



# RESTORES

LIVES ♦ FAMILIES ♦ COMMUNITIES

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

## ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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# Psychology

## A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Reflecting on 2024, I'm struck by the incredible strides UCF RESTORES has made — not just in the lives we've touched through treatment, but in the new avenues we've built to expand access to care, support first responders, and promote mental wellness in our communities.

Over the past calendar year, our clinicians provided more than **2,300 hours** of life-saving treatment, empowering individuals to reclaim their lives in trauma's wake. Our peer support platforms reached over **450,000 individuals** collectively. Meanwhile, our team dedicated more than **800 hours** to public service events — strengthening community connections and breaking down barriers to care.

Additionally, our training initiatives equipped more than **500 first responders** with vital peer support skills through our REACT program and prepared over **100 clinicians** with First Responder Mental Wellness and Trauma Management Therapy trainings — ensuring first responders have access to informed, effective care from professionals who understand their unique challenges.

*Each of these milestones reflects our unwavering commitment to delivering innovative, evidence-based solutions, and to ensuring that no one navigating trauma has to do so alone.*

As we closed out 2024, that commitment led us to take a significant step forward — one that I believe will reshape the future of first responder behavioral health: in January 2025, UCF RESTORES formally merged with the 2nd Alarm Project, another pioneering organization dedicated to enhancing first responder mental wellness.

This merger represents more than just a partnership; it's a powerful investment in our

mission and our future. By combining UCF RESTORES' expertise in clinical trauma treatment with the 2nd Alarm Project's proven, community-driven approach to first responder wellbeing, we're strengthening the foundation for how firefighters, law enforcement officers, and emergency dispatchers — as well as their families — access support. Together, we will expand care programs, build stronger peer networks, and introduce new training and resources designed to meet the unique challenges first responders face — both on the job and in their daily lives.

The impact of this partnership builds on nearly 15 years of dedicated service for UCF RESTORES, strengthening the momentum we achieved in 2024 while expanding our ability to provide immediate support and build lasting resilience in first responder communities.

None of this would be possible without the support of the Florida State Legislature, the generosity of our donors, the dedication of our partners and community supporters, and the unwavering trust placed in us by those we serve. Together, our efforts are empowering individuals to heal, thrive, and find renewed purpose after trauma.

On behalf of our entire team, thank you for standing with us — and for continuing to believe in our mission as we enter this exciting new chapter. Together, we are restoring lives, strengthening communities, and redefining what's possible in behavioral health care.

With gratitude,



Deborah C. Beidel, Ph.D., ABPP  
Executive Director, UCF RESTORES





# Treatment

## Data-Driven Care for Those Who Serve

In 2024, UCF RESTORES continued to advance its mission of providing transformative, behavioral health treatment to those who risk their lives to keep our communities safe — including veterans, active-duty military, firefighters, law enforcement officers, emergency dispatchers, and healthcare workers — as well as survivors of trauma. Our clinicians delivered **2,380 hours** of evidence-based trauma care across **1,695 appointments** — supporting over **350 individuals** through group therapy, individualized sessions, and single-session consultations.

**2,380**  
hours

**1,695**  
appointments

**356**  
individuals

Over the past calendar year alone, we delivered clinical services valued at **\$479,515**. With more than **1,970 individuals treated** since the center's founding — including **550+ veterans** and **1,200+ first responders** — the UCF RESTORES treatment model continues to deliver industry-leading results in posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) recovery and resiliency.

This progress reflects not only our clinical expertise, but our commitment to enhancing access. In 2024, we officially introduced a flexible treatment structure that allows participants to complete our signature Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) in either two or three weeks — depending on individual need.

# IN 2024

WE DELIVERED  
CLINICAL SERVICES  
VALUED AT

**\$479,515**

More than **1,970 individuals**  
**have been treated** since the  
center's founding — including:



**550+**  
VETERANS

**1,200+**  
FIRST RESPONDERS

This change was introduced following a 2023 limited-subject clinical trial which found that 100% of participants no longer met diagnostic criteria for PTSD after just 10 days of concentrated care. Our updated structure now accommodates participants' unique schedules and recovery timelines — without compromising the rigor or results of our methodologies.

