

**NASHVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENTS
PRESENTS TO THE FAMILIES OF FIRST
RESPONDERS:
A GUIDE TO SUPPORTING THEIR LOVED
ONES**



As a first responder's spouse or family member you can often feel left out of what's going on at the Nashville FIRE Department.

We hope this guide helps you and your family to feel more connected to available resources and help provided.

What services are available to assist my first responder?

How does Nashville Fire Department plan on supporting my first responder following a traumatic event or critical incident?

What services are available to assist me to help?

What can I do?



THE DEPARTMENT'S ROLE:

At some point your first responder will be involved in a critical incident. NFD Behavioral Health and Wellness Peer Support Members will reach out to them if they are made aware of the incident.

Peer support involves trained coworkers who are there to listen, mentor or provide support to others who are experiencing personal or professional difficulties. Life is a complicated journey, add in the stress and trauma involved with being a first responder, and it can become overwhelming. Sometimes, a responder may just want to talk to a peer who has walked in their shoes and can provide understanding and direction.

Another benefit of our peer support team is that they can follow up with your first responder weeks or even months after an incident to help resolve any lingering issues your first responder may have.

Peer Support Members can also be proactive in dealing with responders who may be experiencing problems unrelated to an incident, such as family issues, financial difficulties, stress or anxiety, and substance abuse.

NASHVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT 1860

SHARE IT DON'T WEAR IT

LOCAL 140

TEXT
741741
Connect to a Crisis Counselor Free 24/7

EMAIL
Anytime
NFDChaplains@nashville.gov
NFDPeerSupport@nashville.gov

800-681-7444
24 Hour Centerstone Crisis Call Center

800-273-8255
National Suicide Prevention Chat Online @ "Lifeline Chat"

PEER SUPPORT

FIRE & EMS CHAPLAIN CORE

THE FAMILY'S ROLE:

Here are 4 things you can do to support them:

ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION: Do this in a kind supportive way. If you sense that your first responder may be having a challenging time dealing with what they have seen and experienced at work, try to lovingly encourage them to reach out for someone to talk to. Communication is vital.

BE GENTLE WITH QUESTIONING AFTERWARD: Immediately following critical incidents people process very differently and at different paces. Sometimes the impact of the incident can be positive, or it can be negative. So, keep in mind they might be feeling both. Let your first responder know you are there but try not to demand a play by play. You can still support your first responder without knowing ALL the details. Stick to how they are doing now, showing them, you are there for them.

ALLOW SOME SPACE: Be sure to convey interest and support regarding your first responders' thoughts and reactions. While your presence is always better than you distancing yourself, understand they might need space. Respect that need. Don't get upset with them or take it personal. Giving them the space they need to get their thoughts and emotions in proper order is loving on your part. We certainly don't want either of you disconnecting from the situation indefinitely, so be aware of those times. Not becoming overly isolated.

AVAILABLE SUPPORT: Spouses and children can also have a difficult time making sense of a situation his or her spouse was involved in. Listed below are just a few of the many resources available to you. We hope you make use of them to fully benefit your family.

This is our peer support confidential website:

<https://www.behavioralhealthdecon.com/>

<https://firefighterwife.com/>

<https://www.firstresponderfamilypsychology.com/firefighter-family-academy>

<https://www.firstresponderfamilypsychology.com/>

<https://www.behavioralhealthdecon.com/>

<https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/responders.asp>

<https://americanaddictioncenters.org/firefighters-first-responders>

Safe Call Now – 1-206-459-3020

This is a 24/7 help line staffed by first responders for first responders and their family members. They can assist with treatment options for responders who are suffering from mental health, substance abuse and other personal issues.

Veterans Crisis Line (Veterans only)- 1-800-273-8255 & press 1, or text 838255

This is a crisis line specifically for veterans of the US armed forces.