Crisis Leadership Seminar

Race, Class, and Disasters
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Learning Objectives

- Discuss the policy development process for representative emergency preparedness participation
- Recognize the value of networking and group processing skills
- Appreciate the value of input from diverse populations in the plan development process
- Use culturally appropriate community engagement and empowerment concepts with diverse communities
- Identify expected and unexpected human behavior during a crisis
Learning Objectives

- Articulate the outcomes related to emergency preparedness training
- Incorporate training strategies responsive to cultural values, traditions and needs of the diverse communities
- Understand the needs of diverse populations affected by emergencies
- Establish and maintain collaborative relationship with diverse populations in developing systems responses
- Enhance understanding of human behavior during a crisis and recovery
Agenda Topics

- Social Factors in Emergency Preparedness
- Community Engagement
- Understanding Diverse Populations
Policy Impact on Disaster Preparedness

- Preparedness and response activities take place within particular governmental systems and are shaped by larger cultural, economic, and political forces.

- Disaster policies have been altered in recent years by major changes in the broader intergovernmental system.
These changes have consolidated some functions at the federal level, but also have given more autonomy to states and local governments.

FEMA was formed in 1979 in an effort to overcome the fragmentation with disaster management policy and programs.

How has this worked? Think about Katrina.
The US policy system assigns local government the primary responsibility for emergency management, but this has many drawbacks.

Community emergency management networks vary. Local governments have less resources, and disaster-related issues must compete with other concerns that are much higher on a local community’s agenda.
Two factors affect disaster preparedness activities:

- Responsibility for different aspects of the disaster problem is diffused among agencies at different governmental levels.
- Authority relationships among agencies are weak, which impede implementation and lessens accountability.
What do You Think?

Let’s discuss the value of networking and building capacity among agencies on a local level to address barriers.
Social Factors in Emergency Preparedness

- Race and ethnic differences influence a wide range of perceptions and behaviors, including threat perception, concerns about disasters, and attitudes towards the agencies disseminating information on preparedness.
Social Factors (Continued)

- It is important to note that the degree of credibility given to information sources varies, as does the nature and extent of involvement of diverse populations in the disaster preparedness process.
Social Factors (Continued)

- Race/ethnicity
- Socio-economic factors
- Language differences
- Social networks/inter-organizational linkages
- Lack of knowledge/awareness
Social Factors (Continued)

- Ethnic groups differ from the majority population and from one another in the nature and extent of their social networks, their access to information, and their political and economic resources.
Social Factors (Continued)

Disaster preparedness and response activities vary based on:

- Perceptions of disasters
- Disaster experience
- Socio-cultural factors (ethnicity, language)
- Social networks
- Inter-organizational linkages
- Economic resources
Social Factors (Continued)

- Access to preparedness information
- Degree of credibility given to information received
- Ability to protect themselves
- Level of resources
- Communication with authorities
- Impact of immigration issues
What Do You Think?

Let’s discuss strategies to address some of the concerns previously discussed.
Social Factors (Continued)

- Most people respond to disasters as a community, but social patterns of behavior and conduct may become eroded as an “each for himself” mentality sets in during and after a disaster.

- Disasters may cause people to be displaced. As food becomes scarce, families break up.
Social Factors (Continued)

- As food shortages become severe, it is difficult for families to hold together as a group, causing the social fabric of communities to disintegrate.
Community Engagement

- Must develop plans to incorporate cultural beliefs and practices into how people respond during and after a crisis.
- People of diverse racial and ethnic groups face substantial barriers when accessing services (language, communication, fear, etc.)
- Must work in cooperation with internal supports and helping networks within culturally diverse communities
Strategies for Community Participation

Community motivation:

- Organize informal meetings and events to improve the relationships between citizens and their local, regional, and national public officials
- Build the community’s pride by broadcasting their achievements related to disaster preparedness through local media
- Involve diverse populations in planning
- Train volunteers and other groups on emergency preparedness
Creating a Support Network

Social attachments and relationships are key in disaster preparedness. Considerations include:

- Sense of neighborhood
- Participation in Community Organizations
- Presence of family and relatives
Support Network (Continued)

- Social ties are key in determining where people go during a disaster (relatives, friends, faith-based organizations, etc.)
Building local emergency response capacity involves:

- Maintaining frequent inter-departmental and inter-organizational communication
- Establishing councils, boards, etc.
- Mutual aid networks
- Community-wide disaster exercises
Understanding Diverse Populations

- Cultural competence is defined as a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals that enable them to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.
Diverse Populations (Continued)

A culturally competency system acknowledges and incorporates the following:

- Valuing diversity
- Cultural self assessment
- Vigilance toward the dynamics that result from cultural differences
Diverse Populations (Continued)

- Expansion of cultural knowledge; and
- Adaptation of services to meet culturally-unique needs.
Diverse Populations (Continued)

Culture factors may influence the way individuals:

- Define and evaluate their problems
- Seek help for their problems
- Present their problems
- Respond to intervention plans
Diverse Populations (Continued)

Linguistic Competence is an aspect of cultural competence, which addresses the language proficiency of persons served.

The following should be considered:
Diverse Populations (Continued)

- Need to have access to bi-lingual staff or qualified interpreters and translators;
- Language needs and preferences of persons should be monitored to address needs of diverse populations;
- Literacy levels of persons served must be addressed; and
- Linguistic competency requires organizations to respond effectively to the health literacy needs of populations served.
Insight and Actions

- Describe at least one insight and actions that you plan to implement based on what you have gained from this discussion.