



## Tool of the Month: Holding the Line

In crisis response, there is often a strong pull to do something: fill silence, offer solutions, or move people toward closure. But not every situation allows for immediate resolution, and pushing beyond your role can reduce effectiveness and increase stress for both responders and those being supported.

One tool to help in these moments is holding the line.

Holding the line means staying present and engaged without overextending your role or rushing toward answers that do not yet exist. It is the discipline of remaining steady when pressure builds to fix, explain, or reassure beyond what is realistic.

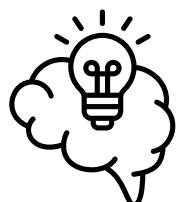
For KCCRT members, holding the line might look like:

- Staying with a group without forcing conversation
- Allowing silence without feeling the need to fill it
- Providing support without making promises you cannot keep



This approach requires restraint. It asks us to tolerate discomfort, both ours and others', while maintaining professionalism and respect. Research on crisis intervention shows that people benefit more from calm, reliable presence than from premature problem-solving or forced reassurance.

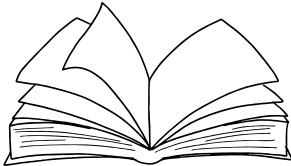
Holding the line also protects responders. It prevents role drift, reduces burnout, and keeps expectations clear. When we stay within our lane and remain steady, we build trust, not through words, but through consistency.



**Try this:** Next time you enter a scene where outcomes are unclear, pause and ask yourself:

1. "What is my role right now?"
2. "What can I realistically do or influence?"
3. "How can I stay present without forcing solutions?"

**Takeaway:** Presence, steadiness, and clarity matter more than having all the answers and the story of the Four Chaplains below is a striking example of this in action.



## From History: The Four Chaplains

In the early morning hours of February 3, 1943, the U.S. Army transport ship SS Dorchester was struck by a German U-boat torpedo while crossing the North Atlantic. The explosion knocked out power and communications, and the ship began sinking rapidly in icy waters. In the darkness and confusion, soldiers scrambled for life jackets and lifeboats as the situation deteriorated by the minute.

Among those on board were four Army chaplains:

- George L. Fox (Methodist)
- Alexander D. Goode (Jewish)
- John P. Washington (Catholic)
- Clark V. Poling (Reformed Church in America)



Eyewitness accounts describe the chaplains moving deliberately through the ship, assisting the wounded, directing soldiers toward safety, and distributing life jackets. When the supply of life jackets ran out, each chaplain gave his own to someone else.

As the Dorchester continued to sink, multiple survivors later reported seeing the four chaplains standing together on deck. According to these accounts, they linked arms and sang hymns and prayers as the ship went down, remaining visibly calm and unified even as escape was no longer possible.

All four chaplains died that night.

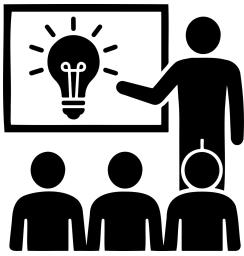
Their story is remembered not simply because of sacrifice, but because of how they carried themselves when the outcome could not be changed. They did not attempt to control the chaos. They did not offer false reassurance. They did not focus on themselves. They stayed with others, fully present, until the end.

The lesson for KCCRT is clear and enduring.

The Four Chaplains remind us that presence, humility, and service matter, even when we cannot fix what has happened. In crisis response, there are moments when no words resolve the situation and no action changes the outcome. What remains is how we show up.

**Presence** means staying engaged rather than withdrawing when discomfort rises. **Humility** means accepting the limits of our role and our control. **Service** means choosing others over ourselves, even when the work is costly.

For KCCRT members and first responders, this is not abstract. Much of our work takes place after the critical decisions have already been made and the damage has already occurred. In those moments, our value is not measured by solutions, but by steadiness, respect, and consistency.



## What This Teaches Us Today

Much of KCCRT's work happens after the sirens stop and the immediate decisions are already made. We often step into situations where there is no clean resolution and no clear endpoint. In those moments, our effectiveness is not measured by outcomes, but by how we carry ourselves.



The Four Chaplains model a form of service that is steady rather than dramatic. They remind us that staying present, maintaining composure, and treating people with dignity still matters, even when circumstances cannot be changed. For KCCRT members, this means showing up without needing to fix, persuade, or explain away what has happened.

It means recognizing that calm presence, consistency, and respect can reduce isolation and restore a sense of stability, even in the absence of answers.



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## KCCRT Annual Conference | April 17–18, 2026

Mark your calendars for the 2026 KCCRT Annual Conference, taking place April 17–18, 2026, at the Capital Plaza in Frankfort, KY.

### **Friday, April 17**

- SAFE Debriefing Training – Full-day training **available for KCCRT members**

### **Saturday, April 18**

- A mix of presentations and a tabletop exercise, designed to strengthen practical response skills

#### **Attendance options:**

- Attend Friday only, Saturday only, or both days.

#### **Hotel accommodations:**

- Rooms available April 16 for those attending SAFE Debriefing on Friday.
- Rooms available April 17 for those attending both days or Saturday only.



**Stay tuned for registration details and a full agenda.**



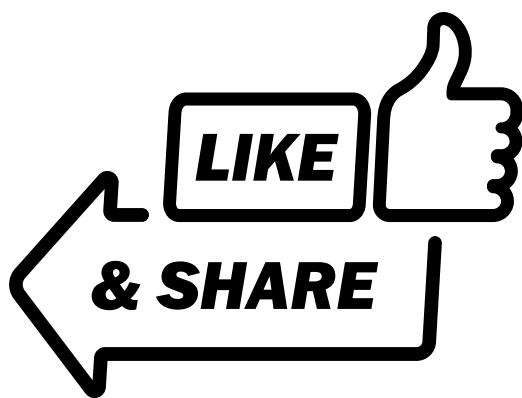
# Help Us Share the Mission

We're working to get the word out about KCCRT and the support we provide across Kentucky, and you can make a difference.

Like and share the KCCRT Facebook page to help more first responders and communities know that support is available when it matters most. Every share helps someone connect with resources, strengthens our reach, and amplifies our mission.



**One small click can have a big impact.**



## January Reflection: Anchors for the New Year

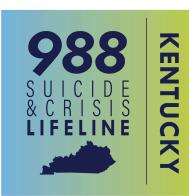
Instead of big, hard-to-keep resolutions, focus on a few practical daily disciplines, small actions that can realistically become part of your routine and help set the tone for the year.

**Anchors for 2026 might include:**

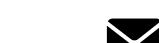
- **Move every day** – take a walk, ride a bike, or do a quick set of stretches.
- **Complete one meaningful task daily** – pick a small, important action that moves a personal project, responsibility, or goal forward.
- **Reset one space each day** – handle a single area, like your workspace, a kitchen counter, or an inbox, to create small wins and momentum.



These are just a few examples. Think about what disciplines help anchor you. What are a couple of small anchors you can add to your life in 2026 to boost your wellness and create consistent momentum?



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