

Tool of the Month: “Circle of Control” Check-In

When things feel out of control, whether you’re on a crisis call or just juggling too much at once, it’s easy to get pulled into frustration, anxiety, or helplessness. One of the simplest ways to get grounded again is practicing the circle of control check-in.

Try this simple exercise:



- Grab a piece of paper and draw two circles, one inside the other, like a bullseye.
- In the center circle, write down everything that is in your control right now. That could be things like your breathing, your body language, how you respond, or what you choose to focus on next.
- In the outer circle, write what’s not in your control, like someone else’s emotions, the outcome of a situation, or decisions other people make.



When stress builds or you feel powerless, take a breath and look at your paper. Shift your focus to that center circle. What’s one thing you can do right now?

This tool doesn’t solve everything, but it can create just enough space to think clearly and respond calmly.

It’s simple, visual, and works for all ages and situations. You can use it for yourself, walk through it with a shaken colleague, or even introduce it during a response to help someone find their footing again.

Sometimes, control starts with recognizing what we don’t have to carry.

In other words, we seek to control the controllables and release the rest.

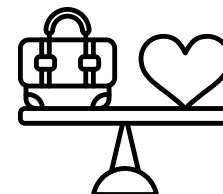
Why Team Debriefs Are Critical Even When You Feel “Fine”



After a deployment, it's natural to want to pack up, head out, and move on, especially if everything seemed to go smoothly and you feel “fine.” But skipping the team debrief can leave important things unspoken and stress unprocessed.

Debriefing with your team after a deployment isn't just about addressing major issues. It's about checking in, sharing perspectives, and giving everyone space to come down from the intensity of the response. After you deploy, even a quick circle-up to talk through what happened helps clarify facts, normalize reactions, and remind each other: you're not in this alone.

Taking time for a short debrief strengthens team trust, improves communication, and helps catch signs of stress before they pile up. It's one of the simplest ways to protect your own resilience and support your teammates, too.



Why the Bad Stuff Sticks? Understanding the Negativity Bias

Let's try something

$$1 + 1 = 2$$

$$4 + 4 = 8$$

$$2 + 2 = 4$$

$$5 + 5 = 10$$

$$3 + 3 = 6$$

$$6 + 6 = 13$$

What stood out?

Chances are that your brain immediately locked onto the last equation.

Never mind the five correct answers, that one incorrect problem is what most people notice first.



That's the negativity bias in action. Our brains are wired to detect what's wrong, not what's right. It's a survival trait. But in crisis work, it can leave us feeling like we're not doing enough, even when we're making a real difference.

You might forget the calm you brought to someone in distress... but replay the one moment you stumbled. You remember the difficult feedback, not the quiet “thank you” someone whispered as you left.

We can't erase the negativity bias, but we can train ourselves to balance it.

✅ Try This:

At the end of your next shift or deployment...

- Name one thing you did well.
- Recall a moment where someone responded to your presence.
- If someone thanks you, take 5 seconds to let it land before moving on.

You're making more of a difference than your brain gives you credit for. Start noticing the full picture, not just the flaws.

🔥 The Power of Hope: A Civil War Lesson for Crisis Response

Hope isn't about ignoring problems or pretending everything's fine. It's about facing reality and still believing things can improve. In crisis work, combat, and personal struggle, hope is what keeps people moving forward. It's not fluff; it's fuel.



Even if we don't feel hopeful all the time, we can build it: by setting small goals, staying connected to others, and remembering why we do what we do. When hope is present, people survive. When it disappears, survival becomes harder.



A real example from the Civil War drives this home.



During the war, the Union and Confederacy operated under a prisoner exchange system. Captured soldiers could be swapped, a policy that gave those in brutal prison camps a reason to keep going. One of the most infamous Confederate camps was Andersonville, where conditions were horrific: extreme overcrowding, no shelter, almost no food, and rampant disease. Still, Union soldiers held on, because they believed they might be exchanged and go home.



That changed in April 1864, when President Lincoln suspended the prisoner exchange program. The Confederacy was returning Union prisoners too sick to fight, while regaining healthy Confederate soldiers in return. Strategically, the decision made sense. But for the 33,000+ Union prisoners still in Confederate camps, it was devastating.

Before the suspension, about 1,000–1,500 Union prisoners died in Andersonville per month.

After the exchange was halted, deaths spiked to nearly 3,000 per month, a 200% increase.



Nothing else had changed, the weather didn't worsen, conditions didn't suddenly deteriorate, but the hope of release was gone. And when hope disappeared, death rates skyrocketed.

Doctors and chaplains at the time reported that once prisoners learned they wouldn't be exchanged, "they gave up." Some stopped eating. Others became unresponsive. Their bodies followed what their minds already believed: there was no point in fighting anymore. This wasn't just about physical survival, it was about psychological survival. That's how powerful hope is. It literally kept people alive.



As members of KCCRT, you carry that same power. You're not there to fix everything. But your calm presence, compassionate listening, and willingness to show up offer people something they may not have had before: a reason to believe things can get better.

Sometimes hope is the most critical thing we deliver, and we never know whose life it might save.

SAFE Debriefing Training Update

Back in May, we introduced a soft rollout of the new SAFE Debriefing curriculum, created especially for KCCRT with guidance from a trusted psychologist. On May 31, we held a training session to gather feedback and see how the model works in practice.

Thanks to everyone who took part and shared their thoughts. We're using that input to make a few final tweaks and improvements. Our goal is to officially launch the SAFE Debriefing training for all team members early this fall.

**COMING
SOON**

We'll share more details soon about training dates and how you can get involved. This new approach is designed to strengthen our ability to support each other after crisis, building on what makes KCCRT's peer support so effective.

Mid-Year 2025 Stats

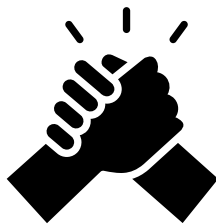
It's hard to believe, but we're already halfway through 2025. Your dedication and presence have made a real impact across the state.

Here's a quick look at where we stand so far this year:

- **Total Deployments:** 33
- **Individuals Served:** 704

Behind every number is someone who showed up, listened, and made space for healing. Whether deployed or on standby, you're part of this mission.

Let's keep showing up strong for the second half of the year. ❤️



Dad Joke Corner

Why don't eggs tell jokes?

— They'd crack each other up.



I'm reading a book about anti-gravity...

— It's impossible to put down.



Why did the bicycle fall over?

— Because it was two-tired!

