



Behavioral Health Awareness  
and Available Resources

2022

# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

This document is designed to be a point of reference for Nashville Fire Department members and their families. This comprehensive document can help connect you to resources dedicated to helping our members no matter what they might be struggling with.

This document is not intended to provide information on every aspect of behavioral health. It is intended to be a point of reference for resources and current information on first responder behavioral health. This document contains a lot of content that will be updated as needed. We know significantly more about first responder behavioral health today than we ever have in the past. Please use this document to help find information and resources to help you, your family and our first responder family.



*Legal Disclaimer: The Nashville Fire Department Behavioral Health Awareness and Available Resources is not a substitute for medical, mental health, substance abuse, or behavioral health advice or service; nor should it be perceived as or relied upon in any way as such. It is not a licensed or unlicensed health services or treatment entity of any type regardless of what is discussed or who provides the service. If you have, or suspect you have, a medical, mental health, substance abuse, or behavioral health condition, immediately contact a competent and licensed health care provider and follow their advice.*

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# CRISIS

- **National Suicide Hotline –(800) 273-8255**
- 24/7 Text -741741
- <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
- **Centerstone Crisis Call Center –(800) 681-7444**
- <https://centerstone.org/programs/crisis-call-center/>
- **Safe Call Now (First Responders) Crisis Line –(206) 459-3020**
- [Home | Safe Call Now \(safecallnowusa.org\)](https://safecallnowusa.org/)
- **Metro Government EAP –(877) 871-6274**
- [Ulliance EAP](#)
- **Police Department Professional Wellness Section –(615) 862-7887**
- [Police Department Professional Wellness Section | Nashville.gov](#)
- **The Crisis Center (For Domestic Violence) -(888) 247-7472**
- [24 Hour Crisis Line | Crisis Center \(thecrisiscenter.org\)](https://thecrisiscenter.org/)
- **Mental Health Cooperative-Nashville – (615) 726-0125**
- Emergency Psychiatric Services (Adults & Children)
- <https://www.mhc-tn.org/>
- **Alcoholics Anonymous (800) 854-6025**
- <https://www.aa.org/>
- **Narcotics Anonymous (888) 633-3239**
- <https://na.org/>
- **Gambling Anonymous Call or Text 800-522-4700**
- <http://www.gamblersanonymous.org/ga/>

# HOTLINE



# Metro Nashville Mental Health Support Resources



## LIFE ADVISOR EAP®

The Ulliance Life Advisor EAP® is a benefit that employers can sponsor and offer total well-being services to their employees, spouse/live-in partner and dependents under the age of 27 at no cost to the employee.

No cost and completely confidential



### Counseling

Counseling is available in-person or telephonically with a counselor close to work, home or school. Individual, family and couples counseling are all included. Short-term, solution focused support for work-life issues such as stress, major life transitions, relationship issues, substance use, grief/loss and overwhelming emotions.



### Coaching

Life Advisor Coaches offer telephonic support for individual life enhancement goals, such as education, career advancement, financial or self improvement goals.



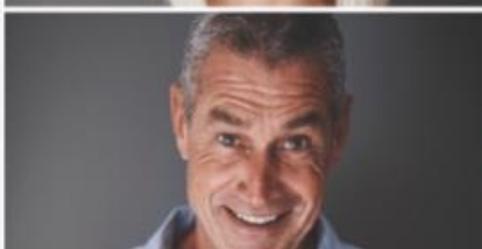
### Crisis Support

Mental health professionals are available by phone 24/7/365.



### Referrals

Consultants provide recommendations for resources within the community.



### Work-life Materials

Information on a wide range of work-life balance topics are easily accessed through the EAP portal. A work-life library of related books are available by calling Ulliance and as always, are free of charge.



### Legal & Financial Consultations

Ulliance professionals can connect employees with resources to assist individuals regarding legal and financial issues.



# Metro Nashville Employee Mental Health Support

[Metro Mental Health Support](#)

## Programs For All Employees

### Ulliance Advisor Employee Assistance Program

[Ulliance Advisor Employee Assistance Program Information](#)

Available to: Employees and Families.

Cost to participant: Free.

Offers: Counseling, coaching, crisis support, referrals, work-life materials, and legal and financial consultations.

### Crisis Services and Suicide Prevention

[Crisis Services and Suicide Prevention Information](#)

Available to: General Public.

Cost to participant: Free.

If you are experiencing a mental health emergency, call now. Help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## Blue Cross Blue Shield Insurance

### Blue Cross Blue Shield Behavioral Health Case Management

[Blue Cross Blue Shield Behavioral Health Case Management Information](#)

800-818-8581

Available to: Employee and dependents covered by Blue Cross Blue Shield Preferred Provider Organization.

Cost to participant: Free.

Personal support for depression, anxiety, eating disorders and other behavioral health challenges.

### Blue Cross Blue Shield Chronic Care Management

[Blue Cross Blue Shield Chronic Care Management Information](#)

Available to: Employee and dependents covered by Blue Cross Blue Shield Preferred Provider Organization.

Cost to participant: Free.

Chronic health conditions can take a toll on your mental well-being; this program offers personalized, one-on-one help.





# Metro Nashville Employee Mental Health Support

[Metro Mental Health Support](#)

## Programs For All Employees

### **Ulliance Advisor Employee Assistance Program**

[Ulliance Advisor Employee Assistance Program Information](#)

Available to: Employees and Families.

Cost to participant: Free.

Offers: Counseling, coaching, crisis support, referrals, work-life materials, and legal and financial consultations.

### **Crisis Services and Suicide Prevention**

[Crisis Services and Suicide Prevention Information](#)

Available to: General Public.

Cost to participant: Free.

If you are experiencing a mental health emergency, call now. Help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## Cigna Choice Insurance

### **Cigna Health Advocates**

[Cigna Health Advocates Information](#)

Available to: Employee and dependents covered by Cigna Choice.

Cost to participant: Free.

Telephonic coaching on anxiety, depression and more.

### **Cigna Lifestyle Management**

855-246-1873

Available to: Employee and dependents covered by Cigna Choice.

Cost to participant: Free.

Telephonic coaching on stress management.

### **Cigna My Health Assistant**

[Cigna My Health Assistant Information](#)

Available to: Employee and dependents covered by Cigna Choice.

Cost to participant: Free.

Online coaching on nutrition, losing weight, managing stress, maintaining a positive mood.

### **Happify- [Happify Information](#)**

Available to: Employee and dependents covered by Cigna Choice.

Cost to participant: Free.

Online mobile app helps you resist negative thoughts, cope with stress, overcome insecurities and gain self-confidence.

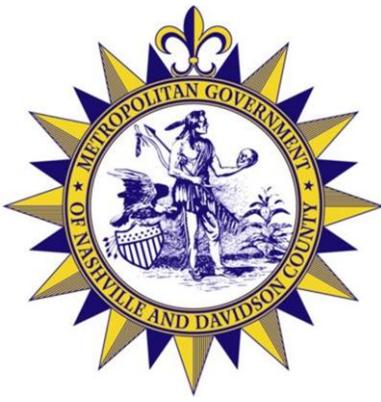
### **iPrevail- [iPrevail Information](#)**

Available to: Employee and dependents covered by Cigna Choice.

Cost to participant: Free.

Online mobile app pairs you with a trained specialist who has faced their own challenges with depression, substance abuse or other behavioral health issues.





# Metro Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Policy

## **FMLA Handbook and Forms**

- [Metro FMLA Handbook](#)
- [Regular FMLA Request Form](#)
- [FMLA Request Form Addendum - EFMLEA & EPSLA Request](#)
- [Request for Qualifying Exigency Leave Form](#)
- [Request for Military Caregiver Form](#)
- [Employee Rights and Responsibilities under FMLA](#)
- [Certification of Health Care Provider for Employee's Serious Health Condition \(Form WH 380 E\)](#)
- [Certification of Health Care Provider for Family Member's Serious Health Condition \(Form WH 380 F\)](#)
- [Notice of Eligibility, Rights, Responsibilities \(Form WH 381\)](#)
- [Designation Notice \(Form WH 382\)](#)
- [Certification of Qualifying Exigency for Military Family Leave \(Form WH 384\)](#)
- [Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of a Current Service Member \(Form WH 385\)](#)
- [Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of a Veteran for Military Caregiver Leave \(Form WH 385V\)](#)
- [Intermittent Leave Medical Certification Form](#)
- [Notice of Intent to Return Form \(2020\)](#)
- [Health Care Provider Instructions Form](#)
- [Authorization for Release of Health Information](#)
- [FMLA / Short Term Disability Insurance Premium Election Form](#)

## **Additional FMLA-Related Resources**

- [Eligibility Basics](#)
- [Reasons You Can Take FMLA Leave](#)
- [Employee Notice and Metro Response](#)
- [Interplay Between Sick and Vacation Leave](#)
- [IOD and Health Insurance](#)
- [Employer-Employee Relationship](#)
- [Qualifying Exigency Leave](#)
- [Military Caregiver Leave](#)



## [NFD Peer Support Website](#)

The NFD Peer Support Program has determined that we will offer fire service members mental, emotional and physical support. Our goals are to help facilitate a culture within the fire service that allows fire service members to make it safe to talk to one another and ask for help when it is needed.

The purpose of NFD Peer Support Program is to prevent and/or lessen the potential negative impact of stress upon a member by providing emotional support, information and assistance when necessary.

This will be accomplished by providing a fire service member mental and emotional support through one-on-one discussions, pre-incident education, spouse/significant other support, on-scene support and post incident interaction.

The NFD Peer Support Team is comprised of fire department members who have been trained in the power of conversation, verbal and nonverbal listening skills, how to communicate through understanding and validation, brain science and some crisis intervention techniques.

Peer Support is not to be considered a substitute for therapeutic services as peer supporters are not trained as mental health professionals. Peer supporters do have access to and work in conjunction with Clinical Consultants who are licensed mental health professionals specially trained in working with the fire service and emergency services.



Behavioral Health Services Division (Police Department)

Professional Wellness Section

**Phone: 615-862-7887**

Professional Wellness Section includes the Counseling Unit and the Sworn Wellness Unit. The Counseling Unit provides counseling and advocacy services to law enforcement employees and their immediate family. These services are provided free of charge. The services provide individual, couples, and family counseling, critical incident stress management, education and training, support/therapy groups, and mental health response for major disasters. Counseling and support is available to address a variety of issues, including marriage/family, couples/relationships, children/adolescents, stress management, depression, grief and loss, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, substance addictions and sexual addictions.

Our location is separate from other department office facilities. In the event that you have an emergency, we can be reached on a 24-hour basis. Just call us at 615-862-7887 and dial the number given by the answering service. We have counselors available 24 hours a day/7 days a week to assist and support you.

[Police Department Professional Wellness Section | Nashville.gov](http://Nashville.gov)



# No Cost First Responder Resources

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## **24 hour Crisis Services**

With specially trained crisis counselors, we are available 24 hours per day to support and respond to you, your family and friends who are experiencing a mental health crisis. Centerstone's Crisis Call Center provides confidential, urgent mental health and crisis counseling by telephone, enhanced follow-up care, and resources for accessing needed services and support.

We know that every crisis situation is unique, so when you call us, our counselors take the time to listen and determine the best course of action to help you or those you are concerned about. This might include connecting you with one or more of our related crisis services:

### **Mobile Crisis Response:**

With mobile crisis response, we come to you. Our Mobile Crisis Response team can also often resolve crises via telehealth when needed.

### **Outpatient Therapy:**

Centerstone's outpatient clinics offer a wide-range of crisis services including intervention assessment and referral, crisis stabilization, and related counseling services.

### **Inpatient Therapy:**

In some cases, it's important that people have a safe place to stay for a short time while they get the care they need.

### **Critical Incident Response:**

Centerstone's crisis services also respond to critical incidents in everyday life. We provide crisis post-event interventions after natural disasters and other traumatic situations people may face.

**Centerstone Crisis Call Center –(800) 681-7444**

<https://centerstone.org/programs/crisis-call-center/>



# MENTAL HEALTH COOPERATIVE

EMERGENCY PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES (ADULTS & CHILDREN)

**615-726-0125**

Our crisis services available 24/7

Are provided at no cost to you

Professional crisis assessment and intervention

Walk-ins are welcome

A mental health crisis can be extremely frightening and difficult for family and friends to understand. Law enforcement and paramedics have limited resources to help during a mental health crisis, which can result in an unnecessary trip to the Emergency Room. This often only adds to the crisis.

Our emergency teams are trained to immediately respond and resolve a crisis. We offer a full continuum of services and treatment resources on our Nashville campus.

