

# Stress In EMS...The Cost of Caring

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# Disclosures

- None...wish I had some financial one's...
- I don't know how to golf....



- This is not just about first responders...ANYONE on the front lines....



# Definitions....

- Compassion Fatigue
  - Profound emotional and physical exhaustion
  - Gradual erosion of our connection to others in our role



A green rectangular sign with rounded corners and a white border, mounted on two wooden posts. The sign features the word "Resilience" in a large, white, sans-serif font. The background is a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The sign is tilted slightly to the right.

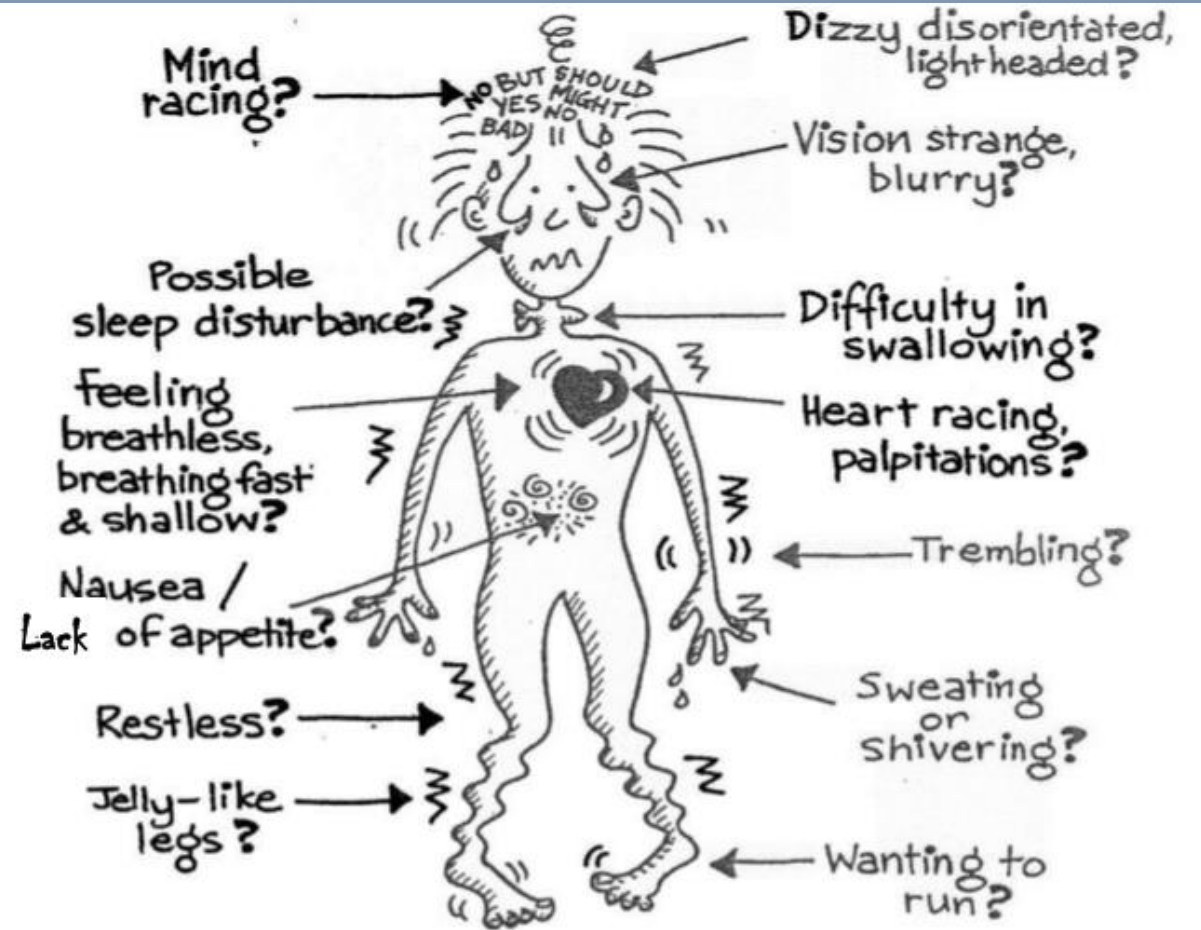
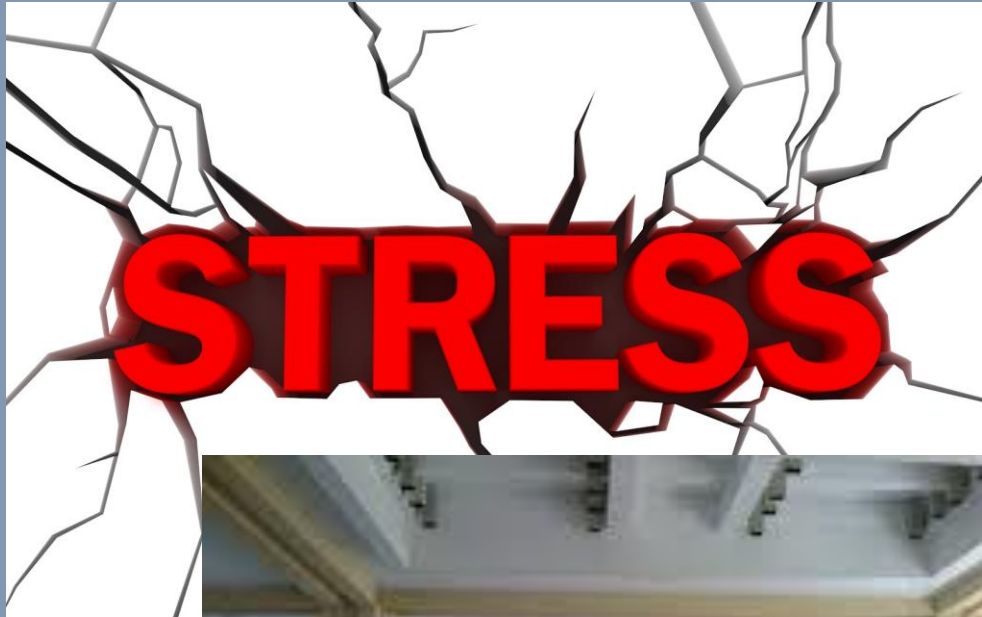
**Resilience**

