

The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of parched, cracked earth in shades of brown and tan. The cracks are deep and irregular, creating a textured, fragmented appearance. Centered over this background is the main title in bright yellow, bold, uppercase letters.

**POST DIASTER NEEDS ASSESSMENT  
AND LONG TERM RECOVERY (  
PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES AND  
CHALLENGES)**

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Disaster-affected people experience various psychological reactions. These reactions immediately follow the event while socio-economic impacts like lack of employment; homelessness, environmental destruction and disorganisation emerge as a consequence, following the devastation caused by the disaster.

The emotional reactions should be understood based on the manifestation of various stress reactions, level of effort put by the people for their own reconstruction, the pattern and amount of disability created due to these psychological stress etc.



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etc.

For every physical injury, there may be 5-6 psychological injuries

This may overwhelm and impede our emergency and/or medical response.





Exposure to a traumatic event in which both of the following were present:

The person experiences, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others.

The person's response involved intense fear, helplessness or horror. (DSM-IV TR)

The length of time that has elapsed between the event occurrence and the present

Pre-existing vulnerabilities

- Children/families
- Seniors
- Disabled
- Bereaved
- Health impairments
- Women

Man-Caused vs.  
Naturally Occurring  
Events

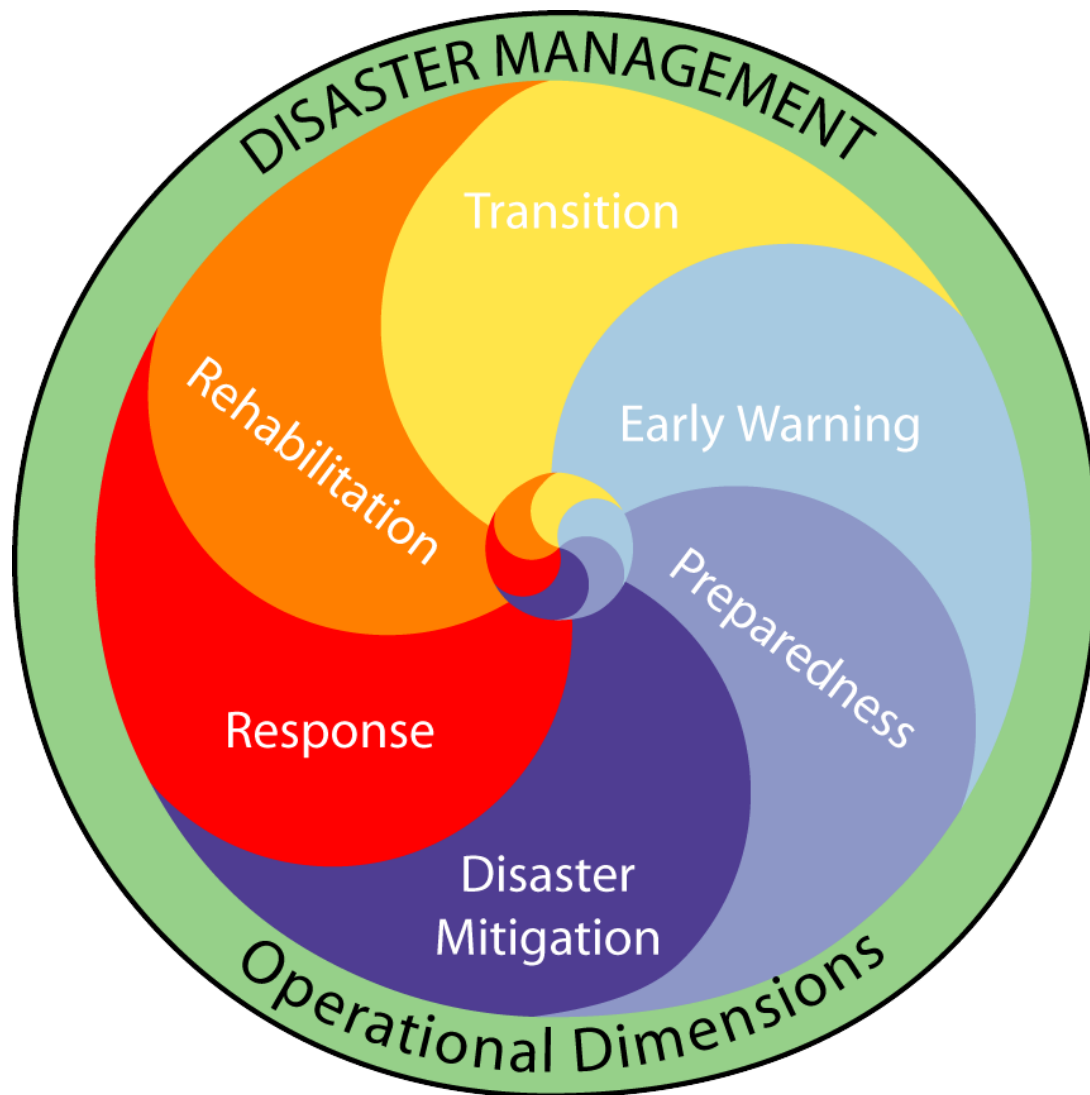


# Tangible Loss



- **L o s s** of loved ones
- **L o s s** of home
- **L o s s** of material goods
- **L o s s** of employment / **income**





It's important to be involved in all of these dimensions, not just response

# Intangible Loss

- L o s s of safety / security (*real or perceived*)
- L o s s of predictability
- L o s s of social cohesion/connection/support
- L o s s of dignity, trust and safety
- L o s s of positive self-image/self-esteem
- L o s s of trust in the future, identity, independence
- L o s s of hope
- L o s s of CONTROL

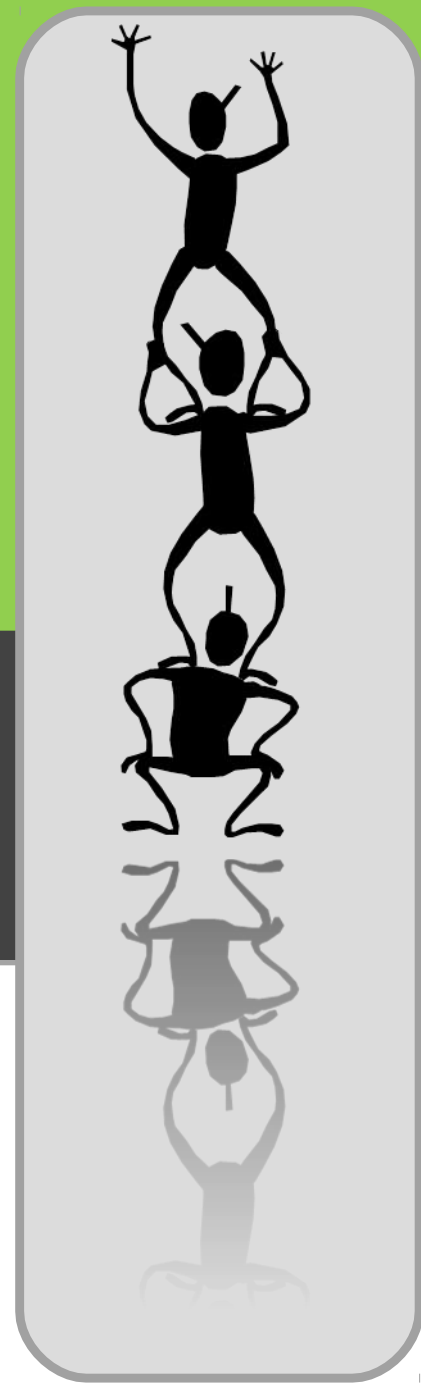
Many people survive disasters without developing any significant psychological symptoms.

For other individuals, the reactions will disappear over time.

**“Just because you have experienced a disaster does not mean you will be damaged by it, but you will be changed by it.”**

**(Weaver 1995)**

**SUPPORTING**



**OTHERS**

Primarily directed toward “normal” people who are responding normally to an abnormal situation

Improve resistance, resilience and recovery.

Identifying those at risk for severe social or psychological impairment

Identify those in need of additional or special services.



## Mitigate post trauma sequelae

- ▶ May prevent future problems
- ▶ Helps people to handle problems in a way that does not create MORE problems

Convey sense of compassion and support for people.





## Experience has shown that:

- No one who sees a disaster is untouched by it.
- Most people pull together & function during and after a disaster, but their effectiveness is diminished.
- Most people do not see themselves as needing mental health services following a disaster and will not seek such services.

