

# Community-based Disaster Mental Health Intervention (CBDMHI):

Curriculum manual for use with communities affected by natural disasters in Nepal

**3-Day English Language Version, October 2016**

*Also Available in Nepali*



Photos from top left moving clockwise: community mapping during intervention – photo by Leah James; Kailali district flooding - Shree Niwas Khanal; Bhaktapur district earthquake damage - Courtney Welton-Mitchell; using natural materials during intervention – Courtney Welton-Mitchell.

## Acknowledgments

This manual is a joint initiative from the Institute of Behavioral Science, Natural Hazards Center, University of Colorado – Boulder, and Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO) Nepal. This manual draws on material from a disaster mental health intervention initially developed by L. James and Soulaje Lespri Moun (SLM) Haiti in the aftermath of the earthquake that struck Haiti in January 2010. The Haitian manual includes content pulled from a disaster prevention training curriculum developed by A. Vudoff, along with additional material incorporated by L. James, C. Welton-Mitchell, E. Childs, M. Tucker, and D. Nicol. The Haitian content was adapted for the Nepal context by James and Welton-Mitchell in collaboration with Nepali clinical and psychosocial staff from TPO Nepal - in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Kailali districts, during several rounds of workshops. Thanks to Rubina Awale, Shree Niwas Khanal, Joshila Rai, and other TPO Nepal staff who were instrumental in translating this manual into Nepali. Thanks too to Katy Wall and RaeAnn Dietlin for edits to earlier versions of this manual. This version of the manual is designed for communities in Nepal affected by a variety of ‘natural’ disasters, including floods, landslides, and earthquakes.

The development and testing of this three-day intervention curriculum was made possible through funds from DFID and Wellcome Trust through the ELRHA R2HC grants mechanism (<http://www.elrha.org/r2hc/home/>). ELRHA R2HC grants were provided for the following two research projects: “Enhancing Community Resilience in the Acute Aftermath of Disaster: Evaluation of a Disaster Mental Health Intervention for flood-prone communities in Haiti and Nepal,” and the associated “Adaptation and Evaluation of a Disaster Mental Health Intervention for Earthquake Survivors in Kathmandu Valley.”

Please feel free to use content from this curriculum manual as useful. We appreciate if you credit the source, suggested citation –

James, L, Welton-Mitchell, C. & TPO Nepal (2016). Community-based disaster mental health intervention (CBDMI): Curriculum manual for use with communities affected by natural disasters in Nepal.
---

For questions or comments, please contact authors –  
Leah James: leahemilyjames@gmail.com  
Courtney Welton-Mitchell: CourtneyMitchell13@gmail.com

TPO Nepal: Head Office: Baluwatar, Kathmandu - Nepal  
G.P.O Box 8974/C.P.C. Box 612  
Telephone: +977-01-4431717/4437124/4424082  
Email: tponepal@tponepal.org.np  
Website: <http://www.tponepal.org>

## Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>Intervention Objectives .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Day 1.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Check-In .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Welcome and Introduction.....</b>	<b>7</b>
Activity: Icebreaker .....	7
Definitions .....	9
Activity: Rock Demonstration.....	10
Activity: Group Expectations .....	11
Activity: Drawing Your Feelings.....	12
<b>Mental Health Matters.....</b>	<b>14</b>
Bodily (Physical/Somatic) Symptoms .....	15
Observing and Calming Body Reaction .....	16
Activity: Tick Tick...Boom .....	16
Activity: Breathing.....	17
Emotional/Cognitive Reactions .....	18
Activity: Body Shake .....	19
Activity: Grounding.....	20
Activity: Mindfulness.....	22
Mind-body connection.....	23
<b>Mental Health Stigma .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Coping .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Closing and Review .....</b>	<b>28</b>
Activity: Day in Review .....	28
Homework.....	28
<b>Day 2.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Welcome .....</b>	<b>30</b>
Activity: Mental Health Check-In with Natural Materials .....	30
Homework Review .....	31
<b>Safety Stories and Symbols .....</b>	<b>31</b>
Activity: Creating Safety .....	31
<b>Link Between Mental Health and Disaster Preparedness.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Disasters, Vulnerabilities, and Resources .....</b>	<b>33</b>
Definitions .....	33
<b>Causes of Disaster and Disaster Preparedness.....</b>	<b>35</b>
"Drowning Man" .....	36
<b>Mental Health Check-In.....</b>	<b>38</b>
Activity: Progressive Muscle Relaxation .....	38
<b>Disaster Preparedness and Intervention .....</b>	<b>39</b>
Activity: "How Do You Prepare?" .....	39
<b>Household Level Preparedness.....</b>	<b>42</b>
Activity: Developing Household Emergency Action Plans.....	42
Activity: Teamwork.....	43
<b>Community Risk and Resource Maps .....</b>	<b>43</b>

Activity: Mapping Our Communities.....	44
<b>Helping Others with Typical Stress Reactions in the Aftermath of Disasters .....</b>	<b>45</b>
Introduction to Psychological First Aid (PFA) .....	45
Action principles of PFA.....	46
The 8 Core Functions of PFA .....	46
Activity: Counselor Role Play.....	49
<b>Closing and Review .....</b>	<b>50</b>
Homework Assignment .....	50
<b>Day 3.....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Welcome .....</b>	<b>53</b>
Activity: Peeling the Onion.....	53
Homework Review .....	53
<b>Helping Extremely Vulnerable Groups .....</b>	<b>54</b>
Helping Children with Stress Reactions in the Aftermath of Disasters.....	54
“A Hopeful Mouse” .....	56
Activity: Butterfly Hug.....	55
Activity: Role Play Teaching a Child Coping Skills.....	57
<b>Helping Those with Mental Health Issues that Seriously Affect Functioning in the Aftermath of Disasters.....</b>	<b>57</b>
Mental Health First Aid in Disaster Context.....	57
Severe Mental Health Symptoms.....	57
<b>Resiliency and Hope .....</b>	<b>58</b>
Activity: Tree of Hope Exercise.....	61
<b>Psychological Preparedness.....</b>	<b>62</b>
Strategies to remain calm and collected under stress .....	63
<b>Bringing it All Together When Disaster Strikes .....</b>	<b>63</b>
Activity: Mini-Simulation.....	63
Group Celebration.....	65
<b>Day 1 Handout.....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Day 2 Handout .....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Day 3 Handout .....</b>	<b>70</b>

## Intervention Objectives

1. Reduce mental health symptoms;
2. Increase functioning;
3. Increase use of coping skills;
4. Reduce mental health stigma;
5. Increase mental health knowledge/literacy;
6. Increase disaster preparedness knowledge and behaviors;
7. Increase help-*giving* behaviors (social support) – for disasters generally, and mental health specifically;
8. Increase help-*seeking* behavior (informal and formal resources) – for disasters generally, and mental health specifically.

*Note: Results of the research associated with this intervention manual available upon request.*



Day 1  
9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

---

### **Overview**

- *Welcome and introduction*
- *Definitions*
- *Mental health check-in*
- *Mental health matters*
- *Mental health stigma*
- *Coping*
- *Link between mental health and disaster preparedness*

9:30 – 10:00

---

### **Check-In**

**Note to facilitators:** Welcome participants as they arrive. Use main participant number and contact list to check participants in upon arrival to the training. When applicable, confirm that participants have completed Time 1/Baseline Pre-Assessment Measures prior to start of training.

10:00 – 11:15

---

### **Welcome and Introduction**

Welcome to this interactive training. We're very happy that you have chosen to participate and we hope that you will learn things that will benefit you, your family and your community. We also **look forward to hearing ideas from you throughout this training**. You are experts on your own experiences and those of your community, and we can all learn more if everyone here is open to sharing with each other.

### **Activity: Icebreaker** (20-30 minutes)

We would like to begin by taking some time to allow you to introduce yourself to the group, introduce myself/ourselves to the group, and tell you about the origins of this project.

**Note to facilitators:** The purpose of this activity is to put everyone at ease and allow the group to begin to get to know one another and share. There are a few options for ice breaker activities, please review options listed below and select one or two, or allow group members to select.

Each participant...

- 1) Says one special thing about themselves (e.g., this could be the meaning of their name);
- 2) Shares a like/dislike, with some explanation of why (e.g., I like the rain because...);
- 3) Is given the opportunity to sing a song or recite a poem and explain why they selected this to share.

Introduction of Counselors:

- 1) Share your full name;
- 2) Share something fun or interesting about yourself, such as where you are from, likes/dislikes, or other ideas (based on what is selected for the participant icebreaker in previous section);
- 3) Share a bit about your experience with mental health counseling and/or disaster preparedness training – why is this work meaningful/important to you?;
- 4) Ask participants if they have any questions for you.

