CLIMATE CHANGE and MENTAL HEALTH

Training module



Key messages

- Indian subcontinent is vulnerable to climate events and disasters with history of significant impact on humans.
- There is emerging evidence of impact of climate change on mental health
- Need to focus on early warning and response systems
- Nodal officers to play key role in the implementation



Outline

1.Climate change and mental health

2.Research and evidence

3.Interventions

4.Task for Nodal officers and DMHP program officers



Climate change

and

mental health in India





Climate change and Mental Health

- Extreme weather events—which are more frequent, intense, and complex under a changing climate—can trigger
 - Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
 - Major depressive disorder (MDD)
 - Anxiety
 - Complicated grief, survivor guilt, vicarious trauma, recovery fatigue
 - Substance abuse
 - Suicidal ideation



Heat Waves:

People with mental illness were three times more likely to run the risk of death from a heat wave than those without mental illness

Floods:

They bring mourning, displacement, and psychosocial stress due to loss of lives and belongings, as a direct outcome or of its consequences. All these are risk factors for PTSD, depression, and anxiety.

Drought: mental distress, anxiety, depression, and suicide

acute impacts (e.g. floods, hurricanes, wildfires, etc.)

• mental injuries to the immediately exposed undefended and helpless people

Subacute impacts

 indirectly witness the effects of climate change leading to anxiety related to uncertainty about surviving of humans, sense of being blocked, disorientation, and passivity.

Long-term outcomes

 social and community effects outbreaking into forms of violence, struggle over limited resources, displacement and forced migration post-disaster adjustment, and chronic environmental stress

Cianconi, P., Betrò, S., & Janiri, L. (2020). The Impact of Climate Change on Mental Health: A Systematic **Descriptive Review. Frontiers in psychiatry, 11, 74.**

Mental Health problems

Incremental climate changes

Rising temperatures, rising sea levels, and episodic drought, agricultural conditions

weaken infrastructure and give rise to financial and relationship stress, Displacement of entire community

increase risks of violence and aggression, relationship issues

causing despair and hopelessness, increase in rates of suicide, rise in substance use





Wu, J., Snell, G., & Samji, H. (2020). Climate anxiety in young people: a call to action. *The Lancet Planetary Health*, *4*(10), e435-e436.

- Referred to as eco-anxiety, climate distress or climate anxiety- anxiety related to the global climate crisis and the threat of environmental disaster.
- Symptoms associated with climate anxiety include
 - panic attacks
 - insomnia
 - obsessive thinking
- Feelings of climate distress might also *compound other daily stressors* to negatively affect overall mental health, potentially leading to increases in *stress-related problems* such as substance use disorders, anxiety disorders, and depression



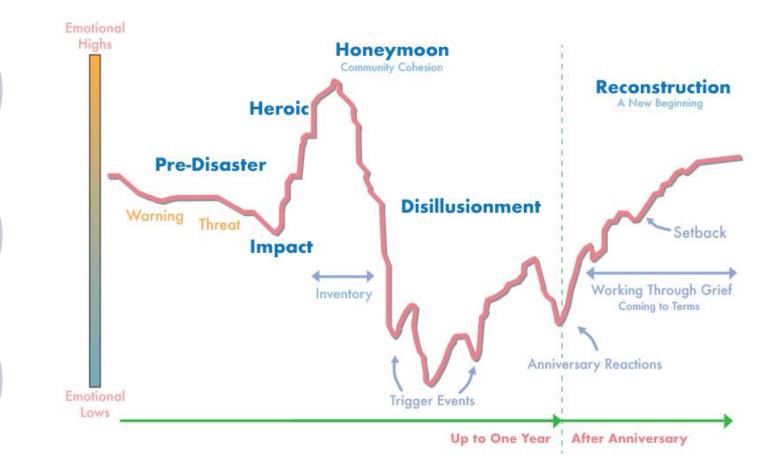
Disaster and Mental Health

Disaster: A severe disruption, ecological and psychosocial, which greatly exceeds the coping capacity of the affected community (*World Health Organization, 1992*)

