



UPSIDE

BUILDING BACK BETTER

2025 TFCA ANNUAL CONFERENCE : LEADING INTO THE FUTURE

April 16TH, 2025

Waco, TX

Ironclad Wellness, LLC.



WARNING





RELATIONAL VALUE

**“Everyone has a story;
everyone hides their past as a
means of self preservation.
Some just do it better and
more thoroughly than
others.”**

- Jodi Picoult





OUR TIME TOGETHER

- **New trends or tools brought back to your organization or used in personal endeavors.**
- **Affirmed in the way you or your organization operates.**
- **Disinterested and checked out.**

**Time is not money.
Time is worth way more than money.
- Rory Vaden**



MARCH 27, 2015





MARCH 27, 2015





WHAT IS “ROCK BOTTOM”

- **Addiction**
- **Infidelity**
- **Isolation/avoidance**
- **Financial burdens**
- **Missed commitments**

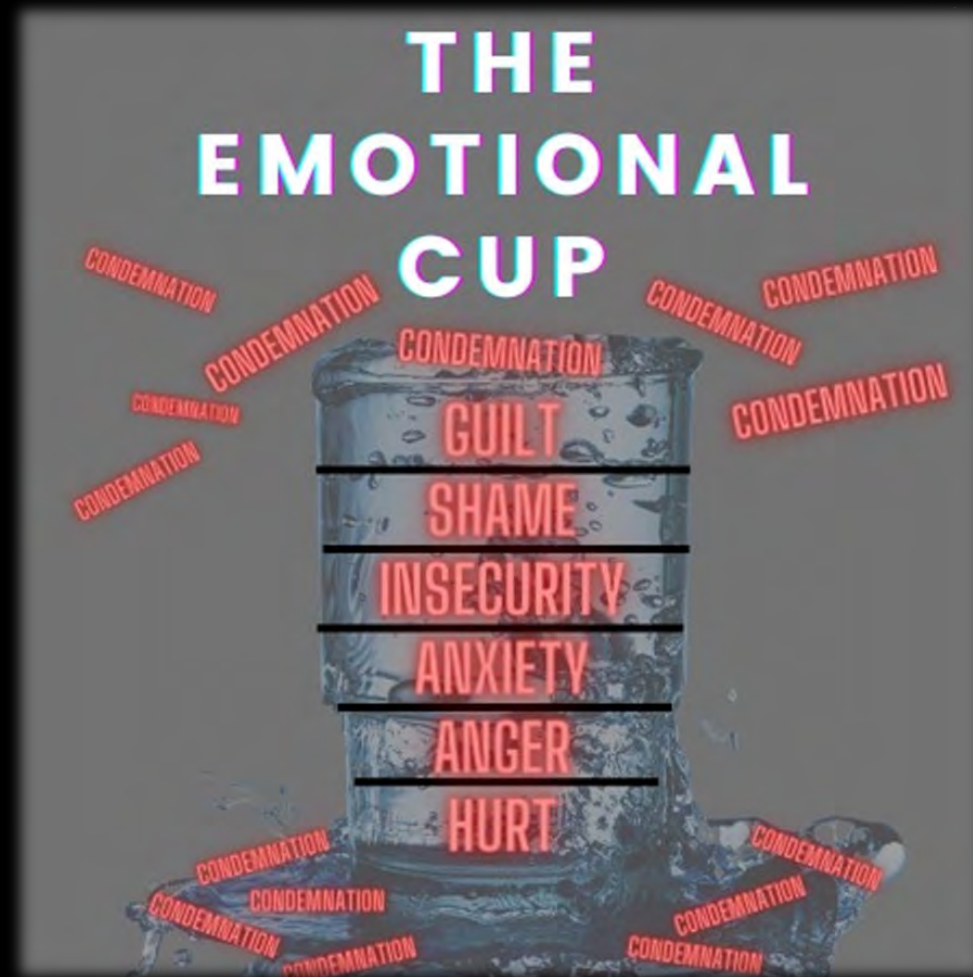
**APPARENTLY
ROCK
BOTTOM
HAS A
BASEMENT**



ARE YOU FULL OF IT?

