

Resilience

# Disaster Worker Resiliency Training

Participant Training

# Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Understanding Stress
3. What Helps
4. Resilience and Traumatic Stress: What is to be Done?
5. Evaluations

## Overall Learning Objectives



After completing this course participants will be able to demonstrate an ability to:

- **Recognize** signs and symptoms of disaster work related stress
- **Obtain** support through your employer/organization and community resources
- **Build** your own resilience by demonstrating stress reduction and coping strategies

# Types of Disasters: May be natural or human-caused

<b>Natural</b> (Earthquakes, fires, floods, tornadoes)	<b>Human-Caused</b> (Airplane crashes, chemical leaks, mass violence, terrorism)
No one to blame	People, governments, or businesses to blame
Beyond human control	Seen as preventable and a betrayal by fellow humans
Advance warning is possible	No advance warning
Post-disaster distress is high and felt mainly by survivors	Post-disaster distress is often more intense than the distress experienced by people after natural disasters, and it is felt by more people not directly affected by the disaster

Source: Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training Program", SAMSHA and FEMA, US Dept of Health & Human Services.

# Traumatic events have the power to overwhelm normal coping abilities of individuals or groups

- Disasters
- Physical or sexual assault
- Fatal or serious injury or accident
- Exposure to death and destruction



## Activity 1



Small group activity, turn to Participant Manual page 8.

### **Sharing your experience and thoughts about disaster work and resiliency**

**Time for activity:** 25 minutes

**Objective:** “The goal of this activity is to share and discuss your experiences related to disaster work.”

**Task:** Answer each of the questions below:

- 1. What previous disaster work have you done and why are you here?*
- 2. What does the term "resiliency" mean?*
- 3. Why does it matter?*

## Definition of Resiliency

The ability to become strong, healthy, or successful again after something bad happens.

It means bouncing back from difficult experiences.



# Resiliency is not a trait that we inherit. It is a combination of:

- behaviors
  - thoughts, and
  - actions
- ...aimed at coping specifically for you.



## Why does it matter?

- Disaster workers experience stress and trauma
- We care
- Stress can affect how we think, act, and feel
- Stress can cause injuries and illnesses
- Volunteers need protection, too
- Training can increase preparedness



# Reactions to trauma may be mild to severe

## Symptoms

- headache, back ache, stomach ache, difficulty sleeping
- upset feeling, negative thoughts, sadness, feeling numb, flashbacks, depression
- angry, on edge, jumpiness

## Severe

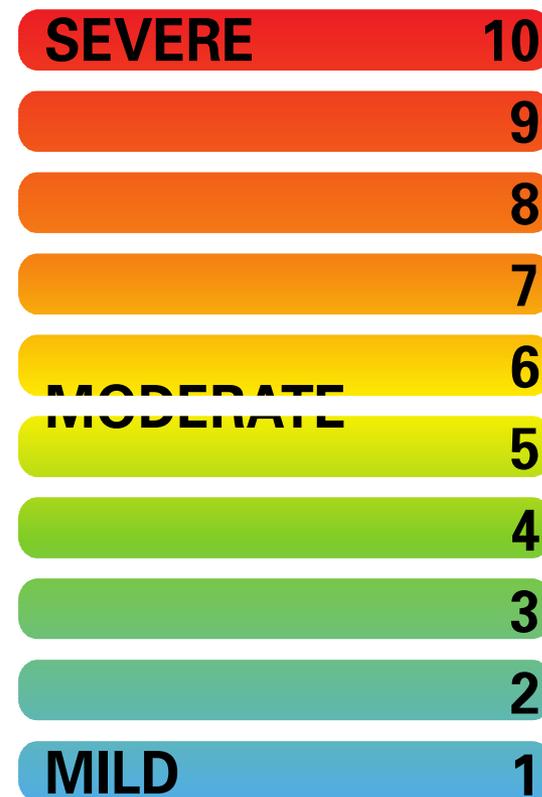
- the symptoms are very intense and can last for over a month
- should seek care

