



# Resiliency for the First Responder

Resilience:

*“The process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress.”*



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*



More first  
responders die by

SUICIDE

than from on  
duty incidents.



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*

Source: Ruderman Family Foundation

# M O R T A L I T Y   R A T I O



Odds of death by suicide in EMTs versus non-EMTs

Arizona Vital Records show 350,998 deaths (2009-2015)

- 7,838 of the total deaths were categorized as suicide.
- 1,205 of the total deaths held EMS occupations

## Arizona-Suicide

63 deaths related to suicide w/ EMS occupations

- Suicide deaths EMS 5.2%
- Non-EMS 2.2%



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

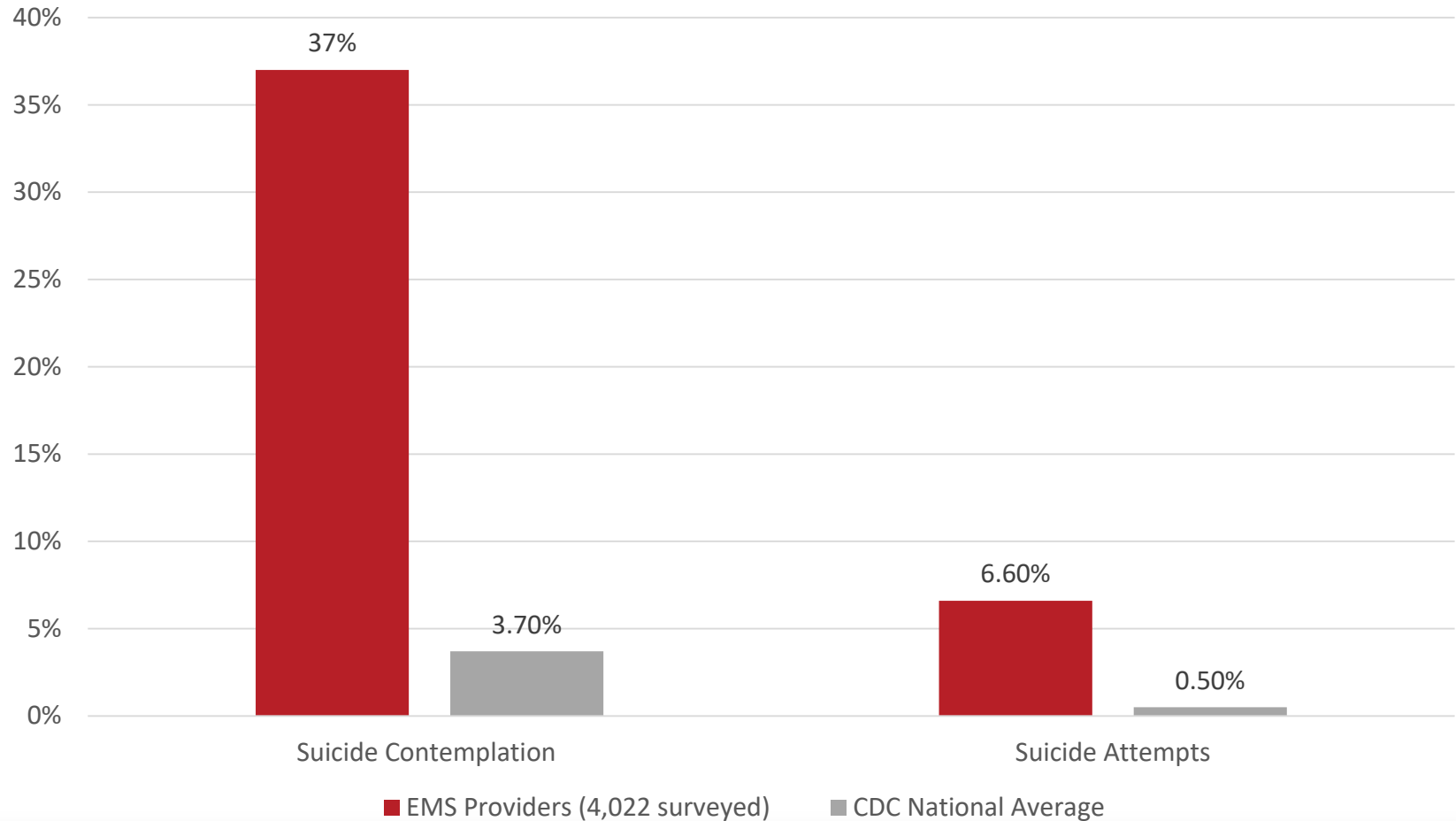
*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*

Source: Neil Vigil / Dr. Bobrow



# Suicide Contemplation vs. Attempts

EMS Providers and General Population




ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*

Source: JEMS





Resilience is about  
behaviors, thoughts  
and actions.

These skills can be  
learned and  
continuously developed  
by **ANYONE**.



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*



# History of Resiliency



**Resiliency, while not new, is finally starting to become a recognized defense in the ability to cope with crisis and high stress incidents.**



First documented research  
in 1973 by Dr. Emmy  
Werner

an American psychologist

Department of Human and Community  
Development

Best known study on resilience in children  
in Hawaii



More work and research done in relation to veteran  
PTSD by University of Arizona and Southern Arizona  
VA Health Care System



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*

Source: Handbook on Resilient Children



# History of Resiliency: Findings

Learning and adopting resiliency skills such as:

- relaxation
  - positive perspectives
  - stress identification techniques
- 

Have statistically helped *veterans and children* develop characteristics that effectively combat and prevent some of the most devastating effects of PTSD.

