

First Responder Resiliency Program Participant Outcomes



An independent research study funded by Movember Canada evaluated outcomes of the Blueprint First Responder Resiliency Program (FRRP) in British Columbia.

Background

Designed, developed and delivered by Blueprint, a non-profit education and training organization funded in part by UBC's Faculty of Medicine, FRRP evolved from research on the impacts of routine exposure to operational stressors on first responders.

Starting in 2017 with the British Columbia Professional Fire Fighters Association, Blueprint has delivered FRRP to active duty fire fighters across BC and beyond; in 2019, the program was modified in collaboration with the British Columbia Police Association to deliver resiliency education to law enforcement officers.

Together, these organizations represent over 10,000 first responders across the province of BC, and comprise the program's participant pool. To date, almost 500 first responders have participated in the program.

The Study

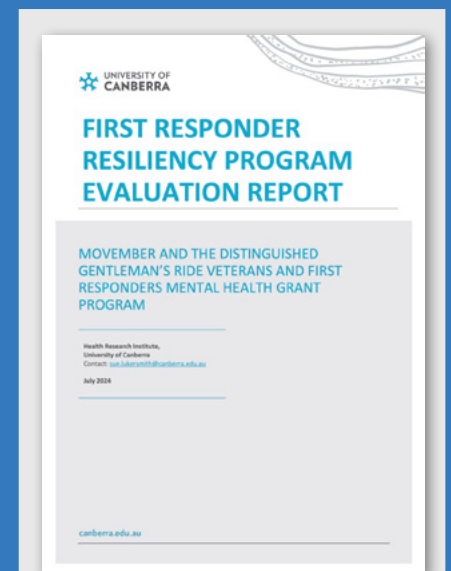
Beginning in 2021, a third-party research team led by the University of Canberra, Australia (UC) set out to learn about the readiness, usability, dissemination, adoption and penetration of FRRP.

In addition to informing Blueprint and program stakeholders of opportunities to refine FRRP and make the model accessible to others, the ultimate goal of the project was to evaluate the program's impact on three key areas related to first responder health and well-being.

As a result of their participation in FRRP, the research team ultimately wanted to understand first responders' ability to:

- Build mental resilience
- Strengthen connections
- Take action to get support

Over the 29-month period, the UC research team monitored FRRP evaluation and data collection related to participant recruitment and post-program experiences, and provided input and support to Blueprint on outcome measures and statistical analysis.



The evaluation and impact analysis report of First Responder Resiliency Program by the University of Canberra evaluation team.

Sue Lukersmith, Luis Savador-Carulla, Cindy Woods, Theo Niyonsenga, Mencia Ruiz Gutierrez Colosia, Itismita Mohanty, Diego Diaz Milanes, Carlos Garcia Alonso (2024).

Program Partners:



Participant Outcomes

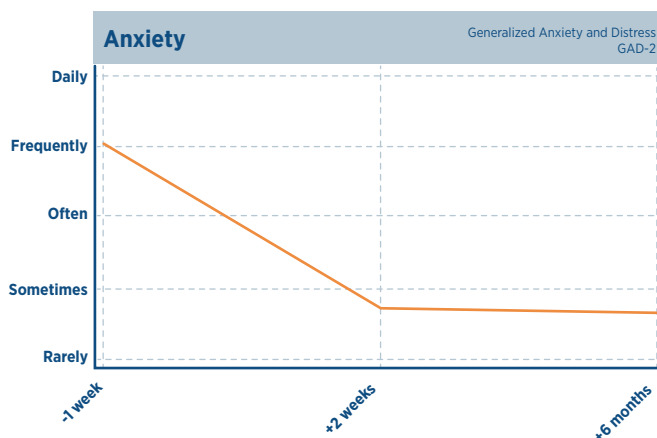
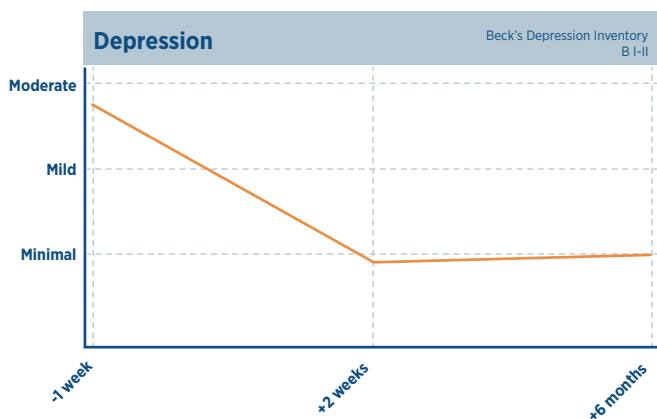
The analysis of indicators shows that participation in FRRP resulted in significant reduction of symptoms pertaining to depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress—outcomes sustained beyond 6 months of completing the program.

