



TEXAS CRISIS RESILIENCY TEAM

Texas Crisis Resiliency Team SOP

Standard Operating Procedures

Introduction

The Texas Crisis Resiliency Team (TCRT) is a result of the compassion and concern of the Christian faith community for survivors of disasters and other traumatic events. The TCRT is a Christian faith based organization motivated by the teachings of Jesus Christ, and provides emotional and spiritual support to trauma survivors of all religious and cultural traditions. The purpose of the TCRT is to encourage emotional and spiritual resiliency among survivors by assisting them to cope with challenges and restore hope.

Purpose and Scope

This SOP applies to the operations of the Texas Crisis Resiliency Team (TCRT) conducting disaster response operations. TCRT members include:

1. Ministers trained in providing spiritual care to trauma survivors. These may include pastors, chaplains, and other clergy members.
2. Non-Clergy members. Social workers, counselors, and other non-clergy members trained to provide spiritual care to trauma survivors are a vital part of the TCRT.

General Principles

1. The TCRT abides by the Basic Standards and Principles of the National VOAD, which include:

- Offer presence and hospitality
- Meet, accept and respect persons exactly as they are
- Do No Harm – Never evangelize, proselytize or exploit person in vulnerable need

The Emotional and Spiritual Care Committee of the National VOAD expanded these basic standards and issued “Disaster Spiritual Care Points of Consensus” (See APPENDIX 1). The TCRT is fully supportive of these points of consensus. Team members must sign a statement to abide by the points of consensus.

2. The National VOAD Emotional and Spiritual Care Committee makes a distinction between emotional and spiritual care. Emotional care is the focus of licensed counselors and social workers, while spiritual care is normally the focus of faith based organizations. The focus of emotional care is emotional well-being and resiliency, while spiritual care deals with meaning, purpose, and hope. While there is a distinction between emotional and spiritual care, the distinction is not as clear as the previous sentences might imply. Sometimes social workers and

licensed counselors are also devout members of the faith and are trained to provide spiritual care. Sometimes clergy members are also trained in the area of social work and counseling. An impartial observer of those providing care to trauma survivors often would not be able to distinguish between those providing emotional care and those providing spiritual care. TCRT members are concerned about both emotional and spiritual well-being. Social workers, counselors, and clergy each have specialized training with different areas of focus and all those skills are valuable assets for assisting trauma survivors.

Services Offered

The TCRT offers these basic services:

- One on One Crisis Partners – Trained personnel will partner with trauma survivors, helping them to cope with emotional or spiritual issues, encouraging, and re-establishing hope.
- Worship Services – As requested ministers/chaplains will lead short Worship services in or near the city shelters for evacuees and in other gathering places where Crisis Responders meet/rest/recoup.
- Death Notification Assistance – When Crisis Responders make death notifications a TCRT member trained in death notification procedures can assist in providing support during this critical time.
- Training for Local Crisis Responders – Local ministers and spiritual care providers desiring to provide assistance in the aftermath of a disaster may need training to assist disaster survivors. The CRT can provide a four-hour course that gives an overview of how to provide spiritual care to disaster survivors.

Congregational Trauma

Congregations frequently have traumatic situations in the lives of their congregants. Pastors and churches normally provide assistance in these situations, but some situations may require additional assistance. These situations could include the suicide of a church staff member, a church bus crash with multiple fatalities, or a natural disaster impacting a large number of church members. The most common service to the congregation is for a TCRT member to serve as an advisor to the pastor or other ministry provider in these situations. If needed TCRT members may go to the congregation and provide direct assistance.

The local congregation normally pays for the expenses of TCRT members providing support. The intent is to utilize local TCRT members in order to minimize expense requirements. The TCRT team coordinator will select team members who best meet the needs of the congregation.

Community Disaster Response

Large disasters have impact beyond the local congregation and the TCRT can provide support to the community. TCRT leaders must coordinate with local emergency managers in providing support. The TCRT does not operate alone but are part of a coordinated response. There is a difference between how local spiritual care providers and deployed spiritual care providers initialize the support.

TCRT LOCAL RESPONSE: Local spiritual care providers of the TCRT are automatically invited to the disaster site because they are a part of the community impacted. This support is still coordinated with the local office of emergency management. The ideal situation is for the spiritual care providers to have worked with the local emergency managers prior to the disaster and for the local emergency managers to expect them to provide care in the event of a disaster.

