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## MENTAL HEALTH IMPLICATIONS DUE TO PROBLEMS AND ATTENTION IN THE PERSONAL HANDLING OF THE GIRARDOTA VOLUNTEER BOMBERS (CBVG)

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**Abstract:** Objective: Design a guide protocol for the support of personnel from the Girardota volunteer fire department due to implications for their mental health and shortcomings in care.

Methodology: The type of study of this research was a quantitative approach, based on a probable sample of people who currently work in the Girardota volunteer fire department.

Results: Conclusions: it can be concluded that the main risk factors based on mental health and that influence their work performance are: long work days, night shifts, little compression and psychosocial support after a major emergency, responsibilities other than part of the body. of firefighters, personal problems, and little training when dealing with this type of mental health cases, which intervene and affect the emotional state and their work activities, thus suffering from anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, burnout syndrome.

## INTRODUCTION

Over time, mental health illnesses and the lack of training in first response organizations have worried various officials and psychologists of the institutions. This lack of knowledge and few interventions are reflected in physical and emotional fatigue, leading to firefighters to emotional instability and poor performance and performance of their duties. The WHO defines that emotional instability "is defined by the predisposition to act impulsively without thinking about the consequence" thus leading to performing tasks in an inefficient manner. without having help and control of their emotions, generating more emotions when dealing with an emergency.

The lack of interventions has generated concern about its high rate of staff suffering from mental health problems and poor work performance in their daily lives. Due to this

lack of a psychologist on site, the rates of suicidal thoughts increased due to the fact that The firefighters themselves repressed emotions that they were not able to release in time, which generated stress and unsuitable behaviors within the site. It must be noted that firefighters already handle a degree of stress due to their work, since the simple fact of putting on such a heavy suit, spending several hours in a fire is already something tedious and adding to the emotional burden the person can collapse abruptly.

Also within the surveys carried out, 54% say that it is very important to have psychological support, and 6% have problems that make their work performance not the best, 41% say that it is important to communicate their emotions and 41% affirm who do not receive psychosocial support from the institution.

The work of the firefighter, like that of any person who plays the role of first responder in any emergency situation, involves a multitude of responsibilities and a workload that must be attended to in the immediate term, and at times not defined in advance and added to a high uncertainty factor, since each event is different from the previous one due to different variables (place, time, scenario, number of people involved, type of emergency, available resources, among others). If to this type of sudden events, which require immediate attention and treatment, we add the probability of risk to the life (or its alteration) of another human being or animal, we are faced with an ideal situation for all types of possible situations to occur, and that must be attended to in order to safeguard lives and property in the most expeditious manner. This places high stress on an intervener, since he must not only respond to what society demands of him in his role, but also to what his own motivation and expectations to help generate.

## **THE RISK TO THE MIND OF THE INTERVENER**

The development of different diseases as a result of stress is something that the firefighter can be exposed to and develop if the different emotions that he experiences as a result of his work in the short, medium and long term are not attended to or treated. The social role that is imposed in his work sometimes implies a heavy burden, both physically and mentally. The amount of knowledge that is naturally attributed to them at the scene of an emergency, demanding quick and efficient action, often forgetting that a crisis scenario can be quite violent, even for those with the best training.

Depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders or substance abuse are some of the diseases that are most frequently reported in this type of population and their greatest consequence is suicide (Gist, Taylor, & Raak, 2011). It is important to consider that any firefighter or emergency responder can and will present symptoms at some point in their career due to stress and trauma, whether due to overly busy shifts or a complex emergency, or the sum of situations experienced in their career, or factors of their private life (marriage breakdowns, bereavements, economic problems, domestic violence, among other difficulties).

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Design: This project has an exploratory research design, given that the intervention and training processes are phenomena that have not been exhaustively explored and their application has not been carried out in the population in the way proposed in the theory. From this, it was considered necessary to conduct research on these topics, seeking to clarify this issue and obtain a better understanding of these processes, their implications and benefits for first responders.

Type of participants: For this research, first response personnel were taken as the population, among which are technologists in pre-hospital care, technicians in pre-hospital care, Aspiring firefighters and the population for the present, which were firefighters. In this project we specifically worked with the Girardota volunteer fire department since they are a population that, due to their work characteristics, such as work schedules, the stress of this profession, inadequate nutrition, little rest time, The constant exposure to situations of crisis and pain, and the little time to share with family and leisure activities, make them more exposed to manifesting problems of psychosocial origin and therefore they are more vulnerable and need more of the implementation of recovery processes. support such as intervention and training.

## **ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

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**DO YOU CONSIDER THAT THE PROFESSION YOU ARE PRACTICING IS...?**



A total of 28% of the population considers that the profession they are practicing is very important, so it can be interpreted that they feel a level of satisfaction and fulfillment with it, on the contrary, the remaining percentage can be inferred that they present frustration or demotivation with the work they are doing and this can influence their level of satisfaction and, as a consequence, develop subsequent mental health problems.

