

# UNDERSTANDING FIRST RESPONDERS' IMPACT ON VICTIMS' TRAUMA: DEVELOPING A HEALTHY INTERACTION STRATEGY

**RPCI**

GREYSTONE  
Bereavement Centre



## Description

This workshop explores the impact of First Responders on the mental and emotional health of victims immediately after a traumatic event. The symptoms of a traumatic response, and the basic neuroscience and brain functioning behind those symptoms will be discussed. The debriefing approach will be evaluated and the Psychological First Aid and the Verbal First Aid approach will be presented as alternatives. The workshop focuses not only on communication skills, but the whole interaction with the 'clients'.

## Learning Outcomes

On completion of the workshop participants will be able to:

- Discuss the effect of trauma on brain and the basic neuroscience and brain functioning behind those effects.
- Understand different types of trauma.
- Understand that effects of trauma and PTSD is the result of chemical reactions in the body caused by the brain.
- Understand that because trauma and PTSD is a chemical reaction its effects on the person is predictable.
- Discuss the concepts of Psychological First Aid and Verbal First Aid.
- Develop their own victim interaction strategy to elicit the information and responses they need while minimizing the traumatic effect on the victim in the process.

## Designed For

First responders, police officers, coroners, ministers, social workers, school counsellors, funeral service providers, fire fighters, EMS professionals, any professionals or volunteers that work with traumatized individuals or families.

## Presenter Profile

Duane T Bowers is a Licensed Professional Counselor and Educator. Duane's specialty is working with survivors of traumatic death and suicide, which includes providing support to families of abducted, missing, exploited and murdered children. As an educator, Duane teaches seminars nationally, internationally and regionally on dying, death and grief, as well as trauma, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and traumatic loss. In September 2001 Duane responded to the Pentagon immediately following the terrorist attack on September 11th, providing support to rescue and recovery workers.