CRISIS TREATMENT CENTER

250 Cumberland Bend, Nashville, TN 37228

[Mental Health Cooperative \(mhc-tn.org\)](http://mhc-tn.org)



**SAFE CALL NOW**

PROTECTING OUR PROTECTORS | 206.459.3020

# Safe Call Now

## 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.

[Home | Safe Call Now \(safecallnowusa.org\)](https://safecallnowusa.org)



# National Center for PTSD

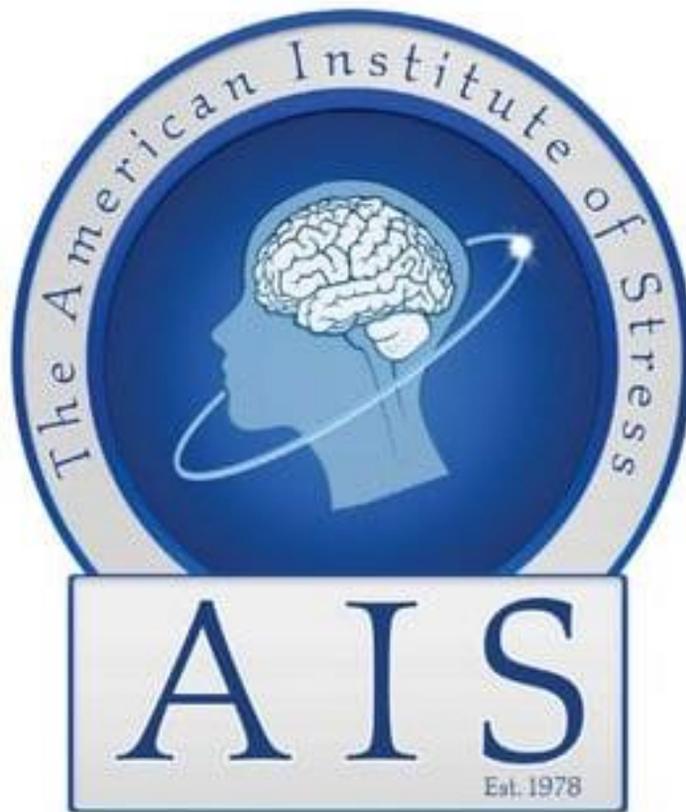
POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

[PTSD: National Center for PTSD Home \(va.gov\)](http://va.gov)

The National Center for PTSD is the world's leading research and educational center of excellence on PTSD and traumatic stress.

PTSD is a mental health problem that some people develop after experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening event, like combat, a natural disaster, a car accident, or sexual assault. It's normal to have upsetting memories, feel on edge, or have trouble sleeping after this type of event. If symptoms last more than a few months, it may be PTSD. The good news is that there are effective treatments.

**(800) 273-8255**



## The American Institute of Stress

The mission of AIS is to improve the health of the community and the world by setting the standard of excellence of stress management in education, research, clinical care and the workplace. Diverse and inclusive,

The American Institute of Stress educates medical practitioners, scientists, health care professionals and the public; conducts research; and provides information, training and techniques to prevent human illness related to stress.

# Anxiety.org

## [Anxiety Disorders: Attacks, Symptoms, Treatment - Anxiety.org](#)

The dedicated team at Anxiety.org is committed to making mental health information accessible, inclusive, easy-to-find, and easy-to-understand. We want anyone suffering from an anxiety disorder to have access to all the resources they need to understand and overcome their condition.

Anxiety.org website provides the latest and most relevant information by working directly with distinguished doctors, therapists, scientists, and specialists to keep you on the cutting-edge of research and advancements in the field, while keeping our content approachable for the average reader.

Our goal is to bridge the understanding gap that exists between mental health professionals and those actually dealing with anxiety disorders.



## Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) is a leading national organization focusing on mood disorders including depression and bipolar disorder, which affect over 21 million Americans, account for over 50% of the nation's suicides every year.

DBSA offers peer-based, wellness-oriented support and empowering services and resources available when people need them, where they need them, and how they need to receive them—online 24/7, in local support groups, in audio and video casts, or in printed materials distributed by DBSA, our chapters, and mental health care facilities across America.

Through our extensive online and print resources and our nearly 600 support groups and more than 200 chapters, DBSA reaches millions of people each year with in-person and online peer support; current, readily understandable information about depression and bipolar disorder; and empowering tools focused on an integrated approach to wellness.

[Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance](#)



211 is the most comprehensive source of information about local resources and services in the country.

Thousands of caring, local experts are available to help, 24/7. Calls to 211 are confidential and can be anonymous.

[211 for Essential Community Services](#)

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation  
(firehero.org)



OUR MISSION IS TO HONOR AND REMEMBER  
AMERICA'S FALLEN FIRE HEROES, TO PROVIDE  
RESOURCES TO ASSIST THEIR FAMILIES IN REBUILDING  
THEIR LIVES, AND WORK WITHIN THE FIRE SERVICE  
COMMUNITY TO REDUCE FIREFIGHTER DEATHS AND  
INJURIES.

PO Drawer 498, Emmitsburg, MD 21727

Phone: (301) 447-1365

## 13. Psychological Support - Everyone Goes Home



### **Psychological Support**

Initiative 13 means that firefighters and EMS professionals and their families must have the resources to deal with the various complications that their jobs can bring to their lives, especially issues regarding emotional and psychological stress.

They must also have help available to deal with the problems in living that all of us sometimes face, regardless of the work we do, especially regarding family, finances or even drug and alcohol issues. Health and safety standards (like the NFPA 1500 Standard on Firefighter Health and Safety) require that assistance programs be made available to ensure that such services are there when needed.



## Saving Those Who Save Others

The mission of Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance is to collaborate, develop and implement behavioral health awareness, prevention, intervention, and post crisis strategies to provide firefighters with an easily accessible and confidential source of information.

Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance

2126 Albury Ave

North Las Vegas, NV 89086

Office: 847-209-8208

[Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance \(ffbha.org\)](http://ffbha.org)



## **RESOURCES**

Peer Support Help Line

**(Text SUPPORT To 1.833.698.7864)**

Resources For Professional Counseling

**(Text COUNSELING To 1.833.698.7864)**

Resources for Professional Treatment Against Addiction

**(Text TREATMENT to 1.833.698.7864)**

Next Rung is a federally recognized non-profit owned and operated by active-duty firefighters. Our mission is to end firefighter suicide by not only raising awareness of the mental health struggles we face but by taking action to fight them. We provide peer support via talk or text, financial aid for licensed counseling and inpatient treatment of firefighters and spouses, and monetary donations to families of firefighters lost to suicide. Together, we can break the stigma and conquer firefighter suicide.



*Robert Michaels*

**CEO / FOUNDER**

**CONFIDENTIAL HELP**

**615-373-8000**

**PUBLIC SAFETY / MEDICAL**

**615-224-2424 (OFFICE)**

[Serve & Protect | Facilitating Trauma Services  
for Public Safety \(serveprotect.org\)](http://serveprotect.org)



## CENTER FOR FIREFIGHTER BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Bringing behavioral health resources and  
education to firefighters and their families

[www.cffbh.org](http://www.cffbh.org)

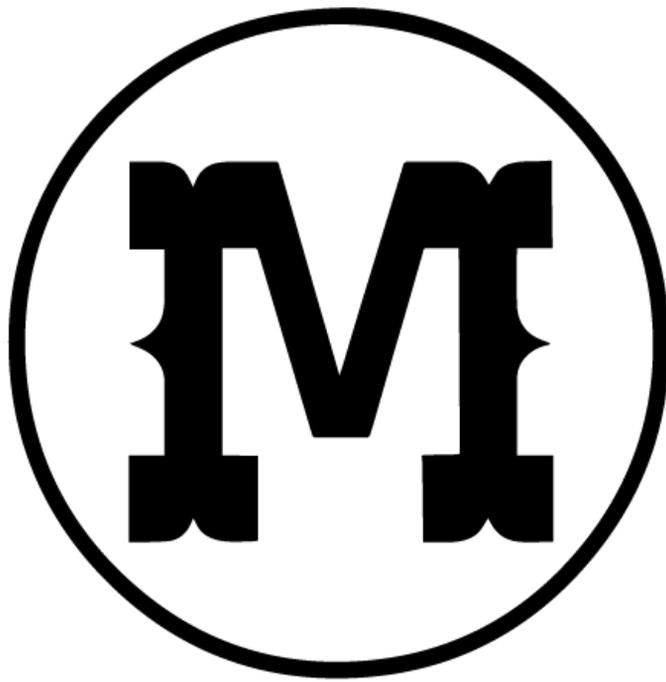
# 7 Cups

Website/App

Utilizes both trained listeners and licensed therapists and counselors to provide services. Trained listeners are laypeople trained in active listening who provide free confidential support. Users can also establish a relationship with a licensed professional for a fee. Not first responder specific, but they allow you to pick your listener and therapist so you can find someone who you're likely to be able to connect with.

[Free Online Therapist & Counseling | 7 Cups](#)





# **CIRCLE M Therapeutic Farms**

Improving the lives of children, adults, and military families with physical, intellectual, and emotional disabilities through the power of Animal-Assisted Therapy  
Circle M Therapeutic Farms is open Monday-Saturday.  
Program participants are scheduled on an individual basis, and Circle M Therapeutic Farms open schedules so as to best fit the needs of our clients.

[Circle M Therapeutic Farms \(circlemfarms.org\)](http://circlemfarms.org)

**615-566-0262**

Chris@CircleMFarms.org



## Fire Fighter Telemental Health Treatment Opportunity

If you are a fire fighter/paramedic who suffers from depression, anger, substance abuse or post-traumatic stress, you may be eligible for a NO COST confidential treatment opportunity through the Warriors Research Institute.

### Project Highlights

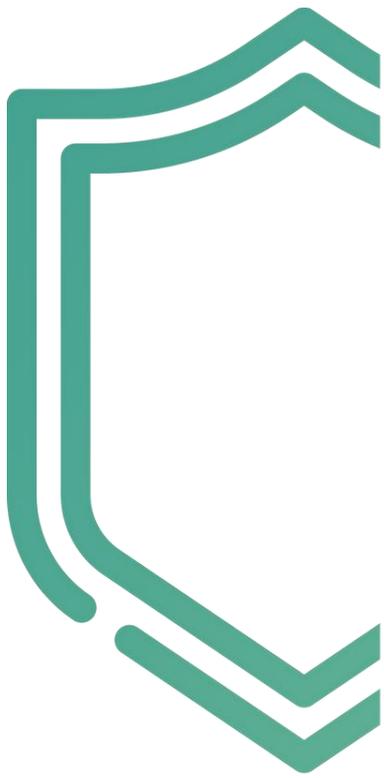
- Private and confidential
- No billing/insurance required
- No wait list
- Flexible scheduling for shift work
- Patients can join session from computer or smartphone
- Treatment provided by therapists who are trained in fire fighter cultural competence



(254) 716-6208  
BSWH.md/WRI

**(254) 716-6208**

[Warriors Research Institute | BSWHealth.med](http://BSWHealth.med)



**CHIP  
TERRY  
FUND** FOR FIRST  
RESPONDERS

[First Responder  
PTSD | The  
Chip Terry  
Fund](#)



# Support Groups for First Responders and Families



## IAFF Online Recovery Meetings

Coping with or in recovery from an alcohol or substance use problem?

Join an IAFF Online Recovery Meeting.

Meetings occur Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

No pre-registration needed. Hosted in Zoom. Participate with video or audio only; no identifying information is required – we do not monitor or track participants.

For the online meeting schedule, visit

[www.iaff.org/behavioral-health/#online-recovery-meetings](http://www.iaff.org/behavioral-health/#online-recovery-meetings)

### Attending Online Meetings

You do not need to sign up or register in advance.

Simply click on the **Join Meeting** located on web page below and enter the meeting password. Meeting links and passwords may change occasionally.

IAFF Online Meeting Schedule

Important: Meeting days/times/links are subject to changes. For the most up to date meeting day/time/links please click link:

[IAFF online-recovery-meetings](http://www.iaff.org/behavioral-health/#online-recovery-meetings)



(415) 721-9789

[First Responder Support Network - Home \(frsn.org\)](http://frsn.org)

First Responder Support Network is a community of first responders working to help other first responders.

FRSN has helped first responders and their families recover from traumatic experiences for over 20 years. Our goal is to help them live fuller and healthier lives by offering a new perspective on stress and providing resiliency skills for improved long-term coping.



# HEROESCOMFORT

[\(844\) 443-7671](tel:(844)443-7671)  
[Peer Support for First Responders and Veterans - Heroes Comfort](#)

Heroes Comfort is a non-profit organization offering various online mental health services to support first responders and veterans. We are a fully operational peer survival group catering to a diverse pool of active and retired emergency professionals, including police officers, firefighters, nurses, EMTs, correctional officers, dispatchers and other crisis response personnel. We offer mental health support and professional therapy in many areas of the Country.

Peer Recovery Groups, Counseling & Therapy Sessions  
for Stress, Trauma, and Family Issues



**(402) 218-1234**

FRST Programs are available for ALL First Responders (paid and non-paid) and their families. All services are confidential.

