

# FIRSTLINE



## COURSE OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To inform course participants of the basic facts concerning line-of-duty stress and trauma, including:
  - The various events that can precipitate “soul wounds,” Post-traumatic Stress, and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.
  - The common symptoms of Post-traumatic Stress.
- ✓ To help participants experience the strength and optimism generated by an inclusive, cohesive group of supportive friends with whom they can feel heard and understood.
- ✓ To provide a safe, non-judgmental environment where participants can process and share their traumatic experiences with others who have had similar experiences.
- ✓ To provide a confidential environment where participants can share experiences and observations without fear of repercussions from their departments or their co-workers.
- ✓ To teach participants to engage in a balanced, three-dimensional approach to Post-traumatic Stress: physical, psychological, and spiritual.
- ✓ To inform participants how to apply Biblical principles that address the causes and symptoms of Post-traumatic Stress.
- ✓ To help participants recognize the counter-productive nature of most of their typical methods of coping with the stress and trauma of their careers.
- ✓ To give participants practical steps to follow when dealing with particularly debilitating aspects of line-of-duty stress and trauma such as anger, loss, grief, false guilt, bitterness due to unforgiveness (of self and others), depression, and suicidal ideation.
- ✓ To involve first responder spouses in the whole Firstline experience so that they can better understand their spouses, be more supportive, and care for their own secondary stress and trauma.
- ✓ To help participants re-frame adversity in their lives, seeing it as a potential agent of strengthening, growth, and resiliency instead of harm and distress.
- ✓ To motivate participants to view God as a responsive, engaged, compassionate, healer and source of power, inspiration, and resiliency, and to approach Him as such.
- ✓ To give participants the vision that, as they gain strength, stability and healing, they are equipped to help others who are struggling with line-of-duty stress and trauma.

# FIRSTLINE CURRICULUM OUTLINE

## **WEEK 1 THE GATEWAYS OF TRAUMA**

Explores the six most common events and conditions that can bring on Post-traumatic Stress and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.

## **WEEK 2 CHANGE THE ROOTS, CHANGE THE FRUITS**

Identifying “soul wounds” in our lives, and understanding that the “fruit” that our lives produce depend in large part on the type of soil our roots are in; natural trauma versus malevolent trauma.

## **WEEK 3 PURPOSE IN YOUR PAIN**

How one can change Post-traumatic Stress Disorder into Post-traumatic Stress Growth; the positive side of adversity and stress “seeing it as a strengthening agent.

## **WEEK 4 MAKING CHOICES TO HEAL**

The instrumentality of Free Will in how we survive trauma – or don’t; the necessity of intentionality versus passivity in the healing process; abandoning the harmful “Go-To Painkillers” that trauma sufferers often resort to.

## **WEEK 5 UNLOADING**

Understanding the difference between anger and angry outbursts; how to deal with “Triggers” that can lead to emotional outbursts; how to recognize and manage one’s anger before it leaves the launching pad.

## **WEEK 6 COLLATERAL DAMAGE**

How to deal positively with loss and grief; example of how Jesus dealt with the loss of His good friend Lazarus; how it is that God can allow such adversity in our lives if He is good and loves us.

## **WEEK 7 WALKING THROUGH DEATH VALLEY**

Understanding how depression can lead to thoughts of suicide, and how to deal with them – in one’s self and in others; explore the key causes of suicidal ideation, and the warning signs of suicide.

## **WEEK 8 GUILT AND INNOCENCE**

The difference between true guilt and false guilt; how one should respond to both kinds of guilt; seeking forgiveness from God for our harmful acts.

## **WEEK 9 FORGIVEN AND FORGIVING**

The roles of accountability and restitution in forgiveness; why and how we need to forgive others who have hurt us; why and how we need to forgive ourselves when we have transgressed our own standards and personal boundaries.

## **WEEK 10 ARMOR UP**

Recognizing and defending ourselves against the malevolent impacts and tactics of the world around us, spiritual opposition, and our own corrupt tendencies; assessing vulnerabilities in our lives through which evil influences can gain access and degrade our abilities to function and enjoy life.

## **WEEK 11 YOUR TRUE IDENTITY**

Traumatic events and cumulative stress tend to shake our self-identity to the core and destroy it, producing a negative self-image and lack of confidence. This chapter seeks to rebuild a positive self-image based on the truths from scripture, rather than the negative influences around us.

## **WEEK 12 SHARE YOUR STORY**

Each participant spends the week prior to this class preparing a personal narrative of “their story” – describing some of the key stresses or traumas they have experienced in their lives; several members share their stories with the group.

## **WEEK 13 GRADUATION**

A ceremony recognizing each of the graduates for the efforts they put into the course, and celebrating their accomplishment with their families, friends, and associates.