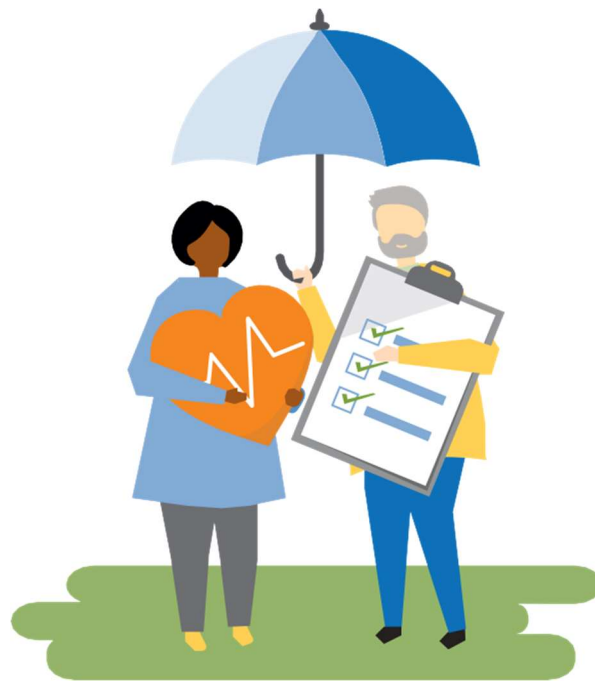


Post-Disaster Telehealth Checklist

Mental Health for First Responders





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ABOUT CTRC

The California Telehealth Resource Center (CTRC) offers no-cost, unbiased training, educational resources, and technical assistance to help California providers and patients get the most from telehealth. As the federally designated telehealth resource center for the region, we offer unbiased tools and services based upon proven telehealth practices. We create lasting change and improvement by focusing on implementation, sustainability, reimbursement and policy, integration, workflows, and patient/provider adoption.

As part of the National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers and the OCHIN family of companies, CTRC assists thousands of providers and patients annually. We have extensive experience supporting the health care safety net, rural and urban providers, and patients and families throughout California who would otherwise be unable to access quality health care due to geographic isolation, language/cultural barriers, lack of insurance, disability, homelessness, and more.



Mental Health Toolkit: First Responders

Natural disasters leave a trail of devastation, not just in physical landscapes, but also in the mental and emotional well-being of those who experience these and those who respond.

A sense of safety. Calmness. Connectedness. Hope.

Each of these is disrupted in each person and community differently.

While these disruptions are a natural response to uncommon situations, natural disasters are becoming more commonplace.

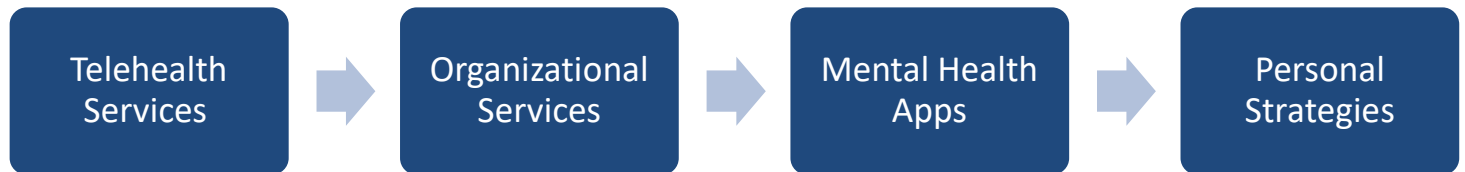
Therefore, it's imperative that first responders to natural disasters have the resources they need for work and themselves.

Value: Why Digital Health & Telehealth?

- **Accessibility:** Immediate support, regardless of location or time constraints.
- **Confidentiality:** Secure and private platforms for sensitive discussions.
- **Flexibility:** Adaptable to your demanding schedules and changing needs.
- **Resource Expansion:** Connection with a wider network of specialists.
- **Continuity of Care:** Minimize disruptions to needed care.



