

# Impact of COVID-19 Crisis on Training: Changes, Challenges, and “New Norms”

**National Trainer’s Exchange**  
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**Indianapolis, IN**

*Presented by* **Kim Dunn, MSPH**  
**Technical Training Director**  
*Co-Presenter* **Bruce McClue III, BS**  
**Technical Training Manager**

*Funded by*



National Institute of  
Environmental Health Sciences  
*Worker Training Program*





# Goal and Objectives

**Goal:** Discuss the overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on training.

**Objectives:** This training will:

- 1) explore the shifts from typical traditional face-to-face technical training to virtual and/or a hybrid of the two platforms;
- 2) highlight the many challenges and potential advantages brought on by the crisis; and
- 3) provide suggestions for effective crisis management strategies and professional development interventions.

# Meet...



Kim Dunn  
Presenter  
Technical Training Director



Bruce McClue, III  
Co-Presenter  
Technical Training Manager

# Background Information

- ▶ Deep South Center for Environmental Justice (DSCEJ) in New Orleans (NO) is the lead site of the Historically Black Colleges and University Consortium (HBCUC)
- ▶ 28 year NIEHS grantee
- ▶ Addressed disasters and deployed graduates since 1989

# HBCU-CBO Consortium Members

## Co-Directors



Dr. Beverly Wright & Dr. Robert Bullard  
 Deep South Center For Environmental Justice  
 Texas Southern University

## Program Managers



Monique Harden & Dr. Denae King  
 Community Interdisciplinary Engagement Research



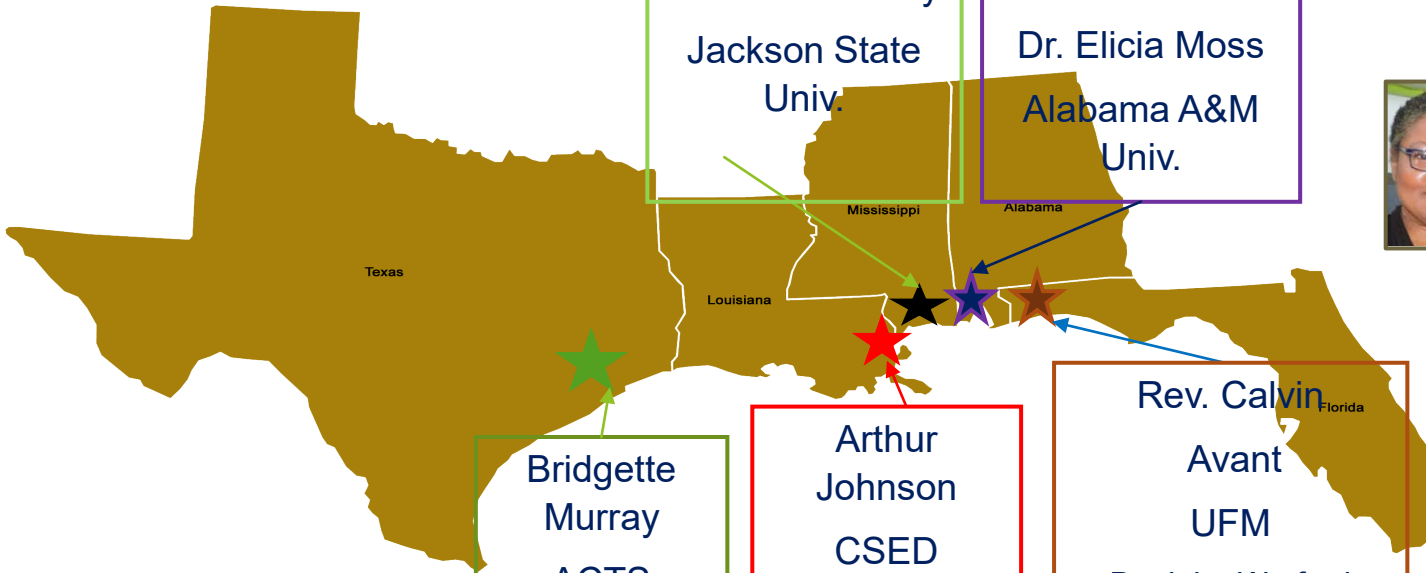
Ruth Story & Kathy Egland  
 EEECHO  
 Dr. Joan Wesley  
 Jackson State Univ.

