



# Behavioral Health Access Programs (BHAP)

Effective Mental Wellness Practices for the Workforce

## Miami Herald:

# “Businesses can save lives and money by creating workplaces to support employees’ mental health”

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*The Surgeon General says there is a need to focus on employee mental health.*

- *76% of U.S. workers report at least one symptom of a mental health condition.*
- *84% of those reporting mental health symptoms believe their workplace is a contributing factor.*
- *81% of employees will be looking for workplaces that support mental health in the future.*

# Educational Curriculum Requirements

- Florida Statute 633.408 - Firefighter and volunteer firefighter training and certification
- Rule 69A-37.055 Curriculum Requirements for Training Firefighter Recruits or Firefighters
- Firefighter I curriculum currently requires 19 hours of training for Safety, Health and Wellness

# Ties to Instructors

- Must be the right instructor for the curriculum being taught
- What to do if you do not have the right instructor in this area
- Know your local resources which may be within your own agencies
- Action plan in place at your facility/dept to handle mental health issues that may arise

# Who Should Receive This Training?

- New Recruits (Fire, EMS and Emergency Communications)
- Current Firefighters, EMS Providers and Emergency Communicators
- Safety, Health and Wellness Officers
- Company Officer (Supervisors)
- Chief Officers
- Leadership (Risk / HR)

# ICS for Mental Wellness

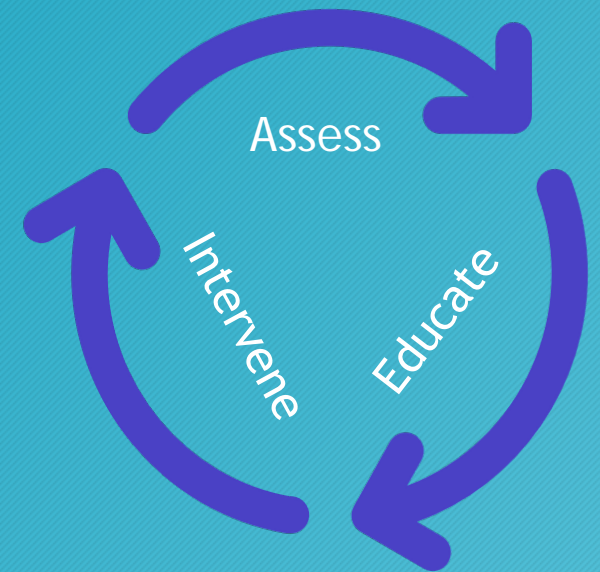
## Behavioral Health Access Programs (BHAP)



# Introduction

BHAP is a comprehensive employee mental health/wellness and crisis intervention program. BHAP aims to assess, educate, minimize the impact of stress, improve quality of life, and return employees experiencing challenges to a healthy, productive state.

BHAP operates under the Safety, Health, and Wellness Committee (SHWC). The Safety, Health, and Wellness Officer/manager implements and manages the program. BHAP programs are intended to be available for any incident 24 × 7 × 365, within two (2) hours after a critical incident or when services are requested.



# EAP to BHAP

- Most organizations offer behavioral health interventions through Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) or commercial insurance policies.
- This is a one size fits all approach.
- You never know who you are going to get as a resource.
- Employees often report disappointment and frustration and discontinue services with counselors who are not familiar with a first responder's lifestyle or an organization's culture.



# The purpose of BHAP is to minimize the unhealthy impact of stress!

- BHAP can be overwhelming at first glance to agencies with few mental health resources in place. However, the framework exists and is available to you.
- Agencies can partner to share resources.
- BHAP is not all or nothing; it can be built component by component.
- BHAP gives you control of the choices you have for your mental health.
- BHAP gives you the ability to pre-screen and choose who is going to be part of your program.