Regarding indicators of social support and quality of life, the results demonstrated a significant increase in perceived emotional support, improved interpersonal relations as well as social role functioning.

For all measures, positive results were sustained for over 6 months following completion of the program.

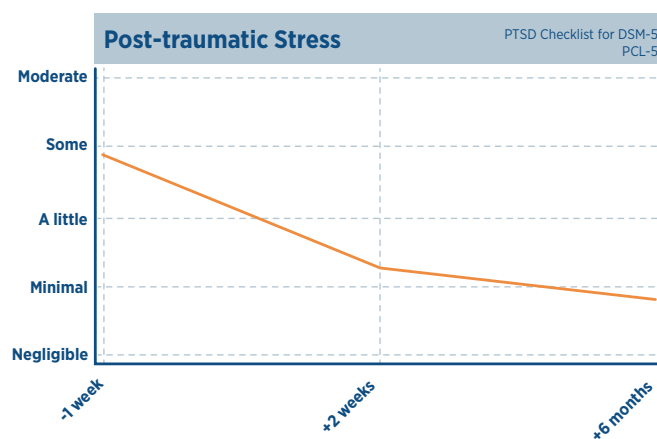
Through their study, the UC research evaluation team affirmed Blueprint's First Responder Resiliency Program as a highly successful project in terms of the following impacts:

- There is evidence on the **significant change and effectiveness of the program** for participants. The project helps participants lower their symptoms of trauma related stress, improves their mental health (depression and anxiety) and overall quality of life, expands their social support and builds resilience.
- Mental health and wellbeing gains are **sustained long after the participants' completion of the program**, indicating the long-term effectiveness of the program on health and well-being.



“Positive and sustained gains in participant mental health and wellbeing, recognised by participants in terms of the value they place on the program, together with **substantial social return on investment** and program management leadership are all strengths for the sustainability of [the Blueprint] First Responders Resiliency Program.”

Health Research Institute, University of Canberra



- FRRP delivered **substantial social value relative to the investment** made by the Movember funding; for every \$1 Movember invested in the program, **the social return of investment was \$5.48 USD**, demonstrating a high positive social value relative to the investment (448%). The social value relative to cost remains high when the additional in kind and operational costs are considered.
- Blueprint demonstrates **solid project leadership capability** in managing the inherent complexities of program delivery without stable funding, and overcoming barriers (ie. COVID).
- The ratings and comments from FRRP participants affirm their **positive perceptions** of usefulness of the program to them.
- The substantive evaluation and effectiveness results strengthen Blueprint's capacity to promote **FRRP as an essential part of first responder education and training**, and proof of the social value of a preventative approach to health care.

