

# HOW PDA RESPONDS TO PUBLIC VIOLENCE

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) responds to public violence as a human-caused disaster and supports mid-councils that request assistance as they reach out to help their communities recover.

- **National Response Team (NRT) deployment:** members of PDA's NRT provide a ministry of accompaniment and presence throughout the various phases of a human-caused disaster from impact to recovery. NRT members can be deployed at the invitation of the mid council to provide a ministry of presence, assessment of resilience/spiritual discernment, facilitate ecumenical and community partnership in response and recovery, advocate for spiritual caregivers and more. Support can be long-term as anniversaries will often bring back strong emotions.
- **Liturgical resources for worship and special services:** Worship resources are available on the PDA website. If invited, PDA can provide worship planning around significant disaster-related dates and events.
- **Trainings:** PDA can lead workshops in Responding to Human Caused Disaster as Faith Leaders, Emotional and Spiritual Care, Resilience and Renewal for Responders, and Compassion Fatigue and Resilience. Online trainings, including active shooter training and security guidance for congregations from partner organizations are available at [www.pcusa.org/PDAmidcouncil](http://www.pcusa.org/PDAmidcouncil).
- **Facilitate Clergy Retreats:** PDA can provide customized retreats (ecumenical and interfaith) addressing the aftermath of violence for faith leaders that include liturgical seasons, bible studies, self-care, worship planning and more. PDA can also offer a clergy sabbatical for highly affected clergy to regain resilience in ministry.
- **PDA grants** are available to mid councils to assist faith communities responding in the aftermath of violence.
- **Healing Camps:** A collaboration between PDA and Ferncliff Camp, the first healing camp was offered in 1998 after the school shooting in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Over the next five years, eight programs were offered for youth affected by gun violence, and eventually expanded to include those affected by other disasters and trauma.





- **Trigger: The Ripple Effect of Gun Violence:** a documentary that frames gun violence as a disaster and public health issue. All those scarred by gun violence ask, “why did this happen to us?” Trigger looks at those experiences and turns to the bigger question, “what can we do to prevent gun violence?” The 51 minute documentary is available on Amazon Prime. A screening kit to support community engagement is available from the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program at [pcusastore.com](http://pcusastore.com).
- **Tapestry: Reweaving the Fabric of Community After Public Violence:** A documentary that examines the effects of public violence events in congregations and communities. Framed through the lens of PDA National Response Team members who have responded to public violence events and supported communities of faith and their leaders through trauma and the healing process (21 minutes). Video and downloadable study guide available at [www.pcusa.org/PDAmidcouncil](http://www.pcusa.org/PDAmidcouncil).
- **The Trauma Pastoral Care Series** training videos: a series of 15 videos intended for pastors caring for those experiencing trauma or experiencing trauma themselves (emphasis on human-caused disasters). Available at [www.pcusa.org/PDAmidcouncil](http://www.pcusa.org/PDAmidcouncil)
- **Recovering from Un-Natural Disasters: A Guide for Pastors and Congregations after Violence and Trauma** (Westminster John Knox Press, 2017): Written by PDA Director Rev. Dr. Laurie Kraus and NRT members Bruce Wismer and David Holyan, three pastors with substantial experience responding to mass violence events. PDA will supply complimentary copies upon request to mid councils affected by public violence. Copies are also available to purchase at [www.pcusastore.com](http://www.pcusastore.com) and Amazon.
- **Story Ministry:** PDA is exploring how storytelling can be a form of ministry in both the process of healing impacted communities and in connecting wider circles of community. Following the 2010 gas explosion in San Bruno, CA, PDA worked with Bethany Presbyterian Church to help them tell their story. PDA can develop story projects that are only for the impacted community or with communities that want to share their story broadly.



Has there been a disaster or emergency  
in your mid council?  
Email [pda.help@pcusa.org](mailto:pda.help@pcusa.org) or  
call 502-569-8800

PDA is a ministry of  
One Great Hour Of Sharing