“Hurt people, hurt people.”

- They are easy targets.
- They are convenient.
- They won't leave.





ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPEREINCES (ACES)

- Three types:
 - Abuse
 - Emotional
 - Physical
 - Sexual
 - Neglect
 - Emotional
 - Physical
 - Dysfunctional household
 - Parent treated violently
 - Substance misuse
 - Mental illness
 - Divorce
 - Incarceration



First Responder Rate: 79%
Civilian Rate: 64%

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BEYOND THE OBVIOUS (ACES CONT.)

- ☐ Did you feel that you didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, or had no one to protect or take care of you?
- ☐ Did you lose a parent through divorce, abandonment, death or other reasons?
- ☐ Did you live with anyone who was depressed, mentally ill or attempted suicide?
- ☐ Did you live with anyone who had a problem with drinking or using drugs, including prescription drugs?
- ☐ Did your parents or adults in your home ever hit, punch, beat or threaten to harm each other?
- ☐ Did you live with anyone who went to jail or prison?
- ☐ Did a parent or adult in your home ever swear at you, insult you or put you down?
- ☐ Did a parent or adult in your home ever hit, beat, kick, or physically hurt you in any way?
- ☐ Did you feel that no one in your family loved you or thought you were special?
- ☐ Did you experience unwanted sexual contact?



BEYOND THE OBVIOUS (ACES CONT.)

- Save the world mentality
- Repeated long term exposure to trauma
- Projected feelings and anxieties





NOT ALL DOOM AND GLOOM



- 1996
- University of North Carolina-Charlotte
- Both a process and an outcome
- Transformative in change and perspective
- Five domains:
 1. Personal strength
 2. Closer relationships
 3. Greater appreciation for life
 4. New possibilities
 5. Spiritual development



PTG: FAMILIAR FACES



Steve Gleason
Team Gleason



Candace Lightner
M.A.D.D.



John Walsh
Americas Most Wanted



Nathan Lee
Denise Amber Lee Foundation

PTSD:

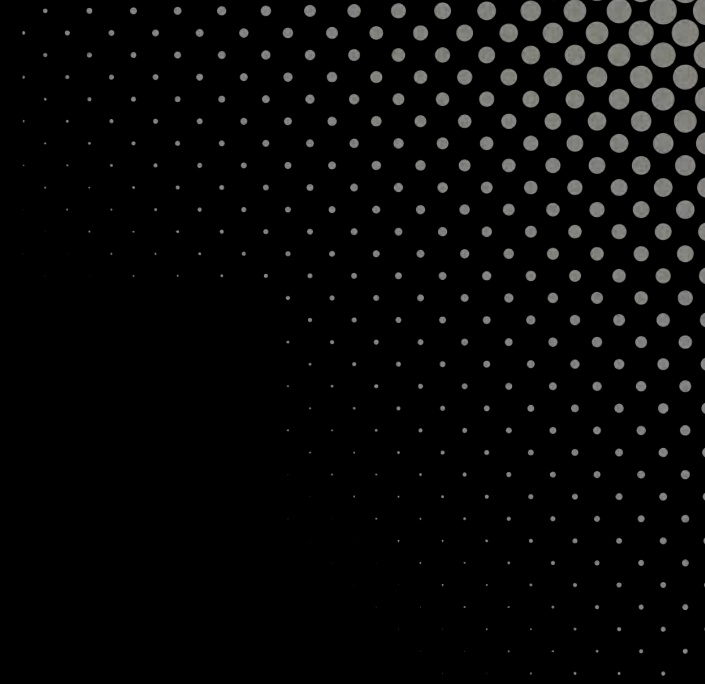
Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental disorder that one can develop after exposure to a traumatic event, such as sexual assault, warfare, traffic collisions, child abuse, other threats on a person's life, vicarious trauma, victims of crimes, etc.

