

From the beginning , I have experienced several overwhelming and severe tragedies without any type of support. It was during the time, you were expected to handle these situations by yourself and move on. At that time there was no support groups, counseling or empathy in dealing with your emotions.

Several events truly stick out in my mind. Trooper Buckingham was in pursuit, got in an accident , was severely burned over 26 years ago. Until I found out he was working for Kent PD, we finally met and I got some answers and understanding of the whole situation. Never received an attaboy on a job well done, recognition or critique of how I handled the call. It wasn't until several years later, when a Kent Lt called on the phone and commended my calmness and handling this situation, after viewing it on TV and she was able to hear actual radio traffic. I guess over the years we were expected to move on and pretend that it didn't even happen, yeah right!

I have worked in the system for over 38 years. We have seen and heard of several tragedies and as we become more and more involved with larger agencies, the increase and more consistent "high stress" events involving drugs, guns and shootings over the years has an affect over your emotions, psych and interaction with people on a daily basis. I know several dispatchers who either try to bury these events either by drinking and or taking anti-depressant meds, in order to cope with the everyday regime. As each city incorporates further out into King County, their work force increases, then the constant demand of the radio plays it toll over the years and as we become of age, our experience is there, however it wears you down mentally and physically.

The years and years of working shift work, not sleeping well or in stages, not having a social life or consistent days off, removes you from society and "normal" people have no concept or understanding what your odd sense of humor, lack of empathy on less insignificant events and removal from social life is a result of doing this type of work.