

# Unit Nine: Disaster Psychology

## I. Unit Overview and Objectives

### A. Unit Overview

1. This unit on disaster psychology will examine the psychological impact of a disaster on rescuers and victims and provide suggestions on how to offer “psychological first aid.” It will focus on caring for yourself, your colleagues and survivors of disasters and address techniques for managing one’s personal situation so that the needs of the victims and those of CERT team members can be met.

2. CERT members should prepare themselves for their role during and following a disaster by learning about the possible impact of disaster on them and others, emotionally and physically. This knowledge will help CERT members understand and manage their reactions to the event and to work better with others.

### B. Objectives

1. By listening, participating and interacting in class activities, by the end of this unit participants should be able to accurately:

- a. Describe the disaster and post-disaster emotional environment.
- b. Identify the steps that rescuers can take to relieve their own stress
- c. Recognize how stress and trauma manifests differently in members of a diverse community.

### II. Individual Well Being

A. Vicarious Trauma – During a disaster, you may see, smell or hear things that will be extremely unpleasant. Even if you don't experience such events first hand, you will likely interact with others who have. This can turn from empathy to **Vicarious Trauma** which is a process of over-identifying with survivors (almost to the point of taking on their burdens as your own). It is an "occupational hazard" for helpers. Taking ownership of others' problems will compound your stress and affect the overall effectiveness of response and recovery teams.

B. Signs of Stress or Trauma – Be alert to **psychological (emotional) and physiological (physical) signs** of disaster trauma in yourself, as well as in disaster victims, so that you can take steps to alleviate stress.

#### 1. Psychological symptoms may include:

- Irritability or anger.
- Self-blame or the blaming of others.
- Isolation and withdrawal.
- Fear of recurrence.
- Feeling stunned, numb, or overwhelmed.
- Feeling helpless.
- Mood swings.
- Sadness, depression, and grief.
- Denial.
- Concentration and memory problems.
- Relationship conflicts/marital discord.

### Individual and Team Well-Being (Continued)

#### 2. Physiological symptoms may include:

- § Loss of appetite.
- § Headaches or chest pain.
- § Diarrhea, stomach pain, or nausea.
- § Hyperactivity.
- § Increase in alcohol or drug consumption.
- § Nightmares.
- § The inability to sleep.
- § Fatigue or low energy.

C. Individual Stress Reduction Activities – You should spend some time thinking about other ways to reduce stress personally. Only you know what makes you able to reduce stress within yourself. Expending the effort required to find personal stress reducers is worthwhile before an incident occurs. You can take the following preventive steps in your everyday life:

1. Get enough sleep.
2. Exercise.
3. Eat a balanced diet.
4. Balance work, play, and rest.
5. Allow yourself to receive as well as give. Remember that your identity is broader than that of a helper.
6. Connect with others.
7. Use spiritual resources.
8. Experienced rescue workers find these steps helpful in controlling their stress levels, but, in some cases, it might be necessary to seek help from mental health professionals.

### Individual and Team Well-Being (Continued)

#### III. Team Well Being

C. The role of the team leader in team well being – If you work as part of a CERT team there are steps that CERT **team leaders** can take to promote team well-being before, during, and after an incident:

1. Provide pre-disaster stress management training to all CERT personnel.
2. Brief CERT personnel before the effort begins on what they can expect to see and what they can expect in terms of emotional response in the survivors and themselves.
3. Emphasize that the CERT is a team. Sharing the workload and emotional load can help defuse pent-up emotions.
4. Encourage rescuers to rest and re-group so that they can avoid becoming overtired.
5. Direct rescuers to take breaks away from the incident area, to get relief from the stressors of the effort.
6. Encourage rescuers to eat properly and maintain fluid intake throughout the operation. Explain that they should drink water or other electrolyte-replacing fluids, and avoid drinks with caffeine or refined sugar.
7. Rotate teams for breaks or new duties (i.e., from high-stress to low-stress jobs). Team members can talk with each other about their experiences. This is very important for their psychological health.
8. Phase out workers gradually. Gradually phase them from high- to low-stress areas of the incident.
9. Conduct a brief discussion (defusing) with workers after the shift, in which workers describe what they encountered and express their feelings about it.
10. Arrange for an informal debriefing or Critical Incident Stress Management professional (CISM) to conduct a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD).

**IV. Critical Incident Stress Debriefing**

A. CISD is one type of intervention system that is based on a careful assessment of the needs of a group (or sub-groups within a larger organization). A CISD is a formal group process held between 1 to 3 days after the event and is designed to help emergency services personnel and volunteers cope with a traumatic event.

B. CISD should not be used as a stand-alone intervention it should be used in conjunction with other types of intervention (such as: personal stress reduction techniques, informal debriefings, or professional longer term counseling).