## Moderate

- The symptoms may last for days to several weeks and are more intense

## Mild

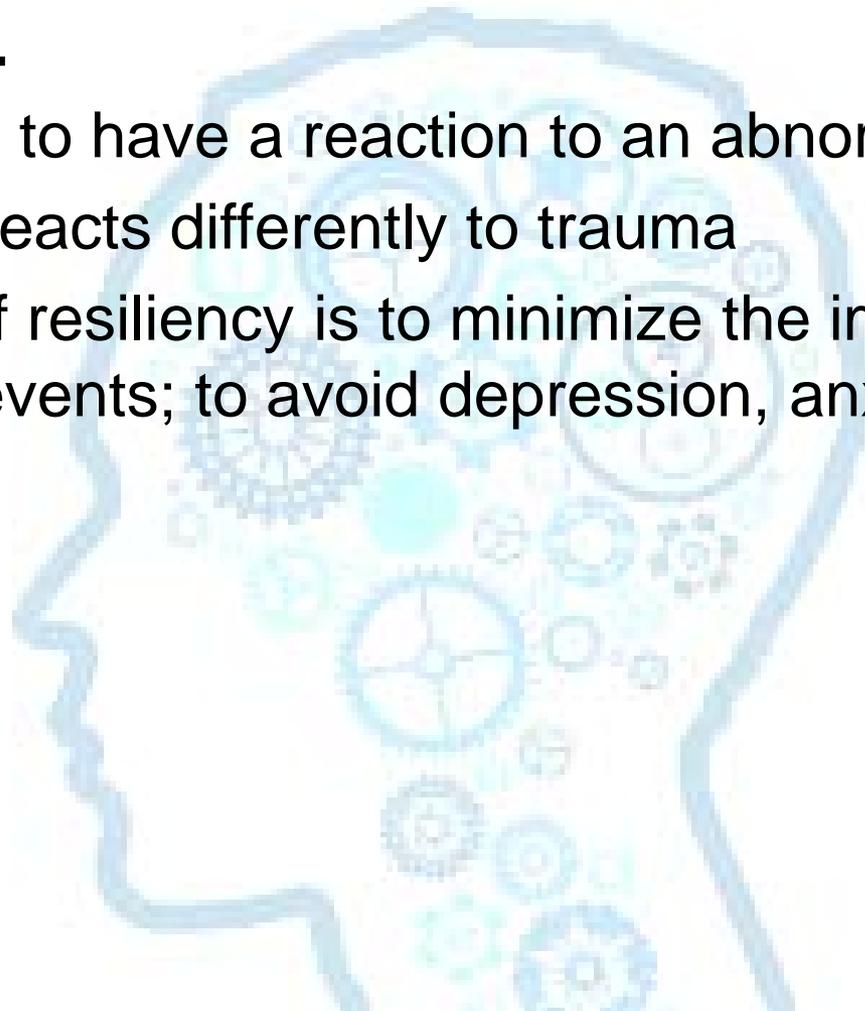
- the symptoms are mild and last for a few hours or days



# Mental health is important to our well being

## Remember...

- It is normal to have a reaction to an abnormal event
- Everyone reacts differently to trauma
- The goal of resiliency is to minimize the impact of traumatic events; to avoid depression, anxiety, or PTSD



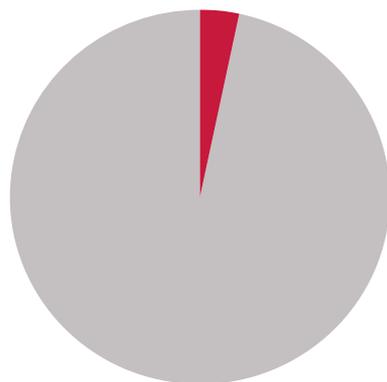
## Elements of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) definition:

1. exposure to a traumatic event
2. severe symptoms lasting more than a month
3. interference with normal life
4. diagnosis made by a healthcare professional

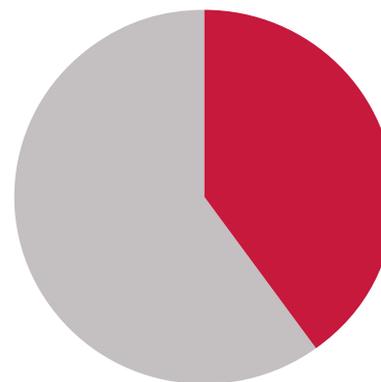


## Disaster work causes high rates of PTSD

- Volunteers have had higher rates of PTSD than professional responders
- 9/11 volunteers that were part of an organization had lower rates, compared to volunteers who weren't part of an organization



