

Module 1

Crisis events and psychosocial support

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Second level
Third level
Fourth level
Fifth level



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Ministry of Regional Cooperation and Ministry of
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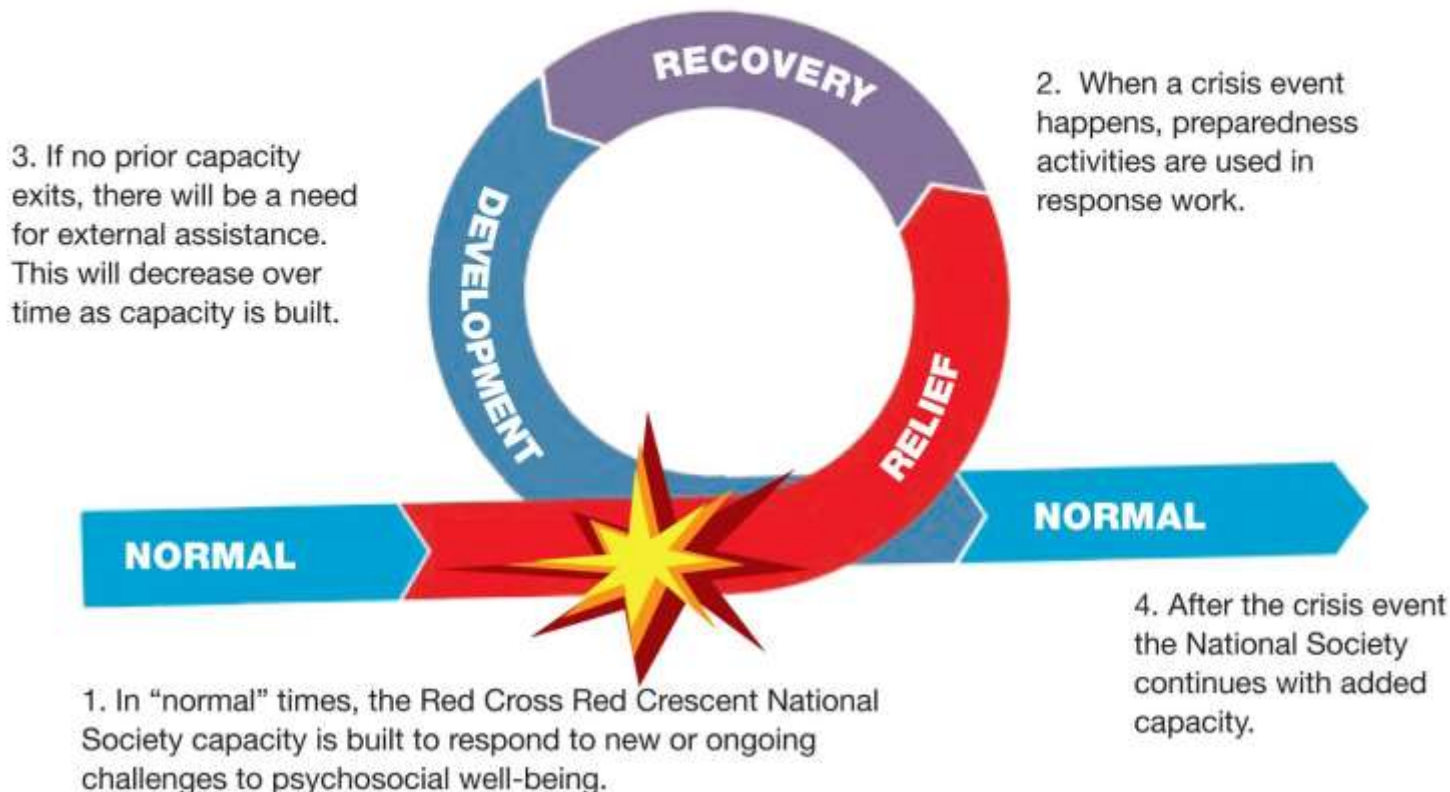
What is a crisis event?

A crisis event is a major event outside the range of ordinary everyday experience that is extremely threatening to those involved, accompanied by feelings of powerlessness, horror or terror.

Within the context of Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies, people are faced with crisis events every day. These events include deaths, accidents, disasters, serious illness (e.g. HIV), rape, suicide.

Preparedness and response

DIAGRAM 1: ELEMENTS OF THE PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PROCESS IN A RED CROSS RED CRESCENT NATIONAL SOCIETY



Factors affecting the psychosocial impact of crisis events

1. Characteristics of the event

- Natural versus man-made
- Intentionality
- Degree of preventability
- Scope of impact
- Suffering
- Degree of expectedness
- Duration of the event

2. Crisis/post-crisis environment

- Weather
- Time of day
- Accessibility to area
- Amount of physical destruction
- Number of deaths
- Number of child deaths

Factors affecting the psychosocial impact of crisis events

3. Individual characteristics

- Age - stage of life
- Mental health
- Social support systems
- Disabilities
- Social economic status
- Religion
- Disaster history
- Previous traumatic experiences

4. Family and community resources

- Weather
- Time of day
- Accessibility to area
- Amount of physical destruction
- Number of deaths
- Number of child deaths

What is psychosocial support?

