

OXYGEN

WELLNESS BLOCK TRAINING SERIES



**STRONGER
FAMILIES**

“BRIDGING THE GAP: MITIGATING THE STRESS OF RELATIONSHIPS ON THE JOB AND AT HOME.”

Bridging the gap between managing job stress and using effective communication skills with colleagues and loved ones is crucial for a First Responder's

Facilitator Guide

Pre-Event Check List:

- Make sure everyone has a Study Guide on Leading From Your Strengths from Stronger Families
- Check your Tech: Computer, Slide Deck, Audio, Music, etc.
- Greet participants as they arrive

Script Layout:

Facilitation Insight:

Deeper ideas for the Facilitator to consider. EX "After doing this exercise, many couples will need a break from the tension. Sharing a breathing exercise, or taking a moment for people to journal their feelings will help release the tension and stress."

Instruction:

*Specific instructions for the Facilitator:
EX "Advance to the next slide and ask the following question"*

Script:

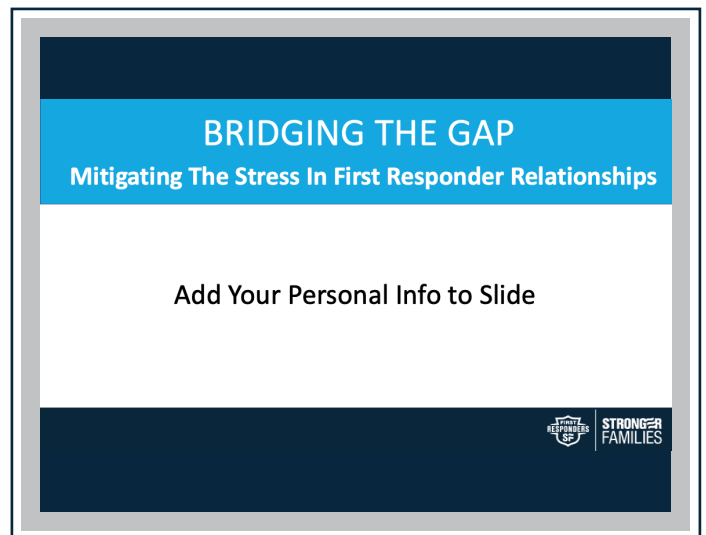
"This is language the Facilitator may consider using to make sure all essential elements of the curriculum are covered."

Put up the Title Slide as the students are arriving. Make sure that you greet them, introduce yourself (if you don't already know them, ask about their day so far, how their shift is going, anything that will begin to form a connection.

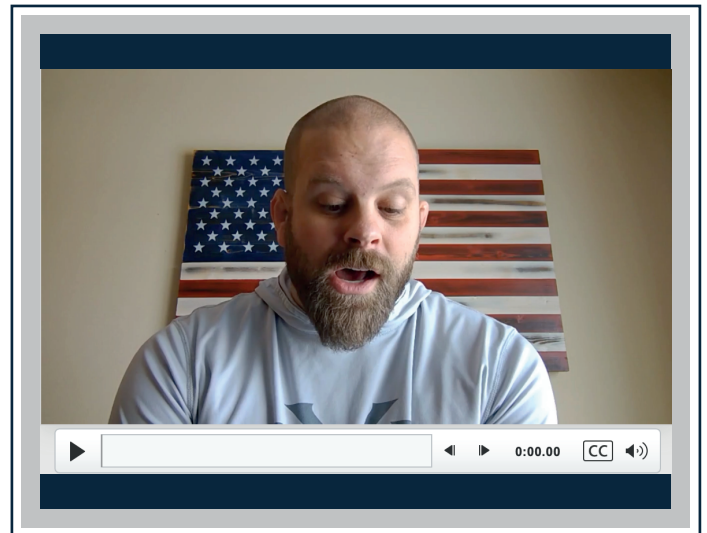


"Welcome to today's training. We will be using the Study Guide from Stronger Families on the topic of Bridging the Gap. For those of you who don't know, my name is _____."

Advance to your family or work picture slide (optional to form connection with students).



You'll want to set up the next slide which is a police officer named Nick. He gave Stronger Families permission to share his story of almost taking his life in an attempted suicide.




Two things you need to know about this video of Nick. First, the guy who called Nick moments before he was going to take his life was a Peer Support member of his department. Many of you serve in that capacity, and it's important to know that you are on the frontlines when it comes to saving lives. The deep respect Nick had for this individual stopped him from taking his own life.

Secondly, much of what led Nick to make this decision was the accumulation of stress over the years as a police officer. He had tried EAP and counseling but never really understood the deeper issues that would ultimately lead him to attempt suicide. Stress for the first responder is very real, and for Nick, it almost ended his life. The question becomes, is stress always a bad thing? It's crucial to address and understand its deeper impacts to prevent potentially devastating outcomes

Advance to Stress for a First Responder Looks Different Slide.

Stress For A First Responder Looks Different for Each of Us

- Life-and-death decisions
- Witnessing human suffering
- Intense workloads
- Risk of personal harm
- Separation from family

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You'll want to present the bullet points and ask the audience in what ways they see stress showing up that are not normal. Remember to pause and give people time to process your question before they answer.

Stress for the First Responder looks different than the normal person (i.e., civilian). A typical day for you is dealing with life-and-death decisions, witnessing human suffering, intense workload, separation from family. What are some other ways you see stress show up differently for you than the average civilian?

Advance to Stress is not always bad slide

Stress IS NOT BAD!

- Your body's response to stress/danger is normal and appropriate
 - The bodies NATURAL response to UNNATURAL situations
 - Your body saying "Pay attention!"
- Your mind is designed to remember stressful/threatening things, not forget them
- Velcro for the bad, Teflon for the good," Rick Hanson PhD
- Your mind's response to the way your body feels is what creates the problem
 - Judgment
 - Stigma
 - Shame



You don't have to use the story listed below to make the point about how we remember the bad over the good. Feel free to come up with your own story to illustrate this idea of how our minds retain the bad over the good.

Stress is not BAD! It is your body's NATURAL response to UNNATURAL situations. It is your body saying 'Pay Attention.' Our brains are hardwired to remember stressful/threatening events.

Rick Hanson, a PhD, said, 'our minds are a lot like Velcro for the bad, Teflon for the good.' You've probably found this to be true. Think about a moment where you received a handful of complimentary praises for the work you are doing, but just as you are about to sign off, your boss sends a scathing email about something you did. Which one do you pay attention to?