## How It Works

At UCF RESTORES, we don't just treat PTSD — we challenge it head-on through a clinical model called Trauma Management Therapy (TMT). TMT is built around **exposure therapy**, where patients are supported in confronting traumatic memories in a safe and structured environment. Central to our model is the use of customized, immersive **Virtual Reality (VR)** **technology** — a tool that enhances and accelerates the exposure process by dynamically recreating elements of an individual's unique traumatic experience.



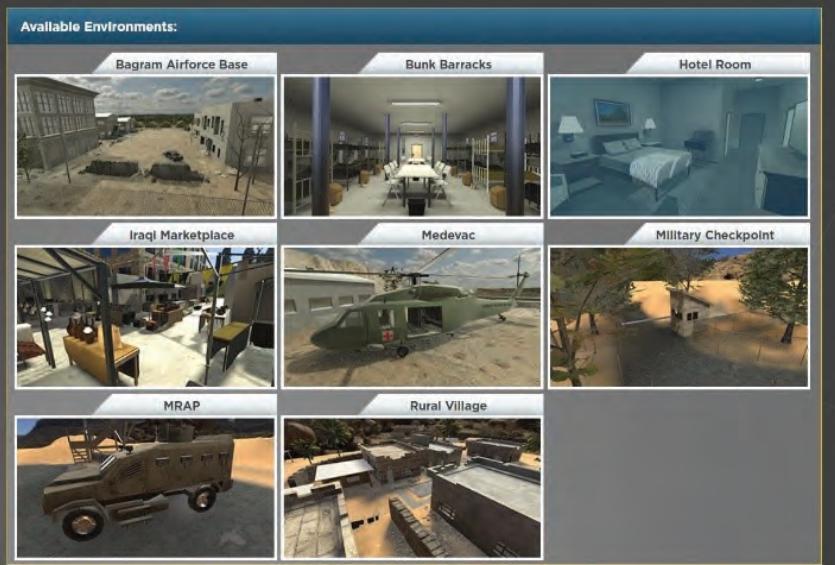
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Please choose from the following available environments to begin creating a scene. You may filter by "type" or search for a specific environment using the options below. Once you have selected the environment, a larger preview will be displayed and you may select the "Next" button above to proceed.

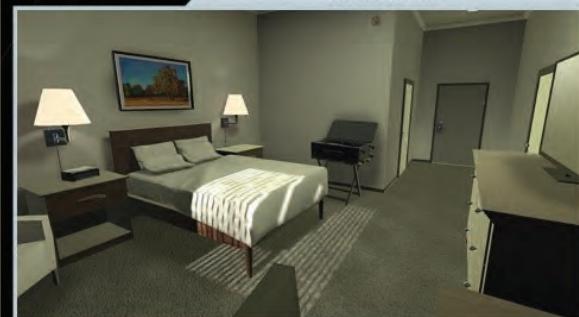
Environment Types:

- All
- Indoor
- Outdoor
- Military
- Vehicular

Search:



Selected: Hotel Room



You may use the icon to the right to adjust your view of the environment. At each press, the camera will rotate to a different wall, allowing you to see the environment in its entirety.



Each VR-assisted exposure therapy session is designed by the patient's dedicated mental health clinician to reflect the specific events and settings relevant to that individual — whether that's a combat zone, active fire scene, hurricane disaster site, emergency call center, or another linked environment — ensuring each patient is able to confront their specific trauma with the right support.

In the case of our IOP, these one-on-one sessions are delivered alongside group therapy — which addresses challenges with anger, sleep, guilt, depression, and social isolation — to drive long-term recovery.

This innovative approach allows our center to consistently achieve results that are superior to national first-line outcomes for PTSD treatment:

**Two-thirds (66%) of veterans and active-duty personnel with combat-related PTSD** who complete our three-week IOP no longer meet diagnostic criteria for PTSD following treatment. Among first responders, that number is even higher: **three-quarters (76%) of first responders** no longer meet diagnostic criteria following three weeks of treatment.



And, in our recent limited-subject clinical trial testing the condensation of our IOP, **100% of participants** no longer met diagnostic criteria for PTSD after just 10 days of care. The IOP's outcomes remain among the strongest in the country – with a 2% drop-out rate and just a 1% relapse rate.

Our unique treatment program accelerates healing and empowers patients with tools for long-term resilience – all while restoring a sense of safety, confidence, and control.

