

THE MENTAL HEALTH DISASTER RELIEF REGISTRY
MENTAL HEALTH PREPAREDNESS
IN THE WAKE OF DISASTER

BRIEF HISTORY

In the aftermath of recent disasters, it has become clear that there are gaps in the mental health services offered to those in need. Following Katrina, many of us wanted to help, but did not know who to contact, where to volunteer, or, indeed, how to be the most help. In the *immediate* aftermath of an event there is typically a great deal of psychological intervention and support available to those impacted by it. Once this support is withdrawn, however, usually within a few weeks, there is less attention paid to the *ongoing* psychological needs of a community. The life-cycle of a disaster dictates that this is a gap that needs to be addressed. Access to mental health services during this time is critical but often difficult. For those without means or insurance, emotional difficulties can continue and worsen over time. We are asking you as mental health professionals to help us fill that gap.

THE PROPOSAL

To develop a nation-wide registry of participating Licensed Mental Health Counselors willing to accept pro-bono clients, on a short-term basis, following a disaster.

THE REGISTRY

The purpose of the registry is to have a system and a resource for referrals from disaster relief agencies in service of disaster survivors, their loved ones and those who provide services in shelters and on site. Our initiative is not about deployment to other states nor is it on-site response. Our initiative is about the next line of mental health preparedness. Essentially, it's a database of clinicians willing to provide short-term, pro bono services to disaster survivors, their loved ones and relief volunteers. This registry will provide an organized, dependable mechanism, offering short term counseling in areas such as traumatic stress, grief and loss, adjustment, and stress management. The registry would be accessed only in the event of a disaster and those referred would come to your office for services. The needs of those referrals are likely to be met after two or three sessions, but participating counselors would only continue with any referral beyond five sessions at their own discretion, much like an employee assistance program. This brief treatment is not designed for those with major mental illness.

Please join us in creating this database of licensed mental health professionals. With your participation, we will be prepared to serve when our nation's citizens are most critically in need.

REGISTRATION

I want to be included on the MENTAL HEALTH DISASTER RELIEF REGISTRY. I understand the Registry will be accessed only in the event of a disaster. I understand that, as part of that registry:

I will try to accept at least one disaster relief referral, pro bono, who is without insurance and for whom payment would constitute a significant financial hardship.

I will also accept referrals who are insured and capable of paying their deductibles and co-pays as I am able.

I understand that I will not be expected to fulfill my pledge to the Registry if I am experiencing disruption in my practice and/or my life that compromises my capacity to provide those services in an effective manner.

I am a mental health professional licensed in **(STATE)** and I have professional liability insurance.

PRINTED NAME: _____

License #: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

OFFICE
ADDRESS: _____

OFFICE PHONE: _____ EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

Thank you.

We will send you a review of information about the treatment of grief and loss, psychological adjustment and stress management. There will be other resources available to use at your discretion.