

---

Foundations of Disaster Mental Health  
DIS000035: Revised August 2011  
Fact Sheet Revised: September 2011

---

<b>Description</b>	<p><i>Foundations of Disaster Mental Health</i> is a basic level, instructor-led course that introduces the key concepts, knowledge and skills required of anyone assigned to the Disaster Mental Health (DMH) Activity. It provides participants the opportunity to apply their learning to real-world examples that reflect challenges experienced by DMH workers, be it on a Disaster Action Team response or serving on a larger disaster relief operation.</p> <p>This revised version of the course includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Information related to Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS) requirements</li><li>• Reordered content related to DMH interventions based on a three-element approach</li><li>• Information regarding PsySTART triage and mental health surveillance</li><li>• Information related to Force Health Protection</li></ul>
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the course is to prepare licensed mental health professionals to provide for and respond to the psychological needs of people across the continuum of disaster preparedness, response and recovery.</p>
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	<p>Upon completion of this training, participants will be able to—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describe the mission of disaster mental health and how it fits into the array of Red Cross services provided by chapters and on disaster relief operations.</li><li>• Explain the psychological impact of disaster and how to apply the three elements of disaster mental health intervention.</li><li>• Discuss strategies to assist disaster survivors and Red Cross workers, including addressing functional needs and incorporating cultural awareness.</li><li>• Identify and employ force health protection strategies to mitigate the effects of disaster stress on workers.</li><li>• Describe the legal and ethical implications of disaster mental health work, including licensing, HIPAA regulations, confidentiality and professional ethics.</li></ul>
<b>Audience</b>	<p>Employees and volunteers of the Red Cross with a current license to practice mental health, who are interested in Red Cross disaster mental health (DMH) preparedness, response and recovery activities at their chapter and on national disaster relief operations.</p> <p>Licensed mental health professionals who are eligible to join the DMH activity are those who have <b>one</b> of the following criteria.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. An independent license (license to practice without supervision) and master's degree as a clinical social worker, psychologist, professional counselor, marriage and family therapist, psychiatric nurse, or psychiatrist.</li></ol>

---

- 
- b. A state license or state certification and master's degree as a school psychologist or school counselor issued by a state board of education. (*This is an expansion to the DMH eligibility requirements cited in 2008.*)
  - c. A state license and a bachelor's degree (BSN) as a registered nurse **and** American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) certification for psychiatric and mental health nursing to include RN-BC or PMHNP-BC or PMHCNS-BC.
- 

**Prerequisites** *Disaster Services: An Overview* (Module one-Online). Module two may be taken at a later date based on the availability of a chapter offering.

---

**Length** This course is 3 hours in length including a 15 minute break. Full attendance of the course is required to earn a course certificate.

---

**Scheduling** This course may be delivered in a classroom or via a webinar. The recommended class size is a minimum of six and a maximum of 20. As class size increases, more than one instructor may be needed. The maximum number of participants for a webinar may exceed 20 participants; the number is at the instructor's discretion.

---

**Instructor Requirements** This course is taught by one or two certified basic disaster instructors who, in addition to meeting the basic Disaster Services instructor requirements, meet the following criteria:

- Currently licensed by a state as a mental health professional.
- Actively engaged as a disaster mental health worker in preparedness, response or recovery on local or larger disaster relief operations.
- Successfully completed the *Foundations of Disaster Mental Health* course.

---

**Materials and Equipment**

- *Foundations of Disaster Mental Health* Instructor Notes
- *Foundations of Disaster Mental Health* Participant Handouts (one packet per participant)
- PowerPoint Presentation
- Computer and LCD projector
- Course roster
- Course certificates (one per participant)
- [Participant evaluations](#) (Form 5898B) (one per participant)

---

Note:

The instructor notes, participant handouts and PowerPoint presentation are downloadable from Crossnet. Printed copies of the instructor notes and participant handouts are available for purchase from the DocStore. Printable materials are designed to be copied double-sided, black and white.

---

**Additional Information** Questions or comments concerning this course should be emailed to [DisasterTraining@usa.redcross.org](mailto:DisasterTraining@usa.redcross.org)

---