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 http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/ mental_health/mental_health_facts/en/index1.html

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
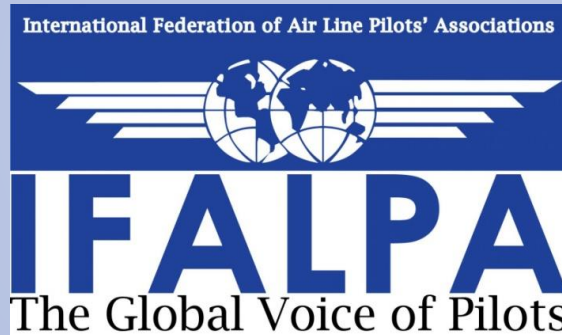 - Personal Communication, Robin Alston

- Air Line Pilots Association International
  - #3 cause of disability / permanent licensure loss
  - Personal Communication, Michael Barreto

Physician, Regulator & Pilot Views

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
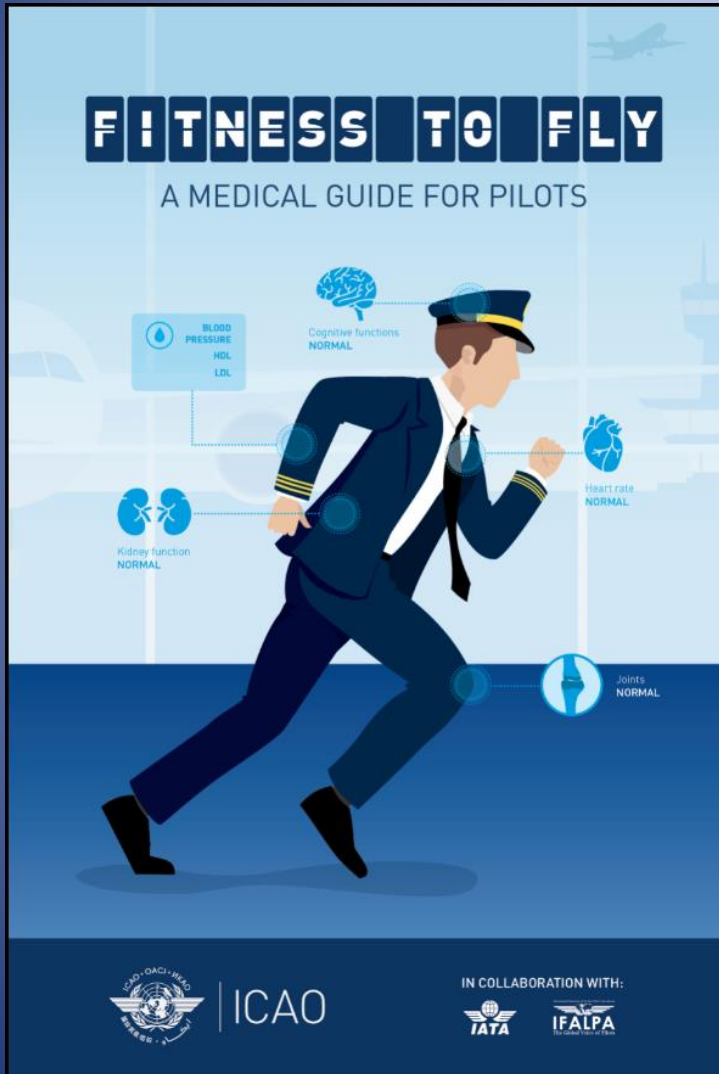
- Chapter 2
  How to Keep Mentally Well

- 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

Pilot Mental Health WG

- **"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**

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)

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

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

KEEP CALM AND TRUST YOUR WINGMAN

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Thank You !
Merci Beaucoup

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Support & Reference Slides

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Pilot Peer Support

- 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) n the Aerospace Medical Association (AsMA) Pilot Mental Health: Expert Working Group Recommendations – Revised 2015**

FAA Pilot Fitness ARC

- "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

PILOT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

- 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**