

We Are Each Other's Medicine: Community Health, Healing and Hope

Vibrant Disaster Behavioral Health Symposium:
The Power of Community and Connection in Disaster Behavioral Health
May 25, 2023
Washington, DC

Learning Objectives

- Name at least two examples of the mental health consequences of mass shootings.
- Discuss at least two ways cumulative trauma contributes to depression.
- List at least 3 out of the five elements that maximize mental health in the aftermath of disasters.

Syndemic

- Two epidemics occurring simultaneously
- The confluence of racial injustice and COVID-19

Shim R, Starks S: Covid-19, structural racism, and mental health inequities: policy implications for an emerging syndemic. *Psychiatric Services*. 72:10 (1193-1198), October 2021

Mass Shootings and Mental Health Consequences

- Associated with a variety of adverse psychological outcomes in survivors and members of affected communities.
- Short-term increases in fear and declines in perceived safety.
- Risk factors for adverse psychological outcomes include female gender, psychological symptoms prior to the incident, greater proximity to the attack, and acquaintance with the deceased.
- Having good emotional regulation and more social support is predictive of a positive psychological outcome

Impact of Structural Racism and Cumulative Trauma on Depression

- Structural racism and cumulative trauma have been shown to be fundamental drivers of the intergenerational transmission of depression.
- Exposure to hate crimes, parental incarceration, and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are examples of cumulative trauma.
- Creating an equitable mental health care system is protective.

Hankerson S, Moise N, Wilson D et al: The intergenerational impact of structural racism and cumulative trauma on depression. *American Journal of Psychiatry* 179:6(434-440) June 2022.

Maximizing Mental Health After Disasters

- Calm
- Safety
- Self-efficacy and collective efficacy
- Connectedness
- Hope

Hobfoll SE, Watson PE, Bell CC, et al: Five essential elements of immediate and mid-term mass trauma intervention: empirical evidence. *Psychiatry* 70(4):283-315, 2007

Including Communities in the Healing Process after Crises

- Local knowledge is key in developing culturally acceptable initiatives.
- Nothing about us without us.
- Community members are aware of historical factors that may have a bearing on strategies.

Brandow C, Swarbick M: Improving Black Mental Health: A Collective Call to Action. Psychiatric Services, June 2022, 73(6):697-700

Collaboration in Response to the Buffalo Massacre

All Healers Mental Health Alliance, Rev. Dr. Willard Ashley and Dr. Annelle Primm

Buffalo Association of Black Social Workers, Dior Lindsey

Community Healing Network, Jan Berger

Department of Homeland Security, Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, Nicole Wood

R Healing, Inc., Buffalo, NY, Afiya Rice

The Association of Black Psychologists, Inc., Dr. Donell Barnett

Outline of Panel Presentation: Timeline of Response to Buffalo Crisis (1)

- Buffalo before the massacre
- Buffalo in the aftermath of the massacre on May 14, 2022
- CHN Emotional Emancipation Circle provided May 15, 2022
- Convenings of Black mental health organizations and offering of healing circles
- Connection with DHS Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships
- Discussions with Buffalo Pastors and other national faith leaders
- Sawubona Healing Circles

Outline of Panel Presentation: Timeline of Response to Buffalo Crisis (2)

- Leading while bleeding
- The importance of healing circles
- Faith community and mental health community collaboration
- White House and Federal agency ongoing involvement
- A Day of Togetherness, May 14, 2023
- Challenges and opportunities for community mental health
- Lessons learned from the community
- Takeaways