

Title: The Impact of Vicarious Trauma on the Emergency Psychiatric Responder: Simple Systematic Approaches to Self-Care

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SAMHSA reports researchers estimate 30 percent of first responders develop behavioral health conditions that can include depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. That's compared to 20 percent in the general population. Crisis responders are often the first to respond to phone calls and situations in their local communities that require hasty and clinical decision-making. De-escalating a mental health crisis, involving children and adults who are experiencing a mental illness or substance use disorder. Often times crisis responders are in a state of do first and feel later, over time this can build up and take a mental and physical toll on their health. This in turn impacts the quality of life for the responder and individuals they serve. Research has found that over time, the buildup of unrecognized and untreated trauma can open a door to malapative behaviors, compassion fatigue, burnout, and place the responder at a higher risk for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

This presentation will aim to provide emergency psychiatric responders and organizations simple approaches to creating work environments that prioritize the well being of a crisis responder. The provision and access to specialized systematic training, mental health and substance abuse treatment resources, and support from colleagues and supervisors for responders seeking to improve their emotional and mental health. To take care of others, responders must be feeling well and thinking clearly (cdc.gov).

Biography

Maria Bush, is a Licensed Professional Counselor and Mental Health Service Provider in the State of Tennesssee. She holds a Master’s Degree in Mental Health Counseling. Maria currently serves as Assistant Director of the Office of Crisis Services and Suicide Prevention for the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. In this role, she assists in providing oversight of Tennessee’s Statewide Crisis Services Continuum. Maria has provided direct services for over 12 years to individuals in need of mental health, substance abuse services and persons in a mental health crisis; including psychotherapy for individuals and families that have experienced

various forms trauma and violence. Maria is the owner of Kindness Connects Us Therapuetic Services, LLC in Murfreesboro, Tennessee where she serves as a psychotherapist.

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