

# The Acute Stress Adaptive Protocol:

# ASAP

Early Intervention Treatment for First Responders Suffering from Acute Stress Symptoms



**Vermont Center for Responder Wellness**

[vtresponderwellness.com](http://vtresponderwellness.com)

## What is ASAP Training?

ASAP (Acute Stress Adaptive Protocol) training is a 40-hour course designed for first responder peer support teams. This innovative program is based on EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) principles, tailored specifically to address the unique and recurring traumatic stress faced by first responders. Developed by a former police officer, who later became an EMDR consultant, the ASAP is the culmination of over 30 years of clinical and practical experience in working in the field with first responders.

The ASAP is both a group and individual intervention designed to be administered peer to peer. The training is facilitated using a scripted manual, which provides a structured path for facilitators and peers through the 8-step ASAP worksheet.



## The ASAP Worksheet

Phase one allows participants to build resources through mindfulness and self-regulation techniques. Phase one also works as a screening tool that will identify participants struggling with severe traumatic stress.

Phase two of the intervention allows for the true processing of traumatic events (whether they are current or from the past,) using the tenants of EMDR therapy, including bilateral stimulation through eye movements and the reprocessing of traumatic memories.

The ASAP is unique because participants work in silence, facing forward as they concentrate on their personalized traumatic event. This unique approach does not require participants to engage in dialogue during the trauma processing. Instead, ASAP relies on the Adaptive Information Processing Model (AIP), the same theoretical foundation as EMDR therapy.

## ASAP Research and Benefits

Research on ASAP has demonstrated its safety, effectiveness, relevance, and efficiency. Notably, it has been shown to **reduce post-traumatic stress symptoms by an impressive 44% in first responders.**

Studies also indicate that when ASAP is combined with compassion-focused psychoeducation and utilized intensively over a four-day period with eight ASAP sessions, it positively impacts moral injury.

Organizations trained in the ASAP promote weekly drop-in sessions to enhance resilience among peers.



## Advantages of Using the ASAP

The ASAP is a versatile tool, suitable for addressing various life-stressing events repeatedly.

The ASAP can be utilized with both large groups and one-on-one settings with peers.

Homogeneity among participants is not a requirement for administering the ASAP.

The ASAP participants are not required to discuss traumatic material, ensuring a non-invasive approach.

The ASAP can be used just three days after an Officer-Involved Shooting (OIS) event.

The ASAP is facilitated by peers for peers, fostering a supportive and empathetic environment.

The ASAP serves as a screening tool for identifying severe traumatic stress.

The ASAP offers stabilization and resource-building techniques to enhance self-regulation.

The ASAP is a safe, effective, efficient, and relevant program tailored specifically for the responder population.

## Trauma in Emergency Personnel is Different...

Experience the  
transformative  
potential of ASAP  
Training and  
empower your first  
responders to  
navigate traumatic  
stress with resilience  
and strength.

