

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS**



IAFF Center of Excellence: Highlights

Dr. Abby Morris, Medical Director

December 12-13, 2022

IAFF Center of Excellence: Highlights

- Exclusively for current/retired IAFF members
- Dually licensed to treat mental health and addiction
- Average length of stay 4-5 weeks
- Daily boarding fees paid by IAFF
- In-network with most major insurance plans
- 18-month of aftercare monitoring
- Bi-weekly meeting/visits from IAFF team
- Total members treated to date-2524+
- Most common admission diagnoses
 - Alcohol use disorder
 - PTSD
 - Major Depressive Disorder/Dysthymia
 - Generalized anxiety/Social anxiety



Clinical Trends

- Sympathetic Tone/Fight or Flight
 - Sleep Deprivation/Exhaustion (on top of poor circadian rhythms)
 - Low T—feedback from adrenal system
 - Poor concentration/hypervigilance
 - High BP/HR, high blood sugars, excess body fat
- Sex/Porn addiction
- Moral Injury (PTSD has to do with FEAR, Moral injury to do with GRIEF)
 - COVID-19 exacerbated this
- Issues with legalization of Marijuana
 - Apathy
 - Impaired judgement



IAFF Center of Excellence II (West Coast)

- Located in Hemet, CA (Riverside County)
- Initial opening: 30-32 inpatient beds and 6 group rooms
- First phase - scheduled to open 2024
- **Wildfire academy** to include education and training, to operate independently of the 240-acre property



Take Aways for Fire Service Leaders

- **Be aware**
 - Check in, ask questions, don't be afraid to ask about changes/problems
- **Build a Brotherhood/Sisterhood in your department**
 - Connection builds resilience
 - Connection fights moral injury
 - Connection fights stigma
- **Bring yourself health and be a role model for change**
 - “If in the event the oxygen mask on this plane were to fall and you are traveling with someone who requires your assistance...”
- **Believe in the process of recovery and avoid shortcuts**



Exciting New Innovations—Now and Future

- Stellate Ganglion Blocks
 - close to 100 done with very positive results for pain and PTSD
- Sex Addiction Specialty Therapy (**SexRecoveryTherapy**)
- Sleep Apnea Assessment and Treatment (?)
- Ear Acupuncture for Detox Discomfort (?)



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Project ACCESS

Dr. Suzy Bird Gulliver
Warriors Research Institute
December 12-13, 2022

Project ACCESS

- Goal: To deliver the Unified Protocol for Transdiagnostic Treatment of Emotional Disorders (UP) to firefighters via live video calls.
- Over the course of this program, we have recruited 166 firefighters.



Project ACCESS

- Demographics
 - Average Age: 38.96 years old (SD 9.204)
 - Gender: 87.2% male
 - Hispanic: 16.3% Hispanic
 - Race: 87.3% white
 - Marital Status: 74.5% married
 - Rank : 36.2% officer, 42.9% FF, 20.9% other
 - Status: 83.4% paid, 7.4% volunteer, 9.2% both
 - Military: 10.9% veterans



Project ACCESS

- Probable Diagnostics Before Treatment

Measure	% Meeting Probable Diagnosis (N=164)
HRA-A (Alcohol Use)	45.1%
HRA-D (Drug Use)	7.9%
Beck's Anxiety Inventory (Generalized Anxiety Disorder)	16.6% moderate anxiety 2.5% severe anxiety
Beck's Depression Inventory (Depression)	46.9% mild depression 22.8% moderate depression 2.1% moderately-severe depression
PCL-5 (PTSD)	43.3%
SBQ-R (Suicidality)	30.4%



Project ACCESS

- ACCESS Pro-Bono
 - A subset of the ACCESS project that is ongoing.
 - Treating firefighters nationwide during the COVID-19 pandemic



