



Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

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August 9, 2023

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State of Hawaii Department of Health
1250 Punchbowl Street, Room #256
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Commissioner Curtis:

I am writing to you regarding the wildfires that are occurring in your state. Our thoughts go out to survivors, those who are responding to the incident, and everyone witnessing this tragedy. As disaster behavioral health professionals continue to respond, I wanted to send you some materials from our resource library that may be helpful to you during the immediate phase of response.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) supports preparedness efforts by states, U.S. territories, tribes, and local entities to deliver an effective mental health and substance use-related (behavioral health) response to disasters. SAMHSA helps states and communities with disaster behavioral health preparedness and response issues directly, as well as through the SAMHSA Technology Transfer Centers (TTCs) and the SAMHSA Disaster Technical Assistance Center (DTAC).

The purpose of the SAMHSA-funded TTCs is to develop and strengthen the specialized behavioral healthcare and primary healthcare workforce that provides prevention, treatment, and recovery support services for substance use disorders and mental illness. The TTC program includes three networks: the Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network (ATTC), the Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network (MHTTC), and the Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network (PTTC). For more information about the SAMHSA TTCs, please visit <https://www.samhsa.gov/technology-transfer-centers-ttc-program>.

SAMHSA DTAC provides materials, training, and technical assistance to the entire United States, its territories, and federally recognized tribes for all-hazards disaster behavioral health preparedness, response, and recovery. For more information about our services, please visit <https://www.samhsa.gov/dtac>. You can also contact SAMHSA DTAC by emailing dtac@iqsolutions.com or calling the toll-free hotline at 1-800-308-3515.

The following list of materials includes those focused on general behavioral health needs after wildfires, as well as separate sections listing materials for children and families, older adults, those with disabilities, access, or functional needs, and first responders.

General Disaster Response and Recovery Information

- ***Tips for Survivors of a Disaster or Other Traumatic Event: Managing Stress***—This SAMHSA tip sheet gives stress prevention and management tips for dealing with the effects of a disaster or trauma. It identifies common reactions to disasters and other traumatic events, lists tips to manage and lower stress, and highlights signs of the need for professional support.
<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Tips-for-Survivors-of-a-Disaster-or-Other-Traumatic-Event-Managing-Stress/SMA13-4776>

This tip sheet is also available in Spanish at <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Tips-for-Survivors-of-a-Disaster-or-Other-Traumatic-Event-Managing-Stress-Spanish-Version-/SMA13-4776SPANISH>. A similar tip sheet is available in Punjabi at <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Tips-for-Survivors-of-a-Traumatic-Event-Managing-Your-Stress-Punjabi-Version-/NMH05-0209PUNJABI>.

- **Coping with a Disaster or Traumatic Event**—At this web page, CDC emphasizes the importance of effective coping after a disaster and getting professional help if needed for reactions that are difficult and intense. Links are provided to additional information about managing your emotional health as a survivor and about supporting your children in coping.
<https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/index.asp>

This information is available in Spanish at <https://emergency.cdc.gov/es/coping/index.asp>.

Wildfire-specific Information

- **Disaster-specific Resources: Wildfires**—This part of the SAMHSA Disaster Behavioral Health Information Series collection includes resources focused on wildfire preparedness and response. The collection includes resources for children, parents and other caregivers, school personnel, and the public.
https://www.samhsa.gov/resource-search/dbhis?rc%5B0%5D=type_of_disaster%3A20555
- **Wildfires**—The SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline supports survivors, family members, responders, and recovery workers who are affected by wildfires and other disasters. Information on this web page includes signs of emotional distress, populations who may be at greater risk for distress after a wildfire, and links to resources for more information and support.
<https://www.samhsa.gov/types-disasters/wildfires>
- ***After the Fire: Your Emotional and Physical Well-Being***—This Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) tip sheet describes common reactions to a wildfire and includes steps an individual can take to cope and stay healthy after a wildfire. CDC also lists freely available resources for more information and support.

<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/wildfires/pdf/afterfire.pdf>

- **Natural Disasters and Severe Weather: Wildfires**—CDC’s website provides information on a host of hazards, including wildfires. This web page offers links to information about staying safe after a wildfire and learning about and coping with hazards linked to wildfires and other disasters, including emotional distress.
<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/wildfires/index.html>

The page is available in Spanish at <https://www.cdc.gov/es/disasters/wildfires/index.html>.

