



# Personal Safety & Preparedness

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Part of the “Life in Congress” Project by:

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# Moderator

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# Well-being Series on Dealing with the Past Year and How to Move Forward

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- April 7: **Managing Trauma & Stress** → Watch the Recording!
- May 5: **Preventing Burnout: Using the Science of Stress & Energy Management to Reset and Recover**
  - featuring special guests, the [Becoming Superhuman Lab](#) at UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business
- TBA: **Return to Work vs Remote Work: Managing Hybrid Workplaces**
- To watch/register: <https://www.congressfoundation.org/lic-training>

# Presenters

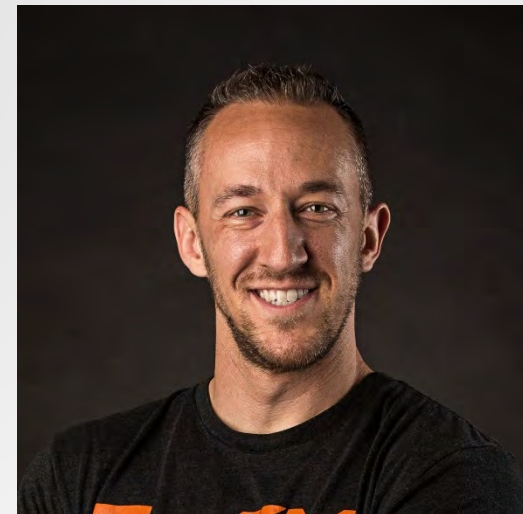
## Rep. Brian Baird (D-WA)

- 6-term Member of the U.S. House of Representatives (1999-2011)
- Ph.D., Clinical Psychology



## Derrek Hofrichter

- internationally recognized self-defense expert for 16+ years
- has led seminars and trainings in over 7 countries and all across the U.S., including training for three congressional offices





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# Goals of this Program

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- Support and empower you, your team and your family
- Offer personal, family, team, and public safety precautions and preparations
- Preparing for safety allows you to focus more on the rest of your work and life
- Preparing for safety not only protects you and your team, it also helps protect constituents
- The ideas and actions we will discuss today can help you be safer in every situation, not just your congressional role
- The more people in your office or family who have prepared, the safer everyone will be

*If you spend 1-2% of your time  
on personal and team preparedness,  
you will be much more effective  
the other 98% of the time.*

“I have learned over the years that when one's mind is made up, this diminishes fear; knowing what must be done does away with fear.”

—Rosa Parks



# Question

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- Which of the following are you experiencing while working in Congress? (Check all that apply)
  - Anxiety for my safety or that of the Member/colleagues
  - Concern about going back into the DC or district/state office(s)
  - Direct insulting or threatening messages or communications
  - Anxiety/fear about accompanying Member to public events
  - Questioning whether I should stay in Congress due to safety concerns

# Preparation

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- The important thing is to be prepared but make preparation something you do to reduce the threat and your anxiety, not something that freaks you out.
- Preparation is a combination of preparing your:
  - Support and backup
  - Facility
  - Equipment
  - Mind
  - Actions
  - TeamAnd then Practicing

# Preparation and Practice Are Ongoing

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- This is not a once and your done thing
- All new staff must be trained and on boarded
- All staff must periodically review and practice
- Equipment must be tested and checked out

# Law Enforcement and 911 Relations

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- Build a relationship with local police and sheriffs so they know who you are, what you and your team members look like and where you work and live. Provide them with addresses and photos of the building and the occupants, including the Member. Do the same with fire dept and ambulance services.
- This is especially important for persons of color
- Let LE know the source of threats and any identifying information you have
- Ask your local law enforcement to provide specific training and instruction to their force for responding to threats in your office or home
- Make sure 911 services are aware of you and your location
- Have a method of notifying 911 covertly if there's an incident
- Coordinate with LE for special events, e.g. parades, town halls, speeches, etc.
- Practice and/or strategize beforehand

# Dealing with Threats

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- Have a strategy that everyone knows
- Coordinate with Capitol Police Threat Assessment Unit and local LE
- Have specific responding strategies to threatening emails, phone calls, in person, other sources
- Assessing severity and urgency
- Connecting and following up with security resources
- Keeping records
- Evacuating if necessary
- Things can be replaced, people can't

# Phone Answering Policies

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- Change them to adapt to post-January 6 environment
- Communicate to callers and website visitors that it is a crime to threaten Members or staff
- Emphasize other ways to communicate that do not involve direct, live contact (website, social media, email)
- Provide staff “post-phone attack” relief
- Consider limiting real-time phone access to staff, even temporarily



# Safety at Public Events

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- Town halls, parades, speeches, even ribbon cuttings
- Assess if LE is needed – coordinate with local and Capitol Police
- Choose the space and setting with a mind to safety
- Don't put all your team in the exact same place, have someone on the side to react
- If you see something say something
- Public safety is your responsibility as well
- Be willing to cancel events or change plans if need be
- Code symbol or gesture?

