

The Curse of Critical Incident Stress

Critical Incident Stress

How do officers handle stressful encounters?

Causes of Critical Incident Stress

- Community/Press
- Leadership
- Police Culture
- Nature of the Job

Community Expectations

- What does the public really expect of the police?
- What are we asking cops to do?

Harry H. Aurandt

- Officer Harry Aurandt died of wounds he sustained when he was shot while off duty as he was taking police action.
- Officer Aurandt and a detective were rabbit hunting in a rural area of Tulsa on Federal Road. At about 9:00 pm the officers had returned to their car when they were approached by three armed men who exited a Buick touring car with the intent of robbing them. The detective attempted to fire his shotgun at them but it misfired. The three men started shooting at he officers while they were sitting in their car. Officer Aurandt, despite serious wounds in one lung, leg, and liver, drove one mile to a farmhouse where he collapsed.

- Officer Aurandt died from his wounds two days later. The detective was paralyzed for life from leg wounds just above the knees.
- The three suspects were later apprehended. Two were convicted of murder and sentenced to life. One escaped from the Oklahoma Penitentiary in 1923. On May 17, 1931, he was captured in Los Angeles, California, following a spectacular gun battle with Los Angeles police officers.
- Officer Aurandt was survived by his wife, daughter and two-year-old son. His son, Paul Harvey Aurandt , later known as just Paul Harvey became a famous commentator, author, and columnist.

Leadership

- Rigid Command and Control System
- Autocratic Leaders
- Poor Leadership Examples
  - Juvenile Suicide
  - Officer attempt to resign

