

# Disasters, Faith & Resilience

*After the Shock: Understanding the Shake-Up*

## General Disaster Mental Health Trends:

- Specific psychological problems
- Nonspecific distress
- Physical health problems
- Chronic problems in living
- Resource loss
- Problems related to youth

Notes:

## Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Criteria:

- Stressor (direct or indirect exposure)
- Intrusion symptoms
- Avoidance
- Cognitive and mood alterations
- Arousal and reactivity alterations
- Duration (>1 month)
- Functional impairment

### Resilience:

The process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress... It means "bouncing back" from difficult experiences. (American Psychological Association 2018)

## Faith & Resilience

- Survivors **turn to God and faith** when sense of control is overwhelmed
- Survivors **attribute disasters** to natural factors, God or both
- **Disaster experience** affects how survivors think about and relate to faith
- Perceived "**head-heart**" **discrepancy** increases likelihood of religious & spiritual struggles
- **Spiritual support** plays important role in recovery process
- How people **engage their faith** is most telling predictor of resilience

# Spiritual First Aid

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**Spiritual First Aid (SFA)** is an evidence-informed spiritual and emotional care intervention that provides a framework for assessing and addressing practical needs of disaster survivors through a supportive relationship and spiritual resources in order to facilitate survivor resilience.

Notes:

**Goal of Spiritual First Aid** is to improve survivors' trajectory for resilience and future recovery.



## CHAT Helping Process

- **Connect** – ministry of presence
- **Humbly Help** – no job is too small
- **Assess** – observe and ask questions
- **Triage** – focus on most immediate needs

## BLESS Method

- **Belong** – encourage social & spiritual support
- **Loss** of (physical) resources
- **Emotional** – facilitate lament
- **Spiritual** – attend to meaning
- **Safety** – refer and/or report

# Volunteer & Self-Care

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**Compassion Fatigue** (or vicarious/secondary traumatization) is the emotional residue or strain of working with those suffering from the consequences of traumatic events.

Notes:

**Burnout** is a special type of job stress – a type of physical, emotional or mental exhaustion combined with doubts about your competence and the value of your work.

- Marked by exhaustion & withdrawal
- Increased workload & situational stress
- Not trauma-related
- Response to ongoing demands
- Occurs when perceived demands outweigh perceived resources
- Emerges over time

If you aren't careful to care for yourself while caring for others, you may soon be unable to care for anyone at all.

## Self-Care Strategies

- **Maintain faith** – find meaning and purpose, engage in spiritual disciplines
- **Plan well** – set a goal and break it down into manageable steps
- **Balance life activities** – engage in meaningful leisure
- **Keep an optimistic perspective** – balance reality and focus on big-picture

