

## DISASTER SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL CARE TIP SHEETS

<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Assessing Survivors' Mental Health</b>	
<b>Aim:</b>	To do basic triage of mental health during disaster relief, including assessment of coping ability.	
<b>General Information:</b>	The SEA-3 formula (Everly, Dewey, Calkins, Webb, Grimm, Stauffer, 2002) is an easy way to remember what to look for in a prescreening mental health assessment. To conduct this assessment, ask yourself the following questions for the disaster survivor you are concerned about:	
<b>The Approach:</b>	<p>It is not necessary to do a formal assessment as part of disaster care, nor are you assigning a diagnosis. However, there are some signs that a person is more severely traumatized that you should be able to recognize. Getting timely help for a traumatized person can make a big difference in their eventual recovery. Therefore, as part of your helping people, you should know the signs that someone may need more extensive help.</p> <p>In general, and in order to make these assessments, you should remember the following basic points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You should have some experience with people in crisis in order to know what is experienced by most people and how the severely traumatized person is different. The best way to get this experience is as part of a team that works together and then discusses what they do and what they see.</li> <li>2. You do not have to be certain about your assessment before you take action. All that you need is a reasonable possibility that this person may need more help. It is better to refer people who may not need more help than to not refer people who do need it.</li> <li>3. Know how to make a referral. You should have a list of people you can refer someone to, and you should stay in contact with the person until they are in the care of the next helper. Your job is not done because you suggest seeing someone else or give someone a name of another helper.</li> <li>4. Keep a record of people you talk with, including their contact information, and if you refer them, who you referred them to and why.</li> </ol>	
<b>SEA-3 Elements:</b>	<b>1. SPEECH:</b> Are his/her words slurred? - speaking too fast? - too loud for the situation? - rambling?	<b>2. EMOTION:</b> Are emotions balanced, or over/under expressed? - anger out of control? - fear debilitating? - excessively hostile? - absent of emotion?

	<p><b>3. APPEARANCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- unkempt? Unclean?</li> <li>- disheveled? Dirty?</li> </ul> <p>Is his/her clothing unusual for the occasion or weather (e.g., wearing a heavy coat in excessive heat)?</p> <p><b>5. ACTIVITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- moving unnaturally slow?</li> <li>- unusually hyperactive?</li> <li>- smiling or laughing even though he/she just lost a loved one?</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. ALERTNESS</b></p> <p>Does he/she know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what day it is? What time it is?</li> <li>- who they are? Where they are at?</li> <li>- the name of the President? Of his/her children?</li> <li>- Does he/she continually forget things?</li> <li>- Does she/he have difficulty recalling incidents?</li> <li>- Does she/he seem dazed, dreamy or is she/he alert and insightful?</li> </ul>
<b>Assessing Coping Ability:</b>	<p>An important part of a mental health assessment of a disaster survivor is assessing his/her coping ability. In order to conduct this part of the assessment, ask the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the person's perception of the stressor? Does he or she feel overwhelmed, confident, anxious, etc.?</li> <li>• What strengths, assets or resources does this person (or his/her family) possess that can help address his/her/family needs?</li> <li>• Does this person realize these strengths and resources?</li> <li>• How can he or she be aided in accessing and implementing these resources?</li> </ul>	
<b>Other Resources:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harding, S. (2007). <i>Spiritual care and mental health for disaster response and recovery</i>. New York: New York Disaster Interfaith Services.</li> <li>• National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (2006). <i>Psychological first-aid: Field operations guide for community religious professionals</i>. Los Angeles, CA: Author.</li> <li>• National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters. (2009). <i>Disaster spiritual care: Points of Consensus</i>. Arlington, VA: Author.</li> <li>• National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters. <i>Light our way: A guide for spiritual care in times of disasters</i>. Arlington, VA: Author.</li> <li>• Roberts, S., &amp; Ashley, W. (2008). <i>Disaster spiritual care: Practical clergy responses to community, regional, and national tragedy</i>. Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing.</li> </ul>	

(Adapted from: Ellers, K.L. (2008). *Emotional and spiritual care in disasters, Participant guide (Version 6.0)*, International Critical Incident Stress Foundation.)

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