

# 1ST RESPONDER MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS CONFERENCE

Presented by 1st Responder Conferences

September 5-6, 2024

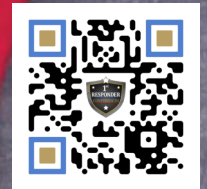
8 AM - 4 PM

Co-hosted by:

Whatcom County Sheriff's Office

Endorsed by:

City of Lynden Fire, Whatcom County Fire District 7,  
Bellingham Police Department,  
Ferndale City Police Department



Early Bird

Registration is \$360

After 8/15/24 \$400

(plus clearevent fees)

Registration is required

Our two-day multifaceted training and networking events are for all 1st Responders, Police, Fire, EMS, Dispatchers, Military/Veterans, Corrections, Coroners, Chaplains, Retired First Responders, Spouses, Professional staff, Clinicians, and all those who work in or around the Public Safety field.

- ⇒ Certificate of attendance will be available for self-submittal
- ⇒ Includes: Breakfast, Lunch, Networking Social, SWAG bag and raffles
- ⇒ Location: Four Points by Sheraton Bellingham Hotel & Conference Center - 714 Lakeway Drive, Bellingham

## Partners and Sponsors:



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Visit our website for more information and to register: [1stRC.org](http://1stRC.org)





**1<sup>st</sup> RESPONDER**  
CONFERENCES



1<sup>st</sup> Responder Conferences Presents

## 1<sup>st</sup> Responder Mental Health and Wellness

Co-hosted by Whatcom County Sheriff's Office  
Endorsed by City of Lynden Fire, Whatcom County Fire District 7,  
Bellingham Police Department and Ferndale City Police Department  
September 5-6, 2024, from 8am-4pm  
September 5th, Networking Social from 4-6pm  
Four Points by Sheraton Bellingham Hotel & Conference Center  
714 Lakeway Drive, Bellingham

**\*You must register to attend. Seats are limited at this conference.**  
**Early Bird Registration is \$360/person (Plus fees)**  
**After August 15, 2024 – Registration is \$400/person (Plus fees)**

**\*Continental breakfast, lunch, appetizers, and networking social included**  
**\*SWAG/Raffle/Door Prizes**

**\*Please consider attending, sponsoring and or passing this information on to other organizations and agencies. See attachments for sponsorship options, donations, marketing, and networking tools.**

<https://app.clearevent.com/eventPortal#event/a16d8070-ce19-41d5-b378-50a97dceaf87/home>

Or visit <http://www.1stRC.org/>

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1st Responder Conferences is committed to the emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being of public safety professionals and we work with leaders in the public safety professions to make this possible. We recognize that first responders are our greatest asset, and we feel it is our responsibility to create a climate that supports wellness and resiliency. We are dedicated to promoting awareness surrounding the difficulties of the profession and inspiring conversations that minimize the stigma associated with the stress our first responders' experience. We provide education, mental health tools and resources for agencies, individuals, and family members. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for all who dedicate themselves to protecting and serving others.

1st Responder Conferences partners with nonprofit organizations like First H.E.L.P. and ICISF. We work together to make sure all first responders get the resources they need to live a happy and healthy life!

## Speakers and Topics:

**“Leading from Your Strengths”- Christopher Littrell, Stronger Families and Scott Welch, M. Div., MA, BCPC** - You were created with unique strengths. These strengths were meant to be leveraged together on your team to create unity, better outcomes, and overall increased performance. Without a proper understanding of this concept, many leaders build a team of people most like themselves and miss out on a larger vision.

Leading From Your Strengths empowers team leaders and teams to discover their unique strengths and the power of differences that leads to building close knit teams. This builds a culture of leadership excellence where relationships thrive. In this session we will be covering how to...

- Better understand yourself through a uniquely generated report
- Help yourself and your team appreciate the strengths each of you bring to the team
- Learn how different people communicate and how to leverage these differences
- Define areas of tension and learn to resolve conflict without “winners and losers”

**Retired Sergeant Christopher Littrell** has been a law enforcement officer in Washington State since 2005. He has had the opportunity to serve as a patrol officer, gang detective, child crime detective, CISM peer support group counselor, SWAT member, school resource officer, patrol sergeant and detective sergeant. Sergeant Littrell is a survivor of job-related PTSD. He is a leadership instructor for the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission. He is the owner of Gravity Consulting & Training, LLC and co-host for the Two Feet on the Ground - Gravity Podcast. Previously, Sergeant Littrell served in the United States Air Force as a Security Forces member and is an Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran

**Scott Welch, M. Div., MA, BCPC**, is a licensed mental health counselor and founder of Mosaic Counseling of Florida where he uses his refined skills and talents to help individuals, couples and families overcome a myriad of challenges. Scott is a dynamic public speaker who has presented nationally and internationally. He is a Master Level Trainer with Stronger Families. He is a national trainer with Prepare/Enrich, the world’s leading premarital and marital inventory, and currently teaches marriage and family counseling and adolescent counseling courses at Trinity College. Scott is a certified First Responder Counselor. He worked in the Hillsborough County Jail in Tampa Florida in the Drug Treatment program. He currently meets regularly with First Responder couples and families guiding them through stress and trauma that impacts their relationships. Scott is a family mediator with the Supreme Court of Florida and a Qualified Parent Coordinator. Scott works as a Social Investigator and Guardian ad Litem. His expertise with pre-marital, marital, and post- marital endeavors provides him with a plethora of methods and resources to guide families in improving communication, working through differences, partnering with one another, and parenting more effectively.

**“Financial Tactics” - Kyle Nelson, Bellingham Police Department-** Good tactics are important to be safe on the street, but what tactics are you using to thrive at home? Finances touch every area of our lives and can have a significant impact on one's wellness. 78% of Americans live paycheck to paycheck. Financial stress is one of the leading causes of divorce in America. This course will give you a roadmap to be successful in your personal finances and give you a tangible way to improve your overall wellness by reducing the stress caused by financial strain.

Kyle is a 17-year veteran of law enforcement in Bellingham, WA. Kyle combined his interests in officer wellness and personal finance by attaining a certification as a financial coach through the Ramsey Solutions. This certification is based on the teachings and principles of Dave Ramsey, most notably the *Seven Baby Steps* that are outlined in the *Total Money Makeover*. Kyle believes that finances touch every area of our lives and that officers and their families can reduce their stress by taking control of their finances, thereby improving officer wellness. He is passionate about helping officers and their families establish, pursue and obtain their financial goals.

**“Unlocking the Secrets of Neurobiology: Insights for Everyday Life”- Matt Quackenbush, LCSW-** In this presentation the distinguished speaker, Matt Quackenbush, brings his wealth of experience in neuroscience and psychotherapy to help us improve our daily lives. Known for his engaging and insightful delivery, Matt will delve into new and compelling topics. Leveraging his deep knowledge in neuroscience and therapeutic practices, Matt will enhance your understanding of neurobiology and its impact on daily habits and functioning. He will explore how early childhood experiences shape neurological development and discuss practical ways to meet human needs based on this knowledge. This session promises to equip you with a refined understanding and applicable skills to improve your quality of life."

**Matt** has been a prominent advocate for change within the mental health community for nearly two decades. An exceptional public speaker with over 500 hours of on-stage speaking experience. Renowned for his captivating presence, thought-provoking ideas, and impeccable delivery, Matt has become a sought-after expert. He is currently engaged in a national speaking tour with Deer Hollow Recovery and 1st Watch Wellness, where he educates First Responders, Veterans, and their families on the profound impact of stress, trauma, and PTSD.

Matt holds the distinction of being a Certified Mind-Body Bridging Therapist, specializing in a diverse range of evidence-based trauma treatment models employing the use of EMDR, Internal Family Systems (IFS), Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Psychodrama, and mindfulness techniques. With his extensive background in the study of neuroscience Matt brings his knowledge and expertise to help audiences all over the nation.

**“Emotional Intelligence: actionable protocols, grounded in research, that WILL IMPROVE your relationships professionally and personally”- Matt Porter, 1 IC Training Group Founder-** The research is clear: emotional intelligence matters but that knowledge isn't enough. In our course we promise to leave you with actionable protocols, grounded in research, that WILL IMPROVE your emotional intelligence. Our instructors are passionate about inspiring you to work towards the best relationships you have ever had personally and professionally.

