

JULY/AUGUST 2013



# Ascension Counseling Center

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## Coping With Disaster

Many people were affected by both the Williams and CF events. With these types of events, there is a ripple effect. Those most deeply affected are the families of those who lost their lives and those who were injured and their families. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. Those who witnessed the event and the injuries it caused to others are also affected, as well as anyone who works at the plant. Finally, people who work at other plants and those who live in the surrounding community will also be affected. Anyone with anxiety or depression may find that their symptoms get worse in the coming months. Everyone will have different reactions based on their own internal thoughts and feelings about the event. Immediately after a trauma people feel numb and may not experience any negative symptoms for up to 6 months following the event. It is normal if you or your family members are worried about going back to work in a plant or about living near a plant. Try some of these tips to help you cope:

- As soon as you notice that you are worrying, try to derail those thoughts. Think or say the word “Stop” and deliberately begin to think of something positive.
- If you find yourself getting physically tense, take several deep breaths, counting slowly to 10 as you inhale and exhale.
- Talk to someone who will understand, such as family, friends, co-workers, or spiritual leader. People who were injured or witnessed the event often just need to tell their story over and over in order to heal.
- Know that once you get back into your regular routine things will gradually begin to feel routine again. Give yourself some time. Things will gradually return to normal. If you still feel bothered after 6 months, you may be experiencing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). See below for more information.
- Ask for help from your Human Resources Department. Check to see if they have an Employee Assistance Program or other assistance.
- Monitor your alcohol, smoking, eating, and substance use. Don’t let them get out of control in an attempt to cope.
- Watch your irritability. It’s normal to get angry more often, even over things that have never bothered you before.

# Coping With Disaster

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder may occur when anyone is exposed to, witnesses, or learns about a life threatening event. Symptoms may occur immediately or up to as long as 6 months after the event, and may include one or more of the following:

- Distressing memories or dreams about the event
- Flashbacks in which you feel or act as if the event were re-occurring
- Intense distress when exposed to things that remind you of the event
- Avoiding things that remind you of the event
- Negative alterations of the event, such as not being able to remember parts of the event
- Exaggerated negative beliefs (“The world is completely dangerous.”)
- A drop in interest or not participating in things you used to enjoy.
- Isolating yourself from others
- Unable to experience positive emotions
- Verbal or physical aggression towards objects or people
- Reckless or self-destructive behavior
- Hyper-vigilance, which is always being alert to signs of danger
- Startle easily
- Sleep disturbance
- Problems concentrating

If you find yourself experiencing any of these symptoms and having trouble coping or if you just want to tell your story, please call Ascension Counseling Center at 450-1158. Ascension Counseling is a department of Ascension Parish Government because we are supported in part by a property tax millage. Our counselors have training and experience in helping people just like you to handle their worry, anxiety and depression by increasing their coping skills.

## Clinic News

### ACC Meets with Referral Sources

Our Agency has begun having a series of meetings with agencies and individuals who refer clients to us. These can include the probation and parole departments, Ascension Parish Schools, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District Courts, FINS/TASC, and more. We have several goals. First, we want to make sure that you have the materials you need to make it easy to refer people to us. We'll get you some new forms with our new phone numbers. Next, we want to ensure that the referral process is easy for you and find out what we can do better. We also want to find out how we can communicate our findings to you in a more user friendly way. And we want to get your feedback on the quality of the services we provide, how easy we are to work with, and whether you are getting what you need from us.

## Community Event

### St. Elizabeth's Kid Fest

Ascension Counseling Center will be participating in the St. Elizabeth's Kid Fest. Our Counselors will be presenting on childhood mental health and substance abuse. Kid Fest is Saturday, August 17th from 9:00 am– 1:00 pm at the Lamar Dixon Gym. Admission is free.

## ACC Staff Attends Trainings

### Suzanne Hamilton Attends Active Shooter Workshop

- Suzanne Hamilton, Director attended the Active Shooter Workshop conducted by the Gonzales Police Department. Participants learned how to prepare for and manage a situation where an individual might enter the building with a gun or other weapon and the intent to harm others. They also learned the indicators of possibility of violence by an employee.