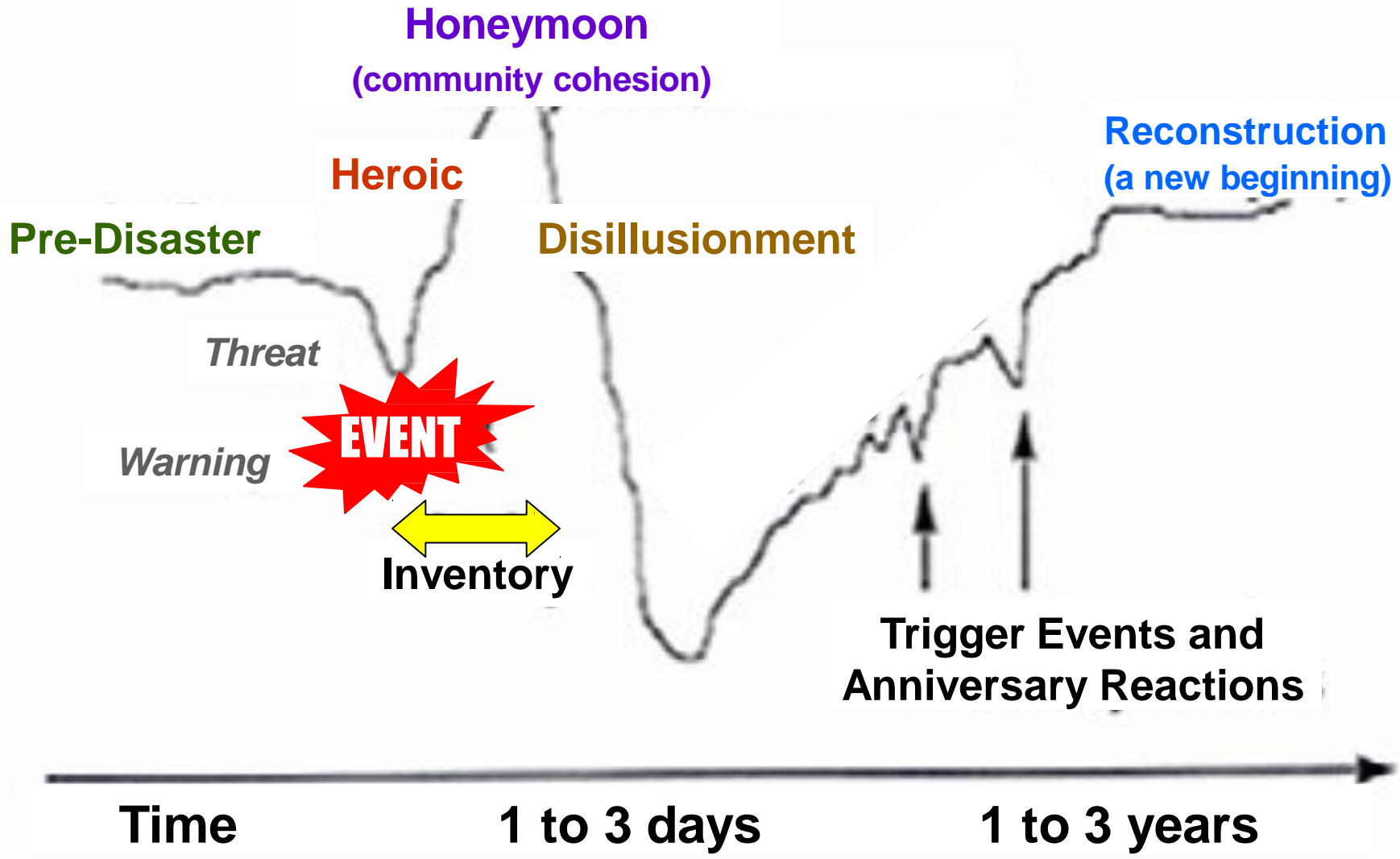
## Experience has shown that:

- Survivors respond to active, genuine interest & concern.
- Survivors may reject disaster assistance of all types.
- Disaster mental health assistance is often more practical than psychological in nature.
- Social support systems are crucial to recovery.

