

# ***Disaster Spiritual Care Fundamentals Disaster Spiritual Care***

**Participant Guide  
November 2015**



## **The American Red Cross Mission**

The American Red Cross prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of Volunteers and the generosity of donors.

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## About this Course

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Disaster Spiritual Care Fundamentals is designed to familiarize you with the disaster spiritual care function.

This course consists of a combination of instruction and activities to provide you with an opportunity to enrich your understanding of your role in Disaster Spiritual Care on a local level and on a disaster relief operation.



## Unit 1: Introduction

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this course is to present the Disaster Spiritual Care (DSC) activity and to prepare volunteers to provide appropriate and respectful Disaster Spiritual Care services.

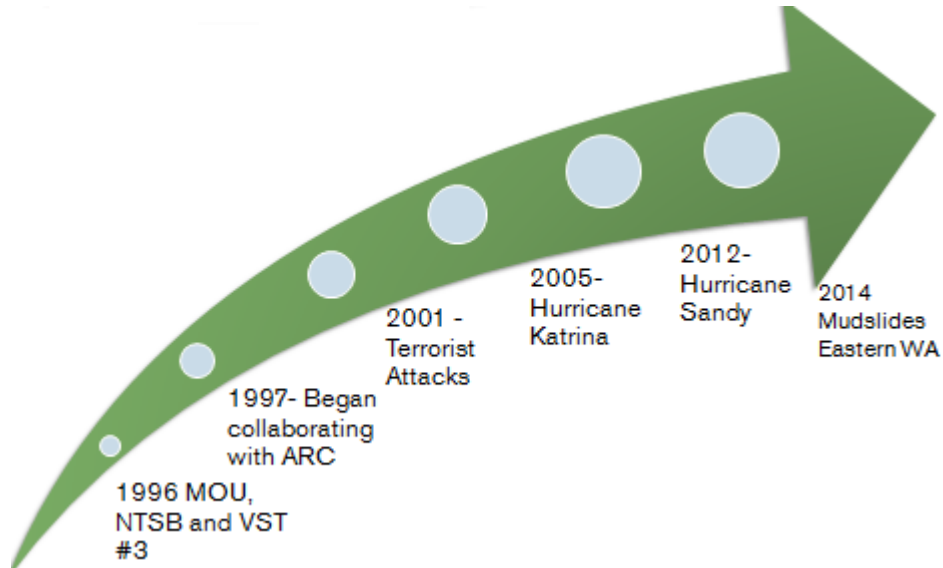
### **Learning Objectives**

At the completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Recall the history of disaster spiritual care.
- Describe the roles in DSC and the requirements of a DSC worker.
- Explain the types of disasters and appropriate and respectful disaster spiritual care interventions.
- Describe the process of assessing clients in a disaster situation.
- Utilize methods to provide self-care and care for the care giver.
- Identify the role of DSC on a local level and working with community partners.
- Understand the role of DSC on Disaster Relief Operations.
- Describe appropriate ways to provide disaster spiritual care on a local and national disaster operation.

## Disaster Spiritual Care through the Years

An American Red Cross Disaster Spiritual Care program has been operating on disaster responses for a long time. Since 1997, Disaster Spiritual Care responders have collaborated on scene with other American Red Cross workers in caring for people affected by natural and human-caused disasters.



### Notes:

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How do disaster spiritual care responders work with clients?

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Eligibility Requirements

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## Unit 2: Introduction to Disaster Spiritual Care

Disaster Spiritual Care assists clients to draw upon their own spiritual resources - values and faith - in the midst of pain, regardless of faith tradition and provides age appropriate and culturally sensitive disaster spiritual care in times of distress.

The Disaster Spiritual Care program is designed to support the care provided at local level during traumatic events and to address the spiritual needs of individuals, families and communities.

