Crisis Response Guidelines and Suggestions for Chapters

These guidelines and suggestions have been formulated by experts to assist chapters in offering a Crisis Response (CR) program to help their local community prepare, respond and recover from a disaster, crisis, or critical incident. Use these guidelines and suggestions to identify and select actions that meet the specific needs of the community in the aftermath of a tragic event. Do not hesitate to contact Committee members regarding questions, support, and outcomes.

**Before a Crisis Event**

1. Create a chapter Crisis Response Professional Development Group
2. Encourage members to join the American Red Cross
3. Promote Crisis Response training
   a. FEMA Independent Study Program (ISP) Courses
   b. Red Cross disaster mental health trainings
   c. Training in a Crisis Intervention modality
4. Conduct regular meetings and trainings to build trust and comradery
5. Design a CR chapter webpage and include CR information in newsletters and blogs
6. Develop systems to communicate with members: surveys, listservs, emails, phone trees, Facebook groups, Yahoo groups, etc.
7. Create special badges to be worn at meetings or during a disaster to aid identification and foster interest
8. Develop and maintain relationships with the local Red Cross chapter, County Mental Health Departments, Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMAT), and/or California Disaster Healthcare Volunteers (DHV) including Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)
9. Create and train a Debriefing Team to support responders returning from deployment
During a Crisis Event
1. Inform CAMFT (Executive Director via email during nonbusiness hours)
2. Contact your local Red Cross, DHV, MRC or DMAT to ask about the kind of help required, where it will be provided, when and how long should it be offered, and how many people are needed
3. Distribute a survey to ascertain who is trained and available as well as which members might be affected and in need of help either personally or professionally
4. Report back to your local contacts (#2) as to who will be reporting to help
5. Coordinate with CAMFT in order to access local non chapter members who might be able to deploy and to assist with media contacts and press releases
6. Contact the experts of the CRER Committee for consultation, planning, resources, and support
7. Access the CRERC Resources webpages for articles specific to the crisis
8. Post on the chapter website home page updates where members and the public can obtain information and services
9. Publish a flyer for distribution at crisis centers, shelters, and media outlets with information about available services and resources
10. Prudently consider the benefits vs. detriments of providing a drop-in counseling center staffed by chapter members due to extreme quality of care and liability issues; consult with the CRER Committee before offering this service

After a Crisis Event
1. Survey the general membership to assess the impact of the event personally and professionally and to identify outstanding needs
2. Initiate personal contact with every member who deployed to assess stress reactions and need for individual and/or post-action group intervention
3. Arrange for all responders to receive individual and/or group crisis intervention services typically provided by other trained members who did not respond to the event
4. Conduct an operation debriefing to evaluate the response and distribute a “Lessons Learned” report to chapter members and the CRER Committee to improve CR services to CAMFT membership and the public
5. Recognize and appreciate individuals for their service via letters, newsletters, articles, and chapter meetings
6. Calendar anniversary dates for follow-up assessments and services