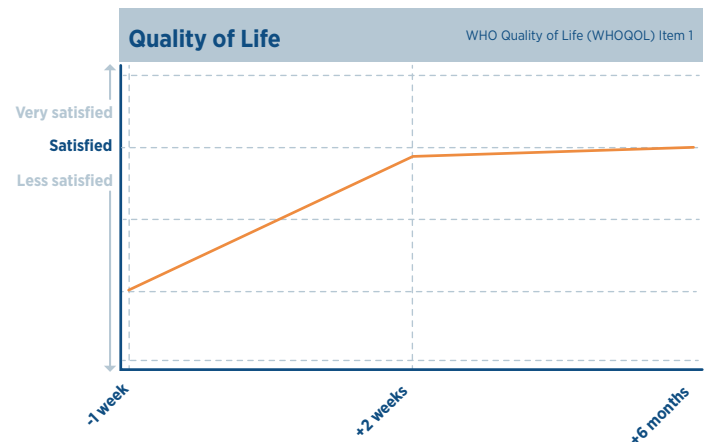
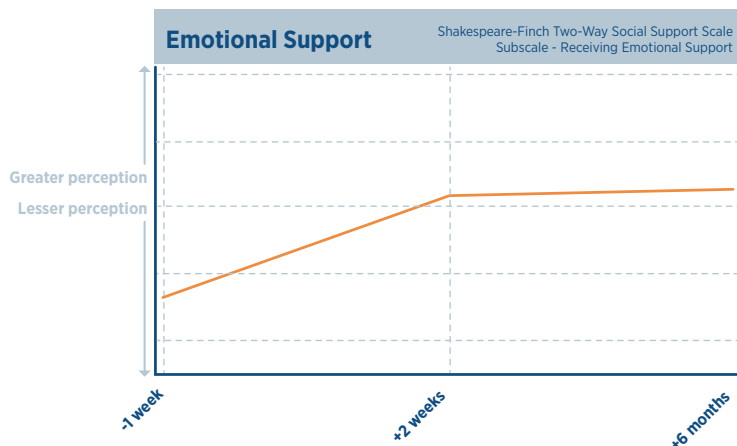
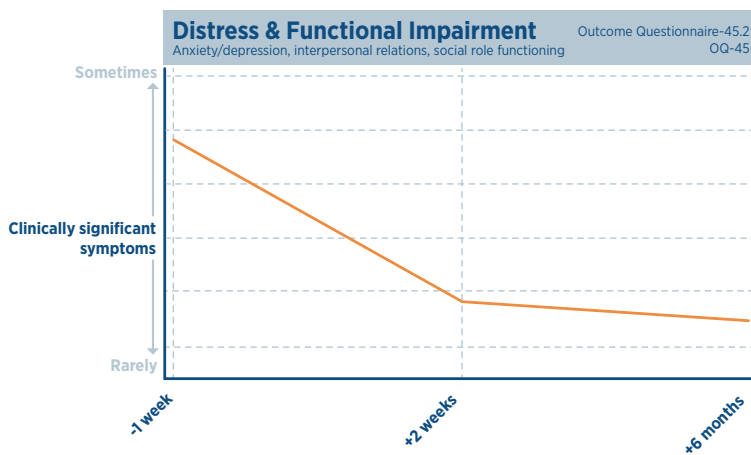
448%

Social Return on Investment (SROI)

A quantitative measure of the value of social, environmental, and economic outcomes generated by an organization's activities, estimated in terms of changes in two measures:

Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL), a multi-dimensional concept encompassing the physical, mental, emotional, functional and social aspects of a person's well-being that are influenced by their health. **HRQoL** is an important measure used to understand how individuals perceive their overall health status and how it impacts their ability to live fulfilling lives; **EQ-5D-3L**, one of the most widely-used HRQoL measures, was used for this study.

Quality Adjusted Life Years (QALY), a metric used to quantify the health-related quality of life improvements resulting from the project; the research team expressed the social impact of the project in monetary terms by estimating changes in **QALY**.



Summary

Analysis of indicators related to building mental resilience, strengthening connections, and taking action to get support showed that participation in the **Blueprint First Responder Resiliency Program** results in a significant reduction of depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, and post-traumatic stress, as well as a significant increase in perceived emotional support.

Program participation has also been shown to consistently result in a significant increase in quality of life, and significant improvements to interpersonal relations and social role functioning.

Most importantly, results in all six outcome areas have been shown to be sustained over 6 months following participation in the program.

Program Feedback

Post-Evaluation comments from anonymous participants.

Mental health

"The project provided a mental re-set that has me looking forward to another 10-15 years of service."

"An invaluable retreat—[it] allowed me to focus on my mental health, and gave me a safe space to start healing."

"FRRP likely saved my life. My social and emotional wellness is better than it has been in a decade or more."

Stress

"This project opened my eyes to every challenge that I didn't know how to cope with. It helped me deal with my personal struggles brought on by work stress, and helped in my personal life."

"An excellent program—it gave me the tools to help with the stress of work, potentially saving my life."

Trauma

"When I finished this program, I was able to leave a lot of my burden behind. Learning how to manage and synthesize stress from trauma on a personal level was most important for me."

"Nothing can prepare you for some of the calls, and knowing there's a resource out there to assist you get through this versus just living with it is a huge resource."

Masculinity / Stigma

"This is a fantastic project for unpacking masculine behaviour, and self-reflection for those who have always been told to 'man up'."

Resilience

"Everyone's experience is unique. FRRP helped me recognize so many different facets about resiliency, support, and life experiences. Awareness, knowledge and support is the key to resilience."

"It was memorable and impactful experience - [it] helped me to understand and learn to cope with many of the challenges that can go hand in hand with a long career in emergency services, and the pitfalls of life in general."

Support

"I have experienced life changing perspective and healing after completing the firefighter resiliency program. My group has continued to talk outside of the project and is still supporting each other."

"This project pulled me out of a rut in a matter of days, to start to see things from a different perspective, and to understand that I was not alone. "

"I felt stronger once I found out I am not alone in this."