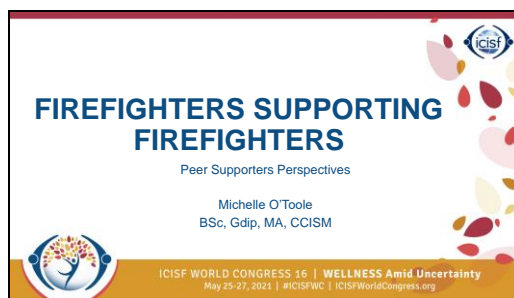


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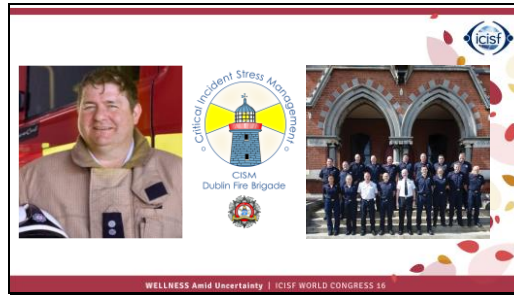
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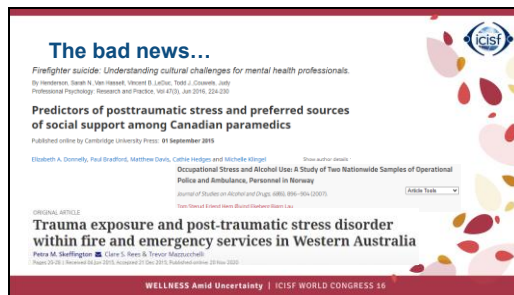
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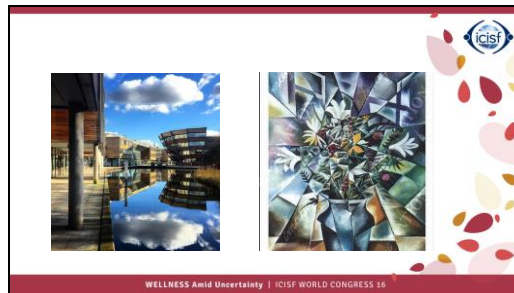
Slide 4



Slide 5



Slide 6



Slide 7

The Shattered Vase (Joseph, 2012)

Precious vase shatters – what do you do?

1. Do you try to glue it back together?
2. Do you discard it?
3. Do you create something new?





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Slide 8

Post Traumatic Growth

- Personal Strength
- Appreciation of life
- Relating to others
- Spiritual changes
- New possibilities

(Beck, 2017; Calhoun and Tedeschi, 2013)





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Slide 9

"Firefighters supporting Firefighters"



A qualitative exploration of the Peer Supporter experience in an Irish fire-based EMS service.



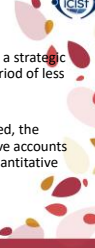

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Slide 10

Literature review

"A little help, rationally directed and purposefully focused at a strategic time, is more effective than more extensive help given at period of less emotional accessibility" (Rapoport, 1967, p.38).

"Since peer support is relatively innovative and un-researched, the understanding provided by narrative, personal and qualitative accounts is as valuable as more outcome focused comparative and quantitative studies" (Repper and Carter, 2011, p.393)





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Slide 11

Methods

- Purposeful sampling strategy
- Semi structured interviews
- Interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith, 2011):
 1. Clear focus
 2. Strong data
 3. Rigor
 4. Elaborate on each theme
 5. Interpretative v descriptive analysis
 6. Analysis should be convergent and divergent
 7. Carefully written



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Slide 12

Results- 4 main themes




Giving back



Old vs New



Personal transformations




Frustrations



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Slide 13



Giving back

1. Looking after each other


"He was just being a good colleague and that made all the difference to me that day. He was there beside me on the ambulance, he was a lot more senior to me and had loads of these calls before... he pulled the ambulance over to the side of the road and we had a good chat and I'll never forget that. That's what we should do for any of our colleagues"

2. Normalising the feelings

"When you talk to your peers about these kind of things, it gives it a sense of normality and I think that's what helps you move on from the incident... the education phase of that first debriefing [I attended] was excellent as it reminded me of the signs and symptoms of stress and nudged me into looking out for the others"

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Giving back ctd...

• 3. Experiencing both sides

"I actually found it very good... I had kinda forgot about it [the incident]... and I got a follow up call from one of our team and I remember thinking it was brilliant... I had been thinking about the incident more as a supporter [rather than needing support]. Sometimes you feel you might be bothering people or reminding them of the incident when you ring them back but I certainly feel like it helped me. It's nice to see it [PS] from the other side and to see it does work is validation for what we are doing"

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Slide 15



Old vs New

1. Attitudes and culture

"When I came in [to the organisation] there was no formal PS, it was the old 'suck it up club' and have a few drinks, which didn't fit me... but now it has changed thank God and it's slowly changing for the better."

