

Factors Associated with Recovery and Resilience After a Wildfire: Rural Families' Experiences



Dr. Rita Burke, University of Southern California

Dr. Santina Contreras, University of Southern California

Amber Anderson, University of Southern California

Abigail Yeager, Happy Camp Community Action

Jasmine Borgatti, RISE Collaborative



Project Overview



Purpose

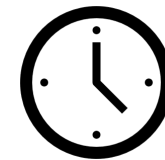
This study aims to better understand what factors in rural communities serve as **barriers to recovery** and which **contribute to resilience** with regards to wildfires



Research Site

Happy Camp, California

Rural community nearing their fourth year of recovery from the Slater Fire of 2020



Timeline

November 2023 -
July 2024



Research Questions

1. What are the drivers to recovery and resilience in the children and families that survived the Slater Fire in a small rural community?
2. What are the barriers to recovery and resilience in the children and families that survived the Slater Fire in a small rural community?
3. What is the role that schools and other community based infrastructure have in the recovery from the Slater Fire recovery?

Methods

Mixed method data collection

- Focus Groups
- 1-on-1 interviews
- Pre-interview questionnaires

Participants were recruited by community partners from the following three groups

- Adults residing in Happy Camp
- Key recovery informants
- Children residing in Happy Camp

Date of Focus Group	Number of Participants*	N (%) female	Average age (SD)
2/28/24	6	4 (66.7%)	43 (7.8)
2/29/24	3	2 (66.6%)	35.5* (17.7)

**Missing data in this category for one participant*

***No demographics were collected for children participating*

Preliminary Findings

The needs of rural families in disaster recovery

“I describe my connection to Happy Camp sort of like gravity, like a pull. Like, it feels like it pulls you back. It's hard to leave and stay left. Even if you're not living here your heart is still here. So that's really that's how I would describe it, like gravity.” - Happy Camp resident

- Rural culture needs to be understood to effectively support communities in recovery
- Local community partners were integral in recovery efforts

Preliminary Findings

The needs of children in disaster recover

“[Going back to school was] kind of horrible because you have to do math while it's all smoke outside and you can't go outside and there's houses that were burned down you just had to sit there in a desk doing math” - Happy Camp resident, child

- Post-disaster behaviors were observed in some children
- Children are still processing their experience when they get back to the classroom

Preliminary Findings

The role of schools in rural disaster recovery

“No offense to anybody in the school systems, but our schools don’t have support at all whatsoever”- Happy Camp Resident

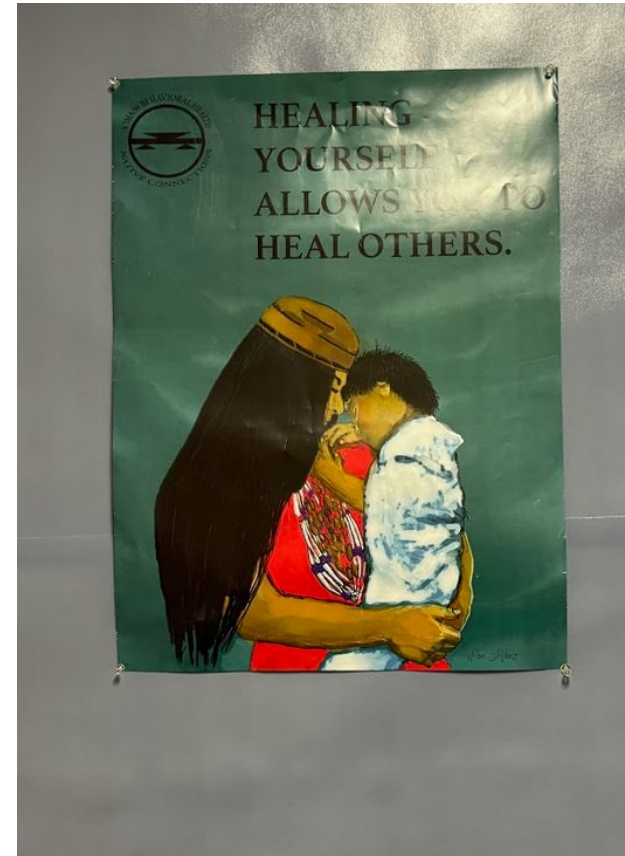
“That’s what the principal of the elementary school is doing right now...living on school grounds”-Happy Camp Resident

- Schools need adequate support and funding prior to disasters to contribute to community resilience
- Lack of housing was a barrier to recruiting needed staff
- School personnel needs support and recovery time

Rural communities need to be addressed with cultural competency

Public Health Implication

1



Supporting rural community resources can build resilience



Public Health Implication

2

Children may need support at school to process their experience



Public Health Implication

3

Acknowledgements



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Public Health Disaster Research Award Webinar:
Call 4 and Continuation Call 2:
August 1, 2024

