




# PTSD AND THE FIRE SERVICE


SIGNS AND SOLUTIONS



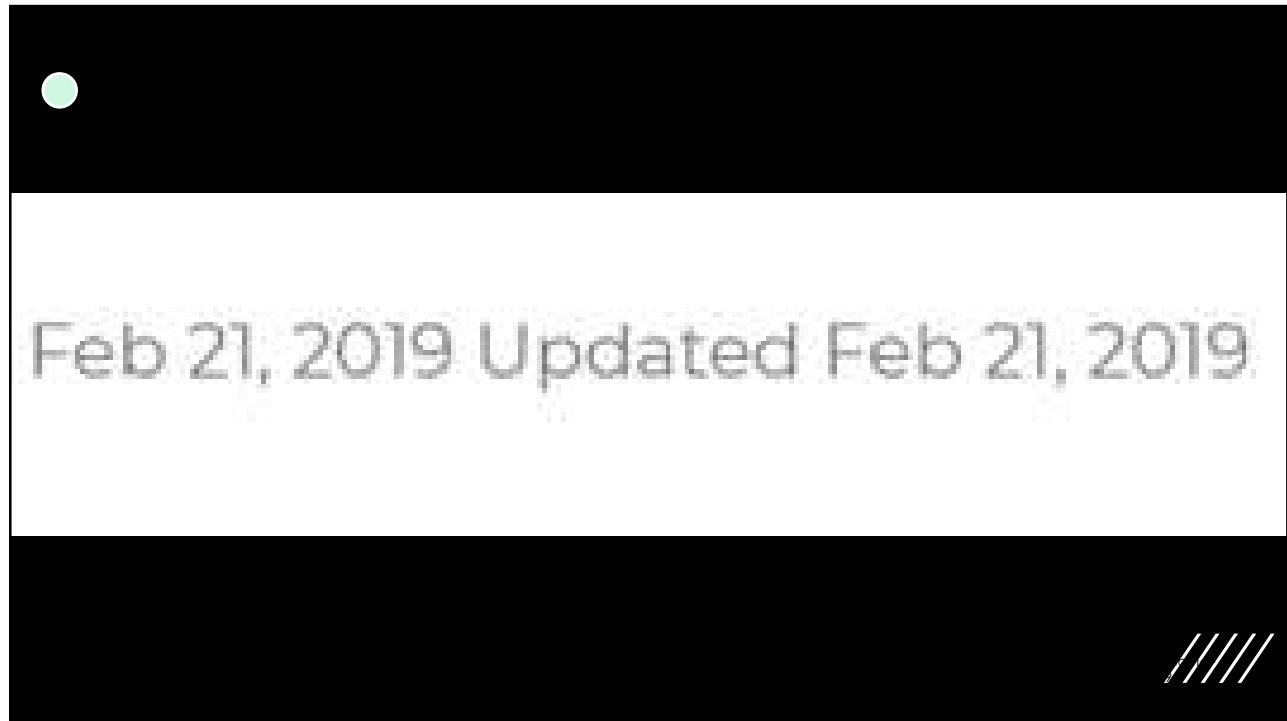
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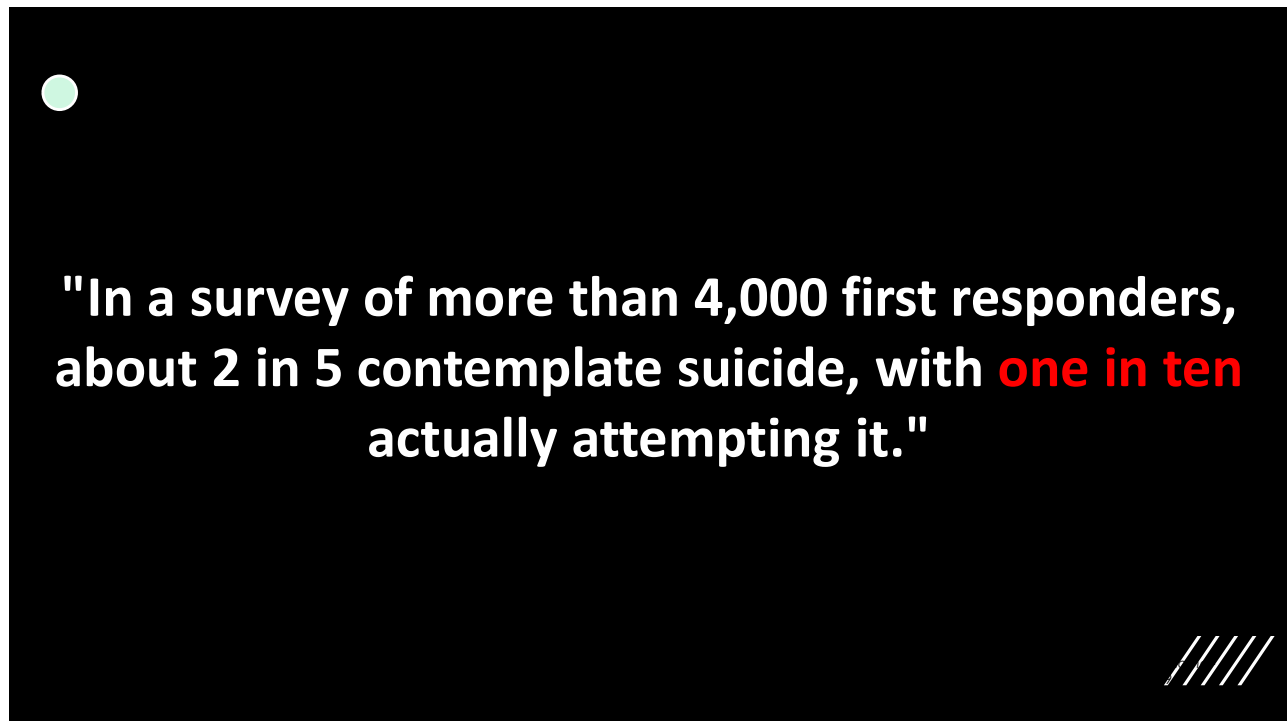
One first responder dies by suicide  
**EVERY 4 DAYS in the USA** (CDC, 2018)