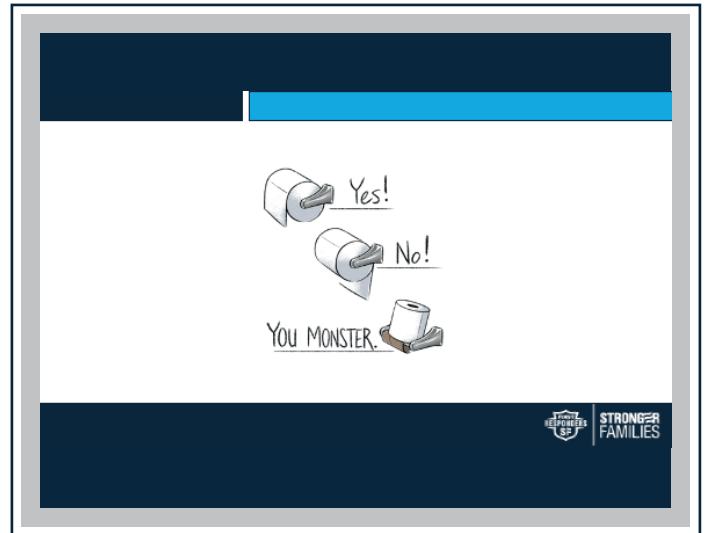
The issue is not whether stress is bad or good, but rather, your mind's response to the way your body feels is what creates the problem.

Before advancing to the toilet paper slide, make sure to set up the survey with the script below.

Each of us in this room handles stress differently. Some of us are stuffers, others of us venters, some of us seek distractions, and some of us turn to close friends or family for support. Let's take a moment, and see just how different we are in this room.

Our first stop is the bathroom. How many of you would say the world hangs in the balance, based on the direction the toilet paper is hanging? How many of you would say, 'as long as the toilet paper is in the general vicinity, we are ok?' And in a room of this size, there is always one person who becomes the monster.

Advance to the toilet paper slide when you introduce the monster in your presentation.



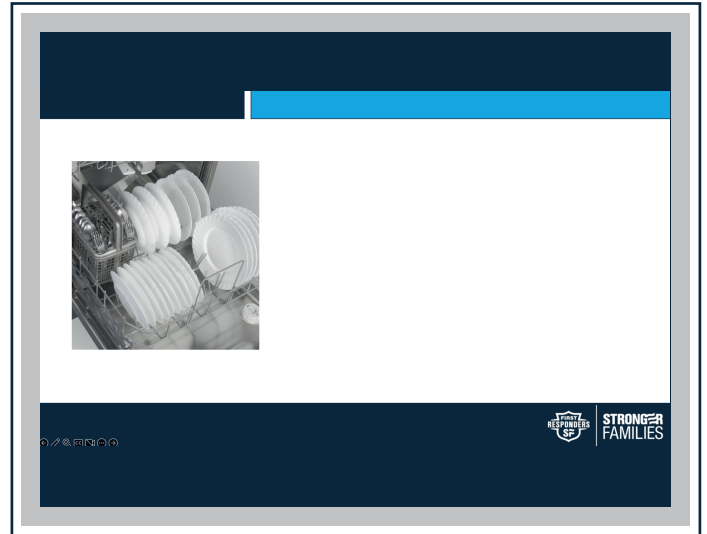
When you ask the questions above, make sure to ask for a show of hands. This will allow the audience to see how different the room is when it comes to these examples.

Advance to the Speed Limit slide.



Moving on to our next example. How many of you drove to our training today? As you passed the speed limit signs on your drive, how many of you thought those signs were a suggestion. Raise your hands. How many of you when it says 65 mph, it means you only go 65 mph and not a mile over the speed limit.

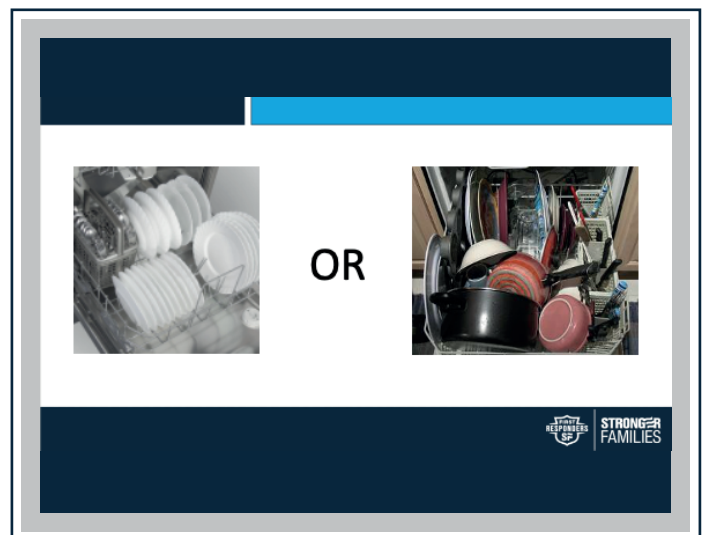
Advance to dishwasher slide.



Only advance to the first image of the dishwasher to create a compare and contrast with the example below.

Our final stop is in the kitchen. How many of you believe there is an organized system to placing dishes in the dishwasher? How many of you look at this picture and it is cathartic?

Advance to dishwasher slide of both images.

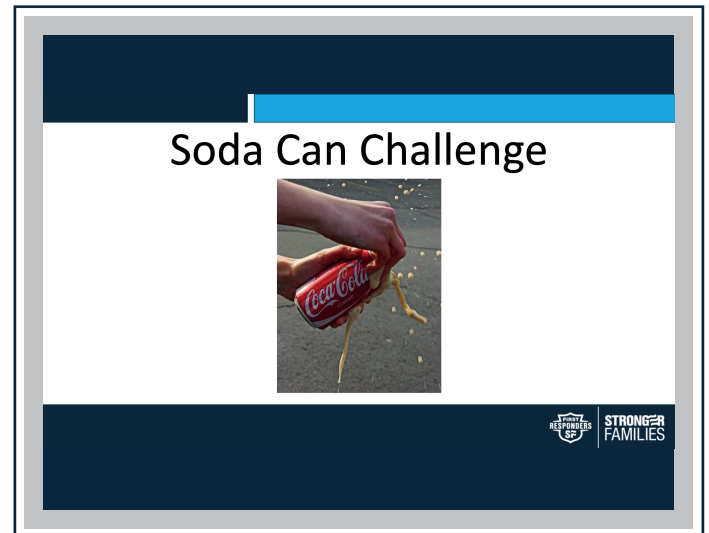


How many would argue that the goal of the dishwasher is to cram as many dishes as possible into the dishwasher, slam the door shut, and hope it still runs?

As you can see, within this room, there are many different responses to the same common daily activities. The same is true of the stress we deal with daily. Each of us has a different way to manage that stress.

For some of us, the differences we experience when managing stress is a lot like this soda can. In fact, the more time I spend with First Responders, the more I think this Soda Can Challenge illustrates many of your lives under stress. It represents what many of you are facing daily.

You'll want to pass out the soda cans for each table to begin shaking based on the stress they are dealing with.

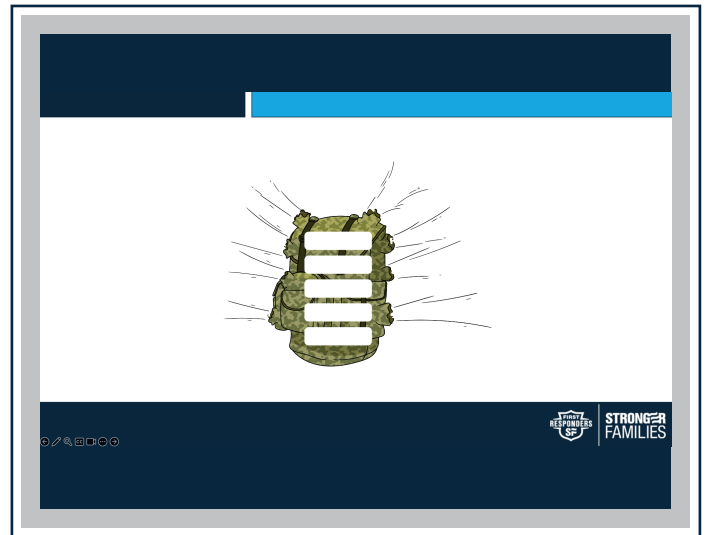


I want you to think about your last shift. What type of stress did you experience. Was there an incident or did someone say something that triggered you. For others, think about the last week at home. How stressful was it at home with your spouse or kids? Take the soda can and begin to shake it. This is your chance to take your stress out on the bottle instead of your co-worker or family.

Make sure each person in the room has a chance to shake the soda can. It is best to have more than one can. This will allow you to distribute to a large group and allow each person the chance to participate. Once everyone has had a chance to shake the can, tell the group to stop and pick one person to demonstrate the activity.

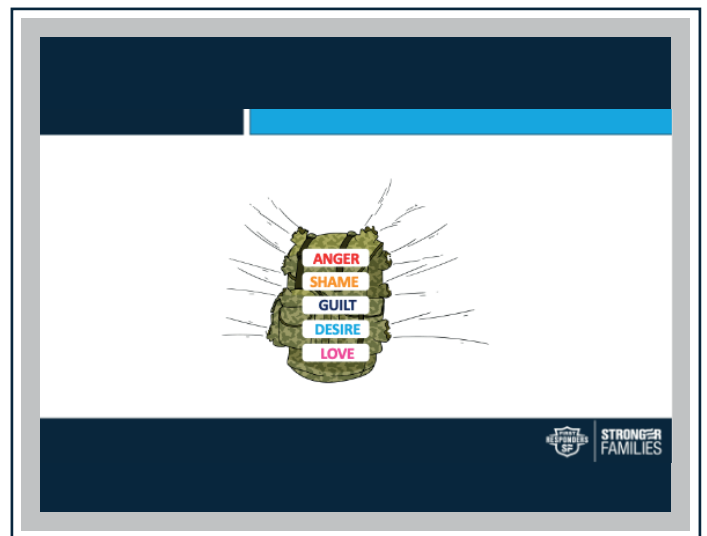
The question becomes, how do we manage the pressure contained in the soda can? How do you manage the stress and pressure you are feeling both on the job and at home? Each of you has acquired a rucksack when you said yes to being a First Responder. And that rucksack is filled with feelings. You've been accumulating those feelings since a very young age; you just didn't know you were depositing them in your rucksack.

Advance to Rucksack slide.



Many of us have positive feelings at the bottom of our rucksack - feelings of love, joy, desire, and contentment. The challenge is that over time, negative feelings can begin to push those positive feelings down, and they are not readily available to us. We lose sight of those positive feelings as they are often clouded with negative emotions like anger, guilt, shame, etc.

Advance to Rucksack slide and show the range of feelings contained in the rucksack.



Anger usually floats to the top of the rucksack and can build up. Many times leading to blow ups. Vulnerable feelings like sadness and fear are often underneath anger. Anger stands in the way of vulnerability and puts up walls. It protects us from being hurt, but in relationships it blocks us from intimacy and closeness.

For some, their rucksack is dangerously full. They have spent their career witnessing trauma, high emotions, and years of pain. It takes a toll. The goal of this exercise is to help unpack some of the emotions stuffed in your rucksack.

Direct participants to take out their study guide and turn to the page with rucksack. Have them write down a few negative feelings they've recently carried in their rucksack.

Advance to the Unpacking Your Rucksack Breakout Slide.

Unpacking Your Rucksack Breakout Activity



Identifying negative feelings helps connect with triggers or common emotions in your rucksack. The goal is to link them to original emotions, like Fear, Frustration, Hurt, or Injustice. Dealing with the original emotion, not the negative feeling, eliminates conflicts in relationships. Don't carry the burden of negative feelings or you could end up like these individuals.

Advance to next slide of video playing the Malcom in the middle.



All of us handle conflict differently, but when we don't address the negative feelings and emotions in our rucksack, we are prone to conflicts spilling out into the relationships closest to us. These conflicts take on the form of isolation/withdrawing, self-pity, blaming, breaking promises.