C. Participation in CISD should be voluntary.

D. To schedule a CISD, you should contact the Red Cross, local emergency management agency, or community mental health agency. You could also ask your local fire or police department for help in contacting the appropriate person.

E. A CISD has seven phases:

1. Introductions and a description of the process, including assurance of confidentiality
2. Review of the factual material about the incident
3. Sharing of initial thoughts/feelings about the incident
4. Sharing of emotional reactions to the incident
5. Review of the symptoms of stress experienced by the participants
6. Instruction about normal stress reactions
7. Closing and further needs assessment

### V. Understanding and Working with Disaster Survivors

A. People who and organizations that respond to disasters need to have an understanding about how people might react to the event. Just as people are vastly different, so are their reactions. In this section of the Disaster Psychology unit the material explored includes: defining disasters, disaster mythology, general patterns of behavior in disasters, social location and special communities, dealing with traumatic stress and, responses to disaster survivors.

#### 1. What is a Disaster?

a. It is important that CERT trained individuals understand that a disaster is different than an emergency. Generally an emergency, even a major emergency, can be handled by local or regional emergency management personnel. Such organizations are adequately prepared to deal with the short term and long-term demands of an emergency. An emergency may be overwhelming in a temporary sense, a disaster is quite different.

b. Charles Fritz a groundbreaking researcher of disasters indicates a disaster is unusual and catastrophic. A disaster is either due to accidental or hard to control events society or a self-sufficient subdivision of society undergoes after an incident that disrupts all or some of the essential functions of that society.<sup>1</sup>

#### 2. Disaster Mythology

a. If you watch television or movie portrayals of people reacting to disasters you have seen disaster mythology represented. Hysteria, widespread irrational activity and dysfunctional behavior may be what can 'sell the story' but they are not factual.

b. Disaster myths that assume that the norms that govern individual and social behavior collapse during a disaster have been proven wrong by many researchers and teams

---

<sup>1</sup> Fritz, Charles E. 1961. "Disasters." Pp. 651-694 in *Contemporary Social Problems*, Robert K. Merton and Robert A. Nisbet (eds.). New York: Harcourt.

## Disaster Psychology

### Understanding and Working with Disaster Survivors

c. Researchers have classified some of most common **disaster myths**<sup>2</sup>:

- Panic Flight – people fleeing in horror
- Looting – people stay in peril to protect or steal property
- Price Gouging – local merchants charging exorbitant fees for essential items
- Contagion – people get caught up in selfish frenzy, then lose control and behave as a mob
- Martial Law – is commonly declared to restore or maintain order in the community
- Psychological Dependency – survivors are too traumatized to function and must depend on outsiders
- Disaster Shock – survivors are so incapacitated they can't function in the most simple ways
- Evacuation Behavior – crazed crowds pushing and shoving and walking or driving over others
- Shelter Use – the primary place of choice for evacuees are over-crowded and under-supplied
- Death, Injury & Damage Estimates – are dramatically high and grotesque

While these behaviors infrequently happen to individuals, they are RARE OCCURANCES, but get undue media attention because they are dramatic. Media looking for the most striking stories help create and perpetuate the myths.

---

<sup>2</sup> Fischer, III, Henry W. 1998. *Response to Disaster: Fact Versus Fiction & Its Perpetuation The Sociology of Disaster*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. University Press of America, Lanham, Maryland.

### Understanding and Working with Disaster Survivors (Continued)

#### 3. General Patterns of Behaviors in Disasters

Although the makers of the 'movie of the week' and tabloid reports create images of hysteria and selfishness in survivors, the actual patterns of behavior of individuals and communities after disasters hit are in sharp contrast to such myths. General patterns of personal and community behavior following disasters include:

- a. If disaster warnings are clear, continual, from knowledgeable sources and consistent for the environment they live in, people will evacuate when requested<sup>3</sup>.
- b. Remaining calm<sup>4</sup>
- c. Do not panic<sup>5</sup>
- e. Altruism (unselfish and philanthropic behavior)<sup>6</sup>
- f. Want to observe and personally survey the damaged area (especially around their home or business)<sup>7</sup>
- g. Behave normally, rationally and are the first to respond to their own needs and the needs of their neighbors<sup>8</sup>
- h. Tell their 'story' of the disaster (many times to many listeners as an act of constructing and understanding the experience as well as to reestablish control).<sup>9</sup>
- i. become active in political processes that are a part of the long-term recovery activities<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Perry, Ronald W., Michael K. Lindell, and Marjorie R. Green. 1982. "Crisis Communications: Ethnic Differentials in Interpreting and Acting on Disaster Warnings." *Social Behavior and Personality* 10 (No. 1): 97-104.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Glassheim, Eliot (Ed.), 1999. *Voices from the Flood: An Oral History of the 1997 Flood of the Red River of the North*. North Dakota Museum of Art, Grand Forks, ND.