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## PERCENTAGE OF PATIENTS WHO NO LONGER

MEET DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA FOR PTSD FOLLOWING UCF RESTORES 3-WEEK IOP



**76%**

first responders



**66%**

of veterans and active-duty personnel with combat-related PTSD

# Peer Support Platforms



## Strengthening Connections, Expanding Reach

UCF RESTORES' peer support platforms remain rooted in a simple, but powerful, truth: for many in public safety, the first step toward healing often begins with a trusted colleague. In 2024, we continued to expand the RescueLine peer support ecosystem – ensuring first responders across disciplines can access help from those who understand their experience best.

Each RescueLine platform offers confidential, evidence-based support by connecting users to peers trained through UCF RESTORES' REACT program, as well as clinicians who have completed specialized training to better understand the demands of public safety careers. Dedicated resources for first responder families are also available, extending meaningful support to those who stand beside our responders every day.



### Redline Rescue™

Our flagship peer support platform serving firefighters and their families — recorded **348,000 unique site hits** in 2024, underscoring its continued relevance and engagement.



### Blueline Rescue™

Launched in late 2023 for law enforcement officers and their families — welcomed **111,000 unique visitors** in its first full calendar year, signaling strong early adoption and potential.



### Goldline Rescue™

Introduced in early 2024 and designed specifically to meet the unique challenges of emergency dispatchers and their families — welcomed **11,000 unique visitors** by year's end.

Dispatchers are frequently the unseen front line of emergency response — exposed to acute and cumulative stress with limited resources for support. Goldline Rescue marks a major milestone in our mission to ensure that every member of the public safety community — whether on the front lines or behind the headset — has access to mental health support that speaks to their role, lifestyle, and needs.

With the launch of Goldline Rescue, UCF RESTORES now offers the nation's first and only comprehensive peer support network for public safety professionals — one that meets firefighters, law enforcement officers, and emergency dispatchers where they are, and connects them to the help they deserve.

Together, these platforms represent a national model for accessible, mission-driven peer support — designed by first responders, for first responders — and sustained through the clinical leadership and operational support of UCF RESTORES. In 2024 alone, the RescueLine ecosystem reached more than 470,000 total unique users, connecting public safety personnel and their loved ones to life-saving peer and clinical support.



## Building Systems of Support Across the Nation

In 2024, UCF RESTORES continued to strengthen the mental wellness infrastructure of first responder communities across Florida and beyond – not only through clinical care, but through training programs that equip both peers and clinicians to identify, respond to, and support individuals in need. From peer support training to specialized clinician education, our efforts continue to build sustainable systems of care that take root in departments, agencies, and communities far and wide.



### REACT Peer Support Training

Our hallmark REACT training program – designed to help public safety personnel Recognize, Evaluate, Advocate, Coordinate, and Track the mental health needs of their peers – remained a cornerstone of our first responder training model in 2024. Over the past calendar year, our team hosted **52 REACT sessions** for more than **523 participants** across **112 agencies**.

# REACT Peer Support Training

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## In 2024 we trained...



Since June 2022, REACT-trained personnel report:

Using their peer support skills with an average of **27 peers per month**; and,

Referring **15 peers per month** to additional support services.

Since 2022, referrals from REACT-trained peers include:

<b>37.9%</b>	Peer Support Team
<b>12.3%</b>	EAP
<b>7.6%</b>	Chaplain/Clergy
<b>5.4%</b>	Counseling/Therapy
<b>3.8%</b>	CISM/CISD
<b>2.7%</b>	Self-Help Group (e.g., AA)
<b>1.9%</b>	Financial Support Services
<b>1%</b>	Crisis Hotline
<b>1%</b>	Inpatient Mental Health Facility

Post-training satisfaction survey results (collected since 2017) reflect REACT's enduring impact:

**94%**

of participants say the training gave them useful skills they or their department can use.

**93.9%**

learned how to have more supportive conversations with peers.

**93.2%**

report improved ability to recognize stress in others.

**93.5%**

would recommend the training to other first responders.

