



**American  
Red Cross**

# **Family Assistance Center Best Practices**

**March 28, 2023  
NCEMA Spring Conference**

# Getting Started...

- Introductions and experience with Family Assistance Centers (or Mass Casualty Incidents)
- Why is the Red Cross a credible organization to discuss best practices?
  - Relationships at local & national level (NTSB, FBI Victim's Advocates, etc.)
  - Subject Matter Expertise
- When are FACs most often used and how is the Red Cross involved?
  - Transportation (legislated vs. non-legislated)
  - Man-made events
- How does the Red Cross engage in in FAC operations? Where do we fit?
  - Whole Community Planning
  - When to activate Red Cross (beyond Canteening)
- Red Cross stance on media and financial contributions for MCI events

# Relationships Matter

- National, State, Local partnerships
- Subject Matter Expertise
- Trust and connection with Incident Command quickly
- Reach and Network to bring in other partners



Photo by Daniel Cima/American Red Cross

# Site Selection & Set Up Considerations

- Location in proximity to event
  - What is close enough, without being too close?
- Location in facility that can be closed and secured
- Ease of secure access for clients seeking services
- Situations requiring lodging
- Not traumatizing – will not see, hear, or smell reminders of impact
- Floor Plan Considerations
  - Use of multiple rooms for providing services
  - Determining how partners are assigned space for ease of clients
  - Sound proofing of individual rooms if used for private conversations or notification purposes
  - Space to pick up belongings that may have been lost/left behind
  - Use of “Quiet Rooms”

# Managing Public/Semi-Public Information Flow

- Use of Family Briefings vs. Media Briefings
- Information Flow from unofficial sources
- Family Members access to information through technology
  - I.E. Find my iPhone and other location tracking apps
- Ensuring partners are aware to allow us to support message

# Information Sharing

- Who manages “the list” – passenger logs, people at facility at time of event, etc.
- Who should have access to “the list”
- Once next of kin has been notified, who has access to names of next of kin for outreach/provision of services?
- How can we reduce the number of times a family has to tell their story



Photo by Daniel Cima/American Red Cross

# Vetting Process for Partners and Individuals

- Vetting Partners offering Services
  - Finding the right balance to create a protective barrier around those impacted, while working to ensure the right players are at the table
- Responsibilities of Groups to vet their responders
  - All helping organizations should vet their responders before assigning them to a FAC
  - Disaster Mental Health screenings/vetting processes are highly recommended
  - Disaster Mental Health services follow ethical standards of associations of licensed professionals
  - Disaster Spiritual Care services follow guidelines of VOAD chaplain organizations and do not judge nor impose beliefs on those affected
- Credentialing process

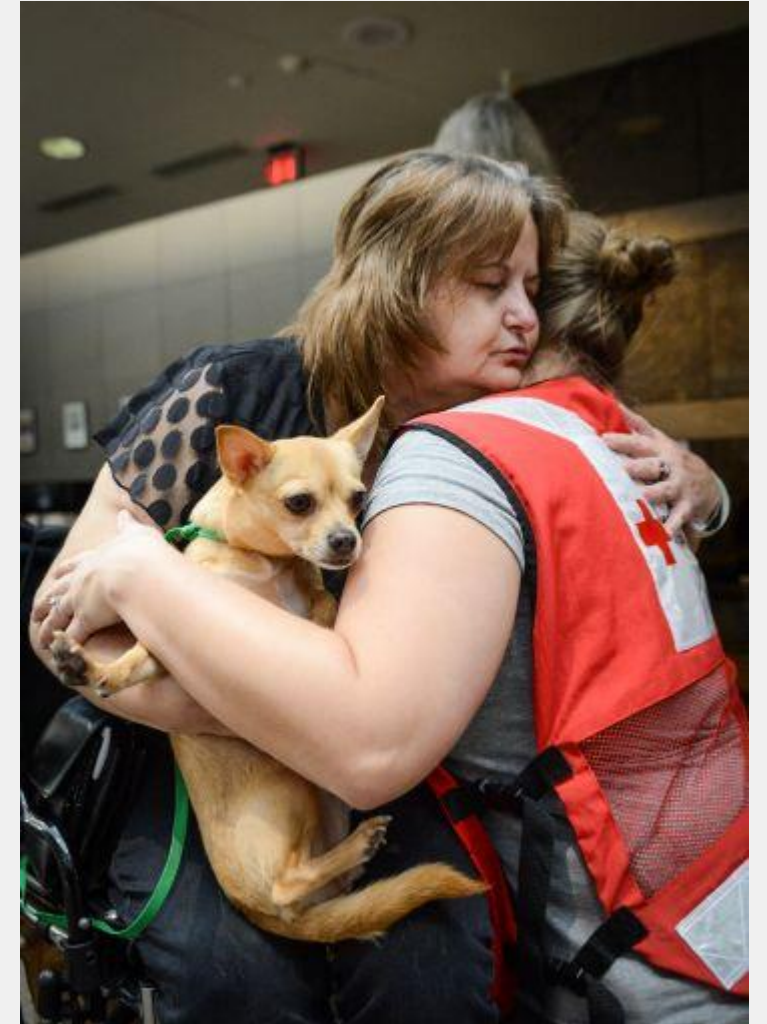


Photo by Daniel Cima/American Red Cross

# Unique Situations call for Unique Services

- Ask for what you need/want, you never know what partners can bring to the table
  - Examples:
    - Financial Assistance for work related expenses
    - Financial Assistance for DMH support to survivors
    - School resources for students
    - Interpreters for prevalent languages
    - Diverse resources from faith community
    - Special needs for those with disabilities



Photo by Marko Kobic/American Red Cross



# Whole Community Planning

## Taking the Next Step to Prepare

- Plan for similar agencies to provide similar (but different) services
  - Disaster Spiritual Care as an example
- Understanding what every agency can bring to the table
  - DMV, “important papers” replacement, transportation to/from FAC
- Planning to meet the family where they’re at
  - We need to be flexible
- Reach out to your local Red Cross POC to be connected to SMEs in NC

# Contact Information

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*Thank you*



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