

PSPG PEER SUPPORT NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2022

Happy June everybody! We hope everyone has been having a safe and successful year thus far. It has been a busy year, and we are excited to see what the summer has in store for us! In this edition of our Peer Support Newsletter, we will highlight an event made possible by our first responders, explore a new and exciting podcast, and talk about a couple of at home exercises to keep our minds healthy.

Quarterly Topic

Animals in Mental Health

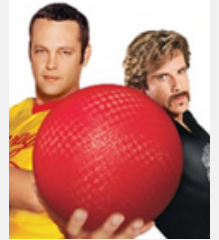
Studies have shown that simply looking into the eyes of a dog can increase oxytocin levels in humans. An increase in Oxytocin can help decrease anxiety and slow your heart rate down. Many agencies have support dogs available to you. Consider taking some time to walk, pet, or simply sit with a dog when your anxiety is high.

"Be strong enough to stand alone, smart enough to know when you need help, and brave enough to ask for it"

THE 5 D'S OF DODGEBALL:



DODGE
DIP
DUCK
DIVE
DODGE



ON SATURDAY MAY 7TH, BERNALILLO COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT HOSTED AN INAUGURAL PUBLIC SAFETY DODGEBALL TOURNAMENT TO RAISE MONEY FOR THE LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN, SPECIAL OLYMPICS NM. THE TOURNAMENT BEGAN WITH SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES TAKING ON THE CREW OF CHANNEL 7 NEWS AND THE COMPETITION CONTINUED FROM THERE. TEAMS FROM ALL DIFFERENT AGENCIES INCLUDING BERNALILLO COUNTY FIRE, BERNALILLO COUNTY SHERIFFS, ALBUQUERQUE FIRE RESCUE, RIO RANCHO FIRE, RIO RANCHO PD, ALBUQUERQUE AMBULANCE, THE ATTORNEY GENERALS OFFICE, AND THE NM CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT FOUGHT TO BE IN THE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME. IN THE END, IT WAS ALBUQUERQUE FIRE VS. BERNALILLO COUNTY FIRE WITH BERNALILLO COUNTY FIRE COMING OUT AS THE VICTOR. THE EVENT CONSISTED OF A SILENT AUCTION, A PRIZE GIVEAWAY, FOOD TRUCKS AND A COFFEE BEVERAGE TASTING TABLE. ALL PROCEEDS, INCLUDING 10% OF THE FOOD TRUCK SALES ALL WENT TO SPECIAL OLYMPICS NM. IN THE END, CLOSE TO \$7,000 WAS RAISED FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS NM! THIS WILL BE AN ANNUAL EVENT SO KEEP YOUR EYE OUT FOR FUTURE INFORMATION! BERNALILLO COUNTY FIRE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL WHO PARTICIPATED AND WHO MADE THIS EVENT POSSIBLE!



ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

There are 8 different active listening skills that are key to being a successful peer supporter. These skills help you not only hear what your peer is expressing, but it builds empathy with them because you are actively listening and being engaging. The 8 skills are:

1. Minimal Encouragers
2. Open -Ended Questions
3. Reflection/Mirroring
4. Effective Pauses
5. Paraphrasing
6. "I" Statements
7. Emotional Labeling
8. Summarizing

Let's break down what Open-Ended Questions are. These questions warrant a response aside from a quick yes or no. They allow for elaboration and explanation. A conversation can be shut down quickly if yes or no questions continue to be asked. Instead of "Are you having a good day?" try asking "What has your day been like?" This requires an explanation and will give you insight into events that may have affected their current state of mind.

Examples of Open-Ended Questions:

"What makes today a hard day?" "How did you get here today?" "What can I do to help you today?"

Meet A Peer Supporter



We asked Rio Rancho Firefighter

Mary Phillips

Why She Chose to Become a Peer Supporter:

When I joined the fire service in 2007, it was still very much the "suck it up attitude." There was plenty of alcohol use to "cope" with stress but not many healthy coping skills being suggested. About 5 years in, I was under some added stress with my mother having breast cancer and going through a divorce, which on top of our normal stress proved to be more than I could deal with on my own. I was not willing to ask for the help, that looking back, I needed and ended up getting a DWI. I was allowed to resign my position and it felt like my life was crumbling down. Fortunately, I was able to test and come back in 2016 and learned they had started a Peer Support team. I was very excited to learn about this new resource for our members because I feel that I could have benefited from it in my past. I felt very strongly that I would handle things differently this time and that this could help me do just that. I am excited to be able to help change the stigma and encourage others to get the help to handle stress in healthy ways. I encourage our members to not only make it to retirement, but to be able to get to retirement healthy enough to enjoy it, and a big part of that is our mental health. I joined the Peer Support team as soon as I was able, and I hope to help offer others support and get them to the resources that we have available now. I understand that the sooner we can gain better coping skills and deal with stress, the better we will be long term.



PSPG is excited to introduce its first ever podcast! Hosted by Dr. Troy Rodgers, "Weight of the Badge" brings in first responders who wish to tell their personal stories.

DR. RODGERS, A 20 YEAR VETERAN OF PUBLIC SAFETY PSYCHOLOGY INTERVIEWS POLICE, FIRE, EMS, CORRECTIONS OFFICERS AND MORE. YOU WILL HEAR REAL-LIFE STORIES FROM THE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN WHO RESPOND TO THE DAILY TASKS OF THEIR EVER CHALLENGING JOBS. THEY WILL OPEN UP ABOUT SITUATIONS THAT HURT THEM, HELPED THEM, AND FOREVER CHANGED THEM. NOTHING WILL BE HELD BACK AS WE CONVERSE ABOUT SOME OF THE HARDEST MOMENTS THEY HAVE HAD TO OVERCOME.

Listen now on Spotify, Amazon Music, and iHeart Radio!

Quarterly Challenge

THIS EDITION'S QUARTERLY CHALLENGE IS TO TAKE 5 MINUTES A DAY TO BE IN COMPLETE SILENCE. TURN YOUR PHONE OFF, LAY DOWN AND CLOSE YOUR EYES FOR 5 MINUTES. IF YOU HAVE MORE TIME, BY ALL MEANS GO FOR IT! BUT FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T SQUEEZE IN YET ANOTHER ACTIVITY, TRY 5 MINUTES A DAY. TAKE TIME TO RELAX YOUR MIND FROM THE DAILY GRIND.



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2022 PSPG PEER SUPPORT CLASS SCHEDULE

**BASIC PEER SUPPORT:
AUGUST 22ND-23RD
NOVEMBER 21ST-22ND**

**ADVANCED PEER SUPPORT:
NOVEMBER 6TH-9TH**

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE
WWW.PSPG-NM.COM OR
CALL 505-888-5499 TO
GET REGISTERED!**