

DISTRESS HELPLINE

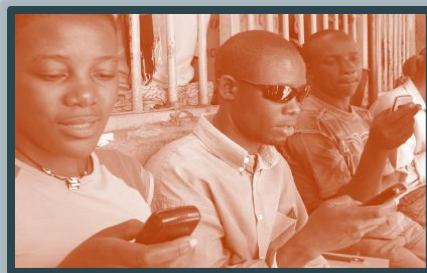
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Introduction to the Disaster Distress Helpline



*Crisis Intervention of Houston, Inc
DDH Core Region Center 2*



June 4, 2012 – Texas Gulf Coast Regional VOAD

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Who is ...

Brenda Fitch



- ✓ Brenda T. Fitch is the Director of Operations at Crisis Intervention of Houston, Inc. (CIH). She has been with the agency for over 24 years and has filled a variety of roles ranging from volunteer Call Counselor to her current position. Brenda oversees all of the programs currently offered by CIH with specific focus on Crisis Response, Community Education, and Survivors of Suicide support groups. Brenda received her bachelor's degree in psychology from Texas Southern University and is a CCW, LAC.

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Who is ...

Chandra Sanders



- ✓ Chandra Sanders is the Outreach and Resource Development Coordinator at Crisis Intervention of Houston, Inc. (CIH). Chandra started with CIH in 2011 and has been instrumental in various aspects of the volunteer program as well as the preparation and launch of the new Disaster Distress Helpline. Having graduated Summa Cum Laude with a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, she is currently pursuing a master's degree in Professional Counseling from the same.

Disaster Distress Helpline: Goals and Objectives

A) 24/7, year-round access to crisis counseling & support for individuals in distress related to disaster

B) Technical Assistance & Training for Call Centers in Disaster Crisis Counseling

C) Outreach & Education to Impacted Communities

D) Assess Performance & Measurable Impact

Disaster Distress Helpline: The Basics

- Provides emotional support first, Information & Referrals second
- Will work to complement existing I & R / Crisis Hotlines as well as link callers/texters with FEMA CCPs & other services, as well as community services (American Red Cross, Salvation Army, other VOADs) provided related to disaster
- Phone (1-800-985-5990) and text ('TalkWithUs' to 66746) available 24/7, year-round
- Multi-lingual interpretation services; Spanish-counseling and texts ('Hablanos' to 66746) available 24/7
- Will provide support to callers before, during & after natural and man-made disasters, incidents of mass violence, public health crises, and any other disaster that has the potential to have a significant psychological impact on a population and that indicates the need for an organized response
- Will be promoted to the public through grassroots marketing & outreach across the country and within each region

Why the Disaster Distress Helpline?

The occurrence of natural and man-made disasters has increased in the U.S and its territories by 39% over the past decade¹. The psychological impact these events have on a significant proportion of people who experience them² suggests / illustrates the need for a disaster hotline network with the capacity to provide disaster crisis counseling, information and referral in any part of the country with immediacy.

1: http://www.fema.gov/news/disaster_totals_annual.fema

2: Norris, F.H., Friedman, M.J. and Watson, P.J. 60,000 Disaster Victims Speak: Part II. Summary and Implications of the Disaster Mental Health Research, Psychiatry 65(3) Fall 2002 240

Disasters:

What interferes with 'normal' or functioning levels of readiness, response and/or recovery?

- History of a challenging or difficult recovery from past disasters
- Overwhelming feelings: fear, anger, anxiety, sadness; persistent feelings of powerlessness; pattern of unhealthy coping
- Prior history of / risk factors for depression, suicidal ideations, substance use, other mental health concerns
- History of / risk factors for family violence, domestic violence, sexual violence, other issues of crime/victimization
- Marginalized individuals / communities before, during & after disasters: disabled, elderly, poor, immigrant, LGBT, racial / ethnic / faith minority groups, rural, etc.

This is who the Disaster Distress Helpline will help.

Why Texting for the DDH?

