



National Disaster Distress Helpline Available for Anyone in the U.S. Experiencing Distress and Other Mental Health Concerns Related to Disaster

NEW YORK, NY (September 7, 2021) – It is common to feel distress before and after a crisis. Emotional distress is second only to death and injury in terms of the toll disasters take within impacted communities. Most distress symptoms are temporary, but for some individuals and families these symptoms may last for weeks or months after a natural or human-caused disaster.

The Disaster Distress Helpline (DDH) is the nation’s only hotline dedicated to year-round disaster crisis counseling and is available to those in need of emotional support related to all natural or human-caused disasters, including Hurricane Ida, the California wildfires, the Tennessee floods, the crisis in Afghanistan, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Services are free, confidential, and available 24/7 across the United States and territories. Anyone experiencing distress or other mental health concerns related to disaster can call or text 1-800-985-5990 to connect with a trained DDH counselor. Spanish-speakers can call or text the hotline and press “2” for 24/7 bilingual support.

Deaf or hard of hearing American Sign Language users experiencing disaster distress can contact the DDH through a direct 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.

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

WHAT: Free, confidential crisis counseling and emotional support available for anyone in the U.S. and territories impacted by natural and human-caused disasters

WHY: Disaster events and disaster memorial dates can trigger or renew symptoms of emotional distress in disaster survivors, responders, & others.

WHEN: Crisis counseling and emotional support services are available 24/7, 365 days a year.

WHERE: DDH hotline, text, and Videophone for ASL users are available across the United States and territories. Callers to the hotline can connect with counselors in over 100 other languages via 3rd-party interpretation services. To connect with a counselor in another

language, callers can indicate their preferred language to the responding counselor, who will connect to a live interpreter.

September is National Preparedness Month, and the DDH has a Disaster Emotional Prep Kit to help you add to your resiliency toolkit with action steps, coping resources, and other disaster behavioral health supports. Check it out at <https://strengthafterdisaster.org/emotional-prep-kit/>.

For more information, visit disasterdistress.samhsa.gov. To contact [Vibrant Emotional Health](#), which administers the Disaster Distress Helpline, reach out to Hannah Collins at hcollins@vibrant.org.

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