



As the 20th Memorial Date of 9/11 Approaches, National Disaster Distress Helpline Available to Those Who Are Struggling

NEW YORK, NY (September 1, 2021) – While those across the country impacted by 9/11 may no longer face the physical scars of the attack, thousands of people are still struggling with depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues that stem from their exposure or loss. The national [Disaster Distress Helpline](https://disasterdistress.samhsa.gov) is a 24/7, 365-day-a-year, hotline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people in the U.S. and territories who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster. Call or text 1-800-985-5990 to connect with a trained counselor.

“Memorial dates of disasters offer opportunities to reflect on healing and growth, but can also remind people of the trauma and pain that they experienced. As we, as a country, reflect on this date, the Disaster Distress Helpline is there to help,” said Christian Burgess, Director of the DDH. “Our counselors are trained to speak to anyone who may be affected by this day, including survivors, victims’ loved ones, first responders, rescue workers, clergy, journalists, parents and caregivers, and others.”

Spanish-speakers can call the hotline and press “2” for 24/7 bilingual support. Callers to the hotline can also connect with counselors in over 100 other languages via 3rd-party interpretation services. To connect with a counselor in your primary language, simply indicate your preferred language to the responding counselor, and they will connect to a live interpreter. Deaf or hard of hearing American Sign Language users can contact the DDH through a videophone option via any videophone-enabled device and dialing 1-800-985-5990, or by selecting the “ASL Now” option on the DDH website at disasterdistress.samhsa.gov.

Feelings such as overwhelming anxiety, trouble sleeping, and other depression-like symptoms are common responses to incidents of mass violence. Other signs of emotional distress may include:

- Feeling numb or like nothing matters
- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Worrying a lot of the time; feeling guilty but not sure why
- Feeling like you have to keep busy; avoidance
- Hyper-vigilance to news and other media related to the event
- Excessive smoking, drinking, or misusing/abusing other drugs.

Certain sounds, such as sirens, can also activate emotional distress. These and other sensations can take people right back to the disaster, or cause them to fear that it’s about to happen again. The memorial date of an event may serve as a [trigger event](#), renewing feelings of fear, anxiety, and sadness.

The DDH was launched in 2012, ten years after the 9/11 attacks, to guarantee that everyone in the U.S. would have access to specialized crisis & emotional support, immediately following

major disaster events and during long term recovery. The DDH has provided counseling and support in response to disasters such as Hurricane Sandy, the Boston Marathon bombing, Sandy Hook and other mass shooting events, and more recently the Coronavirus pandemic.

About the Disaster Distress Helpline

The Disaster Distress Helpline (DDH) is the only national hotline dedicated to providing year-round crisis counseling to individuals experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters. This multilingual crisis support service is available 24/7 via telephone and SMS to residents in the United States and its territories. Call or text 1-800-985-5990 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

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, Disaster Distress Helpline, 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 vibrant.org. And follow Vibrant on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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