

Disaster Behavioral Health (DBH) Response Teams



Mission: To support counties in mitigating the adverse effects of disaster-related trauma by promoting and restoring psychological well-being and daily life functioning in impacted individuals, responders and communities.

Vision: To educate and prepare emergency planners and communities to respond to behavioral health needs and address psychological preparedness allowing persons to better care for themselves and provide support to others at-risk.



Purpose: All people involved in a disaster are affected in some way, from disaster survivors, (including family members and friends), to emergency response workers and the public at large. Disaster survivors and others affected by disaster events may experience varying levels of stress and anxiety. They may also display other physical and psychological symptoms that could adversely affect their ability to respond and function. Outreach, early psychological first aid and referrals can assist disaster survivors meet new challenges. Disaster Behavioral Health Response Teams offer support during a person's recovery process to help return them to pre-disaster performance and functioning levels.

Program Authority/Funding: Chapter 252, Florida Statutes; Section 416, Robert T Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act; Florida Disaster Behavioral Health Response Plan. The department receives funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) Cooperative Agreements.

Disaster Behavioral Health Response Teams support/or aligns with:

[Florida Public Health and Health Care Preparedness 2014-2017 Strategic Plan](#)

Goal 4: Surge Management

Goal 7: Community and Health Care System Resilience

[ASPR Healthcare Preparedness Capabilities](#)

Capability 1: Healthcare System Preparedness

Capability 2: Healthcare System Recovery

Capability 5: Fatality Management

Capability 10: Medical Surge

Capability 15: Volunteer Management

[CDC Public Health Preparedness Capabilities](#)

Capability 1: Community Preparedness

Capability 2: Community Recovery

Capability 5: Fatality Management

Capability 7: Mass Care

Capability 10: Medical Surge

Capability 11: Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions

Capability 14: Responder Safety and Health

Objectives:

- Work with the Florida Crisis Consortium (FCC) in developing, maintaining and implementing the Disaster Behavioral Health Standard Operating Guidelines (DBH SOG).
- Provide information and data to assist state and counties to recognize planning considerations and to integrate behavioral health needs in preparedness planning, training and exercises.

- Provide tools to assist state and community planners better understand behavioral health needs before, during and after a disaster or incident.
- Establish and train DBH teams to be ready when activated.
- Track community behavioral health after an incident to ensure people have access to and receive appropriate behavioral health services during recovery.
- Support counties in creating opportunities to improve behavioral health preparedness.
- Provide information and guidance to address the behavioral health needs of responders.
- Support counties in fostering local partnerships to meet increased behavioral health needs resulting from an incident.

2013-2014 Highlights:

- FCC/DBH information booths were set up at the Child Protection Summit in Orlando, Florida Coalition for Children Conference in Tallahassee and the Florida Mental Health Counselors Conference in Lake Mary.
- FCC/DBH presentations were made at local Healthcare Coalitions in Pasco, Pinellas, Duval and Manatee counties.
- Advanced Team Training focusing on children and disaster behavioral health was provided to 20 FCC members.
- The FCC convened a meeting of nine statewide partners at the University of South Florida to foster collaboration, discuss program activities and review operating guidelines.
- FCC members participated in the Clay County Active Shooter Tabletop Exercise.
- An annual HSEEP-compliant DBH Tabletop Exercise was conducted in Tampa. The exercise included a cultural competency training module for team members.
- A five-person DBH Strike Team was deployed by State ESF-8 to Pensacola to support Department of Health personnel impacted by the May 2014 flooding.
- A five-person DBH Assessment Team participated in the Statewide Hurricane Exercise supporting the Jacksonville Special Needs Shelter.
- A training session titled, Integrating Disaster Behavioral Health into Disaster Planning, was presented to 19 attendees at the Governor's Hurricane Conference.
- FCC members provided information at a booth during the Governor's Hurricane Conference.
- A DBH responder session titled, Compassion Satisfaction or Fatigue for Interpreters, was included as part of the Emergency Management Interpreters for the Deaf Training held in Orlando.

Partners: County health departments, Florida Crisis Consortium, Department of Children and Families and local emergency management.

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For more information on the Florida Department of Health, Division of Emergency Preparedness and Community Support, Bureau of Preparedness and Response, Disaster Behavioral Health Response Team initiatives go to: www.floridahealth.gov/preparedness-and-response/healthcare-system-preparedness/disaster-behavioral-health or go to www.floridahealth.gov and enter "Behavioral Health" in the search box.