[First Responders Support Team  
\(FRST\)](#)



# FIRST RESPONDER FELLOWSHIP SUPPORT GROUPS

By SIMPLE

A Confidential And Safe Place For All First Responders and Public Safety To Experience Strength, Hope, And Healing From The Unique Traumas We Face

## CAMARILLO

1st and 3rd Wednesday each month  
6:30 PM - 7:30 PM  
Eric 805.304.7436 | Tom 805.427.5685

## NEWPORT BEACH

Wednesdays  
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM  
Cassie 714.485.5328 | Matt 949.371.5685

## HOLLISTER

Tuesdays  
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM  
Mark 831.313.2185 | Charlie 831.801.5438

## REDONDO BEACH

Wednesdays  
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM  
Julie 310.227.2472 | Michelle 310.704.6915  
Rey 310.251.2792

## IRVINE

Saturdays  
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM  
Jeff 710.337.1019 | jfoy74@yahoo.com

## SAN DIEGO

Wednesdays  
7:45 PM - 9:00 PM  
Mike 858.366.2799 | Matt 774.269.6874

## VISTA

Wednesdays  
10:30 AM - 12:30 PM  
Jared 619.414.6216 | Bill 619.818.4250

## ZOOM (ONLINE)

Thursdays  
7:00 PM  
Cassie 714.485.5328 | Matt 949.371.9233

FIRSTRESPONDER-WELLNESS.COM  
888.732.5731 | @FIRSTRESPONDERWELLNESS

These groups are made up of 100% first responders. If you would like more information on setting up a support group in your area, please contact Devin O'Day at [devin.oday@firstresponder-wellness.com](mailto:devin.oday@firstresponder-wellness.com) or Matt Fiorenza at [matt.fiorenza@firstresponder-wellness.com](mailto:matt.fiorenza@firstresponder-wellness.com)



**(888) 443-4898**

[Resources - First Responder Wellness \(firstresponder-wellness.com\)](https://firstresponder-wellness.com)



## Significant Other Peer Support Group

A confidential and safe place for significant others of first responders (spouses, partners, and family members) to find support, share experiences and process the unique dynamics and trauma only first responder families face.

Once a month via Zoom meeting.

Patti C. 858.663.3089 | Judy P. 619.873.5450



**(888) 443-4898**

[Resources - First Responder Wellness \(firstresponder-wellness.com\)](http://firstresponder-wellness.com)



## Home - Firefighter Wife

Firefighting is a noble profession, that takes an emotional toll on the first responder and the family. Sometimes at the expense of marriages and family life. Our Mission is to honor, strengthen, support and encourage fire service marriages and families.

# First Responder Family Psychology

Though firefighters are put through an academy that aims to prepare them for the challenges the career might bring, spouses are on their own to navigate the life-changes that await them. In my book I share firsthand experiences and provide you with essential information you might need for the career ahead such as firefighting basics, benefits and challenges of the unique schedule, potential impacts the career may have on your spouse and family, and ways you can prepare you and your relationship for the potential obstacles ahead.



**FIRST RESPONDER FAMILY**  
*Psychology*

925-621-8738

[First Responder Family Psychology | Livermore CA](#)



## Parents of Suicides (POS) - Friends and Families of Suicides (FFOS)

The Parents of Suicides international online support group started on October 09, 1998. For the most current information and support to the families and friends of suicide victims, please visit

[Parents of Suicide - Friends and Family of Suicide](#)

# Online Support Groups

**Disclaimer:** These resources are primarily peer based, and there is no guarantee you will get support from someone who has training in peer support. These online groups are not a substitute for a trained resource. This list is for information only and inclusion on this list is not an endorsement by NFD Behavioral Health and Wellness Program.

## [A Shoulder for Emergency Services](#)

Facebook group

## [EMS Support Group by Tales From the Boo Boo Bus](#)

Facebook group

## [Project Siren](#)

Facebook group

## [Project Hope; EMS and PTSD](#)

Facebook group

## [PTSD Chat](#)

A primarily Twitter based PTSD peer support chat group. They hold weekly “meetings” on Twitter, and participants have included first responders and veterans.

## [The Star of Life Initiative](#)

Facebook group

## [Under the Lid](#)

Facebook group

## [911 Help Site](#)

Facebook group

## [Decompression Chamber](#)

PSG Group on FB.

It’s geared toward NFD personnel; but it doesn’t have any links or references to the NFD, and we have other members of the EMS, Fire and ER community as well.



# SUICIDE PREVENTION



## Suicide Prevention

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# LIVINGWORKS

## **LivingWorks** **(888) 733-5484**

Livingworks is the world leader in suicide prevention training solutions.

Suicide can be prevented, and everyone has a role to play. No matter what that role is, our training programs prepare individuals, organizations, and communities to make a difference.

As COVID-19 increases isolation and anxiety around the world, suicide prevention skills are needed more than ever. LivingWorks Start, our online training program, is the perfect way to learn and apply life-saving skills anytime, anywhere.

[Suicide Prevention Training Centre | LivingWorks](#)

# ***SAMHSA***

Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

[Help Prevent Suicide | SAMHSA](#)

SAMHSA offers a number of free online resources that are designed to help Prevent Suicide!

Suicide can touch anyone, anywhere, and at any time. But it is not inevitable. There is hope.



**PREVENTING  
SUICIDE**

TN Statewide Crisis Line: [1-855-CRISIS-1](tel:1-855-CRISIS-1)



[TSPN – Saving Lives in Tennessee Since 2001](#)

## Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network

TSPN offers a variety of resources, all available for free order or download. Our materials can also be delivered across the state at no cost. Feel free to explore our offerings via the links below.

**Central Office Location:**

1321 Murfreesboro Pike, #155

Nashville, TN 37217

**Office Phone:**

615-297-1077

**Office Email:**

[tspn@tspn.org](mailto:tspn@tspn.org)



Department of  
**Mental Health &  
Substance Abuse Services**

[Suicide Prevention \(tn.gov\)](http://tn.gov)

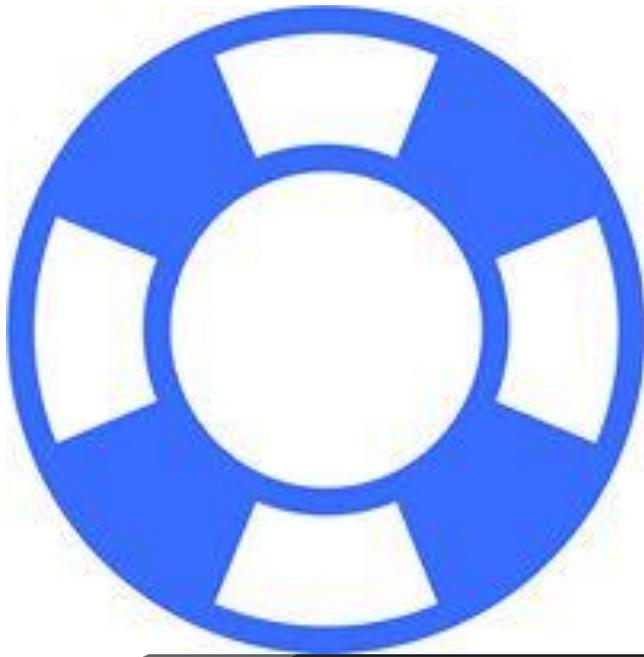
**Suicide Prevention**

Suicide Prevention programs offer various services that provide prevention and post-vention for those experiencing suicidal thoughts or a post suicidal crisis including family support to those who have completed suicide.

**Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse  
Services**

Marie Williams, Commissioner

*500 Deaderick Street  
Nashville, TN 37243*



# American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

## Tennessee | AFSP

The Tennessee Chapter serves all 95 counties in the Volunteer State.

Our Board of Directors, led by Chair Paul Augustyniak, and our passionate volunteers are active in our communities bringing both education and awareness programs to schools and organizations, in addition to supporting those touched by the tragedy of suicide.

Help us reduce the suicide rate by 20% by 2025.  
Together we can [#StopSuicide](#).

Learn more about [Project 2025](#)



# QUICK ASSESSMENT GUIDE

## for Firefighters and EMS

*“Saving Those  
Who Save Others”*

### Top Five (5) Behavioral Health Issues/Suicide Signs affecting Firefighters & EMS Professionals

- 1 Isolation** – becoming distant from the company around the firehouse. Does not actively participate with his/her crew anymore.
- 2 Loss of Confidence** – states they have loss of confidence in their ability to perform their skills as an EMT/Paramedic or as a firefighter.
- 3 Sleep Deprivation** – Difficulties sleeping both at the station or on off days. Loss of sleep can be an early sign of anxiety and stress as well.
- 4 Anger** – Suppressed anger can be a dangerous sign. Displacement can take place where the firefighter takes out their anger at home instead of dealing with the issue at the firehouse.
- 5 Impulsive** – Purchasing guns when they have always been against guns, riding a motorcycle recklessly, charging into a burning building against policy or procedure.



We support  
**Behavioral Health  
& Suicide Awareness**

### Top Five (5) Steps to Assist Your Brother and Sister

- 1 Be Proactive, Be Direct** – We do this when responding to emergency. We need to approach our own when they appear to need help.
- 2 Direct Questions** – Remember these two questions. If a firefighter comes to you with suicidal thoughts ask :
  - 1) Do you feel like killing yourself now?
  - 2) Do you have a plan?A “yes” to any one of these questions means you need to seek medical help immediately.

**Do not leave person alone.**
- 3 Compassion** – Our culture has tradition of not asking for help. Show compassion, stay in the moment when talking to them.
- 4 Discretionary Time** - If a firefighter comes to you with a problem that you don't understand, then use discretionary time. Simply state that you need to do research to gain information to help them.
- 5 Walk the Walk** - If your brother or sister is in need, stand by their side to help them through their issues.



**Click Here for an Informational Video**

[First Responder Suicide Prevention Training](#)



***ASK YOUR COMMUNITY***

***ASK YOUR FELLOW FIREFIGHTER***

***CARE & ESCORT THEM TO HELP***



THE COLUMBIA  
**LIGHTHOUSE**  
PROJECT  
IDENTIFY RISK. PREVENT SUICIDE.

**See Next Page for  
Questions that Can Save a  
Life**

		Past 1 Month
1) Have you wished you were dead or wished you could go to sleep and not wake up?		
2) Have you actually had any thoughts about killing yourself?		
If <b>YES</b> to 2, answer questions 3, 4, 5 and 6 If <b>NO</b> to 2, go directly to question 6		
3) Have you thought about how you might do this?		
4) Have you had any intention of acting on these thoughts of killing yourself, as opposed to you have the thoughts but you definitely would not act on them?		High Risk
5) Have you started to work out or worked out the details of how to kill yourself? Did you intend to carry out this plan?		High Risk
<b>Always Ask Question 6</b>		Life-time      Past 3 Months
6) Have you done anything, started to do anything, or prepared to do anything to end your life? <i>Examples: Collected pills, obtained a gun, gave away valuables, wrote a will or suicide note, held a gun but changed your mind, cut yourself, tried to hang yourself, etc.</i>		High Risk

Any **YES** indicates that someone should seek behavioral healthcare.  
However, if the answer to **4, 5 or 6** is **YES**, seek **immediate help**: go to the emergency room, call 1-800-273-8255, text 741741 or call 911. **STAY WITH THEM** until they can be evaluated.





# Addiction Resources

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# TN

[Tennessee REDLINE \(tn.gov\)](http://tn.gov)

# REDLINE



# 1.800.889.9789

**CALL OR TEXT**



Since 1989, the Tennessee REDLINE has served as a referral service to addiction treatment for people and their families looking for help for substance use disorder.

The service is provided by the Tennessee Association for Alcohol, Drug and other Addiction Services (TAADAS) through a contract with the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS).

The text message capability on the Tennessee REDLINE allows staff to make referrals via text or to follow up phone call referrals with texted information. It also gives people an opportunity to interact and obtain information at their own pace rather than spending a period of time engaged in a call.

All conversations and referrals via text message or voice call are completely confidential.



# American Addiction Centers

American Addiction Centers is a nationwide network of addiction rehab facilities. Research-based treatments are used to help clients with drug addiction, alcohol addiction, and mental and behavioral health issues.

We offer high staff-to-patient ratios to ensure more personal attention for our clients, and many of our staff are in recovery themselves—so they understand what you are going through.

Our success rate is more than double the national average.

For firefighters and first responders, maintaining optimum mental wellness is a critical part of remaining active and effective on the job as well as at home. Constant exposure to trauma, life-threatening situations, and the physical strain of working long hours on little to no sleep can negatively impact overall mental health, increasing the vulnerability and risk of substance abuse and addiction among firefighters and first responders.

**Firefighters: (888) 731- FIRE**



Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of people who come together to solve their drinking problem. It doesn't cost anything to attend A.A. meetings. There are no age or education requirements to participate. Membership is open to anyone who wants to do something about their drinking problem.

A.A.'s primary purpose is to help alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

[Alcoholics Anonymous \(aa.org\)](http://aa.org)



Al-Anon is a mutual support program for people whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking. By sharing common experiences and applying the Al-Anon principles, families and friends of alcoholics can bring positive changes to their individual situations, whether or not the alcoholic admits the existence of a drinking problem or seeks help.

