

- organization for long term service?
- B. Training for service delivery personnel
- 1) Formalized training of organizations and agency personnel (pre-disaster) immediate or acute phase vs. long term recovery
  - 2) Orientations (during disaster)
  - 3) "Supervised experience" systems (on the job training, mentoring, etc.)
  - 4) Focus of training of personnel for long term recovery programs

#### Effects of pre-disaster training and organization on service delivery personnel

- A. Level of expertise of worker
- 1) Trained vs. "off-the-street" personnel
  - 2) Organized delivery systems vs. ad hoc groups/systems
- B. Immediate responders vs. long term workers
- 1) Standard operating procedures and protocols, drills and exercises for immediate, acute response
  - 2) Plans, networks, meetings, problem-solving and strategy formation for long-term workers

#### Steps the American Red Cross has taken to better prepare its workers and chapters for "the long haul" of a major disaster.

- 1) Lessons learned from Hurricane Hugo (1989)
- 2) New service of Disaster Mental Health with a focus on workers
- 3) Guidance for chapters in preparing disaster plans to include the "recovery" phase
- 4) Collaborations with National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, (NVOAD), and Unmet Needs committees regarding the longevity of disaster issues

## MEDICAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT OF LARGE-SCALE DISASTERS

### Mid- and Long-Term Effects of Disasters on Victims

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After a brief overview of various research studies on the mid- and long-term effects of disasters on victims, this discussion centered on the personal stories and experiences of individuals and business owners who were affected directly by the Des Moines Flood of 1993. The main focus was on psychological distress and its effect on behavior and relationships. There also was discussion of disasters as catalysts for positive change. Specific issues that were explored including the negative and positive effects of the flood.

#### Negative Effects

- 1) Continued grieving over lost memorabilia, etc.;
- 2) Significant events such as Christmas

bringing painful memories back as lost items are remembered and mourned once again;

- 3) Avoidance of discussing or thinking about the flood;
- 4) Persistent anger: e.g., seeing neighbors who had volunteers "replace and rebuild" items that never were there before or not damaged by the flood. Anger over the one year "celebration" that took place in Des Moines;
- 5) Increased substance abuse;
- 6) Increasing worry and fear all winter of 1994 that there would be another flood in the summer. Concern that this worry will start up again next winter;
- 7) Certain stimuli such as the smell of sewerage triggering memories;
- 8) "It's dangerous to think about it." Feelings of depression and anxiety arise;

- 9) Anniversary date nightmares; and
- 10) Development of poor money management and spending habits.

#### Positive Effects

- 1) Deep appreciation for the volunteer work which has caused a renewed belief in other people;
- 2) The disaster's effect on saving or collecting things;
- 3) The disaster as a catalyst for major life changes and decisions; and
- 4) Strong belief in survival potential.

#### Other Issues

- 1) Changing roles in relationships;
- 2) The relationship between having experienced other out of the ordinary events (such as combat) and the initial response to the disaster. Also, the relationship of the disaster to current level of functioning; and
- 3) Potential "at risk" groups.

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