**General US  
population PTSD**  
3.6%



**Post-disaster  
PTSD**  
as high as 40%

## Training Helps!

Research shows that **training** disaster workers about mental health issues builds resiliency



## The Bottom Line

- Stress is a normal reaction to abnormal events seen in disasters
- Stress and traumatic reactions can happen to anybody
- There are steps that can be taken by individuals, employers, and organizations to prevent harmful reactions to stress



## Understanding stress

- A normal condition of life
- Necessary for health and survival
- Can have positive or negative effects
- Most people deal with it daily and recover



# Kinds of stress and PTSD

Acute (short-term) Stress

Cumulative (long-term) Stress

Traumatic Stress

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

## Acute stress

It is a short term reaction to stressful events. Reactions include:

- **physical** such as body pain, headache, and stomach ache
- **thinking** such as worry, self-blame, and confusion
- **emotional** such as sadness, anger, and fear
- **social** such as avoiding contact with family, friends, and co-workers



## Cumulative stress

- Grinding stress, hopelessness, that wears people down over time
- Destroys bodies, minds, and lives
- Produces negative changes in:
  - Mental and physical health
  - Performance
  - Relationships
  - Personality



## Traumatic stress

- Starts with exposure to a traumatic event such as death of a loved one.
- Represents a normal response to an abnormal event.
- Most people recover.
- Early support can help reduce reactions.
- Can be an opportunity for positive changes and growth.



# PTSD

- Sufferers may experience:
  - intense fear
  - helplessness and hopelessness
  - flashbacks
  - nightmares
- Most workers who live through a traumatic event will *not* develop PTSD



Not all wounds  
are visible.

## What is recovery from stress?

The ability to return to normal functioning when effected by stress



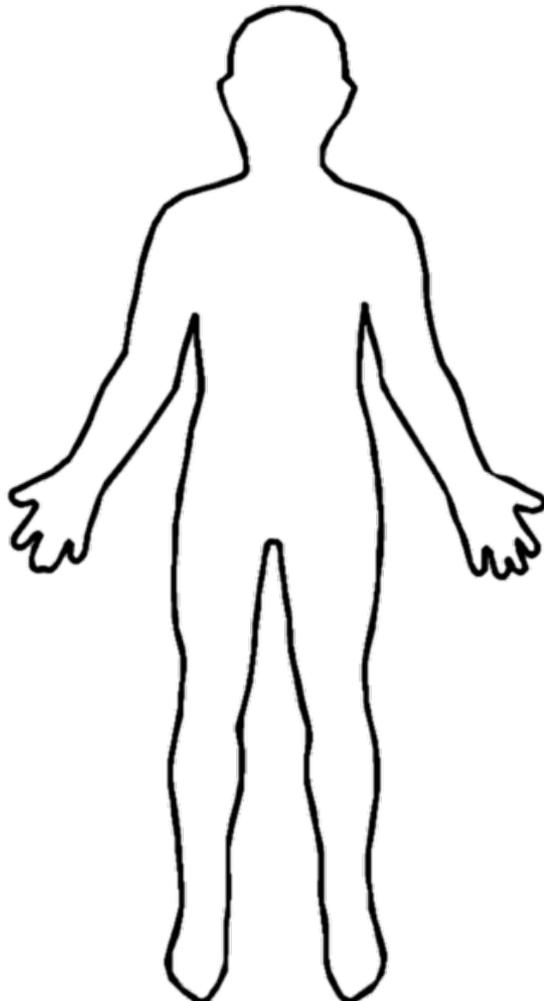
## When terrible things happen

The impact of a traumatic event can produce reactions in four areas:

Definition	Areas
The way we think	Cognitive
The way we feel	Emotional
Interaction with others	Social
Body aches and pain	Physical

## Body Map

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The Instructor or a volunteer will draw a large human outline.

Participants will mark on the outline where they have felt pain from stress.