<sup>7</sup> Fischer, III, Henry W. 1998. *Response to Disaster: Fact Versus Fiction & Its Perpetuation The Sociology of Disaster*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. University Press of America, Lanham, Maryland.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Glassheim, Eliot (Ed.), 1999. *Voices from the Flood: An Oral History of the 1997 Flood of the Red River of the North*. North Dakota Museum of Art, Grand Forks, ND.

<sup>10</sup> Rakow, Lana. 2004. "The Talk of Movers and Shakers: Class Conflict in the Making of a Community Disaster." *The Southern Journal of Communication*.

### Understanding and Working with Disaster Survivors (Continued)

**4. Social Location and Special Communities in Disasters** – People's needs and capabilities are affected by their locations within a society. Location just doesn't refer to physical location (such as the difference between living on a hill or by the river of a flood prone community) it refers to social location as well. Social location refers to your place or position in a society. Consider the following if a hurricane hit a community and you were:

- On vacation from another state
- Did not speak English as your first language
- Living paycheck-to-paycheck in a rental unit that was destroyed
- Just moved to the area and started a new job
- Recovering from a broken leg and were using a wheelchair
- Para Olympics wheelchair sprint champion
- Retired and lived on social security
- Retired and wealthy
- A single parent of three children who was the sole earner for the family

a. Disaster researchers Enarson and Morrow indicate that when members of a community have to deal with issues like restricted housing choices, migration, poverty and other limits to choice they experience risk and disaster differently than those with economic, political or social means.<sup>11</sup>

b. The space and place people occupy in a society can cause them to have vastly different experiences in the same disaster. Trained responders should anticipate interacting with special communities of people in need at each disaster.

---

<sup>11</sup> Enarson, Elaine, Betty Hearn Morrow. 1998. *The Gendered Terrain of Disaster: Through Women's Eyes*. Praeger, Westport, Connecticut.

## Disaster Psychology

### Understanding and Working with Disaster Survivors (Continued)

c. One special community you may encounter in a disaster might be the elderly<sup>12</sup>. Some elderly citizens experience depression, trauma and death not directly due to the disaster, but because their 'taken-for-granted' life in the pre-disaster phase is so disrupted and cannot be restored in the post disaster period. Disaster research has indicated that older members of society will experience disasters differently due to their social isolation, personal situations and limited access to information.

i. Information limitations may include<sup>13</sup>:

- Lack of access to electronic communication tools (e-mail, web access)
- Lack of access to written communication forms (due to weakening eyesight)
- Lack of access to public space and the information sharing that takes place there (due to limited personal mobility, or not able to drive a vehicle)

ii. Social Isolation issues may include<sup>14</sup>:

- Limited personal support systems (due to distance from friends and family, death of friends, family or spouse-partners)
- Limited social support systems (secondary sources of information such as from religious organizations or senior centers are often short of volunteers during a crisis)

iii. Personal situations may include<sup>15</sup>:

- Financial constraints (income dependent on retirement, pension or social security)
- Physical constraints (health related to aging – elderly people may be home bound or unable to travel distances to disaster recovery centers).

---

<sup>12</sup> Hewitt, Kenneth. 1995. "Excluded Perspectives in the Social Construction of Disaster." *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, 13, : 317-340.

<sup>13</sup> Hooper, Pattijean, Kathleen Fearn-Banks, 2005. "Finding Milton Wright: How Public Relations Disaster Campaigns Impact the Elderly." *The Journal of Promotions Management*.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> For elderly, a flood's toll continues to rise. (Nov. 6, 1997) *The New York Times*. p. A36.

## Disaster Psychology

### Understanding and Working with Disaster Survivors (Continued)

v. Disaster recovery personnel need to consider the following demographic information and special susceptibilities when dealing with elderly populations<sup>16</sup>:

- During the 20<sup>th</sup> century the number of persons over sixty-five has tripled and are about 15% of the whole U.S. population<sup>17</sup> That number will grow.
- About 31 percent of all elderly live alone; four-fifths of these are women<sup>18</sup>.
- The poverty rate rises with age; 16% of people over seventy- five live in poverty.<sup>19</sup>
- 1.4 million children are being raised by their grandparents in the United States, this trend is increasing and the possibility exists that children and older adults may occupy the same space in a home.
- Sensory deprivation is increased in older adults.
- Some older people have delayed responses because of age related slowing cognitive and motor activities.
- Chronic Illness and dietary considerations can cause communication and health problems.
- Multiple loss effects (loss of spouse, income, home, physical capabilities) may make disaster recovery more difficult.
- Welfare stigma and unfamiliarity with bureaucracy may cause older adults to be reluctant to seek support from public disaster recovery agencies.

