

Role of Social Workers in Emergency Management

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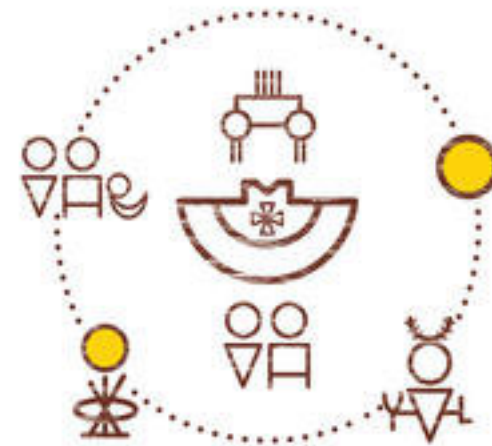
**2021 Emergency Management Stakeholder
Summit
March 24, 2021**



Territorial Acknowledgment



The University of Calgary, Edmonton Campus, respectfully acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples including the Cree, Blackfoot, Metis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway/Saulteaux/Anishinaabe, Inuit, and many others whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our vibrant community.



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University of Calgary Office of Indigenous Engagement

Acknowledgment



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CRSH  SSHRC

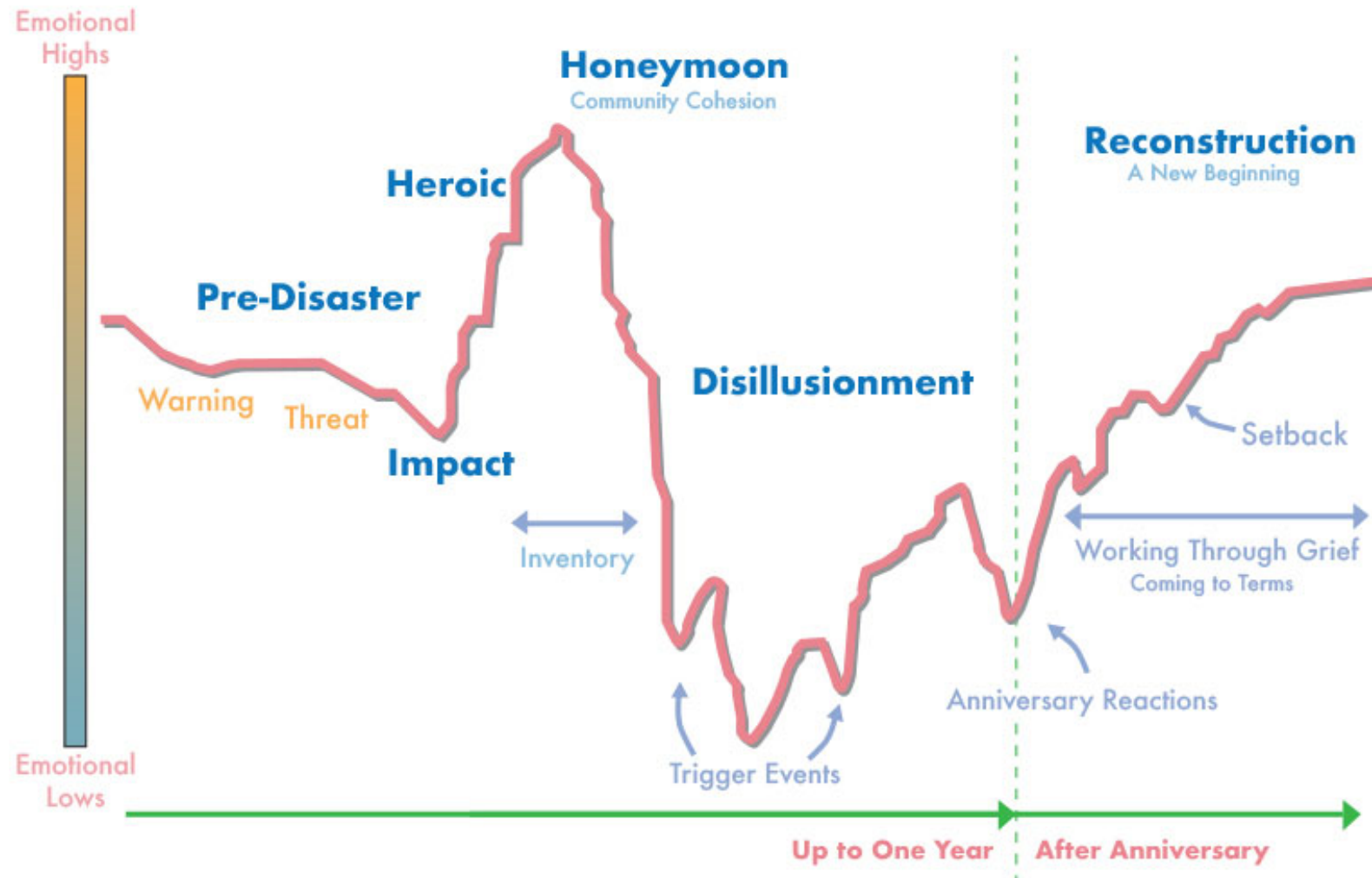
Outline



- Psychosocial Support
- Goal and objectives of study
- Methods
- Findings
- Recommendations
- Engage Social Workers
- COVID-19
- Next Steps



Psychosocial Impact



Research Goal



- The goal is to identify the roles and responsibilities of social work practitioners and human service professionals in long-term recovery efforts after the wildfires in Fort McMurray, Alberta
- The study focuses on the lived experiences of social service professionals to enrich our understanding of the capabilities of social work practitioners and human service professionals in disaster context



Objectives



- There are three objectives in this 3-year study:
 - 1) To better understand the challenges experienced by social work practitioners and human service professionals engaged in long-term disaster recovery in the province of Alberta;
 - 2) To identify supportive social service practices and strategies for long-term disaster recovery in communities; and
 - 3) To articulate a disaster social work professional practice framework at the local community level.

Research Methods

- Literature review
- A qualitative research design in three phases is used to investigate the study goals and objectives to enhance our understanding of practices and strategies on recovery and community resilience after a disaster.
