

Mental Health and Psychosocial Issues in Public Health Disasters & Emergencies: Preparing, Responding and Recovering

Social and Behavioral Sciences Program, Yale School of Public Health

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Meeting time: Mondays and Wednesdays, 3.30 – 4.40 pm

Meeting place: LEPH 126

Course description

The goal of this seminar is twofold. Firstly, students will gain an understanding of emotional and behavioral reactions to disasters and their significance for planning and implementation of public health responses in the US and internationally. Secondly, students will gain knowledge and develop skills related to public health and mental health systems before, during and after disasters or emergencies.

The background readings will be used as the bases for weekly presentations and discussions.

Course learning objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Integrate emotional and behavioral health responses to disasters and emergencies into public health planning and intervention.
- 2) Identify different types of disasters and emergencies and describe their potential effects on psychosocial wellbeing of individuals and communities;
- 3) Assess risk and protective factors of various populations as regards to mental health and disasters or emergencies;
- 4) Identify potential mental health outcomes in various populations exposed to various disasters or emergencies;
- 5) Explain public health strategies related to mental health and psychosocial wellbeing during preparation and planning, threat and warning, impact, immediate post-disaster, and recovery phases.

Writing assignments (60% of total grade):

Students will be responsible for producing two related writing assignments. Both writing assignments will deal with the topic of integration of the public health system with the psychosocial and mental health system as related to disasters and emergencies.

Midterm assignment

The midterm assignment will consist of a paper on a specific topic related to integration of public health and mental health systems. The paper should include a description of a specific issue and a summary of evidence-based recommended solutions to the issue. The paper should be approximately 10 double spaced pages in length. Students are encouraged to use readings from the course as background literature, as well as to conduct their own literature search.

This assignment will be graded as a midterm project (30% of total grade) based on the following guidelines:

- 1) Attention to and understanding of both public health and mental health systems;
- 2) Attention to crosscutting issues such as multicultural approach in public health, attention to vulnerable or underserved populations, etc.;
- 3) Comprehensiveness of evidence provided from the scientific literature to support the proposed solution to the issue.

Final assignment

The final assignment will be produced as a group project (approximately 20 double spaced pages in length total) and each student will be responsible for submitting a one-two page describing their own role and responsibility in the overall project and the dynamics of project completion.

This assignment will be a curriculum for a one and a half hour session. The audience for the curriculum will be members of the current public health and mental health workforce. Each curriculum should include a well developed goal, objectives and activities/exercises that relate to one of the issues presented in papers produced as a midterm. Therefore, each group will select one midterm paper from a student within their group that will serve as the background document for the curriculum. Students will be asked to facilitate this session with members of the seminar at towards the end of the school year (see "Group presentation" below for more information).

Each student will receive an independent grade (30% of total grade) based upon their contribution to the overall group project and their part in the presentation.

Course participation (20% of total grade):

Each week students will be engaged in facilitated discussions which will be led by instructors, guest instructors or fellow classmates. Students are responsible to come prepared (having read the course materials), come on time, and be willing to engage in respectful and productive discussion. Disagreement is encouraged, but mutual respect is required.

Discussion facilitation (10% of total grade):

Throughout the semester, students will be asked to facilitate group discussions by 1) briefly reviewing the readings for the week, and 2) facilitating meaningful discussion about the specific topic. It is students' responsibility to schedule their discussion facilitation for a specific topic and come prepared. Students are encouraged to speak with the course instructors in preparation for their week. Students will be graded based upon their how well prepared they are for their week, methods used in engaging other seminar participants and clarity in communicating the most salient points for that week.

Group presentation (10% of total grade):

During the weeks 11-13, students will be responsible to implement the curriculum designed as part of their final assignment. Students will be graded individually for this group presentation based on the clarity, organization and effectiveness of the presentation. Student groups are encouraged to speak with instructors in preparation for their presentations.

Reading list

Week 1

Classes 1 & 2

Topic: Class introduction and Trauma, Disasters and Emergencies: Definitions and basics

Week 1 objectives:

By the end of this week, the participants will:

- 1) Be informed about the seminar structure and requirements;
- 2) Learn basic definitions related to trauma, disasters and emergencies; and
- 3) Learn types of traumatic events, time of exposure and their effects.

