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**EMBRACE'S  
MENTAL HEALTH DISASTER  
RESPONSE PLAN  
TO THE BEIRUT EXPLOSION**

A photograph of two men walking through a destroyed area. In the background, there is a large, damaged cylindrical structure, possibly a silo or a tower, with significant structural damage. The ground is covered in debris and rubble. The sky is overcast and grey. The overall scene is one of devastation.

**embrace**

**S E P T E M B E R 2 0 2 0**



## DISASTER RESPONSE AFTER AUGUST 4TH

In response to the explosion that hit Beirut on August 4th, Embrace had a rapid and efficient response to tackle the post-trauma stress, as well as the long-term mental health consequences of this mass trauma. Embrace has mobilized a number of initiatives with its response aiming to address the short-term and long-term mental health impact of this collective traumatic event that all Lebanese have experienced. Following the explosion, the immediate response on the ground from the Lebanese citizens, civil society, diaspora, and international organizations has been medical aid, housing, and food security for those in the direct area of the blast. However, the less tangible and visible mental health needs are even larger than those that can be seen by the eye. The explosion which has left

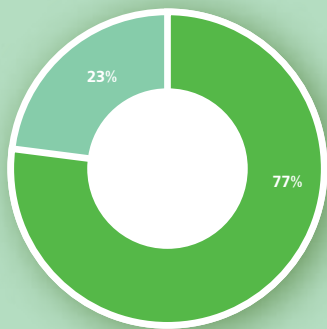
an estimate of 300,000 homeless, more than 190 persons dead, 7 persons missing and more than 5000 injured, has also left a large number of children and adults who experienced the deafening sound of the blast, the rain of glass, car accidents and loss of loved ones (missing or dead). Parents are at loss of what to tell their children, teenagers have lost friends and don't know how to cope, and the elderly have lost their homes where they have lived for more than 30 years, as well as many of their neighbors and friends.

All of this is happening on top of existing health, social, economic and political stress nationally. The mental health needs post this disaster are both short-term and long-term.

## INITIAL POST TRAUMATIC REACTIONS IN THE FIRST 10 DAYS

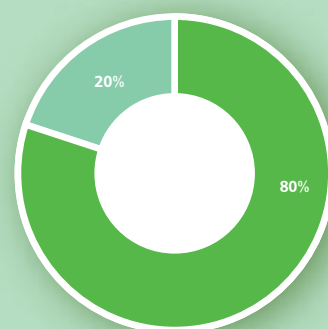
**77% of respondents**  
reported feeling nervous,  
anxious or on edge

more than half the days or nearly  
every day of the week



**80% of respondents**  
reported feeling down,  
depressed, or hopeless

More than half the days or nearly  
every day of the week



The above data was collected by mysay app in collaboration with Embrace and surveyed a total of 701 individuals in Lebanon between the ages of 24-45



**We know both from historical events that have affected Lebanon, and similar historical events from the world, that the mental health impact of this trauma is here to stay, at least for the next few years.**



## DIRECT COMMUNITY INTERVENTION

Embrace's experienced team of operators were present on Ground Zero from day one to offer clean-up efforts and emotional support. Psychological First Aid was being provided in a basecamp set up in the area of Mar Mkhayel with the presence of other humanitarian organizations and social initiatives such as Baytna Baytak and Muwatin Lebnehe who were providing basic assistance, food, and reconstruction services.

In addition to the presence on basecamp, mobile teams were moving around in several of the destroyed locations, helping families clean up their homes and stores, providing a listening ear, and offering referrals to basic needs services and mental health referrals to people as needed.

