

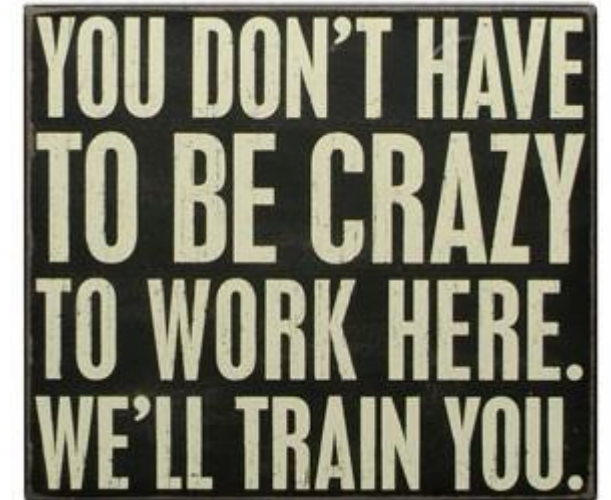
Wellbeing – Championing as a leader

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West Mercia SAR – Chair/Land SAR Lead

Blue Light Champion

Proposal: A leader should facilitate wellbeing as a natural part of SAR-team membership rather than just another “thing we have to do”.



SAR – It loves you and leaves you...

Team of 50 operational plus 20 trainees

Cover Shropshire, Herefordshire & Worcestershire

Challenges:

Mostly tasked to find & retrieve bodies

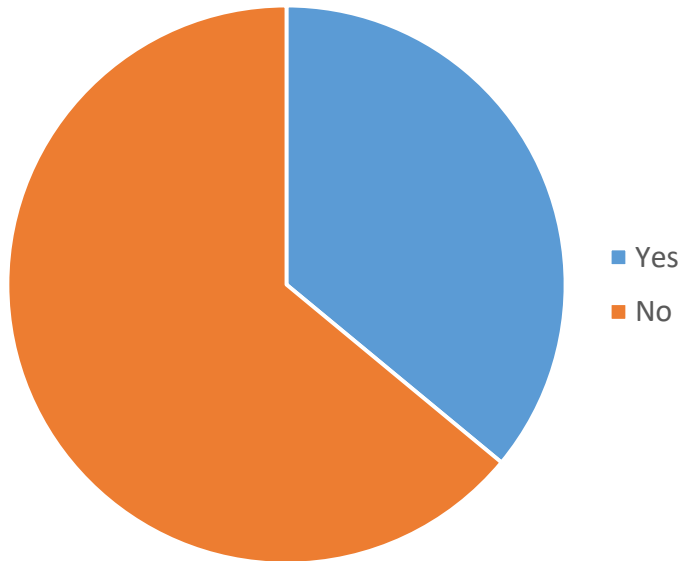
Huge area = widespread members and little chance
for day-to-day contact

SAR rips you from real-life and then dumps you back,
with an expectation to re-join normality



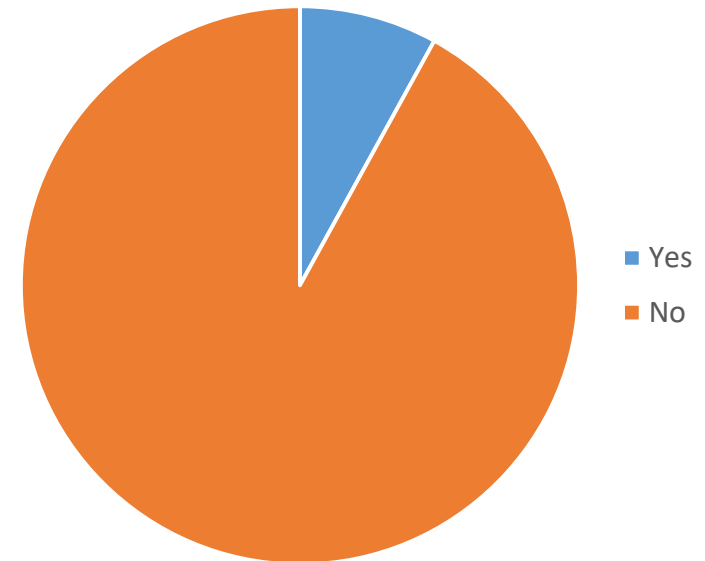
Quick change from normal to hero
and back again isn't great for
management of mental health

...except when it doesn't leave you



Team members reporting short-term wellbeing problems after SAR work

(35%)



Team members reporting long-term wellbeing problems after SAR work

(8%)

