td>1. Get to the mountains twice a month</td>
<td>1. My 2 best friends known how I’m doing</td>
<td>1. Drinking 2-3 glasses of wine at night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Run 3 times a week.</td>
<td>2. Volunteer to teach a training</td>
<td>2. Have dinner with friends once a week</td>
<td>2. I’m choosing time with my family</td>
<td>2. Busyness/Constant noise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Meditation/Prayer 4-5 times a week</td>
<td>3. Feel like I’m making a difference</td>
<td>3. I have days off I say no when I feel overwhelmed</td>
<td>3. I spend time with people who aren’t responders</td>
<td>3. Drinking coffee to stay awake</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Stress Continuum for the Team

**READY**
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*Mission satisfaction/ Mission Drift*

McGladrey & Madden 2019
## The Team, Greener

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Connection</th>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Rituals</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduce stress injuries/mitigation at SAR training</td>
<td>1. Weekly staff dinners/ play together</td>
<td>1. Seasonal goals</td>
<td>1. “Green awards”</td>
<td>1. Opportunities to connect with ranger leads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Calibrate the stress Continuum and green choices</td>
<td>3. Involved significant others in training</td>
<td>3. Hiring green people</td>
<td>3. SAR site fire</td>
<td>3. PFA administered in IC notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

McGladrey & Madden 2019
PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID
YOSAR STYLE
Objective:
Mitigate traumatic stress exposure to reduce injury

Safety
Calm
Engagement (Efficacy)
Connection
Hope
SAFETY
YOSAR PFA INNOVATIONS

- **Used language geared toward Safety** “now that you’re safe, “the hard part is over”
- **Shield patient from distressing details** Removed distressing sites, sounds, turned down radios
- **Offered tangible evidence of survival** – warm layer, hot drink, dark chocolate
- **Accurate information or corrected misinformation** – Press release, operational update
- **Reflected safety of the mission** – 11 mil ropes, bomber anchors
Calm, directive demeanor “lend them your nervous system”

Decrease arousal- Get the patient to stop moving, supported physical calm

Give feedback on improving vital signs

Use the stethoscope to guide slow breathing
ENGAGEMENT

YOSAR PFA INNOVATION

- Assigned a task to the patient – Coiling rope, reading maps
- Reflected that they were executing their own rescue
- Ask them questions (knowledge of trail location, information about scene)
- Get them to help plan the descent or extrication (be sharing the plan)
- Make ‘em part of YoSAR to help get them out- Belonging
**CONNECTION**

**YOSAR PFA INNOVATION**

- Supported an on-scene relationship
- Tape name tags, used names, asked about their lives
- Connected them to significant others (via phone, reunification)
- Supported them feeling part of the mission team
Talk each other up. Name what’s going well. Any reason for gratitude. What signs we’re going to make it out.

Phase change briefing

**Here’s what we face.**

**Here’s what’s going for us**
Safety - Cultivating a culture of trust
   Ritual at mission end
   Review accurate facts of rescue
   Common Language

Calm – “Calm is contagious”
   Wrap up at mission end

Connect - Connecting on purpose
   Intention - Team dinner
   Acknowledging “TWFU”
   Continuum Check in?
   Climbing together

Efficacy - Green choices as a team
   Debrief at the Cache

Hope - Mission Satisfaction
   We’re making a difference

McGladrey 2017
CRITICAL INCIDENT AND NEAR MISS
STRESS PROTOCOL

Recognition

- Family/Survivor Contact
- Personal Connection
- Mission injury/ Helplessness
- Extremes of exposure
- Kids

Support

- Pre-Traumatic Stress Management
- Best Practice all clear
  - Correct Information
  - Rituals/Traditions
  - Operational Timeline
  - Continuum Check
  - Education-what to expect
  - Support for connection
  - Support for green Choices

McGladrey 2017
## Incident Support Session (ISS)