- **Wildfires: Response/Recovery**—Part of the U.S. Department of Labor, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) works to ensure safe and healthy workplace conditions across the United States. This part of OSHA’s website offers information on staying safe as a worker involved in wildfire response and recovery. Links are provided to information about the range of hazards workers may face after wildfires, as well as information for firefighters and other responders.
<https://www.osha.gov/wildfires/response>
- **Recovering From Wildfires**—This part of the American Psychological Association’s website identifies common reactions to wildfires and provides recovery tips for affected individuals and families. The resource also provides guidance for individuals caring for children with special needs, as well as those seeking additional assistance.
<https://www.apa.org/topics/disasters-response/wildfires>

Resources for Children, Youth, Parents and Other Caregivers, and Schools

- **Children and Disasters**—Part of the Disaster Survivors portal (<https://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/disaster-survivors>) at the SAMHSA Disaster Technical Assistance Center website, this web page describes how children and teenagers may experience disasters differently from adults, offers tips for disaster planning for families, identifies common reactions to disasters in children and teenagers, and provides suggestions for adults for helping children and teenagers cope after disaster. Links to related resources are also provided.
<https://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/disaster-survivors/children-and-disaster>
- ***Helping Families Deal with the Stress of Relocation After a Disaster***—In this handout, CDC provides a wealth of information about stress, why relocation after a disaster may be stressful, common signs of stress, and ways that parents and other caregivers can support children and adolescents in coping. Tips are also provided for helping older adults with coping, as are links to related resources.
https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/emes/health_professionals/documents/relocationstress_508.pdf
- ***Parent Guidelines for Helping Children Impacted by Wildfires***—This National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) tip sheet identifies the challenges often experienced

during and after wildfires, lists common reactions in children, and suggests ways parents and other caregivers can help their children with these reactions.

<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/parent-guidelines-helping-children-impacted-wildfires>

The tip sheet is available in Spanish at <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/guia-para-padres-con-hijos-que-han-sido-afectados-por-incendios>.

- ***Trinka and Sam: The Big Fire***—This NCTSN children’s book tells the story of Trinka and Sam, two young mice who are friends and neighbors who survive a wildfire. The book covers effects a wildfire can have on a community, as well as common emotions and behaviors in children after a wildfire. Guidance is provided at the end of the book for parents and other caregivers to help them use the book with their children to understand and talk about their experiences with wildfires.

<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/trinka-and-sam-big-fire>

This booklet is available in Spanish at <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/trinka-y-juan-el-gran-fuego>.

- ***Wildfires: Tips for Parents on Media Coverage***—This NCTSN tip sheet describes how media coverage of a wildfire may affect children and families and lists ways for parents and other caregivers to manage media exposure in helping children cope with a wildfire. The NCTSN also provides tips for talking with the media for families with direct experience of a wildfire.

<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/wildfires-tips-parents-media-coverage>

The tip sheet is available in Spanish at <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/los-incendios-y-su-cobertura-en-las-noticias-recomendaciones-para-los-padres>.

Resources Focused on Older Adults

- ***Helping Older Adults After Disasters: A Guide to Providing Support***—Designed for anyone supporting older adults after a disaster, this SAMHSA guide highlights reactions to disasters that are common among survivors of all ages, as well as unique challenges older adults may face after disasters and how response workers can help. The guide also identifies resources available to help in connecting older adults with services and supports.

<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/helping-older-adults-after-disasters-a-guide-to-providing-support/PEP19-01-01-001>

- ***Helping Families Deal with the Stress of Relocation After a Disaster***—In this handout, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides a wealth of information about stress, why relocation after a disaster may be stressful, common signs of stress, and ways that parents and other caregivers can support children and adolescents in coping. Tips are also provided for helping older adults with coping, as are links to related resources.

https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/emes/health_professionals/documents/relocationstress_508.pdf

Resources Focused on People With Disabilities

- **People With Disabilities and Other Functional and Access Needs**—This part of the SAMHSA Disaster Behavioral Health Information Series resource collection covers various aspects of preparedness, response, and recovery for people with disabilities and other functional and access needs. Items in the collection include articles, guides, and organizations.
<https://www.samhsa.gov/resource-search/dbhis?rc%5B0%5D=populations%3A20181>
- **Hidden Disabilities: Communication Tips for First Responders**—This 8-minute training video recommends ways for first responders to communicate effectively with people with autism spectrum disorder, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, and traumatic brain injury. Although the video addresses communicating in non-disaster situations, it presents principles of effective communication that may be helpful in disasters. The video was developed by the Anchorage Police Department, Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education, and the University of Alaska Anchorage, as well as other agencies and organizations in Alaska.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HmJX3c43szg>
- **Tips for First Responders, 5th Edition**—This guide from the Center for Development and Disability at the University of New Mexico offers tips responders can use during emergencies and routine encounters to support and communicate with people with disabilities and other access and functional needs. Sections of the guide focus on older adults and on people with service animals, mobility impairments, autism, multiple chemical sensitivities, cognitive disabilities, and hearing or visual impairments.
<https://unmhealth.org/services/development-disabilities/programs/other-disability-resources/first-responder-tips.html>

The guide is available in Spanish at <https://unmhealth.org/services/development-disabilities/programs/other-disability-resources/first-responder-tips-espanol.html>.