<u>Characteristics :</u>

- Sudden onset
- Unpredictability
- Uncontrollability
- Huge magnitude of destruction
- Human loss and suffering and
- Greatly exceeding the coping capacity of the affected community

Phases after disaster





Phases

Phases after a disaster	Duration	Characteristics
Occurrence of the disaster	Hours	Apathy, Disorientation, wandering Surprise, Fear, perplexity Anxiety, Helplessness
Heroic	Up to 1-2 weeks	Strong, direct feeling Heroism, Solidarity, Optimism
Honeymoon	2 weeks to 3 to 6 months	Great solidarity, Eagerness to rebuild Sharing of common experience
Disillusionment	2months to 2 years	Withdrawal, loneliness Anger, frustration Community disorganization Negativity, Hostility Impulsiveness, violence Alcohol and drug abuse
Reconstruction	Alifetime	Acceptance of losses Realistic assessment of the situation Search for alternatives to rebuild lives



Human response to disaster

- Grief reactions are normal reactions in abnormal situations. Normal grief resolves over a period of few months
- Survivors guilt
- Fear of losing control on emotions
- Becoming mentally ill
- Substance use
- Death wishes and suicidal ideas
- Complicated grief

Abnormal grief reactions can be delayed, absent, oscillating grief responses.



PROLONGED REACTIONS

(In the rebuilding phase)

Loss of productivity "I am not able to study like before."



"I feel good when

I consume alcohol."

Increase in substance use



"My husband abuses me frequently. I can't stay



Somatization

"I often get headache. I have consulted the doctor many times. He says, I do not have any problems."

Emotional reactions

- Most people involved in a disaster event experiences emotional reaction.
- Everyone reacts to the same situation differently.
- These are NORMAL reactions in an ABNORMAL event.
- Emotions vary in each and every phases of disaster.
- Behaviours and thoughts are expected to be affected by the disaster.
- Relationships with friends and family may become strained as the survivor goes through this cycle of intense emotions.

What you can do?

- Give yourself time to experience these emotions.
- Communicate your experience.
- Ask for support from people who can empathize with your situation.
- Engage in healthy behaviours to enhance your ability to cope.
- Establish or re-establish routines.
- Avoid making major life decisions.
- Reach out for professional support.

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EMOTIONAL REACTIONS OF SURVIVORS



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Indian J Psychol Med. 2015 Apr-Jun; 37(2): 138–143. doi: <u>10.4103/0253-7176.155610</u> PMCID: PMC4418243 PMID: <u>25969596</u>

Psychiatric and Medical Disorders in the after Math of the Uttarakhand Disaster: Assessment, Approach, and Future Challenges

<u>Naveen Kumar Channaveerachari, Aneel Raj, Suvarna Joshi, Prajna Paramita, Revathi Somanathan,</u> <u>Dhanya Chandran, Sekar Kasi, N. Roopesh Bangalore, and Suresh Bada Math</u>¹

Uttarakhand Disaster 2013: A Report on Psychosocial Adversities Experienced by Children and Adolescents

Dhandapani Aneelraj¹, Channaveerachari Naveen Kumar², Revathi Somanathan³, Dhanya Chandran⁴, Suvarna Joshi⁴, Prajna Paramita³, Sekar Kasi³, Roopesh N Bangalore⁴, Suresh Bada Math¹



Psychiatric morbidity in December 2015 floodaffected population in Tamil Nadu, India

Shailaja Bandla¹, N R Nappinnai², Srinivasagopalan Gopalasamy²



<u>BMJ.</u> 2002 Feb 2; 324(7332): 259. doi: <u>10.1136/bmj.324.7332.259c</u> PMCID: PMC1122194 PMID: <u>11823352</u>

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Gujarat earthquake causes major mental health problems

Rohit Sharma

<u>BMC Psychiatry.</u> 2007; 7: 8. Published online 2007 Feb 14. doi: <u>10.1186/1471-244X-7-8</u> PMCID: PMC1808457 PMID: <u>17300713</u>

