



CREATING RESILIENCE DURING COVID  
RECOVERY: ANTICIPATE. PLAN. DETER.  
PSYSTART SELF-TRIAGE  
10-28-22  
TONA MCGUIRE, PH.D.

# Agenda



**Behavioral  
Health Impact  
of Disasters**



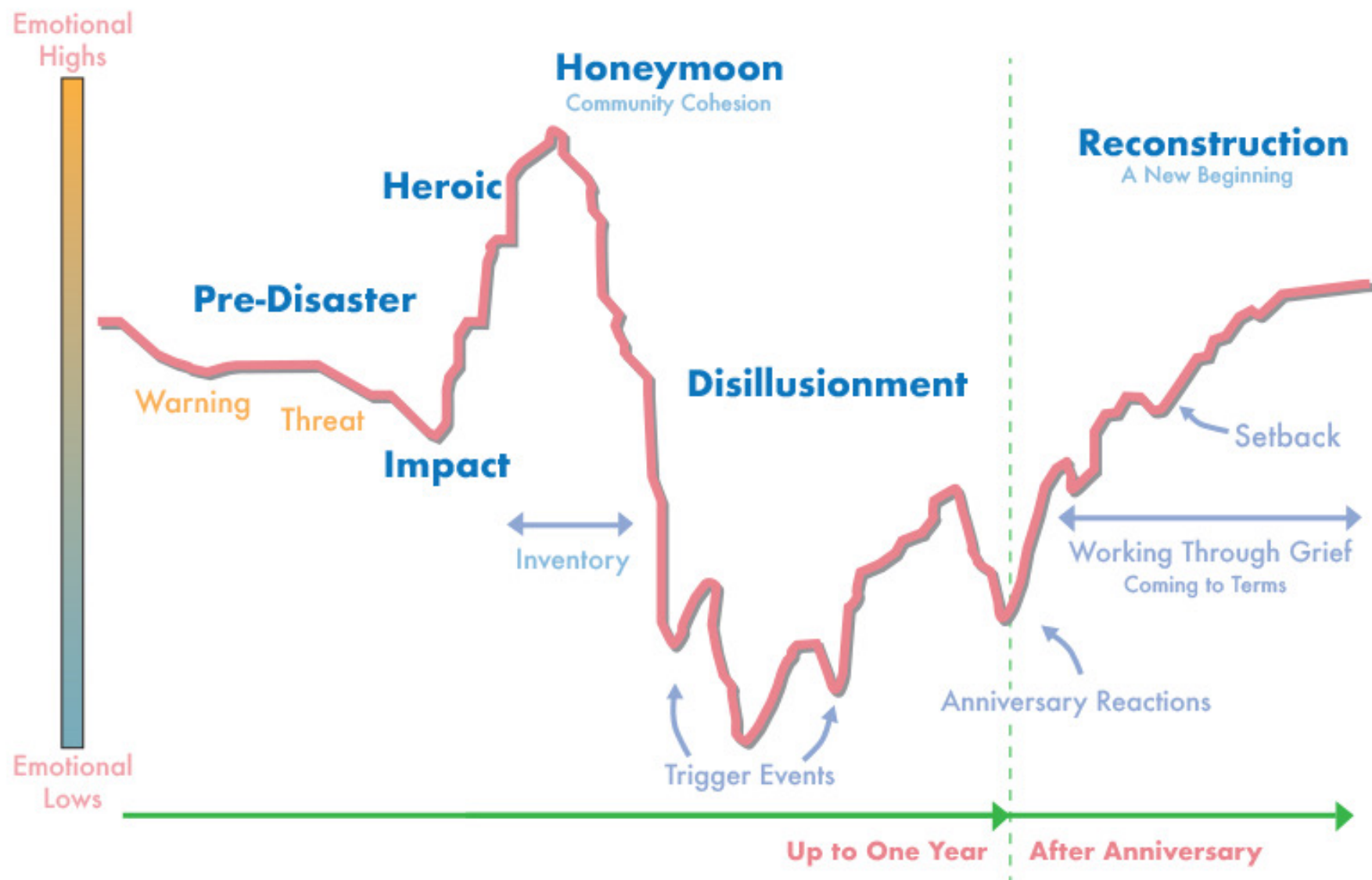
**What we are  
experiencing  
neurologically**



