



May Newsletter



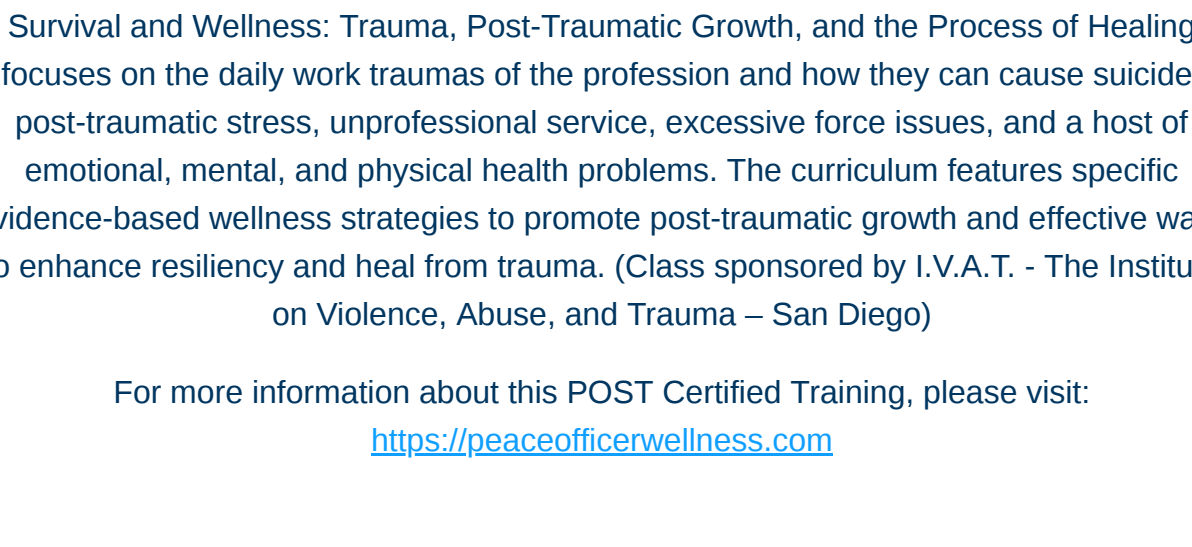
Mental Health Awareness Month

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.

While 1 in 5 people will experience a mental illness during their lifetime, everyone faces challenges in life that can impact their mental health. Life can be challenging, but every day shouldn't feel hard or out of your control. If it does, one of the quickest and easiest ways to determine whether you are experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition is to take a mental health screening at mhascreeing.org.

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!

Evidence-Based Wellness and Resilience Strategies



Advisory Council Member, Retired Capt. Dan Willis, developed a 4-Hour Resilience POST Certified Training. Capt. Dan Willis (ret) served for 30 years with the La Mesa Police Department as a crimes of violence, sexual assault, child molestation, homicide detective, SWAT Commander, Wellness Unit Coordinator and Peer Support team leader. He's a graduate of the FBI National Academy, instructor with the National Command College, international instructor on wellness and resilience, and has developed 3 POST courses.

The course is titled: Evidence-Based Wellness and Resilience Strategies. Emotional Survival and Wellness: Trauma, Post-Traumatic Growth, and the Process of Healing focuses on the daily work traumas of the profession and how they can cause suicide, post-traumatic stress, unprofessional service, excessive force issues, and a host of emotional, mental, and physical health problems. The curriculum features specific evidence-based wellness strategies to promote post-traumatic growth and effective ways to enhance resiliency and heal from trauma. (Class sponsored by I.V.A.T. - The Institute on Violence, Abuse, and Trauma – San Diego)

For more information about this POST Certified Training, please visit: <https://oacacofficerwellness.com>