While there may be specific disaster-related stressors, underlying concerns and needs are consistent across a range of traumatic events. These include:

- A concern for basic survival
- Grief and loss over loved ones & loss of valued and meaningful possessions
- Fear & anxiety about personal safety & the physical safety of loved ones
- A need to talk about events & feelings associated with the disaster, often repeatedly
- A need to feel one is a part of the community & its recovery efforts

# Phases of Disaster



HONEYMOON  
**(COMMUNITY COHESION**

- Survivors may be elated

Happy just to be alive

This phase will not last



# Reality of disaster “hits home”

- Loss and Grief becomes prominent



- **Acute Stress Disorder / Post Trauma Stress Disorder**
- **Grief**
- **Depression**
- **Resilience**

**Mental Health  
and Illness**

- **Avoidance (emotional)**
- **Substance abuse**
- **Risk taking**
- **Over Dedication**

**Distress  
Responses**

**Human  
Behavior in  
High Stress  
Environments**

- **Fear / worry**
- **Sleep disturbance**
- **Altered productivity**

♥ What main attributes and skills should a volunteer have when offering psychological support?

Good Listening skills

Patient

Caring attitude

Trustworthy

Approachable

Culturally aware

- Empathetic

Non-judgmental  
approach

- Kind

- Committed

- Flexible

Able to tolerate chaos

Psychological support promotes and sustains an environment of:

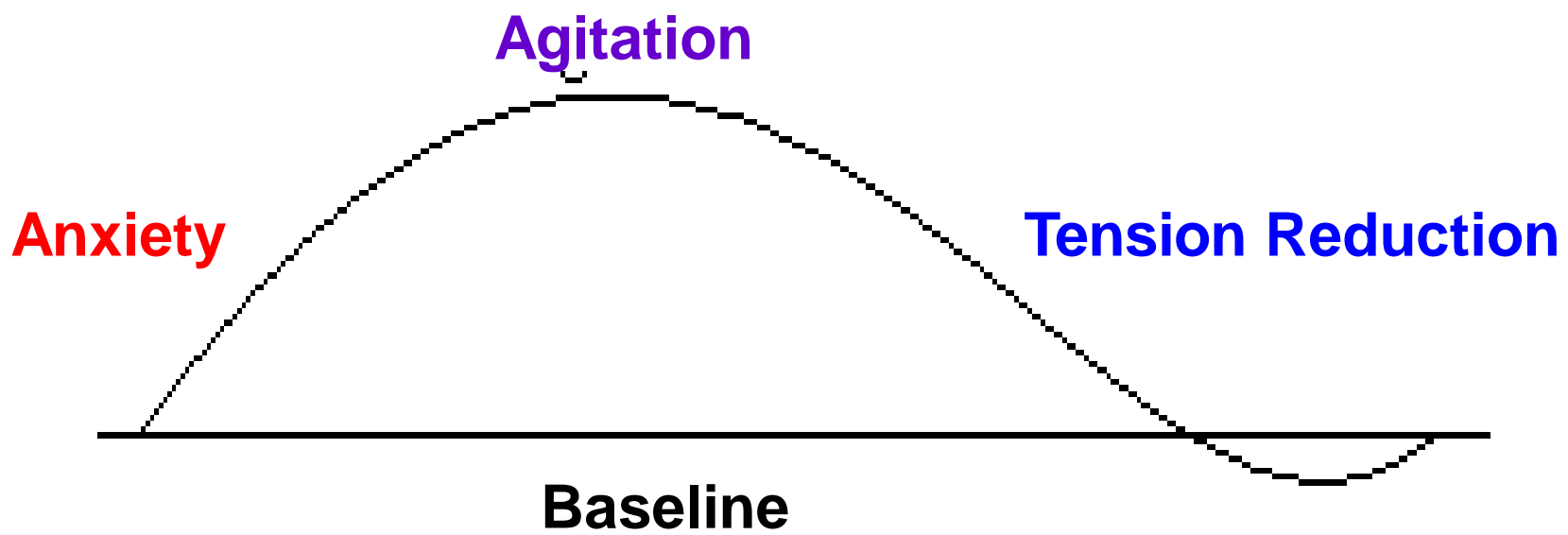
**SAFETY**

**CALM**

**CONNECTEDNESS**

**SELF-EFFICACY**

**HOPE**



People often experience strong and unpleasant emotional and physical responses following exposure to traumatic events (e.g. disasters).

These may include a combination of:

- *Fear & anxiety*
- *Grief & loss*
- *Shock*
- *Hopelessness*
- *Loss of Confidence*
- *Mistrust*
- *Sleep disturbances*
- *Physical pain*
- *Confusion*
- *Shame*
- *Shaken faith*
- *Aggressiveness*

**For most people, things get  
better with time...**



How do we achieve “The right to life with dignity”?