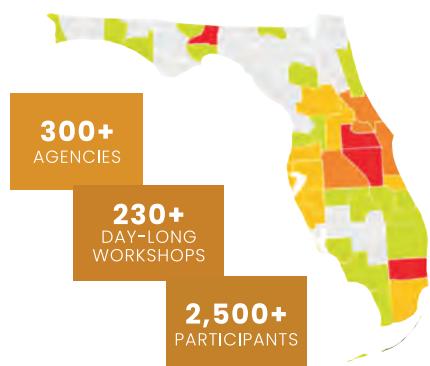
Over the past calendar year, our team hosted:

**52** REACT sessions for more than

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## REACT Training Impact To-Date



# Clinician Training

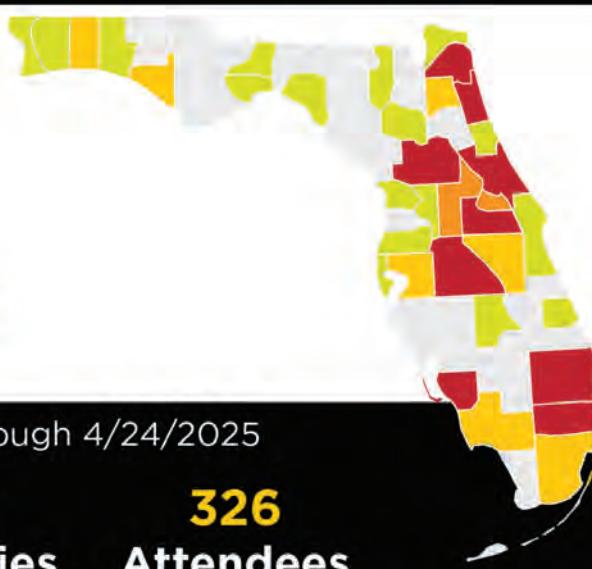
## Supporting First Responders & Their Providers

In 2024, UCF RESTORES launched **“Supporting Firefighter Mental Wellness: A Clinician’s Guide”** — a fully online course that prepares clinicians to confidently and effectively treat firefighters and their families by building fluency in the realities of the fire service, including its lifestyle, values, structure, and terminology. This offering builds on a legacy of collaboration with the **Florida Firefighters Safety & Health Collaborative (FFSHC)**, a longtime partner of UCF RESTORES and a highly respected organization in Florida’s first responder community.

Historically, UCF RESTORES partnered with FFSHC to deliver a two-day, in-person training for mental health providers through the Collaborative’s “Clinician Awareness Program.” That program paired one day of didactic instruction — delivered by UCF RESTORES faculty — with a second day of experiential learning led by FFSHC. Together, these training sessions helped clinicians develop both the theoretical knowledge and real-world insight necessary to support firefighter mental wellness.



### Supporting First Responder Mental Wellness



Recognizing that the didactic component could be delivered effectively in a virtual environment, UCF RESTORES transitioned its portion of the training to an accessible, self-paced format — establishing it as an independent offering that continues to complement FFSHC’s hands-on experiential program. The new course launched online in November 2024 and we trained **79 clinicians prior to end of year**, expanding access across geographic and scheduling barriers.



The online course provides a comprehensive introduction to fire service life, trauma exposure, operational demands, and evidence-based, tailored treatment approaches. Approved by the American Psychological Association for 4.25 CE credits, it also serves as the first step toward eligibility for Redline Rescue's online clinician directory.

By bringing the course online and shifting the overall training program to a hybrid model, UCF RESTORES is expanding the pipeline of informed, prepared mental health professionals available to firefighters across the country.

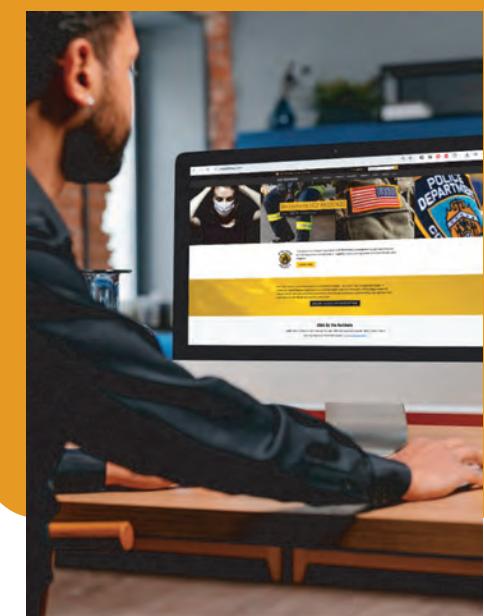
In Summer 2025, we will extend this training model to another first responder group with the launch of **"Supporting Law Enforcement Mental Wellness: A Clinician's Guide"**, helping to bridge the gap between law enforcement officers – as well as their families – and the clinicians who serve them.