Post-traumatic stress disorder in children and adolescents one year after a super-cyclone in Orissa, India: exploring cross-cultural validity and vulnerability factors

Nilamadhab Kar,^{III} Prasanta K Mohapatra,² Kailash C Nayak,³ Pratiti Pattanaik,⁴ Sarada P Swain,⁵ and Harish C Kar^{6,7}

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder among the Flood Affected Population in Indian Subcontinent

Mohammad Asim,¹ Ahammed Mekkodathil,² Brijesh Sathian,¹ Rajesh Elayedath,³ Rajeev Kumar N,⁴ Padam Simkhada,⁵ and Edwin van Teijlingen⁶

Action plan for mental health problems sensitive to climate variability

• Embed climate change-mental health response strategies *within existing health delivery frameworks* and promote inter-agency sharing of intervention strategies, IEC materials etc

List of Stakeholders

- Psycho-social Support and Mental Health Services (PSSMHS) in Disasters [National Disaster Management Authority]
- District Mental Health Programme delivery structures
- Ayushman Bharat- Health and Wellness Centres

Action plan for mental health problems sensitive to climate variability

National Health Mission Elements

- Non-Communicable Disease Control Programmes especially National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS), and National Programme for the Health Care of Elderly" (NPHCE)
- Reproductive, Maternal, New-born, Child and Adolescent Health [RMNCH+A] –(developmental interventions for infants, children and adolescents)
- Rashtriya Bal SwasthyaKaryakram(RBSK)–(awareness, early detection and coping skills)
- Human Resource DevelopmentEducation department -School and College; NCERT (awareness, climate mitigation responses in curriculum)
- Directorate General Labour Welfare; National Skill Development (reskilling and employment)





Interventions

Universal interventions:

These interventions shall be a part of *promoting mental* wellbeing for the whole population.

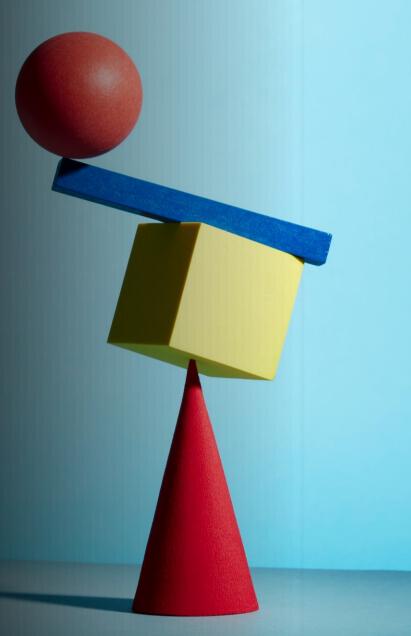
The interventions shall focus on sensitization, knowledge attitudes, practices and positive health strategies



Selective interventions

These interventions shall be a part of preventing occurrence of mental disorders among at risk population.

The interventions shall focus on *sensitization and building resilience* in addition to positive health strategies and well-being



Indicated interventions

These interventions shall be targeted for individuals suspected to have mental disorders among the said population.

The interventions shall include *screening-brief intervention* – referral for treatment using stepped care with special focus on CMDs (esp depression-anxiety), suicide/ violence, substance abuse, psychological well-being – *including pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatments*



Early warning

- This intervention includes surveillance and audit mechanisms and developing CC-MH Observatories.
- The Observatories shall be manned by the District Mental Health Program (DMHP) Team that shall deliver the essential services.
- The Program Officer of the DMHP shall conduct an audit half yearly on a list of indicators/parameters.



Candidate observatories

- These shall include the following as:
 - Disaster prone areas-Coastal Odisha/WB, Uttarakhand;
 - Areas facing desertification and rising sea levels
 - Existing mental health cohorts



Addressing special population during disaster

Children

Elderly

Persons with Disability

Marginalized population

CHILDREN IN DISASTER

Children experiences displacement, loss, death and destruction due to disaster that affects the disruption of their relationship and familiar environment. This leads to physical and emotional insecurity among them.



