

Weathering the Storm After It Passes

Understanding Crisis Fatigue/Stress & Employing Protective
Factors to Diminish Negative Impacts to Emergency
Management Staff

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FEMA Region VI
Higher Ed. Collaborative
Summit

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Workshop Objectives

W h a t w e ' l l
c o v e r i n t h i s
s e s s i o n

What is Crisis
Fatigue?



How These
Impacts Affects
EM Staff?



Resolutions &
Remedies for
Recalibration
and Resiliency

SELF Check

Can you relate?



- Feel like you are "working" non stop but not feeling like you are accomplishing anything
 - Binging or overindulging
- Negative impact on work performance
 - Distractibility, unable to complete tasks or remember things, forgetful or can't concentrate
- Had difficulty sleeping
 - Difficulty unplugging or being able to prioritize YOURself
- Short-tempered, irritability and frustration with others
 - Felt exhausted physically, mentally, emotionally or all of the above

W h a t I s C r i s i s F a t i g u e ?



...burnout response to chronic stress that challenging events
can cause

P r e s s u r e G a u g e

"Wear and tear on the body" or allostatic load

Cumulative burden from prolonged exposure to repetitive chronic stress and life events.



THREE PHYSIOLOGICAL PROCESSES

0 1

Frequent Stress

Magnitude and frequency of response to stress is determines the level of allostatic load

0 2 .

Failed Shut Down

Inability of the body to shut off while stress accelerated and the levels in the body exceeds normal levels

0 3 .

Inadequate Response

Failure of he body systems to respond to challenges

How Prolonged Stress Can Affect Your Health

Naturally our body's defenses itself by a fight or flight reaction; however, continued exposures can negatively impact health, mood, productivities, relationships and quality of life.



H O L M E S & R A H E S t r e s s S c a l e

Identifies 43 stressful life events that can contribute to illness

Developed by Psychiatrists
determine how stress yielded
illnesses

Validity of study and development included
medical patients and sailors who dropped out
of underwater demolitions training due to
medical problems.

Life event	Life change units
Death of a spouse	100
Divorce	73
Marital separation	65
Imprisonment	63
Death of a close family member	63
Personal injury or illness	53
Marriage	50
Dismissal from work	47
Marital reconciliation	45
Retirement	45

Scores of 300+: At risk of Illness

Scores of 150-299:

Risk of illness is moderate (reduced by
30% from the above risk)

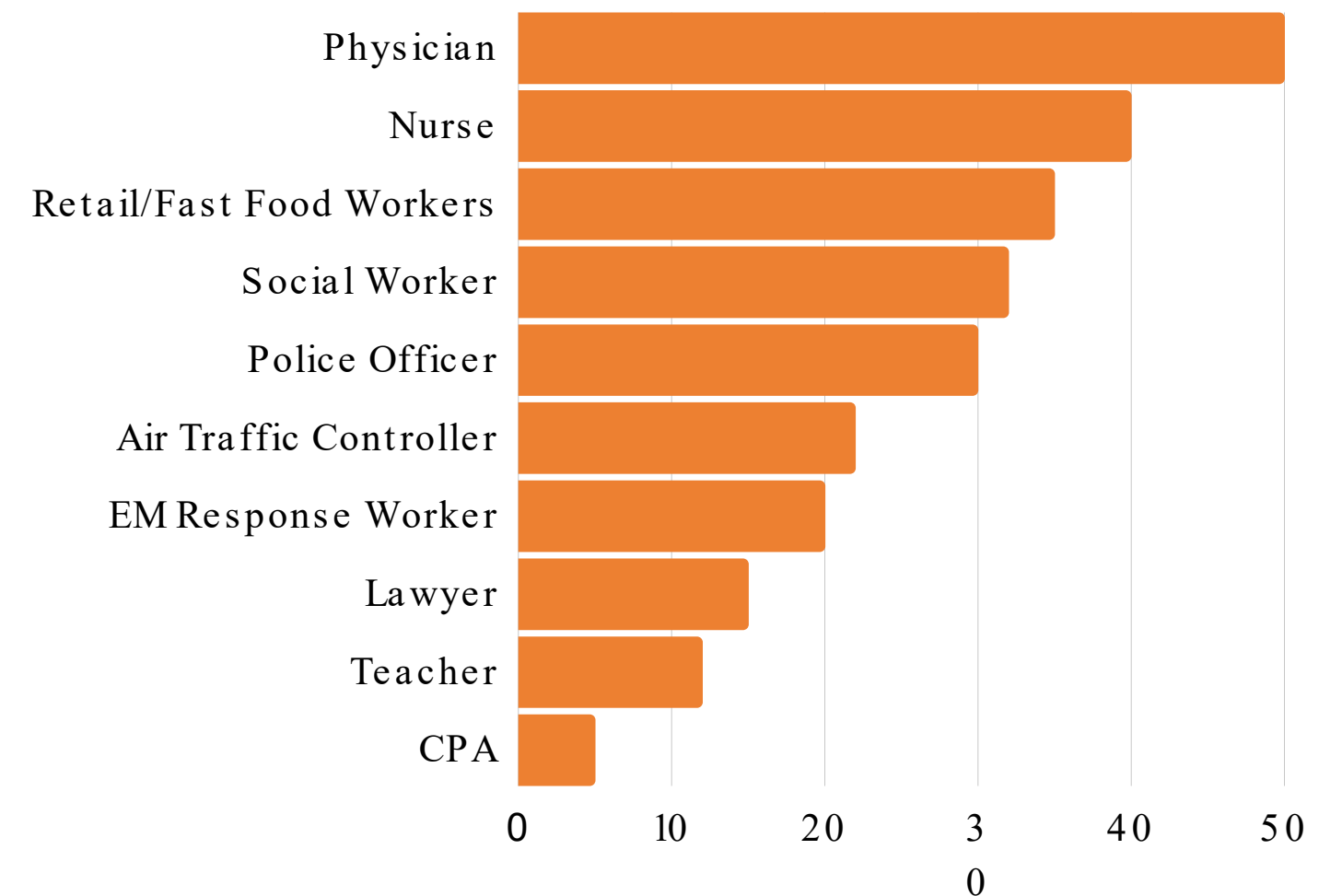
Scores of <150: Have slight risk of illness

