

IV WORLD CONGRESS

Peer Support Programs & Crisis Intervention

Pre-conference 18 & 19 March 2026

Wednesday 18 March 2026

Pre-conference Workshop

Dr. Mary Schoenfeldt "Your Team: Building It On The Fly And Taking Care of It"

BIOGRAPHY



Dr. Mary Schoenfeldt is a highly respected Emergency Management Professional and faculty member with the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF). She brings extensive experience in crisis response and resilience building across diverse sectors, including business, healthcare, government, education, and community organizations.

She is a Hall of Fame Member at the International Network for Women in Emergency Management (InWEM), a Faculty member at FEMA's Emergency Management Institute, is a subject matter expert for US Department of Education, was honored with a Real Hero Award from American Red Cross, has been recognized by the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) and earned a Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation. She is Board President of Green Cross Academy of Traumatology, an international disaster mental health non-profit organization.

Her volunteer experience includes International Board President of Green Cross Academy of Traumatology and has coordinated response teams and/or deployed personally to numerous disasters around the world.

ABSTRACT

How to organize a team during disasters and how to ensure team resilience that results in Post Traumatic Growth. It will use a highly interactive combination of guided tabletop exercises, storytelling, personal insights and activities. It will result in each participant leaving with new knowledge related to their role and responsibility for effective team function during disasters and high stress.

When teams are called to assist in a disaster, they respond as individuals and must come together quickly as a team to provide effective CISM type support to those who are affected. What does it take for trained individual responders to become a resilient team under immense pressure? And how does that team provide the appropriate services so that the individuals served have the best chance to recover with little or no long-term psychological challenges? We will explore the fast-growing research around how to move from Post Traumatic Stress to Post Traumatic Growth. We will look through the lens of not only those we serve, but ourselves as well.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion participants will be able to:

- Articulate the behavioral and psychological responses to a disaster
- Understand the unique role of the individual responder in the formation of a resilient team
- Illustrate the appropriate actions of a response team dependent on the phase of the disaster
- Identify the challenges of building a team under pressure
- Examine Post Traumatic Growth and its application to both team and individual recovery

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Thursday 19 March 2026

Pre-conference Workshop

Roger Solomon Ph.D. "The Journey from Trauma to Resilience"

BIOGRAPHY



Roger Solomon, Ph.D., is a psychologist specializing in trauma and grief. He is the Program Director and Senior Faculty with the EMDR Institute, an EMDR Europe approved trainer, and teaches EMDR therapy internationally. He was the first EMDR trainer in Italy (1999) and continues to provide EMDR training in Italy. Dr. Solomon was a police psychologist for the first 15 years of his career and did research on critical incident trauma. He has provided services to numerous first responder agencies following traumatic incidents, including the FBI, Secret Service, NASA, and US military. In Italy he consults with Polizia di Stato and University of Rome (La Sapienza) and is a visiting professor at Salesiana University in Rome. In Ukraine Dr. Solomon provides EMDR training and direct interventions (trauma victims, war veterans, family members of soldiers killed) both in person and online. Dr. Solomon presents workshops on the utilization of EMDR therapy complex trauma and dissociative symptoms, grief and mourning, treating attachment issues, and the "art" of EMDR therapy. Dr. Solomon has authored or coauthored 51 articles and book chapters and has authored a book on EMDR therapy and grief first published in Italian in 2022: *Lutto e EMDR, dalla Diagnosi all' intervento clinic (Grief and EMDR, from Diagnosis to clinical intervention)*.

Abstract :

A traumatic event, an event that overwhelms a person's sense of vulnerability and control, can shatter a person's world view. The world can seem unpredictable, and a person can lose their sense of safety and control, which interfered with one's sense of confidence, competence, and ability to function. Yet from trauma, one can emerge stronger, experience what is called "post traumatic growth".

Resilience is the ability to regain balance after adverse circumstances by learning from it and utilizing lessons learned to deal with present and future life. Hence, not only can one overcome trauma, but emerge stronger. Further, resilience is the positive capacity of people to cope with stress. It has been described as a dynamic process where people exhibit positive behavioral adaptation when they encounter significant adversity or trauma (Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker, 2000). Hence, working through and adaptively processing a traumatic incident helps us deal more effectively with later critical incidents.

This workshop has two components:

- 1) Learn about resilience, and peer support methods that can increase resilience in one's peers (and oneself). A framework for understanding resilience and practical skills for building resilience will be taught and demonstrated.
- 2) Small group practice to increase one's peer support skills in building resilience. (You don't learn how to drive a car from a lecture).