





# Recognition of Cumulative Trauma Exposure in Your Flight Crew

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**Thank you to the ASA and the FNA  
for inviting me to do my  
presentation at this ASA+FNA  
2011 conference**





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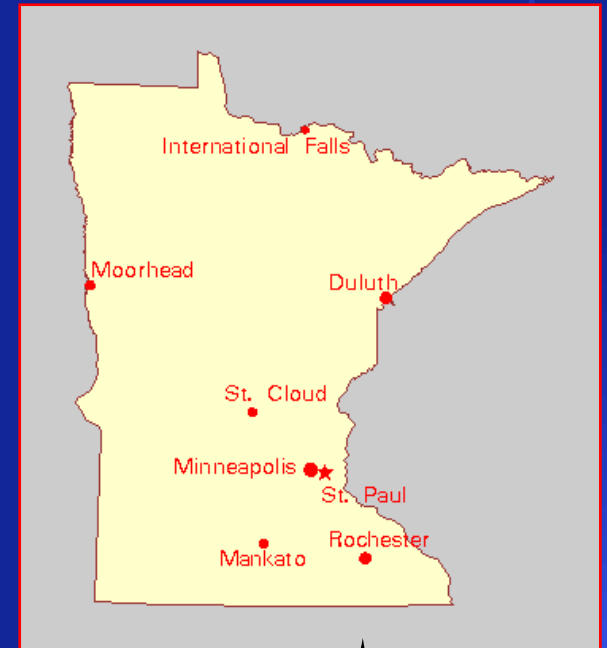
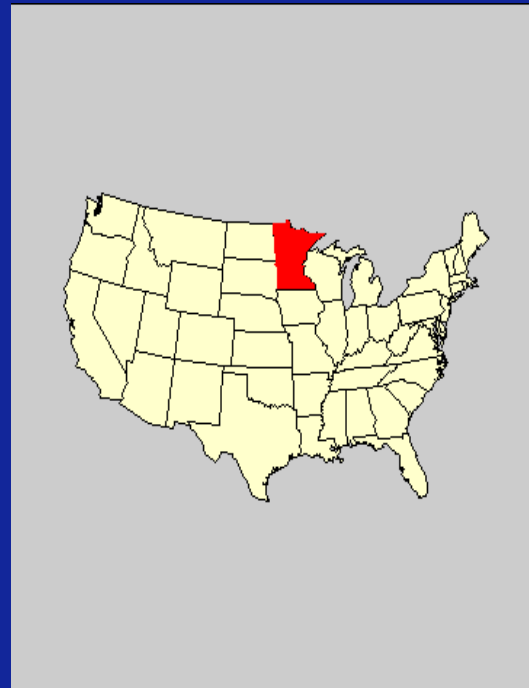
2011 Air Medical Transport Conference  
October 17-19, 2011 - St. Louis, Missouri