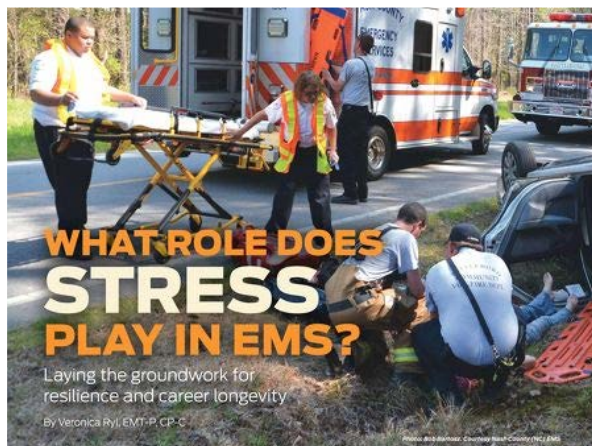
**It is time we make it a priority to prepare First Responders with Resiliency Techniques.**



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*

Source: Tillman

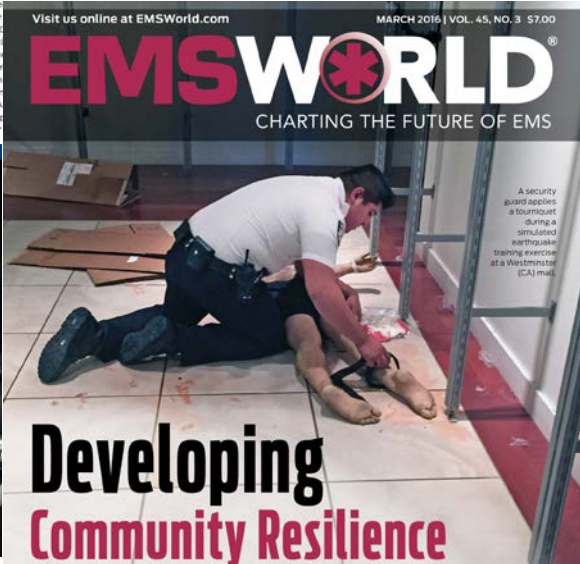
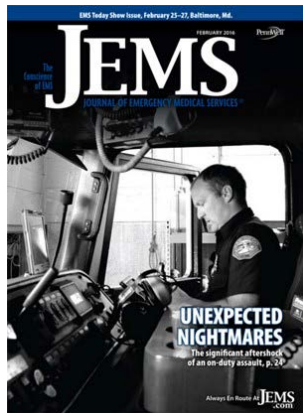


This is the first in a multipart series on stress and resilience in EMS.

**T**here's no denying a career in EMS can be stressful. We are witnesses to gunshot victims, steel-bending motor vehicle collisions, unresponsive babies, and disturbing suicides and murders.

As practitioners, what often affects us

ditions such as anxiety lead to stress disorder, compulsive disorder, stress disorder (PTSD). There has been recent attention to mental health, and it's about the responders and 10 million by suicide in 2017 (as reported cases). In a reported that 37% of



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

Health and Wellness for all Arizonans





# Resiliency for the First Responder



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*



# EMS Responders

## Personality Traits

- Controllers
- Action oriented
- Risk takers/Thrill seekers
- Desire instant gratification
- Obsessive - Compulsive
- Rescue personality
- Dedicated
- Quick Decision Makers

## Public Perception

- Responsive
- Heroic
- Tough
- Prepared/Ready
- Reliable / Dependable
- Physically/Mentally Strong

# STIGMA



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*

# STIGMA



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

## What's Our Union Doing For Us?

▶ YOUR DUES GET RESULTS

### 92 percent of fire fighters say stigma is a barrier to seeking behavioral health treatment

The IAFF is working to end the stigma.

Our new Peer Support Training teaches members how to talk with peers about behavioral health, provide support and serve as a bridge to treatment and other resources.

The self-paced online Behavioral Health Awareness course educates members about post-traumatic stress, substance abuse and suicide awareness/ prevention and dispels common myths about behavioral health.

▶ Go to [www.iaff.org/behavioralhealth](http://www.iaff.org/behavioralhealth) to learn more



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

Health and Wellness for all Arizonans



# Types of Stress

- Physical
- Cognitive (Thinking)
- Emotional
- Behavioral
- Spiritual (Perceptual Stress)
- Psychosocial stress







