



**FEMA**

# News Release

December 6, 2012  
DR-4086-NJ NR-046  
FEMA News Desk: 877-434-4084  
NJOEM PIO Contact: 609-963-6818

## **HELP OFFERED FOR STRESSED SURVIVORS OF HURRICANE SANDY**

**TRENTON, N.J.** – Feeling blue? Disoriented? Powerless?

For disaster survivors who may feel overwhelmed after Hurricane Sandy, help is just a phone call away.

The New Jersey Disaster Mental Health Helpline at 877-294-4357, or TTY 877-294-4356, is open and ready for talk from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

“The help is free and confidential,” said Lynn Kovich, Assistant Commissioner in charge of the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services. “Simply talking with a counselor can sometimes ease the symptoms. We can help folks in distress move forward on their path to recovery.

“The majority of calls are from people having temporary reactions, people who before the disaster were healthy and functioning normally. Hotline crisis counseling can help keep the symptoms from escalating into major mental health concerns,” she said.

Disaster-induced mental distress may include:

- Sleeping too much or too little.
- Stomach aches or headaches.
- Worrying a lot of the time; feeling guilty but not sure why.
- Lack of energy or always feeling tired.
- Severe disorientation or confusion.
- Overwhelming sense of guilt.
- Depression, sadness and feelings of hopelessness.
- Increased use of substances like drugs or alcohol.

Disaster survivors often doubt that happiness will ever be possible again. Talking about those feelings with friends or counselors can help, according to experts.

Talking to someone can help survivors keep perspective. Eventually, these out-of-balance times will improve. In the meantime, it is important to connect with others.

Rest, exercise, and healthy eating help the body deal with stress.

FEMA also supports a Disaster Mental Health Helpline run by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, where counselors are available 24/7. The number is 800-985-5990.

(MORE)

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