

Mental Health Safety Professional Experience

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DRIVING THROUGH THE PAIN



Background To The Event

History Of High-Risk Sports:

Small Georgian Bay Town

College to Study Forestry

Raced BMX

Cliff Diving (Jamacia)

Raced Stock Cars

Raced Quads and MX Bikes

Powerlifter 20+ years

Summer Job Structure

Steel Worker

Line Clearing Business

Arborist

Powerline Technician

(Linesperson)

Tower/Pole Rescue

Instructor

H&S Consultant for H&S

Associations

THE BACKGROUND TO THE EVENT

Moved into Instructor/Consultant Role in 2004-05

Chaired the Provincial High Voltage Electrical Safety Rule Book

Trained both Industry Specific work Groups and Regulators on High Voltage Electrical Safety

National and International Standard Development (Electrical Safety)

Investigated fatalities critical injuries and work stoppages (industry challenges) Regulator or Employer Driven



H&S Experience

Keynote speaker at many provincial, national and international conferences

Go to Electrical Safety person for regulators, employers, safety professionals and workers



The Event to Start the Journey

June 21, 2017

AEUSP GROUP MEETING SARNIA

*OPP Officer Brain Knowler, Presented his
experience with PTSD and his battles/challenges*



Brian Knowler OPP

MVA in the Chatham Area

First to the scene

Assisted First Aid/CPR

Driver Succumbed to Injuries

University Friend

Maintained the OPP role –



Brian Knowler OPP

Began to Break

Alcohol Dependencies

High Risk Behavior

Family Knew

Didn't believe he was broken



Following Brian's Presentation

It was my turn to present the provincial update:

I remember the hotel, the room and the day I couldn't get passed this guy just described my life.



The Walls Close In

I couldn't speak

I couldn't think

I just started to cry and couldn't stop..

All the time I am trying to make words come out of my mouth..

I felt so embarrassed

At this point I knew I was done...



What to Do Next

Called My Wife

Called HR

Called my manager

I knew there was a problem,

All the time still thinking

“What is wrong with me”



YOU MIGHT BE THINKING

This guys isn't overly sensitive

He doesn't look like a sensitive guy

He's a health and safety guy

What could be his problem

From the outside everything looks good



STOP: THAT'S WHAT I AM

Not Who I am....

I am a Husband, Father, Son, Brother,
Cousin and Friend...

My mind programmed me to be what I am
not who I am...

Our minds need to re-define how we look at
ourselves..

Who we are vs what we are:

Who I am:

Husband

Father

Brother

Son

Cousin

Uncle

Neighbor

Friend

What I am:

PLTN/Arborist

Consultant

Electrical Safety Specialist

Director..

Manager..

Supervisor..

Business Owner

Racer



My AEUSP Industry Update

To Bring Awareness of multiple Critical Electrical Incidents to the meeting.

Incidents that I have investigated and had way too much knowledge of

Incidents that resulted in family of workers screaming at me

Incidents of media trying to get a scoop

Incidents that I had to clean up parts of human remain

Incidents of workers that were in my classrooms and presentations

People I knew personally



My AEUSP Industry Update

Every burn unit, every comprehensive investigation

Every keynote presentation with workers that were severely injured from electricity

Every tragic event seem to roll down my cheek in pain.



My Problem

I couldn't let go of these events

I would relive them over and over

Training Session after training session

Rule Book Argument after Argument

In my mind mile after mile



THE PAIN LEAKED OUT

Driving

Alone

At Home

In My Personal World

How Do You Shut It Off?

I couldn't get it out of my mind

From one event to another to another



At Work

Work

They Got The Best

I could hold it together at work

Home

Family got the worst

It would come out at home

It showed in Private/No one was watching



THE WALL

June 2027

Had to Change

Medical Dr.

Clinical Psychologist

Network of “no ones”



PTSD Puzzle

Pride and Embarrassment

Still Trying to Understand

I needed to Learn more PTSD

I was relieved and worried

Why me, Can't be, never had an issue!

Best description was “extreme overflow”



Who is at “Risk”

Top Performers

Get things done at any cost

Passionate and compassionate

Alpha Personalities

Be Aware of the Extreme Actors (I was one)



Who Knew About It

Who didn't know:

Work, supervisor, managers or HR

Who Knew!

My Wife, My Kids,

The Motoring Public

People I had never met..



Some Signs Looking Back

Removal from friends and family

Stop doing things you love

Increase in anger/upset

Physical Inactivity

High Risk Behavior

Addition/abuse of drugs and or Alcohol



Asked Myself Why Talk About It

No one had any idea in my profession world

Everyone in my family knew

Finding a way to deal with Mental Health
issues is something we must do

It will help, there is support out there



The Challenge Continues

I am Back,

I am not perfect

There is a new generation coming that
needs help

This is very difficult to spot

We need to take care of one another

Its ok to get help, in fact it's the only way



The Challenge

If you think talking about mental health is challenging..

Talking to each of you is easy

Talking to your *family* is the worst



My Struggle Continues

I shared my journey with you all

Its not over for me

Use me as an example

Don't be the award-winning actor/actress

We need to take care of each other

There is help for you



My Conclusion is Someone's Beginning

I might not know each and everyone of you

But each and everyone of you might know someone putting an award-winning performance in front of your very eyes.

Talking to each other is the beginning.



***Thank you for listening to
my journey.***

Take care of yourself

Andy