

# **Best Therapeutic Techniques for Preventing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in Firefighters/First Responders**

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UM' Class of 2020

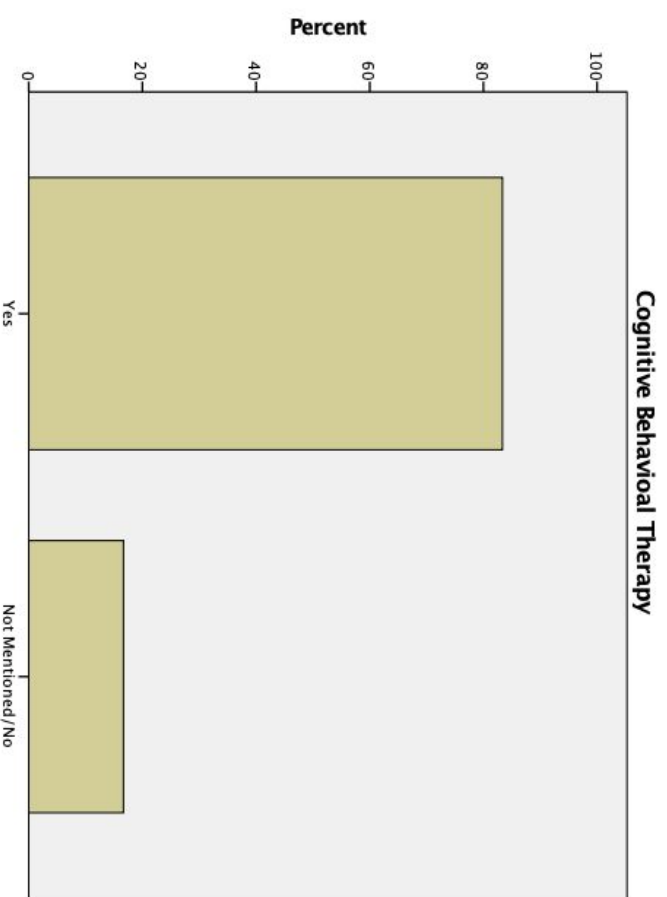


# Purpose of the Research

- I intend, with my research, to show which therapeutic practices are most frequently supported and which are considered the “best” across various disciplines
- My data comes from the following sources :
  - Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA)
  - Mayo Clinic
  - American Psychological Association (APA)
  - Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
  - International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)
  - Crisis Intervention Training Program (CITP)

# Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

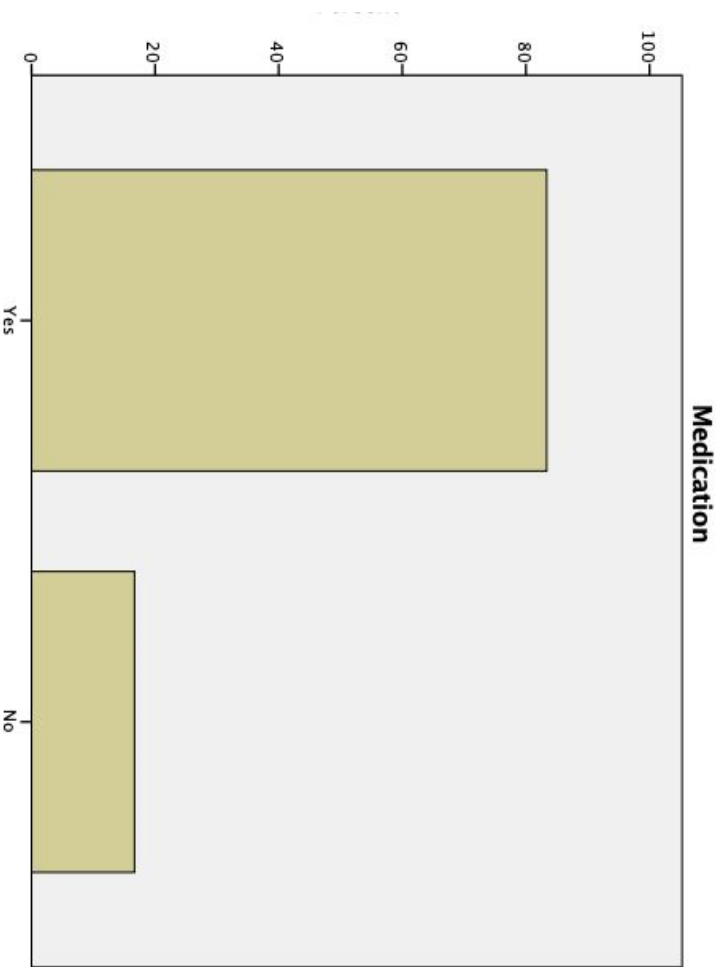
- 83.3% of the sources suggested the use of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- CBT is defined as a psycho-social intervention that aims to improve mental health. CBT focuses on challenging and changing unhelpful cognitive distortions (e.g. thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes) and behaviors, improving emotional regulation, and the development of personal coping strategies that target solving current problems.