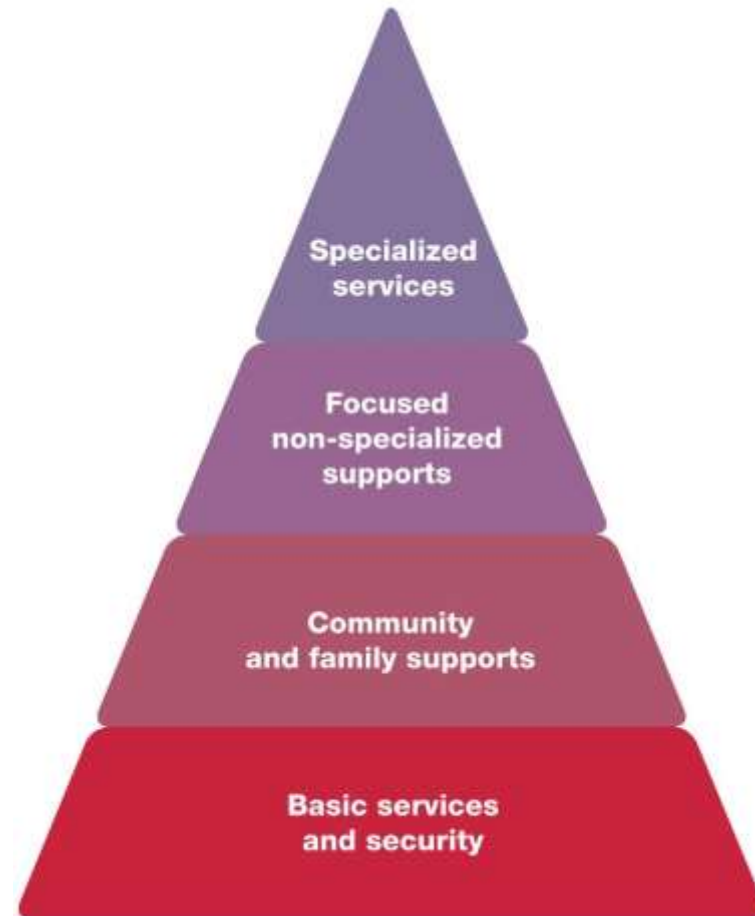
- Psychosocial support refers to actions that address psychological and social needs of individuals, families and communities
- Psychosocial support can be delivered in specific programmes or be integrated within other activities
- The International Federation approach to psychosocial support is:
 - A community based approach to facilitate the resilience of the affected population
 - A way to mobilize the power of humanity
 - A means of maintaining health and well-being of staff and volunteers

Why provide psychosocial support?

- **Mobilizing early and adequate psychosocial support can prevent distress and suffering from developing into something more severe**
- **Psychosocial support helps people affected by crises to recover**

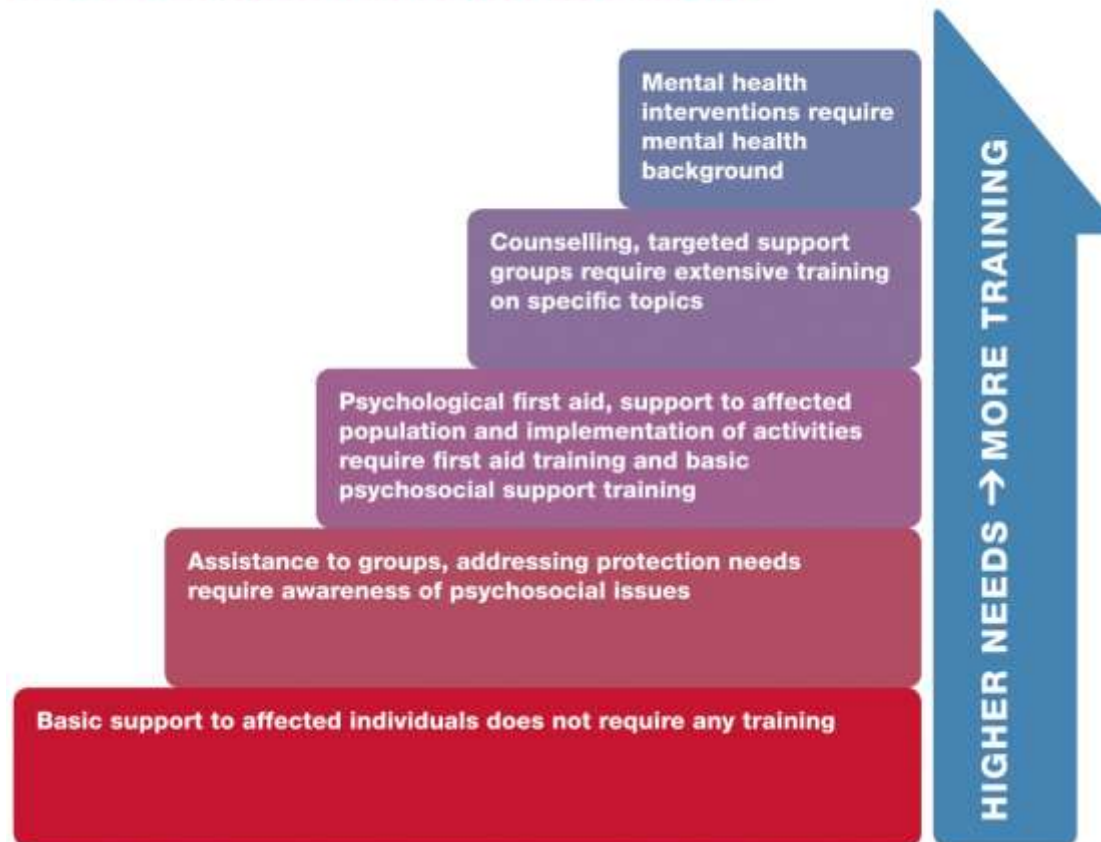
Intervention pyramid

Intervention pyramid for mental health and psychosocial support in emergencies



Matching needs

AS THE NEEDS OF THOSE AFFECTED INCREASE, SO DOES THE NEED FOR TRAINING FOR THOSE RESPONDING



Module 2

Stress and coping

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Stress and coping

- Stress and common reactions to stress
- The difference between normal and extreme stress
- Coping mechanism related to stress
- When to refer for professional help

How do people react?

