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Who helps the heroes? MHRB provides specialized consultation services for front-line workers

SPRINGFIELD, OH (June 29, 2020) – Mental Health Recovery Board of Clark, Greene & Madison Counties (MHRB) is offering front-line workers a new pathway to mental health care that specifically addresses job-related trauma. Starting June 29, workers in critical crisis response roles such as law enforcement, fire/EMS, hospital workers, behavioral health and public health will be able to call a dedicated line to receive concierge clinical consultation free of charge. To help spread the word and overcome entrenched stigma, MHRB asks community members to share this new, free and discreet service with the first responders in their lives.

The new Responder Resilience Program will connect anyone working in front-line occupations in Clark, Greene and Madison counties to consult with mental health professionals trained to treat trauma and trauma-related symptoms. Frontline workers who call for consultation will answer a few questions about their preferences and be connected to a professional within one to three business days. The service provides three free sessions designed to be short and focused on finding solutions. Service providers will help connect workers to extended care if needed.

“We all know people in our lives whose work is dedicated to serving others,” said Dr. Greta Mayer, CEO of MHRB. “And, by virtue of their chosen vocation, often forget to take time to protect their own mental health and strengthen their resilience. Frontline workers are exposed to a lot of stressful and traumatic things. Trauma can result over time from small daily stressful occurrences that build up or in response to a big event, and its impact is different on everyone. We see people come in for help years after something took place because the effects didn’t show up or become problematic until now.”

Trauma experienced by front-line workers is a well-documented phenomenon, much due in part to what researchers observed following the September 11, 2001 attacks at the World Trade Center. [A National Institute of Health](#) survey of PTSD research on rescue and recovery workers exposed to the World Trade Center attack sites suggest that at least 1 in 10 workers continued to suffer from PTSD years after the event, and that many had unmet mental health needs.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is a traumatic, national event that may have a similar impact to 9/11 on our mental health, especially that of front-line workers. What we hope to do is use what we’ve learned from 9/11 and other national tragedies to provide mental health care immediately, before trauma becomes an additional epidemic in our communities,” said Mayer.

According to [research published by the National Institute of Health](#), initial reactions to trauma can include exhaustion, confusion, sadness, anxiety, agitation, numbness, dissociation, and confusion. Delayed responses can include persistent fatigue, sleep disorders, nightmares, fear of recurrence, flashbacks, depression, or avoidance of emotions, sensations or activities that are associated with the trauma, even remotely.

The MHRB pathway to clinical consultation is available by calling (937) 727-4097 and will be open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Mayer provided tips to help co-workers and community members start the conversation with loved ones about seeking care:

- Start gently from a place of respect and empathy. Recognize that the work your loved one does is inherently difficult.
- Emphasize that asking for help and receiving care is not a sign of weakness or dependency. In fact, being strong for others means knowing how to care for yourself.
- Offer to support them. You can even offer to accompany them to their first appointment if it would help them feel more comfortable.

“Recognizing that your or someone you love needs help is a difficult conversation to have,” said Mayer. “But knowing that someone else sees the signs of trauma can help affirm the need for change.”

For more information about mental health and substance use resources in Clark, Greene and Madison counties, please visit the MHRB website at www.mhrb.org.

ABOUT MHRB

Mental Health Recovery Board of Clark, Greene & Madison Counties (MHRB) assists partners, stakeholders, residents, and anyone at risk of mental health issues or substance use concerns in our three-county area, providing pathways to mental health and addiction services. In collaboration with more than 20 care providers, the board advocates for the mental health needs and facilitates delivery of quality care for all ages, regardless of income or ability to pay.

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