PTG:

A positive psychological change experienced as a result of struggling with highly challenging, highly stressful life circumstances.



 **GOOD.**





GROWTH REIMAGINED



- Post Traumatic Growth therapy consists of concentrating more on the future and goals ahead, less on the past.
- Growth does not occur because of the traumatic event, but more so because of the struggle that ensued.
- Sustained changes over a long period of time, not new year resolutions.



PTS IS NOT A DEATH SENTENCE

- **Not everyone experiences PTG:**

- While many people can experience positive growth after trauma, not everyone does, and some may continue to struggle with the negative impacts.

- **PTG is not the same as resilience:**

- Resilience refers to the ability to bounce back from adversity, while PTG signifies positive transformation beyond simply returning to a previous state.

- **Seeking support is crucial:**

- If you are trying to navigate the aftermath of trauma, seeking professional therapy can be vital in facilitating the process of post-traumatic growth.





DETRIMENTAL DOMAIN

Personal Strength

- Outside affirmations
- Chemical dependency
- Societal status

Close Relationships

- Isolation in sobriety
- Deceptive lies for protection

Appreciation for Life

- Reckless acts

Possibilities

- Stagnant (complacent)
- No chances taken

Spiritual Development

- Used as a deterrent to chaotic life
- Used forgiveness as an excuse to commit acts



POSITIVE DOMAIN CHANGES

Personal Strength

- Personal accountability
- Ownership and action
- Professional counseling

Close Relationships

- Transparency
- Drawn out of isolation
- Cut false “close relationships”
- Expert companions

Appreciation for Life

- Loved ones who stayed by my side
- Quit avoiding “hard” feelings

Possibilities

- Found purpose in speaking and teaching.
- Sorting through messy past
- Launching of businesses

Spiritual Development

- Used as a deterrent to chaotic life
- Used forgiveness as an excuse to commit
- Spiritual counseling



DOMAIN CHANGE ACCELERATORS



CHANGE OF MUSIC HABITS



PERSONAL HEALTH



NOTIFICATIONS ELIMINATED



SOCIAL MEDIA ELIMINATED



LIMITING OF NEWS INTAKE



SELECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

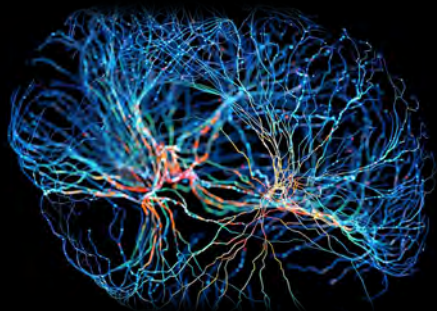
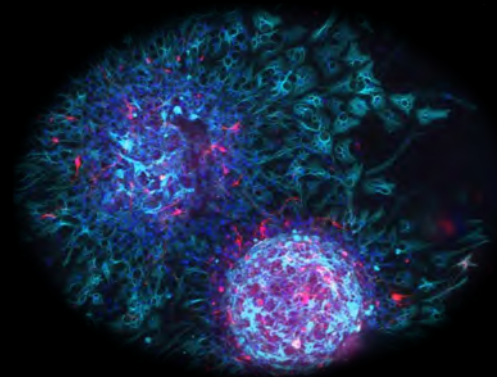


SOBRIETY



CAN BRAINS BE “REWIRED”?