Readings:

- **Adams, M.L.; Ford, J.D.; & Dailey, W.F. (2004). Predictors of Help Seeking Among Connecticut Adults After September 11, 2001. *American Journal of Public Health*, 94(9): 1596-1602.
- **Davidson, J.R.T and A.C. McFarlane. (2006). The Extent and Impact of Mental Health Problems after Disaster. *J. Clin Psychiatry*, 67 (suppl. 2), pp. 9-14.
- Leon, G.R. (2004). Overview of the Psychosocial impact of disasters. *Prehosp Disast Med*. 19(1):4-9
- Norris, F.H., et al. (2002). 60,000 Disaster Victims Speak: Part I. An Empirical Review of the Empirical Literature, 1981-2001. *Psychiatry*, 65(3). 207-239.
- Rao, K. (2006). Psychosocial support in disaster-affected communities. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 18(6): 501-505.

Week 2

Class 3

Topic: Risk and protective factors (national and international perspective) – Part 1 of 3

Week 2 objectives:

By the end of this week, the participants will:

- 1) Learn the basic definitions related to risk and protective factors
- 2) Review event factors

Readings:

- **Ghodse, H. and S. Galea. (2006). Tsunami: Understanding mental health consequences and the unprecedented response. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 18(3): 289-297.
- **Somasundaram, D. J., and W. A. C. van de Put. (2006). Management of Trauma in Special Populations After a Disaster. *J. Clin Psychiatry*. 67(suppl 2), 64-73.
- Oriol, W. *Psychosocial Issues for Older Adults in Disasters*. Retrieved June 22, 2007, from <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/cmhs/katrina/pubs.asp>.
- **Eisenman, D. P., and K. M. Cordasco, S. Asch, J. F. Golden, and D. Glik. (2007) Disaster Planning and Risk Communication With Vulnerable Communities: Lessons from Hurricane Katrina. *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol 97(S1), S109-S115

Week 3

Classes 4 & 5

Topic: Risk and protective factors (national and international perspective) – Parts 2 & 3 of 3

Week 3 objectives:

By the end of this week, the participants will:

- 1) Review individual factors
- 2) Review additional risk and protective factors, including peritraumatic and posttraumatic factors
- 3) Discuss applications to public health practice in an international setting

Readings:

- **Elder, K. and S. Xirasagar, N. Miller, S. A. Bowen, S. Glover, C. Piper. (2007). African Americans' Decisions Not to Evacuate New Orleans Before Hurricane Katrina: A qualitative Study. *American Journal of Public Health, Vol. 97 (S1), S124-S129*
- **Ng AT. (2005). Cultural diversity in the integration of disaster mental health and public health: a case study in response to bioterrorism. *International Journal of Emergency Mental Health. 7(1):23-31.*
- **Vijayakumar, L. and G.K. Kannan, and S.J. Daniel. Mental health status in children exposed to tsunami. *International Review of Psychiatry, 18(6), 507-513*
- Nikapota, A. After the Tsunami: A story from Sri Lanka. *International Review of Psychiatry, 18(3), 275-279.*
- **Panasetis, P. & Bryant, RA. (2003). Peritraumatic Versus Persistent Dissociation in Acute Stress Disorder. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 16(6), 563-566.*
- Sahu, S. and A. Musani, J. Schaller, S. Pairojkul, M.P. Senanayake, P. Brenny, M. J. Rosati, H. Dukkak. Panel 2.10: Reproductive, Mental, and Child Health. *Prehosp Disast Med, 20(6), 432-435*
- **Balaban, V. (2006). Psychological assessment of children in disasters and emergencies. *Disasters, 30(2), 178-198*
- Acharya, L. and KD. Upadhya, F. Kortmann. Mental health and Psychosocial support aspects in disaster preparedness: Nepal. *International Review of Psychiatry, 18(6), 587-592*

Week 4

Classes 6 & 7

Topic (Class 1): Special interest topic 1 (international perspective): Guest lecture TBD
Topic (Class 2): Mental health outcomes or reactions to disasters (Part 1 of 2)

Week 4 objectives:

By the end of this week, the participants will:

- 1) Learn about mental health and disasters in international settings
- 2) Learn about normal reactive processes related to individuals, families, communities and the media

Readings:

- **van Ommeren M.; Saxena S.; & Saraceno B. (2005). Mental and social health during and after acute emergencies: emerging consensus?. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization. 83(1):71-5.*
- **Ganesan, M. (2006) Psychosocial Response to disasters – some concerns. *International Review of Psychiatry, 18(3), 241-247.*
- **Becker, S. M. (2006). Psychosocial Care for Adult and Child Survivors of the 2004 Tsunami Disaster in India. *American Journal of Public Health, 96(8): 1397-1398.*
- **Bride, E. B. (2007) The Impact of Providing Psychosocial Services to Traumatized Populations. *Stress, Trauma, and Crisis, 7(1), 29-46.*

**Birmes, PJ, A Brunet, D. Coppin-Calmes, C Arbus, D Coppin, J-P Charlet, N Vinnemann, H Juchet, D Lauque, Laurent Schmitt. (2005). Symptoms of Peritraumatic and Acute Traumatic Stress Among Victims of an Industrial Disaster. *Psychiatric Services, 56(1)*, 93-95

Additional readings TBD

Week 5

Classes 8 & 9

Topic: Mental health outcomes or reactions to disasters (Part 2 of 2)

Week 5 objectives:

By the end of this week, the participants will:

- Learn about the acute stress disorder and the posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, bereavement and its complications, anxiety disorders, etc.

**Perkonig, A. and RC Kessler, S. Storz, H-U. Wittchen. (2007). Traumatic events and post-traumatic stress disorder in the community: prevalence, risk factors and comorbidity. *Acta Psychiatr Scand 2000 (101)*, 46-59.

Morgan CA. III, and G Hazlett, S Wang, G Richardson, P Schnurr, S M. Southwick. (2001) Symptoms of Dissociation in Humans Experiencing Acute, Uncontrollable Stress, a Prospective investigation. *Am. J. Psychiatry 2001 (158)*, 1239-1247

**Rao, K. (2006). Lessons learnt in mental health and psychosocial care in India after disasters. *International Review of Psychiatry, 18(6)*: 547-502.

Week 6

Classes 10 & 11

Topic: Levels of response – Part 1 of 2

(Assignment 1 due)

Week 6 objectives:

By the end of this week, the participants will:

- 1) Discuss levels of response and roles and responsibilities of the government, community based organizations, the faith community, etc. related to pre-event planning, communication, continuous support, etc.
- 2) Be able to discuss basic needs (shelters, medical and other care, mental health assessments, interventions, activities, communication); and
- 3) Learn about the duties and responsibilities of first responders (ability to address needs of victims, triage, psychological first aid, MHP's consultation, second aid, secondary prevention and treatment, self-care);
- 4) Learn about transition to semi-permanent status (e.g., return to routine)

Readings:

**Siegel, C. E.; Laska, E.; & Meisner, M. (2004). Estimating Capacity Requirements for Mental Health Services After a Disaster has Occurred: A Call for New Data. *American Journal of Public Health. 94(4)*: 582-585.

**Balaban V. (2006). Psychological assessment of children in disasters and emergencies. *Disasters. 30(2)*:178-98.

**Ruzek JI, Young BH, Cordova MJ, Brian WF. (2004) Integration of Disaster Mental Health Services with Emergency medicine. *Prehosp Disast Med, 19(1)*, 46-53.

- **Gheyntanchi, A., Joseph L, Elaine G, Kimpara S, Housley H, Franko ZE, and Beutler LE. (2007) The Dirty Dozen: Twelve failures of the Hurricane Katrina Response and How Psychology Can Help. *American Psychologist*, 62(2), 118-130.
- Connor KM, EB Foa, and JRT Davidson. (2006) Practical Assessment and Evaluation of Mental Health Problems Following a Mass Disaster. *J Clin Psychiatry*, 67(2), 26-33.

