IAFF CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
CLINICAL GUIDE

ADVANCED RECOVERY SYSTEMS

CLINICAL OVERVIEW

The IAFF Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health Treatment and Recovery is a one-of-a-kind treatment program for members of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) who are struggling with post-traumatic stress, substance use, and other behavioral health issues.

Established in 2017, the IAFF Center of Excellence has become a distinct leader in first responder behavioral health, having treated thousands of fire service members from all 50 states and numerous Canadian provinces.

Our 65-bed, residential treatment facility is a haven for healing, located on 15 acres in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. The Center is exclusively for IAFF members in the United States and Canada and is the only treatment program exclusive to fire service professionals.

CENTER OF EXCELLENCE EXPERTISE

Our multidisciplinary team includes on-site physicians, nursing professionals, licensed master's-level clinicians, behavioral health technicians, and support staff who work together to provide comprehensive, individualized care. Drawing on deep clinical expertise in trauma, substance use, and related mental health conditions, the team develops personalized treatment plans tailored to each client's unique needs, experiences, and recovery goals.

A TREATMENT FACILITY DESIGNED FOR FIRE FIGHTERS

The IAFF Center of Excellence is a voluntary treatment facility designed by fire fighters for fire fighters. Our mission is to address the unique medical, psychological, and social needs of IAFF members facing behavioral health issues. Housed among our 15-acre campus, patients share an instant bond, forged on shared sacrifice and a mutual understanding of life in the fire service.

Staff is trained to understand the cumulative impact of occupational trauma, as well as the clinical implications of fire service culture and lifestyle. Treatment plans are designed to restore fire fighters to the career, community, and family they love.



A CONTINUUM OF COMPASSIONATE CARE

The average length of stay at the IAFF Center of Excellence is approximately 40–50 days, but varies based on individual clinical need through four levels of care:

- **Detox:** 24-hour medical monitoring with dedicated nursing
- **Residential:** Seven days per week, with boarding
- **Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP):** Six days per week, with boarding
- **Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP):** Three to five days per week, with boarding

To support full engagement in treatment, on-site lodging is required for all participants and is provided at no cost to the client through the generous support of the IAFF Foundation.

While group therapy and psychoeducation are the primary treatment modalities, patients are assigned to an individual therapist and receive ongoing individual therapy once per week.

All patients receive a comprehensive medical and psychiatric evaluation upon admission, ensuring a thorough understanding of their behavioral health and any co-occurring medical needs. When medication management is recommended as part of the treatment plan, patients receive ongoing care and regular follow-up from the medical team throughout each level of care, helping to support stabilization, symptom improvement, and overall wellness during recovery.

When clinically appropriate, family and peer support sessions may be incorporated into the treatment process, providing an opportunity for trusted support persons to participate in recovery. These sessions help strengthen communication, foster understanding, and build a supportive foundation for continued healing beyond treatment.

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APPROACH TO TREATMENT

On the job and in the firehouse, fire fighters function as a highly cohesive social unit. Off the job, fire fighters are a clinically diverse patient population that requires a variety of evidence-based treatment approaches to address occupational trauma, co-occurring substance use issues, and other complex behavioral health problems.

While many clients admitted to the IAFF Center of Excellence seek treatment for post-traumatic stress, other commonly treated conditions include primary substance use disorders, major depressive disorder, complicated grief, anxiety disorders, obsessive compulsive personality disorder, and other addictions or compulsive behaviors (e.g., sex, gambling, binge eating).

COMPREHENSIVE DISCHARGE PLANNING

Preparing patients for successful reintegration to work, family, and home life depends on continued recovery and accountability at a lower level of care. Case managers strive to connect patients with culturally competent health care providers who understand the demands of the fire service.

Discharge plans use the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) model and include the minimum following components, including the first behavioral health appointment within seven days:

- Referral to clinically indicated level of care (intensive outpatient or outpatient)
- Individual therapy appointment
- Primary care appointment
- Psychiatrist/medication management appointment, if indicated
- Family/marriage counseling, if indicated
- List of local/virtual resources for self-help and peer support
- (AA, NA, SMART Recovery groups, etc.)

TREATMENT APPROACHES INCLUDE:

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)
- Eye Movement Destination Reprocessing (EMDR)
- Accelerated Resolution Therapy (ART)
- Sex Recovery Therapy (SRT)
- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT)
- Stellate Ganglion Block (SGB)
- Comprehensive psychiatry & medication management
- Cranial Electrotherapy Stimulation (CES)
- Psychoeducation and life skills
- Pain management
- Family engagement

AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH

While a strong therapeutic program is the foundation of treatment, the IAFF Center of Excellence is designed to provide purposeful, goal-directed activity outside of therapy sessions.

Alternative wellness approaches enhance recovery by restoring the mind, body and spirit:

- Alcoholics Anonymous meetings (weekly)
- SMART Recovery concepts
- Virtual, peer-led recovery meetings
- Recreation therapy
- Pastoral care
- Comprehensive fitness center
- Equine therapy (available offsite)
- Float therapy (available offsite)

READY TO LEARN MORE OR MAKE A REFERRAL?

Whether seeking information for a member, exploring treatment options, or making a referral, the IAFF Center of Excellence team is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to answer questions, verify benefits, and guide the admissions process. A single call can help connect fire fighters, paramedics, and their families with the specialized care and resources they need.

24/7 Admissions Center:
1-855-900-8437
outreach@IAFFrecoverycenter.com

Learn more about the IAFF Center of Excellence and available resources at IAFFRecoveryCenter.com.