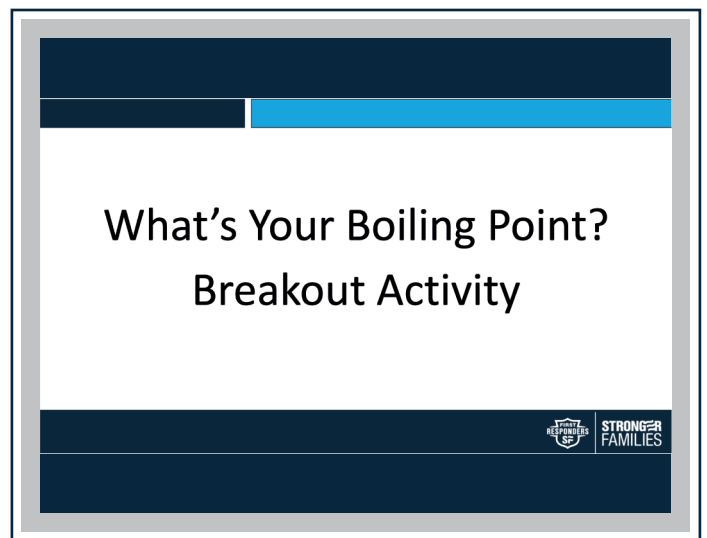
Advance to next slide of identifying conflict igniters



Instruct the audience to write in the lines coming off their rucksack the different kinds of negative conflict that is showing up in their most important relationships. This could be with their spouse, kids, or co-workers.

Take a moment and identify what type of negative conflict igniters are showing up in your relationships because your rucksack is full.

Advance to next slide What's Your Boiling Point? Breakout Activity.



Give the audience enough time to evaluate the connection between the negative feelings and the conflict that might be present in their relationships. Reference the feeling words on page #6 in their study guide if they need help connecting these ideas.

If you struggle to come up with conflict igniters that are connected to your feelings, I've included in the next slide some examples. Take a moment and see which ones apply to you.

Advance to next slide Common Conflict Igniters.

COMMON CONFLICT IGNITERS

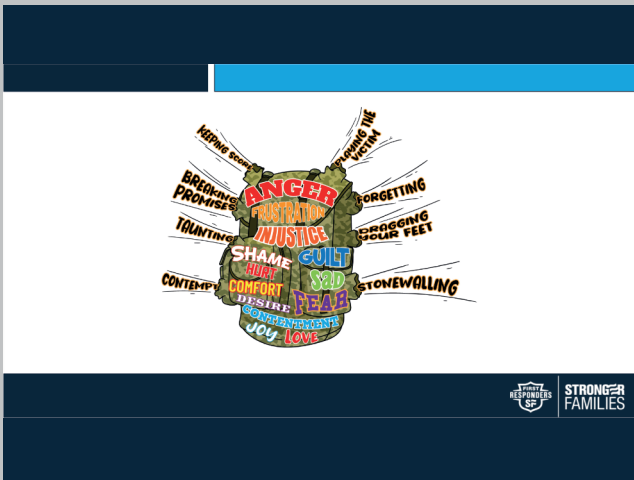
CRITIZING	D dragging your feet	M making excuses
C contempt	L lying	P psychoanalyzing your partner
C complaining	M mind-reading	N name-calling
R ridiculing	S switching the subject	
B bringing up more than one issue at a time	P playing the martyr	

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RESPONDERS
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Advance to next slide a full rucksack.



Advance to next slide Grounding Exercises.



4 X 6

BREATHING EXERCISE

4 seconds in – 6 seconds out

6 times

Just 1 min to alter your brains chemistry



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The following handout, “Ending Your Shift Well” are recommended grounding techniques to use when you are leaving your shift. The techniques have been proven scientifically to move you out of a hypoarousal or hyperarousal state and back into the window of tolerance.

Make sure to explain the concept of “Window of Tolerance” and how the activities in the “Ending Your Shift Well” document help individuals move back into a healthy window of tolerance.

The "window of tolerance" in psychology and neuroscience refers to the optimal range of emotional and physiological arousal for effective processing and response to situations. It's like a metaphorical window representing the emotional and sensory experiences where a person functions best.

Within this window, people handle stress, emotions, and challenges well. They problem-solve, maintain relationships, and regulate emotions. It enables clear thinking, communication, and everyday management without overwhelm.

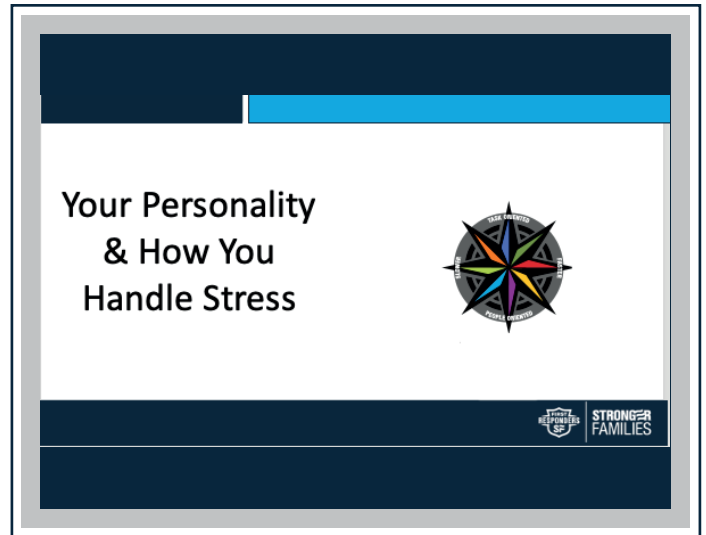
Exceeding the upper limit leads to hyperarousal – anxiety, anger, irrationality. Falling below leads to hypoarousal – numbness, detachment, disengagement.

This window isn't fixed; it varies among individuals based on experiences and well-being. Trauma or mental health issues can narrow it, causing easier overwhelm.

Therapists use it to help clients understand, regulate emotions, and expand it via techniques. Goal: better stress management and well-being.

[illegible][illegible]

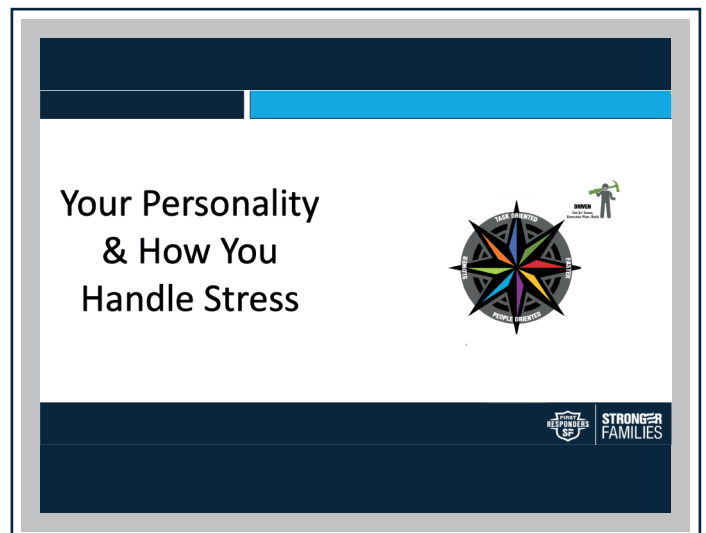
Advance to next slide *Your Personality & How You Handle Stress.*



One of the ways to avoid moving outside the window of tolerance is to understand how your personality handles stress. Each of us has a unique propensity for dealing with stress, influenced by our personality.