## Trauma Management Therapy (TMT) Online Training

Our online training program in Trauma Management Therapy – the evidence-based model central to UCF RESTORES' Intensive Outpatient Program – continued to grow its national reach in 2024.

### **Twenty-seven (27)**

clinicians were equipped with the tools and knowledge to deliver this life-changing protocol, extending the reach of effective PTSD care beyond the bounds of our physical center.

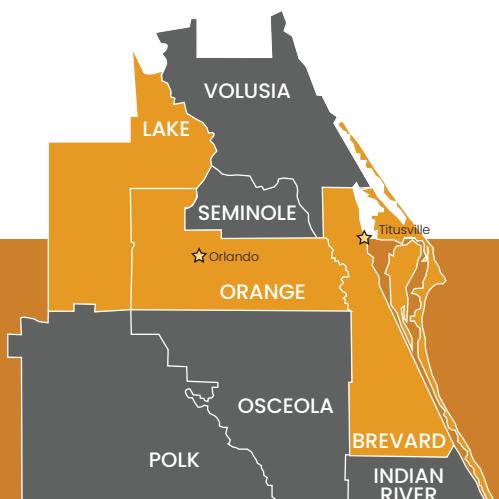




# Critical Incident Response

## Rapid Response to the Front Lines

Throughout Florida, UCF RESTORES is increasingly recognized as a vital resource in times of crisis. Whether responding to natural disasters, mass casualty events, or traumatic line-of-duty fatalities, our team is frequently called upon to provide **Psychological First Aid** and **emergency mental health debriefings** to our state's communities and first responder agencies during their most critical moments.



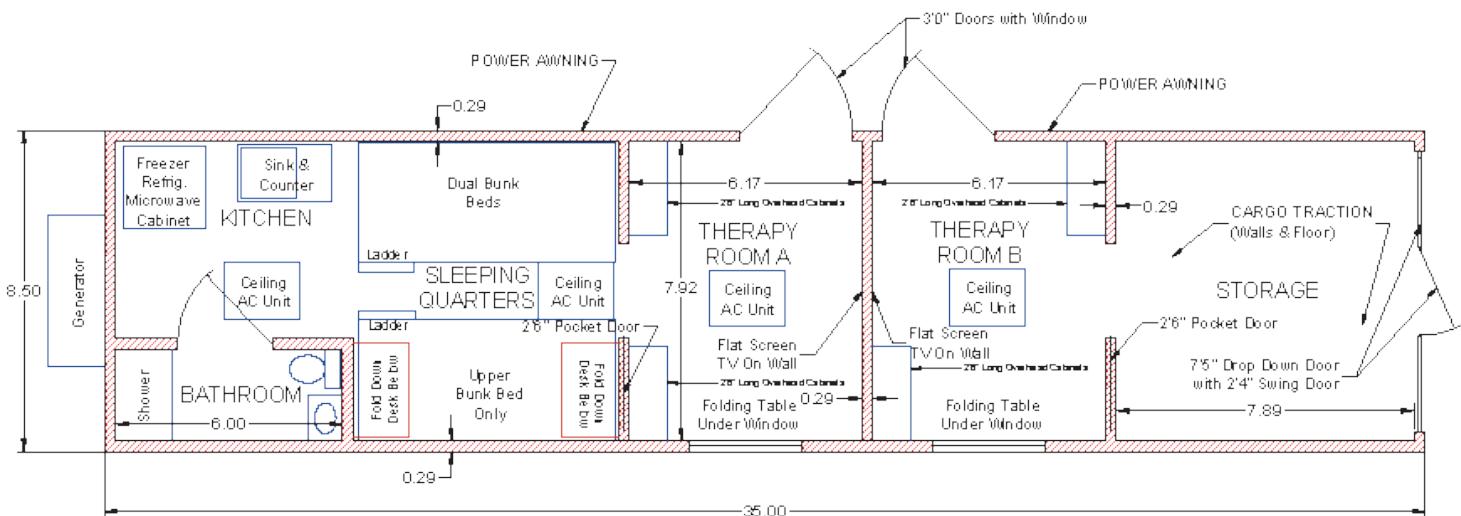
Whether the event is local or statewide, our team is equipped to respond with urgency, compassion, and clinical expertise to support those on the front lines.

