

Assistance to Disaster Survivors

Overview of Slides

Description:

- ☰ Introduces post-disaster intervention programs & applied operational guidelines.

Purpose:

- ☰ To review scope and application of assistance guidelines.

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Question:

What Post-Disaster Intervention Procedures & Techniques are Available for Psychosocial Workers to Assist Survivors?

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Overview of Slides

Content:

- First Aid & Outreach
- Crisis Counseling
- Consultation
- Education

Mental Health referral

Module 5

Guidelines

- **Expect normal recovery**
- **Promote normal recovery**
- **Assume survivors are competent**
- **Recognize survivor strengths**
- **Promote resiliency**
- **Support survivors to master the disaster experience**

Guidelines

Recognize potential groups needing special attention:

- Injured
- Contaminated
- Bereaved
- Intensely exposed
- Displaced from home or work
- Loss of property
- Children
- Elderly
- History of:
 - Previous trauma
 - Mental illness
 - Substance abuse
 - Chronic illness

Guidelines

Match intervention to:

- **Disaster phase**
- **Setting**
- **Survivor characteristics**
- **Individual, community, cultural needs**

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Post-Disaster Techniques...

Techniques available in disaster are defined as **active interactions whose aims are to:**

- a) Promote
- b) Complement
- c) Reinforce

...healthy functions and adaptive behavior of
the survivor.

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- ✓ Care should be taken not to interfere with psychological defenses.
- ✓ The survivor needs these defenses during the initial period post-disaster.

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Psychological Defenses

Resistance Denial is:

- ✓ A **primary defense** during the **initial period** following the awareness of the impact produced by the disaster.
- ✓ Expectable, and should be handled as a **healthy capacity** of the organism to become overwhelmed by the terrible situations in which they find themselves.

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Guidelines for Intervention

- * **Increase** understanding of stress reactions so as to mitigate its effects
- * **Minimize** the impact of trauma by increasing coping strategies
- * **Obtain and identify** concrete types of help
- **Develop and improve** communication to aid in problem-solving skills and **identify** concrete types of help

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Guidelines for Intervention

- **Restore** social coping and functioning within rapidly changing systems and disorganized social structures.
- **Support** relationships with other survivors and staff of agencies providing health care, housing, and economic assistance.
- Link survivors to their families and loved ones as rapidly as possible.

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Guidelines for Intervention

- **Continue** to foster coping skills and adaptation to post-disaster changes in the community so that survivors will be able to **carry on** and **respond *normally*** to an ***abnormal*** traumatic event and to the **changes** that have occurred in their lives.

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Guidelines for Intervention

The worker needs to be aware that the survivor is going to face different experiences as the community is reorganizing and as individuals continue to return to function.

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Guidelines for Intervention

Each of these **phases** will stimulate varying **emotions** and **attitudes** presenting a challenge to the worker who needs to ascertain that this changed behavior is an expression of coping efforts.

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Crisis Theory

Crisis Theory

Definition:

“State of Crisis” – *The organism is in a temporary, state of disequilibrium, precipitated by a **stressor** characterized as “inescapable”. An intense situation that overwhelms our usual coping mechanisms.*

Crisis Theory

There is disruption of the usual “steady state” patterns...

- Biological
- Psychological
- Cognitive
- Behavioral
- Interpersonal
- Social (emotional fluctuation).

Crisis Theory

The situation can be:

- An overwhelming concrete disaster

OR

- A subtle symbolic event linked to emotionally laden meaning that **amplifies** and **distorts** responses to reality events.

*We may also go into crisis over an **anticipated event.***

Crisis Theory

Past

Present

AND

Future

MAY BLUR...

- Predisposing to...
- Precipitating...

AND

- Perpetuating a **CRISIS.**

Crisis Theory

- The stressor precipitates an intense situation that overwhelms the individual's usual coping mechanisms.
- A disruption of the usual “steady state” patterns keep fluctuating over time toward a final equilibrium (individual variations):
 - Biological
 - Psychological
 - Cognitive
 - Behavioral
 - Interpersonal
 - Social

Crisis Theory

Post-disaster crisis counseling...

- An active intervention technique that restores survivors' capacity to cope and handle stressful situations.
- Provides assistance for reordering and reorganizing their world.

Crisis Theory

Post-disaster crisis counseling...

- Education and interpretation of the overwhelming feelings produced by post-disaster stresses are available to help **restore** a sense of capability and hopefulness.

Techniques in Crisis Intervention:

CRISIS THEORY & APPLIED PRINCIPLES

II. Objectives:

- a) To **identify** the problems generated by stressors and the difficulties posed by the need for change
- b) To **list** alternatives and strategies for action
- c) To **build** a decision-making model and develop steps for implementing it
- d) To **operationalize** alternatives
- e) To **apply** the steps and feedback on results

Techniques in Crisis Intervention:

CRISIS THEORY & APPLIED PRINCIPLES

I. Goal of Crisis Intervention:

To foster mastery through good copying behavior, promoting action directed towards carrying out the tasks generated (made necessary) by environmental changes.