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## Ambulance response times worst on record as A&E waits hit new highs

Data for England shows huge pressures across NHS from emergency callouts to admissions

UK politics live - latest news updates

## What is driving the decline in police recruitment?



U.S.

## EMS, Hospital Bed Shortage Lead to Long Ambulance Wait Times Amid Record Call Numbers

BY SAMANTHA BERLIN ON 8/27/21 AT 11:55 AM EDT

## 'America is still burning': Fire departments are struggling to recruit as climate change and modern materials make the job deadlier than ever

BY REBECCA SANTANA AND THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
January 12, 2023 at 4:25 PM EST



7

Let's break down what we can  
**do** about it



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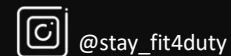
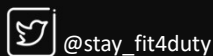


- EMS 20 years (NY, ME, and MA)
  - Kennebunk Fire and Rescue
- Paramedic 18 years
- CCTS-P Boston MedFlight 10 years
  - Preceptor
  - Educator
  - Peer Support Coordinator
- MS Final year Clinical Psychology- Colorado State University
- Graduate Clinical Intern – Specializing in PTSD and trauma (Framingham, MA)
- B.S. Medical Biology University of New England
- Board Certified in Critical Incident Stress Management
- Operates as part of ECHO FAST Peer Support Team
- RI CISM team
- Founder-Stay Fit 4 Duty



9

Founded in 2018, Stay Fit for Duty's mission is simple:  
To help medical professionals treat their mental health with the same dedication and tenacity as they treat the physical health of those they took an oath to help.