Joe Womack  
 CHESS  
 Dr. Elicia Moss  
 Alabama A&M Univ.

Rev. Calvin Avant  
 UFM  
 Dr. John Warford  
 DSCEJ  
 Dr. Richard Gragg  
 Florida A&M Univ.

Arthur Johnson  
 CSED  
 Dr. Bernard Singleton  
 Dillard Univ.

Bridgette Murray  
 ACTS  
 Dr. Glenn Johnson  
 TSU

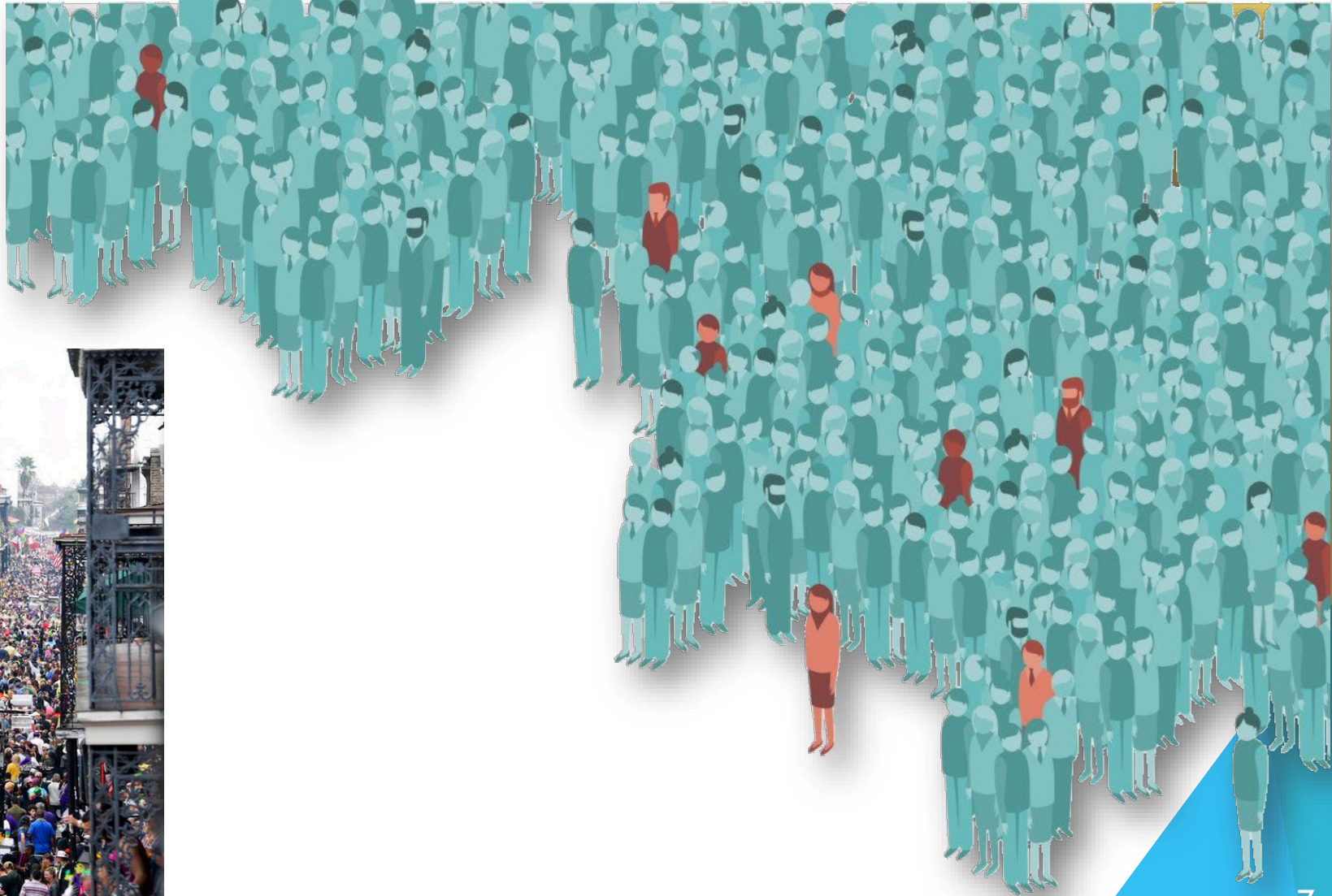


**Looking back -**

**Do you remember the time leading up to  
January 10, 2020?  
Time shortly after?  
Training events?**

# Looking back: Super-Spreader Event

- ▶ Mardi Gras, 2/25/2020



# **DSCEJ Looking Back - March 2020**

- ▶ WTP training occurring in New Orleans and Houston
- ▶ 2 of 18 people on plane, HOU to NO
- ▶ March 22, 2020, New Orleans stay at home order



# DSCEJ Looking Back-2020 WTP Training

## Immediate Responses

- ▶ COVID Education
- ▶ COVID policy and procedures
  - ▶ Educate students
  - ▶ Educate staff
- ▶ Adjust last weeks of training schedule due to shut down of city
- ▶ Virtual graduation

# Pre-Pandemic Training

- ▶ Face-to Face/in-person training
- ▶ Group activities/social interaction
- ▶ Ability to get immediate answers to questions
- ▶ Instructor adjustments made based upon student reactions

# Pre-Pandemic Training

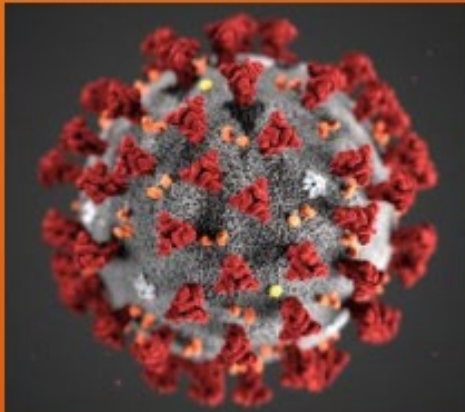
- ▶ Regulatory requirements
  - ▶ No flexibility
    - ▶ No allowance for alternative teaching platform
    - ▶ Hours of hands-on activities must be conducted