Let's take a moment to examine a few different profiles and consider how this might be impacting you.

Advance to next slide *Your Personality - DRIVEN*



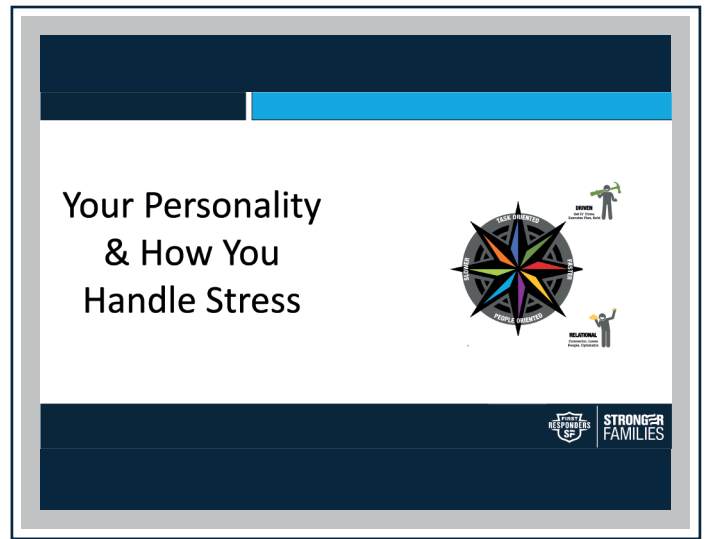
Profile: DRIVEN

The first profile is the Driven. These individuals wake up in the morning with their minds focused on the tasks and to-do lists they need to accomplish throughout the day. Their favorite metaphorical vehicle is the bulldozer, which aligns with their determination to accomplish tasks efficiently. However, a relational challenge faced by those who are driven is that they might plow through obstacles, believing they have achieved a lot in a day, only to reach the day's end and realize that those closest to them have been left ran over. This often includes their co-workers, spouse, kids, and others.

It's crucial to offer appreciation to this profile as it addresses their greatest emotional need.

Take a moment and have individuals who identify with Driven profile raise their hands.

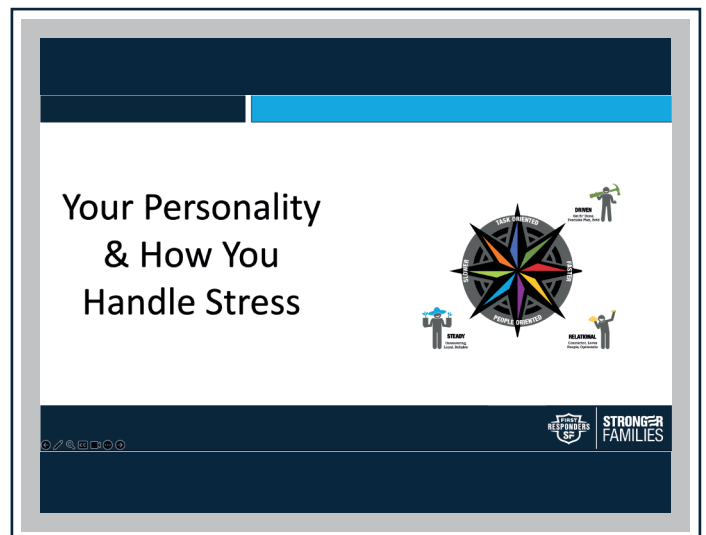
Advance to next slide Your
Personality - RELATIONAL



Moving on, let's delve into the Relational profile. These individuals awaken each morning with an innate desire to connect and engage socially. They tend to boast an extensive circle of around 25 best friends, finding their vigor in forging connections. Their chosen metaphorical vehicle is the acrobatic plane, symbolizing their constant craving to be the life of any gathering. However, a relational challenge that often emerges is the tendency to stretch themselves thin due to numerous social commitments. The concept of setting boundaries can be uncomfortable for them. Just as trick planes can only perform a limited number of acrobatic maneuvers before their fuel depletes, individuals of the Relational profile can similarly exceed their capacity with social obligations and the pursuit of external validation. Consequently, their emotional reservoir can swiftly drain, leaving them feeling utterly fatigued. Their greatest need is accepted and wanted.

Take a moment and have individuals who identify with Relational profile raise their hands.

Advance to next slide Your
Personality - STEADY



Profile: STEADY

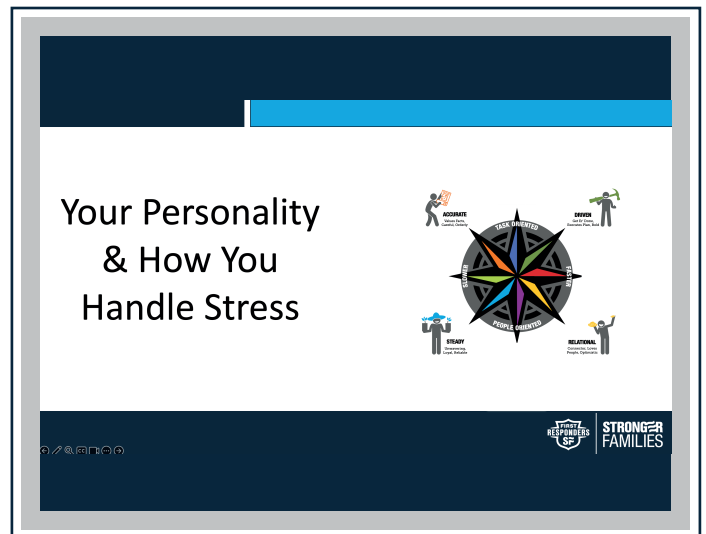
The next profile we'll discuss is the STEADY type. These individuals hum a special little tune every morning: "Hakuna Matata." Their go-to mantra is, "Don't Worry, Be Happy." They are dedicated to maintaining peace and often find themselves in the role of peacemakers within relationships. One remarkable trait they possess is the ability to suppress their emotions expertly – they are, in essence, professional stuffers. However, the challenge they face in their relationships is that emotions can only be contained for so long before finding a way to surface. This often results in a volcanic eruption that contradicts their typically easy-going personality.

