



## **Patrick J. Kenny**

**Taking the Cape Off**

**Retired Fire Chief  
Western Springs, IL**





## **Taking the Cape Off**

Patrick J Kenny  
Firefighter (Retired)

# ALICE GALLAGHER



[www.PatrickJKenny.com](http://www.PatrickJKenny.com)









# Patrick J. Kenny



[www.PatrickJKenny.com](http://www.PatrickJKenny.com)



# PUTTING THE CAPE ON



By Paul Combs February 3, 2014

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# WHAT DOES BRAVE LOOK LIKE?





THE MISSION IS THE WHY. YOU ARE THE PRIORITY



## **SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER?**



**Is the concept of Mental Health in your orientation and the entry level?**

**Are recognition of signs and symptoms part of your supervisor Training?**

**Do we “Human Preplan”?**

**How does your organization deal with this issue with no EAP? If you have one, any training in your culture?**



- **WW II Vets came home as an entire company by ship that took weeks.**
- **Vietnam Vets flown home alone. They were back in US next day.**
- **Who has higher PTSD?**  
(Grossman 1995)





RESCUE... PEER SUPPORT?!  
BUT I'M NOT  
DROWNING YET!

COMBS DRAWN BY FIRE  
©2015 JEMS



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# Mental Health in First Responders

- PTSD 11 – 37%
  - General population 3.5%
- Depression 22 – 40%
  - Suicide 46.8%
  - Ideations 19.2%
  - Plans 15.5%
  - Attempts 15.5%



On the Web at: [www.FireHero.org](http://www.FireHero.org)



Be a Hero



Save a Hero®



**Starting July 16, 2022, dialing 988 will connect you to the National Suicide Prevention network.**

The new 988 number is meant to replace the current National Suicide Prevention number.

***“The 988 helpline registered 154,585 more calls, texts and chat messages during November 2022 compared to the old national lifeline in November 2021, according to the latest data available.”***

***Over 2 million contacts since inception.***

By AMANDA SEITZ Shreveport, LA 1/10/23

Shortening the hotline number from 10 digits to three makes it easier to remember in an emergency.

Old number still available.





# Public Safety Officer Support Act of 2022

- Expands benefits for PTSD or acute stress disorder
- Death/disability by suicide
  - January 1, 2019
- Exposed to traumatic event
  - Mass casualty
  - Mass fatality
  - Other traumatic event
- Counseling/Documentation

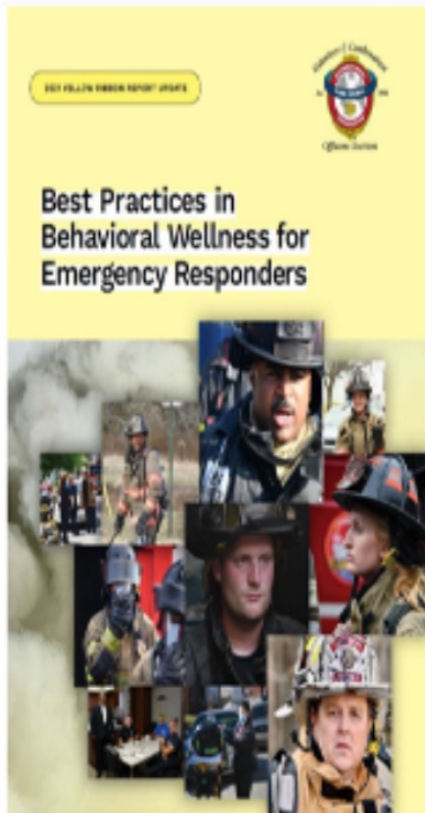


On the Web at: [www.FireHero.org](http://www.FireHero.org)



Be a Hero  Save a Hero®

# MAYDAY FOR MENTAL HEALTH!



Make sure to download the VCOS Yellow Ribbon Report - Under the Helmet: Performing an Internal Size-Up, A Proactive Approach to Ensuring Mental Wellness

<https://bit.ly/3tFYDMd>





# Behavioral Health Initiatives



FIRST RESPONDER  
*Center for Excellence*



On the Web at: [www.FireHero.org](http://www.FireHero.org)



Be a Hero  Save a Hero®



# THIS IS NOT INTENDED TO BE A RESOURCE GUIDE

PTSD IS JUST ONE MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGE  
NOT UNLIKE THERE ARE MULTIPLE CANCERS

AGREE THAT MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION  
AND CANCER PREVENTION ARE KEY  
COMPONENTS OF OVERALL FIRST RESPONDER  
SAFETY AND BOTH ARE PHYSICAL ILLNESSES

## **SOME MATERIAL SENSITIVE:**

Challenge you to put away  
cell phones/iPad.  
I can't hide from you!



