

Basic Disaster First Aid Other Concerns

Todd Miner

University of Colorado School of Medicine
Wilderness & Environmental Medicine Section

Goals

- List at risk populations
- Recognize disaster-caused stress and resulting mental health impacts
- Describe ways to deal with disaster-caused stress and mental health impacts in oneself
- Describe techniques to reduce the impact of disaster-caused stress and mental health impacts in others

Other Concerns

At Risk Populations

Stress and Mental Health

At Risk Populations

- Examples

 - Elderly

 - Disabled

 - Poor

 - Homeless

- Think about at risk populations and where they live/are before disaster strikes

- Check in on them ASAP after a disaster strikes

Stress and Mental Health

Disasters cause mental health injuries as well as physical health injuries

Be aware of stress and mental well-being in yourself, fellow care-givers, and patients

Stress and Mental Health - Yourself

- Try to take good care of yourself – take breaks, get plenty of sleep, drink and eat as well as possible, stay in touch with friends/family
- Recognize that the response will be stressful and that you can only do so much
- Talk with friends and family; don't be afraid to reach out for professional help
- Remember that scene safety trumps everything; you can't help others if you are hurt

Stress and Mental Health - Others

- Use a buddy system and keep an eye on fellow rescuers, particular their stress levels
- Remember that disaster survivors may have mental health issues as well as physical injuries
- Consider taking a Psychological First Aid class

Stress and Mental Health - Others

- Promote a calm environment and address stresses that can be modified
- Communicating information about disasters to reduce fear and promote calm may reduce psychological distress
- Help survivors return to pre-disaster routines
- Helping survivors with social needs (connecting to family/friends) in immediate aftermath of a disaster super important