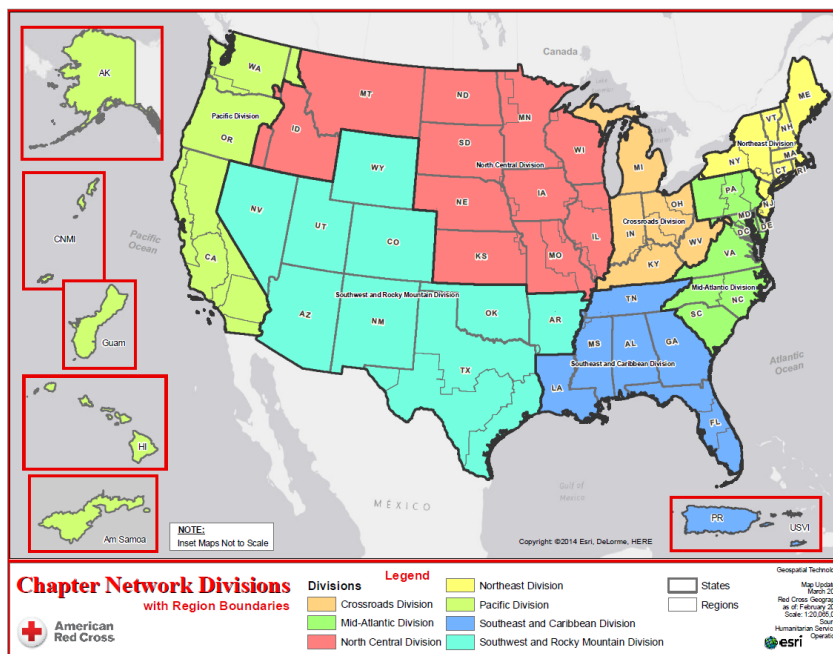
### Roles in Disaster Spiritual Care

The Red Cross has two ways to assign volunteers to positions: 1) by assigning them at the chapter or regional level to a “volunteer position”; and 2) by assigning them to a position as part of the incident command structure on a disaster relief operation.

You will report to the local Disaster Spiritual Care Lead or the Disaster Program Manager and collaborate closely with other direct services providers, including:

- Disaster Mental Health responders
- Disaster Health Services responders
- Caseworkers

### Division Map



**Division and Advisor:**

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## Mission and Fundamental Principles

### Our Mission

The mission of the American Red Cross is to prevent and alleviate human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors.

### Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross Movement

- Humanity
- Impartiality
- Neutrality
- Independence
- Voluntary Service
- Unity
- Universality

How can we remain consistent with this mission? Find the answer in the Standards and Procedures.

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Our program is consistent with the Mission, Vision and all of the fundamental principles listed on the slide, especially as it relates to the fundamental principles of impartiality and neutrality. We also have a standard of confidentiality. The foundation of care is grounded in trust.

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## National VOAD Guidelines

The National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (National VOAD), is a group of national nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership based organizations that provide services in the disaster setting.

The Emotional and Spiritual Care Committee of National VOAD has articulated a set of basic competencies that all member organizations are expected to adhere to.

American Red Cross, as a member of National VOAD, expects all disaster spiritual care volunteers to fulfill these competency requirements:

- Crisis intervention skills
- Grief support skills
- Cultural sensitivity; ability to work in interfaith settings
- Ability to work as a team within command structures
- Spiritual maturity; ability to respect other faith traditions and not impose one's own beliefs on others
- Capacity to maintain healthy boundaries and balance
- Flexibility and patience
- Ability to assess situations, make decisions and make referrals when indicated.

Identify at least two key competencies from the Standards and Procedures and write an example of how that competency may translate in a crisis situation.

Example:

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Example:

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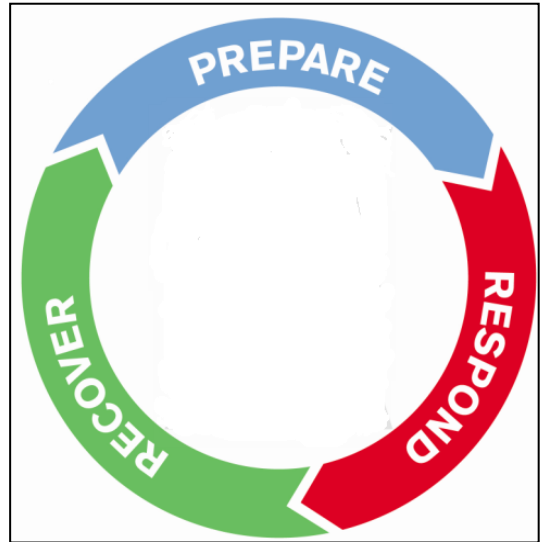
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## Disaster Cycle Services

In order to be consistent with other disaster response agencies and FEMA, the Red Cross has configured Disaster Cycle Services around the three continuous processes of Prepare, Respond and Recover.

