

Volunteers play a vital role after a disaster has occurred. Are we ready for those roles? Join Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD), Medical Reserve Corps and Mid-Plains Center for Enterprise for a volunteer disaster training.

Trainings will be held at no cost to the participants on Friday, June 14, at McCook Community College or Saturday, June 15, in Imperial.

“John and Deborah Bauers have worked for over 25 years in the areas of pastoral care, professional counseling and crisis and trauma preparedness and recovery,” explains Heidi Wheeler, Emergency Response Coordinator for SWNPHD. “Their volunteer disaster training is filled with real-life disaster experiences that will help area volunteers better handle the challenges of a disaster response,” she noted.

This training is targeting clergy and faith communities, school staff, counselors, mental health professionals, hospital personnel, first responders and anyone willing to volunteer after a disaster.

The Bauers will train on recognizing the symptoms of a traumatized individual, defusing and debriefing, delayed grief responses, how early interventions can affect mental health outcomes and how faith-based ministries can interface with first responders and the mental health community.

They have been involved in professional counseling with several disasters: the New Life Church shooting, Hurricane Katrina, 9/11 and multiple large wildfires in Colorado. Furthermore, the Bauers have formal training and experience in police chaplaincy and Critical Incident Stress Management.

“Our pastors and clergy, and other caring and compassionate people who will come to help after a disaster, are going to be critical to a successful response in our communities,” states Wheeler. “We just want to provide them with some training so they understand the response system and not become overwhelmed. We are very lucky to have such a talented duo to provide this crucial training,” she said.

Each training starts at 8 a.m. and finishes at 5 p.m. local time.

McCook’s session will be held at the Hormel Business Center room 213. Mid-Plains Community College Extended Campus in Imperial is located at 1324 Broadway.

For more information or to register, contact Heidi Wheeler at 308-345-4223 or email: erc@swhealth.ne.gov.