NAMI Walks Your Way 2022

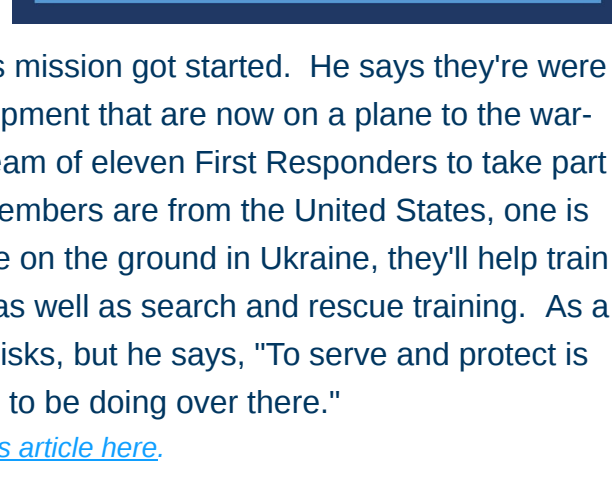


Fire Captain Ryan J. Mitchell's First Responders Behavioral Health Support Program were honored to be part of NAMI Walks San Diego 2022! NAMI Walks was a meaningful event to kick off Mental Health Month. It was wonderful connecting with First Responders, First Responder Family Members and San Diego Community Members, promoting awareness of wellness resources within San Diego County and honoring mental health for all! It was so fun to be out in the community and to support, educate and advocate for behavioral health and well-being!

San Diego Firefighter Leads Mission to Help Search & Rescue Efforts in Ukraine

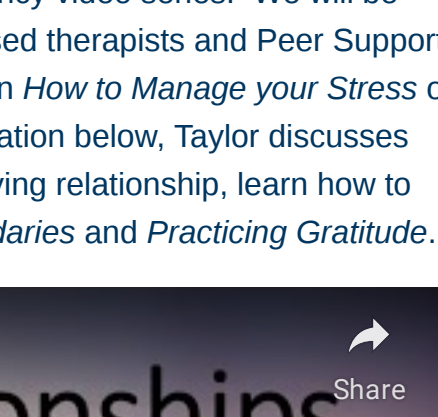
As you are reading, First Responders are helping with the search and rescue efforts in Ukraine. A local firefighter from San Diego County is responsible for making this mission possible. "It's to help our fellow firefighters over there. That's what this is all about," said Eric Hille, an engineer with San Miguel Fire Rescue. Since the beginning of the war, Ukraine has received medical, military, and clothing donations, but not help for the Ukrainian firefighters. Hille saw the opportunity to help these people that stayed to protect their cities, and that's how this mission got started. He says they're were able to collect 26 pallets of fire and rescue equipment that are now on a plane to the war-torn country. With Hille's help, they formed a team of eleven First Responders to take part in what he calls *Project Joint Guardian*. Nine members are from the United States, one is from Germany, and one is from Australia. Once on the ground in Ukraine, they'll help train firefighters how to use the donated equipment as well as search and rescue training. As a military veteran, Hille said he understands the risks, but he says, "To serve and protect is in his blood and that's exactly what we're going to be doing over there."

[Read more on this article here](#)