# Your Office and Home

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- In your home or office have alarms installed and set them
- Install surveillance cameras outside and inside the office and home and have a means of recording in real time
- Add layers of locks (e.g., jams in windows and doors)
- Think about your office layout, how to have space and protection available
- Plan and practice how to use furniture, etc. to block doors or parry an attack
- Know where you can hide that is bullet proof or resistant and where it is not safe
- Have specified escape routes, consider how to get out of upper stories if necessary
- Have the necessary equipment installed or readily available and make sure everyone knows how to use it
- Notify your neighbors and have a communication system with them
- Be careful with suspicious or unexpected packages

# Your Equipment and Tools

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## FIRST AID:

- Have a REAL first aid kit (see handout)
- Know what is in it, how to use it, where it is
- Take courses, e.g. how and when to use a tourniquet
- Be prepared to improvise, e.g. clothing, inner tubes, duct tape, superglue, safety pins
- Make sure your personal legal documents are in order including insurance information, DPOA, Health Care Proxy, etc. and make sure all your staff have done the same
- Go-Kit for other emergencies

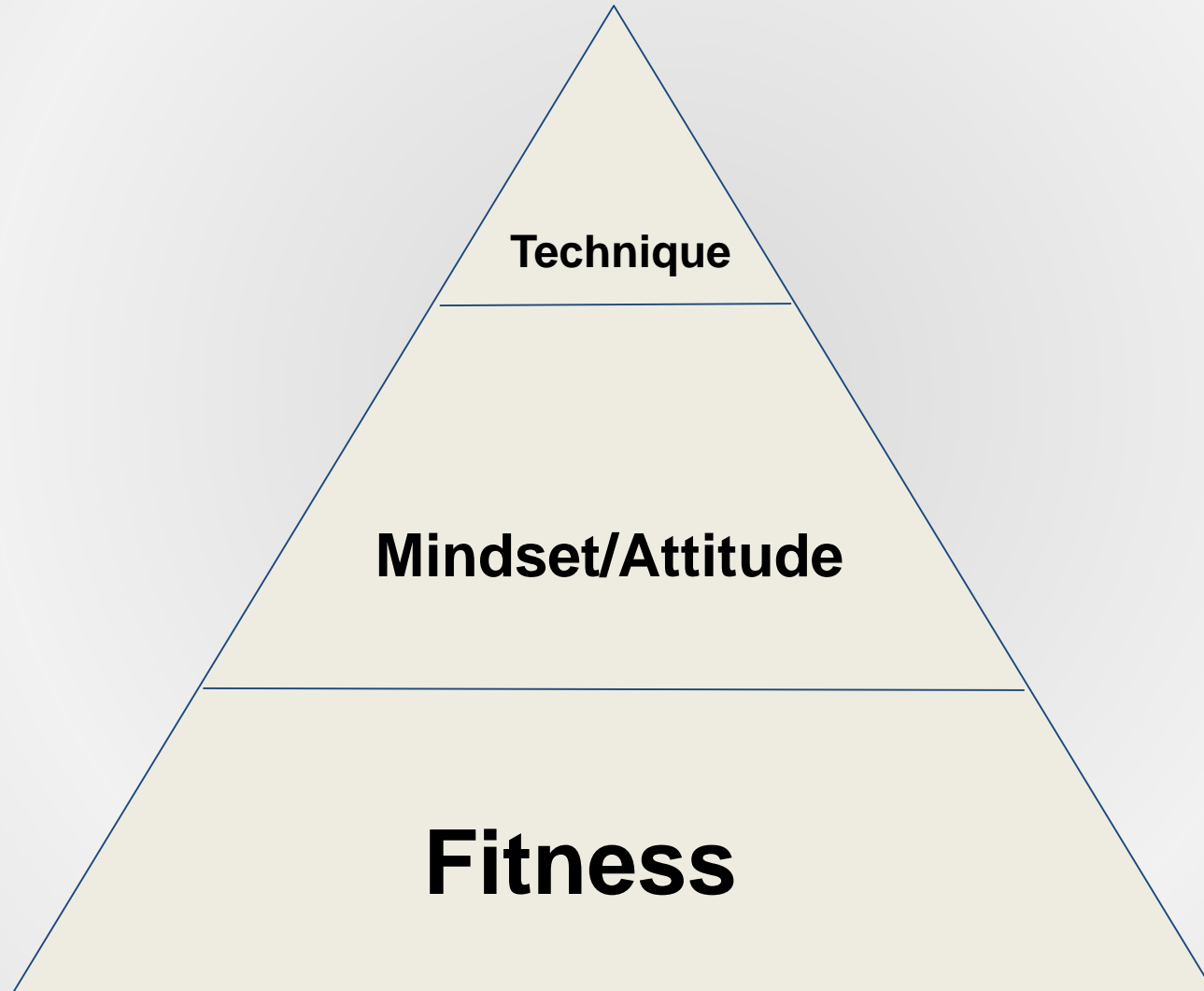
# Coping with An Immediate Attack

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- Assess the situation
- Self-defense audit and plan – different for everyone and every team
- Look for your resources and their weaknesses
- Not a bystander – this is a team effort
- If you do have to fight, don't fight fair, never let up – fight like hell – holding a cat example

# Self Defense Pyramid

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# Self Defense Principles

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- Do Not Try Strength Vs Strength (instead technique/speed vs strength)
- Assume the Aggressor Will Be Bigger and Stronger
- Goal is to Safely Get Away
- Become a Problem Solver not a technique memorizer
- Fewer movements for many uses
- Progressive system for learning



# Behavioral Defenses

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- Assess the threats - you may want to and be wise to fight individuals if you have to, especially active shooters - but you may want to be non-threatening versus groups or mobs if you are severely outnumbered
- Show in word and posture that you pose no threat “I can see you are angry, we are not a threat.” (Even if you are planning to attack the person this should be your presentation)
- Make mental notes of identifying information for later testimony/law enforcement
- Negotiate: “What is it you want or need right now?”
- Lie if you need to