PRIMA 2020
CONFERENCE | NASHVILLE

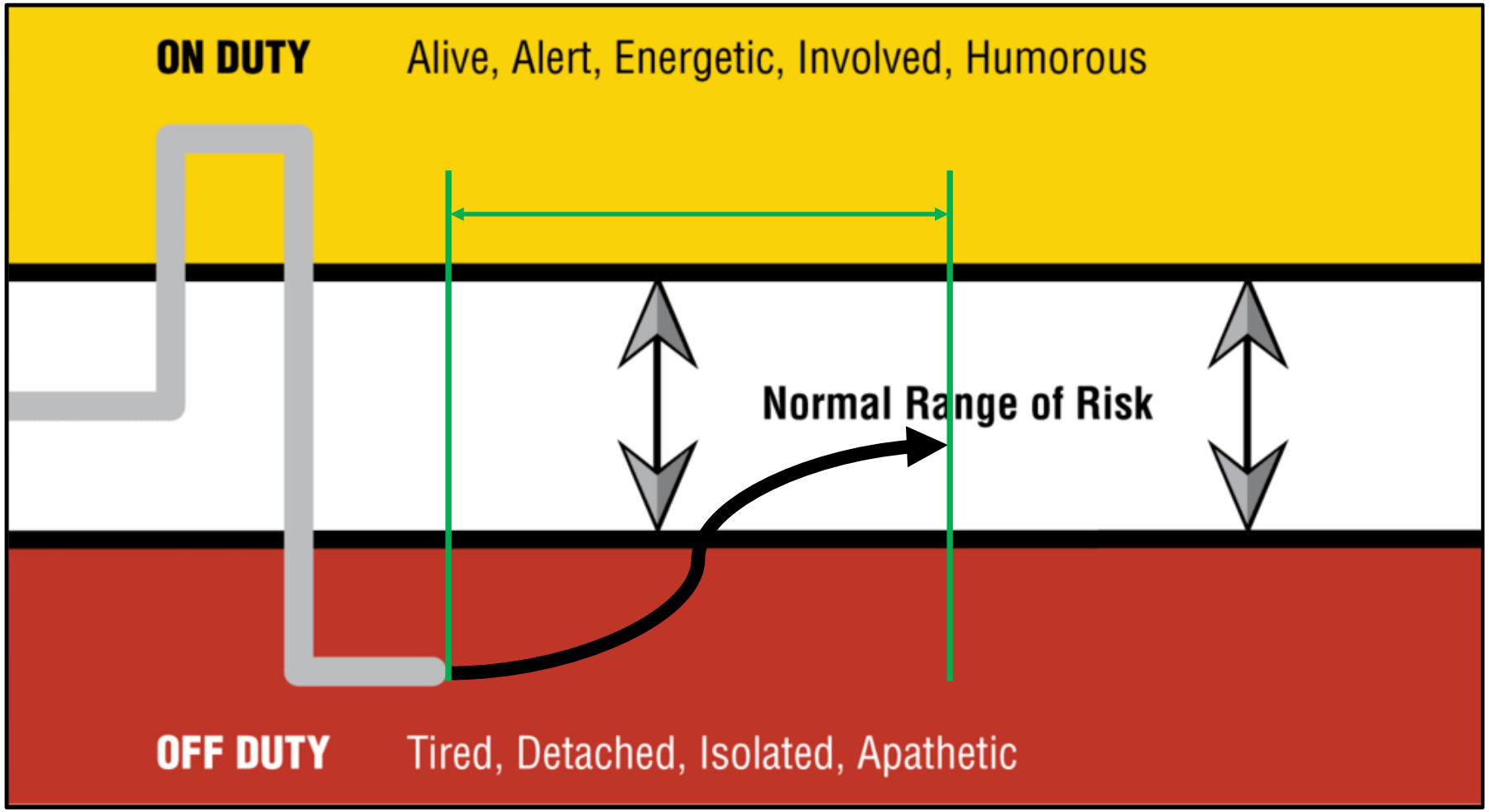
Police Culture

- Choir Practice
- Handle your business
- Weakness (street credibility)
- Code of Silence

Nature of the Job

- Shift work
- Rotating Assignments
- Court appearances / cross examinations
- Calls for service
- Liability!