Alateen, a part of the Al-Anon Family Groups, is a fellowship of young people (mostly teenagers) whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking whether they are in your life drinking or not. By attending Alateen, teenagers meet other teenagers with similar situations. Alateen is not a religious program and there are no fees or dues to belong to it.

**AIS/LDC of Middle Tennessee**

530 26th Ave N

Nashville TN 37209-4137USA

**Work Phone:** (615) 333-6066

**Work Email** [afsofmiddletn@gmail.com](mailto:afsofmiddletn@gmail.com)

**Website** <http://www.middletnalanon.org>

## Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families



Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA)/Dysfunctional Families is a Twelve Step, Twelve Tradition program of people who grew up in dysfunctional homes.

We meet to share our experience of growing up in an environment where abuse, neglect and trauma infected us. This affects us today and influences how we deal with all aspects of our lives.

ACA provides a safe, nonjudgmental environment that allows us to grieve our childhoods and conduct an honest inventory of ourselves and our family—so we may (i) identify and heal core trauma, (ii) experience freedom from shame and abandonment, and (iii) become our own loving parents.

**310-534-1815**

## Home - Nacoa



**The National Association for Children of Alcoholics**

### **National Association for Children of Addiction (NACoA)**

NACoA provide solutions to address these impacts effectively. NACoA envisions a world in which no child who struggles because of family addiction will be left unsupported.

If you are dealing with a parent who abuses alcohol or drugs — or have a relative or friend who does — we're here to help. NACoA offers resources for everyone, including providing support for professionals with tools and training in order to better support individuals in pain due to alcohol and drug dependency in their families. We offer a variety of programs and products uniquely designed to offer support and assist you at home or in the workplace.

NACoA is the only national membership organization focusing on the children of parents struggling with alcohol or substance abuse.

**Phone: 888-55-4COAS**



## **NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS**

Narcotics Anonymous offers recovery from the effects of addiction through working a twelve-step program, including regular attendance at group meetings. The group atmosphere provides help from peers and offers an ongoing support network for addicts who wish to pursue and maintain a drug-free lifestyle. Our name, Narcotics Anonymous, is not meant to imply a focus on any particular drug; NA's approach makes no distinction between drugs including alcohol. Membership is free, and we have no affiliation with any organizations outside of NA including governments, religions, law enforcement groups, or medical and psychiatric associations. Through all of our service efforts and our cooperation with others seeking to help addicts, we strive to reach a day when every addict in the world has an opportunity to experience our message of recovery in his or her own language and culture.

[Narcotics Anonymous](#)

I Want to Quit

My Quit Day

I Recently Quit

Staying Quit

## Tools & Tips

Learn about different tools to help you quit and how to use them.



Smokefree  
Texting  
Programs



Build Your Quit  
Plan



Using Nicotine  
Replacement  
Therapy



Smokefree  
Social Media



Smokefree  
Apps



## Why Quitting Is Hard

Many ex-smokers say quitting was the hardest thing they ever did. Yet millions of people have been able to do it—and you can, too.

For Tools, Tips and Help please visit:

[Home | Smokefree](#)



Cocaine Anonymous is a Fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others recover from their addiction. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using cocaine and all other mind-altering substances. There are no dues or fees for membership; we are fully Self-supporting through our own contributions. We are not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization, or institution. We do not wish to engage in any controversy and we neither endorse nor oppose any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay free from cocaine and all other mind-altering substances, and to help others achieve the same freedom.

[Cocaine Anonymous® World Services, Inc.](#)



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF FIRE FIGHTERS



## Questions to Consider for Identifying Substance Use Disorder (SUD)

The following are a list of questions to consider when evaluating alcohol or substance use. These questions are meant to help individuals consider how their relationship with alcohol or other substances(s) may be negatively impacting their life and overall well-being.

Answering yes to any, some or all of these questions does not constitute a disorder. However, the responses to these questions may help guide an individual to professional treatment or be a starting point for discussing their relationship with alcohol or substances.

- Has my alcohol and/or drug use negatively affected relationships with others in my life?
- Have I broken promises as a result of my alcohol and/or drug usage?
- Has my alcohol and/or drug use negatively affected my performance at work?
- Have I been unable to finish projects as a result of my alcohol and/or drug use?
- Do I think about alcohol and/or drug(s) more than other aspects of my life?
- Have I tried to stop and/or cut down the amount I'm using, but could not?
- Do I experience mental and/or physical discomfort when sober?
- Do I use alcohol and/or drug(s) to cope with feelings like sadness, anxiety, or anger?
- Does the thought of running out of alcohol and/or drug(s) scare me?
- Have I made excuses, hid, or lied about my alcohol and/or drug usage?
- Do I ever feel embarrassed about my alcohol and/or drug usage?
- Have I done things I wouldn't normally do as a result of my drinking and/or drug usage?
- Do I drink and/or use more than I used to?

The IAFF Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health Treatment and Recovery is a comprehensive treatment center exclusively for fire fighters, paramedics and dispatchers struggling with substance use disorder, addiction, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other co-occurring mental health issues. If you or someone you know is in need of help, please call our 24/7 admissions line at 855-900-8437 or visit [IAFFRecoveryCenter.com](http://IAFFRecoveryCenter.com) for more information.

*This is not a scientific questionnaire and should only be used as a tool to approach conversation regarding potential substance use disorder and/or misuse. Please refer to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) for specific criteria to diagnose a Substance Use Disorder (SUD).*

June 2020

# SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator

**SAMHSA**

Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

## FINDING QUALITY TREATMENT FOR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

### THREE STEPS TO ACCESSING CARE

**1. If you have insurance:** Contact your insurer. Ask about your coverage and whether they have a network of preferred providers for you to use.

**If you don't have insurance:** Each state has funding to provide treatment for people without insurance coverage. Find where to call for information about payment for services at: [samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/ssa-directory.pdf](http://samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/ssa-directory.pdf)

**2** Review the websites of the providers and see if they have the [five signs of quality treatment](#) detailed below.

**3** Call for an appointment. If they can't see you or your family member [within 48 hours](#), find another provider. One indicator of quality is the ability to get an appointment quickly. Many programs offer walk-in services. Look for programs that can get you or a family member into treatment quickly.

### FIVE SIGNS OF QUALITY TREATMENT

You can use these questions to help decide about the quality of a treatment provider and the types of services offered. Quality programs should offer a full range of services accepted as effective in treatment and recovery from substance use disorders and should be matched to a person's needs.

- 1. Accreditation:** Has the program been licensed or certified by the state? Is the program currently in good standing in the state? Are the staff qualified? Good quality programs will have a good inspection record and both the program and the staff should have received training in treatment of substance use and mental disorders and be licensed or registered in the state. Does the program conduct satisfaction surveys? Can they show you how people using their services have rated them?
- 2. Medication:** Does the program offer FDA approved medication for recovery from alcohol and opioid use disorders? At this point in time, there are no FDA approved medications to help to prevent relapse from other problem substances.
- 3. Evidence-Based Practices:** Does the program offer treatments that have been proven to be effective in treating substance use disorders including medication management therapies, such as motivational therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, drug and alcohol counseling, education about the risks of drug and alcohol use, and peer support? Does the program either provide or help to obtain medical care for physical health issues?
- 4. Families:** Does the program include family members in the treatment process? Family members have an important role in understanding the impact of addiction on families and providing support.
- 5. Supports:** Does the program provide ongoing treatment and supports beyond just treating the substance issues? For many people addiction is a chronic condition and requires ongoing medication and supports. Quality programs provide treatment for the long term which may include ongoing counseling or recovery coaching and support, and helps in meeting other basic needs like sober housing, employment supports, and continued family involvement.

### TREATMENT LOCATORS

#### Substance Use and Mental Health Treatment Locator:

[findtreatment.samhsa.gov/](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/)  
1-800-662-HELP (4357)  
1-800-487-4899 (TTY)

#### Alcohol Treatment Navigator:

[alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov/](http://alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov/)

FOR A DRUG OR ALCOHOL USE EMERGENCY, CALL 911 OR GO TO THE NEAREST EMERGENCY ROOM



# Inpatient Facilities



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF FIRE FIGHTERS



ADVANCED RECOVERY

S Y S T E M S  
an advanced approach to patient care

# IAFF CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TREATMENT AND RECOVERY

Residential Treatment Facility  
PTSD • Addiction • Substance Abuse • Mental Health

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE — HELP IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK.**

Exclusively for IAFF members  
24/7 Call Center | (855) 900-8437

[IAFF Center of Excellence](#)

# Fortitude: Substance Abuse & Mental Health Treatment for First Responders



## WHAT FORTITUDE CAN HELP WITH

A bad call as a first responder is often traumatic. When these dangerous encounters add up over a career, they can become overwhelming. It's okay to seek help. The FORTITUDE program can help first responders coping with:

Substance use and addiction

Co-occurring mental health conditions

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and post-traumatic stress injury

**24/7 Admissions Center**

**(888) 573-0763**

# Addiction & PTSD Treatment Center for Firefighters

## | Warriors Heart



WARRIORS·HEART

STRENGTH THROUGH HEALING.

At Warriors Heart, you're healing among your brothers and sisters, not at a hospital or impersonal health clinic. In fact, we've designed Warriors Heart to be the opposite of a sterile-feeling institution.

You or your loved ones have suffered enough. Healing at Warriors should ultimately be an uplifting, positive, and relieving experience. Not easy, but worth it. That's what we've created for our warriors.

The Warriors Heart Private Healing Center is located on the former site of Purple Sage Ranch Resort and Conference Center in the Hill Country northwest of San Antonio on 543 acres.

**24/7 Support Available**  
**(855) 960-5405**

# Rosecrance Florian Program for Uniformed Service Personnel



## [Florian Program for Uniformed Personnel | Rosecrance](#)

### Rosecrance Florian Program for Uniformed Service Personnel

A specialized substance abuse and mental health program for those who serve.

Uniformed service personnel — firefighters, paramedics, law enforcement officers, military, dispatchers, correctional officers, medical personnel, etc. — can encounter traumatic events at any time. To deal with the stress of their jobs, some may turn to alcohol and other drugs.

The Rosecrance Florian Program offers a path to lasting recovery for service personnel by bringing occupational factors into the treatment process.

Program director, Daniel DeGryse, is a retired battalion chief with 30 years' experience working for the Chicago Fire Department and over 30 years of experience in the field of addiction and mental health. He developed the program in collaboration with Dr. Raymond Garcia, a board-certified psychiatrist and addictionologist who is trained and experienced in treating uniformed service personnel for co-occurring disorders.

**866-330-8729**

Rockford IL 61108-7631

CONFIDENTIAL • TRUSTED • EFFECTIVE



# FIRST RESPONDER WELLNESS SERVICES

**BY SIMPLE**

**ALCOHOL, POST TRAUMATIC STRESS,  
SUBSTANCE ABUSE, ANXIETY & DEPRESSION**

Detoxification • Inpatient • Intensive Outpatient

[First Responder Wellness | By Simple](https://www.firstresponderwellness.com) • 888.732.5731



Nashville Recovery Center - Addiction Treatment Center

## Nashville Recovery Center

Nashville Recovery Center is located in the heart of West Nashville. We offer a safe and fun place for people to embrace a life of recovery. From a full spectrum of clinical services and sober living, to a variety of 12-step meetings and community events, Nashville Recovery Center caters to every aspect of the recovery community.

6030 Neighborly Ave  
Nashville, TN 37209

**(855) 791-3316**



# First Responder Behavioral Health Education



# Community Education for Fire Fighters & First Responders



The IAFF Center of Excellence is committed to raising awareness and providing education about behavioral health matters that impact fire fighters, paramedics and dispatchers across the United States and Canada. Our community education webinar series is designed to engage and inform fire service members and treatment professionals alike on unique topics that impact this population. Please join us for an upcoming training or access a prerecorded webinar below.

## Prerecorded Webinar Topics

Addiction

Peer Support

Trauma in the Fire Service

Clinical Training

Trauma, Greif, & PTSD

Mental Health

Fire Service Families

Strategies for Success



**FREE Prerecorded Webinars**

[Fire Fighter and Paramedic Community Education Events | IAFF](#)

# ***SAMHSA***

Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

## [Online DTAC Training Courses | SAMHSA](#)

SAMHSA offers free online trainings for first responders that are designed to help participants improve their awareness and understanding of the behavioral health effects of disasters and disaster and emergency response.



# Best Practices in Behavioral Wellness for Emergency Responders



The following information was retrieved from the 2021 Yellow Ribbon Report Update. The following information will help firefighters, emergency responders, officers, and chiefs to recognize the signs and symptoms of possible mental health illnesses and learn what actions they can take to address them.