# Recognition of BHAP

- BHAP is a recognized model by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) and is becoming a world standard of care for first responders.
- BHAP is recognized by the International Journal of Emergency Services as a best-practice behavioral health model.
- The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has begun to outline requirements for BHAP programs. The NFPA Standard 1500, Chapter 12, requires organizations to provide a Behavioral Health Program, including counseling resources and programs to fire service members and families.
- The State of Florida has adopted the BHAP model and has built it into the statewide emergency response plan (SERP).



SAFETY AND HEALTH  
COLLABORATIVE



# Safety, Health, and Wellness Lead

- The Safety, Health, and Wellness lead manages all aspects of BHAP.
- This person must have support at all levels, no matter their position in the organization.
- Once up and running, the program requires administration, updating of information, and analysis of the effectiveness of its various components.
- This is a living program, constantly evolving.

# Safety, Health, and Wellness Committee

- The Safety, Health, and Wellness Committee is designed to bring workers and management together in a non-adversarial, cooperative effort to promote safety and health in the workplace.
- The committee is responsible for ensuring BHAP stays up to date and continues to meet the needs of those covered.

# Mental Wellness Practices, Policies and Procedures

- Practices, policies, and procedures must be in place to govern BHAP.
- These are crucial for the sustainability and consistency of the program.

# Traumatic or Critical Incident

- We do not define what is a traumatic incident or a critical incident for an individual. This is very personal to the person experiencing it.
- Examples of incidents: loss of a parent, sibling, or co-worker. Issues in a relationship or with a child. For first responders, examples can range from a single unit response to a mass casualty event.
- Our first responders are more likely to experience a traumatic or critical incident. However, this does not exclude the rest of your workforce or their families.

# Debilitating Critical Incident (DCI)

Debilitating Critical Incident(s) can be a single acute incident or the cumulative effect of multiple traumatic incidents that may be a contributing factor to the first responders' transition from the acute stress injury phase to functional decline.

# Examples of DCI

- Significant injury or death of a member of the organization
- Pediatric injury or death
- Large Scale/Long Term Event with or without loss of life (natural, man-made, or technological disaster, ASHER event, etc.)
- Multiple youth fatalities or violence to a minor
- Events with severe operational challenges
- Line-of-duty death or line-of-duty injury
- Officer involved shooting



# Examples of DCI, continued

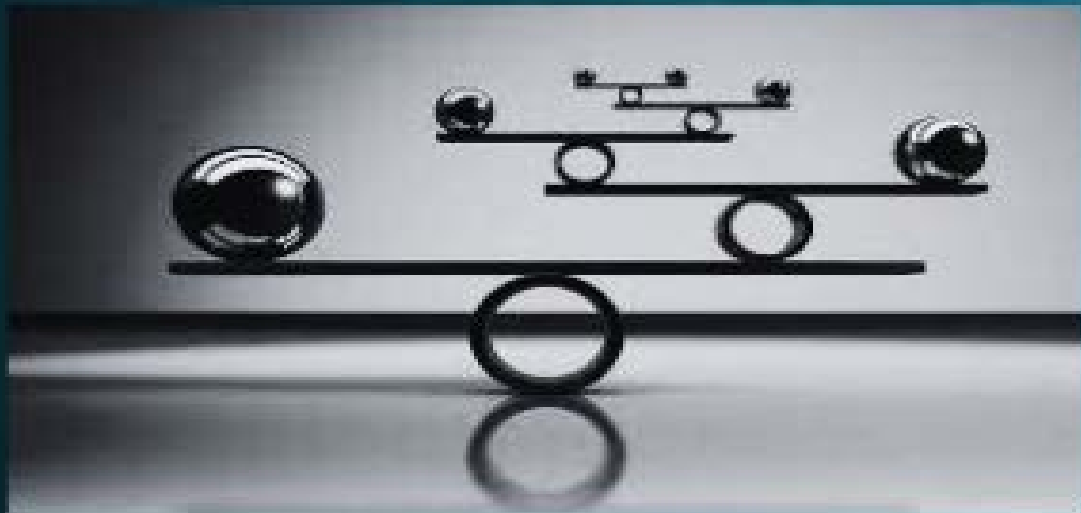
- Off-duty death, suicide, homicide, or injury
- Events with multiple or mass casualties
- Events when the victim(s) is (are) known
- Events with excessive media interest
- Serious injury or death of a civilian resulting from organizational operations (e.g., vehicle accidents or structure fires)
- Any incident that could perceivably cause an emotional impact
- First responder involved in an accident with traumatic injuries

