

Crisis Counseling Available to Tornado Survivors

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FRANKFORT, Ky. – A tornado disaster can shock the emotions of the people who lived through it. Survivors frequently report feelings of anger, depression, sadness, stress or anxiety for months after the event.

Free crisis counseling services can help survivors of the Dec. 10-11 tornadoes cope with trauma. Counseling is available to residents of **Barren, Caldwell, Christian, Fulton, Graves, Hart, Hickman, Hopkins, Logan, Lyon, Marion, Marshall, Muhlenberg, Ohio, Taylor and Warren counties.**

FEMA approved funding for crisis counseling for nine months through **Jan. 15, 2023.**

Those seeking the free service should contact the commonwealth's **211** line. The simple three-digit telephone number dialed from anywhere in Kentucky connects residents to health and human services agencies that can provide help to individuals and households recovering from the tornadoes.

The Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Families operates the program through four community behavioral health centers:

- River Valley Behavioral Health (serving Ohio County): rvbh.com/crisis-line/
- Life Skills (serving Barren, Hart, Logan and Warren counties): lifeskills.com/crisis
- Pennyroyal Center (serving Caldwell, Christian, Hopkins, Lyon and Muhlenberg counties): pennyroyalcenter.org/services/behavioral_health/
- Four Rivers Behavioral Health (serving Fulton, Graves, Hickman and Marshall counties): h4rbh.org/resources-after-a-disaster-crisis-or-trauma/

Counselors meet with adults and children affected by the disaster in non-traditional settings such as shelters, homes and community buildings – not in clinical or office settings. They provide emotional support, education, basic crisis



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counseling and may refer survivors to local resources and disaster relief services in their own area. All services are anonymous, and no records or case files are kept. Counselors usually live in the disaster area and are sometimes survivors themselves.

Children often look to their caregivers for support and to learn how to cope with adversity and trauma. It's a good time to listen to the children, understand what they're feeling, and reassure them their feelings make sense because what they experienced was scary and difficult. For more information on helping children cope, read FEMA's Feb. 7 [news release](#).

Some counseling is offered individually, helping the survivors understand their reactions and review their options. Group sessions may be led by trained crisis counselors who offer skills to help those in the group cope with their situations and reactions.

The Crisis Counseling program is administered through a partnership between FEMA and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Center for Mental Health Services (SAMHSA). SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline, [800-985-5990](tel:800-985-5990), provides 24/7, 365-days-a-year crisis counseling and support to people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters.

For information on Kentucky's recovery from the tornadoes, visit fema.gov/disaster/4630. Follow FEMA on Twitter at [FEMA Region 4 \(@femaregion4\) / Twitter](#) and at facebook.com/fema.

