
FAQ

**When do I need to contact peer support?*

You should contact peer support if you, or if one of your coworkers, are exhibiting any of the signs/symptoms of a stress reaction (see “Signs/Symptoms of a Stress Reaction”).

**Is this only for work-related incidents?*

No. Peer support’s goal is to support first responders and their families. We know that many of the stresses of this job can affect your home life, and vice versa. Marriage, substance abuse, and grief counseling are all part of peer support.

**What if I don’t want anyone to know that I need help?*

Any conversation with peer support, as well as the counselors/psychologists we partner with, is confidential. This means anything you share with us stays with peer support unless you give us permission to share.

**Who pays for counseling should I need it?*

We are working with each city’s HR and administration to ensure that you can see a professional when you need to, regardless of the cost.

**Who do I contact?*

You can contact any member of the peer support team, the duty chief, or the battalion chief, and we will work to meet your needs.



Our peer support team is primarily comprised of first responders from the Texoma area. All team members were trained by Dr. Tania Glenn & Associates, a very well-respected psychologist team whose experience includes working with the US military, border patrol, and many fire/police agencies throughout the country. First responders chaplains are also part of the team.

Dr. Una Starr has partnered with us to provide continuing education as well as counseling services for first responders in our area. Dr. Starr comes highly recommended by Dr. Glenn and has experience working with military and trauma survivors.

Contact Info:

Tania Glenn & Associates, PA

(512) 323-6994

www.taniaglennc.com

Dr. Una Starr

(903) 942-3577

DrUnaStarr@gmail.com

Jesse Kelly- Sherman Fire Rescue Chaplin

(903) 624-3717

Lantz Howard- Denison Fire Rescue Chaplin

(972) 658-4936



The purpose of TFRST is to prevent or lessen the potential negative impact of stress upon employees by providing emotional support, information, and assistance.

The program provides employees with psychological and emotional support through one-on-one discussions, pre-incident education, education on stress management, spousal/significant other support, on-scene support and demobilization intervention. TFRST is comprised of department members who have been specially trained in stress management, peer support, and crisis intervention techniques. Team members will work in conjunction with designated mental health professionals.

Contact Info:

Colby Rich-Sherman Fire Rescue Team Lead

(903) 227-2243

Gerald Pilkilton-Denison Fire Rescue Team Lead

(580) 434-2589

Kaitlyn Rose- TMC Team Lead

(903) 267-4176

Cody Hendricks- Van Alstyne Team Lead

(214) 726-2661

Rustin Reedy- Whitesboro Team Lead

(903) 327-6062

Brandon Hughes- Sherman PD Team Lead

(903) 267-2220

Crystal Arrington- Denison PD Team Lead

(903) 815-4372

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS/PTSD

First responders see and experience things that most people do not. Part of the job is responding to traumatic and emotional events. One way the body sometimes responds to these events is called a stress reaction. A stress reaction may occur after any traumatic event such as an injury, the loss of a loved one, a particularly gruesome call, incidents involving children, or a mass casualty incident. Because of training, as well as the body's response to stress, a first responder's reaction to the event is often delayed. Signs and symptoms could appear hours, days, or even weeks later.

Post-traumatic stress is normal. Part of peer support's job is to help first responders become aware of and deal with post-traumatic stress before it becomes PTSD.

Ways to relieve stress after an incident:

- Sleep/rest
 - Exercise
 - Avoid excessive alcohol consumption
 - Spend time with friends/family
 - Eat healthy meals
 - Maintain a "normal" schedule
-

CUMULATIVE STRESS/TRAUMA

Many first responders will never experience PTSD after a significant event, but the cumulative, or "built-up" stress of multiple events can be just as traumatizing. Where PTSD can be compared to climbing a hill with a heavy weight suddenly dropped on your back, cumulative stress is also like climbing a hill, but each call is a brick added to the weight you carry. Eventually, the weight can become too much. This is often called "burnout."

Events that may lead to burnout:

- Multiple traumatic calls
 - Repeatedly making similar calls
 - Feeling like you can't make a difference
 - Lack of sleep over an extended period
 - A feeling of a lack of support from supervisors/administration/coworkers
 - Normal life events that can lead to a stress reaction (marriage/family problems, personal injury, etc.)
-

SIGNS/SYMPTOMS OF A STRESS REACTION

Physical:

- Nausea/upset stomach/diarrhea
- Increased HR, BP, and breathing
- Headaches
- Changes in sleep

Emotional:

- Anxiety/fear/depression/sadness
- Anger/irritability
- Feelings of abandonment/isolation

Behavioral:

- Difficulty making decisions
- Difficulty remembering/concentrating
- Seeing event over and over
- Changes in eating patterns
- Increased use of tobacco/alcohol
- Any other changes to normal Personality

*If you or a coworker are experiencing any of these signs/symptoms, please contact peer support. We can't help if we don't know!
