

Disaster Mental Health tasks

1. Initiate the Disaster Mental Health activity.
2. Manage Disaster Mental Health activity throughout the relief operation.
3. Close the Disaster Mental Health activity.
4. Advocacy.
5. Casualty support.
6. Consultation.
7. Crisis intervention.
8. Emotional care and support.
9. Environmental stress management.
10. Financial assistance for mental health services.
11. Manage internal mental health referrals.
12. Manage mental health referrals to external agencies and providers.
13. Mental health screening/informal assessment and triage.
14. Problem-solving.
15. Researching mental health facilities, resources and providers.
16. Response Center.
17. Staff Health services.

Mission Statement

The mission of Disaster Mental Health is to provide for and respond to the psychosocial needs of our constituents across the continuum of disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

Personnel

Personnel include licensed mental health professionals who work with their local chapter or who are members of the Disaster Services Human Resource (DSHR) System. These include counselors, marriage and family therapists, psychiatrists, psychologists, registered nurses with documented psychiatric training and experience, and social workers. Graduate students studying psychology or a related field may serve on relief operations if they are accompanied by their faculty supervisor. The students and their supervisor should have completed the *Foundations of Disaster Mental Health* (ARC 3077A) course. There should be no more than five students for every faculty supervisor.

Intervention Standards

Disaster Mental Health personnel provide the following services on relief operations:

- psychological triage, crisis intervention, psychological support;
- instrumental support (i.e., taking action in support of an individual);
- advocacy (i.e., an intervention made on behalf of an individual and intended to benefit the person or cause being supported);
- problem solving;
- education;
- referrals;
- supervision and support to Red Cross workers providing Psychological First Aid;
- monitoring and alleviating organizational stress;
- casualty support.

Disaster Mental Health personnel also provide exit interviews to departing disaster relief workers and sign the Staff Services Out-Processing form.

Training

All Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers need to complete the training course *Foundations of Disaster Mental Health* (ARC 3077-4). Six-and-a-half Continuing Education Units are awarded for completing the course. Previously-trained Disaster Mental Health personnel should take the course to update their knowledge of the Disaster Mental Health activity. Disaster Mental Health personnel should also take *Client Casework: Providing Emergency Assistance* (DSCLS202A) and any relevant Client Assistance System and Client Assistance Card training, as they are expected to be able to open cases and provide assistance, if needed.

Disaster Mental Health developed *Psychological First Aid: Helping Others in Times of Stress* (DSCL206A) for all Red Cross employees and volunteers. Disaster Mental Health personnel support employees and volunteers from other activities in applying psychological first aid skills, and receive Disaster Mental Health referrals from those employees and volunteers.

Collaboration

Disaster Mental Health collaborates with community mental health agencies to augment the activity with local mental health disaster volunteers working under the supervision of their agency.

Objective

To open the Disaster Mental Health activity at the beginning of a disaster relief operation.

Procedures

At the beginning of a relief operation, the Disaster Mental Health manager will:

- 1. Consult with Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers who were first on the scene.**
- 2. Coordinate with Health Services to provide Disaster Mental Health budget information for operation administration, as required.**
- 3. Establish a connection with the Disaster Mental Health consultant designated by the service area for Chapter or Multi-Chapter relief operations.**
- 4. Establish a connection with Disaster Mental Health activity lead or designee at national headquarters on National relief operations.**
- 5. Establish a connection with the local chapter's Disaster Mental Health lead whenever possible.**
- 6. Review the Disaster Mental Health portion of the chapter's disaster plan.**
- 7. Work with other activity managers within Individual Client Services to develop the overall service delivery plan. In addition to the general disaster assessment, include the following factors that can increase the psychosocial impact:**
 - Number of affected families;
 - The number of disaster-related deaths and injuries;
 - Suddenness and/or severity of the disaster;
 - Time of day or night the disaster occurred;
 - Potential for continuing impact of the disaster, such as after shocks, fires or flooding;
 - Frequency of disasters that occur in the area;
 - How recently and/or severely the area may have been previously impacted;
 - Number of individuals likely to have special mental health needs;
 - Number of mental health providers in the community;
 - Availability of community mental health resources;
 - Estimated time for community to recover;
 - Hardship conditions likely to affect workers adversely.