Disaster Spiritual Care is housed in the Respond unit although we know that there are spiritual care needs that may show up in the Prepare phase as well as the Recover phase.



List an example of an activity in each phase of the process.

Prepare:

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Respond:

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Recover:

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## What is a Disaster?

It is important that we all understand what a disaster is and how it affects the community in order to be able to understand our role.

What is a Disaster?

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What causes a Disaster?

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What are some differences in type of disaster or personal factors that can impact a person's reactions?

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What are some factors in human-caused disasters that may exacerbate emotional and spiritual reactions?

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## Activity – Apartment Fire

Suppose you were called to this apartment fire that impacted a family of three. What are some of the things you would consider in this type of event?

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## Who are DSC Clients?

It is important to be able to recognize and be able to assess the need for disaster spiritual care services. There are several types of clients. You need to be able to recognize the differences.

Who are the different clients of DSC?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

## Emotional Response

Disasters happen in phases, and the emotional response differs depending on the phase of the disaster. This is true for staff, survivors and communities.

The initial response after a disaster, or Honeymoon phase, is markedly more positive than a week or so later during what becomes the Disillusionment phase. These phases will vary in duration depending on the type and magnitude of the disaster.

### Notes:

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## When a Disaster Occurs

There are several ways in which Disaster Spiritual Care begins engaging with clients.

- When a disaster occurs a client may request to speak with a Disaster Spiritual Care volunteer.
- During the disaster relief operation, you may get information from another volunteer about a client needing Disaster Spiritual Care.
- For larger scale disasters, Disaster Spiritual Care may be deployed to the disaster operation based on the nature of the event or perceived potential need.
- You may also approach the client and inquire about the situation and the individual's needs.
  - If the client does not want to speak with you, then you may offer information for later support.
  - If the client wishes to engage with you, then you can assess the client's spiritual needs by asking questions.
- There is a typical set of questions you can use to assess a client's needs.

What questions might you ask to assess spiritual needs?

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## Areas of Service

As a Disaster Care Provider, you will provide services in two distinct avenues:

1. When your faith tradition coincides with that of the client's, you interact with them according to what is appropriate, considering the particular disaster situation and faith tradition.
2. When your faith tradition and the client's faith tradition do not align, your primary role is to provide basic appropriate and respectful disaster spiritual care.
  - o In addition, you serve as a connection between the specific religious tradition of the client and an appropriate religious or spiritual care provider in the larger community.
  - o You are responsible for facilitating the meeting the client's spiritual needs within their stated faith tradition. This bridging component is one safeguard to ensure appropriate and respectful provision of disaster spiritual care services.

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## Differences: Disaster Spiritual Care vs. Non-Disaster Spiritual Care

Once you assess a client's needs, you will need to determine what spiritual support or other services are required. Disaster Spiritual Care interventions are quite different than the spiritual care you offer in your own faith community.

There are some significant differences between disaster spiritual care services and non-disaster spiritual care.

- You need to be able to provide appropriate and respectful spiritual care in the disaster context - outside your own faith tradition and in events where the needs exceed your own ability to provide assistance.
- We often work in shared settings as well – settings in which organized disaster spiritual care activities are provided by numerous and diverse organizations to support the needs of diverse populations. Most often, you will be working in Red Cross service sites.

### Activity - Interventions

Work with a partner to brainstorm to answer the following questions.

What is your first responsibility going to be when you are presented with clients when you are assigned to a disaster response?

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How you can support clients in the immediate aftermath of a disaster?

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## Appropriate and Respectful Disaster Spiritual Care Services

As a disaster spiritual care provider, you will need to abide by very important guidelines. Some unacceptable behaviors that must be avoided as a DSC responder include:

- Attempting to convert individuals.
- Correcting theological viewpoints held by those affected.
- Answering “Why?” questions - rather than engaging the person’s meaning-making skills.
- Addressing spiritual needs without addressing the physical, emotional and/or social needs.
- Failing to collaborate with Disaster Mental Health and other professionals - on scene - or off site.

Providing services in an appropriate and respectful manner means you need to:

- Recognize the right of each individual and faith group to hold to their existing values and traditions.
- Refrain from manipulation, disrespect or exploitation of those impacted by disaster and trauma.
- Respect the freedom from unwanted gifts or religious literature or symbols, evangelistic and sermonizing speech, and/or forced acceptance of specific moral values and traditions.
- Avoid the exploitation of the imbalance of power between DSC providers and those being served in any way.