**Personal and  
Workplace  
Impact of Moral  
Injury**

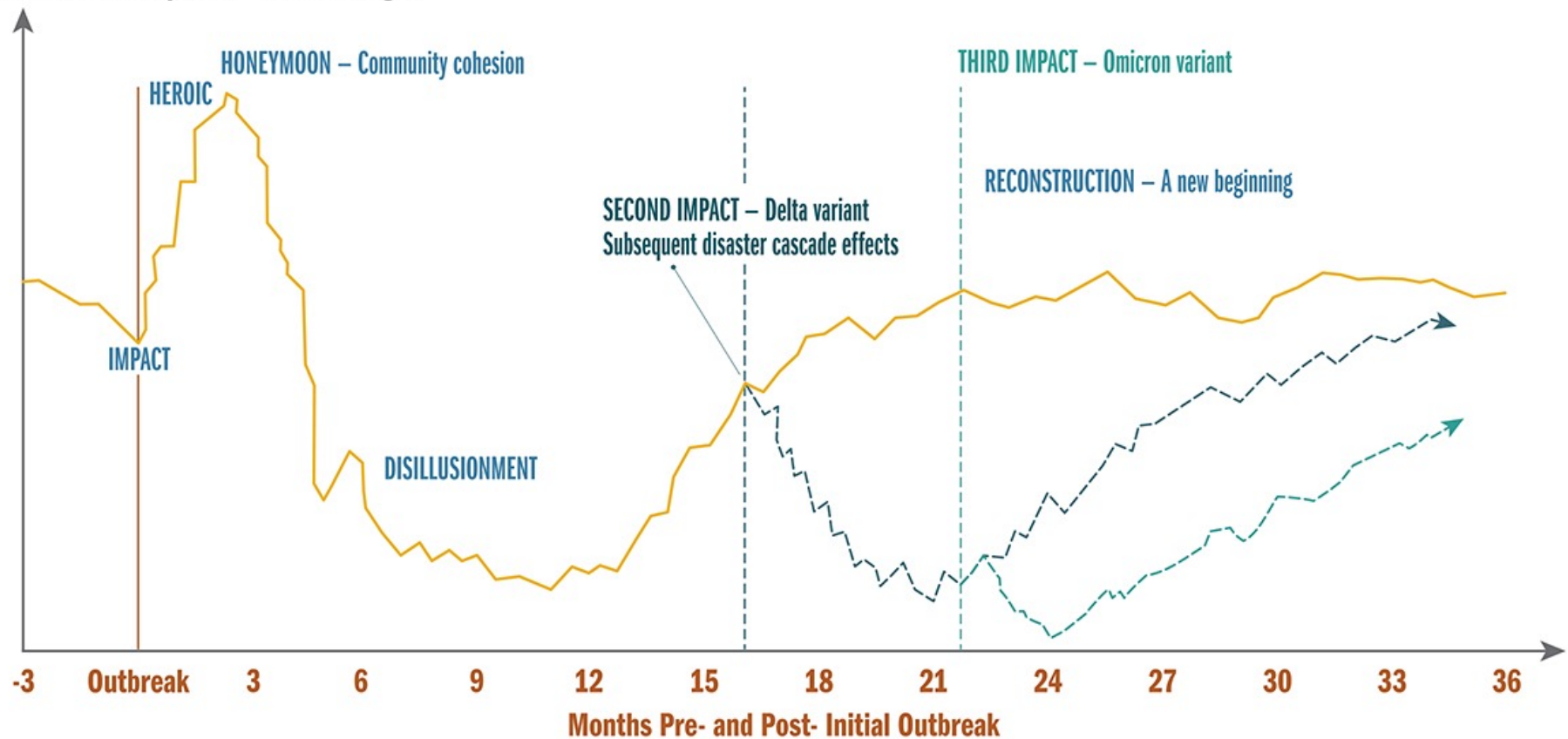


**Enhancing  
Protective  
Factors and  
Vitality**



## Reactions and Behavioral Health Symptoms in Disasters – COVID-19

Emotional Response – Lows to Highs



## Disaster Cascade Effects

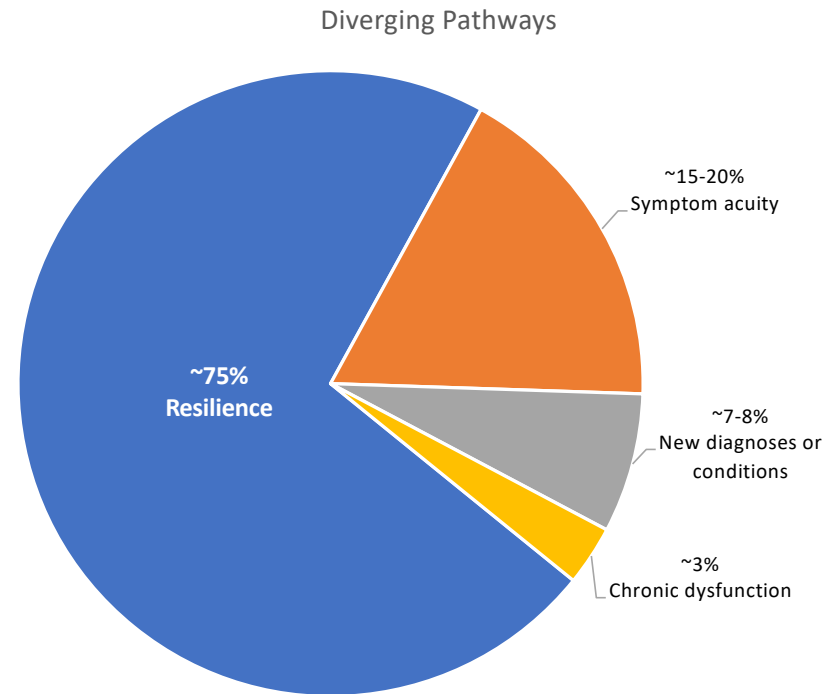
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- A disaster cascade is defined as the experience of multiple disaster “Impacts” within a 12-18 month time frame (multiple waves of the same disaster, or different types – floods, hurricanes, etc).
- Disaster cascades further tax already depleted emotional, physical, social and economic resources.
- Behavioral Health outcome pathways are in a critical point of divergence.
- Outcome pathways can include resilience (most common) as well as new acute symptoms, new disorders and even chronic dysfunction.

## Diverging Pathways

1. Resilience
2. Symptom acuity
3. New diagnoses or conditions
4. Chronic dysfunction

Including behavioral health (acknowledgement and support) in our recovery process will increase the shift towards the long-term resilience outcome.



## What Does 'Recovery' Right Now Really Look Like?

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- Challenging when the playbook isn't written
- People have different expectations and levels of comfort
- Social interactions may have changed
- Workplace experiences have changed
  - Communication norms, expectations, some job roles
- Orienting your process (HOW you operate in the world) around your core values will help