# Self Defense Action Plan

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1. Address the Immediate Threat, Immediately!
2. Go on offense as soon as possible (counterstrike)
3. Once on offense, stay on offense until safely get away

# Your Self Defense Plan

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- Fitness - Steps to take
- Mindset - Steps to take
- Technique/Skills - Steps to take
- Avoidance is Key - Audit Your Day and Spot Most Vulnerable Moments and Adjust Accordingly
- *You don't need to make a major investment to feel safer!*

# How To Get Help

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- Practice what you would say to 911 – be specific about threat and location and need
- There is no one named “someone” to get help
- Be direct in who you choose and point to them
- Be specific in your instructions – tell exactly what to do
- Say, RUN or DO IT NOW if the situation is urgent
- Leaders need to lead

# After Something Happens

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- If there is an incident think about what has to be done
- Getting medical support and treatment for those in need
- Law enforcement evidence and testimony
- Notifying people on the team and loved ones or friends
- Managing media and communication
- Getting emotional support
- Follow up, and don't forget about your families

# Use This PPT and Attachments as a Checklist

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- Assign a team safety officer in DC and in District/State
- Go through it step by step with your team
- Go through it with your family or roommates
- Make the recommended contacts
- Make the necessary adaptations to facilities
- Get the necessary gear
- Practice everything
- Take self defense courses
- Adapt as needed



# Q&A

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**Type your questions  
& comments in the chat**

# **Additional Resources & Information**

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# Key Institutional & Support Offices

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- Check with Committee on House Administration and Senate Rules & Administration Committee on use of official funds
- Review the *Member's Handbook*
- Consult with House or Senate Sergeant at Arms and the appropriate emergency planning & preparedness departments on security-related issues

# U.S. Senate Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

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- **Goal & Mission:** Increase resiliency throughout the Senate community by helping to support happy, healthy and productive employees in DC and in State offices
- **Free & Confidential Services:**
  - Available to all Senators, staff and family members
  - Virtual appointments and with extended hours
  - Updated info on Webster on trauma and presentations for staff
- **Contact:** 202-224-3902, <http://webster.senate.gov/eap/>