Work in groups of three to four.

Discuss the following situation:

A friend or a colleague is very stressed –
how do you see it?

Describe at least five types of behaviour or
physical reactions indicating stress

What is stress?

Stress is a normal response to a physical or emotional challenge and occurs when demands are out of balance with resources for coping.

Types of stress

- Day-to-day stress
- Cumulative stress
- Critical stress

Assessment of extreme stress

Work in groups of three to five.

- What are the causes of stress and possible reactions to stress?
- Remember to distinguish between different groups – children, men, women and older people
- Write down your findings on a flipchart and prepare a short presentation

How do people usually cope with stress?

- **Avoidance** – denial and dissociation
- **Approach** – trying to find meaning, seeking support, taking action

Coping strategies

Imagine yourself in one of the following situations:

- You have suddenly lost the job you have had for the past three years. There is no immediate prospect of similar work.
- There is a flood in your community. Your family's income is based on farming, and you lose all your crops and livestock.
- There are strong political factions in your country. Your father is active in the resistance. He disappears following a political uprising. You have not heard from him for the past three weeks.

Write down at least three actions, thoughts, beliefs, personal characteristics or strengths that would help you cope with or get through the situation.

Examples of coping (1)

- Seeking help from others
- Offering help to others
- Trying to make sense of what happened
- Hiding until the danger has passed
- Remaining fearful and alert to any further danger
- Burying the dead
- Using defences like denial to reduce the impact

Examples of coping (2)

- Gathering remaining belongings
- Following religious practices
- Setting goals and making a plan to accomplish them
- Seeking information about loved ones
- Talking about experiences
- Beginning to repair the damage and get on with life
- Thinking a lot about the event to learn from it

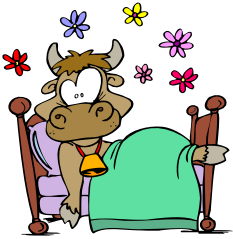
How to assist coping?

- Primary focus on physical care and protection
- Stay close
- Provide comfort and reassurance
- Provide information
- Support activities
- Support emotional adaptation

THE MULTI-MODAL MODEL FOR COPING & RESILIENCY

(Berger et al. 2002)

MOST - BASIC

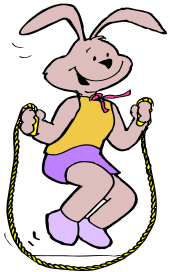


MO: Motor

Doing (activities)
Exercises
Playing
Work

ST: Sensation

Mindfulness
Breathing
Relaxation
Focusing



B: Belief

Attitudes
Beliefs
Values
Meaning



A: Affect

Emotions
Expression
Empathy
Ventilation

S: Social

Support
Helping
Social skills
Groups



I: Imagination

Creativity
Fantasy
Futuristic outlook
Symbols & metaphors

C: Cognition

Knowledge
Positive thinking
Rationalism
Problem-solving



Motor Symptoms and interventions

Symptoms:

Restlessness

Rage

Aches and pain(
somatization)

Lack of energy

Interventions:

Sports & doing

Boxing or running

Expressing feelings
somatically

Energizing exercises

Sensory Symptoms and interventions

Symptoms:

Numbness

Sensitivity to stimulation

Physical exhaustion

Shallow breathing

Interventions:

Somatic awareness

Rest, Sleep, soft touch

Yoga

Diaphragmatic breathing

Belief System Symptoms and interventions

Symptoms:

Empty Mind

Helplessness

Catastrophic thinking

Compulsive Thinking

Self-Blaming

Interventions:

Focusing & Meditation

Problem-Solving

Challenging thoughts

Flexing thoughts

Reframing internal dialogue

Affective Symptoms and interventions

Symptoms:

Anxiety & Fear

Despair

Anger outbursts

Numbness & Dissociation

Apathy

Interventions:

Desensitization

Positive thinking

Anger management

Expression (verbal +Soma)

Values & Empathy

Social Symptoms and interventions

Symptoms:

Alienation

Dependency

Loneliness

Shutting down

Interventions:

Empathy & involvement

Encouraging independency

Social support

Reaching out & Debriefing

Cognitive Symptoms and interventions

Symptoms:

Blaming (self & others)

Catastrophic thinking

Negative automatic
thoughts

Confusion

Interventions:

Cultivating compassion

Optimism

Challenging & distraction

Problem solving

Imaginative Symptoms and interventions

Symptoms:

**Terror and Negative
Scenes**

**Becoming Stuck or
concrete**

Interventions:

**Narrative work & positive
imagery**

Art therapy & Drama

What is assisted coping?

The goal is not to cope for others, but to provide the minimal necessary assistance to help them begin actively coping in their own best interest.

Assessment of coping strategies

Go into the same groups as before:

Continue the assessment of your case.