# Operating in the World Through Your Values

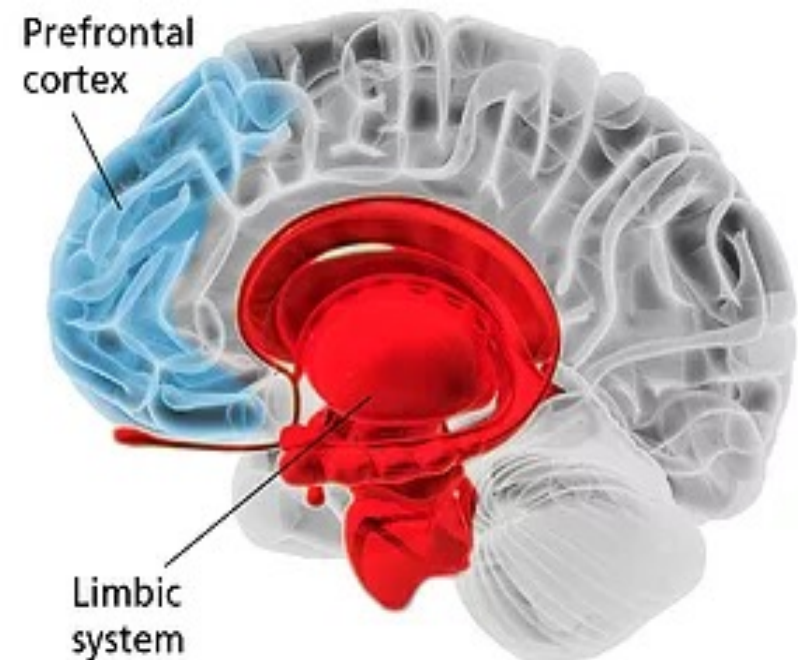
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- What parts of life would be better?
- How would it affect your physical & emotional health and your spirit?
- What would happen to important relationships?
- How would it impact your work?



# The Neuroscience of Response and Recovery

- Prefrontal cortex: higher-level functioning, planning, organization, details, filtering.
- Limbic system: emotion, impulse, pleasure and safety, memory



# Burnout, Compassion Fatigue and Moral Injury

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- Burnout: Exhaustion of body, mind, and motivation due to exposure to prolonged and unresolved work stress or frustration. Burnout is often a consequence of perceived disparity between the demands of the job and the resources that an employee has available to them.
- Compassion Fatigue: Emotional and physical exhaustion leading to a diminished ability to empathize or feel compassion for others, also described as secondary traumatic stress.
- Moral Injury: Strong feelings of guilt, shame, or anger due to not being able to provide the kind of care or service you want and expect to provide.

Resilience: The process – involving behaviors, thoughts, and actions – of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress. Can be developed by focusing on connection, purpose, and flexibility/adaptability.

# How to Manage and Reduce Burnout



## **Bottom line up front:**

- Burnout is widespread in the context of a disaster. Our energy is more limited right now.
- Healthy, clear boundaries between work and time off are essential for reducing burnout.



## **What do DO:**

- Establish your “off time” boundaries. Hours, days, or segments of time that are unavailable for work-related tasks.
- List things you can do during time off that are completely unrelated to work.



## **What to avoid:**

- Professional and social isolation
- Saying “yes” when you need to say “sorry, no, I don’t have the capacity to do that right now”.
- Feeling guilty for taking some mission critical time off.

# How to Manage and Reduce Compassion Fatigue



## Bottom line up front:

- *Compassion rewards* are the antidote for compassion fatigue. Take time to recognize the impact your work is having on others and celebrate victories when possible (even little ones).



## What to DO:

- Offer verbal support for colleagues (active listening is great! – *when you have the capacity!*).
- Call out and attend to the wins, the successes and the “good stuff.”
- Engage with others socially



## What to avoid:

- Unhealthy coping practices (e.g., drinking too much alcohol)
- Focusing on what “didn’t get done.”

# Resilience Into Vitality

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- Set goals that are the right size in order to increase a sense of purpose and experience success
  - Include “fun” goals, not just “achievement” goals
- Prioritize connections- social and professional- that are healthy for you and prevent isolation.
- Establish and maintain healthy boundaries around your “off” or “unavailable” time.
- Practice shifting your thinking from “threat” to “challenge” when something unexpected and negative happens (e.g., another quarantine)
- Look for or recognize the opportunities that may be available even when there is a huge upheaval in work or home life. This is where hope also lives.

