

ACTIONS TO HELP YOURSELF

Keyed up or anxious? Try Tactical Breathing

- Inhale for 4 seconds.
- Hold for 7 seconds.
- Exhale for 8 seconds.

Do this for 6-7 rounds or until you feel anxiety lessening.

Overwhelmed?

- Identify priorities and figure out what needs to be done first.
- Break tasks down into manageable steps.
- Don't hesitate to reach out to people or agencies that can help. You don't have to do it alone.

Having trouble sleeping?

- Try to stick to a regular bedtime.
- Avoid napping after 4:00 p.m. to keep your sleep schedule on track.
- Skip the caffeine in the evening—it'll keep you up.

Using alcohol or drugs to cope or sleep?

- Alcohol might make you pass out, but it won't give you real rest. It messes with the natural sleep process, leaving you feeling worse in the morning.

Taking care of yourself, mentally and physically, is as important as taking care of your gear. Don't let the stress pile up—use these tools to get back to feeling like yourself.

TALKING TO CHILDREN

If your child is aware of the loss, there are ways you can help them cope:

- Limit their exposure to media about the event.
- Ask them if they want to talk about what happened and let them guide the conversation. Be honest, but keep it simple and leave out the graphic details.

Kids don't always sit down and open up like adults do. Conversations often happen while doing something else—whether it's playing basketball, coloring, or even just driving together. Use these moments to start the conversation. Let your child know it's okay to talk about what happened, but don't push them to open up if they're not ready.

ACCESS TO PEER SUPPORT AND MENTAL HEALTH

Clinicians and Peer Support

Red Line Rescue www.redlinerescue.org

UCF RESTORES Main Line 407-823-3910

Single Session Consultation 407-823-1657

www.ucfrestores.com

Crisis Lines

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline dial 988

Crisis Text Line text 741741



BHAP
Toolkit



Stress
Management
Videos



IN THE WAKE OF LOSS

THE LOSS OF A FIRE SERVICE MEMBER IS PROFOUND, AND MAY IMPACT EVERYONE IN THE COMMUNITY. FEELING SAD, ANGRY, CONFUSED OR HURT ARE NORMAL HUMAN REACTIONS TO THIS LOSS. IT IS A STARK REMINDER OF THE NEED FOR BOTH INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE ACTIONS TO HEAL.

REACTIONS TO LOSS

If you've been impacted by loss, it's normal to struggle. You might find it hard to sleep, have nightmares, or lose your appetite. Your mind may keep replaying the event, and you might feel anxious, on edge, or unable to relax. It's possible to suddenly feel like the event is happening all over again.

Right after something like this, these reactions are to be expected. Your mind is trying to process what happened, and that takes time.

For many, recovery and resilience will develop over time. Just as the body heals after an injury or surgery, the mind also has the capacity to heal. In the weeks and months ahead, most people will begin to feel more like themselves as emotions stabilize and the healing process continues. It can be difficult, but it is a natural part of the journey.



REACH INTO YOURSELF

Doing the job well means keeping equipment in good shape so it's ready when it matters. Some problems are easy to fix alone. Others call for help from the crew, and sometimes only an expert can get things working again. Physical and emotional health work the same way. Staying aware of mental and physical needs is important. A small adjustment—more rest, better meals—may be enough on some days. On others, reaching out to a trusted colleague or a professional can provide the support that's needed.

Fire service members are often trained to be strong and self-reliant, but that doesn't mean every challenge must be handled alone. When stress builds and things feel overwhelming, support is available, and difficult moments don't have to last. It can be hard to ask for help, especially for those who are usually the helpers, but doing so is not a weakness. It takes strength to acknowledge the need for support. Reaching out is a courageous step, and one that should always be encouraged.



REACH OUT TO OTHERS

Checking in on personal well-being is important, but it is equally vital to stay connected with others in the first responder community. Watching out for one another, paying attention to signs that someone may be struggling, and not accepting "I'm fine" at face value can make a meaningful difference. Colleagues often understand each other better than anyone else, and sometimes "I'm fine" is actually a way of asking, "Can I trust you?" or "Will you understand what I'm going through?"

When someone's having a tough time, it's important to be persistent—but not pushy. Small acts of kindness and support—listening without judgment, encouraging them to seek help, or just being there—can make all the difference. Reaching out more than once, even when they don't ask for it, might be the lifeline someone needs. Letting someone know you care, and that you're there for them, can mean more than we realize.