

Mason Dyar

Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Data Systems Specialist, Upper Pine River Fire Protection District

Speaker Bio:

Mason Jay Dyar is an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Data Systems Specialist at the Upper Pine River Fire Protection District in Southwest Colorado, where he is the lead in managing the department's data systems and reporting, ensuring operational efficiency and data-driven decision-making. Upper Pine Fire provides all-risk/hazard fire, rescue, and emergency medical services to 284 square miles in an urban-wildland setting.

Mason is the Chief Pilot behind the successful sUAS drone response program for Upper Pine River Fire and is recognized for innovative thinking and commitment to enhancing emergency response capabilities. This multifaceted professionalism garnered significant recognition when he was named EMT of the Year in 2022 for his exceptional management of a Covid vaccine distribution and administration during the pandemic. Demonstrating remarkable organizational skills and a deep sense of community, Mason led a team that administered ~5,000 doses to rural and under-resourced populations, reinforcing public health in the region.

In addition to his professional achievements, Mason has a deep-rooted passion for helping special needs populations. He has spent over three years in leadership roles with peer support groups for individuals struggling with substance use issues, providing empathetic and effective guidance.

Currently, Mason is pursuing a nursing degree, further expanding his medical expertise, and setting the foundation for the next phase of his career.

Presentation:

Telling the Rest of the Story: A Family Members Perspective on First Responders' Mental Health and the Path to Recovery

In the demanding world of Emergency Management and First Responders, the focus is often on the victim and the immediate crisis. The mental health toll on first responders themselves, however, can remain overlooked and underestimated. As

a family member of a first responder and a practicing first responder, I have witnessed firsthand the compound effects of this high-stress occupation on the mental well-being of my family members.

I will share the story of how continuous exposure to crises can lead to long-term mental health struggles and how that affected my family. Using personal experiences, I will demonstrate the ripple effects that this demanding profession can have on familial relationships and home life. The talk will also underline the urgent need for a comprehensive support system encompassing family, therapy, and peer backing.

Finally, the discussion will share strategies and resources for promoting mental health and resilience among first responders, providing tools for recovery and support. I will delve into practical steps that can be taken by organizations, colleagues, and families to improve the mental health outcomes of these vital members of our communities.