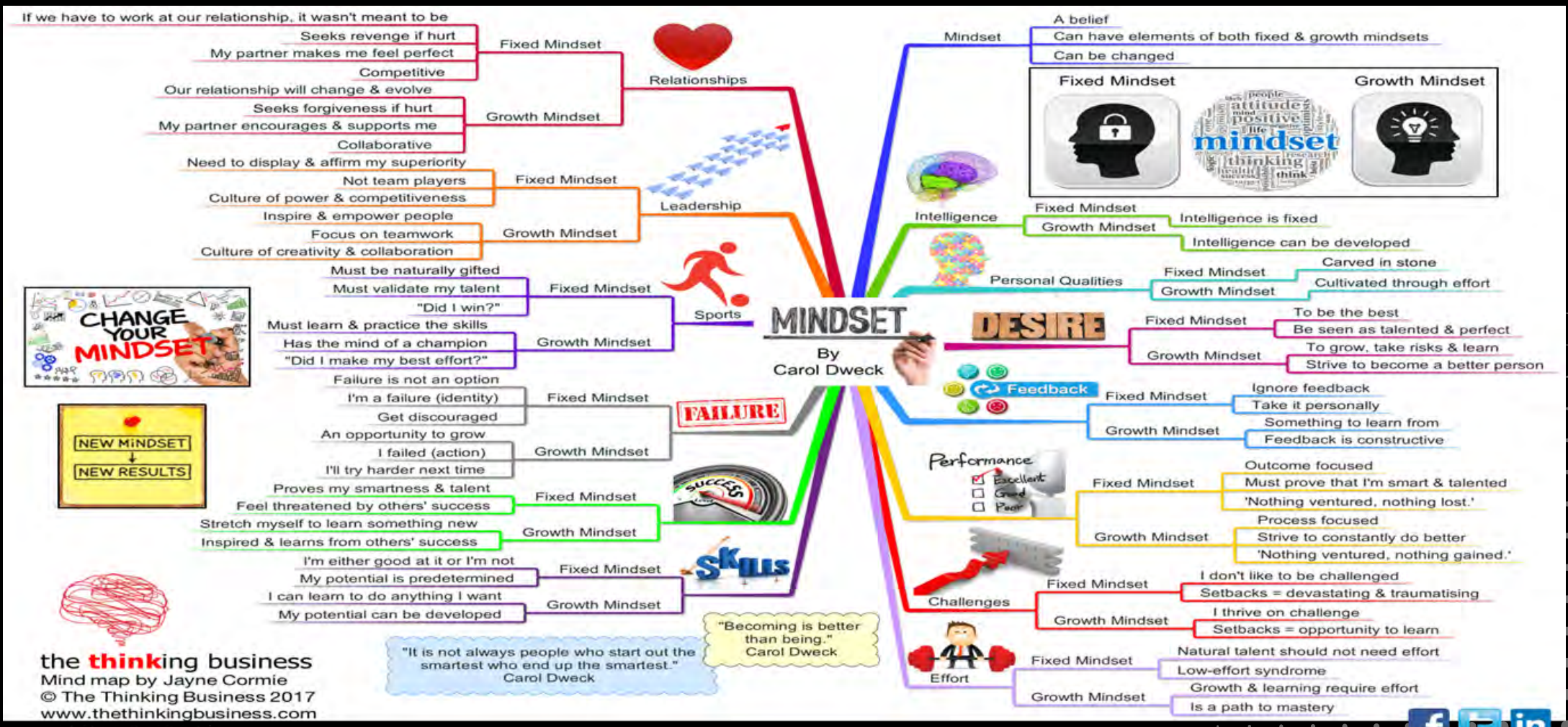
NEUROGENESIS



NEUROPLASTICITY

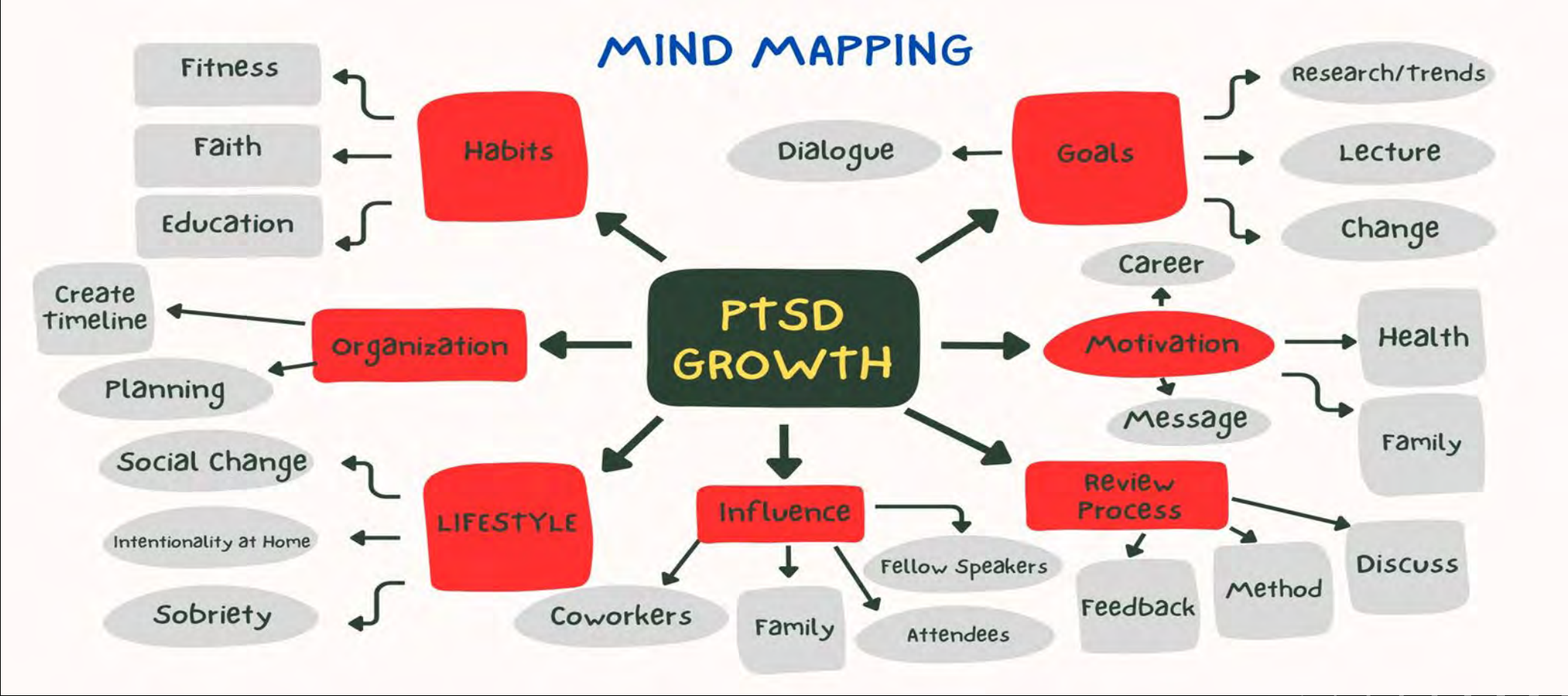


BUSY MINDMAP





SIMPLE MINDMAP





Since 2017

3,092



FIREFIGHTER BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ALLIANCE



- Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance (FBHA)
 - FBHA founded in 2010
 - Jeff Dill, Founder and CEO
 - Las Vegas Fire Department, Behavioral Health Administrator
 - Retired Captain, Palatine Rural FPD, Inverness, Illinois
 - Licensed Counselor

Year	Law Enforcement	Firefighter	EMS/Dispatch	Total
2011	Not Available	56	5	61
2012	Not Available	83	11	94
2013	Not Available	74	9	83
2014	Not Available	101	33	134
2015	Not Available	124	37	161
2016	Not Available	124	39	163
2017	178	108	20	306
2018	187	96	26	309
2019	238	131	22	391
2020	162	104	30	296
2021	171	94	16	281
2022	187	85	14	286
2023	133	84	25	242
2024	112	109	19	240
2025	30	19	2	51