8. **Based on the service delivery plan, coordinate service delivery efforts with partners providing mental health in the disaster-affected area, such as:**
 - Community mental health agencies;
 - Salvation Army;
 - Federal Emergency Management Agency;
 - Department of Veterans Affairs;
 - National Organization for Victims Assistance;
 - Critical Incident Stress Management teams;
 - Other mental health agencies and organizations.
9. **Submit requests for employees and volunteers using the *Staff Request* (F6512).**
10. **Assign employees and volunteers, ensuring mental health coverage for all Red Cross sites and settings.**
11. **Establish a table of organization for the Disaster Mental Health activity.**
12. **Establish a system for developing collaborative partnering with other mental health agencies and non-profit organizations providing disaster relief.**
13. **Establish a system for routinely communicating information to all Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers.**
14. **Establish procedures for reporting and recording Disaster Mental Health contacts and other information.**
15. **Review the template for the Disaster Mental Health final report; establish a system for collecting data to complete the final report.**
16. **Using a *Disaster Requisition* (F6409), order sufficient office and Disaster Mental Health supplies and distribute among Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers and service delivery sites.**
 - file cabinet or container that can be locked for the storage of confidential material;
 - *Health Record* (F2077);
 - *Client Assistance Memorandum* (F1475);
 - *Release of Confidential Information — Client* (F5854);
 - *Release of Confidential Information — Red Cross Workers* (F5854A);
 - *Disaster Referral* (F5855);
 - *Coping with Disaster: Emotional Health Issues for Workers on Assignment* (ARC4472);
 - *Coping with Disaster: Disaster Workers Returning Home After Assignment* (ARC4473);

- *Coping with Disaster: Families of Workers* (ARC4474);
- *Coping with Disaster: For Disaster Victims* (ARC4475);
- *Helping Children Cope with Disaster* (ARC4499);
- Newsprint, paper and crayons;
- Stuffed toys.

18. Submit requests to Material Support Services for in-kind donation of other Disaster Mental Health related materials such as games, books and toys for service delivery sites.

19. Record important incoming Disaster Mental Health employee and volunteer information on the *Staff Roster*:

- Professional license and/or certification; checking that it is valid, up-to-date and corresponds to the name on the employee's or volunteer's picture ID;
- Valid driver's license;
- Assigned resources, rental cars and cell phones;
- Assigned housing;
- Assigned work site;
- Arrival and scheduled release dates.

20. Provide an activity orientation for incoming Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers that includes:

- Contact information for Disaster Mental Health at operation headquarters and for direct supervisor;
- Disaster information within the scope of Disaster Mental Health, including:
 - Demographics: (age, ethnicity, income, languages spoken, housing, institutions, etc.);
 - History and geography of affected area;
 - Number of Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers presently on the relief operation;
 - Location of service delivery sites;
 - Stressors specific to the operation;
 - Extent of intervention activity thus far.
- A brief review of the Disaster Mental Health intervention standards, providing workers with copies of their assigned position descriptions and tasks when possible;
- Directions for tracking contacts; provide employees and volunteers with the *DMH Contacts Form*;

- Local mental health contact information;
 - Location of the nearest hospital with psychiatric services and/or beds;
 - Local crisis hotline number(s);
 - Community mental health agencies that are able to provide disaster related services for adults and children;
 - Local private providers;
 - Child/elder/disabled abuse hotline;
 - Laws and procedures for mandated reporting of abuse and potential harm to self or others.

Definitions

n/a

Policies

n/a

Regulations

State licensing laws require that mental health professionals report to the appropriate authorities suspected incidents of child/elder/disable abuse or of a client's potential to harm self or others.

State licensing laws require mental health professionals to protect client privilege and maintain confidentiality

Resources

DMH Contact Form

DMH Personnel Roster

Disaster Requisition (F6409)

Workers Request Form (F6512)

Client Health Record (F2077)

Client Assistance Memorandum (F1475)

Release of Confidential Information — Client (F5854)

Release of Confidential Information — Red Cross Workers (F5854A)

Disaster Referral (F5855)

DMH Final Report

Coping with Disaster: Emotional Health Issues for Workers on Assignment, ARC 4472

Coping with Disaster: Disaster Workers Returning Home After Assignment, ARC 4473

Coping with Disaster: Families of Workers, ARC 4474

Coping with Disaster: For Disaster Victims, ARC 4475

Helping Children Cope with Disaster, ARC 4499

Objective

Ensure effective administrative management of the activity by the Disaster Mental Health manager during a disaster relief operation.

