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## Occupational Awareness Training for Therapists

### *Understanding First Responder Trauma*

#### **Who Should Take this Course?**

This course is designed for any mental health professional interested in expanding their skill set in treating fire fighters within a clinical setting. While this course has been designed with fire fighters in mind, much of the course content may be helpful for clinicians working with other first responder professions, which may include police officers, paramedics, dispatchers and corrections staff.

#### **Two-Day Intensive Course Goals:**

- Familiarize therapists with the daily routine of professional fire fighters including overviewing the nature of emergency responses and call volume.
- Assist clinicians in understanding the modern challenges of firefighter subculture.
- Increase clinician confidence and competency in developing a sustained working relationship with firefighter clients, leading to lasting retention and goal achievement.
- Overview the latest neuroscience research and clinical implications of trauma exposure.
- Familiarize therapists with common coping strategies that fire fighters utilize.
- Assist clinicians in recognizing the signs and symptoms of maladaptive responses and ineffective coping strategies from a first responder culturally-specific perspective.
- How to enrich therapeutic effectiveness through understanding Peer Support Programs.

#### **Day 1: (9:00am-4:30pm)**

**Session 1:** How First Responder Subculture Impacts the Counselling Experience

**Session 2:** Building a Therapeutic Alliance

#### **Day 2: (9:00am-4:30pm)**

**Session 3:** Exploring Occupational Stress Injuries and the Medical Disorder Approach

**Session 4:** Developing Strategies that Foster Hope and Meaning

#### **How to Register:**

Registration can be made through Eventbrite by following this link: [Occupational Awareness Training](#)

Contact [matt@centeredlifestyle.com](mailto:matt@centeredlifestyle.com) for more information.



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## About the Presenters:



*"Matt Johnston has pioneered scientifically grounded and clinically effective trainings for therapists and others who work with first responders - a wonderfully important and timely contribution."*

*Rick Hanson, Ph.D. – Author of Resilient: How to Grow an Unshakable Core of Calm, Strength, and Happiness*

**Matt Johnston** is a trained mental health clinician and full-time professional fire fighter in Metro Vancouver. Matt began his private practice in 2007, operating Centered Lifestyle Services where he specialized in understanding how trauma impacts the human mind from child to adulthood. Applying his mental health background to a fire hall culture, Matt has developed a unique approach that bridges the cultural gap between the counselling profession and first responders.

Matt is an active member in the critical incident stress management community. He is a published writer on the topics of vicarious trauma and the impact secondary trauma has on first responder mental health. He is consulted by a variety of emergency service organizations provincially and has trained hundreds of individuals on how to proactively manage their psychological health and well-being.



**Captain Steve Farina** began his career with Coquitlam Fire Rescue in 1997. He was elected to the executive board of IAFF Local 1782 in 2005 and was promoted to Captain in 2015. Steve is the Lower Mainland Vice President of the [BC Professional Firefighters Association](#) ("BCPFFA") and currently chairs the BCPFFA's Mental Health Task Force. Steve represents the BCPFFA on WorkSafe's First Responder Task Force on Mental Health and also Chairs the BCPFFA's Occupational Health and Safety Committee. Steve is part of Coquitlam Fire Rescue's Critical Incident Stress Team and has led a multitude of critical incident defusings. Steve serves as a Peer Supporter for his co-workers and has hosted several mental health awareness nights for firefighter spouses and partners.



**Captain Scott Young** is a 21-year firefighter with Coquitlam Fire Rescue. Scott serves as the Chaplain, CISM coordinator and Peer Support Team coordinator for IAFF Local 1782. He is an ordained minister in Canada and a Certified Trauma Responder. Scott also serves on the board of the BC Association of Fire Chaplains and is a member of the BCPFFA Mental Health Task Force. Scott is passionate about building resiliency in firefighters through promoting community-based services including mental health resources.

Contact [matt@centeredlifestyle.com](mailto:matt@centeredlifestyle.com) for more information.