Workshop: Managing a Disaster Recovery Operation – integrating theory with practice

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Principles of Disaster Recovery Planning

- management arrangements recognize that recovery from disaster is a complex, dynamic and protracted process
- agreed plans and management arrangements are well understood by the community and all disaster management agencies
- recovery agencies are properly integrated into disaster management arrangements
- community service and reconstruction agencies have input to key decision-making
- conducted with the active participation of the affected community
- recovery managers are involved from initial briefings onwards
- recovery services are provided in a timely, fair, equitable and flexible manner
- supported by training programs and exercises

Emergency Management Australia, 2004:5
Myth Busting

• 1. People panic
• 2. People cannot look after themselves
• 3. Too much information is bad
• 4. Children are too young to be affected
• 5. If people don’t ‘crack up’, they are not affected
• 6. Communities never recover
• 7. Emergency workers are not affected
Psychosocial phases

- Heroic
- Honeymoon
- Disillusionment
- Reconstruction
HEROIC
- feelings of altruism
  - family, friends, neighbours

HONEymoon
- sense of shared survival
  - anticipation of help/return to normal
  - community and outside agencies

DISappointment
- anger
- frustration
- disputes
- red tape
- loss of support
- exhaustion

DISillusionment

RECONSTRUCTION

OBSTacles

DElays

GROUPS weaken/FRAGMENT
EMOTIONAL STABILITY

TRAUMATIC INCIDENT

1. Shock/disruption -
can last a few hours to several days depending on severity of trauma.

2. Disbelief/denial -
attempt to deny the reality of the event.

3. Emotional Impact -
usually 2-3 days after the incident, can continue up to 8-10 weeks and longer depending on:
   • the situation;
   • coping skills; and
   • amount of support.
It is common to experience depression and/or anger. Such mood-swings reflect anxiety about being 'normal' again.

4. Working it through -
a time of soul searching and questioning - “what if” “if only”. It is common for a victim to attempt to ‘devictimise’ self by minimising the effects of the traumatising experience.

5. Acceptance/resolution -
coming to terms with the meaning of the event for self-acceptance of the experience as a sad or painful memory.

6. Normal reactions -
situational reminders and anniversary.
Common feelings

- Shock
- Fear
- Anger
- Helplessness
- Sadness
- Shame
- Guilt
Effect on behaviour

- Tension
- Sleep disturbances, dreams, nightmares
- Memories and feelings
- Irritability
- Depression
- Social withdrawal
- Physical sensations
- Delayed effects
Children’s reactions

- Sleep problems, nightmares
- Changes of dressing, eating, toilet habits
- Irritability, listless, uncooperative, bored
- Clinging to family, familiar things
- Regression
- Difficulty coping with changes
- More demanding of people or withdrawn
- Conflict, aggression, withdrawal with peers
• Preoccupied with trauma, acting, playing
• Excessive concern for others
• Reduced school performance, concentration
• Over-active, restless
• Comfort seeking
• Exaggerated reactions to small crises
Medium term effects

• Adults:
  – Effects on work performance and routine
  – Irritability & effect on relationships
  – Changes in sexual relationship
• Teenagers:
  – More rebellious or demanding
  – School performance affected
  – May turn to outside family for emotional support
• Children:
  – Clingy, disobedient
  – School performance affected
• Family:
  – Postponing own needs for others
  – Family members’ feelings may change – more detached or preoccupied
  – Lose interest in leisure, recreation, sport
Long term effects

- Event may come back for family members in another crisis
- Family members need to go over events again when grow into new stages of maturity and understanding
- May find future crises harder to handle – esp. feelings aroused
- May cover up difficult feelings
- Previous effects may become habits
- Major change or problem in family members in next few years likely to be related to the crisis
Adjusting

• Acceptance
• Support
• Going over events
• Expressing feelings
• Taking care of yourself
Recovery process

• Coming to terms with trauma and disaster is a normal process
• Everyone goes through to a greater or lesser degree
• Principles are the same, whether the person retraces their past and re-evaluates their future goals
  – in the privacy of their own mind
  – with neighbours
  – in community forums
  – in counselling
• Pushing problems aside or bottling them up is not a successful strategy and sooner or later the issues need to be dealt with or they cause difficulties
• Community interventions can:
  – create understanding and opportunities for working through the trauma
  – encourage those less willing to do so
  – provide specific supports

• The more the community is assisted to maintain its integrity and avoid destructive splits and conflicts, the more it supports recovery of its members
Typhoon Morakot impacts

- 738 killed; 192 missing
- 461 killed in Taiwan?
- $6.636 billion (USD); $3.3 billion USD in Taiwan
- Japan, Philippines, Taiwan, China, Korea
- Floods and mudslides; villages buried – Xiaolin
- Residents trapped; homes demolished; many homeless
- Hotel destroyed; power and water disrupted
- Catastrophic agricultural losses of approx NT$14 billion ($443 million USD)
Planning and intervening

• Alert and evacuation phase
  – Survivors or relatives waiting for news at evacuation centre

• Initial recovery phase
  – At relief centre – what services? needs?

• Longer term recovery issues
  – Individuals and families; children; school and employment; rebuilding; material and $ needs; grief and loss; relationships
• Vulnerable groups
• Needs for the helpers
  – What is it like to meet survivors and work with them?
  – What training and support do you need?
  – How do you take care of self?