

STRESS AND RESILIENCE for Emergency Responders

ROY SMALLEY,

Mayville Fire Dept / Moraine Park Technical College

Stress is a good thing! Just like muscles need physical stress to grow stronger, mental and emotional challenges are necessary to develop resilience, empathy, and grit. However, stress in the emergency services has always been approached as a net negative to be treated, mitigated, avoided, or - worse - ignored. With this kind of mindset, it's not surprising that reported burnout rates in fire and EMS hover around 60%. Stress and trauma are an unavoidable part of our industry, and we as instructors need to be addressing resiliency training in our classrooms from the moment our candidates walk through the door. This session will explore stress from a growth mindset, discuss how stress helps strengthen emotional intelligence and resilience, and explore how we can help prepare our students to be more resilient throughout their careers.

After completing this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the definition and physiological effects of stress;
2. Recognize the role of mindset in reducing the effects of stress and emphasizing its positive benefits;
3. Identify ways to "shift and persist" through stress by accepting and embracing it;
4. Apply knowledge of stress and the concept of mindset to address and train resilience with all our students, candidate through officer.



Roy Smalley is a certified fire officer, emergency services instructor, and EMT-B from Mayville, Wisconsin, where he serves as his department's health & safety officer. As a certified personal trainer, wellness consultant, and stress management coach, Roy has been actively coaching clients for nearly 15 years. His articles on fitness and wellness topics have appeared in the Wisconsin Fire Journal and other publications, and he has presented at conferences and webinars for the WSFA, NVFC, and other organizations.