

# Disaster Mental Health Response in Incidents of Massive Size and Scope: Lessons Learned

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Omaha, NE  
July 12-14, 2006

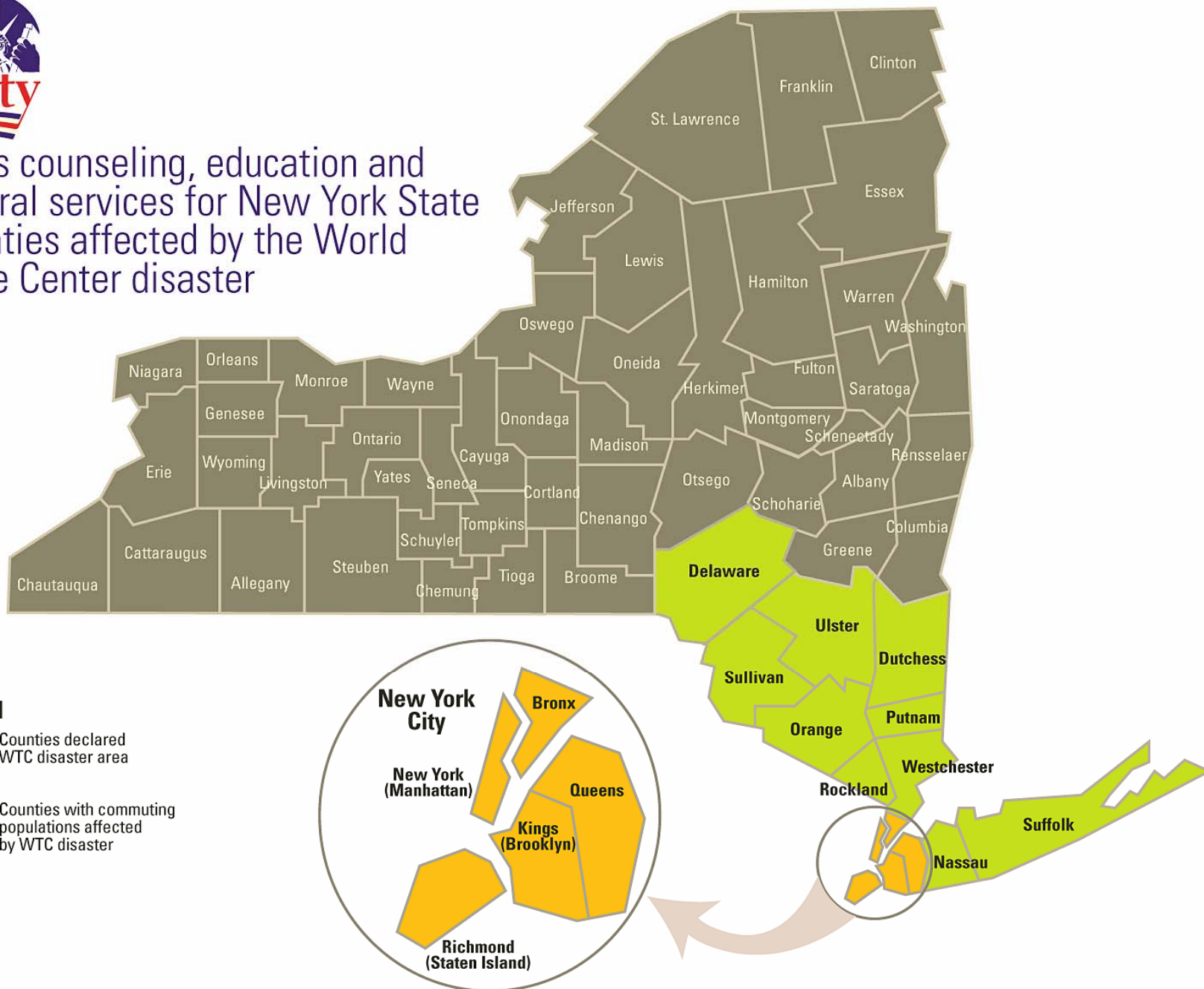
4th Annual Nebraska Disaster Behavioral Health Conference

# DISASTERS OF GREAT MAGNITUDE





Crisis counseling, education and referral services for New York State Counties affected by the World Trade Center disaster