### Ryan Schuette completes Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy training

- Ryan Schuette, LPC-I completed the Trauma-Focused CBT training online. The treatment helps children who have been abused learn how to cope with and heal the abuse. The goal of TF-CBT is that children will move forward without the lifelong damaging effects that abuse can cause.

## ACC Welcomes New Counselor

- Ava Gerald is the new Mental Health Counselor at Ascension Counseling Center. Ava received her Bachelor of General Studies degree at LSU and her Master of Education - Counseling degree from Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor and a Nationally Certified Counselor. Ava was employed with St. James Behavioral Health Outpatient Services for 2 ½ years. While at St. James Behavioral Health Outpatient Services, Ava facilitated group and individual counseling for mental health clients. Ava has also completed internships at Child Advocacy Services in Hammond and Denham Springs and with her supervisor in his private practice.

## ACC Welcomes New Interns

- Tatiyana Curry attends school at Nicholls State University, which is located in Thibodaux, LA. Tatiyana is on track to graduate December 2013 with a Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Her goal while interning at Ascension Counseling Center is to develop her counseling skills with children. She would also like to focus on adolescents and couples. Nicholls State University's Clinical Mental Health Counseling graduate program helps students develop the counseling skills needed to serve different client populations in a variety of settings. Students get hands-on experience through the on-campus Counselor Training Clinic and an externship. The curriculum also focuses on administering and interpreting psychological tests as well as using research techniques to solve practical counseling problems. Students also learn to practice clinical mental health counseling in a manner consistent with the ethical standards of the field.
- Myeaka Rousseau attends Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, Louisiana. She is seeking a Master's of Education in Counselor Education and is in the first semester of internship. Her goals while at Ascension Parish Counseling Center are essentially to enhance her counseling skills and increase her knowledge about the ins and outs of a counseling facility. Ascension Counseling Center provides her with ample opportunity to learn and grow. Her time spent here is valuable and she plans to gain as much experience as possible by observing sessions, sitting in on groups and consulting with supervisors as often as possible.

[www.AscensionParish.Net/MH](http://www.AscensionParish.Net/MH)

### Ascension Counseling Center

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**HELPING INDIVIDUALS AND  
FAMILIES CHANGE BEHAVIORS,  
CHANGE LIVES.**

## MONTHLY EVENTS

### Mondays:

- **Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group**, 4 - 6 pm & 6 - 8 pm, Gonzales.
- **Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment group**, 4 - 6 pm, Gonzales.

### Tuesdays:

- **Women's Empowerment Group**, 10 - 11:30 am, Gonzales.
- **Nurturing Parenting, adult & children groups**: 5 - 7:30 pm, Gonzales.
- **Anger Management Class**, 4 - 5 pm, Gonzales.
- **Stop Smoking group**, 4 - 6 pm, Gonzales
- **Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group**, 6 - 8 pm, Gonzales.

### Wednesdays:

- **Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group**: 1 pm, Donaldsonville.
- **Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment group**, 3 - 4 pm, Donaldsonville.
- **Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group**: 4 - 6 pm & 6 - 8 pm, Gonzales.
- **Living Strong Cancer Survivors group**, 3 - 4 pm, Donaldsonville. 2nd Wed of each month.
- **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren**, 10:30 am - noon, lunch provided, Donaldsonville, 3rd Wed of each month

### Thursdays:

- **Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group**: 6 - 8 pm, Gonzales.
- **Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment group**, 4 - 6 pm, Gonzales.
- **Anxiety Reduction group**: 4 - 5 pm, Gonzales.

Ascension Counseling Center provides comprehensive therapeutic services to individuals and families in an effort to foster healthy coping skills that will improve their quality of life.

### HOURS

#### Gonzales:

##### **Business Hours**

Mon - Thur: 8 am - 5:30 pm; Fri: 8 am - noon

##### **Counseling Hours**

Mon - Thur: 7 am - 8 pm; Fri: 8 am - noon

##### **Psychiatrist Hours**

Monday and Tuesday: 8 am - 6 pm

#### Donaldsonville:

##### **Business Hours**

Wednesday: 7:30 am - 5:30 pm

##### **Counseling Hours**

Wednesday: 7:30 am - 5:30 pm

