



TRANQUIL
CITY

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Psycho-Social Support in Disasters and Emergencies

EDUCATIONAL BOOKLET | TRAINING MODULE



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Introduction

Disasters are extraordinary events that deeply affect the lives of the individuals and communities. These events not only cause physical destruction, but also result in serious psychological and social problems.

Post disaster and emergencies can cause psychological reactions such as:

-Post traumatic stress disorder

-Anxiety

-Depression

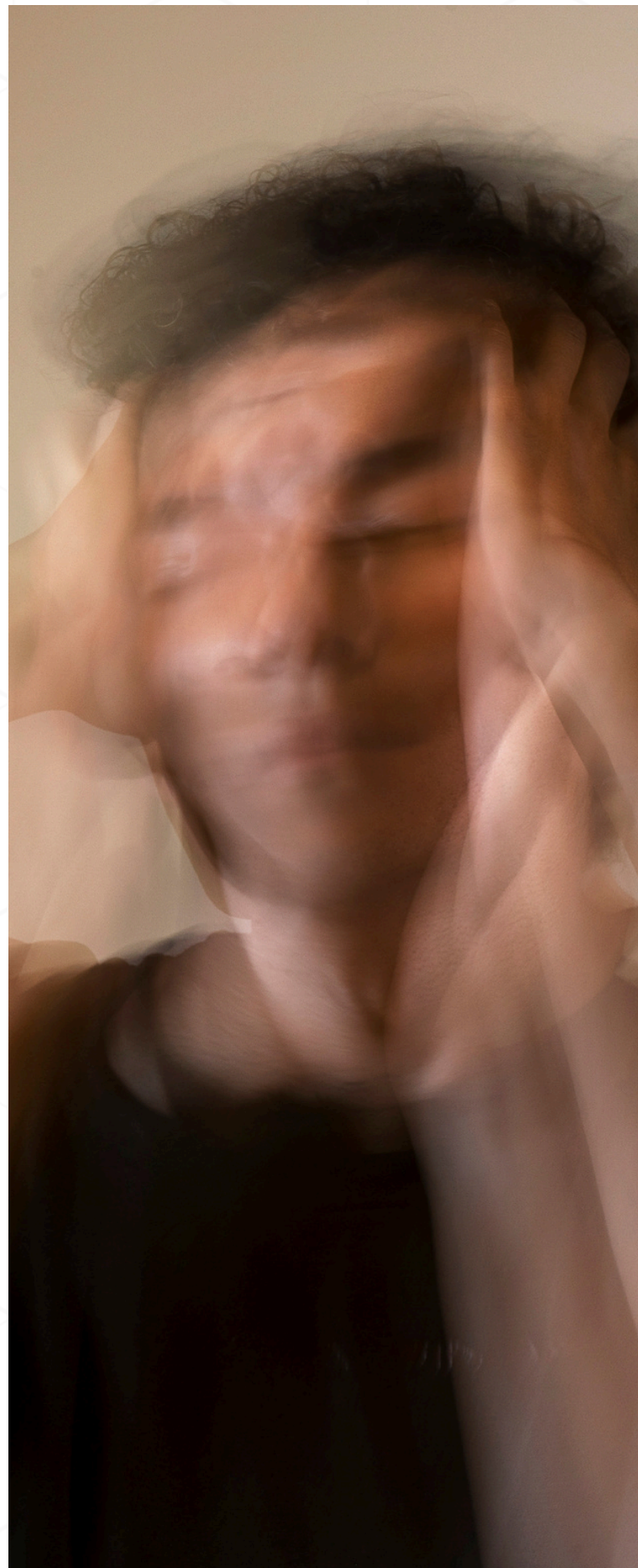
-Grief

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): It is type of an anxiety disorder which is seen after traumatic events creating extreme fright, horror, or despair in a person. Its effects are:

Reliving: Traumatic events are remembered often and involuntarily; nightmares can be seen or the feeling of reliving the moment (flashback) can occur.

Avoidance and Detachment: Tendency to avoid the places, people or situations reminding the traumatic event

Increased Arousal: Sleep disturbances, anger outbursts, heightened startle response, difficulty concentrating.