# MENTAL HEALTH ILLNESS IS PHYSICAL ILLNESS

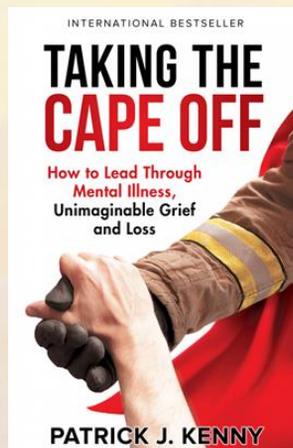
It is not a choice made by someone too weak to face life. Medically, the challenges faced by someone with depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, or any other mental illness can be traced to actual chemical changes in the brain. It is similar to the chemical changes in the body that lead to diabetes, high cholesterol, or cancer.

Both physical and mental illnesses should receive the same level of treatment. Leaders of both families and organizations must be educated about, and held accountable for, acknowledging and treating people who are mentally ill with the same care and concern as those who are physically ill, because they are.

***It can't be said often enough: a mental health challenge is a physical illness, not a choice.***

Those who suffer from mental health challenges, no matter the degree, are wonderful and courageous people. They are no more weak or responsible for their illnesses than someone who is diagnosed with any physical illness. Their disease is not something you can see, like a broken bone on an X-ray, but it is just as real and in need of treatment as physical ailments that are visible.

2021 YELLOW RIBBON REPORT UPDATE [VCOS Resource Detail \(iafc.org\)](#)



Patrick J. Kenny Fire Chief (Ret.) Western Springs, Illinois  
Taking the Cape Off: How to Lead Through Mental Illness, Unimaginable Grief, and Loss  
[TAKING "THE CAPE" OFF Book Endorsement | Patrick J. Kenny \(patrickjkenny.com\)](#)

# Antidote #1 Resilience

## RESILIENT

### ***What is resilience?***

Resilience is the capacity not just to recover quickly from setbacks but to grow as a result of having worked through them. Rather than bouncing back to the point at which the setback occurred, you are able to bound ahead to a higher level.

Resilience is a skill, which means it can be learned and improved with practice. Humans are by nature resilient beings.

Strategic innovation expert Aviv Shahar\* drew upon lessons learned during his experience as an Israeli fighter pilot to identify five aspects of resilience:

- Physical: enables you to recover quickly from exhaustion and illness
- Mental: allows you to assimilate information quickly, see multiple points of view, and focus on what's essential
- Emotional: enables you to remain calm under pressure
- Social: helps you to overcome resistance and to ask for and accept help
- Spiritual: brightens your life and inspires others

### ***How is resilience relevant to the fire and emergency service?***

Addressing the five aspects of resilience identified above enables first responders to be more productive, excel in their jobs, and keep themselves and those around them safe. For example, mental resilience goes to the ability to maintain situational awareness.

Emotional resilience enables responders to focus on doing their jobs even amidst chaos.

Social resilience is particularly important when it comes to behavioral wellness; perhaps more importantly than asking for help, first responders must have the capacity and wisdom to accept it when given.

### ***What's in it for you and your organization to learn more about resilience?***

Resilience enables people to get through difficult situations or circumstances and to experience personal growth that will improve their lives. Learning the thoughts, behaviors, and actions that build and fortify resilience will benefit individual first responders as well as their departments and the communities they serve. Engaging in self-care is a critical way to build one's resilience. To the extent that departments create a culture in which personnel are expected to take care of themselves and to watch out for their colleagues, everyone wins.

# RESILIENT

## How can you encourage and support resilience in yourself and others?

Because people experience setbacks and traumatic events differently, there is no one size fits all approach to building one's resilience. However, there does seem to be some consensus around actions that individuals can take to help them develop and strengthen this skill. These include:

### *Short-term*

- Engage in positive self-talk
- Take one step today to take care of a physical, emotional, or mental need
- Find the opportunity in the problem or challenge, and focus on it
- Ask for help when you need it; don't wait

### *Long-term*

- Develop strong social support systems
- Engage in positive self-talk
- Develop and implement a plan to strengthen the five aspects of resilience listed above
- Take care of your physical, emotional, and mental needs
- Develop the mindset that you always get to choose how you experience setbacks
- Apply the skills of emotional intelligence
- Proactively ask for help and then accept it

A department can support its members' resilience by creating and sustaining a culture in which people who ask for help are viewed as courageous instead of as weak or damaged. This can be achieved by developing the norm that personnel are responsible not only for taking care of their own physical and mental needs, but also for having their colleagues' backs when it comes to behavioral wellness. Focusing attention on the opportunities inherent in any situation rather than always rushing to identify problems also will increase resilience. Additionally, departments can offer resources, provide regular training in behavioral wellness, and encourage officers to conduct debriefs after incidents or situations that may cause trauma – keeping in mind that not everyone experiences trauma the same way.

### **Suggested Resources for Resilience**

[Your Resilience Practice – Part Two | Aviv Consulting](#)

[Resilient Self-Authorship | Aviv Consulting](#)

[Building your resilience \(apa.org\)](#)

# Antidote #2 Emotional Intelligence



## **What is emotional intelligence?**

Emotional intelligence, also known as emotional quotient or EQ, represents the ability, skill, and understanding to manage the emotions of oneself, others, and groups. Composed of behavioral, communication, and emotional theories and practices, its five key components are self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness, and social skills.

## **How does emotional intelligence relate to the fire and emergency service?**

Emotional intelligence is a great way to engender resilience, which may reduce the stress, anger, negativity, and conflict that are common workplace issues and lead to burnout or compassion fatigue. These outcomes benefit individuals' behavioral wellness, which will have a positive impact on their colleagues and their department. For first responders whose emotions and the decisions seem constantly to be under a microscope, self-regulation is key to enabling behaviors and decisions that will withstand close scrutiny.

## **What's in it for you and your organization to learn more about emotional intelligence?**

Understanding your emotions will make you a more calming figure within the department. When first responders, especially leaders, display this demeanor, it can become contagious. It also will help make you more resilient. Here are some additional individual and organizational benefits of applying emotional intelligence: stronger personal and professional relationships, increased optimism and confidence, more effective leadership, improved communication, fewer workplace conflicts, and improved problem-solving skills.



## How can you encourage and support emotional intelligence in yourself and others?

An integral part of emotional intelligence is understanding others and taking control of our actions.

Here are some short-term and long-term suggestions to help you do that:

### *Short-term*

- Apologize and admit fault when necessary
- Immediately explore and identify the reason(s) for any changes in motivation in yourself or others so they can be addressed before they grow
- Monitor your stress level and use a suggestion from page 29 to reduce it when necessary
- Control potential outbursts by counting to ten before you say anything
- Be open to new ideas
- Take personal responsibility for your actions
- Take a sincere interest in the feelings and perspectives of others
- Assist others when possible

### *Long-term*

- Follow up on any indicators of loss of motivation
- Try out different stress reduction techniques, find a few that work for you, and use them
- Identify effective techniques that will help you reduce your stress level
- Learn how to manage outbursts, rushes of emotions, and other disruptive behaviors
- Hold yourself accountable to the same standards as everyone else must meet
- Learn to view problems or challenges through a different lens
- Identify your strengths and weaknesses; take action to fortify the strengths and address the weaknesses
- Model empathy

### **Suggested Resources for Emotional Intelligence**

[Working with Emotional Intelligence: Daniel Goleman: Book](#)  
[Emotional Intelligence 2.0: Bradberry, Travis, Greaves, Jean, Lencioni, Patrick M](#)

# Antidote #3 Positive Intelligence



## **What is positive intelligence?**

Positive intelligence, a research-based concept grounded in neuroscience, cognitive and positive psychology, and performance science, helps people live up to their potential and improve their quality of life. While your individual potential depends on many factors, positive intelligence determines what percentage of your potential you actually will achieve by teaching you to make your brain work for you instead of against you.

## **How is positive intelligence relevant to the fire and emergency service?**

Positive intelligence can help individuals significantly reduce stress by managing it in a healthy way. It also teaches you how to improve the quality of your relationships, manage conflict, deal with difficult behaviors, and stop the negative self-talk. All these outcomes contribute to the behavioral wellness of responders and their departments, which also benefits the communities they serve.

## **What's in it for you and your organization to learn more about positive intelligence?**

By practicing positive intelligence techniques, you can increase the percentage of time that you control your mind rather than allow it to control you. Integrating positive intelligence's simple and effective practices into your life can enable you to live longer, decrease your susceptibility to stress-related illnesses and diseases, increase your enjoyment of life, and become the person you'd like to be. Your organization can benefit from its members' heightened ability to focus, their greater accuracy in decision-making, and their increased individual and team performance. Positive intelligence strongly supports or complements other approaches to behavioral wellness such as emotional intelligence and resilience.



## **How can you encourage and support positive intelligence in yourself and others?**

The three steps below will teach you how to increase the positivity in your life. All the information and self-assessments you need are available free of charge at:

[Home | Positive Intelligence](#)

### ***Short-term***

- Go to the Positive Intelligence website and listen to the audio example of an exercise you can do immediately
  - Engage in that exercise a few times a day
- Go to the Positive Intelligence website take the short assessment to discover what percentage of time your mind is working for you

### ***Long-term***

- Identify which types of your negative self-talk are most prominent by taking the saboteur self-assessment
- Learn about your saboteurs and identify how they show up in your life
- Engage in positive intelligence exercises to help reduce the negative talk and behaviors they support

### **Suggested Resources for Positive Intelligence**

[Home | Positive Intelligence](#)

[Shirzad Chamine: Five Strategies to Challenge Negative Thoughts](#)

[Positive Intelligence: Why Only 20% of Teams and Individuals Achieve Their True Potential and How You Can Achieve Yours](#)

# Antidote #4 Relationship Strengthening



## **What is relationship strengthening?**

We have a relationship with each person we know or regularly encounter, though some are more important than others. Relationship strengthening tactics and behaviors enable first responders to mitigate the toll that the stresses of life and the mental challenges that they experience take on them and the people in their lives.

## **How is relationship strengthening relevant to the fire and emergency service?**

It is nearly impossible to separate our personal and professional lives. For example, stress in one aspect certainly will affect the other. Your commitment to join the fire-rescue service affects most of the other people in your life. In addition to the obvious stress caused by putting your life on the line are less overt stresses such as being called away from family functions, missing family dinners, and suffering from sleep deprivation. Stressors that impact your life outside the department also will impact you on the job, a downward cycle that, without intervention, may be doomed to repeat itself.

## **What's in it for you and your organization to learn more about relationship strengthening?**

Healthy relationships can improve our physical and behavioral well-being. This outcome enables first responders to work more effectively and productively, decrease the likelihood of behaviors or decisions that could endanger the safety or health of personnel or community members, and make it easier for the department to attract and retain qualified people.



## **How can you encourage and support relationship strengthening in yourself and others?**

The foundation of healthy relationships is communication. When we have the courage to communicate our feelings and fears, we demonstrate vulnerability and increase trust by making “deposits” into our emotional bank accounts.

Research demonstrates a 5:1 ratio of positive to negative interactions during conflict leads to a stable and happy relationship. The more currency in the account, the more conflict a given relationship can withstand.

Dr. John Gottman, a psychological researcher and clinician who has done extensive work on marital stability, offers these suggestions that apply to any type of relationship:

### ***Short-term***

- Look for common ground with the other person
- Treat others with kindness and respect
- Communicate your own feelings and fears

### ***Long-term***

- Learn to manage conflicts rather than try to avoid or eliminate them
- Learn to communicate in a way that works for both/all parties

### **Suggested Resources for Strengthening Relationships**

[The 4 Most Common Relationship Problems -And How To Fix Them](#)

[Fully Involved: A Guide For Being In A Relationship With A Firefighter: Ohs PhD, Mynda](#)

[I Love a Fire Fighter: What the Family Needs to Know: Kirschman, Ellen](#)

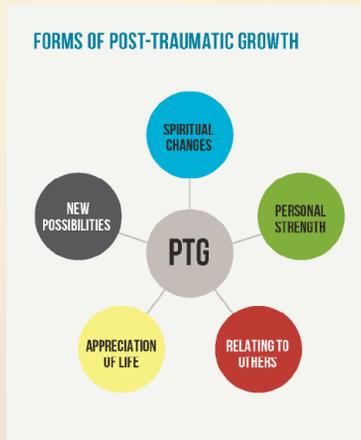
[Why Marriages Succeed or Fail: And How You Can Make Yours Last: Gottman, J. PhD](#)

[The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work: Nan Gottman John M.](#)

[Ten Lessons to Transform Your Marriage](#)

[What Makes Love Last?: Gottman, John](#)

# Antidote #5 Post-Traumatic Growth



## What is post-traumatic growth?

Post-traumatic growth (PTG) is positive psychological change experienced as a result of adversity and other challenges that enables individuals to rise to a higher level of functioning.