### **Origin of the Current Project**

Introduction for TPO facilitators: *I am working as a counselor/psychosocial worker for a Nepali organization called Transcultural Psychological Organization-Nepal. TPO works in many locations in and around Nepal providing psychosocial and mental health support, including for communities experiencing natural disasters such as floods, landslides, and earthquakes.*

**Note to facilitators:** Some versions of this intervention may be implemented with **pre- and post-intervention survey** to assess participant learning. If using pre- and post-survey, administer pre-survey now, with the following explanation:

Before we continue, we would like to request that you complete a short survey about the topics that will be covered in this training. We are asking you these questions before and after this training so we can understand whether this training is effective for you. By “effective” we mean that we want to understand if this 3-day training can help people be more physically and psychologically prepared when a disaster happens, and to cope with difficult past experiences such as major disasters. The training includes information about disaster preparedness, risk reduction, and overall mental health and wellbeing.

Please keep in mind that this is not an exam and we do not expect that you know the answers to all of these questions today! Please feel comfortable answering however you would like. Please try to complete this on your own, and ask us questions if anything is unclear. For anyone with difficulty reading we will send someone over to assist you.

**Note to facilitators:** Facilitators should carefully explain the survey instructions, including the use of response scales. Depending on the education level of the participants, it may be necessary to read the survey questions aloud to participants.



## Definitions

(15-20 minutes)

Before we continue, we would like to take a minute to define “psychosocial and mental health”. We will be using these terms throughout the training.

## Discussion

***What do these words – psychosocial, mental health – mean to you?***

“Psychosocial well-being” can refer to **mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being**.

When we say “mental health” in this training we include both psychosocial issues AND more severe mental health issues. This can include everything ranging from feeling nervous and having trouble sleeping related to earthquake and aftershocks, to seeing or hearing things that aren’t there.

For some of you it may be useful to think about these concepts in terms of the “heart-mind” and the “brain-mind”, including how frightening and distressing experiences such as disasters may create wounds/sores on the heart-mind. If this terminology isn’t useful for you however, don’t worry. We want you to share your own ideas, definitions, and descriptions about mental health and psychosocial issues.

## Discussion continued...

***How would you define ‘mental health’?***

***Do you think it is helpful to distinguish between well-being of the ‘heart-mind’ and the ‘brain-mind’? If not, how might you explain ‘mental health’ or ‘psychosocial wellbeing’ to someone who has never heard these terms before?***

Thank you for that discussion. As we mentioned, we will revisit these words and ideas throughout the training and hope that you will continue to share your ideas.

Some of you might be wondering why we should bother talking about mental health when you may have other needs like housing, food, employment or education concerns. It is important to understand that just as you need food for your body, you can also benefit from relief to the heart and mind, especially after an event such as a flood or an earthquake. When your heart-mind [**note to facilitators:** you may substitute other language here] has relief, you may find it easier to address other needs in your life. For example, a person suffering from wounds/sores on the heart-mind may have difficulty planting or harvesting crops, taking care of children, or other daily tasks.

We hope you will feel good after this training and that you will find the content useful. We also hope that you may be able to use some of the knowledge you have gained about mental health/psychosocial needs and disaster preparedness to help others in your family and community.

***Note to facilitators:*** Explore this in some depth to clarify community-specific use and understanding of terminology up front, including stigma-related concerns. Some words/ideas may be more likely to be seen as very negative and as such, highly stigmatized.

## **Activity: Rock Demonstration**

*(15 Minutes)*

[Have participants get into small groups of about 5 persons each] As you can see, we are meeting in small groups. Let's do an activity that can help us to think about the role of the group.

**Do you notice the large rock(s) sitting in this room? I would like someone to volunteer to lift this rock using only one finger.**

*Note to facilitators:* Before the participant lifts the rock, emphasize that the person can only use one finger. Ask for several other volunteers to try to lift the rock with only one finger.

**Now, let's see what happens when many people work together to do this difficult task.**

*Note to facilitators:* Ask the WHOLE group to lift the rock together with each member only using one finger. After the group successfully lifts the rock (as a group), lead the group in a discussion about the significance of this activity.

### **Suggested discussion questions:**

- What does this rock represent? - Burdens, troubles, difficult tasks.
- How did the person feel when they had to lift it alone? – It was difficult, impossible, very heavy.
- How did the person feel when they had the group to help lift the rock? – It was light, easy to carry.
- What does this suggest about the purpose of the group? – To support each other in carrying our burdens (including mental health burdens); to allow us to accomplish difficult tasks together that we might not have been able to do individually (like disaster preparation). In sum, this activity is designed to show us the value of the group, in other words - how there is strength in numbers.

This exercise may also make us think about rocks and rubble from earthquakes and other disasters, and the role of the community in helping to clear the rubble and rebuild. During the next 3 days, we have the opportunity to learn and work together. Just like in this demonstration, we hope we can each find success as we support and help each other.

## Activity: Group Expectations

(20 Minutes)

What Expectations do you have for this training? What do you want to learn or accomplish?

**Note to facilitators:** Participants should volunteer some hopes/expectations for the training (e.g. learn about how to prepare for disasters, learn how to help one's own family and community before and after disasters). Try to be realistic about what is and is not possible in this training.

For us to meet these expectations in this training, it is important that all group participants feel safe and comfortable. We will be talking about disasters, such as monsoon rains and flooding, earthquakes, and landslides, and about mental health. These can be stressful and upsetting things to talk about, so it is important that everyone feels supported when they share with the group. Let's take a few minutes to identify group expectations and ground rules for the next three days of the training.

**Note to facilitators:** Participants should brainstorm ground rules for the training. Counselors can write rules as they are shared and fill in rules below as needed. If participants are stuck, suggest rules that previous groups identified as useful.

The primary rule is **RESPECT** – for each other, for the presenters, and for everyone's time. This can include:

- As much as possible, attend all parts of the training and arrive on time. Tell or call the group facilitator if you cannot attend or will be late. Don't answer phone calls in the group (unless there is a concern about a potential emergency). This is part of respecting the group's time.
- Avoid interrupting when others are speaking and make sure to allow time for all to speak (e.g., equal time for men, women, more quiet people).
- Avoid criticism or putting others down BUT it is okay to disagree respectfully. What are some examples of ways to express different opinions in respectful ways?
- **Confidentiality:** In this group, we want everyone to feel comfortable sharing how he or she is feeling. To do this, we have to maintain confidentiality, so that no one outside of the group finds out private information. This means that no one should repeat private information shared in the group to anyone outside of the group (share example of times confidentiality was broken and the implications - such as the group member did not return, or shut down/stopped talking).
  - It is important to remember that some information can, and should, be shared outside of the group. For example, we hope you will share some of the training information on coping skills, giving and receiving help, and preparing for disasters with others. However, you should not tell others about personal stories or emotions shared by participants unless the participant gives you permission to share.

Now that we have group expectations and rules, we also need a group song or slogan! Who can suggest a song or saying that represents our group? We can use this song or slogan to open and close every day of the training.

11:05 – 11:15

---

**10-minute break**

11:15 – 12:00

---

For the rest of today, we will discuss mental health and psychosocial reactions – some happy, some sad/distressing. We will also discuss ways to cope with the reactions that may be distressing. Sometimes people don't pay much attention to their emotional and physical feelings – so let's start by doing an activity to get in touch with our emotions and associated physical reactions.

### **Activity: Drawing Your Feelings**

*(45 minutes)*

**Note to facilitators:** Give each participant three pieces of paper. Arrange a variety of art supplies (pens, markers, crayons of different colors) within easy reach of all participants. Please note that you can choose to use *some* or *all* of the instructions below. For participant groups who find this exercise new and/or challenging, it may be useful to shorten the activity by exploring fewer emotions and sensations (e.g., to choose just 3 emotions and 2 physical sensations).

**For each of the following steps,** act out the emotion or sensation participants are being asked to draw on their paper. For example, act out anger by clenching your fists, frowning, yelling, stomping your feet, etc. If participants are comfortable, ask for a volunteer to demonstrate the emotion or sensation to the class or for the group to act the emotion or sensation out with you from their seats. Following every **Act out “\_\_\_\_\_”** allow no more than 1 minute for participants to draw the emotion/sensation being explored.

#### **On first piece of paper:**

1. First, think about anger. How do angry people look? How does anger feel in your body? **Act out “angry”**. Now, draw an “angry” line or shape. Think about the following for your “angry” line or shape: What color is your line? Is it light or dark? Thick or thin? Straight or curved? Smooth or jagged?
2. Now, consider how happy people look, how happiness feels in your body. **Act out “happiness”**. Now draw a “happy” line or shape. Again, for your “happy” drawing, consider color, thickness, straightness, smoothness.
3. Next, **Act out “sadness”**. How does sadness feel in your body? Now, draw a “sad” line or shape. Consider color, thickness, straightness, smoothness.
4. **Act out “frightened”**. How does fear feel in your body? Draw a “frightened” line or shape.
5. Finally, **Act out “peaceful or “calm”**. How does calmness feel? Draw a “peaceful, calm” line or shape.