## Definitions

**Stressor** - a stimulus that causes or recalls a negative response to situations or conditions

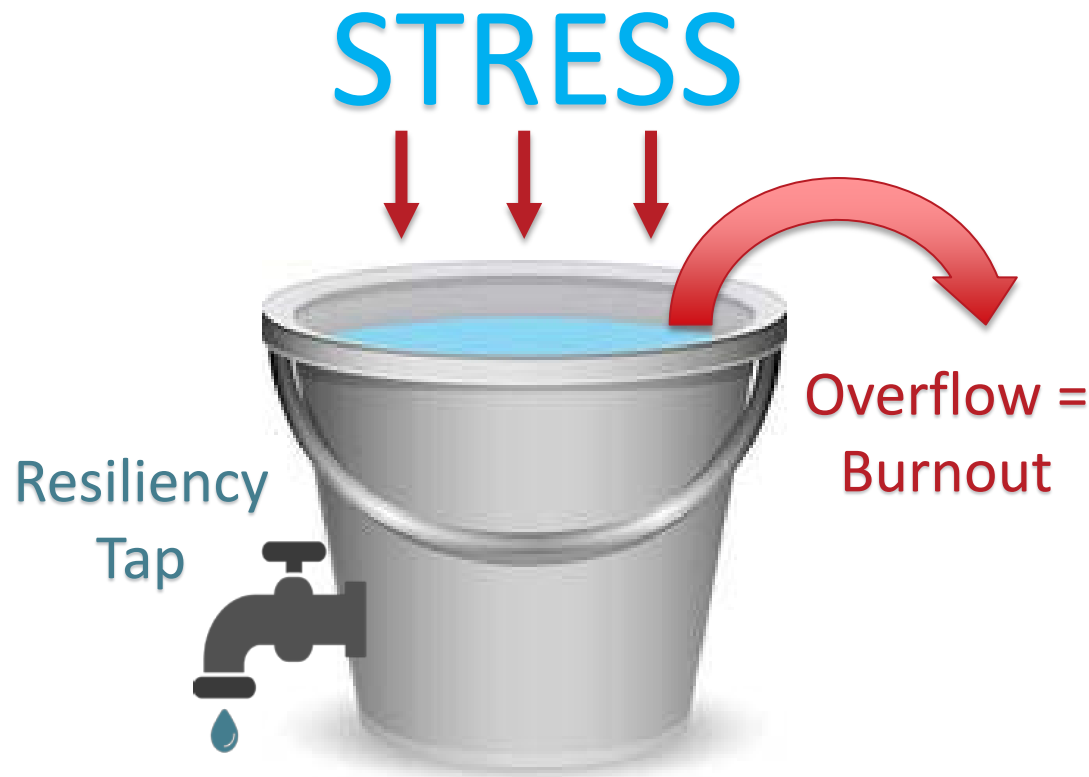
**Distress** - the term applied to stress as a negative dysfunctional force; can lead to disease and erosion of health.



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*

Source: Everly



Cumulative stress – stress arousal that slowly builds up over time and leads to a condition called “burnout”.

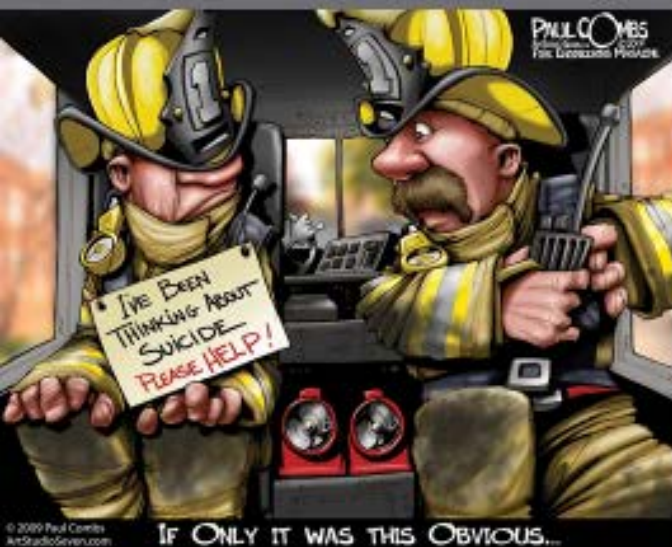
**Good Resiliency Skills** = Open Tap that drains stress  
**Lack of Resiliency Skills** = Closed Tap, water fills bucket and over flows



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*

**Burnout** -  
state of mental  
and physical  
exhaustion  
caused by long  
term exposure.



Detachment

Boredom and  
cynicism

Increased  
impatience and  
irritability

A sense of  
omnipotence

Feeling of  
being  
unappreciated

Change of  
work style

Paranoia

Disorientation

Psychosomatic  
complaints

Depression

Major  
Depression

Suicidal  
thinking



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*



# How Does Stress Affect Us?



Stress is linked  
to the six  
leading causes  
of death.

- Heart Disease
- Cancer
- Lung ailments
- Accidents
- Cirrhosis of the liver
- Suicide



OSHA has declared  
stress a hazard of the  
workplace



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*





# Different Stress in EMS:

---

Constant Exposure to High Stress Incident  
Triggered by:

- **Touch**
- **Smell**
- **Sound**
- **Visual Stimulus**

Natural Instincts can be “confused” by the need for  
heightened awareness vs. suppressed sensitivities



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*



# Different Stress in EMS:

---

- Sleep Interruption
- Heightened State of Awareness
- Team Responsibility
- Unfamiliar Locations
- Changes to Heart Rate



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*





# Compassion Fatigue

- Reduced interest in being empathetic or compassionate towards others
- Adopting the emotional pain and suffering of others
- Caused by a traumatizing event OR reoccurring exposures



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*

# Am I vulnerable to Compassion Fatigue?



Exposure To Extraordinary Traumatic Material



Emotionally Vulnerable



Limited Work Satisfaction



Limited Stress Management



Poor Self-care



Poor Support Systems



Lack Of Sleep



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*



# Work-Related Stress Symptoms

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Changes in eating behavior
- Trouble sleeping
- Withdrawal, loneliness
- Physical aches and pain
- Increased cortisol output
- Increased smoking, drinking, or eating as coping mechanism
- Increased risk for cardiovascular disease, e.g. hypertension