In 2024, we were deployed as part of **Florida's State Emergency Response Plan (SERP)**, serving as a key member of the Mental Wellness Incident Management Team for both **Hurricane Helene** and **Hurricane Milton**. Our staff coordinated mental health services for counties impacted by these storms, ensuring that first responders had access to immediate psychological support in the aftermath of disaster.

**IN 2024 WE CONDUCTED**  
**32** critical incident debriefings facilitated across safety agencies in multiple counties

Additionally, UCF RESTORES facilitated **32 critical incident debriefings** for public safety agencies in Orlando, Titusville, and across Orange and Lake Counties. These sessions help departments navigate the aftermath of high-impact calls and incidents, identify personnel at risk, and proactively reduce the likelihood of long-term trauma.

This past year also marked the start of an exciting new chapter in our crisis response capabilities: the development of a **first-of-its-kind Mobile Behavioral Health Unit**. Backed by the Florida State Legislature and supported by Lockheed Martin, the unit was designed to meet a growing need for safe, private, and clearly designated spaces to deliver Psychological First Aid at the site of mass disaster and mass casualty incidents.



Mobile Unit Floor Plan



Historically, our team has relied on partner agencies to provide makeshift spaces for emergency support – often in busy, high-traffic areas that lack the privacy individuals need to open up and begin processing their experience. With the new unit, that challenge is a thing of the past: it will provide a discreet, trauma-informed environment for Psychological First Aid by reducing confusion, noise, and potential exposure for those seeking help. The unit is now complete, and we look forward to officially **unveiling it in Summer 2025**.

As Florida continues to face an evolving landscape of emergencies, UCF RESTORES remains committed to providing fast, effective care to those who serve.

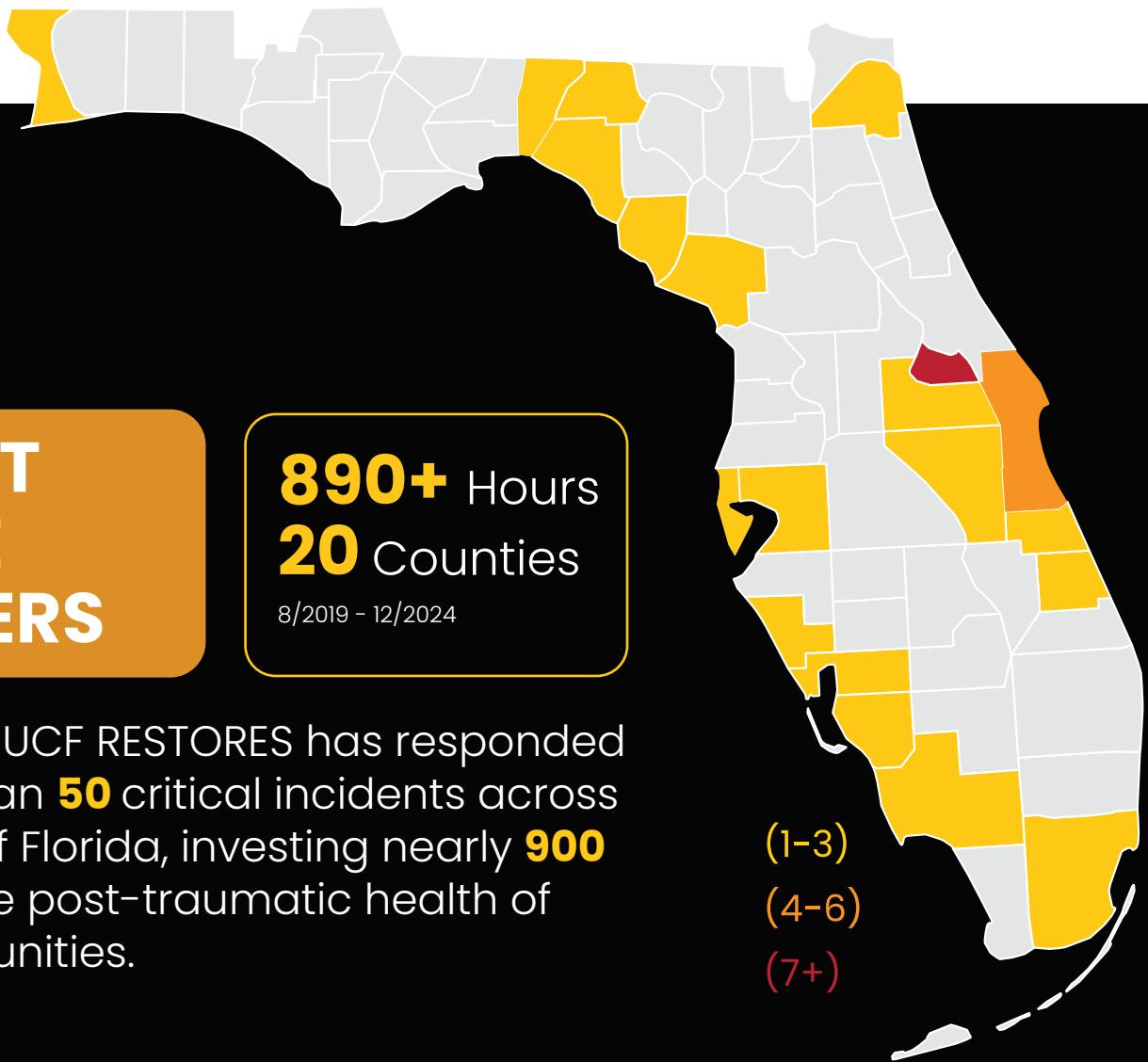
## IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