# Perception is not Reality





# Stress cycle....





- Believing that providing compassionate care won't effect you, is like walking through water and thinking you won't get wet...  
(Mathieu, 2012)



# Health Effects of Stress....

## Physical Symptoms

- Increased heart , respiratory rate, blood glucose levels, consumption of oxygen, and coagulation of blood
- Alertness
- Dilation of blood vessels and eyes
- Increased muscle tension and strength
- Digestive disorders
- Musculoskeletal disorders such as pain
- Stomach problems, eating disorders

Sleep disturbances and fatigue

Headaches

## Physical Conditions

- Heart disease/cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure
- Slowed recovery from infections
- Ulcers
- Arthritis
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Stroke
- Asthma
  - NIOSH and USFA state extended unresolved stress can compromise our biological ability to recover.



# Health Effects of Stress....

## Behavioral Symptoms

- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Low morale
- Depression
- Isolation from coworkers

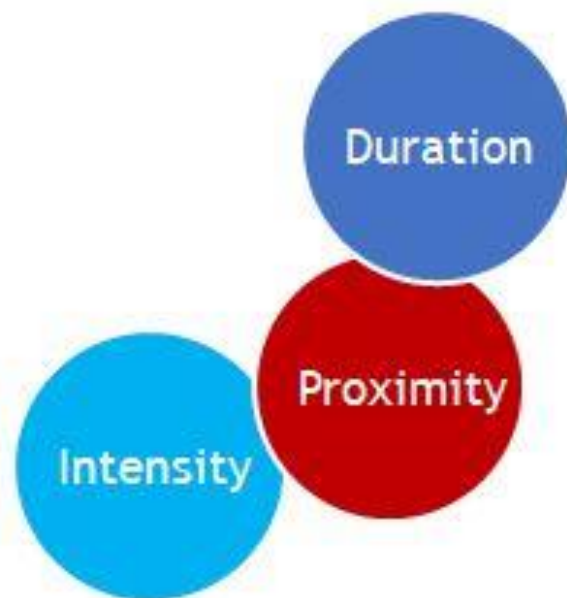
## Behavioral Conditions

- Suicidal behavior
- Domestic violence
- Substance abuse
- Alcohol
  
- Donnelly and Siebert (2009) suggest a direct linkage between chronic occupational stress of the EMT and high-risk alcohol and other drug use