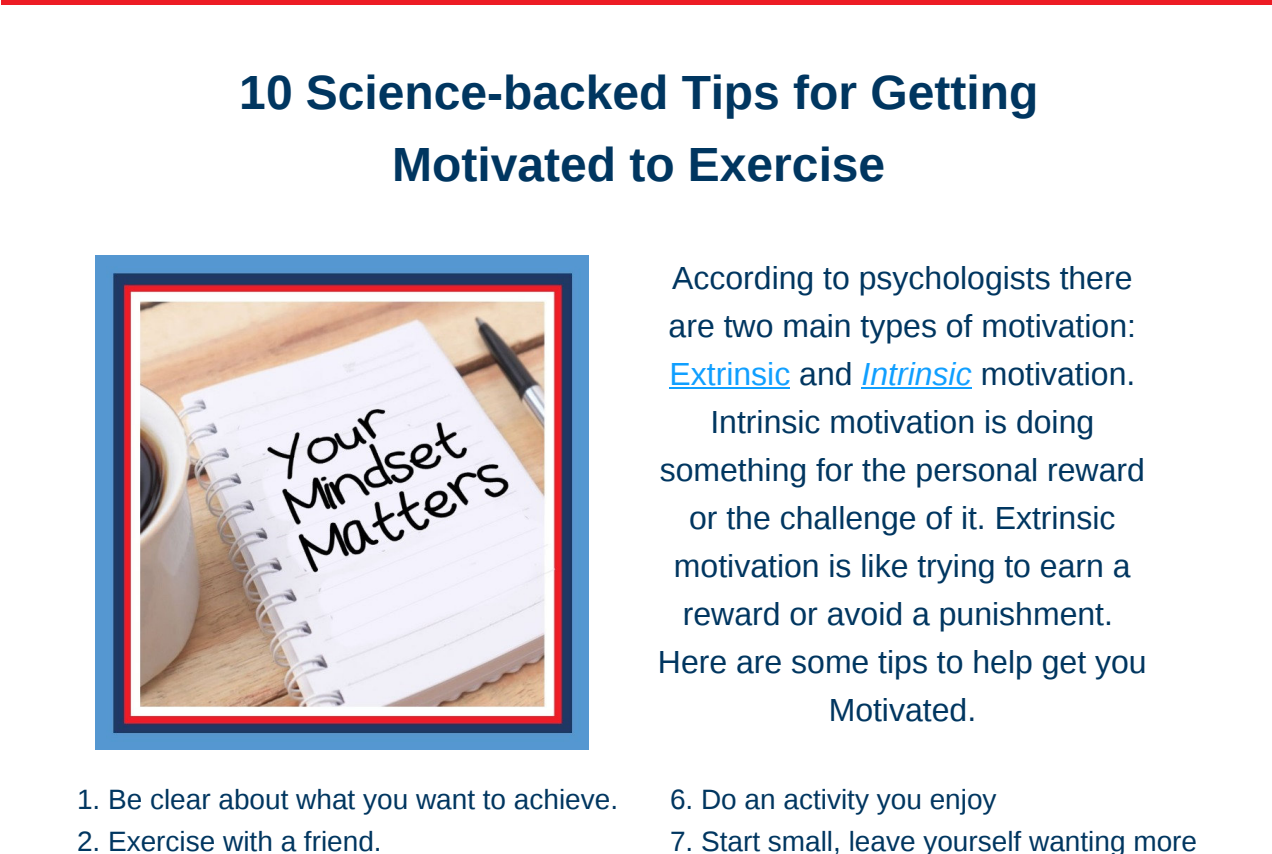
CLINICAL COUCH

With Taylor Valdivia, LMFT
Program Manager

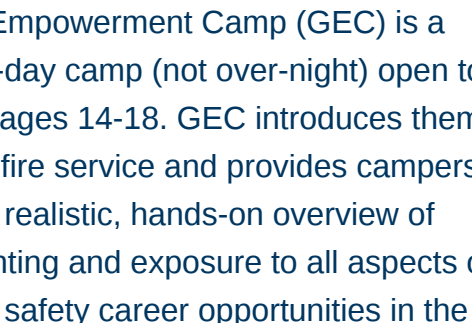


Healthy Relationships

Welcome to our First Responders Wellness & Resiliency video series. We will be highlighting new topics every month presented by Licensed therapists and Peer Support Navigators. Dive into the *8 Dimensions of Wellness*, learn *How to Manage your Stress* or *How to Balance Work & Life*. In our first video presentation below, Taylor discusses *Healthy Relationships*! Learn the *Ingredients* to a thriving relationship, learn how to *Navigate Relationship Stressors*, and understand *Boundaries* and *Practicing Gratitude*.



10 Science-backed Tips for Getting Motivated to Exercise



According to psychologists there are two main types of motivation: [Extrinsic](#) and [Intrinsic](#) motivation.

Intrinsic motivation is doing something for the personal reward or the challenge of it. Extrinsic motivation is like trying to earn a reward or avoid a punishment. Here are some tips to help get you Motivated.

1. Be clear about what you want to achieve.
2. Exercise with a friend.
3. Offer conditional rewards to yourself
4. Get an activity tracker
5. Exercise at the same time each day
6. Do an activity you enjoy
7. Start small, leave yourself wanting more
8. Get a pumped-up musical playlist
9. Take your dog for a walk (or someone else's)
10. Try [Behavioral economic theory](#)

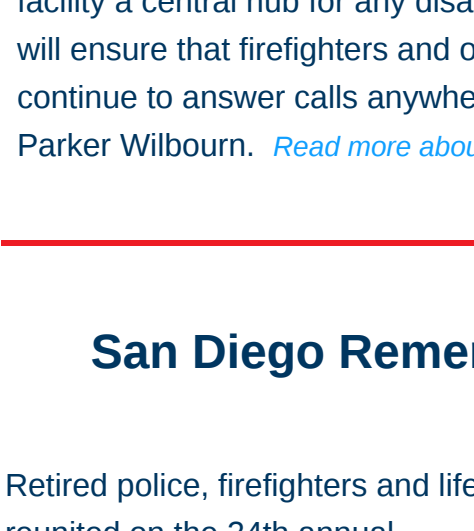
[You can read more about this article here](#)