Week 7**Classes 12 & 13**

Topic (Class 1): Special interest topic 2: Guest lecture TBD
Topic (Class 2): Strategies for public health – Part 1 of 6

Week 7 objectives:

By the end of this week, the participants will:

- 1) Learn first-hand experience on a special topic of their interest from a practitioner in the field
- 2) Discuss preparation and planning phase, including disaster preparedness and response effort coordination and liaison with other services

Readings:

- **Wodarski, JS. (2007). Preparing Social Services and Public Services Professionals for Meaningful Roles in Disaster Services. *Stress, Trauma, and Crisis*, 7(4), 209-222.
- **Alexander DA. (2005). Early Mental Health Intervention After Disasters. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*, 11, 12-18
- Additional readings TBD

Week 8**Classes 14 & 15**

Topic: Strategies for public health – Parts 2 & 3 of 6

Week 8 objectives:

By the end of this week, the participants will:

- 1) Review the threat and warning phase and the impact phase
- 2) Review immediate post-disaster phase: Recoil and rescue, including professional roles and responsibilities, engagement and assessment and monitoring and evaluation

Readings:

- **Rao, K. (2006). Psychosocial Support in Disaster-affected Communities. *International Review of Psychiatry*. 18(6), 501-505.
- **Reyes, G. & Elhai, J.D. (2004). Psychosocial Interventions in the Early Phases of Disasters. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*. 41(4), 399-411.
- Boscarino J.; Figley C.R.; & Adams RIE. (2003). Fear of terrorism in New York after the September 11 terrorist attacks: implications for emergency mental health and preparedness. *International Journal of Emergency Mental Health*. 5(4): 199-209.

Week 9**Classes 16 & 17**

Topic: Strategies for public health – Part 4 & 5 of 6

Week 9 objectives:

By the end of this week, the participants will:

- 1) Review immediate post-disaster phase: Dealing with the media
- 2) Learn about the immediate post-disaster phase, including measured used during recoil and rescue

Readings:

**Perez-Lugo, M. (2004). Media Uses in Disaster Situations: A New Focus on the Impact Phase. *Sociological Inquiry*, (74)2, 210–225.

**Rose, S. (2002) Theoretical Approaches to psychological trauma: Implications for Research and Practice. *Counseling and Psychotherapy Research*, 2(1), 61-72

Florida Center for Public Health Preparedness. (2007). Disaster Behavioral Health: First Aid Specialist Training.

Mace S.; & Bern A.I. (2007). Needs assessment: are Disaster Medical Assistance Teams up for the challenge of a pediatric disaster? *American Journal of Emergency Medicine*. 25(7): 762-769.

Reid, W. et al. (2005). Disaster Mental Health Training in Florida and the Response to the 2004 Hurricanes. *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*. 11(Suppl.): 57-62.

Week 10

Classes 18 & 19

Topic: Strategies for public health – Part 6 of 6

Week 10 objectives:

By the end of this week, the participants will:

- 1) Discuss the recovery phase, including training and support needs (changed work demands and circumstances, post disaster worker skills, case review and supervision, 'counter-disaster syndrome', activity as treatment, psycho-education)

Readings:

**Klitzman S. & Freudenberg N. (2003). Implications of the World Trade Center attack for the public health and health care infrastructures. *American Journal of Public Health*. 93(3):400-406.

**DiMaggio, C.; Markenson, D.; Henning, K.; Redlener, I.; & Zimmerman, R. (2006). Partnership for Preparedness: A Model of Academic Public Health. *Journal of Public Health management and Practice*. 12(1): 22-27.

North, C. & Hong, B. A. (2000). Project CREST: A New Model for Mental Health Intervention After a Community Disaster. *American Journal of Public Health*. 90(7): 1057-1058.

Wunsch-Hitzig R.; Plapinger J.; Draper J.; & del Campo E. (2002). Calls for help after September 11: a community mental health hot line. *Journal of Urban Health*. 79(3): 417-28.

Week 11

Classes 20 & 21

Student presentations

Week 12

Classes 22 & 23

Student presentations

Week 13**Classes 24 & 25**

Student presentations

Week 14**Class 26**

Topic: Seminar summary

Week 14 objectives:

By the end of this week, the participants will:

- 1) Be able to review materials covered in the seminar and discuss the links between mental health / psychosocial and public health systems in disaster preparedness

Exam week**No class**

Final papers due

** - Required readings