#### **Now we will talk about *physical or bodily sensations*. Take out your second piece of paper:**

1. **Act out “tired”**. Draw a “tired” line or shape.
2. **Act out “active”**. Draw an “active” or “energetic” line or shape.
3. **Act out “sick”**. Draw a “sick” line or shape.

4. **Act out “healthy”.** Finally, draw a “healthy” line or shape.

### **‘Drawing Your Feelings’ continued...**

Now, take a minute to think about *how you have been feeling these days (in general, recently)*. What emotions do you have? How does your body feel? What bodily sensations, like we just drew, have you been experiencing lately? You might be feeling positively or negatively...or perhaps a mixture of both. Please don’t hesitate to share any difficult feelings you might have!

**On your third piece of paper**, I am going to ask you to draw your current emotions and bodily sensations – using any color or art supply that you choose. Before you begin, keep in mind that in a couple of minutes we will move into small groups to share about our drawings on this third piece of paper.

**Note to facilitators:** Divide participants into smaller groups for sharing (if possible, one group per facilitator so that each facilitator can sit with a group throughout the exercise). As participants share, encourage them to focus on both emotions and physical sensations. Encourage group members to be brief (e.g., share just one thing about their drawing).

**\*\*Important:** Encourage other members to provide supportive feedback and ask questions. After each participant shares, the facilitator can briefly comment, then ask the rest of the group if they would like to say anything or ask any questions – leave most of the time for this.

If participants are hesitant to interact, ask probing questions, such as:

- “Does anyone feel similarly to \_\_\_\_?”
- “Can anyone identify with what \_\_\_\_ is saying?”
- “ \_\_\_\_ just trusted us with some difficult feelings. How can we as a group support her?”

When participants do provide support, thank them for doing so and reflect on this process as a group. Ask:

- “ \_\_\_\_ how did it feel to receive support from the group?”
- “ \_\_\_\_ how does it feel to know that what you said made \_\_\_\_ feel better?”

When all are finished sharing in small groups, come back to the large group and ask *some* or *all* of the following questions:

- “Now that everyone has shared, let’s reflect on how it was to pay attention to emotions and bodily sensations– was this strange? Easy or hard?”
- “How was it to share your feelings with others? Was this comfortable or uncomfortable?”
- “How do you feel afterwards – relieved? Closer to each other or more distant?”
- “Do you share your feelings with others in your life?”

## Mental Health Matters

**Note to facilitators:** Throughout this section, make a special effort to encourage interaction and support giving between participants. When someone shares something (especially something sensitive or upsetting) ask other participants to provide feedback and support to that person.

Now that you had a chance to think about how you are feeling, both physically and emotionally, we will talk together about common feelings that occur in reaction to traumatic events and ongoing stressors.

A **traumatic event** is something that makes you feel that your life, or the life of someone around you, is in danger (e.g., an earthquake, a very serious flood, a landslide, another type of natural disaster, being the victim of violence or sexual assault).

**Stressors** are demanding or difficult circumstances in your life that can cause distress (mental tension) and often tend to continue for a while (e.g., having to constantly worry about food, water, money, job, children, etc.).

Disasters can be especially difficult because they often involve an initial traumatic event followed by ongoing stressors. For example, in the 2015 earthquakes in Nepal, many people felt that their lives were threatened, and may have lost loved ones, property, and livestock. Immediately after the earthquake, many people experienced difficulty finding food, water, and shelter. For some this has been followed by long-term challenges or stressors, such as not having enough money or a regular source of income to support their survival. Some of you may have had similar experiences due to big floods and/or landslides.

Due to all of these challenges, it is common that disasters, especially recent ones, can affect a person's mental health and wellbeing. People can be affected physically and emotionally. This does not mean that something is wrong with you.

### Discussion

***What are some physical and emotional responses you have noticed in yourself or others after disasters?***

**Note to facilitators:** Wait for participants to describe their responses. Facilitators can also share personal examples if desired.

It is important to keep in mind that almost any mental health or psychosocial problem – both generally and following a disaster – can range from *mild to moderate to severe*. Where a problem falls along this range depends on how much it affects the person's "functioning" or their ability to complete tasks like work, caring for their family, being social, etc.

For example, someone experiencing mild sleep problems might be slightly tired and sluggish during the day. Someone with a severe sleep problem, however, might be so exhausted that they cannot function at all. **Can you think of other examples of mild, moderate and severe heart-mind difficulties?**

**Note to facilitators:** Draw a continuum to demonstrate mild – moderate – severe and discuss examples of mild, moderate, and severe symptoms. Fill in with examples from the group. Use examples below as necessary.

## **Bodily (Physical/Somatic) Symptoms**

**Mild** ----- **Moderate** ----- **Severe**  
(e.g., feeling sad sometimes)      (e.g., feeling very sad often so that it is hard to complete life tasks)      (e.g., feeling extremely sad all the time so that it is nearly impossible to complete life tasks)

Now we will talk about some feelings that some people have in their **bodies**. You might recognize some of these feelings in yourself or others:

### **1. “Feeling jumpy, shaky, fast heart rate, fast/shallow breathing**

Sometimes this feeling happens after a loud noise, or some other surprise. Your body reacts this way for a very good reason. During a disaster, your body needs to be alert in order to run or act in a way that will keep you safe. It is important that your heart is beating fast and your body feels “ready to go”, because this helps you to take care of yourself and others. After a really big disaster, it can sometimes take a long time for your body to feel calm again.

For example, for people who have been in earthquakes, sometimes hearing a loud noise and/or feeling a vibration, like a truck or plane, or even a cell phone, can cause one’s body to react as though an earthquake is happening again. **Sometimes people feel the ground moving under their feet or feel dizzy.** This does not mean that you are having a heart attack or that you are going crazy! Later, we will talk about some things that you can do to calm your body down and help it to feel safer.

### **2. Muscle tension and clenching**

When people are nervous or afraid, it is common that they clench and tighten their muscles, often without realizing it. Sometimes people have **pain in their bodies, especially in their head, back, and stomach.** Learning to relax your body can help some of these pains to go away. But if your pain is really bad, you should try to see a doctor.

### **3. Trouble sleeping**

Sometimes people have a lot of trouble sleeping. Is this the case for anyone here? In order to fall asleep, your body needs to be calm and relaxed, so it makes sense that if you always feel jumpy and alert, falling asleep will be hard and you might wake up a lot at night. Sometimes people also have bad dreams or nightmares that keep them awake. We will teach you some things that you can do to feel calm at night so that you can sleep better.

### **4. Changes in appetite**

Stress can make people want to eat more or less. When we aren’t getting enough food, or the right foods, this can make us feel tired and sick.

### **5. Fatigue, feeling weak**

Stress is exhausting. It's common to feel tired, especially if you are having trouble sleeping or not eating enough.

## Observing and Calming Body Reaction

### Activity: Tick Tick...Boom

(15 Minutes)

Let's take a few minutes to do another activity. This one is called Tick Tick...Boom. Can I have one volunteer to help instruct the group in this activity? Now I'd like the rest of the group to form one large circle.

**Note to facilitators:** Explain the following game to the group: Participants stand in a circle and pass an object from one person to the next. One of the facilitators stands outside the circle and turns away from the group so he/she cannot see the other group members. The facilitator says "Tic Tic" while the object is passed, then at a random moment, he/she says "Boom" (alternatively he/she hits a surface with a marker to make "tick" sounds, then suddenly stops hitting to signify the "boom"). The person in the circle who is holding the object at the time the word "boom" is used must leave the circle. The game continues until only one group member remains in the circle. Complete the activity with the group, then conduct the following discussion.

### Discussion

***How did you feel as you played this game? It was likely fun, but at the same time, did you notice feelings of jumpiness, anxiety, or even fear during this game?***

***This game is designed to help you to notice "fear sensations" when they occur. In this case, these feelings were probably fun rather than distressing. Playing this game can help you to learn to feel more comfortable with feelings of tension in your body.***

***How did you feel anxiety or fear in your body (e.g., fast heart beat and breathing, muscle clenching, butterflies in stomach)? Can you share some examples of times that you felt these anxiety reactions, but were not so fun? (e.g., stressed about work, fighting with family, thinking about disasters)***

Learning to notice fear or anxiety sensations when they occur is an important first step in learning to *relax your body* and *decrease uncomfortable feelings*. Now let's try another activity that can help to calm your body down.



## **Activity: Breathing**

*(15 minutes)*

When people feel anxious and jumpy, breathing often becomes fast and shallow. When we breathe like this it sends a message to our minds that things are dangerous and causes fear even when there is nothing frightening happening around us. Therefore, learning to breathe slowly and deeply is a very important way to calm down both our bodies and our minds.