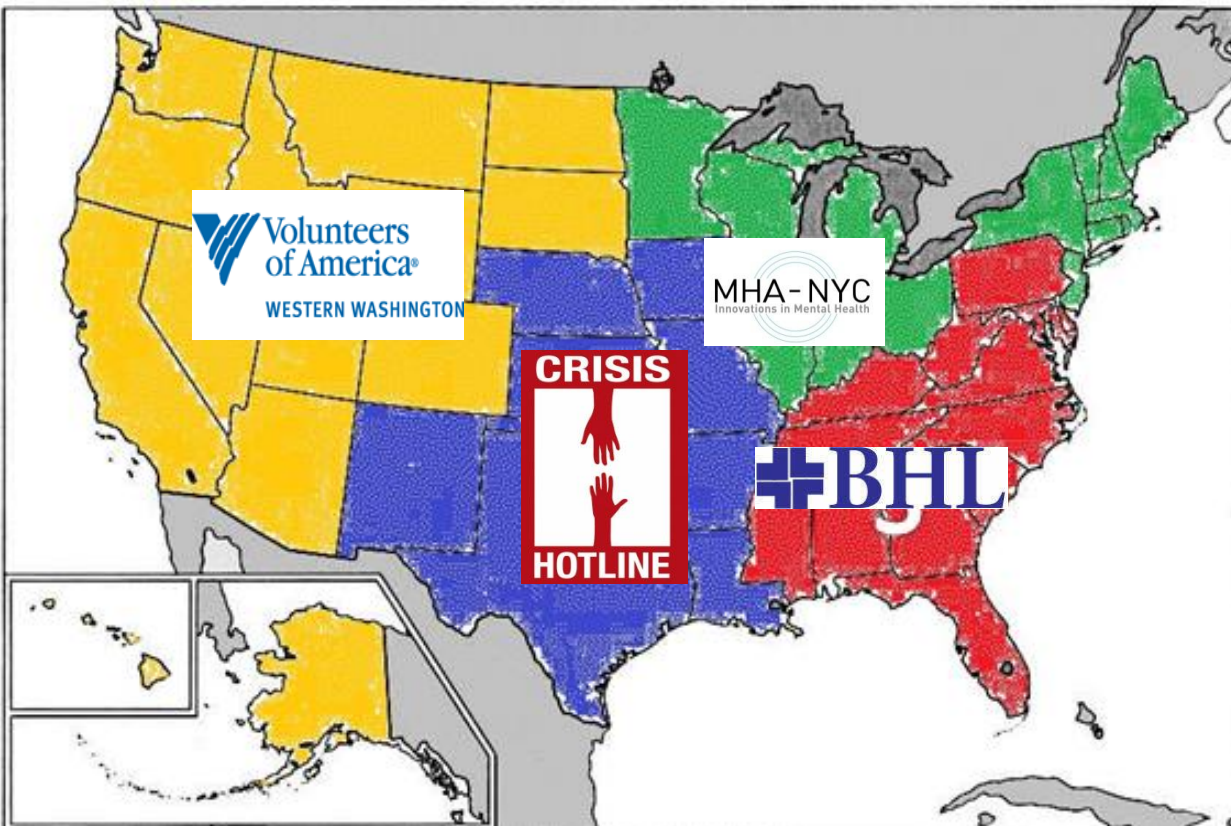
- 📱 Prevalence of Mobile Phones, SMS/Texting
- 📱 Study: Preferred Method of Communication for Teens, increasingly also for Adults
- 📱 Growing form of outreach and engagement for other Helplines and social services
- 📱 Opportunities to reach individuals whom otherwise may go unnoticed ('hard to reach')
- 📱 Engaging individuals in circumstances when they can't make phone calls

Disaster Distress Helpline: Key Players

| SAMHSA | L2HS | Core Region Centers (CRCs) | Affected Area Centers (AACs) | Key Stakeholders |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funder | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Administrator | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operators | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Temporary Network Call Centers | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partner Agencies, Institutions, Organizations |

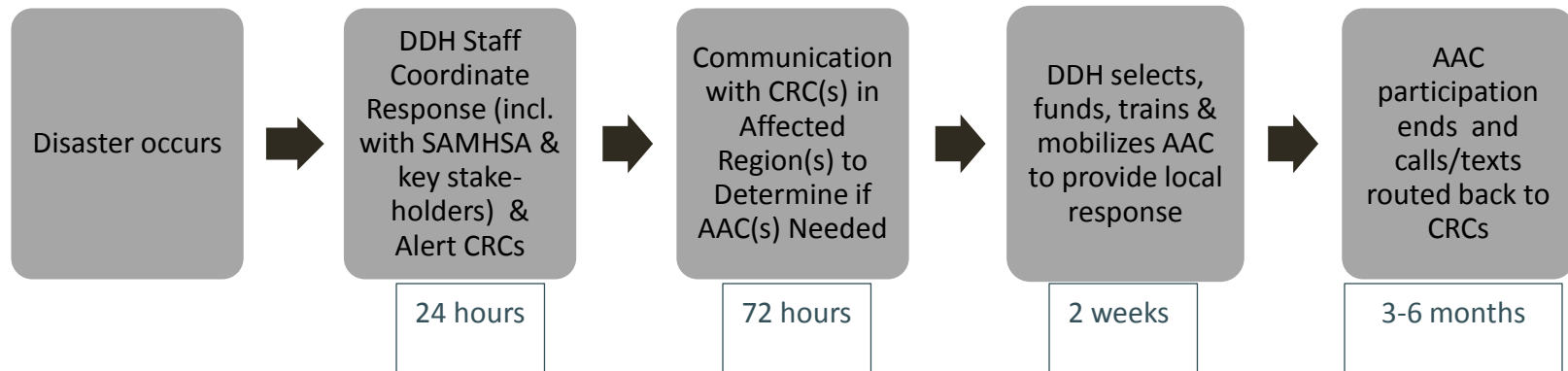
*We will all work together to make the
Disaster Distress Helpline a success and help individuals in
distress after a disaster.*

