VETERANS AWARENESS TRAINING

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Phoenix Fire Dept.
WARNING – This presentation contains video of American Soldiers in combat and under attack from IEDs and gunfire.

If there are any veterans in the room who would rather not be reminded of past experiences, now would be a good time to take a 5-10 minute break.
VA announced it will continue to fund a program that targets homeless vets.

Places a priority on finding immediate shelter or preventing loss of their homes

$300 million annually for 2014/2015
Goal

To provide an overview of military service to help Phoenix Fire personnel understand the challenges, hardships and difficulties facing our veterans.
Phoenix Fire Involvement

- Partnered w/ Arizona Coalition for Military Families in 2009
- Paramedic CME (3 hours)
  Included a panel with 3 vets.
- Civilian/dispatcher training
- On-Line Training for firefighters
Objectives

- Overview of military service.
- Identify military stressors (combat & civilian).
- Overview of post-traumatic stress (PTS) and traumatic brain injury (TBI).
- Identify resources for veterans, homeless veterans & military families.
Combat Stressors

- 98% -- Incoming artillery, rocket or mortar fire
- 92% -- Knowing someone who was seriously injured or killed
- 81% -- Attacked or ambushed
- 79% -- Seeing dead bodies
Recent Conflicts

Operation Desert Storm 1990--1991
War of Kosovo 1998--1999
Operation Enduring Freedom 2001- present
Operation Iraqi Freedom 2003--2010
Operation New Dawn 2010- present
Arizona Military/Veteran Population

- +/- 600,000
- 9% AZ population
- 25% live in rural areas
- High concentration of OEF/OIF/OND veterans
Post Traumatic Stress

- **Definition:** “An anxiety response that can occur following the experience or witnessing of a traumatic event.”

- Occurs after someone goes through, sees, or learns about a traumatic event such as combat exposure, physical or sexual abuse, terrorist attack, serious accident, or natural disaster.

- A stress-related reaction that does not resolve over time may be PTS.
“If you had seventy near-fatal car accidents in one year of your life between ages eighteen and nineteen, do you think that would mess you up all by itself?”

Jack, A Vietnam Vet as told to Edward Tick, PhD. Author, War and the Soul
Post Traumatic Stress

“I don’t want help for PTS. I just can’t sleep.”

Former OIF/OEF Combat Vet
Traumatic Brain injury

“A blow or jolt to the head, resulting in a closed head injury, or concussion, or penetrating head injury that disrupts the function of the brain.”

- May not realize they have TBI.
- Ranges from mild to severe.
- Extended period of unconsciousness or amnesia.
A method to recognize stress
Ask...Care...Escort

A Stress Continuum

- **Red Zone** — Suicidal or violent
  (18 vets. commit suicide each day)

- **Orange Zone** — Extreme anxiety, rage, panic attacks

- **Yellow Zone** — Irritable, sleep issues, apathy, drug abuse

- **Green Zone** — Stress manageable
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RED ZONE: ILL</th>
<th>There is an immediate danger or threat to life – call 9-1-1</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Examples:</strong> actively suicidal (danger to self) and/or violent (danger to others).</td>
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<tr>
<td>ORANGE ZONE: INJURED</td>
<td>There is an urgent situation which requires support – utilize national and local crisis resources</td>
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<td><strong>Examples:</strong> extreme anxiety, panic attacks, suicidal thoughts, homicidal thoughts, rage, self-harm behavior, heavy use of drugs and/or alcohol, psychosis, eating disorders, sexual assault, family violence.</td>
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<td>YELLOW ZONE: REACTING</td>
<td>There is a situation where a person shows increased signs and symptoms of distress – encourage connection to local/national counseling resources, and to social supports.</td>
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<td><strong>Examples:</strong> trouble sleeping, anxious, irritable, grouchy, worrying, apathy, loss of interest, negative, pessimistic, drinking more alcohol to cope, drug experimentation, relationship stress.</td>
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<tr>
<td>GREEN ZONE: READY</td>
<td>There is no crisis situation and stress is manageable.</td>
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Caregiver Tips

- Identify their military service.
- Don’t bang on the front door.
- Slow down, lower radio volume. Shut down engine.
- Be prepared to stay a while.
Caregiver Tips

- Confirm if armed & ask to secure it. Look for weapons.
- Determine their stress level.
- If tired, give them time & space.
- Be aware of their potential for violence.

You may be their first contact seeking assistance.
Service Members/Veterans in the Community

- Identify clues to military service.
- “Have you served in the military?”
- “Thank you for your service.”
- “What branch did you serve in?”
- “Are you doing ok?”
- Stay neutral.
- Don’t make assumptions.
- If they use abbreviations, ask them what it means.
If Veteran in Crisis

Call 9-1-1
Call the Crisis Response Van

On duty 24/7

Manned by a social work graduate student/EMT

Connect patient to social/behavioral resources
Service Members/Veterans in the Workplace

- Hard to return to normal society
- A lot on their mind
- Memory triggers
- Be respectful of deployment experience
- Focus on listening
- Give them time
- Maintain interactive neutrality
If Veteran not in Crisis

- Do they have counseling resources? If so, connect them to help.
- Maricopa Crisis Line - “Catch All” 602-222-9444
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255) Press ‘1’.
- Encourage them to seek out VA.
“Phoenix sets pace in U.S. for housing homeless vets”

- The White House last month declared Phoenix the first U.S. city to house all chronically homeless veterans.
- Program started in 2011 and has found housing for 222 veterans.
ON-LINE TRAINING LINK

http://phoenixfireops.com/ctc/
situation-awareness/

On the site, use the “Situation Awareness” tab to review each section in the training. (Do not use the “Exit Activity” button)

It will take approx. 1 hr. to complete.
Thanks

- Capt./Paramedic Dean Pedrotti for the major work he did on this project.
My New Ride
No Lights!
No Sirens!
No Radio!
Just 2 Oars, an 18ft Raft and the River!