

Natural & Human-Caused Disasters: Lessons Learned from Regional and National Mental Health Responses

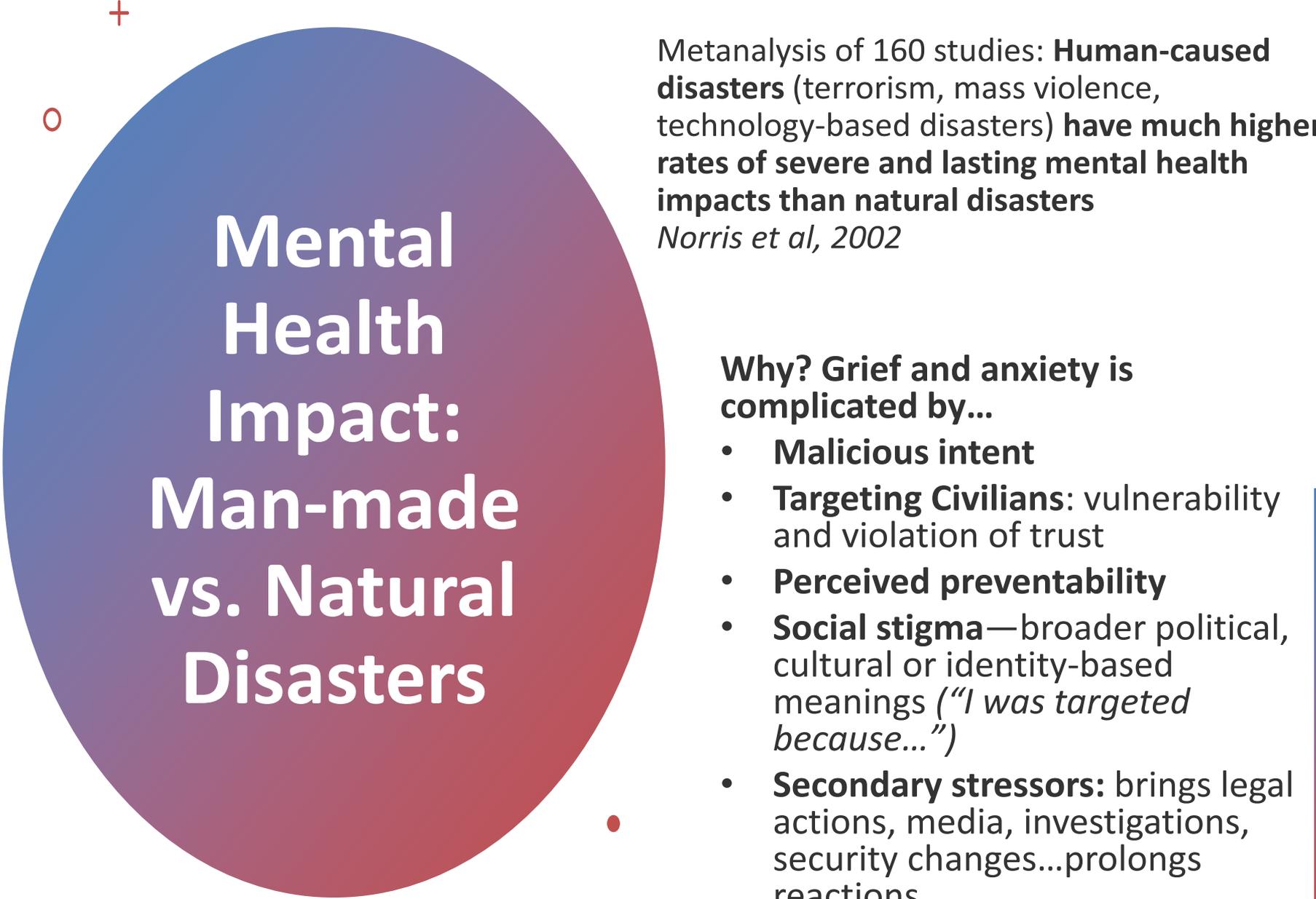
*National Dialogues in Behavioral
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**Mental
Health
Impact:
Man-made
vs. Natural
Disasters**