It is important that you stay within your areas of expertise. If there is a situation that can be better handled by another area of expertise it is vital to use our referrals. This can be to other Red Cross services or community resources.

Based on the client’s stated needs, you may provide disaster spiritual care support immediately or you may make a referral to another Red Cross service provider or a service provider from another agency.

**Notes:**

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## Caring for the Caregiver – Self-Care

Providing disaster spiritual care to people who have been impacted by disasters may take a strong emotional, spiritual and physical toll on DSC providers.

DSC providers are vulnerable to empathy fatigue and compassion fatigue. Various factors may cause coping skills to be overwhelmed.

What are some of things that can impact the ability to cope?

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Indicators of excess stress or compassion fatigue that may be felt by DSC volunteers include:

- Emotional numbing
- Feelings of despair
- Disturbing memories
- Feelings of isolation or estrangement
- Avoidance of thoughts or activities associated with the event
- Increased and persistent cognitive dysfunction

To help manage the excess stress and compassion fatigue, you should:

- Maintain personal spiritual disciplines and rituals
- Diet and hydration – eat healthy and drink plenty of water
- Rest and exercise – get plenty of sleep when possible and engage in physical exercise – even a short walk is helpful
- Social support – talk to those you care about and those who care about you
- Work set shifts with appropriate breaks
- Defuse at the end of each shift
- What are some of things that can impact the ability to cope?

**Notes:**

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## Unit 3: DSC on a Local Level

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As a Disaster Spiritual Care responder in a region or chapter, you are a member of a team. Once you've been oriented to the chapter activities, you will receive your work assignments from the local Disaster Program Manager (DPM) or his or her delegate.

You will be expected to work closely with other responders from any of the following functions:

- Client casework and recovery planning
- Disaster Health Services
- Disaster Mental Health
- Volunteer management
- Community Partnerships
- Other business lines, such as Preparedness, Health and Safety, Service to the Armed Forces, or International Services

During local disaster responses, you may be assigned to DAT responses, Community education, and home fire campaigns. List the key points of each from the Standards and Procedures.

DAT responses

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Community education

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Home fire campaigns

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## Connecting with Local Faith-based Groups

You may be asked to make connections with local faith-based groups.

- Relationship building allows faith-based groups to become better acquainted with their local Red Cross.
- Faith leaders can recognize the potential to provide for their own congregants and expand their neighborly relationships.
- This opens the door to possibly join whole community preparedness efforts and empower the processes to speed recovery across diverse congregations.
- Relationship building before disasters can enhance the coordinated and collaborative readiness of the whole community.

## Outreach Services

You may also be assigned to conduct outreach services as part of an Integrated Care Condolence Team (ICCT). This team provides support to families whose loved one is seriously injured, missing or deceased as a result of the disaster.

- When you are deployed to an integrated care condolence team, you do not notify families of the death of their loved one, but may be asked to accompany and support workers from other agencies who are providing death notification.
- Integrated care condolence teams may consist of any combination of Disaster Spiritual Care, Disaster Mental Health, Disaster Health Services and Client Casework.
- These teams go to hospitals, morgues or homes to provide support to individuals and families whose loved one is missing, deceased or very ill.

If next-of-kin are not located in the area of the disaster, the integrated care condolence team lead may facilitate a meeting of family members with an integrated care condolence team from the chapter in their area.

### Notes:

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## Community Partners

Community partners are crucial when you need to refer a client to another resource. You will be responsible for identifying resources and providing referrals to other agencies or community resources.

What can you do to create community partners?

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Groups called Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) are nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership based organizations that serve as the forum where organizations share knowledge and resources throughout the disaster cycle—preparation, response and recovery—to help disaster survivors and their communities.

Some organizations that are a part of VOAD include:

- Salvation Army
- Catholic Charities, USA
- Local faith-based organizations and community houses of worship that provide disaster relief, such as Presbyterian Disaster Assistance or Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation

What local agencies are likely to be involved in disaster response?

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What state agencies are likely to be involved in disaster response?

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### Unit 3: DSC on a Local Level

What federal agencies are likely to be involved in disaster response?

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Additional collaborators to offer support in disaster care include:

- Professional Chaplaincy Organizations
- Disaster Relief Organizations (e.g. Salvation Army, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, UMCOR, Catholic Charities, Mercy Air Lift)
- Government (e.g. FEMA, NTSB, FBI)
- Business and industry, e.g., Walmart, Home Depot



## Making Referrals

In the case of making a referral, if possible, we give the appropriate contact information to the client and allow the client to make the contact directly. If necessary, you can contact the other agency on behalf of the client.