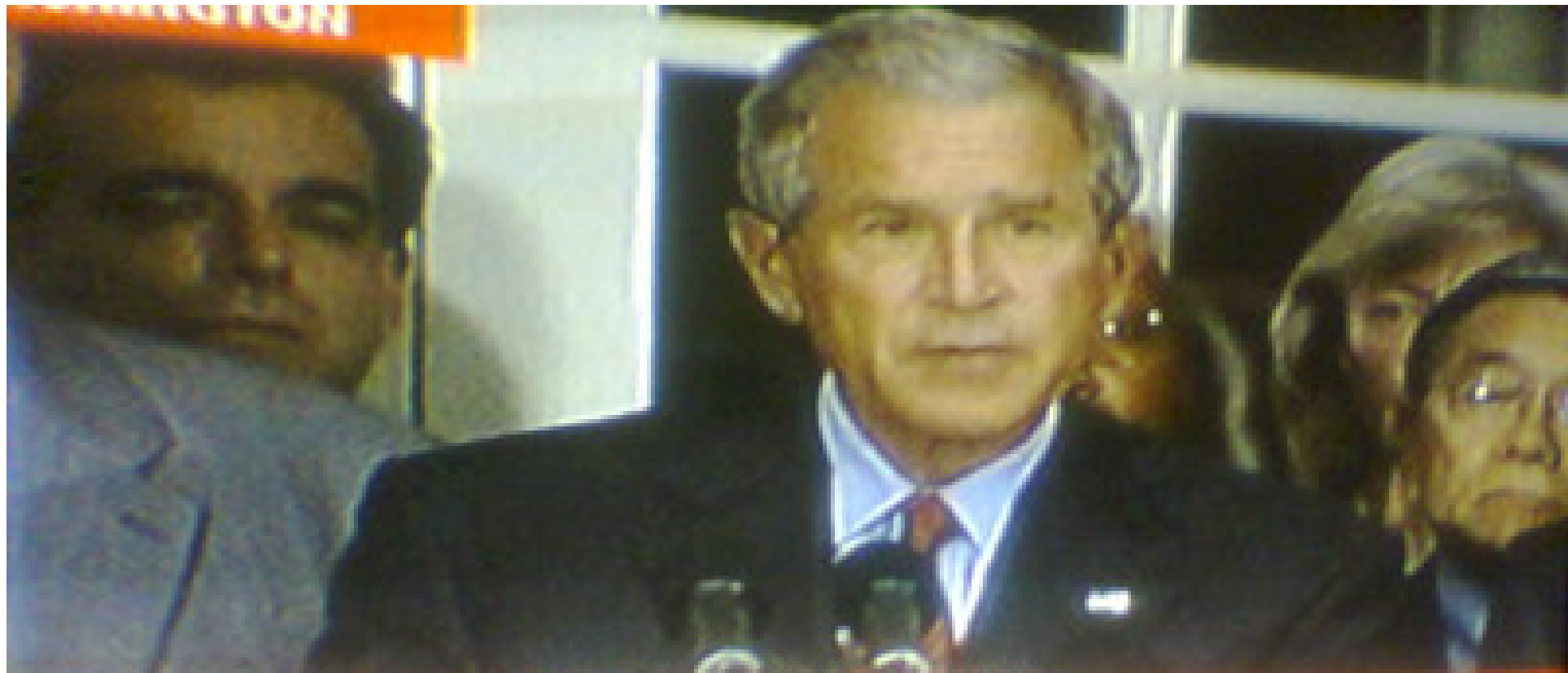




# HURRICANES



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Type of Loss	Number	Multiply by ANH	At-Risk	# of Persons targeted per Loss Category
Missing or Dead	4,544	2.62	100%	11,905
Hospitalized	800	2.62	100%	2,096
Non-hospitalized Injured	7,985	2.62	90	18,829
Homes Destroyed			100	
Homes "Major Damage"	4,500	2	50	4,500
Homes "Minor Damage"			15	
Disaster Displaced Employed & Unemployed	327,000	2.62	50	428,370
Others, WTC Emergency & Recovery Workers	17,859	2.62	100	46,791
WTC Evacuees	5,456	2.62	100	14,295
WTC Workers Absent at Time of Attack	40,000	2.62	90	94,320
School Children & Teachers in 7 Schools Evacuated in WTC Attack	9,151	2.62	100	23,976
Pre-school and School Age Children	1,932,000		40	772,800
Global Outreach	6,584,196		10	656,420
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED PERSONS IN NEED OF CRISIS COUNSELING SERVICES:</b>				<b>2,074,302</b>

<b>Category I</b>	<b># of Individ.</b>	<b>Est. % PTSD</b>	<b>Est. #PTSD</b>
A) Individuals trapped/rescued	8,000 <sup>1</sup>	40% <sup>5</sup>	3,200
<b>Category II</b>			
B) First responders (NOPD; NOFD)	2400 police + firefighters	30% <sup>6</sup>	720
A) Superdome evacuees	25,000	30% <sup>8</sup>	7,500
B) Convention Center evacuees	19,000	30% <sup>8</sup>	5,700
C) Trapped hospital personnel and pts	4,000	30% <sup>9</sup>	1200
D) Non-exposed family members of other Category I individuals	59,500 <sup>2</sup>	30% <sup>10</sup>	17,850



