Emerging Best Practices in Peer Support Programs

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Mental Health Disease Burden

• Mental and substance use disorders are the leading cause of disability worldwide. ~23% of all DALY’s

• Mental disorders are important risk factors for other diseases, as well as unintentional and intentional injury. HIV, CVD, diabetes & vice-versa

• Stigma and discrimination against patients and families prevent people from seeking mental health care
  – WHO 10 Facts on Mental Health
Routine Stressors

- Marital / Family Dysharmony
- Family Medical Conditions / Prolonged Illness
- Elder / Child Care
- Death of Loved Ones
- Financial
- Legal
- Travel / Absences
- Occupational
Work-Related PSP Roles

• Critical Incidents
  – Aviation Related
  – Non-Aviation Related
• Training Difficulties
• Professional Standards
• Substance Use
• Personal Medical Issues
Burden in Aviation

• Stiftung Mayday – Non Critical MH issues
  – 19% of cases
  – 70% of workload
    – Personal Communication, Dr. Gerhard Fahnenbruck

• Harvey Watt & Company
  – 10.2% of pilot long-term disability
  – #3 behind cardiac and musculoskeletal
    – Personal Communication, Robin Alston

• Air Line Pilots Association International
  – #3 cause of disability / permanent licensure loss
    – Personal Communication, Michael Barreto
Physician, Regulator & Pilot Views

EASA
European Aviation Safety Agency

IAAO
International Air Transport Association

ESAM

AEROSPACE MEDICAL
ASSOCIATION

IFALPA
International Federation of Air Line Pilots’ Associations
The Global Voice of Pilots

EPPSI
European Pilot Peer Support Initiative

BEA
Bureau d’Enquêtes et d’Analyses pour la sécurité de l’aviation civile

FEDERAL AVIATION
ADMINISTRATION

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ICAO – Mental Health Advocacy

• The concept of mental health advocacy has been developed to promote the human rights of persons with mental disorders and to *reduce stigma and discrimination*

• It consists of actions aimed at *changing the major structural and attitudinal barriers* to achieving positive mental health outcomes

• More recently, the concept of advocacy has been broadened to include the needs and rights of persons with *less severe mental disorders and the mental health needs of the general population*

Dr. Ansa Jordaan, Chief, Aviation Medicine, ICAO, Airline Medical Directors Association, April 2016
ICAO Publication Sept 2018

- Chapter 2
  How to Keep Mentally Well
- Chapter 3
  Impact of Alcohol & Drugs on Performance and Health
- Chapter 7
  Sleep & the Impact of Medical Conditions
Pilot Peer Support

- Draft Amendment to Regulation (EU) 965/2012
- Drug & Alcohol Testing
- Peer Support Sections (20 – 31)
  - Strong Privacy Protections
  - Safety Concern Exceptions
  - Mental Health Professional Oversight / Backup
  - Education and Advertising component
  - Employer & Regulator Support/ Involvement / Firewalls
  - Third Party Services possible
  - Mandatory by August 2020 – funded by employers
• “It is recognized that there may be barriers affecting a frank discussion of mental health issues between an aeromedical examiner and a pilot”
  – Cultural **barriers exist** – Pilots are highly independent, value control, and fear losing their medical certification.
  – Successful approaches that improve rates of reporting, discussion, and participation aim to provide a **“safe zone”** for such activities. These approaches **enhance aviation safety and optimize pilot mental health while minimizing career jeopardy and the stigma of seeking mental health assistance**. Examples: Project Wingman, HIMS, PAN
**PILOT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

- Pilot Assistance Programs provide *trained* peer support to fellow pilots, offering referral to appropriate professional resources and upholding strict confidentiality.

- Pilot Assistance Programs are increasing in numbers throughout the world with the full support of the International Federation of Air Line Pilots’ Associations (IFALPA). A global network is growing that will ensure that no matter where a pilot may be in crisis, the assistance they need will be available.

- IFALPA Position paper - Mental Health Requirements for Active Pilots - 5 August 2015

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Flight Training Organizations

- Pilot Peer Support
- Extending PPSP to FTO’s
- Mental Health problems more prevalent in youth in tertiary education programs
- Become chronic mental health issues
- Becomes part of aviation culture early
- Reduces MH problems during training/career

IFALPA HUPER Discussion paper - 5 October 2018
Successful Aviation PPSP’s (a few)

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Challenges in PSP

• Boundaries – Egalitarian Pluses & Minuses
• Stressors on Peer Support Volunteers
• Confidentiality Limits
• Accountability
• Defining Referral / Safety Thresholds
• Lack of Data in Informal Programs
• Building Mutual Trust – Company & Union PSP
• Funding
• Mental Health Concept in Non-Western Cultures
Key Element - Trust

- Driven and owned by the pilot community
- Confidentiality
- Easy access
- Rapport / credibility (pilots, union, company, medical, CAA)
- Continuity and reliability
- Clarity on referral pathways and triggers
- Perceived procedural fairness
- Reputation and perception is everything

