

# Help for When Readjusting to Life After Military Service is Overwhelming

Returning from military service often begins as an exhilarating homecoming, but that can quickly be displaced by severe anxiety, depression and, in some cases, addiction.

“You go from having a job, responsibilities, rank and a structure, from living on adrenaline, to suddenly having no idea where you fit in,” says James Schneider, Peer Support Specialist at Penn Medicine Princeton House Behavioral Health’s First Responder Treatment Services. “In some cases the transition isn’t something you can get through alone, but, because you have always been the one people look to for help, you don’t know how to ask for help yourself.”

Schneider knows about those challenges first-hand — he spent four years in the military, serving in the military police corps during the Vietnam War. Back home in New Jersey, he then spent 30 years as a police officer, retiring as head of a local detective unit.

“I know that coming in to seek help takes a lot of courage, because I’ve been in the situation veterans are in when it comes to readjusting to civilian life and when it comes to seeing yourself as the person in need rather than the hero,” Schneider says. “I also know how important getting help can be, and what a difference it can make in your life.”

## A Specialized Program

PHBH’s First Responder Treatment Services can help. Offering assistance to military personnel, police, fire and other first responders, the program provides both inpatient and outpatient help in dealing with mental health and substance abuse issues.

Since its inception in 2013, First Responder Treatment Services has helped more than 800 veterans and first responders. Led by clinicians with military and first responder experience, it is one of just a handful of programs nationwide providing specific services to first responders.

Based in Princeton, First Responder Treatment Services provides distinct therapy sessions for veterans and first responders as an addition to inpatient treatment, which includes a comprehensive evaluation; individual and/or group therapy; family therapy; 12-step recovery-based programming; medication if needed; nutrition counseling; expressive therapies such as art, music and movement; and physical activity in an on-site gym.

Those who need intensive outpatient or partial hospital programs often find a good fit in either Princeton House’s Men’s Program or Women’s Program trauma tracks.

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**To find out more** about Princeton House Behavioral Health’s First Responder Treatment Services, call 800-242-2550, or visit [www.princetonhouse.org/firstresponders](http://www.princetonhouse.org/firstresponders).



## First Responder Treatment Services helps veterans and first responders cope with recurring issues, including:

- Isolation and anger
- Personal relationship and work-related problems
- Alcohol and drug use
- Sleep disturbances, including night terrors
- Flashbacks and intrusive memories
- Suicidal thoughts
- Financial pressures