

## **Surviving the Job: A Journey to PTG (Post Traumatic Growth)**

This lecture covers a 32-year career as a first responder, police officer and firefighter. From my first fatal MVA as a 17-year-old volunteer FF, the events of September 11, 2001, and being on scene of multiple LODD fires including Black Sunday. This is a story of how I've gone beyond my PTSD diagnosis to PTG (Post Traumatic Growth) with the help of therapy, medication and becoming a peer counselor. PTSD is a silent injury that is still not discussed as much as it should be. I share my story with other first responders hoping they realize that there is no longer a stigma with being in pain. Gone are the days of "suck it up kid" and "we don't talk about that stuff". Talking helps you empty "the box" of stored up trauma and images before it can overflow and affect you and your home life. This is not a scientific study or research, this is my story and how I "Survived the Job".