Hosegood, Ian “Pilot Peer Assistance” AMDA April 2016
Best Practices — Design

• Written Policies — Dynamic Revisions
• Addresses
  – Substance abuse and addictions
  – Everyday Life Stressors
  – Critical Incidents
• “Firewalls” — Program | Management | CAA’s
• Just Culture Philosophy & Practice
• Incorporation with Safety Management System
Best Practices - Access

• Multiple Modalities
  – Telephone, Text, Email, Web-based

• 24 / 7 Access, Rapid Response Capability

• Emergency Situation Contingency Defined

• Professional Mental Health Oversight / Assist

• Knowledge / Access to other Carriers’ PPSP’s

• All Aviation Segments
Best Practices - Implementation

• Effective Training – Initial and Recurrent
• Confidentiality Understanding / Agreement
• Emergency Situation Contingency Defined
• Widespread Marketing
• Insurance Coverage / Career Protection
• All Aviation Segments, Genders
• Adequate Funding
Best Practices - Sustainment

- Case Debriefings with Peers & Professionals*
- Data Collection* (* de-identified )
- Working Groups with All Stakeholders
- CAA Cooperation and Explicit Support/Practice
- Education of Operators / Management
- TRUST from all parties
  – ? Third Party authority to determine fitness to fly vs. Peer Chairperson vs. Mental Health Pro
The Future HOPE - Pilots

• Formalized Peer Support Training Programs
  – Initial and Mandatory Recurrent Training

• Support from Employers
  – Financial
  – Operational

• Trust in PPSP Leadership

• Aviation Savvy MHP “Relief Valves”

• Effective Widespread Marketing

• Inclusion of PTO’s to “Normalize” PPSP
The Future HOPE - Employers

• Insurance Coverage / Financial Protections
  – Pilots temporarily not Fit to Fly, Training Difficulties
  – Family member issue inclusion
  – MHP coverage
  – Education of EAP Groups
• Trust in PPSP Leadership
• Education of Chief Pilots, Training Departments
• Integral in Airline Safety Management System
The Future HOPE - Regulators

• Acceptance of PPSP Confidentiality Boundaries
• Trust in PPSP Leadership
• Limited Pilot Reporting Responsibilities
  – Define Reporting & Qualification Thresholds
  – Assumption of Fitness to Fly w/ PPSP & MHP OK
  – Education of AME’s – Accept AME Assessments
• Minimize Requalification Barriers
• Participation in Design / Training / Re-evaluation

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The Future HOPE – MH Professionals

- Multi-modality Counseling
- Flexible Hours
- Aviation Savvy Treatment
- Appropriate Reimbursement
- Trust in PPSP Leadership
- Participation in PPSP Training
- Pilot-rated Counselors
Summary

• Universal Support
• Proven Effectiveness
• Full Spectrum of Issues
• Multiple Models
• Trust and Confidentiality Key
• Promotes Pilot Health
• Essential for FLIGHT SAFETY
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Thank You!

Merci Beaucoup

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Aviation Medicine Advisory Service
www.AviationMedicine.com
Support & Reference Slides
Specifically, the EASA wants to create an environment in which pilots can talk about their professional or personal problems in a confidential manner and in which "they can receive advice on how to deal with those problems from fellow pilots that understand the workload, the environment, and how that affects their entire life."

EASA Spokesperson on release of EASA Opinion No 09/2016, Medscape News
ESAM – EAAP - ECA

• ESAM, EAAP and ECA give strong support to the acknowledgement of the value of pilot Peer Support Programmes. Such programmes have proven successful in enhancing safety and addressing health-related issues, while minimising career jeopardy and the possible stigma of seeking assistance.

• Joint statement by the European Society of Aerospace Medicine (ESAM), the European Association for Aviation Psychology (EAAP) and the European Cockpit Association (ECA) on the Aerospace Medical Association (AsMA) Pilot Mental Health: Expert Working Group Recommendations – Revised 2015

Dr. Quay Snyder, ICASM 2018 - Best Practices in Peer Support Programs
“The successful implementation of pilot support programs benefits from a joint collaboration between the air carrier to include senior management support, its pilot representative organization, and pilot peer volunteers. The trusting relationship with a fellow pilot in a peer-supported program may provide the best opportunity to identify and engage an individual requiring assistance. To encourage use, pilots must be handled in a confidential, non-stigmatized, and safe environment. If a culture of mutual trust and cooperation is maintained, pilots are less likely to conceal a condition, and more likely to report and seek help for mental health issues.”

FAA Pilot Fitness Aviation Rulemaking Committee Report  11/18/2015
• IFALPA is committed to the maintenance of an “inclusive” pilot assistance policy, dedicated to the promotion of the airline pilots’ health, well-being, and professional performance.

• It has been demonstrated that Pilot Assistance Programs are effective for dealing with a wide range of problems experienced by pilots. Member Associations are strongly encouraged to establish these programs to assist their own members.

• IFALPA Position paper - Mental Health Requirements for Active Pilots - 5 August 2015