

Living It and Feeling It: Disaster Behavioral Health in Pandemic Response

2021 CSTE Disaster Epidemiology Workshop



“I wish the ring had never come to me. I wish that none of this had happened.”

“So do all who live to see such times, but that is not for them to decide. All you have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to you.”

- J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*



Disaster Functioning

- Integrating Behavioral Health and Access & Functional Needs

2019 CSTE Disaster
Epidemiology
Conference

Public Health Emergency Profile

- People are the hazard
- People are the response system
- People are survivors, dealing with personal disruptions
- The duration of the pandemic fatigues the motivation of people's behaviors.
- The pandemic challenges emergency management assumptions

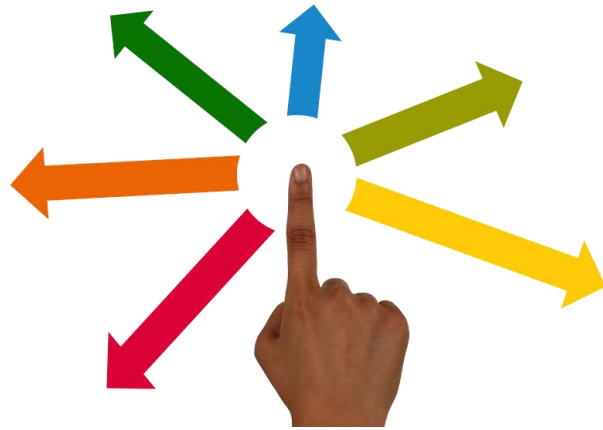


New Reality

- “In order to react successfully to a disaster, you must understand human behavior better than anyone else in your community.”
- - McIntire, D. (2007). *Disaster Response and Recovery*

- Applying disaster behavioral health principles and supports to...

- Make public health operations more effective interacting with the community



- Maintain and care for the Human Resources of whole community response



- Reduce the stress, improve functioning and outcomes of people



...during a novel infectious disease event

Hobfoll et al. (2007). Five essential elements of immediate and mid-term mass trauma intervention: empirical evidence



Safety



Calm



Connectedness



Efficacy



Hope

Disaster Behavioral Health Strategies & Resources

Changing, Adapting, Surviving in the COVID-19 Response

People & stress-informed operations

- Disaster Behavioral Health position in Joint Information Center
 - [Connected Colorado public television panel, Governor's press conference](#) for [mental health during the holidays](#)
 - [Webpages](#), social media graphics
 - [I am a disaster communicator and this is why you should be one too](#)
- Disaster Behavioral Health task force with non-traditional partners (e.g. State Unit on Aging, Colorado Respite Coalition)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Planning and Distribution: Disaster Behavioral Health Principles and Support](#)
- Developing a DBH data sentinel surveillance system





“Resilience: (v) The way water knows just how to flow, not force itself around a river rock; then surely I can stretch myself in the shape my own path is asking of me.

- Corina Fadel, as quoted in adrienne maree brown’s *Emergent Strategy*

Resourcing, caring for teams and responders

- Psychological First Aid training series for Contact Tracing teams
- Healthcare Worker Resilience and Retention Initiative
- “Sustainable Work Requires Sustainable People” briefings at DOC Weekly and Monthly updates
- [Resources for Leaders and Workers](#)
- CDPHE [“Are you getting crispy?” article](#) and resources



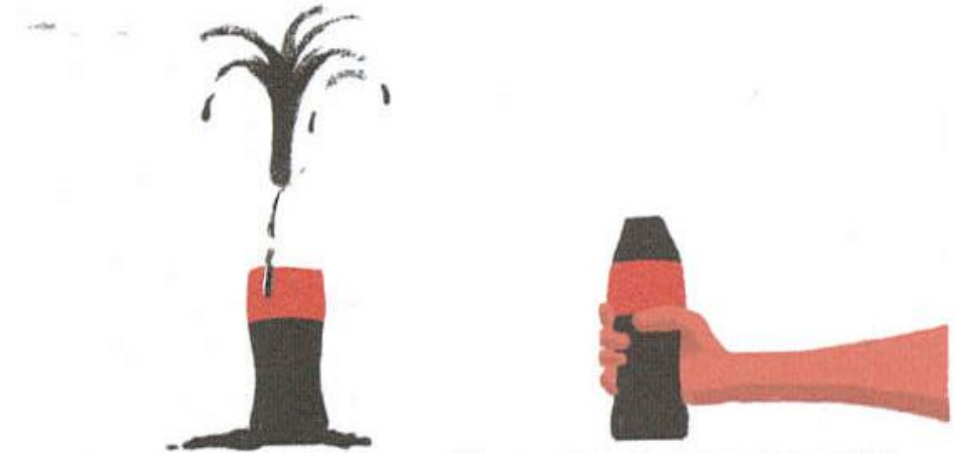
Fizzy bottle

WORKING WITH
TRAUMA IS LIKE
BEING AN EXPERT
AT OPENING COKE
BOTTLES.



THE CHARGE INSIDE A BODY WHEN OVERWHELMED
CAN BE COMPARED TO A COKE BOTTLE THAT HAS
BEEN VIGOROUSLY SHAKEN.

TAKE THE TOP OFF TOO QUICKLY AND IT GETS
MESSY. DIVE INTO THE TRAUMA STORY TOO
QUICKLY AND YOU MAY MEET INTENSE EMOTIONS
AND SENSATIONS THAT ARE HARD TO REGULATE.



A SMALL OPEN AND A QUICK CLOSE CAN RELIEVE
THE PRESSURE. IT MAY TAKE A FEW GOES, BUT IT
IS SAFE ONCE YOU GET THE HANG OF IT. AND NO
MESS. AND A FULL COKE BOTTLE TO ENJOY.

Concept: Babette Rothschild (2000)

Image: *Trauma is Really Strange*, Steve Haines

Reduce Stress, Increase Adaptive Functioning

- Dedicated Team debriefings, meetings
- [Colorado Spirit Crisis Counseling Program](#)
 - [Inside Colorado's Crisis Counseling Program](#) (blog post)
- Wider Community Presentations
 - Dept. of Local Affairs "Adaptations and Futures [webinar](#) and [companion piece](#)
- [Engage-Calm-Distract: Understanding and Responding to Children in Crisis](#)
- [The Viral Blog](#)





“Life is a shipwreck, but we must not forget
to sing in the lifeboats.”

- Peter Gay, on the thesis of Voltaire’s *Candide*

Disaster Stages – integrating human-focused supports

- BEFORE – Setting Expectations
 - have a healthy baseline
 - make a toolkit
- DURING – Energy Maintenance
 - use
 - discharge
 - recharge
- AFTER – Meaning Making
 - acknowledgement, memorials, gratitude
 - reconnecting, storytelling
 - learning, improving



Questions?

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