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For Immediate Release

***DISASTER DISTRESS HELPLINE OFFERING SUPPORT AFTER ORLANDO ATTACKS
THOSE IMPACTED BY MASS VIOLENCE CAN GET BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE 24/7***

NEW YORK, N.Y. (June 13, 2016)- In the aftermath of the tragedy in Orlando, Florida, the Disaster Distress Helpline, the first national hotline dedicated to providing year-round disaster crisis counseling, is available with 24/7 crisis counseling and emotional support for anyone struggling with distress or other mental health concerns related to the shootings.

When disasters strike, most people experience behavioral health reactions: Those most at risk include survivors living or working in the impacted areas, the loved ones of the victims, as well as first responders, rescue and recovery workers. Often people react with increased anxiety, worry and anger. The Disaster Distress Helpline (DDH) provides an avenue of support that has benefitted tens of thousands since it was first established as a dedicated line in 2012.

Sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and administered by the Mental Health Association of New York City, the Helpline immediately connects callers and texters to trained and caring professionals from a nationwide network of independently-operated crisis centers. Helpline staff provide confidential counseling, including information on common stress reactions and healthy coping, as well as referrals to local disaster-related resources for follow-up care and support. This toll-free, multilingual, crisis support service is available 24/7 via telephone (1-800-985-5990) and SMS (text "TalkWithUs" to 66746) to residents in the U.S. and its territories who are experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters.

"It is always vital to remember the mental health impact in a horrible tragedy like this one," said Christian Burgess, the director of the DDH. "Crisis and emotional support services such as the DDH can help alleviate temporary distress reactions or intervene when more serious mental health concerns may emerge, including during long term recovery."

For additional information and resources related to disaster behavioral health visit:
<http://disasterdistress.samhsa.gov>

About SAMHSA

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

About the Mental Health Association of New York City (MHA-NYC):

MHA-NYC is a non-profit organization with local roots and a national reach that for over 50 years has been leading the way in mental health with our three-part mission of service, advocacy and education. Our mission is to identify unmet needs and develop culturally sensitive programs to improve the lives of individuals and families impacted by mental illness while promoting the importance of mental health. We break down barriers by providing care directly to those who need it, with state of the art telephone, text and web based technologies to respond to community needs where and when that help is needed. We work every single day to save lives and assist those in crisis while providing millions more with the help they need before a crisis can occur. www.mhaofnyc.org

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