# U.S. House of Representatives Office of Employee Assistance

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- Free & Confidential Consultation, Counseling and Information for the House community
- Management Consultation
- Executive Coaching
- Transition/Career Planning
- Training, Presentations and Retreat Facilitation
- Critical Incident Response: Organizational consultation and Management of crises impacting DC and District offices
- House Wellness Center

## Contact:

Main phone number, for appointments and urgent 24/7 after-hours needs: 202-225-2400

General email, for appointments and basic information:  
employee.assistance@mail.house.gov

Website: <https://Housenet.house.gov/EmployeeAssistance>

# Upcoming Programs

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- “Preventing Burnout: Using the Science of Stress & Energy Management to Reset and Recover”
  - featuring VERY special guests, the Becoming Superhuman Lab, and an exclusive, 3-minute assessment of your burnout risk
  - Wednesday, May 5 at 2pm Eastern/11am Pacific
  - <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/7919840943146305035>  
or visit <https://congressfoundation.org/calendar>

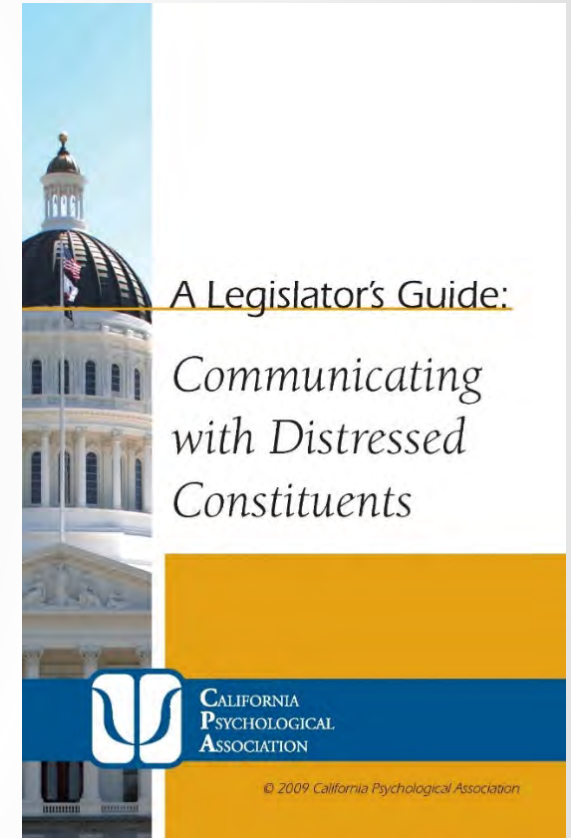


# CMF's Congressional Crisis Preparation & Response Center

A compilation of resources on crisis management, remote work, burnout and stress, remote town halls, and employee assistance.

Access related webinars, handouts, publications, articles, and more, including:

- “Managing Trauma & Stress”
- “Strengthening Employee Well-Being and Personal Resilience”
- CPA Guide: *Communicating with Distressed Constituents*
- CMF Handout: *Casework Burnout & Stress*



# #CapitolStrong Coalition

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A coalition of civil society organizations working to strengthen and invest in the institution of Congress and the people who serve there.

**CapitolStrong.org** links to many resources for staff including:

- Immediate and longer-term mental health support
- Resilience, safety and workplace resources
- Playbooks, checklists and toolkits

Contact:

[\*\*CapitolStrong.org\*\*](https://www.CapitolStrong.org)