### **Here's what I'd like you to do:**

- Find a comfortable way to sit or stand. You can close your eyes, or if you would prefer, keep them open and let them half-close to a comfortable position. Try to focus only on how your body feels right here, right now. Notice the feeling of your feet on the ground and how your clothes feel. Notice how you breathe - often people just breathe shallowly, in and out of their chests.
- Now, take a deep, full breath all the way into your stomach. You do not have to take in extra air, just a normal amount, but breathe in deeply so that you feel your stomach expand – put your hand on your stomach so that you can be sure that it is expanding as you are breathing in.
- Now, slowly and smoothly breathe out and as you're doing this, count to 4. Breathe in... 2, 3, 4, and out... 2, 3, 4 (demonstrate 2x).
- As you're breathing out, think of a word such as "calm" as you're counting to four. Breathe in...Calm 2, 3, 4 (demonstrate 4x).
- Once you are breathing naturally, try to concentrate on your breath – in, out, in, out. If other thoughts come into your mind, notice them, and then gently return your attention to your breath.
- Now, continue breathing this way on your own for a few minutes. (Let participants breathe for approximately 2 more minutes.)
- When you're ready, slowly bring your awareness back to the room. Rub your hands together quickly until they are hot, then place them over your eyes. Slowly move your hands away from your face and open your eyes.

### **Discussion**

***How do you feel now? How does your body feel? Do you notice a contrast with how you felt after the 'Tick Tick...Boom' game?***

This breathing technique sounds simple, but it is very effective. People do not always breathe like this, so it takes practice to learn to do it right. You can teach your kids as well. You should practice every day, even when you're not feeling jumpy, because then you will learn it well and can use it when you feel very jumpy. Try it before you go to bed.

Together, these two activities can teach you (1) to identify your jumpy or fearful sensations and (2) to take steps to decrease them. This shows you that you have some control over how your body and your mind feel – you can help yourself to feel better.

1:00 – 2:00

---

## **Lunch**

2:00 – 3:00

---

## **Emotional/Cognitive Reactions**

We have talked about how stress and trauma might affect how your *body* feels. Now we will talk about how stress and trauma may affect your **emotions or thoughts**.

### **1. Anxiety, nervousness, fear**

It is not uncommon for people experiencing a lot of stress or those who have gone through a traumatic experience to feel **anxious, nervous, or afraid**. For example, they might fear that another disaster, such as monsoon flooding or earthquake will occur and that they will not be able to protect or take care of their families.

Sometimes these fears cause people to share rumors about whether and when another disaster, such as an earthquake or flood, might happen. Although it is important to be prepared in case a disaster does happen, too much time spent listening to and sharing rumors can actually increase fear. It is important to make sure that warnings about disasters are based on good evidence – not just in rumors.

Sometimes people feel anxious or afraid even when they are not sure why. We talked about how your body can feel jumpy and this sends a message to your mind that there is something to be worried about or afraid of, even if you don't see anything scary around. These are times that it is good to know skills to use to calm your body, so you can also calm your mind.

### **2. Sadness and grief**

It is common to have a many different kinds of emotions after a disaster. If some you care about was killed or badly injured in the disaster, you likely feel sadness and grief when you think about them. You might also have grief about losing your home or job or other possessions. These are big losses, and it will take time to grieve for them.

### **3. Guilt**

Sometimes people feel guilt about things they could have done differently during a past disaster. Sometimes they think that they could have helped others more if they had done something else.

For example, here is a story from Haiti that happened after the earthquake there in 2010. There was a Haitian woman who said that on the day of the earthquake, her daughter told her she did not want to go to school. The mother made her daughter go to school anyway, and then the earthquake destroyed the school and the girl was killed. This woman says she killed her daughter and she felt very guilty. Do you think she killed her daughter? (wait for participant responses). In fact, the woman loved her daughter very much and wanted her to learn, so she did the best thing that she

knew of by sending her to school. She had no idea that the earthquake would happen. **Can you think of any similar situations that apply to you or people you know in Nepal?**

#### 4. Depressed or hopeless

After a disaster, people sometimes feel depressed and/or hopeless. It can sometimes feel as though a disaster could happen again at any time so there is no point in hoping for a better future. **Sometimes people develop low self-esteem and lose confidence in their ability to control things in their lives.** This may be especially true for people who feel that they were not able to protect themselves or their families during disasters or to support them after disasters (e.g., people who have lost their jobs as a result of the earthquake). Can anyone identify with this?

Eventually, **people may feel very helpless and stop trying to do things.** For example, people who do not believe that they can control what happens to them may not bother to prepare for disasters. **Some people who feel hopeless and as though they have little control may have thoughts that life isn't worth living or that they would be better off dead. Sometimes these thoughts can become plans to commit suicide. If this is the case for you, it's important to talk to one of the facilitators during the break.**

#### 5. Relief

Other times you might feel relieved that you and others that you care about have survived, or you might feel happy to see your kids playing. It is okay to feel this way. Sometimes people **move from feeling happy to feeling sad very quickly.** One second you are laughing, and then you are crying. Your mood swings back and forth. This is understandable; relief and mood swings are common in response to disasters or stress.

#### 6. Irritable or easily angered

People also often feel irritable and get angry easily. It is important to remember that this is a normal reaction to stress and does not mean that people are really angry at each other. In some cases, irritability and anger can lead to violence, including domestic violence against one's spouse or children.

When a person gets nervous or stressed, this feeling can easily turn into irritability and anger. However, we can learn ways to release stressful energy stored in the body before it turns into anger or causes a lot of distress. A common reaction is to use this energy to hit, kick, or break something, but let's practice a safer way to release some of this energy. You can use this when you're irritable, or when feeling anxious or stressed. This activity is not only helpful for adults but can also work well for children.

### **Activity: Body Shake**

*(5-10 minutes)*

- Stand and shake your right arm while counting from 5 to 1.
- Shake your left arm while counting down from 5 to 1.
- Shake your right leg 5 times.
- Shake your left leg 5 times.
- Repeat this process, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> round counting to 4, the 3<sup>rd</sup> round counting to 3, etc. until the final round when after you shake each limb one time, you finish by shaking the whole body.
- End by dancing for a few minutes!

## 7. Trouble concentrating or confusion

People sometimes have a lot of trouble concentrating on what they are doing. They may feel confused and find that it takes a long time to remember things and to get things done. Maybe they go to do something and then forget what they were doing in the middle of it. This can be upsetting, but it is normal when you have a lot of worries on your mind.

Sometimes difficulty concentrating happens because memories of disasters and other distressing events are distracting you.

## 8. Memories and Nightmares

**Sometimes people find that memories or images of disasters or of other sad or scary things will pop into their head and cause them to feel upset or afraid.** Sometimes this happens when something reminds you of these events – like a loud sound, or a certain smell. But, sometimes it happens all on its own. **Sometimes these images happen while you're asleep, in dreams or nightmares.** This is your mind's way of telling you that it needs to keep these memories around in order to be ready to keep you safe. Often, these pictures go away over time, but in some cases, they may stay for a long time.

Sometimes memories of traumatic events can feel so real that it is hard to remember that you are actually in the present moment (where it is safe) rather than in the past dangerous event. At these times, it can be helpful to use a technique called “grounding” to become centered in one's body in the present moment. This technique can remind you that you are not back in a traumatic moment (e.g. in the moment of the earthquake) in the past, and rather that you are safe in the present moment. It can help you to feel calmer, stronger, and safer.

Let's practice a grounding activity now.

### Activity: Grounding

(15 minutes)

- Sit on the ground with your legs crossed and your eyes open. Try to keep your spine straight but relaxed, and your shoulders back so that your body feels balanced, stable, solid, and evenly connected to the ground. Take a moment to notice the way that the ground feels under your legs. Let yourself feel supported by the ground beneath you.
- Now, take a few breaths and notice your breathing (in-out, in-out). Don't try to change your breath, just notice it.
- Slowly turn your head to look to the left... and then to the right. Notice what is around you and identify five non-distressing things that you can *see*. Name each thing in your mind, or say it out loud, for example you could say, “I see the floor, I see a shoe, I see a table, I see a chair, I see a person.” (*Note to facilitators:* You can ask five participants to each say one thing aloud during this exercise).
- Next focus on identifying things of a particular color: Name 5 green things. Name 3 yellow things. (*Note to facilitators:* Again, ask five participants to each say one green thing aloud, then three to say 1 yellow thing, etc.).
- Now focus on identifying shapes: Name 5 things that are shaped like circles. Name 2 things that are squares.

- Breathe in and out slowly and deeply.
- Next focus on identifying what you can hear: Name 3 things you can hear (e.g., birds, people talking).
- Name 3 things that you can touch (e.g., ground under your feet, wind on your face, things in your pockets).
- Continue to breathe slowly and deeply.