Girls Empowerment Camp

Girls Empowerment Camp (GEC) is a free 2-day camp (not over-night) open to teens ages 14-18. GEC introduces them to the fire service and provides campers with a realistic, hands-on overview of firefighting and exposure to all aspects of public safety career opportunities in the fire service. Additionally, the program empowers campers with life skills and professional guidance that encourages them to pursue a career in public safety. The camp is held at the SDFD Training Center near Terminal 2 of the San Diego International Airport. Campers receive hands-on training with firefighting tools and equipment, 360-degree view of fire service career options, CPR/AED training, drawstring backpack and a t-shirt. Lunch is also provided each day. This camp is for Teens of all genders who are at least 14 to 18 years old. For questions or to request additional information please call 619-630-6409 or email sdfdgec@sandiego.gov.



\$44M in California State Funds Requested for First Responder Training Facility

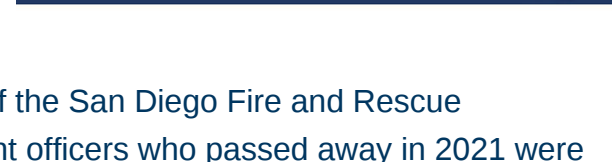


Rancho Cordova has initiated a one-time state funding request of \$44 million for the third phase of enhancements at Zinfandel First Responder Training Facility. The announcement came in early April for the 50 acre size First Responders Zinfandel Training Facility. The grounds are used by multiple agencies and have helped facilitate training for crews who have assisted in over 200 large-scale California disasters. "The \$44 million would add indoor and outdoor spaces, driving and

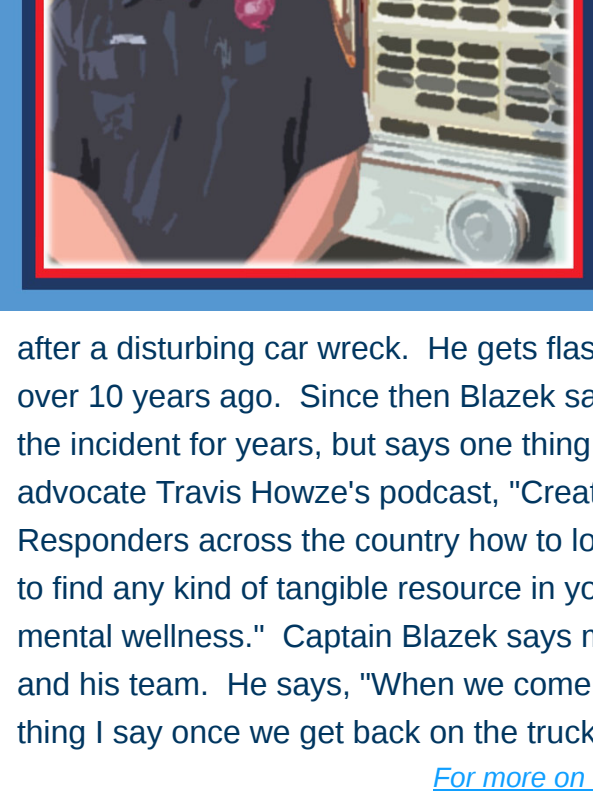
emergency vehicle operation, special ops training grounds and more. "This is the perfect location for resources to be staged for anything on the northern side of California," said Sacramento Metro Fire Chief Todd Harms. Local emergency experts call the training facility a central hub for any disasters across the state of California. "The training facility will ensure that firefighters and our regional fire and EMS agencies are prepared to continue to answer calls anywhere in our beautiful state," said Sacramento Metro Fire's Parker Wilbourn. [Read more about this article here](#).