- Discuss possible coping strategies in the situations, and how they can be assisted.
- Write your findings on a flipchart and prepare a presentation.

Who to refer - when and how?

- A woman becomes seriously ill
- A man loses his wife in a car accident
- A girl gets infected by HIV

When to refer for professional help?

- Severe sleep problems
- Strong emotions
- Talk of suicide
- Persistent physical symptoms
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Behaviour that is a risk to self or others
- Enduring depression or other disorders
- Inconsistent behaviour
- Indication of abuse or criminal activity

Module 3

Loss and grief

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Loss and grief

What are your thoughts and feelings about the theme of the module loss and grief ?

Various types of losses

Work in groups of three to four.

- Examine situations from your work where you have experienced other people's loss
- Write down at least three types of loss you have recognized

Loss (1)

Loss is mainly associated with the death of a loved one. However, it also results from:

- Loss of loved ones e.g. ending a relationship
- Loss of property
- Loss of dignity, trust and safety
- Loss of livelihood

Loss (2)

- Loss of control over one's life
- Loss of social infrastructure
- Loss of self-esteem
- Loss of confidence in the future
- Loss related to illness or disability
- Multiple losses

Different reactions to loss

Individual work

- Think about possible reactions to the losses you have just worked with in the previous activity:
 - What kind of reactions did you experience?
 - Who were the persons involved?
 - How did they experience the situation?

Common reactions to sudden loss

- Shock
- Anger
- Guilt
- Depression
- Despair
- Hopelessness
- Search for meaning
- Religious and spiritual beliefs get challenged
- Goals and plans get re-evaluated

Four areas of adjustments



Factors that complicate the grieving process

- **Traumatic circumstances** - if the body is never found, molestation of the body, sudden loss, suffering when dying
- **Death of more than one** – a greater loss, difficulty handling the different feelings towards the diseased persons
- **Ambiguous feelings** – relief after a long course of a disease, complicated relations to the diseased

Needs of grieving people

Help both emotionally
and practically:

- Arrange funerals or other ceremonies
- Encourage the social support of family and friends
- Stay close, listen and provide care

Responding after a crises

Work in groups of three to four.

- Spend 25 minutes in group work.
- Prepare a summary for presentation in plenary.

Module 4

Community-based psychosocial support

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Community-based psychosocial support

- Psychosocial well-being in the community
- Community resilience and stress
- Community based psychosocial support

