



***MEDIA ADVISORY***

**March 25, 2019**

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## **Disaster Distress Helpline Available for Those Emotionally Affected by Mass Violence and Other Disasters**

It is common to feel distress before and after a crisis. Most stress symptoms are temporary, but for some people, especially children and teens, these symptoms may last for weeks or months after a natural or human-caused disaster. The anniversary of a disaster can also renew feelings of fear, anxiety, and sadness in disaster survivors, families of disaster survivors, and first responders, rescue, and recovery workers.

The Disaster Distress Helpline is available to those in need of crisis counseling or emotional support related to all natural or human-caused disasters, including the Parkland shooting and recent floods. Services are free, confidential, and available 24/7 across the United States. Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained counselor. Spanish speakers can call 1-800-985-5990 and press 2.

**WHAT:** Free, confidential crisis counseling available for U.S. residents emotionally affected by natural and human-caused disasters

**WHY:** Disaster events and disaster anniversaries can trigger or renew symptoms of emotional distress in disaster survivors & others

**WHO:** The national Disaster Distress Helpline (DDH) hotline and texting service, funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and administered by Vibrant Emotional Health

**WHEN:** Crisis counseling services are available 24/7

**WHERE:** Both hotline and text service are available across the United States and its territories, with hotline service in over 150 languages via interpretation

For more information visit <http://www.disasterdistress.samhsa.gov>. To contact Vibrant Emotional Health, which administers the Disaster Distress Helpline, reach out to Frances Gonzalez at [fgonzalez@vibrant.org](mailto:fgonzalez@vibrant.org).

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**About the Disaster Distress Helpline:**

The Disaster Distress Helpline (DDH) is the first national hotline dedicated to providing year-round crisis counseling to individuals experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters. This toll-free, multilingual, crisis support service is available 24/7 via telephone and SMS to residents in the United States and its territories. Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained counselor. The Disaster Distress Helpline is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and administered by Vibrant Emotional Health.

**About Vibrant Emotional Health:**

Formerly the Mental Health Association of New York City (MHA-NYC), Vibrant Emotional Health is a non-profit organization that helps individuals and families achieve emotional wellbeing. For over 50 years, our groundbreaking solutions have delivered high-quality services and support, when, where and how people need it. We offer confidential emotional support through our state-of-the-art contact center and crisis hotline services that use leading edge telephone, text and web-based technologies and include the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, NFL Life Line and NYC Well. Through our community wellness programs individuals and families obtain supports and skills they need to thrive. Our advocacy and education initiatives promote mental wellbeing as a social responsibility. Each year we help more than 2.5 million people live healthier and more vibrant lives. We're advancing access, dignity and respect for all and revolutionizing the system for good. Visit [www.vibrant.org](http://www.vibrant.org). And follow Vibrant on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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