# Seeking Help

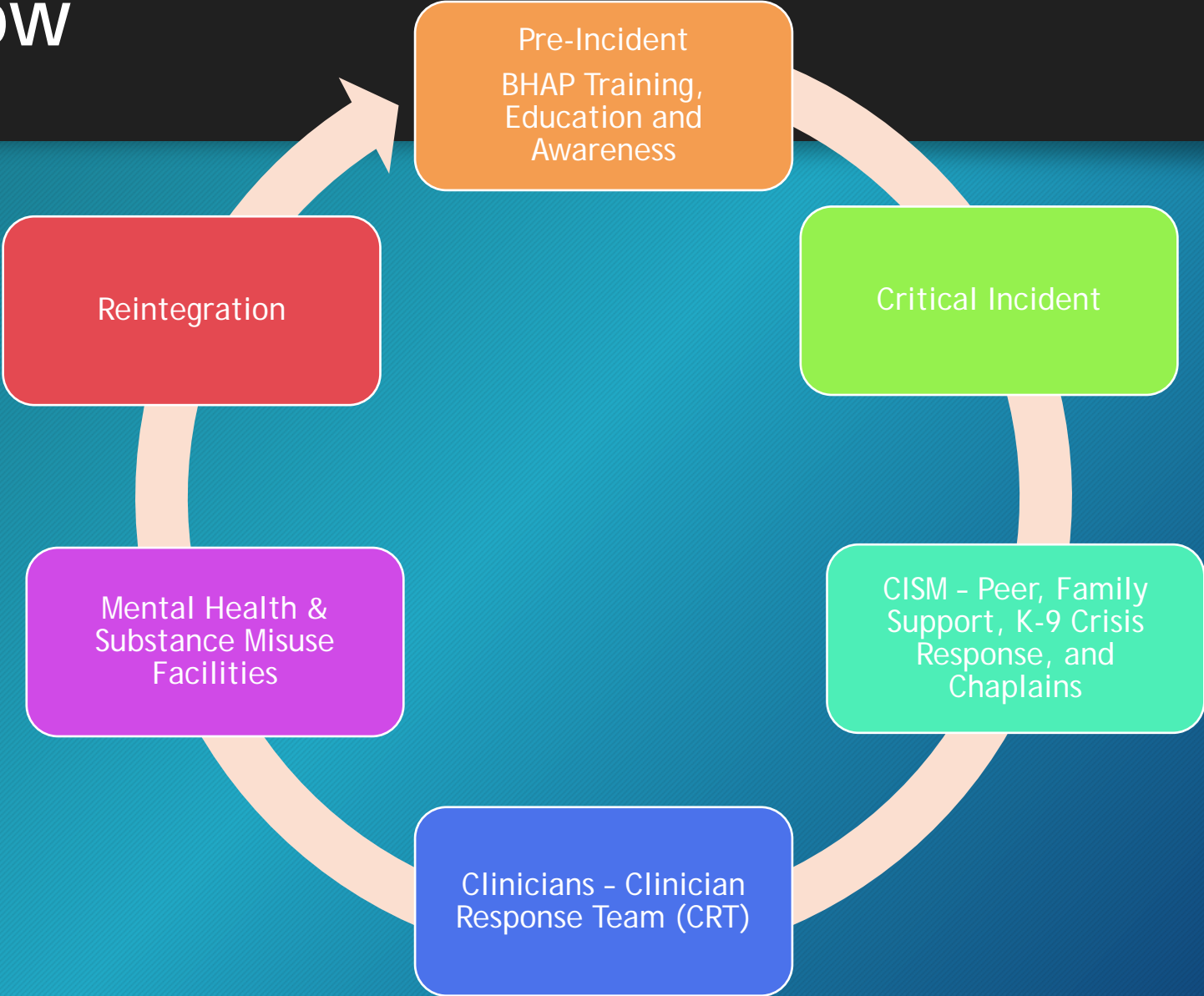
- Combined with the stigma surrounding help-seeking behaviors, lack of systematic resource and referral programs, and other barriers to care, your personnel may not routinely receive a continuum of evidence-based assessment and treatment services from trained mental health professionals.
- They may also be hesitant to ask peers for assistance.