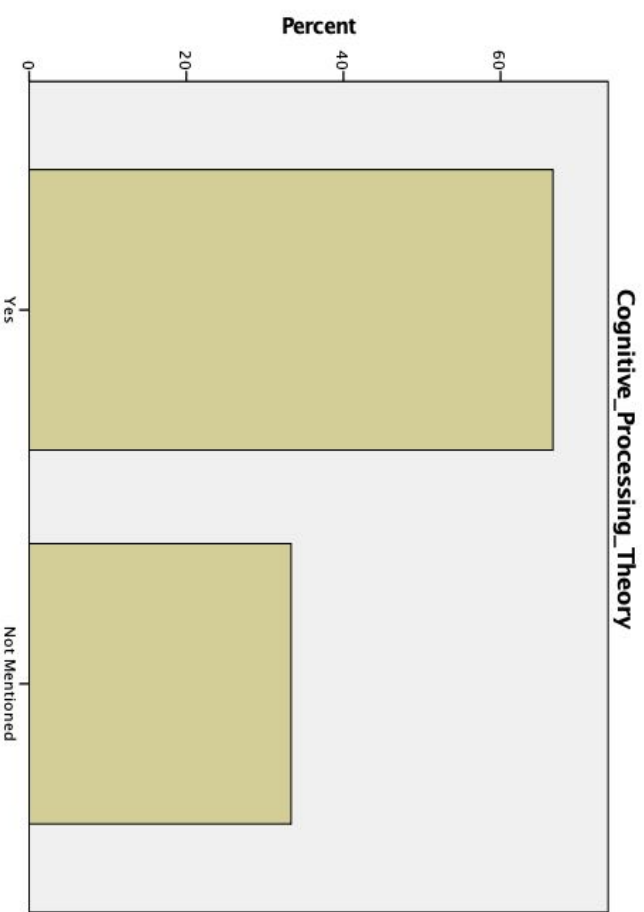
# Medication

- 83.3% recommended the use of medications to help with the effects of PTSD
- These medications include:
  - Antidepressants (SSRI's, Zoloft, Paxil)
  - Anti-Anxiety Medications
  - Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors (MAOI's)
  - Beta-Blockers
  - Benzodiazepines



