



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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# **Preparing for Disasters: NOVA Crisis Response Training Program to be offered in Valley**

***Program helps community leaders assist victims  
of hurricanes, major crimes, other tragedies***

**HARLINGEN** – A National Crisis Response Team training program will be offered in the Valley in January and February as a preparation for disasters such as hurricanes, major crimes, floods, and other tragedies.

The Basic National Organization of Victim Assistance (NOVA) training prepares participants to help groups of affected people cope with their immediate emotional reactions when a crisis strikes their community. Those who should attend include law enforcement officers; public safety, fire, EMS, and first responders personnel; public and private school counselors and principals; school nurses; special education instructors; mental health professionals and counselors; clergy and ministers; disaster relief leaders; and victims' advocates. The course comes with a nationally-recognized certification ([www.trynova.org](http://www.trynova.org)).

The NOVA training program will be held in Harlingen at Valley Baptist Medical Center, on five Tuesdays (January 17, Jan. 24, Jan. 31, Feb. 7, and Feb. 14) from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The 40-hour training covers techniques and protocols for providing crisis intervention to traumatized people. It focuses on the fundamentals of crisis and trauma, and how to adapt basic techniques to individuals and groups in this area, also known as "psychological first aid."

The program also equips leaders to plan for longer-term emotional support, and assists teams to begin the process of developing their own community-based crisis response program. In addition, the five-day course combines key elements of NOVA's victim advocacy and victim counselor training courses, helping to promote rights and services for victims of crime and crisis.

Participants who have completed this "basic" course may wish to take an advanced NOVA course in crisis response training, which will also be offered at Valley Baptist in Harlingen, from Feb. 28 to March 1.

Instructors for the training will be led by Dr. Bobby Smith, Texas State NOVA Training Director and Director of Chaplaincy Relations for the Baptist General Convention of Texas. For more information, contact the Valley Baptist Pastoral Services Dept. at (956) 389-1194 or by e-mail at [PastoralServices@ValleyBaptist.net](mailto:PastoralServices@ValleyBaptist.net). For registration and cost information, please visit: [www.texasbaptists.org/chaplaincy](http://www.texasbaptists.org/chaplaincy).

## **About Valley Baptist Health System**

Valley Baptist Health System is an 866-bed faith-based regional health system located in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. It is focused on improving the lives of the people it serves by providing high quality health care and medical education throughout South Texas, guided by the healing and teaching ministry of Jesus Christ.

Valley Baptist extends many of its services beyond its facilities and into local communities, offering free screenings for the community, support groups and numerous educational opportunities. For more information, visit [www.ValleyBaptist.net](http://www.ValleyBaptist.net) (and [www.FaceBook.com/ValleyBaptistMedicalCenter](http://www.FaceBook.com/ValleyBaptistMedicalCenter)).