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PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAINING PROGRAM FOR INTERVENTION AND RESCUE PERSONNEL

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Abstract

The manner in which individuals deal with stressful situations depends on several variables. Personality characteristics, event circumstances, preparedness of individual, personal appraisal of events, pre-existing organizational and personal stressors are all key factors. Psychological resistance to stress can be the result of spontaneous evolution, or can be developed through special training, through programs that increase the threshold beyond which functional alterations may occur, resulting from dealing with stressful events. Psychological training can be improved by acquiring specific psychological knowledge and strategies and by indirect experiences with emergency situations and scenarios. Procedures such as stress inoculation, emotional management and stress reduction management, cognitive restructuring, relaxation techniques, problem solving and optimization of interpersonal relationships can be learned and used by individuals. Along with training in conditions as close as possible to future reality of interventions, psychological training can contribute both to the success of intervention and rescue operations and to appropriate management of emotions generated by emergency response.

The current paper details issues regarding the implementation of a psychological training program for intervention and rescue personnel in toxic/ flammable/ explosive environments, in order to test it and to identify adjustments needed to be made for optimizing it, as well as a series of theoretical fundamentals for each of the five modules of the program.

Key words: coping, psychological training, rescuer, stress

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