Metanalysis of 160 studies: **Human-caused disasters** (terrorism, mass violence, technology-based disasters) **have much higher rates of severe and lasting mental health impacts than natural disasters**

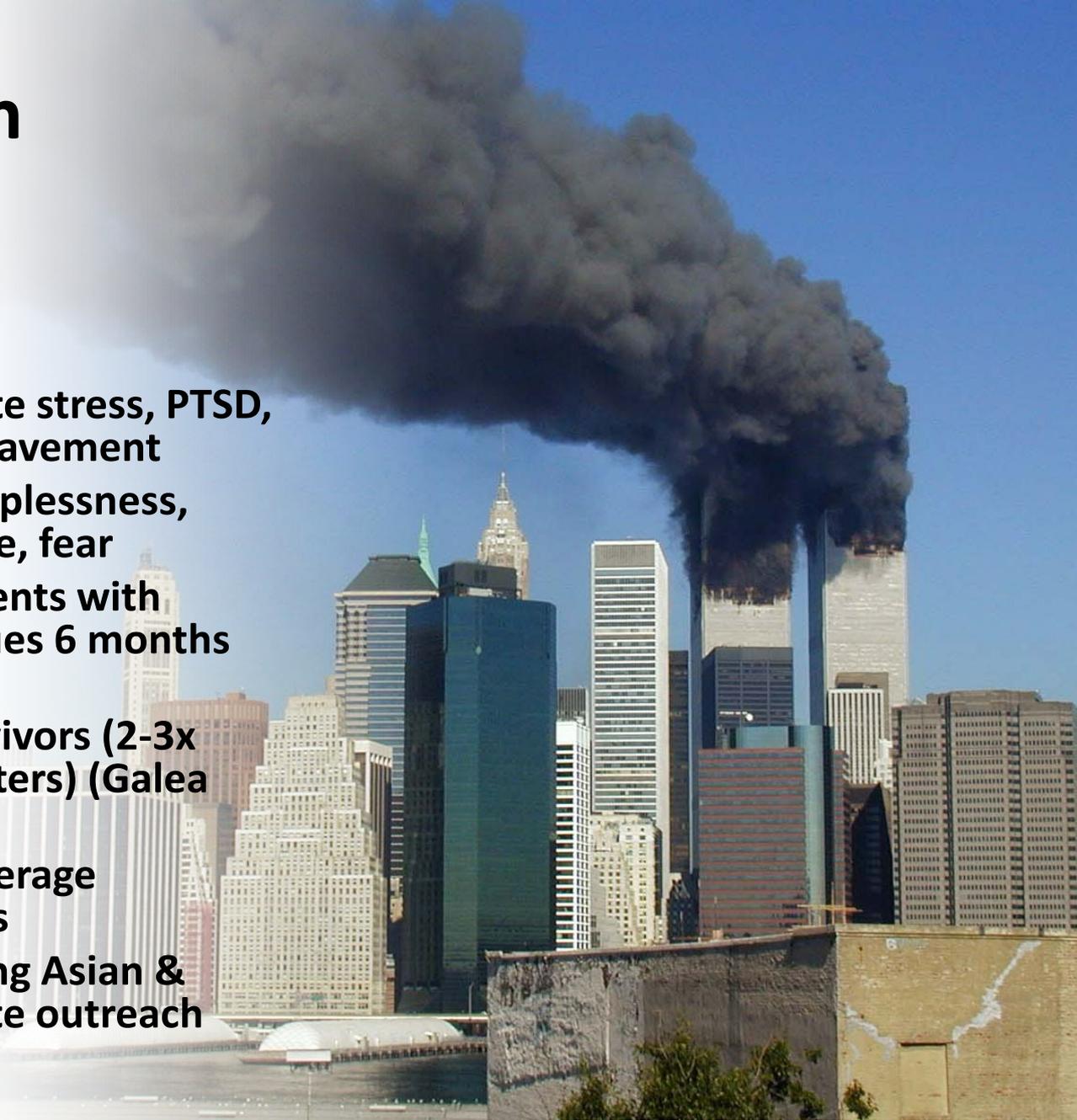
Norris et al, 2002

Why? Grief and anxiety is complicated by...