*Schimelpfenig T. NOLS Wilderness Medicine. 6th ed*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISN FRAMEWORK</th>
<th>Principles of Psychological First Aid *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set the scene (Safety)</strong></td>
<td>Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appropriate environment</td>
<td>• Mitigating the scene by reducing chaos and removing patients from perceived threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Establish guidelines</td>
<td>• Reflecting evidence of safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tell the story (clarify facts!)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Calm</strong></td>
<td>Calm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Check-in / Temp check</td>
<td>• Calming yourself first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Grounding (↓ arousal)</td>
<td>• Emphasizing the present, the practical, and the possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Normalize stress reactions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stress response</td>
<td>• Involving the person in problem-solving, self-care, and rescue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stress continuum</td>
<td>• Recognizing and reminding people of existing strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adaptive coping strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action Plan (Self Efficacy)</strong></td>
<td>Connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create predictability</td>
<td>• Building an on-scene relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Plan coping strategies</td>
<td>• Helping people contact friends, family, loved ones (including pets)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop a script</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home-base (Connection)</strong></td>
<td>Hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Check out - What's next?</td>
<td>• Reflecting specific, accurate, positive facts and predictable, realistic steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support for transition</td>
<td>• Personally maintaining and communicating hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Follow-up and referral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHAT’S YOUR BASELINE & HOW DO YOU RETURN TO IT?

**READY**
- Sense of mission
- Spiritually and emotionally healthy
- Physically healthy
- Emotionally available
- Innovation
- Healthy sleep
- Sense of joy/vitality
- Room for complexity

**REACTING**
- Criticism
- Work avoidance
- Loss of interest
- Distance from others
- Short fuse
- CHANGE

**INJURED**
- Sleep disturbances
- Numbing and avoiding
- Burnout
- Nightmares
- Trapped

**ILL**
- Hopelessness
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Intrusive thoughts
- Feeling lost or out of control
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- Thought of suicide
- Self blame
- Hiding out
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*Change in worldview*
If you want to
manage stressful incidents,
manage incident Stress
What does this have to do with risk management?

**READY**
- Engaged in mission
- Keen to communicate
- Agility to respond to risk
- Trust actions will make a difference
- Willing to be wrong, willing to take a risk to manage risk
- “My observations matter”
- Spontaneous noticing
- Stop and fix

**REACTING**
- Shortcuts
- Apathy
- Careless errors
- Things falling through cracks
- Out of character mistakes
- “Nobody’s listening”
- Risk is someone else’s problem
- Freelancing noncompliant behaviours

**INJURED**
- Stop sharing observations
- Executive thoughtfulness hijacked
- “tunnel vision”
- Disconnection from positive pressure
- Non-sharing silo tribes
- “It’s not my problem”
- I’m not going to be here long

**ILL**
- Non compliant with systems
- Culture of trust breaking down
- Fear of retribution
- Fear of reporting
- “My actions don’t matter”
- Hiding knowledge gaps
- Not observant
- Unresolved conflict
- Lose scene awareness
- “Fuck them.”

McGladrey & Madden 2019
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Phase 2 Planning
1. Trend toward *green* yourself. People will follow you

2. Model using available support

3. Use language that supports conversation

4. Consider using the Stress Continuum to create a common goal and common language

5. Prioritize and recognize *green* behavior in teams and individuals

6. Set realistic goals for resiliency and vitality

7. Hire *green* people

8. Create teams that people want to come home to when critical incident stress occurs
QUESTIONS?
REFERENCES/RESOURCES


Psychological First Aid. http://learn.nctsn.org

Disasterdistress.sahmsa.gov

“Managing Intense Emotions,” Psychological First Aid at http://store.samhsa.gov/SHIN/content/NMH05-0210/NMH05-0210.pdf

National Center for PTSD at http://www.ptsd.va.gov/


Siegel, D. J. (2010), Mindsight, Random House, New York, NY

WWW.RESPONDERALLIANCE.COM - Education - Resources

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