### Category III

A) Other evacuated persons (not Category I A, B, or C) in Orleans area

8,000

24%<sup>11</sup>

1,920

B) Professional caregivers (within impact area) of individuals in Categories I and II

300<sup>3</sup>

24%<sup>12</sup>

72

### Category IV

Displaced persons with damage to homes or businesses

550,000<sup>1</sup>

15%<sup>13</sup>

82,500

### Category V

Displaced persons with no damage to homes or businesses

500,000<sup>1</sup>

10%<sup>13</sup>

50,000

### Category VI

Non-displaced persons outside of impact area

1,799,000<sup>4</sup>

5%<sup>13</sup>

89,950

**TOTAL**

**2,976,300**

**260,612**

9

*Emergencies can provide 'cover' that brings out the good in people and organizations. Opportunities abound to show empathy, compassion, willingness to collaborate, and flexibility. They can greatly facilitate the process of assembling an effective public health, mental health and substance abuse response enabling people to rapidly overcome the typical bureaucratic obstacles to mounting any new program, and be less risk-averse.*

OR NOT



# The Estimate of Mental Health Needs Following Hurricane Katrina-Sept. 3, 2005

Severity of Impact	% Of Clinically Significant Distress	% Of Sub Clinical Distress but Need Some Additional Support
Moderately Exposed Areas	5-10%	5-10%
Very Severely Exposed Areas	25-30%	10-20%

Fran Norris, Ph.D.  
Patricia Watson, Ph.D.  
National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

## PROJECT LIBERTY: Accomplishments

- *Develop and implement local Plans of Service (NYC and ten surrounding counties all with separate governmental and mental health authorities) via the NEEDS ASSESSMENT.*
- *Initiate contracting process with approximately 200 agencies.*
- *Develop mechanisms for payment and reimbursement (new contracts, cost-based budgets in counties, fee-for-service budgets in NYC).*
- *Develop curriculum and operationalize a structure for Staff Training and Provider Technical Assistance.*
- *Develop, educate, and distribute Public Education materials in many different languages.*
- *Develop and rollout Media campaign.*
- *Initiate and sustain Data Collection and Evaluation modules.*

## Project Liberty: Accomplishments (cont.d)

- *Over 1,012,170 unique individuals have been served through Project Liberty crisis counseling and public education services.*
- *Over 632,533 Project Liberty crisis counseling and public education sessions have been provided.*
- *Over 160 mental health agencies have participated in delivering Project Liberty services.*
- *Over 4,800 workers have been trained in outreach-based disaster mental health counseling and public education techniques in over 125 separate training sessions.*
- *Project Liberty providers have offered services in over 37 different languages with many dialects.*

# The Role of Mental Health

50% of the 5,000 crisis counselors and 25% of the managers and supervisors in the NY 9/11 response were mental health professionals.

The remaining 50% were indigenous community workers, paraprofessionals and cultural brokers.

# The Role of Mental Health

- Apply epidemiological approach to the disaster Needs Assessment
- Evaluate the social factors of the health and mental health problems post disaster
- Determine the appropriate interventions
- Plan and implement service delivery
- Conduct program evaluation