Local Spiritual Care Providers do not need to coordinate with the leadership of the TCRT to provide spiritual support, but they must coordinate with and report to TCRT leadership when wearing the TCRT badge when responding.

TCRT DEPLOYED RESPONSE: TCRT members will deploy only when invited to the disaster response efforts. These invitations may come from local churches, the local emergency manager, other deploying organizations, or the Texas VOAD. The TCRT will always be in a support role and will not self-deploy without an invitation.

TCRT team members are often members of other organizations that deploy and provide spiritual care with those organizations. This is the most frequent way TCRT members deploy. When deployed with those organizations TCRT members follow the organizations rules of the deploying organization. Members deploying with other organizations are encouraged to keep the leadership of TCRT informed of their deployment and utilization.

The TCRT is a member of the Texas VOAD and supports the needs of the Texas VOAD following disasters. When a Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) is set up following a disaster the TCRT will provide emotional and spiritual care at the MARC. The TCRT Coordinator will coordinate with TCRT Regional Coordinators and the Texas VOAD to ensure support. There may also be other members of the Texas VOAD at the MARC providing emotional and spiritual care and the level of response will vary based upon the need at the MARC.

TCRT Membership – The TCRT is a multi-disciplinary team including members of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. Membership includes credentialed professionals and

others skilled and trained to provide spiritual care to trauma survivors. When planning to respond to a traumatic event, the TCRT leadership intends to deploy a team that best matches the needs of the requesting community. The membership is divided into different categories with different credentialing requirements:

Local Spiritual Care Provider
Basic Responder: Deployed Spiritual Care Provider
Team Leader: Deployed Spiritual Care Provider

The training requirements for each provider are:

Local Spiritual Care Provider:

Disaster Spiritual Care (DSC) Overview (2 hour module)
Encouragement Through Listening (1 hour module)
Loss and Grief (1 hour module)
Table Top Exercise Application (1 hour module)

Basic Responder: Deployed Spiritual Care Provider. Additional training:

Traumatic Stress (1 hour module)
Spiritual / Psychological First Aid (4 hour module)
Religious Competence (2 hour module)
Cultural Competence (2 hour module)
Suicide Awareness Training (2 hour module)
Age Appropriate Response (2 hour module)
Media (1/2 hour module)
Care for the Caregiver (1 hour module)
FEMA ICS-100 on-line

Team Leader: Deployed Disaster Spiritual Care Provider. Additional Training:

Organizing and Leading a CRT (3 hour module)
Group Dynamics (2 hour module)
Promoting Community Resiliency (2 hour module)
FEMA ICS-200 on-line
FEMA ICS 300 (Resident course – offered by State Emergency Management)
FEMA ICS-700 on line
FEMA ICS-800 on line

Chaplains: All members are Spiritual Care Providers, but the team members and leadership acknowledge the specialized skills of individual members and will utilize those skills as needed. There are various organizations that use the term chaplain and their requirements for credentialing chaplains vary. Endorsement is not the same as credentialing. Endorsement refers to the approval of a recognized ecclesiastical body. Endorsed chaplains are normally ordained or

licensed ministers of their faith group. The TCRT will only utilize the title of chaplain for endorsed chaplains who are recognized by their respective faith group. Example:

Texas Baptist Men Chaplains – They are credentialed as disaster response training by the organization of Texas Baptist Men. They may or may not have any formal theological training. They are usually not ordained or licensed ministers. They are credentialed by the Texas Baptist Men as chaplains. In order to be a chaplain with the TCRT these individuals must be endorsed as a chaplain by their faith group. Non-endorsed individuals may serve as a spiritual care provider with the TCRT.

Texas Baptist Chaplains – They must be approved by the Texas Baptist (BGCT) Endorsing Council and must meet the requirements established by the board for endorsement. They are expected to have formal theological training and are normally ordained or licensed Texas Baptist ministers. To serve as a chaplain with the TCRT they must also have the additional training credentialing them as a crisis responder.

The TCRT is not limited to Baptist Chaplains. Chaplains from other denominational groups are required to be endorsed as chaplains in order to be recognized as chaplains for the TCRT. When responding to congregational trauma the goal is to have at least one chaplain from the faith group of the congregation.

