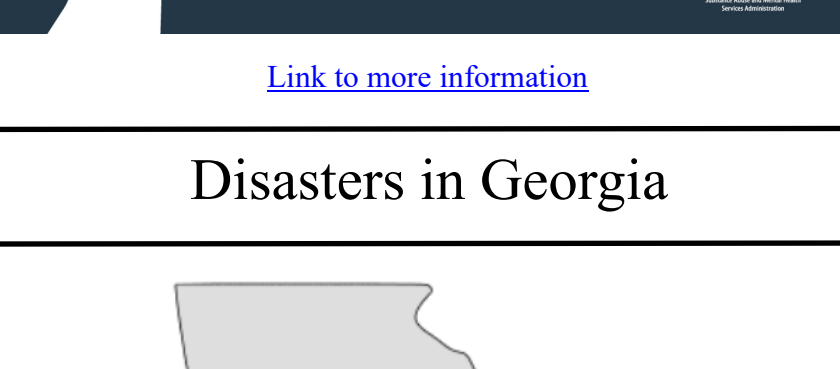


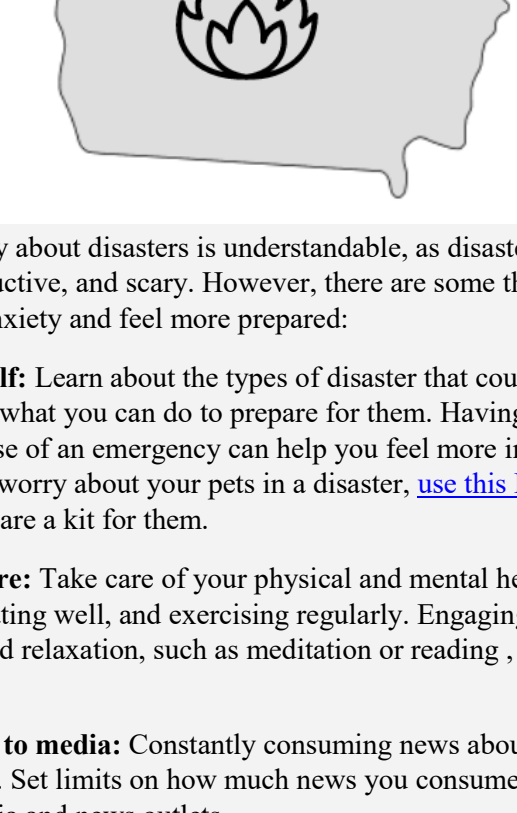
Hello Colleagues!

This month we are focusing on mental health awareness and identifying some of the aspects of disasters that cause anxiety. Education is the best way to alleviate some anxiety surrounding disaster events. We also recognize that May is Mental Health Awareness month. A link to more information about this event, social media resources, and graphics is listed below.



[Link to more information](#)

## Disasters in Georgia



Experiencing anxiety about disasters is understandable, as disasters can be unpredictable, destructive, and scary. However, there are some things you can do to help manage your anxiety and feel more prepared:

- Educate yourself:** Learn about the types of disaster that could occur in your area (see below) and what you can do to prepare for them. Having a plan and knowing what to do in case of an emergency can help you feel more in control. For example, if you worry about your pets in a disaster, [use this Pet First Aid checklist](#) to prepare a kit for them.
- Practice self-care:** Take care of your physical and mental health by getting enough sleep, eating well, and exercising regularly. Engaging in activities that bring you joy and relaxation, such as meditation or reading, can also help reduce stress.
- Limit exposure to media:** Constantly consuming news about disasters can increase anxiety. Set limits on how much news you consume and take breaks from social media and news outlets.
- Connect with others:** Talking to friends, family, or a therapist about your fears can help you feel less alone and more supported. You can also consider joining a community group or organization for additional support.

### [Most common natural disasters to occur in Georgia:](#)

#### ◇ **Hurricanes**

- Coastal areas are at a higher risk, however inland areas are at risk of wind damage, severe flooding, and widespread power outages.

#### ◇ **Tornadoes**

- Georgia ranks #14 in the USA in terms of tornado risk.

#### ◇ **Floods**

- Most at-risk areas: Tybee Island, Wilmington Island, Whitemarsh Island, Savannah, Garden City, Coffee Bluff, Richmond Hill, Bloomingdale, Pooler, Bloomingdale, and Hinesville.

#### ◇ **Wildfires**

- More than 2.7 million properties in Georgia – or 61% of all properties in the state — are at risk of wildfires by 2050.

#### ◇ **Heat waves**

- The number of dangerously-high heat days is only expected to increase in Georgia. By 2053, Decatur, Seminole, and Miller will have 80 or more days above 100F.

#### ◇ **Drought**

- Heat waves in Georgia are often accompanied by drought. While these droughts aren't deadly, they can damage crops and cause economic damage. This impacts mental health in the long-term.

#### ◇ **Winter storms/ freeze events**

- Georgia is known for its warm weather and rarely gets snow or ice. However, cold winter weather can occur, and when it does, it often catches residents unprepared. Because of this unpreparedness, even mild winter storms can be destructive in Georgia.

## Expanding our Volunteer Network

The Georgia Disaster Mental Health Response Team (GMH) is made up of licensed mental health professionals in GA who volunteer to provide crisis intervention services to disaster survivors & relief works.

Providing emotional support to responders & survivors of disasters is an important part of emergency response, and GA is committed to developing a team of trained/experienced volunteers who can meet that challenge.

Disaster mental health is a unique intervention only implemented during times of emergency and disaster; special qualifications & training are required.

All GMH volunteers are required to have:

- A current professional mental health or medical license with the state of GA.
- Training in either Georgia Disaster Mental Health Field Response Training or American Red Cross Disaster Mental Health Training or Georgia Disaster Mental Health Response Team on-line training
- National Incident Management System FEMA ICS courses 100 & 700

If you are interested in joining the team, please register at [www.servga.gov](http://www.servga.gov).

## Tools & Resources:

[Areas of Flood Risk](#)

[DBHDD: Mental Health for Adults](#)

[Georgia Crisis & Access Line \(GCAL\)](#)

[Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network \(GMHCN\)](#)

[GHA: Emergency Preparedness](#)

[NAMI Georgia: Support Groups](#)

[NAMI Georgia: Calendar of Events](#)

[SAMHSA: Find Help](#)

[SAMHSA Mental Health Awareness Week—Toolkit](#)

If you have any questions, please contact the DBHDD Office of Disaster Mental Health:

[Kalie Burke, Disaster Mental Health Coordinator](#)

(404) 416-2829