



El Paso Tragedy: Lessons in Disaster Response

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El Paso Incident

- On Saturday August 3, 2019, at approximately 10:39am, a gunman entered a Walmart in El Paso and began shooting people.
- Approximately 3000 customers and 100 employees were in the store at the time the shooting began.
- The casualty count is currently at 22 dead and 26 injured.



Texas HHSC

Disaster Behavioral Health Teams

- Teams address the mental health impacts of emergencies on survivors and first responders.
- Teams are needed because people in and around disasters tend to experience distress and anxiety about safety, health and recovery.
- Teams come up with interventions that are incident specific.
- Teams coordinate with LMHAs who generally provide mental health services



Texas has a National Leader in Mental Health Disaster Response

- DBHS Director Chance Freeman has led the response to more than 27 federally declared disasters
- He trains state and federal agencies, and contributed to a textbook used around the world to teach disaster behavioral health response.
- Chance leads a team of 12 disaster experts at the state level.



Survivors Helped by Disaster Response Teams



Survivors of natural disasters

tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, wildfires, mudslides, and droughts.

Survivors of man-made disasters

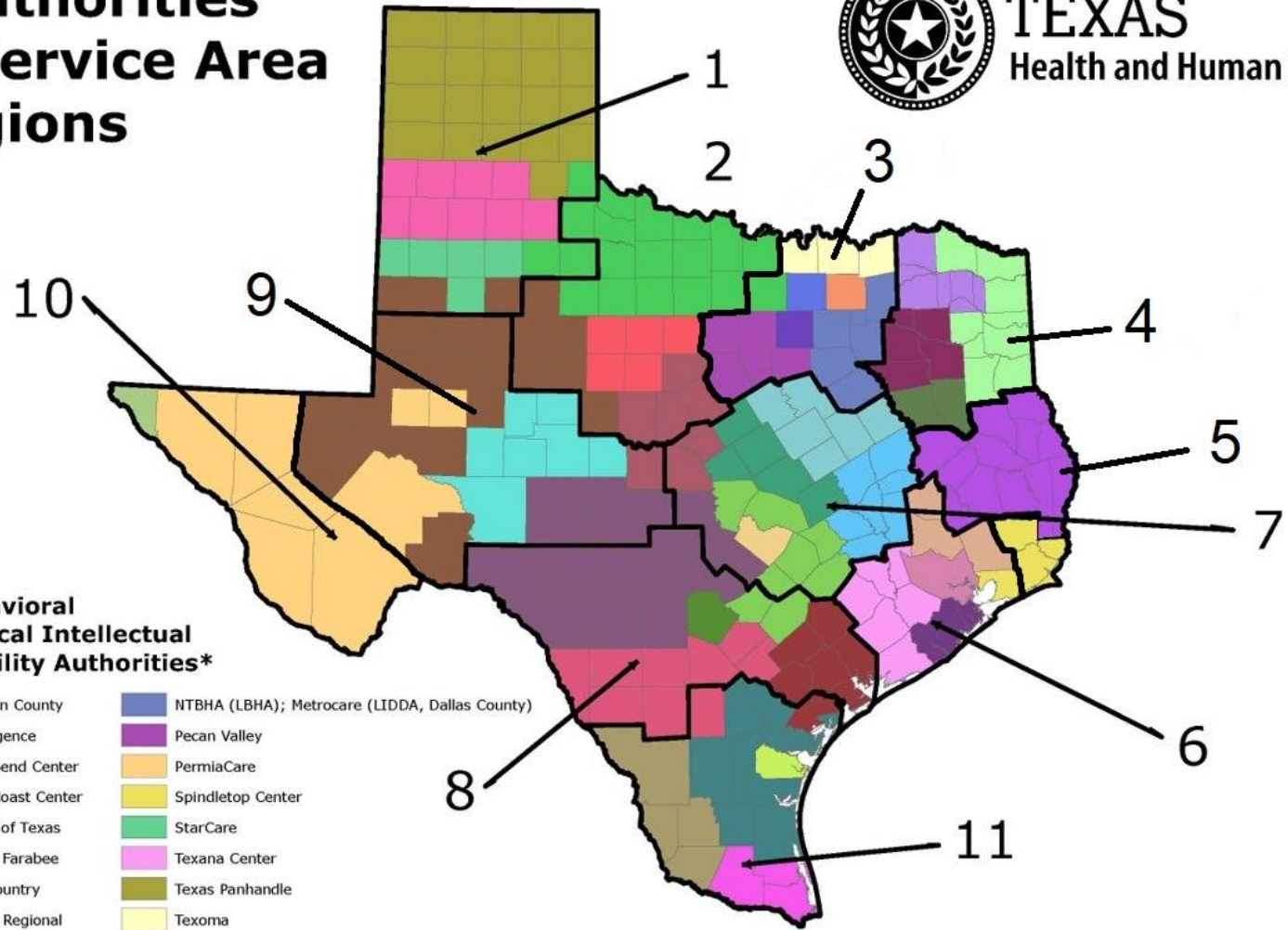
Mass shootings, chemical spills and terrorist attacks



