



## AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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### **The American Psychological Association's Disaster Response Network**

- APA's Disaster Response Network (DRN) is a national network of psychologists with training in disaster response who offer volunteer assistance to relief workers, victims, and victim's families after manmade or natural disasters in the United States and territories.
- After identifying a need to manage the stress experienced by its relief workers at disaster sites, the American Red Cross entered into a Statement of Understanding with APA to add a disaster mental health function to the services it offers. This agreement led to the establishment of APA's Disaster Response Network in 1991.
- The network is comprised of state psychological association DRN programs, which are managed on a state by state basis. APA's DRN office serves as an information resource and a liaison between the states and the American Red Cross.
- DRN members use their professional judgment and training to help disaster victims cope with extremely stressful and often tragic circumstances. Members help problem-solve, make appropriate referrals to community resources, advocate for workers' and victims' needs, provide information, and listen. They also focus on providing general emotional support and helping people to marshal their own successful coping skills.
- We estimate that DRN members have volunteered more than 24,000 days in the past 14 years (approximately \$11 million worth of psychologists' time) helping the American Red Cross.
- In addition to their work as disaster responders, several DRN members also are American Red Cross instructors, consultants, and American Red Cross state mental health leaders.
- The DRN has more than 2,500 members nationwide who volunteer primarily through our valued partnership with the American Red Cross. The DRN has an extensive database to track and provide information to these members.
- Some state DRN programs also have relationships with their local emergency services, such as police and fire departments, to offer assistance.
- Each DRN member is required to complete two Red-Cross-sanctioned courses: the 3-hour Introduction to Disaster Services course (offered regularly at most local Red Cross chapters), and the one-day Foundations of Disaster Mental Health course. Members also may obtain additional training through outside continuing education courses or graduate-level programs.