Events that bothers children in disaster

- Familiar environment become suddenly scary and unfamiliar.
- Living with the adults who are equally worried and concerned.
- Struggle to deal with unusual circumstances.
- Loss of own belongings, like toys, books, dresses and pet.
- Loss of loved one, parents, sibling, any other family members and friends.
- Continued threat to the sense of well-being.

IMPACT OF DISASTER ON CHILDREN

Pre-school (1–5 years)

- Temper tantrums
- Crying whimpering or screaming
- Clinging
- Regressive behavior
- Easily frightened/ angry
- Sleep disturbances

School Age (6–11 years)

- Aggressive
- Bed-wetting
- Change in appetite
- Nightmares
- Sadness and apathy
- Disobedience

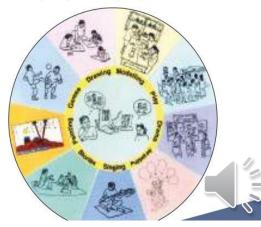
Adolescence (12–18 years)

- Isolation/Depression
- Irritability
- Risk-taking behavior
- Substance abuse

MEDIUMS TO WORK WITH CHILDREN

Children can be aided in recovery through the use of various mediums suiting their age group. They are :

- Facial expression cards
- Thematic card
- Clay modelling
- Drawing
- Family of dolls
- Family portrait
- Writing
- Children use play to express themselves.
- Effective use of the materials can help children to act out feelings.
- Children not only express themselves but also learn a lot of new things while playing.
- While playing or drawing, they express their frustration, fear, tension, anger and insecurities.







REFERRAL REQUIREMENT FOR CHILDREN

- Conduct problems
- Overactive
- Somatization
- Post- traumatic stress disorder
- Depression
- Substance abuse

Referral is required if



- No indication of the reactions becoming less.
- Increase in severity.
- It is distressing to the family or the child.
- Interferes with the daily routine of the child.
- Interferes with interaction with others like friends or relatives.
- Interrupts work or school.

ROLE OF PSYCHOSOCIAL CAREGIVER

- Reassure children that they are safe.
- Provide opportunities for the children to talk about their fears.
- Share how various people are coping and overcoming this event.
- Do not stress too much on academic achievement immediately after the disaster.
- Reassure children that the event was not because of their fault.
- Do not criticize regressive behaviours that children might display.
- Use play, art and other creative mediums along with discussions to reach out to children.
- Encourage children to develop coping and problem-solving skills to handle anxiety.
- Identify children who needs extra help to cope and refer them to a specialist.
- Let them know that it is normal to feel upset after something bad happens and allow them to cry and express their feelings.

CHILDREN IN DISASTER



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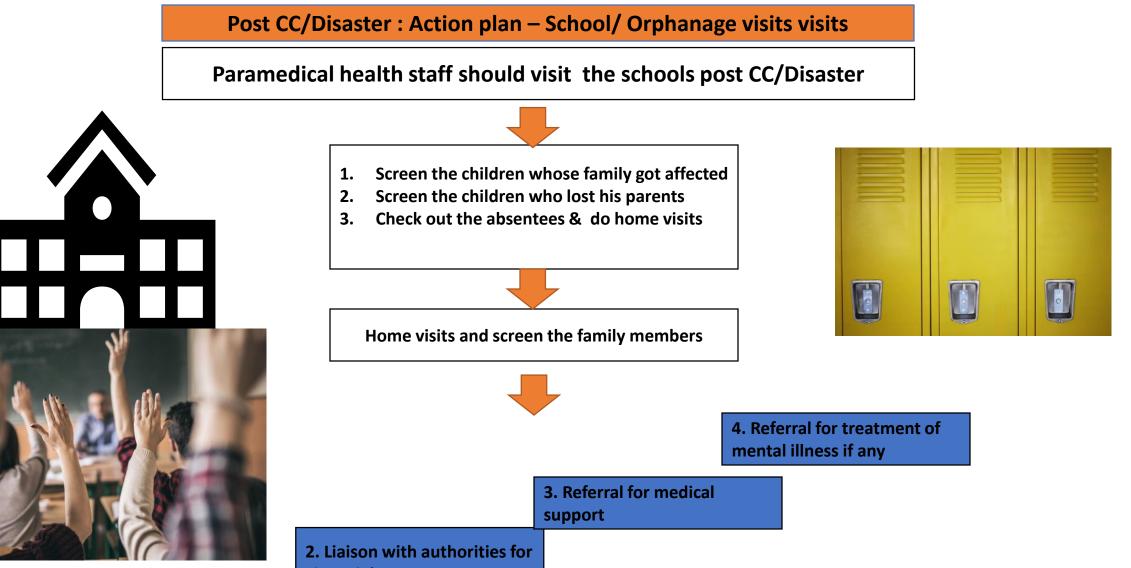