According to clinical psychologist Dr. Anne Bisek, PTG offers these benefits:

1. Increased ability to relate to others
2. Discovery of new possibilities
3. Development of a sense of personal strength
4. Change in spiritual/core values
5. Greater appreciation for life

## How is post-traumatic growth relevant to the fire and emergency service?

In working to overcome their own struggles with the trauma they encounter, first responders have an opportunity to find the silver linings in those clouds. This insight could encourage them to acknowledge those struggles and seek the help they need.

## What's in it for you and your organization to learn more about post-traumatic growth?

Understanding that it is possible to recover from trauma and find a new path to a happy and fulfilling life is very encouraging. Knowing that people just like themselves have achieved this outcome helps first responders realize that PTG is possible and that there is a light at the end of the tunnel should they choose to move toward it. When people who have experienced trauma successfully undergo a healing process, they often experience a higher level of functioning, a greater appreciation for their lives, and a deeper understanding of their purpose. They, and everyone around them, can benefit from those outcomes.



## How can you encourage and support post-traumatic growth in yourself and others?

Here are some short-term and long-term suggestions:

### *Short-term*

- Monitor yourself and others for signs of PTSD
- Focus on the fact that recovery and growth both are possible
- Look for the silver lining in every cloud
- Ask yourself what advice you would give to a colleague or close friend, then take it yourself

### *Long-term*

- Identify resources that would be helpful for your recovery from trauma
  - Recovery is a journey that takes time and depends on your own choices and experiences, so take your time

### **Suggested Resources for Post-Traumatic Growth**

[Firefighters must practice self-care to achieve post-traumatic growth \(firerescue1.com\)](http://firerescue1.com)

[Measuring Levels of Posttraumatic Growth in Firefighters \(waldenu.edu\)](http://waldenu.edu)

[Post Traumatic Growth - Fire Engineering: Firefighter Training and Fire Service News, Rescue](#)

[From PTSD to PTG: A Firefighter's \(My\) Journey After a Multiple LODD Incidents](#)

# Antidote #6 Tools to Measure and Reduce Stressors



## **What are stressors?**

Stressors are physical or mental factors that trigger a physical response in the body that we call stress. Work or relationship problems are examples of external factors; internal factors may include negative self-talk or unhealthy life choices. Stress can be caused by positive events as well, such as having a child, receiving a promotion that entails more responsibility, or preparing for the holidays. To counteract the negative effects of stress, you must identify the presence and magnitude of the positive and negative stressors in your life.

## **How are stressors relevant to the fire and emergency service?**

Too much stress underlies most, if not all, threats to individuals' physical and behavioral well-being. Because first responders experience additional - and often more intense - stressors than most people, their behavioral well-being is at much greater risk. While some degree of stress improves performance, beyond a certain level it causes harm. Knowing what that balance is for the individual, and how to mitigate it when the stressors are pushing them over the line, will help maintain one's physical health and behavioral well-being.

## **What's in it for you and for your organization to learn more about how to mitigate the stressors in your life?**

You can increase the quality of your life and likely live longer by managing the effects of the stressors in your life successfully. There are many stressors you cannot control; the key to reducing your stress level in those instances is managing your reaction to those stressors. The entire organization will benefit from members' effective stress management in the form of fewer unnecessary conflicts, higher morale, improved performance, fewer sick days, and greater energy and focus.



## **How can you encourage and support the use of tools to measure and mitigate the effects of stressors by yourself and others?**

Here are some short-term and long-term suggestions:

### ***Short-term***

- Create a baseline by taking the short [Holmes- Rahe Stress Inventory](#) online to identify the positive and negative stressors in your life and their magnitude
- Go to [David Posen MD](#) website and read a brief article that contains suggestions for reducing your stress
- Take one of the quick on-line assessments of the “Additional Resources” section of this report that is most relevant for you in the moment such as trauma or anxiety
- Use the results of the stress inventory to develop a customized action plan to mitigate the negative effects of stressors

### ***Long-term***

- Implement your action plan
- Pick one stress management tip and do it this week. Then pick another and do it next week, continuing until you find a few that are most effective for you
- Evaluate your plan for effectiveness at least quarterly and adjust as needed

#### **Resources for Tools to Measure and Reduce Stressors**

[Holmes- Rahe Stress Inventory](#)

[National Fallen Firefighters Foundation: Trauma Screening Questionnaire](#)

[Anxiety Test - MHA Screening](#)

[Depression Test - Free mental health tests from Mental Health America](#)

[How to track behavioral health changes \(firerescue1.com\)](#)

[Yerkes-Dodson Law: How It Correlates to Stress, Anxiety, Performance](#)

# Antidote #7 Emotional Tactical Worksheet



Worksheet Summary In an ongoing effort to remove the stigma of mental health, the 2021 Yellow Ribbon Report Update committee felt one way to approach that goal is by drawing a parallel, whenever possible, to current fire service accepted procedures.

The fire service has become very comfortable with tactical worksheets whether on a fireground, EMS response, hazardous materials incident, etc. The idea is to prompt the incident commander on things he or she may forget in the heat of the moment.

The emotional tactical worksheet is exactly that same tool. The intent is to provide whomever is assisting someone with a mental health challenge, whether fire service personnel or family member, with reminders of what to look for and things you can do to help. We hope you find it useful for both you and members of your department.

## Emotional-Tactical-Worksheet-IAFC

EMOTIONAL TACTICAL WORKSHEET		Side / Exposure C: CHARLIE		MAYDAY			
<b>BENCHMARKS</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate scope of the problem <input type="checkbox"/> Construct Incident Action Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Contact appropriate "hand-off" sources <input type="checkbox"/> Establish safety officer <input type="checkbox"/> Verify the member has made contact <input type="checkbox"/> RIT established for follow-up <input type="checkbox"/> Make appropriate notifications <input type="checkbox"/> Under control	<b>RESOURCES</b> Options Available P A B Tailboard Kitchen Table Peer Support Chaplain	Side / Exposure B: BRAVO Side / Exposure D: DELTA		<b>RECOGNITION/DENIAL (personal/organizational)</b> Failure to reach out Problem seen as not solvable Lack of professional intervention Nowhere to turn to Catastrophic failure/hulcide L: Location in building _____ U: Unit: _____ N: Person/Company Requesting MAYDAY: _____ A: Assignment: _____ R: Radio Frequency Assignment: _____ - Location (Emotional) - numb, depressed, lost. - Unit - family fire department. - Name - who I am as a person. - Assignment - (role) husband, wife, father, sister, brother, firefighter. - Resources - I need someone to talk through something with me. Copyright Red Tail Clinical Counseling - Dr. Cody Todd <input type="checkbox"/> Deploy RIT: <input type="checkbox"/> PAK for Involved Department Member <b>Family Notification</b> 1. _____ 2. _____			
		<b>RISK FACTORS</b> • Trauma/abuse history • Sleep disorder • Humiliation • Substance abuse • General life stress • Separated or divorced; recently widowed • Physical health problems • Access to firearms • Previous attempts • Family history • Exposure • Depression • Low self-esteem • Anxiety • PTSD	<b>CISM</b> P A B <b>EAP</b> Other Behavioral Health Services Treatment Centers			SUBDIVISIONS Side / Exposure A: ALPHA	
						<b>SAFETY / ISO</b> Emotional wellness is not an option but a mandatory part of firefighter health and safety.	<b>EMS/REHAB</b> Emotional health and wellness is part of your overall health, not a portion or separated.
		<b>RISK ANALYSIS</b> • Family history • Busy department • Multiple traumatic events • Working at more than 1 fire department • Home stressors	<b>RISK EVALUATION QUESTIONS</b> Have you had any of the following types or responses? • Young person death • Physical abuse • Drug overdose • Murder • Traumatic death • Domestic violence • Criminal Activity • Suicide			<b>INCIDENT COMMAND TACTICAL WORKSHEET</b> • Open culture established • Emotional wellness education/training top to bottom completed • Programs evaluated and in place including funding • Members and their families trained on the available programs • Annual evaluations of personnel and programs in place	





# Behavioral Wellness Issue #2

## Compassion Fatigue



### **What is compassion fatigue?**

Compassion fatigue is a stressor that results from repeating the same actions again and again, such as responding to automatic alarms at the same building or repeated daily calls to the same person.

### **How is compassion fatigue relevant to the fire and emergency service?**

Because compassion fatigue is characterized by a decreased ability to empathize, its presence creates a serious problem for organizations whose customers demand empathy and compassion on a daily basis. In fact, the public's expectation that first responders will be nice to them at all times can itself contribute to compassion fatigue. Dealing with a high call volume, excessive demands of patients, repetitive nuisance calls or calls from "frequent flyers," and long hours all are draining. Ignoring the signs and symptoms of compassion fatigue can have a negative impact on people's behavioral wellness and lead to undesirable actions or results.

### **What's in it for you and your organization to learn more about compassion fatigue?**

The DNA of most first responders compels them to help people who are suffering or experiencing trauma. When that compulsion weakens over time because responders perceive that the calls are becoming routine or "useless," or they believe their actions are not having the desired positive impact, they can suffer from compassion fatigue and its negative side effects on performance and motivation. Managing the critical issues that create compassion fatigue will reduce sick time and other disabilities that increase workers' compensation claims. Dealing with the issues that create additional stress will improve the long-term behavioral wellness of first responders.



## **How can you recognize compassion fatigue?**

## **How can you mitigate its effects in yourself and others?**

Symptoms of compassion fatigue may include displaying an increasingly negative attitude, more frequent irritability, loss of sleep, and isolation. Self-awareness, the ability to step back and assess your life, is one specific action you can take. To begin to address compassion fatigue, conduct an inventory of your traits. Keep those that are positive and release those that are holding you back. It might be a good idea to ask a trusted friend, family member, or colleague to help you with this inventory.

Realize and recognize when you are experiencing feelings and emotions that have a negative impact on your behavioral wellness. It is okay to let others know – and perhaps desirable to do so. Feed yourself with positive thoughts and actions. Although sometimes it is hard to have a positive outlook on the challenges of life, remember that addressing the issues that could result in compassion fatigue will have a significant positive impact on you, your family, your relationships, and your activities outside of work as well as your role as a first responder.

While a career firefighter might consider a station change, volunteers generally do not have that option. However, they could consider taking a vacation from the department and/or to choose not to respond to medical calls for a specific period of time. Keep in mind that departments may lose individuals who don't return because they realize they don't really miss being a volunteer. That's another good reason why supervisors need to be trained to recognize the signs, signals, and symptoms of compassion fatigue. Behavioral wellness is not something to be ignored or swept under the rug.

# COMPASSION FATIGUE?



## Leadership Strategy and Tactics to Address Compassion Fatigue

- Maintain a positive mindset by feeding your brain positive thoughts and feelings
- Practice empathy – with yourself as well as with others
- Create relevant ideas that provide solutions to specific issues
- Deliver positive communications
- Acknowledge the struggle positively
- Keep the message as simple as possible
- Be consistent in how you deal with others' experiences
- Conclude your conversation with actionable suggestions

## Overcoming Compassion Fatigue

- Spend quality time with family, children, and friends
- Fill your mind with thoughts of peace, courage, health, and hope
- Find yourself and be yourself: remember there is no one else on Earth like you
- Focus on and appreciate the positives in your life
- Stop worrying about things you don't control; your angst won't change the situation
- Count your blessings rather than your troubles
- Talk about your feelings with a trusted person
- Exercise regularly
- Follow a healthy diet
- Get restful sleep
- Develop hobbies different from work
- Develop positive coping strategies
- Reach out to support groups and networks

### Resources for Compassion Fatigue

[The New Psychology of Winning: Top Qualities of a 21st Century Denis Waitley Surrounded by Idiots: The Four Types of Human Behavior and How to Effectively Communicate](#)

[You Are Stronger than You Think:](#)

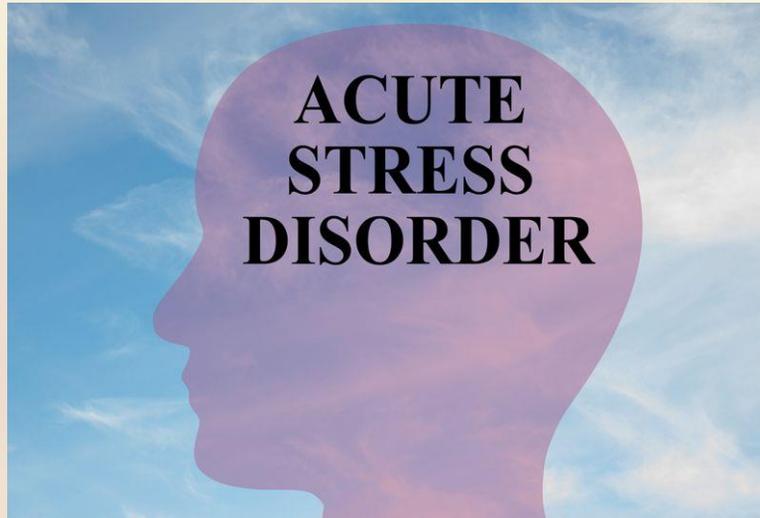
[Embrace the Struggle: Living Life on Life's Terms: Ziglar, Zig](#)

[Overcoming Compassion Fatigue: When Helping Hurts: Nance](#)

[A Minute to Think: Reclaim Creativity, Conquer Busyness, and Do Your Best Work](#)

# Behavioral Wellness Issue #3

## Acute Stress Disorder



### **What is acute stress disorder?**

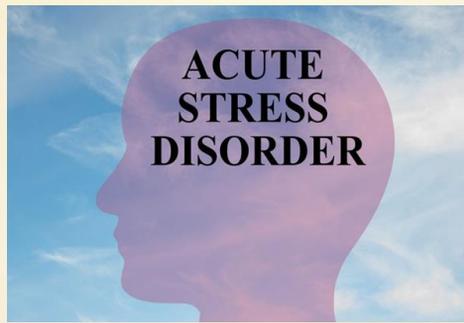
Acute stress disorder (ASD) is a short-term, severe anxiety reaction to a traumatic event that temporarily disrupts your life. ASD generally occurs within one month of such an event. In some cases, it can be a precursor of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); some have called it the sister to PTSD.

