Nevada Health awarded crisis response grant

Funding will support crisis counselors in programs statewide

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Through a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Nevada will be deploying 35 crisis counselors statewide to support Nevadans coping with the effects of COVID-19. The program will focus on a population health approach that encourages healthy coping and active management of stressors, building resiliency and fostering compassion.

The State of Nevada was awarded $654,640 for the Crisis Counseling Immediate Services Program through FEMA and will use the funding to place crisis counselors in community programs. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) will work in partnerships with local health departments and human service agencies, Boys and Girls Clubs, and Nevada COVID-19 Aging Network (Nevada CAN) to ensure Nevadan's have access to prevention and early intervention services.

"While we are all facing new challenges while coping with COVID-19, it is important to remember that we are not alone. This funding will be used to place crisis counselors in communities across Nevada," said Dr. Stephanie Woodard, DHHS Senior Advisor on Behavioral Health. "Developing coping strategies, feeling connected to others and understanding the resources that are available can help people impacted by COVID access needed community resources. Now is the time to act to prevent the possible increase in mental health issues, suicide and addiction. Psychological First Aid is effective prevention."

Psychological First Aid provided by crisis counselors is designed to reduce the initial distress caused by a traumatic event and to foster short- and long-term adaptive functioning and coping. Psychological First Aid is based on the understanding that individuals affected by traumatic events will experience a wide range of initial reactions that may cause enough distress to interfere with coping. Crisis counseling will be provided in both individual and group formats and telehealth crisis counseling and other technology-based platforms will be prioritized to minimize risk of possible exposure.

Through this funding Crisis Support Services of Nevada (CSSNV) staff will also receive training in crisis counseling and Psychological First Aid. CSSNV connects individuals to trained, compassionate counselors who can offer support and direct them to mental health and substance abuse counseling services. This is a toll-free number and all calls are confidential. CSSNV can be reached at 800-273-8255 or by texting CARE to 839863.

In addition to direct services provided by crisis counselors, the funding will also assist in providing information on access to resources in communities and provide public awareness campaigns to bring awareness to healthy ways to cope and manage the stressors from COVID-19.

More information on Nevada's COVID-19 response can be found at nvhealthresponse.nv.gov.

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