Their preferred symbolic vehicle is a gondola. Much like setting out on calm waters in a gondola, they aspire to glide through each day with a tranquil demeanor. Yet, a common issue arises as most individuals of the Steady profile are in relationships with other types that tend to create emotional ripples, causing these emotional "waves" to spill over the boat's edge.

Their greatest need is consistency/stability and loyalty.

Take a moment and have individuals who identify with Steady profile raise their hands.

Advance to next slide Your Personality - ACCURATE



Profile: ACCURATE

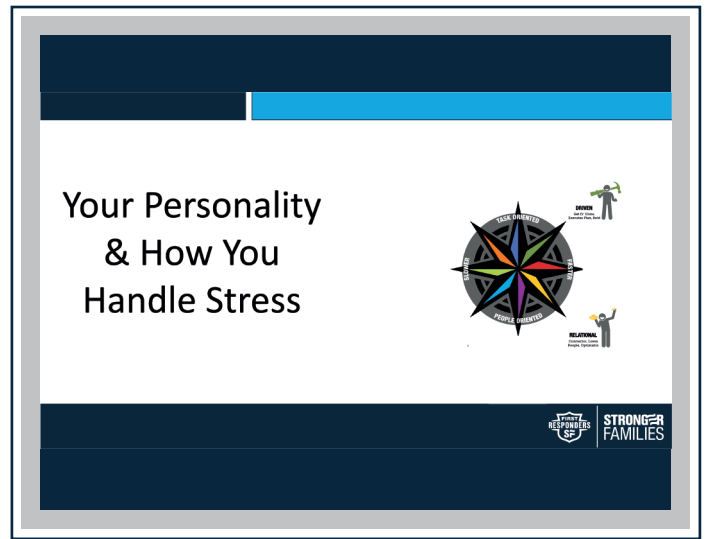
The last profile we're going to talk about is the Accurate type. These people see things in terms of right and wrong ways to do stuff. They're happy to tell you the right way. Details and finding facts matter a lot to them. They like having a plan before they make changes. They're the kind of folks who set high standards for themselves and others. They're really hard on themselves – they're their own toughest critics.

The tough part for Accurate folks is that they can sometimes seem critical or like they're talking down to others. But that's not what they intend. They'd actually say they're just trying to help by sharing the right way to do things because they care about you. They're at their best when things are consistent and have structure. They need time to think through decisions and don't like when things are rushed or thrown at them.

Their biggest needs are things like having a stable routine and people they can rely on.

Take a moment and have individuals who identify with Accurate profile raise their hands.

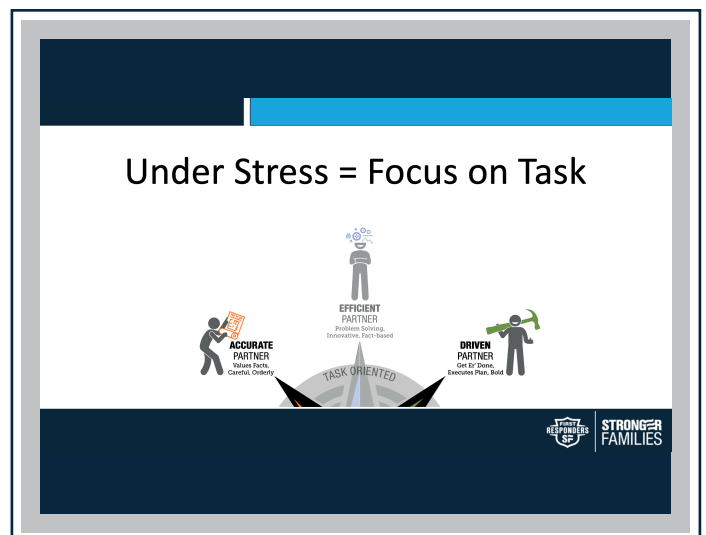
Advance to next slide Your Personality - ACCURATE



We've just covered the core 4 of the profiles. They represent the largest group of individuals. However, there are a total of 8 profiles, which can be a combination of the 4. It is important to keep in mind that your natural style will be highlighted in color. This is what you are most comfortable operating as an individual.

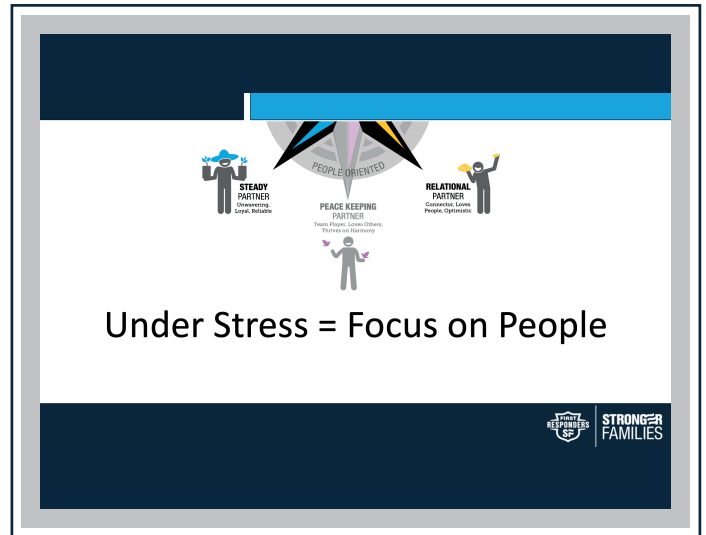
There are 2 scales at work within this compass revealing 4 personality tendencies. First, the vertical scale. At the top of the scale are the task-oriented personalities and at the bottom are the people-oriented personalities. Task-Oriented personalities will focus almost exclusively on the tasks that need to be accomplished in any given situation. The People-Oriented personalities will focus on the people and relationships in any given situation.

Advance to next slide Under Stress = Focus on Task.



Let's focus on the top of the scale and the dynamics that generally play out with Accurate, Efficient, and Driven personalities. When under stress, these individuals tend to turn to their task lists to alleviate and manage the built-up tension. Completing tasks helps them regain their sense of stability and composure.

