Disaster Behavioral Mental Health: Key Concepts for Mental Health Professionals

Colin Newlin, Braintree Solution Consulting, Inc.
Agenda

• Basic Overview of Emergencies and Responses (BERT, COOP, AHRP)

• Basics of Disaster Behavioral Mental Health Response
  – Response Issues
  – DBMH Responder Training
  – Lifecycle of Disasters
  – Lessons Learned
Basic Types of Emergencies

Building Emergencies (BERT)

Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP)

All Hazards Response Plan (AHRP)
Building Emergencies (BERT)

Any event or incident that requires the evacuation or sheltering process to protect employees, persons in care, and visitors.
COOP (internal “response”)

**Continuity of Operations:**

– Ensure essential functions
– “All Hazards”
– Relocation or not
Goals of a COOP

– Continuous performance of essential functions (especially critical services to existing clients)
– Maintain communication.
– Protect facilities, equipment, records, and other assets
– Ensure the safety of personnel.
– Support the state/locality’s Response Plan.
– Achieve a timely and orderly recovery
Essential Functions (to Prioritize and Assign)

- Executive Direction
- Public Information
- Access Helpline
- Financial Management
- Personnel Management
- Technological Support
- Facilities Management
- Emergency Community Services
- Emergency Psychiatric Services
- Inpatient Psychiatric Care
- Pharmacy services
Prioritize and Assign

What Happens?
Emergency and Essential Personnel
- Safety
- Communication
- Flexibility
- Responsibility
Supplies and Equipment

- 800mhz Radios
- Satellite Telephones
- Laptops
- Emergency go kits
- Psychiatric Medicine Cache
- Emergency contracts in place (e.g. snow removal)
- Emergency vehicles
- Emergency medication contract
- Emergency food
- Generators
All Hazards Response Plans (external)

Public mental health stakeholders should have an All Hazards Response Plan (AHRP) providing the framework for how they will respond to a public emergency. Private sector partners should be involved as resources in response when needed.
Categories and Examples of Hazards

• Natural Hazards—Severe weather, hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding, or earthquakes;
• Infrastructure Disruptions—utility and power failures, water supply failures, critical resource shortages;
• Human-caused Events and Hazards—urban fires, special events, civil disorder, or transportation accidents;
• Technological Hazards—hazardous materials, radiological, biological, or computer-related incidents; and
• Terrorist Incidents—bomb threats, sabotage, hijacking, or armed insurrection, which threaten life or property.
Examples of Team Responses

Emergency Response (No Disaster Declared)
• This type of response is the most common for DMH. In this discussion the major parts of the response will be covered (staff deployment, administration, financing, etc.)

Disaster Declared
• Practical elements involved with a disaster response (the types of interventions provided such as PFA, triage, record keeping, etc.) Overview of the regional training plan and the core competencies all responders must possess.

Catastrophe
• A catastrophe is an incident that permanently interrupts or alters the continuity of the status quo in terms of impacts upon human physical and mental health, culture language, economy and environment creating irrecoverable losses.
Response Teams

• Coordinate mental health activities through needs assessment and the provisioning of appropriate crisis support services and counseling for first responders, victims, families, and special vulnerable populations.

• Mental Health Response Teams (MHRTs)
  – Surge Response Teams
  – Emergency Response Teams
What do Responders Need to Know?

Core Courses for the Three Target Audiences to Receive Training

- **First Responders**
  - Additional Core Courses (for First Responders)
    - Self-Care
    - Mental Health Triage
    - Red Cross Training

- **Common Core Courses** (everyone takes these)
  - NIMS/ICS
  - All Hazards DBMH
  - PFA (4 hr ARC)

- **Non-Professionals**
  - Additional Core Courses (for Non-mental health professionals)
    - Ethics in Crisis Response
    - Self-Care

- **MH Professionals**
  - Additional Core Courses (for mental health professionals)
    - Cultural Diversity in CR
    - Crisis Response Training Resilience
Responder Training

