

Lake County ADAMHS

Disaster

Plan

The Behavioral Health Disaster Plan: When Disaster Strikes

Working together with local, state, and federal partners to provide a strong safety net for our community in times of crisis.

Explore
More



Behavioral Health Disaster Plan: Purpose

1 Introduction and Purpose

The Lake County Board of Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (Lake ADAMHS) plays a critical role in ensuring that Lake County residents have access to behavioral health support during and after disasters. In times of crisis, individuals and communities face significant emotional, psychological, and social challenges that can have lasting impacts on their well-being. This plan establishes a structured, coordinated approach to address those challenges, prioritizing both immediate crisis response and long-term recovery efforts.

Lake ADAMHS operates as part of the county's broader emergency response network, working in close partnership with the Lake County Emergency Management Agency (EMA), the American Red Cross, healthcare providers, non-profit organizations, and various community partners. These collaborations help deliver critical interventions, such as psychological first aid, crisis counseling, and substance use support services, and ensuring timely access to behavioral healthcare for those affected by disasters.

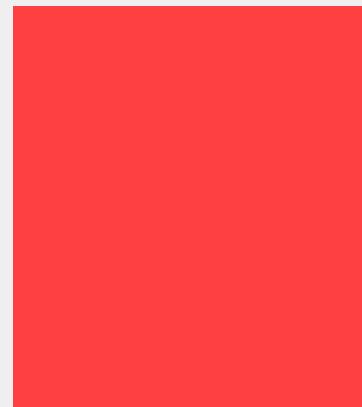
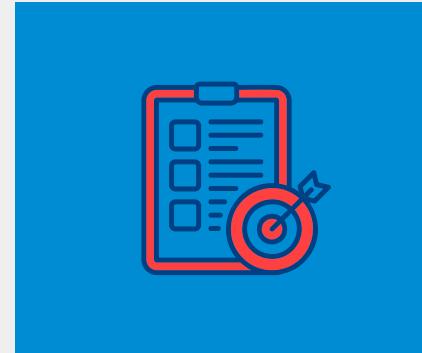


The primary objective of this plan is to:

- 1. Organize internal resources to maintain continuity of care for the most vulnerable individuals within the Lake ADAMHS system, including but not limited to those in residential programs and those reliant on behavioral health medication.**
- 2. Activate a comprehensive, community-based response to provide behavioral health services to the broader Lake County population.**

By coordinating with local partners, Lake ADAMHS strengthens the county's ability to deliver immediate interventions and sustain long-term recovery efforts — fostering resilience, promoting healing, and helping residents rebuild their lives following traumatic events.

Primary Objective



AUTHORITY

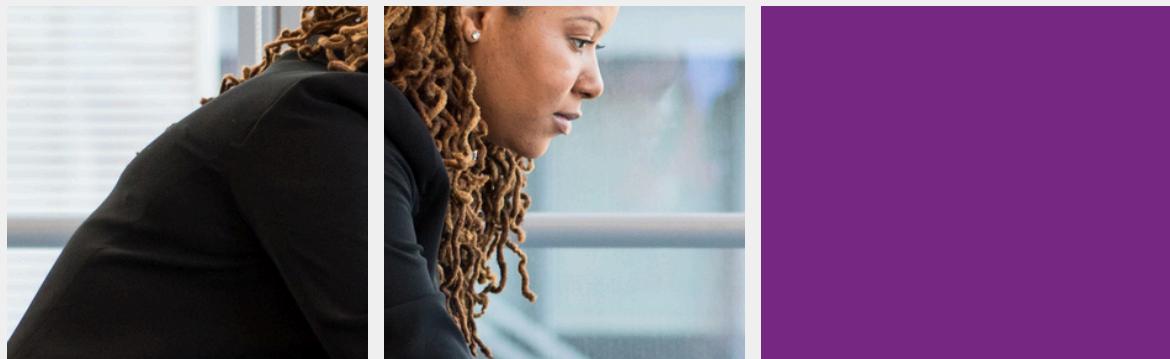
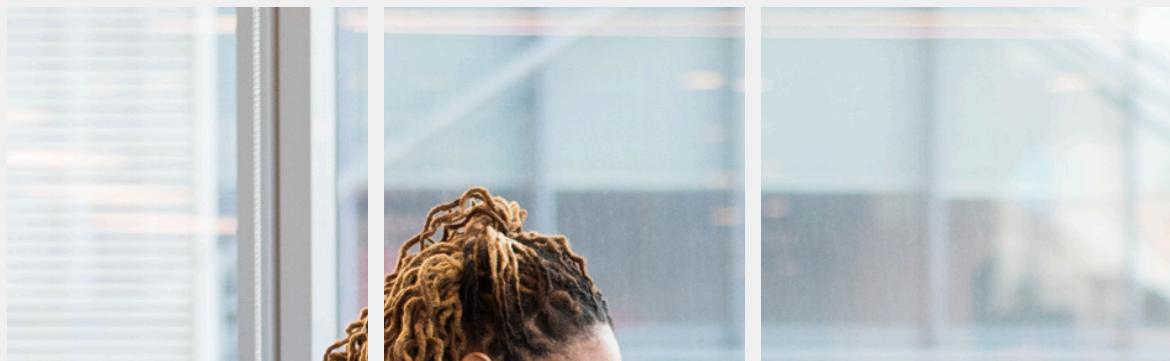
2 Authority

Lake ADAMHS plays a critical role in disaster planning, response, and recovery efforts for Lake County by ensuring that behavioral health needs are effectively addressed during and after disasters. This role is grounded in the Lake ADAMHS' statutory authority under Ohio Revised Code Section 340, which designates ADAMHS Boards as the local planning authority for mental health and addiction services. As part of this mandate, Lake ADAMHS is responsible for the continuity, coordination, and oversight of behavioral health services during emergency situations.

Emotional distress, trauma, and substance use challenges often escalate during crises, making it vital for mental health and addiction services to be seamlessly integrated into broader emergency management strategies.

To ensure an effective and adaptable response, Lake ADAMHS employs a two-pronged approach in its disaster behavioral health efforts:

LEAD



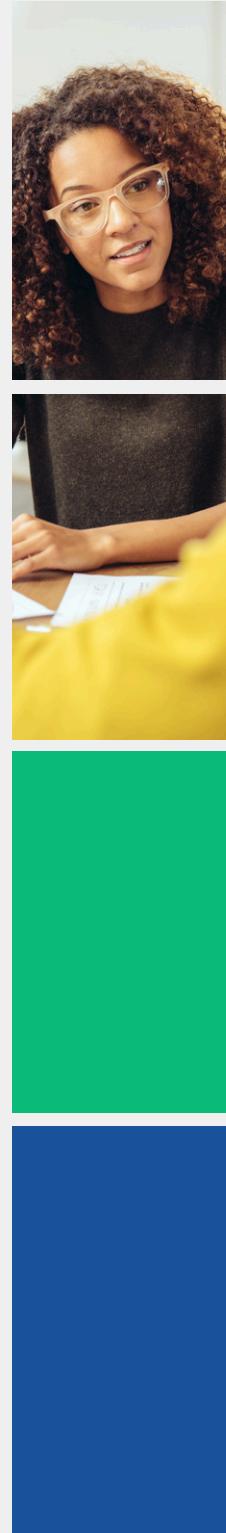
1. During major disasters, Lake ADAMHS' first priority is to stabilize its **Internal System** to ensure that essential behavioral health services remain accessible. This includes:

- **Organizing Internally:** Coordinating leadership, board staff, and board efforts to maintain operational capacity
- **Protecting the Most Vulnerable:** Prioritizing individuals in residential treatment programs and those dependent on essential behavioral health services, including vital medication management.
- **Coordinating Crisis Services:** Lake ADAMHS' network of behavioral health providers plays a vital role in delivering crisis intervention, counseling, and peer support during emergencies.
- **Ensuring Service Continuity:** Behavioral health services, including residential treatment, crisis hotlines, and medication distribution, must continue without interruption during disasters.

2. Once internal stability is secured, Lake ADAMHS shifts its focus to **Community Stabilization**, mobilizing behavioral health resources for the broader community. This is where behavioral health interventions help mitigate emotional distress, prevent the escalation of symptoms, and promote community resilience during recovery efforts. This includes:

- **Strengthening External Coordination:** Aligning efforts with OhioMHAS, state and federal emergency agencies, and local partners to support system-wide resilience.
- **Appointing a Behavioral Health All Hazards Coordinator:** This designated leader serves as the primary point of contact between the county's emergency response teams and the behavioral health system. Conducting impact assessments to determine the scope of behavioral health needs.
- **Developing and activating the Behavioral Health All Hazards Team,** which consists of trained responders providing psychological first aid and crisis counseling.
- Serving as the primary liaison between emergency management officials, healthcare providers, and community partners to ensure a coordinated response.

Through these efforts, Lake ADAMHS ensures that behavioral health remains a central component of emergency planning and disaster relief operations. By integrating mental health and substance use services into disaster response, Lake ADAMHS helps residents navigate the psychological effects of crises, build resilience, and rebuild their lives in the aftermath of traumatic events.



How We Operate

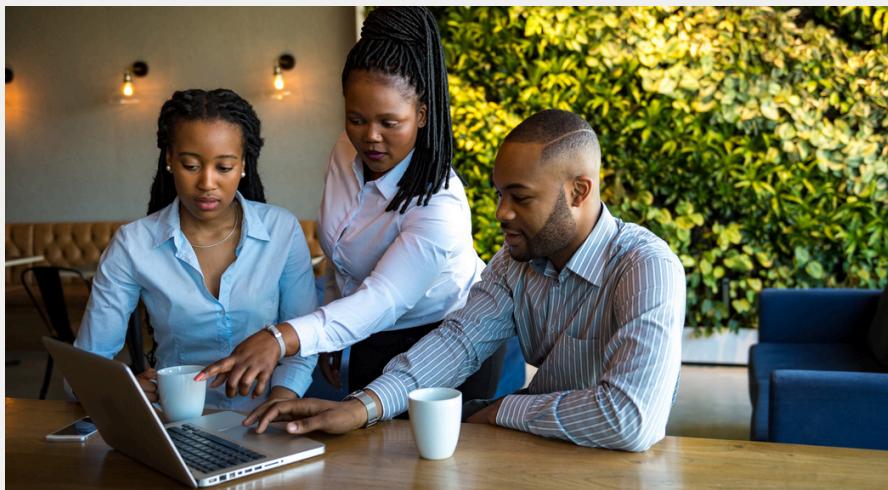
3 How We Operate

Lake ADAMHS operates within a structured framework, adhering to local, state, and federal regulations to ensure a well-coordinated and effective response to disasters.

