Disaster Consequences, Stress and Resilience of Individuals, Families and Communities in Yolanda-hit Areas: Implications to Working in Ebola Outbreak Setting

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• To help us understand the various stress, psychological problems and needs of individuals, families, communities, healthcare professiona associated with working during crisis situation, like the Ebola virus disease outbreak; and

• How this understanding can be translated into a framework in managing stress and help people lead normal and happy lives.
• What are the consequences of the disaster on individuals, families, community and the healthcare provider?
• What is psychological first aid?
• What are the resiliency factors that helped the survivors move on to lead normal lives again?
Stress is normal...
Disaster..

Super typhoon Yolanda, a disaster...

and

Ebola virus disease/outbreak
The Cost of Disaster

• Human cost

• Economic cost

• Physical cost

• Environmental cost
Psychological cost

- This disaster have impacted on the emotional life of the people resulting to psychological consequences:

“Makaharadluk, makatutu-uk.” These were the kind of emotion-packed reactions of most survivors.
Disaster impacts…

Individual

Family

Community

Health worker
How one reacts depends

- Nature and severity of the event
- Support
- Personal factors (age, physical health, personality)
- Cultural background
## Physical, Affective and Behavioral Symptoms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical/Medical symptoms</th>
<th>Feelings</th>
<th>Behaviors</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Headaches</td>
<td>• Depression</td>
<td>• Difficulty relaxing</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Tiredness</td>
<td>• Anger</td>
<td>• Difficulty making decision</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Dizziness</td>
<td>• Guilt</td>
<td>• Need to cling to others</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Stomach pains</td>
<td>• Feelings of bereavement, grief</td>
<td>• Confusion</td>
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<td>• Insomnia/nightsmares</td>
<td>• Anxiety/Fear</td>
<td>• Difficulty believing what had happened</td>
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<td>• Worrying that something bad is going to happen</td>
<td>• Avoiding activities, places, thoughts or feelings that remind you of the trauma</td>
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• All these are normal reactions to an abnormal situation

• These feelings will usually become less intense after a few weeks. They might find it hard to cope and it might take a while to come to terms with what has happened

• It is important to know the needs of the victims during the aftermath of the disaster. The identified needs will anchor whatever appropriate psychosocial intervention programs to be developed.
Stressors particular to Ebola

• Fear
• Physical strain of protective equipment
• Risk of contamination
• Shock - late stage symptoms & rapid deterioration may be shocking to both medical and non-medical staff
Normal reactions & behaviours to Ebola

• Fear of being sick, suffering & dying, thereby avoiding hospitals & health clinics
• Fear of sick people
• Fear of symptoms and disease that are normally easily treated
• Fear of losing livelihood (not being able to work or being refused to return to work after being sick)
• Mistrust and anger of everyone associated with the disease
• Stigmatization and fear of healthcare workers
Sources of these fears and reactions:
• realistic dangers,
• rumours and misinformation.

There is a need to…
• to correct misconceptions, at the same time, acknowledge that the feelings and subsequent behaviour is very real, even if the underlying assumption is false.

• Provide psychosocial support
Guiding Principles in Providing Psychological Support

• Primary focus on physical and material care and protection from danger
• Immediate intervention: Be direct, active and remain calm
• Focus on “here and now”
• Provide accurate information on situation
• Do not give false assurances
• Recognize the importance of taking action
• Reunite with family and friends
• Provide and ensure emotional support
• Focus on strengths and resilience
• Encourage self-reliance
• Respect feelings of others
Psychological First Aid (PFA)

• Disaster response (first two weeks of the incident);
• Humane, supportive response to a fellow human being who is suffering and may need support;
• Focus on practical, pragmatic needs, info on support and referral systems, education of normal responses to trauma and coping;
• Approach recommended by the United Nations, WHO, Red Cross and those doing Humanitarian Work during Emergency Situations.
PFA can be provided during Ebola outbreak

- During contact tracing of people who have had contact with person with Ebola;
- When delivering survival and hygiene kits to people who recovered but whose properties were destroyed during disinfection of their home;
- When supporting health care provider experiencing distress;
- When supporting family or community that has lost someone to Ebola and is suffering because their loved one cannot be buried according to tradition;
- When supporting a child whose parents are in hospital, and who may be feeling confused and sad.
PFA helps people to...