**@CapitolStrong**

**#CapitolStrong**

# SHRM COVID-19 Resources

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Visit

<https://pages.shrm.org/covid-19-resources>

for

**Coronavirus and COVID-19 Resources**

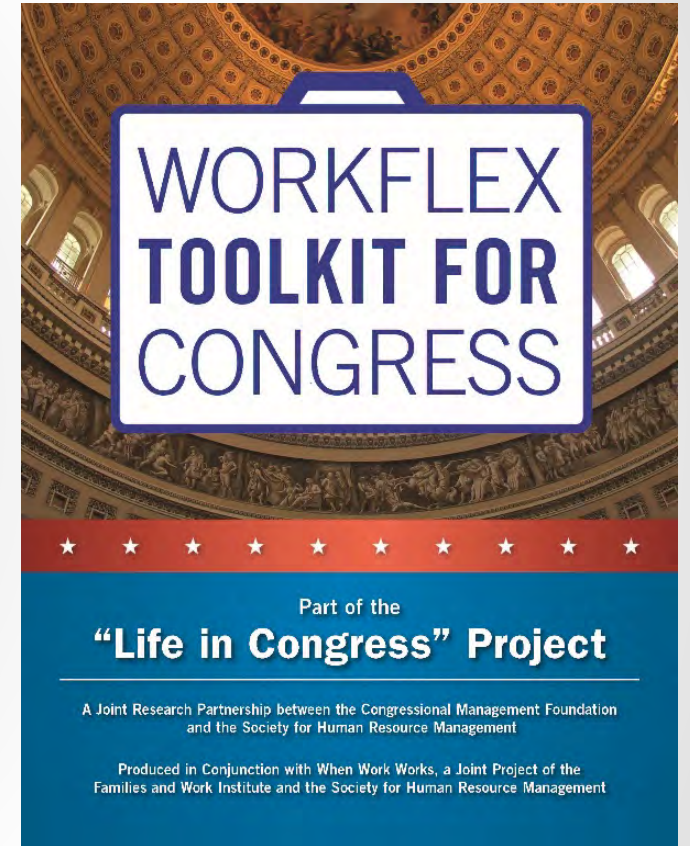
and

**Government Response and Resources**

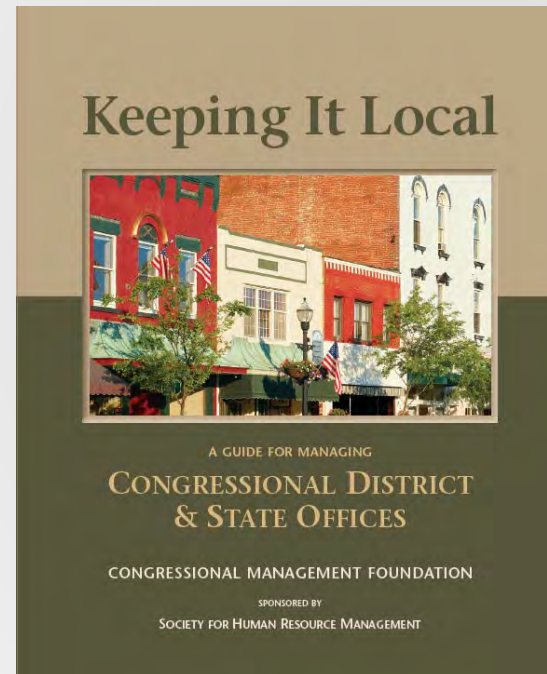
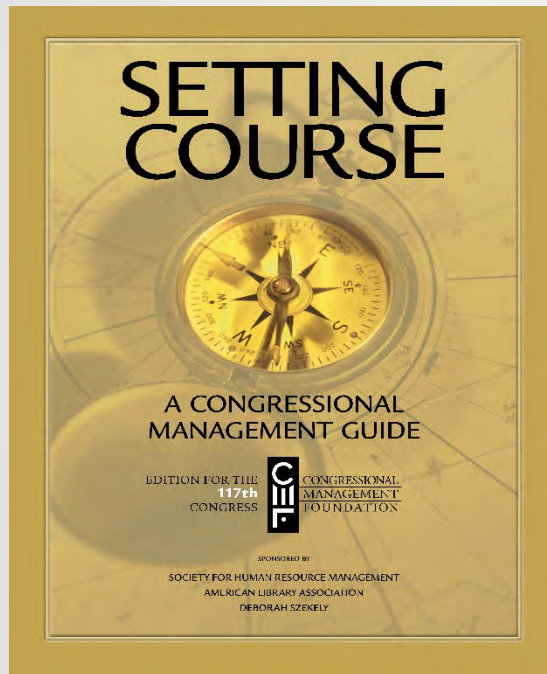
# “Life in Congress” Reports

- *Aligning Work and Life in the U.S. House and Senate*
- *The Member Perspective*
- *Job Satisfaction and Engagement of House and Senate Staff*
- ***Workflex Toolkit for Congress***
- *Congressional Benefits & Personnel Practices*

Visit [CongressFoundation.org](https://CongressFoundation.org) for downloadable PDFs



# Complimentary Management Guidebooks



Visit [CongressFoundation.org](https://CongressFoundation.org) for downloadable PDFs or contact us for free hardcopies or if we can be of any assistance to your office





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