

The aftermath of Katrina through the eyes of addiction treatment

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Ten years post-Hurricane Katrina, experts have reflected on the aftermath through the eyes of addiction treatment professionals to become better prepared for future tragedies. Their *Journal of Addictions & Offender Counseling* study highlights the experiences of 11 professionals who worked in addiction treatment agencies in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Houston, Texas.

Participants described an overall increase in [addiction](#) disorders and especially in prescription drug addictions. They also reported many staff-related and service delivery challenges. In terms of skills needed, prevention skills, assessment skills, trauma skills, grief skills, empathy, and knowledge of [post-traumatic stress disorder](#) were all very important and useful in assisting clients.

The disaster also forced agencies to create emergency preparedness plans where none existed previously. These emergency plans also forced more collaboration and communication between agencies. However, [participants](#) were surprised that the federal help that came was withdrawn too quickly and had strict conditions. Participants expressed feelings of frustration, helplessness, and being overwhelmed by the trauma.

Many participants reported that they expect to be learning from these disasters for many years to come.

More information: Pamela S. Lassiter et al, Reflections 10 Years Post-

Hurricane Katrina: Implications for Addiction Counseling, *Journal of Addictions & Offender Counseling* (2017). [DOI: 10.1002/jaoc.12032](https://doi.org/10.1002/jaoc.12032)

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