- **Malicious intent**
- **Targeting Civilians:** vulnerability and violation of trust
- **Perceived preventability**
- **Social stigma**—broader political, cultural or identity-based meanings (“*I was targeted because...*”)
- **Secondary stressors:** brings legal actions, media, investigations, security changes...prolongs reactions

Mental Health Impacts of 9/11

- **Widespread trauma: acute stress, PTSD, anxiety, depression, bereavement**
- **Common symptoms: sleeplessness, flashbacks, hypervigilance, fear**
- **Children: 1 in 5 NYC students with significant emotional issues 6 months after**
- **PTSD 11-20% among survivors (2-3x higher than natural disasters) (Galea 2005)**
- **Anniversaries/media coverage triggered symptom spikes**
- **Lower help-seeking among Asian & Latino populations despite outreach**



NYC's 1-800 LifeNet Before 9/11

- **Founded 1996 as 24/7 multicultural crisis hotline**
- Strong partnerships: NYC Dept. of Health, Police, Schools, Hospitals
- Outreach and relationships with providers across the City
- City-funded LifeNet public awareness campaigns
- Handled ~3,000 calls/month; 40% first-time help seekers
- Multilingual access: Spanish, Chinese, translation services
- Integrated with 911 and mobile crisis outreach

WE'RE ON THE LINE
WHEN YOU'RE AT
THE END OF YOURS

1-800-LIFENET
THE CRISIS, INFORMATION AND RE-
FERRAL NETWORK FOR EMOTIONAL AND
SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROBLEMS

LIFENET
a free, confidential
service of The Mental Health
Association of New York City,
Inc. in collaboration with
The New York City Department
of Mental Health, Mental
Retardation and Alcoholism
Services.

www.mhaofnyc.org
TTY Hard of Hearing: 212-982-5284

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1-800-543-3638

LifeNet's Role After 9/11

- **Central communications hub** for referrals & crisis response from day 1
- **Coordinated thousands of volunteer counselors** from day 1
- **Coordinated public and privately-funded community care services**
 - Trauma Resource Network
 - Uniformed Services Group
- **Entry point for FEMA's Project Liberty counseling program**
- **Partnered with Red Cross & September 11th Fund to promote BH **treatment** access:**
 - **BH treatment voucher, long-term care** benefits (first responders, evacuees, witnesses, families of deceased) –over 17,000 beneficiaries, 44 states & beyond
 - **Mass professional workforce training** to prepare to care for longer term mental health challenges—over 7,000 bh professionals trained
- Call volume doubled and stayed elevated for 2 years

Public Education & Outreach

- Project Liberty: largest post-disaster mental health media campaign
- Ads across TV, radio, subways, billboards – funneled to LifeNet
- Outreach to caregivers boosted child & teen-related calls
- Media mentions of LifeNet directly spiked call volume



EVEN
SUPERHEROES
NEED HELP
SOMETIMES.

*How's your child doing since 9-11?
We're here to help.*

Children can bounce back from most things. But even the most resilient child may need someone to talk to about 9/11. Often kids have a delayed reaction to stressful events and difficulty expressing their feelings. So don't wait for them to come to you. Ask your child questions like "Are you worried about being safe?" Also look for changes in behavior like extra clinginess, nightmares or difficulty concentrating on schoolwork. For information about how to get help for your child, a child you know or yourself, call 1-800-LIFENET. It's free.

At Lifenet, counseling professionals are always here to provide free, confidential information and referrals for care. So call us at 1-800-LIFENET. We're here to help.

1-800-LIFENET
1-800-543-3638 • 24 hours a day • 7 days a week

www.lifenet.org • TTY: 800-543-3638
This campaign is a collaboration between the Mental Health Association of New York City, Inc.,
The New York State Department of Health and Mental Health, and the Department of Children and Family Services.