For First Responders: A General Digital and Telehealth Checklist for Wellness During and After Disaster Response



Telehealth Services

- **Identify telehealth providers specializing in trauma and disaster response:**
 - Check with your insurance or employer for covered telehealth services.
 - Look for providers offering video or phone consultations with licensed therapists or counselors.
- **Schedule regular telehealth check-ins:**
 - Proactive mental health maintenance is crucial, even when you feel "okay."
 - Establish a routine for virtual therapy sessions.
- **Access crisis hotlines and text lines:**
 - Save contact information for national and local crisis lines on your phone.
 - Utilize text-based crisis support for discreet and immediate assistance.
- **Explore virtual support groups:**
 - Participate in online group therapy sessions for shared experiences and coping strategies.
 - Look for groups that focus on first responder mental health, such as [A Guide to First Responder Peer Support Groups](#)



Organizational Resources

- **Familiarize yourself with your organization's employee assistance program (EAP):**

- Understand the digital and tele health resources offered through your EAP.
- Ensure you know how to access these services confidentially.

- **Participate in virtual debriefing sessions:**

- Engage in post-incident debriefing sessions conducted via telehealth.
- These sessions provide a structured space to process trauma and receive support.
- Engage in peer support and supervision

- **Reflect on secondary trauma**

- Utilize online resources to enhance your knowledge of trauma-informed care and self-care strategies.
- Look for webinars and online courses.

- **Participate** in your organization and community's Disaster Behavioral Health Planning including Psychological First Aid (PFA)

An **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** is a voluntary program offered through your employer that provides free and confidential services for things like financial problems, behavioral health, and emotional health.



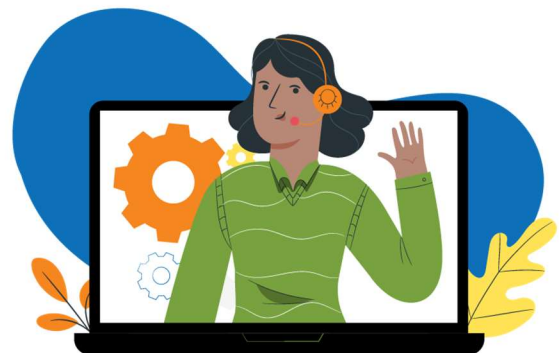
Mental Health Apps & Platforms as an adjunct to telehealth services

- **Download and familiarize yourself with evidence-based mental health apps:**

- Consider apps focusing on stress management, mindfulness, PTSD symptom reduction, and mood tracking (e.g., PTSD Coach, Headspace, Calm).
- Check if your organization offers access to specific mental health platforms with tailored resources.

- **Explore online peer support communities:**

- Look for platforms connecting first responders with shared experiences.
- Ensure the community is moderated and provides a safe space for dialogue.



Personal Strategies

- **Create a dedicated "digital wellness" space:**
 - Find a quiet and private space for telehealth sessions and digital self-care.
 - Minimize distractions and ensure a stable internet connection.
- **Set boundaries for digital usage:**
 - Limit exposure to distressing news and social media content.
 - Schedule "digital detox" periods to disconnect and recharge.
- **Integrate digital tools into your existing self-care routine:**
 - Use mindfulness apps during breaks or before bed.
 - Listen to guided meditation or calming music while commuting.
- **Share resources with colleagues:**
 - Help to reduce stigma by sharing information about the available resources.
 - Encourage team members to use digital health and telehealth services.

Remember: Your mental health is just as important as your physical safety. Digital health and telehealth resources are valuable tools for supporting your well-being during and after disaster response. **Prioritize self-care, reach out for help when needed, and utilize these resources** to build resilience and maintain your mental and emotional health.

California Resources for All Wildfire First Responders: Accessing Services to Support You During or After Wildfires

1. California-Specific Providers:

- West Coast Post-Trauma Retreat (WCPR) - Peer support retreats for California first responders <https://www.frsn.org/west-coast-post-trauma-retreat.html>
- EMDR for First Responders] (<https://www.emdria.org/blog/emdr-therapy-and-first-responders/>)

For Rural Communities:

- Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) Mental Health Resources [Health Care & Social Services - Rural County Representatives Of California](#)
- California First Responder Support Network <https://cfrst.org/>

2. Crisis Resources:

- California Peer Support Warm Line: 1-855-845-7415
- First Responder Crisis Support Line: 1-844-550-HERO
- CalHOPE Connect: 1-833-317-HOPE

3. Mental Health Apps for Wildfire

- PTSD Coach (<https://mobile.va.gov/app/ptsd-coach>) - Specific modules for disaster responders



