

The Virgin Islands Consortium

FEMA Offering Resources For Reducing Stress During Holidays

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Throughout this holiday season federal and territorial officials is reminding residents to take care of themselves and stay safe. Virgin Islanders who lost their home, business or personal property, may be struggling to cope with the emotional impact of the disaster. For individuals and families looking to rebuild, the approaching holidays may be especially difficult.

Survivors who are experiencing feelings of shock, difficulty concentrating and problems sleeping are advised to speak with someone about what they've been through. Survivors may meet with crisis counselors at the FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers located throughout the territory. The crisis counselors can make referrals to other local health

professionals.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) provides multilingual and confidential support on its Disaster Distress Helpline. Call **800-985-5990** or text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor. Spanish speakers can call **212-461-4635**.

Disasters can leave children feeling frightened, confused, and insecure. Whether a child has personally experienced trauma, or has heard it discussed by adults, it is important for parents and teachers to be informed and ready to help if reactions to stress begin to occur.

Talking to children about a crisis can be difficult, but it is very important to help them cope. Resources for helping you and your child cope after the disaster can be found at National Center for Child Traumatic Stress <http://www.nctsn.org/trauma-types/natural-disasters> or by calling **310-235-2633** or **919-682-1552**.

Additional resources are available to survivors in need of medical prescriptions and supplies.

“When people become distracted from their normal routines sometimes they don’t take care of themselves,” said Mona Barnes, the Territorial Coordinating Officer for the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency. “Some even go off their medications. And that can be very dangerous.”

Residents affected by the hurricanes who have no prescription insurance may receive a free 30-day supply of eligible drugs and medical supplies through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Emergency Prescription Assistance Program (EPAP). Currently, the enrollment period runs through **Feb. 1, 2018**. For more information on the program call **855-793-7470**.