Techniques in Crisis Intervention:

CRISIS THEORY & APPLIED PRINCIPLES

Guidance...

- ✓ is task-oriented
- ✓ focuses on the “here and now”
- ✓ communicates:

- hope
- concern
- confidence



about the probability
of an eventual
successful outcome.

Techniques in Crisis Intervention:

CRISIS THEORY & APPLIED PRINCIPLES

Guidance...

*All support system resources should be **mobilized**, and responsibilities of daily living should be **apportioned** among members of family.*

Techniques in Crisis Intervention:

CRISIS THEORY & APPLIED PRINCIPLES

- ✓ A **balance** between rest and work should be encouraged
- ✓ Use linking to networks as a strategy
- ✓ Facilitate the expression and understanding of **painful emotions** that are part of *all* phases.

Phase-Oriented Interventions

Assistance procedures and techniques vary according to the reactions manifested by the survivor.

Disaster Phases & Intervention

- Each post-disaster **time phase** will be marked by different characteristics and manifestations of **crisis**.
- In the **acute phase**, survivors will be dependent on the workers, with few support systems available.

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Phase-Oriented Interventions

TIME PHASES will present differences in:

- ✓ Intensity
 - ✓ Acuteness
 - ✓ Emergency

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Phase-Oriented Interventions

Procedures & Techniques: **OUTREACH**

The array and extent of problems and needs of survivors are **numerous** and **difficult** to resolve.

➡ Necessitates careful considerations of priority and possibility of solutions.

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Impact Phase-Oriented Interventions

Procedures & Techniques: OUTREACH (stage 1)

- Approval
- Support
- Tell their story
- Instilling hope
- Reassurance
- Offering Information
- Reflection
- Self-disclosure

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Phase-Oriented Interventions

Procedures & Techniques: **OUTREACH**

✓ A hopeful attitude should be conveyed to the survivor.

“... Together we will work and process the painful situation ...”

This does NOT mean that one cheerfully or unrealistically offers solutions

Techniques in Early Intervention:

PROVIDE PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID

GUIDELINES:

Recognize potential groups in need of
special attention:

- Injured
- Contaminated
- Bereaved
- Intensely exposed
- Displaced from home/work
- Loss of property

Techniques in Early Intervention:

PROVIDE PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID

GUIDELINES: Secure Basic Needs

PROVIDE :

- ✓ Safety
- ✓ Security
- ✓ Food
- ✓ Water
- ✓ Shelter

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Impact Phase-Oriented Interventions

Procedures & Techniques:

PSYCHOSOCIAL FIRST AID (stage 2)

- Open and closed-ended questions
- Information gathering
- Cognitive focus
- Behavioral feeling
- Relationship focus

Techniques in Intervention:

PROVIDE PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID

GUIDELINES: Match Intervention To:

- Disaster phase
- Setting
- Survivor characteristics
- *Needs* of the:
 - ✓ Individual
 - ✓ Community
 - ✓ Culture

Techniques in Crisis Intervention:

PROVIDE PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID

The ABCs

Diminish Arousal

Facilitate Functional Behavior

Support Clear Cognition

ABCs of Psychological First Aid

Arousal

- Comfort and console
- Provide a sense of safety
- Reunite families
- Keep families together
- Identify distressed survivors for early attention and support
- Provide basic needs

Source: Raphael, 2000

ABCs of Psychological First Aid

Behavior

- **Protect from harm due to high-risk behaviors**
- **Link to support systems**
- **Redirect to constructive, helping behaviors**
- **Provide opportunities to gain mastery**
- **Reutilize activities**
- **Educate survivors on adaptive behaviors**

Source: Raphael, 2000

ABCs of Psychological First Aid

Cognition

- Communicate effectively
- Orient to the situation
- Clarify what happened
- Provide disaster updates
- Provide information for action
- Ground the survivor in reality
- Identify risks & resources

Source: Raphael, 2000

Long Term Phases & Counseling

OBJECTIVE OF POST-DISASTER INTERVENTION

Mitigating the long-term debilitating effects of post-traumatic reactions through:

✓ Crisis counseling

✓ Consultation

AND

✓ Education

Techniques in Crisis Intervention:

Objective of Post-Disaster Intervention

(continued)

Assisting survivors in organizing and getting to those disasters related services, resources and opportunities that will help them achieve pre-disaster levels of functioning and equilibrium.