- Feel safe, calm, and hopeful
- Feel connected to others
- Have access to social, physical and emotional support;
- Help themselves as individuals, families and communities
Helping responsibly involves:

- Respect
  - Safety
  - Dignity
  - Rights

- Be aware of other available emergency response measures
  - Access to correct information about Ebola (service & supports available)
  - How to protect themselves
Helping responsibly involves:

Looking after your own physical and mental well-being
Yolanda experience: Resilience is the key to bounce back

From the focus group discussion (FGD) data it was shown that individuals, families and communities exhibited qualities to cope effectively with the disaster.

Lesson learned: RESILIENCY will transform the individual from a being a VICTIM to becoming a SURVIVOR
Personal

• Inner strength and resolve to move on and overcome the difficulties
  – “Nakusog nga huna-huna ngan kasing kasing para ha pamilya “ (strong will and heart to for the family to survive).
  – “Gin dig-on an akon huna-huna nga dako an akon pagla-um nga mabuhi bisan waray na balay” (strong hope and resolve to live)

• Prayers and Faith in God
  – (pag-ampo ug pagtapod ha Ginoo).
  – For the faithful, their relationship with God and prayer life gave meaning to their lives and something to live for. It carries with it the meaning of man’s relationship with a world beyond himself and others, which gives meaning and purpose to one’s existence.
• **Community Factors**
  As a community, the barangay exhibited ways of coping with the effects of the disaster through
  • cooperation
  • working together
  • sharing
  • helping one another
Specific responses that signified community spirit

- *Nagburubligay* (helping each other)
- *Nagkamay-ada paghinatagay* (sharing resources – food, water, things)
- *Nagka-urusa an ngatanan para han kaupauyan han barangay* (becoming united and one for the good of the community)
- *Nagka-urusa an mga tawo nga magburublig tagsa-tagsa nga kay malampasan ang mga problema* (becoming united to help each other to cope with the problem)
- *Nagburubligay an mga mulopyo* (residents helped each other)
- *Mayda sarabot an tagsa-tagsa* (fostering understanding among the residents)
Factors seen in resilient people

• A strong social support system

• Successful copers tend to have a sense of control over the environment, “self-efficacy”

• They have the information and tools needed for effective problem-solving

• Successful copers tend to be CONFIDENT that they can adapt to new situation
How we can become more resilient in crisis settings?

• Get connected
  – Building strong, positive relationships with loved ones and friends can provide needed support and acceptance. Establish other important connections with fellow health workers or team members

• Make every day meaningful
  – Do something that gives you a sense of accomplishment and purpose every day. Set goals to help you look toward the future with meaning
How we can become more resilient in crisis settings?

• Learn from experience
  – Think back on how you've coped with hardships in the past. Consider the skills and strategies that helped you through rough times

• Remain hopeful
  – You can't change what's happened in the past, but you can always look toward the future. Accepting and even anticipating change makes it easier to adapt and view new challenges with less anxiety
How we can become more resilient in crisis settings?

• Take care of yourself
  – Tend to your own needs and feelings, both physically and emotionally.
  – Participate in activities and hobbies you enjoy.
  – Get plenty of sleep.
  – Eat a healthy diet.
  – To restore an inner sense of peace or calm, practice stress management and relaxation techniques, such as yoga, meditation, deep breathing or prayer.

• Be proactive
  – Don't ignore your problems or try to wish them away. Instead, figure out what needs to be done, make a plan and take action. Although it can take time to recover from traumatic event or loss, know that your situation can improve if you actively work at it.
When to seek professional advice?

Becoming more resilient takes time and practice. If you don't feel you're making progress or you don't know where to start consider talking to a mental health provider. With guidance, you can improve your resiliency and mental well-being.
Once we believe in ourselves, we can risk curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight, or any experience that reveals the human spirit.

- C.C. Cummings
Thank you!

Happy children with their broken Mickey Mouse
References

Bonanno,, et.al (2010). Weighing the Cost of Disaster: Consequences, Risks, and Resilience in Individuals, Families, and Communities. Psychological Science