- ❑ ResponderRel8 (<https://www.responderrel8.com/>) - Built by California first responders
- ❑ First Responder Resiliency (<https://www.responderstrong.org/>) - Tailored content for fire personnel

California Resources Specifically for Firefighters

1. Virtual Peer Support Programs:

- ❑ California Fire Foundation - Support services for firefighters
<https://www.cafirefoundation.org/what-we-do/for-communities/save>
- ❑ Sonoma County's Virtual Peer Support Groups for Fire Personnel
<https://fireadaptednetwork.org/sonoma-wildfire-mental-health-collaborative/>
- ❑ Los Angeles Fire Department's telehealth peer support

2. Specialized Training:

- ❑ [International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Certified Peer Support Training](<https://www.iaff.org/peer-support/>)

3. Partnership Opportunities:

- ❑ Join California Firefighter Joint Apprenticeship Committee (<https://www.cffjac.org/>)
- ❑ Partner with local fire departments for on-call services
- ❑ Collaborate with California Professional Firefighters
- ❑ California Professional Firefighters Behavioral Health Committee (<https://cpf.org/health-and-safety/behavioral-health>)

Successful Models in California:

- Marin County's integrated behavioral health program for firefighters
- San Diego Fire-Rescue Department's peer support telehealth
- Santa Clara County's virtual trauma debriefing sessions

- ❑ Partner with California fire departments' EAPs

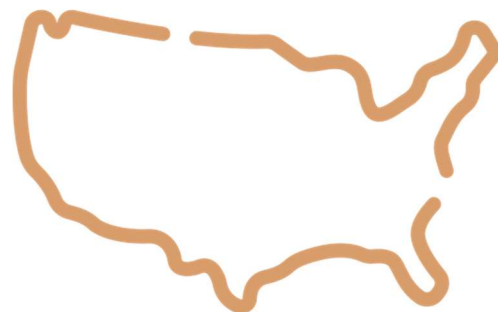
Additional Clinician Resources:

- ❑ California Behavioral Health Planning Council
(<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/MH/Pages/CBHPC-PlanningCouncilWelcome.aspx>)
- ❑ California Institute for Behavioral Health Solutions
(<https://www.cibhs.org/>)
- ❑ For technical assistance in expanding your practice, contact:
 - California Telehealth Resource Center: 1-877-590-8144
 - California Mental Health Services Authority:
info@calmhsa.org



National Resources

- **SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline (DDH):** 1-800-985-5990 or ddh@vibrant.org
- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** Call or text 988, or chat at 988lifeline.org
- **SAMHSA Disaster Technical Assistance Center (DTAC):** samhsa.gov/dtac 1-800-308-3515 or dtac@samhsa.hhs.gov
- **SAMHSA Disaster Mobile App:** Offers tools and resources for disaster responders.
- **Help Kids Cope Mobile App:** Developed by NCTSN to help children cope with disasters.
- [Tips and A Guide to Managing Stress for Disaster Responders and First Responders](#)
- [My Disaster Recovery](#)
- [55 First Responder Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Mental Health Resources to Support First Responders](#)
- [Essential Resources for Natural Disaster Recovery](#)
- [Alternative First Responders | TRANSFORM911](#)
- [Mental Health for First Responders: Addressing the Unique Challenges Faced by Our Everyday Heroes - Mindstate Psychology Blog](#)
- [First Responders and Mental Health: How We Can Support our Firefighters, Police Officers, and Emergency Medical Personnel - Relief Mental Health](#)
- [Crisis Resources - Integrated Telehealth Partners](#)
- [LA Wildfires: The Critical Need for Scalable Mental Health Solutions in Disaster Response - California Telehealth Resource Center](#)
- [Disaster Preparedness Plan as COVID, Wildfires & Hurricanes Surge](#)
- [Disaster Behavioral Health All-hazards Planning Guidance | SAMHSA Publications and Digital Products](#)
- [Essential Telehealth Resources: How To Prepare for Telehealth Emergency](#)
- [Essential Resources for Natural Disaster Recovery](#)
- [HHS emPOWER Program](#)
- [Responder Peer Support for Disasters | SAMHSA](#)
- [Recovery and Resilience Resource Library | FEMA.gov](#)
- [Home - Heal the Hero Foundation](#)
- [Behavioral Health - First Responder Center for Excellence](#)
- [Help & Resources – The Code Green Campaign](#)
- [First Responder PTSD: Coping and Healing](#)



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