

# HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT COUNSELOR AS A FIRST RESPONDER

*Not all counselors are created equal when it comes to serving first responders. Here are some things to consider when trying to find mental health providers for you or your loved ones!*

## EAP, Insurance or Cash?

There are pros and cons to each.

### EAP

Pros: Free

Cons: Limited providers, limited sessions

### Insurance

Pros: Cost effective, more sessions

Cons: Requires diagnosis on permanent medical record (ie PTSD, Major Depressive Disorder)

### Cash

Pros: Not in medical record, you control services completely

Cons: Cost

## What do all of those letters mean?

**LPC:** Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor

**LMFT:** Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist  
(extra education on how relationship dynamics impact mental health)

**LCSW:** Licensed Clinical Social Worker  
(education focused on community mental health programs)

**PhD/PsyD:** Psychologist, has their doctorate  
(extensive training on diagnosing and assessments)

**Life Coach:** Not a licensed professional  
(think personal trainer for your behaviors)

## How do I know if they are good working with first responders?

### Ask them!

You can ask what kind of experience they have working with responders.

Ask them what kind of trainings or certifications they have around understanding trauma (EMDR is one of many).

### Trust your gut!

You are intuitive and know whether someone will get you or not.

## Where do I find the right counselor?

### Code 3 Counseling

<https://code3counseling.com>

### First Responder Counselor Directory:

<https://www.firstrespondercounselor.com/cfrc-directory>

### First Responder Support Network Directory:

<https://www.frsn.org/looking-for-a-clinician.html>

### Lifegiver Directory:

<https://www.life-giver.org>

### Code Green Campaign Resource List:

<https://codegreencampaign.org/resources/>

### Healing Our Own Directory:

<https://healingourown.org/getting-help>