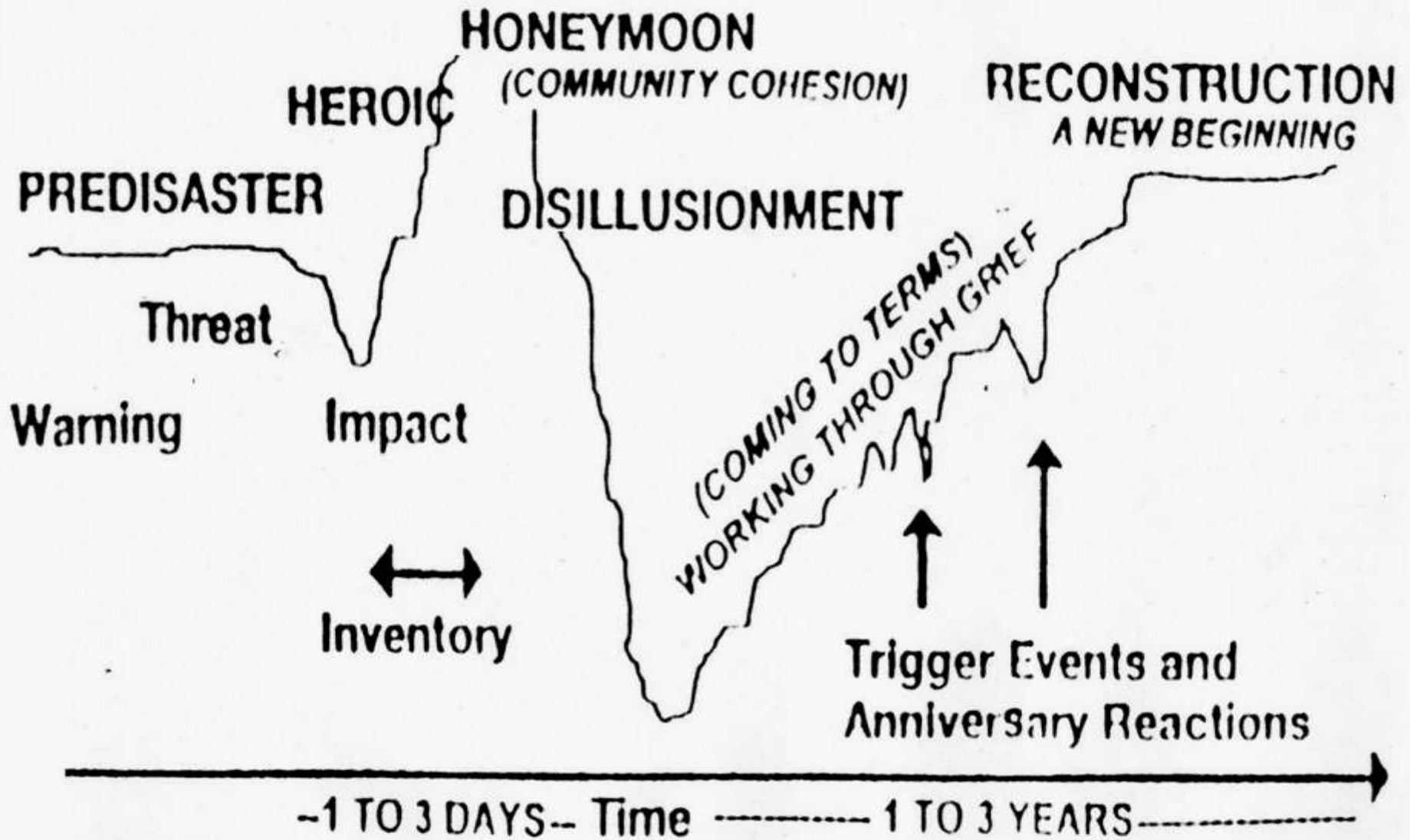
Definition of a community

- A community is a group of people who have a common identity relating to certain factors: geography, language, values, attitudes, behaviour patterns or interests.
- A community is the social and psychological foundation for the individual: belonging, sharing, values, identity, norms, developed structures for health, education, etc.

Factors promoting resilience

- Belonging to a caring family
- Maintaining traditions and cultures
- Having a strong religious belief or political ideology

Phases of Disaster



Community Resilience Factors

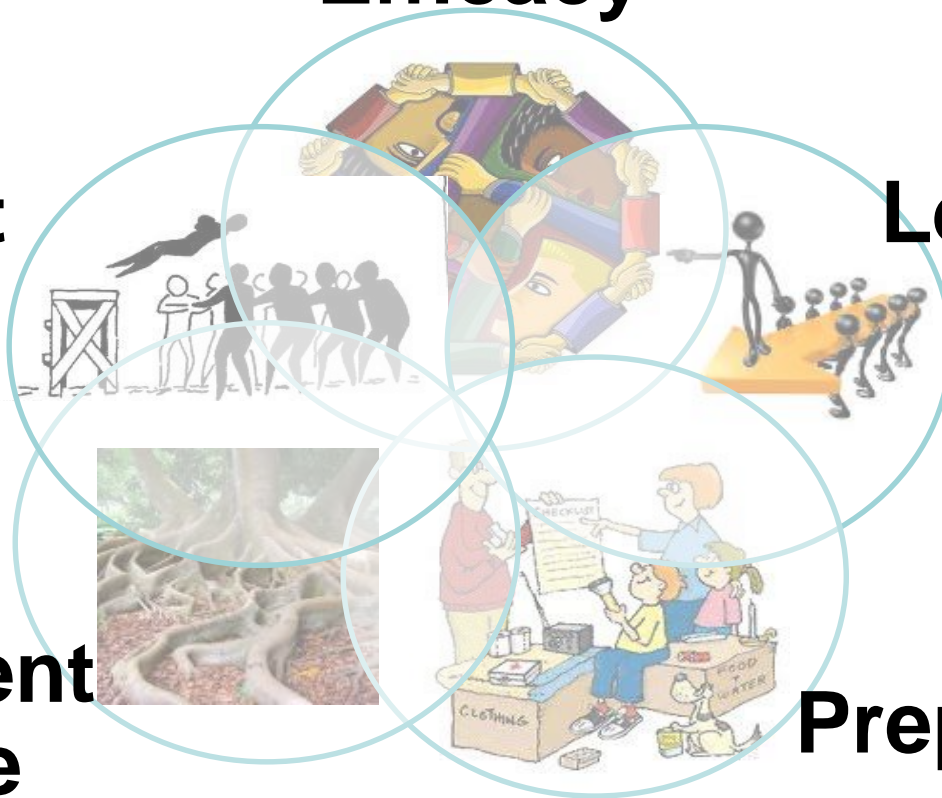
Collective Efficacy

Social trust

Leadership

Attachment to place

Preparedness



The impact of stress on a community

Some communities manage to maintain a level of normality and interaction even in difficult times.

The impact of stress on a community

Others disintegrate to some extent:

- Social regulations break down
- The community reacts with signs of mistrust, fear and insecurity
- Religious and moral confusion
- Absence of respected leadership
- Social uprooting and destructive behaviour
- Social apathy and loss of trust and hope

Man-made disasters are often intentionally directed towards the destruction of communities and social order

Remember individual, family and community resources

- Individual skills
- Community leaders, government officials
- Land, savings, crops and a livelihood
- Schools and teachers, health clinics and staff
- Religious leaders, practices of prayer and worship, burial rites

Who are the vulnerable groups?

Work in groups of three to four:

- Who within the community is being isolated, left alone or discriminated against?
- What are the psychosocial consequences?
- Who are potentially vulnerable groups in your own communities?

