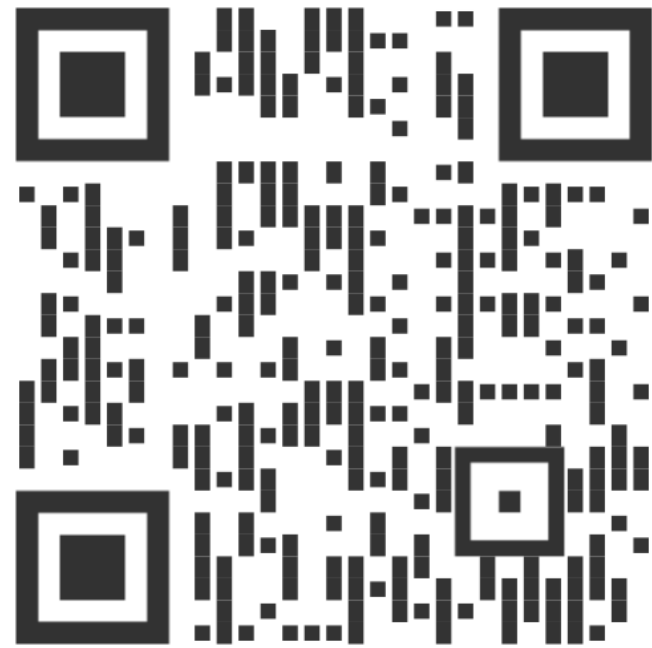


**Webinar starts at 10:00 Central Time**



**Disaster  
Emotional and Spiritual  
Care Academy**  
*Spring 2026*

**Tuesdays  
March 24 – April 28  
10 to 11:30 a.m.  
Central**



<https://www.crisiscareministries.net/ccmwebinarhub>



# **PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

**OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE**



Rev. John Cheek  
Member, PDA National  
Response Team

Rev. Kathy Riley  
PDA Associate for Emotional  
and Spiritual Care

# Human Caused Disaster

A deliberate act by one or more people with the intent to cause harm

Mass shootings

Terrorism

Arson

Other intentional acts of violence

# The Four Phases of Human-Caused Disaster Response



2011  
Holzer, Kirk, Kozak, Turner, Wolfe, Warner



Presbyterian Mission  
**Presbyterian  
Disaster Assistance**



# Possible Stress Reactions

Shock

Numbness

Feeling helpless or hopeless

Sometimes, survivor's guilt

# Possible Stress Reactions

Difficulty Sleeping

Problems with appetite

Restlessness

Difficulty concentrating

# Possible Stress Reactions

Emotional outbursts

Irritability

Spiritual questions, doubts, anger



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**OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE**



# Considerations in Disasters

Care providers can also be survivors

Loss of relative sense of safety- home, schools,  
stores

Usual support systems may be disrupted

Most survivors do recover

# Who Gives Care?

Faith leaders  
Medical practitioners  
Mental Health workers  
Friends, family members  
and co-workers  
Volunteer and  
professional disaster  
responders



# National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)

<https://www.nvoad.org/>

# Mental Health Resources

State and Community Mental Health  
Agencies

Private Practitioners

Hospital-Based Services

Pastoral Counselors

# National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

1-800-950-6264

<https://www.nami.org/>

<https://www.nami.org/find-your-local-nami/>

# Who Provides Care?



ANYONE who is willing to be present to suffering persons.

# Providing Appropriate and Respectful Disaster Emotional and Spiritual Care

## Ministry of Presence



# Pillars of Healing in Disaster

Story telling

Relationships

Self-care

Spiritual and faith-based  
support, for many



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# Disaster Distress Helpline

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/helplines/disaster-distress-helpline>

Call or text [1-800-985-5990](tel:1-800-985-5990).

**Español:** Llama o envía un mensaje de texto [1-800-985-5990](tel:1-800-985-5990) presiona “2.”

**For Deaf and Hard of Hearing ASL Callers:** Please text or call the Disaster Distress Helpline at [1-800-985-5990](tel:1-800-985-5990) using your preferred Relay provider.

# Providing Appropriate and Respectful Disaster Emotional and Spiritual Care

## Some Best Practices

Ministry of Presence

Active, deep listening

Respect for diverse faith and social traditions

Concern for confidentiality

Maintaining boundaries

and functioning within our own expertise

## VOAD Resources

<https://www.nvoad.org/>

<https://www.nvoad.org/wp-content/uploads/Guide-to-NVOAD-ESCC-Resources-2025-2026-2.pdf>

[https://www.nvoad.org/wp-content/uploads/light\\_our\\_way\\_2018\\_final-published-copy.pdf](https://www.nvoad.org/wp-content/uploads/light_our_way_2018_final-published-copy.pdf)

[https://www.nvoad.org/wp-content/uploads/lightourway\\_spanish.pdf](https://www.nvoad.org/wp-content/uploads/lightourway_spanish.pdf)

**Providing Appropriate and Respectful  
Disaster Emotional and Spiritual Care**

**Hard Questions You May Hear**

Is this divine punishment?

How could a loving God let this happen?

Why???. Did this happen for a reason?

Maybe there is no God.

Others

# Responding to Hard Questions

- Listen deeply and validate emotions
- When a question is asked, take time to discern if an answer is desired
- Avoid premature reassurances
- Validate the lack of a completely satisfying answer
- When it seems a verbal answer is wanted, offer a simple, authentic response

## Providing Appropriate and Respectful Disaster Emotional and Spiritual Care

### Some responses to hard questions

“I believe God is sad to see your suffering.”

“I believe God will be here with you in your  
loss.”

“I believe God will offer hope to you.”

Others



# **PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

**OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE**



# Pillars of recovering from Disaster and Trauma



Story telling



Relationships



Self-care

# Self-Care

## Self-Care often gets neglected

- No time or energy
- Seems selfish or self-centered
- Can't enjoy life when there is so much suffering around you
- There is a cost to minimizing self-care





# **PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

**OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE**



# Resilience Tools and Practices

## All are in the Handout!

Observe your breath      Releasing Our Concerns

Doorknob Affirmation      4-7-8 Breathing

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Intentional Listening Partners

Diet, Sleep and Exercise      Lifting My Spirits

Strong Back, Soft Front      Grounding

Centering      Practicing Gratitude

Shake it Off



# Intentional Listening Partner

Non-judgmental

Able to maintain confidentiality

Available within 24-48 hours

Willing to withhold advice (unless asked)

Able to listen without telling their own  
story

# Doorknob Affirmation

*I do this work because . . .*

# Last Thoughts

People remember we listened

“Speak into a listening silence”

Listen for the other trauma

Offer hope without platitudes

You **can** help

Practice good self-care

If you have questions about the material we presented or would like more information about our Emotional and Spiritual Care offerings, please contact:

**Kathy Riley at  
[Kathryn.riley@pcusa.org](mailto:Kathryn.riley@pcusa.org)**