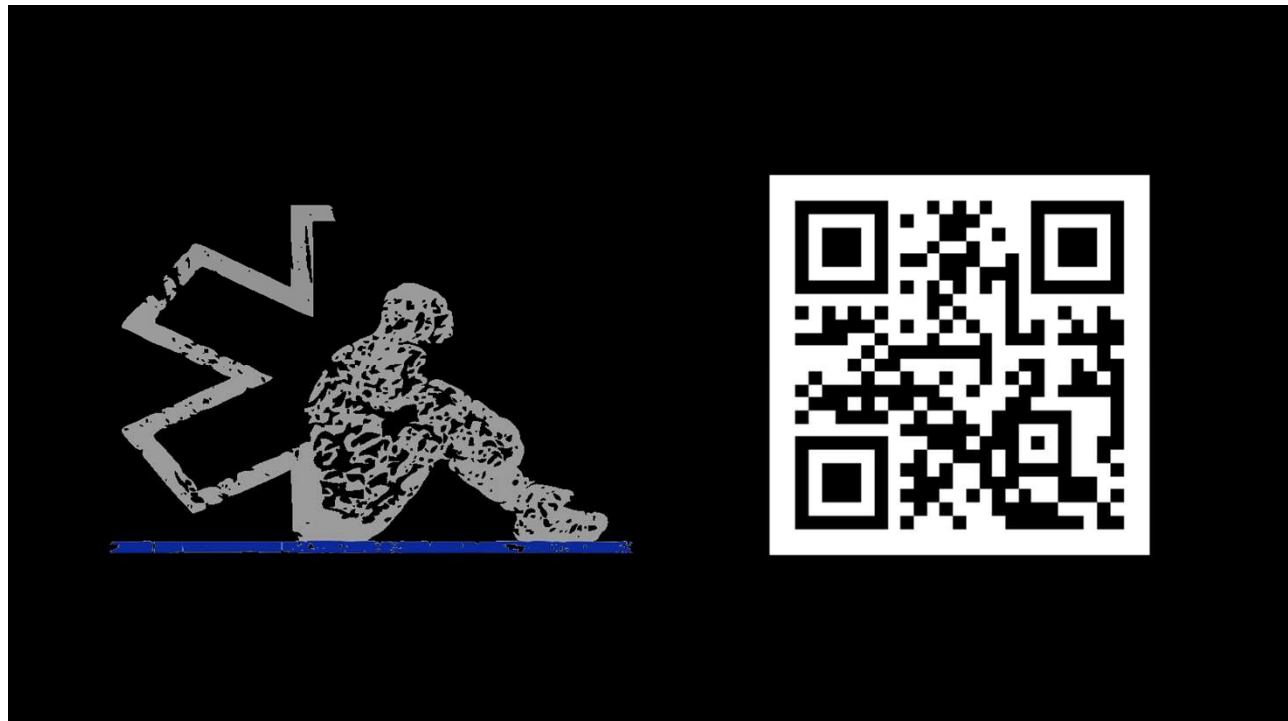


10

## Goals of Stay Fit 4 Duty

- Support and advocate for the need for better mental health and resilience education and practice in the medical profession.
- Advocate for and help teams create peer support programs within their institutions.
- Help align individuals in need with members of the mental health profession who understand medical professionals, their world view, and ideals in a way that gives them the best mental healthcare possible.

11



12



Post Traumatic **Stress**

Post Traumatic Stress **Disorder**



13



Let's start by reducing the **stigma**  
and give ourselves some **grace**



14



## What Makes an Event “Traumatic”?

It involves a threat—**real or perceived**—to one’s physical or emotional well-being.

It is **overwhelming**.

It results in **intense feelings** of fear and lack of control.

It leaves one feeling **helpless**.

**It changes the way a person understands the world, themselves, and others.**

(American Psychiatric Association, 2000)



15



**How many calls have you **and your team** been on  
that meet those criteria?**



16







PTSI **isn't** a thing...yet



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Don't confuse your body's **natural response** to stress and trauma for PTSD



18

- - A. Stressor
  - B. Intrusion Symptom
  - C. Avoidance
  - D. Negative Alteration in Cognition
  - E. Alterations in arousal and reactivity

(SAMHSA, 2014) 

19

- “Duration of the disturbance (Criteria B, C, D and E)  
**is more than 1 month**” (SAMHSA, 2014)



20



“**not all** diagnosable Trauma and Stress-Related Disorders will result in PTSD.”



21



What else is there?

Acute Stress Disorder (ASD)

Adjustment Disorder (AD)

Unspecified Trauma and Stress Disorder



22



The biggest factors separating these from  
one another is **time**



23



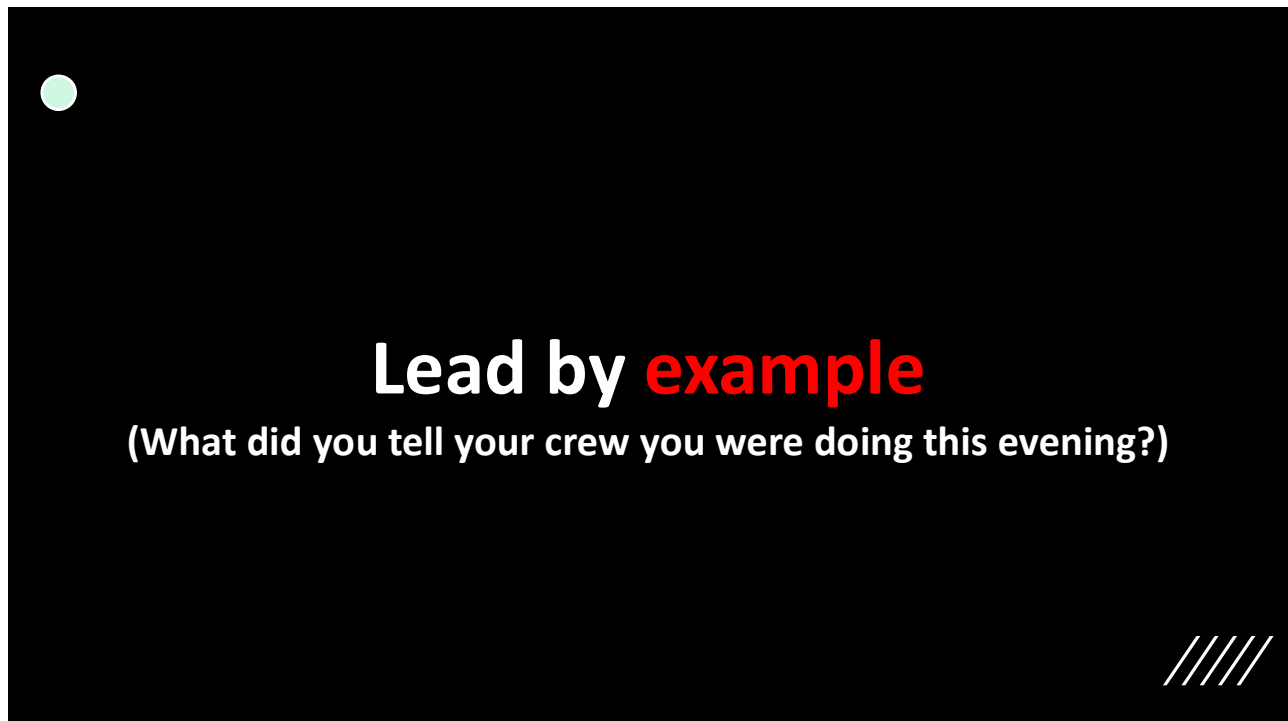
All the diagnosis we discuss today are  
made by a  
licensed **mental health professional**



24



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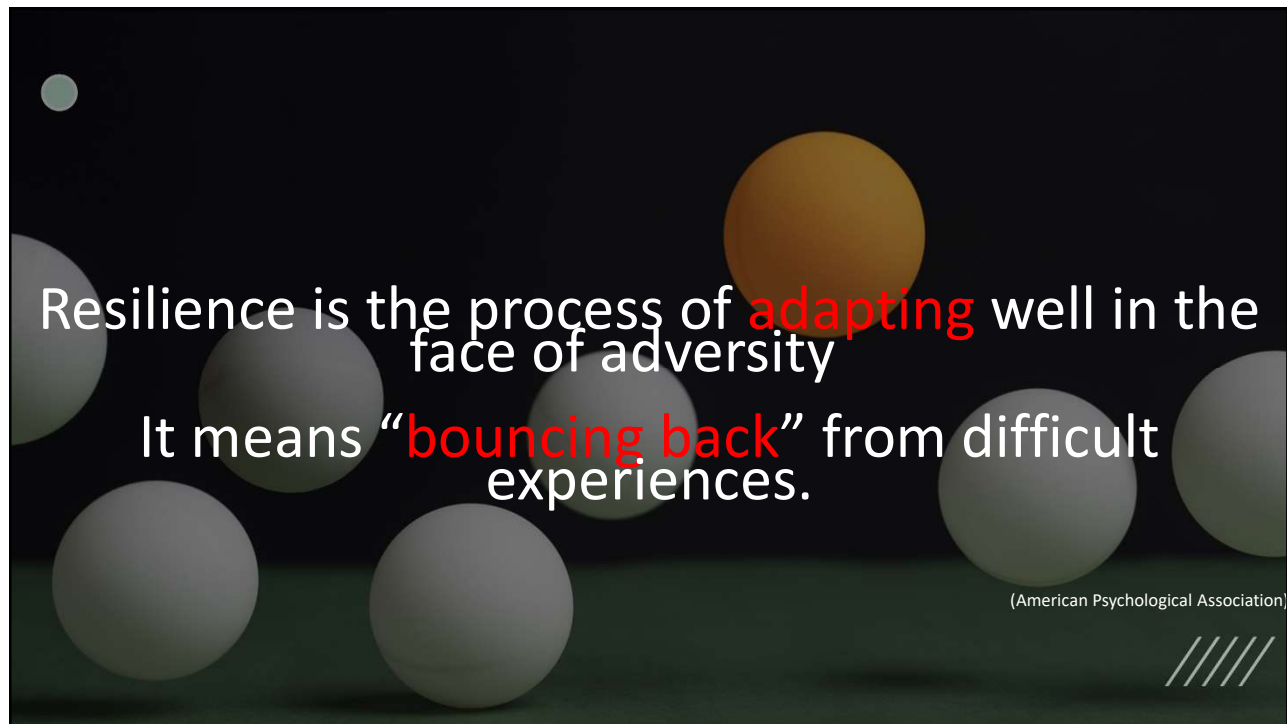
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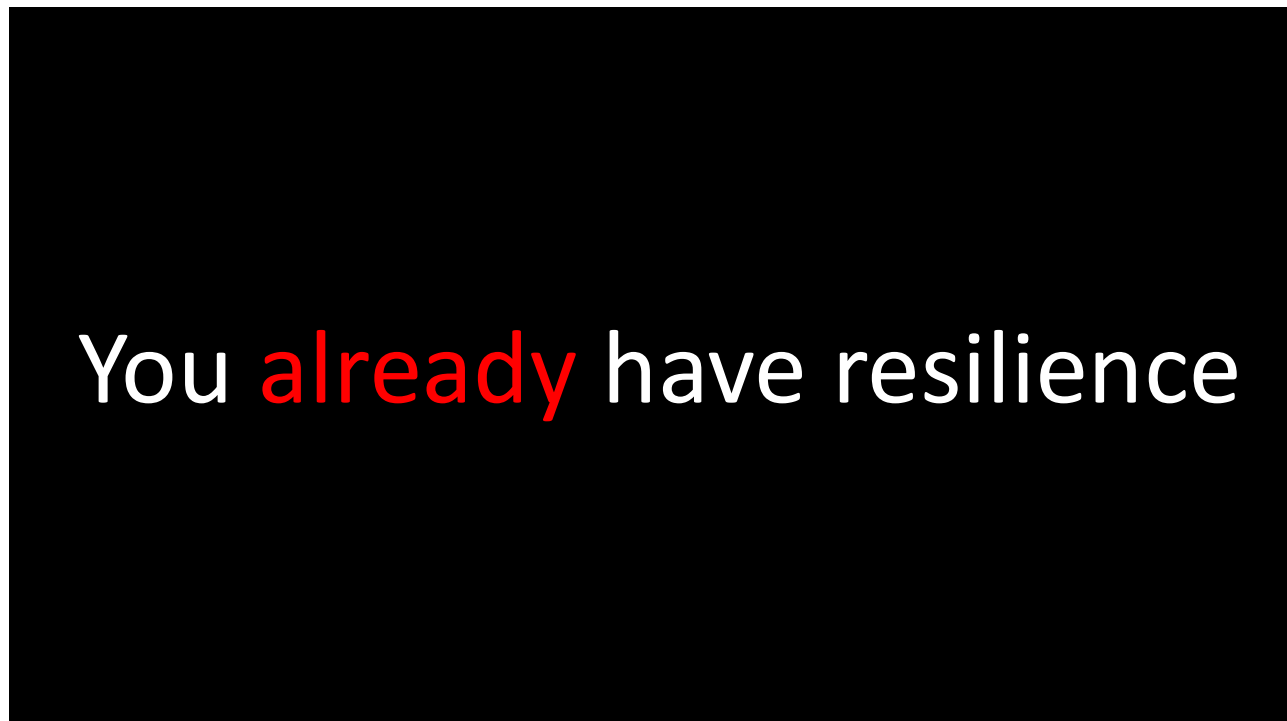
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I'm presenting ways to  
**strengthen** it