Resources for Disaster Responders and First Responders

- **First Responders and Disaster Responders Resource Portal**—This part of the SAMHSA Disaster Technical Assistance Center website notes the stressors that may be involved in work as a responder, identifies signs of stress, and offers coping tips. The page features links to tip sheets, online trainings, and other resources related to responder mental health and freedom from substance use issues and conditions.
<https://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/disaster-responders>
- **A Guide to Managing Stress for Disaster Responders and First Responders**—This SAMHSA guide is designed for first responders, public health workers, construction workers, transportation workers, utility workers, crisis counselors, and volunteers who respond to disasters and other crises. The guide provides information on how people experience stress; signs of extreme stress; and ways for organizations and individuals to

manage and mitigate stress before, during, and after disaster response.

<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/managing-stress-responders/pep22-01-01-003>

- ***Tips for Disaster Responders: Understanding Compassion Fatigue***—This SAMHSA tip sheet defines and describes compassion fatigue, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress. It lists signs of compassion fatigue, offers tips for preventing and coping with compassion fatigue, and notes that responders may also experience positive effects from their work.

<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Understanding-Compassion-Fatigue/sma14-4869>

This tip sheet is available in Spanish at <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Tips-for-Disaster-Responders-Understanding-Compassion-Fatigue-Spanish-Version-/SMA14-4869SPANISH>.

- **Firefighters Helping Firefighters (FHF)**—Designed by a team based at the Medical University of South Carolina, this website features videos in which firefighters and fire chiefs and captains talk about the stress and trauma that may be involved in working as a firefighter, the toll that stress and trauma took on their lives and loved ones, and their experiences of seeking and taking part in treatment. FHF was created in partnership with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and with funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The Help part of the site (<https://musc-fhf.netlify.app/help>) provides links to sources of additional information and support.
- ***Strategies to Manage Challenges for EMS Families***—In this manual provided by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, challenges of work in emergency medical services (EMS) are highlighted, as are the impacts of these challenges on EMS personnel and their children and families. For each challenge there are also strategies presented for coping. Sections of the manual focus on typical challenges for EMS families, communication between and among parents and other caregivers, and talking with children about their concerns.

<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/strategies-manage-challenges-ems-families>

Additional Resources for Acute Needs

- **SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline**—The SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline (DDH) provides free, confidential crisis counseling and support to people in distress due to natural and human-caused disasters. The DDH is available 24/7, on all days of the year, via talk or text to 1-800-985-5990. The line also offers support in Spanish (people who call or text should press 2 for this option) and several additional languages other than English. People who are deaf or hard of hearing or who have other speech or hearing disabilities can use the texting option or, if they would like support in American Sign Language (ASL), they can call the DDH’s toll-free number via videophone-enabled device or click the “ASL Now” link at the DDH website.

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline>

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- This website is available in Spanish at <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/espanol>.
 - **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline**—The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is a source of support available 24/7 to people in crisis, including people experiencing challenging reactions to disasters. Call 988 for support in English or Spanish. <https://988lifeline.org>

The website is available in Spanish at <https://988lifeline.org/es/home/>.

A disaster event such as this is unexpected and often brings out strong emotions. People can call or text the SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline’s toll-free number (**1-800-985-5990**) and receive immediate counseling. This free, confidential, multilingual crisis support service is available to anyone experiencing distress as a result of a natural or human-caused disaster. People who call and text are connected to trained, caring professionals from crisis counseling centers in the network. Helpline staff provide confidential counseling, referrals, and other needed support services.

Should you have further questions, please feel free to contact me directly. You can also contact CAPT Erik Hierholzer at 240-276-0408 or erik.hierholzer@samhsa.hhs.gov, as well as your SAMHSA Regional Director, Captain Emily Williams, at Emily.Williams@samhsa.hhs.gov. Additionally, you can reach a technical assistance specialist at SAMHSA DTAC by calling 1-800-308-3515 or emailing dtac@iqsolutions.com.

Sincerely,



Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D.
Assistant Secretary for Mental Health
and Substance Use