**Matt** is married to an incredible woman, and they are approaching 20 years of outstanding marriage. He is the father to two teenage girls that he is exceedingly proud of. Matt has an undergraduate degree in psychology and sociology. His focus in his undergraduate work was marriage and family psychology. His graduate degree is in business. Matt has been a municipal law enforcement officer in western Washington for over 16 years. He currently serves as the training and support services sergeant. Additionally, he has been an active SWAT officer for 15 years and currently serves as one of the team leaders for a large tier 1 SWAT team. Matt holds instructor certifications in multiple disciplines including Master Instructor for Defensive Tactics and Patrol Tactics. He developed the mandatory emotional intelligence program for all 10,000 officers in Washington State as part of the patrol tactics program. He is one of the primary authors and instructors of the state's Basic SWAT school. Two years ago, he started his leadership and training consultancy the 1 IC Training Group. He provides leadership and personal development courses and consulting for private sector clients founded in his experience applying the same principles he uses as a special operations team leader. "1 IC" comes from my work in counter terrorism and hostage rescue. The 1IC is the "one in charge" of the tactical element. It is his belief that we are each the 1IC of our own lives and he works to inspire people to take charge of their lives and build the trusting relationships that will move them to inspire others.

**“Cumulative Stress: How it clouds our minds and affects our performance on the job and at home in our relationships”- Gordon Mitchell, Douglas County Sheriff's Office-** In this presentation, Gordon will engage the audience in a discussion about the significance of training in our respective professions. He then inquires about the criteria we use to determine which tasks or skills to prioritize in our training regimens. This segues into his personal experiences as a trainer.

Subsequently, He will delve into statistics concerning the fatalities of officers, firefighters, and EMS personnel due to traffic accidents, structure fires, and violent incidents. Gordon will juxtapose the number of training hours allocated to combating these specific threats with the tragic loss of life. Following this,

we delve into a conversation about the amount of wellness or mental health training we receive in our respective professions, which, in many cases, amounts to zero for most agencies. Gordon will draw parallels between this deficiency in training and the distressing statistics surrounding officer and firefighter suicides. He will recount his personal narrative of cumulative stress, elucidating its impact on his professional performance and personal life. Gordon will offer specific personal anecdotes illustrating the harsh realities of unmitigated stress and disclose the resources and tools he utilized to navigate through this challenging journey.

**Gordon** has been in Law Enforcement for 10 years. His first three years were with a small agency in eastern Washington where he was a solo patrol officer in the city. This is where he learned the importance of community involvement and relationships. Gordon carried this knowledge with me to a large county sheriff's office where he now supervises a patrol squad as a Corporal. He is an active defensive tactics instructor, field training officer, and lead patrol tactics instructor through the state of Washington. Gordon is currently pursuing his bachelor's in psychology, to deepen his understanding of the human mind and human behavior. Gordon loves teaching first responders' tactics to improve their skills at work and he is passionate about integrating emotional intelligence into personal and professional development.

**“The Alertness Edge”- Steve James, PhD and Assistant Professor-** Our society is dependent on first responders providing services 24/7, despite mounting evidence for negative physical and mental health outcomes from sleep displacement due to shift work. This talk reviews short- and long-term health consequences of sleep displacement and circadian misalignment due to shift work. We will also discuss the impact of sleep loss on cognitive function, decision making, and the ability of the first responder to process stress. You will be given a better understanding of why sleep eludes us and given concert advice on how to achieve more sleep. Sleep is a core biological function that can help protect you from the stresses of your job and promotes recovery. **BIO-** Stephen James, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in the College of Nursing at Washington State University Health Sciences Spokane. His research focus includes the interaction between physical stressors [such as sleep, and shift work related fatigue, law, policy, training, and practice relating to operational performance for military and law enforcement personnel. Dr. James strives to better understand the dynamics of performance in a wide variety of policing tasks, driving, citizen encounters, crisis intervention, and deadly force encounters. Dr. James utilizes neurophysiological measurements and simulation technology to evaluate training and performance of military and law enforcement personnel.

**“The Resilient Hero”-Captain Nicole Picknell, South Snohomish County Fire & Rescue-** The first responder lifestyle often creates stress in our lives both acute and long-term stress. Many of us live for the job and take the job stress home. We often allow our work to get in the way of taking care of our body and mind first. In this workshop first responders and families will discover how exercise, nutrition and mindset can be the foundation to a healthy life. We will discuss how exercise and good nutrition can decrease stress, clear the mind and support you shifting from shift.

Join me in learning how movement and nutrition can support you, the resilient hero. Nicole Picknell has served almost 34 years in the fire service and has experience as a Wildland Firefighter, Paramedic, Helitack firefighter, Captain, Lieutenant and Acting Battalion Chief. She now oversees the mobile integrated health/CRP team. Her education includes Exercise science and Firefighter health. She has a background in nutritional therapy, massage therapy, yoga for first responders and emotional intelligence training. She has a passion and desire to create awareness around health body healthy mind and emotional awareness.