**How do you feel after this exercise? What do you think is its purpose?** Once you can bring your mind to the here and now (rather than let it be distracted by memories, worries, fears, etc.), then you will find that you are calmer and able to make decisions in an organized way. You can do this exercise anytime (and if necessary, name things in your head rather than out loud).

### 9. Thought avoidance

Sometimes people try to avoid thinking about upsetting things. They try to push memories out of their heads and avoid doing activities that might remind them of things they do not want to think about. For example, some people avoid going to the place where they were when a disaster happened; others quickly distract themselves if thoughts of the disaster come into their head. Avoiding places and thoughts may work in the short-term, but in the long-term this can make things worse. It is like a child being afraid of the monster under the bed. The longer he doesn't look under the bed, the scarier the monster becomes. The more one avoids doing something, the scarier it becomes, and the harder it gets to do it again.

### Discussion

***Are there things that you avoid doing? What are some examples?***

One way that people try to avoid thinking or feeling things is through **substance abuse**, especially **abusing alcohol**. Although alcohol and drugs can distract one from upsetting thoughts and feelings, in some cases being drunk can actually make these feelings stronger – and over the long term, substance abuse often makes things worse, so that one cannot cope at all without alcohol or drugs.

### Discussion

***Does any of this sound like anything you or people you care about have gone through?***

### 10. Racing Thoughts

Many people feel like if they don't avoid things **they will think too much about various worries** and can't slow down their thoughts. This can make it difficult to focus in school, work, and at home. It can also make it very difficult to fall asleep.

### Discussion

***Has anyone here heard of the 'monkey mind'?*** In some religions, such as Buddhism, there is a term known as "Monkey Mind". This refers to the mind jumping from one thought to another thought, like a monkey jumps around from one tree branch to another. This 'monkey mind' can also be described as *racing thoughts*.

We are now going to learn an exercise that can be used when your thoughts and emotions make you uncomfortable or upset. It's called "mindfulness" and is different than avoiding your thoughts. Instead of avoiding or pushing them away you can let your upsetting thoughts come and go, like waves passing through you, without letting them control you or your behaviors. Let's take a moment to notice our monkey mind.

### **Activity: Mindfulness**

*(15 minutes)*

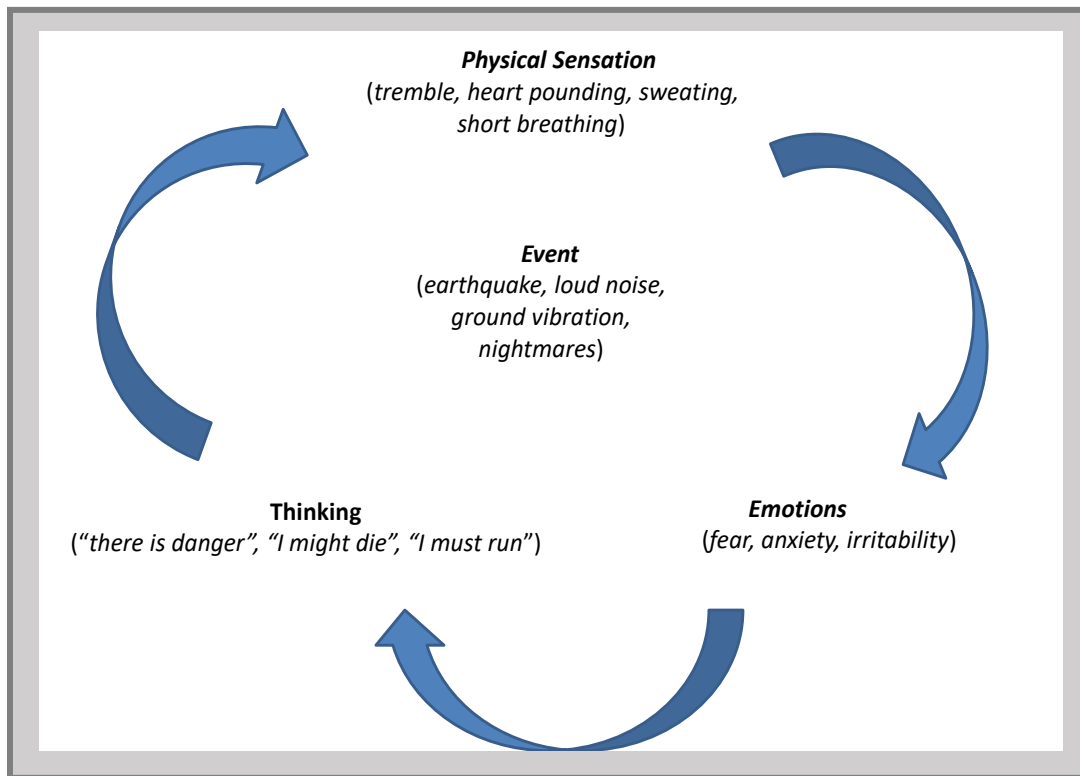
- Sit down, breathe normally and notice your breaths. If you want to close your eyes, go ahead. If not, that's fine too.
- Wait for a few minutes - notice the first thought that appears in your mind.
- Try to push the thought away, clear your mind, and stay still and think of nothing. Soon enough you will see you can't easily clear your mind; thoughts jump in and out of your "monkey" mind. Like monkeys, thoughts jump quickly from one to another, and then another, and another, and so on. If you get angry and try to grab a monkey to make him stop jumping, he will only slip out of your hands and run faster.
- However, when you don't try to control or stop your thoughts you can calm the monkey mind. If you let the monkeys play without trying to stop them, they will eventually get tired on their own and settle down to sleep.
- Notice the thoughts like monkeys jumping. No thought is good or bad. Every thought is like a silly restless monkey jumping around playfully.
- This is sometimes hard to do, your thoughts may distract you, or catch you. Try not to engage with the restless monkeys, just watch them playing next to you, without judging them.
- Notice your breathing. Rub your hands until they become warm. Cover your eyes and then move your hands from your eyes while opening your eyes slowly.

The idea of this exercise is to just quietly observe your thoughts without trying to change them – and that eventually this will naturally calm your monkey mind. It can take a lot of practice to achieve this aim. For now, just practice observing your monkeys – or thoughts – no judgment, no engagement, just observation.

## Mind-body connection

Now we have talked about body reactions and emotions/thoughts. It is important to realize that the way your body feels influences your emotions and thoughts, and in turn, your emotions and thoughts influence how your body feels.

**Note to facilitators:** Draw/share the following image to explain the relationship between events, physical sensations, emotions, and thinking.



This cycle means that if you calm your body, you will also calm your emotions and thoughts. It also means that if you calm your emotions/thoughts, you will also calm your body. The exercises you have learned so far – breathing, body shake, grounding, monkey-mind – can stop this cycle by calming your body and/or your mind.

## Mental Health Stigma

This training is about disasters and mental health, but it is also about helping people in our families and communities. In Nepali culture we are often encouraged to help each other. However...

**Note to facilitator:** Lead a discussion that can address mental health stigma, distrust of neighbors, gender issues, caste differences, etc.

### Discussion

***Are there any reasons why a person would not want to ask for help or give help for mental health problems to his neighbor or family member?***

***How do members of the community treat people who are struggling with mental health problems?***

Include discussion about cultural beliefs about mental health, including:

- Belief that such problems are a person's own fault (e.g., religious infractions, bad karma/inauspicious astrological forecast) and that admitting to having such problems could imply that one acted badly in a past (or current) life.
- Belief that mental health problems are caused by witches or bad spirits, and that people with these problems are "bad luck".
- Fears that one can "catch" mental health problems by being around people with these problems.
- Belief that people with mental health problems are "weak" and can't be trusted with any decisions, even if they have since recovered from these problems.
- Belief that mental health problems will affect one's self and one's family, including marriage prospects, employment, and family reputation, perhaps for generations to come.
- There are very negative connotations with the Nepali word for "crazy" – what are more respectful ways to speak about mental health difficulties?
- Do any of you know someone in the community who has severe mental health problems such as seeing or hearing things that are not there? We will talk more about these kinds of problems on day 3.

There may be particular stigma about **suicidality**. Suicide is illegal in Nepal, which might prevent reports of suicidal ideation. However, suicide is believed to be the leading cause of death amongst women of reproductive age.

### Discussion

***What beliefs do people have about suicide in Nepal?***

- Belief that someone who commits suicide must have done something very bad and shameful and is trying to hide this by killing himself.
- Belief that suicide in a family affects marriage prospects, employment, and family reputation, perhaps for generations to come.

Stigma can also be especially linked to other elements of a person's identity, such as their gender, caste, or ethnicity.



