

Implementation of a Peer Support Program for Campus First Responders

FIRST PLACE

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POSTER PRESENTATION ABSTRACT | PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT & EVALUATION CATEGORY

Introduction: The Carleton University Student Emergency Response Team (CUSERT) is comprised of 45 on-call volunteers who respond to medical situations on campus. Due to increased call volume and concerns surrounding first responder mental health being brought to the forefront nationwide, CUSERT identified a need for responder support by individuals with shared experience. A Peer Support program was implemented in October 2019.

Program Development & Implementation: This program was developed following an assessment of CUSERT's unique needs. Three members received training through the First Responder Peer and Trauma Support System (FR-PATSS) course. CUSERT then launched a Peer Support program comprised of 1-on-1 and group sessions, as well as a library of resources.

Program Evaluation: Surveys have measured team satisfaction with CUSERT's Peer Support program and provided the opportunity for members to make suggestions. The program was well-received and will continue for the next academic year. Continuous evaluation will occur to ensure that the program is meeting its goals and remaining cost-effective.

Discussion/Conclusions: The implementation of this program is one step CUSERT has taken towards improving mental health support for campus first responders. Peer Support is an important resource for campus first responders to have access to, due to the unique nature of our role. We hope to expand the program to include other members of Carleton's Campus Safety Services.

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