



PeerOnCall

Evaluating the implementation of the PeerOnCall apps within the fire sector

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A hand holding a smartphone with a blank white screen. The background is a whiteboard with various diagrams, sticky notes, and text, including a flowchart and a diagram of a house. The whiteboard is partially obscured by a blue circular graphic element on the left side of the slide.

Agenda

- Background
- PeerOnCall app
- Research project
- Next steps



*Image with permission from: <https://www.dansungallery.com>

Why develop a peer support app?

High rates of post-traumatic stress injury (PTSI) and mental health issues in the public safety community

Many barriers to seeking support (stigma, access to skilled provider)

Peer support can be a valuable first line of response

*Response to request for peer support app from Public Safety Community



PeerOnCall



PeerOnCall
Support

App-based peer support designed by and
for the Canadian Public Safety community

Project Goals

- To capture real world experiences of first responders using the app to ensure it can:
 - Reduce barriers to seeking help
 - Promote high quality information and support when and where needed
 - Ensure private, secure connection to peer support

Design Principles

- Privacy/Security
- Easy to use
- Contextually relevant
- Peer Wisdom + Evidence
- Trauma-informed
 - Reduced cognitive load
 - Safe - Avoid triggers
 - Trustworthy/transparent
 - Choice (who/how to access)
 - Strengths based



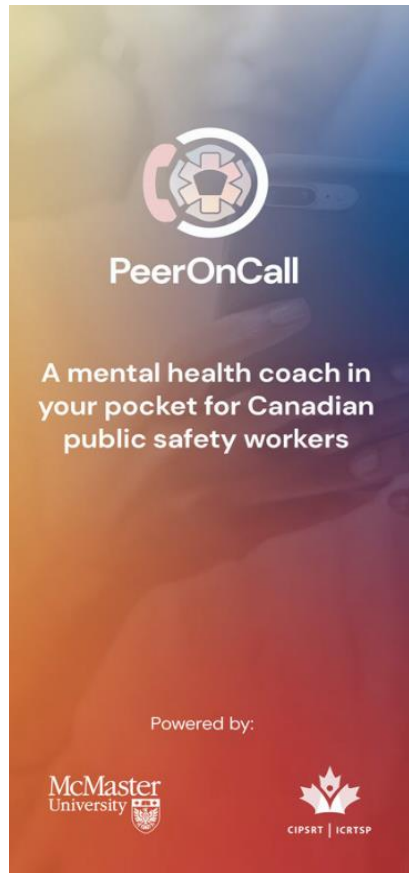


PeerOnCall



PeerOnCall
Support

App-based peer support designed by and for the Canadian Public Safety community



Two paired apps to connect firefighters with peer supporters within their organization.

*restricted access to employees from participating organizations

<https://www.oncallapp.ca>

Implementation Research

Implementation Research

Goal

Evaluate the implementation, use, and impact of the PeerOnCall apps within the fire sector.



(Daniel Shirey/MLB Photos via Getty Images)

Research Methods

Sample

- Fire departments (both paid and volunteer) across Canada were recruited to participate in a 6-month study of the apps.