## Discussion continued...

***Why might a man or a woman have an easier or more difficult time reaching out to receive or give help?***

- Although men may face some stigma due to mental health problems, consequences (e.g., marriage prospects, employment, family reputation) may be worse for women.
- Gender stereotypes may put pressure on men to act “strong” and therefore make it especially uncomfortable for them to experience and express strong emotions because of concerns about appearing weak.
  - In this group, we believe that expressing emotions is a sign of strength, not weakness. We encourage all to feel comfortable trusting the group by sharing their emotions.

***Why might someone of a particular caste or ethnic group have an easier or more difficult time reaching out to receive or give help?***

- Lower castes are sometimes believed to be more likely to have mental health problems.
- People from higher castes with mental health problems may be more likely to hide them to maintain their reputation.
- Different castes/ethnic groups may cope in different ways (e.g., alcohol use is more acceptable for some castes/ethnic groups).
- People from different castes/ethnic groups are unlikely to seek help or to give help to someone from a caste/ethnic group different from their own.

***What are things that you can do in your family and community to encourage better treatment of and support for someone with mental health issues (heart-mind wounds or even brain-mind problems)?***

- Keep in mind that mental health and psychosocial problems can happen to anyone. In fact, it is very common to have some of these reactions after disasters.
- If you know someone in your community with mental health problems, simply treating him/her with respect and providing support can make a big impact and perhaps start to change norms in the community. For example, starting to use more respectful words, rather than “crazy” can set an important example to others about how to treat people with mental health problems.
- Encouraging community members to seek help for mental health problems can make a big difference. We will discuss places to go for help on day 3 of this training.

## Coping

We have already learned some relaxation techniques and games, but now we will talk about some other things that you can do to help yourself, your kids, and other family members. First, it is important to remember to take good care of yourself so that you can take care of others. You are a role model for your kids and other family members, they look up to you to learn how to feel and act.

## Discussion

***What do you do to feel better?***

**Note to facilitators:** Participants provide responses – reinforce all good coping, such as religious practice (e.g., forgiveness puja), meditation, yoga, homeopathic treatments, and traditional healers.

Some things that people do to help themselves feel better are very personal and specific to an individual. Others are more common and many people practice them in their daily lives even when life is not so difficult. Let's take some time to talk about a few good examples of things you can do to help yourself feel better in difficult times.

### 1. Spend time with other people

It can sometimes be tempting to go off and be by yourself, especially if you feel depressed. In fact, it can be helpful to spend time on one's own for short periods, but isolating for long periods can often make things worse. Some examples of activities you can do with others are:

- Just spend time with people. Listen to music, talk, joke together.
- Talk about your feelings with other people. Now that you know about a lot of common reactions to disasters and other kinds of stress and trauma, you might feel more comfortable discussing these with each other, checking up on each other.
- Pray together in a group. Go to temple or church together.
- Sing or dance together.
- Go to festivals, practice rituals, celebrate holidays.
- Share memories about people who have died and remember them together.
- Do things to help each other – cook, shop, clean, childcare.

It can be very uplifting to do something nice for someone else. After a disaster, people may not have the supports that they used to have. It makes a lot of difference to have people you can count on.

## Discussion

***Can you think of other things you can do when spending time with other people?***

- You can do these things with the group that you are in now. We hope that you will continue meeting with each other after we finish this training.

## **2. Start to do things you have avoided**

Let yourself start to think about scary or upsetting events and to talk about them with others. It is okay to feel afraid while doing this; often the fear will go away gradually. Remember, a memory can be uncomfortable, but it is not dangerous like the event itself. You have already been through the hardest part – surviving the event. Now you are just learning to look at the memory, too. Some examples of things you can do are:

- Visit where you were when a disaster, such as a flood or earthquake, happened. You can take a friend with you, and start slowly by taking gradual steps.
- Talk about your memory of the disaster with family and friends. Although remembering details that you may have tried to forget can be upsetting, you may also find that you feel better after talking about what happened.

## **3. Use techniques (e.g., relaxation, self-soothing, grounding) and games to help yourself feel better (e.g., breathing, grounding, mindfulness).**

### **Discussion**

*What are some techniques that you have already learned in this training that may help you to feel better? What are some other examples of things you do to relax? (Ex: meditation, yoga, games)*

## **4. Some things that people do to try to feel better are actually unhelpful in the long run. We should be aware of them, so that if they happen we can recognize them and make an effort to change the situation.**

1. Withdrawing from other people or from activities and responsibilities. This is bad for your mental health, and also for your family who needs you.
2. Fighting or creating conflict with others. Although this can relieve tension in the moment, in the long term it can have many negative consequences for your relationships and your own well-being.
3. Using drugs and alcohol. As we discussed earlier, this may feel good in the moment because it can help you to avoid thinking about upsetting things and to feel calmer. However, if you use alcohol or drugs for a long time, in large quantities, there are often negative consequences. If you use drugs and alcohol excessively after disasters, they make keep your mind and body from recovering naturally.

### **Discussion**

*Does anyone have any examples of problems in your community resulting from alcohol or drug use?*

**Note to facilitators:** Let participants come up with their own examples here, do not argue with them about the pros and cons of alcohol use - e.g., addiction develops, you can feel worse if you become so dependent that you are unable to cope with life without drugs and alcohol, abuse and neglect of family.

4. It is also not helpful to *blame yourself* for things in the past. It is important that your mind is here in the present so that you can help your kids and family!

3:50 – 4:00

---

### **Closing and Review**

#### **Activity: Day in Review**

*(10 minutes)*

We have learned a lot of information today. For a review activity, please share one thing from today that you enjoyed and one thing you found challenging or confusing. *(Activity can be done in small groups if desired).*

#### **Homework**

Your homework for tonight is to share one thing you learned today with a family member (e.g., a relaxation exercise, or something else). What are some examples of things that you can share with them? (Do not share private/confidential information). We will talk about this experience tomorrow when we return for the second day of training.

**End with small song or slogan for the group** (as developed during “Group rules” section).



Day 2

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

---

### **Overview**

- *Group welcome, mental health check-in, and homework review*
- *Safety stories and symbols*
- *Link between mental health and disaster preparedness*
- *Disasters, vulnerabilities, and resources*
- *Causes of disasters and disaster preparedness: household and community level planning*
- *Psychological first aid and role plays*

10:00 – 10:30

---

### **Welcome**

**Note to facilitators:** Before participants arrive, create a display of natural materials (e.g., branches, leaves, flowers, stones, etc.) from the environment in the center of the room, then give the following instructions. Remember that materials should be both “pretty” (flowers, leaves) and “ugly” (dead leaves, spiky sticks, stones).

### **Activity: Mental Health Check-In with Natural Materials**

*(20 Minutes)*

Please look through this pile of natural materials and choose something(s) that “speaks to you” or captures how you are feeling nowadays. You can choose items that symbolize both positive and negative aspects of how you are feeling.

Now please divide into small groups (no more than 5-6 people in each). In your small groups, I/we would like each of to share with the group about the thing(s) you chose, explaining why/how these items represent you and how you are feeling. **Again, remember to provide feedback and support to other group members.**

**Note to facilitators:** Facilitators should each join a group, or float between groups if there are more groups than facilitators. After each participant shares, facilitators should invite other members to give feedback (questions, comments, support). Use the skills described on p.17 to encourage group members to support each other. After everyone shares in small groups, return to the large group and ask participants to reflect on how it was to share their feelings with others. Was it strange or scary at first? How did it feel to get feedback from others? Reinforce recognition that sharing can sometimes bring relief and help one to feel supported.

Natural disasters can disrupt peoples’ relationships with the natural world (e.g., can make it feel dangerous, unknown, and unpredictable). It is important to think about reconnecting with nature in a positive way (e.g., a relationship with nature like “finger nail with flesh”). Today we will talk about disaster preparedness measures that you can take that may help you to feel safer in your natural environment.

## Homework Review

(10 Minutes)

Yesterday we asked you to go home and teach a family member about one of the relaxation skills or other things you learned during our first meeting.

## Discussion

*How was that experience for you?*

*Were your family members receptive?*

*What was effective? What was challenging?*

*For those whose family members found the skills helpful: How did it feel to help your family member in this way?*

*For those who did not teach a skill/skill was unhelpful: What can you try next time that might be more helpful to your family member? (ask other participants to make suggestions)*

10:30 – 11:15

---

## Safety Stories and Symbols

As we discussed yesterday, it is common to feel unsafe after a disaster. Let's talk about what it means to create safety.

### Activity: Creating Safety

I would like you to take a moment to think of a time in which you felt a lot of fear - perhaps during a disaster (e.g., a flood or earthquake), or perhaps another time. Now, try to follow this memory to the next time that you felt safe. When was the first moment you felt safe? Was it when you had a moment to rest in a safe area? Was it when you saw your family again? Perhaps something else? Focus on that moment – What did it look like? Sound like? Who was with you? Can anyone share one example of a moment you felt safe?

