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Recovery News

Free Crisis Counseling Can Help Hurricane Isaac Survivors Cope

BATON ROUGE, La. — Louisianians who survived Hurricane Isaac — or saw neighbors or family experience loss — may suffer emotional stress as real as the hurricane’s physical destruction.

To help people experiencing post-disaster emotional stress, **free crisis counseling** is available in the parishes designated for Individual Assistance under the major disaster declaration. The program, funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and administered by the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH), is open to any child or adult in designated parishes.

“FEMA funds this important program because counseling can help people understand and process their emotional reactions to the disaster,” said Federal Coordinating Officer Mike Hall of FEMA. “The right support can help most survivors regroup and move on with their lives.”

Those who have suffered losses may be likely to experience at least one of several emotional responses, including anger, fatigue, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, nightmares, depression, inability to concentrate, hyperactivity, or increased alcohol or drug use. Children are particularly vulnerable to emotional stress after a disaster. Their stress symptoms may include excessive fear of the dark, crying, fear of being alone, and constant worry.

Trained counselors are provided by the network of state Human Services authorities and districts. Calls to the crisis lines are free of charge, as are face-to-face follow-up sessions for adults and children whose needs cannot be fully served through phone counseling.

Participating districts/authorities, the parishes they serve and their phone numbers are:

Florida Parishes Human Services Authority	Livingston, St. Helena, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Washington	1-800-272-8367
Jefferson Parish Human Services Authority	Jefferson	504-832-5123
Metropolitan Human Services District	Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard	504-826-2675
South Central Louisiana Human Services Authority	Assumption, Lafourche, St. Charles, St. James, St. John, St. Mary, Terrebonne	1-877-500-9997

Statewide resources include:

- DHH-Office of Behavioral Health Louisiana Spirit Crisis Line: 1-866-310-7977
- Louisiana Behavioral Health Partnership: 1-800-424-4399
- SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: 1-800-985-5990

For more information on Louisiana disaster recovery, click www.fema.gov/disaster/4080 or www.gohsep.la.gov. You can follow FEMA on Twitter at www.twitter.com/femaregion6 or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FEMA. Also visit our blog at www.fema.gov/blog.

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Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585.

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.