Risk Factors and Threats

Lake County is susceptible to a wide range of potential disasters, both natural and human-made. These emergencies can lead to significant distress, anxiety, and trauma among residents, necessitating an organized behavioral health response. Some of the key risks include:

- Natural Disasters: Floods, tornadoes, severe winter storms, fires, droughts, and other extreme weather events that can cause widespread devastation.
- Other Emergencies: House and building fires, extended power outages, hazardous materials incidents, transportation accidents, and civil unrest, all of which can disrupt daily life and create mental health challenges.
- War-Related Incidents and Terrorism: Acts of terrorism, cyberattacks, and other security threats that can lead to fear, uncertainty, and psychological distress within the community.
- Pandemic – an epidemic occurring worldwide or over a very wide area.



RISK

Lake ADAMHS actively coordinates with various organizations to ensure that behavioral health services are integrated into emergency response efforts. These partnerships include:

1. Internal System Response: In the immediate aftermath of a disaster,

the primary focus is on stabilizing the Lake ADAMHS system to maintain essential operations and protect those most at risk. Key actions include:

- Organizing internal communications between agencies, community partner, and the EMA.
- Assessing the well-being of individuals in residential programs and ensuring continued access to medications and support services.
- Identifying urgent needs of contracted agencies in the system to maintain service support continuity.
 - i. Coordinating with providers to prioritize services for high-risk clients.
 - ii. Allocating resources to sustain core operations and essential care services.

2. Community-Based Response: Once internal systems are stabilized,

Lake ADAMHS activates its broader community response in coordination with county, state and federal agencies and other community partners. This response includes:

- Deploying crisis intervention services such as psychological first aid and trauma counseling.
- Mobilizing community providers to offer emotional support and substance use services at emergency shelters and community hubs.
- Facilitating referrals to appropriate behavioral health resources.
- Providing public information on coping strategies and available services.
- Supporting long-term recovery efforts by offering ongoing counseling and rehabilitation programs.

By balancing both internal systems and community outreach, Lake ADAMHS helps ensure that residents have access to the behavioral health services they need during and after a disaster. Lake ADAMHS plays a crucial role in fostering community resilience, reducing long-term psychological harm, and helping individuals and families recover from traumatic events.

Activating the Plan

4 Activating the Plan

When a disaster occurs, Lake ADAMHS initiates a structured response to protect the well-being of both its internal system and the broader community. This activation follows a two-pronged approach that prioritizes:

1. Internal Procedures: Lake ADAMHS' internal response is the first priority, focused on protecting the stability of its service network and the well-being of high-risk individuals. Key actions include:

- **Impact Assessment:** Lake ADAMHS will assess the disaster's scope, identify at-risk populations, determine service disruptions, and the need for crisis support.
- **Operational Continuity:** Policies and funding mechanisms will be activated to maintain essential functions, particularly for residential services and medication access.

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Coordinate
Efforts



Work
Smart

continued...

- **Leadership Communication:** The Executive Director will oversee communications with board staff, board members, and behavioral health contract provider executive directors.
 - To notify the disaster response implementation, the Lake ADAMHS Executive Director will utilize email as the primary communication method. If email is unavailable due to technical limitations or other barriers, the Lake ADAMHS Management Team will be tasked with disseminating the information to their direct reports, ensuring that all personnel receive timely and accurate updates regarding their roles and responsibilities.
 - If the Executive Director is unavailable, then the Director of Business Operations will assume these duties.
- **Agency Coordination:** The Director of Quality & Clinical Operations will notify behavioral health contract provider site supervisors and the Trauma Response Team to prepare for service activation. Operational evaluations and protocols will be continuously assessed based on the level of disruption caused by the event.
- **Funding & Resource Mobilization:** Lake ADAMHS will ensure flexibility in funding and have mechanisms in place to utilize funding streams for emergent needs during a declared disaster.



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- **Public Information:** The Lake ADAMHS' Director of Marketing & Communications will issue updates through media, social platforms, and community networks. Lake ADAMHS works closely with multiple agencies and organizations, including but not limited to:
 - Lake County Trauma Response Team
 - Lake County behavioral health contract provider agencies
 - Lake County Commissioners and all county departments and agencies
 - Lake County educational services
 - Lake County United Way
 - Northeast Ohio American Red Cross
 - Lake County Sheriff's Office and other local law enforcement agencies
 - University Hospitals, Windsor Laurelwood Center for behavioral medicine, and the Cleveland Clinic Hospital
 - Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
 - Other state departments
 - Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
 - Federal Health Agencies
 - Federal Emergency Management Agency
 - Federal Bureau of Investigation

2. External and Multi-Systemic Procedures: Once internal systems are stabilized, Lake ADAMHS shifts its focus to a comprehensive, multi-tiered behavioral health response in partnership with local, state, and federal agencies, as well as contracted providers. This approach ensures that behavioral health services are seamlessly integrated into the broader disaster response framework. Key actions include:

- **Activation of Behavioral Health Services:** The Behavioral Health All Hazards Team, composed of trained clinicians and volunteers, will be deployed to shelters, hospitals, and community hubs to provide crisis intervention and emotional support.
- **Site Supervision:** Behavioral Health Site Supervisors will assess needs, identify high-risk populations, and oversee crisis interventions at designated locations.
- **Emergency Coordination & Partner Communication:** Contract provider agencies will report updates to the Director of Quality & Clinical Operations, who will serve as the primary liaison between agencies. A regularly updated contact list of community partners and contract providers will be maintained by Lake ADAMHS. Situational updates will be shared in real-time to align mental health interventions with broader emergency management strategies.

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- **Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Participation:** The Executive Director or the designated Behavioral Health All Hazards Coordinator will represent Lake ADAMHS at the EOC, ensuring behavioral health needs are prioritized. Upon activation, a representative will report to the EOC's central hub for disaster response management.
- **Government Communication:** The Executive Director will maintain ongoing contact with county, state, and federal agencies, including Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), to advocate for resources and align strategies.
- **Regional Collaboration:** If additional resources are needed, the Northeast Ohio Regional Collaborative—a strategic support network comprising six neighboring counties—will be activated to facilitate the sharing of resources, expertise, and support.
- **Ongoing Support & Recovery:** Behavioral health teams will transition from immediate crisis response to long-term recovery services, offering counseling, peer support, and referrals as needed.
- **Continuous Monitoring & Improvement:** Regular updates will be provided to the EOC, with adjustments made based on emerging needs. After each disaster, Lake ADAMHS will collect data, gather feedback, and refine its response protocols to enhance future preparedness and resilience.

By following this structured activation process, Lake ADAMHS ensures that behavioral health remains central to both immediate disaster relief and long-term community recovery. This two-pronged approach allows Lake ADAMHS to protect its internal system while offering critical support to the broader Lake County community.

(Internal Policies and Procedures detail Step-by-Step System Activation Process).





ROLES

Roles & Responsibilities

5 Roles & Responsibilities

Once the Lake County Behavioral Health Disaster Response Plan is activated, Lake ADAMHS, in collaboration with the Behavioral Health All Hazards Coordinator and the Behavioral Health All Hazards Team, will implement a comprehensive support system to address the mental health and emotional well-being of individuals impacted by the disaster. This coordinated approach prioritizes the delivery of behavioral health services to affected residents, emergency responders, and the broader community throughout the crisis response and recovery process. The key roles and responsibilities include:

- **Consultation and Strategic Planning**
 - The Executive Director and Behavioral Health All Hazards Coordinator will collaborate with emergency planners, government officials, and community partners to ensure that behavioral health services are fully integrated into disaster response operations.
 - Expert guidance will be provided to decision-makers on the allocation of resources, identification of behavioral health service locations, and development of trauma-informed crisis response protocols.
 - Recommendation strategies will be provided to prioritize vulnerable populations and ensure that mental health needs are considered at every stage of disaster management.

- **Crisis Counseling and Emotional Support**

- Licensed mental health professionals and trained crisis counselors will provide immediate emotional support and psychological first aid to individuals experiencing distress, trauma, or grief.
- Services will be offered to a wide range of individuals, including:
 - **Survivors and Victims:** Displaced individuals, those injured, and families grieving the loss of loved ones.
 - **First Responders and Emergency Personnel:** Firefighters, police officers, paramedics, and others at risk of emotional exhaustion or secondary trauma.
 - **Community Leaders and Volunteers:** Those involved in relief efforts who may need support for emotional resilience.
- Crisis counseling will be accessible at shelters, hospitals, family assistance centers, and other critical locations.

- **Psychological Debriefing and Defusing**

- Structured debriefing sessions will be offered to first responders, volunteers, and community members to help them process their experiences and reduce the risk of long-term psychological distress.
- Defusing interventions will provide early emotional support to individuals showing acute stress reactions, helping mitigate the risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or other mental health conditions.
- Debriefing sessions will promote peer support, healthy coping strategies, and community resilience.



- **Education, Training, and Public Awareness**
 - The Behavioral Health All Hazards Team will provide training to emergency responders, volunteers, and community partners on:
 - Psychological first aid
 - Recognizing emotional distress
 - Coping strategies
 - Trauma-informed care principles
 - Public education campaigns will raise awareness of common emotional responses to disaster-related stress and promote help-seeking behaviors.
 - Educational materials will be distributed through brochures, social media, community presentations, and partnerships with local organizations.
- **Support for At-Risk and Vulnerable Populations:** Special attention will be given to:
 - **Individuals with Pre-Existing Mental Health Conditions:** Coordination with providers to maintain continuity of care.
 - **Children and Adolescents:** Age-appropriate interventions to help young individuals process trauma.
 - **Older Adults:** Outreach and support to combat isolation and address mobility or health challenges.
 - **People with Disabilities:** Specialized services to accommodate physical, cognitive, and sensory needs.
 - **Low-Income and Underserved Communities:** Ensuring equitable access to behavioral health services.
 - **Residential Facilities:** Lake ADAMHS will maintain an up-to-date registry of all ADAMHS-funded residential facilities, including facility locations, capacity, emergency protocols, and backup locations.
 - The Behavioral Health All Hazards Coordinator will serve as the liaison to coordinate emergency medication management and resident care during disasters.
 - Behavioral health teams will partner with community organizations, faith-based groups, and social service agencies to ensure targeted outreach and support.