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*



# PTSD Symptoms

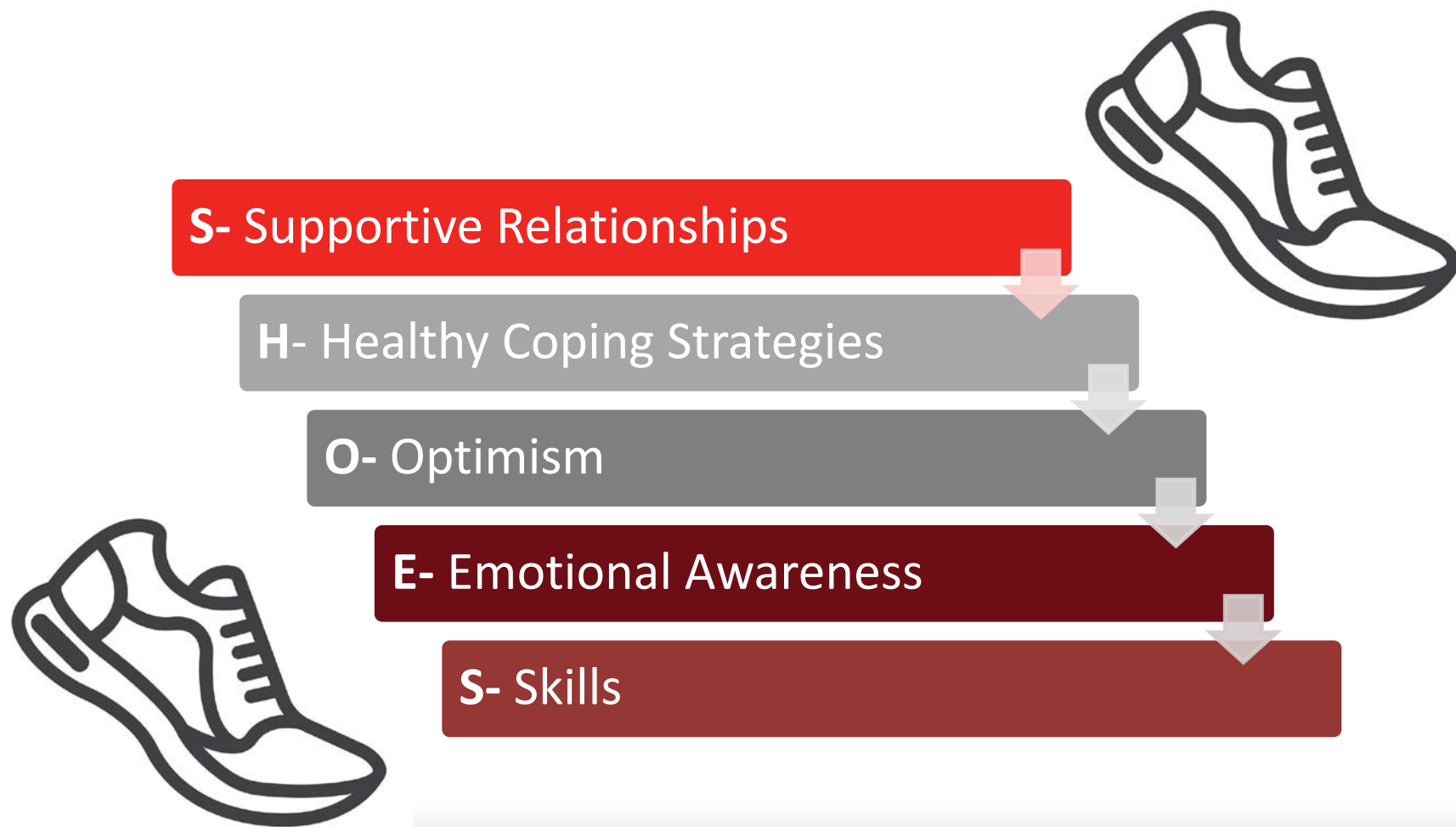
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Changes in eating behavior
- Trouble sleeping
- Withdrawal, loneliness
- Physical aches and pain
- Increased cortisol output
- Increased smoking, drinking, or eating as coping mechanism
- Increased risk for cardiovascular disease, e.g. hypertension
- **Dysregulation in cortisol output**
- **Emotional reactivity, irritability, outbursts or aggressive behavior (hyperarousal)**
- **Always being on guard for danger (hypervigilance)**
- **Being easily startled or frightened (startle response)**
- **Self-destructive behavior, e.g. heavy drinking too, risk taking**



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*

# Resiliency S.H.O.E.S



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*

# S- Supportive Relationships



Reaching Out:  
Peer Support



Optimizing Resources  
Like EAPs



Social Support:  
Friends & Family



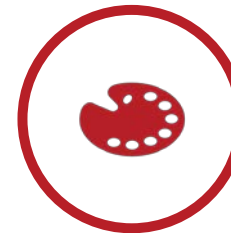
Team Sports



Volunteering



Religious  
Organizations



Clubs & Organization  
Involvement



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*



# S- Supportive Relationships



Reaching Out:  
Peer Support



Optimizing  
Resources Like  
EAPs



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

Health and Wellness for all Arizonans



IF YOU SEE  
NO WAY OUT  
**THEN JUST  
REACH OUT**

MAKE THE CALL TO MAKE THINGS BETTER

Share the Load™ is a support program that helps firefighters, EMTs, and their families overcome persistent sadness, suicidal thoughts, substance abuse, work or life stresses, or other issues affecting work or home life. We're all in this together. We're here to help.

The free Fire/EMS Helpline, designed by firefighters for firefighters and EMTs, offers:

- Certified counselors trained and experienced in the firefighter and EMT culture
- 24/7 availability
- Help connecting with addiction treatment centers and local resources
- Non-judgmental support

The first step is to share your troubles. Talk to someone you love. Talk to a friend or colleague. Or, talk to someone at our national Fire/EMS Helpline:

**Call 1-888-731-FIRE (3473)**



Learn more and find resources to  
Share the Load at [www.nvfc.org/help](http://www.nvfc.org/help)





## S- Supportive Relationships



Social Support:  
Friends & Family



Team Sports



Volunteering



Religious  
Organizations



Clubs & Organization  
Involvement

### Evaluate your “Support Team”

- Rate the Quality
  - Identify Characteristics
  - Identify Roles
  - Strengths and Weaknesses
- 
- **What do YOU bring?**
  - Identify actions to improve the support system.



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*





# H- Healthy Coping Strategies



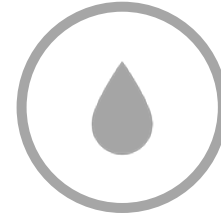
Good Sleeping Habits



Exercise  
Program



Nutrition And  
Healthy Eating Habits



Proper Hydration



Regular Physicals



Relaxation  
Techniques



Meditation



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

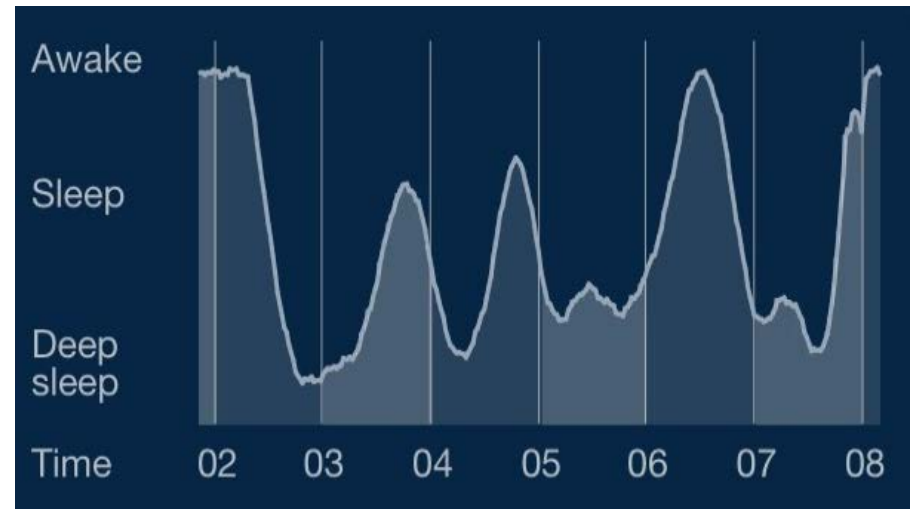
*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*



Good Sleeping  
Habits

## What is “Normal Sleep”?

- Slow Down
- Create a Routine
- Cool, Dark Room
- Practice Positive Imagery
- Sleep Log



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*

## H- Healthy Coping Strategies



Exercise  
Program



Nutrition And Healthy  
Eating Habits



Proper Hydration



Regular Physicals

***56% of line of duty deaths were attributable to heart disease or a related disorder***



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*

## H- Healthy Coping Strategies



### Relaxation Techniques

- Yoga
- Positive Visualization
- Gratitude Journal



### Meditation



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*

# O- Optimism



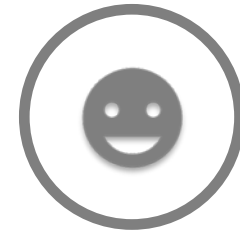
Positive  
Perspective



Focusing On  
Happiness



Finding  
Purpose



Life  
Satisfaction

*What we believe about the world directly effects  
how we live in it.*

*Your perception is your reality.*



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*



# E- Emotional Awareness



Empathy



Calendar  
Tracking



Breathing  
Exercises



Taking “Me”  
Time



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*

# S- Skills



Beating Self Defying  
Thoughts



Perspective of Wins  
and Losses



ABC'S – Activating  
Events, Beliefs,  
Consequences



Goal Setting



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*

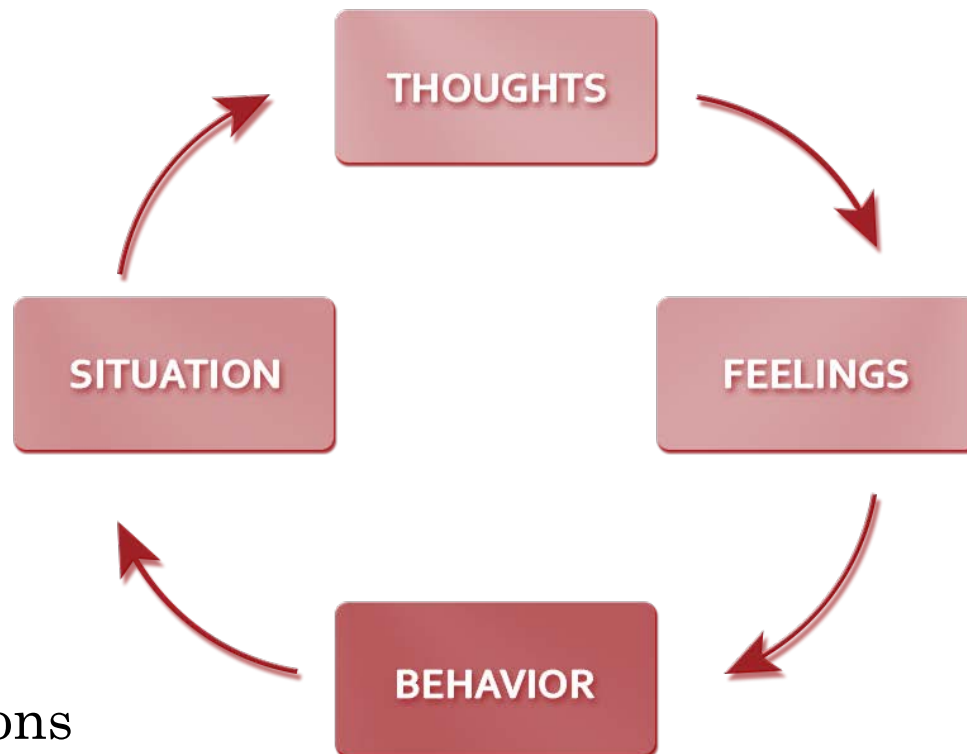


# S- Skills



Beating Self  
Defying Thoughts

- All or Nothing
- Overgeneralization
- Mental Filter
- Positive Discounting
- Jumping to Conclusions
- Emotional Reasoning
- Should Statements
- Personal Blame
- Avoidance Thoughts



