



Public Safety Behavioral Health Symposium

The South Carolina Fire Academy partners with On A Mission LLC, SC FAST, and South Carolina Fire Insurance Services to present a Public Safety Behavioral Health Symposium. All South Carolina fire service, law enforcement, EMS, and dispatchers are encouraged to attend this free one-day program centered around the stressors of the job, how to manage those stresses, and local resources available for assistance. Lunch is provided by South Carolina Fire Insurance Services.

About the Program

Surviving the Job Captain Steve Gillespie will share his story of how he went beyond his PTSD diagnosis to PTG (Post Traumatic Growth) with the help of therapy, medication, and becoming a peer counselor. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a silent injury that is still not discussed as openly as it should be. Steve offers his story with others hoping they realize there is no longer a stigma with being in pain. Gone are the days of "Suck it up, kid" and "We don't talk about that stuff." Talking helps empty "the box" of stored up trauma and images before it overflows. This is not a scientific study or research, but Steve's story and how he "*Survived the Job.*"



Stress Management for the Emergency Responder Dr. David Griffin will share how Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS) affects emergency responders all over the world. Quite often, emergency responders do not understand why they are feeling a certain way. They may not know where to go for help or are afraid to ask due to the stigma and the "suck it up" mentality plaguing emergency services. Research indicates this is unhealthy physically and mentally - not only for suffering emergency responders, but for their family and friends as well. Sadly enough, this has led to an alarming increase in emergency responder suicides. During this workshop, David will discuss the signs, symptoms, and differences between PTSD and PTS from clinical research and from his own personal experience and outline stress management techniques. This is a powerful workshop where emergency responders learn from a fellow emergency responder who actually experienced a traumatic event, was diagnosed, and was able to overcome PTSD.

SC First Responder Assistance and Support Team (SC FAST), a section of the SC Firefighters' Association, provides training to First Responders, EMS, Public Safety and 911 Telecommunications on behavioral health, resilience, and how to help each other. Team Director Patti Graham will provide attendees with information and training resources available in South Carolina to enable them to meet the challenges of their everyday personal lives and emergency responses.



Attendance Details

Saturday, May 30, 2020

8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

SCFA, Denny Auditorium

Fee: Free and includes lunch

Direct Registration Link: 9020-20-001

<https://fire.llr.sc.gov/Portal/Registration/registration.aspx?crsidnt=69357>

Questions? Contact your regional coordinator



About the Speakers

Steve Gillespie's career as a police officer and firefighter began in 1983 with his first fatal motor vehicle accident as a 17-year old volunteer firefighter. After serving as a police officer for seven years, he began his paid career as a New York City firefighter in 1994. He retired in 2015 after serving 21 years on the job with FDNY in "The Bronx." During those years, he was exposed to significant tragedy including responding to the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, the "Black Sunday" fire, the Deutsch Bank fire, and many others involving the multiple injuries and loss of firefighters and civilians alike. According to Steve, "The only thing I ever wanted to be was a New York City fireman. I have lived my dream." He is a respected lecturer and H.O.T instructor with experience teaching at FDNY Probationary Firefighter School, FDNY Technical Rescue School, and presenting at national conferences such as Firehouse Expo and Fire Department Instructor's Conference. Steve retired to North Charleston, SC and currently serves as a Captain with the North Charleston Fire Department Training Division.

Dr. David Griffin is a current Battalion Chief and Deputy Director of Training with the City of Charleston Fire Department. He was the operator of the first due engine on June 18, 2007, when nine of his fellow firefighters perished in the line of duty. He earned a Bachelor's of Science in Education from The Citadel, a Master's of Science in executive fire service leadership, and a Doctorate of Education in organizational leadership and development. He is the author of the best seller, *In Honor of The Charleston 9: A Study of Change Following Tragedy*, as well as *ACTION: 9 Missions for Personal and Professional Growth, From PTSD to PTG: A Firefighter's Journey After A Multiple LODD Incident*, and *Tattoos and Trauma: The Healing Power of Tattoos for Emergency Responders*. David is also an international speaker and instructor, a certified Chief Fire Officer and Chief Training Officer with The Center for Public Safety Excellence, and a graduate of the Executive Fire Officer Program from the National Fire Academy. He completes Harvard University's Kennedy School of Executive Education program entitled, Senior Executives in State and Local Government in July 2020. He has taught in 44 states in the United States, plus Canada and Mexico, and at over 500 organizations in three different languages, with more than 3,100 courses presented to 67,000 plus attendees.

Patti Graham was born to a father who dedicated his life to serving others, with a passion for the fire department and the community. Unfortunately, he was killed in 2008 while serving others. Wanting to carry on the tradition, Patti decided to follow in her father's footsteps. Since her dad's passing, Patti took her firefighter training with the Sumter County Fire Department, served as a volunteer firefighter, and its assistant chaplain. She is now a volunteer firefighter at Boiling Springs Fire District in Greenville, SC. Patti also serves as the Team Director for the SC First Responder Assistance and Support Team (SCFAST). It warms her heart to hear from others and knows her father is proud to watch her grow and continue his legacy. Patti is married to Steve Graham, Chief of Boiling Springs FD. They have four children and 10 grandchildren.