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Community Counseling Solutions recently hired local Crisis Outreach Workers to carry out a Crisis Counseling Program (CCP) in response to the ongoing pandemic. The program is funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (also known as FEMA) through a grant in cooperation with the state to provide outreach and support to community members impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Crisis Counseling Program that we are implementing is aimed at survivor support. It helps people recover and rebuild their lives after a disaster. The Crisis Counseling Program supports short-term interventions that involve counseling goals to include helping disaster survivors understand their current situation and reactions, reducing stress and providing emotional support, promoting the use and development of coping strategies, and connecting survivors with other people and agencies who can help them in their recovery process. It's all about connecting survivors with the resources they need. While the name crisis counseling program insinuates that we are going to be counseling people, that is not the case. None of us are counselors. We are well informed on local resources and how they work in the community and we can use basic assessment tools to help you find the most effective and manageable ways to get back to where you need to be.

We don't have extra funding to offer and we're not implementing any long-term programs. We provide a unique service with the intent of reaching populations who have immediate needs that they struggle to meet due to COVID, as well as those with emerging needs who are not familiar with local resources because they haven't needed to utilize them in the past. We're problem solvers who are looking to help anyone who is struggling, in any way, due to COVID. This can include housing, food, employment, medical care, behavioral healthcare, education or legal services.

Since many of the resources in the community already work together, we are trying to use those existing relationships to best serve our contacts. Our hope is that people will be made more aware of the symptoms of disaster related stress, understand where to go to get help, and therefore be more likely to be proactive about dealing with arising mental health issues, now, and in the future. The program has the potential to provide a trickle-down effect over time, leading the community toward resiliency.

Research has shown that the behavioral health consequences resulting from disasters start with increased anxiety for the first 2-3 months, followed by an increase in depressive symptoms over the next 2-6 months with a spike at 9 months, and an elevated risk of suicide towards the time of the one-year anniversary. We will be adjusting our focus to address these potential changes in the communities we serve, as well carrying out the most effective outreach methods while operating within the guidelines of the state regulations and keeping all interactions anonymous.

In the coming months you will likely hear radio ads and interviews, receive information in the mail, and see new educational information posted around town. This will include all the contact information for how to reach a Crisis

[www.communitycounselingsolutions.org](http://www.communitycounselingsolutions.org)

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Outreach Worker at Community Counseling Solutions, hotline information, and links to the Safe and Strong website where people can get up to date COVID-19 information and explore state level resources. Also available is a new mobile app called "COVID Coach" made specifically for veterans to manage mental health issues related to COVID-19, but a great tool for anyone dealing with stress.

Outreach workers are easy to connect with. Any of the Community Counseling Solutions offices can directly connect you with someone in your local community. We ask a few questions for data collection purposes, but no personal or vital information. It's all free, anonymous, voluntary and follow up is optional. Here are some contacts and resources you might find helpful, whatever you're dealing with.

- Find help locally by connecting with a Crisis Outreach worker through your local Community Counseling Solutions Office
  - Arlington Office: (541) 454-2223
  - Boardman Office: (541) 481-2911
  - Condon Office: (541) 384-3121
  - Fossil Office: (541) 763-2746
  - Heppner Office: (541) 676-9161
  - John Day Office (541) 575-1466
  
- COVID Coach, is a mobile app made specifically to support self-care and overall mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic.  
[https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/COVID\\_coach\\_app.asp](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/COVID_coach_app.asp)
  
- For up to date information on COVID-19 and state resources available to you.  
<https://www.safestrongoregon.org/>
  
- Need someone to talk to?  
Oregon Warmline (non-crisis line for people who just need to talk to someone)  
1-800-698-2392
  
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline  
1-800-273-8255

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