



**National
Voluntary Organizations
Active in Disaster**

COOPERATION | COMMUNICATION | COORDINATION | COLLABORATION

EMOTIONAL & SPIRITUAL CARE

Ratified by NVOAD
Board ?? 2020

Recovery Tools Workshop

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Disaster Recovery

“A disaster affects the entire fabric of community....Disaster recovery is the...re-tying of the thousands of strands of relationship in the fabric...that have been severed by the disaster.”

The Rev. John A. Robinson, Jr.
Light Our Way, p. 6



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Basic Concept of Disaster Spiritual Care (DSC)

*Spirituality is an essential part of humanity.
Disaster significantly disrupts people's spiritual lives.
Nurturing people's spiritual needs contributes to
holistic healing.
Every person can benefit from spiritual care
in times of disaster.*

Disaster Spiritual Care Points of Consensus, Point 1



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Basic Concept of Disaster Emotional Care (DEC)

Disaster emotional care is a valuable component of comprehensive disaster preparedness, response and recovery. Disaster emotional care promotes resilience, helps mitigate long and short term consequences of disaster, and facilitates recovery.

Disaster Emotional Care Points of Consensus, Point 1



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Disaster Spiritual Care Providers

What's so unique about them?

- They come from a many walks of life
- They make a conscious choice to enter places of suffering and pain
- They provide a safe and non-anxious presence
- They help people find meaning and hope in crisis
- They facilitate meeting basic needs
- They help people find healthy, supportive connections
- They support people through emotional/spiritual interventions and active listening



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Disaster Emotional Care

What's so unique about it?


- Has a range of supportive actions grounded in concepts of resilience and behavioral health
- Activities are informed by relevant research and established best practices
- Is not psychotherapy, nor a substitute for psychotherapy
- May be the first step that leads to professional counseling and psychotherapy
- Specialized training is necessary for effective disaster emotional care

• Disaster Emotional Care Points of Consensus, Point 1



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Who Does Emotional and Spiritual Care?



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Who Does Emotional & Spiritual Care?

- Clergy
- Spiritual leaders
- Deacons
- Chaplains
- Church members
- Leaders of houses of worship





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Who Does Emotional & Spiritual Care?



- Mothers, Fathers, Grandparents, Daughters, Sons, Grandchildren



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Who Does Emotional & Spiritual Care?



- Teachers
- Coaches
- Counselors
- Business people
- Retired people
- Professional people
- People from many different jobs and professions



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Who Does Emotional & Spiritual Care?



- Many who are trained and willing to provide compassion and presence to those who are suffering



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Distinctions Between Disaster Spiritual Care and Disaster Emotional Care

Disaster Spiritual Care

- Endorsed by faith group or association
- Trained in pastoral care and counseling
- Focus on faith and meaning
- Language of spirit and purpose
- May be licensed in mental health

Disaster Emotional Care

- Licensed by the state
- Trained in psychopathology
- Focus on coping and stress
- Language of feelings, behavior, cognition
- May be a chaplain



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What Do People Need After A Disaster?



- Basic needs of food, water, shelter
- Cleaning and removing debris
- Accurate information
- Emotional and spiritual comfort and care
- Kind listening ear



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Who Gets Impacted After a Disaster?

- Individuals
- Families
- Social networks
- Rescue workers
- Health care providers
- Faith communities and spiritual care providers
- Businesses
- Pets
- Vulnerable populations



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Important Guidance



- Do No Harm
- Respect cultural and religious diversity
- Be impartial as you serve all people
- Remain neutral to controversies in politics, religion or ideologies
- Do no counseling and/or therapy in the field



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Expected Competencies

- Psychological first aid skills
- Grief support skills
- Able to work in diverse cultural and religious settings
- Able to work as a team within a command structure
- Flexibility and patience in all matters
- Ability to assess situations, make appropriate decisions
- Capacity to maintain healthy boundaries and practice self care



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Patience is Essential

- Disaster responses are chaotic, especially in the immediate aftermath
- Lots of activity and some confusion
- Gathering information may be challenging as information changes rapidly
- Roles and responsibilities may change
- Unaffiliated—and sometimes untrained—volunteers may arrive on scene
- Order will evolve—please be patient



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Where Does DSC and DEC happen?

- At a scene of a disaster
- Feeding site
- Shelter
- Multi Agency Resource Center (MARC)
- Family Assistance Center (FAC)
- Local Assistance Center (LAC)
- Neighborhoods
- Mass distribution sites
- Spontaneous and planned memorial sites



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Local Community Resources

- Local spiritual care providers, communities of faith and local providers of emotional care are primary resources for pre and post-disaster emotional and spiritual care
- Any emotional and spiritual care entering from outside the community support but do not substitute for local efforts

Disaster Spiritual Care Points of Consensus, Point 3
Disaster Emotional Care Points of Consensus, Point 4



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Disaster Trauma and Vulnerability

- People impacted by disaster are vulnerable
- There's an imbalance of power between disaster responders and those who receive care
- Spiritual care providers refrain from using their position, influence, knowledge, or professional affiliation for unfair advantage or for personal or organizational or agency gain