Nueva  
York

Nos Cómo Salir Adelante  
Después de Sept. 11

New  
York  
Needs

Coping After Sept.11 Us

Strong

我們

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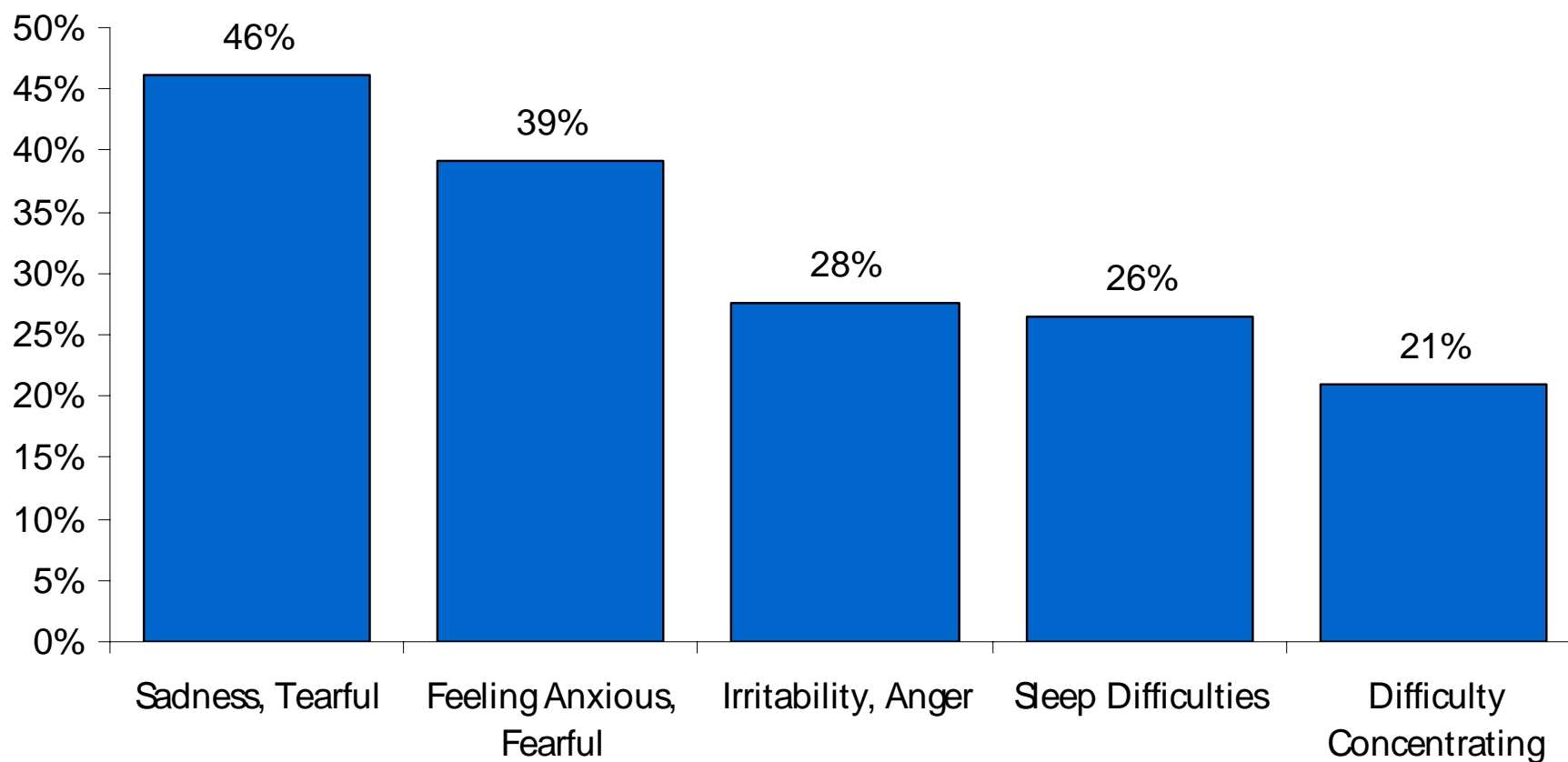
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# WHAT WE'VE SEEN

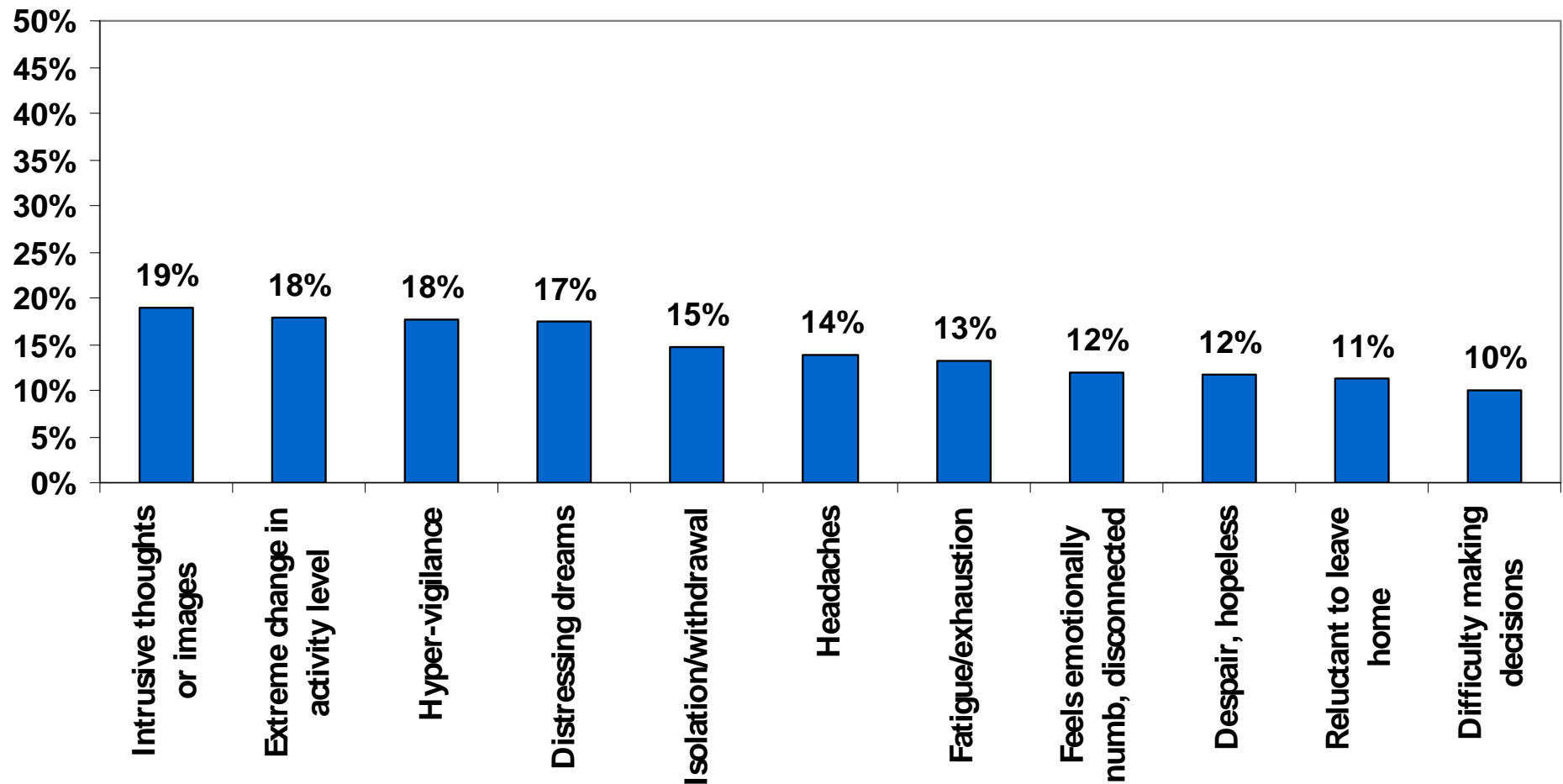
# What We've Seen...

