



The Training Brief

Quick Reference mini-training Topics

Survivorship

Supporting those who have been diagnosed with Occupational Cancer

The purpose of this training topic is to how to support a colleague who has been diagnosed with cancer. There is a need to provide proactive support rather than reactive support.

Discussion

Fact:

Refer the individual to the Firefighter Cancer Support Network:

- FCSN provides timely assistance to fire/EMS personnel and their family members who have been diagnosed with cancer. If you or someone in your immediate family has received a cancer diagnosis, we can help. Call us toll free at 1-866-994-3276.
- FCSN responds quickly and delivers a FCSN signature toolbox free of charge. FCSN's toolbox contains critical resources to help you plan, communicate, and take action with your doctors, your loved ones, and your brothers and sisters in the fire service. FCSN will stick with you through the diagnosis, treatment, and recovery process.
- A mentor will be provided to assist through the entire process. The mentor is a cancer survivor.



Make the necessary changes

An individual who hears from his or her medical doctor that they have a cancer diagnosis is overwhelming. The individual may feel lost, isolated, overwhelmed by medical terms, and options. The implications to their future life and health can be debilitating.

Steps to consider for a peer or supervisor when a member tells you they have cancer:

- *Be supportive, offer your presence and be a good listener.*
- *Offer to assist with rides to and from appointments and to be a note taker.*
- *Encourage them to maintain copies of all reports and scans if needed for further opinions.*
- *Refer them to the Firefighter Cancer Support Network (FCSN) website: www.firefightercancersupport.org*
- *Encourage others to send cards and letters in the mail supporting the individual.*
- *Encourage others to assist with any needs the family may have.*
- *Provide peer support. Peer to peer support with a supportive management team behind them will assist in the process.*
- *Understand that the assistance must fit the individual's needs. Be respectful, not intrusive. The member may want to keep the diagnosis private, respect that. Needs may be different for each individual.*
- *When a member comes forth with an occupational cancer diagnosis a supportive reaction that uses positive dialogue and general concern can make all the difference in the world.*
- *Offer support from both the department and agency they work for.*
- *Supervisors need to be conscious of demeanor and ensure interactions offer hope and solidarity.*
- *A supportive reaction that uses positive dialogue and genuine concern can make all the difference in the world.*