Disaster Distress Helpline Provides Immediate Crisis Counseling to People Affected by the Coronavirus Pandemic

Jesup, GA - Natural disasters – including such pandemics as the coronavirus outbreak – can be overwhelming and seriously affect emotional health. The Disaster Distress Helpline, 1-800-985-5990, can provide immediate counseling to anyone who is seeking help in coping with the mental or emotional effects caused by developments related to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Helpline is a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week and free resource that responds to people who need crisis counseling and support in dealing with the traumatic effects of a natural or human-caused disaster. The Helpline is sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Helpline specialists are trained to assist callers who have a range of symptoms.

“People who have been through a traumatic event can experience anxiety, worry or insomnia,” said Dr. Elinore F. McCance-Katz, MD, PhD, who is the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use and who is the head of SAMHSA. “People seeking emotional help during an ongoing disaster such as a pandemic can call 1-800-985-5990 or can text ‘TalkWithUs’ to 66746 – and can find recovery and coping strategies.”

The Helpline immediately connects callers to trained and caring professionals from the closest crisis counseling centers in the nationwide network of centers. The Helpline staff will provide confidential counseling, referrals and other needed support services. More on the Helpline is at http://disasterdistress.samhsa.gov/.

For more information, contact the SAMHSA Press Office at 240-276-2130. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

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