

Josie McKee

Director of Communications, Responder Alliance

Speaker Bio:

Over the past two decades, Josie's career has included technical rescue, wildland fire, and EMS work, as well as leading mountain expeditions across the globe. In addition to her work in the field, she teaches wilderness medicine, high-angle rescue, and EMT courses. Stress exposure throughout her career gave her personal insight into the value of resilience training. She is currently in a Master of Science program in Performance Psychology, provides mental training to athletes and serves on the Lander Search & Rescue resilience team. As Director of Communications at Responder Alliance, she trains individuals and organizations to manage stress in high-risk occupations.

Presentation:

Stress Resilience for Emergency Response

Professionals working in emergency response are at significant risk for developing occupational stress injuries, such as burnout and PTSD. These injuries can impact engagement and efficacy in our work, lead to an early end to promising careers and can be life threatening. Resilience skills for professionals, plus support structure within organizations can mitigate the risk of these injuries. A shift in how emergency management culture understands and talks about stress is the first step in protecting professionals in these occupations. This presentation will introduce a common language to help participants begin to engage in this cultural shift. It will then cover tangible resources to implement within emergency management organizations, including:

1. Use of the Stress Continuum for self-awareness and decision making;
2. Basic principles for mitigating stress impact in self and others; and
3. A novel structure, recommended by the International Commission for Alpine Rescue, for organizations to support their personnel following significant stress exposures.

This presentation is designed to be relatable, interactive, and actionable. It includes personal anecdotes, examples of how organizations are utilizing these tools, and facilitated discussion to help guide participants in implementing these practices within their work.