Disaster Spiritual Care Points of Consensus, Point 9



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Emotional & Spiritual Care Active in All Disaster Phases

- Essential in disaster response
- Provide help, hope, and healing
- Active listeners and compassionate presence
- Valued resource throughout the disaster cycle



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Early Response Volunteers

- DSC and DEC volunteers are serving from the beginning
- Neighbors helping neighbors
- Affiliated volunteers
- Spontaneous unaffiliated volunteers



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ESC Committee

Tasks and Responsibilities

- Helping National VOAD member organizations collaborate with local mental health agencies, houses of worship, and other organizations and agencies involved in the disaster event
- Educating people through public media and groups
- Facilitating commemorative events—memorial services and other events—at significant times



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ESC Committee

Tasks and Responsibilities

- Providing information about mental health and spiritual care resources in the community
- Assessing the needs for referral
- Making appropriate referrals
 - Medical
 - Spiritual care
 - Local spiritual leaders of houses of worship
 - Mental Health
 - Humanitarian aid organizations and agencies



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DSC & DEC Volunteer Types

□ Affiliated Volunteers

- May or may not be local residents
- Associated with an agency or organization
- Typically arrive with leadership

□ Spontaneous Unaffiliated Volunteers (SUV)

- May or may not be local residents
- Not associated with any agency or organization
- Often arrive with no leadership



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Who Is Impacted

Bereaved, Injured, or Lost Property

First Responders

Family & Close Friends

Those Who Serve

Faith, Business &

Government Groups

Community at Large

...in Short, Everybody

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Guidelines for DSC competency

□ Personal attributes

- Sensitivity, respect, spiritual maturity, ethical approach, truthfulness, confidential, inspire confidence and hope

□ Knowledge

- Familiarity with National VOAD POC; working theory of stress, grief, trauma, disaster phases and cycle; understanding of crisis communication and crisis intervention; know effective coping strategies
- Personal theological/religious framework for disaster
- Principles of ethical standards
- Organizational structure of disaster response



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Guidelines for DSC competency

□ Skills

- Expressive communication - speaking
- Receptive communication – listening
- Ability to assess and identify common crisis reactions
- Ability to use a broad range of supportive actions
 - Meet basic needs, advocacy/liaison, active listening, facilitating catharsis (venting), providing social support, work effectively as a team, establish trusting relationships, provide information, theologically reflect and learn from the disaster experience
- Ability to orient and adapt to disaster scene
 - Acclimate, facilitate, collaborate, adapt



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Guidelines for DEC competency

□ Attributes, Knowledge and Skills

- Effective communication, confidentiality, privacy
- Accurate documentation
- Effective connection in diversity
- Good collaboration, leadership and followership
- Knowledge of principles, techniques, procedures, and resources for providing emotional care
- Empathetic connection, non-judgmental, emotional stability, patient, good observation skills, flexible, adaptable, tactful



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Essential Caring Actions

□ Active listening

- Allow the impacted person to tell his/her story
- Be physically, emotionally and spiritually present
- Listen compassionately
- Some people need to tell their story several times
- The narrative provides hope for "one more chapter"



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Essential Caring Actions

- Encourage and facilitate healthy connections
 - Family and loved ones
 - Friends and colleagues
 - Social communities



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Essential Caring Actions

- Self-Care
 - Prayer and Meditation
 - Exercise
 - Have Fun!



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What is the Role of the LTRG?



Provide opportunities for training in Disaster Emotional and Spiritual Care (DEC and DSC)



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What is the Role of the LTRG?

- Provide opportunities for compassionate, active listening to those who have been impacted by the disaster



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What is the Role of the LTRG?

- Provide opportunities for rest, retreat, self care and restoration for those who provide DEC and DSC



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What is the Role of the LTRG?

Facilitate commemorative events at significant dates

- Vigils
- Prayer services
- Memorial services



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What is the Role of the LTRG?

Provide public information about emotional and spiritual care:

- Training opportunities
- Possibilities for care
- Referral information
- Resources



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Self-Care for Those Who Serve



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Rest and Relaxation are Essential

- Deep diaphragmatic breathing
- Regular exercise – even walking is helpful
- Regular periods of rest and relaxation
- Healthy diet and hydration
- Appropriate night's sleep
- Meditation and mindfulness
- Social support
- Spiritual disciplines



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Retreats

- Provide retreat opportunities for care providers themselves during the long recovery process



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Serenity Prayer

God grant me the
serenity to accept
the things I cannot
change,
The courage to change
the things I can,
And the wisdom to
know the difference.



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End of Day Debriefing

- Allows volunteers to express their feelings
 - What was the most challenging/difficult thing today?
 - What was the best thing or blessing today?
- Re-assign as needed
- Assign tasks/duties for tomorrow



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Questions and Answers



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Feedback

<http://tiny.cc/nvoadrtweval>



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Thank you for your participation. For more information, contact your state or local leadership or National VOAD at www.nvoad.org.

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