



UCF

RESTORES

LIVES + FAMILIES + COMMUNITIES

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Restoring Hope



A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Starting out in 2019, from expanding our scope of service within the first responder community, to forging new partnerships that strengthened our research capabilities and clinical services, to managing outreach initiatives that heightened our national profile, our dedicated team expanded our impact in many ways ...

TRAUMA TREATMENT:

- UCF RESTORES provides evidence-based treatment, combining exposure therapy, emerging technology, one-on-one and group therapy sessions, with results superior to national first-line treatment outcomes for those suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- To-date, UCF RESTORES has treated 500 veterans and active duty personnel, 333 first responders (including firefighters, law enforcement, emergency medical technicians and paramedics, medical personnel and emergency dispatchers), as well as survivors of sexual assault and mass violence, including the Pulse nightclub, Las Vegas and Parkland mass shootings.

PEER SUPPORT AND RESILIENCY TRAINING:

- Understanding that our front-line heroes – those in the military or first responder professions – are more likely to open up to peers with similar experiences, background and history, UCF RESTORES provides daylong workshops through its REACT training program. Here, first responders learn to recognize signs of emotional distress, offer peer-level support and effectively coordinate follow up when clinical assistance is warranted.
- In 2019, UCF RESTORES hosted 18 REACT trainings, engaging with more than 200 participants.

CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE:

- UCF RESTORES is often asked to provide mental health support after a critical incident. Among the 20 incidents to which we responded in 2019 were the loss of two firefighters at sea (Jacksonville) and a mass shooting at a Naval Air Station (Pensacola). In 2019, our organization provided 115 hours of critical incident debriefing and mental health support to first responders.

None of this would be possible without the continued support of the UCF administration, state and federal legislators, community partners and generous donors. The funding we receive, the partnerships we share and the relationships we form help us advance the achievement of our core mission: Restoring Lives, Families and Communities.

Deborah C. Beidel, Ph.D., ABPP

Director, UCF RESTORES®

Trustee Chair and Pegasus Professor

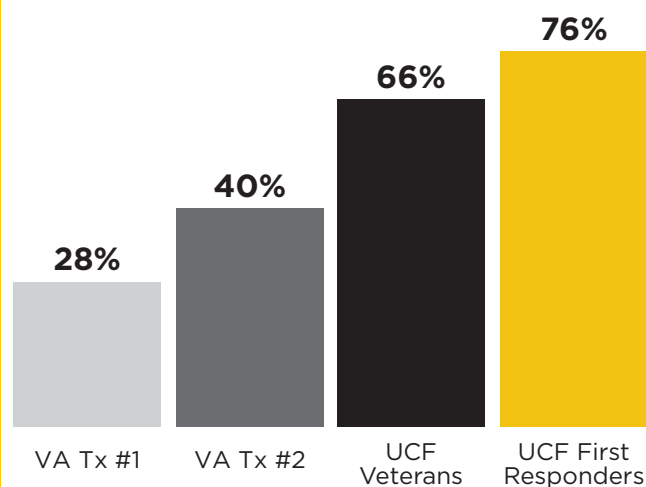
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A UNIQUE APPROACH WITH UNPRECEDENTED RESULTS

UCF RESTORES was founded on the mission to change the way the world understands, diagnoses, and treats PTSD and other trauma-related concerns. In line with this mission, our team has developed a unique approach to Trauma Management Therapy, including a first-of-its-kind, three-week intensive outpatient program that combines cutting-edge technology, exposure therapy, and individual and group therapy sessions to treat PTSD. We also place great focus on cultural competency for a wide variety of populations; to effectively treat those we serve, we must have an understanding of their language, lifestyle and general challenges.

This approach has delivered unprecedented results for those seeking to regain control of their lives in the aftermath of trauma and it is an honor to play a role in each individual's brave journey on the road to recovery.



Percentage of patients who no longer have PTSD after a course of treatment (Tx) at the VA vs. UCF RESTORES

4,939
Hours of individual and group therapy provided in 2019

500+
Veterans and active duty personnel treated 2011-2019

\$864,325
Value of services provided at no cost to Floridians

300+
First responders treated 2016-2019



THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

Located in the heart of America's Partnership University®, UCF RESTORES embodies the UCF mission of forging new relationships with like-minded organizations to expand our reach and impact for those in need. 2019 was a banner year for partnership establishment as we worked to further strengthen ties with our heroes in the first responder community.