**MORE THAN 200 PERSONS WERE REACHED THROUGH DIRECT SUPPORT ON THE GROUND.**







## EMBRACE LIFELINE (1564) THE NATIONAL LIFELINE FOR EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Embrace operates the Embrace Lifeline (1564): The National Emotional Support and Suicide Prevention helpline in Lebanon in collaboration with the National Mental Health Program at the Ministry of Public Health. The helpline, the only one of its kind in the Middle East, has been operational since 2018 and has literally saved lives. The Lifeline provides emotional support through active listening to anyone going through an emotional crisis, whatever the reasons may be. It has received more than 10,000 calls since it launched, with calls peaking following August 4. Despite damages to the Embrace Lifeline's call center as a result of the explosion, and minor

injuries to our staff, our operations were not interrupted and the Embrace Lifeline continued through its mission to support the community affected by the blast. The helpline services currently respond to all individuals in emotional distress as a result of the events, or those experiencing suicidal ideation. The Lifeline also provides referrals to mental health professionals and NGOs providing basic assistance. While the Lifeline operates from 12 PM to 5:30 AM daily, as part of our longer-term response to the disaster the Lifeline aims to operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in the next few months.



**The Embrace Lifeline  
has received more  
than 1200 calls  
since August 4**

**19% of callers  
indicated the  
explosion as part  
of their emotional  
distress\***

\*While we strive to capture all data from all calls received, some data remain missing. However, the metrics reported here can be considered representative of calls received during the reported time-period.





## FACE TO FACE AND VIRUTAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT SESSIONS

Since the first week of the explosion, Embrace has been approached by tens of organizations requesting to provide community group sessions to staff members and groups, aimed at providing psychological support, raising awareness about the psychological reactions post-trauma, the red-flags that might emerge in the coming weeks, and liaising the community to available resources.



Embrace has responded to each and every one of these requests for community support sessions, and has held both face to face sessions and virtual sessions as well as virtual support sessions for Lebanese diaspora who have also been impacted by the events in Lebanon. These community support sessions continue to be taking place in the month of September.



“ Through these community support sessions, Embrace has provided psychological support to around 400 children and adults in different areas of Beirut and also abroad. ”



## FREE MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC FOR SURVIVORS

In parallel to it's on the ground presence, and phone-based services, Embrace has just launched a mental health clinic that is now offering free psychotherapy and psychiatric services to those impacted by the explosion so that children and adults can receive trauma and grief counselling to process the experience they have lived. The clinic will cater to populations who have been more severely impacted by the trauma and are experiencing symptoms that are affecting their daily functioning.

**Since the Embrace  
Mental Health Clinic  
launch on August 17th,  
we have supported and  
served more than 65  
people who have been  
directly and severely  
affected by the blast**

Despite this disaster, we remain hopeful at Embrace and believe that if we cradle these traumatic experiences early on through support and action we can prevent future mental health consequences for individuals and for the Lebanese community at large.







# 7A22AK TE7KINA - حَقِّكَ تَحْكِينَا CAMPAIGN

As part of Embrace’s plan in pursuing wider scale support to the community, we launched the “7a22ak Te7kina” campaign with the contribution of Its. Communications, to encourage everyone in Lebanon to reach out to the national emotional support and suicide prevention helpline 1564

This campaign reemphasizes the right of every individual (directly or indirectly) affected by the blast to speak up and voice their thoughts and emotions to the Embrace Lifeline’s trusted team of volunteer operators who never failed to diligently provide their time, effort and listening skills for the greater psychological wellbeing of every person who reaches out.

## MAIN FILM

was aired on MTV, LBC, al Jadeed, All social media platforms.



## OUTDOOR CAMPAIGN

VIVAD and Promo media networks.



## SOCIAL MEDIA





# DONATE TO EMBRACE'S MENTAL HEALTH RELIEF PLAN

We are responding to Lebanon's disaster with our mission to ensure that every hurt voice in Lebanon is heard.

We are launching a free mental health clinic to treat the trauma and grief and expanding the Embrace Lifeline (1564) operations to 24/7 for emotional support and suicide prevention.

## Your contribution counts.

Donate online through our website:  
[www.embracelebanon.org](http://www.embracelebanon.org)

Donate through bank transfer:

**Account number 542012**

IBAN: LB59 0056 0000 0000 0054 2012 0012  
BANK AUDI

For cash donations:

**T: 00961 81 029 399**