Our formal support of wellbeing

Wellbeing and TRIM policies in place

Hot debrief after incidents

Follow-up phone calls 72h post-incident

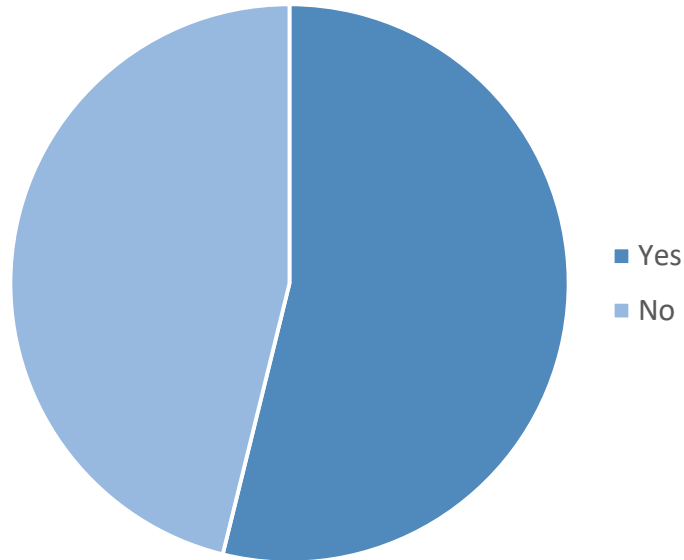
Blue Light Programme posters/leaflets

On-call Padre and counsellors

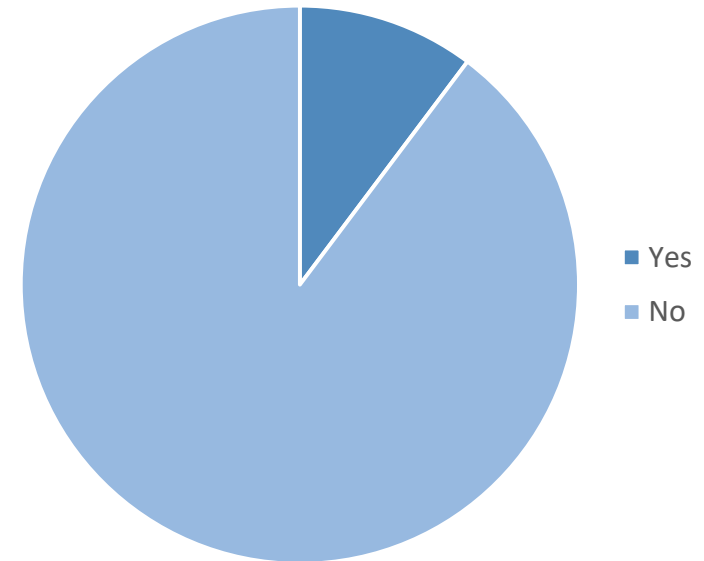
Permanent links to help from team forums



But how do members REALLY seek help?



Approached a team-mate for informal chat (54%)



Used the Blue Light/Padre/Wellbeing Guide/Website (10%)

So leaders must facilitate peer support

Promote team relationships

Encourage fun

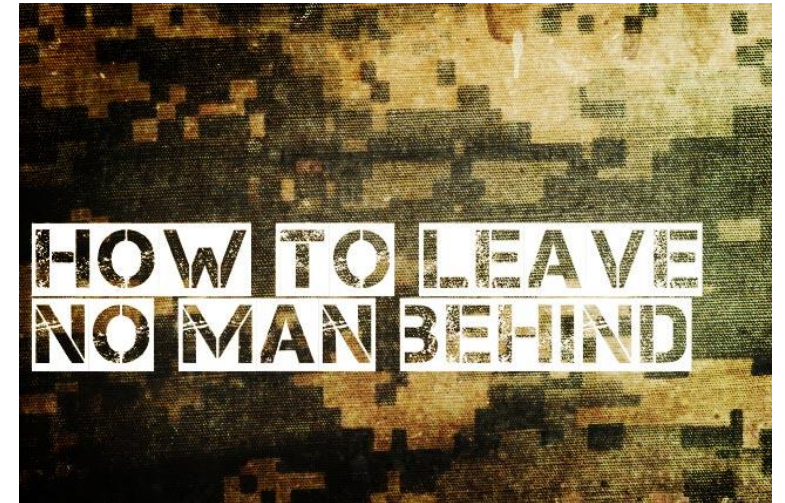
Nurture team-mate trust

Steer, don't interfere

Allow groups, but beware cliques

Make an inclusive, safe environment

Use these relationships to spread passive wellbeing



Sell wellbeing as a way to support their team-mates, rather than as something for themselves, and they tend to “get it”

How have we done that locally?

Local training groups to divide the area

New members get a mentor

Members empowered to lead training

Promote Whatsapp & Facebook groups

Don't always do SAR – socials, walks etc.

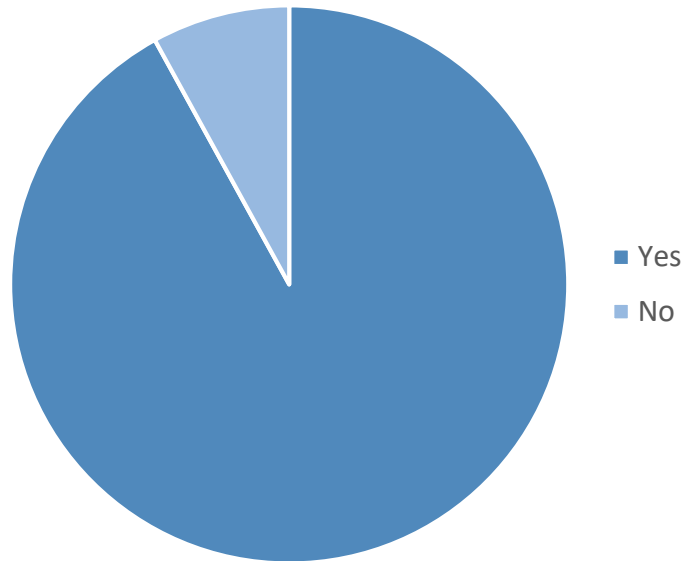
Follow-up calls trickle down (not all from leaders)

And be open about your own wellbeing –
lead by example



£100 budget for any team leader
to spend on informal debrief food
& drink after any incident:
no questions asked

Has it worked?



Are you happy with the wellbeing support from the team? (92%)

We aren't perfect, and probably never will be, but the promotion of peer-led wellbeing seems sustainable and mostly effective in a wholly voluntary team