



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

NJ Department of Human Services

Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services

New Jersey Crisis Counselor Newsletter

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Winter 2012

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Dear Disaster Response Crisis Counselor:

Welcome to the winter newsletter! Even though this season has been mild so far, we know that can change suddenly, just as disasters can bring abrupt adjustments. A major component of disaster response is being prepared, both professionally and personally. The more prepared you and your family are when disaster strikes, the better positioned you will be to assist others affected. The website: www.ready.gov provides guidance for family and business preparedness.

As DRCCs, you must be at the ready to assist people who have been impacted by trauma, as seen with Tropical Storm Irene. This newsletter will help you, as disaster responders to prepare professionally by keeping you apprised of relevant training events and initiatives.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for being part of the Disaster Response Crisis Counselor (DRCC) program. In recognition of your dedication to disaster response, in May, a state wide meeting of all DRCCs and fellow response partners is being planned. This occasion will allow you to connect with your colleagues and to share information that will enhance your abilities as responders. Additional information will be sent to you via e-mail shortly. We hope you will attend and look forward to seeing you there.

Regards,

Adrienne Fessler-Belli, LCSW, DRCC
Director, Disaster and Terrorism Branch
New Jersey Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services
New Jersey Department of Human Services

Project Recover Update



The New Jersey Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Department of Human Services' Disaster and Terrorism Branch, has been awarded funding to continue its provision of crisis counseling to survivors of Tropical Storm Irene. The program is named Project Recover and focuses on making available emotional support, education on responses to disaster and ideas for coping with the effects of the disaster.

The funding was awarded through a partnership between the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It will last through September 2012. Helping the people of New Jersey affected by Tropical Storm Irene is the top priority of Project Recover. The program began providing services to individuals in the midst of the disaster and continues, today. Many survivors are showing extraordinary resiliency and are rebuilding their lives. At the same time there are many who are experiencing tremendous anxiety and grief in the aftermath.

With this additional funding, Project Recover is able to continue its work to promote resilience, empowerment and recovery with individuals and groups. Crisis counselors will outreach by going door-to-door in the most hard hit neighborhoods, provide group educational workshops in community settings and at local schools, and work closely with community based organizations to promote available resources that can assist survivors with critical services and supports.

These services are delivered privately and at no cost. Project Recover partner agencies include Catholic Family and Community Services (serving Passaic and Morris Counties), Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center (serving Somerset County), and Family Service Bureau of Newark (Serving Essex and Hudson counties).

For additional information please contact Julia Wimmer, Project Recover Administrator at (609) 789-3899 or at Julia.Wimmer@dhs.state.nj.us.

Preparedness is Critical in Winter Storms

The freak Halloween snow storm took much of the Northeast and many parts of New Jersey by surprise. With leaves still on the trees, more than 2 feet of heavy, wet snow fell throughout the region, pulling down branches, trees and power lines. Nearly 2 million residents across northern New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts were left without power. In some New Jersey towns, schools could not reopen for an entire week. Tragically, the storm also resulted in 13 deaths from falling tree limbs, motor vehicle accidents and other causes.

Winter storms occur every year across much of the United States, resulting in storm damage from trees, downed power lines, loss of power and treacherous travel. However, winter storms often bring about injuries and fatalities that can be "prevented", such as motor vehicle accidents and carbon monoxide poisoning. As with most disasters and emergencies, the key to success, and sometimes survival, is preparedness. It also is helpful to keep previous winter emergencies in mind, since they can provide important lessons. [Read the full story.](#)

F.A.S.T. Update

The Family Assistance Support Team (FAST) began on-site training at the Jersey

City Medical Center's (JCMC) Emergency and Trauma Departments in January. The first didactic sessions took place January 14th in Jersey City and January 21st in Morristown with both areas' Team members attending. A program at the Morristown Medical Center has been in place for several years and served as the model for the new program at JCMC. The training brings all FAST Team members together in training and supervision meetings with the ultimate goal of fostering development as a specialized Team of Disaster Response Crisis Counselors (DRCC). The objective is to provide the skill set and approach used by emergency responders working with families of patients who are critically ill, traumatically injured or who die in the Emergency Room to trainees. In Jersey City we already have the first two trainees in place to cover Saturdays 4:00 P.M. - 12:00 A.M. shifts with a supervising trainer, until such time as they are prepared to begin solo shifts one Friday night a month from 8:00 P.M. - 12:00 A.M. [Read the full story.](#)

Managing Anger after Disasters

So much about a disaster, and often a disaster response or relief effort, can seem unfair to survivors. It is understandable that disaster survivors often struggle with intense anger in the wake of such events. While expressing that anger and frustration in acceptable ways may be helpful or even therapeutic, that same anger can become an obstacle to recovery and a risk to Crisis Counselors and others who reach out to offer support.

Early last year, the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Disaster Technical Assistance Center (DTAC) asked the Disaster and Terrorism Branch's Gladys Padro and Steve Crimando to share their insights and advice on safely managing survivor anger. The full story appears in the DTAC "Dialogue", SAMHSA's quarterly disaster behavioral health bulletin. Learn more about anger and anger management in disaster recovery by [clicking here](#) to view the article.

SAVE THE DATE

Fri., April 20, 2012
Hamilton Park
Conference Center
175 Park Avenue
Florham Park, NJ.

RESPONDING TO CRISIS: MAKE IT WORK

Keynote Speaker: Captain Al Haynes
Teamwork in Crisis: The Story of Flight 232
[Read more about Captain Haynes and Flight 232](#)

Registration and payment must be received by April 1.
Continental Breakfast, lunch, 5 CEU's pending and DRCC recertification credits.
Fee: \$30
[Download the registration form.](#)

SAVE THE DATE: Statewide DRCC Conference

Thurs., May 17th, 2012
Rutgers Douglass
College Center

This statewide DRCC conference will be held on Thursday, May 17th, 2012 at Rutgers. The conference planning committee includes several county mental health administrators and addictions and mental health representatives. Conference participation will build new skills, update existing skills and provide an opportunity for networking. More information will be made available soon.