Lessons Learned

1. Preparedness matters: **Pre-existing hotlines are central to planning** for IMMEDIATE response (federal grants will follow weeks/months after) and Ongoing Response
2. **Credentialing & training in psych first aid needed for volunteers** prior to deployment
 - Expand outreach, training & mobile resources before disasters
 - Services must be ready to come to schools, workplaces, non-clinical community settings
 - Strong relationships between call center and providers
3. **Link pre/post disaster campaigns** and FEMA CCP grant services to **central hotlines** for maximum impact
 - Emphasize resilience in public messaging
 - Note differential impacts are common, healing time varies
4. **Large-scale clinician training in trauma and disaster mental health care is essential**
 - Short-term: establish routines and connect to social supports
 - Longer-term: assessment and treatment of PTSD

The Legacy of LifeNet's Role in the 9/11 Disaster Response

"...LifeNet had relationships with government at all levels and with service providers. A communications infrastructure (like LifeNet's) must be something recognized by consumers, govt. and providers as a central means of accessing services, and it must be in place beforehand. LifeNet was critically important, perhaps the single most important asset in the response."

SAMHSA report on 9/11 response, Norris et al, 2006



- Crisis call centers became essential components of federal Crisis Counseling Program grants
- Established precedent for multi-state disaster mh response, national Disaster Distress Helpline



National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Response to Gulf Coast Hurricanes (2005)

Hurricane Katrina •
Mental Health Crisis •
Federal Mobilization

The Mental Health Crisis Scope: Hurricane Katrina



- HHS estimated 20–30% survivors with serious emotional problems
- Additional 10–20% with post-disaster stress
- Reports of suicides among evacuees (New Orleans, Atlanta, Houston)
- **Hundreds of thousands dispersed nationally → coordinated response needed**

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline



National Disaster Response Line

- 800-273-TALK: SAMHSA Designated NSPL as the National Disaster Response Line on 9/7/2005
- First time suicide prevention network mobilized for disaster response
- Immediate national reach for dispersed survivors
- ***Coordinated National Mobilization:***
 - **Local Support:** Volunteers maintained VIA Link–New Orleans operations (211 Monroe center)
 - **Regional Capacity:** Gulf Coast centers managed surging call volumes
 - **National Coverage:** Centers nationwide handled evacuee calls
 - **Emergency Funding (SAMHSA):** Supported 5 centers for volunteer coordination, staffing, overflow call management

Lifeline Integration with Federal Disaster Programs

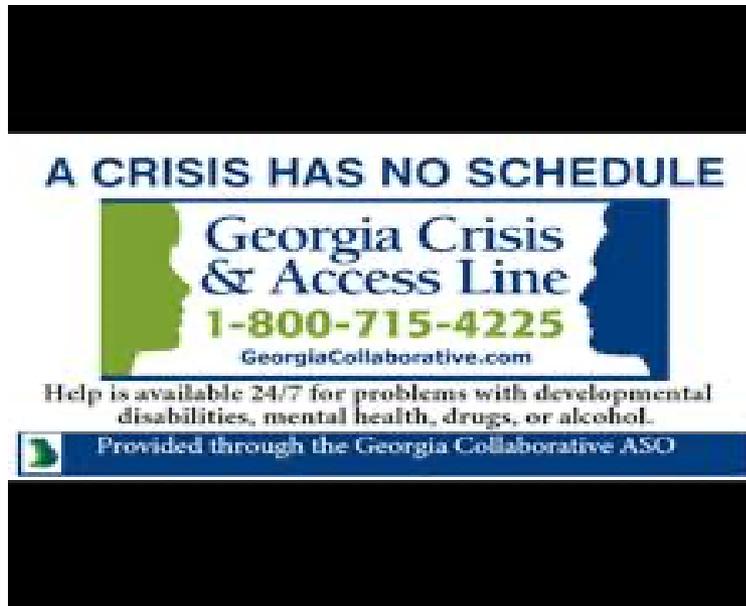
- Partnership with FEMA Crisis Counseling Program (CCP)
- Lifeline became option for states' CCP hotline requirements
- Created unprecedented state-level integration
- Four states adopted 800-273-TALK as their CCP Hotline:
 - Louisiana
 - Florida
 - Colorado
 - Georgia

