Reach out to coworkers for help because they know you best and understand the job. Have accountability for each other such as mental health check-ups. The more people involved increases the likelihood of success.

Routine maintenance to have time for friends/family, eating healthy, working out, etc.

Schedule rest or break times as diligently as you schedule your work times

Changing perspective

How you view your work matters! Instead of "dreading work" and being put in a predisposition that it is not enjoyable, say "I get to go to work and help people"

Make your phone work for you

Limit usage for social media (utilizing phone settings)

Organize apps and notes to surround your goals

Download motivational quote apps

Have hobbies unrelated to your job

Surround yourself with people that inspire and motivate you

Have a morning routine – Don't hit snooze, 5 min. stretches/exercises, eat within the first 30 min., avoid news and social media usage

Cumulative PTSD

Cumulative Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a type of PTSD that builds up over time from witnessing many stressors and traumatic events.

Signs to look for:

- Withdrawal from people, places, and things
- Behaving out of character (e.g. emotional outbursts)
- Making bad choices
- Poor eating and hygienic habits

First Responders and Mental Health

- Seeking help can be difficult due to the stigma of maintaining a certain image as a first responder.
- In first responders:
  - Suicide rates are higher
  - 1 in 20 have an untreated mental illness
  - There is a 5x higher rate of suffering PTSD than any other profession

Combatting Cumulative PTSD

- Reach out to coworkers for help because they know you best and understand the job. Have accountability for each other such as mental health check-ups. The more people involved increases the likelihood of success.
- Routine maintenance to have time for friends/family, eating healthy, working out, etc.
  - Schedule rest or break times as diligently as you schedule your work times
- Changing perspective
  - How you view your work matters! Instead of "dreading work" and being put in a predisposition that it is not enjoyable, say "I get to go to work and help people"
- Make your phone work for you
  - Limit usage for social media (utilizing phone settings)
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  - Download motivational quote apps
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Data adapted from "Fighting Monsters: Cumulative PTSD in First Responders", a webinar originally held on 4/5/2021. Presented by Sgt. Shane Blalock. Sgt. Shane Blalock is available by email directly at sblalock@florenceal.org or funkypork@live.com.

NAMI Maryland can help. Visit www.namimd.org or call 410-884-8691 for more information.