# PsySTART Psychological Triage

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Developed by  
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**UCLA** David Geffen School of Medicine

## Why Are We Doing This Training?

- We are used to thinking about an “earthquake kit” because we know we can’t assemble the kit after the earthquake.
- Likewise, in terms of our personal preparedness, we want to have a resiliency toolkit ready to go.
- The idea is that we don’t think clearly in the middle of a crisis or when highly stressed, so we want to be able to monitor ourselves and implement our coping plan using something we’ve already created.



# Anticipate.Plan.Deter.

## A focus on resilience

- **Anticipate**

- What your role is and challenges you may experience, sometimes called “stress inoculation”

- **Plan**

- Develop your personal resilience plan to help you cope
- Build on your personal strengths and social connections
- Consider what else you may need in your coping plan

- **Deter:**

- Activate individual coping and resilience plan
- Self-monitoring: Monitor your exposure risk by monitoring what has happened to the children you help
- Manage “next steps”

# Experience Resilience Also!

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Development of new coping skills

Increased self-awareness

Renewed positive relationships

Shifting priorities

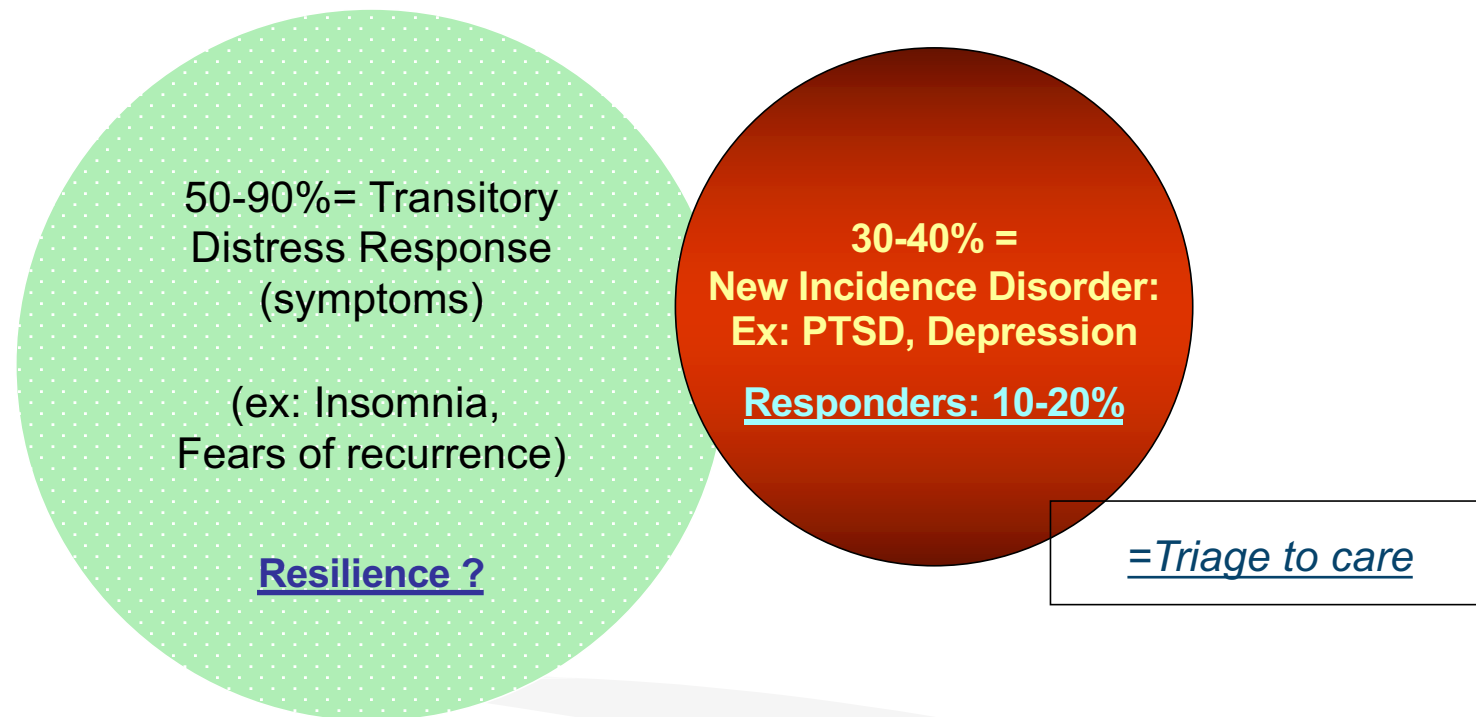
Deeper appreciation for life

Personal growth

- Becoming closer to loved ones
- Gaining confidence in one's ability to rebuild a life
- Becoming more spiritual or religious
- Finding deeper meaning and purpose in life
- Discovering inner strength
- Being there when needed



## State of the Art: Mental Health Risk in Disasters: Population Level Effects



Based on IoM, 2003

# Secondary Trauma

- When working with youth and families who have been traumatized, hearing about what happened to them can be traumatizing for the helper
- That risk is often greater among women and among those who are very empathetic
- People with a history of traumatic events themselves are also at greater risk of Secondary Trauma

# Managing Secondary Trauma

- Be aware of your risk factors
- Make time to rest, eat healthy meals, and take breaks
- Set boundaries between your work role and your personal life. When you are “off” do not take on tasks
- Reach out to your colleagues or supervisor if you find yourself struggling.

## How to ANTICIPATE?

- Think about the things you believe will be most difficult for you as part of your work or volunteer role and write those challenges down
- What will be most challenging for you to hear about from the youth you are helping?
