

Wellbeing & The Safety Professional – Who's Looking After You?

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Who's Ready for Some Safety Therapy?



Our Life's Work

- ▶ 20+ years
- ▶ Aligns with my life's purpose – to be in service of others
- ▶ Not merely a job, a vocation
- ▶ There are easier ways to earn a living
- ▶ Have made job choices based on how many people I could assist.

Life as A Safety Professional: Two Sides of the Same Coin

- ▶ Variety in problem solving – every day is a different challenge
- ▶ Keep people safe, feeling supported
- ▶ Moving the needle in the right direction
- ▶ Seeing that change in perspective
- ▶ Being needed & recognized as a go-to resource
- ▶ “I got you.”

Life as A Safety Professional: Two Sides of the Same Coin

- ▶ Did I make a difference or was I just lucky?
- ▶ Mind is still on call even when I am not.
- ▶ Overwhelmed by being needed, there's nothing left of me to give.
- ▶ Recognizing a potential identity crisis – who am I outside of this work?
- ▶ Who has me?





What's My Why?

The Only Person
Who Will Take Of
You Is YOU

Today's Presentation

- ▶ How to Recognize the Not-So-Hidden Burdens of our Roles
- ▶ Prioritizing Our Mental & Physical Wellbeing
- ▶ Take Back Your Power, Take Care of Yourself, Be a Better Safety Professional
- ▶ The Importance of Building a Community of Support
- ▶ Physical fitness and mental wellness and being more resilient and effective safety leaders.

The Ultimate Caretaker

As safety professionals, our primary role is actively taking care of others:

- ▶ Ongoing hazard analyses & occasional surprises
- ▶ Responding to emergencies – big & small
- ▶ Constant state of alertness or engagement with what is/could be taking place on the job.

The Not-so-hidden Burdens Of Our Roles

- ▶ Emotional load from investigating injuries, fatalities, and near misses.
- ▶ Pressure of being both an enforcer and a supporter.
- ▶ Impact of often working in isolation with little peer support.

Another Day, Another Existential Crisis

- ▶ Unable to disconnect when away from work.
- ▶ Question if we are doing enough to prevent incidents
- ▶ Worry what will/could happen if we are not onsite
- ▶ Blame ourselves (or perhaps are blamed) when incidents do occur
- ▶ Fear potential legal ramifications
- ▶ Perceive ourselves as undervalued/unappreciated by those we support.
- ▶ Struggle to balance large projects and demands with limited financial resources and insufficient manpower.

A Case Of Workplace Whiplash

What happens when we are pulled everywhere, all at once?

- ▶ A constant push to adapt, respond, and deliver takes a toll—not just on productivity - but on our own mental and physical wellbeing and safety.
- ▶ Exhaustion
- ▶ Compromised immune system leading to poor health and chronic illnesses.
- ▶ Personal and professional relationships can become damaged.
- ▶ Physical fatigue can morph into compassion fatigue as we combat cynicism from creeping into our day-to-day professional life.

Why We Must Prioritize Our Mental & Physical Wellbeing

- ▶ A burned-out safety professional can't effectively advocate for others.
- ▶ Stress, physical exhaustion, and compassion fatigue can impair decision making.
- ▶ Modeling self-care creates credibility when encouraging workers to care for themselves.

Take Back Your Power, Take Care Of Yourself, Be A Better Safety Professional

- ▶ Learn to establish boundaries – the quandary of being reliable and responsible
- ▶ How can we improve being more present while at work and at home?
- ▶ Making time for physical activity & recognizing its impact on productivity, creativity, and mental fortitude
- ▶ Engaging in mindfulness, resilience, and stress management techniques.

Exercise & Productivity

But I am so busy- Take that wellness break!

- ▶ **Increased energy** - When the body is physically active, your energy capacity increases.
- ▶ **Reduction in fatigue and stress** = better sleep!
- ▶ **Improved Cognition & Concentration** - boosts blood, glucose, and oxygen levels, allowing for better concentration and focus on tasks. Additionally, exercise has shown to increase the size of the area of the brain involved in memory and learning.
- ▶ **Increased creativity & problem-solving skills.**

Benefits Of Meditation & Mindfulness

- ▶ There is no wrong way!
- ▶ Started with 5-minute sessions. I fell asleep during the first one.
- ▶ Take 5 breaths before going from one task to the next - especially when responding to an emergency!
- ▶ Calm = Strong

Benefits Of Meditation & Mindfulness

- ▶ **Focus** - concentrate on tasks and reduce mind-wandering.
- ▶ **Stress** – reduce stress and feel more calm.
- ▶ **Distractions** - Meditation can help you learn to minimize distractions more efficiently.
- ▶ **Procrastination** - procrastinate less and catch yourself when you do.
- ▶ **Decision-making** – find solutions more easily.

Build A Community Of Support

- ▶ Establish peer networks and mentoring to reduce professional isolation.
- ▶ Within your own team and outside.
- ▶ Think about Total Worker Health for YOU!!
- ▶ Take advantage of your company's resources – employee assistance program, gym, etc.