Procedures

- 1. Monitor the relief operation and conditions in the field.**
 - Communicate regularly with Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers at all work locations;
 - Alert Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers to observe trends, evidence of unmet needs, community response to the Red Cross and other variables that may indicate a need for adjustments to service delivery planning;
 - Communicate relevant information with the relief operation's leadership;
 - Coordinate necessary service delivery adjustments with other activities that are to be involved.
- 2. Coordinate ongoing employee and volunteer assignments with other activity and group responses.**
- 3. Mentor and provide technical guidance to Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers assigned in supervisory roles.**
- 4. Monitor performance of Disaster Mental Health supervisors, providing feedback and offering opportunities for adjustments in performance as appropriate.**
- 5. Support capacity-building and mentoring for Disaster Mental Health at the local chapter.**
- 6. Attend leadership meetings at relief operation headquarters to share information and participate in ongoing service delivery planning. Communicate information to Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers**
- 7. Ensure that Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers have days off regularly and advocate for all employees and volunteers to have a regular days off.**
- 8. Monitor human and material resources for additional requests or other adjustments as needed.**
- 9. Tally and report Disaster Mental Health contacts, etc., to the Individual Client Services administrator.**
- 10. Continue to coordinate with Health Services to provide Disaster Mental Health budget information to Operations Management as requested:**
 - \$500 is an adequate initial estimate for most Chapter and Multi-Chapter Disaster operations.

- For large National operations, where numerous deaths or injuries have occurred and/or where there has been especially severe trauma or stress, Disaster Mental Health leadership can increase the initial estimated budget, as deemed appropriate.
- As administration makes budget adjustments late in the operation, Disaster Mental Health leadership can decrease the budget estimate to support the perceived remaining need.

11. Maintain contact with the Disaster Mental Health consultant designated by the service area.

Definitions

n/a

Policies

n/a

Regulations

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Resources

DMH Contacts Form 6/06

Objective

Effectively close the Disaster Mental Health activity in a major disaster relief operation and transition Disaster Mental Health responsibilities to the local chapter(s).

Procedures

1. Determine, in coordination with the Individual Client Services administrator and the local chapter(s), the date when Disaster Mental Health will transition to the local chapter(s).
2. Coordinate with Client Casework, Health Services and the local chapter(s) to estimate expected ongoing client and community mental health needs following the transition from the relief operation to the chapter(s).
3. Notify any agencies or organizations that Disaster Mental Health worked with or had contact with that the operation is transitioning to the chapter.
4. Coordinate with the local chapter(s) to establish resources for post-transition Disaster Mental Health client referrals, and note contact information for these resources on the Disaster Mental Health activity narrative.
5. Ensure that all outstanding referrals have been addressed, including closing all *Client Assistance Memorandum* (F1475) and all Client Assistance System mental health referrals.
6. Ensure that all departing Disaster Mental Health workers go to RTT to have their user ID for the Client Assistance System cancelled.
7. Coordinate with Staff Services to ensure that sufficient Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers remain on the relief operation to provide mental health exit interviews for outgoing workers (see Provide Exit Interviews).
8. Determine, with the aid of local chapter(s), how workers continuing with the operation will be able to access Disaster Mental Health for exit interviews or other mental health services. Note such procedures and contact information in the Disaster Mental Health activity narrative.
9. Ensure that all out processing Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers receive performance evaluations.
10. Arrange with Material Support Services for the disposition of remaining supplies.
11. Obtain narratives from Disaster Mental Health supervisors and service associates who have chosen to write them.
12. Complete the Disaster Mental Health final report and the Disaster Mental Health activity narrative.
13. Send the Disaster Mental Health activity narrative, narratives from other Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers, the Final Report and all *Health Records* (F2077) and

Client Assistance Memoranda (F1475) to the Disaster Mental Health activity lead at national headquarters.

14. Leave the Disaster Mental Health relief operation book with the chapter's Disaster Mental Health lead.

Definitions

n/a

Policies

n/a

Regulations

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Resources

DMH Final Report

Client Assistance Memorandum (F1475)

Client Health Record (F2077)

DMH Activity Narrative

Objective

Help individuals access needed services and supports.

Procedures

- 1. A Disaster Mental Health employee or volunteer evaluates the situation with the disaster victim, Red Cross employee or volunteer or family members to determine the need for advocacy.**
- 2. When dealing with sensitive issues, Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers consult with Disaster Mental Health supervisors before proceeding.**
- 3. Advocacy includes:**
 - Communicating the needs of persons affected by disasters and workers to supervisors and/or care providers;
 - Providing culturally sensitive services;
 - Addressing special needs;
 - Providing information about relief programs and services available from the Red Cross, from local, state and federal agencies and from private organizations;
 - Helping people understand the process of applying for services;
 - Assisting family members of employees and volunteers on assignment.

Definitions

n/a

Policies

n/a

Regulations

State licensing laws require that mental health professionals report to the appropriate authorities suspected incidents of child/elder/disable abuse or of a client's potential to harm self or others.

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Resources

Coping with Disaster: Emotional Health Issues for Workers on Assignment (ARC4472)

Coping with Disaster: Workers Returning Home after Assignment (ARC4473)

Coping with Disaster: Families of Workers (ARC4474)

Objective

Provide mental health support to individuals affected by disaster who have lost loved ones or who have suffered serious physical injury to themselves and/or to a family member.