Law Enforcement Rollercoaster



Negative Outcomes

- For the officer
  - Inability to handle stress / breaking points

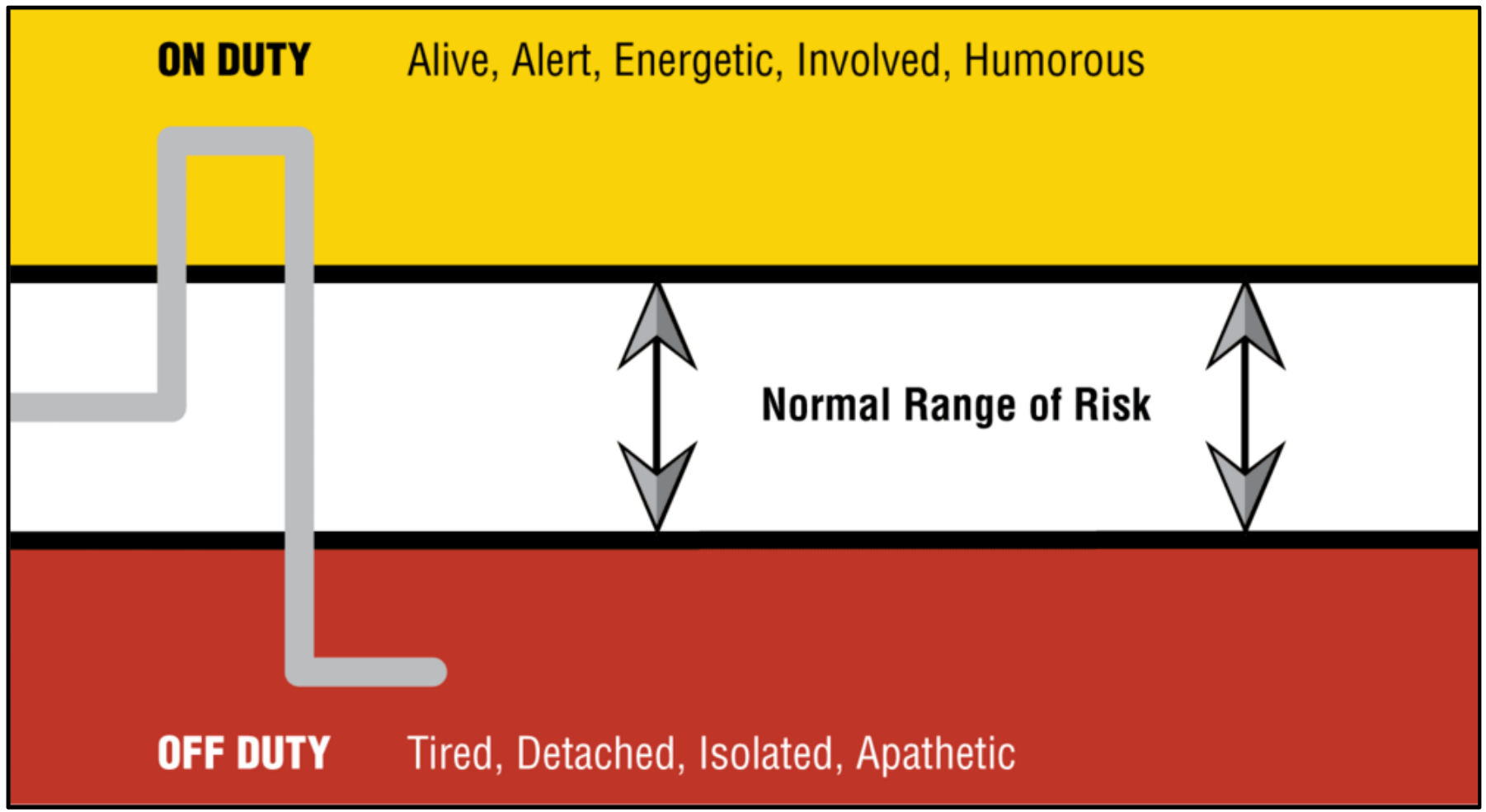
Negative Outcomes

- For the officer
  - Inability to handle stress / breaking points
  - Substance abuse issues
  - Health issues
    - Higher rates of heart disease, cancer, substance abuse, anxiety, depression and PTSD

Negative Outcomes

- Officer families
  - A spouse/parent with anger, impatience, violence issues
  - Higher rates of divorce
  - Financial struggles