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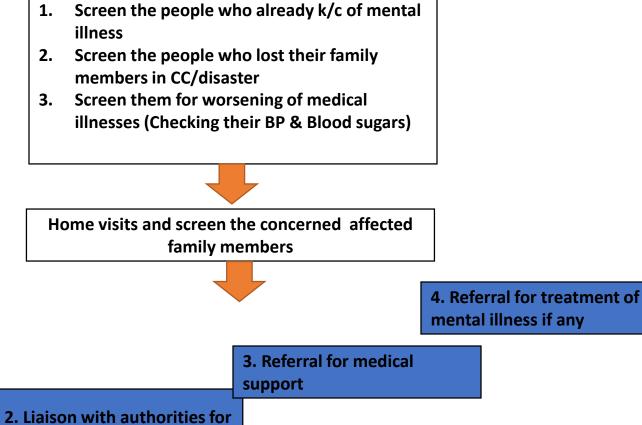
Financial support

Post CC/Disaster : Action plan – Old age home visits

Paramedical health staff should visit the old age homes in the allocated premises - post CC/Disaster







Financial support

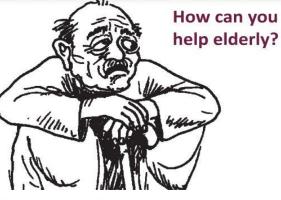
1. Psychosocial support

Elderly in Disaster

Following a natural disaster, elderly is considered as vulnerable population in the same way as children. Like children, the frail elderly is often unable to advocate for their own interests because of physical impairments, cognitive limitations, or a combination of both.

Elderly at high risk because they are

- Less mobile .
- Separated from families.
- Decreased sensory awareness.
- Prone to illness and injuries.
- Chronic medical conditions.
- Having less access to medication.
- Cut off from services.
- Socioeconomic limitations.
- Suffering from psychological distress.
- Have specific nutritional and health needs.
- Prone to risk, abuse and neglect.
- Physical disabilities.
- Having weak functional capacity.
- Increased dependency.
- Social isolation.



- Keep a list of medications.
- Connect to required resources and services.
- If available, keep them with loved ones.
- Link with access to health care.
- Listen to their experience and leadership roles taken in emergencies.
- Consider older people's knowledge and experience in developing coping strategies following disaster.
- Create neighbourhood communities of elderly.
- Talk to medical provider about an emergency back-up plan.
- Create a list of special needs.
- Consider them as valuable resources to provide emotional support to other disaster victims.

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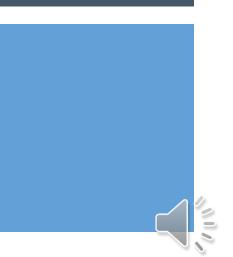
IEC-10 Person with Disablity **Elderly in Disaster**

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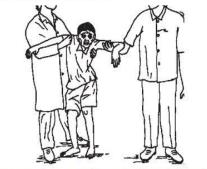


Person with Disabilities in Disaster

Disasters can have an impact on disability, by disproportionately affecting persons with existing disabilities and by creating a new generation of persons with disabilities.