    - ▶ State accreditation and training certifications needed for individuals could not work

# Shift to Virtual

## 1<sup>st</sup> Virtual presentation

### COVID-19 Community Awareness Training

HBCU-CBO Gulf Coast Equity Consortium – April 25, 2020



Kim Dunn, MSPH  
Technical Training Director

Bruce McClue III, BS  
Technical Training Manager

*Research reported in this presentation is supported by the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice and the NIEHS of the National Institutes of Health.*



# Face-to-Face Virtual

## COVID Training

- ▶ Lots of research
  - ▶ Dispel myths and stay within regulatory constraints
  - ▶ Reputable resources
  - ▶ Constantly changing information
  - ▶ Determine regulatory requirements, if any
- ▶ Lots of preparation; consider the audience
- ▶ Tremendous stress on instructors

# Face-to-Face Virtual

## Training courses other than COVID during the pandemic:

- ▶ Deeper dive into regulations
  - ▶ Determined on course-by-course basis if course could be virtual
  - ▶ Only IN-PERSON TRAINING REQUIRED in some instances and had to determine risks and issues:
    - ▶ Facility cleaning and disinfection, equipment decontamination, trainee and instructor health & safety, facility size constraints, etc.
    - ▶ Other problems, i.e., No medical evals, fit testing issues, support offices closed due to COVID outbreaks, etc.
- ▶ Mental health and stress to instructors to be considered.
- ▶ **Safety first!**

