

First Responder Treatment Services



Princeton House
Behavioral Health

Princeton HealthCare System

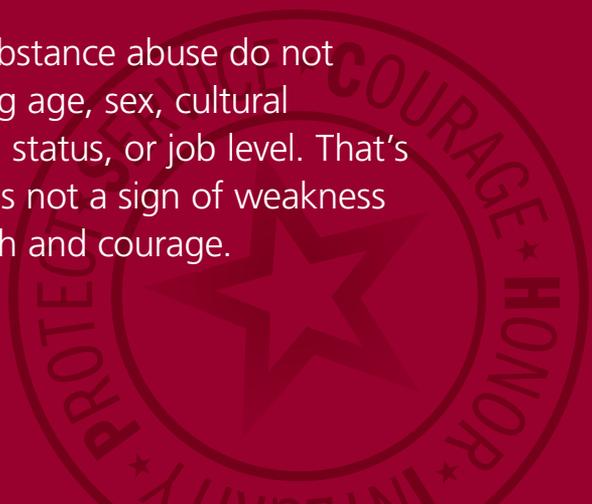
PRINCETON

Long hours, rotating shift work, and constant exposure to chronic stress impact the lives of First Responders like no other profession. First Responders see things on a daily basis that most people only see in the movies or on television. The average person can change a channel or shut the TV off. For First Responders, it's just another day on the job.



First Responders are always the first ones to keep us safe. We want to be the first ones to keep them safe from the possible impacts of the job. We understand that being in a chronic state of heightened awareness can lead many First Responders to unwind or detach by abusing alcohol or other substances. We know it's not easy to "flip the switch" after a long, difficult day.

Alcoholism and substance abuse do not discriminate among age, sex, cultural background, social status, or job level. That's why seeking help is not a sign of weakness but one of strength and courage.





First Responder Treatment Services

provides a full continuum of inpatient addiction and mental health specialty services within a confidential setting for law enforcement, firefighters, paramedics, emergency medical technicians, and military veterans/personnel. We are an acute care facility with medical and psychiatric services specifically designed to treat PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) and chronic and acute trauma associated with critical incidents that First Responders confront in the performance of their work.

Whether returning home from deployment, running into a burning house fire, investigating a gruesome homicide, or handling a motor vehicle accident or a prisoner assault on an officer, First Responders engage the danger when others seek safety.

This constant exposure to tragedy that a First Responder experiences and the stress that follows can have a devastating impact on a First Responder's family life. Long hours on the job and less time at home can lead to marital discord, domestic violence, financial problems, parenting and relationship issues, emotional unavailability, alcoholism and substance abuse, and sadly, suicide.

"Our vision to have a facility in New Jersey that would provide a full continuum of mental health services to all First Responders has become a reality. Dr. Bizzarro makes access and treatment services seamless for our membership."— Eugene M. Stefanelli, EdS, PhD, Clinical Services Coordinator, NJ State PBA



We Can Help

The stigma that many First Responders expect to experience if they seek assistance is becoming obsolete as advances in medical and behavioral health treatment are evolving. We are here to help those in trouble and to help repair the damage through professional treatment.

As with any medical problem, the sooner you reach out for help, the earlier you can begin treatment. You do not have to be “in a jam” before seeking help. Early intervention—whether from a brother or sister First Responder, family member, or supervisor—can help you interrupt the problem and lead to new ways to cope with on-the-job stress. You will not be alone as you take this important first step. We will listen to your concerns without judgment. We will help you to heal and move forward with confidence.

Our First Responder Treatment Services are confidential and completely private from the beginning of treatment until you return to your work and home. Your supervisor and brothers/sisters at work will not have to know that you have turned to us for treatment.

Your Circle of Support

Alcoholism and substance abuse strike a First Responder’s entire family. Family participation is an important component of inpatient treatment, and it is crucial to a First Responder’s recovery. We strongly encourage family members to visit their loved ones in recovery and to attend group therapy and psychoeducation sessions.



Your Return to Work and Community

Every First Responder is a valued member of his/her department. That's why helping a First Responder seek treatment is not only the right thing to do, but is also in the best interest of the department. The cost benefit to both the First Responder and the department supports treatment as opposed to hiring and training a new recruit. More importantly, by being your brother's/sister's keeper, you could assist in saving a life.

When it is time for a First Responder to return to his/her community, a recommendation will be made for follow-up care. We also refer to community outpatient providers and can help First Responders locate a 12-step program or "Bottles & Badges" support group near his/her home.

We coordinate each First Responder's re- to work with a telephone call to his/her department, corps, or union liaison to ensure that all requirements for a smooth transition are met.

"This program saved my life."

— Ron T., First Responder





Each First Responder's Care Includes:

- Comprehensive evaluation
- Assessment and treatment of co-existing medical and psychiatric conditions
- Individualized treatment plan
- Individual and group therapy
- Family therapy and psychoeducation
- Evidence-based practices integrated with traditional 12-step recovery-based programming
- 24-hour, 7-day-a-week nursing coverage
- Psychotropic medication management, as needed
- Nutrition counseling
- Expressive therapies (art, music, and movement)
- Fitness gym

"Under our uniforms, we are human beings. The stress and demands of our job are not always physical in nature. Princeton House Behavioral Health provides the support and resources our career firefighters, EMTs, and dispatchers need to overcome the challenges of mental stressors and addiction."— Ed Donnelly, President, NJFMBA

First Responder Treatment Services Team



Michael Bizzarro, PhD, LCSW, BCD

Director of Clinical Services for First Responder Treatment Services

A lifelong resident of New Jersey, Dr. Michael Bizzarro received his master's degree in social work from Rutgers University and his PhD in clinical social work from the Institute for Clinical Social Work in Chicago. Early in his career, he served in the U.S. Army Reserve and later as a police officer. He has been working with first responders for more than 20 years.

Iris Perlstein, LCADC, LPC, ATR-BC

Director of Allied Clinical Therapies,
Clinical Specialist for First Responder Treatment Services

A licensed clinical alcohol and drug addiction counselor, licensed professional counselor, and board certified registered art therapist, Ms. Perlstein received her master's degree in professional studies from Pratt Institute in New York City. She specializes in trauma treatment, with additional expertise in addiction recovery interventions.

Jim Schneider

Peer Support Specialist for First Responder Treatment Services

Mr. Schneider is a retired lieutenant who served 30 years with the Westfield Police Department and was a member of Westfield PBA Local 90. He received his bachelor's degree in criminal justice from John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Mr. Schneider served four years in the U.S. Army as a military police officer. He has been involved in addiction recovery for more than 20 years.

Ken Burkert

Senior Outreach Coordinator for First Responder Treatment Services

Mr. Burkert is a 25-year retired corrections officer and former Chairman of the New Jersey State PBA Peer Assistance Response Team (PART). He is a liaison to first responder organizations, facilitating the smooth transition of first responders to PHBH's First Responder Treatment Services and their outpatient care within the community.



**Princeton House
Behavioral Health**
Princeton HealthCare System

Redefining Care

**First Responder
Treatment Services**

**800.242.2550
princetonhouse.org**

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A wide variety of insurance plans are accepted. Medicaid and Medicare are also accepted for most programs. Please check with our sites about specific programs available at each location.

Transportation may be available for partial and intensive outpatient programs. Please check with the individual sites regarding pick-up coverage and availability.

Licensed by The State of New Jersey.

University Medical Center of Princeton and the clinical units of Princeton HealthCare System are accredited by The Joint Commission.