

SHIFT: First Responder Mental Wellness Conference



Wednesday, April 23, 2025

7:00 am – 8:00 am	Conference Check-in and Continental breakfast
8:00 am – 8:15 am	Welcome
8:15 am – 9:15 am	<p>Shepherd Leadership....How Strong Are You?, Sott Lail</p> <p>Attendees will be inspired to embrace a leadership perspective that transcends traditional hierarchies. Individuals at all levels of an organization, including those who may not currently hold leadership positions, will be empowered to cultivate essential leadership skills and envision themselves as future leaders. A leadership philosophy rooted in prioritizing the welfare of team members and nurturing a cohesive, robust team culture will be explored. Drawing insights from the acclaimed book “The Way of the Shepherd,” this session will highlight the transformative potential of incorporating the 7 foundational principles of Shepherd Leadership into one’s everyday interactions. By installing a sense of purpose and passion for service-oriented leadership, attendees will be inspired to recognize their innate leadership abilities and lead with compassion and integrity. Are you prepared to embark on a journey of personal and professional growth, paving the way for a new generation of inclusive and empathetic leaders? Are you strong enough to lift others to their potential? Explore the profound impact of prioritizing people-centric leadership principles in shaping a brighter future for individuals and agencies.</p>
9:15 am – 9:30 am	Break
9:30 am – 11:00 am	<p>Frontline Strong Together: Introducing FST5 and the Effects of Trauma on First Responders, Dr. Arash Javanbakht</p> <p>The presentation will highlight the effects of mental trauma on the body and mind of the first responder and what FST5 has to offer, including free therapy, classes, peer support, and support to local CISM teams. Also new therapeutic advances such as Augmented Reality glasses and other specialties from Wayne State University.</p>
11:00 am – 11:15 am	Break
11:15 am – 12:15 pm	<p>Balancing Identity: Beyond the Uniform, Justin Templeton</p> <p>In the high-stress world of first responders, it's easy to let your job define you. However, identifying too closely with your role can lead to a loss of personal identity and significant mental health challenges. This presentation explores the dangers of merging professional and personal identities, particularly the long-term impact of never truly "coming home" from the "emergency." We'll examine how this continuous state of alert affects not only your own well-being but also your family life. By emphasizing the importance of disconnecting from work and reconnecting with your true self, we will provide practical strategies for creating a healthy work-life balance. Attendees will learn how to protect their mental health and nurture their personal relationships, ensuring they can serve their communities effectively without sacrificing their own lives and families. Join us to discover how to thrive both on and off the job.</p>
12:15 pm – 1:15 pm	Lunch
1:15 pm – 3:15 pm	<p>The Fatal 10 of EMS: Inoculate Before It’s Too Late, Dr. Olivia Johnson</p> <p>Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is a rewarding yet challenging field, often leading to struggles with work-life balance due to overtime, irregular shifts, and physical demands. The stress and trauma from the job can make a positive work-life balance seem unattainable. Psychological repercussions such as anxiety, depression, and PTSD are common, compounded by dealing with aggressive patients and workplace conflicts. Physical wear and tear, along with risks like slips, falls, and exposure to diseases, add to the challenges. Moral injury and the need for psychologically safe environments are growing concerns. This course aims to spotlight the risks faced by EMS professionals, empowering them with tools and resources to manage these challenges and improve their well-being.</p>

Day One Agenda continued on opposite side

3:15 pm – 3:30 pm	Break
3:30 pm – 4:30 pm	<p data-bbox="390 139 2030 172">Fueling Resilience: The Impact of Metabolic Diets on Mental Health, Daniel Sundahl</p> <p data-bbox="390 172 2030 415">This eye-opening session will unpack the fascinating link between what you eat and how you feel, discovering how metabolic health practices can supercharge your mental well-being. During this session, we will journey through the latest research, metabolic neurobiology insights, and the nitty-gritty of metabolic syndrome. We will chat about ketogenic-type diets, the powerhouse role of mitochondria, and how your metabolic health can influence conditions like PTSD and trauma. Expect to gain a deeper understanding of metabolic health markers like blood glucose, blood ketones, and the Gluco-Keto Index, and learn tips on tackling insulin resistance for a happier mind. You will walk away with the tools to make informed choices for a more robust and resilient life. Discover how metabolic diets can revolutionize your mental health and unlock the secrets to a healthier, happier you.</p>
4:30 pm – 5:30 pm	<p data-bbox="390 423 2030 456">To the Brink and Back: How to Heal From What We Do, Amanda Davarn</p> <p data-bbox="390 456 2030 708">Drawing from the dual perspectives of an active EMT and a therapist, this session delves into the often-overlooked mental health needs of first responders. Many of us feel uneasy about discussing our emotions with a therapist, yet those who do often speak of validation, core beliefs, and coping skills. Amanda, a Licensed Professional Counselor and EMT with 12 years of experience, understands how first responders are trained to suppress basic self-preservation instincts, stay calm amid chaos, and then carry on as if it's just another day. We often claim we're fine, but what if we're not? Where can we find help, and what does it look like? This session will explore the origins of our resilience, teach immediate resourcing skills, guide us in choosing a mental health provider, and demonstrate the positive impact of therapy on first responders' lives. Amanda will share real-life examples to show how trusting a provider can lead to profound healing.</p>
5:30 pm	Day One Concludes

