Community Capacity Building and post-disaster psychosocial reconstruction

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Meaninglessness

Lose of sense of security
Lose of sense of coherence
Dismantled social network and interpersonal relationships
Lose of goals in life
Lose of hope
Lose of sense of manageability in life
Lose of hope in life
Collective Capacity Building

Restoring *Hope* and *Meaning* for Survivors of Trauma
Restoring *Hope* and *Meaning* for Survivors of Trauma

Community Capacity Building: Long Term Solution for Reconstruction of Dignified Living in Sichuan
Catastrophe Management Initiative
Human Vulnerability

\[ H \times V - C = R \]

Hazard \times Vulnerability – Capacity = Risk
## Human Vulnerability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hazard</th>
<th>Vulnerability</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Disaster</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potential threat to humans and their welfare</td>
<td>Exposure and susceptibility to loss of life or dignity</td>
<td>Available and potential resources</td>
<td>Probability of disaster occurrence</td>
<td>Realization of a risk</td>
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</table>
Mourning and Grieving over Loss

- Loss of loved ones
- Loss of home
- Loss of past
- Loss of hope
- Loss of dreams
- Loss of sense of safety
- Loss of sense of control
- Loss of sense of security
Mourning & Searching

• Ambiguous Loss
  – Not finding the bodies of the loved one can block the normal grief process (Pauline Boss, 2004)
  – No markers exist, e.g. no bodies to bury, no mourning rituals to have a clear-cut loss

Frozen Time

• We found a passer-by who was a resident of the city and a survivor of the 512 Earthquake.
• He escaped from the rubble on the 5th day of the disaster.
• However, some of his family members had lost their lives during the earthquake and still buried under the rubble.
• Half year after the Earthquake, he is still wandering around the abandoned city and searching for his family members and searching for his lost home.
Hobfoll’s 5 elements of intervention (2007)

- Sense of safety
- Calmness
- Sense of self and community effectiveness
- Connectedness
- Hope

Levels of Needs

- Problem-solving and task-centered

- Individual therapies
  - For individuals suffering from PTSD and other kinds of psychiatric disorders

- Family & Group therapies
  - For families losing loved ones and close relatives – attention is needed for their bereavement, especially for those with prolonged grief

- Community Capacity Building
  - For communities affected by the disaster and those located in earthquake zones – community resilience and preparedness towards natural disasters
1st: Mourning & grieving
2nd: De-victimization
3rd: Restoration of dignified living
4th: Self-Help capacity building
5th: Restoration of quality living

Community Resilience & Social Cohesion
Use of Community

• Ferell N. and Cole J.B. (2002) advocated professionals to use the community as a context of healing
  – To help victims of disaster through focusing on the mending of disrupted social roles, rebuilding of dismantled community and social order of the world, re-establish interrupted routine so as to diminish the impact of loss
To facilitate post-traumatic growth...
...creating a supportive school environment
Strength-focused and Meaning-oriented Approach to Resilience and Transformation (SMART) Model
The SMART Intervention

• Aim
  – To enhance holistic well-being in face with trauma
  – To transform negative impacts into personal growth

• Model
  – Integrated with the philosophy of Chinese Medicine of harmony, modesty, balance, growth through pain, appreciation of life, accept unpredictability in life, so as to embrace adversity

Overview of SMART

- **Strength-focused**: Re-affirmation of inner strengths
- **Meaning-oriented**: Re-appraisals of life values through cognitive restructuring

**Result:**
- **Resilience** – building strengths for future challenges
- **Transformation** – gaining a new sense of purpose and appreciation of life
Strength-focused

• Principle:
  – Based on affirmation
  – Not focused on elimination of negative emotions and symptoms
  – Stress the importance of looking for inner strengths and growth
Meaning-oriented

- Grief work by R. Neimeyer highlights the power of meaning reconstruction
- Meaning searching, sense making, benefit finding, meaning reconstruction
- Coherent narrative for personal and social transformation (Berzoff, 2006)
- By bringing nuanced changes in narratives of the person, meaning could be reconstructed
Post-traumatic growth

- Research emerging from records of anecdotal accounts to systematic investigation
- Ordinary people in face of trauma and major losses more likely to exhibit resilience than “psychopathological” responses (Bonanno, 2004)
- People who reported growth experienced less distress symptoms (Linley & Joseph, 2004)
Post-traumatic growth

• Not anomaly, but rather within reach of most people under conducive and supportive circumstances
• ‘It is unlikely that the passage of time per se influences adversarial growth, but rather intervening events and processes.’ (Linley & Joseph, 2004, p.17)
De-victimization

- Shelter
- Hygiene
- Back to school
- Return to work
- Establish daily routine
- Market and shops
- Retails
- Health care
- Communal activities
Grief Pattern for adults and children
Transformation Process

Uncover
• Uncover the wounds
• Share their concerns and emotions with others
• Mindful of pain and suffering
• Cope with physical illness and psychological distress

Recover

Discover
Mourn over the lost of home and memories of the deceased spouse.
Collective Mourning

- Legitimize mourning and grieving
  - Group and collective rituals of mourning
  - Collective art and wisdom
  - Organized continuing bonds
  - Counting blessing of deceased
  - Blessings and mutual caring
  - Therapeutic elements of Oral History or Journal Writing
Collective Memorialization

- Establishment of earthquake museum
- Preservation of traditional cultural practices
Mourning Rituals