# Minnesota

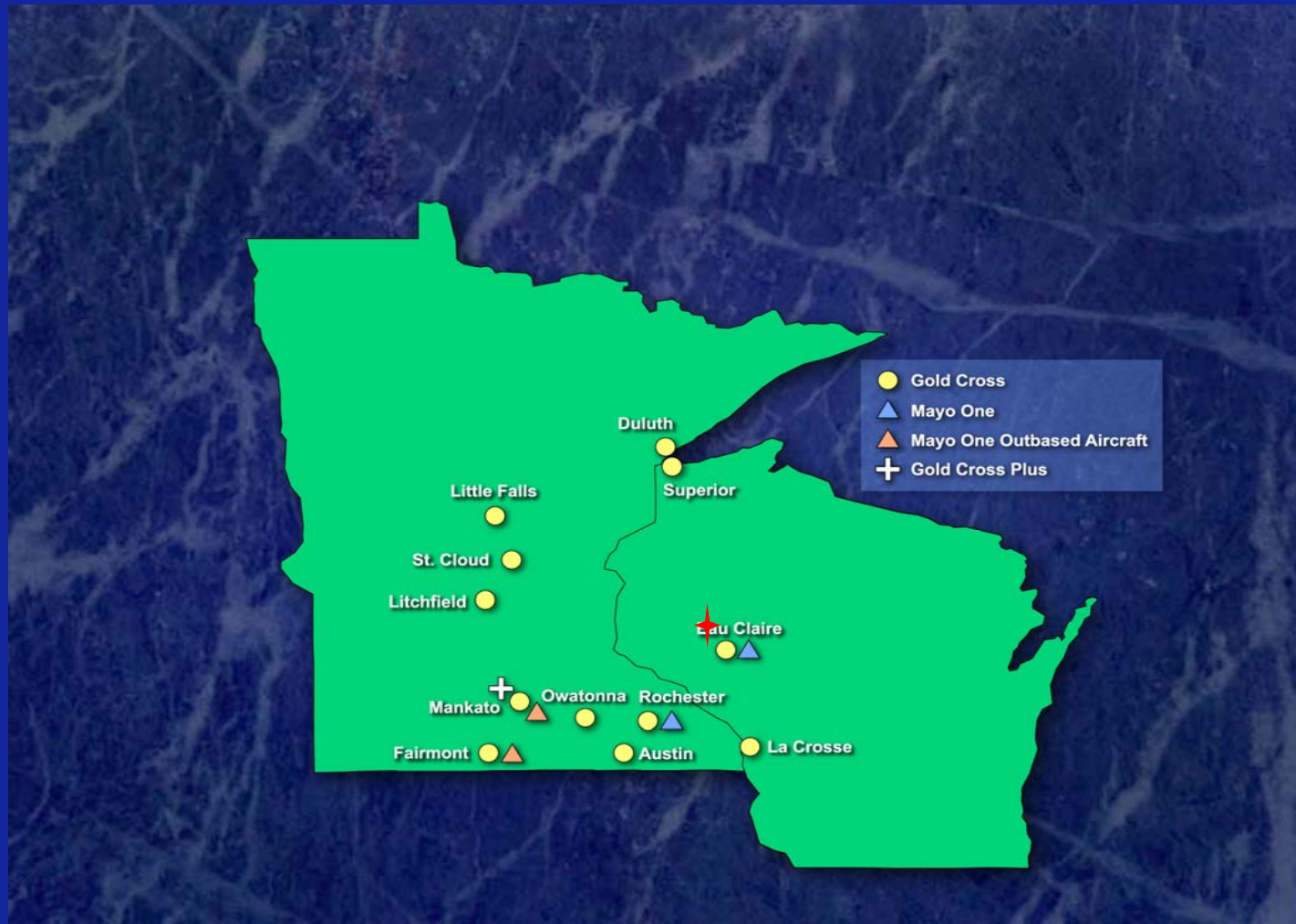
## Where do I work?







# Where do I work?









## Where do I work?

- **Mayo Clinic Medical Transport**
- **Rotor-wing: 2100**
- **Fixed-wing: 300**
- **Ground critical care transports: 300**
- **Ground emergency**
- **ALS transports system-wide**





# SURVIVORS NETWORK

AIR & SURFACE MEDICAL TRANSPORT





# Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

- Trauma
- Freud 1914
- “A breach in the protective barrier against stimuli leading to feelings of overwhelming helplessness”





# PTSD

- **Trauma**
- **V. Beckener and J. Arden**
- **“facing a severe threat to one’s life, health or emotional security or witnessing the death or serious threat to another”**





# PTSD

- **Stress**
- **Peter Levine**
- **“reaction resulting from stimuli which activates the autonomic nervous system and is either resolved or accumulated”**





# PTSD

- **Natural trauma**
- **Unintentional trauma**
- **Intentional trauma**





## Response to Trauma

- **General principles of trauma severity**
  - ◆ Trauma less disabling if you are able to act
  - ◆ Age
  - ◆ Caused by someone you know
  - ◆ Repeated exposure





