

Reflexology For Vermont Flood Victims

On August 29th Hurricane Irene caused the worst flooding in over a century to small towns in upstate New York, and Southern and Central Vermont. The normal peaceful meandering rivers became ravaging flood waters within hours. Houses along these rivers quickly flooded and people were evacuated. The waters quickly receded within hours of the flood but left lingering damage.

I had the opportunity to provide reflexology services to 15 flood victims in Moretown, Vermont two weeks after the flood. Moretown is a small town along the Mad River, near Stowe Vermont. Many of the victims had immense flood damage to their homes or their properties and they also had harrowing stories of escaping from the flood waters.

Being a psychiatric nurse, I naturally honed into the mind-body connection, supporting their emotional being via the physical touch of reflexology.

I listened to their stories while working on the adrenal, pituitary, heart, kidney, liver and spinal reflexes of their feet. Since the majority of the clients had shallow breathing as the result of the trauma (several of the clients had to climb out of their kitchen windows in order to avoid drowning)...I worked on their lung and chest reflexes.

The clients relaxed, were calmer and some even began to express emotion. Mental Health Services had provided education and counseling to the town the previous week and all my clients were well-versed in the different stages of grieving.

Words can not fully express the experience of providing reflexology services to clients after a disaster. It was one of the most rewarding experiences I've ever had. I have never been so grateful for my reflexology training.

Laurie J. Hanna, RN, MSN, ARCB Certified Reflexologist