Consequences of a disaster Survivors with existing disabilities

- In comparison to a non-disabled peer, they are at more risk.
- Losing of assistive devices.
- Difficulty in accessing basic needs.
- Dependency increases.



Survivors with newly acquired disabilities

- Loss of livelihood.
- Untreated fractures & infected wounds leading to long lasting disabilities.
- Referral to appropriate health facilities gets delayed.
- Scarcity of rehabilitation personnel & infrastructure to cater the needs.

The types of disabilities as per the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

- 1. Blindness
- 2. Low-vision
- 3. Leprosy Cured persons
- 4. Hearing Impairment
- 5. Locomotor Disability
- 6. Dwarfism
- 7. Intellectual Disability
- 8. Mental Illness
- 9. Autism Spectrum Disorder
- 10. Cerebral Palsy
- 11. Muscular Dystrophy
- 12. Chronic Neurological conditions
- 13. Specific Learning Disabilities
- 14. Multiple Sclerosis
- 15. Speech and Language disability
- 16. Thalassemia
- 17. Hemophilia
- 18. Sickle Cell disease
- 19. Multiple Disabilities including deaf-blindness
- 20. Acid Attack victim
- 21. Parkinson's disease



The acute phase

- Identify persons with existing disabilities and connect them with temporary shelters.
- Referral to specific health care needs.
- Identify the people with injuries and provide trauma care services.
- Implement curative and therapeutic interventions.
- Connect with service agencies.
- Provide multidisciplinary care.

The reconstruction phase

- Identification of the exiting capacities and skills.
- Assessing the immediate and long-term needs.
- Mobilise community resources.
- Initiate community-based rehabilitation services.
- Provide medical services & therapies if requireq?
- Attending to the social needs.

MIGRANTS

Migrants may be less familiar with the new environment in which they live. They may not speak the dominant language causing a barrier in the interaction with others. This may further increase their vulnerability in seeking help when a disaster strike.



They can be helped in the following ways:-

- Their skills and capacities should be recognised and utilised, including their social networks and experiences in dealing with disasters.
- Awareness programmes about the hazard, risk and vulnerability should be prepared and designed specifically for non-native speakers, through community outreach, written and oral translation.
- Positive communication should be promoted to improve the inter-community relationships.

SEXUAL MINORITY

This group differs from the other on their sexual identity, orientation or practices from the majority of the surrounding society. The needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people following disasters, exacerbate existing vulnerabilities especially in places where equal rights and protections for LGBTI people are absent.



They can be helped in the following ways:-

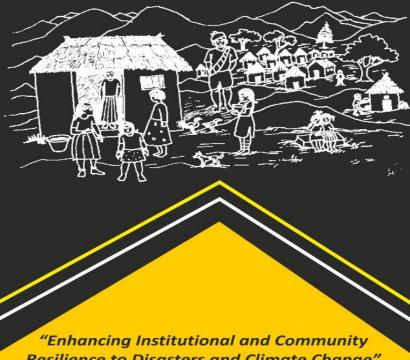
- Make sure that same sex couples are sent to evacuation zones and their rights are being protected.
- LGBTI people with children should be given special attention as there are high chance of exclusion.
- Facilitate government and other forms of aid and recovery assistance.

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Dealing with Marginalised Groups

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With Family

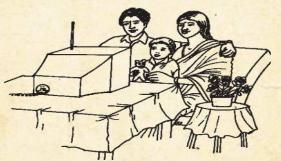
Evaluate your lifestyle- As a parent, it's important to model healthy behaviours for your children.

Talk about it- If you notice that your children are looking worried or stressed, ask them what's on their minds.

Create a healthy environment- Your home, work space and even social environment can influence your behaviours.

Focus on yourself- When you and your family are experiencing stress, make a conscious decision to take care of yourselves.

Spend time together- Spend time with family over a good meal, or shopping.



