



BACKING the BADGE

"Serving those that serve us."
backingthebadge.com
(800)788-8630
A Division of
encompass



Special 2015 Holiday Edition by Gary M. Bush

Welcome to a special Holiday Edition of BACKING the BADGE. It's hard to believe, but the holidays are rapidly approaching. The holiday season can be both satisfying and trying for law enforcement officers, as you all know. This season is a time to give thanks, and spend time with friends and family. Work safely, and go home to your friends and family.

We at BACKING the BADGE want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your service and dedication to our communities and the people you serve.

BACKING the BADGE Announces New Additions to the Team

BACKING the BADGE is pleased to announce two new additions to the BACKING the BADGE team.

Cathy Fitzgerald is BACKING the BADGE's Director of Law Enforcement Training & Development. She has worked in Law Enforcement since 1987 and has served in various capacities in both uniform and undercover operations. In addition to serving in various trainer and/or instructor positions during her career, she holds a special designation of Professional Emergency Manager for the State of Michigan. Cathy holds an M.S.A. Degree in Human Resource Administration and has a Graduate Certificate in Public Administration from Central Michigan University, a B.S. Degree in Criminal Justice/Conservation Law Enforcement and an A.A. Degree in National Resource Technology from Lake Superior State University College. Currently, Cathy also serves as an Adjunct Instructor for Jackson College.

Steve Darling is BACKING the BADGE's Coordinator of Law Enforcement Wellness Initiatives. He retired from the Michigan State Police in 2013. He worked at several locations throughout the State of Michigan in different capacities including 8 years with Behavioral Science as a law enforcement EAP counselor. After retirement, Steve was hired as a consultant to assist in re-organizing a security department for a large healthcare corporation. After this was



completed, Steve was hired as the Security Manager. Steve's passion for working with police officers and their families drew him back to the counseling profession. Steve holds a Master of Arts Degree in Counseling from Western Michigan University.

Cops and Alcohol: Use or Abuse?

By Joseph Budnick, MA, Limited Licensed Psychologist, ENCOMPASS, LLC

One issue I frequently run into, as a counselor, is someone who suspects alcohol use is a problem but is unsure of what they should do about it. They may even question if they want to do anything about an activity in which they find personal value. The concerns about alcohol use often originate with the suggestion of a significant other or when health or performance difficulties are experienced by the individual.

Law Enforcement Professionals are not immune to these concerns and alcohol abuse among them, estimated as high as 25% overall, is a well-documented subject. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to understand the perceived benefit of alcohol use by cops as both a coping mechanism to deal with the stress of the job and as a social lubricant with peers – the only ones thought of who can relate to that stress. Most indications that alcohol might be a problem fall into the categories of difficulties with performance issues at work and relationship problems at home.

It also doesn't take a rocket scientist to recognize the roadblocks for a Law Enforcement Professional seeking help with a drinking problem. The idea of a person who is expected to be the example of control and wise behavior can be seen as a contradiction to the person with an alcohol problem. Twelve step programs focus on admitting to being powerless. Mistrust of those without insight into the particular issues of cops keeps many away from seeking help as does the worry about confidentiality.

So what are you supposed to do? If you or someone else sees your alcohol use as a problem, the following might be resources that you can explore:

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services
- Peer support services
- Individual counseling
- Police chaplaincy services

An important aspect of accessing resources is to investigate the provider's skill and experience in working with the specific culture and needs of the Law Enforcement community.



A Message from Our **BACKING the BADGE** Team

Cathy Fitzgerald

Remember: **BALANCE** and **FOCUS** your attention in the **MOMENT!** Whether you're at work rushing to calls for service, communicating with people whose focus is somewhere else, or with family and friends trying to share the most moments in the smallest amount of time, **YOU** must give yourself time to **SLEEP** and **ENJOY**. When your fuse becomes short, ask yourself: Is it me or them? **Be Safe and Focused Street Warriors. Happy Holidays.**

Gary Bush

Well Brothers and Sisters, it's hard to believe but it's the holiday season again. We all know how stressful this time of year can be. You will see some of the best representatives society has to offer and of course at the other end of the spectrum, you will see the worst. Even if you are unlucky enough to have to work the holidays, remember you are holding the line so that the citizens you protect can be safe. Take the opportunity to enjoy your down time with friends and loved ones. Be safe during this season and watch your 6. **Happy Holidays from BACKING the BADGE.**

Mike Ohren

Nice thoughts as we approach the **SEASON.**

Alison Brown

During this holiday season I want you to know that I am grateful to you for your service. My hunch is that I'm grateful for many things that you do or have done 'behind the scenes' for which you neither want nor need recognition. But I think about you and the difference you make in communities across the country. There is no other profession quite like yours – and I, for one, am thankful for what you do. My wish for you is to create some time for you and your loved ones to enjoy each other!

Steve Darling

During this season of giving and receiving, remember to give yourself special care. One sure way is to focus on the things you can change, understand that there are things that will never change; and most of all, use your wisdom to know the difference. Stay focused and stay safe.

Michele Kimmel-Fors

A whopping 71% of Americans say the holidays cause them stress. My belief is that if many of us walked in the shoes of law enforcement officer for a day, we would have a better understanding of "real" stress and our holiday stress would pale in comparison. I am grateful for and admire your service, take good care of you and yours this holiday season and **THANK YOU!**



BADGE and BALANCE: Helpful Hints by Dr. Alison Brown

The holidays can be about presents or presence...you decide. This season the gift of time is a low cost luxury that your loved ones will appreciate!

The BACKING the BADGE Team

Dr. Alison Brown, Senior Consultant and Co-Founder of BACKING the BADGE

abrown@encompass.us.com

Mike Ohren, VP of Organizational Development and Training for ENCOMPASS, LLC

mohren@encompass.us.com

Sara Eklove, LMSW, Chief Operating Officer and Employee Assistance Consultant for ENCOMPASS, LLC

seklove@encompass.us.com

Jessi Zielinski, LMSW, Director of Organizational Development for ENCOMPASS, LLC

jzielinski@encompass.us.com

Gary Bush, Executive Director and Co-Founder of BACKING the BADGE

gmbush@encompass.us.com

Jeff Baker, Senior Employee Assistance Consultant for ENCOMPASS, LLC

jbaker@encompass.us.com

Michelle Kimmel-Fors, Executive Director, COMPASS

mkimmel-fors@encompass.us.com

Cathy Fitzgerald, Director of Law Enforcement Training & Development for BACKING the BADGE

cfitzgerald@encompass.us.com

Steve Darling, Coordinator of Law Enforcement Wellness Initiatives for BACKING the BADGE

sdarling@encompass.us.com