- *Challenge is monitoring and managing stress proactively rather than avoiding thinking about it*
- Understand Risk Factors for you in your role



## ANTICIPATE: What Are Your Stress Responses?

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What is typical for you? How will you recognize when you are stressed? What is the first thing you notice? Write down your common responses.

- **Emotional:** irritability, anger, sadness, guilt, worry, fear, apathy, grief
- **Cognitive:** confusion, memory problems, difficulty focusing or attending to details
- **Physical:** sleep difficulties, exhaustion, increased headache, appetite changes, muscle pain
- **Behavioral:** expressed anger/irritability, substance misuse, withdrawal from others, overwork, abandonment of self care

## PLAN: Build on success: “What works for you?”

- List your resilience factors
  - Identify positive thoughts experiences including those that give a sense of mission or purpose:
    - Making a difference
    - Making someone or yourself proud
    - Being there for those that need us
    - Reducing suffering

## PLAN: Build on success: “What works for you?”

- List your positive coping plan
  - Distraction using positive images, thoughts
  - Combine with relaxation breathing with mindfulness
  - Imagery examples: fun family times ahead, trips, your pets, your kids, significant others and family!
  - Pleasant scenes such as beach, mountains, streams, waterfalls, art.
  - Start thinking of your favorites to use when needed

Its preferable to have a “go to” list of specific and general coping ideas **ready** when you need them

## PLAN: Build on Success

Who are your social supports?

List a few people to whom you can turn when you need some support

- 
- 
- 
- 



## Plan B: What if Your Coping Plan Isn't Enough?

- Paced breathing (app store free)
- Utilize EAP at work
- Breathe2Relax (app store free)
- Mindfulness Coach (app store free)
- PTSD Coach (assist people experiencing symptoms of significant stress), free at:  
[www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/ptsdcoachonline/default.htm](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/ptsdcoachonline/default.htm)
- Faith Leader
- Private Counseling

## DETER: Tracking Your Exposure to Psychological Risk

- One way to track your risk is by tracking what has happened to the youth and families you are helping.
- Their stories of experienced traumatic events can be recorded on a form for your use only.
- This form is called PsySTART and is a list of certain events that are more predictive of developing a later psychological disorder.
- By checking off what you've heard about on the triage, you can help track your secondary traumatic risk

