



COPING WITH DISASTERS

Behavioral Health Tips for Handling Tragic Events



OFFICE OF DISASTER SERVICES





WHAT WE DO

- **Plan, prepare and drill DMH on handling disruptive events:**
 - Hazardous weather and natural disasters
 - Technology failures and utility disruptions
 - Damage to facilities
 - Loss of key suppliers
 - Impact to workforce
 - Workplace violence and other human caused events
- **Work with partner public/private agencies to prepare the state:**
 - State: SEMA, DHSS ASPR/PHEP, DOC, Coalition, Gov's Partnership
 - Federal: HHS/SAMHSA, DHS/FEMA, ARC



WHAT WE DO (CONT.)

- **Trainings, Exercises and Technical Assistance**
 - Educate and prepare the Community to handle disruptive events:
 - First on Scene; CPR and first aid
 - Psychological First Aid
 - Skills for Psychological Recovery

We'll discuss these trainings more when we explore resources at the final session of Ambassadors Academy.

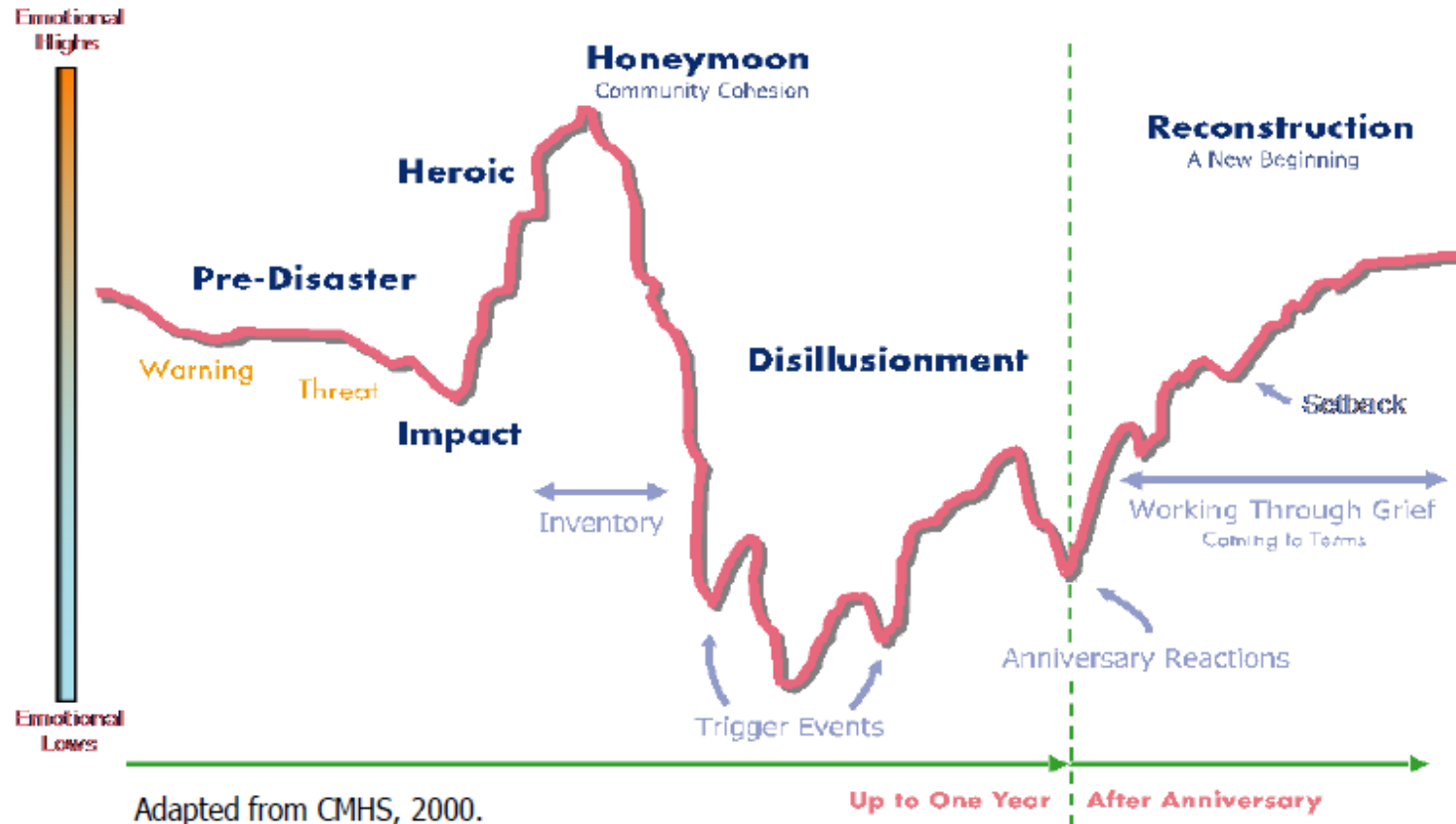


TEAM EXPERIENCE:

