

PUTTING OUT MENTAL FIRES: COGNITIVE STRATEGIES OF FIREFIGHTERS

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Introduction

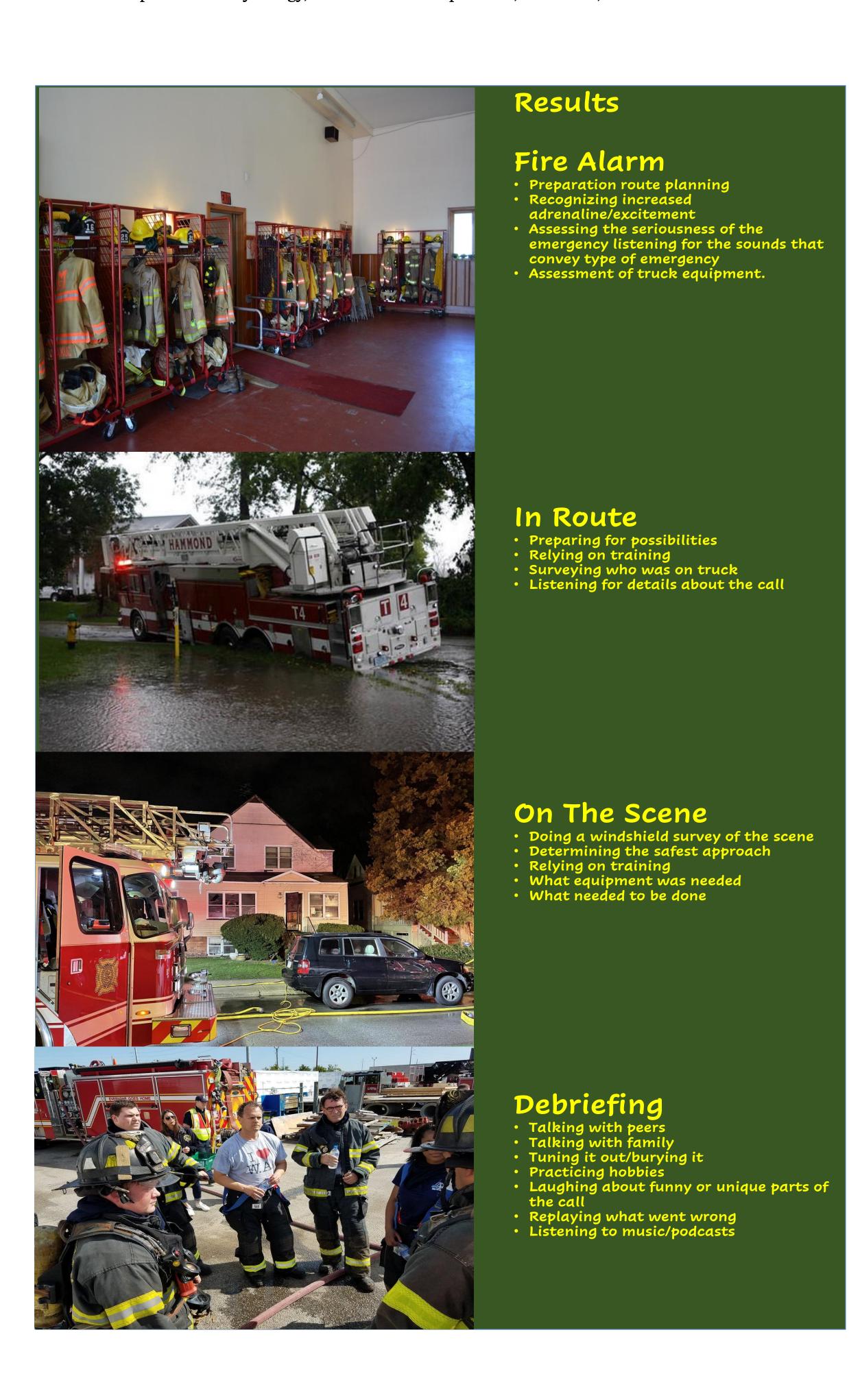
Mental strategies are important for firefighters and sport scientists who work with them. Responses to emergent dangers require mental management and training scenarios for effective extrication of endangered individuals, fire abatement, and emergency medical care.

Purpose

- How do fire athletes manage emergent situations?
- Preparing for the emergency
- Managing thoughts in the truck
- Decisions during the event
- Debriefing

Methods

- 41 fire fighting athletes completed interviews.
- Interview interpretations were triangulated with a second researcher.
- Categories were formed.
- Labeling of themes were organized.
- Representations of themes were categorized in tables.



Conclusions

Fire Alarm

- Relying on training
- Reading the auditory and visual cues practiced in scenarios
- Self and equipment assessment.

In Route

- Assessment of equipment
- Individual skills of team

On The Scene

- Determining a safe approach
- Proceeding with caution but urgency.

Debriefing

- Social support seeking
- Individual reflection/distraction
- Burying/denial

Practical Applications

Training scenarios, reliance on discipline for success over reaction, and assessment of available assets

It was further identified that the fire athletes may need mental health support for coping with multiple emergency exposures.

Further research is needed to assist these emergency responders manage the "mental fires" of rapid response.

References

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