Change your reaction- Remember that while you can't control stress, you can change your reaction to it.

Replace- Replace each negative thought with a positive one.

Create happy memories- Look back through pictures of happy memories - family vacations and special events.

With Colleagues

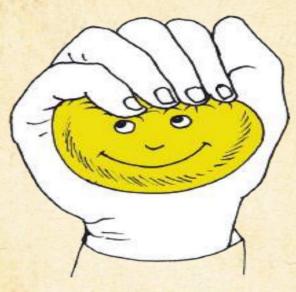
- Listen to each other's feelings.
- Do not take anger too personally.
- Avoid criticism unless necessary.
- Give each other comfort and care.
- Encourage and support co-workers.
- Reach out to others when you are feeling low.
- Support others if they are down.
- Check for fatigue and stress symptoms.
- Take a break when required.
- Develop a buddy system with a co-worker.



"Stress is Inevitable Self-care is your responsibility Mental health is a priority Choice is yours"

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SELF CARE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN DISASTER



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Stress

It is a normal physical response to events that make you feel threatened or upset your balance in some way. They are of two types.

1. Eustress / Positive stress

When stress is good and leads to something desirable such as receiving a good grade on the exam or receiving a promotion at work, it is called eustress.

2. Distress/ Negative stress

When the stress has negative effects such as confusion, an inability to make decisions, and illness, it is called distress.

Stress Warning Signs and Symptoms

Stress isn't always bad. In small doses, it can help you perform under pressure and motivate you to do your best. But when you're constantly working in disaster situations, your mind and body becomes weakened. You can protect yourself by recognizing the signs and symptoms of stress and taking steps to reduce its harmful effects.

Physical Symptoms	Behavioural Symp
Aches and pains Diarrhea/ constipation Chest pain/ rapid heartbeat Nausea/dizziness	Eating more or less Substance use Procrastination Isolating yourself
Cognitive Symptoms	Emotional symp
Memory problems	Moodiness Irritability or short to

Anxious Constant worrying

ptoms

toms

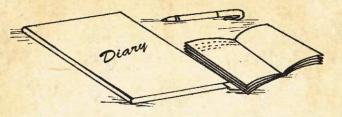
temper linability to relax Sense of loneliness

Why self- care is important for caregivers?

- Working with the survivors of disaster can be stressful.
- Care givers are equally vulnerable.
- Stress can cause an internal tension.
- It takes toll on one's body.
- Working with the survivors of disaster needs physical and emotional well-being.
- Sustain one's ability to serve the survivors of disaster.
- Care giver's need to do take preventive actions to enable one self to cope with stresses.
- It is important for care givers to practice selfcare.



Things to do for oneself



- Keep a diary of your activities and experiences.
- Do physical exercise daily.
- Spare enough time for rest.
- Listen to music, read books, watch television every day.
- Practice relaxation techniques like meditation and breathing exercises.
- Relax through pleasant visual imagery.
- Stay in touch with your family.
- Share your thoughts and feelings with others.
- Identify one day in the week for your personal work and relaxation.



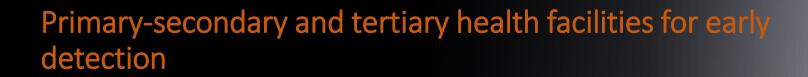


Task for Nodal officers of each state

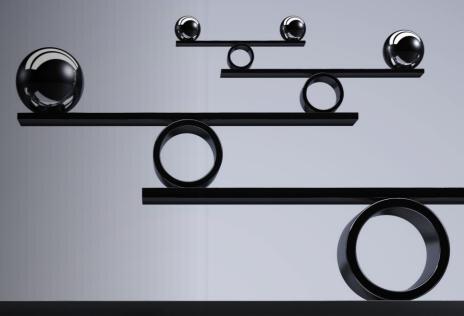
IDENTIFY

- Identify climate sensitive zones in state, ie. areas where

 a] repeated extreme weather events occur
 b] Incremental climate changes are occurring
- Identify and create linkages between existing (mental) health care delivery facilities at primary-secondarytertiary levels, which can be potentially used to form a stepped care network – especially from catchments in climate sensitive zones



- brief or early intervention –and referral for treatment if necessary.
- Early detection should occur via screening for common mental disorders (depression-anxiety– suicide/self-harm) -post traumatic stress disorders – alcohol and substance use disorders during while consulting for trauma, NCD etc.



