

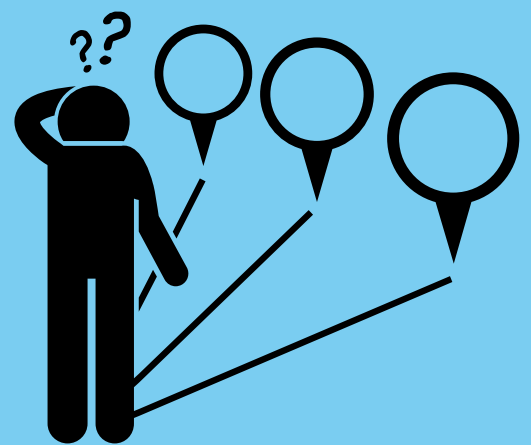


# DECISION FATIGUE

What it is, and how to combat it

## WHAT IS DECISION FATIGUE?

Decision fatigue is when someone has to make so many decisions in a day/shift that they are then unable to continue to make any decisions. They freeze as a stress response to having to make even simple choices.



## WHY DOES IT OCCUR?



Our mental energy is finite, and when faced with making constant, and quite often, life altering choices, those in first responder positions hit a decision wall. They are required to be vigilant, efficient, sharp, and most importantly, always right in the decisions they make at work. Then couple those shifts with the near constant physical exhaustion, it is inevitable that a first responder's brain will want a break.

## WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

When overwhelmed, our brains look for shortcuts in two possible ways:

1. Become reckless/act impulsively
2. The ultimate energy saver = do nothing. Avoid any choice. You start to resist any situation that will present choices to be made.



## HOW DO YOU COMBAT DECISION FATIGUE?

1. Avoid choice overload - when your day is full of decision making by necessity of the job, having less decisions to make outside of work helps. This means having predetermined routines, cutting out options for various things etc.
2. Avoid perfectionism - there is no need to make every decision a perfect decision. Many of them have very little consequence to major parts of life, so go for it.
3. Flip a coin - many of those decisions do not carry catastrophic weight to them, let the universe decide which restaurant to get food, which place to visit, which chore to do first, which pants to wear etc.
4. Make a list of pros and cons - some decisions are big and life changing, not ones for coin tosses. Making a list of each side will help, but it is a matter of doing it to help make the choice; not instead of making the choice.
5. Learn to live with uncertainty - there is no way to always know what will happen and what every decision will bring. Working on being comfortable with feeling uncomfortable will help in many areas of life.