- 11 Years post Oklahoma City, the American Red Cross is still providing mental health services for first responders
- 5 Years post 9/11, survivors are first accessing mental health services
- In three previous large scale disasters in the U.S., mental health staffs moved out of response due to compassion fatigue

## Event reactions in New York experienced by more than 20% of persons served

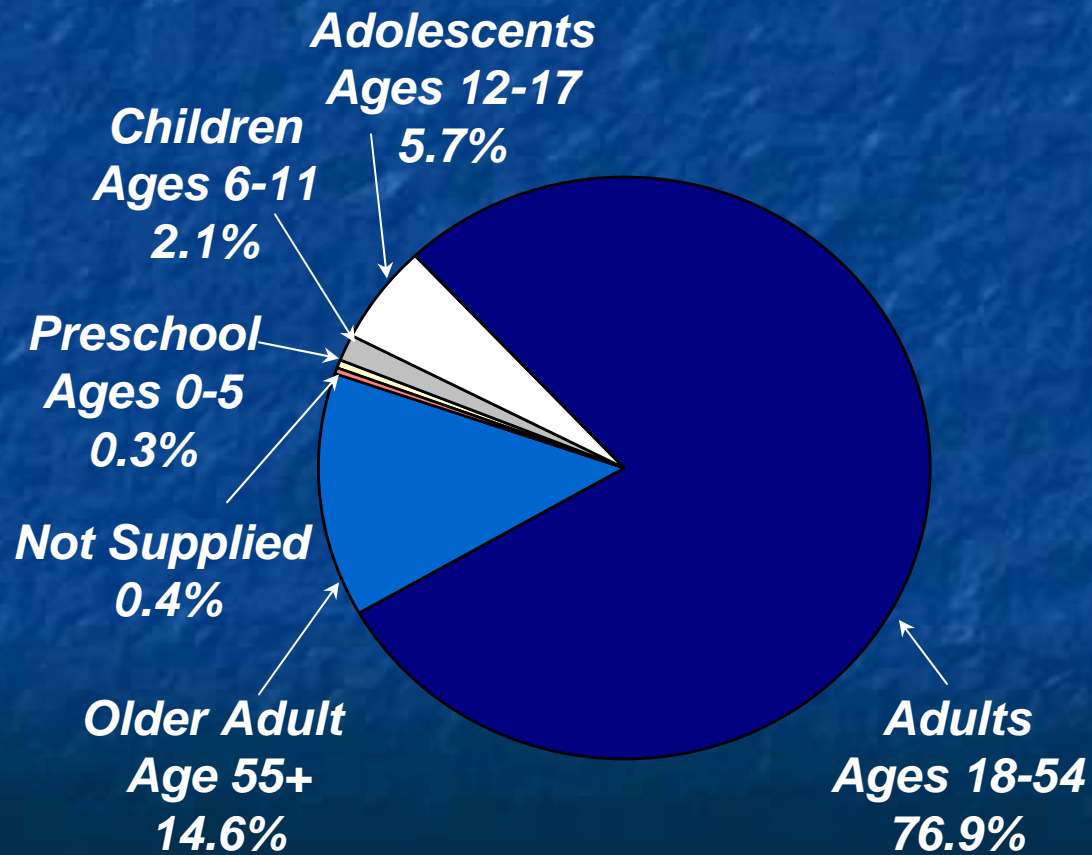