Anxiety: A state of intense worry and stress experienced during and after emergencies and disasters. Anxiety symptoms can be listed as follows:

- **Physical Symptoms:** Heart palpitations, sweating, trembling, shortness of breath, dizziness, nausea
- **Emotional Symptoms:** Intense fear or panic, restlessness, sadness or depression, anger or emotional instability, feeling lonely or isolated.

Mental Symptoms: Persistent thoughts that something bad will happen, difficulty with attention and concentration, repeated recollection of traumatic memories, intense worry about the future.

Depression: Depression is characterized by a persistent low mood and loss of interest, with symptoms lasting for at least two weeks. It negatively affects daily activities such as work, school, and social life. Depression symptoms include persistent sadness and hopelessness, loss of interest and inability to enjoy activities, low energy and fatigue, sleep problems (sleeping too much or insomnia), changes in appetite (overeating or loss of appetite), difficulty concentrating and making decisions, feelings of guilt or worthlessness, suicidal thoughts or attempts

Grief: Grief is a process that encompasses the emotional, mental, and physical reactions typically experienced after a loss. It varies greatly from person to person.



Why Is Psycho-social Support Important in Disasters and Emergencies?

Psychosocial support after a disaster plays a critical role in the recovery process of individuals and communities. The importance of psychosocial support emerges both in immediate interventions and in long-term recovery phases.

Purpose: To reduce physical and emotional pain, assist in recovery and coping, facilitate a return to normal life, increase a sense of control, and activate support systems.

Key Principles of Psychosocial Intervention:

Work in coordination with all teams

-Individuals should be viewed not as passive victims but as strong people who have survived

-The main thing is developing, empowering, and promoting the independence of individuals

-Enhance existing capacities and skills for coping with problems

-It is important to ensure and maintain a flow of simple, clear, and reliable information

-Emphasize that psychological, physical, mental, and behavioral reactions are normal responses to an abnormal situation

-It is essential that information is passed on to aid workers and volunteers through psychosocial training during the preparedness phase

Levels of Psycho-social Intervention

Suggested Interventions		Impact of the Crises on the Population
Professional Treatment for the Individuals or Families	1 Specialized Services	Severe Mental Disorders
Individual, Family or Group Interventions	2 Focused, Non-specialized Services	Mild or Moderate Mental Disorders
Psycho-social Support Activities	3 Community and Family Support	Mild Psycho-social Stress (Natural reactions to the crisis)
Providing Basic Needs and Security	4 Basic Services and Security	General Population Being Affected by the Crisis

Basic Services and Security: Basic needs include other areas of disaster response such as the establishment of shelter units, the provision of food and health services, and ensuring safety.

Community and Family Support: At this level, activities include family reunification, facilitation of mourning rituals, and providing information on topics such as the psychological effects of the disaster, the grieving process, and coping with stress.

Focused, Non-Specialized Services: Refers to individuals who require individual, family, or group interventions planned by professional mental health workers.

Specialized Services: Refers to individuals for whom support and psychosocial intervention at other levels are not sufficient.

Psychosocial Support Methods:

- Needs and Resource Assessment: Identifying the level of impact and the problems and needs, as well as identifying individuals and institutions within the community and determining available services.
- Psychological First Aid: A psychosocial intervention that begins simultaneously with needs and resource assessment.
- Referral and Guidance: A psychosocial intervention that involves referring individuals to local professionals (psychologists, psychiatrists) and institutions (mental health units, hospital psychiatric clinics) for treatment.
- Establishing an Information Center: Creating an accessible and user-friendly information center where information is shared with those in need, and needs and resources meet each other, is an important psychosocial intervention.
- Community Mobilization: The main goal of community mobilization is to increase the ability of individuals affected by a disaster or emergency to help themselves.
- Short, Medium, and Long-Term Social Projects: Involves acting according to the objectives of the projects.
- Trainings: It is important to reach both those affected by the disaster and those involved or potentially involved in psychosocial support practices through education.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Involves tracking and evaluating the interventions being implemented.

Psychosocial Support in Emergencies and Disasters:

- *Pre-Disaster Psychological resilience, coping*
- *During Disaster Psychological first aid*
- *Post-Disaster Psycho-social intervention, referral*

Psychological First Aid (PFA):

Psychological First Aid (PFA) is an early intervention aimed at supporting individuals after a serious crisis event, with the goal of reducing initial distress and promoting adaptation and coping.