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*



Perspective of  
Wins and Losses

## What is a “WIN” when all is lost?

- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) vs. **Post Traumatic Growth**
- Trauma can be the basis for social transformation.
- A loss can be an opportunity for growth
- Be a **survivor not a victim**





ABC'S – Activating  
Events, Beliefs,  
Consequences

ABC Worksheet		
Activating the Event	Beliefs and Thoughts	Consequence
The challenge...	I think....	I feel/ I do...
What self-defeating thoughts are being used?		
What is the intensity of the feelings? Rate the level of intensity from 0-10. (0 not intense at all, and 10 being extremely intense)		
1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10		
What is a more realistic view of thinking about this situation?		
How does this more realistic view change the feelings ?		







# S- Skills



## Goal Setting



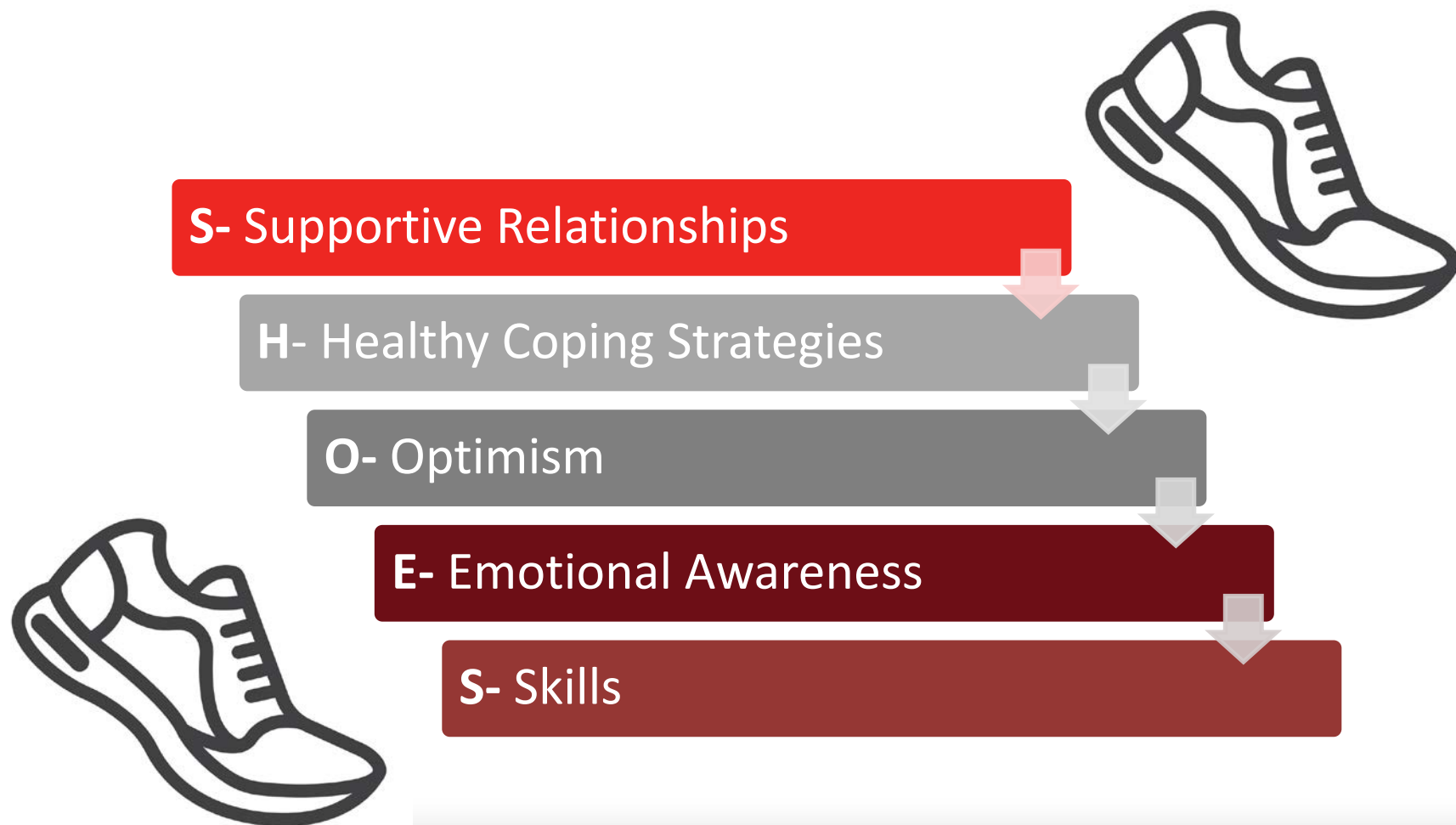
- Purposefully set
- Realistic, Measurable, Attainable
- Identify the Steps
- Write them down



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*

# Resiliency S.H.O.E.S



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*



# Summary

- **Recognition of Stressors**
  - Physical
  - Cognitive (Thinking)
  - Emotional
  - Behavioral
  - Spiritual (Perceptual Stress)
  - Psychosocial stress
- **Identify**
  - Cumulative Stress
  - Compassion Fatigue
  - PTSD
  - Burnout
- **Resiliency SHOES**
  - Supportive Relationships
  - Healthy Coping Strategies
  - Optimism
  - Emotional Awareness
  - Skills
- **Be willing to GET / ASK / GIVE help**



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*



# First Responder RESILIENCY RESOURCES

---

## Crisis Response Network

**(855)832-2866**

24/7 help line local to Arizona

## Safe Call Now

**1-206-459-3020**

24/7 help line staffed by first responders for first responders and their family members. Assistance with treatment options for responders suffering from mental health, substance abuse and other personal issues.