PRIMA 2020
CONFERENCE | NASHVILLE



Negative Outcomes

- For the Department
  - Lawsuits
  - Unhealthy Culture
  - Morale Issues

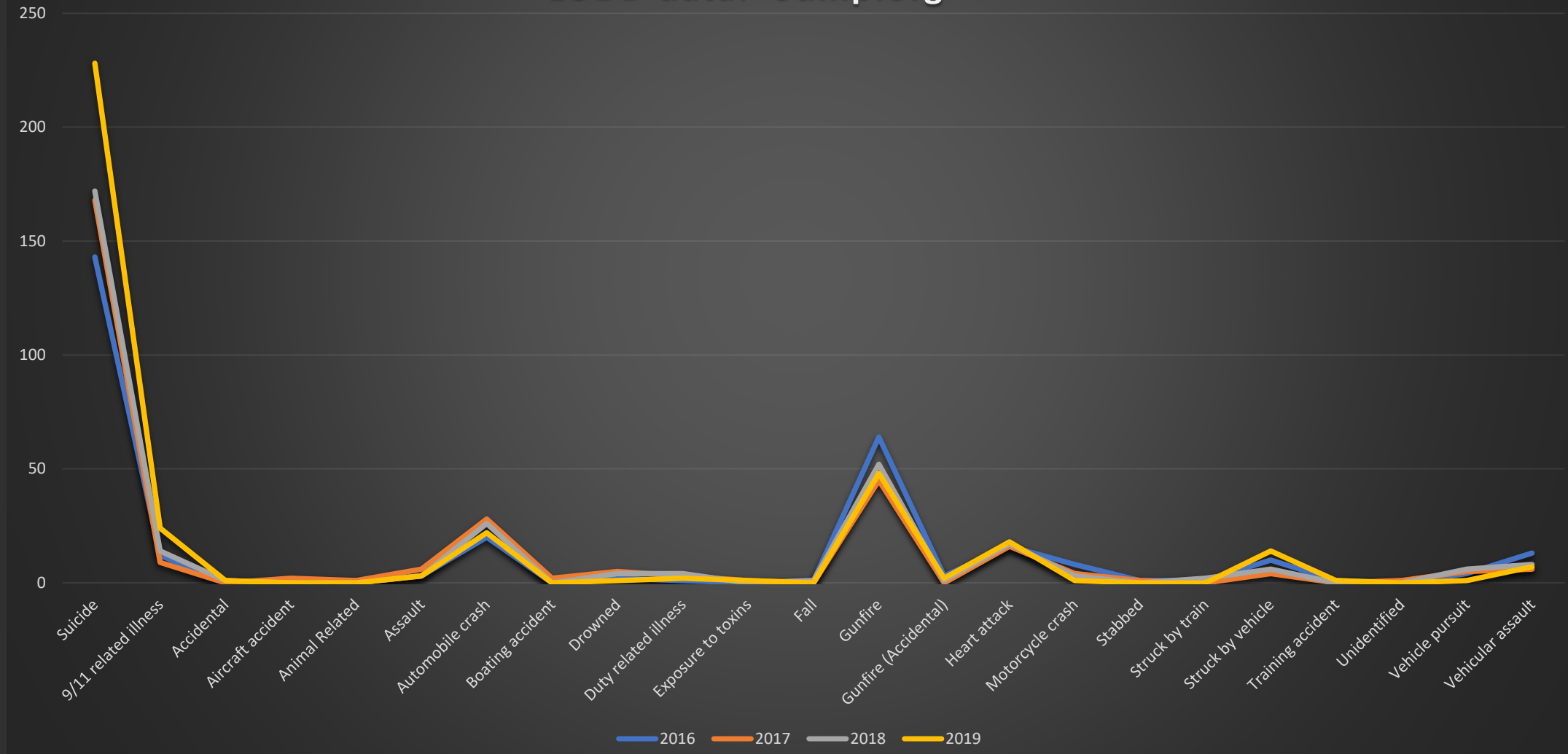
Negative Outcomes

- Public Perception
  - Who are we recruiting?
- Increased costs

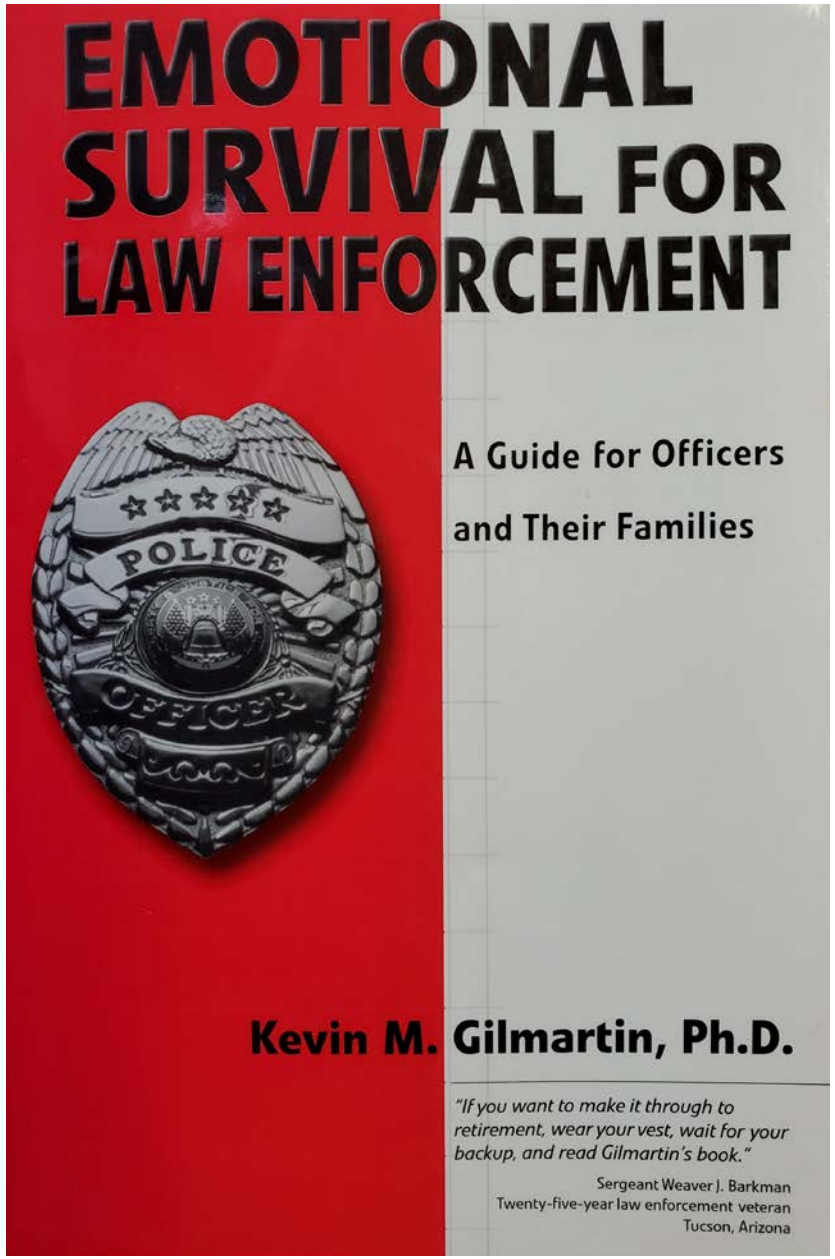
Solutions

- Improving Leadership
- Breaking the Code of Silence
- Outside Assistance/Systems and Programs

