

“Mayday for Mental Health”

This workshop deals with addressing mental health challenges in the Fire Service and the lack of “tools” to deal with these challenges. The National Fallen Fire Fighters Foundation’s (NFFF) Life Safety Initiative #13 states that “Firefighters and their families must have access to counseling and psychological support.” Are we, as a service, really addressing this initiative?

The workshop examines the culture both in and outside the Fire Service as it relates to mental health awareness, the history of how we have dealt with traumatic incidents in the past, and covers some basic definitions of common mental health conditions. It also will raise the question, as to how well trained are the Employee Assistance Professionals, in the matter of the Fire Service culture, we refer those courageous enough to come forward?



Fire Chief Pat Kenny

Patrick Kenny has been a member of the Fire Service for over 27 years. He retired from the Hinsdale Fire Department with over 24 ½ years of service, 14 as the Fire Chief in January 2008 and was immediately appointed Deputy Chief of Fire and EMS for the Village of Western Springs. Chief Kenny resigned from his position in Western Springs in January 2010, to assume the position of Assistant Executive Director for the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association.

Chief Kenny serves as a member of the Illinois Fire Chief’s Promotional Assessment Board, the Metropolitan Fire Chief’s Executive Board, the Illinois Fire Chief’s Educational Foundation and is a Past President of the Illinois Fire Chief’s Association.

Chief Kenny holds a Bachelor degree from Loyola University in Psychology and an Associate Degree from the College of DuPage in Fire Science. He is a graduate of the Executive Fire Officer program at the National Fire Academy and is a current recipient of Chief Officer Designation by the International Fire Chiefs’ Association.

Chief Kenny is an Instructor for the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association, Illinois Fire Service Institute and NIPSTA. He has articles published in the areas of leadership, fireground safety, mental health and fire code challenges. Chief Kenny has twice been awarded the Fire Prevention Achievement Award by the Illinois Fire Inspector’s Association and was recognized by the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association as Fire Chief of the Year for 2004 and was nominated for the same award by Fire Chief Magazine for the International Fire Chiefs that same year.