**890+** Hours  
**20** Counties

8/2019 - 12/2024

Since 2019, UCF RESTORES has responded to more than **50** critical incidents across the state of Florida, investing nearly **900** hours in the post-traumatic health of our communities.

(1-3)  
(4-6)  
(7+)



# Awareness & Advocacy



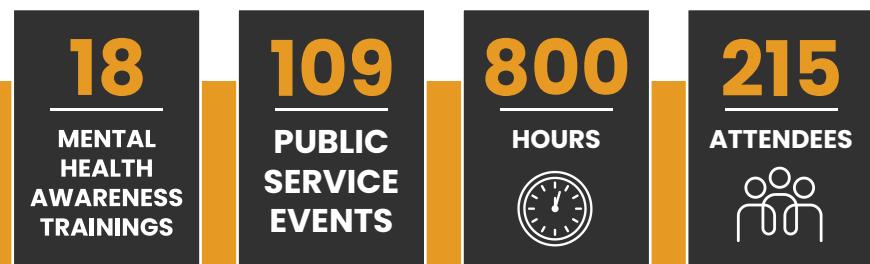
## Expanding Impact Through Outreach

At UCF RESTORES, we understand that meaningful change doesn't happen in a vacuum — it takes informed communities, engaged industry leaders, and strong partnerships. That's why our work extends beyond clinical care to include education, outreach, and public engagement efforts that strengthens understanding and access to trauma-informed resources.

In 2024, our team led **18 Mental Health Awareness Trainings**, reaching more than **215 attendees** through presentations designed to educate, empower, and equip community members and professionals.

We also dedicated more than **800 hours** to broader community engagement and awareness efforts, supporting **109 public service events** — including outreach efforts, crisis intervention training, and informational sessions tailored to a wide range of audiences. These efforts deepen our community relationships and help ensure mental wellness remains a shared priority across regions and disciplines.

### 2024 Outreach By The Numbers





## Our team also continued to elevate UCF RESTORES' visibility through strategic media engagement:

- Spectrum News 13 featured UCF RESTORES in an in-depth report on Florida's mental health crisis among first responders, spotlighting our trauma treatment and peer support training models as part of the solution. ("[Orlando Fire Department Firefighter Helps Change the Mindset of Mental Health in the Fire Service](#)")
- WESH 2 News highlighted our work in Lake County, as UCF RESTORES responded on-site to support law enforcement through a critical incident — providing a rare glimpse into our crisis response services in action. ("[UCF Psychologists Extend Support to Grieving Lake County Sheriff's Office](#)")
- Around the holidays, UCF RESTORES contributed expert insight to ClickOrlando (WKMG News 6), offering trauma-informed tips for families navigating fireworks season — with a focus on veterans with PTSD, families, and pet owners. ("[Celebrating Safely: Fireworks Tips for Families, People with PTSD, Pets](#)")
- NPR affiliate WUSF featured UCF RESTORES in a longform story examining the psychological toll of repeated trauma on Florida's first responders. The piece also introduced our merger with the 2nd Alarm Project, highlighting the combined impact of both organizations in advancing first responder behavioral health support statewide. ("[Courage of First Responders Can Only Be Imagined, but at What Cost?](#)")
- WKMG's Solutionaries series featured UCF RESTORES in a longform segment highlighting the center's innovative use of virtual reality-assisted exposure therapy to treat PTSD. The story explored UCF RESTORES' clinical model and its success in delivering results that outpace national standards — particularly for Florida's veterans and first responders. ("[Innovative Treatment at UCF Shows Promise in Helping PTSD Patients](#)")

