

THE DISASTER PSYCHOSOCIAL SERVICE: PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID TELEPHONE SUPPORT

Need to talk with Someone?

It is normal to feel stressed when faced with difficult situations. Many people find that it can be helpful to speak to someone who understands what they are going through. The Disaster Psychosocial Program (DPS) offers *psychological first aid* if you need to talk to someone about how you are feeling.

What is the Disaster Psychosocial Program?

The **Disaster Psychosocial Program** is a service of the Provincial Health Services Authority that supports communities when they are affected by emergencies and disasters. This is not a regular service but is temporarily 'activated' to provide psychosocial support when communities are affected by events such as flooding or wildfires. It consists of mental health professionals or paraprofessionals who volunteer their time during disasters or similar events.

What is Psychological First Aid?

Psychological First Aid is not counselling or therapy. It is a brief telephone call to provide individuals with information and strategies to help them cope with the stress associated with a disaster. Psychological First Aid is designed to help people who usually cope well with daily life but may be feeling overwhelmed during a very difficult and stressful time. It is a practical tool for you to use.

What to Expect

The DPS volunteer who speaks with you will not keep notes on the content of your conversation. The DPS program will not be keeping a record of your name or contact details.

If you do not answer, the volunteer will leave a brief message for you, and your name will remain at the top of the "active list" so that another volunteer can call you later during that day or next morning.

Emergency Care and Crisis Situations

The volunteers do not provide emergency mental health services. If you are or a person you care about is in crisis, we will refer you to another service to help you. If you are experiencing an immediate crisis, please call a crisis line:

Toll free: 1-866-661-3311 or 1-800-784-2433 Youth/Adult or TTY: 1-866-872-0113 or Senior's Distress: 604-872-1234 or call 911.

HOW TO ACCESS PSYCHOSOCIAL FIRST AID

- A DPS volunteer is available for you to speak with between 9AM and 8PM. The phone number is 604-314-2532.
- You can also request support by writing to dpsprogram@phsa.ca and requesting a telephone support call.
- Please leave a number where you can be reached and advise if you do not want a message left for you.
- If the volunteer is unable to reach you they will leave a brief message and will call again later.
- The volunteer will try to reach you within 72 hours of your initial request. This service is only provided after a disaster or other emergency.

CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS

We care about how you are supported. Please contact the DPS program office at dpsprogram@phsa.ca and we will follow up with your concern or complaint.