

Clinician Vetting Questionnaire

We are looking for clinicians who understand the cultural, occupational, and emotional landscape of first responder work. This includes trauma-informed care, an understanding of systemic dynamics (such as peer culture, stigma, and chain of command), and a demonstrated commitment to cultural humility and continued learning. Candidates should be able to speak to their experience supporting individuals in high-stakes roles and their strategies for promoting resilience and reducing burnout.

1) Assess Clinical Background & Experience

- **Direct Experience:** Ask if the clinician has worked directly with first responders or military personnel.
- **Specializations:** Look for training in trauma, PTSD, grief, crisis response, and substance use—common issues in this population.
- **Modalities Used:** Ensure they're familiar with evidence-based treatments effective for this group (e.g., EMDR, ART, CBT, CISM-informed).

Questions to ask:

- What experience do you have working with first responders?
- What treatment modalities have you found most effective for this population?

2) Evaluate Knowledge of First Responder Culture

- **Awareness of Role Stressors:** Clinicians should understand shift work, critical incidents, departmental politics, chain of command, and hypervigilance.
- **Familiarity with Identity Issues:** Including reluctance to seek help, stigma, and the role of camaraderie and dark humor.

Questions to ask:

- How do you tailor your approach to the culture and values of law enforcement/fire/EMS/etc.?
- How do you address the stigma associated with seeking help in this population?

3) Confirm Trauma-Informed & Systems-Savvy Practice

- **Trauma-Informed Lens:** Can they explain how trauma may manifest differently in first responders (e.g., moral injury, somatic symptoms)?
- **Systems Understanding:** Are they aware of the occupational risks (e.g., mandatory reporting, department referrals, fit-for-duty implications)?

Questions to ask:

- How do you manage confidentiality and trust when treating first responders?
- Can you speak to the impact of cumulative trauma versus single incident trauma?

4) Review Professional Affiliations and Training

- What licensures/certifications do they have?
- What trainings have they taken (and what have they been trained in specifically related to working with first responders)?