

Disaster and the Adult with a Serious Mental Illness¹

People with serious mental illness often do well immediately following disaster. They can often contribute to disaster recovery by volunteering as part of an organized disaster relief effort.

The following advice is designed to help the person with a serious mental illness continue on their road to recovery following disaster.

- Reconnect with your regular mental health service delivery system. If it is disrupted, connect with mental health disaster recovery services to insure your recovery is continuous.
- It is a good idea to help locate peers and help them reconnect with their service provider.
- Consider sharing your experiences with others.
- It's ok to be alone sometimes. You may need time to deal with your losses and personal issues.
- Get involved in the disaster recovery effort as long as you are not overwhelmed by it.
- Work with your provider to make a disaster preparedness plan for the future.

¹ *Responding to the Needs of People with Serious and Persistent Mental Illness in Times of Major Disaster*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Washington D.C., 1996