



For Immediate Release:

To: Dave Ruthenberg
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Press Release

Date: October 29th, 2024

Candy Durman, M.Ed. LMFT-Intern, of Grey Matters Workshop, LLC and True U Counseling Group, LLC is organizing group outreach and support services to residents of Cocke County, TN and surrounding areas impacted by flooding associated with Hurricane Helene.

The support group is free to adults 18 and over, It will meet every Tuesday beginning November 12th, for six consecutive weeks. Each Tuesday, the group will be limited to the first twenty people to sign in, which begins at 6 PM. Participants can come as often or as little as they like—there is no obligation or commitment to return. Residents are welcome to join the group at any point during the six week period. Participants will be provided with information regarding mental health resources in the area. Additionally, participants will be offered professional support to identify individual mental health needs. Information regarding PTSD, Acute Stress Disorder, and other mental health conditions and experiences associated with natural disasters will be covered and provided.

Participants will be given information on coping skills associated with Dialectical Behavior Therapy, including Mindfulness, Meditation, and Emotional Regulation skills. Participants are encouraged to dress comfortably and casually. There is no childcare provided during group time, and children will not be permitted. Participants will be asked to provide contact information in order to participate to ensure appropriate safety protocols, clinical follow-ups, and coordination of care.

The group meetings are being hosted by The Episcopal Church of the Annunciation located at 304 Cosby Highway, Newport, TN. The group will meet each Tuesday from 6:30pm until 7:30pm.

Participants of all faiths, beliefs, cultures, and communities are welcome. The group is not affiliated with any government or civic agency, religious organization or community group. The volunteer staff and all facilitators are private volunteers from the region with one goal—to provide comfort and relief to folks who are hurting. Group members will be invited to share their experiences, and will be offered support to build community with each other around issues of grief and adjustment. To ensure the safety of all, no weapons of any kind will be permitted. Any participant deemed disruptive or disrespectful will be asked to leave and may not be permitted to return to future meetings.

Candice Durman, the group facilitator, is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in private practice at Grey Matters Workshop, LLC, a mental health and wellness company in Jefferson City, TN and True U Counseling Group, LLC in Morristown, TN. Durman is a Marriage and Family Therapy Intern, practicing under the clinical supervision of Richard Gillespie, LMFT, AAMFT-Approved Supervisor. Candy Durman earned her Masters Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy from Carson Newman University. Durman has a Bachelors Degree in Psychology from the same institution. Durman has over six years of clinical mental health practice experience, and more than four thousand hours of direct clinical contact with clients in East Tennessee.

Additional volunteer clinical staff will be onsite as needed depending on the initial interest, response, and determined need. “Dr. George Mack, LPC, MHSP is standing by to provide additional assistance as needed, and I am very thankful for the support he has given me to make this group happen.”, says Durman of colleague at True U Counseling Group LLC. Durman added, “I am currently reaching out to other mental health professionals, as well as graduate programs in counseling, from the area to build a bench of resources, should the need be significant and greater than anticipated” says Durman, when asked about the anticipated response.

Educational materials, mental health referral services, and screening assessments are being donated free of charge by Grey Matters Workshop and True U Counseling Group. The Episcopal Church of the Annunciation is donating the facilities for the group meetings.

Regarding the facilities, Durman says, "Father Brian Austin and the entire community at the Episcopal Church have been great to work with, and have donated a really great space for us to use. I am so very grateful to Father Austin and his efforts on my behalf, and I look forward to an ongoing relationship with him as we make progress together."

Currently, Durman is networking in the hopes of identifying local mental health service providers, (licensed professional counselors, licensed marriage and family therapists, and other mental health professionals) willing to provide pro-bono or low cost assessment and crisis stabilization services to flood victims. We are also compiling a general list of providers in the area who are currently taking new clients, as well as have experience in trauma work and crisis stabilization. Durman enthusiastically invites those local providers to contact her for inclusion in the packets of materials distributed to participants. If you are a mental health service provider and would like to volunteer to help with the group meetings, please contact 865-469-2007.

When asked about what she expects, " Durman said, "Truthfully, I don't really know. We haven't really been here before with a natural disaster of this scale, at least not in my lifetime, so I'm not sure what to expect or what the response to this humble offering of initial therapeutic contact might be. I know it won't be enough to meet the need after something like this, but it is one step... one something that we can do."

For questions or more information, contact Candy Durman 865-469-2007 or cdurman@trueucg.com.

FREE TO THE PUBLIC FLOOD SURVIVORS SUPPORT & GRIEF GROUP FOR ADULTS

When: Starting November 12th, meeting every Tuesday Evening
from 6:30 - 7:30 PM for 6 weeks.

Where: Episcopal Church of the Annunciation
304 Cosby Highway, Newport, TN 37821

What Time: 6:30 - 7:30 PM

Notes: This group is facilitated by Candy Durman, a licensed mental health professional. The group is open to all residents of Cocke County and surrounding areas impacted by Hurricane Helene flood waters. All are welcome, regardless of personal loss or impact, to share their experiences, feelings, and process the loss and grief associated with natural disasters. This group is not affiliated with any government or civic agency. Group staff are private volunteers from the local and surrounding community.

Dress comfortably and casually. Currently, there is no childcare available during group. This particular group is restricted to participants 18 and up. Children will not be admitted. Services, Materials, & Resources will be provided to participants free of charge. This group is open and runs for 6 consecutive weeks every Tuesday. You may come as often as you wish during the 6 week period.

For questions or more information contact: **Candy Durman 865-469-2007.**



Grey Matters Workshop, LLC is a community mental health and wellness company located in Jefferson County, TN

Candice E. Durman, M.Ed., LMFT-Intern, Professional Member AAMFT (Under the clinical Supervision of Richard Gillespie, LMFT, AAMFT Approved Supervisor.)

The True U Counseling Group, LLC is a mental health and wellness company located in Hamblen County.





Candy Durman, M. Ed., LMFT-Intern,
AAMFT Professional Member.

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Under the Clinical Supervision of Richard
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True U Counseling Group, LLC