Project ACCESS

ACCESS Pro-Bono Outcomes

Measure	Pre-Post Effect Size (N = 58)	Pre-1 Month Effect Size (N = 56)
PCL-5 (PTSD)	0.88 (Large)	1.02 (Large)
BDI-PC (Depression)	1.13 (Large)	0.99 (Large)
BAI (Anxiety)	0.46 (Medium)	0.60 (Medium)
WHOQOL - Psychological	0.95 (Large)	0.67 (Medium)
WHOQOL - Social	0.66 (Medium)	0.63 (Medium)
WHOQOL – Physical Health	0.80 (Large)	0.59 (Medium)
WHOQOL - Environmental	0.44 (Small)	0.34 (Small)
SBQ-R (Suicidality)	0.24 (Small)	0.11 (Small)
HRA-A (Alcohol Use)	0.12 (Small)	0.16 (Small)
HRA-D (Drug Use)	0.25 (Small)	0.09 (Small)



Project ACCESS

- Why telehealth works for Firefighters:
 - Significant reduction in clinical symptoms after treatment
 - Progress is maintained at 1-Month follow up
- Future of the Project
 - This project is still open to enrollment.



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Questions? Contact us!

Dr. Suzy Bird Gulliver

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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS



IAFF Clinician Training Program

Lauren Kosc, LCPC

Scott Robinson

December 12-13, 2022

Utilization of Behavioral Health Services

Despite high rates behavioral health problems in the fire service, services are often not utilized.

- 81% fear they will be seen as weak or unfit for duty
- 58% fear not being trusted by crew, if they ask for help
- 62% report behavioral health services are inadequate
- 71% report have never used their EAP



(NBC IAFF National Summary Survey, 2018)

Barriers to Service Utilization for Fire Fighters



1. Stigma persists (internal & external)
2. Lack of trust (administration & clinicians)
3. Lack of culturally competent care
4. More evidence-based treatment needed
5. Inadequate service delivery/ coordination

IAFF Clinician Training Program

Online Prerequisite
(2 hours self paced)

Classroom Education
(8 hours)



FIRE OPS 101
(8 hours)

Clinician Peer Consultation Group
(monthly)



Understanding the Fire Service for Mental Health Clinicians



Description

Understanding the Fire Service for Mental Health Clinicians is an online self-paced training intended for behavioral health clinicians interested in working with or treating fire service personnel. By providing a comprehensive overview of the firefighting occupation, this training will help clinicians build a strong therapeutic foundation when working with a fire fighter client. The training is also a prerequisite for the one-day clinician IAFF training, *Treating Fire Fighters in Behavioral Health Settings* (expected delivery is Fall 2022).

Developed by the IAFF

The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) is the largest labor union for fire service professionals, representing more than 325,000 members in the United States and Canada. This training was developed by a multidisciplinary team of licensed mental health providers and professional fire fighters, who are also licensed mental health clinicians.

Course Objectives

1. Describe the benefits of treating fire fighters in clinical practice.
2. Discuss the firefighting occupation and common job functions.
3. Identify personal qualities and values that shape a fire fighter.
4. Recognize fire fighters as a unique first responder subculture.
5. List additional fire service training opportunities for mental health clinicians.

Cost

There is no cost for this course.

Who should attend?

- Mental health clinicians who are interested in working with fire fighters in a clinical setting
- Mental health clinicians who provide clinical supervision to fire service peer support teams
- Employee assistance professionals who work with fire and rescue departments
- Healthcare providers who are interested in a deeper understanding of fire fighters

www.iaff.org/behavioral-health

How to Access the Course

- Go to the [course home page](#)
- Log in or create an account
- Click "Register Myself"
- Visit "<https://lms.iaff.org/my/>" to access "My Courses"

Questions?

Contact behavioralhealth@iaff.org

This program is approved by the National Association of Social Workers (Approval # 886882120-0522) for 1.5 continuing education contact hours.



- Launched July 2022
- Two-hour self-paced online course
- Free, open access
- Provides comprehensive overview of the fire service occupation and culture
- Approved for 1.5 CEUs from NASW
- 149 students completed (12 COE clinicians)
- To access, visit iaff.org/behavioral-health/ > Clinician Training

*As of 12/2/22

Treating Fire Service Members in Behavioral Health Settings

Treating Fire Service Members in Behavioral Health Settings

BETA CLASS
September 7-8, 2022
New Hampshire Fire Academy
98 Smokey Bear Blvd • Concord, NH 03301
7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.



