BEHAVIORAL HEALTH RAPID RESPONSE:
RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOWING A MASS VIOLENCE INCIDENT

PRE-PLANNING

GOAL: Preparation, improve coping

- Lead by Example: Promote the importance of behavioral health.
  - Communicate the importance of behavioral health to members.
  - Sponsor behavioral health trainings and encourage attendance.
  - Establish and/or support local peer support teams by encouraging involvement.
  - Provide information on behavioral health and mass violence related mobile apps (www.pocketpeer.org).
  - Include a behavioral health representative in trainings and events to show importance of behavioral health.

- Conduct drills on how your department will respond to mass violent incidents including:
  - Las Vegas
  - Rural settings (Texas Church Shooting)

- Review courses on the Fire Hero Learning Network (www.fireherolearningnetwork.com) such as:
  - Stress First Aid and
  - Responding to Violent Incidents.

- Learn about common reactions to potentially traumatic events and behavioral health resources.

- Implement a buddy system among members (i.e., ensure physical and behavioral safety of one another).

IMMEDIATE (0 - 48 HOURS)

GOAL: Survival, communication

- Establish that basic needs have been met by assessing the members’ safety and security.

- Remain calm and communicate.
  - Hold an operational meeting with members – recognize aspects that were successful; provide information about details and next steps; answer questions from members.
  - Assess communication with family, friends, community.
  - Listen to concerns and follow up.

- Encourage self-care and buddy-care.
  - Give the members autonomy to decide when and where to rest (i.e., at home vs station).
  - Check in that members are eating healthy, avoiding abusing alcohol, getting plenty of sleep.
  - Inspire members to talk to peers.

- Identify someone to conduct a “walk-around.”
  - Enlist a team of people on the ground offering a supportive presence and monitoring emotional states (e.g., peer, chaplain).

- Review the Seven Cs of Stress First Aid and encourage members to look after each other.

- Contact experts to provide supportive behavioral health services.
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**RESCUE (0 - 1 WEEK)**

**GOAL: Adjustment**

- Conduct a needs assessment with a confidential survey or informally talking to department members.
- Coordinate psychological stress resources by facilitating meetings with local peer support teams or other local resources.
- Have resources available for family members.

**RECOVERY (1 - 4 WEEKS)**

**GOAL: Appraisal, planning**

- Monitor the recovery environment.
  - Hold follow-up meeting with members – provide additional information and reduce behavioral health stigma.
- Foster resilience and recovery.
  - Sponsor relevant support groups and trainings (i.e., family, coworker, and grief support; coping skills).
  - Provide information on behavioral health and mass violence related mobile apps like [WWW.POCKETPEER.ORG](http://WWW.POCKETPEER.ORG).

**RETURN TO LIFE (4 WEEKS – ONGOING)**

**GOAL: Reintegration**

- Reduce stigma by supporting and encouraging behavioral health treatment.
  - Continue to provide handouts on resources and services.

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For more information on Stress First Aid, visit [WWW.FIRSTRESPONDERCENTER.ORG/TRAINING-FOR-FIRST-RESPONDERS](http://WWW.FIRSTRESPONDERCENTER.ORG/TRAINING-FOR-FIRST-RESPONDERS)