



Health and Safety
Psychosocial Impacts



Just In Time Training Health and Safety: Psychosocial Impact

Mental Health

“a state of psychological and emotional well-being that enables an individual to work, love, relate to others effectively, and resolve conflicts”
-Mental Health Education and Resource Center

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PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESSORS

- Deployment
- Working conditions
- Assigned tasks

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Deployment


- Stressful for responder and their families
- Disruption of regular schedule
- Being away from home and family
- Unfamiliar environment
- New people



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Working Conditions

- Long work hours
- Physically demanding work
- Limited or lack of resources



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Assigned Tasks

- Prolonged exposure to injury, death and destruction
- Performing euthanasia and depopulation
- Public perception/support
 - Lack of appreciation

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SIGNS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS

- Physical
- Cognitive
- Emotional
- Behavioral

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Signs of Psychological Stress

- Physical effects
 - Fatigue, body aches and pains
 - Nausea, headache
 - Rapid heart rate, sweats and chills
 - Muscle twitching
- Cognitive (thinking)
 - Confusion, disorientation
 - Poor concentration or alertness
 - Memory problems
 - Sleep disturbances, nightmares

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Signs of Psychological Stress

- Emotional
 - Anxiety
 - Fear
 - Irritability, anger
 - Depression, sense of failure
 - Helplessness, feeling overwhelmed
- Behavioral
 - Denial
 - Distrust
 - Blame
 - Withdrawal
 - Inability to relax
 - Excessive worry
 - Substance abuse

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Psychological Disorders

- Mild, transient distress
- Acute Stress Disorder
 - 2 to 28 days after event
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
 - Longer than 4 weeks after event
- Depression
 - Persistence over 2 months after event



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REDUCING PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS

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Reducing Psychological Stress

- Pace yourself
- Take frequent rest breaks
 - Mental fatigue increases risk of injury
- Take breaks away from work areas
- Try to maintain a normal schedule
 - Regular eating and sleeping times
- Drink plenty of water
 - Avoid the use of caffeine when possible
- Eat a variety of foods
 - Increase intake of complex carbs

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Reducing Psychological Stress

- Communicate with loved ones
- Choose your own comfort level
- Avoid substance abuse
- Practice stress/relaxation techniques
- Accept what you cannot change
- Formal mental health support

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Prevention

- Be aware of psychological stress
- Monitor levels of stress
 - Yourself
 - Other responders
- Seek assistance
- Severe psychological disorder
 - Contact a health professional immediately



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Resources

- Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
 - Disaster Health Services

<http://www.samhsa.gov/trauma/index.aspx#rhp>

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Acknowledgments

Development of this presentation was by the Center for Food Security and Public Health at Iowa State University through funding from the Multi-State Partnership for Security in Agriculture

Authors: Dan Taylor, DVM, MPH; Glenda Dvorak, DVM, MPH, DACVPM



Center for Food Security & Public Health IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY