



Break the Stigma, Heal Your Mind: May is Mental Health Awareness Time

Mental Health Awareness Month is observed in the month of May every year in the United States to raise awareness about mental health and mental illnesses. The aim of this month-long observance is to educate the public about the importance of mental health, reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness, and encourage people to seek help when they need it.

During Mental Health Awareness Month, various organizations, mental health professionals, and advocates work to promote mental health and provide resources and support for those who are struggling with mental health issues. Activities such as workshops, seminars, and community events are organized to spread awareness about mental health and the importance of self-care, coping skills, and seeking professional help.

Established in 1949 by Mental Health America, May was selected to be the designated month for Mental Health to be recognized. Every year, the goal is to raise awareness, break the stigma, provide support and educate the public to advocate for policies and resources for our communities.

Fire Captain Ryan J. Mitchell's First Responders Behavioral Health Support Program is excited to promote and honor your wellness and mental health this month and every month! Join us in celebrating and honoring our resiliency, growth and well-being as we hooray for May!

Bravery, Dedication, Sacrifice Thank You, Firefighters

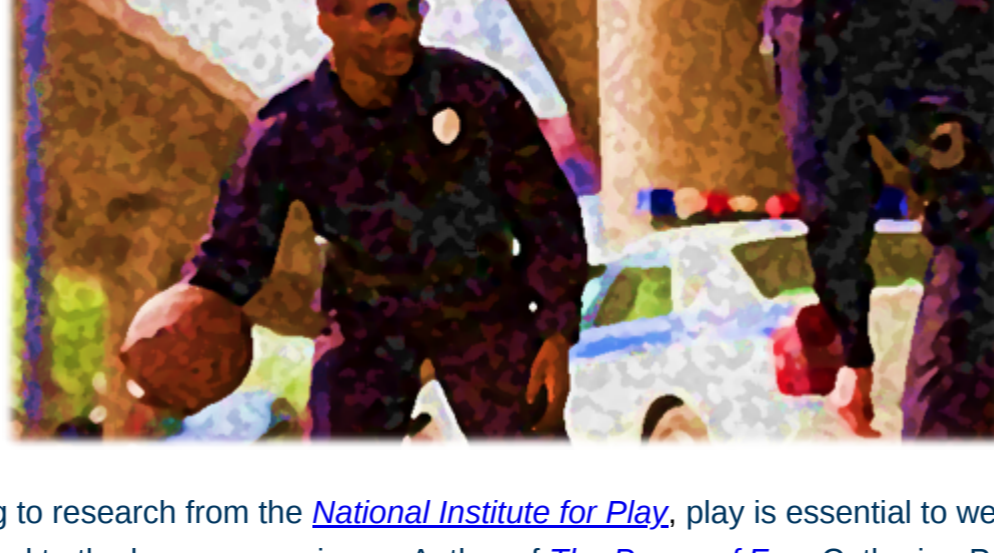
International Firefighters Day is observed on May 4th every year to honor and recognize the sacrifices that firefighters make to ensure the safety and well-being of their communities. This day was established in 1999 after a tragic event in which five firefighters lost their lives while battling a wildfire in Australia.

International Firefighters Day is a day to remember and honor firefighters who have lost their lives in the line of duty, as well as to show appreciation for the ongoing efforts and bravery of firefighters around the world. On this day, people may organize events, parades, or other activities to show their support for firefighters and thank them for their service to the community. The day also serves as a reminder of the importance of fire safety and prevention measures to



reduce the risk of fires and protect lives and property. By proudly wearing and displaying blue and red ribbons pinned together or by participating in a memorial or recognition event, we can show our gratitude to firefighters everywhere. The IFFD ribbons are linked to colors symbolic of the elements firefighters work with – red for fire and blue for water. [Click here for additional support information](#)

Unleash the Powerful Mental Health Benefits of Play



According to research from the [National Institute for Play](#), play is essential to well-being and integral to the human experience. Author of [The Power of Fun](#), Catherine Price says "Play is enormously important." "We're such perfectionists, so to find a context in which you can let down your guard, it's incredibly freeing and very conducive to fun." Caring for our mental health has become more essential than ever before. The way we treat our bodies, how and with whom we spend our time, and what thoughts are center stage in our minds are vital.

Playtime isn't just for children. Though you might've given up playing in favor of engaging in serious adult stuff, play is just as good for grown-ups as it is for youngsters. It's vital for all of us, actually. While play itself is both an action and an attitude, it's playfulness, which anyone can cultivate, that leads to more lightheartedness and fun in our everyday lives. It turns out fun is seriously good for us, Price says. A feeling she defines as the confluence of playfulness, connection, and flow, fun reduces stress, fosters intimacy, increases relaxation, and stimulates creativity. All of those traits help reduce chronic inflammation, which is associated with an increased risk of diabetes, heart disease, strokes, and cancer.

Here's how to invite more playfulness into your life:

• Let Go of Perfectionism

Perfectionism is the enemy of playfulness, which requires allowing yourself to be swept up in the moment. To release the need to be totally perfect — or simply good — at the fun thing you want to try, Price suggests approaching the experience by asking yourself this innocuous query: What's the worst that could happen? "That's a question that can be posed in all sorts of contexts that leads to a spirit of playfulness," Price says, adding that it also helps to embrace absurdity and a willingness to laugh at yourself.

• Identify Your Fun Magnets

"Fun magnets are the people, settings, and activities that are the most likely to generate fun for you personally," Price explains. "For some people, karaoke might be a huge fun night. And for another person, that's a nightmare of a night out." You can make better use of your leisure time and increase the health-boosting benefits of play and fun in your life when you know your fun magnets so you can prioritize creating those circumstances.

• Know Your Play Personality

Say it's been a long time and you're not sure where to begin... Stuart Brown, author of [Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul](#) says, "Determine your [Play Personality](#)." He's identified eight archetypes — based on more than 6,000 interviews and clinical observations — that can help you connect with activities and opportunities to turn up your personal playfulness. They are: the collector, competitor, creator, director, explorer, joker, kinesiologist, and storyteller. You can learn more about these this model here: <https://www.nifplay.org/what-is-play/play-personalities/>

It's important for adults to make time for play in their lives, as it can help them to recharge, increase happiness, and improve their overall quality of life. So go ahead and have some fun! [Find the full article here.](#)

Remembering the fallen, honoring the brave International Police Week

International Police Week is a week-long observance held every year during the week that includes May 15th. It is a time to honor and remember law enforcement officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty, as well as to show appreciation for the ongoing efforts and sacrifices of police officers around the world. International Police Week was first observed

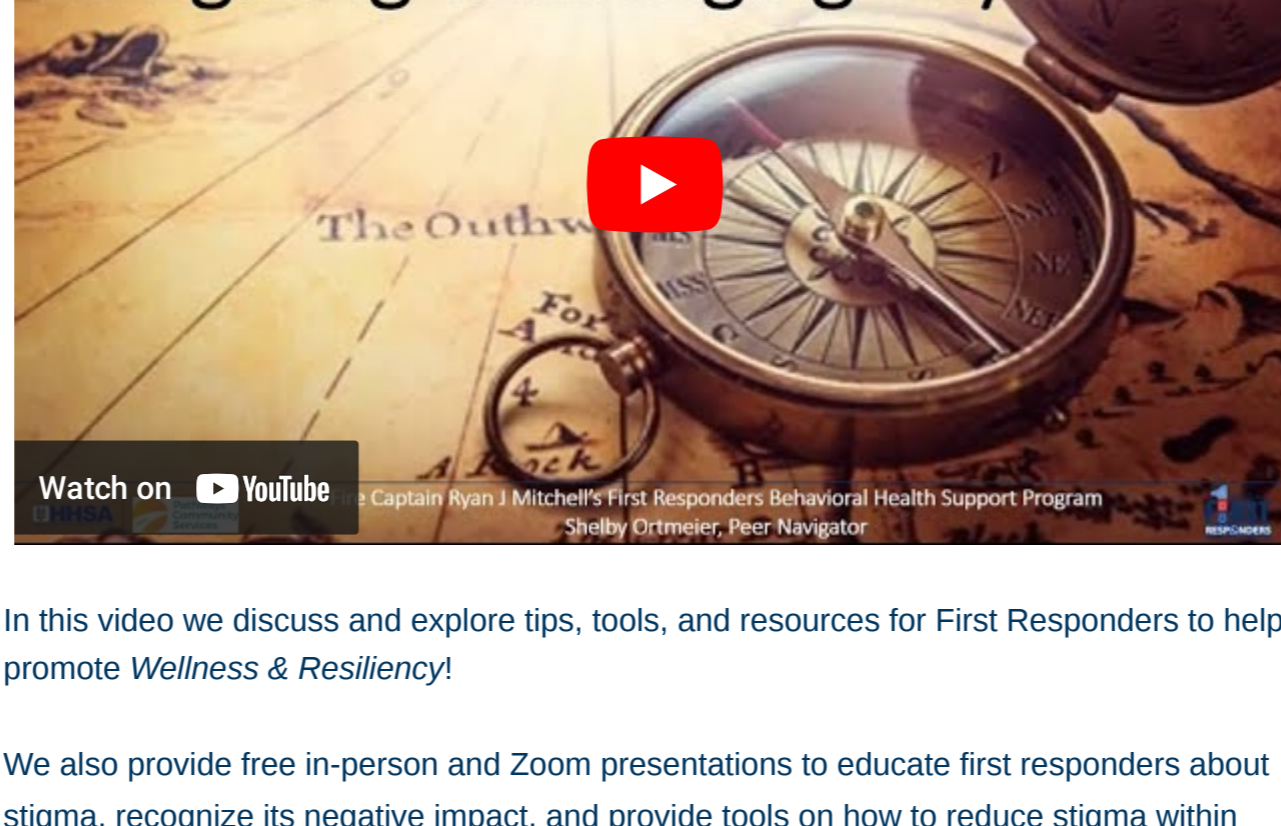


in 1962 in the United States, and has since grown to become a global observance, with events and activities organized by law enforcement agencies, community groups, and individuals to honor and support police officers. During this week, various events and activities are organized to promote law enforcement and community partnerships, raise awareness about the challenges and risks that police officers face, and recognize the important role that law enforcement plays in maintaining public safety and security.

The week typically includes ceremonies, vigils, memorial services, and other activities to remember fallen officers and show support for those who continue to serve their communities.

Your support makes a difference. The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund is a non-profit and non-partisan organization. Although both the Memorial and Museum are on federal land by acts of Congress, we do not receive taxpayer dollars but rely on your charitable, tax-deductible contributions. <https://nleomf.org/support/>

Navigating Challenging Days



In this video we discuss and explore tips, tools, and resources for First Responders to help promote *Wellness & Resiliency!*

We also provide free in-person and Zoom presentations to educate first responders about stigma, recognize its negative impact, and provide tools on how to reduce stigma within one's department. Our team will also create custom presentations to meet the needs of your department. For more information about this presentation, please visit us at: www.sdfirstrespondersprogram.org 1-833-YU-FIRST (1-833-983-4778)

Every Second Counts: Honoring Our EMS Heroes on National EMS Day

National EMS Day is observed on May 19th every year to recognize and honor the contributions and sacrifices of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) practitioners, including paramedics, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), and other first responders.

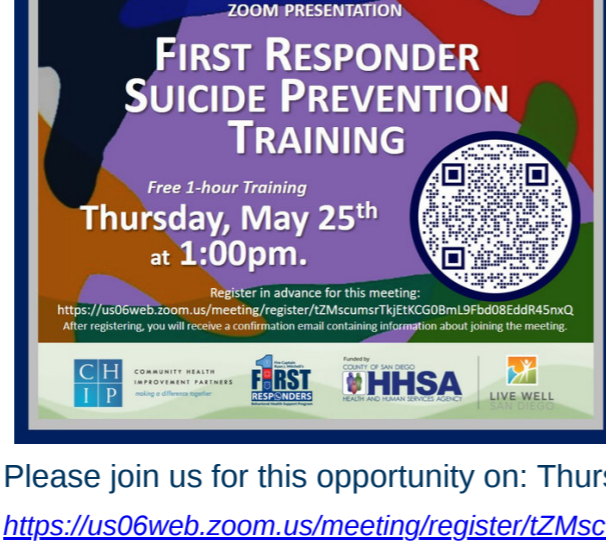
EMS practitioners play a vital role in providing critical medical care and support to individuals in emergency situations, often working under stressful and challenging conditions. National EMS Day is a time to show appreciation for their dedication, bravery, and commitment to saving lives and serving their communities.

During this day, events and activities are organized to raise awareness about the importance of EMS services, educate the public about emergency preparedness and response, and recognize the achievements and sacrifices of EMS practitioners. This day also serves as an opportunity to advocate for better resources, training, and support for EMS personnel to ensure that they are better equipped to handle emergencies and provide the best possible care to those in need. [Click here to learn more.](#)



First Responder Suicide Prevention Training

San Diego County Suicide Prevention Council in collaboration with Fire Captain Ryan J. Mitchell's First Responders Behavioral Health Support Program is hosting a First Responder Suicide Prevention Training.



This free, 1-hour training helps prepare First Responders to prevent suicide by raising awareness about factors of suicide, learning conversation tools for suicide prevention, discussing resources, understanding factors of suicide, and identifying how to appropriately respond.

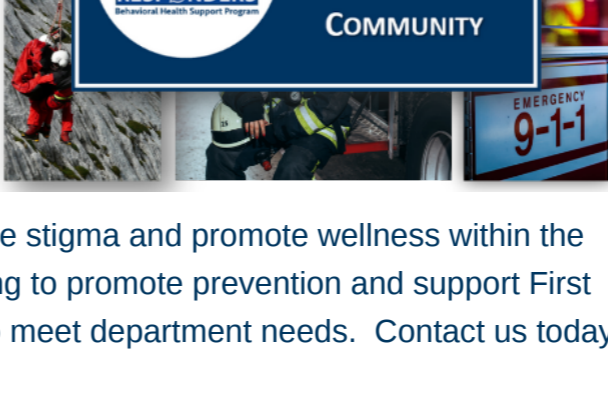
Who should attend? Those who represent the First Responder population including Law Enforcement, Fire Departments, EMS, Dispatch, Lifeguard, CERT, or other emergency response communities.

Please join us for this opportunity on: Thursday, May 25, 2023 @ 1:00pm. Link to Register: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/92M5cumsrTjEtkCG08mL9Fb08EddR45nX0>

A Zoom link will be provided upon registration.

Group Presentation: Reducing Stigma

Resiliency is a top priority in the First Responder community. First Responders are at a greater risk for experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety due to repeated exposure to trauma. Many First Responders are hesitant to seek help because of the stigma surrounding mental health. Our staff provides county-funded in-person & Zoom presentations to educate First Responders about stigma, resiliency & wellness,



recognize its impact, and provide tools to reduce stigma and promote wellness within the First Responder community. Our team is working to promote prevention and support First Responders – creating custom presentations to meet department needs. Contact us today to request an in-person or Zoom presentation.

[Request Information](#)

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