

Reflection #22
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Coping with The Fear of COVID – 19 Infection
Do you need to eat... sleep... or talk?

When ever I am asked to do educational event about work stress to First Responders, I insist that one of the events include their partners. When their First Responder partner comes home from a call, I suggest that they ask them three questions. What do you need to do first; eat... sleep... or talk. I insist that the couple make a strong policy in their home that all three questions will eventually need to be answered. The reason I stress this way of processing a critical event is that it breaks the unspoken message of do not talk, trust, or feel and completes the vital step of closing the feedback loop in the communication process. This model of direct and clear communication about events, thoughts and feelings allow the First Responders and their partners to be informed and then united in what needs to take place next.

This is a great model for all of us to use during the COVID – 19 crises. This life changing, long term, event has affected all of us in profound ways. A tool that is used in this model is “Deep Listening”. This when you are listening without judgment, without forming a response while the person is talking and focusing on being totally present.

Deep listening also:

- Allows you to engage without assumptions
- Establishes trust by demonstrating that you value what others say and take them seriously
- Cultivates authentic connection with others -- the quality of your attention influences the quality of the conversation
- Helps clarify what is really going on
- Enables new possibilities to surface

Eat... sleep... talk – what do you need to do first?