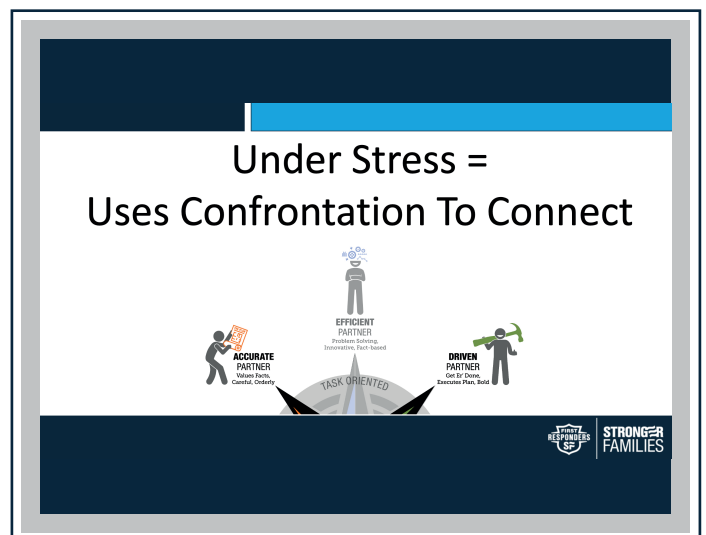
Advance to next slide Under Stress = Focus on People.



On the bottom of the scale, we have Steady, Peace Keeping, and Relational. These individuals under stress will turn toward relationships to alleviate and manage the built-up tension. They are processors and need people to help process whatever is causing the stress.

It is common to find those at the bottom of the scale (Steady, Peace Keeping, Relational) seeking out those at the top of the scale (Accurate, Efficient, Driven) to process their stress. This can create issues as those who are people focused don't need someone to solve their problems but rather listen. The challenge for those who are tasked focus is that they like to offer bottom line perspective and are known as fixers.

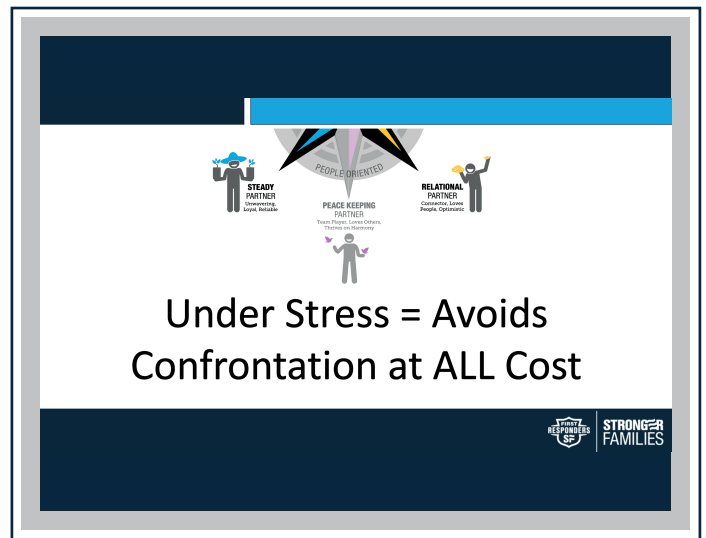
Advance to next slide Under Stress = Uses Confrontation to Connect.



Not only do individuals at the top of the scale tend to lean into tasks when under stress, but they also approach conflict very differently compared to those at the bottom of the compass.

For individuals who are Accurate, Efficient, and Driven, conflict or confrontations are tools for connection. They don't shy away from conflict; instead, they view it as an opportunity to connect. Most of the time, you don't have to wonder where this person stands on issues or with you.

Advance to next slide Under Stress = Avoids Confrontation at ALL Cost



For those who are Steady, Peace Keeping, and Relational they will avoid confrontation at all cost. Instead of addressing conflict head-on, they will shut down and withdrawal from perceived or actual conflict in a relationship. It's not that they don't want to resolve conflict but rather they need time to step away and process before they can come back and address the issues.

Advance to next slide.



In the room, it's likely that someone possesses a Coordinating or Persuasive Profile, and you may wonder where I fall when it comes to balancing tasks and people, avoiding confrontation, or stepping into it. These profiles can adeptly shift between the two different aspects of the compass, depending on the day and environmental factors. This group has the ability to adapt and choose the side of the compass that best suits their desired needs.

Advance to next slide Respond, Relate, and Reinforce.

How To Respond, Relate, Reinforce when under STRESS



Understanding your profile is the first step in the process to understand your personality and how you deal with stress. Not just your stress but the stress of others you are in relationship with. The issue we've found is that it is one thing to know your profile but the power comes from understanding those around you.

How many of you have been successful in changing someone's behavior or personality? Most would agree it is difficult to change someone. This is why we created as part of the assessment what we call the 3R's. Respond, Relate, and Reinforce. We've included all 8 of the personality profiles as a download. You can scan the QR code or enter the link in your browser to get your custom 3R report.

Advance to next slide Respond, Relate, and Reinforce.

Download 3R's



**Scan QR code
or visit**

<https://qrco.de/3rcode>



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Advance to next couple slides of Driven Partner and Relational Partner.

DRIVEN PARTNER
Get Er' Done, Executes Plan, Bold

How to Respond to Driven Partners

- Be firm and direct
- Focus on actions and goals
- Confront with care to get their attention

How to Relate to Driven Partners

- Be brief and to the point
- Explain "how to achieve goals"
- Allow them time to consider your ideas

How to Reinforce Driven Partners

- Offer appreciation – this is their greatest need
- Give bottom-line instructions
- Give them space to lead

How to Respond to Relational Partners

- Be friendly and positive
- Allow for informal dialogue
- Allow time for stimulating and fun activities

How to Relate to Relational Partners

- Allow time for them to verbalize their feelings
- Transfer talk to an action plan
- Make the action plan fun and engaging

How to Reinforce Relational Partners

- Offer positive encouragement and incentives for taking on tasks
- Help them organize the action plan
- Offer recognition and appreciation for their contributions

RELATIONAL PARTNER
Connector, Loves People, Optimistic

The application of the following two slides is specific to Noel Meador's illustration of him and his wife's profiles. He compares and contrasts the very different responses generated when examining how to Respond, Relate, and Reinforce different profiles. As the facilitator, feel free to replace these two slides with your own 3R Profile. You can use a comparison and contrast approach with a spouse, co-worker, or friend. Sharing a story about how the 3Rs impact your relationship and enhance communication is always the best approach.

You'll want to begin to transition to the final part of the assessment, which is understanding how you are adapting under stress.

Advance to "How Are You Adapting At Home and Work?"

How are you Adapting At Home and Work?