- If client information is discussed with the other agency, then a *Client Consent to Share Information* form must be completed to protect the client's right to privacy.
- Only information that is necessary for an effective referral will be shared.
- In all cases, you or the caseworker will check in with the client within a week or so to determine whether the referral resulted in a successful resolution of the disaster spiritual care needs.
- You will need to collaborate with the caseworker assigned to the case to document your referral in the client's case record in CAS.

## Regional Lead Responsibilities

If you are the Regional Lead, you may be tasked with building a local team. Details on this role are included in the Standards and Procedures. You can target several different populations for recruitment for the Disaster Spiritual Care program.

### Activity – Recruitment and Selection

List at least four places from within the community where they can target recruitment efforts. See the Standards and Procedures for ideas.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Once you've recruited other disaster spiritual care volunteers, you will have the responsibility of maintaining and supporting your local team.

You will need to:

- Consult with your Division Advisor for guidance and mentoring.
- Conduct regularly scheduled team meetings to keep in touch with the volunteers

## Activity – DSC on a Local Level

Gather in a group and review your assigned scenario and then answer each question and brainstorm how you will handle each issue with your group. Use the Standards and Procedures and what you have learned so far to help you. Be prepared to share your questions and responses with the group. Note answers to other scenario questions as the groups share.

### Scenario #1 – Apartment Fire

You are responding to a local fire. An apartment building has been severely damaged and several apartments have been destroyed. The DAT team asks you to support the response at the scene. When you arrive, several groups of people are standing on the street while the fire department is working.

1. What do you need to take with you to the scene?

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2. What is the first thing you do when you arrive at the scene?

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3. One family is deeply distressed when you arrive. How do you approach the situation?

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Unit 3: DSC on a Local Level

4. You find out there is an injured resident. What do you do?

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5. You find out that one individual has no immediate social support.

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Scenario #2 – Tornado

A tornado hit a town during the week in the daytime hours. People are at work and kids are in schools. Damage impacted several neighborhoods and put all surrounding schools on lockdown. So far, no injuries have been reported but not everyone is accounted for and not all families have been reunited with their children.

1. Who will call you to respond to this disaster?

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2. Before being assigned to a client site, you are asked to stock water on ERVs. What do you do?

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Unit 3: DSC on a Local Level

3. You are assigned to the site where parents are being reunited with their children. How do you provide disaster spiritual care in that setting?

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4. What types of behaviors would not be appropriate at this time?

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5. Are there barriers to pastoral authority vs. chain of command?

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6. A second tornado hits the local area, the DMH supervisor is also an active DAT team member of their chapter and rallies colleagues to deploy to the area to provide support post-impact. You're invited; the DMH supervisor doesn't know that you've already been on the job and that you've already worked for eight hours on top of your regular work day. What do you do?

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## Unit 3: DSC on a Local Level

### Scenario # 3- Local School Shooting

There was a shooting at a local college. The college was on lock down for 6 hours. At this time we know of two injuries and the suspect was apprehended. Local faith communities take the lead in providing disaster spiritual care to families and local Mayor and Governor. The State and local VOAD partners are also actively engaged with families and community. State law enforcement takes the lead in protecting family from media and well-meaning helpers not associated with affiliated disaster relief organizations.

1. Every response begins as a local response. When you are called by the chapter to go to the scene, what do you do first?

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2. What do you do when you arrive at the scene?

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3. Who will be giving you direction and assigning you to your tasks?

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4. The Governor will be arriving in 5hrs and you are asked to coordinate spiritual care support to families and to provide Secret Service key information on parents in the most grief. What do you do?

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Unit 3: DSC on a Local Level

5. A memorial service is planned and there is a need to assemble 60 chaplains in 8hrs?  
What do you do?

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6. You are invited by the Governor to have your photo taken with him. What do you do?

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7. What is your responsibility to document the event at the end of the response?

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Unit 3: DSC on a Local Level

Scenario # 4- Wildfire

A wildfire has impacted a small, tight knit community. So far, there have been two fatalities and one injured firefighter. The fire continues to burn threatening a neighborhood of 25 homes.

