

Thinking of friends and colleagues impacted by disasters

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As public health professionals, we are intimately aware of the impact and effects of disaster. Unfortunately disaster is, at the moment, an all-too-common event. On the heels of massive flooding in Texas and Louisiana from Hurricane Harvey, we are beginning to see the effects of another massive hurricane named Irma. The islands of Barbuda and St. Maarten/St. Martin have so far suffered some of the worst damage, although nearly all communities throughout the Caribbean have been impacted by Irma's wrath. Florida is now in the hurricane's path, and a massive evacuation underway.

As if that weren't enough, a powerful earthquake struck just off the coast of southern Mexico late Thursday while another hurricane, Katia, looms just off the eastern coast. Meanwhile Hurricane Jose gathers strength in the Atlantic.

In the past month monsoon rains in South Asia have impacted at least 41 million people in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, and rain, again, was the cause of a massive mudslide in Sierra Leone. In Oregon, a nearly week-long fire has destroyed thousands of acres of forest.

Disaster is a painful reality of our world. We extend our deep sorrow and shared sympathies to everyone impacted by these and other catastrophic events around the globe. When possible, we respond by giving of our time and our talents, using public health practices and scholarship to address the aftereffects of disaster and prepare for future challenges.

There are many needs in the wake of disaster. The [International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies](#) has a network of 190 local humanitarian organizations, including the American Red Cross. In the days to come, these and

other organizations will be on the ground in disaster zones to offer assistance, care, and recovery.