How a little cash and coffee affected psychosocial well-being

A small coffee shop set up by an Indonesian couple in a camp after the tsunami positively affected psychosocial well-being

Mapping of psychosocial needs

Go into the same groups as before:

- Draw or create a map of your own community. Include the different services relevant to the community – schools, health clinics, public offices etc
- Discuss risk and protective factors in the community
- Complete the table in the hand-out
- Present your map and table in plenary

Planning of community-based activities

- An intervention must take **norms** and **values** of the community into account to succeed
- A community-based approach relies on participation of community members. Pay attention to the amount of **ownership** they feel for a particular issue or problem
- Give priority to activities with a potential to foster **family and community support** and **increase bonds** between people

Steps in activity planning

- Identify vision or goal and define objectives
- Identify ways of achieving these objectives
- Identify advantages and disadvantages of possible ways
- Check resources such as time, money, human resources

Steps in activity planning

- Establish an acceptable plan
- Establish who will do what, when, where and how
- Establish a timeframe and criteria for programme evaluation

Community participation

Is important for several reasons:

- Facilitates ownership and responsibility
- Is a move from dependency to self-reliance

Community participation

- Is the first step from passive victim to active participant
- Mitigates the emotional impact by action and gives hope
- Encourages sustainability for the future

Empower community members

To

- identify and set priorities
- define the community's role and responsibility in designing and implementing self-help strategies
- assess their difficulties based on community knowledge and values
- initiate a dialogue and share information leading to solutions

Empower community members

To

- Identify and involve local leaders, as this is essential for community participation
- Identify leaders who:
 - are locally accepted, trusted and respected
 - accurately represent their communities
 - will work towards helping the community to achieve its collective goals
 - have sufficient status to attract other members to be involved

Module 5

Psychological first aid and supportive communication

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Psychological first aid and supportive communication

- Psychological first aid
- Supportive communication
- Telephone support and facilitating support groups

Psychological first aid and supportive communication

- Active listening is the core element of psychological first aid

Knowing the starting point

- In order to truly succeed in leading a person to a certain place, first and foremost you must be mindful of finding him where he is right now and then begin from there.

- Søren Kierkegaard, Danish 19th century philosopher

Active listening

Work in pairs:

- One person tells the other a personal story - not necessarily about a crisis event.
- The other person listens actively by asking clarifying and summarizing questions.

When is psychological first aid needed?

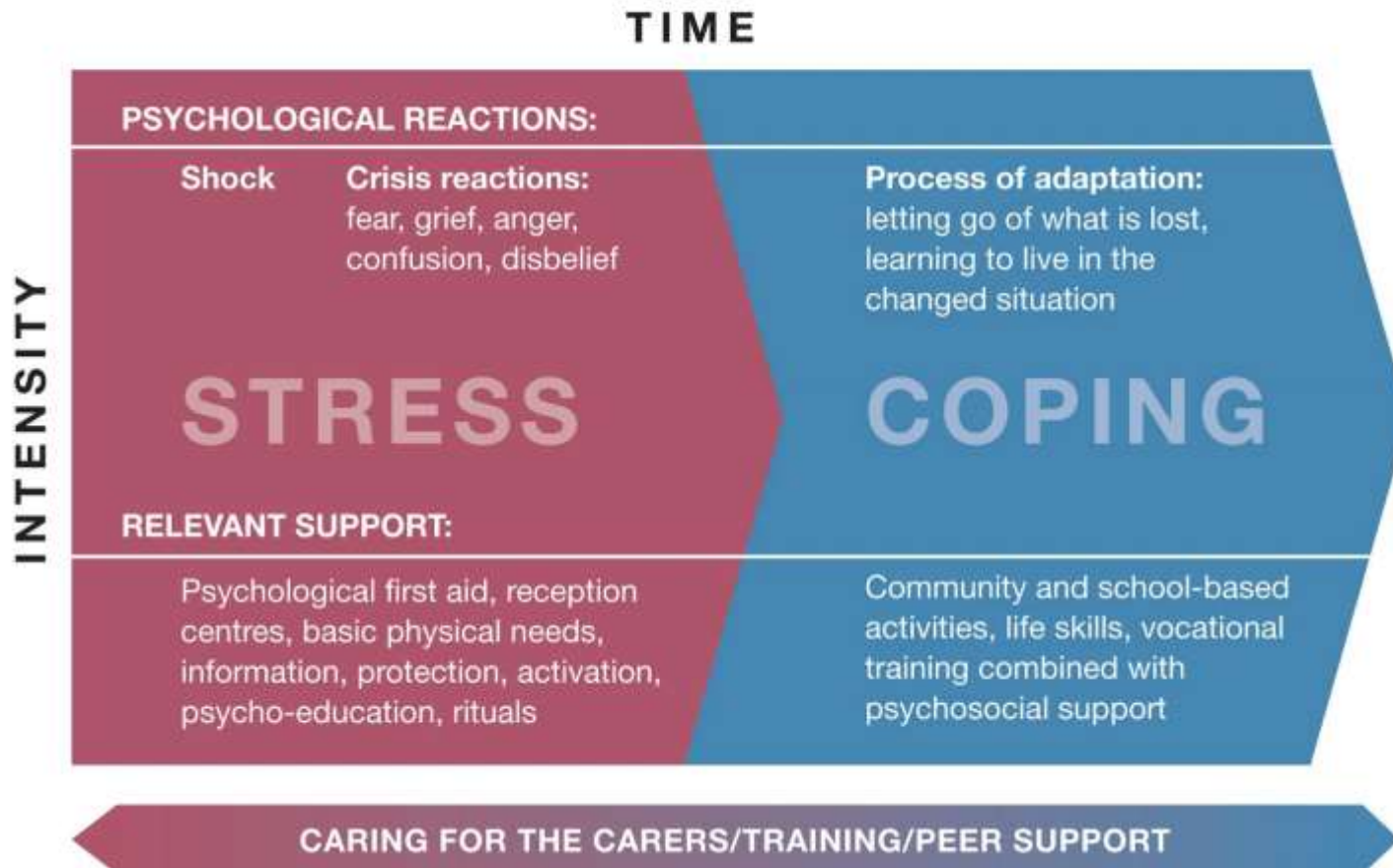
- Disasters
- First aid
- Home visits
- Telephone and online support