U.S. VETERANS

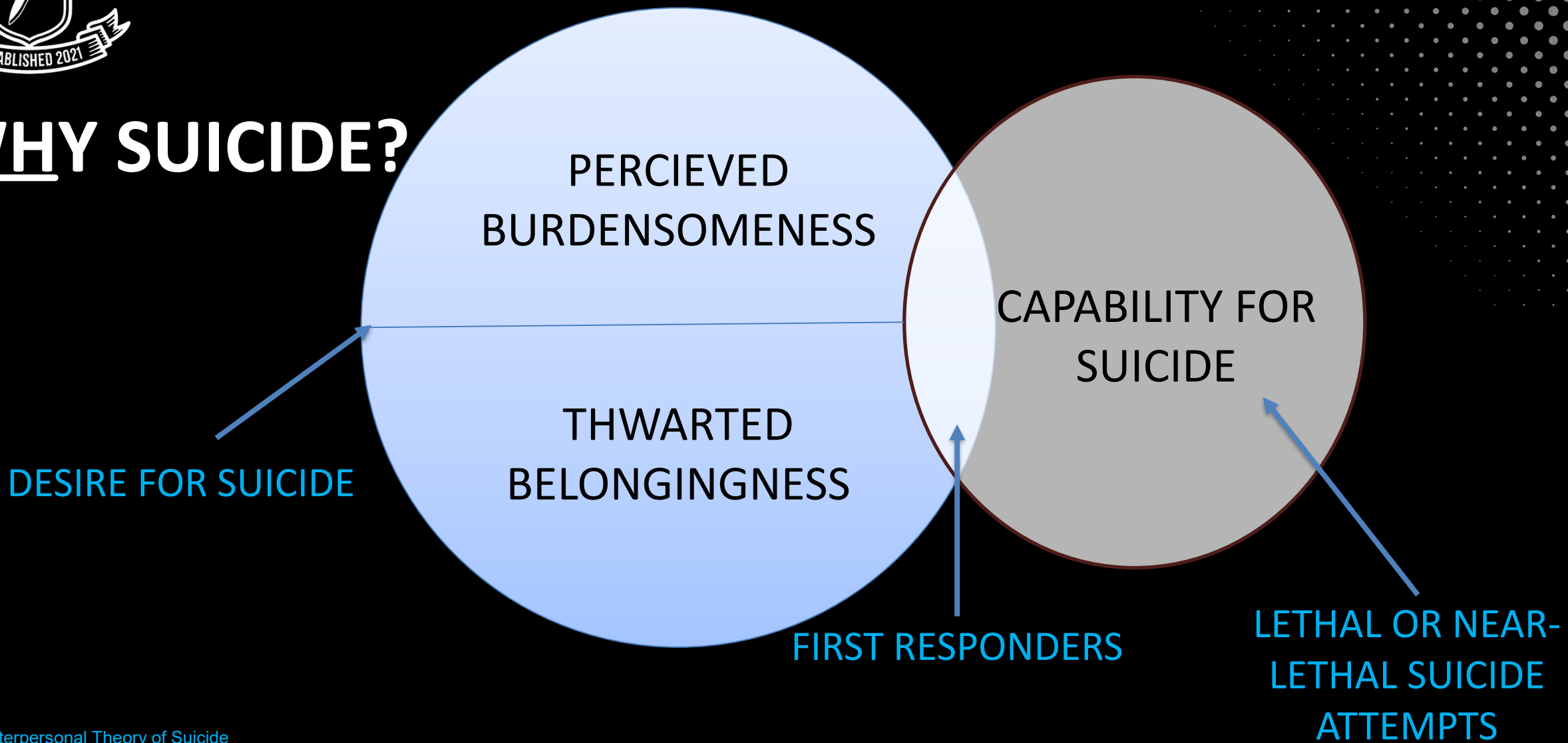
- Daily veteran suicides: 17-22
- 2nd Leading cause of death 45 and under.
- Risk Factors
 - Pain (55.9%)
 - Sleep problems (51.7%)
 - Increased health problems (40.7%)
 - Relationship problems (33.7%)
 - Recent declines in physical ability (33.0%)
 - Hopelessness (30.6%)



MODALITY OF PTS



WHY SUICIDE?