1. The staff of the local chapter ask for a moment of remembrance for the victims. What do you need to make it happen?

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2. You and another DSC are assigned to a MARC. A family arrives needing much support, they are missing 4 family members, they get word that loved ones are found a block away, what do you do?

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## Unit 4: DSC on a Disaster Relief Operation

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When you are deployed outside of your local area, you will need to be aware of the deployment process, your role and the resources available.

### **Keep in Mind...**

- Disasters are chaotic
- Expect lots of activity and some confusion.
- Flexibility is key!
- Gathering information is challenging as it is changing rapidly.
- Order will evolve, so be patient!

### **Notes:**

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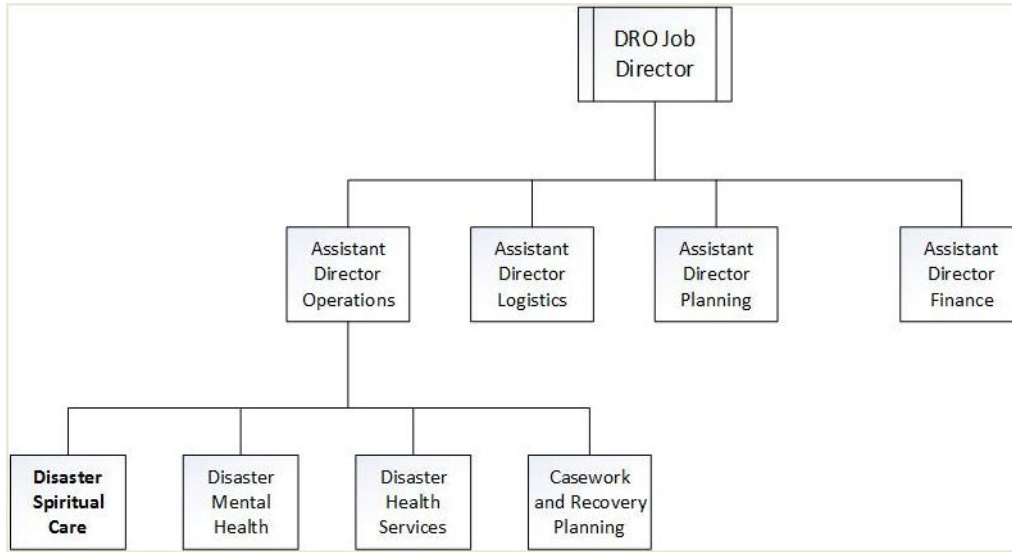
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## Positions on a Disaster Relief Operation

Positions on a DRO are somewhat different than those on a local team.



Turn to the section on Disaster Spiritual Care Standards and Procedures on a Disaster Response Operation and review the Disaster Spiritual Care Lead Tasks and to note the differences from the Local level role.

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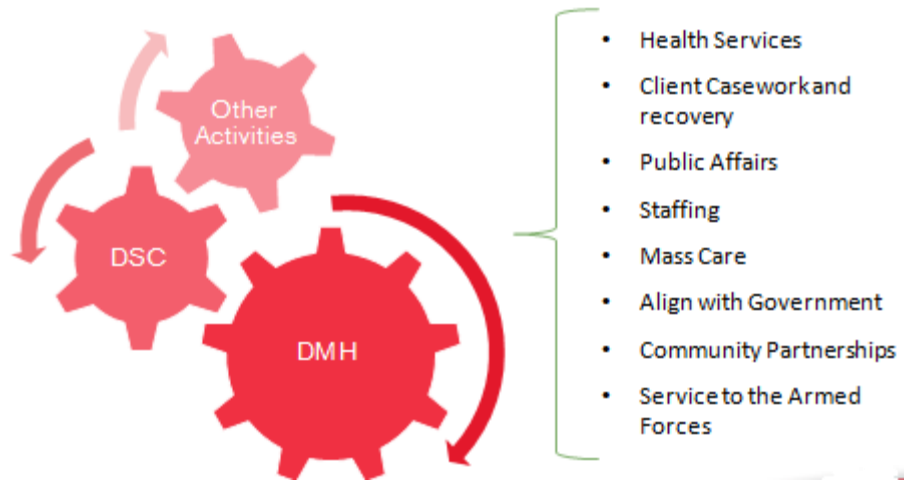
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## Working with Other Activities



**Notes:**

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## Managing a DSC Response

There may be circumstances where you are the first (or only) Disaster Spiritual Care responder on an operation.