Agencies capable of raising awareness and sensitisation especially to at-risk groups

- Identify personnel available for mental health interventions – both trained mental health professionals and trainable personnel (for potential task shifting and skilling)
- Arrange Training of trainers (local mental health professionals and regional experts)





Focus training on

- **Positive Mental Health Strategies** Enhancing wellbeing and resilience, enhancing community engagement
- Stress Reduction and Yoga techniques- Brief stress reduction /management interventions for vulnerable population/those at risk
- Life skills education: Dealing with Anger-Sadness-Boredom-Anxiety; Conflict resolution and Problem solving

- Psychological First Aid- Brief modules for individuals in distress(experiencing depressive/anxiety symptoms); Deliberate self-harm – suicide and violence
- Alcohol and substance misuse
- Mitigating Climate Change at personal and local levels Psychological adaptation
- Therapeutic skills training how to help another



Audit

- The Program Officer of the DMHP shall conduct an audit half yearly on the indicators/parameters to fulfil the following 2 major aims:
 - Patterns and trends of mental health in different climate sensitive zones and following climate events; risk and resilience factors
 - Working of the stepped care network and sensitisation efforts



Essential Indicators/parameters & Surveillance Measures

- Number of human resources available at the Observatory
- Availability of funds for Climatic Change-Mental Health at the Observatory where the program is being implemented.
- Number of Training programs conducted for each category of human resources
- Infrastructure availability @ the Observatory
 - Psychologists' instruments
 - ECG machines, Pulse-oximeter
 - Alcohol breath analysers
- Number of IEC activities/Community awareness activities conducted



- Targeted interventions activities
 - Life skills education/suicide prevention/stress management trainings to teachers
 - Counselling
- Availability of essential psychiatric drugs
- Exclusive vehicle hired for community activities, travel, monitoring
- Display of the services, norms or standards of the Observatory

- Display of the rights of PWMI
- Display of the Grievance redressal contact numbers

 Number of cases of long standing (>1yr duration) illnesses who had previously not been in contact with health services and now in contact with services.

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- Total number of cases seen in a month stratified by categorizes such as age, gender, major diagnostic categories etc
- Evaluation by the users of health services for the quality of care (for example, adequacy of the time spent, satisfaction etc)
- Number of planned and surprise reviews by DMHP teams
- Concurrent audit



- Number of meetings of user and care giver groups held at health facilities
- Budget utilization
- Number of self-help groups and advocacy initiatives launched
- Increase in OPD registrations to show higher help seeking behaviours.
- Estimated coverage of care for mental disorders based on expected number of cases and the number identified
- Types of intervention referred to each case
 - Medications
 - Psychosocial interventions
- Number/population of Homeless Mentally III who access DMHP
- Number of other disadvantaged patients accessing DMHP



Number/proportion of persons from different economic states and gender who are diagnosed with and treated

- Number of referrals to higher centers
- Number of patients with mental illnesses receiving continuing care services (day care, home based rehab, short stay residential continuing care services)
- Number of women attending Observatory (including referral from the RCH program)
- Number of children receiving services
- Number with Alcohol Use Disorders receiving services
- Number with other Substance Use Disorders receiving services
- How many availed Disability certifications?
- How many availed Disability certification allowance?
- Number of suicides
- Number of persons with mental illnesses who have had dropped out of care



Learning

- Indian subcontinent is vulnerable to climate events and disasters with history of significant impact on humans.
- There is emerging evidence of impact of climate change on mental health
- Need to focus on early warning and response systems
- Nodal officers to play key role in the implementation



THANK YOU