

SEPTEMBER 2023

# FIRE & RESCUE HEALTHY NEWS

Brought to you by the South Heartland District Health Department

## Prepare for the "triple threat"

With the fall/winter season just around the corner, it's time to start thinking about getting vaccinated against Influenza, Covid-19/monovalent, and RSV, when these shots become available.

Check the South Heartland District Health Department website for more information about when and where you can get updated immunizations.

[southheartlandhealth.ne.gov/what-we-do/immunizations/](http://southheartlandhealth.ne.gov/what-we-do/immunizations/)



**National Alliance on Mental Illness**

For more information, visit:  
[www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Frontline-Professionals/Public-Safety-Professionals](http://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Frontline-Professionals/Public-Safety-Professionals)



**402-462-6211**  
606 N Minnesota Ave., Suite 2, Hastings  
[southheartlandhealth.ne.gov](http://southheartlandhealth.ne.gov)

*Thank you for  
your constant  
service to your  
communities!*

## Suicide Prevention Month

You're trained to handle emergency calls. Some of them stay with you, some of them don't.

You may question why you're not bothered by a particular call or outcome, or whether you're experiencing a normal reaction to the scenes you respond to. It may help you to know that trauma creates a variety of responses. Feeling upset about a call can be expressed in problems with sleep or dreams, feeling irritable or wanting to be alone, sudden emotions or even physical pain.

There are ways to improve how you cope and feel better emotionally. If you're a first responder, you already know how important it is to keep yourself physically healthy and fit for duty. But in order to serve effectively and safely, you also have to prioritize your mental wellness.

Below you will find information and resources specifically for public safety professionals, including simple tips to build your resiliency, wellness strategies, as well as resources for your loved ones. As you explore these areas, take a moment to review the signs that it's time to reach out for support.

Taking care of others requires that you also care for yourself. Sometimes it's easy to recognize the signs that you need to talk to someone about how you're doing. But it can also become routine to ignore the effects of stress and trauma as you respond to calls, take extra shifts and manage all the usual stressors day after day.

It's essential to practice self-care and check in with yourself regularly. Be aware of how you're feeling, especially after difficult shifts. Don't let symptoms of trauma or stress reach a dangerous level.

### Reach out for support if you are experiencing any of these warning signs:

- Feeling irritable or angry.
- Feeling anxious, depressed, lonely or constantly sad.
- Reliving traumatic events.
- Isolating yourself and lack of trust in others.
- Experiencing compassion fatigue, burnout or moral injury.
- Struggling to sleep or oversleeping.
- New or increased substance use.

### You may also be experiencing physical issues that impact you in unexpected ways. This could include:

- Digestive and/or appetite problems.
- Increased aches and pain.
- Sexual and/or reproductive issues.
- Executive function and memory problems.

Cumulative stress and trauma can create a range of emotions and responses, and it may seem overwhelming at times. These feelings and experiences are normal, but they can take a significant toll on your mental and physical well-being. It doesn't mean that you are destined to have a long-term mental health condition because you're experiencing any of these signs, but addressing them is vital to ensuring lifelong health and wellness.

### IF YOU ARE IN CRISIS, THERE ARE RESOURCES YOU CAN TURN TO:

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline offers free, confidential crisis counseling 24/7/365 — and you don't have to be in crisis to call or text.

The Crisis Text Line also offers free 24/7 mental health support. Text "10-18" to 741741 for help.