# Worksheet, Activity 4

## When Terrible Things Happen, What You May Experience, What Helps and What Doesn't

When terrible things happen there are a wide variety of positive and negative reactions that people may experience during and immediately after a traumatic event. Fill in the blanks:

### Immediate Reactions:

Domain	Negative Responses	Positive Responses
Thoughts (cognitive)		
Feelings (emotional)		
Interaction with people (social)		
Body aches and pain (physical)		

# When terrible things happen: Immediate Reactions

Domain	Negative Responses	Positive Responses
The way we think (cognitive)	Confusion, disorientation, worry, intrusive thoughts and images, self-blame	Determination and resolve, sharper perception, courage, optimism, faith
The way we feel (emotional)	Shock, sorrow, grief, sadness, fear, anger, numb, irritability, guilt, shame, and crying	Feeling involved, challenged, mobilized
The way we interact with others (social)	Extreme withdrawal, interpersonal conflict, risky behavior	Social connections, generous helping behaviors
Physical body aches and pains	Fatigue, headache, muscle tension, stomachache, increased heart rate, exaggerating startle response, difficulties sleeping	Alertness, readiness to respond, increased energy

# Impact on Business and Organizations

- Loss of productivity
- Lost work Time
- Absenteeism
- Workers' compensation and medical costs
- Law suits
- Conflicts among employees
- Lowering of morale
- Reduced quality of services
- Loss of customers, clients, and reputation



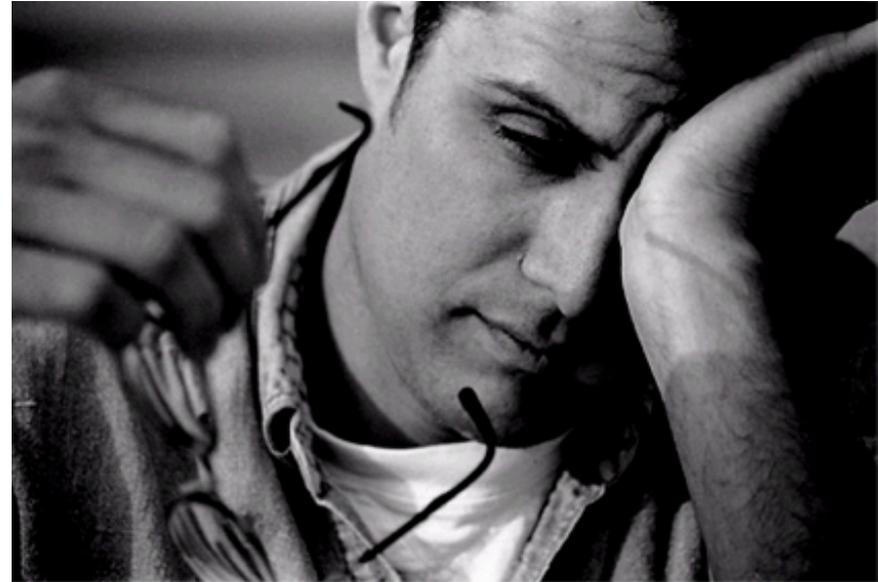
# Stressful working conditions and fatigue

## Stressful working conditions:

- Increase the likelihood of injury and illness
- What are examples of stressful working conditions?

## Fatigue:

- Contributes to failing to use proper equipment and safety procedures
- Causes impairment similar to alcohol
- Affects alertness, reaction times, and performance



# Health and Safety

## Is it adequate?

- Hazard identification and control
- Personal protective equipment
- Respiratory protection
- Safety and health training
- Rest breaks and drinking water
- Clean-up and equipment storage facilities

**Inadequate**



**Adequate**

## Self-Care and Stress Management

- Actions individual disaster workers can take to increase resiliency
- Healthy habits such as eating, sleeping, engaging in positive activities, and socializing
- Connecting with others, giving and receiving social support



## What helps

- Talking to someone
- Engaging in positive activities
- Getting enough sleep and eating healthy
- Trying to maintain a normal schedule
- Taking breaks
- Focusing on what you CAN control or change
- Exercising
- Relaxation
- Daily debriefing



## What doesn't help



- Using alcohol or drugs to cope
- Working too much
- Extreme avoidance of thinking or talking about the event
- Extreme withdrawal from family or friends
- Violence or conflict
- Not taking care of yourself
- Overeating or failing to eat
- Withdrawal from pleasant activities
- Doing risky things such as driving recklessly, substance abuse, staying out late at night
- Blaming others