31



Your family can **help** you



32





### CREATING A RELATIONSHIP ACTION PLAN

**Define Your Needs**  
Talk with your partner about what you need help with. What tasks would normally be your responsibility, but need to be temporarily shouldered by your partner?

**Define "Decompression"**  
Taking the time to "decompress" is tremendously important. Not only should you know how your partner decompresses but you should both ensure that you each have the time to do so.

**Prepare a Visual Plan**  
For some, a simple conversation is all that is needed. For others it's helpful to have an actual written plan that can be reviewed. Create what works best for you and your partner.

**Know When To Get More Help**  
Allow yourself and your partner the freedom to recommend using additional resources. These can include peer/crisis teams, mental health professionals, spiritual care professionals.

**Watch, Measure, and Update**  
Action plans are a guide. They can change, grow, and evolve just like any relationship. Don't be afraid to change and edit your plan as needed.

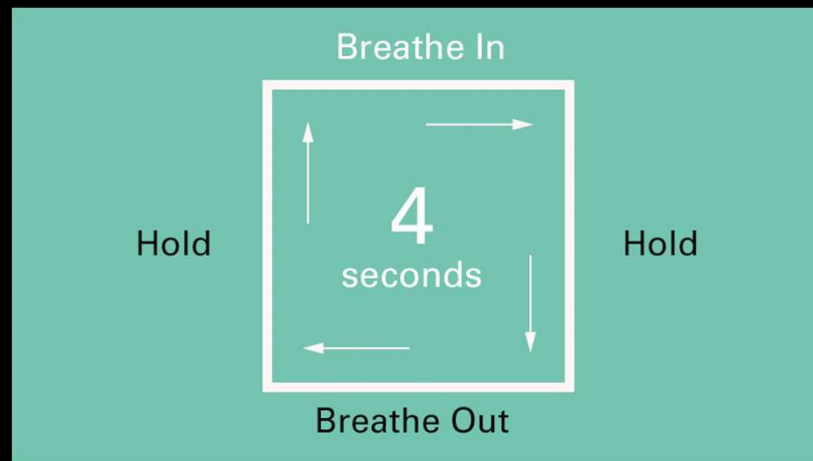
Stay Fit 4 Duty [stayfit4duty.org](http://stayfit4duty.org)