Law Enforcement Suicides and Line of Duty Deaths
2016-2019
Suicide data: bluehelp.org
LODD data: odmp.org



PRIMA 2020
CONFERENCE | NASHVILLE



Firefighters: For Whom the Bell Tolls



Life Threatening Duty Risks:

- **Burn injuries**
- **Hazardous chemical exposures**
- **Asphyxiation due to equipment malfunction**
- **Collapse due to physical stress**
- **Explosion**
- **Entrapment**

Firefighter Line of Duty Deaths

Fatalities by Nature of Fatal Injury (2009)

- Heart Attack: 43.3%
- Trauma: 30%
- Cerebral Vascular Incidents: 8.9%
- Other: 7.8%
- Asphyxiation: 5.5%
- Burns: 2.2%
- Heat Exhaustion: 1.1%
- Violence: 1.1%
- Electrocution: 1.1%



https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/ff_fat09.pdf

Firefighter Line of Duty Fatalities

Fatalities by Cause of Fatal Injury (2009)

Stress/Overexertion: 55.6%

Vehicle Collision: 17.8%

Other: 7.8%

Fall: 6.7%

Struck by: 3.3%

Caught/Trapped: 3.3%

Lost: 2.2%

Collapse: 2.2%

https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/ff_fat09.pdf

Physiological Strain of Firefighting

Cardiovascular: Increased HR and BP, Decreased Stroke Volume

Hematological: Decreased Plasma Volume and Hemoconcentration

Thermoregulatory: Elevated Core Temperature and Dehydration

Respiratory: Increased Breathing rate and Oxygen Consumption

Metabolic: High Oxygen Cost, Increased Lactate and Fatigue

Immune/Endocrine: Increased Leukocytes and Hormones

Nervous: Sympathetic Surge and Increased Adrenaline

Muscular: Increased Oxygen Use and Heat Production

"Sudden Cardiac Events in the Fire Service: Understanding the Cause and Mitigating the Risk," Skidmore College Health and Exercise Sciences, 2010

CDC HHE Report 2017-0021-3293

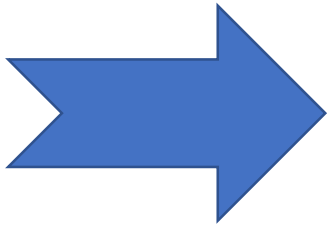
Firefighter Job Stresses:

- Lifesaving Duties
- Retirements
- Layoffs
- Budget Cuts
- Dissatisfaction of Pay and Benefits
- Lack of Job Security

CDC HHE Report 2017-0021-3293

Firefighter Work Event Stress:

- Job Stress
- Exposures to Traumatic Events at Work
- Mental Health Symptoms
- Training and Use of Resources to Cope with Stress



PTSD

Anxiety

Depression

NIOSH Definition of Job Stress

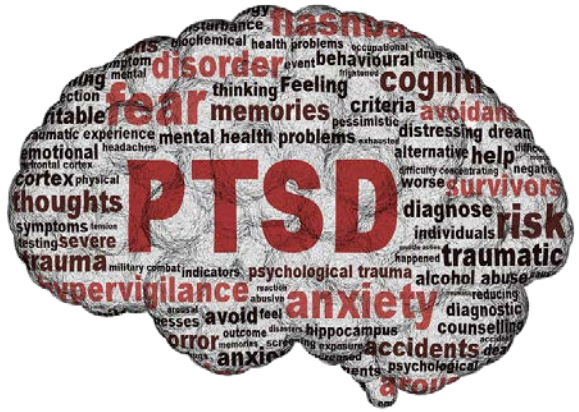


CC BY-NC

Job Stress is the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when job demands do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of employees.