Per feedback from regional stakeholders and national DBMH experts, all responder groups should take 3 courses (minimal threshold for deployment):

- **NIMS –ICS-100 and ICS-700**
- **All Hazards DBMH Training** (a longer version of today’s session)
- **Psychological First Aid** (4 hr ARC version)
## Core Trainings for Mental Health Professionals Before Deployment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Training for Professional Responders</th>
<th>State Lead Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* National Incident Management System (NIMS) IS-700 / Incident Command System (ICS) IS-100</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis Response Training</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* All Hazards Disaster Mental Health Training</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Cultural Diversity in Crisis Response</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
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West Virginia Has a DBMH Responder Certification!

Contact Joann Fleming for information:

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Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities
Desk: 304-356-4788
email: Joann.E.Fleming@wv.gov
Response Teams (Major Roles)

• Provide emergency and crisis behavioral mental health support to first responders, victims, families, and visitors.

• Coordinate all mental health activities and monitor mental health needs/compile assessments.
The Basics First (Maslow): Assessment of Physical Needs

- Numbers affected
- Shelter
- Food
- Wounds/Illnesses
- Infectious Disease
- Medications Available
- Fuel
  - Heat
  - Cooking
- Continued violence
- Mass fatalities
Assessment of Mental Health Needs/Risks

- **Vulnerable populations**
  - Previously mentally ill (often highly resilient)
  - Wounded
  - Bereaved
  - Tortured
- **Medications**
- **Hospital Beds**
  - General
  - Psychiatric

Dead bodies generally not infectious disease risk, but are psychological toxins.
Assessment of Mental Health Resources: Never Go in without a Briefing

- Personnel
  - Traditional mental health workers
  - Red Cross
  - Crisis counselors
  - Others
- Crisis counseling centers
- Clinics/Hospitals
- Medications
  - Psychiatric
  - Medical
- Language/culture

“local” vs “outsider”
The Disaster Lifecycle:
Assessment Should be On-Going

- “Honeymoon” period common following disasters
- When attention and media leave, often physical and psychological needs surface
  - Feelings of bitterness, abandonment, anger at government
- Clean-up period
  - Tedious, may still be dangerous
# Emergencies and Disasters: Timelines and COOP Impact

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<tr>
<th>Tiers</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Incident/Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier One - Yellow</td>
<td>BERT 0 to 8 hour duration</td>
<td>Building emergency such as fire, water damage, loss of power, or an air borne illness (flu pandemic) Weather Emergency such as snow, ice, or heat related.</td>
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Emergencies and Disasters: Timelines and COOP Impact

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| Tier Two - Orange| COOP  >8 to 96 hours  | - Unscheduled Government closing of an emergent nature  
|                  | (must be engaged by 72  | - Emergency building closure.  
|                  |  hours)                | - An environmental failure, such as loss of power that prevents the staff from safely occupying the building for an extended period of time preventing staff from tasks. |
# Emergencies and Disasters: Timelines and COOP Impact

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<tr>
<td>Tier Three</td>
<td>COOP</td>
<td>City/Regional Disaster- All Hazards Catastrophic interruption of normal operating processes caused by: Natural Disaster, Acts of war, or Criminal (terror) actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red &gt; 96</td>
<td>hours</td>
<td>Complete loss of critical components, such as data, or the loss of primary place of business.</td>
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AHRP Example:
Katrina Behavioral Health Issues

• Chronically mentally ill off medications
  – Note: psychiatric medications not in stockpile
• Displaced psychiatrists and populations
  – Volunteers needed, but not enough patients for New Orleans doctors
  – Issues of housing, transportation
• Importance of pets
• Long term issues of “diaspora”
• Exercise at Johns Hopkins based on Katrina
Brief Summary of Lessons Learned

• Must incorporate lessons learned into time-phased planning
• Psychiatric medications
• Family Assistance Centers
• Risk communication
• Command and control
• Environmental monitoring
• Ongoing health assessment
Questions?
Contact Information

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