# Event reactions experienced by 10% to 20% of persons served

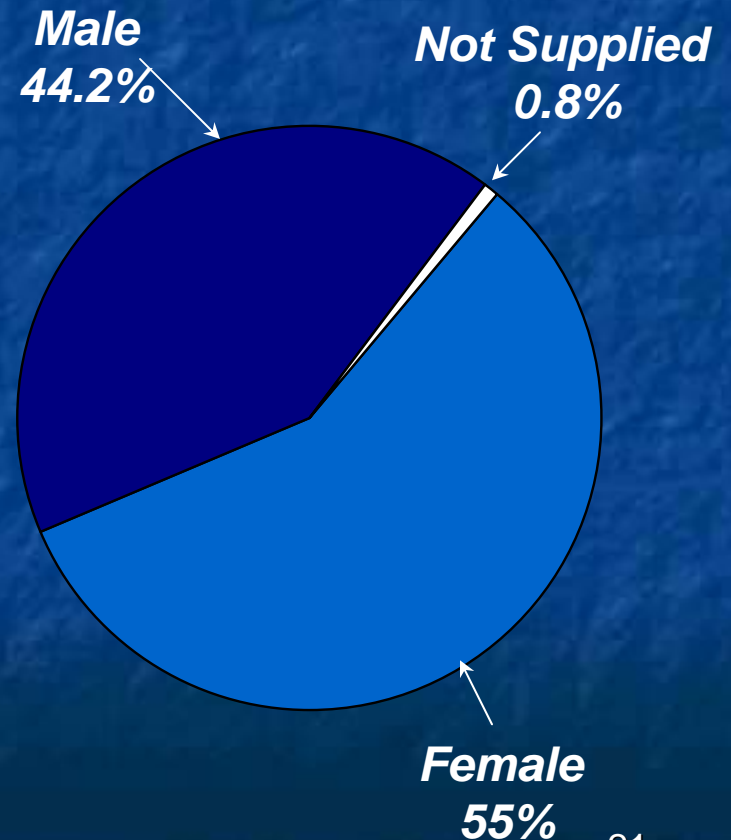


# What are the gender and age characteristics of persons receiving individual crisis counseling services?

## Age Characteristics



## Gender Characteristics

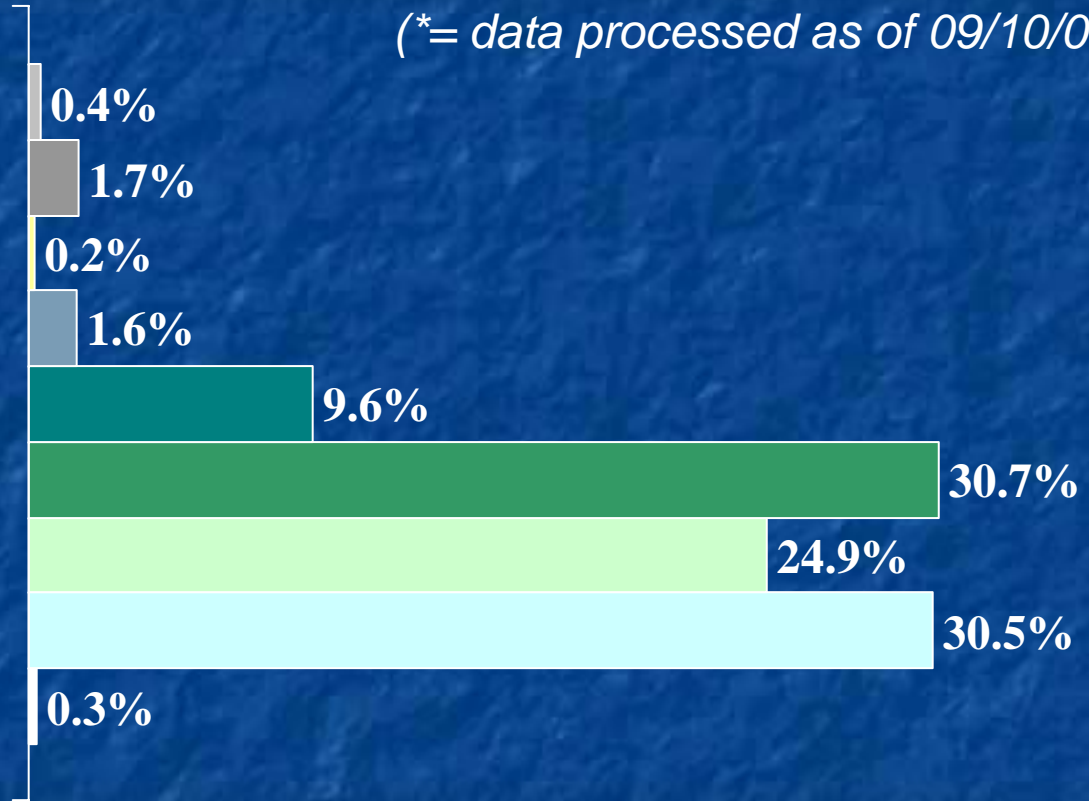




# Ethnicity of Persons Receiving Crisis Counseling Services

(\* = data processed as of 09/10/03)