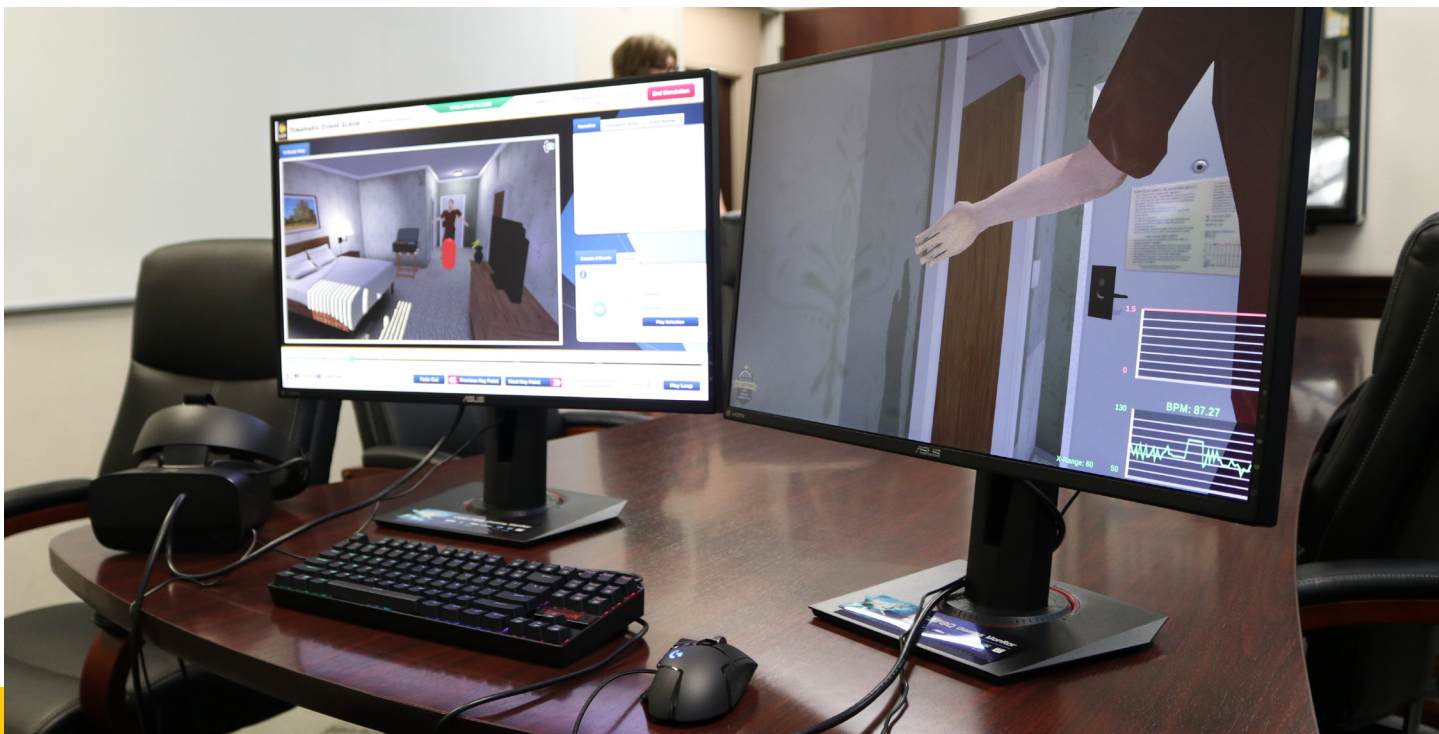
UCF RESTORES has joined forces with the Florida Firefighters Safety and Health Collaborative (FFSHC) to serve as the collaborative's committed partner for mental health and wellness. Through this partnership, more than 350 Florida fire departments represented by FFSHC can now benefit from streamlined access to support, resources, and treatment for PTSD.

UCF RESTORES is also playing a crucial role in enhancing one of the collaborative's anchor initiatives – Redline Rescue™. Redline Rescue

is a program modeled to take peer support to the next level, matching empathic peers and culturally aware clinicians with firefighters in need. These one-on-one connections provide crucial support for those suffering from anxiety and other distressing symptoms that often accompany repeated exposure to traumatic events.

UCF RESTORES has also partnered with the National Police Foundation's Center for Mass Violence Response Studies, which launched in 2018 to provide research, reports and other important information to help inform policy and procedure relating to the prevention, response and recovery from mass violence. UCF RESTORES and its team brings extensive experience in mass violence incident response, having treated first responders and survivors of mass shootings across the country.

"As we continue on our mission to be the first place the nation turns to for education and research on PTSD and trauma, we realize the need to align with partners that can connect us to those who are affected," said UCF RESTORES Director Deborah Beidel, Ph.D., ABPP. "Our partnerships with FFSHC and the National Police Foundation move us closer to that goal."



REDEFINING PERSONALIZED TREATMENT

At UCF RESTORES, one of our core approaches to treatment is exposure therapy, enhanced using fully immersive virtual reality (VR) technology. By guiding our patients to face very specific elements of their traumatic memory, we are able to help them process that memory, put their trauma in its place and regain control of their daily lives.

While VR has always played a role in our approach, we are now breaking new ground with the development of our own, proprietary VR technology tool with funding from the U.S. Department of Defense. Once this tool is in hand, we will be able to dynamically recreate scenarios that are specific to each patient's unique experience.

With the power to edit and control all aspects of the patient's simulation, this development will

bring the personalization and, subsequently, the effectiveness of our treatment to new heights.

Furthermore, when this project is complete, we will be able to share our technology with trained therapists across the nation. At UCF RESTORES, though we have been humbled to serve so many, we understand that not everyone can make it to Central Florida for treatment. In sharing our work with others, we hope to open the door to posttraumatic healing for countless individuals that may not have had access to our treatment otherwise.

