

“Just In Time” Training & Resource Alert

Attack in New Orleans January 2, 2025

Overview

On January 1st, at approximately 3:15 a.m. local time, an individual drove a pickup truck into a crowd of people celebrating New Year’s on Bourbon Street in New Orleans, Louisiana. As of 10am CT at least 15 fatalities have been confirmed with dozens more injured, including two law enforcement officers who exchanged fire with the suspect, who was killed. The FBI is working to determine potential associations and affiliations with terrorist organizations. In addition, an incident in Las Vegas on 1/1/25 whereby a vehicle exploded outside of a hotel, with the suspect killed and reports of injuries of people near the scene, is being investigated for possible connections. Overall, investigations for both incidents are ongoing and as more information/resources become available, this alert may be updated if necessary.

Media

Note: Crisis counselors are advised to limit their exposure to media surrounding the shooting, only obtaining key information about the event as needed and as other details may emerge that might inform an accurate understanding of each incident, as media surrounding the severe weather may contain words, images, sounds, etc., that may be distressing.

- [CNN: New Orleans Attack](#)

Just In Time Training

Incidents of mass violence can instill feelings of fear, confusion, anger, and helplessness in survivors. Because mass violence disrupts our collective sense of order and safety, they can even cause emotional distress for those who were not directly impacted by the event. People who experienced similar events in the past, and for whom recovery may have been difficult, may also have symptoms of distress activated by media surrounding the event. It is normal for people to experience emotional distress after an incident of mass violence and to experience trauma and grief. Although many calls and texts you may be receiving from the affected areas will be requests for specific resources, please remember that we want to utilize the four steps of DDH Just In Time training with each caller/texter, and avoid rushing to provide referrals. Use these steps to guide your conversations from beginning to end:

- **Engage** with them (establishing rapport and a compassionate presence; ask for their name and state yours; let them know that you are glad to help them).
- **Explore** their presenting concerns (ask about coping, reinforce healthy behaviors, look for distress reactions, identify social supports).
- **Connect** them with additional referrals for follow-up care and support as needed/appropriate based on their presenting/identified concerns.
- **Conclude** by summarizing any “plans” you’ve helped them think through, action steps to take, etc., and reminding them when appropriate to call/text back if they/loved ones should ever need to reach out again.

Use four standard elements of supportive crisis counseling:

- **Utilize Active Engagement**
 - Important in establishing a trusting relationship with the contact
 - Being present, patient, kind, and compassionate with the contact
 - Example: "I am following what you are saying"

- **Validate Emotions**
 - Telling one's "story" is important for many survivors, but can be retraumatizing for some; allow survivors to tell their story, but refrain from prompting them to do so, or telling them they 'need' to do so, especially if they are revisiting gory details
 - Acknowledge the person's experience as their own
 - Validate their emotions and reactions
 - Example: "It seems like your experience was quite scary"

- **Normalize Reactions**
 - Let the contact know that their distress is likely a normal reaction to an abnormal event
 - Their reactions are expected, as they are common in people who have been exposed to these events
 - They are not alone; others may be experiencing similar reactions
 - Example: "I've worked with many people who have described similar experiences," or "We know from our work with these events that most people will experience some of these same distress reactions for a period of time."

- **Provide Psycho-Education and Coping Information**
 - Once a person's experiences have been validated, provide education and helpful information
 - Educate about common reactions to stress
 - Provide information about breathing techniques and other coping skills like walking, stretching, and talking to others who understand and accept how they feel
 - Example: "The headaches you've been having may be a sign of stress. Having a physical reaction like a headache is one of the ways our body reacts to stressful situations. Drinking more water can help since stress is dehydrating and is one of the causes of headaches. If your headaches persist, we advise you to see a medical professional."

Disaster-Specific Resources

Educate the caller/texter that it may take more than one attempt to get through to local resources, as hundreds of other individuals may be attempting to get through as well. They may encounter a busy signal, but if they keep trying, eventually they should get through. As part of your provision of psycho-education for callers/texters, it can be helpful to remind them of this, urge as much patience as possible, and to keep calling.

- **Local Resources**
 - [City of New Orleans Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness](#) information on:
 - Seeking information on a missing person
 - Reporting a missing person, or
 - Requesting resources related to displacement from homes or hotels
 - **Residents in Orleans Parish:** Call 311 for assistance. *Please press option 3.*
 - **Families outside of Orleans Parish** 504-658-2299. *Please press option 3.*
 - [United Ways in Louisiana](#)

- **FBI Digital Tip Line**
 - The FBI has set up a digital tip line, and asks anyone with information or video of the incident to submit them to www.fbi.gov/bourbonstreetattack or call 1-800-CALL-FBI

- **Additional Resources**

- SAMHSA: [Incidents of Mass Violence](#)
- NCTSN: [National Child Traumatic Stress Network: Mass Violence Resources](#) & [PFA: When Terrible Things Happen](#)
- APA: [Managing your distress in the aftermath of a shooting](#)
- FEMA: [Active Shooter Resources](#)
- MHTTC: [Resources for Coping with School Tragedies and Community Violence - Mental Health Technology Transfer Center \(MHTTC\) Network](#)
- Office for Victims of Crime: [View Resources for the Victims of Recent Mass Violence Incidents](#)
- PTSD.VA.org: [The Impact of Disaster and Mass Violence Events on Mental Health - PTSD](#)