# Components of BHAP

1. Leadership
2. CISM
3. Trained Clinician Response Team
4. Chaplaincy
5. Peer Support Team
6. Family Support
7. Recovery Centers
8. Retiree Inclusion
9. Behavioral Health Awareness Education
10. Financial Wellbeing
11. Effective Insurance Coverage
12. Employee Assistance Programs
13. Confidentiality
14. K-9 Response



# BHAP Flow



# Resources



<https://2ndalarmproject.org>



<https://ucfrestores.com>



<https://www.strugglewell.com>



<https://redlinerescue.org>

# Educational Curriculum



## Firefighter Mental Health Training Videos & Resources

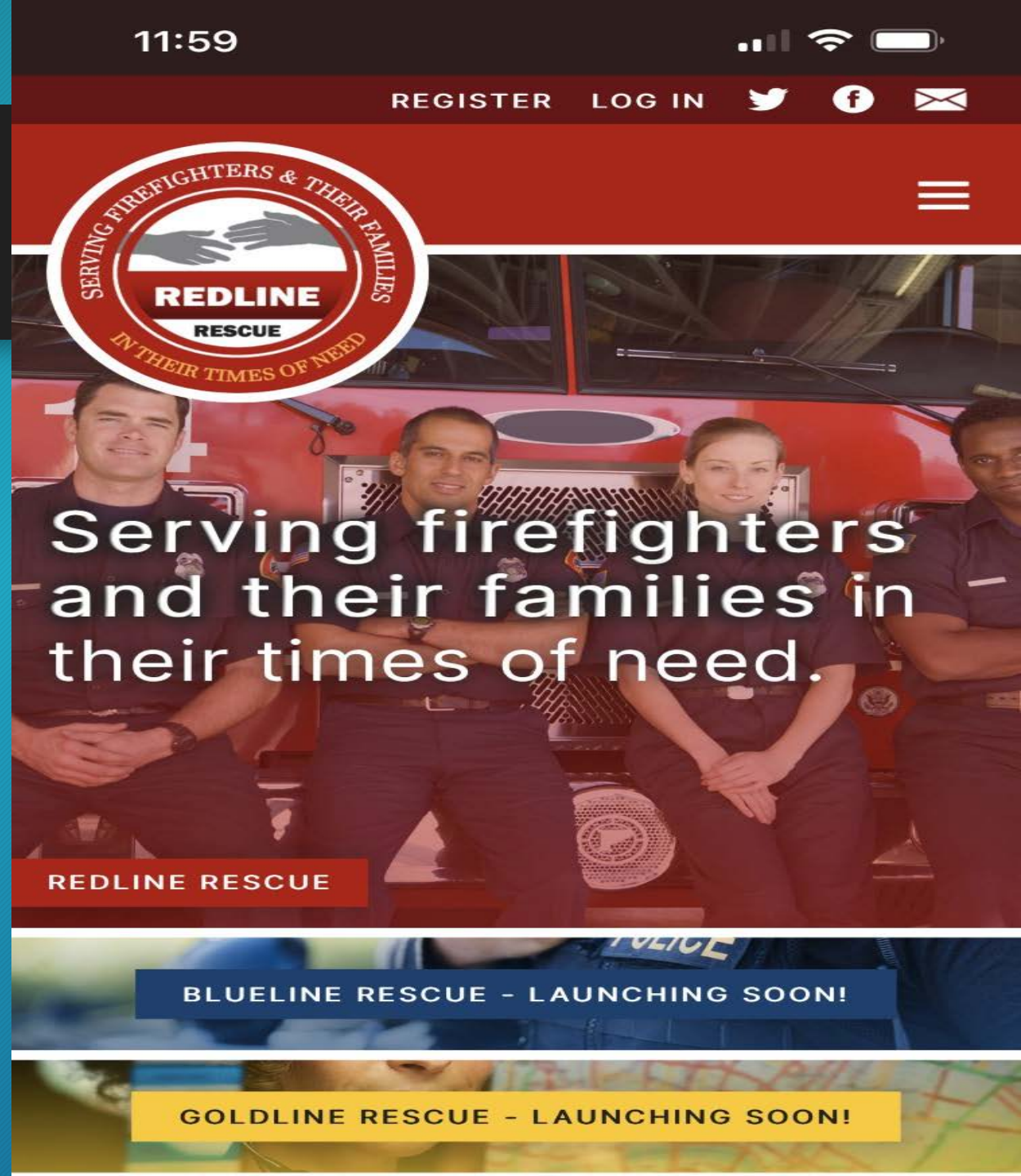
<https://www.myfloridacfo.com/division/sfm/mht-videos>

<https://www.myfloridacfo.com/division/sfm/bfst/safety/safety-links>

# Redline/BlueLine Rescue

<https://redlinerescue.org>

<https://bluelinerescue.org>

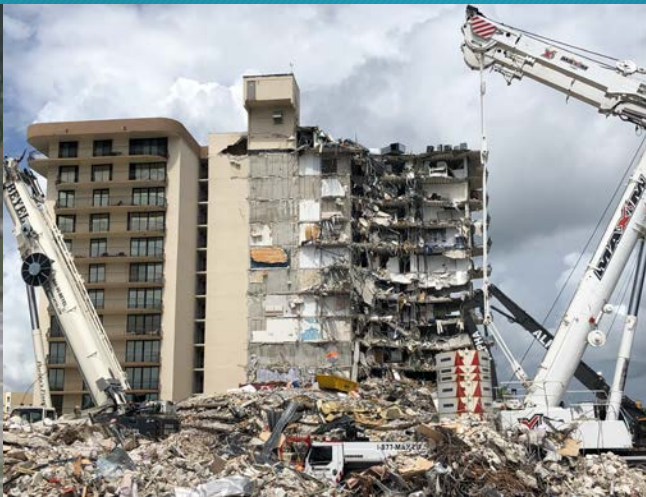






# Case Studies

- MSD Shooting
- Champlain Towers South Collapse (Surfside)
- Hurricane Ian
- Hurricane Idalia



## BHAP Access

Employers should have a dedicated website for their employees to access the BHAP resources.

Cities that have established a dedicated website for mental health resources include the following:

The City of Coral Springs – [www.CoralSpringsStrong.org](http://www.CoralSpringsStrong.org)

Orlando Firefighter's Peer Support Team – [www.ofdstrong.com](http://www.ofdstrong.com)

The City of Tamarac - <https://www.tfrstrong.org/programs>

The City of Palm Beach Gardens - <https://pbgfrwellness.com>

# Confidentiality

All BHAP and Peer Support interventions and interactions are strictly confidential.

- All interventions contained within the BHAP and all Peer Support interactions, regardless of type, as strictly confidential.
- Notes, other than those specifically identified in this policy, are prohibited.
- No audio or video recording may be made without the express consent of all participants.

# BHAP Toolkit