- ❖ Prevent/mitigate impacts of disasters
- ❖ Provide food, water, health, shelter, sanitation, education, psychosocial support
- ❖ Provide protection – presence, advocacy, reporting
- ❖ Help rebuild lives and livelihoods
- ❖ Advocate for affected people + promote changes to ineffective or unjust systems
- ❖ Mobilize governments, general public to help

- **Deploy psychosocial volunteers** who speak the **local language**
- **Art and play therapy** used with children
- Psychosocial intervention took place on **individual, family and community levels**
- **Knowledge of the risk** and lessons on preparedness help individuals and communities to deal with their experiences in a disaster

## Topic: Actions of the Department of Mental Health

- **Team approach** includes psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurses and pharmacists
- Interventions include **home visits**, and individual and group counseling
- Opening a **mental health center expanded the reach** of the psychosocial interventions

*Case 35: Youth helping families to recover, IFRC Youth Award - Together for humanity:  
Reducing the impact from disasters - Return of Happiness - Costa Rica Red Cross*

- Youth volunteers can be mobilized to help provide psychosocial support to vulnerable groups especially children
- Youth volunteers must be trained
- Support from UNICEF motivated youth volunteers and helped the community recover

## ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS WITH CHILDREN

1. **Facilitate expression** : Children can find it difficult to express emotions and difficult feelings. Various mediums can be used to help children feel less vulnerable and safer

- Drawing
- Writing
- Group Discussions
- Use puppets and stories

2. **Goal oriented activity**: such activities help foster confidence and directed behavior

- Collage making
- Small repairs



**“When helping the old-age population.....**

Ensure **medical aid** and **physical well-being**.

Guard against extreme feelings of hopelessness and helplessness.

Encourage **healthy grief reactions**, such as crying, talking about losses.

Allow elders to talk about their fears, anxieties and guilt.

Encourage **group meetings** with elderly survivors.

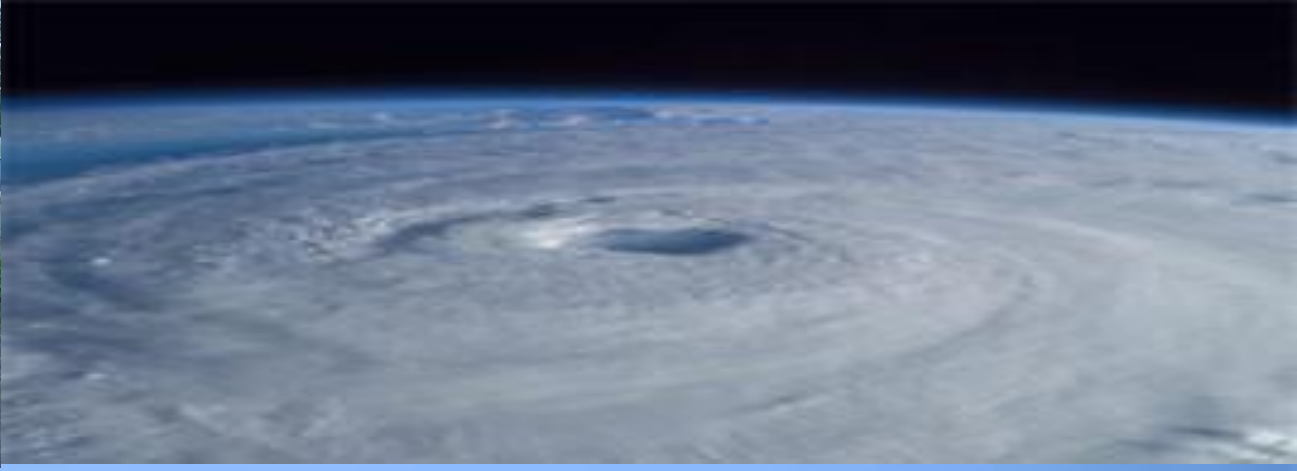
Encourage **participation** in community decision making.”

## ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS WITH ADULTS

- **Group Mourning:** let people come together in groups and mourn the losses as a community.
- **Group Discussion:** open communication and encourage people to talk and express their pain and loss in group setting. This will help build solidarity and lessen the feeling of 'I am the only sufferer'.
- **Cultural community activities:** such as folk songs, participation in community activities etc.
- **Relaxation and Exercises.**



In any disaster, it is the community that is always the first responder. Outside help comes in only later. Training the community and making such response organised is therefore of utmost importance.



Thank you

[http:.....](http://.....)



## References

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