

Discussion: Although a wealth of existing literature notes the need for an effective psychosocial response in mass trauma and disaster situations, no prior study has analyzed the efficacy of such interventions or laid out an evidence-based plan. This study will fill this much-needed gap in the literature.

Prehosp. Disaster Med. 2019;34(Suppl. 1):s69–s70

doi:10.1017/S1049023X19001511

Recent Unprecedented Wildfires in British Columbia, Canada: Progression of a Grassroots Disaster Psychosocial Program

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Introduction: Psychosocial needs related to disaster are increasingly identified as a significant concern for both communities and responders. In response to the needs of travelers suddenly unable to leave Vancouver immediately after 9/11 in the United States, a network for the provision of volunteer mental health response at the time of a disaster was developed through the Provincial government within British Columbia (BC). Starting from less than 20 individuals primarily located within the Vancouver area, Disaster Psychosocial Services (DPS) now encompasses a network of over approximately 200 providers throughout the Province.

Aim: To showcase a successfully functioning DPS program modeled after a volunteer-based mental health network, the evolution undergone, its present operational framework, and future goals.

Methods: In response to the observed need for trained psychosocial intervention, we developed a framework for recruitment, education, deployment, and support of a volunteer network of mental health professional and paraprofessional providers.

Results: This approach has been found to be effective, significantly increasing our volunteer base and opportunities for deployment.

Discussion: This presentation will detail the grassroots development of BC's DPS Program as well as the current model in practice. It will provide an overview of how BC's DPS network of providers was stimulated and managed; issues related to volunteer management, including the selection of volunteers; methods of specialized training; and deployment. Multiple settings in which DPS is now utilized with increasing regularity will be described, including Emergency Operations Centers, Reception Centers, and Town Hall Meetings. Lastly, there will be a focus on the lessons learned, as well as future goals highlighting a focus on culturally-sensitive support, specifically with respect to British Columbia's indigenous populations for building community resiliency and knowledge across the province.

Prehosp. Disaster Med. 2019;34(Suppl. 1):s70

doi:10.1017/S1049023X19001523

Responding to Disasters: More Than Economic and Infrastructure Interventions

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Introduction: Natural disasters confront individuals, communities, and governments with the challenge of rebuilding and addressing psychosocial sequelae. With the increasing number of natural disasters, it is pertinent to evaluate the efficacy of interventions and strategies to address the mental health needs of individuals and the community.

Aim: The presentation will highlight the effectiveness of interventions post-disaster, and continued adverse outcomes five years post-event.

Methods: An evaluation of literature related to the psychosocial impact of natural disasters, treatment efficacy, and government strategies to confront the social and psychological impact of natural disasters for the period 1983 – 2016 was undertaken.

Results: Epidemiological studies following natural disasters, despite the use of differing psychological measures, demonstrate significant psychological morbidity – anxiety (7–42%), complicated grief (28–41%), depression (6.5–38%), post-traumatic stress disorder (11–89%), and substance misuse (1.3–24%). Intervention studies post-disaster demonstrate efficacy capability.

Discussion: The increase in the number and impact of meteorological and hydrological events since the 1980s and the psychological, social, and economic consequences of these events have resulted in the development and implementation of government policies to confirm the immediate and long-term adverse outcomes. The focus is typically on resources and infrastructure redevelopment with less focus on social and mental health interventions, with long-term evaluation of interventions uncommon. The consequence of natural disasters emphasizes the importance of developing strategies to ensure effectively evaluated psychosocial interventions are available across at-risk communities.

Prehosp. Disaster Med. 2019;34(Suppl. 1):s70

doi:10.1017/S1049023X19001535

Supporting and Accompanying Young People After the Lac-Mégantic Train Derailment (Quebec, Canada)

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Introduction: In July 2013, a train transporting oil derailed and exploded in Lac-Mégantic, causing major human, environmental, and economic impacts. A community-based survey of people aged 10–25, conducted in 2017, revealed that many young people suffer in silence and report feeling isolated. These observations led to the conclusion that we must make room for young people, and that opportunities for engagement and participation must be provided within the community.

Aim: The Public Health Direction of Estrie aimed to identify strategies to promote health and wellbeing for young people living in and around Lac-Mégantic.

Methods: A collective reflection half-day was hosted with sixty key stakeholders (school board, other education institutions, health and social services, community sector, municipal/political sector, parents, youth). Throughout the event, participants were invited to build on and learn from accomplishments and experiential knowledge, and develop a common vision of the