# Why do we get stressed differently?

## Event-related Factors

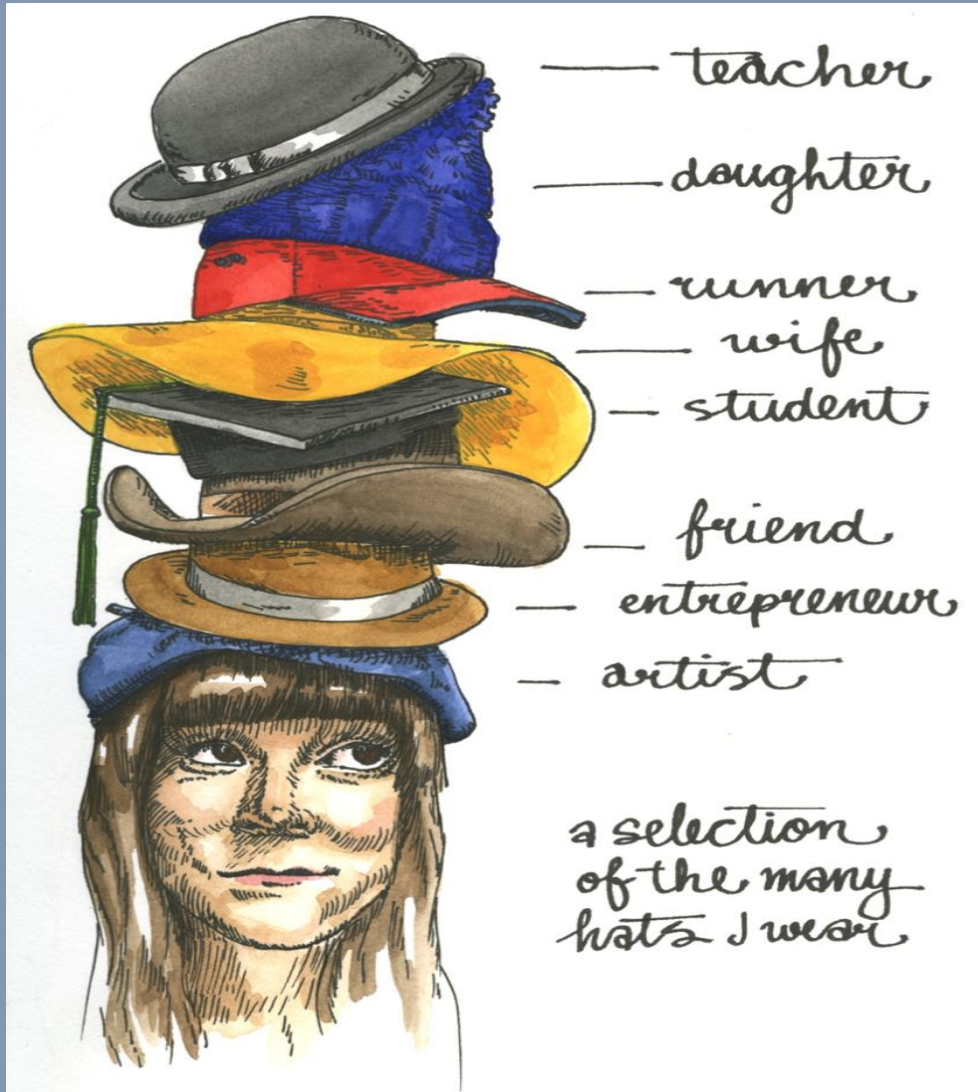


## Person-related Factors



(Schirmer, 2015)

# Acute becomes chronic...becomes hopeless



# Can Poor Well-being Affect Patients?

- Karadzinska-Bislimovska et al. (2014) discovered increased stress decreased quality in healthcare.
- Hall et al. (2016) reviewed 27 articles for associations between well-being and poorer patient safety.
  - They concluded that poor well-being was associated with poor patient safety.



# Our Culture



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FIRE ENGINEERING MAGAZINE

**DAMN -  
WE LOST  
ANOTHER ONE!  
WE'VE GOT TO  
DO BETTER  
THAN THIS!**



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**Resilience**



# Need to Manage Our Stress....



# What is Self-Care?



# Help is Available



<https://www.firestrong.org>



<https://www.samhsa.gov>



## THE CODE GREEN CAMPAIGN

*We call code strokes, code STEMI's, and code traumas. It is time we called a code alert on our mental health.*

<http://codegreencampaign.org>



National Alliance on Mental Illness

<https://www.nami.org>



<https://americanaddictioncenters.org/firefighters-first-responders>

<https://www.naemt.org/initiatives/ems-mental-health>



# NH Project First

- Need to Prevent Calls
  - First Responders - House Calls
  - Teach life saving skills
  - Give naloxone
  - Connect with treatment
- Multidisciplinary Approach



# Summary

- Stress is automatic, you cant control the biology
- We can control our perceptions and reactions
  - Your life depends on it....
- Change your thinking, change your stress
- Resilience can be learned
- Reach Out When You Need Help



WE LOVE U LONG TIME : DAMNLOL.COM



The ~~End~~ Beginning

Don't take life too seriously...

Take care of yourself...

Thank You....

*Nick & Paula*

