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Steps To Effective Support to your First Responder/Health Care Provider

Being a spouse/family member to those that serve during pandemic times is no easy venture.

Loving a first responder/health care provider is no easy task. Sporadic schedules, long delays, missed holidays, missed family moments sometimes feels unfair. Watching them leave out that front door, not knowing the dangers they may face can cause uncertainty and stress in any relationship. Wanting to understand how to support your loved one is sometimes the hardest part of loving a first responder/health care provider. What can you do?

Here are steps to effective and successful support to your loved one..



Step 1: Recognize the Signs- Burnout/Stress/Moral Injury

Serving the community can be daunting and tiring on a good day, now add months on months of a pandemic. Your loved one may complain of being more tired, they may be more short fused, apathetic and disengaged. Burnout is real, not to mention the moral injuries happening during these unprecedented times.



Step 2: Reach-In to Your Loved One....

When asking how their day was, truly listen. Do not listen to answer, but practice true active listening skills. This means, putting down distractions such as phones, and computers. Showing you are taking care to understand and hear how their day truly was goes miles.



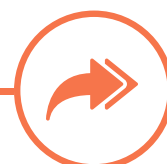
Step 3: Ministry of Presence...

You are not expected to solve the problems they speak of. Being present and asking few questions. Listen for cues of what the real underlying situation is. Ask what you can do to help make their end of day easier to transition out of 'work mode'? Is this giving them their "own time" when getting home? Having dinner made? Filling up the car with gas?



Step 4: Give Useful Feedback To Your First Responder/HCP...

Making sure your statements are non-cliche and limiting statements that can be appear non empathetic. Are your responses engaging? Communication is key, to helping your loved one process their day or shift.



Step 5: Know When to Follow Up

As a spouse to a first responder/HCP, it is not your job to fix what is bothering them. It is beneficial to know when and how to follow up. Does your loved one have access to peer support resources? Counselors/therapist? If so, do you have access to start those connections? Perhaps start the conversation that you have interest in taking in those services as well?



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