

## **Disaster Crisis Outreach and Referral (DCORT) Fact Sheet**

### **Mission**

DCORT's mission is to assist those individuals that have been impacted by crisis or disaster by providing emotional support and therapeutic activities to ease stress, foster a compassionate presence, and to aid in community resilience.

### **Expectations and Assumptions**

#### **County**

For each county to be capable of providing assistance for a basic behavioral response to an all hazard incident or support service during a crisis, disaster, or for an incident with the potential of causing emotional trauma to the general populous.

- Provide for a basic emergency behavioral health response plan.
  - Training:
    - NIMS 700.
    - ICS-100.
    - ICS-200 for Supervisors / Leads.
    - DCORT.
    - Psychological First Aid (PFA).
  - Develop basic standard operating procedures to ensure staff safety.
  - General Contact information.

#### **Commonwealth**

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, DPW-OMHSAS will provide training, coordination, collaboration, assurances, and surge capacity to support the county and the Regional Task Force DCORT operations. When available, DPW-OMHSAS will also provide support through the Federal Emergency Management - SAMHSA Crisis Counseling Program or SERG grant during a presidentially declared disaster.

### **Request for Assistance from the Commonwealth**

In the event any county is in need of additional resources, to include material goods or staff, they may place a resource request for such assets through their County Emergency Management Agency to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA). Upon request, and with a mission assignment from PEMA, the DPW-OMHSAS will coordinate and provide technical assistance and surge capacity to assist with County DCORT operations as described under the State Emergency Operations Plan. The counties making the request should also contact their local OMHSAS field office for situational awareness. DPW will:

- Make Commonwealth staff available to support county operations.
- Utilize trained volunteers, when available, to support operations.
- Commonwealth staff will be under the direction of the county DCORT Leader for the purpose of strategic placement for outreach services operations.

### **Training Descriptions**

**NIMS 700:** This course introduces and overviews the National Incident Management System (NIMS). NIMS provide a consistent nationwide template to enable all government, private-sector, and nongovernmental organizations to work together during domestic incidents.

**ICS-100:** This course introduces the Incident Command System (ICS) and provides the foundation for higher level ICS training. This course describes the history, features and principles, and organizational structure of the Incident Command System. ICS-100 also explains the relationship between ICS and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

**ICS-200:** This course is designed to enable personnel to operate efficiently during an incident or event within the Incident Command System (ICS). ICS-200 provides training on and resources for personnel who are likely to assume a supervisory position within the ICS.

**DCORT Training:** This course is designed to prepare responders to assist individuals and communities in recovering from the effects of natural and human-caused disasters through the provision of community-based outreach and psycho-educational services and is based on SAMHSA and FEMA best practice under their joint Crisis Counseling Program. The DCORT training supports short-term interventions that involve assisting crisis and disaster survivors in understanding their current situation and reactions, mitigating stress, assisting survivors in reviewing their crisis and disaster recovery options, promoting the use or development of coping strategies, providing emotional support, and encouraging linkages with other individuals and agencies who may help survivors in their recovery process.

**Psychological First Aid (PFA):** This course is an evidence-informed modular approach to help children, adolescents, adults, and families in the immediate aftermath of disaster, terrorism, and other crisis events. It is designed to reduce the initial distress caused by traumatic events and to foster short and long-term adaptive functioning and coping. PFA is based on the understanding that disaster survivors and others affected by such events will experience a broad range of early reactions (physical, psychological, behavioral or spiritual). Some of these reactions will cause enough distress to interfere with adaptive coping, and recovery may be helped by support from compassionate and caring disaster responders.

### **Credentialing**

Historically, credentialing of DCORT has not been standardized across the Commonwealth. Each of the counties and Joinders as well as DPW-OMHSAS has had its own approach for determining the proficiency of a DCORT Workforce member and for determining which tasks the DCORT member was qualified to execute.

Attempts to implement a standard credentialing program were historically isolated to specific counties or regions and were not uniform across the Commonwealth. To help address this challenge, DPW launched the DCORT Credential program in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Certification Board in order to apply a basic level of certification across the Commonwealth. This means that for all counties and regions, there is a standard governance approach, consistent processes and common tools for training. Ultimately, this will ensure that government, at all levels, is better able to utilize personnel with the specific skill-sets needed to execute the DCORT mission.

Pennsylvania Certification Board  
298 S. Progress Avenue  
Harrisburg, PA 17109  
Phone: 717.540.4455 Directions to Office  
Fax: 717.540.4458  
email: [info@pacertboard.org](mailto:info@pacertboard.org)  
<http://www.pacertboard.org/>