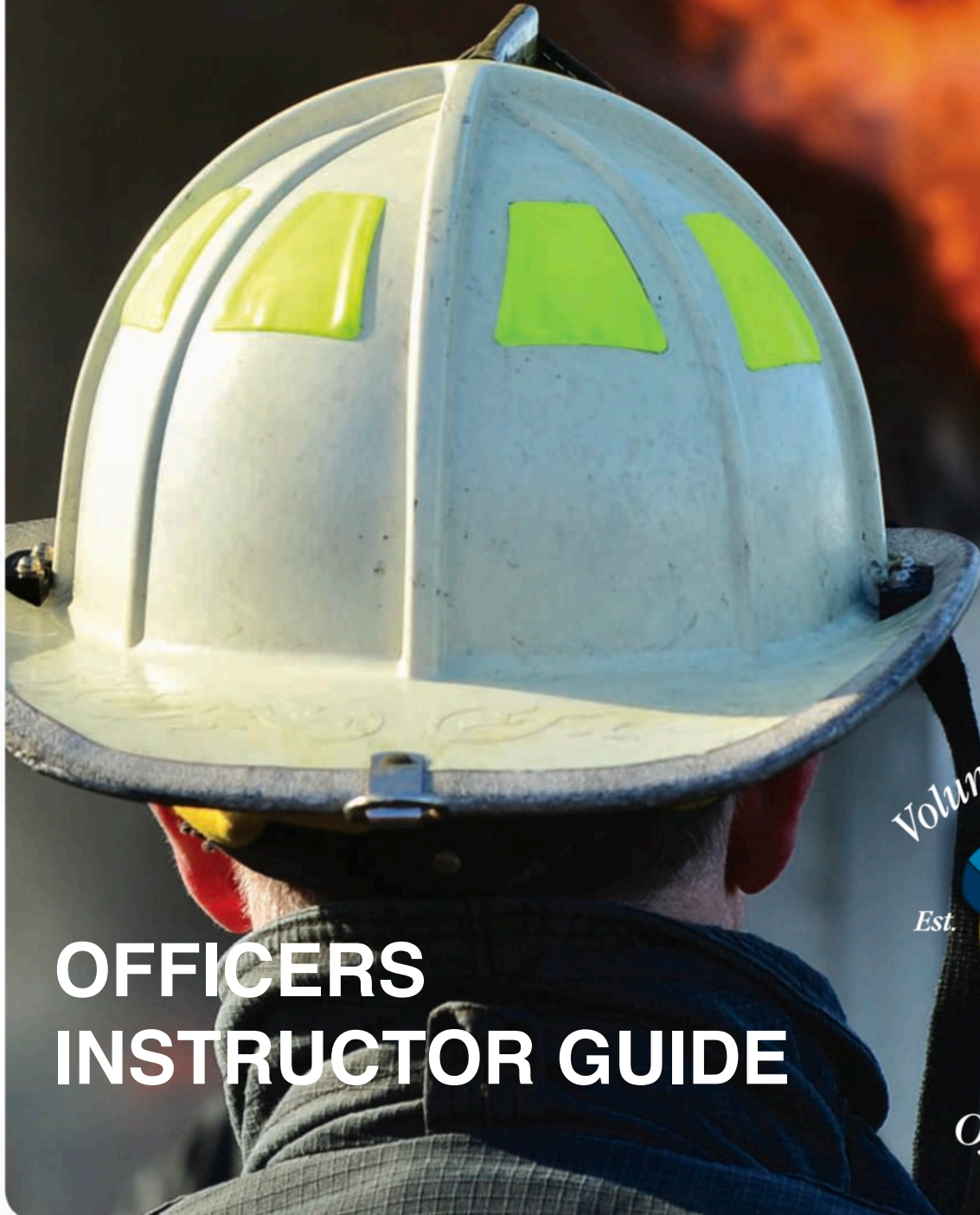


UNDER THE HELMET: Performing An Internal Size-Up A Proactive Approach To Ensuring Mental Wellness



OFFICERS INSTRUCTOR GUIDE



Behavioral Wellness Recruit Awareness Level Training
Instructor Guide
Developed by the IAFC Volunteer Combination Officers Section

Contributing Authors
John M. Buckman III
Elizabeth Fletcher
Pat Kenny
Skip Straus

Slide Welcome - Opening Slide - Introduce yourself to the students. Name, years of service, active or retired, rank or highest rank attained. Depending on the students you may ask that they introduce themselves.



Behavioral Wellness:
Awareness Level Training



Based on the Yellow Ribbon Report developed by the IAFC Volunteer Combination Officers Section

Slide Contributing Authors

John M. Buckman III - Grandfather, Author, Photographer, 35 years as a volunteer fire chief. President, IAFC 2001-2002, Chair VCOS 1988-1996, Fire Chief of the Year 2004, ISFSI President. Award 2016.



Behavioral Wellness:
Awareness Level Training



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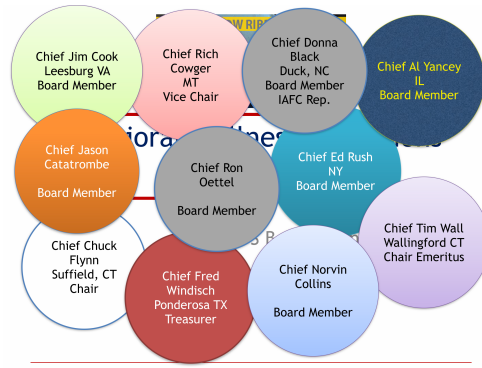
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Slide

VCOS Board Members formed in 1994 - 9 Board members - at-large Board member of the IAFC - one board member sits on the International Association of Fire Chiefs Board of Directors.




Slide

Introduction of Instructors



Behavioral Wellness:
Awareness Level Training

Introduction of your instructors



**Adam Farrar
&
Joe Chornock**

Slide Mission of the training

DISCUSSION Explain the levels of training and use comments from the report Recruit/Firefighter - basic information about the issue / sandwich Officer - programs and actions / Chief Level - leadership responsibilities for developing a behavioral wellness culture and appropriate program.

