



## **DAY ONE - Monday, June 27, 2022 – 2:00 PM**

### **Ask a Question and Save a Life: Understanding the Phenomenon of Suicide**

#### **Session Description:**

Many in public safety find themselves impacted by suicide during their career. The most common question asked by those who lose friends, coworkers, or those they care about to suicide is, "Why?" Other unanswered questions may be, "Did I miss something? Did I do everything I could have? Could this have been prevented?" This presentation uses a mixture of personal and professional experiences in an attempt to answer some of the questions, to help us understand the phenomenon of suicide, and to understand how it might be prevented.

#### **BIO:**

**First Sergeant Kenneth Blank** is an Area Commander in Area 48 Office of the Virginia State Police in Fairfax County. He was born and raised in Red Wing, Minnesota where he graduated from Red Wing Central High School and entered the United State Marine Corps. He served as a military police man and for four years as part of the security force for the Presidential Helicopter Squadron. He was honorably discharged in 1993 at the rank of Sergeant. He was hired by the Virginia State Police in 1996 and was assigned to Fauquier County for his first duty post. He transferred to Culpeper County in 2001 and was promoted to the rank of Sergeant in 2005, and worked as a first line supervisor in Area 11, Prince William County until he was promoted to his current position, December 10, 2017.

As a Trooper, First Sergeant Blank was recognized many times for his enforcement efforts. Some of his awards include the Superintendent's Award for Excellence, Superintendent's Trophy, the Community Leadership Award, and the Outstanding Safety Achievement Award. He has been a DCJS instructor since 1999, a Defensive Tactics Instructor since 2004 and teaches frequently at the State Police Academy. First Sergeant Blank graduated from the University of Virginia, National Criminal Justice Command College in 2008 as class co-president. First Sergeant Blank also teaches Critical Incident Stress Management and Suicide Prevention to many other agencies.

He became an ICISF Certified Instructor in 2016 and has taught Assisting Individual in Crisis 10 times and Group Crisis Intervention 10 times. He became a BJA Suicide Awareness and Prevention Instructor in 2010, and has taught that course more than 40 times.

Exiting a trafficking situation is a process, not an event, and we need informed professionals as members of our support systems throughout our journey to freedom. Together, let's explore the Stages of Change Model (SCM), how it applies to trafficking intervention efforts, and the cyclical nature of healing from trauma. We will apply SCM to investigation and prosecution activities and identify opportunities to empower survivors in these processes. You will hear examples of this process in motion through data collected by The Avery Center over the past decade as well as learn more about survivor-led programs available to individuals who are now on their own journey, and how you can best support them.