Data Collection and Analysis

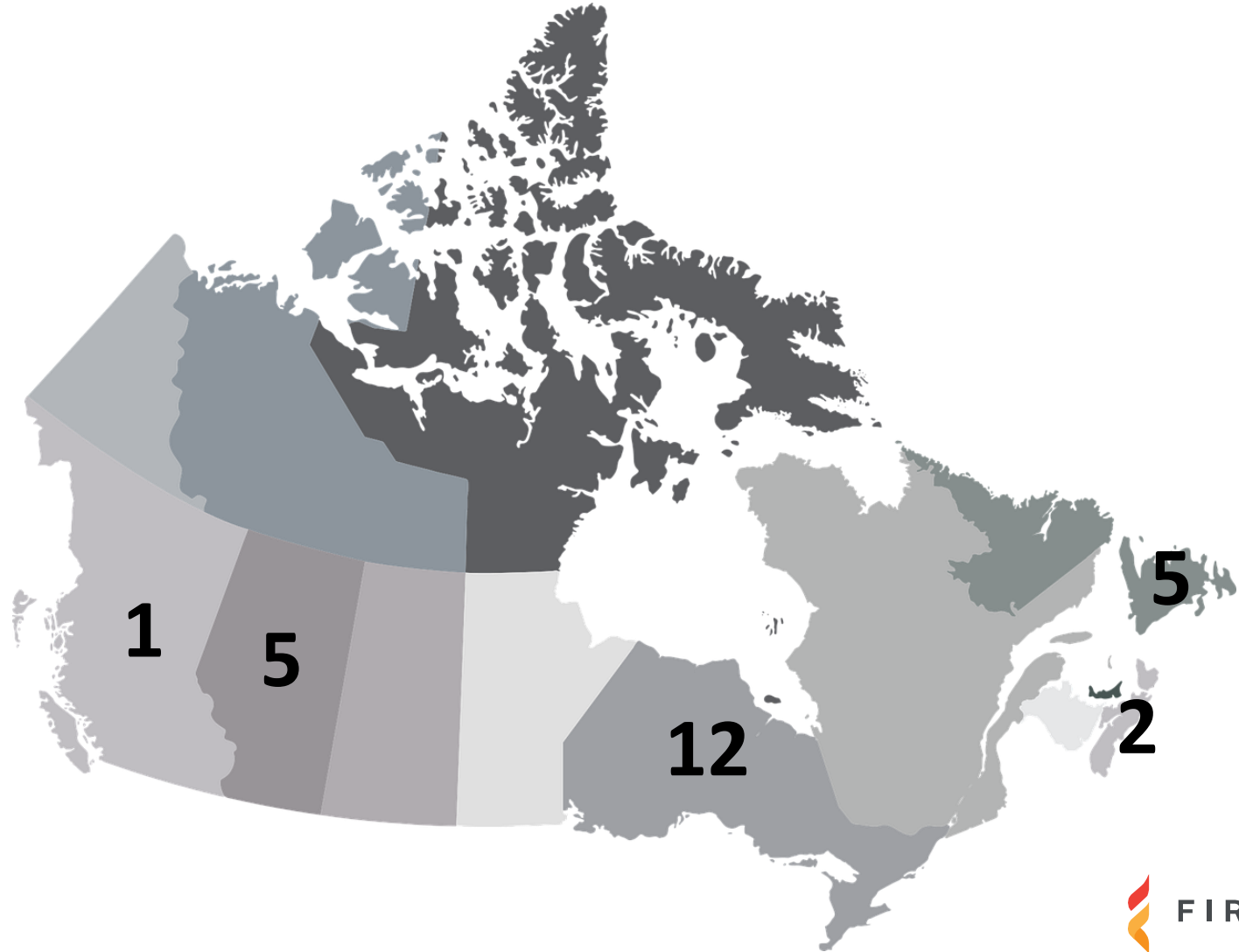
- Field notes from initial presentation meetings with fire departments were used to gather preliminary information
- Baseline semi-structured interviews with organizational champions participating in the 6-month study
- Using the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR), barriers and facilitators of decision-making regarding participation in the implementation study of the app within their fire service.

Research Results: Study Sample

Initial Meetings

N = 25 fire services:

- 7 career
- 14 volunteer
- 4 composite



Research Results: Study Sample

Six-Month Study Participants

- N = 9 organizations (n=11 organization champions)
- Geography: 5 Ontario, 4 Newfoundland
- Type: 8 Volunteer, 1 Composite
- Size
 - 6 Small (n=1-40)
 - 3 Medium (n=50-199)
 - 0 Large (n=200+)

Preliminary Findings

Barriers

- Concerns of privacy
- Sustainability of the app
- Future costs associated with the app
- Technology literacy
- Capacity and resources
- Bureaucracy
- Lack of peer support infrastructure

Facilitators

- Free access
- Inherent beliefs in the usefulness of peer support
- Co-design process
- Established relationship with the research team
- Simplicity of technology
- Trust between leadership and peer supporters

Facilitator

*"I love the anonymity of the app.
There is still a stigma you face coming forward. But the ease of picking up your phone and being able to connect with someone by text through the app is good."*



Facilitator: Technology

"This app is exciting because it is an opportunity for firefighters- both paid and volunteer, to access peer support in an innovative way that is unique to their needs..."

Barrier: Capacity and Resources

“After looking at the costs and hours of initial training and the number of people we would need involved, we at this point do not have the budget funds to move ahead. This would be something that would take a fair bit of time to get firefighters involved.”



Barrier: Bureaucracy

“We all think this will be a great asset for firefighters and an important tool for our toolbox. But...it is virtually impossible for us to get the right people involved for a relatively short pilot project. Our team is totally volunteer, and we have been very busy...none of us were willing to take on yet another project at this time. Getting fire departments to buy in will take lots of work and...we realistically feel there is not sufficient time.”

Discussion

Implementation

The decision-making process for participation in the 6-month study period of the apps provided critical insights into the landscape of peer support within the fire sector in Canada and the unique challenges faced.

Next Steps

- Complete the 6-month implementation study period (~March 2024).
- Use feedback from the implementation evaluation to improve app function and content.
- Develop a sustainability plan for the future use of the app.

Researchers and Project Partners



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PeerOnCall

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