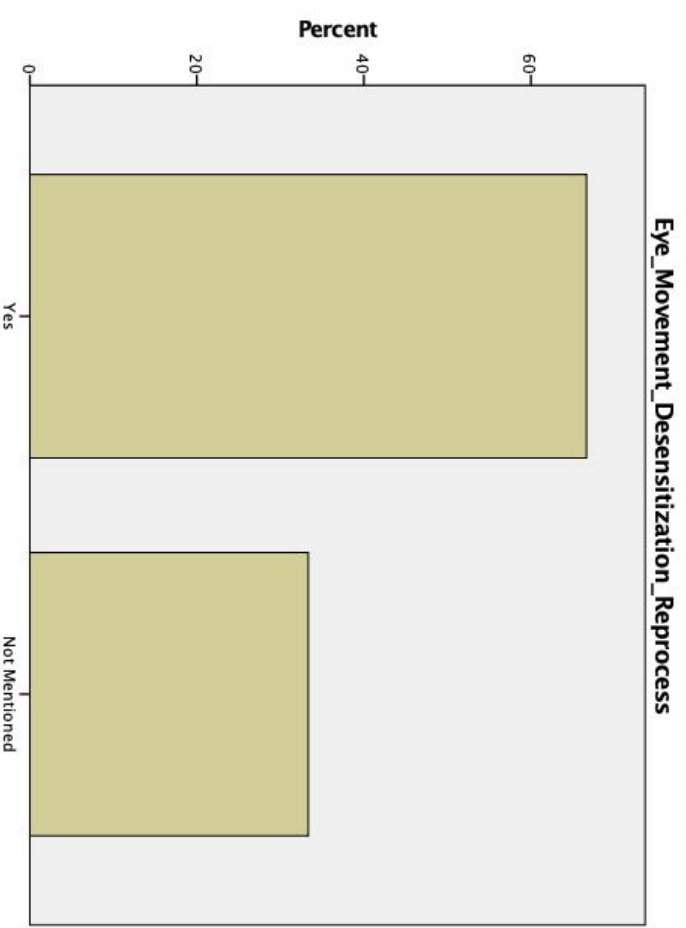
# Cognitive Processing Theory

- 66.7% of sources recommended using a cognitive processing technique
- Mayo Clinic defines Cognitive Processing as a talk therapy helps you recognize the ways of thinking (cognitive patterns) that are keeping you stuck — for example, negative beliefs about yourself and the risk of traumatic things happening again.



# Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing

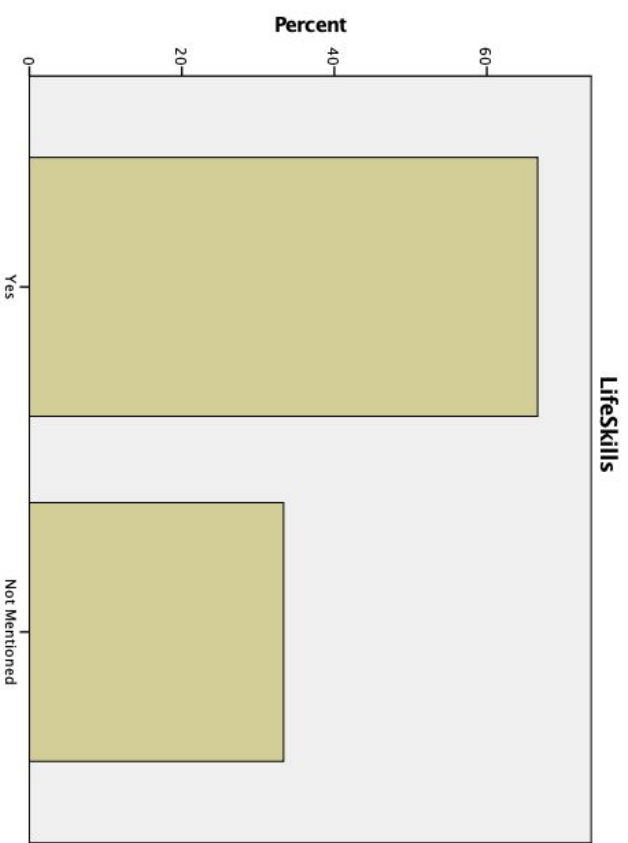
- 66.7% of sources recommended using EMDR as a therapeutic technique
- EMDR works by looking at back-and-forth movement or sound while calling to mind an upsetting memory until shifts occur in the way that one experiences that memory
- There is still a ton of debate for why this works, but for the purpose of this research, we are focused on the idea that it does work