---

<sup>16</sup> Oriol, William . "Psychosocial Issues for Older Adults in Disasters" Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Center for Mental Health Services. DHHS Publication No. ESDRB SMA 99-3323

<sup>17</sup> "Sixty-Five Plus in the United States." Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census Statistical Brief, May 1995

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> "Aging into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," Washington, D.C.: National Aging Information Center, Administration on Aging, 1996.

## Disaster Psychology

### Understanding and Working with Disaster Survivors (Continued)

- Hyper/hypothermia vulnerability makes elderly more at risk during disasters that involve extreme temperatures.
- Transfer trauma - Elderly who need to be evacuated or permanently moved from their residences may experience stress and disorientation.
- Language and cultural barriers can cause confusion and exasperation at relief centers or with interactions with disaster relief workers. Native Americans have unique cultural traditions; bilingual and bi-cultural concerns need to be addressed with the elderly.

iv. The Voices of Wisdom videotape, part of Project Cope<sup>20</sup> offers older adults recovering from a major disaster the following advice:

- Physical reactions to a disaster are normal.
- Acknowledging our feelings helps us recover
- Asking for what we need can help heal us.
- Focusing on our strengths and abilities will help.
- Accepting help from community programs is healthy.
- We each heal at our own pace.
- We each have different needs and different ways to cope.
- Older adults have many experiences that may be of help to the recovery efforts of individuals and the community.
- Older adults may be potential volunteer workers and service to the community which may help them heal and feel a greater sense of community.

---

<sup>20</sup> Project COPE. "Voices of Wisdom Videotape and Brochure." Ventura County, California, 1992

## Disaster Psychology

### Understanding and Working with Disaster Survivors (Continued)

v. The Center for Mental Health Services<sup>21</sup> offers the following principles to support the above stated. While it is not practical for CERT members to deliver all of the suggested services, it is none-the-less important for you to know these services may be required and refer community groups or government agencies to older citizens in need:

- Provide strong and persistent verbal reassurance.
- Assist with recovery of physical possessions; make frequent home visits; arrange for companions.
- Give special attention to suitable residential relocation, ideally in familiar surroundings with friends or acquaintances.
- Help re-establish medication regimes.
- Provide escort service.

d. Another special community you may encounter in disasters might be children. Natural disasters can leave children feeling frightened, confused, and insecure. Whether a child has personally experienced trauma or has merely seen the event on television or heard it discussed by adults, it is important for parents and teachers to be informed and ready to help if reactions to stress begin to occur.

Children respond to trauma in many different ways<sup>22</sup>. Some may have reactions very soon after the event; others may seem to be doing fine for weeks or months, and then begin to show worrisome behavior. Knowing the signs that are common at different ages can help parents and teachers to recognize problems and respond appropriately.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Oriol, William . "Psychosocial Issues for Older Adults in Disasters" Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Center for Mental Health Services. DHHS Publication No. ESDRB SMA 99-3323

<sup>22</sup> [http://www.fema.gov/kids/tch\\_diz.htm](http://www.fema.gov/kids/tch_diz.htm)

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/KEN-01-0093/default.asp>

### Understanding and Working with Disaster Survivors (Continued)

i. Preschool Age – Children from one to five years in age find it particularly hard to adjust to change and loss. In addition, these youngsters have not yet developed their own coping skills, so they must depend on parents, family members, and teachers to help them through difficult times.

Very young children may regress to an earlier behavioral stage after a traumatic event. For example, preschoolers may resume thumb-sucking or bedwetting or may become afraid of strangers, animals, darkness, or "monsters." They may cling to a parent or teacher or become very attached to a place where they feel safe.

Changes in eating and sleeping habits are common, as are unexplainable aches and pains. Other symptoms to watch for are disobedience, hyperactivity, speech difficulties, and aggressive or withdrawn behavior. Preschoolers may tell exaggerated stories about the traumatic event or may speak of it over and over.

ii. Early Childhood – Children aged five to eleven may have some of the same reactions as younger boys and girls. In addition, they may withdraw from play groups and friends, compete more for the attention of parents, fear going to school, allow school performance to drop, become aggressive, or find it hard to concentrate. These children may also return to "more childish" behaviors; for example, they may ask to be fed or dressed.

iii. Adolescence – Children twelve to fourteen are likely to have vague physical complaints when under stress and may abandon chores, schoolwork, and other responsibilities they previously handled. While on the one hand they may compete vigorously for attention from parents and teachers, they may also withdraw, resist authority, become disruptive at home or in the classroom, or even begin to experiment with high-risk behaviors such as drinking or drug abuse. These young people are at a developmental stage in which the opinions of others are very important. They need to be thought of as "normal" by their friends and are less concerned about relating well with adults or participating in recreation or family activities they once enjoyed.