DDH Core Region Centers



| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Region 1 | ND, SD, MT, WY, CO, ID, UT, AZ, WA, OR, NV, CA, AK, HI, Palau, Marshall Islands, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia |
| Region 2 | IA, MO, NE, KS, OK, AR, LA, TX, NM |
| Region 3 | PA, DE, MD, Washington DC, WV, VA, KY, TN, NC, SC, GA, AL, MS, FL |
| Region 4 | ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, OH, IN, MI, IL, WI, MN, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands |

Sample DDH Disaster Response Timeline and Flowchart



What types of disasters might require an organized response?

- Disasters that result in a significant loss of life and/or property damage, and/or that have the potential to inflict psychological distress on a sizeable population
 - ✓ Natural (Tornadoes, Hurricanes, Earthquakes)
 - ✓ Man-made (Technical Disasters)
 - ✓ Incidents of Mass Violence (Terrorism)
 - ✓ Public Health Crises (Epidemics)

What might an organized response look like?

- *Training & Technical Assistance*
- *Resources*
- *Communications*
- *Service coordination*
- *Operationalize AAC*
- *Continuous monitoring & follow-up re: ongoing behavioral health impact*

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Outreach



Training



Resources



Communications

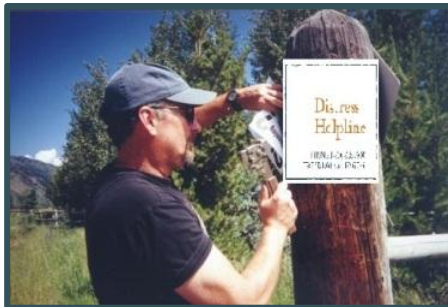


Outreach & Training

Outreach

Each Core Region Center has a full-time **Outreach & Resource Development Coordinator** who will develop & carry out outreach plans:

- Key Stakeholders
- DDH Promotion



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Website & Resource Database



SAMHSA Disaster Website

- A temporary resource for the DDH: www.samhsa.gov/disaster

Disaster Distress Helpline Website

- Will contain information & resources for the public on topics related to disaster mental health
- Will be updated 24-72 hrs. after major disasters with disaster-specific mental health resources & information
- Will provide links to other DDH key stakeholders websites, incl. SAMHSA DTAC, FEMA, VOADs, Crisis Call Centers, NCTSN, etc.

Disaster Distress Helpline CRC Resource Database

- A web-based, easy-to-use resource database containing general and disaster-specific mental health and other resources (FEMA CCPs, VOAD services, etc.)
- Resources will be verified and updated regularly, incl. 24-72 hours after a disaster.

Oil Spill Distress Helpline Website

- Will remain up indefinitely and continue to serve as a resource for individuals impacted by the 2010 BP Oil Spill: www.samhsa.gov/oilspilldistress

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Communications



Social Media

www.facebook.com/distresshelpline

www.twitter.com/distressline#

Website

Press Releases

Assistance with Outreach – Flyers, Program Literature, etc.

E-Newsletter, Blog, Media Campaign, Branding

How can the DDH and your organizations work together to help individuals in distress after a disaster?

- **Promote the DDH** as a resource to the individuals and communities served;
- **Provide the DDH** with member information and resources offered for inclusion in our resource databank to assist callers and texters in distress;
- **Connect through social media** before, during and after disasters to share resources, communicate with the public, offer support;
- **Coordinate service delivery** before, during and after disasters so that behavioral health is included in any response plans.



TGCR VOAD
Texas Gulf Coast Region
Voluntary Organizations
Active in Disaster

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Q & A



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Why the Disaster Distress Helpline?

Why We Call - Video