Disasters: Social Work Interventions

RSSW 731/15556 Katharine Briar-Lawson
Fall 2006 Office hours: By appointment
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Course Description
This course will promote knowledge and multi modal skill development in social work practice in disaster related work. Students will acquire skills in community mobilization, collaborative practices, and support group facilitation. Special attention will be paid to evidence based crisis and trauma responses, and efficacy concerns surrounding critical incident debriefing. Recovery strategies and treatment technologies will be presented. Students will be expected to demonstrate skill acquisition through simulations and community based service plans.

Learning Goals:

1) Students will become knowledgeable about the evidence base for differential responses to varying types of disasters, especially focusing on clinical interventions.
2) Students will be able to differentiate among the similarities and differences involving natural, technological and politically and socially induced disasters.
3) Students will become conversant about theoretical and empirical sources that inform social work practices in disasters.
4) Students will be able to describe the type of trauma, stresses and phases of recovery involved with disasters.
5) Students will demonstrate analytical skills and cultural competency in discerning appropriate interventions, given different kinds of events and their effects, especially trauma related.
6) Student will become cognizant of the social justice dimension of disaster work, examining the vulnerabilities of the most disenfranchised and marginalized populations.
7) Students will demonstrate skills in trauma mitigation in group based simulations.
8) Students will become knowledgeable about cross-cultural and cross-national disaster work.
Assignments and Grading:

1) Class participation -20%

2) Students will prepare a research informed term paper that compiles the evidence for approaches and interventions given a certain kind of disaster. It is expected that a minimum of 10 articles will be reviewed. Based on the review of findings and a critique, students will then propose some improved approach, along with relevant research including a demonstration project. Papers should be limited to 12 pages. Papers are due the 12th week of the semester- 40%

3) Students will develop a skill/ experiential strategy to demonstrate new ways to handle some phase of a disaster. This skill based simulation can include group based trauma mitigation. Students may undertake a service learning project or to do a video or a role play that demonstrates new skills, approaches, and knowledge applications.-40%

Textbooks


*Required readings  PASSWORD: LAWS731

Sept. 7 Week I.
Disasters: definitions scope, nature, and classification systems
Phase specific interventions; disasters and catastrophes
Social work and the evidence base for interventions

Sept. 14 Week II.

Populations affected:
Discerning impacts based on type of disaster, post disaster environment


Sept. 21, 28,  Weeks III-IV

Services and models

Disasters and sequelae


Oct. 5th no class, re-scheduled for Oct. 19th

Oct. 12 & 19th, weeks VI and VII

Stress and coping, acute stress, trauma, PTSD

Critical incident debriefing; stress management, secondary trauma: introduction to essential skills


Oct. 26, Week VIII

Peer services, support groups, recovery


Nov. 2, Week IX
Emergency preparedness:
Terrorism, WMD


Browse:
PrepareNow.Org
FEMA:Preparedness Guides and Links
SAMSHA Training Manual
American Red Cross

Nov. 9, Week X
Capacity building for disaster work
Lesson drawing

Itzhaky, H., & York, A. S. The Role of the Social Worker on the Face of Terrorism: Israeli Community-Based Experience. Social Work

Nov. 16, ` Week XI
Changing policies, practices and attitudes
Media issues
Site Visit to American Red Cross
33 Everett Road, Albany, New York 12205


Nov. 23, Week XII - No Class

Nov 30, Week XIII
Models for the future; globally, nationally, locally
Cross cultural, cross-national


Dec. 7, Week XIII
Student presentations, Videos