- **Long-Term Recovery and Follow-Up**

- Lake ADAMHS will support long-term recovery efforts by offering continued counseling services, peer support groups, and referrals to ongoing mental health care.
- Follow-up assessments will identify residents requiring extended support and connect them to appropriate services.
- A post-disaster mental health assessment will evaluate the effectiveness of the response, gathering data to inform future emergency preparedness efforts and improve the county's disaster behavioral health framework.



Through this multi-faceted approach, Lake ADAMHS ensures that the behavioral health needs of Lake County residents remain a priority during all phases of disaster management. By emphasizing consultation, crisis intervention, debriefing, education, and targeted outreach, Lake ADAMHS plays a vital role in helping the community cope, recover, and build resilience in the aftermath of disasters.



RECOVERY

Evaluation and Updates

6 Evaluation & Updates

To ensure the Lake County Behavioral Health Disaster Response Plan remains effective, adaptable, and aligned with best practices, Lake ADAMHS, in collaboration with the Behavioral Health All Hazards Coordinator, will conduct a comprehensive review at least once per year. This ongoing evaluation process supports the two-pronged approach of disaster preparedness and response by continuously enhancing the Lake ADAMHS' ability to meet the mental health needs of residents during crises.

1. Annual Full-Scale Plan Review

- The Lake ADAMHS Executive Director and Behavioral Health All Hazards Coordinator will lead an annual review of the entire disaster response plan.
- This evaluation will include:
 - Analyzing the effectiveness of previous disaster responses, including strengths and gaps in implementation.
 - Identifying emerging risks and threats, such as public health emergencies, environmental changes, or increased vulnerabilities in the community.
 - Ensuring compliance with local, state, and federal regulations, including updates to emergency management policies and behavioral health protocols.
 - Consulting with emergency planners, community leaders, and behavioral health professionals to gain diverse perspectives on plan effectiveness.
 - Incorporating lessons learned from drills, real-world emergencies, and community feedback.



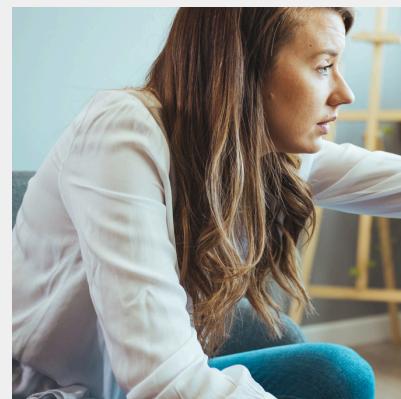
2. Identifying Gaps and Implementing Improvements

- Systematic evaluation will focus on identifying problem areas that may arise during both training exercises and actual emergency responses, including:
 - Communication delays between behavioral health teams and emergency response partners.
 - Gaps in service delivery to vulnerable populations or underserved areas.
 - Barriers to rapid mobilization of the Behavioral Health All Hazards Team.
- Once gaps are identified, Lake ADAMHS will develop corrective action plans and adjust protocols to ensure more effective future responses.

3. Response Team Training and Preparedness

- Regular training sessions and simulation exercises will be conducted to reinforce the roles, responsibilities, and coordination protocols of all personnel involved in the disaster response.
- Training will include:
 - Psychological first aid and crisis counseling techniques.
 - Trauma-informed care approaches.
 - Deployment procedures and rapid response protocols.
 - Cultural competency to better serve diverse populations.
 - Scenario-based drills that simulate a range of disaster types, including natural disasters, public health crises, and mass casualty events.

Identifying
Gaps



4. Updating Contact Information and Procedures

- Lake ADAMHS will maintain an up-to-date registry of:
 - Behavioral health response team members.
 - Local emergency personnel.
 - Lake ADAMHS-funded residential facilities and their points of contact.
 - Community partners, including hospitals, support service agencies, and non-profits.
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) will be regularly updated to reflect:
 - Changes in communication protocols and command structures.
 - New response team assignments.
 - Resource allocation procedures.

5. Community Collaboration and Feedback

- Lake ADAMHS will host annual stakeholder meetings to:
 - Engage community partners, emergency responders, and non-profit agencies in the evaluation process.
 - Review lessons learned from past exercises and emergencies.
 - Collect input on how to improve the integration of behavioral health services in disaster response.
- Feedback will also be gathered from survivors and community members to ensure that the plan reflects the lived experiences and needs of those affected by disasters.

