

Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry (AGFO)
The growing issue of wildfires in Canada and the
consequential effects that wildfires have on forestry and agriculture industries
April 16, 2024

QUESTION

Senator Burey: I want to get to the next question because the chair is going to cut me off. I wanted to build on the workforce with the kinds of supports that you have for the workforce. It is really important. I want to ask specifically about mental health supports that you have in place. The government announced in the 2024 budget a tax credit for the firefighters. Can you just talk a little bit about that; mental health and then the tax credit, please.

Ms. El Bied: We can follow up.

ANSWER

Mental health support for public safety personnel fighting wildfires

Funded in part by the Government of Canada, the Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research and Treatment (CIPSRT) has developed a comprehensive suite of mental health tools and supports for all public safety personnel, including firefighters.

Located in Regina, Saskatchewan, CIPSRT is committed to evidence-based research, treatment, and knowledge exchange that supports an overall mission to help current and former Canadian first responders and other public safety personnel (PSP), their leaders, and their families improve and maintain their overall mental health and wellbeing.

Treatment

CIPSRT offers online therapy through [PSPNET](#), the clinical research unit within CIPSRT. PSPNET conducts research on and delivers Internet-delivered Cognitive Behavior Therapy to first responders and other PSP.

PSPNET offers therapist-guided and self-guided courses. The self-guided courses mean that clients of these courses do not receive support from a therapist. The therapist-guided courses provide therapist support, including optional therapist support, or once or twice-weekly therapist support during the course.

The [Therapist-guided PSP Wellbeing Course](#) and [Therapist-guided PSP PTSD Course for Mental Health](#) are available in Saskatchewan, Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. Clients can access the course for up to one year after enrollment.

The [PSPNET | Self-Guided PSP Wellbeing Course](#) is available to PSP anywhere in Canada. Clients receive materials that can be accessed for up to 20 weeks after enrolment.

In addition, there are many family-specific resources that can be found on the [PSPNET Families Wellbeing Hub](#). Topics covered by the hub include information on shift work, trauma exposure, and the risks and requirements of work in the public safety sector.

Knowledge Exchange

In complement to the work done at PSPNET, the Knowledge Exchange Hub at CIPSRT has developed several tools and resources for PSP.

[Self-Assessment Tools](#) are online screening tools provided to help identify symptoms of mood disorders, anxiety disorders, or post-traumatic stress disorder. The tools are free and anonymous for use.

[Pspmentalhealth.ca](#) is an online repository of programs and services available for Canadian PSP. Programs can be searched, compared against one another, and sorted through by a number of filters (cost, location, delivery method, therapist-directed, and more).

PSP who may be seeking help for a mental health issue may not know where to start. CIPSRT's [Six Steps to Finding a Clinician](#) outlines the steps, from getting familiar with workplace coverage through to getting ready for the first appointment. Six Steps also familiarizes users with the Glossary of Terms.

Because of their shared occupation, co-workers may be the first point of contact for PSP experiencing symptoms of poor mental health. [How to Support a Co-worker Experiencing Mental Health Issues](#) details common signs of poor mental health, and ways co-workers can offer each other support.

In addition, the CIPSRT Knowledge Exchange Hub also offers regular [webinars](#), publishes [research summaries](#) and infographics, and has formed a community of practice, [PSP Connect](#), for frontline PSP.