Procedures

- 1. Casualty support is offered during the immediate aftermath and recovery phase of a disaster when death and serious injuries have occurred.**
- 2. Disaster Mental Health can offer casualty support independently or in coordination with Health Services and/or Client Casework as part of an integrated care team.**
- 3. Depending on the number and types of casualties, Disaster Mental Health offers a broad range of services including:**
 - Making condolence visits or telephone calls;
 - Supporting families of casualties during ante-mortem interviews, death notifications, visits to the event site and memorial services;
 - Providing educational material about loss and bereavement;
 - Identifying resources and support systems;
 - Obtaining further mental health assistance;
 - Making referrals for ongoing mental health services;
 - Assisting with the costs of mental health services.

Definitions

n/a

Policies

n/a

Regulations

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State licensing laws require mental health professionals to protect client privilege and maintain confidentiality.

Resources

Family Assistance Act of 1996, 1997 (<http://www.nts.gov/Family/family.htm>)

Objective

Provide mental health consultation in areas of human behavior, communication, interpersonal relationships, problem-solving and stress management to Red Cross relief operation employees and volunteers, community organizations and persons affected by disasters.

Procedures

- 1. Inform relief operation employees and volunteers of Disaster Mental Health availability to serve as consultants in the areas of human behavior, communication, interpersonal relationships, problem-solving and stress management. Examples of these include:**
 - A supervisor requesting information about how to create a user friendly service delivery site;
 - A caseworker wishing to discuss how to interact with a client who has special issues and/or difficulties;
 - A community leader wanting to know how to address the emotional needs in the community following the disaster;
 - A community group requesting a discussion of disaster preparedness and emotional resilience as they relate to their community.
- 2. Respond to requests by providing information in appropriate ways (i.e., verbally, pamphlets, group presentations, etc.).**
- 3. Record contact information on *DMH Contacts Form 06/06*.**

Definitions

n/a

Policies

n/a

Regulations

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State licensing laws require mental health professionals to protect client privilege and maintain confidentiality

Resources

DMH Contacts Form 06/06

Objective

Respond to crisis situations.

Procedures

- 1. Disaster Mental Health provides crisis intervention when clients or workers experience extremely distressing situations or emotions.**
- 2. Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers endeavor to —**
 - Help individuals sufficiently address the situation.
 - Alleviate the distress so individuals return to an effective level of functioning.
- 3. Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers provide a wide variety of interventions including:**
 - Emotional support;
 - Problem-solving;
 - Advocacy;
 - Conflict resolution;
 - Education and information regarding emotional responses;
 - Information about various resources individuals may find useful;
 - Referrals for additional mental health services.

Definitions

n/a

Policies

National Response Plan, Emergency Support Function #8-13; #14-6. The American Red Cross provides supportive counseling and mental health referrals.

Regulations

State licensing laws require that mental health professionals report to the appropriate authorities suspected incidents of child/elder/disable abuse or of a client's potential to harm self or others.

State licensing laws require mental health professionals to protect client privilege and maintain confidentiality

Resources

Coping with Disaster: Emotional Health Issues for Workers on Assignment (ARC 4472)

Coping with Disaster: Disaster Workers Returning Home After Assignment (ARC 4473)

Coping with Disaster: Families of Workers (ARC 4474)

Coping with Disaster: For Disaster Victims (ARC 4475)

Helping Children Cope with Disaster (ARC 4499)

Objective

Help persons affected by disasters, their family members and Red Cross workers manage their emotional responses before, during and following disasters.

Procedures

- 1. Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers offer emotional care and support to all who have been affected by the disaster, including:**
 - Adults and children;
 - Red Cross employees and volunteers;
 - Family members of workers and persons affected by disasters;
 - Employees and volunteers who have returned home from an assignment;
 - Community members who have experienced emotional responses to the disaster.
 - Note: When clients or Red Cross employees or volunteers indicate spiritual problems, referral to faith-based community partners is appropriate.
- 2. Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers typically provide emotional care and support by discussing individuals' emotional, cognitive, physical, behavioral and spiritual* reactions to their current situations and helping them process their reactions by active listening, and by providing a comforting presence.**
- 3. While providing emotional care and support, Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers provide the following interventions:**
 - Psychological triage;
 - Advocacy;
 - Casualty support;
 - Problem-solving;
 - Conflict resolution;
 - Crisis intervention;
 - Education on relevant topics, such as stress factors, resilience, coping and the recovery process;
 - Referrals;
 - Instrumental Support;
 - Identification of support services and referral resources.