Thursday, April 24, 2025

7:00 am – 8:00 am	Continental breakfast
8:00 am – 8:15 am	Welcome
8:15 am – 9:15 am	<p>Managing Stress, Maximizing Life: Best Practices for Home, Work and Relationships, Deb Timmerman</p> <p>This session is designed to help EMS providers manage stress effectively. Participants will learn to recognize the physiological and psychological impacts of stress on their bodies, gaining valuable self-awareness. They will understand how cumulative work-related stress affects mental health, communication, and relationships, and how these effects can carry over into their personal lives. Additionally, participants will practice 2-3 practical stress-reduction tools that can help conserve energy, improve communication, and enhance overall mental wellness.</p>
9:15 am – 9:30 am	Break
9:30 am – 10:30 am	<p>Managing Stress, Maximizing Life: Best Practices for Home, Work and Relationships, Deb Timmerman - Continued</p> <p>This workshop is designed to help EMS providers manage stress effectively. Participants will learn to recognize the physiological and psychological impacts of stress on their bodies, gaining valuable self-awareness. They will understand how cumulative work-related stress affects mental health, communication, and relationships, and how these effects can carry over into their personal lives. Additionally, participants will practice 2-3 practical stress-reduction tools that can help conserve energy, improve communication, and enhance overall mental wellness.</p>
10:30 am – 10:45 am	Break
10:45 am – 12:15 pm	<p>Transforming Public Safety: Strategies for Integrating Mental Health & Stress Management Programs, Brian Stalsonburg</p> <p>The public safety sector has been plagued with stress and burnout for many years. Chronic exposure to stress and adverse traumatic experiences, and unprocessed stressful experiences, all play a role in the potential longevity of the EMS provider. As EMS providers, we can utilize simple tools to manage those repeated stress exposures to become resilient providers. This has long term benefits such as a decrease in errors, accidents and injuries, improved on the job performance, and increased employee retention. This interactive presentation will provide participants with information about the utilization of purpose-driven mental health awareness in education programs, as well as methods to implement effective programs in the classroom and within organizations.</p>
12:15 pm – 1:15 pm	Lunch
1:15 pm – 2:15 pm	<p>Death Communication: What We've Failed to Teach, Alexandra Jabr</p> <p>Research continues to stress the importance of remaining on scene for up to 30 minutes in an effort to improve outcome and survivability of cardiac arrest patients. But what happens when even the most successful efforts result in futility and resuscitation efforts must be terminated? Historically, institutions have failed to prepare first responders for this outcome, and "training" for these situations are experiential, at best. Because of this, we have failed to recognize our unique role in the grieving (healing) process, which begins for the survivors at the moment that we determine time of death of the patient. In this class, you will learn how the risks associated with continuing to overlook this training, tips on how to perform the skill of death notifications, as well as the positive impact that first responders can have on the survivors of these patients.</p>
2:15 pm – 2:30 pm	Break

Day Two Agenda continued on opposite side

2:30 pm – 3:30 pm	<p>Core Values: Self Actualization and Decision Making, Daniel Sundahl</p> <p>This session isn't about deep breathing, mindfulness, or sinking your toes into the sand. Those are fantastic methods to practice self-care, but what does self-care actually mean to you, and how can you achieve it for yourself? Discover your core values, how they determine your behavior, and how to validate them internally so you can reach your full potential. Test if your values are validated externally and learn simple techniques to check in with yourself when stresses arise to determine where to go from there. You will leave this workshop with the tools to understand your values, integrate them into everyday living, reach your full potential, and simplify your decision process when challenges arise.</p>
3:30 pm – 3:45 pm	<p>Break</p>
3:45 pm – 4:45 pm	<p>Be Where Your Feet Are...Building Your Own Resiliency, Scott Lail</p> <p>We see things we should not see and hear things we were not meant to hear. So what happens when the experiences are too much, and your plate is full or begins to overflow? What if there was something we could do to proactively prepare ourselves for these traumatic events and help mitigate their effects on us? Luckily, there IS something we can do; we can build full-scale resilience! This session will offer a brief introduction to the challenges associated with reactive responses to trauma. More importantly, it will explore several techniques to help Responders build their own resiliency. This lecture is appropriate for everyone from the newest rookie to senior leadership and management, and the discussion may range from emotional and dark to smiles and laughter. Ultimately, it is designed to help Responders live their best life!</p>
4:45 pm – 5:00 pm	<p>Conference Wrap Up & Evaluations</p>