Local Authorities and HHS Service Area Regions



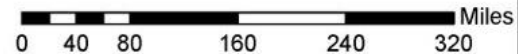
TEXAS
Health and Human Services



Local Mental Health/Behavioral Health Authorities and Local Intellectual and Developmental Disability Authorities*

Health Service Region	Denton County	NTBHA (LBHA); Metrocare (LIDDA, Dallas County)
ACCESS	Emergence	Pecan Valley
Andrews Center	Gulf Bend Center	PermianCare
Integral Care	Gulf Coast Center	Spindletop Center
Betty Hardwick	Heart of Texas	StarCare
Bluebonnet Trails	Helen Farabee	Texana Center
Border Region	Hill Country	Texas Panhandle
Burke Center	Lakes Regional	Texoma
Camino Real	LifePath Systems	Center for Health Care Services (LMHA); Alamo Area Council of Governments (LIDDA)
Center for Life Resources	MHMR Brazos Valley	Tri-County Services
Central Counties	MHMR Concho Valley	Tropical Texas
Central Plains	MHMR Harris County	West Texas Centers
Coastal Plains	MHMR Nueces County	
Community Healthcore	MHMR Tarrant County	

(*authorities overlap except as indicated)



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Source: Health and Human Services Commission, Behavioral Health Services



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State Response Timeline

1. On Sunday, August 4. the incident was declared a local disaster by the city of El Paso.
2. The HHSC Disaster Behavior health team was contacted and mobilized.
3. Network of LMHAs responded and coordinated to work in shifts: Bluebonnet Trails, Tropical Texas , Tarrant MHMR-Trauma informed trained
4. HHSC website landing page was updated to include local service locations and hotline numbers.
5. The Governor's office has granted permission for Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant



Crisis Resource Flyer

Crisis Resources:

El Paso Shooting Aftermath

The tragic incident of mass violence in El Paso has affected that community and the entire country. It is common for all involved to experience emotional distress, including increased anxiety or depression-like symptoms.

Where Can I Get Help?

Crisis Hotline at Emergence Health Network in El Paso

Call 915-779-1800 or toll-free at 877-562-6467 to speak to live support 24/7.

Emergence Health Network

is offering community sessions. Topics and support conducted by licensed clinicians include anxiety, grief and loss, depression, trauma, vicarious trauma and PTSD.

El Paso Strong Counseling Co-op

provides in-person counseling and support. Visit EmergenceHealthNetwork.org to find a clinic time that works for you.

- Daily sessions are being offered at the following locations:
 - **East Valley Clinic**
2400 Trawood Drive, Suite 301, El Paso, TX 79936
 - **CHAMPS**
8500 Boeing Drive, El Paso, TX 79925
 - **El Paso Psychiatric Center**
4615 Alameda Ave., El Paso, TX 79905
 - **University Medical Center – West**
6600 N. Desert Blvd., El Paso, TX 79912
 - **Atlantis Health Services**
6028 Surety Drive, El Paso, TX 79905
- Saturday sessions are offered 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m. at all locations except the Trawood office.

Online Mental Health, Disaster and Violence Resources

MentalHealthTX.org

offers general information about mental health signs, symptoms and interventions, Texas mental health resources and emergency contact information.

Coping with Grief After Community Violence introduces some of the signs of grief and anger after a community violence incident, provides useful information about how to cope with grief, and offers tips for helping children deal with grief.

Incidents of Mass Violence

provides a list of signs of emotional distress signs related to incidents of mass violence, details of lockdown notices and other warnings, and additional coping resources.

The Impact of Disaster and Mass Violence Events on Mental Health

provides common reactions disaster survivors may experience.



Supports Provided

1. Counseling support to victims and impacted community
2. Debriefing to first responders
3. 24/7 call Center live support
4. Web based resources available on LMHA and HHSC websites
5. DBHS provided on site support and connection to other federal resources



Course of Action

Disaster Behavioral Health Services (DBHS)

1. Facilitated conference call with Emergency Health Network and other stakeholders in Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) to determine the status of services and recovery efforts.
2. Is actively working with provider fiscal personnel to track deployment activities and plan for longer term support.
3. Facilitated conference call with CISM teams that will deploy to provide first responder peer support in the coming weeks.
4. Conducted victim needs assessment review and is prepared to submit the results to the Governor's office by Friday August 16, 2019.
5. Daily Situation Reports.



What Have We Learned So Far?

1. Effective Collaboration at the community level before a crisis pays dividends in the time of a crisis.
2. Locally trained and responsive Mental Health resources with ability to partner to provide relief to responders.
3. Planning for and responding to criminal incidents is different than natural disasters.
4. Behavioral health responders need specialized training.
5. Management of spontaneous and well-meaning behavioral health volunteers is a full-time task.
6. Response activities seem to last longer than natural disasters.





Thank you

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