## Fire/EMS Helpline –

**1-888-731-3473**

Also known as Share The Load, a program run by the National Volunteer Fire Council. Help line, text based help service, and variety of resources.



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*





# First Responder Resiliency Resources

---

## National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

**1-800-273-8255**

The national (USA) suicide hotline. Large number of first responders and veterans who volunteer.

## Crisis Text Line

**Text “Start” or “Help” to 741-741**

A service that allows people in crisis to speak with a trained crisis counselor

## Frontline Helpline

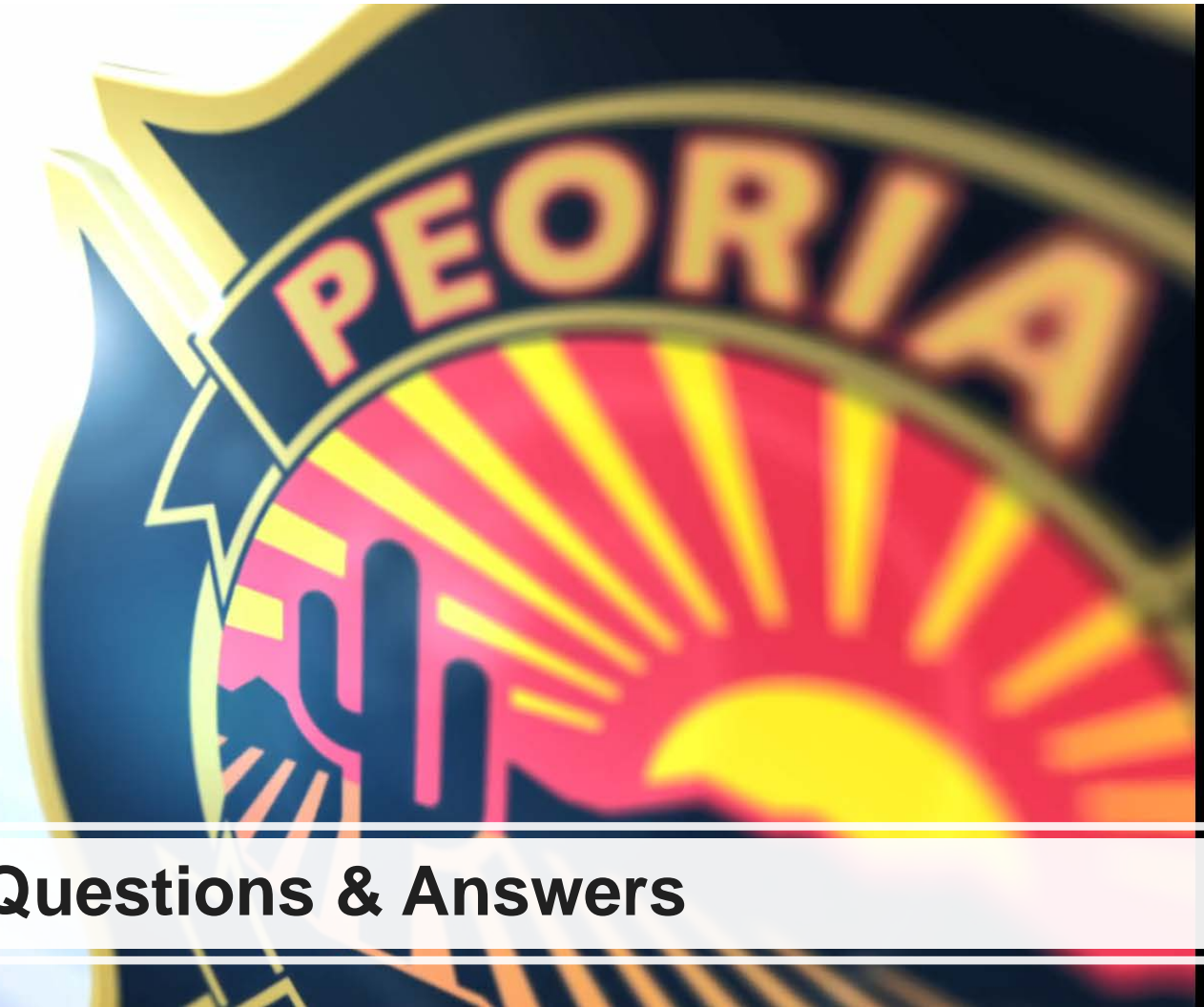
**1-866-676-7500**

Run by Frontline Responder Services. Offer 24/7 coverage with first responder call-takers.




ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*



## Questions & Answers





**“The person who completes  
suicide, dies once. Those left  
behind die a thousand  
deaths, trying to relive those  
terrible moments and  
understand ...**

**Why?”**

**– Clark (2001)**



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*





# Content Contributors

## **Robert Brewster**

Deputy Fire Chief Peoria Fire –Medical Department

[Robert.Brewster@PeoriaAZ.gov](mailto:Robert.Brewster@PeoriaAZ.gov)

## **Nicole Swartwout**

Peoria Fire-Medical Department

[Nicole.Swartwout@PeoriaAZ.gov](mailto:Nicole.Swartwout@PeoriaAZ.gov)

## **Paul Honeywell**

EMS Coordinator Peoria Fire –Medical Department

[Paul.Honeywell@PeoriaAZ.gov](mailto:Paul.Honeywell@PeoriaAZ.gov)

## **Tom McSherry, MC**

President - Founder Crisis Preparation & Recovery Inc.

