

# Project ACCESS:

## Expanding Evidence-Based Treatment via Telehealth to Fire Service

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## Project ACCESS

- **Objective:** To improve the behavioral health of firefighters by developing a telehealth clinic that provides protocol-driven, evidence-based treatment for firefighters with behavioral health needs



## Phases

- **Phase 1**

- Adapt the Unified Protocol (UP) for the Transdiagnostic Treatment of Emotional Disorders for firefighters and delivery via telehealth
- Develop a firefighter cultural awareness training for clinicians

- **Phase 2**

- Gather feedback on the cultural awareness training from firefighters
- Pilot test the training with Baylor University PsyD students

## Phases

- **Phase 3**

- Pilot the telehealth clinic with 5 firefighters
- Refine procedures

- **Phase 4 (current phase)**

- Telehealth clinic opens to paid and volunteer firefighters across Texas

## Funding

- The funding for this project was provided by a Fire Prevention & Safety grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

## Background

- A need for more clinicians aware of firefighter culture
- Recognition of barriers to accessing behavioral health care
- WRI's mission to train future generations in evidence-based treatment

## Behavioral Health in FS

- 1 in 5 firefighters will have behavioral health issues<sup>1</sup>
- 56% of career and 45% of volunteer firefighters reported past-month binge drinking<sup>2</sup>
- PTSD affects 24.2% of firefighters<sup>3</sup>

## Barriers to Treatment for Firefighters

- Lack of culturally aware clinicians<sup>4,5</sup>
- Fear of breach in confidentiality<sup>4</sup>
- Stigma<sup>4</sup>
- Negative expectations of treatment<sup>6</sup>

## Access to Treatment

- 68% of firefighters would not recommend the behavioral health services that are provided to them through their department<sup>4</sup>
- Although Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) are available for firefighters, they are rarely used<sup>5</sup>

## Telehealth

- “Telehealth is the use of digital information and communication technologies, such as computers and mobile devices, to access health care services remotely and manage your health care.”<sup>7</sup>
- Telehealth aids in the alleviation of stigma and brings greater access to treatment to rural populations<sup>8</sup>
- Telehealth produces similar levels of satisfaction when compared to in-person treatment<sup>9</sup>

## Unified Protocol (UP)

- The UP combines mindfulness, cognitive therapy, and behavioral therapy to teach patients new ways to respond to uncomfortable emotion, which reduces symptoms of many mental health disorders<sup>10</sup>

## Clinician Cultural Awareness Training

- Developed with input from retired and current firefighters, as well as licensed clinicians
- Consists of a curriculum based around the culture of fire service
- WRI clinicians receive this cultural awareness training, as well as further reading to familiarize themselves with fire service culture

## Project ACCESS to Date

- 3 study therapists
- 14 firefighters in treatment
- 4 firefighters completing screening/consenting procedures
- 51 total treatment sessions provided

As of 11/19/18

## Participation Process

1. Contact us for more information
  - Contact info on next slide
2. Complete screening assessment
3. Complete Consent form
4. Complete pre-assessment
5. Weekly therapy sessions through WebEx
  - Therapists are flexible with firefighter's work schedule
  - Complete assessments after 6<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> appointment
  - Receive approximately 12 weeks of therapy
6. Complete 1-month follow-up assessment

## How to Contact Us

- Call
  - 254-716-6208
- Email
  - [wri@sw.org](mailto:wri@sw.org)
- Website
  - <http://researchers.sw.org/wri/warriors-research-institute>
- Follow us on Twitter!
  - @SuzyGulliverPhD



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**Firefighter**  
*Telemental Health Treatment*  
**Research Opportunity**

If you are a firefighter who suffers from depression, anger, substance abuse or post-traumatic stress, you may be eligible to participate in a NO COST research study at Baylor Scott & White Research Institute.

Investigators in our Workers Research Institute group are conducting a study that investigates the provision of treatment to firefighters in the state of Texas. Treatment will be available **online** through telemental health one-on-one sessions.



**NO COST**  
**Research Study**

For information about this confidential study, call 254.716.6208 or email [wri@sw.org](mailto:wri@sw.org).  
[BSWH.md/WRI](http://BSWH.md/WRI)

