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DISASTER MENTAL HEALTH INSTITUTE



Psychological Support in International Humanitarian Relief

Gerard A. Jacobs, Ph.D.

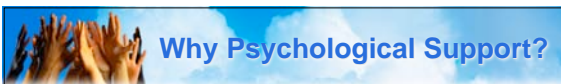


- Why consider psychological support as part of disaster relief and management?



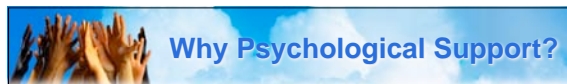
Why Psychological Support?

- When people are exposed to traumatic events:
 - Some are directly affected
 - Some are indirectly affected
 - Including humanitarian relief workers



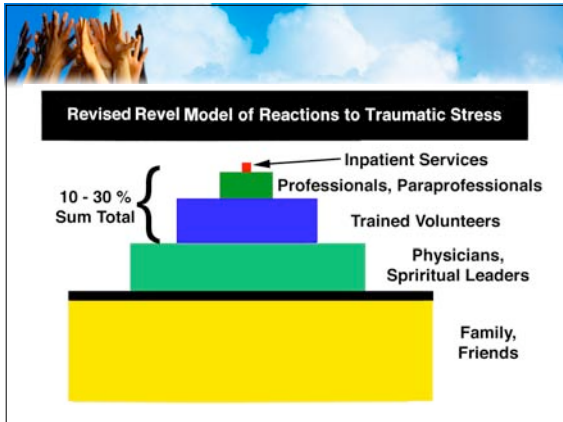
Why Psychological Support?

- Traumatic events happen to people...
 - Therefore traumatic events produce ***humanitarian*** issues



Why Psychological Support?

- People who are having traumatic stress reactions have difficulty participating in recovery, both personally and as a community
 - Therefore traumatic events produce ***operational*** issues
 - If you aren't part of the solution, you ***are*** part of the problem



Developing World Concept of Psychological Support

Two Components of Psychological Support

- Psychological First Aid
- Disaster Mental Health

Psychological Support / Psychosocial Support

- Psychological First Aid
 - basic “grassroots” psychological support provided for family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues by members of the general population
 - Educates public about traumatic stress
- Disaster Mental Health
 - services provided by mental health professionals in preparation for and during the emergency phase of a disaster operation

Integrated vs. Stand-Alone

These approaches do not need to be mutually exclusive.

- Disaster relief personnel, community leaders, teachers, first-aiders are not necessarily comfortable or good at being psychological support providers
- There may be persons who are natural providers of psychological support who wouldn't be good at other roles

Reflecting on the Past

- **PREPARED IS BETTER THAN REACTIONARY**
- Responses following 12/26/04 tsunami

International Guidelines for Psychological Support

- **Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines!!!!!!**
 - www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/content/products/
 - Expatriates are not to provide direct service

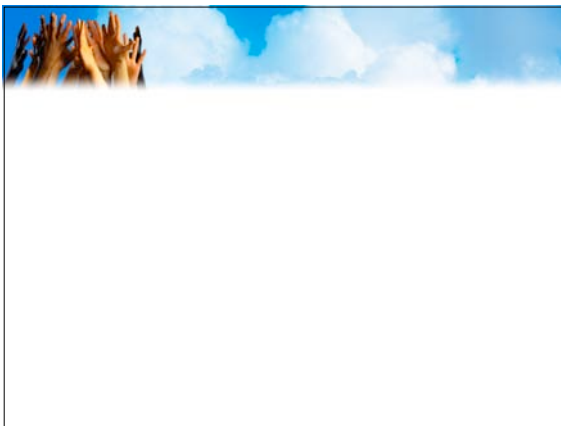


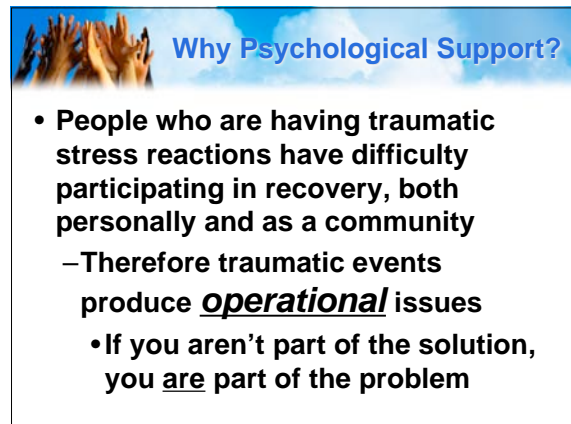
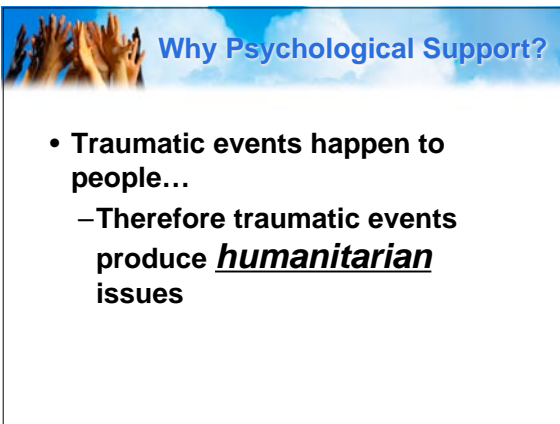
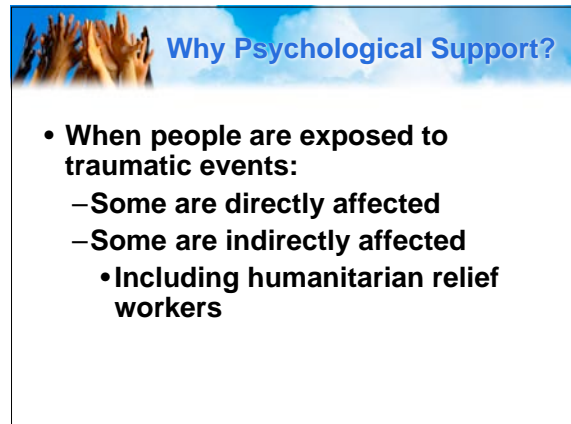
- **Providers working independently**
 - No support mechanism
 - May have no knowledge of culture/community/language issues
- **Short term program or single-session clinical services**
- **Proselytizing while providing service**
- **If you have a hammer...**
- **“Something is better than nothing”**

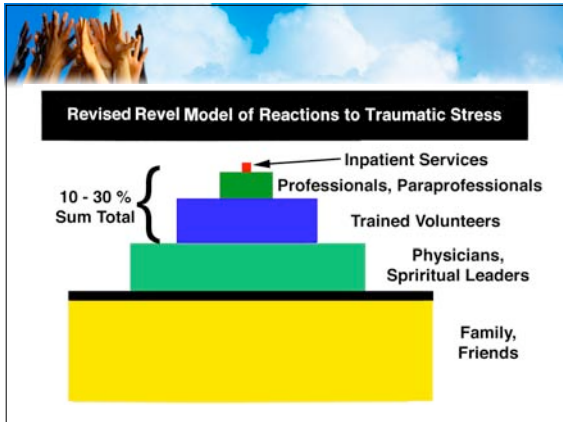
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