## DETER: WHEN YOU WANT FURTHER ASSISTANCE

- Consider resources as part of your work setting:
  - Please list those now
- Certain evidence based interventions are recommended when risk factors high and stress does not dissipate
- So what works? :
  - Trauma Focused Interventions
  - Identify concerns and further develop coping tools and strategies
  - PTSD Coach" for distress (not just for PTSD)



## DETER: Triage and Track Your Exposure

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Go to:

[Www2.psystart.net/psyped](http://Www2.psystart.net/psyped)

Select your site from the dropdown list (OTHER)

185720 is your registration code

- Do not share this code with others
- Create your own personal account/password

Works on any smart phone, tablet or laptop

Remember: **NO INDIVIDUAL INFO VISIBLE** -except to you

# Risk Factors

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## Acute Incidents



- Acute danger or life threat
- Disasters or terrorism
- Traumatic death of loved ones and friends
- Displaced from home or home not livable
- Saw others who were severely injured or dead including mutilating injuries or burns
- Severe injury or illness
- Felt as if their life was in danger



## Chronic Incidents/SDH/ACES

- Housing insecurity
- Food insecurity
- Victim of interpersonal violence
- Food insecurity
- Housing insecurity
- Child Neglect
- Previous history of trauma, mental illness or substance use disorder

← → ↻ Secure | https://psystart.net/ORPsyStartres/register

Home [Login](#)

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Register

Name

E-Mail Address

Gender Male ▾

Date of Birth

Discipline CHAPLIN/CLERGY ▾

Sponsoring Agency

Primary Location Adair RFPD ▾


Registration Code

Password

Confirm Password

[Register](#)

← → ↻ www2.psystart.net/psyped/home 🔒 📄 ☆ 🗄 👤 ⋮

 **PsySTART®**

WRAP-EM  
Western Regional Alliance for  
Pediatric Emergency Management

AZ NV WA  
CA OR

Home

Input triage information


Bed Tracker

Using PsyStart

Tona McGuire

**What is PsySTART?**

- ✓ (Psychological Simple Triage and Rapid Treatment)
- ✓ Part of a comprehensive solution: PsySTART Rapid Mental Health Triage Systems



Filter locations

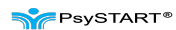
<b>Site</b>	<b>Date</b>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Optional Field-1</b>	<b>Optional Field-2</b>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>
<input type="text" value="Child 0-3 years"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Incident</b>	
<input type="text" value="Default incident"/>	

If the individual responds "Yes" to any of the statements below, click the button next to it. When the button slides to the right and vibrant color is visible, the statement has been selected.

EXPRESSED THOUGHT OR INTENT TO HARM SELF/OTHERS?	<input type="checkbox"/>
FELT OR EXPRESSED EXTREME PANIC?	<input type="checkbox"/>
FELT DIRECT THREAT TO LIFE OF SELF OR FAMILY MEMBER?	<input type="checkbox"/>
SAW / HEARD DEATH OR SERIOUS INJURY OF OTHER?	<input type="checkbox"/>
MULTIPLE DEATHS OF FAMILY, FRIENDS OR PEERS?	<input type="checkbox"/>
DEATH OF IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER?	<input type="checkbox"/>
DEATH OF FRIEND OR PEER?	<input type="checkbox"/>
DEATH OF PET?	<input type="checkbox"/>
SIGNIFICANT DISASTER RELATED ILLNESS OR PHYSICAL INJURY OF SELF OR FAMILY MEMBER?	<input type="checkbox"/>
TRAPPED OR DELAYED EVACUATION?	<input type="checkbox"/>
HOME NOT LIVABLE DUE TO DISASTER?	<input type="checkbox"/>
I HAVE FAMILY MEMBER(S) WHO ARE CURRENTLY MISSING	<input type="checkbox"/>
I AM A CHILD CURRENTLY SEPARATED FROM ALL CAREGIVERS	<input type="checkbox"/>
FAMILY MEMBERS SEPARATED DUE TO COVID RISK OR EXPOSURE?	<input type="checkbox"/>
PRIOR HISTORY OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE?	<input type="checkbox"/>
CONFIRMED EXPOSURE OR INFECTION WITH COVID?	<input type="checkbox"/>
DE-CONTAMINATED?	<input type="checkbox"/>
RECEIVED MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR EXPOSURE/CONTAMINATION?	<input type="checkbox"/>
HEALTH CONCERNS TIED TO EXPOSURE TO COVID?	<input type="checkbox"/>
NO TRIAGE FACTORS IDENTIFIED?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Submit

