

**First Responders** face unique challenges as the frontline workers of emergency response.



Caring for your mind and body can help you stay well and ready for action given the unique stressors of your profession.

## Fuel Your Body

- Research shows a positive relationship between a **healthy, balanced diet and mental health**.
- Eat **regular meals and snacks**, and stick to a **schedule** that works for you.

## Make Time for Rest

- Studies demonstrate people who sleep 6 hours or less are more likely to experience low mood and other mental health side effects.
- **Create a sleep routine** to unwind, relax and ensure you get **the right amount of sleep for you**.

## Connect

- **Send a text, schedule a FaceTime or Zoom video chat, or pick up the phone to call a friend.**
- Work relationships are great - **and** be sure to seek connections outside of work too that allow you to take a break from your job.

## Find a Way to Play

- Whether it's throwing a ball with your dog, tag with your kids, dancing along with the radio, or enjoying a card game.. **Adults need play too!**
- Studies demonstrate that when you **exercise your sense of play**, your brain can **overcome emotional difficulties with less stress**.

## Practice Gratitude

- Take a few minutes each day to **write down or notice what you are grateful for**.
- Studies show that over time, those who write in a **gratitude journal** experience long term health benefits, including a **lower incidence of mental illness and positive changes to the brain**.



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For information, referrals, or support,  
call the NAMI Chicago Helpline at:

**833-626-4244**

**M-F 9am-8pm  
Sat & Sun 9am-5pm**