- 4. Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers provide emotional care and support for children with activities such as**
- Supporting positive coping strategies;
 - Helping children reestablish connections with others;
 - Involving children in recovery efforts through meaningful tasks;
 - Helping children focus on positive self-views;
 - Reminding families and children of the importance of taking breaks from recovery efforts and other healthy self-care practices;
 - Encourage families to get back to basic routines of meals, bedtimes and other daily rituals;
 - Leading play, game or story activities;
 - Distributing stuffed animals;
 - Providing educational materials to parents.

Definitions

n/a

Policies

National Response Plan, Emergency Support Function #8-15; #14-6. The Red Cross provides Ssupportive counseling and information about referral resources.

Regulations

State licensing laws require that mental health professionals report to the appropriate authorities suspected incidents of child/elder/disable abuse or of a client's potential to harm self or others.

State licensing laws require mental health professionals to protect client privilege and maintain confidentiality

Resources

Coping with Disaster: Emotional Health Issues for Workers on Assignment (ARC4472)

Coping with Disaster: Disaster Workers Returning Home After Assignment (ARC4473)

Coping with Disaster: Families of Workers (ARC4474)

Coping with Disaster: For Disaster Victims (ARC4475)

Helping Children Cope with Disaster (ARC4499)

Helping Children Cope with Disaster (ARC4499)

Newsprint / paper / crayons

Objective

Monitor and mitigate environmental and personnel stressors on a disaster relief operation.

Procedures

- 1. Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers assess stressors that negatively affect clients and Red Cross employees and volunteers, and communicate this information to their supervisor and/or manager. These include:**
 - Assessing environmental stressors that impact workers;
 - Assessing environmental stressors that impact clients;
 - Arranging task assignments to maximize worker morale and endurance;
 - Advocating for shorter work shifts or more time off if and when appropriate;
 - Identifying recurring operational difficulties with disaster leadership and possible methods for resolving them;
 - Assist in minimizing stressors present in the relief operation environment;
 - Provide assistance to address instances of worker created stress including discrimination, sexual harassment and workplace violence.

Definitions

n/a

Policies

n/a

Regulations

State licensing laws require that mental health professionals report to the appropriate authorities suspected incidents of child/elder/disable abuse or of a client's potential to harm self or others.

State licensing laws require mental health professionals to protect client privilege and maintain confidentiality

Resources

n/a

Objective

Assist disaster affected persons and Red Cross employees and volunteers to obtain additional mental health services beyond those provide by Disaster Mental Health.

Procedures

1. **If Red Cross employees and volunteers cannot relay to Disaster Mental Health internal mental health referrals verbally or by means of the Client Assistance System they may use a *Client Assistance Memorandum (F1475)A* that will say only “please refer” or “please evaluate” rather than providing detailed information about the mental health condition.**
2. **Interview the individual to determine the condition or symptoms that would benefit from additional mental health services and/or the need for a formal assessment by a mental health provider.**
3. **Explore available resources such as:**
 - Private insurance;
 - Medicaid;
 - Medicare;
 - Department of Veterans Affairs;
 - Federal Emergency Management Agency.
4. **Consider the importance of the individual’s previous or ongoing relationship with a provider from whom he or she would like to continue to receive services.**
5. **Discuss with the Disaster Mental Health supervisor or the chapter’s Disaster Mental Health leadership.**
6. **In conjunction with Health Services, prioritize treatment needs of the client, taking into account the \$500.00 limit established for additional mental health and/or health needs.**
7. **Establish with the provider the expected fee and number of sessions.**
8. **Ensure that the provider will accept Red Cross payment.**
9. **Provide a Disaster Referral to the client and document in the Client Assistance System and on the *Disaster Registration and Case Record (F901)*.**
10. **Prepare a *Release of Confidential Information for the Referral Agency — Client (F5854)* when needed.**
11. **Complete a *Disbursing Order (F140)* or issue a Client Assistance Card for services.**
12. **Document the reason for the type of service funded and the number of sessions funded, using *Health Record (F2077)*.**

Definitions

n/a

Policies

n/a

Regulations

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State licensing laws require mental health professionals to protect client privilege and maintain confidentiality

Resources

Client Assistance System-Quick Reference Manual (CAS-QRM)

Disaster Registration and Case Record (F901)

Disbursing Order (F140N or C)

Release of Confidential Information — Client (F5854)

Release of Confidential Information — Red Cross Workers (F5854A)

Client Health Record (F2077)

Objective

Provide accurate information to Red Cross employees and volunteers about how to refer clients to Disaster Mental Health.

