

CHP Sergeant Kevin Briggs (retired) - “Guardian of the Golden Gate Bridge”



(Excerpts from the bio of Sergeant Kevin R. Briggs, retired)

Kevin Briggs is a retired California Highway Patrol officer who spent many years patrolling the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. Through his compassion, gentle voice, eye contact, and his innate ability of “listening to understand,” Briggs encouraged more than 200 individuals to either not go over the Bridge’s rail or to return to solid ground from where they had been standing precariously on a chord of the Bridge. These challenging, but rewarding efforts earned him the nickname “Guardian of the Golden Gate Bridge.” After a 23-year career with the California Highway Patrol, Briggs retired to dedicate his life to promote mental health awareness across the globe through *Pivotal Points*, an organization he founded to promote crisis management, suicide prevention, and leadership skills.

Briggs speaks publicly about not having the right kind of professional training to effectively assist persons in crisis when he first began work as a patrol officer. Throughout his career, he reached out to senior officers who had been in the trenches, asking for their guidance – how to approach an individual in crisis, what to say, what not to say, tone of voice, among many other things. He sought various professional training avenues including hostage negotiator training to continue to improve his skills and abilities. Over time and using all the things he learned, Briggs found a positive way to approach people in crisis, using listening skills he practiced to find the “thread” that would encourage individuals to find hope for tomorrow and allow them to make the decision to live for another day. Briggs is a mental health consumer himself - he has depression related to his work as a Highway Patrol Officer, lost his grandfather to suicide, and other family and personal experiences, including a motorcycle accident in which he was severely injured.

Today, Briggs speaks publicly about his suicide prevention and crisis encounters with people on the Bridge. He shares his “Listening to Understand” skills followed by key active listening points; his personal triad for healthy living; his RELEASE model to assist anyone in crisis; all while sharing his personal mental health challenges and recovery.

CHP Sergeant Kevin Briggs (retired) - "Guardian of the Golden Gate Bridge"

Date: Wednesday, November 2, 2016
Time: 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Duration: 7 hours (including one hour lunch break)
Location: Anchorage Police Department Training Center – classroom 1 &2
3760 West Dimond Boulevard, Anchorage AK 99502
Contacts: Wendi Shackelford, 907-264-6224, wendis@alaskachd.org

Course content:

Crisis Intervention and Communication with Suicidal Individuals – 1.5 hours

- Specific cases from law enforcement encounters on the Golden Gate Bridge
- Understanding the important role of empathy/understanding in crisis communication
- How "listening to understand" is vital to successful interactions
- Specific interactions with an individual contemplating suicide
- Enhancing communication skills: what to say and what not to say
- Signs presented by an individual in crisis/contemplating suicide
- Familiarization with effective communication tools
- Interacting with adolescents in crisis regarding suicide of a peer
- RELEASE Model for working with individuals in distress or a crisis
- Developing a crisis safety plan
- Suicide by cop

RELEASE model and Active Listening Skills (ALS) – 2 hours

- Understanding how to approach and communicate with someone who may be contemplating suicide or self-harm
- Seven components of Active Listening
- Role playing using ALS and RELEASE model in multiple scenarios
- Gain usable information to promote confidence in engaging a person in distress or crisis

Quality of Life – 1 hour

- How stress affects your daily quality of life
- Quality of life triad: a guide to maintaining a healthy mental and physical life style
- Understanding stress hormones and the impact they have
- The importance of support systems

Law Enforcement Mental Health – 1 hour

- Signs to look for when suffering from compassion fatigue/post traumatic stress
- The role of administration after a traumatic incident
- Officer self-care and quality of life
- Courageous conversations: communicating with an officer in crisis
- The personal experiences of Sergeant Kevin Briggs and his journey of recovery