Part 1 of 2

Overview
Other Modules in the Mental Health Series:

- Mental Health Consequences of Disaster
- Psychology of Terrorism
- Self-care and Care for Caregiver
- Disaster Mental Health Interventions
- Strategic Planning
- Crisis Communications
- Psych First Aid: Competencies for Public Health Workers
Need for Disaster Mental Health Services

- Need for public health to respond to disasters
- Many more mental health injuries than physical injuries from a disaster
- Mental health of community will determine how resilient the community is
- Therefore, disaster mental health services are a vital component of disaster planning for public health agencies.
Using just one example of a terrorism event, the sarin gas release in Tokyo:
- 12 victims died
- 5,500 sought medical care
  - Most had no sign of exposure
  - Anxiety
  - Most treated as outpatients and released
Meaning For Public Health

- High ratio mental health casualties to physical casualties
- Immediate post-disaster mental health services likely delivered by non-MH personnel
- PH Workers understand and provide needs of both individuals and communities
- With specialized training, provide basic crisis intervention
Crisis Intervention

- Disaster mental health is a subset of crisis intervention.
- Crisis intervention is well-documented to be effective in reducing distress.

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Psychological Crisis

- Occurs when usual coping mechanisms fail
- Results in impairment or dysfunction
Psychological Crisis

- Can occur in an individual, organization, community, or nation
- Results in impairment or dysfunction
- Need to mitigate the distress
Disaster Mental Health: Beginnings

- 1982 Air Florida Flight #90 took off from Washington DC’s National Airport in a snowstorm and crashed into a bridge sending passengers into an icy river.
- Began to focus attention upon the psychological reactions of disaster victims
- And on the rescue personnel that tried to save them
Disaster Mental Health: Beginnings

- International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF) in 1989
- Advent of the disaster mental health networks of the American Red Cross in 1992
Six Useful Guides to Disaster Mental Health Planning

1. Disaster mental health intervention should assist victims to meet basic needs first
   - Family reunification
   - Food
   - Water
   - Shelter
   - Alleviation of pain
   - Safety and Security

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Lesson #2

2. Disaster mental health services should be:
   - Phase sensitive
   - Multi-modal
   - Intervention system
3. Such a system might include:
   - Assessment and triage
   - Strategic planning
   - Psychoeducation and anticipatory guidance
   - Liaison, advocacy, and reunification, or building, of familial and social support networks
   - Individual clinical intervention
   - Small group intervention
   - Large group intervention, e.g., “town meetings” and respite areas for emergency response personnel
   - Follow-up and referral
Lesson #4

4. Disaster mental health is only one point on a continuum of psychological care.
   - Not a substitute for psychotherapy
   - Facilitate access to next level of care
Disaster Mental Health and Terrorism

- Terrorism: The use of force or violence, or threatened use of force or violence, against persons and places for the purpose of intimidating and/or coercing a government, its citizens, or any segment thereof for political or social goals (as defined by FBI).
Recent Events: Evidence of Successful Disaster Mental Health

- Boscarino, et al, 2005
- 1681 New York adults after 9/11
- 2 year follow up
- Crisis interventions resulted in
  - ↓ binge drinking and alcohol dependence
  - ↓ PTSD symptoms
  - ↓ major depression
  - ↓ anxiety

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