Procedures

- 1. The Disaster Mental Health manager will assign a Disaster Mental Health employee or volunteer at every work location to whom Red Cross workers can make referrals.**
- 2. The Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers ensure that Red Cross employees and volunteers know how to refer clients to Disaster Mental Health.**
 - Disaster Mental Health recommends verbal rather than written referrals, as these do not create paperwork that could contain confidential mental health information.
 - If Red Cross employees and volunteers use the Client Assistance System, they can check the appropriate box under the heading “Status” for a Disaster Mental Health referral.
 - When mental health assistance is needed they will check “Needed.”
 - When the mental health assistance has been provided, they will check “DMH complete.”
 - If information cannot be relayed verbally or through Client Assistance System, the *Client Assistance Memorandum* (F1475), should be used. Use ONLY “please refer” or “please evaluate” on the *Client Assistance Memorandum* (F1475).

Definitions

n/a

Policies

n/a

Regulations

State licensing laws require that mental health professionals report to the appropriate authorities suspected incidents of child/elder/disable abuse or of a client’s potential to harm self or others.

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Resources

Client Assistance Memorandum (F1475)

Objective

To meet the needs of clients or workers who require mental health services beyond the scope of services provided by the Disaster Mental Health activity.

Procedures**1. Referrals for additional mental health intervention when**

- A client or Red Cross employee or volunteer shows evidence of a serious mental health condition that will likely require additional ongoing care.

2. Make referrals for services such as:

- Mental health evaluation;
- Counseling or psychotherapy;
- Hospitalization.

3. Coordinate referral efforts with Health Services or Staff Health when:

- Any physical condition is worsened by the emotional response to the disaster;
- Hospitalization is considered;
- Medications or recreational drugs are suspected of contributing to the observed symptoms;
- A medical condition is suspected of contributing to observed symptoms;
- An employee or volunteer may need to return home for mental health reasons.

4. If facilitating a referral requires speaking with an external mental health professional, or other individual, complete the *Release of Confidential Information — Client (F5854)* and obtain the client's signature.**5. Use *Disaster Crisis Referral (F6641)* to request documentation that identifies clients as disaster victims.****Definitions**

n/a

Policies

National Response Plan, Emergency Support Function #8-13; #14-6. The Red Cross provides affected families with appropriate referrals.

Regulations

State licensing laws require that mental health professionals report to the appropriate authorities suspected incidents of child/elder/disable abuse or of a client's potential to harm self or others.

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Resources

Release of Confidential Information—Client (F5854)

Disaster Crisis Referral (F5855)

Objective

Assess and identify the appropriate mental health intervention for Red Cross workers and disaster affected persons.

Procedures

- 1. Use mental health screening/informal assessment, observation, interviews and provided information to evaluate Red Cross workers and disaster affected persons. The Disaster Mental Health screening/informal assessment is used to:**
 - Identify adults and children who may need Disaster Mental Health intervention and/or referral.
 - Identify adults and children who may have special needs as a result of a prior mental health condition.
 - Identify problematic issues during exit interviews for Red Cross workers.
 - Determine if Red Cross workers need to return home for mental health reasons.
- 2. Use the mental health screening/informal assessment to triage adults and children and Red Cross workers to determine the appropriate level of intervention. This includes:**
 - Individuals who threaten or attempt suicide, display aggressive behaviors or extreme emotional states.
 - Those who are lost or separated from their families, individuals without support systems, and those who seem the most distraught.
- 3. Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers determine the most appropriate intervention and may consult with other activities.**

Definitions

n/a

Policies

n/a

Regulations

State licensing laws require that mental health professionals report to the appropriate authorities suspected incidents of child/elder/disable abuse or of a client's potential to harm self or others.

State licensing laws require mental health professionals to protect client privilege and maintain confidentiality

National Response Plan, Emergency Support Function #8-13; #14-6. The Red Cross provides supportive counseling and referrals.

Resources

n/a

Objective

Assist Red Cross workers and disaster affected persons cope with difficulties that may arise in a disaster setting.

Procedures

- 1. Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers offer problem-solving assistance when individuals appear unable to resolve difficulties on their own, or upon request.**
- 2. Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers help individuals to identify, understand and address their reactions and circumstances, and to develop constructive solutions and positive coping skills.**
- 3. Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers help clients —**
 - Identify or define problems;
 - Explore possible causes;
 - Generate and evaluate options;
 - Select possible solutions;
 - Develop plans for follow-through.
- 3. When the intervention involves more than one person, as in cases of interpersonal conflict, before proceeding, all people involved need to consent to the intervention.**

Definitions

n/a

Policies

n/a

Regulations

State licensing laws require that mental health professionals report to the appropriate authorities suspected incidents of child/elder/disable abuse or of a client's potential to harm self or others.

State licensing laws require mental health professionals to protect client privilege and maintain confidentiality

National Response Plan, Emergency Support Function #8-13. The Red Cross provides supportive counseling

Resources

n/a

Objective

Identify and develop resource guide of relevant mental health resources for referrals, hospitalization and collaboration and disseminate to other staff.