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- Take a breath



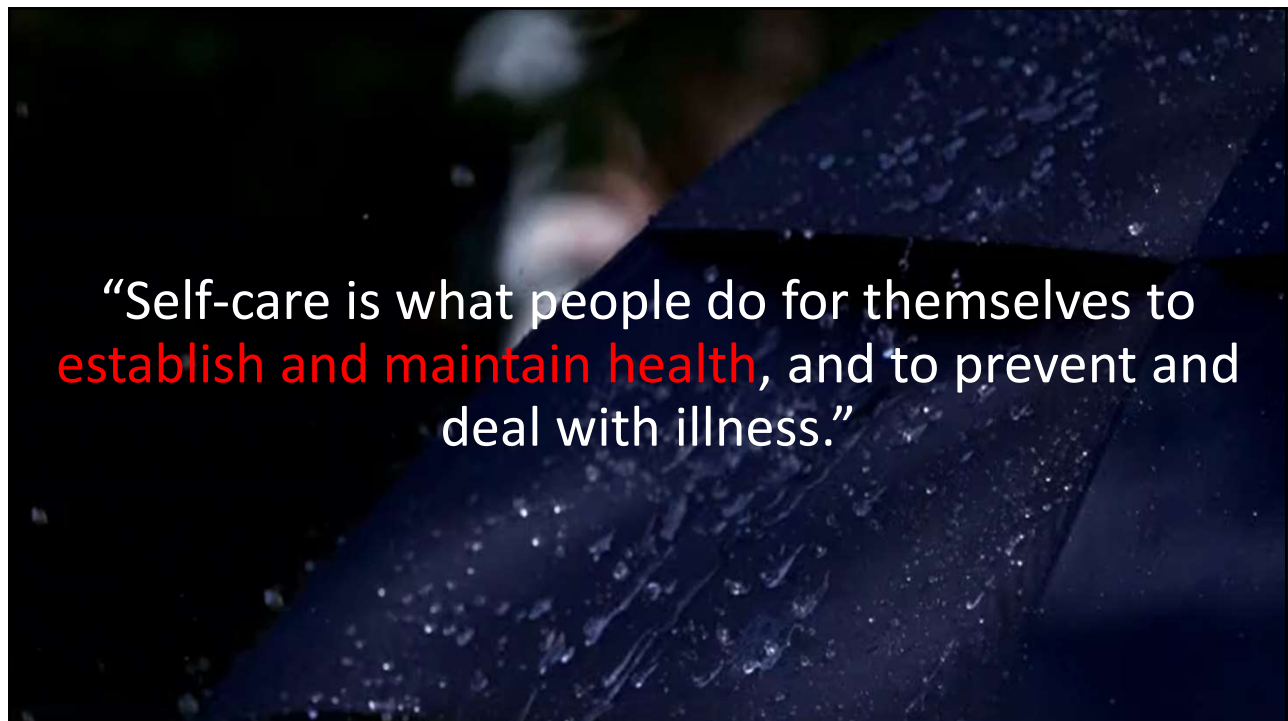
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- **mindful rest**  
**is as psychologically**  
**beneficial**  
**as**  
**actual\* sleep**

