

*What would you think if I sang out of tune  
Would you stand up and walk out on me  
Lend me your ears and I'll sing you a song  
and I'll try not to sing out of key*

*Oh, I get by with a little help from my friends*  
John Lennon and Paul McCartney

# PEER SUPPORT

## MODULE 9

# Stress and Psychological Growth

Framing a stressful or painful experience as part of a larger experience that is:

- Interesting
- Worthwhile
- Provides a chance to learn and grow

Bartone, 2006

# Leaders can Promote Growth after a critical event

- Leaders can shape how stressful experiences are understood by members of the group
- They do this through:
  - Example
  - Communicating a positive interpretation of the experiences

Bartone, (2006)

# Peer Support

The support responders give each other is extremely important:

- Emotional reassurance
- Help with day-to-day tasks
- Giving information on how to do something
- Suggesting a course of action
- Being confident that help will be forthcoming

Bonanno et al.. (2010)

# Peer Support Leaders

Encourage others:

- To interpret stressful events as challenges
- They are capable of meeting these challenges
- They can learn and benefit from these challenges

# Framing Events as Challenge

- Acknowledge the seriousness/difficulty of the situation
- Acknowledge peers' emotional reactions (use active listening here!)
- Use problem solving to look for ways to handle the situation
- Make sure the solution comes from the peer
- Help with problem solving, don't prescribe solutions

# Help Others Accept Limits and Circumstances

- Help each other figure out what's changeable and what isn't
- Figure out how to live through what can't be changed
- Remember that everyone has limits and therefore everyone needs balance
  - Enforce breaks
  - Enforce pleasant activities

# Activity

- As a group, identify a situation where you may want to designate a Peer Support Leader.
- Divide into small groups
  - What are your expectations for what the Peer Support Leader will do in this situation?
  - What are your expectations about how Peers will support each other in this situation?



# Remember Coping Skills

- Maintain social connections
- Problem Solving
- Recognizing Self-Talk
- Relaxation

# Peer Support after a Critical Incident

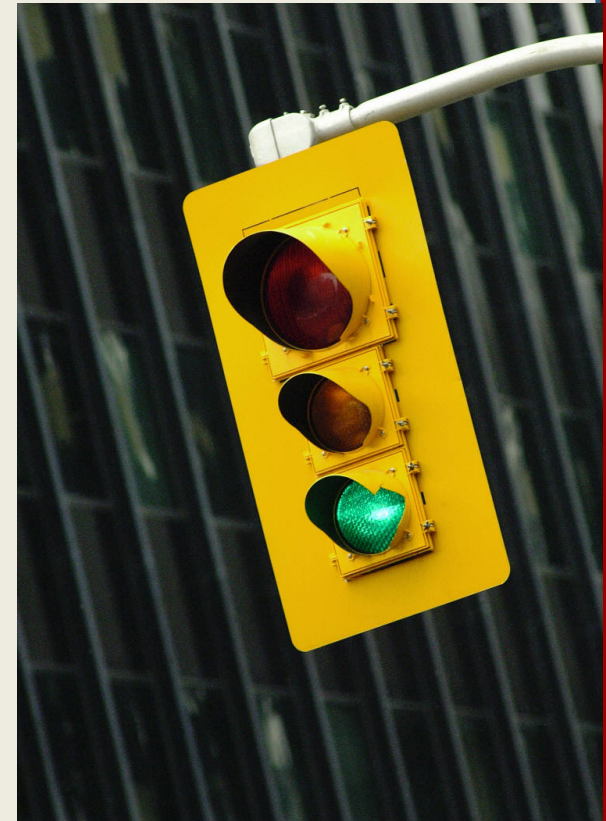
- Supervisors should give off-duty personnel something to do if they want to help
- Remind each other to stay away from the internet/television/media
- Reduce your exposure to critical comments
  - If you hear critical comments, get feedback from a peer before assuming it's a fact

# Protection against suicide

*Green light .... Good to go!*

Protective Factors – Factors that make it less likely that someone will die by suicide

- Being connected to community, family, friends
- Getting help – especially for depression
- Restricted access to highly lethal methods of suicide – especially firearms



# Suicide Risk Factors

## *Yellow Light – Proceed with Caution*

- Previous suicide attempt
- Hopelessness
- Loss
- Lack of connectedness
- Depression – especially with substance use
- Barriers to getting help
- Easy access to lethal methods (have peers hold firearms if needed)



# Suicide Warning Signs

## *Red Light – Stop – Get Help*

- Talking , writing, posting about suicide or death
- Talking about feeling worthless or helpless
- Saying things like “I’m going to kill myself” or “I wish I was dead.”
- Saying goodbye
- Hopelessness
- Significant change in behavior



# What to do – Suicide Prevention

- Ask the question – Are you thinking about suicide?
- Listen – Listen and look for warning signs and risk factors
- Take action
  - Decrease access to guns and pills
  - Offer hope – Getting help is a sign of strength
  - Refer to a trusted professional – Don't be silent

# Alcohol and Substance Use

- Refer to the Handout for a list of indicators that someone may need a screening or assessment

**Alcohol is for celebration  
.....not medication**

# Alcohol & Substance Use

- Get help from a professional
  - Offer to assist a coworker if you suspect there is problem with their drinking, use of medication or drugs
- Find out more about where to get an help in your area

<http://nebraska.networkofcare.org>