A close-up photograph of a silver microphone with a blue band, mounted on a stand. The background is dark and out of focus.

**SO WHAT  
QUALIFIES ME TO  
SPEAK?**

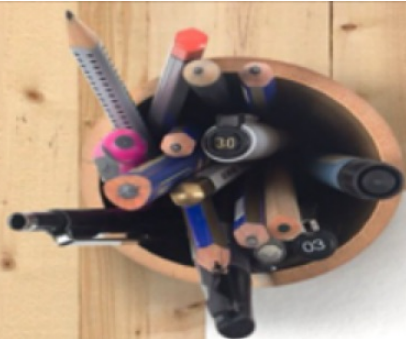




A coincidence is just God's  
way of remaining  
anonymous!







Name Sean Kenny

Age 10½

I'm an expert at fixing things and  
running.

My favorite book is The Twits.

My best school subject is Spelling,  
because I like it.

What I like to do most is Swim.

When I grow up I will be a fireman.

## REAL WORLD COMPARISONS



### **Cancer**

Exposure to dangerous by-products  
Possible Pre-disposition  
Denial of Condition  
Diagnosis:  
Possible Annual Physical  
Medications-expedite death  
Hope one day/Despair next

### **Terminal diagnosis:**

Treat to buy “quality time”

**\*Firefighter/Family Embraced**

### **Mental Health**

Exposure to stressful situations  
Possible Pre-disposition  
Denial of Condition  
Diagnosis:  
No annual evaluation  
Medications-expedite death  
Hope one day/Despair next

### **Terminal diagnosis:**

Treat to buy “quality time”

**\*Firefighter/Family Shunned**

**\* If diagnosed, the key difference between the 2 illnesses!  
Which funeral will you make an effort to attend?**



## REAL WORLD COMPARISONS



- Would you accuse a cancer patient of faking their pain?
- Would you accuse someone with Alzheimer's or Dementia of lying when they can't remember their name?
- But we accuse people with mental illness of faking not being able to get out of bed!

**Must become “Our People!”**





# **Mental Health Versus Cancer**

**“Its not as easy as washing your gear.”**

**- Chief John Buckman**



## WHAT DOES TERMINAL LOOK LIKE?





## WITH TERMINAL BRAIN CANCER





**Mental Health deterioration not as visible!**

**Coping Mechanisms/Warning Signs Prevalent:**

- **Illegal Drugs**
- **Prescribed Medication Abuse**
- **Alcohol**
- **Smoking**
- **Eating**



**A MESSAGE BURIED IN A MOVIE.  
DELIVERED MY “WHY”, MY MISSION!**

**Roy Hobbs asks: “Why did you stand up that day?”**

**Her “Why”? “Because I didn’t want to see you fail!”**

**Sometimes you have to take your Cape off  
and let others wear it.**

**She wore the Cape that day!**

**Offer to wear their Cape. It can become your “Why”.**  
**It gives the person a chance to rest and heal.**



## LESSONS LEARNED



**Treat Mental Health care like any other  
Physical injury.....expect it!  
Prepare a Human Preplan as the response:**

### **Back Injury Analogy**

- **Can't always lift correctly –injured**
- **Can't always have things “Bounce off you”-injured.**
- **Both cases see trusted Doctor you vet ahead of time.**
- **Both cases maybe need meds to help.**
- **Both cases maybe need some therapy to heal.**
- **Both cases if caught early get a 100% return to full duty.**
- **Both cases if left untreated cripple you and can become terminal!!!**





WHY DO YOU PUT THE CAPR BACK ON? FOR YOUR WHYS!





**Be “Okay” with Your  
Human Side**

**There is a time to go  
back into your personal  
phone booth.**

**Put the Cape Back On!!!!**







**I wear my Cape for  
my “Whys”**

**My Granddaughters  
Caroline Eileen and  
Maeve Margaret!**





# CAROLINE KENNY



July 5, 2023



[www.PatrickJKenny.com](http://www.PatrickJKenny.com)





July 5, 2023



[www.PatrickJKenny.com](http://www.PatrickJKenny.com)







Want a glimpse of Heaven?  
You are NOW part of  
Sean and Eileen's Team.

You report to them!  
My "S" stands for Sean and  
my Someone is Eileen.  
Identify your "S" and proudly  
put the Cape back on!