# Events and Risk Factors



Incident Name: training test



Original-Patient Chart



Date: 2021-04-06	Case ID: 2024
First Name: my phone number	Last Name: my kids name
Age: Child	Gender: Non-Binary
EXPRESSED THOUGHT OR INTENT TO HARM SELF/OTHERS?	
FELT OR EXPRESSED EXTREME PANIC?	
FELT DIRECT THREAT TO LIFE OF SELF OR FAMILY MEMBER?	
SAW / HEARD DEATH OR SERIOUS INJURY OF OTHER?	
MULTIPLE DEATHS OF FAMILY, FRIENDS OR PEERS?	
DEATH OF IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER?	
DEATH OF FRIEND OR PEER?	
DEATH OF PET?	
SIGNIFICANT DISASTER RELATED ILLNESS OR PHYSICAL INJURY OF SELF OR FAMILY MEMBER?	
TRAPPED OR DELAYED EVACUATION?	
HOME NOT LIVABLE DUE TO DISASTER?	
I HAVE FAMILY MEMBER(S) WHO ARE CURRENTLY MISSING	
I AM A CHILD CURRENTLY SEPARATED FROM ALL CAREGIVERS	
FAMILY MEMBERS SEPARATED DUE TO COVID RISK OR EXPOSURE?	
PRIOR HISTORY OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE?	
CONFIRMED EXPOSURE OR INFECTION WITH COVID?	
DE-CONTAMINATED?	
RECEIVED MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR EXPOSURE/ CONTAMINATION?	
HEALTH CONCERNS TIED TO EXPOSURE TO COVID?	
NO TRIAGE FACTORS IDENTIFIED?	✓




# Additional Resources



HomeInput triage informationMy PsySTARTMy Resilience PlanNext StepsIncident ReportSettingmerritt schreiber


RESOURCES

[Access Hotline-LA County Department of Mental Health](#)




LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF  
MENTAL HEALTH  
hope. recovery. wellbeing.  
Mental Health Help 24/7  
800-854-7771

[National Center for PTSD](#)




National Center for  
PTSD  
POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

[Coping with a Disaster or Traumatic Event](#)



CDC  
CENTERS FOR DISEASE  
CONTROL AND PREVENTION

[Psychological First Aid for First Responders](#)  
[Tips for Emergency and Disaster Response Workers](#)



## In Review:

Anticipate your challenges, develop your coping plan, deter risk by monitoring exposure to traumatic stories, and implement your coping plan

- Engage in self care
- Pay attention to your feelings of stress
- Monitor your risk factors for secondary trauma using the PsySTART Triage system to track what you hear and are exposed to from the youth and families with whom you are working
- When risk factors occur:
  - Deploy your “personal coping plan” as first line of defense
  - Select positive coping options
  - Use your social support system
  - Use the next steps tab for additional resources

Monitor regularly- once a month, and more often if you are hearing about many traumatic events.



# THANK YOU!

PsySTART Operations:

[psystartoperations@gmail.com](mailto:psystartoperations@gmail.com)

Technical support, consultation on use of  
PsySTART triage system in real or actual events  
available 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Pacific Standard Time

Emergency contact: 202 630-5577



Merritt Schreiber, Ph.D.  
PsySTART Ops  
PsySTART Triage Systems



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