## Response to Trauma

- **General principles of trauma**
  - ◆ **Predictability**
  - ◆ **Violation by another person**
  - ◆ **Ability to get help**





## Symptoms of PTSD

- Re-experiencing Symptoms
- Hyper-arousal Symptoms
- Numbing and avoidance
- Depression

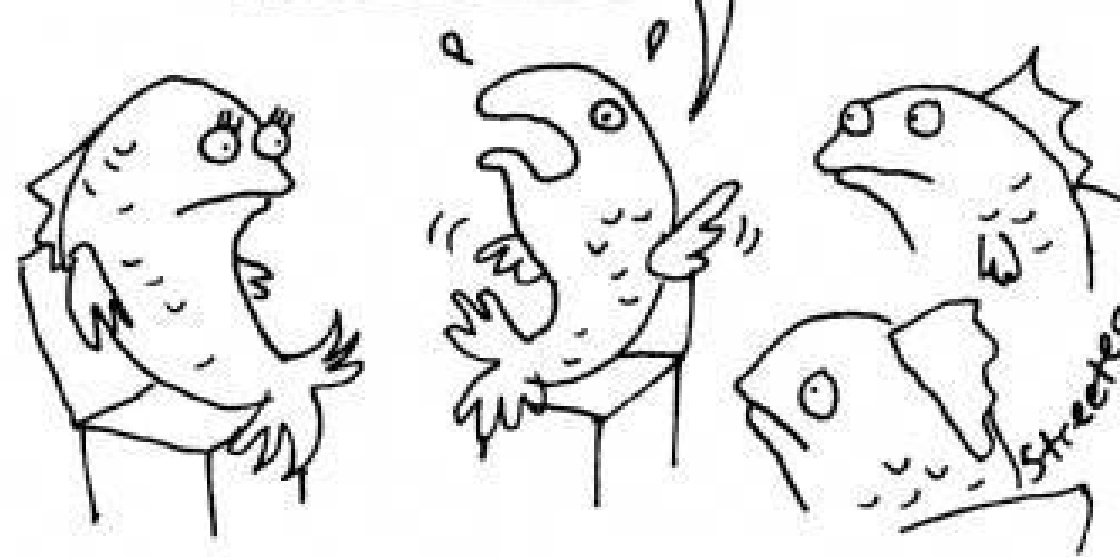




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And now whenever I see  
anything remotely like a  
hook, I get these  
horrible flashbacks!



search ID: bstn563

Post-catch-and-release-  
stress support group





# PTSD

- **Treatment**
- **Coordinated combination of techniques including behavior modification, relaxation techniques, desensitization and cognitive skills**





## Accumulated Stress Disorder (ASD)

- Also called Trauma Exposure Response (Van Dernoot Lipski and Burk)
- Burnout







# ASD

- **Defined as “ the transformation that takes place within us as a result of repeated exposure to the suffering of others”**





# ASD

- **Warning signs**
  - ◆ **Feeling overwhelmed**
  - ◆ **A sense that one can never do enough**
  - ◆ **Hypervigilance**
  - ◆ **Diminished creativity**





# ASD

- **Warning signs**
  - ◆ **Inability to embrace complexity**
  - ◆ **Minimizing**
  - ◆ **Chronic exhaustion/physical ailments**
  - ◆ **Deliberate avoidance**





# ASD

- **Warning signs**
  - ◆ **Dissociative moments**
  - ◆ **Sense of persecution**
  - ◆ **Guilt**
  - ◆ **Fear**
  - ◆ **Anger**





**National  
Center for  
PTSD**  
Posttraumatic  
Stress Disorder

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

**National Center for PTSD**

ADVANCING SCIENCE AND PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING OF TRAUMATIC STRESS

[www.ptsd.va.gov](http://www.ptsd.va.gov)



- **Checklist developed by US Department of Veterans Affairs**
  - ◆ **3 types**
    - ◆ **Military**
    - ◆ **Civilian**
    - ◆ **Specific to a specific event**



## PTSD CheckList – Civilian Version (PCL-C)

Client's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Instruction to patient: Below is a list of problems and complaints that veterans sometimes have in response to stressful life experiences. Please read each one carefully, put an "X" in the box to indicate how much you have been bothered by that problem *in the last month*.

