

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)

Natural Disasters and a Community-Based Systems of Care Approach for Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists and Pediatric Services

Background: Natural disasters, such as storms, fires, earthquakes, are increasingly frequent occurrences which significantly impact individuals, families, communities and systems of care. It is important that child and adolescent psychiatrists and other providers serving children's mental health (health care, schools, community and faith-based organizations and others (are informed regarding principles and practices for disaster preparedness and managing post-disaster recovery).

Learning Objectives: This module can be used as a self-directed resource or as part of a curriculum to address existing knowledge gaps for child and adolescent psychiatrists, trainees, providers and systems of care serving youth and families. As a result of using this module the reader/ participants will be able to:

1. Identify core principles and practices of disaster readiness especially as it relates to planning for the needs of youth and families.
2. Articulate a systems of care approach to natural disaster preparedness and recovery, especially in addressing the mental health needs of youth.
3. Describe the role of child and adolescent psychiatry as part of a coordinated and systems of care response to natural disasters.
4. Consider the particular needs and practice considerations for special populations of children, for example children with intellectual and physical disabilities, rural and lower-income communities, immigrant and refugee youth.

Methods: This training module integrates: 1) the existing literature in disaster psychiatry and in particular for natural disasters, and the principles of system of care approaches; 2) expert and key informant recommendations from the field of disaster psychiatry and disaster response; 3) and case examples prepared from field interviews in the post-disaster contexts of Puerto Rico, North Carolina and California. The module will offer core competencies and recommendations for disaster responsiveness for child and adolescent serving systems i.e. pediatric health and behavioral health; schools and higher education; community agencies, faith-based and other key organizations during the various phases of natural disasters. The module will also provide information for supporting special populations through disasters, for example children with disabilities, rural and lower-income communities, immigrant and refugee youth with a consideration for the social context and systems of care factors that can result in potential vulnerabilities for certain communities.

AACAP Committees: Community Based Systems of Care, Disaster and Trauma Committee, Autism and Intellectual Disabilities Committee.

Part I: Intro: Disaster and Community Systems of Care for Children and Families

- I. Introduction—A Scientific Review
- II. Learning Goals
- III. The mental health of Children, Families in Disasters
- IV. Systems of Care Approach for CAPs
 - A. Disaster Response Agencies
 - B. Community-Based Organizations
 - C. Faith-Based Organizations--
 - D. Medical and Mental Health Services
 - E. Schools and Daycare
 - F. Housing and Shelters

Part 2: Prevention and Response for Children and Adolescents in a Disaster

- V. Disaster Response Models important for Preparing for and Responding to the Needs of Children
- VI. Systems preparation and readiness as trauma prevention
- VII. Vulnerable Populations in the context of Disasters
 - A. Case Vignettes
 - B. Discussion Summary to Intro
- VIII. Supporting schools and teachers
 - A. Case Vignette—Puerto Rico and others
- IX. Mental health services readiness and models of intervention
 - A. Case Vignette—North Carolina and others