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Resources

- State Resources
 - [Louisiana Commission for the Deaf](#)
 - National Association of the Deaf: [Directories for State Agencies for Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#)
- Disaster Safety Information
 - NCTSN & Gallaudet University's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child Resilience Center ASL Videos:
 - [Coping After Mass Violence](#)
 - [Talking to Your Children About the Shootings](#)
 - [For Teens: Coping After Mass Violence](#)
 - [Age-Related Reactions to a Traumatic Event](#)
 - Piplo Productions: [ASL Once I was Very Very Scared video](#) (This story helps children and adults to understand how stress can affect children and ways to help them cope)

Spanish Language Resources

- Disaster Distress Helpline One Page Summary in Spanish: [Spanish Disaster Distress Helpline One Page Summary](#)
- SAMHSA DDH information en Español: [Línea de Ayuda para los Afectados por Catástrofes](#)
- APA: [Centro de Apoyo - Tiroteó](#) (How to Manage your Distress After a Gun Tragedy)
- NCTSN: [Mass Violence en Español](#)

General Behavioral Health Referral Resources

For callers and texters from anywhere in the U.S. who may be presenting with distress or other mental health concerns related to this disaster:

- **[2-1-1](#) (Information on local disaster-specific and general social services)**
- General, non-behavioral health-related disaster I&R or other general requests for information and resources should be referred to the caller/texter's local 2-1-1 call center. Use the above link to determine where their nearest center is, based on the caller/texter's ZIP code, and from their visit the 2-1-1 center's own website if needed to find a specific local number.
 - Avoid directing callers/texters to simply call 2-1-1, as they may not be routed to their actual local center.
 - However, if a local number can't be located via the aforementioned means, direct the caller/texter to call 2-1-1.
 - Sample script: "Your local 2-1-1 info center should be able to help you with questions about most local social services available in your area. Here is the local number for the closest 2-1-1 to you."

- [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#)
 - When a caller/texter has expressed suicidal/homicidal ideation or other crisis behavioral health concerns, after providing crisis assessment & intervention as needed, for follow-up care and support educate and refer the caller/texter to their nearest 988 Lifeline-networked crisis contact center by using the website locator based on their ZIP code and then visit the center’s website to find their specific local crisis number.
 - Avoid directing the caller/texter to simply call 988, as they may not be routed to their actual local 988 Lifeline-networked center.
 - However, if a local number can’t be located via the aforementioned means, direct the caller/texter to call 988 *or* educate them about the 988 Chat option, available via the main Lifeline website:
 - [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Chat](#)
 - Sample script: “(Name of) your local crisis center can provide additional support, including follow-up care on what we have talked about. Here is the number for your local center.
- [SAMHSA's National Helpline / Treatment Referral Locator](#)
 SAMHSA’s National Helpline is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service (in English and Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental health and/or substance use disorders.
 - 1-800-662-HELP (4357) / TTY: 1-800-487-4889 Utilize the Helpline/Treatment Referral Locator when you cannot locate a local 2-1-1 and/or Lifeline-networked crisis center located near from where the caller/texter is located.
 - You can provide the website as a resource for the caller/texter and then they can look up resources on their own from there, but recognize that not all caller/texters may have access to the web, or may be experiencing a level of distress that might affect their ability to locate services on their own. In these circumstances, offer to visit the website yourself and, using the caller/texter’s ZIP code, help them to locate specific services based on their needs/presenting issues.
- [Strength After](#)
 Strength After is an initiative of the DDH that offers a platform for disaster survivors and responders to share stories of hope and strength during recovery after natural and human-caused disasters.
 - When people are struggling with distress or other mental health concerns like depression or anxiety after a disaster, it can help to hear from others who have gone through similar experiences regarding what helped them to find ‘strength after’, in moving forward on the path of recovery.
 - Counselors are encouraged to refer contacts to ‘Strength After’ to read stories of other disaster survivors, and/or share their own stories of recovery when they are ready.

Communications

If any DDH caller/texter identifies themselves as press, including seeking information about the DDH, quotes, comments, etc. in general or in relation to a disaster, instruct them to email ddh@vibrant.org and they will promptly receive a reply to their inquiry (Vibrant Emotional Health DDH staff constantly monitor emails received, and will coordinate media/press inquiries accordingly, including in conjunction with the SAMHSA Office of Communications). If any DDH caller/texter is a provider seeking more information about the DDH, instruct them to email ddh@vibrant.org.

Self-Care

As caregivers and responders, DDH counselors expose themselves to stories of trauma related to distress. So, whether you are a seasoned counselor or this is the first week that you've engaged in disaster crisis counseling with the DDH, please be mindful to take care of your own well-being while you take care of others. We encourage you to practice self-care, such as engaging in regular work self-care routines, using your support network to talk about troubling images and stories received through the DDH, and engaging in 'active' healthy coping during/after work to process emotions and relieve stress. The [988 Lifeline Wellness team](#) has curated a list of [self care resources](#) designed to help mitigate the effects of answering DDH contacts related to disaster trauma. For some extra support during moments of stress, visit the Vibrant Emotional Health [Safe Space](#) website.