TCRT Organization and Responsibilities.

The TCRT is organized into six regions, mirroring the regions of the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS). DPS is the lead agency in Texas for disasters across the state. DPS further divides the regions into 22 disaster districts with Disaster District Chairpersons and Regional Liaison Officers (See APPENDIXES 3, 4, and 5).

There are three organizational pieces to the Chaplain Response Teams:

1. **TCRT Coordinator.** Serves as the State Coordinator for all TCRT members and response operations.
2. **TCRT Region Coordinators.** Coordinates all TCRT members in the region of responsibility. There are six regions, mirroring the regions of the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS). DPS is the lead agency in Texas for disasters across the state.
3. **TCRT Members.**

Pre-Deployment or Shaping Operations Responsibilities.

1. **TCRT Team Coordinator.**
 - Enlists TCRT Region Coordinators.
 - Identifies training requirements and coordinates training for TCRT members.
 - Manages funding requirements for TCRT training and events.

- Coordinates with TCRT Region Coordinators to prepare members to provide crisis response.

2. TCRT Region Coordinators.

- Identifies and enlists TCRT members in area to respond to disasters.
- Ensures all TCRT members are informed of training opportunities.
- Develops and maintains working relationships with all key disaster response partners in area, including:
 - Government organizations preparing, planning and responding to disasters.
 - Local Volunteer Organization Active in Disasters (VOAD).
 - Local Red Cross Directors.
 - Key religious leaders in area.

3. TCRT Members.

- Participate in regular training opportunities.
- Keep Region Coordinator informed of changes in status that may impact availability.
- Maintain professional endorsement requirements.

Deployment Responsibilities

1. TCRT Coordinator.

- Approves deployment.
- Coordinates with Region Coordinators to deploy TCRT to required locations.
 - Approves members of deploying TCRT.
 - Ensures logistical support of deploying TCRT.

2. TCRT Region Coordinators.

- Selects best qualified team members to respond to requests for TCRTs and makes recommendation to TCRT Coordinator.
- Coordinates with TCRT Coordinator for deployment requirements.
- When possible coordinates directly with deployed TCRT leader to support TCRT requirements.
- Keeps TCRT Coordinator informed of any significant issues.
- May deploy as a TCRT member when appropriate.

3. TCRT Members.

- Serve as a member of a larger team. The TCRT is deployed at the request of another organization and supports that organization. All TCRT responders must be good team players and work with others.
- Coordinate with TCRT Region Coordinator to ensure all logistical requirements (lodging, food and supplies).
- Conduct TCRT support activities.
- Participate in daily debriefing sessions.
- Keep TCRT Region Coordinator informed of significant events and issues.

Post Deployment Responsibilities

1. TCRT Coordinator.

- Ensures final debriefing of TCRT Members.
- Writes After Action Report with Lessons Learned in order to prepare for future events.

2. TCRT Region Coordinators.

- Coordinate with TCRT Director to ensure debriefing.
- Provide information and lessons learned to the TCRT Director for After Action Report.
- Monitor situation for additional requirements.

3. TCRT Members.

- Participate in Debriefing Sessions.
- Give input to Region Coordinator for After Action Report.

ENCLOSURES:

1. National VOAD Disaster Spiritual Care Points of Consensus
2. Texas Crisis Resiliency Team Coordinators
3. Texas DPS Disaster District Chairman
4. Texas DPS Regional Liaison Officer Areas

APPENDIX 1



NATIONAL VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN DISASTER POINTS OF CONSENSUS

DISASTER SPIRITUAL CARE

In 2006 the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster's Emotional and Spiritual Care Committee published Light Our Way to inform, encourage and affirm those who respond to disasters and to encourage standards insuring those affected by disaster receive appropriate and respectful spiritual care services. As a natural next step following the publication of Light Our Way and in the spirit of the NVOAD "Four C's" (cooperation, communication, coordination and collaboration), the Emotional and Spiritual Care Committee then began working to define more specific standards for disaster spiritual care providers. The following ten "points of consensus" set a foundation for that continuing work.

1. Basic concepts of disaster spiritual care¹

Spirituality is an essential part of humanity. Disaster significantly disrupts people's spiritual lives. Nurturing people's spiritual needs contributes to holistic healing. Every person can benefit from spiritual care in time of disaster.