Now we will do an activity to further reflect on the safety moment you just thought about and on other things that make you feel safe. There may be many things that make you feel safe – such a place, person, or symbol. On the piece of paper I will give you, draw one or more of the following options:

- 1) That moment of safety that you just thought about;
- 2) A protective/safe symbol (such as a kalash or swastik);
- 3) Something else that makes you feel safe, like a place (e.g., a relaxing picnic spot) or a person (e.g., family member or friend).

In a few minutes we will divide into small groups and discuss these drawings.

**Note to facilitators:** When drawing is complete, divide participants into small groups so that they can share their drawings. One facilitator should be present in each group to provide support and elicit feedback from other group members as in 'drawing feelings' and 'natural materials' exercises above.

### ***'Creating Safety' continued...***

Please note that this exercise may be quite distressing for some participants. Be careful to leave sufficient time for each story and to thank participants for their courage in sharing their stories and for trusting the group with them. If participants are tearful, give space for them to cry, ask the group to provide support, and again thank them for having the courage to trust the group and to connect to their emotions during this activity.

After small group sharing, return to the full group and ask the following discussion questions.

#### **Discussion**

***How was this exercise for you?***

***How was it to draw these safety moments or symbols?***

***How was it to share with the group, and to hear others' sharing?***

***What kind of feedback/support did you receive from your group and how did it make you feel?***

**Note to facilitators:** Finally, ask “Why do you think we did this activity?” Provide rationale for exercise: *Sometimes very terrifying events become frozen in our memory so that we only remember the moment of terror, not the moment of safety and relief that followed. It is important to remember that although the experience was very scary, you did survive, and did reach safety. If you have upsetting memories of a scary event, try to think about your safe moment and the picture you drew today. You can also use breathing, grounding, or other relaxation exercises. Does anyone feel tension in their body or mind right now? What do you feel? This is a very common response. Let's do an exercise together. Do breathing or grounding exercise with full group (chosen by facilitator or group members).*

11:15 – 11:25

---

#### **10-minute break**

11:25– 12:30

---

#### **Link Between Mental Health and Disaster Preparedness**

##### **Why Should We Talk about Disaster Preparedness and Mental Health?**

*(10 minutes)*

For the next several hours, we are going to focus on causes of disasters and how to prepare for them. Some of you might be wondering why this training is about preparing for future disasters when you have other things to worry about like having money to feed and house your family, educating your children, etc. The reason is we know that Nepal is very vulnerable to the impact of many different kinds of disasters including earthquakes, monsoon storms, floods, and landslides. As you know, even if you have a good job and plenty of money, an earthquake or flood can change things for you. Therefore, one of the most important things you can do to take care of yourself and your family is to take steps to protect yourself in case of a disaster.



You might also wonder why we are focusing on disaster preparation and mental health in the same training.

### Discussion

***Can anyone explain why we would focus on disaster preparation and mental health in the same training?***

Most simply, it is because disasters and mental health are connected. Disasters and fear of future disasters can cause mental health problems, and mental health problems can increase vulnerability to disasters. We will talk more about this later today.

## Disasters, Vulnerabilities, and Resources

### Definitions

(20 minutes)

Before we continue on to the rest of today's content, let's take some time to discuss and identify a few important definitions.

**Note to facilitators:** Allow participants to talk; praise after each definition; encourage all members of the group to give any definition of disasters.

**Disaster:** An event (hazard, such as storm or earthquake) which creates a serious disruption of the functioning of a community involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which *exceeds* the ability of the affected community to cope using its own resources. Disasters can be natural or human-made.

### Discussion

***What examples of natural disasters can you think of?*** (Earthquake, monsoon rains (when responsible for major losses), flood, landslide, disease or epidemic.)

***What examples of human made disasters can you think of?*** (War, political violence, bus or plane accident.)

***How can natural disaster be influenced by humans?*** (Earthquakes are more dangerous depending on the quality of the housing; floods are more dangerous if the trees have been cut down or if housing has been built on a flood plain; some farming practices can contribute to landslides; bad sanitation can contribute to disease)

The impact of disasters is influenced by the vulnerabilities and resources of the community.

**Vulnerability:** Characteristic of a person, group, or community that *decreases* its ability to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of natural hazards.

**Resource/Strength:** Characteristic of a person, group, or community that *increases* its ability to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of natural hazards.

It is important to understand that the same event can have very different effects depending on the vulnerabilities and resources/strengths of the community. For example, a community with a good

drainage system or dam, and evacuation plan may have few problems as a result of a flood, but another community without these things may suffer a lot as a result of the same flood.

### Discussion

*What are some examples of vulnerabilities and resources/strengths in your community in Nepal?*

**A persons' mental health can be a resource or a vulnerability in a disaster or emergency situation.** Feeling mentally prepared, calm, confident, and hopeful can be helpful when a disaster strikes. Mental health problems can hurt peoples' ability to stay safe in a disaster. It is important to consider how the status of a persons' mental health can affect their willingness and ability to prepare for and respond to disaster situations.

### Discussion

*How might a person's mental health response to a disaster affect their ability to prepare for other disasters?*

- Some people might want to **avoid thinking or talking about disasters** because thinking about and preparing for future disasters can remind you of bad experiences from prior disasters (e.g., 2015 earthquakes, 2014 Sindupalchowk landslide, monsoon rains and floods from prior years). Thinking about future disasters **may make people afraid or anxious**. In order to avoid feelings of fear and anxiety people may avoid doing any disaster preparedness.
- If a person is depressed they **may feel hopeless or like they are doomed no matter what they do**, so why should they bother to prepare? They may believe they do not have control over what happens so there is no reason to try to stay safe from disasters.
- If a person is not able to sleep well and/or feels a lot of pain in their body they **may not have the energy or strength** to prepare.
- If a person does not feel close or connected to other people or does not feel that they can trust others they **may not want to work with others in the community** on disaster preparedness.

Although it may be stressful at first, learning about and preparing for future disasters can actually help people cope with mental health reactions after a disaster. It may help a person to feel safer, less afraid, and more in control and confident. Disaster preparedness training can connect people to their neighbors. People can work together to prepare the community for the rainy season or other disasters, like earthquakes. A major goal of this training is to give you some skills that you can use and share with others in order to help with your own other people's mental health reactions to disasters. We can think of this as "psychological preparedness" for disaster.

In the next section we are going to talk about **disaster preparedness**. This can be stressful for many people because thinking about disasters is scary, and it can remind them of past disasters. Sometimes people avoid listening carefully to disaster information for this reason. However, it's very important that you are in a relaxed state of mind so you can hear today's information. We will take breaks during this time to use relaxation exercises to help you to feel calm during the discussion. If you begin to feel anxious during this section, please feel free to notify an instructor. This is normal and we can work together to feel better!

**Note to facilitators:** Observe reactions of participants during the following section. When they appear anxious (or bored) use a relaxation exercise from yesterday or a stretch or game to relieve

tension. Be sure to reflect with participants about why you are using an exercise and how they can observe their own reactions to determine when an exercise can be useful for them.

## **Causes of Disaster and Disaster Preparedness**

First, we are going to talk about our beliefs about causes and characteristics of different kinds of disasters. If you understand where disasters come from, it is easier to know how to prepare for them.

### **Discussion**

***What do you think are the causes of disasters?*** – (E.g., religious, man-made, natural, etc.)

Many times there is a connection between a person's explanation for why the disaster happened and their motivation to prepare.

People may have many different reasons to explain disasters including religious causes like God's will, fate, karma, destiny, or something else. For example, some communities believe that the earthquake was a punishment for peoples' misdeeds, such as not practicing their religion in a good way (e.g., killing cows, not respecting images of the Kumari, etc.), for overpopulation, or even for failing to ratify a constitution. Some communities believe, therefore, that it is important to do rituals such as forgiveness pujas.

### **Discussion**

***How might these reasons affect a person's motivation to prepare for a disaster?***

For example, if people believe that disasters are a punishment from a God(s), or a result of karma, they may think that it may not matter much if you prepare.

Religious beliefs about how disasters happen and the role of the Gods in guaranteeing ones' safety can determine how people prepare for and respond to disasters. However, some religious beliefs may actually encourage one to take steps to keep oneself safe from disasters.

## **“Drowning Man”**

This story is told in Nepal and many other countries. It is told among Hindus, Christians, Muslims and others. Maybe you will recognize it...