## Disaster Psychology

### Understanding and Working with Disaster Survivors (Continued)

In later adolescence, teens may experience feelings of helplessness and guilt because they are unable to assume full adult responsibilities as the community responds to the disaster. Older teens may also deny the extent of their emotional reactions to the traumatic event.

iv. How to Help<sup>24</sup> –Provide children with opportunities to talk about what they are seeing on television and to ask questions.

- Don't be afraid to admit that you can't answer all their questions.
- Answer questions at a level the child can understand.
- Provide ongoing opportunities for children to talk. They will probably have more questions as time goes on.
- Use this as an opportunity to establish a family emergency plan. Feeling that there is something you can do may be very comforting to both children and adults.
- Allow children to discuss other fears and concerns about unrelated issues. This is a good opportunity to explore these issues also.
- Monitor children's television watching. Some parents may wish to limit their child's exposure to graphic or troubling scenes. To the extent possible, watch reports of the disaster with children. It is at these times that questions might arise.
- Help children understand that there are no bad emotions and that a wide range of reactions is normal.

---

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/KEN-01-0091/default.asp>

### Understanding and Working with Disaster Survivors (Continued)

- Encourage children to express their feelings to adults (including teachers and parents) who can help them understand their sometimes strong and troubling emotions.
- Try not to focus on blame.

In addition to the tragic things they see, help children identify good things, such as heroic actions, families who are grateful for being reunited, and the assistance offered by people throughout the country and the world.

**5. Traumatic stress** – The National Institute of Mental Health estimates that approximately 10% of survivors experience great distress after a disaster<sup>25</sup>. This may be in the immediate aftermath or in the longer-term recovery process. There is no specific pattern or time-line for feeling traumatized. Some of the traumatic responses may include problems with:

- a. Cognitive functioning. Those who have suffered traumatic stress may act irrationally; have difficulty making decisions; or may act in ways that are out of character for them normally. They may have difficulty sharing or retrieving memories.
- b. Physical health. Traumatic stress can cause a range of physical symptoms—from exhaustion to heat problems.
- c. Interpersonal relationships. Those who survive traumatic stress may undergo temporary or long-term personality changes that make interpersonal relationships difficult.
- d. The strength and type of personal reaction vary because of:
  - The victim's prior experience with the same or a similar event. The emotional effect of multiple events can be cumulative, leading to greater stress reactions.

---

<sup>25</sup> National Institute of Mental Health. Innovations in Mental Health Services to Disaster Victims. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Publication No. (ADM) 90-537, 1990.

## Disaster Psychology

### Understanding and Working with Disaster Survivors (Continued)

- The intensity of the disruption in the survivors' lives. The more the survivors' lives are disrupted, the greater their psychological and physiological reactions may become.
- The meaning of the event to the individual. The more catastrophic the victim perceives the event to be to him or her personally, the more intense will be his or her stress reaction.
- The emotional well-being of the individual and the resources (especially social) that he or she has to cope. People who have had other recent traumas may not cope well with additional stressors.
- The length of time that has elapsed between the event's occurrence and the present. The reality of the event takes time to "sink in."
- You should not take the survivors' surface attitudes personally. Rescuers may expect to see a range of responses that will vary from person to person, but the responses they see will be part of the psychological impact of the event—and probably will not relate to anything that the CERT members have or have not done.

**6. Responses to Disaster Survivors** – The goal of on-scene psychological intervention on the part of CERT members should be to stabilize the incident scene by stabilizing individuals. Some ways to do this include:

- a. Assess the survivors for injury and shock. Address any medical needs first. Observe them to determine their level of responsiveness and whether they pose a danger to themselves or to others.
- b. Get uninjured people involved in helping. Focused activity helps to move people beyond shock, so give them constructive jobs to do, such as running for supplies. This strategy is especially effective for survivors who are being disruptive.

## Disaster Psychology

### Understanding and Working with Disaster Survivors (Continued)

- c. Listen! Let people talk about their feelings and their physical needs. Victims often need to talk about what they've been through—and they want someone to listen to them.
- d. Empathize. Show by your responses that you hear their concerns. Victims want to know that someone else understands their feelings of pain and grief.
- e. Help survivors connect to natural support systems, such as family, friends, or clergy.
- f. Mental Health Referrals – Survivors that show evidence of being suicidal, psychotic, or unable to care for themselves should be referred to mental health professionals for support. Remember disaster mythology; this will be infrequent in most groups of survivors.
- g. Avoid Un-empathic responses – When providing support, they should avoid saying the following phrases. On the surface, these phrases are meant to comfort the survivors, but they do not show an understanding of the person's feelings. These types of responses could elicit a strong negative response or distance the survivor from you. It is ok to apologize if the survivor reacts negatively to something that you said.
  - “I understand.” In most situations we cannot understand because our experience is not the same and rarely our social location is exactly like another's.
  - “Don't feel bad.” The survivor has a right to feel bad and will need time to feel differently.
  - “You're strong or You'll get through this.” Many survivors do not feel strong and question if they will recover from the loss.
  - “Don't cry.” It is ok to cry.

## Disaster Psychology

### Understanding and Working with Disaster Survivors (Continued)

- “It’s God’s will.” Giving religious meaning to an event to a person you do not know may insult or anger the person.
- “It could be worse” or “At least you still have ...” it is up to the individual to decide whether things could be worse.

## VI. Resources

A. Local, Community, State, and Federal organizations or agencies that can help you better understand disaster psychology and act as a support and referral system to you during disaster response. **Listed below are some resources, you should add local and regional community based organizations to tailor the list to your area.**

B. Federal Resources – In response to a presidentially-declared disaster, FEMA may work with up to 28 federal agencies and the American Red Cross to provide assistance. These agencies provide state and local governments with personnel, technical expertise, equipment and other resources, and assume an active role in managing the response.

To coordinate the federal efforts, FEMA recommends and the President appoints a Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) for each state that is affected by a disaster. The FCO and the state response team set up a Disaster Field Office (DFO) near the disaster scene. It is from there that the federal and state personnel work together to carry out response and recovery functions. These functions are grouped into 12 [Emergency Support Functions](#) (ESFs), each headed by a agency supported by other agencies. The federal agencies that provide assistance include:

1. [Department of Agriculture](#)
2. [Department of Commerce](#)
3. [Department of Defense](#)
4. [Department of Education](#)
5. [Department of Energy](#)
6. [Department of Health and Human Services](#)
7. [Department of Housing and Urban Development](#)

### Resources (Continued)

8. [Department of the Interior](#)
9. [Department of Justice](#)
10. [Department of Labor](#)
11. [Department of State](#)
12. [Department of Transportation](#)
13. [Department of the Treasury](#)
14. [Internal Revenue Service](#)
15. [Department of Veterans Affairs](#)
16. [Agency for International Development](#)
17. [American Red Cross](#)
18. [Environmental Protection Agency](#)
19. [Federal Communications Commission](#)
20. [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#)
21. [General Services Administration](#)
22. [National Aeronautical and Space Administration](#)
23. [National Communications System](#)
24. [Nuclear Regulatory Commission](#)
25. [Office of Personnel Management](#)
26. [Office of Science and Technology Policy](#)
27. [Small Business Administration](#)
28. [Tennessee Valley Authority](#)
29. [U.S. Postal Service](#)

C. National Organizations - that support disaster response and recovery include The National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) which coordinates planning efforts by many voluntary organizations. Member organizations provide more effective and less duplication in service by getting together before disasters strike. Once disasters occur, NVOAD or an affiliated state VOAD encourages members and other voluntary agencies to convene on site. This cooperative effort has proven

## Disaster Psychology

### Resources (Continued)

to be the most effective way for a wide variety of volunteers and organizations to work together in a crisis. NVOAD serves member organizations through: communication, cooperation, coordination, education, leadership, development, mitigation, convening mechanisms, and outreach. The following is a list of National VOADs.

• <a href="#">Adventist Community Services</a>	• <a href="#">American Baptist Men</a>
• <a href="#">America's Second Harvest</a>	• <a href="#">American Radio Relay League, Inc.</a>
• <a href="#">American Disaster Reserve</a>	• <a href="#">Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team</a>
• <a href="#">American Red Cross</a>	• <a href="#">Christian Disaster Response</a>
• <a href="#">Catholic Charities USA</a>	• <a href="#">Church of the Brethren Disaster Response</a>
• <a href="#">Christian Reformed World Relief Committee</a>	• <a href="#">Convoy of Hope</a>
• <a href="#">Church World Service</a>	• <a href="#">Episcopal Relief and Development (formerly The Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief)</a>
• <a href="#">Disaster Psychiatry Outreach</a>	• <a href="#">Humane Society of the United States</a>
• <a href="#">Friends Disaster Service</a>	• <a href="#">International Critical Incident Stress Foundation</a>
• <a href="#">International Aid</a>	• <a href="#">Lutheran Disaster Response</a>
• <a href="#">International Relief Friendship Foundation</a>	• <a href="#">Mercy Medical Airlift: National Patient Travel Center</a>
• <a href="#">Mennonite Disaster Service</a>	• <a href="#">National Organization for Victim Assistance</a>
• <a href="#">National Emergency Response Team</a>	• <a href="#">Northwest Medical Teams International</a>
• <a href="#">Nazarene Disaster Response</a>	• <a href="#">REACT International, Inc.</a>
• <a href="#">Presbyterian Church (USA)</a>	• <a href="#">Southern Baptist Convention</a>
• <a href="#">Society of St. Vincent de Paul</a>	• <a href="#">The Salvation Army</a>
• <a href="#">The Points of Light Foundation</a>	• <a href="#">United Methodist Committee on Relief and the General Board of Global Ministries</a>
• <a href="#">United Jewish Communities</a>	• <a href="#">Volunteers of America</a>
• <a href="#">Volunteers in Technical Assistance</a>	• <a href="#">World Vision</a>
• <a href="#">Wider Church Ministries, United Church of Christ</a>	• The list continues to expand. . .

