

SHOUTOUT COLORADO

Meet Joanne Rupert MA, LPC, NBCC
Co-Founder / CEO & Senior Clinical Director
First Responder Trauma Counselors

September 26, 2023



We had the good fortune of connecting with Joanne Rupert and we've shared our conversation below.

Hi Joanne, what principle do you value most?

Our most valued principle is the premise that “there is no box... our limits are self imposed and we can be bigger than our perceived problems and more creative in our efforts to solve them.” At FRTC we value trust, integrity, transparency and accountability. What we say we will do, we follow through on.

Our first responders know they can trust us and count on us to be there for them. As former first responders ourselves, my husband and I know how they feel, as we have felt the same way. We understand; we “get them” and will be there to help them find their path. We are honest and transparent about who we are and hold ourselves accountable to our values.

As the operational leader of First Responder Trauma Counselors, I have come to believe that we have a holistic and far-reaching behavioral health practice that benefits not only our first responders and frontline workers, but also the citizens they serve. With that mindset, we understand that we are truly working in the best interest of the public; if our organization does its job well, the public as a whole benefits.





What should our readers know about your business?

First Responder Trauma Counselors was founded in 2008. At that time we were a small business but dedicated to doing the right thing. Being a counseling group of just 2 people (both first responders in our past lives), we made ourselves available to our first responders and frontline workers, 24/7-365.

First responders and frontline workers typically encounter thousands of civilians a year at the most traumatic moments of their lives. First responders have their own traumas – personal or family related – and experience difficulties in life just like everyone else. Add the compounding job-related trauma they experience daily as emergency service providers and, at times, it becomes really difficult to be 100% focused on the care of others.

We know how difficult it is for first responders and frontline workers to pick up the phone to ask for support. That phone feels like it weighs 10,000 lbs. If and when they do make the call, someone who truly cares and is culturally competent should be there to answer it.

To reduce the barriers to reaching out, we train first responders and frontline workers to be peer supporters for their brothers and sisters in every agency FRTC serves. These individuals attend our 40-Hour National Peer Support Academy to learn and practice effective peer support skills. Peer support can be helpful for anything ranging from having a “bad day” to having responded to a critical call. We have over 150 trained peer support individuals on our Regional Member Agency Peer Support Team, operating under the supervision of our Directing Clinical Supervisor. They are incredible people who are willing to be available to help their brothers and sisters, both while they are at work and on their days off. We couldn't do what we do if it weren't for our Regional Member Agency Peer Support Team members.

Our vision and mission have always been to provide an innovative service beyond traditional counseling to these courageous individuals. To earn their trust and respect, show them how much we genuinely care, and follow through on what we say we are going to do. Trust, Transparency, Accountability and Integrity – these are the values we strive to uphold. We do not innovate to compete; we innovate to change the breadth of behavioral health care for our population groups.

We know that the emergency service and frontline worker culture runs on a treadmill of trauma – it never stops and nor do we. We are the 911 for the 911.

FRTC has grown rapidly over the years. We now have nearly two dozen licensed counselors and more than 100 trained peer supporters. We recently developed a non-profit organization in 2022 – First Responder Trauma Services – to further expand our program and innovative resources for this incredible Tribe, and provide them at no direct cost to the employees of the agencies we serve.

