**ESP Meeting Minutes**

**March 27, 2023**

**Present:** Stephanie Busch, Cindy Lack, Matt Engels, Len Howard, Bill Elwell, Mourning Fox, Vicky Fielding, Ollie Neith, Clarke Collins, Christine Bullard, Trevor Whipple, Ashley Happy, Emma Harrigan, James Gulley.

**Welcome and Introductions/Attendance**

Members took time to introduce themselves briefly, and new members were welcomed. Stephanie said her goal was to review and approve the January minutes and then member updates, after which the remainder of the meeting will focus on one or two of the goals identified in January and start digging into priorities for 2023 and gain traction.

**Meeting Minutes from January 23, 2023**

Stephanie caught and removed one extra “long” in the “long long list.”

Motion was made and seconded to accept the motions as corrected. Motion passed unanimously.

**Member Updates**

* **First Responder Wellness Conference** - Trevor said he was approached by dispatcher Emily Leinoff, and she brought this conference to my attention. The conference will take place on July 19-20, 2023 in Castleton. This is being put on by The Center for Social Justice and Trauma Informed Care. Emily and two professors at Castleton are putting this conference together. Agenda is still forming, and speakers are still being sought. They plan to include all meals, and the price appears (not firmly set yet) to be very affordable. College-level lodging will also be available. At this point this commission has not yet offered support but if the time were right, I would be happy to formulate a motion. This conference is for anyone who wishes to attend.

Stephanie said she would be interested to see an agenda. Trevor said there is a book written on first responder wellness that has been used in the police world for years. His practice partner has agreed to come. There will be a mix of keynote presentations, breakout sessions and perhaps panel discussions. They are seeking practitioners who could be on site.

It was noted that there is not much meat to the conference at this point, but Trevor will stay connected with Emily and if anyone has ideas on speakers or guidance, please reach out.

Bill Elwell said at this point he would support the conference, particularly since the group’s name is already on the poster.

There was a brief discussion about the cost of the conference and any support that might be in the works.

Stephanie – this does align with one of our 2023 goals. Should we vote to support it? Trevor – we have no money to give to the cause, so supporting it is just a formality. Also, if there are individuals on the Commission who want to support the preparation and planning, I’m sure that would be welcomed. The group is also looking for business-level sponsors, of which VLCT is one.

Bill Elwell made the motion that the Commission would work with the planners of the First Responder Wellness Conference in July 2023 and work with them as the conference unfolds. Motion seconded. Motion passed.

Please bring topics/speakers to our/their attention as they come up.

* Cindy Lack – Peer Support Team Leader for DOC – moving forward with partnership with EAP around providing an available therapist for Southern State Correctional staff. DOC is slowly making progress. A letter has been drafted and will go out to corrections staff, and they are trying to narrow down a date for a meet and greet with the chosen therapist. Peer Support Team had a recruiting staff, which gained them 8 new members. That gives the team 26 folks, of which 5 are currently offline for various reasons. Still having issues deploying team members, particularly when they are working on the floor.

The 8 new members attended training on March 8-10. They also need to go through the GRIN training, and will be paired with folks who have more experience for their first few call-outs.

Stephanie said she would love to see what onboarding training looks like. There are options like Project Secure and other groups that are interested in what the necessary training looks like. Now might be a good time to begin looking at what a peer support team should look like, and best practices could start to be developed. Cindy - The National Institute of Corrections Peer Support Guidelines is a resource. It’s a lengthy document but it provides a step-by-step guideline. Onboarding right now is pretty much limited to critical incident stress management, and instructions on being a better listener, and other skills.

* Ollie Neith – I’m developing a pre-incident education piece for the eastern division of the NSPS. It’s an LMS-based course and covers how stress injury happens and what can be done about it. At this point, it is targeted to ski patrollers but could easily be adapted to other groups. He will put together a document in a week or so that will provide more detail to the group. The timeline for the course Ollie is working on is late summer, so it will be ready for fall refresher training.

Stephanie - The NH training is available on the Vector platform for EMS. As we work through what trainings are currently available and as the conference approaches, perhaps we could come up with a list of 5 trainings we would like our providers to have. Bringing awareness to folks about what is currently available could be meaningful.

**Priorities for 2023 from January’s meeting:**

* Develop and deliver training for emergency service organizations and providers.
* Host an annual conference focused on emergency services, mental health and wellness.
* Develop recommendations for defining ‘qualified clinicians’ who are prepared to  
  treat emergency service providers.
* Review Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) workers compensation legislation.
* Given the fact that the group will focus on an annual conference, Ashley suggested discussing the first goal – training. Stephanie – let’s think about training at both the organization and provider level. Are there specific trainings that you wish you could provide to your people?
  + Pre-incident training (Ollie)
  + Raising awareness around existing resources – specific and general (Ollie)
  + How to work with VLCT for a work-related PTSD incident, both from a provider and an organizational perspective (Cindy)
  + Technical/legal process of workers’ compensation claims (Trevor)
  + Vicarious Trauma for first responders
  + De-escalation
  + Civil deputies/executives (sheriff’s office employees/civilians) who are not certified through the criminal justice association but are functioning in the field. Do they have access to trainings? Is workers’ compensation handled differently? Do they have access to EAP? (Gulley)
  + Training on how organizations can support someone struggling with PTSD/anxiety/depression appropriately.
  + Assisting individuals/groups in crisis (CISM) (Elwell)
  + SAFER-R (EMS protocol)
  + Public-facing training to raise awareness and importance of first responder wellness.
  + Training for town leadership on first responder mental health (What can you do to help support someone in crisis?)
  + Developing a peer support program
  + Helping clinicians understand uniformed service providers and culture. “A day in the life.”
  + Developing healthy interventions for individuals in need.
* Feel free to reach out with more topics/thoughts.

Next Meeting – May and July 24th

May’s date is currently on Memorial Day, so Stephanie will send out a survey and find another May date.