



QPR for Law Enforcement and Emergency Services Professionals: Instructions for QPR Certified Gatekeeper Instructors

Background

Law enforcement officers and all emergency services professionals can benefit from QPR training. The QPR Institute's faculty includes several professionals experienced in law enforcement work, consultation, training and in the provision of counseling and treatment services to emergency services professionals and their families.

While the data regarding rates of suicide among police officers and other first responders may be controversial, what is not controversial is that emergency services professionals have frequent contact with violence and suicidal people. What is also not controversial is that more law enforcement officers die by suicide each year than are killed by criminals.

Surveys show that all emergency services professionals have significant contact with suicidal persons in their line of work and are usually the first people on scene when a suicide completion has occurred. Because of the nature of their work and the roles they assume in our society, first responders may be particularly vulnerable to stressors and circumstances that may elevate their personal risk for suicidal behaviors.

Purpose

QPR for Emergency Services Professionals training is especially designed to prevent suicide *in the ranks*. While basic QPR training may be helpful in many duty and community settings, our goal here is to prevent suicide among the people serve who and protect all of us. Because of the unique nature of the law enforcement environment and its social and cultural norms, our faculty felt that a "customized" approach to teaching QPR within the context of an employer-based, peer support model was needed.

Through a unique partnership with the San Bernardino Sheriffs Department, the Ontario Police Department, the California Highway Patrol, the S.B.S.D. Valley Control and the Redlands Fire Department, a hosted series of video QPR interventions has been produced for use by all Certified QPR Instructors.

Model Video Interventions

The video role-plays provided to instructors were produced by the San Bernardino Country Sheriffs Department. All "actors" in these scenarios are sworn officers in their various organizations. There are five role-play scenarios, each followed by brief expert commentary. The first scenario is a "wrong-way" intervention, while the remaining four show the "right-way" to conduct a QPR intervention.

Time requirements

Delivery of QPR for Emergency Services Professionals will require a minimum of 90 minutes. The program works best when two hours can be devoted to showing the generic QPR trigger video, teaching the required slides, conducting the first Q&A, followed by showing the specialized first responder intervention videos. If testing for certificates and more extensive role-plays are to be conducted, two hours will be needed, perhaps even more.

Content

Following the introduction of the hosts, each scenario may be shown to audiences and paused for discussion or role-play. Given a broad outline of the problem encountered by the potentially suicidal person, these role-plays were not tightly “scripted” and the officers used their own language to carry out the interventions.

Basically, the five scenarios are designed to show how a QPR intervention is done. You may find the tone or specific language different than what you might use, or that members of your audience might use. That is to be expected. We encourage you to use these differences and perceptions for “discussion” sessions.

Instructors may select to use all of the role-plays or only those scenarios involving 911 professionals, fire or law enforcement. These training tools are intentionally designed to be flexible and may be expanded to include information on issues unique to the law enforcement culture as specifically encountered by emergency services personnel.

Please note: This content includes discussion of stigma, law enforcement stressors, symptoms of depression and the role of alcohol in suicide risk. Linking untreated depression to suicide risk is emphasized and major symptoms are covered, but Instructors should feel free to expand this content as they see fit and slides are provided in the download library on the QPR web page.

Conclusion

Instructors may use the closing “expert comment” and then conduct their own wrap up session or they may skip the expert comment and finish the sessions themselves. We only ask that three things be stressed to your emergency services professional audiences:

- Never ignore suicide warning signs
- Always intervene immediately
- Know exactly where you will take the suicidal person

Advanced training

Should trainees desire more training (beyond QPR) the Institute has developed and adapted the QPR Suicide Triage training for law enforcement settings. This program teaches officers and 911, 211 operators and others how to make an initial assessment of acute suicide risk. It is available online or may be taught in classrooms by Certified QPR Suicide Triage Trainers. Additional training in peer support may be found at www.cophealth.com.

Program Outline and Estimated Timeframes (times are approximate)

| | |
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| Introductions & goal setting | 3 min |
| Introduction/scope of problem in PowerPoint | 10 min |
| Introductory video overview suicide in America (optional) | 2 min |
| Instructors' personal story (optional, now or later) | 5 min |
| QPR trigger video/Carrie Fisher (optional) | 10 min |
| Distribution of QPR booklets and cards | 1 min |
| Standard QPR Curriculum delivery | 25 min |
| Q&A | 5-10 min |
| (Short break – optional) | |
| Begin QPR for ESP video (guidelines) | 5 min |
| Select one, some or all scenarios to show and discuss | (time allotments will vary) |
| Always show the “wrong-way” intervention and discuss | |
| 1st role-play practice session + discussion | 15 min |
| Video “right way” intervention + discussion | 5 min |
| 2nd role-play practice session + discussion | 15 min |
| Video of “right way” intervention + discussion | 5 min |
| Video right way interventions + discussion | 15 min |
| 15-item quiz scored by participants, certificates (optional) | 10 min |
| Final review and wrap | 5 min |
| Closing “Moments” music (optional) | 4 min |

Resources

For a comprehensive review of suicide prevention opportunities for law enforcement personnel, we recommend the text, *Police Suicide: Tactics for Prevention* by Dell P. Hackett and John M. Violanti and *Police Suicide: Epidemic in Blue - 2nd Edition* by the same authors. Also, Dr. Violanti newest book, *Under the Blue Shadow: Clinical and Behavioral Perspectives on Police Suicide*, is now available. All books are published by Charles C. Thomas. (Both authors are experienced law enforcement and suicide prevention specialists.)

Where possible and practical, this training should be imbedded within the context of peer support training as provided by the Law Enforcement Wellness Association

To explore or arrange peer support training contact <http://www.cophealth.com/>

Acknowledgement

We wish to thank all the organizations who participated in the production of these training materials and to especially thank Sheriff Gary Penrod of the San Bernardino County Sheriffs Department for his leadership and vision. We also wish to thank Dr. John M. Violanti for his peer review of the training content slides.