6. Ongoing Updates Triggered by Key Events

In addition to the annual review, Lake ADAMHS will update the disaster response plan as needed based on:

- Results from training exercises and drills.
- Post-disaster debriefings and evaluations following real emergency responses.
- Changes in key personnel or leadership roles.
- Policy or regulatory changes at the local, state, or federal level.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

Through this structured evaluation process, Lake ADAMHS maintains a dynamic, evidence-based disaster response plan that evolves to meet the changing needs of the community. By prioritizing proactive training, community partnerships, and ongoing review, Lake ADAMHS enhances Lake County's overall emergency preparedness and ensures that behavioral health remains central to disaster response efforts. This commitment to continuous improvement strengthens the county's resilience and supports the long-term recovery and well-being of residents in times of crisis.

Lake County Trauma Response Team



Trauma Response Team

The Lake County Trauma Response Team (LCTR) is a collaborative network of behavioral health agencies committed to delivering immediate and sustained trauma-informed support to individuals and groups affected by critical incidents. These events may include natural disasters, workplace crises, community violence, tragic accidents, or other traumatic occurrences that significantly impact emotional and psychological well-being.

To ensure a structured and effective response, the LCTR follows a two-pronged approach:

- 1. Internal System Response** – Ensuring that behavioral health providers, first responders, and key stakeholders are organized and prepared to conduct trauma-informed care.
- 2. Community-Based Response** – Deploying direct crisis intervention to the community with long-term recovery services and public education of area support services to affected individuals and groups.

- 1. Internal System Response:** LCTR prioritizes strengthening the behavioral health system's internal capacity to ensure a rapid and effective trauma response.
 - Coordinating Behavioral Health Providers:** Organizing a unified trauma response network among mental health agencies, hospitals, and crisis teams.
 - Ensuring Service Continuity:** Maintaining accessibility to crisis counseling, medication management, and emergency behavioral health services for affected populations.
 - Training First Responders & Healthcare Providers:** Conducting annual trauma-informed care, crisis intervention, and disaster psychology training for LCTR members and key response personnel.
 - Developing Crisis Communication Protocols:** Establishing clear internal communication strategies to streamline coordination between behavioral health providers and emergency management agencies.
 - Protecting Behavioral Health Records:** Ensuring compliance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and other legal frameworks to safeguard patient confidentiality during crisis interventions.

2. Community-Based Response: LCTR mobilizes trauma response efforts to directly assist individuals and communities during and after a crisis.

- **Deploying Crisis Teams:** Activating trained professionals to provide psychological first aid, immediate counseling, and peer support at emergency sites.
- **Establishing Community Resource Access:** Connecting affected individuals to mental health services, crisis hotlines, shelters, and financial assistance programs for sustained recovery.
- **Enhancing Public Awareness & Accessibility:** Conducting outreach initiatives to educate residents on available trauma support services through schools, workplaces, law enforcement, and community organizations.
- **Ensuring Early Identification & Intervention:** Training community members to recognize psychological distress, apply de-escalation techniques, and seek professional support early.
- **Standardizing Trauma Response Training:** Implementing a shared language, best practices, and coordinated training programs to ensure consistency among all responding agencies.
- **Strengthening Multi-Agency Collaboration:** Hosting regular interagency meetings, crisis simulations, and coordinated response planning sessions with first responders, healthcare professionals, and social service providers.

By maintaining this two-pronged approach, the LCTR ensures that both internal behavioral health system preparedness and community-based trauma response remain a central focus in disaster planning and recovery. This strategy enhances Lake County's ability to respond efficiently, promote resilience, and support long-term healing in the aftermath of traumatic events.



Supplemental Disaster Services



Supplimental Disaster Services

In addition to the Trauma Response Team, which provides both large- and small-scale support, Lake County offers a range of supplemental disaster response and crisis intervention services designed to meet the diverse needs of the community. These services include:

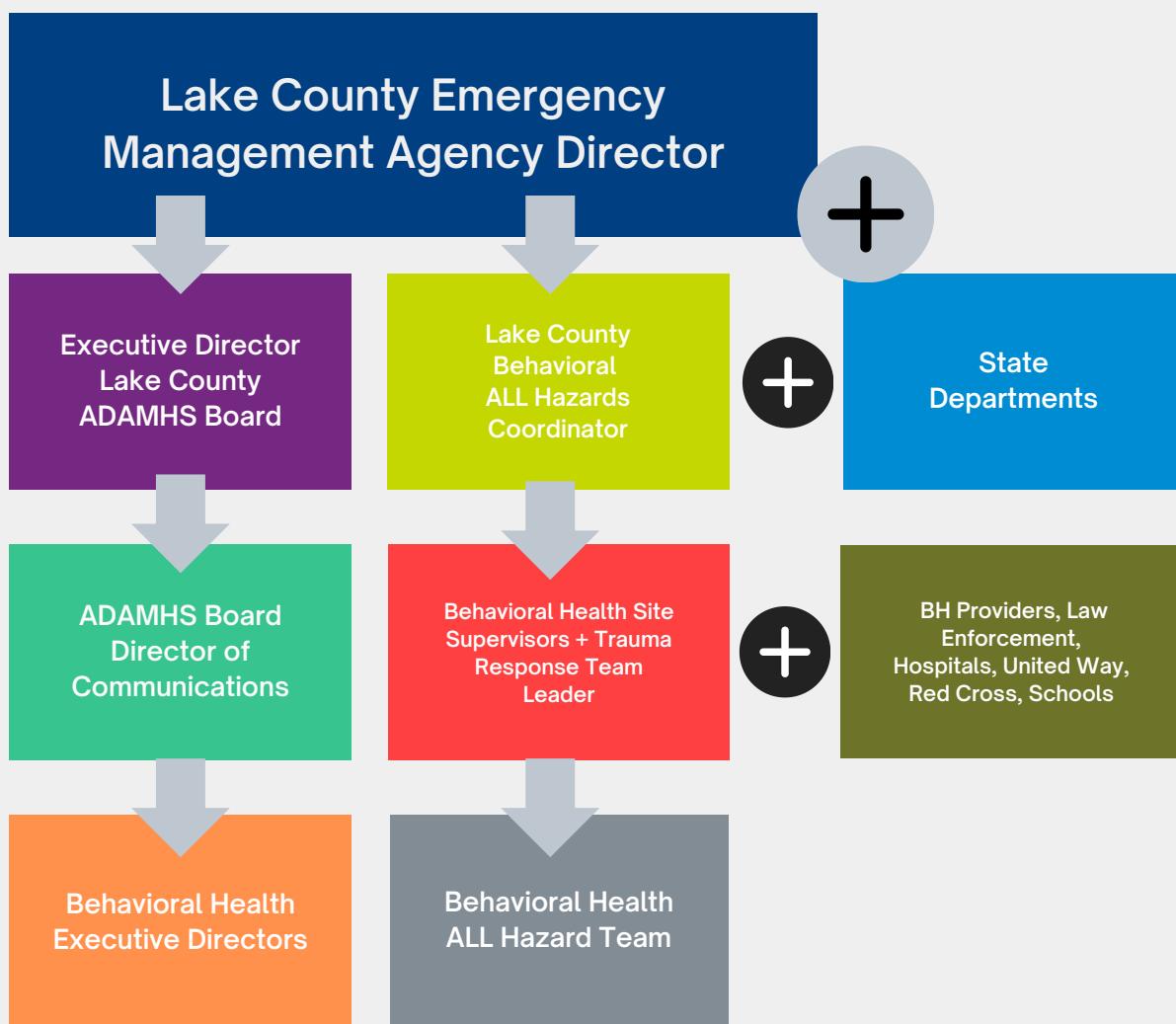
- **Code Blue Protocol** – A coordinated emergency response initiative that provides shelter for Lake County's unhoused population when winter conditions become life-threatening. This protocol ensures that individuals facing extreme cold have access to safe and secure accommodations.
- **Crisis Continuum** – Specialized mental health crisis intervention services available to Lake County residents in need of immediate support. The Lake ADAMHS' crisis continuum includes someone to talk to, someone to respond, and a place to go. These services provide face-to-face and/or telephone assistance, offering crisis intervention support in various settings, including private residences, community spaces, and local agencies or facilities.
- **First Responder Wellness** – A comprehensive support system dedicated to promoting the well-being of first responders. This program offers a range of services, including clinical support, a 24-hour helpline, counseling, peer support, psychiatric services, yoga classes, and crisis intervention training. These resources are designed to help first responders manage stress, enhance resilience, and maintain overall wellness while serving the community.



Notification Tree

+ Trauma Response Team

Lake County ADAMHS Board Behavioral Health Disaster Plan
Notification Tree.