This is a two-day, in-person training designed for mental health clinicians who are interested in working with fire service members. This training is ideal for licensed mental health clinicians working in private practice, behavioral health treatment programs, employee assistance programs, or those interested in collaboration with fire department peer support teams. Clinicians will develop best practices for working with fire service members through a combination of traditional classroom instruction and hands-on fireground training.

This training will teach clinicians to:

- Understand common behavioral health challenges in the fire service and barriers to help.
- Identify foundational principles for treating fire service members.
- Build a successful therapeutic alliance with a fire service client.
- Apply best practices to achieve positive treatment outcomes with a fire service client.
- Establish an effective connection with your local fire department or union.
- Gain direct exposure to fire and rescue operations through live fireground training (FIRE OPS 101).

Brought to you by the IAFF
This course is delivered by the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), the largest labor union for fire service professionals representing over 230,000 members in the United States and Canada. The classroom portion will be delivered by a licensed mental health clinician and a professional fire fighter with extensive behavioral health experience.

FIRE OPS 101: What to Expect
The purpose of FIRE OPS 101 is to safely expose clinicians to fireground operations through participation in live, structured training. Students will participate in four different fire and rescue scenarios and will be provided required personal protective equipment.

Training Prerequisite
Prior to attending this training, clinicians must complete the online prerequisite, *Understanding the Fire Service for Mental Health Clinicians*. This is a free two-hour, online, self-paced course that is approved for 1.5 credits from the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).

Registration Cost: FREE
Free overnight lodging available at the training academy.
Contact Deborah.A.Pondargues@OOS.NH.GOV to request a room.

Preregistration is Required
[Click here to register](#)
Deadline: August 19

Questions?
Host Point of Contact: Justin.A.Cutting@OOS.NH.GOV
IAFF Instructor Team: behaviors@iaff.org



www.iaff.org/behavioral-health

- Two day in-person training for mental health clinicians
 - One day didactic classroom
 - One day FIRE OPS 101
- Focused on best practices in treatment when working with fire service members
- Completed 2 beta classes in fall 2022, 49 clinicians trained
- Under final revision for Spring 2023 launch



Treating Fire Service Members in Behavioral Health Settings

- I. Introduction to Treating Fire Service Members
- II. Occupational and Homelife Stressors
- III. Mental Health Challenges and Disorders
- IV. Treatment Barriers and Bridges to Help
- V. Do's and Don'ts of Treating Fire Service Members
- VI. Building a Therapeutic Alliance
- VII. Delivering Effective Treatment
- VIII. Next Steps: Making a Connection



Occupational Stressors

- Shift work
- Staffing shortages
- Mandatory overtime
- Sleep deprivation
- Physical injury and illness
- Potentially traumatic exposure
- Organizational betrayal
- Crew member conflict
- Near misses
- Line of Duty Death (LODD)



Distinct Aspects of Fire Service Trauma

- “Suck it up buttercup” culture
- Cumulative exposure
- Reactivation of childhood trauma
- Reactivation of military trauma
- Workaholism as coping strategy
- Dual careers, dual exposure
- Organizational betrayal
- Learned detachment
- Nihilism or pessimism



FIRE OPS Preview



Clinician Fire OPS 101



Debrief

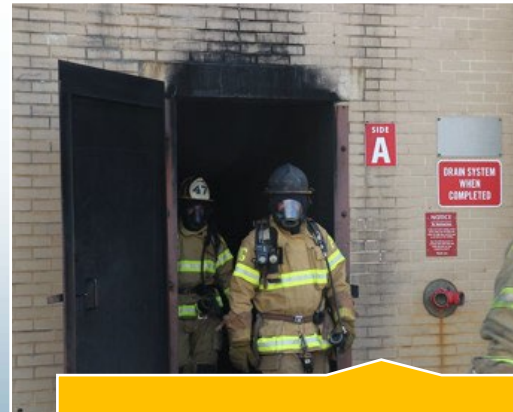
- How was the experience overall?
- What was most challenging?
- What were some of the thoughts, feelings, or stress you experienced?
- Were there any surprise takeaways?



EMS Scenario



Vehicle Extraction



Search and Rescue



Engine Operations
(Extinguishment)

Questions?