# Life Skills Training

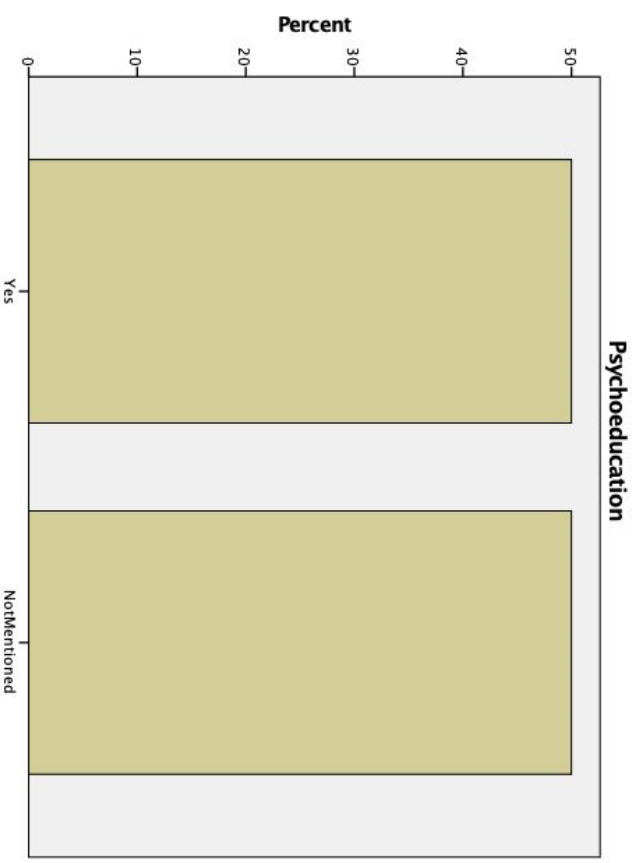
- 66.7% of sources recommended teaching life skills as a way of treating PTSD
- This type of therapeutic intervention teaches the individual how to deal with the somatic and psychosomatic symptoms associated with PTSD including:
  - Breath Retraining
  - Muscle Relaxation
  - Cognitive Restructuring





# Psychoeducation

- 50% of sources recommended using Psychoeducation as a therapeutic technique
- Psychoeducation teaches individuals about the somatic and psychosomatic experiences their body goes through when experiencing PTSD
- This is especially helpful in promoting a more scientific approach to those who don't respond to a mental health/ psychological approach







## Other Therapeutic Interventions

- SMART Recovery Training (50%)
- Motivational Interviewing (33%)
- AA, NA, or related Substance Misuse Groups (33%)
- Yoga/ Exercise (33%)
- Pain Management ( 16.7%)
- Pastoral/Religious Care (33%)



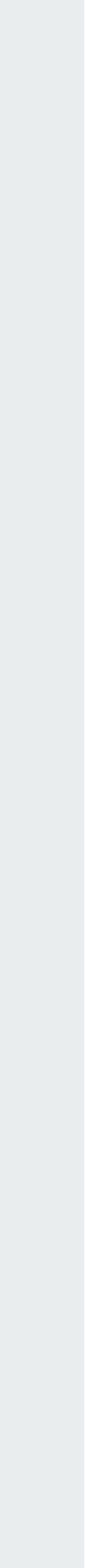


# Why Does The Research Matter?



- In 2019
  - Out of the 166 firefighters who died last year, approximately 68% of those were caused by suicide
- While these heroes are risking their lives daily to serve their communities, many are dealing with the effects of PTSD
- It is my sincere hope that by making these therapeutic techniques more widely known, accepted, and accessible, the number of deaths as a result of PTSD will significantly decrease

Data comes from the Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance



**Thank you all!**  
**Questions?**

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