## Ways to get connected...

- Calling friends or family
- Increasing contact with co-workers and friends
- Involvement in church, synagogue, or other religious groups
- Getting involved with support groups or community activities



## Good things to do while giving support

- Show interest, attention, and care
- Find an uninterrupted time and place to talk
- Be free of expectations or judgments
- Show respect for individuals' reactions and ways of coping
- Acknowledge that this type of stress can take time to resolve
- Help brainstorm positive ways to deal with reactions
- Talk about expectable reactions to disasters, and healthy coping
- Believe that the person is capable of recovery
- Offer to talk or spend time together as many times as needed



Active  
Listening

## Disaster Distress 24 Hour Helpline

- 1-800-985-5990 or Text 'TalkWithUs' to 66746
- Free 24/7 helpline for stress, anxiety, and distressing reactions following a disaster
- Staffed by trained counselors
- SAMHSA is the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



Download the **SAMHSA Disaster App** at Google Play, Apple, or Blackberry stores

## SAMHSA Treatment Finder

- 800-662-HELP (4357)
- Connects to treatment resources for substance abuse or other mental health needs
- <http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment/natHELPFAQs.aspx>



Be **STRONG** enough to  
stand alone,  
**SMART** enough to know  
when you need help,  
and **BRAVE** enough to  
ask for it.

## Seek outside help if you:

- Are not able to take care of yourself or your children.
- Think about suicide.
- Are not able to do your job.
- Hit, shove, or kick your spouse or child.
- Are continually critical or demeaning to your spouse or child.
- Think or talk about marital separation.
- Use alcohol or other drugs to escape your problems.
- Feel sad or depressed for more than two weeks.
- Experience panic attacks where, overcome with fear, you have a high pulse rate and difficulty breathing.



## Professional counseling

- Has helped millions find relief
- Helps patients identify trauma triggers and work to reduce their impact
- Helps individuals to reduce the symptoms and restore health



# Employer/ Organizational crisis intervention programs

## Goals:

- Prevent long-term effects by rapid intervention
- Provide organizational support
- Provide opportunity for expression
- Reduce reacting to and thinking about traumatic events through crisis education



## Core elements of a crisis intervention program

- Prevention
- Education, not counseling
- Provision of caring, supportive services
- Follow-up referral



## Activity 8

Individual exercise, refer to page 34 of the Participant Manual.

### Action Planning for Resiliency and Traumatic Stress

**Time for activity:** 20 minutes

**Objective:** The goal of this activity is to begin developing an action plan on the individual and workplace organizational levels that will promote resiliency.

**Task:** Based on the lessons learned in today's program I will take the following actions

- 1. List one or more steps you may take as an individual to increase resistance to trauma, stress, and improve resiliency.*
- 2. List one or more steps your employer or organization may take to increase resistance to trauma, stress, and improve resiliency.*

## Evaluations

Participants will complete the evaluations



## The End

**Congratulations! Enjoy your travels on the road to:**



# Acknowledgements

The sources below were used to develop this training program. We thank them for use of their materials.

1. New York State OMH Bureau of Education and Workforce Development (BEWD)
2. The Impact of Trauma on Lives, Victor Welzant, Psy.D.
3. US Department of Health and Human Services, SAMHSA, CCP Trainer's Guide; Participant Workbook; Slides; Trainers' Toolkit: Core Content Training, Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training
4. International Union of Operating Engineers, Traumatic Incident Stress Training, produced under an NIEHS grant
5. US Department of Health and Human Services, SAMHSA, A Post Deployment Guide for Supervisors
6. CDC, Let Us Take Care of You! Health, Safety, and Resilience for Disaster Responders
7. Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress, Leadership Stress Management
8. DMS-5 for PTSD, National Center for PTSD
9. Bicknell-Hentges, L., & Lynch, J. J. (2009, March). Everything counselors and supervisors need to know about treating trauma.
10. Psychological First Aid, Field Operations Guide, 2nd Edition, National Child Stress Network, National Center for PTSD
11. Psychological First Aid for First Responders, Tips for Emergency and Disaster Response Workers, SAMSHA
12. Stress: The Different Kinds of Stress, American Psychological Association

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