

Haiti

When disaster strikes, how can you help when good intentions are just not enough? SIG members with over 20 years of collective experience in Haiti return after the earthquake to give some advice.

Don't be part of the problem. Here is what you should AVOID doing in your free time:

Rent a helicopter, get your best group of colleagues together and show up in Haiti ready to rehab!

Although there are immediate rehabilitation needs in Haiti, showing up unprepared and without a local organization can overwhelm the medical system and make matters worse. Current on-the-ground reports tell us there is no shortage of short-term rehab volunteer applicants. Focus on long-term needs instead. Stay linked into the networks below and as local rehab programs update needs, you'll be one of the first to know.

Collect rehabilitation equipment, clothes, or other material goods.

Gathering donated material goods and shipping them to Haiti often inundate the relief delivery and storage circuit. If you insist on collecting goods, be sure there is an expressed local need for very specific equipment. Ensure there is a mechanism in place to deliver and store goods from start-to-finish. When in doubt, fundraise for the organization to maximize flexibility on the ground.

CROSS CULTURAL & INTERNATIONAL SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

Take action

First, take a deep breath and realize that Haiti will have rehabilitation needs for months and years to come. Practice restraint and think things through before joining a volunteer group or starting an initiative to "Help Haiti." Consider issues of sustainability, cultural sensitivity, and time-best-spent.

STAY INFORMED.

Join the CCISIG listserv to participate in current conversations on how best to participate in Haiti's rehabilitation efforts. Visit us at www.aptahpa.org and click on SIGs, "Cross Cultural". Join the CCISIG Facebook group.

Take this opportunity to educate yourself and colleagues about Haitian culture, history, political issues and current medical and rehabilitation infrastructure. You'll be more prepared for discussions and service.

FUNDRAISE.

Rehabilitation programs in Haiti need your help. Raise funds to support supplies, wages, and living conditions for local Haitian staff and local rehabilitation programs. Check the APTAs website www.apta.org/haiti for a list of organizations that is up-to-date.

SPREAD THE WORD. Don't forget about Haiti in the long-term. Talk to colleagues, friends and family about rehabilitation needs in Haiti. Organize a fundraising challenge in

your local community to directly benefit earthquake victims needing rehabilitation services. Get friends to join the CCISIG listserv and facebook group.

LINKS.

www.apta.org/haiti

www.aptahpa.org; go to SIG; then [Cross Cultural](#)

www.hvousing.org ; go to "Focus on Haiti"

For rehabilitation professionals that want to volunteer: Register your profile and specific skill-set to USAID's database to match on-the-ground needs to volunteer skills. www.usaid.gov/haiti

Go to "to offer medical volunteer service," and join aidmatrix network.

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