Assistance to Disaster Survivors

Long--Aftermath Phase-Oriented Interventions

Procedures & Techniques: CRISIS COUNSELING

- Clarification
- Education
- Reality testing
- Reinforcement
- Encouragement
- Offering insight connections

Disaster Phases & Crisis Counseling

- As time goes by, more resources will become available to assist in crisis intervention and assistance.
- ✓ Coping capacity will increase
&
✓ Stress signs will diminish.

Disaster Phases & Crisis Counseling

OBJECTIVE OF POST-DISASTER INTERVENTION

When assumptions regarding certain predictable events become disorganized, a complex series of responses are selected, depending on the individual's:

- Physiology
- Psychology functioning
 - Feelings about self
 - Relationship with others

Disaster Phases & Crisis Counseling

TECHNIQUES IN CRISIS INTERVENTION:

***Counseling:
Objectives & Procedures***

Techniques in Crisis Intervention:

OBJECTIVES OF COUNSELING

- **Identifying** the problems generated by stressors and difficulties presented by demand for change
- **Listening** of action alternatives, strategies
- Building a decision model and steps to accomplish
- **Operationalizing** alternatives
- **Application** of steps & feedback of results

Techniques in Crisis Intervention:

PROCEDURES OF COUNSELING

- **Obtain** information on experience post-disaster
- **Establish** competence and credibility
- **Keep** survivor updated on any subsequent steps

Techniques in Crisis Intervention:

PROCEDURES OF COUNSELING

- **Provide** realistic information
- **Alleviate** emotional distress
- **Diminish** cognitive confusion and disorganization
- **Discourage** dependence

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Disaster Phases & Long Term Counseling

Long Term Phases Counseling

TECHNIQUES IN INTERVENTION:

*Assisting in Reorganization
and
Return to Functioning*

Long-Term Disaster Phases

Counseling

OBJECTIVE OF POST-DISASTER INTERVENTION

Assisting survivors in organizing themselves and accessing those...

- ✓ Disaster-related services

- ✓ Resources

AND

- ✓ Opportunities

... that will help them achieve pre-disaster levels of functioning and equilibrium.

Techniques in Intervention:

Assisting in Reorganization & Return to Functioning

1. Correct misconceptions in order to change the cognitive process and enable the survivor to determine reality.
2. Analyze dysfunctional self-statements and projections of future misfortunes...
 - Train in problem-solving
 - Rehearse options for decision-making

Techniques in Intervention:

Assisting in Reorganization & Return to Functioning

5. Train in methods of self-control
6. Develop techniques for “**stress inoculation as prevention**”
7. Connect type thinking
 - ✓ (past-present) to emotions/congruity of perceptions/reality

Techniques in Intervention:

Assisting in Reorganization & Return to Functioning

8. **Develop** behavioral techniques to modify behavior
9. **Clarify** role conflicts in the context of the present reality
10. **Identify** interpersonal problems and problems of self-concept within social functions

Disaster Phases & Long Term Assistance

*Post-Disaster
Consultation & Education*

Techniques in Crisis Intervention:

Consultation is a process with defined boundaries between two individuals:

#1

One individual
solicits help with a
work-related problem

#2

The other offers
**information and
guidance**

Techniques in Crisis Intervention:

OBJECTIVE:

- ✓ **Increase** the capacity of the emergency worker to assist survivors.
- ✓ **Assist** the emergency worker in dealing and working with the multiple post-disaster agencies simultaneously assisting survivors.

Agencies Problems

TYPICAL PROBLEMS INCLUDE:

- **Difficulty obtaining resources**
- Bureaucratic responsibilities, regulations, methodology of multiple agencies
- Inter-agency coordination:
 - **Lack of a recognized plan**
 - **Different** points of view and objectives
 - **Power struggles** and “turf wars”
- Interdisciplinary communication

Assisting the community

POST-DISASTER EDUCATION

- I. **Communicate** post-disaster advice and guidance via the mass media throughout each post-disaster phase.
 - ▲ TV, radio, newspaper, etc.
- II. **Disseminate** educational material to inform the population of “*normal reactions in an abnormal situation*”.

Assisting the Community

POST-DISASTER EDUCATION

- III. **Be prepared and accessible** to media professionals to respond to their questions.
- IV. **Be prepared** to participate with lay groups to inform them about post-disaster reactions.
- V. **Write, print, and disseminate** pamphlets, documents, cartoons, etc. with advice and guidance for survivors.

Techniques in Crisis Intervention:

PROVIDE PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID

GUIDELINES:

Recognize potential groups in need of
special attention:

- Children
- AND
- Elderly
- History of:
 - ✓ Previous trauma
 - ✓ Mental illness
 - ✓ Substance abuse
 - ✓ Chronic illness

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Long term Phase-Oriented Interventions

Procedures & Techniques:

MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY

The aim of these therapies are similar to the clinical range of therapies used for pathological mental health syndromes. These syndromes may have anteceded the impact of the disaster Or have been manifested by the traumatic stimuli of the events.