- Unknown
- Other
- Native American/Alaska Native
- Middle Eastern
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Black
- Hispanic Origin
- White
- Missing



**Preferred Languages:** English = 82.1% Spanish = 7.9%  
 Chinese = 6% Other = 0.15%  
 Not Supplied = 0.55%

# Service Recipients at Risk for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

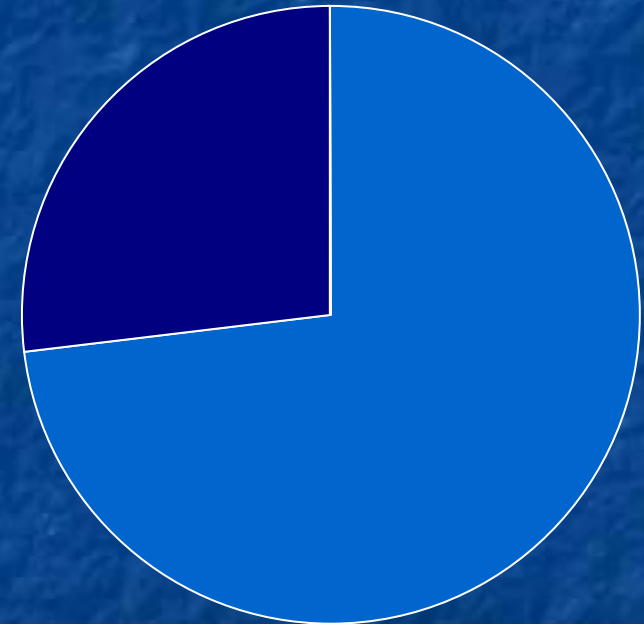
Based on the presence of 2 or more of the following reactions:

- *Distressing dreams*
- *Intrusive thoughts or images*
- *Hyper-vigilance*
- *Emotional numbness or disconnection*

OR

- *Hyper-vigilance alone*
  
- *(Derived from four item primary care PTSD screen, National Center for PTSD)*

*Persons With Reactions Suggestive of PTSD:  
27%*



*Remaining Service Recipients:  
73%*

# Service Recipients at Risk for Depression

*Based on the presence of 4 or more of these reactions:*

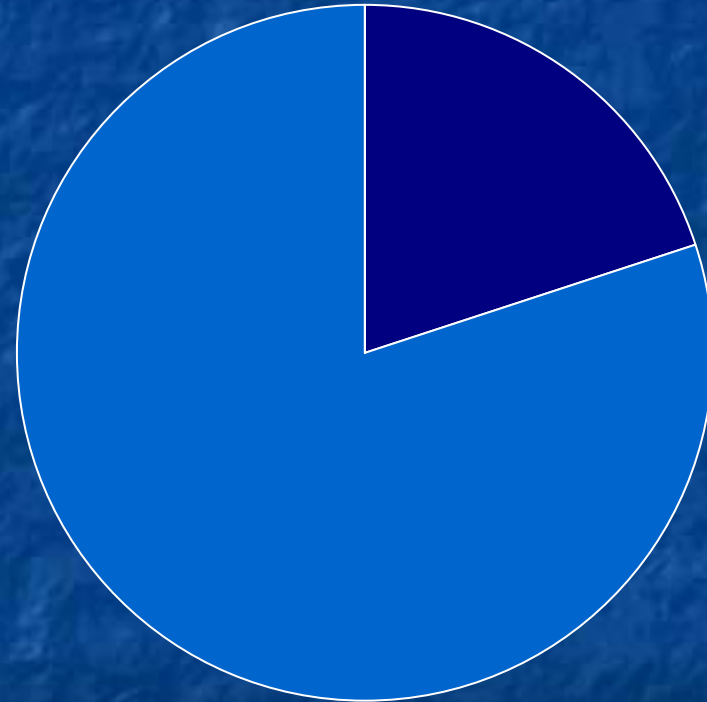
- *Change in activity level*
- *Sadness/tearfulness*
- *Despair/hopelessness*
- *Sleep disturbances*
- *Difficulty eating*
- *Fatigue/exhaustion*
- *Difficulty concentrating*
- *Difficulty remembering things*
- *Difficulty making decisions*
- *Suicidal thought*