PRIMA 2020
CONFERENCE | NASHVILLE

A Cry for Help



CC BY-NC-ND

Critical Event Screening red flags arising out of a traumatic event:

- Flashbacks about a traumatic event that create anxiety
- Reliving the moment
- Feeling upset by reminders of the event
- Bodily reactions – fast heartbeat, stomach churning
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Irritability or outbursts of anger
- Difficulty concentrating
- Heightened awareness of potential dangers to yourself and others
- Feeling jumpy or being startled by something unexpected

www.everyonegoeshome.com

Behavioral Assistance Resources

Personal Physician

Support Groups at Work

Religious Organizations

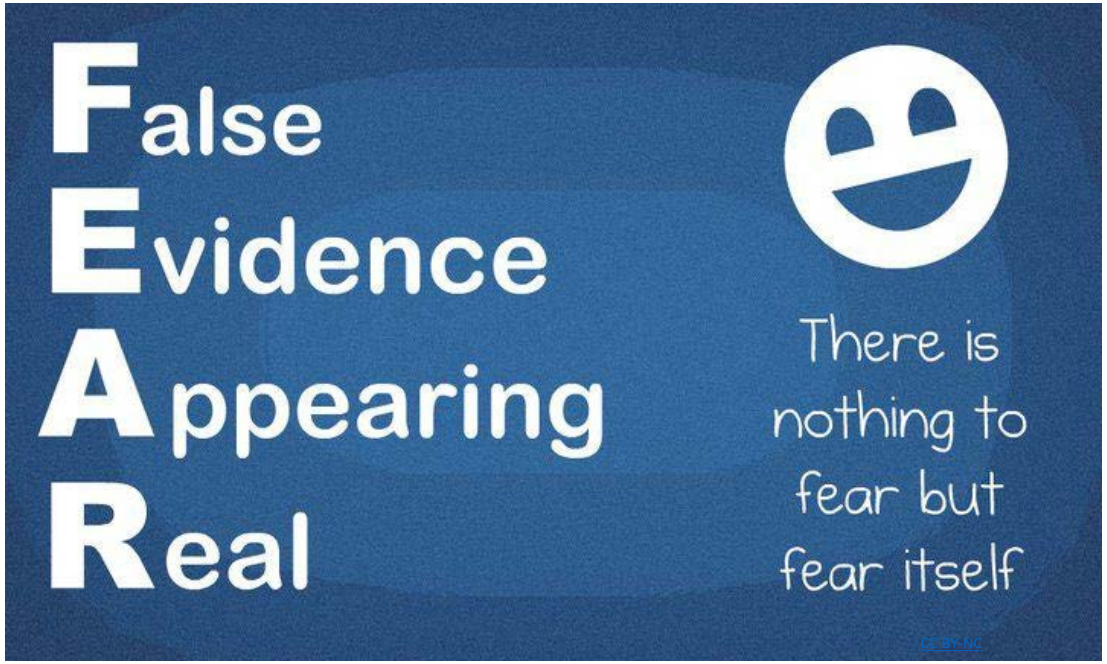
Employee Assistance Programs



CC BY-SA-NC

Perceived Stigmas to Seeking Help

- Embarrassment
- Cost of Services
- Skepticism about effectiveness
- Weakness will harm their career
- Fear of being treated differently



Peer Support Groups

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD PEER SUPPORT:

- Offers living proof of wellness and makes recovery attractive.
- Shows faith in the ability to change; encourages and celebrates wellness achievements.
- Encourages self-advocacy and self-sufficiency
- Genuinely cares and listens, can be trusted, can identify areas for potential growth
- Tells the truth, is honest about recovery process, identifies roadblocks
- Is a role model for recovery and provides stage-appropriate wellness education
- Assists in structuring daily activities around a self-developed plan for wellness
- Helps resolve roadblocks and problems, both personal and environmental
- Is knowledgeable about help resources, community services, and professional help
- Is a companion, an advocate, a cheerleader, and an inspiration

https://www.americanmentalwellness.org/intervention/peer-support/

Employee Assistance Programs



CC BY-NC-ND

Six Critical Requirements of an EAP:

1. 365/24/7 services
2. Confidentiality
3. Referral support and follow-up
4. Crisis Intervention
5. Substance abuse expertise
6. Communication of available services

Establishing First Responder EAP

1. Understand the material difference between Civilian and First Responder EAP
2. Communicate your intent and engage in discussion with your workforce
3. Determine the physical and behavioral health needs of your first responders
4. Collaborate on a policy governing your needs
5. Measure your program against applicable federal and state statutes, regulations and standards
6. Research your potential providers
7. Measure the effectiveness of your proposed EAP
8. Coordinate your EAP efforts to include peer support and community resources
9. Establish proposed parameters for EAP implementation
10. Implement and monitor the effectiveness of the EAP

PRIMA 2020
CONFERENCE | NASHVILLE

What makes an EAP program successful?