## Disaster Psychology

### Resources (Continued)

C. State Resources – the following chart indicates active organized voluntary organizations in Tribes, States and Territories as well as the nation’s capital.

• <a href="#">Alabama VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">Alaska VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">Virginia VOAD</a>
• <a href="#">Arizona VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">Arkansas VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">West Virginia VOAD</a>
• <a href="#">California Statewide Contacts</a>	• <a href="#">California VOAD - North</a>	• <a href="#">Wyoming VOAD</a>
• <a href="#">California VOAD - South</a>	• <a href="#">Colorado VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">Washington State VOAD</a>
• <a href="#">Connecticut VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">DC VOAD - Washngtrton DC</a>	• <a href="#">Wisconsin VOAD</a>
• <a href="#">Florida VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">Georgia VOAD</a>	
• <a href="#">Guam VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">Hawaii VOAD</a>	
• <a href="#">Idaho VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">Illinois VOAD</a>	
• <a href="#">Indiana VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">Iowa VOAD</a>	
• <a href="#">Kansas VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">Kentucky VOAD</a>	
• <a href="#">Louisiana VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">Maine VOAD</a>	
• <a href="#">Maryland VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">Massachusetts VOAD</a>	
• <a href="#">Michigan VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">Minnesota VOAD</a>	
• <a href="#">Mississippi VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">Missouri VOAD</a>	
• <a href="#">Montana VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">Nebraska VOAD</a>	
• <a href="#">Nevada VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">New Hampshire VOAD</a>	
• <a href="#">New Jersey VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">New Mexico VOAD</a>	
• <a href="#">New York City VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">New York VOAD</a>	
• <a href="#">North Carolina VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">North Dakota VOAD</a>	
• <a href="#">Ohio VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">Oklahoma VOAD</a>	
• <a href="#">Oregon VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">Pennsylvania VOAD</a>	
• <a href="#">Puerto Rico VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">Red Cloud Indian School</a>	
• <a href="#">Rhode Island VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">South Carolina VOAD</a>	
• <a href="#">South Dakota VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">St. Croix VOAD</a>	
• <a href="#">St. Thomas &amp; St. John VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">Tennessee VOAD</a>	
• <a href="#">Texas VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">Utah VOAD</a>	
• <a href="#">Vermont VOAD</a>	• <a href="#">Virginia - Northern Virginia VOAD (NOVAVOAD)</a>	

### Resources (Continued)

D. Local Resources – The following list is an example of local resources available in the Seattle area – Washington State Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster Members (WAVOAD) consists of voluntary and state government organizations with disaster relief roles. VOAD functions include animal control, building repair, child care, clean up, clothing, communication, counseling, damage assessment, disaster welfare inquiry, financial assistance, food, human relations, mass care, sheltering, transportation, volunteer staffing, and warehousing and bulk distribution. There are more members that are listed below and more will likely join in at the onset of a disaster this is a sampling. WAVOAD members with web sites include:

- [Adventist Community Services](#) is a national, humanitarian agency involved in relief and community action programs. It is sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but is separately incorporated as a public charity.
- [Airport Chaplaincy](#) is affiliated with Sea-Tac Ministries Foundation and Southcenter FOCAS
- [American Red Cross](#) is a humanitarian organization led by volunteers and guided by its Congressional Charter and the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross Movement, will provide relief to victims of disasters and help people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies.
- [Catholic Community Services of Seattle](#) - "With one heart, we are working to build healthier families and communities across Western Washington."
- [Christian Reformed World Relief Committee](#) is a Christian non-profit agency with programs in North America and in over 30 countries world-wide, working with people and their communities to create permanent, positive change in Christ's name through development, relief, and education.
- [Church World Services](#) is the relief and development agency of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., responds to natural and human-caused disasters throughout the world through local partners it supports via counsel, technical assistance, training, funds, and material resources.
- [REACT International](#) is a public service organization comprised of private radio operators serving travelers and their communities alike with radio communications. Member volunteers are dedicated to improving their communities by providing voluntary, two-way communications.

### Resources (Continued)

- [Salvation Army](#) - The Salvation Army is an integral part of the Christian Church, although distinctive in government and practice. The Army's doctrine follows the mainstream of Christian belief and its articles of faith emphasize God's saving purposes. Its objectives are 'the advancement of the Christian religion... of education, the relief of poverty, and other charitable objects beneficial to society or the community of mankind as a whole.
- [World Relief](#) works primarily through the local church by assisting it with economic development and health improvements, by helping it minister to refugees and migrants, and by aiding its response to disasters.
- [World Vision International](#) is a nonprofit Christian humanitarian organization committed to serving God by working with the poor and oppressed.