ADAPTING TO CHANGE	REFLECTIVE	AGGRESSIVE
ADAPTING TO CHANGE	REFLECTIVE Takes time to understand the situation. Likes to ask questions and listen to others. Likes to plan ahead.	AGGRESSIVE Takes time to understand the situation. Likes to ask questions and listen to others. Likes to plan ahead.
ADAPTING TO CHANGE	FACTS Likes to understand the situation. Likes to ask questions and listen to others. Likes to plan ahead.	FEELINGS Likes to understand the situation. Likes to ask questions and listen to others. Likes to plan ahead.
ADAPTING TO CHANGE	ACCEPT Likes to understand the situation. Likes to ask questions and listen to others. Likes to plan ahead.	RESIST Likes to understand the situation. Likes to ask questions and listen to others. Likes to plan ahead.
ADAPTING TO CHANGE	SPONTANEOUS Likes to understand the situation. Likes to ask questions and listen to others. Likes to plan ahead.	CAUTIOUS Likes to understand the situation. Likes to ask questions and listen to others. Likes to plan ahead.

One of the final parts of the OXYGEN Profile Assessment is the idea of how you are adapting. If you look at your compass on your results page, you'll find a star showing up. Some of you have the star showing up on your colored profile, others you have the star maybe showing up one profile to the left or right of your core profile.

To demonstrate the power of the star, you'll want to find someone in the audience and walk up to them, asking them to grab an object from your hand (e.g., a pen or clicker). Once they reach out and take the pen, inquire whether they used their dominant hand and if they had to think about it. Most of the time, people will respond with 'yes, I grabbed it with my dominant hand, and no, I didn't think about it; it just happened naturally.' This illustrates what the core profile represents: an automatic, subconscious response.

Now, let's bring some curiosity to the group. Who here has the star showing up next to their profile, and how many have the star on the opposite side of the compass? These questions can help us understand why this is happening.

In contrast, the star represents how someone consciously reacts to the environment around them. Unlike the core profile, when someone has the star showing up outside of their core profile, they will have to consciously think about how to respond. This is why, for the star, the question becomes, 'how much energy is being used to maintain the position of the star?' For those who have the star appearing next to their core profile, very little energy is needed to sustain it. However, for someone who is mapping on the other side of the compass, it will take an enormous amount of energy to maintain that placement

Let's turn to the page in your report where you can see the graph with blue, yellow, and red streaks. It comes after the 'How Are You Adapting' page of your report.

What we're mapping here is a more specific explanation of why and where your star is appearing on the compass. Each of the four categories—Solving Problems, Influencing Others, Reacting to Change, and Making Decisions—corresponds to a blue, yellow, or red streak.

If you only see blue, it represents no need to adapt. If you see yellow, it indicates that you may need to adapt, but it can be sustainable. For others, you'll see a red streak, representing the need to adapt, but likely, this is not sustainable.

The key questions in this portion of the report aim to better understand why you need to adapt and whether it is sustainable.

Advance to slide "Emotional Connectedness Breakout Activity."

Emotional Connectedness Breakout Activity



It is likely that the degree to which you are adapting is linked to the emotional connections you have with others. Identifying your emotional connections is key to understanding how grounded you are mentally. The following breakout is a questionnaire designed to rate your emotional connectedness with your significant other. If you are not in a romantic relationship, you can still fill this out based on your emotional connection to others in your life. Take a moment to answer the questions on pages 11 and 12. Then, add up your scores for both odd and even numbers and tally them at the bottom of page 12.

The Emotional Connectedness Breakout Activity should take 10-15 minutes to complete. Keep in mind that not everyone in the room will be in a romantic relationship. Remind them that they don't need to have a significant other to fill out the questionnaire. Once they have completed the questionnaire, instruct them to add up their scores and then refer to the Key on pages 13 and 14 to understand their emotional connection.

Advance to slide "Weekly Emotional Check-In Slide"

Weekly Emotional Check-In Breakout Activity

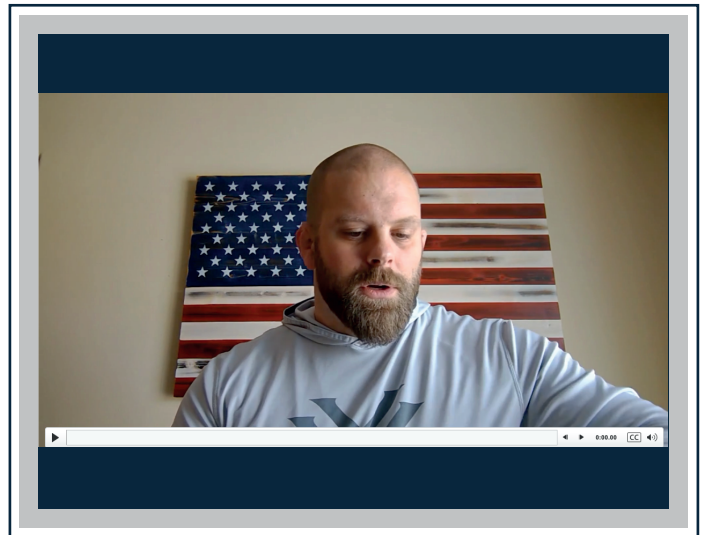


Depending on how you scored on the Emotional Connectedness survey, the importance of making the investment in our relationships. Not only with others but with ourselves. The following breakout is designed to help you self-regulate your emotions when coming off of a shift. Instead of stuffing away the negative feelings and emotions that may happen on shift, this check-in is focused on answering questions that will create space mentally to not stuff the emotions away. The danger is not the exposure to the trauma, the danger is allowing the emotions to be pushed down and not dealt with.

For those of you who are in a romantic relationship, you'll want to answer the Relationship questions. The goal is to use "I feel" statements when sharing with your partner. Stay away from using statements like "you never" or "you always."

You'll want to provide 10-15 minutes for individuals and couples to connect with the questions in the check-in.

Advance to slide "The Rest of Nick's Story"



We started this event by hearing from Nick, and I want to end with you hearing from Nick as well. His story is similar to what you've experienced during our time together. His rucksack was bursting at the seams, and he didn't have the tools to silence the voices in his head. Thankfully, he stopped short of committing suicide, but the rest of Nick's story is about his journey to heal, the demons he had to face in his past, and ultimately coming to a place where he could be at peace with his past. He did the hard work, the same hard work that can be found in the pages of your study guide, and he was vulnerable with others. Let's listen to Nick as he shares his experience at First Responder Wellness.

Playing the Nick video is OPTIONAL. Some feel it is important to hear from Nick to close the session, other facilitators will opt to give more time to the breakout. It is your choice how you finish the event.