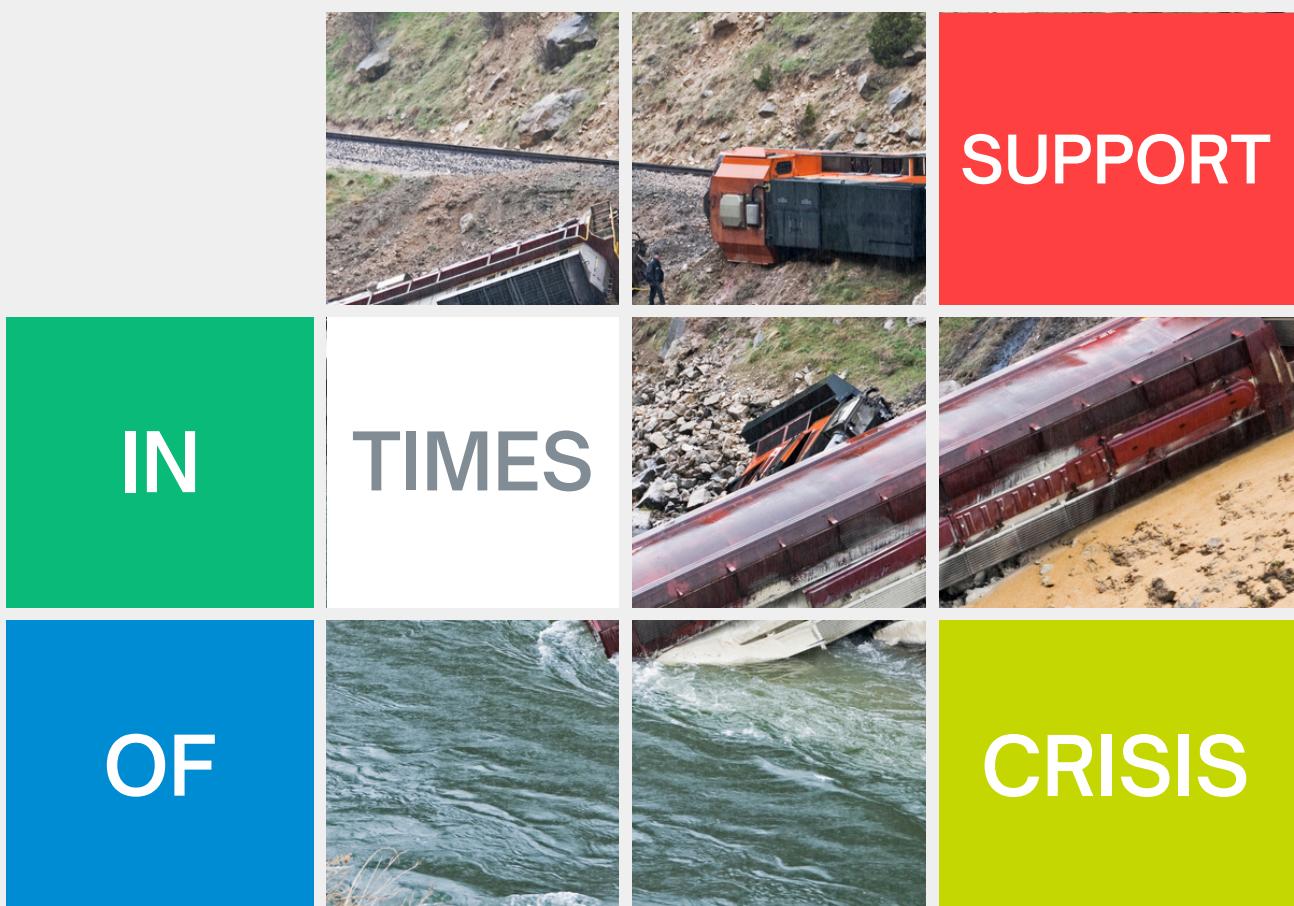


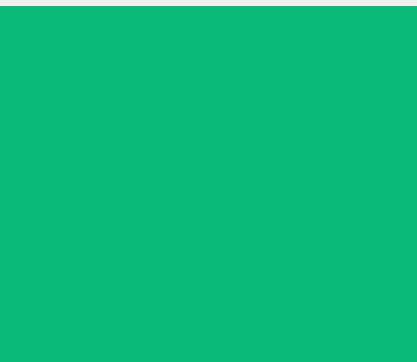
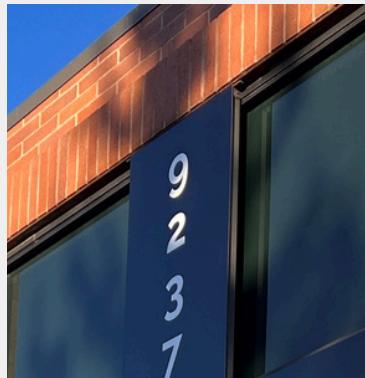
Commitment

Supporting Residents in Times of Crisis

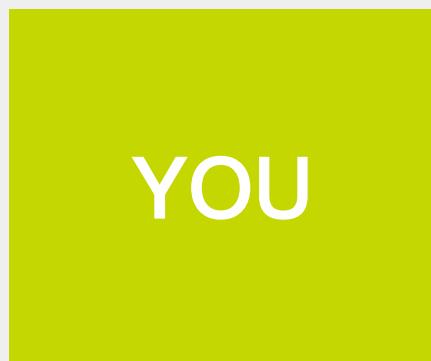
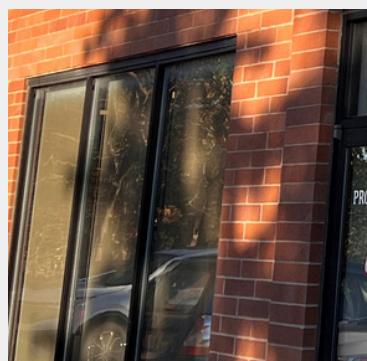
Through a structured and two-pronged approach, Lake County remains steadfast in its mission to protect and support both the internal behavioral health system and the broader community in times of crisis. By ensuring internal preparedness among providers and first responders while also mobilizing community-based trauma response services, the Lake ADAMHS Disaster Plan strengthens the county's ability to manage emergencies effectively.

Through enhanced crisis coordination, proactive training, accessible trauma resources, and multi-agency collaboration, this plan ensures that individuals, families, and organizations receive the support they need to stabilize, recover, and rebuild. By prioritizing both system-level resilience and direct community intervention, Lake County fosters a responsive and compassionate framework for navigating the challenges of disaster and trauma.





THANK



YOU

Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to review our Emergency Disaster Plan. Your commitment to preparedness and safety is invaluable in ensuring that we can respond effectively in times of crisis.

By familiarizing yourself with this plan, you are helping to create a safer environment for everyone.

 440-350-3117

 9237 Mentor Ave. Unit B, Mentor, OH 44060

 www.HelpThatWorks.us