

# Utah Disaster Crisis Counselor

January 2024 Newsletter



## Save the Date

May 20, 2024, for the annual Disaster Crisis Counseling Certification/ Re-Certification training. More information is coming soon!

## Helping people experiencing homelessness

People experiencing homelessness are especially vulnerable during disasters. About [1 in 4](#) people who are homeless in Utah are chronically homeless. Individuals experiencing homelessness often experience trauma as part of homelessness, and they may also have histories of trauma prior to becoming homeless. Because disasters may also involve trauma, these individuals can be retraumatized, which can involve intense reactions. It is important to be informed about trauma and re-traumatization and connect with those who have expertise in providing services to those experiencing homelessness.

To help individuals experiencing homelessness following a disaster:

- Share information about available shelters.
- Do not ask people to provide detailed personal information at intake and prioritize their safety and connection to available services.
- Help them develop and maintain a support system or self-care plan.
- Provide information for free or reduced-cost services, such as mental health and substance use-related support, veterinary care for companion animals, or housing options.

Some people may need additional accommodations following a disaster, such as:

- Families, especially those with young children, must be kept together.
- LGBTQ+ people often experience discrimination and need to have safe and welcoming accommodations.
- Older adults may have specific access or functional needs due to their age.
- Individuals with companion animals should be kept together whenever possible to reduce stress and enhance resilience.

## Self-care after the holidays

Whew, you made it. Now that the holiday hustle and bustle is over, remember to take some time for your own care. Here are some ideas:

- Validate your own emotions. Try writing down your thoughts, especially those that are weighing you down.
- Have confidence in who you are.
- Do whatever you need to do to really relax (read, go for a walk, take 5 deep conscientious breaths).
- Approach New Year's resolutions with caution. Be open with how you want to do things differently this year and make self-care a priority.

## Get involved

If you or someone you know someone may be interested in becoming a part of Utah's disaster crisis counseling team, to the Utah Responds Volunteer Registry by clicking the icon to the left or go directly to the website [utahresponds.org](https://utahresponds.org) and select Utah Crisis Counseling as the organization.

[SUMH Disaster Crisis Counselor Webpage](#)

