Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: Missouri

Assign Program Category (applicant): Corrections (Use list at end of application)

Program Name: Peer Action and Care Teams (PACT)
行政单位: 陕西省《2012年度微》

Contact (Name and Title): Michelle Kasak, Workplace Violence Prevention Coordinator

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1. How long has this program operated (month and year)? Note: the program must be between 9
months and 5 years old as of April 5, 2012 to be eligible for this year’s award. **The program has been active since November 2007.**

2. Describe the program:

   - Why was it created?
   
   The Missouri Department of Corrections Peer Action and Care Teams (PACT) were created to establish a peer responder program. The Department recognized staff are more likely to trust and be open with someone who shares similar job responsibilities and understands the situation from shared experiences. Therefore, PACT was established to help staff remain fully productive at work and home by providing immediate support to staff in the form of information, assistance and referrals to the Employee Assistance Program and community resources in the aftermath of a trauma-related event. This support helps to reduce long-term problems that can affect our staff, their families and the community. Select department staff, who are well-respected and have experience in their field, are selected and trained to assist victimized employees by providing “emotional first-aid.” They not only provide a shoulder to lean on, but they help the victim complete the necessary paperwork related to the critical incident and obtaining the necessary referral assistance. Staff are more likely to trust and be open with someone who shares similar job responsibilities and understands the situation from shared experiences.

   - Why is it a new and creative approach or method?
   
   Corrections, by the very nature of its business, presents a stressful environment for staff. The security measures and hardware that are ever-present are a constant reminder of the ongoing threat of violence in the workplace. Each and every day, corrections staff in prisons and Probation and Parole offices can potentially encounter random and targeted acts of violence initiated by offenders. The aggression may be
in the most common form, which includes verbal abuse and threats, to more personal and invasive acts such as exposure to bodily fluids, or most seriously, actual physical violence and assault of others. As can be expected, any environment that contains the constant threat of assault or injury not only impacts the victims and witnesses to the incident, but also extends collateral impact and stress to their co-workers, family and the community, at large. Due to the violent nature of the corrections environment and the constant threat it represents, it is imperative that departments provide staff with viable, meaningful and cost-effective support services to reduce anxiety and promote the general well being of staff.

In the community, victims often exercise options to completely remove themselves from the scene of the crime. They may leave their homes or communities, get a new job, or change identities. In corrections, victimized staff are, in many cases, expected to return to the scene of the crime – their work assignment - often very soon after the incident occurs. Rapid integration into the workplace without supportive services can trigger varying degrees of psychological reactions, some of which may not be immediately evident. In some cases, the offender continues to remain in the same facility, or report to the same Probation and Parole field office, while the victim (the corrections professional), is transferred to another site in his or her best interests. Such actions can be considered punitive, and erroneously imply the victim was to blame or was ineffective in their job duties. Offenders with histories of victimizing staff must continue to be supervised in the correctional setting, potentially subjecting yet another employee to victimization. The responsibility of supervising or monitoring a known “correctional staff victimizer” can add tremendous stress to those who must assume this job.

- What are the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order?

At the present time, approximately 350 Missouri Department of Corrections staff have received specialized training and assist co-workers with information and referral services. These peer responders are members of the Peer Action & Care Team (PACT). A PACT team exists at each facility within the department and each Probation and Parole region. Each facility strives to maintain at least four (4) members per work shift to ensure immediate availability of peer responder services. Teams reflect a diverse composition of members in regards to gender, age, ethnicity and job classification. Employees may volunteer or be nominated by another employee by submitting a form to a team member. The team leader reviews all applications and may conduct interviews with prospective members. The team leader also solicits comments from current team members regarding prospective members and requires written recommendations with each application. Selection of members is made by the chief administrative officer of the work site with input from the leader.

The department’s selection of peer responders is based on the key areas of importance established by a policy manual for Victim Service Programs in State Correctional Agencies which are as follows:

1. Confidentiality
2. Personality Style
3. Listening Ability
4. Open to New Ideas
5. Peer Support Group Makeup
6. Willingness to Learn
7. Ability to Follow Through
8. Selection Process
9. The Use of Volunteers

Incorporation of these guidelines into the selection of peer responders ensures PACT teams are formed so they provide the most effective support system to their peers.

In order for a peer responder to be effective at what they do, they need to have the personal qualities necessary to deal with people. These personal qualities include: humility, modesty, integrity, respect, sympathy, with curiosity of and appreciation for people.

Training

Each PACT member is required to complete an initial eighteen (18) hour training curriculum. A refresher course is also required every three (3) years along with on-going professional growth training geared toward enhancing staff assistance. On-going training has included mental health first aid, suicide prevention, coping with death or grief, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and other issues that may impact staff wellbeing.
Clear Roles and Responsibilities

PACT members’ duties include:

- Contacting employees affected by a traumatic event or critical incident in person or by phone as soon as possible to discuss the situation and provide support, information, referral and follow up.

- Assisting the employee affected by a critical incident or traumatic event with practical things to be done that the employee may not or cannot do for themselves. For example these responsibilities may include providing transportation, making phone calls, completing required paperwork, accompanying them to physician's visits or coordinating visits with the Employee Assistance Program representatives.

Peer responders may also be required to provide assistance to employees at other work sites based on need as determined by the division director and the Workplace Violence Coordinator. In addition, PACT members may be required to attend critical incident stress debriefings and may be designated to notify the appropriate staff of the time, place and date of these meetings.