San Diego Remembers Fallen First Responders

Retired police, firefighters and lifeguards reunited on the 24th annual *Remembrance Day* to call to mind their fallen colleagues. It is held every year by the Retired Fire and Police Association and meant to honor and remember the firefighters, police officers and lifeguards who answered their last call in 2021. After two years of a virtual ceremony, 200 people came out to pay their respects in person. "These First Responders had the courage to step in harm's way, or put others needs and safety aside to provide protection, compassion and empathy to others in need," said Fire Chief Colin Stowell of the San Diego Fire and Rescue Department. The names of 51 law enforcement officers who passed away in 2021 were read out loud by active and retired officers. Bag pipes played and bells rang along with a 21-gun salute ceremony. [You can read more about this article here](#).

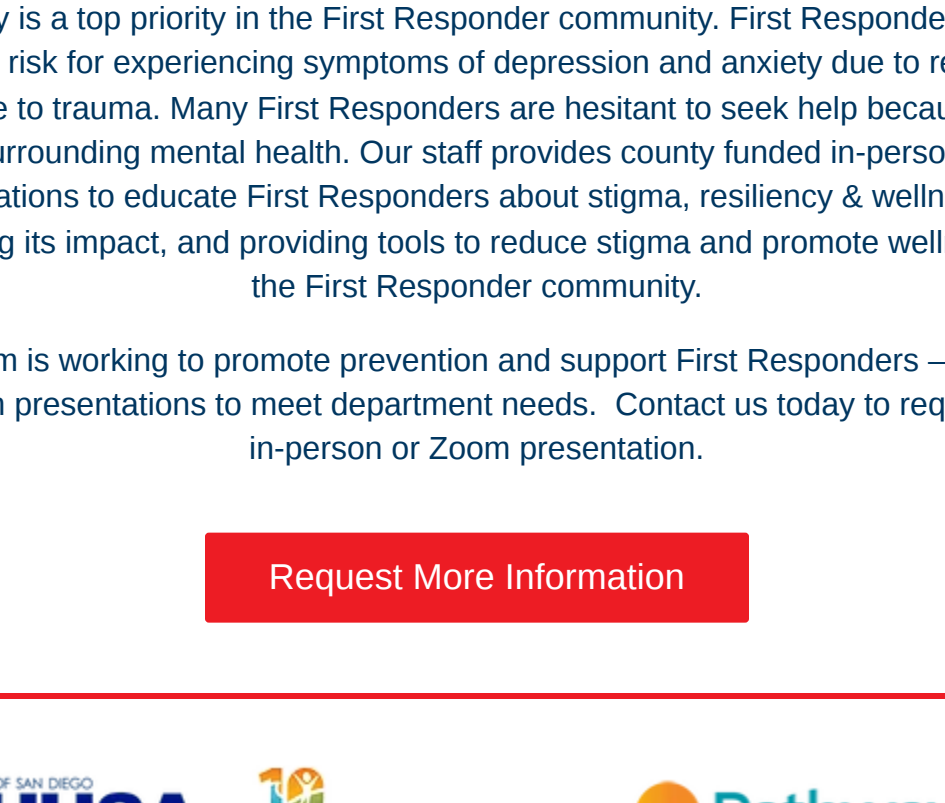


Fire Department PTSD Trainings Change Fire Captain's Life



First Responders are learning how to prioritize their own health while they watch out for the health and safety of others. Being on the front lines can take a toll on our First Responders. One fire captain says he still feels the impact of one incident 10 years later. Monday marks the first day in Hamilton County as First Responders begin classes to prioritize mental health, especially related to PTSD. Captain Chris Blazek of Station 6, Chattanooga Fire Department says PTSD awareness helped him deal with his terrorizing flash backs after a disturbing car wreck. He gets flashbacks that still wake him up from the incident over 10 years ago. "Since then Blazek says he struggled with anger management after the incident for years, but says one thing that's helped is listening to PTSD awareness advocate Travis Howze's podcast, "Create Your Own Light." Howze teaches First Responders across the country how to look for help. He says "My advice would be to try to find any kind of tangible resource in your area and know the resources available for mental wellness." Captain Blazek says mental health is a number one priority for him and his team. He says, "When we come off of a call that may be disturbing, the first thing I say once we get back on the truck is, are you guys okay? Do you need to talk?" [For more on this article, click here](#).

First Responder Community Training



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, and recognizing its impact, and providing 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 More Information](#)



This program is funded by the County of San Diego/HHSA