



THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF EXPERTS IN TRAUMATIC STRESS®
THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR CRISIS MANAGEMENT®

DEPLOYMENT INFORMATION

How Do I Volunteer to Deploy?

Academy members should notify the Academy offices by email at deployment@aaets.org of their willingness to volunteer for deployment. The Academy in turn will provide the Board of Directors of Green Cross Academy of Traumatology's Board of Directors of your willingness to deploy, along with your credentials, certification(s) and contact information. The member will then need to meet the Green Cross' criteria for deployment (see below).

Beyond Desire to Deploy

Many Academy members have a strong desire to help those in crisis. This includes situations in which there has been widespread trauma due to a disaster or crisis situation. However, despite this desire, deployment may not be for everyone. There are personal requirements that go well beyond the ability to and desire to help individuals in crisis. Everyone needs to understand their limitations and deploying oneself in a land away from their homes and surroundings is not easy and places a lot of stress on the most resilient of individuals. Those wishing to deploy need to understand and be mindful of their current state of mind, personal circumstances and vulnerabilities in order to ensure that they are in the best position to assist those who are victims of traumatic events and/or who have been exposed to a crisis situation.

Risk of Compassion Fatigue

Compassion fatigue, also called "vicarious traumatization" or secondary traumatization (Figley, 1995), is defined as the emotional residue or strain of exposure to working with those suffering from the consequences of traumatic events. It differs from burn-out but can co-exist with burn-out. Compassion Fatigue can occur due to exposure on one case or can be due to a "cumulative" level of trauma (The American Institute of Stress).

As written in the Green Cross Academy of Traumatology guidelines, trauma work requires more than desire and training. It is crucial that those caring for and addressing the traumatic responses of others care for themselves. The most experienced and knowledgeable of caregivers are vulnerable to the emotional strain known as compassion fatigue. Caregivers need to be mindful of the symptoms of compassion fatigue and understand their own emotional vulnerabilities when working with victims of traumatic stress and crisis situations. Caregiver needs to be aware of all components of compassion fatigue, that is the cognitive,

emotional, behavioral, physical and spiritual. Not monitoring one's self in any of these domains can increase the risk of compassion fatigue (Green Cross Academy of Traumatology).

Green Cross Academy of Traumatology (GCAT) requires that those who are volunteering to deploy complete the Compassion Fatigue Self-Test and/or have an interview with a GCAT Compassion Fatigue Specialist prior to deployment. The Compassion Fatigue Self-Test can be downloaded by clicking [here](#).

Understand Your Responses During Anxiety Producing Situations

Green Cross Academy of Traumatology states, "Another essential element of trauma work is the ability to maintain a non-anxious presence in crisis situations." This requires that deployed individuals have the ability to self-reflect and understand their own emotional propensities during anxiety producing and stressful situations. Deployed individuals need to have the ability to cope with stress and anxiety in order to maintain an appropriate anxiety level that allows them to utilize their experience, training and skills when addressing the needs of those in crisis and affected by traumatic events. Deployed individuals need to understand what services are available to them to assist them with coping and be able to utilize these services in order to best serve those in crisis.

Requirements Prior to Deployment

Green Cross Academy of Traumatology requires that those volunteering to deploy complete the Federal Emergency Management Agency's internet-based courses IS-100, IS-700, and IS-396a. These are free courses that result in continuing education credits. The certificates provided after completing these courses will need to be submitted during the GCAT certification process. The materials from these courses can also be downloaded. A final examination needs to be passed in order to obtain the certificate.

Green Cross Deployment Certification

Those volunteering to deploy must be certified for deployment through the Green Cross Academy of Traumatology. GCAT weighs the following factors when certifying an individual for deployment:

- Certification from Green Cross Academy of Traumatology or one of their reciprocal organizations
- Prior professional experience working in crisis situations
- Completion of the above referenced Compassion Fatigue Self-Tests and GCAT approval of scores

Academy members can submit their certification(s) with the Academy and the Center as part of the deployment certification process as evidence of their knowledge, experience, education and training.

Before Deployment

Green Cross Academy of Traumatology recommends the following before you are deployed.

Those being deployed need to be prepared for any contingency. They should be able to put their affairs in order in a short period of time. GCAT offers a checklist of issues that need attention prior to deployment:

- immunizations are up to date
- health insurance is up to date
- insurance cards and information should be taken with you during deployment
- prescriptions are filled and available during deployment
- necessary medications are available in excess of what is needed for the expected period of deployment
- financial matters are in order and someone is familiar with your finances in case you are deployed for a longer period than expected
- arrangements are made with your employer
- childcare is arranged
- appointments and other obligations that fall during the deployment period are rescheduled or cancelled
- arrangements are made for care of your pets
- family members have been prepared for the eventuality of your deployment and have been briefed on the current situation
- a will has been prepared and appropriate people have been advised
- arrangements are made to hold mail and newspapers (if necessary)

The Academy also recommends:

- if a mental health provider, patients/clients are dealt with appropriately, there is a covering practitioner in case of emergencies and patients/clients are made aware of how to contact the covering practitioner
- ensure that your mobile phone service covers the area where you are being deployed
- check with your health insurance to know who are covered medical providers in the area where you are being deployed
- reacquaint yourself with the signs and symptoms of compassion fatigue and burn-out
- make sure you are psychologically prepared for deployment

Those who are deployed do so at their own risk and responsibility. The Academy and GCAT are not responsible for the healthcare of individuals who are deployed.

What is Psychological Preparation?

The following information was taken directly from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees Emergency Handbook (2012).

Psychological preparation is a process of tuning person's inner resources to the coming situation. A psychologically prepared person expects certain challenges, has an idea of the potential psychological impact of such challenges, knows his/her own reactions to such challenges and is familiar with his/her own inner resources and where and how to seek support when needed. In the context of assignments to hardship locations, these challenges include:

- working under continuous pressure
- lack of privacy
- working and living in the contexts of security threats and/or exposure to human suffering
- separation from family and social networks
- lack of conditions that favor a healthy lifestyle

While some aspects of the psychological preparation can be standardized and used for all newly recruited persons to hardship locations, the preparation process has to take into account individual differences at all levels: personality, past personal and professional experiences, individual coping skills and cultural background including values and norms. Those volunteering to deploy could consider the process of psychological preparation as an opportunity for an open discussion and a personal reflection about his or her readiness for the upcoming deployment assignment. The areas of focus are:

- assessing the past experiences that might contribute to their resilience/vulnerability
- assessing their current level of stress, identifying personal resources and learning new coping skills
- familiarizing with the sources of stress at their destination
- identifying potential risks for the person
- establishing a self-care plan

Personal Items and Equipment for Deployment

The Academy and GCAT do not provide equipment or items during deployment. When deployed, caregivers should consider taking the following items:

- Academy and GCAT identification cards
- clothing that is appropriate to the climate and condition of the deployment

- mobile phone with necessary charging equipment (or prepaid phone)
- paper and writing utensils or a laptop computer
- due to the unpredictability of circumstances and availability of food, snacks be brought to make sure your body gets the nourishment and energy it needs

Questions?

If you have any questions regarding the deployment process, please contact the Academy offices by phone at 1-800-810-7550 or 631-543-2217 or by email at deployment@aaets.org.