

Training for the American Red Cross Disaster Mental Health Volunteer

Mental health professionals play a central and rewarding role in American Red Cross disaster operations, offering emotional support and promoting resilience in responders and survivors who are coping with stress and loss. Social workers have been involved with disaster response at all levels. In the past, the American Red Cross has indicated that 40% of their mental health responders are Licensed Clinical Social Workers. There are more social workers volunteering than any other mental health professional in a variety of capacities. Given the number of man-made and natural disasters that have been occurring across the world, we want to make sure that social workers are aware that in order to volunteer as a mental health provider they must be trained and volunteering through the American Red Cross.

Getting Started

To become an American Red Cross Disaster Mental Health (DMH) Volunteer, please visit the following websites:

1. *Volunteer Connection* is the starting place to register as a volunteer with the American Red Cross. <https://volunteerconnection.redcross.org>
2. The *Edge* has training modules once you become a volunteer. <https://www.redcross.org/sso/edge>
3. *The Exchange* has information about volunteer roles, training and Red Cross news. http://www.redcross.org/ns/training/MyRCO/a001_it_security_the_exchange.html

Eligibility

Most licensed and many retired mental health professionals are eligible to become DMH volunteers. For detailed eligibility requirements, see *Eligibility Criteria for DMH Workers* (Go to *The Exchange* and search for this title).

Below are **training requirements** for mental health professionals to become Disaster Mental Health (DMH) workers at the Service Associate level with the American Red Cross. Details on training and system access requirements for all DMH levels may be found in *Job Tool: Training and System Access Requirements for the Disaster Mental Health Workforce*. (Search on *The Exchange*.)

Training Formats

ILT: Instructor-Led Training (in person; sign up on Edge)

VILT: Virtual Instructor-Led Training (webinar; sign up and take it on Edge)

WBT: Web-Based Training (on Edge website)

Required Training for DMH Service Associate

Disaster Cycle Services: An Overview (ILT or WBT)

Disaster Mental Health: Introduction (WBT)

Disaster Mental Health: Fundamentals, Part 1 (WBT) & *Part 2* (ILT or VILT)

Recommended Training (Strengthen your skills & become more versatile)

Psychological First Aid (WBT, ILT, or VILT)

Everyone is Welcome (ILT, WBT)

Disaster Frontline Supervisor (including Simulation) (ILT)

Casework and Recovery Planning Fundamentals (WBT)

Direct Client Assistance Fundamentals (WBT)

Meet the Client: What is a Family? (WBT)

Disaster Action Team Basics Presentation (search on The Exchange)

Shelter Fundamentals (ILT)

North Carolina Recommendations

- Consult regional or chapter American Red Cross Disaster Services for more information on how to become part of Disaster Services. <http://www.redcross.org/find-your-local-chapter>
- NASW-NC has a Disaster Response [Practice Area Network \(PAN\)](#) that is web based and includes numerous links to both state and national resources, listed experts, and a Google Group that NASW members can join. Research and new resources are shared with those on the Google Group. The Disaster Response PAN is a member only resource and benefit.
- NASW-NC is a founding member of the North Carolina Disaster Response Network, a statewide coalition that meets quarterly and includes all of the mental health professions, state officials and representatives for the Red Cross.