[TMcSherry@CrisisPreparationandRecovery.com](mailto:TMcSherry@CrisisPreparationandRecovery.com)



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*

# Sources:

Anthony Walker, Andrew McKune, Sally Ferguson, David B. Pyne, Ben Rattray. "Chronic occupational exposures can influence the rate of PTSD and depressive disorders in first responders and military personnel". 15 July 2016. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4947320/>. Accessed 20 August 2018.

Bergen-Cico, Dessa. "The impact of post-traumatic stress on first responders: analysis of cortisol, anxiety, depression, sleep impairment and pain." 1 December 2015  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288021313\\_The\\_impact\\_of\\_posttraumatic\\_stress\\_on\\_first\\_responders\\_analysis\\_of\\_cortisol\\_anxiety\\_depression\\_sleep\\_impairment\\_and\\_pain](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288021313_The_impact_of_posttraumatic_stress_on_first_responders_analysis_of_cortisol_anxiety_depression_sleep_impairment_and_pain) . Accessed 20 August 2018.

Callahan, Philip Ph.D., Marks, Michael Ph.D, Grill, Mike MS. First Response Resiliency. 2nd Edition. 2013.

CDC - Measures of Risk. (2012, May 18). Retrieved January 20, 2019, from  
<https://www.cdc.gov/ophs/csels/dsepd/ss1978/lesson3/section5.html> .

CDC FastStats - Leading Causes of Death. (n.d.). Retrieved February 25, 2019, from  
<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/leading-causes-of-death.htm> .

DeGryse, Dan. "Chicago Fire Department Suicide Study". 30 November 2015  
<http://www.rosecrance.org/chicago-fire-department-suicide-study> . Accessed 20 August 2018.

Goldstien, Sam. Handbook of Resilience in Children. 2006. Gunderson, Jonathan, Grill, Mike MS, Callahan, Philip Ph.D., Marks, Michael Ph.D, "An Evidence-based Program for Improving and Sustaining First Responder Behavioral Health." Journal of Emergency Medical Services. 3 March 2014,  
<https://www.jems.com/articles/print/volume-39/issue-3/features/an-evidence-based-program-for-improving-and-sustaining-first-responder-behavioral-health.html> . Accessed 20 August 2018.

Goodwin, J. (Ed.). (2016, March 01). 2016 National Survey on EMS Mental Health Services. Retrieved January 25, 2019, from <http://www.naemt.org/docs/default-source/ems-health-and-safety-documents/mental-health-grid/2016-naemt-mental-health-report-8-14-16.pdf> .

Hayes, Crystal. "Silence can be deadly". USA Today 11 April 2018  
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/04/11/officers-firefighters-suicides-study/503735002> . Accessed 20 August 2018.

IAFF Website. (n.d.). Retrieved January 25, 2019, from <http://client.prod.iaff.org/#page=behavioralhealth> .

JEMS Staff "An Update from the EMS Alliance on Resiliency". 2 June 2018.  
<https://www.jems.com/articles/print/volume-43/issue-6/departments-columns/resiliency-report/an-update-from-the-ems-alliance-on-resiliency.html> . Accessed 20 August 2018.

Locke, Ginger "How to protect sleep-deprived EMS personnel." 5 July 2016, <https://www.ems1.com/ems-products/fitness-health/articles/104701048-How-to-protect-sleep-deprived-EMS-personnel/> Accessed 20 August 2018.

McSherry, T. (n.d.). Crisis Preparation and Recovery. Retrieved February 2, 2019, from  
<https://crisisprepandrecovery.com/> .

NAEMSP. (2018, December 28). The Emergency within EMS - Risk of Suicide in EMS Compared to the General Public. Retrieved from <http://www.naemsp-blog.com/emsmed/2018/12/28/article-bites-9-the-emergency-within-ems-risk-of-suicide-in-ems-compared-to-the-general-public> .

Neil H. Vigil, Andrew R. Grant, Octavio Perez, Robyn N. Blust, Vatsal Chikani, Tyler F. Vadeboncoeur, Daniel W. Spaite & Bentley J. Bobrow (2018) Death by Suicide—The EMS Profession Compared to the General Public, Prehospital Emergency Care, DOI: [10.1080/10903127.2018.1514090](https://doi.org/10.1080/10903127.2018.1514090)  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10903127.2018.1514090> .

Newland, C., Barber, E., Rose, M., & Younge, A. (2015). JEMS: Survey Reveals Alarming Rates of EMS Provider Stress and Thoughts of Suicide. JEMS: Journal of Emergency Medical Services.  
<https://www.jems.com/articles/print/volume-40/issue-10/features/survey-reveals-alarming-rates-of-ems-provider-stress-and-thoughts-of-suicide.html> . Accessed 20 January 2019.

Slack, D. (2019, March 06). Trump ramps up effort to prevent veteran suicides with executive order creating task force. Retrieved March 11, 2019, from  
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2019/03/05/trump-order-enhances-efforts-prevent-veteran-suicides/3065098002/> .

Strategic Resilience for First Responders. <https://langara.ca/continuing-studies/programs-and-courses/programs/resilience/pdf/infoguide-SEER.pdf> . Accessed 20 August 2018.

Sun, D. (n.d.). Dansunphotos. Retrieved January 1, 2019, from <https://www.dansunphotos.com/> .



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*



# THANK YOU

Presented by: Arizona Department of Health

Services

[presentersemail@azdhs.gov](mailto:presentersemail@azdhs.gov) | 602-542-1025

 azhealth.gov

 @azdhs

facebook.com/azdhs



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Health and Wellness for all Arizonans*

