HEALTH and WELLNESS

..It’s Not Just For Patients!
Presented by
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A.K.A.
“The Walking Risk Factor”
Disclaimer:

In no way is this short presentation designed to cover all bases regarding wellness. That would be a monumental job.

What this IS designed to do is cause you to question your status quo, to perhaps make you uncomfortable, possibly “triggered” and maybe angry. That’s ok, we can talk.

Hopefully, you’ll be challenged and motivated to create your own changes, your own way, toward a healthier approach to your life inside and outside of EMS.

Resources for change abound. Perhaps at the end of this presentation, you’ll seek one or two.
What...you think this stuff is EASY?????
“Paramedic Dies in Possible Fatigue-Related Ambulance Crash”

“Are we working EMS providers to death? Excessive work hours, compassion fatigue and violence are contributing to an alarming increase in EMS caregiver suicide”

“Study Finds that Many EMS Providers are Overweight or Obese The health of the provider affects their ability to care for patient”

“First Responders: At Risk for Divorce”
“Ambulance or Aviation Induced Divorce Syndrome is caused by misplaced priorities....(it) is what happens when EMS and aviation professionals identify so strongly with their work, they forget about the rest of their lives. They forget about what really matters. They forget about their spouses, their kids, and the people who love them. They fool themselves into believing success as a medic, nurse or EMS pilot is somehow more important, or just as important, as success as a husband, brother, father, wife, sister, or mother. I was a workaholic who picked up every extra shift. I routinely re-arranged my family life for my work schedule, and thought nothing of it. It was easy to rationalize and easy to do.”
“I’m talking about how medics, nurses and pilots use strong work ethic to rationalize their never at home, absentee husband, father, mother, sister (you get the idea) behavior.

I’m talking about working extra EMS shifts because you identify more with EMS than your own family”

This is **NOT** A Virtue!!
That Your Life Has Become Unmanageable.....

“...It’s a Command Center!”
For God’s Sake...you’re ALREADY in the “hot zone”

TURN THOSE ELECTRONICS OFF!!!!!!
PROVIDER HEALTH PRACTICAL SKILLS EXAM - IDENTIFY THE FOLLOWING:
If your next Doctor’s appointment starts with “Who the heck are you?”

You might be an EMS Provider
“We asked EMS Providers to list the top excuses why they DON’T get regular healthcare......”
I'll be fine
TOO YOUNG
MOTRIN
IT'S A FLESH WOUND
PASS MY ESSENTIAL OILS
I DID MY OWN RESEARCH
TOO BUSY
TOO YOUNG
URGENT CARE/ER
I'll be fine
hyp·o·crite
ˈhipəˌkrit/
a person who indulges in hypocrisy.

pretender, dissembler, deceiver, liar, pietist, sanctimonious person, plaster saint;
Informal: phony, fraud, sham, fake

synonyms:
hyp·o·crite
ˈhipəˌkrɪt/

1. An EMS Provider who berates patients for getting poor medical care or being “non-compliant” while getting none for themselves and neglecting their own well-being

2. An EMS provider who relies on non-scientific practices for themselves because “they don’t believe in the medical system” while advocating for the opposite for patients (ie: anti-vaxxers)
What’s Your Self-Image?
Is Your Self –Image HEALTHY??

https://www.dansunphotos.com/
We LOVE the “Damaged Hero” in literature, film, and TV.....
They can be inspiring examples of wounded people overcoming great adversity, BUT...did you ever notice that most of them

• Are divorced or in failed relationships?
• Are alcoholics or addicts?
• Think “no one understands but us”?
• Are prone to anger and violence?
• Are completely consumed by their “work”?
• Take unnecessary risks?
• Wind up DEAD?
Do you identify yourself as “damaged” to reinforce your self-image of a “hero”???

Do you engage in risky or irresponsible behavior to bolster that image?
• Oversharing (especially on social media)
• Pretending every call is life or death
• Confusing normal reactions with being “one step away from mental illness” on every call
• Labelling every stress as “PTSD”

BUT ALSO.....
• Isolating
• Drinking/druggling
• Self-diagnosing
• Ignoring what friends and family are telling you
• Avoiding getting help because you think it makes you weak
• Perpetuating the “suck it up” culture
Staying mentally healthy can be as challenging as staying physically healthy.

You may find yourself walking a thin line between healthy and unhealthy behaviors.
SUCK IT UP CULTURE

You just trying to get through the day, go home at the end of your tour, and live a well-balanced life

What did you expect?
- Just do your job
- Stop being a snowflake
- Keep it in house
- They don’t understand
- Faux hero image
- Faux tough guy/gal

Faux PTSD and trendy self diagnosis
- Taking on everyone’s pain
- Everything is a tragedy
- T-shirts, posters, ribbons
- Presenting image of suffering
- Perpetual oversharing

Depression
- Substance abuse
- Domestic violence
- Loss of job
- PTSD
- Provider suicide
EDUCATE YOURSELF!

- Stop the stigma
- Learn about local resources
- EAP, counselling teams, 12 step programs, etc.
- Before you start “advising” or “judging”, get your own house in shape; remember your own limitations!
- Don’t pretend you’re sick, don’t pretend you’re well – recognize signs/symptoms (of both!) and seek PROFESSIONAL help if needed
- Don’t be a jerk to those who are hurting!
- Don’t perpetuate “suck it up” OR “victim” culture in EMS when it comes to mental health!!
“Watch your thoughts, for they become words. 
Watch your words, for they become actions. 
Watch your actions, for they become habits. 
Watch your habits, for they become character. 
Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny.”

Lao Tzu
Yes, you’ve heard this all before......
So what steps have YOU taken toward wellness?
Thank you

Suggestions/Comments:
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Thank you and enjoy the Conference!