

# ABPSI'S NEWS FLASH

[www.ABPsi.org](http://www.ABPsi.org).

President  
Robert L Atwell, Psy.D., P.C.



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**September 5, 2005**

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## **THE ASSOCIATION OF BLACK PSYCHOLOGIST MOBILIZES MEMBERS FOR KATRINA DISASTER RELIEF**

*ABPsi's President will contact the Congressional Black Caucus, NAACP, Homeland Security, Red Cross, Salvation Army and FEMA to offer clinical support.*

Washington, DC - Dr. Robert L. Atwell, President of the Association of Black Psychologist (ABPsi), today expressed both concern and commitment regarding the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the efforts of the public and private sectors to address critical mental health and safety issues. "We are directing all of our members and regional Disaster Response Teams to set up treatment centers and offer assistance to help workers and victims of Hurricane Katrina," said Atwell. "We will also be issuing a call to government agencies to use all mental health resources to better address the unique issues confronting the disproportionate number of poor African-Americans affected by the hurricane."

The ABPsi's members in New Orleans, LA; Houston, TX; Charlotte, NC; Washington, DC; New York, NY; and Denver, CO have already begun to mobilize to help in any way possible. Atwell reported that the ABPsi is also working to provide expert commentary to the media regarding the traumatic stress following this traumatic incident. Culturally relevant interventions have been developed for de-mobilizing, defusing and debriefing people after disengagement from a crisis. "Ultimately, our goal is to help the people to move through a normal process in the face of an abnormal event," expressed Atwell.

The Association is very concerned about the mischaracterization of the survivors of this disaster as "refugees" rather than evacuees and the labeling of desperate people searching for food and clothing as "looters" that has taken place in the media by some reporters. The desperation and chaos that emerged in New Orleans and along the Mississippi Gulf resulted from the inadequacy of the government's initial response. It should be viewed for what it is, not as a projection of the fears of the privileged.

The Association of Black Psychologists is committed to assisting in the efforts to respond therapeutically to the psychological injuries resulting from the losses and displacement caused by Hurricane Katrina. The Association can be reached at **(202) 722-0808**.

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