*The Interpersonal Theory of Suicide
Dr. Thomas Joiner, Clinical Psychology, Florida State University
Joiner (2005), Van Orden et al. (2010), Stanley et al. (2015)



SOMETHING MORE



- **REDUCE THE STIGMA**
- **MOVE BEYOND AWARENESS**
- **WHO IS TRAUMA INFORMED?**



QUALITY WELLNESS PROGRAMS

- Minimum of three services – non exhaustive.
- No prescribed order of which program component users utilize.
- No limiting of sessions for any component.
- Independent services that protect confidentiality.
- EAP's may not be the answer, find the culturally competent.
- Exceptions to confidentiality – current or immediate threat.



EFFECTIVE PEER SUPPORT

1. Gain interest and test the waters
2. Poll the population
3. Select PSG members
4. Diversity and inclusion
5. Initial and ongoing training





LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING

Mandatory Quarterly Training Topics:

- Burnout
- Suicide Awareness
- Communication
- Vulnerability
- Ending Stigma
- Conflict
- Work Relationships
- Alcohol/Drug Addiction
- IAFF Resiliency (PSG)
- IAFF Peer Support Group (PSG)
- ICISF Crisis Training (PSG)

Staff and Family Seen For:

- Addiction
- Anxiety
- Conduct Disorders
- Depression
- Grief
- Impulse Control
- Marriage/Family
- PTSD

100 %
EMPLOYEE – CLINICIAN
EXPOSURE



FINAL THOUGHTS

- **Free will and choice are real, spiritual, and scientific facts. Stop saying you can't... you can!**
- **Your mind has one foot in the door of the spirit and one foot in the door of the body; you can change your brain with your mind and essentially renew your mind.**
- **Your body is not in control of your mind – your mind is in control of your body. Your mind is stronger than your body.**
- **You are not a victim of your biology.**
- **You cannot control most events and circumstances in life, but you can control your reactions to them.**
- **When you think, you build thoughts. Thoughts become physical substances in your brain.**
- **Good thinking, leads to good choices which leads to good thinking.**
- **You are designed to stand outside of yourself and observe your own thinking and change it.**
- **You are also designed to recognize and choose the right things to think about.**



FINAL THOUGHTS

- Each morning when you wake up you have new nerve cells born inside your brain to use wisely as you remove bad thoughts and wire in new ones, this is called neurogenesis.
- You can learn how to learn and greatly deepen your intellect.
- If you wire those toxic thoughts in, you can wire them out.
- You don't have to get stuck in bad habits; you can change them.
- You can overcome feelings of rejection and hurt.
- Forgiveness is not the battle you may think it is.
- You don't have to worry about the things that are out of your control.
- You are not a victim of the things you shouldn't be doing.
- You don't have to keep digging into the past to get free from it.
- It is possible to be happy and filled with peace regardless of your circumstances.



...one more consideration

Thoughts form our choices

Choices form our behavior

Behavior forms our habits

Habits form our lifestyle

Lifestyle forms our life trajectory

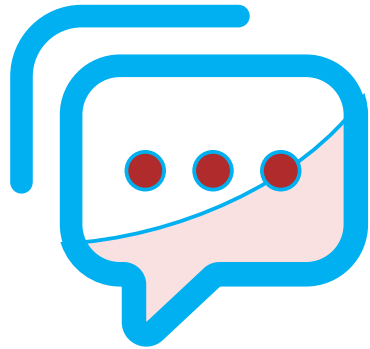
Life trajectory forms our destiny



MOTIVATION

VS

DEDICATION



Audience Q&A



THANK YOU



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SCAN ME