



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
DISASTER & TERRORISM BRANCH
www.disastermentalhealthnj.com
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New Jersey Crisis Counselor

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The past several months have been very active for New Jersey's disaster mental health system. In early summer four counties along the Delaware River received Presidential Declarations of Disaster following the flooding of several riverfront communities. In late summer, Crisis Counselors provided mental health support services to incoming Lebanese evacuees landing at McGuire Air Base. And all throughout this time, members of the disaster mental health responder community have been playing an active role in pandemic influenza planning and the overall disaster and terrorism readiness process statewide.

Please enjoy this issue of *New Jersey Crisis Counselor* and catch up on some of the news from our Crisis Counselor community. Please pay special attention to the first article which discusses new developments in the statewide disaster mental health responder credentialing process. This important information pertains to every crisis counselor who wishes to become active or remain active, as a ready resource to respond to disasters within New Jersey and beyond.

Thank you as always for your dedication to helping New Jersey remain ready for whatever challenges lay ahead!

Best regards,

Kevin Martone,
Assistant Commissioner



Quick Links...

- [New Jersey Disaster Mental Health Online](#)
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- [Personal and Family Preparedness](#)

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Disaster & Terrorism Branch Moves Forward with Credentialing Process



The Division of Mental Health Services, Disaster and Terrorism Branch, undertook a pilot project to credential disaster mental health workers in 2005. Five counties participated in the final pilot (Essex, Morris, Ocean, Passaic and Monmouth), which constitutes Phase I of this project. Phase I involves the review of county call-up rosters through a standardized process. The mental health administrator in each county appoints a local review panel of seasoned clinicians and directors with expertise in disaster mental health and trauma. All participants who are interested in serving on the state's disaster mental health response network then complete an application, which is reviewed by the expert panel. The panel identifies the competencies reflected in the roster as well as any gaps in specific services that may be needed in the county's ongoing disaster response (e.g., specialized skills in working with children, older adults, substance abuse issues, etc.). Identifying such gaps assists in recruitment and planning training activities.

[Learn more about credentialing...](#)

Caution about Medications for Disaster-related Anxiety



Disasters, whether manmade or natural, leave some people to deal with severe symptoms of anxiety and post-traumatic stress that they, quite appropriately, feel are beyond their coping abilities. Thankfully, many of those impacted seek out help from professionals. While most people will resume a normal level of functioning with some minor intervention, others find that they need further intervention. There are various treatment methods for treating anxiety disorders and PTSD and everyone must decide which will be best for their specific symptoms.

[Learn more about the use of medications following disasters...](#)

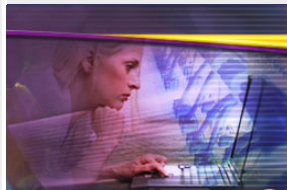
Crisis Counselors Assist Evacuees from Lebanon



As the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel intensified through July and August, U.S. officials launched what was thought to be the largest evacuation since Americans exited Liberia a decade ago. State Department officials estimated that roughly 25,000 Americans were in Lebanon when hostilities suddenly escalated. On Saturday, July 22, flights carrying evacuees began arriving at McGuire Air Force Base in Central New Jersey. As part of the overall humanitarian assistance effort, the New Jersey Division of Mental Health Services-Disaster & Terrorism Branch coordinated crisis counseling services at the Repatriation Center set up at the base. Counselors also received evacuees who were bussed from the base to Newark Liberty airport. Crisis counseling was available around the clock through Tuesday, July 25, as flights continued to arrive throughout the day and night. Nearly 1,000 evacuees received psychosocial support from counselors positioned in the base passenger terminal.

[More about support for evacuees....](#)

A Guide to FEMA's Virtual Campus: Navigating the Online NIMS Training Program



The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Virtual Campus provides a comprehensive menu of online training programs in a variety of emergency management topics. Many disaster responders, including mental health responders, have attempted to take the Incident Command System- ICS 100 and National Incident Management System- NIMS 700, and have found the Virtual Campus tricky to navigate. The Disaster & Terrorism Branch has developed an online tutorial to help orient students to the Virtual Campus environment. The narrated orientation takes about 20 minutes to complete, and while it is not required, it may help students move more quickly and smoothly through their distance learning experience. You can take the self-paced, online orientation by clicking on the link below.

[Click here to take the Virtual Campus orientation...](#)

A Call for Articles



The editors of *New Jersey Crisis Counselor* are seeking articles and story ideas for future issues. Stories can address any aspect of disaster mental health, traumatic stress response, crisis or emergency management, that would further the knowledge or skills disaster mental health responders.

Please submit your article ideas to mhsttag@dhs.state.nj.us. A representative of the editorial team will get back to you with feedback and guidance for developing those story ideas selected for publication.

In the Counties: Spotlight on Atlantic



Atlantic City is an American icon recognized worldwide. When people think of Atlantic City, they think of the Miss America pageant, bustling boardwalk and casinos, and of course, the real estate that defines the timeless game of Monopoly. As a symbol of American culture, Atlantic City is recognized as a target of terrorism. Located on one of New Jersey's barrier islands, Atlantic City, and surrounding Atlantic County can also potentially land in the cross hairs of a hurricane or major coastal storm. Atlantic County has many unique risks and resources when it comes to emergency management. Among those resources is the Atlantic County Emergency Mental Health Response Team. In this edition of *New Jersey Crisis Counselor*, we will shine the spotlight on Atlantic County, and feature an interview with Mental Health Administrator Sally Williams, who serves as the Coordinator of the Emergency Mental Health Response Team.

[More About the Atlantic County Emergency Response Team...](#)

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