No.	Response	Not at all (1)	A little bit (2)	Moderately (3)	Quite a bit (4)	Extremely (5)
1.	Repeated, disturbing <i>memories, thoughts, or images</i> of a stressful experience from the past?					
2.	Repeated, disturbing <i>dreams</i> of a stressful experience from the past?					
3.	Suddenly <i>acting or feeling</i> as if a stressful experience <i>were happening</i> again (as if you were reliving it)?					
4.	Feeling <i>very upset</i> when <i>something reminded</i> you of a stressful experience from the past?					
5.	Having <i>physical reactions</i> (e.g., heart pounding, trouble breathing, or sweating) when <i>something reminded</i> you of a stressful experience from the past?					
6.	Avoid <i>thinking about or talking about</i> a stressful experience from the past or avoid <i>having feelings</i> related to it?					





7.	Avoid <i>activities</i> or <i>situations</i> because they <i>remind you</i> of a stressful experience from the past?						
8.	Trouble <i>remembering important parts</i> of a stressful experience from the past?						
9.	Loss of <i>interest in things that you used to enjoy</i> ?						
10.	Feeling <i>distant</i> or <i>cut off</i> from other people?						
11.	Feeling <i>emotionally numb</i> or being unable to have loving feelings for those close to you?						
12.	Feeling as if your <i>future</i> will somehow be <i>cut short</i> ?						
13.	Trouble <i>falling</i> or <i>staying asleep</i> ?						
14.	Feeling <i>irritable</i> or having <i>angry outbursts</i> ?						
15.	Having <i>difficulty concentrating</i> ?						
16.	Being " <i>super alert</i> " or watchful on guard?						
17.	Feeling <i>jumpy</i> or easily startled?						

PCL-M for DSM-IV (11/1/94) Weathers, Litz, Huska, & Keane National Center for PTSD - Behavioral Science Division

This is a Government document in the public domain.





## PTSD

- Checklist scored by DSM-IV symptom criteria
- Scored by treating all responses of 3 through 5 as symptomatic and consider positive if symptomatic response to at least one in questions 1-5, three in questions 6-12 and two in 13-17





# PTSD

- Checklist has been validated by two studies in veterans





## EMS Checklist

- 1. Repeated, disturbing memories, thoughts, or images of recent calls?
- 2. Repeated disturbing dreams of recent or past calls?
- 3. Acting or feeling as if stressful call is happening again?





## EMS Checklist

- 4. Feeling upset when something reminds you of stressful call?
- 5. Having physical reactions when reminded of stressful call?
- 6. Avoid thinking or having feelings about stressful call?
- 7. Wanting to avoid coming to work?





## EMS Checklist

- 8. Trouble remembering call or certain parts of call?
- 9. Recent loss of interest in things you usually enjoy?
- 10. Feeling distant or cut off from other people?
- 11. Feeling emotionally numb?





## EMS Checklist

- 12. Feeling as if there is no future?
- 13. Recent trouble falling or staying asleep.
- 14. Feeling irritable or angry?
- 15. Having difficulty concentrating?





## EMS Checklist

- 16. Being extremely alert or watchful?
- 17. Feeling easily startled?





## Implementation

- **Develop similar check list with input from Department of Aeromedical Medicine and Occupational Health**
- **Develop policy to allow for self check as well as peer evaluation**





## Implementation

- **Organize structured support system integrating Psychiatry, Chaplaincy, Aeromedical and Occupational Health**





## Perceived difficulties

- **Lack of “buy in” from staff and management.**
- **Difficulty in organizing support staff.**
- **Plan to do a prospective study to determine feasibility and usefulness.**





*"We're encouraging people to become involved in their own rescue."*





# Thank you! Questions?



