

Executive Summary of the Report Entitled:

Emergency Family Assistance Centers:

An Examination of the Literature for Evidence-Informed Practices

The Clearinghouse conducted a thorough review of the disaster response literature, both civilian and military, as well as of the emergency response services provided by a wide range of organizations, including non-profits governmental agencies, and professional association. As requested, best practices regarding planning for, developing, and implementation of an emergency family assistance center (EFAC) were identified in 11 areas listed in the DoD's 2010 Directive-Type Memorandum 10-023 (see pp. 9-20 of the full EFAC report for comprehensive listing of best practices). Listed below are recommendations culled from the literature that would facilitate effective planning and preparation of EFACs to achieve their critical functions.

- Establish a system for the bi-yearly submission and review of installations' EFAC plans.
- Read entire EFAC report, and review additional sources to better understand factors involved in its operation and management (see p. 21 for full listing of suggested sources).
- Commission a comprehensive literature review of disaster mental health and effective strategies for facilitating resilient coping in the immediate, mid-, and long-term aftermath of a mass-casualty event.
- Develop a detailed outline of a basic training curriculum for all pre-identified EFAC staff that includes teaching about trauma exposure reactions and traumatic grief.
- Consider outsourcing specialized areas of training for emergency preparedness for EFAC staff and leadership (e.g., Psychological First Aid).
- Establish criteria for credentialing and verifying the credentials of disaster mental health responders, particularly those who are new volunteers after a mass casualty event occurs.
- Establish clear plans for providing assistance to disabled survivors and disabled family members by partnering with local/regional agencies serving this population.
- Develop an EFAC registration and intake system that is online; however, it is necessary for paper-based copies as a backup system.
- Develop a post-disaster review and lessons-learned protocol to promote improved preparedness over time.
- Develop a data collection strategy to be implemented in the event of a disaster to gather information on utilization, satisfaction with, and efficacy of EFAC services; trauma symptoms; and helpfulness of referral agencies.
- Develop a standard family preparedness plan and require the Service member to complete it within 90 days of their arrival at the installation.

Establish a policy that within 24 hours of notification, all members of the planning committee and members of the response team are required to be present at the EFAC site.