D. Community Resources – For individuals and families wanting to get involved beyond personal preparedness (escape plans, 3-day kits, etc.) but are not interested in joining a specific disaster response organization there are ways they can become involved at the community level:

- [Community Emergency Response Training](#) – where citizens receive training to work as a team, or become individually aware of how they can assist in disaster response efforts in their community.
- [Neighborhood Watch](#) – a program supported by local law enforcement. This neighborhood crime watch program could help you know your neighbors, gain knowledge about the structures in your area, acquaint you with people who may need special help in time of disaster and provide you with general knowledge of who lives in your immediate area.

E. Special Community Disaster Resources – Earlier in this unit we examined children and older adults as communities in need of special consideration. Resource links are provided below for each of these groups. The more you know your neighborhood, workplace, and your community the more you will discover about the needs of your friends, neighbors, co-workers and fellow citizens. We encourage you to know your community to be a better responder in a time of disaster.

### Resources (Continued)

1. Resource list of groups, agencies and organizations who may offer helpful information or response assistance with children during disasters.

- [American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry](#)
- [American Counseling Association](#)
- [American Psychological Association Online: Help with Trauma](#)
- [Emergency Services and Disaster Relief Branch, Center for Mental Health](#)
- [Helping Children and Adolescents Cope with Violence and Disasters](#)
- [Helping Children Cope with Disaster, National Parent Information Network](#)
- [High Schools for Heroes](#)
- [National Association of School Psychologists](#)
- [National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder](#)
- [Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder \(PTSD\), Trauma, Disasters, and Violence](#)
- [Talking with Children When Disaster Strikes](#)
- [Ten Tips to Help Your Kids Deal with Violence, Parenting Press](#)
- [Terrorism and Children, Purdue University Extension](#)
- [University of Oklahoma, Department of Pediatrics](#)
- [U.S. Government Information and Resources in Response to September 11th Events](#)
- [Children, Stress and Natural Disasters: A Guide For Teachers](#)
- [Oregon Fire and Emergency Services Kids Stuff](#)
- [Resources for Public Safety Education](#)  
Games and image resources for education of public safety
- [Suggestions for Adults Talking and Thinking with Children About the Terrorist Attacks:](#)

### Resources (Continued)

- [TornadoChaser Kids Site](#)  
Everything you could want to know about tornados, including activities and free stuff.
- [PA National Weather Service Office](#)  
Kids' Weather Page from the State College, PA National Weather Service Office.
- [Sparky the Fire Dog Celebrates First Anniversary](#)  
Sparky the official mascot of the nonprofit National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA)
- <http://www.fema.gov/kids/feel.htm>

2. Resource list of groups, agencies and organizations who may offer helpful information or response assistance with older adults during a disaster.

- US Department of Health & Human Services Administration on Aging. Excellent detailed page about disaster assistance for aging population. At the top of the web page, under the term “Key Topics” click on the term “disaster assistance”.  
<http://www.aoa.gov/>
- US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Emergency Preparedness. <http://oep-ndms.dhhs.gov/>
- Disaster News Network  
<http://www.disasternews.net/news/news.php?articleid=2248>  
Federal administration on aging is proposing a project called EAGLES Elder Action Global Logistical Emergency System (peer training)
- Keep it Cool with Hot Weather Advice for Older People  
<http://www.nia.nih.gov/NewsAndEvents/PressReleases/PR20010801KeepitCool.htm>
- The Elderly May Have Advantage in Natural Disasters  
<http://www.psychiatrictimes.com/p010133.html>
- National Mental Health Association. Dealing with Stress After A Natural Disaster  
<http://www.nmha.org/reassurance/naturalDisaster.cfm>

### Resources (Continued)

- “Most seniors are not frail, sick or dependent. . . they are resourceful and want to participate in the planning of disaster preparedness. . .” City of Greater Sudbury  
<http://www.city.greatersudbury.on.ca/content/static/nas/emergencyprep/html/elderly.cfm>
- American Red Cross: Guidance and resources for consumers and professionals.  
<http://redcross.org/more/commserv/seniors.html>
- Local emergency management pages with elderly information: Putnam County Department of Emergency Services Palatka, Florida  
<http://www.putnam-fl.com/brd/PCPS/Elderly.htm>
- National Institute on Aging  
<http://www.nia.nih.gov/>

### **NEXT . . .**

1. If your CERT class continues on the same day, take your break and return to this classroom.
2. If your CERT class continues on another day (next week or next month) your **Homework Assignment** is to:
  - Read and become familiar with Unit Ten: *All Hazards* before the next session.

**End of Unit Nine**