

DISTRESS HELPLINE

PHONE: 1-800-985-5990 TEXT "TalkWithUs" TO 66746

The occurrence of natural and man-made disasters has increased in the U.S and its territories by 39% over the past decade.¹ 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.

The **Disaster Distress Helpline (DDH)** is the nation's first hotline dedicated to providing disaster crisis counseling. The toll-free Helpline operates 24 hours-a-day, seven days a week. This free, confidential and multilingual, crisis support service is available via telephone (1-800-985-5990) and SMS (Text 'TalkWithUs' to 66746) to U.S. residents who are experiencing psychological distress as a result of a natural or man-made disasters. Callers are connected to trained and caring professionals from the closest crisis counseling center in the network. The helpline staff provides confidential counseling, referrals and other needed support services.

When disaster strikes, people react with increased anxiety, worry and anger. With support from community and family, most of us bounce back. However, "Some may need extra assistance to cope with unfolding events and uncertainties," said SAMHSA Administrator Pamela S. Hyde, J.D. "People seeking emotional help in the aftermath of a disaster can now call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 and begin the process of recovery."

Individuals affected by natural or man-made disasters, incidents of mass violence, or any other disasters and who are experiencing distress at any time before, during or after such disasters can access help easily by calling 1-800-985-5990 or by texting *TalkWithUs* to 66746 (Spanish-speakers can text '*Hablanos*'), 24/7. Calls and texts are answered by trained crisis counselors at local or regional crisis centers in the DDH network. These counselors provide emotional support, information & resources related to stress and healthy coping, as well as referrals for federal, state and local services specific to disasters as they occur.

The DDH is a project funded by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and is operated by Link2Health Solutions, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Mental Health Association of New York City. Link2Health Solutions, Inc. runs the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255), a 24-hour, toll-free, confidential suicide prevention hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is also funded by SAMHSA. Please visit SAMHSA's website at www.samhsa.gov/disaster for additional information and resources related to disaster behavioral health.

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- Free
- Multilingual
- Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

SMS: Text 'TalkWithUs' to 66746

- Standard text messaging/
data rates apply
- Spanish-speakers can text 'Hablanos'
to 66746
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¹http://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