36



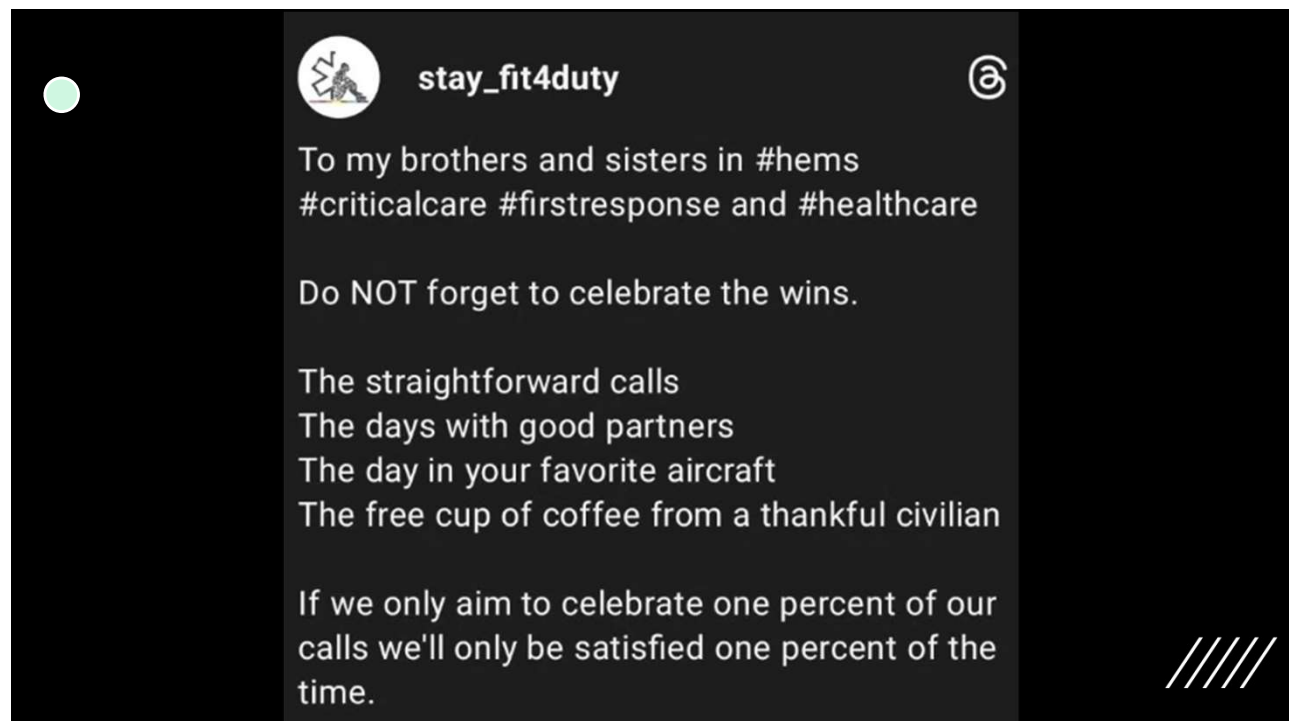
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38

## Post Traumatic and Vicarious Growth

39



A social media post on a dark background. At the top left is a light blue circle. The post features a profile picture of a person with a gear, the username 'stay\_fit4duty', and a location pin icon. The text is white and reads: 'To my brothers and sisters in #hems #criticalcare #firstresponse and #healthcare Do NOT forget to celebrate the wins. The straightforward calls The days with good partners The day in your favorite aircraft The free cup of coffee from a thankful civilian If we only aim to celebrate one percent of our calls we'll only be satisfied one percent of the time.' At the bottom right, there are four white diagonal slashes.

 **stay\_fit4duty** 

To my brothers and sisters in #hems  
#criticalcare #firstresponse and #healthcare

Do NOT forget to celebrate the wins.

The straightforward calls  
The days with good partners  
The day in your favorite aircraft  
The free cup of coffee from a thankful civilian

If we only aim to celebrate one percent of our  
calls we'll only be satisfied one percent of the  
time.

40

# Thank you all for your time and attention

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james@stayfit4duty.org