Note the key responsibilities of the lead from the Standards and Procedures.

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## Transportation and Mass Casualty Incidents

Transportation and mass casualty incidents vary from disaster situations. According to Victim Support Task #3 - When a transportation incident occurs, Red Cross has agreed to provide Disaster Spiritual Care in a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Transportation Safety Board.

What are some of the factors that would make a transportation incident different than a disaster?

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## Activity – DSC on a DRO

Gather in a group and review your assigned scenario and then answer each question and brainstorm how you will handle each issue with your group. Use the Standards and Procedures and what you have learned so far to help you. Be prepared to share your questions and responses with the group. Note answers to other scenario questions as the groups share.

### Scenario # 1 – Hurricane Sandy

This hurricane created two major DRs, one in New Jersey and the other in New York. ICCTs were very slow to get started due to waiting for next of kin confirmation. Compounding weather, snow storms and shelters created all sorts of issues.

1. The storm has just ended, and your local volunteer engagement worker has called you to ask if you can deploy. You have said yes, that you just need to rearrange some commitments in your schedule. She said she would call you back with specifics. That was four hours ago and you still haven't heard anything. You've already cancelled your other commitments. What is happening and what should you do?

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2. When you arrive, it seems that the response is very disorganized and chaotic and you've been there for two hours without receiving an assignment. You hear from a colleague that people are not being taken care of in places like Rockaway and Staten Island. His local church is stepping in to provide services and he asks you to help him. What do you do?

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3. You're assigned to a shelter and you see that some of the elderly clients are having difficulty with the cots and that the nurses and other shelter workers do not seem to be paying attention to their needs. What is the role of the chaplain in advocating for the vulnerable in shelters?

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Unit 5: Course Conclusion

Scenario # 2- Boston Marathon Bombing

In April 2013, two bombs went off at the finish line of the Boston Marathon. Three spectators were instantly killed and many more were injured. Casualties were taken to several area hospitals and movement into and out of the area was quickly restricted by the FBI. The subsequent manhunt led to another death of an officer at MIT and ultimately one of the bombers.

1. What are some of the emotional and spiritual issues that are likely to be present in a situation like this?

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2. What are some of the logistical issues that may make it difficult to provide services?

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3. Who is in charge of the disaster response in an incident like this?

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4. What is the role of Disaster Spiritual Care in working with other types of partners in a situation like this?

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Unit 5: Course Conclusion

5. In what types of settings will it be appropriate for DSC to be working?

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6. A memorial site is the place for DSC support to visitors. What happens when the crowd begins to move the items to a new location, carrying shoes, flowers & cards, what is the political risk of disposing the waste? How can a DSC volunteer help?

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7. What are some ways that Disaster Spiritual Care can support the staff of the local chapter?

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Scenario # 4- Moore, OK Tornado

There is a repeat of major tornado warnings. Volunteers know Survivors are in the area. There is a MARC open. There is Identity Confusion for DSC Chaplains. You and another DSC are assigned to a MARC. A family arrives needing much support. They are missing 4 family members and they get word that loved ones are found a block away.

1. You are assigned to the relief operation and travel from your home state to Oklahoma. Who will be your direct supervisor on this job?

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Unit 5: Course Conclusion

2. A pastor from a local church approaches you at the large shelter that was set up in the high school gym and says he would like to leave religious tracts and conduct a service for the residents of the shelter. What do you respond?

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3. You and another DSC are assigned to a Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC). A family arrives needing much support, they are missing 4 family members, they get word that loved ones are found a block away, what do you do?

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4. You've been assigned as DSC Lead for this operation. What are some of your responsibilities as Lead?

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5. You have been asked to join an Integrated Care Condolence Team to provide support to families whose loved ones have not yet been located in the devastation. Who are you likely to be working with and what are some of the issues you are likely to face?

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## Unit 5: Course Conclusion

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### Summary

We've reviewed the tasks you may be responsible for in Disaster Spiritual Care role including:

- Assessing client needs
- Addressing client needs
- Managing your own self-care and that of other DSC workers
- Working with community partners
- The role of DSC on a local level and on a national DRO response

### Next steps

1. Take Psychological First Aid if you haven't already
2. Take other required courses
3. Take recommended courses, if available
4. Be flexible and willing to learn about other key roles across the American Red Cross
5. Get involved – get to know the other responders and leadership at your local Red Cross chapter

Unit 5: Course Conclusion

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