Psychological first aid

- Active listening – the key element
- Stay close - being near is a sign of caring
- Accept feelings – accept the affected person's interpretation of the event
- Provide general care and practical help – this is also a way of showing care

Psychological reactions and responses

PSYCHOLOGICAL REACTIONS



Key values in supportive communication

- Empathy is the ability to see and feel from the affected person's point of view
- Respect will allow you to listen and not make assumptions
- When communicating, keep in mind the need to empower the affected person
- Be sure to take a non-judgemental stance

Responding in a crisis

- Be constructive and focus on recent actions that can be changed
- Respond with general statements instead of asking questions or giving answers
- Focus on the person's thoughts and feelings
- Give supportive feedback without judgement
- Ask open-ended questions
- Concentrate on what the person is saying

Non-verbal communication

- Non-verbal communication is just as important as verbal
- Some good tips are:
- Face the speaker
- Display an open posture, especially with your arms.
- Keep an appropriate distance: proximity reflects interest, but may also communicate intimacy, informality or pushiness
- Make frequent non-intrusive eye contact
- Be particularly aware of different cultural practices with this behaviour
- Appear calm and relaxed

Listening and responding

Work in groups of three:

- Assume the following roles: Helper, recipient, observer
- The recipient shares an issue, related to his/her work
- The helper should practise all the skills learned so far
- The observer should give feedback to the helper

Personal communication skills

Stay in the same groups

Discuss the following questions:

- When you are working as a helper, what communication skills do you need?
- What values are the most important in the situations where these skills are needed?

Ethical conduct

- Do no harm
- Be trustworthy and keep your word with appropriate action
- Never exploit your relationship
- Respect a person's right to make his/her own decisions
- Never exaggerate your skills or competence
- Be aware of your own biases and prejudices

Support groups

- Psychosocial well-being often flows from experiences of community participation and co-operative effort
- People who feel a sense of belonging within an effective group derive a sense of membership and worth
- Establishing a support group is inexpensive and relatively simple
- Rely primarily upon assisting people at the community level
- Become comfortable and effective in working with various sizes of groups
- Define a target group around an issue for which there is sufficient interest to motivate significant participation

Facilitating support groups

- **Crucial factors in this process:**
- A good facilitator; knowledgeable in group work
- Regularly scheduled meetings at an accessible location
- Groups based on community members' needs and desires

Principles of immediate intervention in the aftermath of a major disaster (PFA)

- **Joining the clients – Pacing & leading**
- **Providing mental and physical orientation**
- **Providing concrete needs – Safe place, water, food, blanket Using an authoritative approach**
- **Normalization – Normalizing reactions, providing logical explanation and expectation for improvement**
- **From a passive to an active approach**
- **Practical skills – belly breathing, all-body relaxation and sensory-motor labeling**
- **Inviting significant others to support**
- **Discouraging negative thoughts and encouraging positive**

Module 6

Children

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Why are children more vulnerable than adults in crisis situations?

- A high level of stress in the environment which may affect families
- Increased presence of strangers which increases the risk of abuse and exploitation of children

Why are children more vulnerable than adults in crisis situations?

- Lack of protective and social structures for children
- Lack of livelihood and employment which leads to despair and frustration in families

Why are children more vulnerable than adults in crisis situations?

- Continued increased risk of sexual abuse and exploitation, for example if children are pushed into trying to obtain resources
- Rejection, degradation and terrorization of children is more common in post-disaster settings

Different reactions at different ages (1)

- **0-2 years** – irritable, crying, showing clinging or passive behaviour
- **2-6 years** – often feel helpless and powerless, fear of separation, play activities may involve aspects of the event, denial and withdrawal, become mute and avoid playmates and adults

Different reactions at different ages (2)

- **6-10 years** – guilt, feelings of failure, anger, fantasies of playing rescuer, intensely preoccupied with details of the event
- **11-18 years** – responses resemble adult reactions, irritation, rejection of rules and aggressive behaviour, fear, depression, risk-taking behaviour, may attempt suicide

Different ways of coping

Work in groups of three to four

- Discuss the scenario:

Both Amina and Fatima, aged 10, lost their fathers in the Pakistani earthquake in 2005. They were both very distressed. They did not want to go to school or meet anyone. After two years Amina is still very distressed. Her school performance is poor, she is depressed and is unable to make friends. Fatima on the other hand is back in school, doing well having many friends.

- Why have the two girls, faced with the same problem, coped so differently?

Different coping mechanisms

- Emotion-focused
changing of belief
- Problem-focused
seeking help

Important factors for coping

- Individual characteristics that can influence how a child copes:
 - Family environment
 - School
 - Leisure time
 - Friends

Normal reactions to abnormal situations

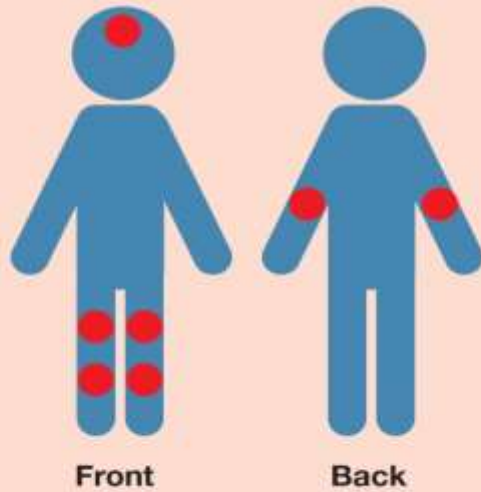
- Aggressive behaviour
- Separation anxiety
- Withdrawal
- Denial