• Suggestions
  – Group rituals of mourning and dispensing remains breaks down the denial of death and loss
    • Allow bereaved and affected individuals to go through the normal grieving process
  – Collective celebration
    • Community theatre, songs, feast, music, rituals, festive activities, games, dance, opera, chanting
Rebuilding Hope

- Culturally relevant
- Age appropriate
- Active community collective participation
Mourning Rituals

• Suggestions
  – Establishment of earthquake museum
  – Reservation of traditional cultural practices
Transformation Process

Uncover

Recover

Discover

Recovery and Rehabilitation

- Accept the situation
- Seek Help
- Adjust of self and others to the new situation
- Build up personal capacities
- Mobilize resources
Recover

Active coping
Fun time
Games
Sports
Expressive Arts

Music and Dancing Group
“Although we suffer during the earthquake, it is still okay for me to have fun now”
Gratitude and Appreciation

• Appreciation (感恩的心) :

★ Her house collapsed and her husband was injured

★ Yet she found herself very fortunate to have soldiers helping to rebuild the house

★ She gave these handmade insoles to soldiers as she explained “I don’t have much to give, I just want to say thanks to them”
Transformation Process

Uncover

• Forgive themselves & others
• Focus on personal growth
• Redefine the meaning & priorities of life
• Discover new self
• Maintain a peace of mind

Discover

Recover
Discover

Helping others

“When the twelve of us walk hands in hands, our dreams can be materialized together”
Wheel of Transformation

Relationships

Body
Mind
Spirituality
Cognition
A Temporary School
Evaluation of Teachers’ training in ShiFang (什邡)

“I regain my faith and courage”

“Now I understand happiness is a choice”

“Put the earthquake behind us, let’s focus on rebuilding our new lives”

“Count our blessing”

“Now I realize it is my choice to be happy”

“I choose to be strong, I know I can conquer anything”

“I know how to find my direction in life, I know it will only be better”

陳麗雲、樊富珉 (2008). 身心靈全人健康模式—中國文化與團體心理輔導
Reconstruction of Dignified Living

- Maintain Normalcy
  - Promoting Continuity of self
  - Fostering Resilience
  - Facilitate Sense Making

- Facilitate Social Involvement
  - Re-establish Communal Responsibility
  - Sense of Usefulness by helping others

- Promote Physical Activity to prevent Illness & Pain
  - Re-establish a sense of control for one’s life

- Enhancing Social Support
  - Re-establishing Social Network
  - Building Family Intimacy
Return to Normality – Work, Income, Sense of Community
Community Resilience

• Building the community resilience to disaster
  – Readiness enhancement and risk reduction, including several representative adjustments to carry out at homes, schools and other places (Mileti & Darlington, 1997)
  – e.g. storage of emergency equipment

Current Projects

- **Establishing Community Service & Resource Centers (CSRC)**
  - In Jiannan Township, Mianzhu County, Deyang City (in collaboration with Beijing Normal University)
  - In Qushan Township, Beichuan, Mianyang City (in collaboration with Institute of Psychology, Academy of Science)
Community Service & Resource Centers (CSRC)

- Promoting community recovery and redevelopment
- Serving the needs of the vulnerable groups through various social service provisions;
- Enhancing the community self-governing capacity through the training of local teachers;
Recreate Joy in Temporary Housing Areas
Returning to Normality
Fostering resilience through self-help and capacity building activities
Why do we need community capacity building?

Because disaster could happen any time!
They are expected to happen more often!
Community Capacity Building

- Social Services Network
- Facilitate sense of Belonging
- Promote sense of Connectedness

- Economic Independence
- Existing Expertise Investment
- Generate Income & Employment

- Facilitate Community Participation
- Social Equality
- Sense of Safety & Justice

- Instill Hope & Empowerment
- Renew Goals & Motivation
Journal Writing, Calligraphy, Poetry, Art Work, Songs As Healing Activities
Bereavement & Dislocation: Distraction, working teams, Social Support

Photo by Zhang Oi Lin – Xin Hua Net
Healthy Physical Games and sports
让过必将天晴
Project TRANSCEND
Expressive Arts Intervention

• Movement Therapy
Expressive Arts Intervention

• In a drawing activity, a child drew a big black hole representing his fear.

• During the workshop, the child was able to learn how to change his view from the unhappy experience into positive meaning.

• He added a head, four legs and a tail onto the black hole and transform his fear into a cute lovely tortoise.
Local Cadres Training

• Self-care and grief intervention for local cadres to reduce work stress.
Setting up Social Enterprise

- Flowers of Hope – local women making ribbon flowers for sell in Mothers’ Day. All the profits are for the ladies’ wage and the investment for further service for the community.
Reflections?

- Arranged remarriage for the bereaved couples
- Children of newly restructured families?
- Loyalty issues to deceased spouses
- Needs of connection with in-law families
- Tang Shan experience?
- When is a good time?
- Issues of child birth…
Reflections?

- Rapid Pregnancy for bereaved mothers
- Knowledge of emotional resilience
- Trajectory of grief and bereavement
- Heros of the Earthquake. How do they adjust their new lives?
- Moving on and collective avoidance… denial of emotional needs, institutionalization of resilience?
Gifts of Love in Rebuilding
Hope & Dignified Living
Bless them and Thank you!
Be Prepared for Crisis, Loss and Disaster!
To Everyone Of You:

“THANK YOU!”