Build the sandwich - IS HOW YOU BUILD A BEHAVIORAL WELLNESS PROGRAM How do you build a sandwich - put all of the parts together.

ASK the students how they build a sandwich - you are relating the story to the components of a behavioral wellness program.

As an example Spread mayo, butter or cream cheese all the way to the edges of each slice of bread to create a seal against wet sandwich fillings. Also, try packing high moisture ingredients, like tomatoes, pickles, and cucumbers, separately.

Ask students - is there a correct order to make a sandwich?

From Bottom up: Bread - Meat - Cheese - Condiments - Lettuce - Bacon - Bread. Use Condiments wisely - some things don't mix - like peanut butter and anchovies. Tip: Put condiments like mustard, mayo, on the meats - not on the bread. You can then lay lettuce on top to keep the bread from getting mushy.

Slide Group Introductions

Slide

The student shall be able to define:

- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Symptoms of PTS
- Suicide Prevention
- Actions to take related to preventing suicide
- Suicide Intervention
- Actions to take related to suicide intervention

Mission

To provide education and training to recruits/firefighters about behavioral wellness issues and the personal/professional impact:

- Recruit/Firefighter
 - Officer
 - Chief
-

Group Introductions

- Who you are?
 - Service time?
 - Family?
 - What are your experiences?
-

Training Objectives

The student shall be able to define:

- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
 - Know the symptoms of PTS.
 - Suicide Prevention
 - Know the actions to take related to preventing suicide.
 - Suicide Intervention
 - Know the actions to take related to suicide intervention.
-

Slide

Objectives

The student shall be able to identify his/her:

- Role in managing personal behavioral wellness
- Shared responsibility for behavioral wellness within the organization
- Role in organizational culture change toward behavioral wellness
- Responsibility to share emotional response following each traumatic events
- Awareness of training programs and other resources available relative behavioral wellness.

Slide

The student shall be able to define:

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Understand the services associated with an EAP for their specific employer.
- Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)
- Define the components of a CISM program?

Slide

The student shall be able to identify:

- potential triggers that positively/negatively impact behavioral wellness

~~The student shall be able to identify their role in managing behavioral health for themselves.~~

~~The student shall be able to identify their responsibility in behavioral health issues within their department or company?~~

~~The student shall be able to identify the organizational culture toward behavioral health and wellness within their FD?~~

~~The student shall be able to identify the safety culture within their FD?~~

~~The student shall be able to identify the debriefing process for events within their FD?~~

~~The student shall be able to identify the training programs available through their FD relative to behavioral health and wellness.~~

Slide

The student shall know the statistics about behavioral wellness for firefighters.

- Line of Duty Death (LODD) (2016 - 89)
- Suicide (2016 - 189)
- **Source - United States Fire Administration**

Administration

NOTES

Ask the students what they know about the number of suicides in 2017/2018?

Why don't we know more about suicides?

Ask if any of those in the audience have experienced a public safety suicide?

In 2016, 89 firefighter deaths in the line of duty were recorded. And 130 committed suicide. In 2015, 135 firefighters committed suicide, and 89 lost their lives in the line of duty. The number was a bit lower in 2014 – 114 suicides and 92 line-of-duty deaths, but you can clearly see the trend. These numbers are confirmed by the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA).

The student shall be able to define:

1. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
 1. Know the symptoms of PTSD
2. Suicide Prevention
 1. Actions to take related to preventing suicide
3. Suicide Intervention
 1. Actions to take related to suicide intervention
4. Suicide Post-Vention
 1. Actions to take related to suicide post-vention
5. Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
 1. Understand the services associated with an EAP for their specific employer.
6. Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)
 1. What is a CISM program?
7. Behavioral Health and Wellness
8. Health and Wellness

NOTES - VCOS is trying to build the sandwich.

NOTES - there are many component and variables to behavioral wellness. This program will bring awareness of many of the components necessary to recognize signs and symptoms of stress and what you can do to manage stress.

Training Objectives

The student shall know the statistics about behavioral wellness for firefighters.

- Line of Duty Death (LODD) (2016) - 89*
- Suicide (2016) - 132**

*United States Fire Administration
**Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance

Slide

Behavioral health affected firefighters for years...

Page 8 of the Yellow Ribbon Report written by John M. Buckman III

NOTES - Refer the students to page 8 in the Yellow Ribbon Report.

Cultural change/behavioral health There are many factors that impact an organizational culture. This slide begins the discussion about the need for cultural change.

Ask student what their local FD culture is about behavioral wellness?

The answers could include:

- ignore the issue • leadership is out of touch
- have programs • leadership has bought into it
- leadership doesn't care Ask what has been the results of organizations that have a positive culture about behavioral wellness?



DISCUSSION Instructor you do not need to read the words from the PowerPoint. The students can read.

NOTES - Instructor - read the quote from Mother Teresa.

Mother Theresa once said “The biggest disease today is not leprosy or cancer or tuberculosis, but rather the feeling of being unwanted, uncared for and deserted by everybody.” That loneliness is devastating is not new information; everyone who has felt alone understands how painful it can be. For the lucky many, loneliness is a fleeting feeling but for those who cannot find the escape hatch, loneliness can be a terrible, and fatal, trap.

Instructor - ask the students the following questions and solicit discussion.

How does that statement relate to our topic today - behavioral wellness?

Can Loneliness Really Kill You?

Can you be alone and be in a crowd? Why? How?

Slide

Show video from the National Volunteer Fire Council on suicide prevention. Video is about 2 minutes in length.

Discuss what message was received by the students...

- you can make a difference (ask students how they can make a difference?)
- be proactive
- ask direct questions
- show compassion - not judgement

- Video provided by the National Volunteer Fire Council
- Introduction to Behavioral Wellness Action Items
- <https://vimeo.com/280976161>



11

Slide

Reference the student manual list of items from Chief Gary Ludwig book Blood, Sweat and Tears. Recruit Firefighters You will... witness the miracle of birth...not dream of doing another job...

Gary Ludwig Chief Champaign (IL) Fire Department Author - Blood, Sweat, Tears and Prayers

DISCUSSION Ask the students if they have experienced any of these situations and how they dealt with the stress of the situation? How did they feel? Don't focus on the negative issues alone.

As firefighters, you will...

- witness the miracle of birth...
- cry with your patients...
- hold a baby in your arms as it takes it's last breath...
- be vomited upon...
- Have cookies brought to the fire station...
- control bleeding...
- Receive a thank you card from a grateful resident...
- say a short, silent prayer for a patient...
- Have a kid come up to you and hug your leg...
- comfort a father who held his dead son in his arms and grieved with the greatest sorrow...
- Be promoted to an officer rank...
- Carry valuables out of a house after putting the fire out...

Chief Gary Ludwig, Champaign, IL Fire Dept., author, excerpted from Blood, Sweat, Tears, and Prayers

12

Slide

Action Statement 1 Let students read the statement. Ask the students to define stress. Define acute and cumulative stress. Write the definitions on a easel pad or white board. Write it somewhere that it will not be erased or covered up. You may refer to these terms throughout the presentation.

Action Statement 1

During recruit school, emotional and behavioral health, as well as dealing with cumulative stress, must become integrated into the initial education.

Slide

Exercise - give each student a 3x5 card. Ask students to write down an event in their life that had a positive effect on their behavioral wellness. On the other side of the card write down an event that had a negative effect on their behavioral wellness.

Collect the cards.

Shuffle them.

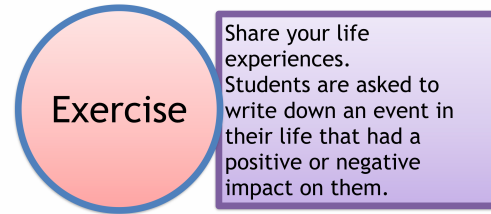
Distribute them back to the students.

Ask the students to read both sides of the card.

Select or ask up to 5 students to share the information on the card.

The goal of this exercise is to allow students to realize they are not alone. Others experience the same challenges on behavioral wellness.

Ask students what was the outcome of the events.

A graphic for an exercise. It features a pink circle on the left with the word "Exercise" in black text. To the right is a purple rectangular box with white text.

Exercise

Share your life experiences. Students are asked to write down an event in their life that had a positive or negative impact on them.

14

Slide

What are the consequences of ignoring behavioral wellness issues?

The answers can include:

- drug abuse
- spousal abuse
- family problems alcohol abuse
- anger
- anxiety

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF IGNORING BEHAVIORAL WELLNESS ISSUES?



"I asked for help. I begged my brothers and sisters for help. They ignored my plea. They weren't behaving with malicious intent. They did not know the action to take to help me."

Scott Gieselhart
Volunteer Firefighter, Suicide Attempt Survivor

15

DISCUSSION Refer students to Page 13 of the Report Refer to the story from Scott - ask students what their reaction is to the story?

What signs and symptoms were present that a firefighter was not dealing with the stress of the job?

Avoidance of acknowledging behavioral wellness issues.

Sign of weakness to ask for help.

Suffering silently and ignoring the issue.

Wake up and address the issue.

Soft issues as well as technical competencies in personnel development need to be addressed.

Slide

NOTES -

Nicole Mittendorf, a 31-year-old firefighter/paramedic in Fairfax County, Virginia was missing for 6 days until her body was found in Shenandoah National Park; her death was ruled a suicide by hanging. After her death, reports emerged alleging cyber-bullying as a possible contributor

For chiefs' training—Chief Richard Bowers lost his job over this—announced his retirement after a 41-year career February 18, 2016. Bowers' retirement followed the resignation of Battalion Chief Kathleen Stanley, who headed Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department's women's program; her resignation letter included details of at least half dozen allegations of sexual harassment.

Sources:

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/nicole-mittendorf-firefighter-bullying_us_571e2959e4b0d0042da9b3d6

<https://www.sebastiandaily.com/news/vero-beach/irc-rescue-firefighter-commits-suicide-after-facebook-post-1526/>

<https://ffxfirerescue.wordpress.com/2018/02/16/fire-chief-richard-bowers-announces-retirement/>

Fairfax County fire chief announces retirement amid complaints about handling of sexual harassment

By Justin Jouvenal

February 16

Email the author

Fairfax County's fire chief announced his retirement Friday, a little more than a week after county officials said they would investigate allegations that the department had failed to curb sexual harassment.

Richard R. Bowers Jr. has received high marks during his five-year tenure for the department's firefighting work, but was dogged by complaints and a handful of lawsuits claiming that women were mistreated in the ranks.

Bowers's last day will be April 30.

The chief declined to comment, but county officials said Bowers offered to retire after a meeting this week with the county executive, who expressed

Firefighter Suicide

Fairfax County, VA Fire-Rescue - April 13, 2016



- Firefighter/Paramedic Nicole Mittendorf, age 31, was missing for six days before she was found in a park.
- Her death was ruled suicide by hanging.
- Cyber bullying and sexual harassment were alleged as possible contributing factors.

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frustration by the Board of Supervisors with the pace of progress in changing the culture of the department.

Still, Sharon Bulova (D), the chairwoman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, praised Bowers's work.

"Chief Bowers has been an outstanding chief in that he has been over the top with community outreach and engagement, and making improvements to some of the response issues the department has had," Bulova said. "As we are looking for a new fire chief we will be looking for someone who has those skills and can deal with behavioral issues."

Bowers was appointed chief in February 2013, following a 35-year career with the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service in Maryland. The department achieved a top-tier ranking for fire protection under his watch, created its first strategic plan and built and renovated stations.

[Female firefighter's suicide is a 'fire bell in the night']

But the department was plunged into controversy in 2016 after firefighter Nicole Mittendorff committed suicide. Her family has not given a reason for her suicide, but sexist and sexually suggestive comments were made about her on a local Internet forum that appeared to come from people with knowledge of the department.

In the aftermath of Mittendorff's death, other female firefighters came forward and some sued, alleging problems with sexual harassment in the department, a lack of leadership on the issue and problems with women advancing to higher ranks.

Bowers promised to change the culture of the department and instituted a number of changes, including revising policies for investigating sexual harassment claims and providing retraining on the issue.

County officials also commissioned a report analyzing the department's culture that was released last year. A survey accompanying it found that nearly 40 percent of firefighters reported experiencing or witnessing harassment, bullying and discrimination. It also showed that some were dissatisfied with the department's leadership.

Then last month, Battalion Chief Kathleen Stanley outlined fresh allegations in a scathing letter, submitting her resignation as interim director of the fire department's women's program. Department leaders disputed the claims.

[After a female firefighter's suicide, the ugly sexual harassment was supposed to end. It hasn't.]

"This position is for show with no legitimate authority, respect or value," Stanley wrote in the letter. "Advice, advocacy and suggestions are humored, at best, and routinely dismissed."

Stanley detailed a long list of complaints, including saying that a group of men received privileges that women did not, that a female firefighter was retaliated against after seeking an apology for sexual harassment and that the department's "zero tolerance" policy for sexual harassment was not acted upon.

"I hope with the new administration we will get through all these problems," Stanley said Friday. "We are a great department. We deserve a great leader."

Bulova said the county will begin a wide-ranging search for Bowers's replacement. It hopes to have a new chief in place by the time he retires at the end of April.

Slide - Chief Suicide

NOTES - David Dangerfield, a Florida Battalion Chief in Indian River County Fire Rescue, dies by suicide Saturday night shortly after writing a Facebook post about PTSD, according to the Sheriff's Office.

Deputies found Battalion Chief David Dangerfield a short distance away in a wooded area off State Road 60 west of Interstate 95. They were responding to a call about the incident at about 10:30 p.m.

Saturday, according to Sheriff's spokesman Lt. Eric Flowers.

Flowers said Dangerfield drove his pickup on State Road 60 near I-95 and made a call to 911 to tell dispatchers where deputies could find his body.

Deputies drove to the scene and found Dangerfield dead from a self-inflicted gunshot wound, the Sheriff's Office said.

IRC Emergency Management Director John King notified Dangerfield's co-workers about his death, according to Assistant Chief Brian Burkeen.

"It is with great sadness I share with you the passing of Battalion Chief David Dangerfield this evening," King wrote in the email to his staff. "Please keep Dave's immediate and extended family in your thoughts and prayers."

Just before his death, Dangerfield wrote this on his Facebook page:

"PTSD for Firefighters is real. If your love one is experiencing signs get them help quickly. 27 years of deaths and babies dying in your hands is a memory that you will never get rid off. It haunted me daily until now. My love to my crews. Be safe, take care. I love you all."

Dangerfield was named Emergency Service Provider of the Year by the Treasure Coast Fire Chiefs' Association in 2013.

Dangerfield was also a fire instructor at the Indian River State's Fire Academy and a field training officer for the dive rescue team.

The veteran firefighter provided Thanksgiving Day meals through the Big Heart Brigade of Indian River County. Dangerfield also founded the annual Firefighters Chili and Salsa Cook-off, a charity fundraiser.

According to the IAFF (International Association of Firefighters):

"PTSD is a serious and chronic condition that can ruin the careers of fire fighters and paramedics, destroy families and jeopardize public and fire fighter safety. According to the Journal of Occupational Health, approximately 20 percent of fire fighters and paramedics have PTSD.¹

Furthermore, according a 2015 Florida State University study, nearly half of the fire fighters surveyed (46.8 percent) have thought about suicide, 19.2 percent had suicide plans and 15.5 percent had made suicide attempts.² In fact, those with PTSD are six times more likely to attempt suicide compared to demographically matched controls."

Fire Chief Suicide

Indian River County, FL Fire-Rescue - October 15, 2016



- Battalion Chief David Dangerfield died by suicide shortly after posting to Facebook.
- "PTSD for Firefighters is real. If your love (sic) one is experiencing signs get them help quickly. 27 years of deaths and babies dying in your hands is a memory that you will never get rid off (sic). It haunted me daily until now. My love to my crews. Be safe, take care. I love you all."

17

The Dangerfield family is still coping with the fact the battalion chief had been getting counseling for PTSD. But it's a disorder that sometimes can haunt the individual. Bruce Dangerfield said his son went to the doctor three times a week for about 1 1/2 years. He says PTSD has "hurt a lot of people" and they can't control what they do.

NOTES - instructor ask students Why are firefighters killing themselves?

Possible answers may be...

- PTS
- Family and money issues
- Firefighting/EMS is a high-stress job

How large is the firefighter suicide issue?

- CareerCast.com
 - 1st - enlisted active duty military
 - 2nd - Firefighting

NOTES

The short answer has to do with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), but both the FBHA and the USFA say more factors are at play here. Family and money issues combined with the fact that firefighting/EMS is a high-stress profession. In fact, CareerCast.com just completed their annual survey of the most stressful careers in the nation. First, of course, are our enlisted active duty military personnel. Firefighting was number two. Number two! Ahead, even, of commercial airline pilots (the complete survey results can be found here). Career Cast factors in environment, life risk, and on the job hazards, among other things.

Slide

NOTES - The issue of behavioral health has affected firefighters for many years without much notice. Acknowledging and accepting the mental and physical impact has only recently been recognized as having a short and long-term consequence on the mental wellness of our brothers and sisters which we in public safety community are now beginning to admit. It is a duty of ourselves to accept we cannot always deal with the stress that life and public safety brings to bear upon. The impact stress brings to our family, children, friends and colleagues can no longer be ignored. The use of drugs, alcohol and other stimulants to disguise the symptoms must be recognized and action taken. Mental wellness is a necessary for members of the response community on the signs, symptoms and actions necessary to protect ourselves form the stressors.

Slide

It's not as easy as cleaning your gear?

NOTES - Every first responder on the job has had overwhelming experiences that create a stress-related reaction. It is the responder's reactions to this cumulative stress that can impact the individuals long term emotional health and well being.

Slide

"I asked for help. I begged my brother and sister for help. They ignored my plea. They weren't behaving with malicious intent. They did not know the action to talk to help me."

Scott Gieselhart Volunteer Firefighter - Suicide attempt survivor.

NOTES - Page 13 of the Report

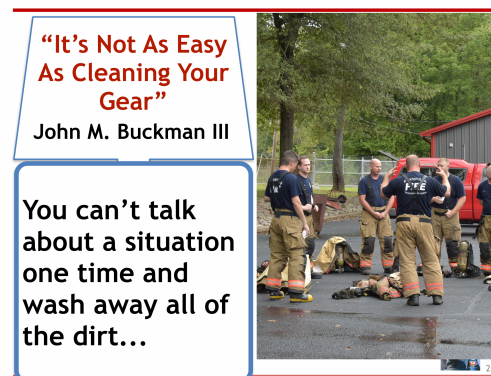
Avoidance of acknowledging behavioral wellness issues.

Sign of weakness to ask for help.

Suffering silently and ignoring the issue.

Wake up and address the issue.

Soft issues as well as technical competencies in personnel development need to be addressed.



NOTES - this article from the National Volunteer Fire Council is a very good description of one of our brothers who was at the brink of disaster - took the jump - but survived. His story is riveting. Instructors can provide copies for each student and then have a discussion about the circumstances and what signs and symptoms were present.

I MADE THE CALL TO MAKE THINGS BETTER

November 8, 2016

By Scott Geiselhart

Reprinted from the NVFC's Helpletter

Scott Geiselhart

My name is Scott Geiselhart. I'm a 20 year veteran of the Frazee (MN) Fire Department, a father, and an auto repair shop owner. And I am a PTSD, meth, and suicide attempt survivor.

During my time as a firefighter, I had responded to countless calls, including auto extrication and ice water rescue, where I witnessed many deaths and other losses. It was all part of the job. But it affected me. I was angry all the time and yelled at my girlfriend and kids. I was having nightmares, flashbacks, angry outbursts, and was isolating myself. I was doing meth – a line an hour or more so I never would go to sleep and have nightmares. I thought I had a split personality!

In July of 2014, I had enough! I couldn't go on. I was so confused not knowing what was going on in my life – why was I like this? I had to stop myself from hurting my family. I felt I needed to eliminate myself; they would be better off with me not hurting them. I went to my shop and found my favorite, most reliable revolver, put it to my head, and pulled the trigger. The hammer came down... and just clicked. I threw the gun down in shock – it had never malfunctioned before. None of the rounds were touched!

I started to type on my computer keyboard and put these words into a search engine: nightmares, yelling, flashbacks. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) filled the screen! I'd heard about PTSD before, but thought it was just something that affected the military; I didn't even know what the letters stood for.

I couldn't believe it – this condition was treatable! There was help out there. This wasn't something I had to live with forever. I went to tell my girlfriend and kids as fast as I could, but it must have seemed like I'd lost it – I was so excited to tell them I'd found an answer that I was yelling, and they were scared of me and wouldn't listen.

I went back to my shop, heart broken. I didn't know what else to do. I found a number for a suicide hotline; I called 12 times and no one answered. I called three other phone numbers that the fire department had provided, and they were disconnected. I called a police officer friend, and he said they were going to come pick me up. I didn't want to be

taken to a mental hospital, so I decided I was going to try a few more numbers and then I was going to make my second suicide attempt. I called a local counseling center and they said they could see me in a week and a half. Finally, I had one last number left to call: 1-888-731-FIRE (3473) – the Fire/EMS Helpline.

Someone picked up right away, and after I told him what happened, he said, “Scott, we’ve got you.”

Finally, someone was there, and understood what I was going through! It was as if he reached through the phone and was holding me in his hands! The amazing person on the other end of line was Mike Healy. Mike works with American Addiction Centers in conjunction with the National Volunteer Fire Council to provide this free, confidential hotline to first responders and their families.

The next day, on Mike’s recommendation, I was getting Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) Therapy. EMDR is a type of psychotherapy that helps process negative memories through sounds or movements while you talk about the trauma. EMDR was incredible!

It took some time, but thanks to the right treatment and effort I’m back and loving life! No more nightmares and flashbacks. I walked away from meth and haven’t been angry in 22 months. The peace I feel now is awesome! Now I’m able to share my experiences and help others by speaking out and informing emergency responders about PTSD, mental health, and suicide awareness and prevention. I want other emergency responders to know if they are struggling they are not alone, and there is help available. Watch more of Scott’s story at https://youtu.be/NEBf_M_Ir18.

If you are struggling and need help, call the Fire/EMS Helpline at 1-888-731-FIRE (3473). Find additional resources from the NVFC’s Share the Load program here.

Slide

Cumulative Effects

“It is no wonder that constant exposure to such events can result in cumulative stress that can potentially impact the individual’s emotional well-being.”

NOTES - Page 11 of the report

Ask the following question? What are the potential stressors and the resulting emotional toll that can create behavioral issues?

The manner in which the responder copes with the cumulative stress effects impacts their entire life. Family - Career - Joy -

**Cumulative
Effects**

**Cumulative
Effects**

**Cumulative
Effects**



Physical Health - Overall Well Being.

Slide

What you signed up for?

NOTES

What does the fire service do?

Help people - pure and simple.

Mrs. Smith calls 911 and wants a fast response - take care of her problem and to be nice to her.

You will experience society for many on the worst day of their life.

You are human and should understand what you see will affect you in ways that you won't understand or accept today BUT it will affect you.

Show the video...

After the video

Ask the students if any have experienced something like what you have you just seen

Limit discussion to about 10 minutes about their experiences

Slide (2 slides include most of these items)

NOTES - Instructor should ask students who amongst the group have experienced these kinds of issues. There are both positive and negative factors that can bring a barrage of emotions.

Reference the student manual list of items from Chief Gary Ludwig book Blood, Sweat and Tears.

Recruit Firefighters

You will... witness the miracle of birth hold a baby in your arms as it takes its last breath cry with your patients be vomited upon comfort a father who held his dead son in his arms and grieved with the greatest sorrow control bleeding say a short silent prayer for a patient work past the end of your shift have important family plans cancelled perform CPR on a young girl who reminds you of your daughter work in severe cold be criticized for showing up late tell a father his son has died hold a young child's hand while his mother is loaded in the ambulance immobilize neck and back injuries climb down dark hole get lost in a smoke filled building listen when a patient tells you they are dying deal with homeless people you will have a civilian file a complaint against you drive a lady to the hospital in the front seat of an ambulance while CPR is being performed on her husband of 56 years go an entire shift without eating a meal chop a hole in a roof with heavy fire coming out immediately not dream of doing another job...

Gary Ludwig Chief Champaign (IL) Fire Department Author - Blood, Sweat, Tears and Prayers

Slide

“Roughly 50% of the U.S. population is exposed to traumatic stress, but only 5%-10% develop PTSD” (Ozer et al., 2003, p. 54).

Assuming this statistic is accurate, then it might be reasonable to say that 100% of emergency responders are exposed to traumatic stress.

NOTES - Page 14 of the report

Many seasoned first responders have the ability to handle stressful situations, deal with the unknown, calm excited people, and withstand gruesome scenes while performing heroic acts to save lives and continue to make rational decisions while others around them are losing their heads. The ability to deal with all these on-the-job stressors, plus all the other parts of daily life everyone else faces, is almost an after thought because as first responders, that’s what we do.

Slide

There are calls that WILL impact YOU!

Let’s be clear, the “Suck it up, Buttercup,” mentality is NOT the approach to take.”

NOTES

Page 16 of the report

“Not long ago, veteran firefighters derided comrades for wanting to put on air packs before walking into a burning structure. Even today, rookies might express their feelings after their first horrific scene, only to be told by the “seasoned veteran” to “Suck it up, Buttercup.” Let’s be clear, the “Suck it up, Buttercup,” mentality is NOT the approach to take.”

Slide (there are 3 slides that go together describing two health issues)

Behavioral Health Sizeup

A family member approaches you and relates that lately they are having shortness of breath, pain in their arm and now recurring chest pains.

Second slide

A firefighter approaches you and states “I haven’t been sleeping well after that response the other day”. He is usually very engaged but now is withdrawn.

NOTES

Would you do anything and if so what?

Why did you know to take those actions?

Now a firefighters comes up and states “I haven’t been sleeping well after that response the other day”. He is usually very engaged but now is withdrawn.

Would you do anything and if so specifically what?

What’s the difference in your comfort level to take action from each scenario?

Don’t care?

A family member approaches you and relates that lately he/she is having shortness of breath, pain in the arm, and recurring chest pains.

What would you say? What action would you take?

Behavioral Health SIZEUP

A firefighter approaches you and states “I haven’t been sleeping well after that response the other day.” He is usually very engaged but now is withdrawn.

What would you say? What action would you take?

Behavioral Health SIZEUP

Never trained for what that looks like and might be? What do I do? What can I do?

Slide

Culture of Accountability

- Two-in, two-out
 - Physical safety
- Two-in, three-out
 - Emotional as well as physical safety
- Emotional RIT
 - Just as important as establishing RIT on the fireground
 -

NOTES

We all know and accept “two-in, two-out” for accountability and safety. We should apply the same philosophy to firefighters experiencing reactions to calls.

Two-in, three-out means having a third person who “has the firefighter’s back” regarding emotional safety. This could be a specific person whose role is to be available for emotional wellness support (not necessarily on the fireground), for example, a chaplain, behavioral wellness professional, peer-support team.

We have embraced a strong culture of RIT on the fireground—we need to have just as strong a culture of Emotional RIT.

For chiefs—about culture—the chief sets the tone regarding the stigma of discussing behavioral wellness and reactions to calls. The expectation in the department should be that not only should discussion about behavioral wellness be *encouraged*, but *expected*.

Slide

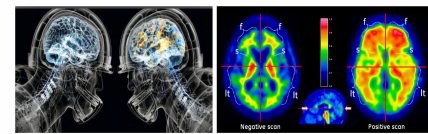
Your Brain On Drugs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vma93RB-aBI>

NOTES

Show video

This is your brain...



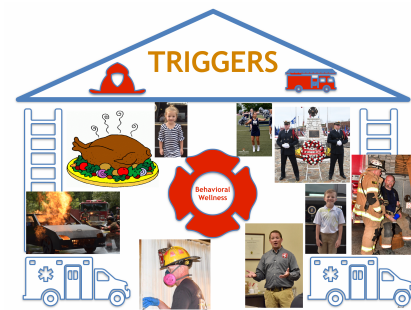
...with a Traumatic Brain Injury

...with Post Traumatic Stress



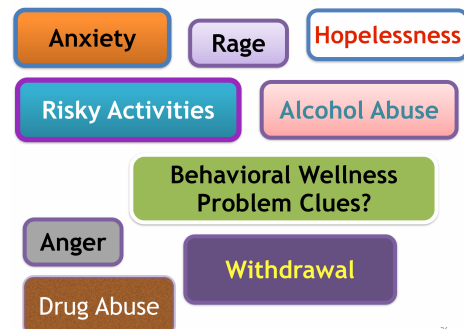
Slide - This is your brain...

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) are the result of a single traumatic event resulting in lifelong deficits. The cumulative effect of traumatic brain injuries is a significant issue. Concussions and other types of repetitive play-related head blows in American football have been shown to be the cause of chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), which has led to player deaths and other debilitating symptoms after retirement, including memory loss, depression, anxiety, headaches, and also sleep disturbances. TBI can result in permanent neurological damage producing lifelong deficits. TBI is a degenerative disease. TBI can also occur from stressful events. The slide depicts the differences in the brain between TBI and individuals with Post Traumatic Stress.



Slide

Triggers
Life events can leave everlasting images that can be recalled by various sensory “triggers”.



The triggers can evoke positive memories:

NOTES

Smell – Grandma’s Thanksgiving Turkey

Sounds – song that reminds you of an event to this day and how good you felt.

Visual – Pictures that bring back warm memories.

The triggers can evoke negative memories:

Smell – Flower scent reminds you of a funeral/death of a loved one.

Sounds- car back fire reminds you of a gunshot victim.

Visual – Child’s Xbox game violence reminds you of a gruesome accident scene

Slide

Behavioral Wellness Problem Clues

- Trapped
- Burden
- Substance
- Anxiety
- Reckless
- Sleepless
- Withdrawing
- Rage / Aggression
- Humiliation
- Seeking Revenge
- Saying goodbye to friends
- Giving away possessions

NOTES

Page 18

These are some of the clues of suicidal behavior. Being mindful of a change in a colleague’s overall demeanor can drive a conversation, which lead to getting help for that person. The above clues are behavioral changes, that if observed, may indicate that a person is in distress.

Instructor—emphasize that these clues should never be ignored. Emphasize that if firefighters in a department have an overall awareness of the clues, and are encouraged/expected to watch for these in their colleagues, they could potentially save a life.

Slide

Saying “I’ve got it all figured out now—I know what I am going to do” regarding a problem

NOTES

Page 18 not on the page exactly

Editorial addition

Individuals when they verbalize their mental plan for suicide they can exhibit a sense of calm.

Once the individuals has solidified a plan in their mind they can exhibit a peace within them self.

They can exhibit sense of peacefulness or calm with their life.

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Slide

Dealing with Stress

NOTES

Page 21 of the report

Exercise - huge dividends

Respect - plenty of sleep

Breathe - deep breathing exercise - 5 minutes



life will flash before your eyes. Make sure it's a spectacle and majestic view worth watching.

Your Bucket List

In 2007, I watched this movie call "The Bucket List". It's about two terminally ill men (Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman) on their road trip with a wish list of things to do before they "kick the bucket". There is this particular scene that I remembered vividly, when both of them are on top of a pyramid drinking and chatting, Morgan Freeman asked Jack Nicholson 2 questions after telling him some story about entering heaven's gate;

- 1) Have you found joy in your life?
- 2) Has your life brought joy to others?

Isn't it a tough question at times? As we frantically try to give a "politically" correct answer before we give up totally? And seriously, how much we weigh upon our answers? Or even provide an answer with a clear conscience?

I'm thinking hard, and I personally believe it's never too early or too late to think about these 2 questions.

Have you found joy in your life? (Qn 1 of 2)

Early this year (2014) I saw an awesome video by someone who quitted his job, packed a bag, grabbed his camera and travelled around the world. His catchphrase caught my attention; 17 Countries. 343 Days. 6237 Photographs. One incredible journey.

He compiled a time lapse of the many amazing places he visited and uploaded this YouTube video.

The Good Life (2008)

What really matters in life? Truth be told, you may find that it is already much closer than you think! Here is my take on things that matters, and of which I will definitely find the joy I'm searching for in my life:

Health matters—Poor health will both reduce the time you have in this world and your capability to live the life you want to live. "Nuff Said"

Relationship with our loved ones—They appear in our lives for a reason, and that is to complete us. We complete one another's lives. We are made that way.

Living a purpose-driven life—You can call it aspiration, life goals, whatever. What is the "YOU" in you? What makes you different to everyone else? Understanding your purpose is a journey that requires time and reflection. Personally, I feel I've only understood half of my own life-purpose and for all I know my life-purpose might even change in the near future! Find out what is it that truly makes you feel alive, and that is your life-purpose!

Have your life brought joy to others? (Qn 2 of 2)

This question is much harder to answer because it is a reflection, a third party thought. It is what we ultimately call a healthy relationship (with family, friends, colleagues and simply all humans). They need commitment to work, with lots of effort.

Forgive and forget—Forgiveness is the remedy. You have to let go of what’s behind you before you can hold onto the goodness in front of you.

Admit when you make a mistake—No one is “error-free”. Admitting to a mistake makes you more human anyway.

Be sincere—The greatest power you have in this world is the power of your own self-transformation. Be true to everyone as you would to yourself.

“No matter how rich you become, how famous or powerful, when you die the size of your funeral will still pretty much depend on the weather.” ([Click to Tweet](#))

Other Quotes from the Movie

There are also some other interesting “quotes” from the movie which I would like to provide here. So sit back and enjoy!

Quote No.1

Carter Chambers: You measure yourself by the people who measure themselves by you.

Quote No.2

Edward Cole: We live, we die, and the wheels on the bus go round and round.

Quote No.3

Carter Chambers: Forty-five years goes by pretty fast;

Edward Cole: Like smoke through a keyhole.

Quote No.4

Carter Chambers: Even now I cannot understand the measure of a life, but I can tell you this. I know that when he died, his eyes were closed and his heart was open. And I’m pretty sure he was happy with his final resting place, because he was buried on the mountain. And that was against the law.

Quote No.5

Edward Cole: The simplest thing is... I loved him. And I missed him. Carter and I saw the world together. Which is amazing... When you think that only three months ago, we were complete strangers! I hope that it doesn’t sound selfish of me but... the last months of his life were the best months of mine. He saved my life... And he knew it before I did.

Quote No.6

Carter Chambers: [in his letter to Edward] Dear Edward, I’ve gone back and forth the last few days trying to decide whether or not I should even write this. In the end, I realized I would regret it if I didn’t, so here it goes. I know the last time we saw each other, we weren’t exactly hitting the sweetest notes—certain wasn’t the way I wanted the trip to end. I suppose I’m responsible and for that, I’m sorry. But in all honesty, if I

had the chance, I'd do it again. Virginia said I left a stranger and came back a husband; I owe that to you. There's no way I can repay you for all you've done for me, so rather than try, I'm just going to ask you to do something else for me-find the joy in your life. You once said you're not everyone. Well, that's true-you're certainly not everyone, but everyone is everyone. My pastor always says our lives are streams flowing into the same river towards whatever heaven lies in the mist beyond the falls. Find the joy in your life, Edward. My dear friend, close your eyes and let the waters take you home.
Quote No.7

Edward Cole: ... He saved my life, and he knew it before I did. I'm deeply proud that this man found it worth his while to know me. In the end, I think it's safe to say that we brought some joy to one another's lives, so one day, when I go to some final resting place, if I happen to wake up next to a certain wall with a gate, I hope that Carter's there to vouch for me and show me the ropes on the other side.

I do hope that you will be able to provide good answers to the above two questions, but as of now I'm still searching for mine. I sure hope that when the time comes I will have the answers.

"In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years." (Click to Tweet)

2 Simple Questions to Ask Before We Die

The Bucket list is a great film. The two questions are very important

Slide

Tim Conway Oldest Fireman Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_AwOIs2buE

NOTES

Slide for chiefs/recruits 22

Tim Conway oldest volunteer firefighters

Slide

Infrastructure Support

- Each department will have different support mechanisms

NOTES

Ask the students to look at page 25 of the yellow ribbon report under support model and infrastructure give them 2 minutes to read the information about the different programs.

After the reading is done / ask about the programs available locally and how to access them.

This slide requires the instructor to complete research before the presentation on what is available for their specific fire department and how to access.

- Peer-support
- Chaplaincy
- EAP
- Behavioral Health resources
- Treatment programs
- Other organizations

Slide

“One size doesn’t fit all” applies to options for components of a system.

NOTES

A department of fifteen volunteers probably won’t need every component on the “menu.” But, you do need something.

“Develop and implement the support system that is best for your organizational culture and infrastructure.”

Page 25

Peer-support Program. (as a component of a CISM program) Identify individuals in the department who are well-suited and have the desire to serve in this capacity; these individuals should be trained using known peer support models (e.g., ICISF).

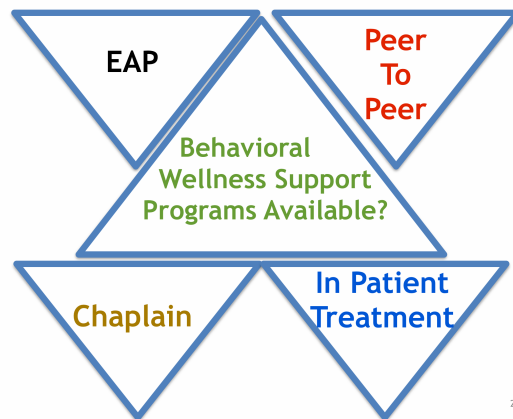
Chaplaincy Program. Chaplains should have education, training, and experience specific to the fire service. Selecting a chaplain who is or has been a first responder is ideal. Consider sponsoring one of your own who has felt the call to go through training to become a chaplain.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Ensure that EAP personnel are vetted and have specific

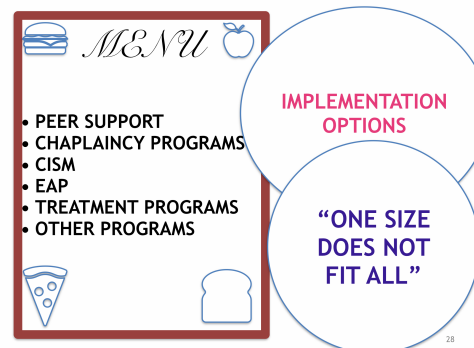
Dealing with Stress: Coping Mechanisms

[World's oldest firefighter](#)

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25



28

education in firefighter culture, exposure to trauma, and the unique experiences that we encounter that can lead to emotional and behavioral health problems.

Other Behavioral Health Resources. Even if your department has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), it may be beneficial to identify therapists who specialize in working with first responders as an additional resource.

Treatment Programs. Become aware of outpatient and inpatient professional treatment programs which are appropriate for first responders.

Other Organizations. Use the resources from the IAFF Behavioral Health Program, NFFF, Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance, IAFC, NFPA, NVFC, and others.

Slide

Slide

<http://www.thedailymusician.com/featured-posts/featured-video-sirens-gone-kevin-davidson/>

Kevin Davison

Singer, Songwriter, Firefighter

NOTES

Impact at home

Cumulative effects of emergency service carry over at home. As you just saw in the video, what were some of the things that you noticed when Kevin got home?

He experiences nightmares

He experiences flashbacks

Wife is talking and he is still thinking about the call

Special thanks to Kevin Davison for

“When Those Sirens Are Gone.”

Slide

“We ain’t superheroes were just ordinary people, trying to make a difference and the first on every scene. It’s a heavy, heavy burdn’, to carry all this hurtin’, when you can’t unsee the things you’ve seen. It keeps goin’ on, when those sirens are gone”

Infrastructure Support

[When Those Sirens Are Gone](#)

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We will close with the words...

“We ain’t superheroes; we’re just ordinary people, trying to make a difference and the first on every scene. It’s a heavy, heavy burden, to carry all this hurtin’, when you can’t unsee the things you’ve seen. It keeps goin’ on, when those sirens are gone.”

Kevin Davison, Firefighter/Paramedic, Kentville, Nova Scotia, Canada

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Kevin Davison, Canadian FF/Paramedic

NOTES

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Special thanks to Kevin Davison for “When Those Sirens Are Gone.”

Slide

Photo of VCOS Board with “Red Noses.”



Slide

Ask if anyone has questions

Slide

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nF_C3bO8WZ0

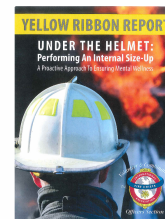
NOTES

To end on a lighter note - this video is a Tim Conway and Harvey Norman dentist visit.

Thank everyone for coming.

Questions?

Go make a difference. *Be* the difference.



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