2. Types of disaster spiritual care²

Spiritual care in disaster includes many kinds of caring gestures. Spiritual care providers are from diverse backgrounds. Adherence to common standards and principles in spiritual care ensures that this service is delivered and received appropriately.

3. Local community resources

As an integral part of the pre-disaster community, local spiritual care providers and communities of faith are primary resources for post-disaster spiritual care. Because local communities of faith are uniquely equipped to provide healing care, any spiritual care services entering from outside of the community support but do not substitute for local efforts. The principles of the National VOAD - cooperation, coordination, communication and collaboration - are essential to the delivery of disaster spiritual care.

4. Disaster emotional care and its relationship to disaster spiritual care³

Spiritual care providers partner with mental health professionals in caring for communities in disaster. Spiritual and emotional care share some similarities but are distinct healing modalities. Spiritual care providers can be an important asset in referring individuals to receive care for their mental health and vice versa.

5. Disaster spiritual care in response and recovery⁴

Spiritual care has an important role in all phases of a disaster, including short-term response through long-term recovery. Assessing and providing for the spiritual needs of individuals, families, and communities can kindle important capacities of hope and resilience. Specific strategies for spiritual care during the various phases can bolster these strengths.

¹ See Light Our Way pp. 52-54. ² Ibid. ³ Ibid. ⁴ Ibid.

APPENDIX 1

6. Disaster emotional and spiritual care for the care giver

Providing spiritual care in disaster can be an overwhelming experience. The burdens of caring for others in this context can lead to compassion fatigue. Understanding important strategies for self-care is essential for spiritual care providers. Disaster response agencies have a responsibility to model healthy work and life habits to care for their own staff in time of disaster.⁵ Post-care processes for spiritual and emotional care providers are essential.

7. Planning, preparedness, training and mitigation as spiritual care components⁶

Faith community leaders have an important role in planning and mitigation efforts. By preparing their congregations and themselves for disaster they contribute toward building resilient communities. Training for the role of disaster spiritual care provider is essential before disaster strikes.

8. Disaster spiritual care in diversity

Respect is foundational to disaster spiritual care. Spiritual care providers demonstrate respect for diverse cultural and religious values by recognizing the right of each faith group and individual to hold to their existing values and traditions. Spiritual care providers:

- refrain from manipulation, disrespect or exploitation of those impacted by disaster and trauma.
- respect the freedom from unwanted gifts of religious literature or symbols, evangelistic and sermonizing speech, and/or forced acceptance of specific moral values and traditions.⁷
- respect diversity and differences, including but not limited to culture, gender, age, sexual orientation, spiritual/religious practices and disability.

9. Disaster, trauma and vulnerability

People impacted by disaster and trauma are vulnerable. There is an imbalance of power between disaster responders and those receiving care. To avoid exploiting that imbalance, spiritual care providers refrain from using their position, influence, knowledge or professional affiliation for unfair advantage or for personal, organizational or agency gain.

Disaster response will not be used to further a particular political or religious perspective or cause – response will be carried out according to the need of individuals, families and communities. The promise, delivery, or distribution of assistance will not be tied to the embracing or acceptance of a particular political or religious creed.⁸

10. Ethics and Standards of Care

NVOAD members affirm the importance of cooperative standards of care and agreed ethics. Adherence to common standards and principles in spiritual care ensures that this service is delivered and received appropriately. Minimally, any guidelines developed for spiritual care in times of disaster should clearly articulate the above consensus points in addition to the following:

- Standards for personal and professional integrity
- Accountability structures regarding the behavior of individuals and groups
- Concern for honoring confidentiality*
- Description of professional boundaries that guarantee safety of clients* including standards regarding interaction with children, youth and vulnerable adults
- Policies regarding criminal background checks for service providers
- Mechanisms for ensuring that caregivers function at levels appropriate to their training and educational backgrounds*
- Strong adherence to standards rejecting violence against particular groups
- Policies when encountering persons needing referral to other agencies or services
- Guidelines regarding financial remuneration for services provided

⁵ Ibid. ⁶ Ibid. ⁷ Church World Service "Standard of Care for Disaster Spiritual Care Ministries" ⁸ Church World Service "Common Standards and Principles for Disaster Response" *See [Light Our Way](#) p. 16