**“Create Opportunity out of Uncertainty”- Dave Sanderson, CEO of Dave Sanderson Speaks International-** Create Opportunity out of Uncertainty: In this stirring presentation, Dave Sanderson reveals the lessons and strategies that helped guide his decisions following the crash of US Airways Flight 1549, or “The Miracle on the Hudson.” Dave not only survived the “crash” but reali(s)zed that there were critical moments in his life that prepared him for how he came through the events of that day. In this 50-minute presentation, Dave shares practical and implementable strategies on resiliency, leadership, and

mindset anyone can use to survive their “personal plane crash” moment to grow, thrive and have a fulfilling life. Takeaways: - The REAL AI - How to Aviate, Navigate and Communicate - Stopping the Chaos - Employing Confidence, Competency, and Creativity- Creating conditions around you for success.

Dave is an inspirational survivor, author, and nationally sought-after leadership speaker. When US Airways Flight 1549, or 'The Miracle on the Hudson,' ditched into the Hudson River on January 15, 2009, Dave Sanderson knew he was exactly where he was supposed to be. As the last passenger off the back of the plane on that fateful day, he took responsibility for the well-being and safety of others. He risked his own life in the frigid water to help other passengers off the plane but despite the hazards to himself, Dave thought only of helping others. He emerged from the wreckage that day with a mission to encourage others to do the right thing. This profound experience changed his life and today he travels the globe sharing his inspirational and motivational leadership messages to help people make a difference in how they do business and in how they live their lives.

**“Let's Talk Therapy”- Dr. Shannon Meyer-** In this hour we will discuss the basics of how to find a therapist, when you should consider going to therapy, what therapies work, if you can ever be "cured", what you should look for in a therapist, issues related to L and I, and more. While these are all simple questions, finding the answers can be complicated. So let's talk therapy! Dr. Shannon Meyer has a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology with advanced training and expertise in PTSD, operational stress, and secondary trauma in first responders. Dr. Meyer is a Victim Specialist who works for FBI in the Seattle area, a member of the Skagit County CISM Team, and a psychologist at the West Coast Post-Trauma Retreat, a residential treatment program for first responders. Dr. Meyer and her German Shepherd, Odin, recently became certified as a Crisis Response Canine Team with the goal of serving first responders at natural and man-made disasters. Dr. Meyer is happily married to a retired law enforcement officer.

**Speaker video:** <https://vimeo.com/937499617>

**Please note speakers are subject to change due to unforeseen reasons.**

**\*Networking Social directly after training (Included in Registration) on September 5th from 4-6pm**

Directly after the training. This is a great opportunity to get to know others, ask questions and share your ideas and thoughts with other like-minded professionals. Appetizers and non-alcoholic beverages will be provided.

**\*Accommodations:**

Group block/discounted hotel rates available:

**Four Points by Sheraton Bellingham Hotel & Conference Center for 139 USD per night**

Start Date: Tuesday, September 3, 2024

End Date: Saturday, September 7, 2024

Last Day to Book: Saturday, August 10, 2024

**[Book your group rate for 2024 1st Responders Health & Wellness Conference](#)**

**Please note our 30-Day Refund Policy:**

There are a lot of costs involved in organizing a conference. The reason we list our 30-day nonrefundable statement on the registration website when an attendee registers, is due to having to purchase everything in advance. We will allow registrations to be transferable, so food and other items don't go to waste. There will be no exceptions to this policy.

**\*CEU's available:**

All attendees will receive a certificate of attendance upon completion of the conference evaluation.

**\*Disclaimers\***

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**Waiver of Liability**

Some of the material presented at this event may cause emotional triggers. We will have onsite assistance if needed. There will also be additional resources available if needed. This conference is not intended to provide counseling services, whether medical, psychological or of any other kind, nor to diagnose, prevent, cure, or treat any disease, disorder or injury. This conference is certainly not intended to replace the advice of a physician. If you need expert advice, please consult a competent professional. This conference is only intended for “educational” use, and it should only be used as a guide.

**RECORDING OF CONFERENCE OR SPEAKERS IS PROHIBITED**

Written consent may be given by speakers, but 1st RC staff will need to be informed prior. At registration we will have a waiver of liability and a photo release form that must be signed. If you have any questions regarding the waiver please contact us, so we can be of assistance.

**Shawn Thomas**

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