



First Responders Mental Health Guide

A Community-Focused Wellness Resource

Provided by PPSV Charities

Community-centered mental health education and support.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to offer supportive, easy-to-understand information for individuals, families, and communities. It can be used for personal education, group discussions, peer support, or as a starting point for seeking help.

Important Disclaimer

This guide is not a substitute for professional mental health care, diagnosis, or treatment. If you or someone else is in immediate danger or experiencing a mental health emergency, contact local emergency services or a qualified mental health professional right away.

Understanding Stress and Trauma

First responders serve their communities under intense and often unpredictable conditions. Over time, repeated exposure to emergencies can affect emotional health, relationships, and overall well-being.

Recognizing Signs of Burnout or Trauma

- Feeling constantly on edge or emotionally drained
- Changes in sleep, mood, or patience
- Pulling away from family or coworkers
- Using unhealthy habits to cope with stress

Healthy Coping and Self-Care

- Prioritizing rest, nutrition, and movement
- Talking openly with trusted peers
- Creating routines that help you decompress after shifts
- Taking time for family and personal interests

Professional and Peer Support

- Confidential counseling with trauma-informed providers
- Peer support teams and mentorship programs
- Employee assistance or community-based services

Supporting Families

Families are an important part of the support system. Open communication, education, and shared understanding can strengthen relationships and resilience.