- The three phases are as follows;
 - Phase I – Individual Interviews
 - Phase II – Survey
 - Phase III – Focus Groups
- COVID-19 Impact
 - Virtual Interviews
 - Online Survey
 - Virtual Focus Groups



Findings



- Social workers offer a unique contribution to disasters
 - Bring social work values of self-determination, advancing human dignity and respect, and social justice
 - Advocacy for injustices
 - Compassion, caring and adaptability
 - Approaches and theories used were trauma, ecological systems theory, person in environment, strengths-based, community development, anti-colonial and anti-racist, Indigenous knowledge, wellness, collaboration, self-care, systems, anti-oppressive, and social connections
- Participants asked that social workers are acknowledged for the value they bring to disaster work

Findings

- Role of Social Worker in Disaster Management
- **Preparedness:** to build effective strategy to support recovery
 - **Mitigation:** business continuity plans
 - **Response:** resource connections, empathy
 - **Recovery:** collaboration, social connection

“Critical for social work to be at the table in disaster management. focus on ‘building back better’ to meet human and social needs by amplifying the voices of marginalized and/or disempowered individuals and families” (participant)

Recommendations



- Participants identified several recommendations:
 - Social workers identified as first responders
 - Disaster training integrated into social work education
 - Identifying disaster trained social workers to support future disasters in Alberta



Engage Social Workers



➤ Beyond Emergency Social Services

- Person-Centred approach to build collaborative relationships with external partners
- Green Social Work – Climate and environmental impact
- Community Development – prepare your community
- Research – critically analyse the event
- Social Justice – build inclusive plans
- Planning – evacuation; response; public communications

➤ Find social workers in your community

- Provincial Government & NPO's employ social workers
- Connect with the Social Work and Disaster Network