How to help

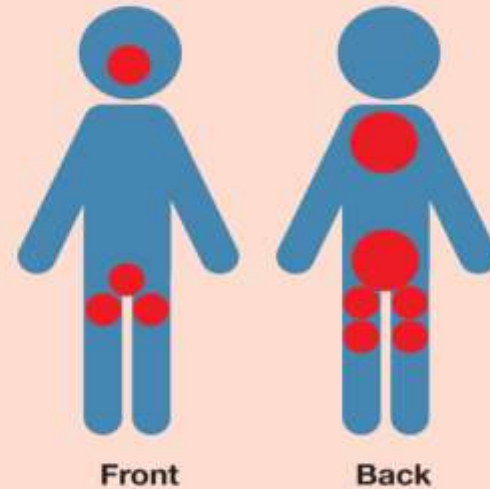
- Observe the child
- Communicate in a supportive way
- Provide extra care
- Maintain daily routines
- Refer if necessary

Recognizing child abuse

NORMAL BRUISES



SUSPICIOUS BRUISES



Canadian Red Cross: Respected

All abused children suffer...

- But they react differently depending on their age, gender and cultural background
- They often try to keep it a secret. They may deny the abuse and become very frightened

How to react to child abuse?

- How should adults respond to violence and abuse?
- What actions should be taken?
- In which ways can an abused child be supported?
- How can abuse be prevented?

General child protection measures

- Register and document children
- Approve all workers
- Be aware of adults interacting with children
- Report any concerns to supervisor
- Ensure accommodation for unaccompanied children
- Prioritize family reunification
- Believe children if they say they feel unsafe
- Support children who are bereaved

Specific action if child abuse is suspected

A Acknowledge the child's situation and feelings

- Access support and help: report

C Carefully listen to what the child says

T Comfort the child; ensure the child is safe

- Take notes: document what the child says and what is observed

Module 7

Supporting volunteers and staff

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Supporting volunteers and staff

- Signs of stress and burnout
- How staff and volunteers can help colleagues and themselves

Stress at work

Individual work:

- Think about situations where you or others experienced stress over a sustained period of time at work.
- What triggered the stress?
- How was it manifested?

Causes of helpers' stress (1)

- Poor preparation and briefing
- Being a part of a collective crisis
- Prolonged exposure to a disaster situation
- Physically difficult, exhausting, and dangerous tasks
- Lack of sleep and feeling chronically fatigued
- Feeling inadequate in dealing with the task
- Facing moral and ethical dilemmas
- Feeling frustrated by policies / decisions of superiors

Causes of helpers' stress (2)

- Being detached from your support system (home and family)
- Feeling unsupported at your work site
- Facing the perceived inability to never do enough
- Being exposed to the anger / apparent lack of gratitude
- Unclear, inadequate or inconsistent supervision
- Feeling guilt over access to food, shelter, and other resources

How to manage helpers' stress (1)

- Guidance and support from team leaders
- Encourage and support your co-workers
- Respect confidentiality so that people can feel safe admitting stress and seeking help.
- Openly talk and share your problems without fearing the consequences

How to manage helpers' stress (2)

- Emphasize self care
- Take a break when you feel your tolerance diminishing
- Stay in touch with family and friends
- Defuse briefly whenever you experience troubling incidents and after each work shift
- Create a peer support system for sharing experiences

Burnout

- An emotional state due to long-term stress, characterized by chronic emotional exhaustion, depleted energy, impaired enthusiasm and motivation to work, diminished work efficiency, a diminished sense of personal accomplishment and pessimism and cynicism.

Benefits of supporting staff and volunteers

- Stress results in:
 - decreased alertness
 - performance
 - poor judgement
 - decreased efficiency
 - has consequences on health
- Stress equals time and money lost

Your reactions are normal (1)

- Talk to someone with whom you feel at ease, describe your thoughts and feelings
- Listen to others and share insights with them. What do they say and think about the event?
- Take special care of yourself, eat well, limit alcohol and tobacco and stay fit
- Avoid perfectionist expectations; they often lead to disappointment and conflict

Your reactions are normal (2)

- Do not try to hide feelings
- Do not self-medicate
- Continue to work on routine tasks
- Look for a healthy outlet
- Go easy on yourself
- Seek professional advice

Advantages of a peer support programme

- Support is provided by someone who knows the situation
- Assistance can be provided in a short period of time
- Prompt peer support may prevent other problems from arising
- People under stress may just need some short-term help and don't have major psychological problems
- Peer support helps people to develop their personal coping skills

Principles of peer support

- Be available in a non-intrusive way
- Manage the situation and locate resources – find a quiet place and locate relevant people that can help, e.g. family, friends, medical help
- Provide information – one of the key elements of gaining control is information about the situation
- Assist in establishing self control – treat the person as a colleague or friend, not as a victim. Give encouragement – it is important to encourage positive explanations although not being unrealistic
- Maintain confidentiality – this is the cornerstone in all support
- Provide follow up in a non-intrusive way

Listening and responding

Role play in groups of three:

- Assume the following roles - helper, recipient and observer
- The recipient shares a work-related issue
- The helper should practice active listening skills
- The observer provides feed-back on the exercise