



# Southeast MHTTC Newsletter

Volume II, Issue I - October 2019

## Upcoming Events

### Don't miss out on our upcoming events!

- **Webinar: What is Supported Housing? Does it save lives?**  
Monday, October 21 | 12:00-1:30 PM ET  
Supported housing expands the range of mental health service delivery to address a non-medical need of critical importance to the well-being of homeless Americans and adults with severe mental illness. What does it take to do it? What does it do for people? Is it worth it? What do we value?
- **In-Person Training: Peer Voice - Louisville, Kentucky**  
Wednesday, October 30 | 1:30-4:30 PM

Visit [our website](#) for event topics and dates scheduled in November.

## Past Events

Did you miss a recent Southeast MHTTC Event? Click on the links below to access our webinar recordings and download slide deck presentations.

- Financing School-Based Mental Health Services in Medicaid Managed Care
- Mental Health Response to Disasters: Natural Disasters - Part 1
- Mental Health Response to Disasters: Human-Created Disasters - Part 2
- Trauma-Informed Schools Part 1 & Part 2
- Preventing Suicide in Healthcare Settings: What We Are Learning Webinar
- Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality (CAMS)

# Mental Health Response to Disasters

In July, the Southeast MHTTC sponsored two webinars focusing on system-level mental health response to disasters. Our presenters provided information on the phases of a disaster mental health response and how to assess the needs of a community after a disaster. In this issue, we focus on provider-level resources that clinicians may find useful in supplementing their knowledge on how to assist disaster survivors.

View our disaster toolkit.

[Mental Health Response to Disaster: Part 1 Webinar](#)

[Mental Health Response to Disaster: Part 2 Webinar](#)

[Mental Health Response to Disaster Fact Sheet](#)

## Survivor Reactions & Needs

**Whether it is a natural or human-created disaster, there are commonalities between the underlying concerns and needs for survivors. This includes:**

- concern for basic survival
- grief over loss of loved ones and valuable and meaningful possessions
- fear and anxiety about personal safety and safety of loved ones
- need to talk about events and feelings associated with the disaster, often repeatedly<sup>1</sup>

## Common Challenges



After a disaster, the challenges experienced by survivors include but are not limited to:

- transportation
- unemployment
- inability to locate a missing loved one
- filling/re-filling prescriptions

Even though disaster workers may be the first to assist survivors in these challenges, clinicians can benefit from knowing resources to address these common challenges.

# Disaster Counseling Skills



## Establish Rapport

Rapport refers to the feelings of understanding and trust that form when genuine concern is expressed. Clinicians can build rapport by:

- Caring eye contact
- Calm demeanor
- Listening attentively



## Active Listening

Providers listen most effectively when they take in information through their ears and eyes. Check out the listening tips below.

- Allow silence
- Use nonverbals
- Paraphrase
- Reflect feelings
- Allow expressions of emotions



## Problem Solving

Disaster stress can cause disorganized thinking and challenges with planning; using the problem-solving steps below with survivors can assist them with prioritizing and focusing action.

- Identify and define the problem
- Assess the survivor's functioning and coping
- Evaluate available resources
- Develop and implement a plan

# Other Resources

There is an abundance of resources clinicians can pair with their expertise on how to assist disaster survivors. We have listed some below.



## Disaster Distress Hotline

1-800-985-5990

Available 24/7, 365 days per year to provide counseling and support to disaster survivors



## Social Media & Technology

Technology, such as mobile apps and social media, provide the opportunity to quickly disseminate and easily share information and resources. These avenues could be extended for use before, during, and after a disaster response.

Mobile apps - There is a variety of disaster-related apps for various audiences. Some that may be helpful for clinicians are:

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Behavioral Health Disaster Response
- FEMA
- American Red Cross

Social media - The majority of people use social media to connect with others and obtain news. The most popular platforms are:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Snapchat

It's important to think about what platform, if any, your intended audience uses most.



## Medication

With so many competing priorities, taking medication, refilling a prescription, and/or ensuring an adequate supply may become an after-thought during a disaster. Learn tips to prepare patients to keep their medication safe for a disaster.<sup>3</sup>

# Self-Care



## Stress Management

Responding to disasters can be stressful on both disaster survivors and clinicians; practicing self-care and managing stress is vital. The following discusses some signs of stress and ways to alleviate its effect.<sup>4</sup>



### Signs of Stress

- Inability to feel pleasure or have fun
- Worrying excessively
- Blaming others for everything
- Wanting to be alone all the time
- An increase/decrease in your energy and activity levels
- Having trouble sleeping or relaxing

### Tips to Manage Stress

- Share your experience with someone you trust
- Maintain a routine - eat healthy and get adequate sleep
- Know your limits
- Exercise
- Deep breathing/meditation

## References

1) Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration. (2000). Field Manual for Mental Health and Human Service Workers in Major Disaster. Retrieved from <https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/adm90-0537.pdf>

2) Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration Disaster Technical Assistance Center. (2019). Disaster apps, tools, and technology. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/dtac/samhsa-dtac-dialogue15-030719.pdf>

3) United States Food and Drug Administration. (n.d.). Natural Disaster Preparedness and Response | Drugs. Retrieved from <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/emergency-preparedness-drugs/natural-disaster-preparedness-and-response-drugs>

4) Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration Disaster Technical Assistance Center. (2016). Stress Management and Care. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/dtac/dialogue-vol-12-issue-3.pdf>

Thank you for reading the Southeast MHTTC Newsletter!

The Southeast MHTTC Newsletter is published quarterly bringing you updates on our center and information and resources related to public mental health.

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## STAY IN TOUCH



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