



AFTER THE CALL



ADDICTIONS

During the past few months the focus for First Responders has been on PTSD and stress related disorders. While this is obviously an important issue that needs addressing, mental health issues for First Responders are broader than stress alone.

ALCOHOL

Alcohol use has been a coping measure linked to Firefighting (Bacharach, Bamberger, & Doveh, 2008), Policing (Davey, Obst, & Sheehan, 2001), and to EMS (Fieldheim et al., 2014; LeBlanc, Regehr, Birze, King, Scott, MacDonald, & Tavares, 2011). While engaging in the consumption of alcohol might be seen as socially accepted, it can be just as damaging as other substances. This article is to help put drinking behavior into perspective:

* *In drinks per week*

For Males:

0 - 2 = 61 percent of the population
3 - 7 = 21 percent of the population
8 - 14 = 12 percent of the population
15- 21 = 4 percent of the population
22+ = 2 percent of the population

For Females:

0 - 2 = 85 percent of the population
3 - 7 = 10 percent of the population
8 - 14 = 4 percent of the population
15+ = 1 percent of the population

* *All statistics taken from CAMH (retrieved September 3rd, 2015)*

Understanding that as a First Responder you might be susceptible to problem drinking is the first step toward preventing the behaviour. We need to be perceptive to issues like this in our departments and to offer a hand to our brothers and sisters who might be struggling.

This document is not to be used for diagnosing problem drinking behavior, but to inform on the norms within the population for drinking.