# Funding Impact



## Support That Moves the Mission Forward

Florida Department of Children and Families  
First Responder Regional Support Grant

With funding support from the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), UCF RESTORES continues to expand the state's infrastructure for mental wellness among public safety professionals — delivering no-cost peer support, suicide prevention, and clinician training across a 12-county region of Central Florida.

This funding, awarded through DCF's First Responder Regional Support Grant, has enabled UCF RESTORES to serve as one of only five Regional Support Centers in the state — providing education, training, and trauma-informed care resources to first responders at no cost. Now in its third consecutive year, the grant has not only allowed us to sustain our core programming, but to scale and evolve its reach.

# IN 2024 THIS GRANT SUPPORTED



**52**  
peer support  
training sessions

**523**  
first responders  
trained

**112**  
agencies  
reached

**79**  
licensed clinicians  
trained\*

\*(via our newly launched online course, Supporting Firefighter Mental Wellness: A Clinician's Guide)

These efforts strengthen first responder wellness from both sides of the equation: equipping frontline personnel with peer-driven support strategies and growing the pipeline of clinicians ready to serve them.

Looking ahead, the momentum continues. In early 2025, our team received additional DCF funding to pilot expanded services for a group of critically underserved populations: retirees, partners, and children of first responders.

These individuals often face unique challenges – from the ripple effects of repeated service-connected trauma to the abrupt lifestyle shifts that accompany retirement.

With this new investment, UCF RESTORES will design and deploy programming that speaks directly to their experiences and needs, reinforcing our commitment to whole-family wellness across the public safety community.





## Legislative Support

At UCF RESTORES, we remain deeply grateful for the continued partnership and funding support of the Florida State Legislature. In 2024, the Legislature approved our \$875,500 budget request for the 2024–25 fiscal year — allowing us to continue our treatment services, introduce new training programs, expand our research efforts, and improve access to trauma-focused care for those who serve our state.

That support made a measurable difference. In 2024, UCF RESTORES clinicians delivered 2,380 hours of trauma-focused care across 1,695 appointments — serving more than **300 individuals** through one-on-one sessions, group therapy, and single-session consultations. This reflects a **20% increase** in the number of individuals served compared to the previous year.

Importantly, this increase was achieved while streamlining the total number of sessions and hours required, made possible by ongoing innovations and

efficiency refinements within our clinical delivery model — including the evidence-based shift from a 15-day to 10-day format for our IOP.

Such refinements allow our staff to serve more individuals and pursue new opportunities that support the health and resiliency of our communities.

As UCF RESTORES continues to evolve, our sights remain set on not only delivering best-in-class treatment — but also expanding the reach, relevance, and impact of our programs across the Sunshine State and beyond.



From Left to Right: UCF College of Sciences Dean Maggy Tomova, Ph.D.; UCF Provost Michael D. Johnson, Ph.D.; Florida State Representative David Smith; UCF RESTORES Executive Director Deborah C. Beidel, Ph.D., ABPP; Florida State Senator Tom Wright.



## Help Us Restore Lives, Families, and Communities



At UCF RESTORES, we witness every day how trauma-informed, evidence-based care can spark meaningful change – not just in the life of a single patient, but in the **strength and stability of entire families, departments, and communities**. With the support of people like you, we're able to offer transformative trauma treatment at no cost to those suffering.

### Your involvement helps us go further:

expanding peer support resources, training clinicians and first responders statewide, breaking ground on clinical research, and building innovative tools to meet tomorrow's challenges head-on.

Whether you give to, advocate for, or share our mission, **your support strengthens our ability to restore hope, dignity, and connection** where it's most needed.

# Scan to LEARN MORE



Please indicate "UCF RESTORES  
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Every contribution helps us reach more people, train more professionals, and deliver life-changing care to those who serve. Learn how you can make a difference.

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