- Confidentiality
- Inclusion of employee and their family
- Recognition and support by peers and management
- Program supported by unions, management and workers
- Compromise and adaptability to the workforce's changing needs
- Understanding that the program should never be weaponized



CC BY-SA

Pinal County Sheriff's Office

- **Mandatory EAP counseling for Investigations Bureau (15 mins twice a year)**
  - **Looking to add other Dept's in county, patrol, jail, probation, victims assist's, county attorney, medical examiner, public defender etc**
- **Risk/HR provide articles on building resilience, self care**
- **Leadership support has been outstanding**
- **Using a counselor specific to Law Enforcement exposures is essential**
  - **Visits were moved to an offsite location after initial implementation**
- **Peer support programs and having a strong coordinator**
- **Mandatory stress class Sheriff's Office wide**

Pinal County Sheriff’s Office

- Matthew Thomas
- Chief Deputy Sheriff
- Pinal County Sheriff's Office
- Office # 520-866-5133
- Matthew.Thomas@pinal.gov

- Pat Shriner RN BSN COHN-S
- Pinal County Occupational health
- PH 520-866-6206
- Fax 520-866-6401
- Patricia.Shriner@pinal.gov

PRIMA 2020
CONFERENCE | NASHVILLE

Where We Are

- Twelve states cover mental claims with a limited burden of proof
  - New Mexico, Oregon, Nevada and Vermont have PTSD carve outs for first responders
- Thirteen states use some variation of the words ‘unexpected, unusual or extraordinary’
  - Louisiana and Colorado have PTSD carve outs for first responders
  - Pennsylvania has bill in the Legislature…
- Eighteen states still require a physical injury to have mental stress
    - Four states have PTSD carve outs for first responders (Ohio has bill in the Legislature…)
- North Carolina, Texas, Montana, Maryland, Kentucky ONLY cover first responder PTSD
- Minnesota only recognizes the diagnosis of PTSD and has a separate carve out for first responders
- North Dakota does not cover mental injuries at all

Where We Are Headed

National trend is toward laws specific for First Responders:

- Sandy Hook, Pulse Nightclub, Las Vegas
- Some include EMTs and Dispatchers
- Some classify PTSD as an Occupational Disease
- Some have lower thresholds for compensability including diagnosis of PTSD or ‘substantial contributing cause’

Where We Are Headed

CHALLENGES:

- Lack of providers who can separate out pre-existing conditions, personality disorders, know how to diagnose PTSD objectively
- COST- Unknown Impact:
    - Mental claims are considered ‘unscheduled’- eligible for lifetime benefits with loss of earning capacity analysis
    - Claims are estimated to cost $500,000 to $1.8 million each for indemnity benefits if employee unable to return to job
    - There is no offset in AZ through pension system for workers’ comp benefits

Where We Are Headed

FOCUS ON PREVENTION!

- Train Supervisors/Managers to recognize symptoms in employees, don't wait for employee to say something
- Mandatory annual psych evals for those in high-risk positions
- Develop protocol for CISM debriefing and peer support after traumatic event:
    - Sex crimes/pornography involving children
    - Child drownings
    - Gruesome accidents with multiple fatalities
    - Murder-suicide of family
    - Fires involving death of children
    - Employee witnesses or is present at death of civilians or co-workers

Where We Are Headed

FOCUS ON PREVENTION!

- Organizations such as www.bulletproof.org and www.fireproofaz.org providing resources; technology is developing
- Resiliency policies
  - Internal support
  - Rotation of employees out of high stress jobs
- Include the spouse/significant other
- Provide open opportunity to seek help