Procedures

- 1. Disaster Mental Health leadership identifies the relevant mental health contacts and resources within the disaster affected area, compiles resource guide and disseminates it to other staff.**
- 2. Critical referral resources and information include:**
 - Location of the nearest hospital with psychiatric services and capacity;
 - Local crisis hotline number;
 - Contact information for accessing community mental health services, and any special consideration that may be given to disaster victims who need treatment;
 - Local private providers who have offered pro bono services for disaster victims;
 - Contact information for reporting abuse of children, the elderly and the disabled;
 - Contact information for reporting a client's potential harm to self or others.
- 3. Disaster Mental Health coordinates its efforts with partners in the disaster mental health response. Partners may include:**
 - Community mental health agencies;
 - Salvation Army;
 - Federal Emergency Management Agency;
 - Department of Veterans Affairs;
 - National Organization for Victims Assistance;
 - Critical Incident Stress Management teams;
 - Other mental health agencies and organizations.

Definitions

n/a

Policies

n/a

Regulations

State licensing laws require that mental health professionals report to the appropriate authorities suspected incidents of child/elder/disable abuse or of a client's potential to harm self or others.

State licensing laws require mental health professionals to protect client privilege and maintain confidentiality

National Response Plan, Emergency Support Function #8-5. During times of national disasters, behavioral health (community mental health personnel) may be activated for assisting the response.

National Response Plan, Emergency Support Function #8-13; #14-6. The Red Cross acquaints disaster-affected families with available resources and services and makes referrals.

Resources

n/a

Objective

Meet responsibilities that relate to the emotional wellbeing of Red Cross workers in relationship with Staff Health

Procedures

- 1. Ensure that incoming Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers know that Staff Health is a resource to them.**
- 2. Ensure that Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers are assigned to, or responsible for, every site where Red Cross workers work, and are available for mental health referrals for workers.**
- 3. When a worker is suspected of being impaired by drugs or alcohol, either by Disaster Mental Health observation or referral by supervisors or Staff Health, the Disaster Mental Health employee or volunteer —**
 - Handles the situation as he or she would deal with an observation or referral pertaining to any other person (see External Referrals).
 - Considers the worker's possibility of significant harm to self or others (e.g., if the worker is driving while intoxicated).
 - Reports the situation to Staff Relations.
- 4. If an employee or volunteer who is referred by his or her supervisor or by Staff Health declines Disaster Mental Health's offer of a mental health intervention, the Disaster Mental Health employee or volunteer informs the referring individual and offers consultation to Staff Health and the workers member's activity lead as they consider the workers member's continuing status on the operation.**
- 5. If an employee or volunteer declines hospitalization when a Disaster Mental Health employee or volunteer has determined that it is necessary to protect the individual from harm to self or others, the Disaster Mental Health employee or volunteer —**
 - Consults with his or her Disaster Mental Health supervisor;
 - Informs the appropriate local authority if it is deemed necessary;
 - Arranges for the worker to sign the *Declined Treatment Form*.
 - Informs the director and Staff Health manager of the status of the worker's acceptance or decline of treatment and makes recommendations for the worker to remain on or be removed from the relief operation.

- 6. In circumstances when a worker may need to be released for a mental health reason, the DMH worker —**
 - Works with the individual to see if the emotional or environmental circumstances can be alleviated sufficiently for the worker to remain on the operation.
 - Informs Staff Health if Disaster Mental Health and the worker jointly decide that the best option is for the person to return home (and Staff Services if not already involved).
 - Coordinates with Staff Health and the worker to determine whether the person may travel alone or should be accompanied by a Disaster Mental Health employee or volunteer or another person.
 - Informs the operation director that the worker needs to be released from the relief operation.
 - Documents the circumstances and/or condition, the basis for the recommendation, and exit plan or final outcome on the *Staff Injury and Illness Record*.
- 7. When an employee or volunteer dies on an operation, Disaster Mental Health —**
 - Helps facilitate providing support and meeting the needs of the family and carrying out their wishes in coordination with Staff Health and the worker's chapter affiliation.
 - Provides emotional support for the family if requested.
 - Assists, if requested to do so by Staff Health, in making travel arrangements for family members.
 - Offers other employees and volunteers an opportunity to process their reactions to the event by providing individual or group interventions, as appropriate.
- 7. When there is a death, medical emergency or other urgent situation in an employee's or volunteer's family, Disaster Mental Health —**
 - Assists in informing the worker, as requested by Staff Health.
 - Provides emotional support and, depending on the circumstances, helps the worker decide whether to remain or return home.
 - Facilitates the worker's return home if such assistance is requested.
 - Arranges for an escort home if such support is indicated.
- 8. If a worker reports experiencing harassment, Disaster Mental Health —**
 - Focuses primarily on providing emotional support for any individual involved with the situation.
 - Helps the worker process and prepare for possible ramifications — if the worker does not wish to file a complaint with Staff Relations or his/her supervisor — and continues to provide emotional support as needed.
 - Provides emotional support and advocacy throughout the process, if the worker does wish to file a complaint.
 - Offers emotional support and advocacy to the person against whom a complaint is filed.