### **How is acute distress disorder relevant to the fire and emergency service?**

Although anyone can develop ASD after a traumatic event, first responders who regularly experience, see, and/or treat people who have undergone a trauma as part of their job may be more susceptible to it than the general population.

### **What's in it for you and your organization to learn more about acute distress disorder?**

People experiencing ASD may become detached or numb, have a reduced level of situational awareness of their surroundings, and/or see their environment as strange or unreal. In addition, the distress and anxiety they experience may reduce or remove their ability to start or complete many tasks. All these outcomes pose a risk to the safety and health of individuals, their colleagues, and the people they serve.



### **How can you recognize acute stress disorder?**

### **How can you mitigate its effects?**

In addition to the symptoms identified in the above sections, people with ASD may experience physical symptoms such as nausea, difficulty breathing, and chest pain. They also may find themselves reliving the traumatic event through flashbacks or nightmares. Seeing items or situations that may trigger thoughts of the traumatic event may increase people's anxiety level. As a result, they may avoid people, locations, activities, conversations, or thoughts that could give rise to ASD.

There are a number of ways to mitigate the effects of ASD, many of which require trained and/or medical professionals. Because professional evaluations will help identify each person's specific needs, having a list of qualified clinicians to whom you can refer others is necessary. Learning more about ASD also is helpful in addressing it. Because first responders cannot avoid trauma, the best approach may be to take proactive measures to mitigate their effects. For example, departments that provide training about how to handle or prepare for traumatic events, offer or make referrals for counseling, and/or refer personnel for medical evaluation may reduce the likelihood that their personnel will develop ASD and/or that it will escalate into PTSD. Various forms of therapy (e.g., cognitive, behavioral, response-based) have been successful in preventing ASD from developing into PTSD.

### **Resources for Acute Stress Disorder**

[Acute Stress Disorder in Firefighters: What You Need to Know \(linkedin.com\)](#)

# Behavioral Wellness Issue #4

## Gaslighting



### **What is gaslighting?**

Gaslighting is a form of psychological manipulation in which a person or a group intentionally creates doubt in a targeted individual or group, making them question their own memory, perception of reality, or judgment. It often is used by abusers to make their victims question their own traumatic experiences.

### **How is gaslighting relevant to the fire and emergency service?**

Gaslighting is harmful and abusive. It contributes to a toxic work environment and must have no place in any station or department. If we are truly the family we claim to be, we never should allow this type of behavior.

### **What's in it for you and your organization to learn more about gaslighting?**

Gaslighting causes people to doubt their abilities and lower their self-esteem. First responders who start second-guessing themselves and their skills or knowledge are dangers to themselves, their colleagues, and their communities.

### **How can you recognize gaslighting?**

#### **What can you do to mitigate its effects on yourself and others?**

Gaslighting can be seen in situations in which someone chooses to manipulate others psychologically and emotionally. If you are hearing lies or half-truths spread around your station, especially if they center around a person in a demographic that has been historically oppressed, and/or if the person spreading it will gain something by spreading the lie, you know you're witnessing gaslighting.



### **Here are other forms that gaslighting might take:**

- Using dismissive language (“Don’t be so sensitive” or “Can’t you take a joke?” or “You’re overreacting” or “You’re crazy”)
- Humiliating others through criticism, insults, and/or jokes that are not funny or relevant, and often have no basis in truth
- Discrediting the victim and/or undermining the victim’s views or beliefs
- Telling blatant lies
- Later denying having said the lies, even when there is proof to the contrary
- Discrediting or discounting information or facts that contradict the abuser’s perception

Department leaders must play a big role in discouraging gaslighting. For example, they could write a policy and create a culture that make it clear there is zero tolerance for gaslighting. They can provide real consequences for violations of the agency’s behavioral norms. In conjunction with department personnel, leaders who identify and describe in behavioral terms the department’s core values will find that they are a valuable tool in combatting abusive and offensive behaviors. When the norm is to speak up against gaslighting behaviors, the abusers will be shut down before they create a toxic work environment.

There are many ways that individuals can mitigate the effects of gaslighting on themselves and others, such as identifying it for what it is: a mechanism to manipulate you, confuse you, and make you doubt yourself. Victims who remain calm and refuse to engage may discourage the abuser. Creating physical space between themselves and the abuser is helpful to many victims. If that’s not possible, taking deep breaths or counting slowly to ten are feasible back-up plans. Collect evidence of the abuser’s interactions by saving e-mail messages, taking screen shots of text messages, and/or recording phone calls or in person encounters (when it’s legal to do so). Victims can make a special effort to be kind to themselves, and to engage in positive self-talk. Some victims find it empowering to call out the abuser’s bad behavior publicly, speaking up to challenge the abuser’s insults, criticisms, and/or discrepancies, such as asking them to explain the joke or the back-handed compliment.

### **Resources for Gaslighting**

[11 Red Flags of Gaslighting in a Relationship | Psychology Today](#)  
[8 Ways to Deal with Gaslighting \(healthline.com\)](#)

# Behavioral Wellness Issue #5

## Toxic Work Environment



### **What is a toxic work environment?**

A toxic work environment is one in which behaviors, systems, and/or processes negatively affect individual and organizational performance. These can take the form of significant drama and infighting, cliques, poor communication, and little or no work/life balance. Leadership usually is non-existent, and turnover typically is very high in such workplaces.

### **How is a toxic work environment relevant to the fire and emergency service?**

First responders are some of the most tightly knit coworkers on the planet. We refer to our colleagues as brothers and sisters and family. We refer to our stations and buildings as houses. When all is well, there is nothing better. The negativity generated by a toxic work environment, on the other hand, has the ability to destroy the very fabric of those valued relationships or prevent them from developing. The resulting poor performance puts everyone at risk, including the community. And imagine what observing or hearing about a toxic work environment does to a department's ability to recruit and retain productive personnel.

### **What's in it for you and your organization to learn more about toxic work environments?**

For most people, their profession or job is a big part of their identity. This fact may be exponentially more true of first responders than of other people. Thus a toxic work environment affects responders on a deeply personal level. Allowing a person or group of people to spread negativity, and even worse, direct that negativity at others, is one of the fastest ways for people to feel ineffective and burned-out, for leaders to lose credibility, and for the department to hemorrhage personnel.



## **How can you recognize a toxic work environment?**

### **How can you mitigate its effects?**

Characteristics of a toxic work environment may include personnel who feel stressed, burned-out, depressed, and even physically ill. They may dread even the thought of reporting for their shift and find ways to avoid it. Communication in such environments often is very poor: leaders may give different, changing, incomplete, and/or unclear messages. Personnel may be expected to respond to non-emergency calls or messages during off-duty hours. Cliques may exclude those not in the “in” group, and their members may engage in gossip, innuendo, and rumors.

Bullying, hazing, and/or discriminating behaviors, policies, and/or processes may be an open secret – or even an expectation. Perhaps personnel, including officers, may belittle others, letting them know they’re not good enough. A toxic work environment is likely to exist when a department or a station is highly dysfunctional and/or is run by leaders who perpetuate drama and interpersonal fighting. The workers’ behavioral wellness is an afterthought – or is not considered at all. Although some people may recognize this situation if they are in it, others may have gotten so used to a toxic work environment that it seems normal to them.

There are a number of ways to mitigate the effects of a toxic work environment. Leaders can act as role models, set or change policies and procedures, change a negative culture, have the department identify and define its core values and hold everyone accountable for living by them, on duty as well as off. They can convey messages that are clear, complete, accurate, timely, and consistent. They can ensure the department’s processes (e.g., performance management, promotional, training) are transparent and equitable, and they include accountability mechanisms. They can get to know their personnel and provide positive reinforcement to let them know their contributions are valued.

### **What if the fire chief or a chief officer is the one engaging in and/or permitting toxic behaviors?**

Personnel can mitigate the effects of a toxic work environment by participating in positive conversations, behaviors, and activities. They can treat others respectfully and professionally even when those behaviors are not reciprocated; others may follow their lead. When necessary and possible, create some space at work, such as moving to a different room or taking a walk outside the station or office. Although fire-rescue personnel are exceptional problem solvers, they can retrain themselves to seek the gifts or opportunities in any situation instead of jumping immediately to the problems. They can associate with positive people inside and outside the department. They can learn to define themselves and who they are rather than give that power away by buying into what others may say about them. And they can remember that while there are many situations in which they have little or no control, they always get to choose how they experience every situation.



**According to workplace culture expert Heidi Lynne Kurter, here are four ways to repair a toxic culture:**

- Accept responsibility. Everyone from leaders to the newest recruit needs to be valued and have a voice. Goals and expectations should be clear and applicable to all.
- Bring in a third party. If things are reaching a truly troubling point, perhaps it's time to ask a neutral professional for help. This is particularly true if people don't feel they can get a fair shake from "the old guard."
- Institute new policies and hold everyone accountable. If you're trying to remedy a toxic work environment, that means you know you have one. The necessary changes should be severe, as modest ones tend to allow people to slide back to the way things used to be. They also must apply to everyone, no matter how small the issue appears to be.
- Cultivate a safe environment. Leaders must commit to acting with integrity and taking all complaints seriously. People cannot be afraid of ridicule or retribution for coming forward with an issue.

**Resources for a Toxic Work Environment**

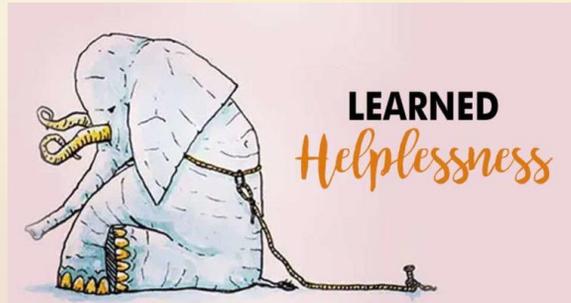
[4 Strategies To Repair A Toxic Culture From The Top Down \(forbes.com\)](#)

[How to Recognize a Toxic Work Environment and Get Out Alive | Psychology Today](#)

[The signs of toxic leadership in firefighters and fire chiefs \(firerescue1.com\)](#)

# Behavioral Wellness Issue #6

## Learned Helplessness



### **What is learned helplessness?**

Coined by psychologist Dr. Martin Seligman, the term learned helplessness describes what occurs when people repeatedly are subjected to a stimulus from which they cannot escape, such as a noise. Over time, the inability to remove themselves from the stimulus causes them to stop trying to avoid it and just accept it.

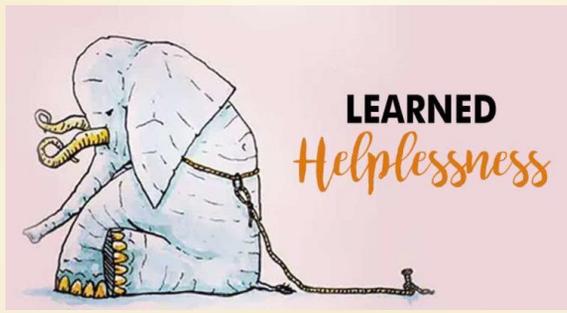
### **How is learned helplessness relevant to the fire and emergency service?**

A state of learned helplessness can occur if first responders who continually face stressful situations stop trying to change the circumstances due to a real or perceived absence of control over the outcome. They can feel hopeless. For example, responders who have been unsuccessful in the promotional process may deem themselves a failure because they feel they lack the control needed to make things better for their future.

### **What's in it for you and your organization to educate yourselves about learned helplessness?**

Because first responders face many uncontrollable events, it is imperative they learn to maintain at least some sense of control. Learned helplessness not only has a negative impact on behavioral wellness by itself, it also can cause other negative consequences such as anxiety and depression. All these behaviors are likely to have undesirable effects on an individual's performance, which is likely to affect that of their colleagues.

Research suggests that pessimists become helpless at twice the rate of optimists. Additionally, pessimists are likely to give up, suffer more depressive episodes, and not enjoy life as much as their optimistic counterparts. Optimists become ill less frequently, achieve more, have better overall health, and enjoy life more.



