Building Resilience Ground Up
Dr Alex Su
Head CARE, IMH
SINGAPORE
Team & Video Presentation

Presentation Structure
- Brief introduction of Singapore
- History of Disasters in Singapore
- National Care Management System
- Lessons in Building Resilience

Singapore

2012 Statistics
Population 5.3 million
- Bangkok 9.1 million
- Jakarta 10 million
- Chengdu 14.5 million

Land Area 704 km²
- Bangkok 1569 km²
- Jakarta 662 km²
- Chengdu 12,132 km²

City state
Geographically safe from natural disasters

Hotel New World Disaster

- Singapore’s deadliest civil disaster
- Occurred on 15 March 1986
- A six-story building rapidly collapsed, trapping 50 people beneath the rubble. 17 were rescued, while 33 were killed.

Singapore Airlines Flight 117

- 26 March 1991
- Hijacked in flight by four male Pakistanis passengers.
- The hijackers killed and hostages unhurt

SilkAir Flight 185

- 19 Dec 1997
- 104 lives lost
- Scheduled passenger flight from Jakarta to Singapore crashed into Musi River

Singapore Airlines SQ006 Crash in Taiwan (2000)

- 31 October 2000
- Aircraft attempted to take off from the wrong runway in Taipei during a typhoon.
- Crashed into construction equipment on the runway, killing 83 of the 179 occupants.

SARS 2003

- Map of the world showing the spread of SARS in 2003
Nicoll Highway Collapse

- 24 April 2004
- A construction accident
- A tunnel being constructed for use by MRT trains collapsed
- The collapse killed four people and injured three

World-shaping Events (Terrorist Attacks)

- Sept 11, 2001: New York City
- Oct 12, 2002: Bali
- Mar 11, 2004: Madrid
- Sept, 2004: Beslan
- Sept 10, 2004: Jakarta
- July 7 & 21, 2005: London Bombing
- Nov 26, 2008: Mumbai

World-shaping Events (Natural Disasters)

- Dec 26, 2004: Earthquake & Asian Tsunami
- Aug 29, 2005: Hurricane Katrina & Rita
- May 27, 2006: Yogyakarta earthquake
- May 12, 2008: Sichuan earthquake
- Jan 2011: Flood in Australia
- Feb 2011: Christchurch Earthquake
- Mar 2011: Japan Nuclear Disaster

Why Early Psychological Intervention?

- Short-term reduction of distress and suffering
- Improve coping behavior
- Establish support networks within and between organizations
- Likely earlier identification and possibly reduction in long-term psychiatric morbidity
  - Sick days, job turnover, work and domestic stress, anxiety disorders, depression, substance misuse and PTSD
National CARE (Caring Action in Response to Emergencies) System

- The NCMS incepted in 1994 as a response element to emergencies
- It is developed as a home-front system to provide psychological inputs in the management of a crisis and the first line of psychological and emotional support to cushion and mitigate the impact of the trauma in a crisis

The National CARE Management System (NCMS)

- A multi-agency, multi-ministry network:
  - Ministry of Health (MOH)*
  - Ministry of Social And Family Development (MSF)
  - Ministry of Education (MOE)
  - Ministry of Information, Communication and The Arts (MICA)
  - National Environment Agency (NEA)
  - Ministry of Transport (MOT)
  - Ministry of Manpower (MOM)
  - Ministry of Defense (MINDEF)
  - Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)
  - Singapore Civil Defense Force (SCDF)
  - Singapore Police Force (SPF)
  - Singapore Prisons Services (SPS)

Mission

- Provide psychological support for victims, relatives, rescue workers and the public before, during and after a crisis
- Provide psychological training and input to crisis managers
  - Psychological aspects of emergency planning
  - Crisis information flow & dissemination

CARE Officers

- CARE Officers form the core structure of the NCMS
- A CARE Officer is an individual
  - Whose primary role in his/her organization involves emergency planning
  - Who has completed the Basic CARE Course
  - Able to provide psychological assistance during crisis situations
  - With reference to his/her organization's role during a crisis
NCMS Training

- CARE Officer selection
  - No strict criteria
  - A sound understanding of structure, function and operational procedures of his agency
  - Good interpersonal skills
    - Openness to new ideas
    - Communication skills
    - Leadership skills
    - Ability to work under pressure

- Basic CARE Officer Course
- CARE Updates / Refreshers
- Emergency exercises

Clients as Strategic Partners in Resilience Building

NCMS Training Syllabus

- NCMS concepts and structure
- Various organizations’ responses to disaster
- Psychological reactions to disaster
- What helpers should expect
- Brief Grief and bereavement counseling
- Basic helping skills
- Helping the helpers
- Information management skills
- Case studies
Resilience building during peacetime as part of preparedness strategies

IMH also provides crisis training to our strategic partners. Key areas covered:
1. Psychological reactions to stress
2. Crisis management
3. Circles of vulnerability
4. Basic intervention skills
5. Coping with grief, death and bereavement
6. Cultural, religious and racial aspects if grief
7. Helping the helpers
8. Role plays *

Summary and Learning points

- Trauma, disaster and crisis are more relevant today than ever before
- People are generally resilient - psychological reactions are experienced by all, but the majority (despite being transiently intense) have no long term effects
- “Normal response to an Abnormal situation” – very important statement to help those involved in “normalizing” their experience.
- However, there exists an “at-risk” group where intervention is necessary to allay suffering and reduce future morbidity
- Psychological response to disaster management need to be well organized and co-ordinated.
Looking forward

• At a **national** level, NCMS provides psychological support for victims, relatives, front rescuers and the public before, during and after a crisis.

• Sharing of **best practices** amongst partners & agencies within Singapore supports resilience building as a nation.

• **On a regional level,** create platforms for different countries and professionals to interact to share experience.

• Knowledge sharing allows us to progressively develop mental health services to support **resilient communities across Asia.**

---

**Video Presentation**

*Acknowledgements*

Crisis Management Services Unit, Singapore Airlines 
&
all who have shared their stories to make this video possible