

SHIFT: MENTAL WELLNESS FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

April 23-24, 2025

Speaker Profiles



Amanda Davarn, LPC, is the Clinical Director at Insight Counseling Services in Greater Lansing, Michigan. With an EMT license since 2011, Amanda's passion for first responder mental health grew after joining the Pewamo Fire Department in 2016 and earning her Masters in Counseling. As a CISM facilitator, she focuses on shifting stigmas around mental health in traumatic environments. Amanda has served as adjunct faculty at MSU, Walden University, and Spring Arbor University, supervising graduate students and presenting at EMS courses and first responder agencies across Michigan.



Alexandra Jabr Ph.D., EMT-P, started her EMS career in 2003 and has been an educator since 2008. She holds a master's degree in mental health with a focus on death, grief, and bereavement, and a Ph.D. in depth psychology, where she researched psychedelic therapy for firefighters with PTSD. Alexandra is the creator of Emergency Resilience, a continuing education platform designed to help first responders build resilience by integrating overlooked topics into routine training. She also developed the CE course "Death Communication for First Responders: How to Deliver Unfortunate News".



Arash Javanbakht, M.D. Arash Javanbakht, M.D., is a psychiatrist and neuroscientist, and founder and director of the Stress, Trauma, and Anxiety Research Clinic (STARC) at Wayne State University School of Medicine. He is nationally known for his clinical and research work on anxiety, trauma, and PTSD and is heavily involved in treatment of civilians, refugees, and first responders with PTSD. Dr Javanbakht researches the biological, psychological, and factors of risk and resilience and examines epigenetic, autonomic, parenting, and environmental elements of trauma impact. STARC is also a national leader in utilization of patented artificial intelligence and augmented reality and telemedicine technologies for treatment for anxiety disorders and PTSD. This work is funded by the State of Michigan, and the DoD. Dr Javanbakht is recipient of the Anxiety and Depression Association of America Distinguished Member Award, The Society for Biological Psychiatry Humanitarian Award, and International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies Distinguished Member Award. Dr Javanbakht's work has been featured on the CNN, Aljazeera, NPR, Scientific American, Washington Post, Smithsonian, PBS, Science, Lancet, American Psychiatric Association, Anxiety and Depression Association of America, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Society of Biological Psychiatry, and tens of other media outlets. He is the author of the book "Afraid: Understanding the Purpose of Fear, and Harnessing the Power of Anxiety".



Dr. Olivia Johnson is the founder of the Blue Wall Institute, an Air Force veteran, and former police officer. She is a subject expert in law enforcement suicide and holds the Law Enforcement Psychological Autopsy Certification from the American Association of Suicidology. She holds the only database in the world that examines over 100 data points regarding suicide deaths of law enforcement officers. From her data collection, she developed the Fatal 10, which is currently used as a risk assessment tool by health insurance companies. She holds a master's in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Missouri, St. Louis, and a doctorate in Organizational Leadership Management from the University of Phoenix.
bw-institute.com

SHIFT: MENTAL WELLNESS FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

April 16-17, 2024

Speaker Profiles



Scott Lail has worked in Fire, EMS, and Flight services for 30 years, rising through the ranks to EMS Chief of the Cleburne Fire Department. He is a certified Master Firefighter, and a seasoned educator who currently serves as an EMS Instructor with the department. After 19 years of service, Scott retired as Flight Paramedic with CareFlite, though he still holds his Certified Flight Paramedic (FP-C) certification and maintains his flight status, just in case! In early 2022, Texas Governor Greg Abbott appointed Scott to the Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council (GETAC). Scott is a dynamic speaker who has lectured at state, national, and international conferences. He has also appeared in an episode of Miracle Detectives on the Oprah Winfrey Network.



Brian Stalsonburg is the Emergency Management Training and Exercise Coordinator with the Kent County Sheriff's Office, Manager of Initial Education at the BDI Team, and a training officer for a local combination fire department. He has over two decades of experience as a dedicated Firefighter/EMT in west Michigan. Brian thrives on driving change and raising the standard of public safety education.



Daniel Sundahl (DanSun) is a published artist, registered Counseling Therapist with the Canadian Professional Counselors Association, Advanced Care Paramedic and retired Firefighter. Articles of his work are featured in several international publications, and his art is recognized worldwide. Daniel travels internationally to share his personal experience with occupational stress injury and post-traumatic growth, and to promote mental health and wellness among first responders. He is the president and founder of The Recovery and Resiliency Foundation, a charitable organization that helps support people living with symptoms of trauma.
dansunphotos.com



Justin Templeton is a career shift Lieutenant/ Paramedic at Oxford Fire Department. With 21 years of service he is a Paramedic IC, certified Fire Instructor 1, certified Fire Officer III, Fire Officer instructor, and the Course Manager for the North East Oakland Fire Academy. He has received the Achievement in Excellence award from Oakland County MCA for life saving measures in exigent circumstances seven times. He volunteers with DoCare International and MiCaring Hands where he has taken part in 12 medical missions in Central and South America.



Deb Timmerman, RN, DAIS, HMCT is Chief Resilience Officer at Less Stress in Life, which focuses on empowering individuals with skills and resources to manage significant change and high stress. She specializes in coherence practices, techniques that align the mind, emotions, and physiology. These practices, which promote overall well-being, resilience, and performance and are rooted in mind-body medicine and stress management, include meditation, breathwork, mindfulness, and heart rate variability (HRV) training. Since 2015 she has dedicated her efforts to raising awareness about the impact of stress and integrating stress management strategies. She holds multiple certifications in mind-body practices and leadership development, including reflexology, TaiChi Easy, mindfulness and meditation, HeartMath Coherence Advantage, and HeartMath for Teams. In 2017, she was awarded Diplomate status by the American Institute of Stress for her commitment to stress education.