COMMUNITY WELLNESS = PUBLIC SAFETY

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Remember to take care of yourself. Sometimes you get so busy helping others you forget that you're important too.
The term “emergency responders” includes police officers, firefighters, and emergency medical services such as paramedics and EMTs. These industry professionals are exposed to situations that many people would not be able to emotionally bear, increasing the risk of the development of mental health disorders. In fact, it is estimated that 30% of first responders develop behavioral health conditions during their time of service, including: depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Despite the importance of mental health in the profession, there is an undeniable cultural stigma concerning mental healthcare treatment. Fear of being seen as weak or not up to the job of a first responder keeps many from seeking help and can lead suffering individuals to turn to substance abuse as a means of relief. – July 2019 Addictio Center
Folks who work in corrections have the highest rates of alcoholism, addiction, domestic violence, divorce, and suicide. If we make it through that we are at risk for dying 20 years earlier than other professions.

Corrections officers suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder at more than double the rate of military veterans in the US, according to Caterina Spinaris, the leading professional in corrections-specific clinical research and founder of Desert Waters Correctional Outreach, a nonprofit based in Colorado.
RISK FACTORS

- A personal history of trauma
- Geographical and social isolation
- Being overworked and overwhelmed
- Working with too many clients
- Having limited professional experience
- Having limited training about vicarious trauma and its prevention
- Working with a high percentage of traumatized children
- Working with clients who are underserved and disadvantaged
- Working for poor pay, under stressful conditions, with limited resources

- Personal ACE score of 4 or more
YOU DESERVE TO HAVE THE LIFE YOU ARE WORKING TO CREATE! WE ALL DO!!
DO YOU BELIEVE THAT CHANGE IS POSSIBLE?

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

- Margaret Mead
PROOF THAT IT’S POSSIBLE!!

**THEN**  
![Mugshot Image]

**NOW**  
![Current Image]

**HOPE**
PART OF THE JOURNEY THAT LED ME TO YOU...

- Alcoholism x 2
- Violence x 2
- Poverty
- Sexual Assault: 3, 14, 18
- Divorce x 2
- Brother’s Suicide
- Uncle’s Suicide
- Child/Adult Obesity
- Age 14: started drinking
- Age 16: MJ, Cocaine, Meth, LSD
- 15 year Crack Addiction
- 15 TX’s – 3 MH adm.
- MH dx – BP, BPD, Depression, Anti-soc
- 8 year Prison Sentence
THE ROAD TO RECOVERY...

- Got out and hit the streets with a purpose - *CHANGE THE SYSTEM*
- Went to community meetings regarding incarceration/recovery/MH
- Grassroots leadership college
- Turned anger into action
- Created a plan (WRAP wasn’t around)
- Got a sponsor – worked the steps - gave rides to meetings - cleaned ashtrays - made coffee
- Took Industrial Areas Foundation broad-based organizing training
WHAT CAN WE DO?

For SELF- Personally and professionally:

- Take care of yourself- eat, sleep, exercise. breathe
- Spend time with people who are NOT in this line of work
- Pay attention to your thoughts, your Body, and ask for what other see
- Take planned time off that feeds your soul
- Try and remember someone else’s behavior towards you is not personal it is how they see themselves
- Make a bucket list and intentionally make plans to complete them
- Practice celebrating and sharing small successes
- Spend time with people who are positive and see the world of possibilities

For those we meet along the way:

- Make a connection- Find areas where you can ‘connect’ or ‘empathize’ with the experiences someone is having
- Look for the strengths
- Encourage people- ask them about their dreams
- Be honest about the consequences without judgement or guilt
- Believe it is possible for change
- See behavior as a coping mechanism and transferable skills
- Offer opportunities to learn new skills
- Involve Peers- people who have been their done that – at every intersection of contact
WE ARE THE ONE’S WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR-

- We can not arrest our way or incarcerate our way out of this. We have to find new ways to meet people where they are, and assist them in getting to where they are going. Including our co-workers, each other, the people we meet along the way, their families, and community members. WE ALL DESERVE TO HAVE A GREAT LIFE.

- WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER!

- This is not some other person’s dilemma we are all impacted by the decisions we make- LET’S MAKE IT THE KIND OF COMMUNITY WE WANT TO LIVE, WORK, GROW, AND RAISE OUR FAMILIES IN!!
THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO TO MAKE THIS WORLD A BETTER PLACE!!