- *-The first 72 hours are critical*
- *-Aims to reduce distress, support adaptation, and promote coping*
- *-Helps reduce PTSD and minimize psychological impact*
- *-The first step is to bring the person to a calm environment*

Psycho-social Support Intervention:

Psychological Resilience: The ability to adapt positively and recover from distress

Coping Skills: Various strategies individuals use to manage stress, distress, or challenging situations

Psychological Resilience:

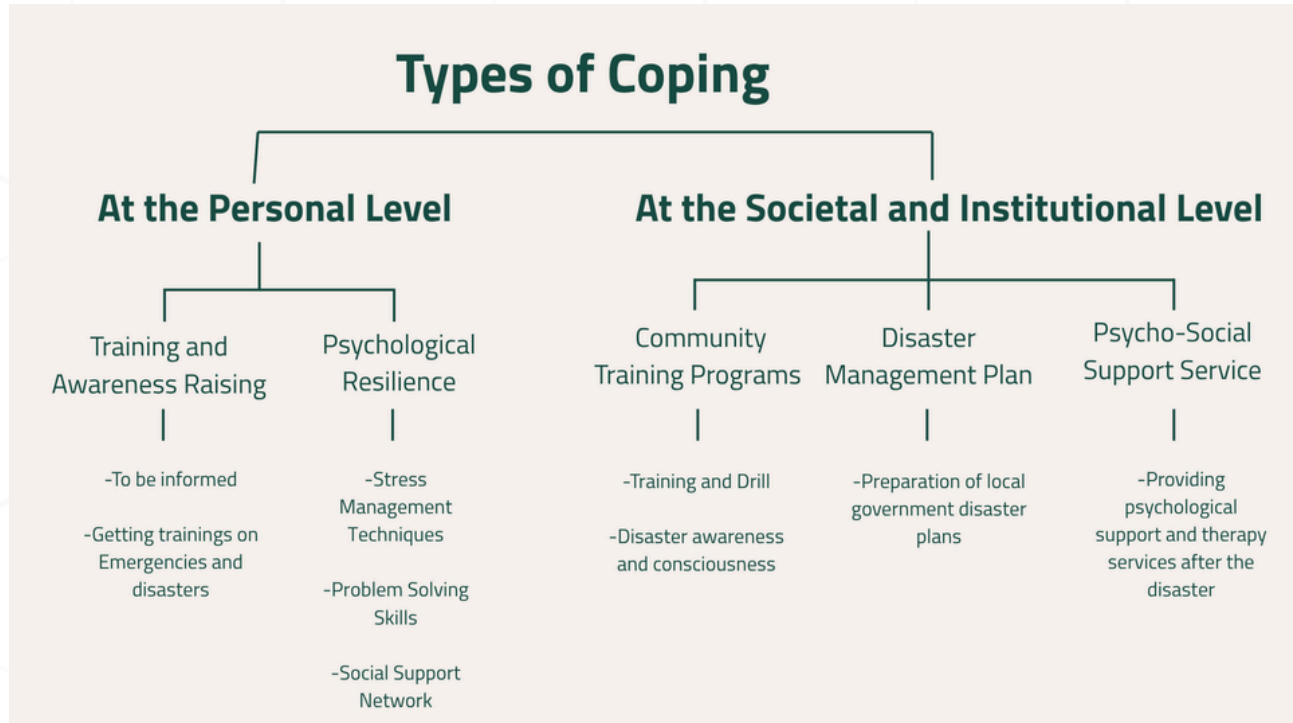
- *-Identify risk factors,*
- *-Enhance protective factors,*
- *-Provide peer social support,*
- *-Strengthen the ability to adapt to adverse situations,*
- *-Acceptance of the problem is essential; assess personal strengths,*
- *-Existing strengths should be boosted,*
- *-Empowerment should be done both individually and in groups,*
- *-Exposure or Systematic Desensitization,*
- *-Prepare for possible scenarios.*



Coping:

Coping refers to the strategies individuals use to manage stress, distress, or challenging situations. It serves as a protective factor during emergencies and disasters.

Types of Coping:



Psychosocial Support in Emergencies and Disasters:

- *Before the Disaster: Psychological resilience, coping*
- *During the Disaster: Psychological first aid*
- *After the Disaster: Psychosocial intervention, referral*

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