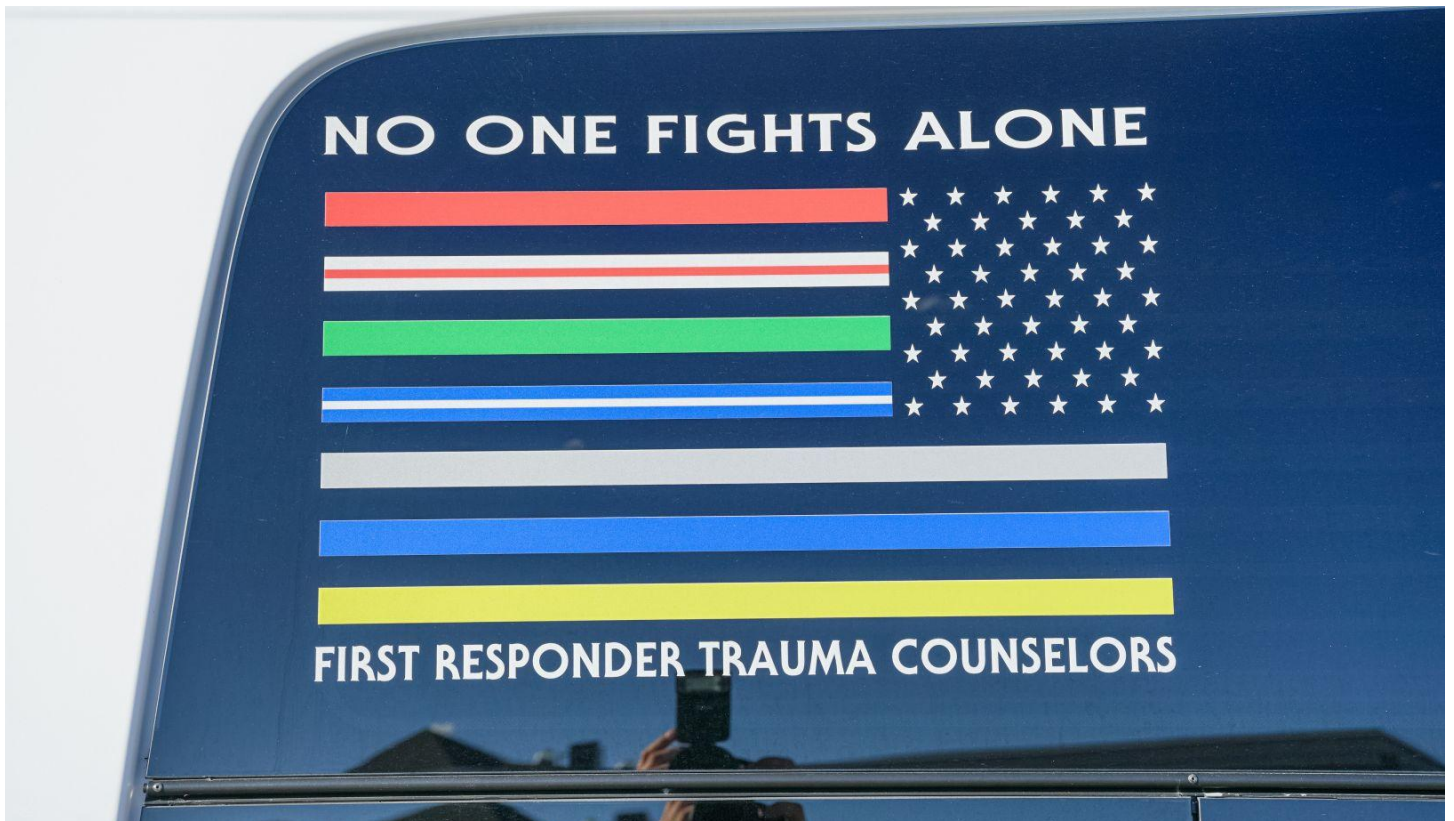


The Shoutout series is all about recognizing that our success and where we are in life is at least somewhat thanks to the efforts, support, mentorship, love and encouragement of others. So is there someone that you want to dedicate your shoutout to?

First Responder Trauma Counselors dedicate our life's work to the incredible individuals who put others before themselves every day despite the elements, the long shift hours, the lack of rest, and the repetitive exposure to trauma – all while working to balance family life. These first responders and frontline workers serve to protect the public, when citizens are experiencing some of the worst days of their lives. FRTC honors them, for without their trust in us, we would not be the organization FRTC has become today.

We are deeply committed to our mission of serving All Badges, All Uniforms, All Scrubs, All Together. Together® with our new non-profit, First Responder Trauma Services, frts501c3.com, we hope to further support the tireless efforts of this amazing Tribe and continue to provide for their behavioral health needs, 24/7-365.





Website: frts911.com

Facebook: First Responder Trauma Services

YouTube: First Responder Trauma Services

Other: 911overwatch.org

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