*OR*

- *Suicidal thoughts alone*

*Persons With Reactions Suggestive of Depression:*

*20%*



*Remaining Service Recipients: 80%*



# % of Persons Referred by Risk Group

Risk Category	% Referred for Additional MH	% Referred to Substance Abuse Services	% Referred to Other Services	% With No Referral Made
Port Authority Police	24%	1%	8%	67%
Injured	24%	4%	18%	57%
Other Rescue/Recovery Workers	24%	2%	11%	64%
WTC Evacuees	20%	1%	18%	64%
Family of Missing/Deceased	20%	3%	16%	65%
Homes "Major Damage"	18%	1%	25%	59%
WTC Workers Absent on Day of Attack	18%	3%	16%	65%
Fire Department	18%	2%	13%	70%
Past or Pre-existing trauma, psychological problems or substance abuse problems	16%	6%	12%	72%
Displaced Employed and Unemployed	15%	3%	20%	65%
Police Department	15%	1%	8%	78%
Has physical disability the limits mobility	15%	6%	13%	71%
School Evacuees	13%	1%	9%	78%
School Children	10%	0%	9%	81%
Other	8%	1%	8%	84%

Nueva  
York

Nos Cómo Salir Adelante  
Después de Sept. 11

New  
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# WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

# Responding Immediately...

The public mental health system is not sufficiently prepared to respond to disasters of large scale

This includes the structured provider community (e.g. hospitals, clinics, community mental health centers)

Responding effectively requires an expansion of focus to the entire population... The first step in doing so is to use a broad Public Health approach to education in a media campaign

Since September 11, my son has been hooked on the story of the "Three Little Pigs" on TV. I didn't realize it before, but the counselor said that watching this makes him feel much better about the world that he lives in - like no matter how hard they huff and puff, and try to blow the City down, they just can't win. This makes him feel safe.

Agatha

Agatha, 37, Brooklyn

9/11


#### ONE YEAR LATER

Do you still feel the impact of the World Trade Center disaster? Many New Yorkers do. Depression. Panic. Drinking too much. Nightmares. Anxiety. Anger. Loss of Sleep.

#### ONE CALL NOW

If you experience any of these reactions, talk to us about it. We can help you. For free, confidential counseling or just someone to talk to, call **1-800-LIFENET**.

**Honor the past. Embrace your future.**

  New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene [nyc.gov/health](http://nyc.gov/health)



From my rooftop I could see the arc of black smoke cut through the sunset over Brooklyn.

As days passed and smoke cleared, it seemed that all we were left with were questions and suddenly empty sky.

...Everyday things became more important because they construct my life. And life is what I'm lucky to have. I was born and raised on this soil. And I stand strong in the knowledge that you can build a lot of new dreams in a whole lot of empty sky.

La Ronda, 29, Brooklyn



**NEW YORK NEEDS US STRONG**

New York City Department of Public Health  [nyc.gov/health](http://nyc.gov/health)

Nos  
Necesita  
Fuertes

Cómo Salir Adelante  
Después de Sept. 11

...tamos el mismo problema. Pero si la  
lbruma, llámenos al 1-877-AYÚDESE.

**NUEVA YORK NOS NECESITA FUERTES**

Departamento de Salud Pública de la Ciudad de Nueva York  [nyc.gov/health](http://nyc.gov/health)

# Responding Effectively...

Funding streams, plans, training, public education, and research must become 'mainstream' in public mental health and substance abuse policy and practice at every organizational level..

Integrate training curriculums including universities, clinics, grass roots, faith-based and community-based organizations and businesses.

Database of disaster-trained counselors prepared to conduct broad outreach into affected communities in the event of any future disaster.

Assume non-traditional public health roles...

# Assuming Public Health Roles...

Mental Health is primary -encouragement of a 'Wellness Model' that emphasizes personal and community resilience;

Greater public health focus bringing other potential opportunities beyond disaster mental health preparedness such as: leverage to advance an overall prevention agenda, further 'normalization' of mental health services and potential reduction of stigma and cultural biases.



*Even  
heroes  
need  
to  
talk.*

Call 1-800-LIFENET when you do.



**NEW YORK NEEDS US STRONG**

new york city department of mental health & addiction services



# Case Study

Attempting to provide public health, mental health and substance abuse services among 1500 evacuees from the Gulf Coast housed on a cruise ship introduced variables unexpected as opposed to working in their homes or clinics. An evacuee living on the ship for 3 months suffered from the increased stress and had multiple episodes of epilepsy, even on medication. After collapsing at the entrance to the ship, it took security 15 minutes to call an ambulance (after getting authorization from the incident commander) and 45 minutes for one to get through to the piers and past security.



# Website References

## National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

[www.ncptsd.va.gov/topics/katrina.html](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/topics/katrina.html)

## SAMHSA

[www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/](http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/)