While membership on a PACT is voluntary, continued participation is not taken for granted. PACT membership is approached in the same professional and ethical manner as the members' jobs and requires a commitment of time, energy and other personal resources, in addition to the demands of their regular duties. A member can be removed from the team when participation in the program interferes with the successful performance of the member’s job assignment or when the member’s participation adversely affects the program.

Establishing boundaries that clarify what is not included within the roles and responsibilities of PACT members has helped to maintain the integrity of this program. These boundaries include:

- Peer supporters are NOT counselors and do not provide professional mental or physical health services. Whenever professional assistance is needed, the employee should be referred to the Employee Assistance Program.

- Employees’ utilization of the services provided by PACT are VOLUNTARY. Employees cannot be compelled to participate in the program or meet with a PACT member.

- A PACT member cannot serve if assisting, advising or representing an employee affected by a critical incident or traumatic event in a grievance pertaining to the incident. In these cases, the PACT member must refer the employee to a different team member and notify the employee of the same in writing.

- PACT members cannot provide services to direct supervisors, subordinates or their own family members.

- PACT members cannot respond to a critical incident or traumatic event when intoxicated or taking medication that can impair the member’s functioning and judgment.

Role in Emergency Preparedness

PACT responsibilities also assist with the support of critical incident management that may include riots, disturbances or hostage situations. The PACT role is integrated into each emergency operation plan and incorporated into the five-phase tactical system of each type of correctional incident. During the deactivation or recovery phase, PACT members are on hand to enhance timely referral of employees to the Employee Assistance Program or other resources as needed.

Leadership
Each PACT has a team leader/coordinator(s). This person is a member of a team that has been designated by the chief administrative officer as the primary contact person for the team and is responsible for the following duties.

- Mobilizing the PACT team,
- Ensuring proper procedure for PACT member selection, training and replacement,
- Maintaining PACT incident reports and other confidential information in a secure location, and
- Coordination of quarterly meetings.

The Department Workplace Violence Coordinator is responsible for oversight and coordination of the workplace violence program and PACT members. Oversight duties include but are not limited to revisions to training curriculum, feedback to PACT members as to how they can be more effective in their role, and continued development of the program.

- Is it effective? Provide tangible results and examples.

The impact of the reassurance of a co-worker during times of trauma or stressful events is not measurable. Examples of assistance by PACT members that involve considerable time include incidents where PACT members have waited in a hospital emergency room for hours with staff who have been assaulted by offenders, listening to the distress shared by staff who have been subjected to sexual overtures or assault, assisting fellow employees with the completion of required paperwork for blood and body fluid exposures, ordevoting time listening to a distressed employee who found an offender hanging in their cell, removed them from their ligature, performed CPR for endless minutes, only to find the offender did not survive. Each of these events, individually, have an impact on the employee, whether immediately recognized or not. Compounded together, they can lead to serious impact on staff’s overall wellbeing.

Another factor to take into consideration is prevention. Preventative actions are just as vital to the program as they ensure many acts of violence never materialize due to the intervention PACT provides. The department is able to provide statistics of PACT utilization, but measuring incidents averted as a result cannot be tangibly calculated. How do you put a number on the level of support provided to staff through PACT? Despite this barrier, much anecdotal evidence exists to illustrate how beneficial PACT is to our department.

The department receives regular feedback from staff indicating they would have not been able to work through their issues without the assistance of PACT. In many instances staff would have not been aware of the Employee Assistance Program resources available without the help of PACT. In addition, many expressions of heartfelt thanks and appreciation have been received from family members of staff for PACT member presence during hospital stays or while an employee is homebound.

The Workplace Violence Program further benefits the department by enabling staff to return to work sooner after an incident, in better physical and mental health as a result of the assistance they received from PACT. As a result, these benefits combine to save the department money; in comparison to a staff member who is not able to return to work or returns with emotional or other issues caused by a workplace violence incident. After a staff member was attacked by an offender at one of the department’s maximum security facilities, he reported that one of the biggest factors in his return to work was PACT members’ encouragement and support. The injuries required hospitalization and PACT members’ frequent visits to the hospital as well as their efforts in accompanying him to doctor’s visits only improved his emotional well being. PACT members’ support continued while the staff person was assigned to light duty after returning to work.

PACT is now an integral part of the department’s response to addressing violence in the workplace. It has been verified that this had such far reaching benefits that it, in turn, became a solution for the community as well. PACT members have taken their training and experience, applying it each day, to their homes and communities. The most recent example of these far reaching benefits was felt in Joplin, Missouri as PACT assisted staff who suffered the wrath of the May 22, 2011 Joplin tornado which killed 159 people.
3. Did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator’s name, present address, telephone number, and e-mail address. Yes—Kay Crocket, Victim Services Coordinator, 3400 Knipp Drive, Jefferson City, MO 65109, (573) 751-8488, kay.crocket@doc.mo.gov.

4. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ? No

5. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter when attempting to adopt this program? Identifying staff who are willing to volunteer for the program who have the ability to compassionately respond to high stress and traumatic situations presents a significant challenge. Sufficient coverage of shifts on each team, training issues (time and resources), confidentiality and support of the administration also present certain obstacles. Confidentiality by members is a key element and will make or break the program’s effectiveness and reputation. Without confidentiality, staff will not trust and utilize the program. Another obstacle could be the “buy in” to the program from administrators/supervisors. Support from the administration and cooperation of supervisors is imperative to the success of each of the worksite teams.

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