**How can you recognize learned helplessness?**

**How can you mitigate its effects?**

**According to Dr. Seligman, three factors characterize learned helplessness:**

1. Passiveness in the face of trauma
2. Difficulty learning that responses (actions) can control trauma
3. Increased stress levels

Learned helplessness for first responders could take the form of quitting if they believe that no matter what they do, they cannot impact the situation positively. Seligman found that people who appear resilient and resistant to helplessness did so through optimism – that is, by understanding that although bad things happen and they may not have control over the outcomes, they always can choose how they experience the outcomes.

Optimism not only increases behavioral wellness, it enables responders to change their experiences via a sense of control.

Optimism also helps to explain why those who choose challenging jobs such as being a first responder succeed. Identified as one of three characteristics of success (with aptitude and motivation), optimism is a necessary trait for a healthy and progressive career. If a first responder is having a challenge viewing life with a positive lens, then learning how to be optimistic is a necessity. Seeking out a therapist who can assist with learning new cognitive skills can help teach the responder a new way of looking at the world.

### **Resources for Learned Helplessness**

[Learned Helplessness - What It Is and Why It Happens \(verywellmind.com\)](https://www.verywellmind.com/learned-helplessness-what-it-is-and-why-it-happens-2786272)

[Learned Helplessness | Psychology Today](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/healthcare/learned-helplessness)

[Learned Helplessness: What is It and How to Overcome? - Mantra Care](https://www.mantracare.com/learned-helplessness-what-is-it-and-how-to-overcome/)

[Learned Helplessness: Seligman's Theory of Depression \(+ Cure\)  
\(positivepsychology.com\)](https://www.positivepsychology.com/learned-helplessness-seligman-theory-of-depression-cure/)



# HELPFUL APPS



**Mindfulness Coach** app provides a gradual, self-guided training program designed to help you understand and adopt a simple mindfulness practice. Mindfulness Coach also offers a library of information about mindfulness, 12 audio-guided mindfulness exercises, a growing catalog of additional exercises available for free download, goal-setting and tracking, a mindfulness mastery assessment to help you track your progress over time, customizable reminders, and access to other support and crisis resources.

[Mindfulness-coach](#)



**MindShift** app uses scientifically proven strategies based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to help you learn to relax and be mindful, develop more effective ways of thinking, and use active steps to take charge of your anxiety.

[Mindshift-cbt-anxiety](#)



**AIMS** app is designed for Veterans and military Service members but can be used by anyone coping with anger problems. The AIMS app is based on the Anger and Irritability Management Skills online self-help course. The app provides users with education about anger, opportunities for finding support, the ability to create an anger management plan, anger tracking, and tools to help manage angry reactions. Users can also create custom tools based on their preferences, and can integrate their own contacts, photos, and music.

[AIMS for Anger Management | VA Mobile](#)

# HELPFUL APPS



**Breathe2Relax** app is a stress management tool, which will help you learn how to perform and use diaphragmatic breathing techniques for stress control. It also provides you with education about the biology of stress, the effects of stress on the body, how to do diaphragmatic breathing, and the biology of breathing. Using this app can be helpful to your meditation practice as well. Even though this app was developed by the Department of Defense (DoD) and T2, it is not restricted to use by military or veterans.

[Breathe2Relax on the App Store \(apple.com\)](#)

[Breathe2Relax - Apps on Google Play](#)



**Tactical Breather** app provides guided breathing instruction to gain control over heart rate, emotions, concentration, and other physiological and psychological responses during stressful situations.

[Tactical Breather on the App Store \(apple.com\)](#)

[Tactical Breather - Apps on Google Play](#)



**PTSD Family Coach** app provides support for concerned family members of those with PTSD. The app can help you learn about PTSD, how to take care of yourself, and how to manage your relationship with your loved one or children. PTSD Family Coach also has information on how to help your loved one get the treatment they deserve.

[PTSD Family Coach - PTSD: National Center for PTSD \(va.gov\)](#)

# HELPFUL APPS



**PTSD Coach** app was designed for those who have, or may have, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This app provides you with education about PTSD, information about professional care, a self-assessment for PTSD, opportunities to find support, and tools that can help you manage the stresses of daily life with PTSD. Tools range from relaxation skills and positive self-talk to anger management and other common self-help strategies.

[PTSD Coach | VA Mobile](#)



**Psychological First Aid** app was designed to assist responders who provide psychological first aid (PFA) to adults, families, and children as part of an organized response effort. This app provides responders with summaries of PFA fundamentals, PFA interventions matched to specific concerns and needs of survivors, mentor tips for applying PFA in the field, a self-assessment tool for readiness to conduct PFA, and a survivors' needs form for simplified data collection and easy referral.

[PFA Mobile - PTSD: National Center for PTSD \(va.gov\)](#)



**Suicide Safe** app helps providers feel confident to assist patients who present with suicidal ideation. The app offers tips on how to communicate effectively with patients and their families, determine appropriate next steps, and make referrals to treatment and community resources.

[Suicide Safe by SAMHSA on the App Store \(apple.com\)](#)

[Suicide Safe - Apps on Google Play](#)

# HELPFUL APPS



**Meeting Guide** app is brought to you by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., Meeting Guide is a free of charge app that provides meeting information from A.A. service entities in an easy-to-access format. Over 100,000 A.A. meetings are currently listed. The information is refreshed twice daily.

[A cut World Services, Inc. Apps on the App Store \(apple.com\)](https://www.aaworldservices.com/apps-on-the-app-store)

[Meeting Guide | Alcoholics Anonymous \(aa.org\)](https://www.aa.org/meeting-guide)



**SAMHSA Disaster** app helps first responders during a disaster. The SAMHSA Disaster App offers first responders' immediate access for any type of traumatic event at every phase of response, including pre-deployment preparation, on-the-ground assistance and post-deployment resources.

[SAMHSA Disaster Mobile App](https://www.samhsa.gov/disaster-app)



**CrewCare** app was created in response to the growing concerns on mental health within the first responder industry and has since grown to include healthcare workers. ImageTrend and the collaborative minds behind CrewCare are committed to making a positive impact on the mental health struggles that first responders and healthcare workers may be dealing with. The goal of CrewCare is to provide mental health insight on an individual's stress load and associated factors, as well as grow an aggregate non-identifiable database to strengthen the industry and improve mental health research.

[CrewCare - First Responder and Healthcare Worker Mental Health Awareness Mobile App \(crewcarelife.com\)](https://www.crewcarelife.com)

# Additional Resources



## Additional Resources

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# Behavioral Health Program - IAFF



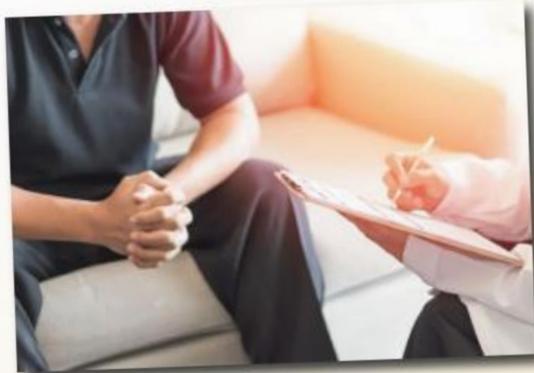
## Finding the Right Clinician:

### 7 Questions for Fire Fighters to Ask

If you're coping with post-traumatic stress, depression, anxiety or addiction, finding the right individual mental health clinician is an essential component of recovery.

For fire fighters and paramedics who are brave enough to seek help, finding a local provider who is culturally and clinically competent in the unique needs of IAFF members may be a challenge. Getting the right help at the right time can be the difference between prolonged suffering or gaining practical skills to manage symptoms and restore your quality of life.

**If you are looking for an individual clinician for yourself or as a resource for your department, consider the questions below to guide your search:**



**1. Do you have experience working with fire fighters or other emergency responders, including EMS, police or military populations? Tell me about it.**

Previous experience working with first responders helps a clinician understand the culture and daily operations of the fire service. However, while such experience is ideal, it is not absolutely necessary, nor always available. If a clinician answers yes to this question, ask if they are willing to provide references.

**2. What evidence-based practices do you use to treat post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety and co-occurring substance abuse? Do you assign homework?**

While traditional psychodynamic approaches to therapy are appropriate for some clinical populations, research shows the efficacy of standardized time-limited interventions, such as CBT, DBT and EMDR in treating trauma and other acute mental health problems. Further, a clinician who assigns homework or tasks between sessions is not only maximizing in-session time, but encouraging the client to assume an active vs. passive role in their recovery. Lastly, be wary of a clinician who describes themselves as generalist, eclectic or claims to treat everything.

**3. How many sessions does it typically take for you to complete your initial assessment?**

If a provider takes more than two sessions to conduct an initial diagnostic assessment and construct a treatment plan, this may reflect a non-directive, open-ended approach to therapy that is generally not suited for someone in crisis, acutely symptomatic or functionally impaired. After one or two visits, the therapy process should begin.

**4. Do you offer appointments within 24 hours or access to an on-call clinician?**

If you or a friend is in crisis, you cannot wait days or weeks to be seen. While the emergency room is always an option for immediate intervention, talking with a mental health provider first may defer the need for a hospital visit or overnight stay, which can be costly, inefficient and offer limited anonymity in smaller communities.

**5. If an individual has a psychiatric emergency and needs inpatient care, what facility or hospital do you refer to?**

While mental health providers do not technically need hospital privileges to refer a patient for inpatient care, it is helpful to have a clinician who has an established relationship with an accredited inpatient residential program, should this level of care be needed.

**6. Do you work closely with a prescriber for individuals who need medication?**

Finding the right prescriber (usually a psychiatrist, physician's assistant or nurse practitioner) can be as challenging as finding the right therapist. For individuals who take medication to treat a mental health problem, it is critical that the therapist and prescriber are coordinating care. This is more likely to happen if they have an established working relationship. Additionally, prescribers who have prior experience working with first responders will be more knowledgeable about medication classes that can impact clearance to work.

**7. Would you be willing to participate in experiential training to gain a better understanding of the daily experiences of the fire service professional?**

You can tell your clinician what it's like to be a fire fighter or paramedic, but until they have literally walked in your shoes, words are words. Experiences including ride-alongs or FIRE OPS 101 can give clinicians an invaluable understanding and window into your world.

**If you need support:**

To learn more about IAFF behavioral health resources visit [www.iaff.org/behavioral-health/](http://www.iaff.org/behavioral-health/)

## Micro Current Neurofeedback Device | IASIS Technologies Intl.

Getting your brain out of Fight or Flight can change your life! Imagine having a calm brain- a brain with no chatter, intrusive thoughts, cravings, impulsiveness and anxiety. Imagine a brain that is clear and focused that allows restful sleep, positive thoughts and solutions to problems.

Imagine how having a calm mind might improve inflammation, pain, fatigue, headaches, memory, disordered digestion and autoimmunity.

These are just some of the things that people who have experienced treatments with IASIS MicroCurrent Neurofeedback report.

Brain Well-Being offers IASIS Micro Current Neurofeedback (MCN) services to adults, children, athletes, military personnel & first responders.

It is safe and effective, non-drug brain training, that refreshes or “reboots” the brain with a tiny pulsating current. MCN is used by people who have suffered from concussions, endure high levels of stress, anxiety, PTSD, TBI, insomnia, depression, athletic and academic performance demands, long hours and not much time or ability to recover.

Now Available in NASHVILLE through Brain Well Being Nashville, LLC

**\*\*SPECIAL PRICING AVAILABLE TO FIRST RESPONDERS**

Contact **Dr. Leslie Shew** for more information:

Phone 615-669-7151

Email [info@drlesliewellness.com](mailto:info@drlesliewellness.com)

## Self Care:

- [Emergency Responders: Tips for taking care of yourself \(cdc.gov\)](#)

## Finding a Therapist:

[Find an EMDR Therapist - EMDR International Association \(emdria.org\)](#)

[Psychology Today: Health, Help, Happiness + Find a Therapist](#)

## Specialized treatment for first Responders

[TraumaTherapyNashville.com](#)

[Caring for Military, Veterans, First-Responders and their Families - Soldier Center \(soldier-center.com\)](#)

[Home | Brattleboro Retreat](#)

## Suicide Prevention

[ff\\_suicide\\_report.pdf \(montgomerycountymd.gov\)](#)

[FireServiceSuicideAwareness.pdf \(nfpa.org\)](#)

[FirstResponders Suicide Prevention WHO](#)

[A Firefighter's Silent Killer Suicide](#)

[Firefighter suicide prevention: The company officer's role \(firerescue1.com\)](#)

## Behavioral Health

[Behavioral-Health-Mgmt-Guide](#)

[EAP to BHAP Guide](#)

[After Action Review poster](#)

[Behavioral Health \(responderhelp.com\)](#)

## Screening Tools

[Trauma Screening Questionnaire](#)