Crisis Fatigue and Stress leads to Burn Out

Mental health and well-being over the past two years have made significant negative impacts to personnel

Highest occupations with highest amount of burnout-related job turnover.

Microsoft's 2021 Work Trend Index
September 7, 2022





Stressors PRESENT

Share demands, adversities and
tipping points familiar to you



Physical Warning Signs

- Exhaustion, insomnia, or hypersomnia
- Headaches, frequent illness
- Somatization (stress manifested as illness) such as acne, stomach aches, digestive issues, etc.

Behavioral Warning Signs

- Increased use of alcohol, drugs, or other addictions
- Absenteeism or avoidance of work
- Over-committed to work, exaggerated sense of responsibility
- Anger, irritability, forgetfulness
- Difficulty in relationships

Psychological Warning Signs

- Feeling emotionally drained, difficulty feeling sympathy or empathy
- Distancing/isolation
- Feeling cynical, resentful, professionally helpless
- Symptoms of anxiety or depression
- Negative self-image

T r a i n e d
R e A c t i o n s
V e r s u s
r e a l i t y o f
R e a c t i o n s



Observed and shared experiences from
the field

I am having trouble sleeping...

I am so irritable.

I cannot concentrate and am so easily distracted

You seem short -tempered.

I cannot remember that

I am sorry to send that
email as I don't recall
getting it

My energy is depleted.

All I wanna to do is go home, sleep and watch TV.



n e g a t i v e

Im p a c t

While affects may not be immediate, the results can be life changing.

- Resignation
- Early Retirement
- Strained relationships and even divorce
- Health issues
- Increase behavioral health issues





The cure for burnout
isn't and can't be
self-care, it has to be
all of us caring for
each other "

-Emily and Amelia Nagoski

The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle

K e y
S u p p o r t
E l e m e n t s &
P r i o r i t i e s

Self-Care, Staff Support and Incorporating
Key Touchpoints Embeds Coping Supports

Crisis Counseling
Support

Employee
Assistance
Programs

Individual Therapy

Peer Support

Critical Incident
Stress Debriefing

SAMHSA First
Response and
Disaster
Responders
Resource Portal

Psychological First Aid



Stop the

Stigma.

Encourage

Sharing,

Supporting and

Talking about

it.

Lead by example and embed practices routinely

LESSON FROM THE PAST

1

Program your work with time off, family time and home life.

Hurricane Laura will be a ten year event and work cannot be done overnight. Pace and protect yourself to avoid burn out, illness and strain on the homefront.

2

Check your "Cup".

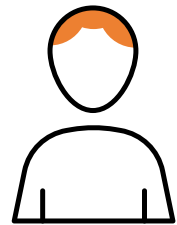
You cannot pour from an empty cup. Fueling with healthy choices like food, water, exercise and ample rest/sleep allows you to recharge. Recharging is purposeful and must be done with care.

3

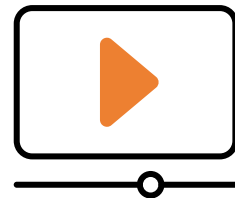
Secure your Support Network

There is no "I" in TEAM and we all share experiences that others may have had. Ask for help and what you need, accept help and know that you are not alone.

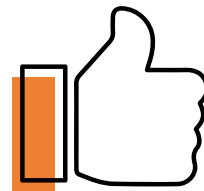
T a k e a w a y s



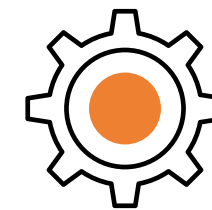
Focus on your people.



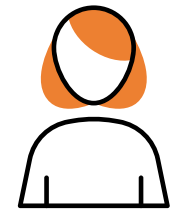
In order to press "play" you may need to press "pause"



Maintain continual communication on wellness and acceptance to push pause



Just like you would test your equipment - check, observe and debrief your team



Explore other resources and support as needed

A b o u t t h e
s p e a k e r

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