**Spokane Hol**

**Spokane Holistic Healing Client Handout**

 **What is a First Responder Treatment Provider (FRTP)**

A **First Responder Treatment Provider** is a healthcare professional that specializes in providing **mental health and/or substance use disorder treatment** specifically tailored for **first responders**—such as police officers, firefighters, paramedics, EMTs, dispatchers, correctional officers, nurses and other health care providers.

**Key Features of a First Responder Treatment Provider:**

1. **Specialized Treatment:**
	* Focus on **trauma**, **PTSD**, **stress**, **burnout**, **substance use**, and **depression**—all common in first responder professions.
	* Programs often include **peer support**, **group therapy with other first responders**, and clinicians trained in first responder culture.
2. **Cultural Competency:**
	* Therapists understand the unique pressures, language, and lifestyle of first responders.
	* Reduces stigma and improves communication between the client and provider.
3. **Confidentiality:**
	* Providers emphasize confidentiality to ensure first responders feel safe seeking help without fear of professional repercussions.
4. **Training:**
	* The “First Responder Treatment Provider” is a **designated status**, meaning the provider has completed specific training to work with this population.

Working with first responders calls for approaches that are **evidence-based** but also **practical, culturally sensitive, and trauma-informed**. Here's a breakdown of the most effective types of therapy when working with first responders:

**🔹 1. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)**

* **Why it works:** Focuses on identifying and restructuring unhelpful thoughts and behaviors.
* **Effective for:** PTSD, depression, anxiety, and substance use.
* Often used in brief, goal-oriented formats that appeal to first responders' problem-solving mindset.

**🔹 2. Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)**

* **Specialized form of CBT for trauma.**
* Helps reframe distorted beliefs about the trauma ("I should have done more").
* **Highly effective for PTSD.**

**🔹 3. Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE)**

* Involves gradually confronting trauma-related memories, feelings, and situations.
* Helps reduce avoidance and desensitize traumatic memories.
* **Best used when a first responder is stable and ready to engage deeply with trauma.**

**🔹 4. Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)**

* Uses bilateral stimulation (like eye movements) while processing trauma.
* Doesn’t require verbalizing all the trauma details, which some first responders prefer.
* Strong outcomes for PTSD and moral injury.

**🔹 5. Group Therapy (Peer Support-Based)**

* Facilitated by clinicians, often includes only first responders.
* Normalizes experience, reduces stigma, builds camaraderie.
* **Powerful in combination** with individual therapy.

**🔹 7. Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD)**

* A structured group process conducted shortly after a traumatic event.
* Used as part of a broader crisis response.

**8. Family & Couples Therapy**

* First responder stress often spills into relationships.
* Supporting the family unit can improve overall outcomes.