- **Floods of '93, 15, 17**
- **Columbine High School Shooting**
- **9/11**
- **Hurricanes: Bob, Floyd, Katrina**
- **Tornados: Joplin, Good Friday, Pierce City**
- **Bird Point Levee**
- **Death of Michael Brown in Ferguson**
- **The Great Recession of 2008**
- **Super Storm Sandy**
- **Arab Spring**
- **Stockley Verdict**
- **Branson Duck Boat Tragedy**

Psychological Reactions to Disaster

Collective Reactions Typical phases of disaster:



Community Reactions



INDIVIDUAL DISASTER RESPONSES

- **Disasters and Trauma**

- **Natural Disaster vs. Human Caused**
- **Degree of personal impact**
- **Size and scope**
- **Visible impact**
- **Probability of recurrence**
- **Media Coverage**

- **Common reactions:**

- **Feeling overwhelmed**
- **Sleep disturbances**
- **Recurring images of the event**
- **Anger**
- **Withdrawal**
- **Depression**
- **Crying**
- **Fatigue**
- **Headaches**
- **Appetite: increase or decrease**
- **Children may regress**
- **Irritability**



COPING TIPS

- **Seek support**
- **Help others by sharing thoughts and checking on them.**
- **Make use of available community services.**
- **Everything in moderation.**
- **Healthy routines are important for recovery.**
- **Self-Care**
- **EAP**
- **Exercise and relaxation**
- **Keep a journal.**
- **Structure your time**
- **Daily schedule/Routine**
- **Time/Patience**



WHEN TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE

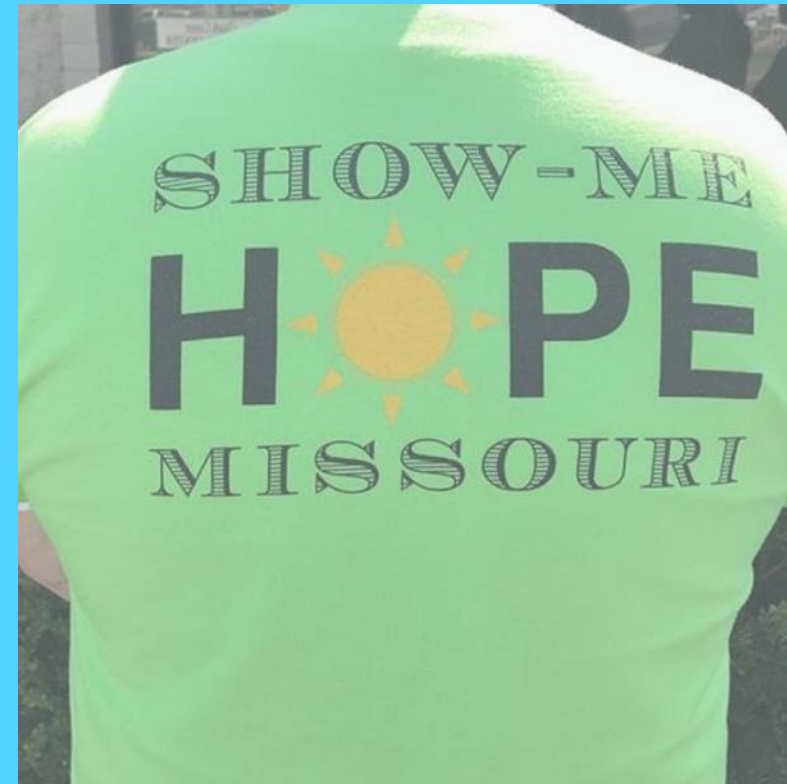
Ask for help if you need it, especially when:

- **Things are falling apart: marital problems, family conflict, loss of friendships, problems at work or school.**
- **There is no medical explanation for chronic physical problems.**
- **Preoccupation with the tragic event interferes with life activities.**
- **Isolation and fear cause feelings of desperation.**
- **Experiencing feelings of hopelessness, depression, or extreme anger.**
- **You are reliant on alcohol or other drugs.**



DMH PROCESS

- **Current: CMHC**
- **Future: Cadre**
- **Challenges:**
 - **Funding**
 - **Maintaining & Sustaining Expertise**





CASE STUDY:

Branson Duck Boat Tragedy

- July 19, 2018
- Duck Boat #7 capsizes on Table Rock Lake at 7:08 p.m. during a sudden weather event.
- 17 of 31 people onboard die
- Most victims tourists, one an employee
- One family loses 9 of 11 members on vacation
- Event covered heavily in media
- First NTSB event handled by experience team



WHAT WE WANT YOU TO KNOW

- **Put together a disaster plan**
- **Vicarious rehearsal**
- **Emotional responses vary**
- **Learn the emotional basics**
- **Take a class in person or on line**
- **Identify the needs for your district**
- **Contact us for our expertise and know we are a resource when a critical event occurs**



QUESTIONS

Susan Flanigan
Director, Disaster Services
(573) 522-5612

Beckie Gierer
Director, COOP
(573) 751-8136

Eric Evans
Director, EM
(573) 526-6962

Web: www.dmh.mo.gov/disaster

Facebook: "Disaster Services - Missouri Dept. of Mental Health"

Twitter: "DMHDisaster Services" @ShowMe_Hope