9. Concerning violence or escalation toward violence in the workplace, Disaster Mental Health —

- Attempts to de-escalate such situations only if doing so does not put the Disaster Mental Health workers or other workers at risk.
- Works with Life Safety and Asset Protection to resolve such issues.
- Contacts law enforcement by calling 911 if a situation escalates to a potentially violent level and is judged to be excessively risky.
- Reports observed hostile incidents to law enforcement and if they involve Red Cross workers DMH will inform Staff Relations.
- Provides emotional support to all who may become involved with resolution of the incident.

10. If an employee or volunteer reports experiencing sexual assault while on an operation, the Disaster Mental Health employee or volunteer —

- Provides emotional support for the employee or volunteer.
- Consults with his or her Disaster Mental Health supervisor.
- Refers the worker to Staff Health for any needed medical assistance.
- Advocates for the worker as needed while he or she makes reports to Life Safety and Assets Protection and/or law enforcement.
- Helps the employee or volunteer to determine whether he or she can continue on the operation.
- Records a brief summary of the incident as it was reported, the intervention provided, and the outcome for the worker on the *Staff Injury and Illness Record*.
- Consults with the Disaster Mental Health lead and legal counsel at national headquarters to determine whether breaching confidentiality and client privilege is justified if the worker does not wish to report the incident, and the Disaster Mental Health employee or volunteer is concerned that there may be a potential for continued danger.

11. Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers offer all Red Cross employees and volunteers an optional mental health exit interview as they out-process.

- If the offer is accepted, Disaster Mental Health provides a brief screening by discussing what did and didn't go well for the worker throughout the relief operation, and is alert to any emotional difficulties that may have arisen or may occur later; and when needed, provides an appropriate intervention.
- DMH may distribute and/or discuss the *Coping with Disaster: Workers Returning Home* (ARC 4473 or 4473S) or *Coping with Disaster: Workers on Assignment* (ARC 4472 or 4472S) when a worker is new to the disaster experience, or at any time when it appears it could benefit a worker.

- Disaster Mental Health ensures that out processing workers know that should emotional difficulties arise later, Disaster Mental Health services can be accessed through their local chapters.
- Disaster Mental Health checks and initials the appropriate exit interview box on the worker's out processing form, regardless of whether the offer is accepted or declined.

Definitions

n/a

Policies

n/a

Regulations

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Resources

Coping with Disaster: Emotional Health Issues for Workers on Assignment (ARC4472)

Coping with Disaster: Disaster Workers Returning Home After Assignment (ARC4473)

Declined Treatment Form

Staff Injury and illness Record

Objective

To provide Disaster Mental Health support to Response Center call agents, Welfare Information workers and other workers present in the Response Center and to clients who have called the Response Center and are experiencing emotional difficulties.

Procedures

Manager/Supervisor

In addition to the responsibilities described in “Initiating, managing and closing the Disaster Mental Health activity,” the Disaster Mental Health Response Center manager and/or supervisor will —

1. Ensure that current copies of the Disaster Mental Health Response Guide are available for each assigned Disaster Mental Health employee or volunteer.
2. Ensure that newly arrived Disaster Mental Health service associates and Disaster Mental Health supervisors attend a Response Center Orientation.
3. Provide daily relief operation updates to Disaster Mental Health employees and volunteers.
4. Arrange for the provision of group stress reduction meetings for call agents when needed.
5. Report daily Disaster Mental Health contacts to Disaster Mental Health in the Disaster Operations Center at national headquarters.
6. Arrange for sufficient Disaster Mental Health coverage to cover all required shifts.

Service Associate

The Service Associate will follow the procedures in the activity handbook and will—

1. Attend a Response Center Orientation and read the Disaster Mental Health Response Center Guide before commencing their work.
2. Provide guidance to call agents about effective techniques to use with difficult calls.
3. Provide mental health support to call agents when requested.
4. Assume the role of call agent when a caller experiences emotional difficulty.
5. Assess the caller’s emotional state and provide appropriate intervention.

6. Assist with referrals and information.
7. Monitor the stress level of call agents.
8. Teach call agents individually and in groups regarding effective techniques for stress reduction.
9. Maintain appropriate documentation of contacts.

Definitions

n/a

Policies

n/a

Regulations

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Resources

A Resource Guide for Disaster Mental Health at the American Red Cross Disaster Response Center