# Face-to-Face Virtual

## ALL Courses

- ▶ Re-visit current training materials
- ▶ Consider the audience
- ▶ Employ more “subject-matter” experts, when needed
- ▶ Need instructor “down time”

# Face-to-Face Virtual

## SUGGEST:

**Dry run for all training**

**Engage the audience**

- ▶ Virtual logistics
- ▶ Pre- and post-poll questions
- ▶ Breakout sessions
- ▶ Allow audience to speak (Depends upon audience size)
- ▶ Annotation, games, demonstrations, other



# Face-to-Face Virtual Challenges

- ▶ Difficult to keep learners engaged
- ▶ Face-to-face to virtual training not one-to-one shift; takes longer to provide quality training
- ▶ Technical difficulties: Network connectivity, bandwidth glitches, security, etc.
- ▶ Need multiple people assisting
- ▶ Training documentation important
- ▶ Virtual time constraints needed

# Face-to-Face Virtual Challenges

- ▶ Participant level of understanding & comprehension difficult to gauge when can't see one's face
  - ▶ Hard to measure desired outcomes virtually
- ▶ Potential for decreased focus w/more distractions based upon student's environment
- ▶ Unable to accomplish required hands-on activities
- ▶ Testing procedures to document student's course completion changed

# Advantages of Shifting to Virtual

- ▶ Reached broader, more diverse populations; ability to train individuals that could not travel; less cost
- ▶ Stronger partnership and community connections; new partnerships
  - ▶ Assisted communities with concurrent disasters - addressed more audiences and reached more people
  - ▶ Partnerships allowed for community facility/church use when restrictions were withdrawn/areas partially and slowly opened

# DSCEJ Community Partners!



# Advantages of Shifting to Virtual

- ▶ **IMPORTANT:** WTP tools were basis of training materials
- ▶ Deeper dive into regulations changed some in-person training aspects
  - ▶ Now assign individual PPE
  - ▶ Re-evaluate medical evaluations and service providers
- ▶ Re-evaluated written materials for better delivery virtually and in-person
- ▶ Realization that blended training works
  - ▶ Utilized the best of both worlds

# Lessons Learned – The New Norm

- ▶ Virtual training is here to stay
  - ▶ Face-to-face only training is not an option
  - ▶ A blend of training is the new norm.
- ▶ Must be able to quickly ADAPT, ADJUST, MODIFY
  - ▶ Multi-instructional staff with expertise needed
- ▶ Trainee engagement is key: enhances, better learning experience

# Lessons Learned – The New Norm

- ▶ Training materials and hands-on activities on hand
  - ▶ Develop more during down time
  - ▶ Update current materials
  - ▶ Utilize current WTP tools and information and grantee expertise
- ▶ Multiple training platforms needed
  - ▶ Determine need and best fit
  - ▶ Have to use to stay proficient

# Blended Training

Consider:

- ▶ Re-imagined courses and classroom structure
  - ▶ Work more with communities-Gyms and churches utilized
  - ▶ Continue infection control procedures for safety, facility cleaning and disinfection
- ▶ Courses that reach more audiences
  - ▶ Train-the-trainer (i.e., COVID, muck and gut, etc.) with fewer trainee
  - ▶ Trainee from TTT then trained others, so still reached large audiences



# Suggestions for Effective Crisis Management

- ▶ Start with regulations and apply to situation
  - ▶ Adapt, adjust and modify as needed
- ▶ Utilize the tools you have, consortium members, experts
- ▶ Provide support and resources needed to instructors
- ▶ Ensure continued infection control policy and procedures
- ▶ Need for more trainers: Identify, develop, mentor
- ▶ Ensure instructor mental hygiene/mental health



# Comments or Questions

# Deep South Center for Environmental Justice

The **Deep South Center for Environmental Justice** was founded by Dr. Beverly Wright in 1992 in collaboration with community environmental groups and other universities within the southern region to advance environmental justice. Since that time, the center has become a powerful resource for environmental justice research and education as well as health and safety training for environmental careers.



# **For further information, contact Kim Dunn, Technical Training Director**



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**THANK YOU**