Hurricane Katrina → Georgia's Wake-Up Call

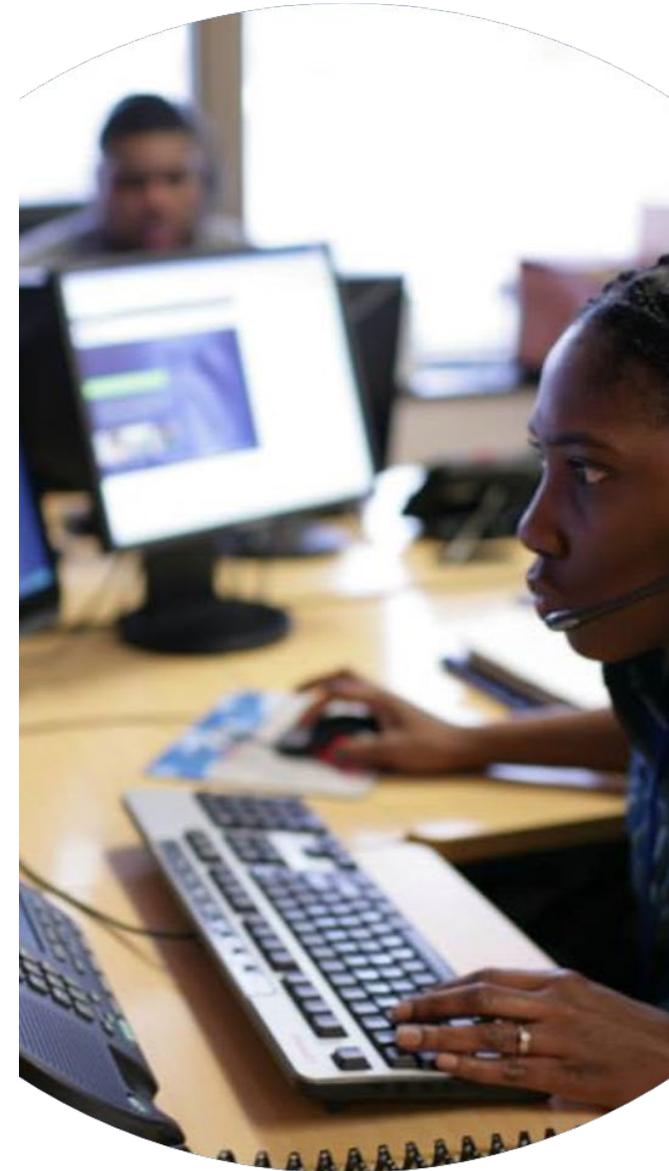
- 2005 Hurricane Katrina: Thousands of evacuees relocated to Georgia (esp. Atlanta)
- System Overwhelmed: Existing mental health services strained, ad hoc counseling required
- Wake-Up Call: Georgia DBHDD recognized gaps – no coordination, inconsistent crisis care
- Catalyst: Highlighted urgent need for a centralized crisis response system



GCAL: NATION'S FIRST STATEWIDE "AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL" CRISIS COORDINATION HUB



- Georgia state access line est. 2006
- First statewide crisis center
 - 24/7 Crisis call de-escalation services
 - Dispatching MCTs in all counties
 - 24/7 outpatient scheduling
 - Bed Registry for crisis receiving facilities
- GCAL was a Model for Crisis Now, SAMHSA Guidelines on Crisis Care Coordination



Lasting Changes to Crisis Infrastructure

BEFORE KATRINA

Crisis centers operated independently

Limited disaster role

Suicide prevention focus only

Isolated from emergency management

AFTER KATRINA

Integrated into state disaster planning

Official recognition from state/fed officials

Expanded disaster response capacity

New partnerships beyond traditional MH community

Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill: The Origin of the SAMHSA-funded Disaster Distress Helpline



Apr 2010
Deepwater Horizon
Explosion

Sep 2010
Oil Spill Helpline
Launched

Feb 2012
DDH National
Launch

SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline

- **Funded by SAMHSA as part of the NSPL/988 grant since 2012**
- **4-5 Contracted 988 centers taking all calls/texts 24/7, including Spanish and ASL services for Deaf/HoH**
- **Provides psych first aid and crisis counseling support for disaster affected persons during and after any all federally-declared disasters**
- **Supports all states/centers receiving CCP grants in affected areas**





Thank You!

John Draper, Ph.D.

**President of Research,
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