

Dear Net Connection members and other local mental health professionals,

We are so grieved with the recent tragedy at Fort Hood when Major Nidal Malik Hasan opened fire on his fellow comrades. And in the wake of this tragedy the Net Connection has received several inquiries about how our members, who are so geographically close to Fort Hood, may serve the military families and community affected by this tragedy. Thus, we began to research how to facilitate volunteering for those who are so eager to serve those who have fought for our freedom. And while we wait for possible access to serve, the most organized route that we have found is through the National Association of Social Workers/Texas Chapter. Please note the following letter, posted at www.naswtx.org, written by the Executive Director of NASW/TX, Vicki Hansen, LMSW-AP, ACSW. And please pay special attention to the section “What Can You Do?”

NASW/Texas Responds to the Fort Hood Tragedy

November 6, 2009

Our hearts go out to all of those affected by the tragedy at Fort Hood on November 5, 2009. Although we are far away from having the final facts, there are things we know.

This tragedy will have far reaching effects. The shooting was a stone thrown in a pond that will send ripples beyond the base, beyond Killeen, beyond Texas, and beyond the United States. We know that the military and veterans groups have been struggling with stresses brought on by multiple deployments, fractured family and work lives, the physical and emotional damage caused by their service.

What is different is the growing “threat from within.” Suicide and violence among those in service is on the rise. The Fort Hood tragedy raises the bar to an unimaginable level bringing fear directly onto our military bases in the way the Columbine brought fear onto school campuses.

NASW/Texas began reaching out within hours of the shooting with offers of assistance. The commanders at the base know we are ready to help; the 2-1-1 system knows we are ready to help; the DSHS Disaster Response System knows we are ready to help. We have reached out to a number of our members who have expertise in working with individuals in the military.

What can you do?

Go to www.helpstartshere.org and review the information “Coping with Trauma”. Under “Issues and Answers” there is a section on working with veterans that provides some good overview information. Go to www.naswtx.org and review the Resources under our Emergency Preparedness and Response section. Email me at vhansen@naswtx.org with the subject line “Fort Hood” if you are experienced in dealing with grief and trauma and are willing to provide pro-bono counseling to individuals, families, children, or groups.

Please provide me with your name, address, phone number, email, license & credentials and what you can offer. It is my assumption that there will be needs across the state. Please be patient – it may take some time to get past the immediate crisis before the needs emerge.

Thank you for all you do,
Vicki Hansen, LMSW-AP, ACSW
Executive Director, NASW/Texas

And I encourage those of you who are trained in critical incident debriefing, PTSD, grief & loss, etc., to email Vicki to volunteer your time to serve those who valiantly serve us every day. In the subject line, please list “Fort Hood.” And within the body of your e-mail, please note that you are with The Net Connection. I shall email her now. And I look forward to serving with you in the near future.

Grieved, Inspired, Committed,
Leah Wilson McDill, Ph.D., LPC-S
The Net Connection, Co-Founder & President