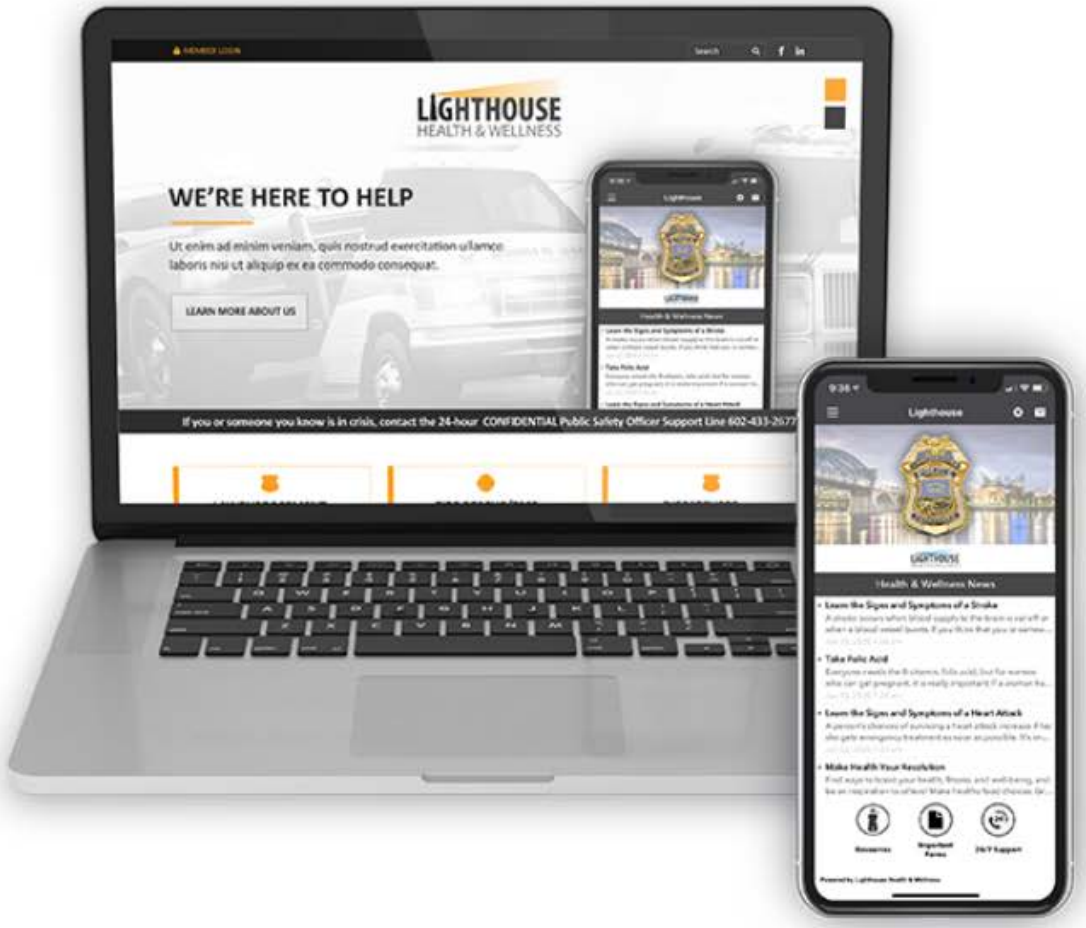
PRIMA 2020
CONFERENCE | NASHVILLE

https://www.lighthousehw.org/



PRIMA 2020
CONFERENCE | NASHVILLE

https://www.lighthousehw.org/



Provide Anytime Anywhere Access to Your Agency's Health & Wellness Resources

Lighthouse Web Portal & Mobile App

Instantly provide access to health and wellness resources via the Lighthouse web portal and mobile app. Information is automatically synced across all platforms and devices. Most importantly, front and center is 24/7/365 access to first responder focused crisis hotlines and resources to ensure that help—or just a friendly, anonymous voice—is just a phone call away.

Custom Agency Applications

Take it a step further with a fully customizable mobile application branded to your agency. With a mobile app, you can skip the login and provide faster access to your agency's resources. Additionally, you will now have access to powerful push notifications and user groups allowing you to instantly broadcast critical agency messages to key agency stakeholders. Built on the Apex IRIS platform, your options for expansion are limitless.

PRIMA 2020
CONFERENCE | NASHVILLE

https://www.lighthousehw.org/

RESOURCES



My Agency's Resources



Personal Wellness



Mental Health



Physical Fitness & Health



Financial Fitness



Substance Use & Addiction



Self Assessments



Peer Support



Find A Therapist



Chaplains



Helpful Resources & Referrals



Other Trainings /Events

Thank you!



Marilyn L Rivers, CPCU ARM AIC
Director of Risk and Safety
Safety & Compliance Officer
City of Saratoga Springs
474 Broadway
Saratoga Springs, NY. 12866



Greg Veitch, MS
President
Noble Cause Training and Development, LLC
PO Box 932
Saratoga Springs, NY. 12866



Kurt Braatz, MPA SPHR
Loss Control Manager
Arizona Counties Insurance Pool
1905 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ. 85009