In 2019, we were thrilled to complete and deliver a comprehensive prototype of the proprietary VR tool, which we have continued to build out into a fully developed system that we trust will serve as a "game-changer" for immersive exposure therapy treatment.

Beginning in late 2020, with continued federal funding, UCF RESTORES will launch clinical trials to test the efficacy of the VR system and develop intensive training materials for licensed clinicians seeking to incorporate this tool into their own exposure therapy treatment programs.

SUICIDE AWARENESS, INTERVENTION & PREVENTION

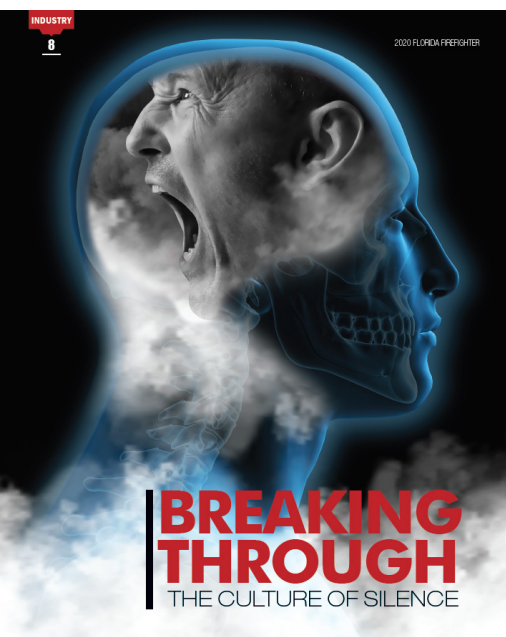
First responders and veterans who deal with repeated or heightened exposure to traumatic events are particularly susceptible to suicidal thoughts, and thousands die by suicide each year in the U.S. alone. UCF RESTORES is working diligently to help reduce the number of lives lost to completed suicide by continuing exploration and research to further bolster our evidence-based treatment approach for those impacted by trauma and expand our areas of faculty-led expertise.

UCF RESTORES' newest faculty member and suicide prevention expert, David Rozek, Ph.D., brings years of experience in researching cognitive and behavioral interventions for military members and first responders who deal with suicidal thoughts and behaviors, PTSD and depression. His multimethod approach has been funded by the National Institutes of Health, Department of Defense, Boeing Corporation and the Bob Woodruff Foundation.

“When you’re friends with one military member or first responder, you gain a whole new family, and I have several ‘brothers’ in that family. My best friend is a veteran who has lost several friends to suicide. The opportunity to continue my research and make an impact with a value-driven and mission-based organization like UCF RESTORES doesn’t come up very often. I’m a researcher who wants to collect data, but more importantly I want to impact people’s lives. I know that I can do that here.”



David Rozek, Ph.D.
*Assistant Professor and Suicide
Prevention Expert
UCF RESTORES®*



BOLSTERING NATIONAL AWARENESS

In 2019, UCF RESTORES was honored to serve as a subject-matter educational resource for a variety of populations by way of engagement with regional, statewide and national media outlets. From partnering with in-state first responder publications like *Florida Fire Service* and *Florida Firefighter* (left) to collaborating with outlets like the *The Associated Press* and National Public Radio, it has been a privilege to support the reporting and advocacy of so many seeking to shine a spotlight on the importance of mental health awareness, support and treatment.

BREAKING THE CULTURE OF SILENCE:

First Responder Mental Wellness

The fire service, as a whole, has made incredible strides in acknowledging and addressing the mental wellness challenges facing its members. You can turn to nearly any major trade publication or industry conference and find the topic being discussed in-depth. When critical incidents like natural disasters or mass-casualty incidents occur, Critical Incident Stress Debriefings are scheduled, and Critical Incident Stress Management teams are put in place. But what resources are available to those in need after the debriefing is over and the team leaves?

This question is being answered by the development of on-the-ground, peer-to-peer support and national dissemination of crucial information specifically related to mental health and wellness in the first responder community. By equipping firefighters with the tools they need to identify signs of stress in their peers and effectively “start the conversation” when needed, our community is building powerful, empathic teams that are ready to provide approachable, accessible support right at home in our fire stations.

“Every day, firefighters are equipped with tangible gear needed to protect themselves from the physical risks of the job; in the same way, they must be prepared with the knowledge and ability to support their brothers and sisters. Bottom line: mental wellness training should be as standard as our uniforms. In making awareness and discussion of mental health the ‘new normal,’ we can help pave the way for the next generation of firefighters to truly understand the importance of putting themselves first.”



Chris Bator

President and Co-Founder,
FFSHC
Battalion Chief, City of Coral
Springs

FIRST RESPONDER MORTALITY RATES

nationally in 2017

POLICE OFFICERS

140 *Suicide*

129 *Killed in line of duty*

FIREFIGHTERS

103 *Suicide*

93 *Killed in line of duty*

Heyman, M., Dill, J., & Douglas, R. (2018). *The Ruderman White Paper on Mental Health and Suicide of First Responders*.



FOR MORE
INFORMATION

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