

As the news coverage continues to broadcast the devastation of those impacted by Hurricane Harvey, many of us will feel the pull to help in some way. APA's Disaster Resource Network (DRN) maintains an open communication with representatives from the Red Cross, in addition to governmental and non-governmental organizations, when deployed to supply essential items following catastrophic events.

There is presently an email circulating regarding the need for Red Cross volunteers and specifically, psychologists in Texas:

*The Red Cross is in great need for experienced responders to help with their direct deployment process as screeners. If anyone in the DRN who has responded to previous DR's with the Red Cross in the past and is comfortable with computer systems and is available and willing to do screenings, please send your names and contact info (phone and email) directly to Elizabeth Lewen, [elewan@apa.org](mailto:elewan@apa.org).*

*Red Cross has had an incredible response to their plea for volunteers and now they need to talk with everyone who expressed interest to volunteer (and has never had DMH training) to determine if they are fit for deployment.*

A word of caution regarding your offer of assisting. Please, do not self-deploy. All of your good intentions and actions may go for naught, if it results in you needing assistance. The other important premise is that you do not go into an area unless asked. Each volunteer needs to be included in the emergency response management system (Incident Command Structure). Connect with an established group who includes mental health as part of their delivery (Non-Government Organizations (NGO)/Faith Based Organizations (FBO)). The Red Cross sends volunteers through their Direct Deployment Process, which includes a mechanism for students to assist.

Here is their information again:

The Direct Deployment process, for potential new DMH and DHS volunteers who are not already Red Crossers.

As a RED CROSS VOLUNTEER, you AGREE TO:

Work in a shelter or other service site, which may involve walking or standing for long periods of time – 12 hour shifts are typical.

A 9-day deployment commitment (7 days of working plus 1 day for travel on each end)

Follow Red Cross principles and procedures

Take Red Cross trainings (Specific instructions to access these trainings will be provided).

The volunteer recruitment information for health and mental health professionals can be found at <http://www.redcross.org/hurricane-harvey-health-professionals>. This includes the eligibility requirements, just click on the “click here” in Step 1. When you click on the link you will find information about eligibility, travel and housing, deployment, volunteering, and training.

If you are a current Red Cross DMH volunteer and are able to deploy, please go to volunteer connection and enter in your availability in the schedule.

Most groups include some sort of vetting process to accept you as a volunteer (e.g. disaster mental training, licensure). If you need assistance in identifying a group, please let me know via back channel. Psychologists can play an important role in the coming weeks and months as communities try to pick up their lives and rebuild. Often, this is when the news coverage dies down and the media moves on to the next big story – yet many people will still need various levels of support.

Thank you for your willingness to help.

Ginny Frazier, PsyD  
DRN Advisory Committee