

Description of Session on Mass Casualty Events/Disaster Response
NCA Mental Health Conference
Fall 2023

This session will focus on ways of applying what we have learned about the phenomena of traumatic stress reactions that can occur following mass-casualty events/disasters to intervention strategies and clinical treatments provided by responding mental health professionals. The session will begin with a review of phases of traumatic reactions as a basis for considering specific approaches that may be of greatest help to impacted children and families and that are informed by a public health frame of reference. With this foundational background, the session will pay particular attention to mental health responses to the earliest phases of traumatic reactions, including 1) building capacities of providers to address the immediate psychological needs of impacted children and families; 2) ways of increasing public awareness of phenomena of traumatic reactions and self-care strategies; 3) modes of and approaches to early, direct contact with impacted populations; 4) approaches to screening and identification of children and families in need of clinical treatment; 5) description of the Child and Family Traumatic Stress Intervention and building capacity for delivery of this early, evidence-based treatment model. Similarly, indications for longer-term trauma-focused treatment will be discussed in the context of building capacity for the delivery of evidence-based care across phases of trauma reactions.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will learn the value of applying knowledge of the phenomena of phase-based trauma reactions to the mapping of strategies for responding to disasters and mass-casualty events.
2. Participants will understand the importance of building local capacities of health and behavioral health providers to respond to the phase-based needs of traumatized members of the affected community.
3. Participants will understand principles and activities that increase phase-based support for children and families following mass-casualty traumatic events.
4. Participants will gain a general understanding of the Child and Family Traumatic Stress Intervention (CFTSI), an evidence-based, early trauma-focused treatment.
5. Participants will learn about the clinical goals of an early, trauma-focused mental health treatment that can be implemented in a variety of settings.