Social Workers in COVID-19

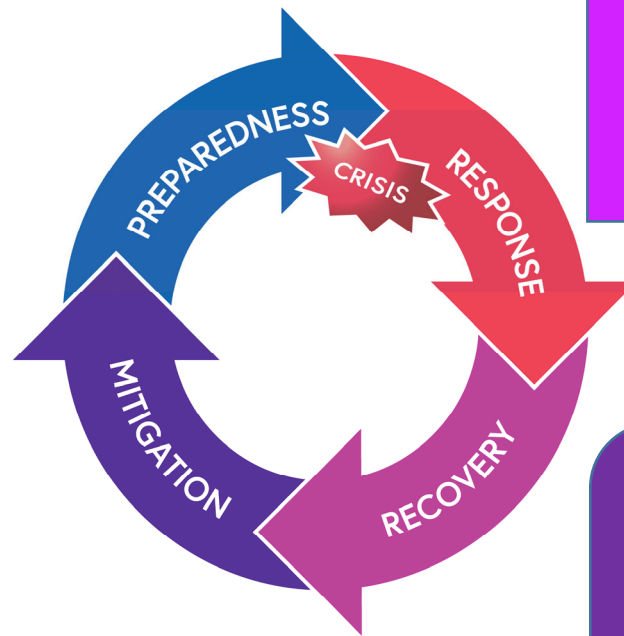


Town Hall, Inform
residents of
requirements or
vaccine plan

Vaccine Planning, avoid
inequities

Psychosocial Support,
mental health awareness

Share accurate
information to
residents



Next Steps



- Survey for Alberta Social Workers & Students
 - Identify role of social workers in disaster phases
- Focus groups with social work practitioners and human service professionals
 - Elaborate on the findings from the 40 interviews
- Create a Social Work and Disaster Network
 - Support future AB disasters



Focus Group Invite



FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE 2016 ALBERTA WILDFIRE: EXPERIENCES OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTITIONERS AND HUMAN SERVICE PROFESSIONALS IN LONG-TERM DISASTER RECOVERY

The goal of this study is to identify the roles and responsibilities of social work practitioners and human service professionals in the context of long-term disaster recovery as a result of the wildfires in Fort McMurray, Alberta.

WHO CAN APPLY:

Social Work Practitioners and Human Service Professionals engaged in disaster recovery in the context of the 2016 Alberta wildfires



YOUR ROLE AS A PARTICIPANT:

- You will participate in a 60-90 minute virtual focus group to share your perspectives and experiences on delivering and accessing services and programs in Fort McMurray during the 2016 wildfires
- The focus group will ask you for your experiences and recommendations to improve the system of services.
- The session will be audio recorded.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

- If you are interested in participating please contact: Dr. Julie Drolet, Professor, University of Calgary at (780) 492-1594 or email jdrolet@ucalgary.ca

This study has been approved by the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (REB18-1328)

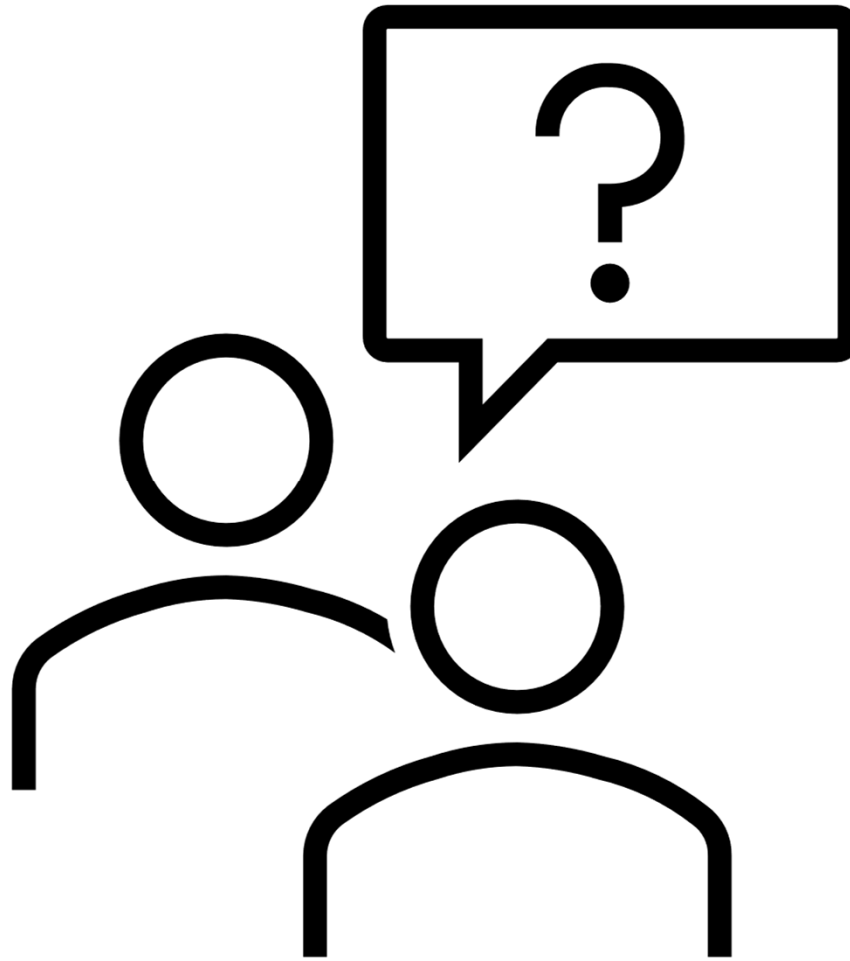


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Q&A Period



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