# UNDERSTAND THE POWER AND LIMITS



**Use the Cape as it is designed!**

**Put it on:**

- **When you are called to help and serve others, your WHYS!**

**Take it off:**

- **When it's time for self-care. Self care not selfishness!**
  - **When you can't fix it.**

**The key to successful leadership is:**

**Knowing your WHYS!**

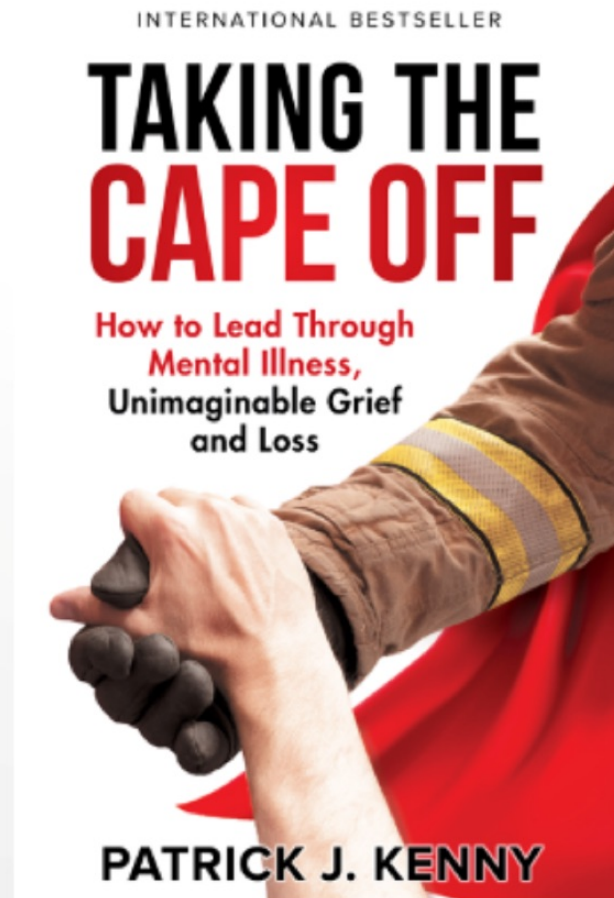
**AND**

**Knowing the “When’s” about your Cape.**

**Who does your “S” stand for? (Family, Friends or You)**



# I MADE A PROMISE !



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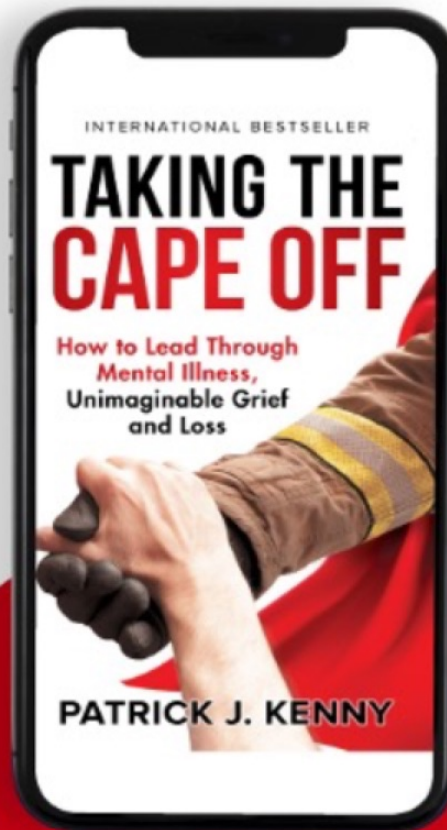




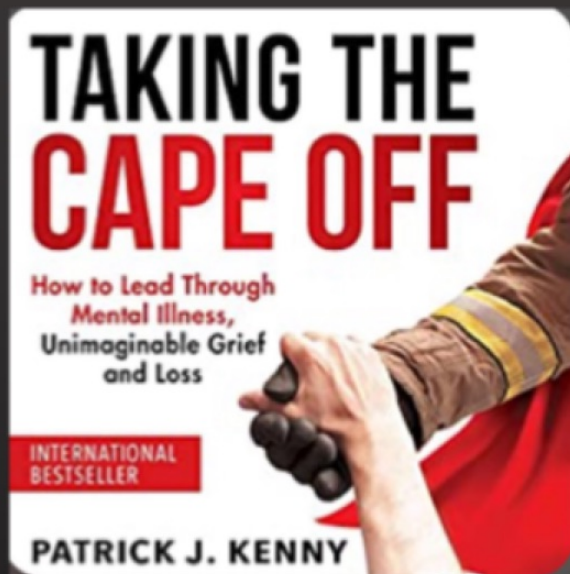
I DIDN'T MAKE THIS PROMISE!



Now available on  
**audible**



Mental Health is a Physical Illness not a Choice!



<https://patrickjkenny.com>



# TORN YET STILL PROUD TO WEAR MY CAPE!



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TORN YET STILL PROUD TO WEAR MY CAPE!



**THANK YOU!**