**REGARDING FAMILY AND INTERPERSONAL SUPPORT, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU HAVE THE NECESSARY SUPPORT?**



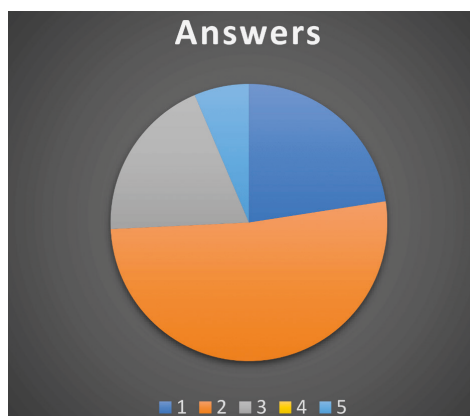
As it can be analyzed in this graph, 54% have the necessary support from their family, 32 almost every day and 12% occasionally,

which can be interpreted that, based on this perception of not having this support, it can be generate emotional and/or psychological problems in these personnel, for not feeling supported and understood by their own.

**DO YOU CONSIDER THAT LIFE PREVENTION IS ESSENTIAL, THEN YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND FINALLY THE WORK PART?**



As it can be analyzed in this graph, 38% consider that they strongly agree that mental health is essential, 35% agree, 22% neither agree nor disagree, 3.22% strongly disagree, From here we can analyze that a high percentage of the population surveyed for this study does not perceive the care of their mental health as relevant or important, and from here we can understand the presence of various pathologies in this area in the population under study.



As it can be analyzed in this graph, 51% of the surveyed population states that the loss of a patient has a great impact, and that this has an impact on their mental health. On the contrary, the rest of the surveyed population expressed different opinions. degrees of affectation or interpretation of it, in the face of the loss of a patient, from which it can be inferred that they have either not had a significant loss or have developed insensitivity due to the same situation, which is more worrying, since he has developed a loss of emotions and responses to crisis situations.

**DO YOU THINK YOUR KNOWLEDGE IS SUFFICIENT TO DEAL WITH A SERIOUSLY ILL PATIENT?**



As it can be analyzed in this graph, 41% of the population surveyed consider that they have the necessary knowledge to face and manage patients or situations that may present a crisis or have a serious condition, which leaves the rest of the population survey with the perception or feeling of not having the tools, knowledge and skills for the adequate management of patients in a state of crisis or serious illness. Which corroborates the evident need to have training, guides or material that is oriented towards support and training in the areas of mental health, for first response personnel.

**DO YOU CONSIDER PREPARATION TO FACE THIS TYPE OF SITUATION RELEVANT?**



As it can be analyzed in this graph, 61% are aware that they need preparation to face this type of situation, given that in the situations that they have had the opportunity to experience so far they have perceived or experienced different degrees of psychosocial affectation, the which, according to what they expressed, have developed psychosocial problems and mood disorders, leading them to the point of presenting crisis situations and interpersonal and family problems.

**WHEN YOU HAVE BEEN IN HIGH-STRESS EMERGENCIES, HAVE YOU RECEIVED ANY TYPE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL HELP?**





As it can be analyzed in this graph, 41% have never received any type of help to manage the stress caused by work, the type of care and patients they must handle, which is a significant percentage that demonstrates the need for something percentage of respondents who have experienced high-stress situations and have not had personnel or support processes to manage them, leading to this having an impact on their mental health and therefore on their work and attention.

**DO YOU IDENTIFY, WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT CAUSE TENSION AND ANXIETY IN YOUR WORKPLACE?**



As it can be seen in the previous graph, a high percentage of the people surveyed are clear about the main factors that influence or trigger the levels of tension and anxiety in their workplace; In the process of carrying out the surveys, they stated that various factors, such as work schedules for their shifts, facing different crisis situations, not having permanent support, family conflicts caused by stress and anxiety generated from work

Conflicts in the work environment were some of the main factors that influenced the increase in these pathologies.

**DO YOU THINK THAT, HAS ANY EVENT GENERATED ANY TYPE OF STRESS OR TRAUMA?**



A total of 70% consider that yes, they have experienced some event throughout their work experience that could have influenced them to generate some type of discomfort, stress or even trauma, because in many cases they did not have the necessary support, neither in the institutions where they worked, nor in their personal space; They stated that some of the events experienced can be of high impact, since they must face death, pain, crisis and this can generate emotional empathy wear or a compassion syndrome among others at the time of providing care.

**DO YOU CONSIDER THAT, HAVE WORK PROBLEMS AFFECTED YOUR PERSONAL LIFE?**



A total of 77% of the people surveyed

consider that in some way these problems have affected their personal life, given that they have not had the support or strategies to manage or confront these situations, which could have led them to present a series of psychosocial problems, such as anxiety, chronic stress, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, among others, and these continue throughout their day, generating conflicts with partners, friends and family; some stated that their home or marriage was over due to the work problems they had experienced.

**DO YOU CONSIDER THAT, IS IT NECESSARY TO EXPRESS YOUR EMOTIONS IN THE FACE OF A CRISIS SITUATION?**



A total of 51% consider that it is important to communicate their emotions, but, although they are aware that it is important, they say that they almost never do it, due to various factors, such as shame, the taboo that first response workers, in this case the firefighters cannot “fall”, but on the contrary they must be strong and withstand all the situations that arise; But some who have managed to find spaces or people to express their emotions have expressed the perceived benefits of carrying out this process.

**HAVE YOU HAD THOUGHTS THAT OTHERS WOULD BE BETTER OFF WITHOUT YOU? THAT YOU ARE THE CAUSE OF THE PROBLEMS?**



A total of 16% have thought that they would be better off without them. Although this may seem like a small number, it is significant, since these people who answered yes are people who may have suicidal ideations, because they have reached a point of hopelessness, or lack of confidence in themselves and others, a perception of having support from others and not feeling valued or needed; This may have been generated from an accumulation of stress, feelings of frustration, work problems, among others, and not having adequate timely support, which ends up becoming a risk factor for the mental health of this population and their families. companions.

**HAVE I FELT AT ANY TIME IN MY LIFE THAT THE SITUATION AFFECTED ME SO MUCH THAT I FELT USELESS?**



A total of 24% respond that they have felt useless, when speaking with the people surveyed, they stated that they felt that their contribution or value was not so important, because in the past they had experienced situations that had generated feelings of frustration for not having been able to “help” more or have been able to solve a certain problem, this together with the fact that they did not have the necessary support to manage these perceptions or responses, but on the contrary they accumulated all these feelings and frustrations, reaching the point of generalizing that feeling of uselessness in their life, in different spheres or areas of themselves, which is very significant, because it can be seen how the lack of support can impact the lives of these people in the long term.

## DISCUSSION

The present research focused on identifying the knowledge and need that the participants (first responders) had to implement in their workplace, intervention strategies such as intervening and training for the management of crisis situations and psychosocial problems that they have been able to experiment in their work and in their attention, a particular analysis is carried out with several everyday questions. A bibliographic search was carried out to analyze the relevance of the topic with various related investigations, to compare with the results found in the present study, below, makes the relationship and reference of them.

It was observed that age, where the majority are between 18 to 30 years old, sex, work experience, position of the participants, as could be observed in the analysis of the results, may be a factor that influenced the presence or increase in psychosocial problems or disorders, which can be confirmed when studies such as the one carried out are observed; When analyzing these results, it can

be understood how the largest percentage of the population of this study is at an age that has emotional and psychological characteristics that make them more vulnerable to acquiring or developing psychological pathologies, due to this perception that is found at this stage of its development.

On the other hand, the question feelings of depression after caring for a patient in a critical situation demonstrates the impact that this type of situation can have on the population. It can be seen that 54% of the population surveyed expressed feelings of depression, referring to needing psychological help and 41% say they want to express the emotions of the various causes that are happening after providing care in critical situations, which demonstrates the impact that experiencing or experiencing situations can have. How were they experiencing the pandemic, which generated critical situations? for first response personnel since they did not have the tools, strategies or training to face these crisis situations. Another necessary aspect to analyze in the results is the work performance affected as a result of work-related stress situations. As it can be seen in the results, 19% of those surveyed stated that they had felt affected by the experiences they had. It is important to approach the health worker in which you can observe how they reach the following conclusion “taking into account that health sector personnel act in the first line of response for the care of many emergencies and pre-hospital care and who are directly facing the consequences of the immediate changes for the care of the affected people, including high work demands, social stigmatization, separation from their family units, limitations to timely care and with assessment processes.

In conclusion, it is important to remove the stigmas about mental health, even though they are called heroes, heroes need help, help that heals for them, helping and healing the



community, since they have long work days, especially with tasks. daily within the station, lack of resting completely due to emergencies, physical exhaustion, not eating well, not achieving all objectives at work, highly complex emergencies, poor listening, and completing activities on their work days. rest, joining the pre-hospital environment, is being available 24/7 to provide services of different levels of complexity, experiencing stressful

situations, dealing with delicate patients, family members and environments that are not very pleasant for carrying out said work. For this we decided to create interventions for first responders and training to strengthen their knowledge at the time of these emergencies and to support their colleagues when they need to use a psychosocial intervention with the tools and keys that we will give in their training.

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