



Helping the Helpers

Individual Services for First Responders and Medical Professionals

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Law enforcement personnel are 54% more likely to die of suicide than civilians³

Rates of PTSD and depression for first responders has been found to be as much as five times greater than the general population.⁶

75% of 911 dispatchers report feeling burnout daily.⁵

46% of Healthcare Workers reported feeling burnout in 2022.¹

From 2014-2020, more fire fighters died by suicide than in the line of duty.²

Suicide rates amongst EMS professionals is twice as high as the national average.⁵

The majority of LEO suicides occur at home, using the officer's own service weapon.⁷

Healthcare Workers reported an average of 4.5 "poor mental health days" in the past 30 days in 2022.¹

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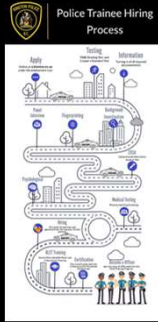
Understanding the Job

Work Conditions
Cultural Challenges
Risk Factors

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Work Conditions

- Training process
- Shift work
- Separation from friends/family
- Intense physical/emotional labor
- Repeated trauma exposure



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Cultural Challenges

- Idealistic Rookie vs. Cynical Veteran
- Are mental health issues acceptable?
- Survival Mentality
- Agency Structure/Leadership

"Does being distrustful of human nature and motive have a purpose? Yes, it keeps cops alive."
 - Dr. Kevin Gilmartin

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Risk Factors

	COMPASSION FATIGUE	MORAL INJURY
<p>BURN OUT</p> <p>a state of mental, emotional, and often physical exhaustion brought on by prolonged or repeated stress ⁸</p>	<p>a condition in which someone becomes numb to the suffering of others, feels less able to display empathy toward them, or loses hope in their ability to help.⁸</p>	<p>when one feels they have violated their conscience or moral compass when they take part in, witness or fail to prevent an act that disobeys their own moral values or personal principles.⁹</p>

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Commonly Reported Issues⁹

- Sleep disturbances
- Appetite change
- Digestive issues
- Poor focus
- Intrusive images
- Nightmares
- Memory issues
- Hypervigilance
- Anxiety/Panic
- Survivor guilt
- Anger outbursts
- Numbness
- Obsessiveness
- Denial/Disbelief
- Isolating
- Secondary injury from relational stress
- Alcohol/drug consumption
- Sex drive change
- Recklessness
- Loss of motivation
- Startle reaction
- Redefining morals/values/faith
- Lack of hope

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Fundamentals of Treatment

Building Rapport
 Effective Interventions
 Do No Harm



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“The most challenging aspect of intervening with first responders is the resistance you will meet. Whether this is due to the culture or the fact that they have been through poorly run interventions in the past, you should expect it each and every time you respond. The key to resolving this is to avoid making it seem like an intervention, but more like extended family showing up to help out any way you can.”

- Tania Glenn, PsyD, LCSW, CCTP



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Building Relationships

DO¹⁰

- Schedule quickly & w/ flexibility
- Reiterate Confidentiality
- Establishing Your Knowledge
- Keep it real, direct, and transparent

AVOID⁹

- Fall victim to the “shock factor”
- Use psychological terminology
- Use language like “I understand how you feel” or “This is God’s will”
- Interpret their emotions

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Effective Interventions

- Focus on Hierarchy of Needs First¹⁰
 - Confirm basic needs are being met
 - Establish safety
- Evidence Based Practices
 - Motivational Interviewing
 - EMDR
 - Progressive Desensitization



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DO NO HARM!

Improper/Inadequate training is the greatest risk factor associated with interventions!⁹

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International Critical Incident Stress Foundation's Cautions to Providers:

1. Not all individuals exposed to trauma will need intervention
2. Normalizing responses is encouraged, however do not dismiss crisis reactions
3. Interventions should be voluntary
4. Interventions should not interfere with natural recovery
5. Individuals should not be encouraged to talk about or relive a traumatic event unless they are comfortable doing so
6. When in doubt seek assistance and supervision
7. The risk of adverse outcomes is associated with all intervention

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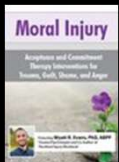
Additional Resources

Trainings
Recommended Readings



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Trainings



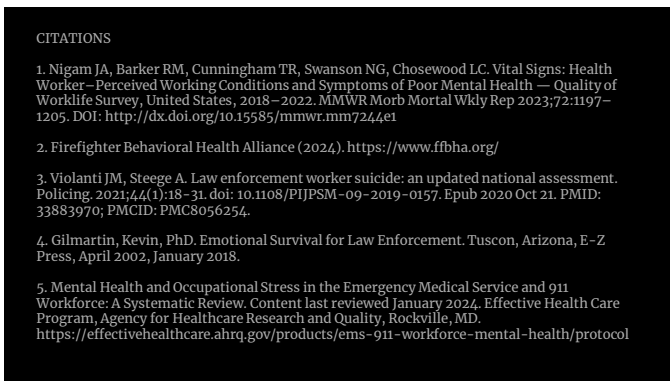
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CITATIONS (cont.)

6. Heyman M, Dill J, Douglas R. The Ruderman White Paper on Mental Health and Suicide of First Responders. April 2018. https://rudermanfoundation.org/white_papers/police-officers-and-firefighters-are-more-likely-to-die-by-suicide-than-in-line-of-duty/

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8. Psychology Today. What is Burnout. 2024. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/burnout#:~:text=Burnout%20is%20a%20state%20of,%2C%20caring%20or%20romantic%20relationships.>

9. <https://icisf.org/>

10. Glenn, T. (2020). First Responder Resilience: Caring for public servants. Progressive Rising Phoenix Press, LLC.