2. Support systems

"[After] the first fatality I got in a fire, I got PS. It wouldn't have been as structured as the set-up we have now but I was approached by the senior man and the officer... just to make sure I was okay... it was the way it was done. There would've been a lot of black humour but that was the way we always done things... somebody would've kept an eye on you for the first couple of years..."

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Slide 16



Personal transformations

1. *Personal development*

"I think the career knocks the empathy out of us but this [PS] gave me a new lease of life...it gave me empathy back which I can see more in my family life...my relationship with my wife and my kids has got better..."

"I really enjoy it and it's brought me to a place I never thought I would be...I've gone to college and done some third level stuff and that's all down to being part of the team... It (PS) gave me a push to go do it and I'm so glad I did as it's definitely been an eye opener of an experience"

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Slide 17



Personal transformations ctd...

2. *New perspectives*

"I view the world differently, relationships differently, I view people different...I'm certainly more in touch with my emotions after taking on this training so I have changed in that way...my confidence and self-belief have also grown..."

3. *Greater understanding of people*

"I am more mindful...more aware of other people's needs...more astute to people's feelings...I'm able to stay with somebody when they are emotional. When I was younger in [organisation name], you just ran away from those situations but now it's second nature... the skills we learn are fantastic"

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Slide 18



Personal transformations ctd...

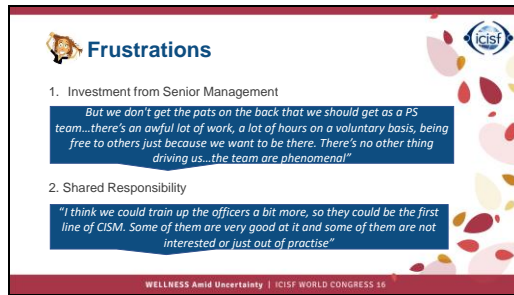
4. *Knowing too much*

"There is baggage that comes with being a PSW... I've been worried, I've been stressed ...and I've thought about them at home at night.... but it has always been rewarding eventually"

"Sometimes you feel you are constantly on call when you are carrying the [team] phone...but I don't think I've ever been approached where someone wants to talk to me and I haven't been able to deal with it"...some people may be burned out so it's important to bring in fresh people"

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Slide 19



Frustrations

1. Investment from Senior Management
But we don't get the pats on the back that we should get as a PS team...there's an awful lot of work, a lot of hours on a voluntary basis, being free to others just because we want to be there. There's no other thing driving us...the team are phenomenal"
2. Shared Responsibility
"I think we could train up the officers a bit more, so they could be the first line of CISM. Some of them are very good at it and some of them are not interested or just out of practise"

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Slide 20

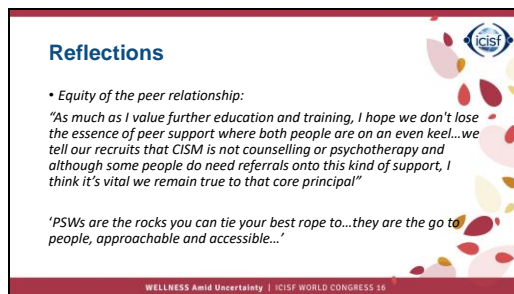


Frustrations ctd...

3. Communication
"We have come a long way, this last team has been a phenomenal step forward...the Whats App group was a great idea of keeping in contact... the alert system with the phones...everything is working and its working for the benefit of our colleagues on the road."

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Slide 21



Reflections

- Equity of the peer relationship:
"As much as I value further education and training, I hope we don't lose the essence of peer support where both people are on an even keel...we tell our recruits that CISM is not counselling or psychotherapy and although some people do need referrals onto this kind of support, I think it's vital we remain true to that core principal"


'PSWs are the rocks you can tie your best rope to...they are the go to people, approachable and accessible...'


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Slide 22

Limitations

- Small sample size?
- Purposive sampling
- Inexperience conducting interviews
- Human error





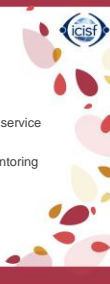



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Slide 23

Recommendations

- Review of the PS service in this organization
- Continuation of the current internal support system
- Consider embedding in an organization-wide integrated EAP service
- Offer trauma counselling
- Encourage reflective journaling for new members and PS mentoring
- Enhance training opportunities for PS team members
- Survey the service users to seek their preferences






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Slide 24

Reflexivity

"Reflexivity is defined as the constant movement of being in the phenomenon and stepping outside of it" (Enosh and Ben-Ari, 2016).







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Slide 25

Thank you!

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Slide 26

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