

Abstracts of Oral Presentations-WADEM Congress on Disaster and Emergency Medicine 2019

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Positively Adapting to a Changed Reality

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Introduction: Following the New Zealand November 2016 earthquake, mental health staff were deployed to assist with the immediate levels of distress in the community. The work included working with individuals, couples and families, staff wellbeing sessions, psychosocial education, and participating in outreach clinics to isolated communities.

Aim: Aware of international evidence and the experience following the 2010/11 earthquakes, the aim was to provide mental health assistance to address issues as early as possible with the intent that this would reduce the future demands on specialist services.

Methods: Following the response phase, a small team of mental health specialists formed the Recovery and Wellbeing Team working in the affected communities undertaking clinical, consult, advisory, and educational work as needed. The team flexed and evolved to meet the changing needs. A range of data was collected and analyzed to monitor the work and the outcomes of this team.

Findings: With additional support provided following the earthquake, there has been a significant positive change in the numbers of referrals to secondary mental health services in Christchurch. A new model of care has now been collaboratively developed, as the mental health system positively adapted to a changed reality. This model is essentially an easily accessed, early intervention, comprehensive model of mental health service to maintain the positive gains.

Discussion: Following a significant disaster, all involved will benefit from some form of psychosocial support. For most, this will be achieved through the person's own networks. For some, the event will trigger responses from previous traumatic experiences and a few mental health supports will be required. Having skilled professionals with the ability to cope with the constantly changing needs, and who are available to meet people at the earliest opportunity, has enabled issues to be resolved rather than leaving these issues to escalate over time.

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Victorian Compendium of Community-Based Resilience Building Case Studies - Critical Success Factors Help Communities Strengthen Resilience to Disasters

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Introduction: Global conversations emphasize strengthening communities' resilience to disasters. These conversations inspired the Victorian Compendium of Community-Based Resilience Building Case Studies. The Compendium motivates community members to build expertise, reduce program duplication, and save valuable resources. Case study analysis identified critical success factors. Between 2012 and 2018, community groups completed an Expression of Interest to present at the MUDRI Advancing Community Resilience Forums, which provided an opportunity to impart resilience activities and knowledge. It also solved challenges and shared unforeseen learning. Over six years, 72 groups presented. Subsequently, 35 submitted their activity for consideration into the Compendium. Of these 35, 30 were included.

Aim: This updated research analyses critical success factors of 30 case studies. Success factors support the key tenet of the Victorian Compendium of Community-Based Resilience Building Case Studies: to promote the sharing of achievable, practical resilience building activities. The online Compendium provides free access for all communities to explore activities before, during, and after disasters.

Methods: A thematic analysis identified critical success factors of 30 Compendium case studies.

Results: Case studies revealed unique and valuable learning in diverse settings. The critical success factors included: (1) strong governance, Board support, leadership and trust; (2) partnerships; (3) commitment, adaptability, and stamina; and (4) community-based initiatives. Other success factors included a paid facilitator and local government support, stamina, and celebrating success.

Discussion: The Compendium represents an Australian first and offers an innovative contribution to resilience practice and research. It enhances other Victorian initiatives such as the Rockefeller funded Resilient Melbourne Strategy, which incorporates the Compendium to bring people together from across sectors to deliver distinct, yet connected actions to strengthen resilience. The Compendium enables diverse communities to adopt or adapt proven resilience activities, thereby preserving valuable resources. It offers the opportunity to extend to a national or international Compendium.

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