

5 WAYS TO SUPPORT DEPARTMENT MEMBER FAMILIES

Physically and mentally healthy first responders benefit your organization and our communities. Wellness involves ongoing lifestyle choices that begin at home. How a family manages the stressors of daily life and their career will directly impact the health and wellness of your employees. Below are five ways to show your commitment to supporting not only your staff but also their loved ones.

1 PROVIDE A WARM WELCOME TO NEW HIRES AND THEIR FAMILIES BY INVITING THEM TO A HOSPITALITY RECEPTION SHORTLY AFTER THEY BEGIN

- Discuss common challenges faced working in public safety and how to overcome
- Provide information on resources your department provides (e.g., Employee Assistance Program, therapists your agency contracts with, login information for Lexipol's Cordico wellness app if your agency is a subscriber)
- Gather family member contact information for future communication

2 HOST FAMILY EVENTS AT LEAST ANNUALLY SUCH AS FAMILY NIGHT/DAY, A BBQ OR HOLIDAY PARTY

- Supply light refreshments and name tags
- Allow attendees to tour facilities and explore equipment
- Include equipment demonstrations
- Encourage connections between families through ice-breaker activities

3 DEVELOP PROTOCOL ON HOW TO SUPPORT FAMILIES FOLLOWING CRITICAL INCIDENTS THAT INVOLVE THEIR LOVED ONE

- Establish a process for notifying spouses or other emergency contacts
- Offer information on behaviors to watch for and how to monitor
- Determine who (e.g., chaplain, other department liaison) will provide follow-up support

4 ESTABLISH A BUDGET TO CELEBRATE AND SUPPORT SIGNIFICANT LIFE EVENTS

- Extend congratulations on events such as the birth of a baby or a new marriage
- Express concern when someone is sick with a serious illness, is in an accident or experiences the death of a loved one
- Send a card, flowers or gift/food basket to show support

5 IDENTIFY VETERAN SPOUSES TO FACILITATE REGULAR SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

- Gather contact information and offer opportunities for spouses to get to know each other
- Deliver information on events or relevant updates from the department
- Provide welcome messages and support to new spouses and family members or those in need