*A man was trapped in his house as a terrible flood approached. He began praying to the Gods to rescue him. He had a vision in his head of one of the Gods’ hands reaching down from heaven and lifting him to safety. His neighbor came to the house and offered to teach him how to prepare for the flood, by creating a drainage system, collecting supplies and important documents, and making an evacuation plan. The man declined his offer, saying, “I am waiting for the Gods to save me.” The neighbor went away.*

*Soon, the water started to rise in the man’s house. A friend drove up in a truck, urged him to leave, and offered him a ride to safety. The man yelled back, “I am waiting for the Gods to save me.” The friend drove off in his truck.*

*The man continued to pray and hold on to his vision of being saved by the Gods. As the water began rising in his house, he had to climb up to the roof. A boat came by with some people heading for safe ground. They yelled at the man to grab a rope they were ready to throw and take him to safety. He told them that he was waiting for the Gods to save him. They shook their heads and moved on.*

*The man continued to pray, believing with all his heart that he would be saved by the Gods. The floodwater continued to rise. A helicopter flew by and a voice came over a loudspeaker offering to lower a ladder and take him off the roof. The man waved the helicopter away, shouting back that he was waiting for the Gods to save him. The helicopter left. The flooding water came over the roof and caught him up and swept him away. He drowned.*

*After he had drowned, he asked the Gods - “Why did you not save me? Why did you let me drown?” The Gods replied, “We sent you a helpful neighbor, a truck, a boat and a helicopter and you refused all of them. What else could we possibly do for you?”*

### **Discussion**

**What does this story mean to you?**

## Discussion

*How can religious beliefs discourage or encourage people to take steps to keep themselves safe in a disaster?*

*How might you respond to a man in your community who thinks the same way as the man in the story?*

As discussed, there may be many different causes for a disaster. They may have both religious significance and environmental/natural causes. Now we will talk about **natural** causes of disasters, focusing on earthquakes, monsoon rains, floods, and landslides.

**Note to facilitators:** Be careful not to tell people that their religious or cultural beliefs are wrong – rather just introduce the possibility that there can be both religious and natural causes for disasters, and that preparing for disasters is important in any case.

**Monsoon:** A monsoon is a seasonal wind that lasts for several months. These rains blow in from the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea bringing heavy rainfall to the region. Monsoons also occur in other regions such as North America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Brazil and East Asia. The mechanism is simple: land heats up faster than water causing ocean air to be lifted upward by mountains and surface heat, resulting in increased rainfall. Life is dependent on monsoon rains. Without monsoons there would not be enough water for crops and animals. But heavy monsoons can also cause many problems. Monsoons and their associated flooding claim about 300 lives and loss of over 1 billion Nepali rupees every year.

**Floods:** Floods, common during monsoon season, can be a result of rivers overflowing their banks or heavy rain in areas not able to rapidly absorb large amounts rainfall in a short period of time. Water-borne diseases can be a serious concern during floods.

**Landslides:** Landslides, often a secondary consequence of flooding, occur when a slope that was previously stable becomes unstable, causing the earth to slide downhill.

**Earthquake:** An earthquake occurs because of movement under the earth's surface. The earth is made up of plates of rock that move against each other, causing heat and energy to accumulate. Sometimes these plates collide and energy rushes up to the earth's surface and creates a big jolt. This is what we call an earthquake.

There are several places around the world where these plates tend to collide. These are called "fault lines". Earthquakes are more likely to happen near fault lines because of the way the earth is structured under the surface, not because of the people who live there. Earthquakes happen all over the world, for instance Haiti, California USA, Chile, Japan, Taiwan, Pakistan, etc.

An aftershock is a smaller earthquake that follows the main shock of a large earthquake. After a large earthquake it is possible for multiple aftershocks to occur. They result from the change in stress and

pressure within, and between, rock plates due to the previous larger earthquake. They tend to occur in rocks located near the epicenter, or fault lines, of the original earthquake and can continue for quite a while after the original quake.

In past research, we found that people who understand the natural causes of disasters were more likely to prepare than those who did not have this understanding. However, **it is important to keep in mind that it is possible to have multiple beliefs at the same time about where disasters come from.** For instance, an earthquake can have natural causes and for some people, it can also have important religious meaning. If you believe in religious causes or meanings for disasters, it still makes sense to take steps to prepare and respond to disasters in ways that keep you and your family safe. The story of the drowning man provides a good example of this.

12:30 – 1:00

---

### **Mental Health Check-In**

Like we've already mentioned, it is normal that discussing past disasters may make people nervous or afraid. Is that the case for anyone here? Some of you may notice that you are having upsetting memories or thoughts, or that your body feels tense or uneasy. Let's do an exercise to relax our bodies and send the message to our minds that we are safe and that things are ok.

#### **Activity: Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)**

*(30 minutes)*

**Note to facilitator:** When instructing the following activity allow 10-15 seconds of relaxation after the tensing of each muscle group. Arrange participants lying on mats (consider gender issues).

For the next minutes, we will practice a relaxation technique called progressive muscle relaxation. Before we begin, please take a moment to find a comfortable position in your seat. You may want to fold your hands in your lap, or rest them on the tops of your legs. However you choose to sit, be sure you are comfortable.

- Take three deep breaths, breathing out slowly each time, imagining the tension draining out of your body. We are now going to relax different body parts at a time. Each time, pay attention to the different feelings between tightening and relaxing the muscles.
- Tighten your feet by curling them downwards. Hold for 10 seconds and then relax.
- Tighten your calf muscles by pulling your toes towards you. Hold for 10 seconds and then relax.
- Squeeze the muscles in your thighs. Hold for 10 seconds and then relax.
- Tighten your stomach muscles by sucking your stomach in. Hold for 10 seconds and then relax.
- Tighten the muscles in your arms and shoulders. Hold for 10 seconds and then relax.
- Clench your fists. Hold for 10 seconds before releasing and feeling the tension drain out of your body.
- Tighten your shoulders as if you are going to touch your ears. Hold for 10 seconds and then relax.
- Tense the muscles in your face and forehead. Tighten the muscles around your eyes, nose, and mouth. Hold for 10 seconds and then relax.
- Mentally scan your body for any leftover tension. If any muscle group remains tense, repeat the exercise for those muscle groups.
- Now imagine a wave of relaxation spreading over your body (30 seconds).

**How do you feel now?** You can practice this exercise on your own in its entirety or just parts of it (e.g. your legs and feet when you are sitting in a chair).

1:00 – 2:00

---

## Lunch

2:00 – 3:00

---

## Disaster Preparedness and Intervention

In this next section we are going to discuss things you can do to prepare for a disaster so you can be as ready as possible.

### Activity: “How Do You Prepare?”

**Note to facilitators:** Divide participants into three groups. Give each group one of the following three questions and ask them to wait for further instructions. Groups should write or draw responses on newsprint/poster paper. After completion of the activity, ask each group to share with the rest of the groups/participants. *Following each group’s sharing, add points below that participants did not mention in their sharing.* Write all points on newsprint/poster paper during whole group discussion.

Now that you are split into three groups, please take the next 10 minutes to consider the questions your group has been given. Use the newsprint/poster paper to list out the responses your group identifies and identify one person who will share your responses with the whole group at the end of the 10 minutes.

### Questions

- Group 1 - What are some general things you can do to prepare for any disaster? What would you put in a disaster supply kit, and what items would you make sure to have in your house to assist you when/if a disaster occurs?
- Group 2 – What would you do to prepare specifically for difficulties such as flooding associated with monsoon? How would you respond if flooding happens?
- Group 3 – What would you do to prepare specifically for an earthquake? How would you respond if an earthquake happens?

### Preparing for any kind of disaster:

- Gather information:
  - Attend community **meetings** of disaster organizations (if available).
  - Talk to the VDC office, schools, health posts, neighbors and community leaders to **gain and give information.**

- Listen to the **radio or watch TV** and follow instructions.
- Review your **family emergency plan** with all family members and your community plan with neighbors (we will talk about making these plans later). Remember to talk to kids about your disaster plan.

### ***'How Do You Prepare?' continued...***

- Prepare a **disaster supply kit** (you can do this now, before any sign of a disaster):
  - You could include: candles, matches, flashlight, batteries, rope, whistle, dust mask, bleach/cleaning supplies, water purification tablets, and a clean bottle for water. First aid supplies such as alcohol rubs, bandages, band-aids, routine medications. Extra clothing, sandals/shoes, and blankets. A crowbar or other tools to open jammed doors. Heavy plastic bags and bucket for waste.
  - Also include important documents, put in plastic envelopes to protect from water.
  - Make sure you have extra prescription medications.
  - Protect your supply kit in waterproof container or plastic bags. Keep it in a place that is easily accessible if you have to evacuate suddenly.

**Note to facilitators:** You can make this section more interactive by suggesting both good and bad ideas for supply kits. Ask participants, 'Is \_\_\_\_\_ a good or bad idea for items for a disaster supply kit?' Example of bad idea: fresh food.

- If possible, make sure you have **extra drinking water**. Experts suggest that families should store a week's supply of water in a secure location outside of their houses (One gallon/ or four liters of water, per person, per day)
- Learn how to **disinfect water** (it is often not safe to drink water after earthquakes or floods without disinfecting). Here are three possible ways of disinfecting water:
  1. Boiling: Put water in pot. If possible, strain it through a clean cloth to remove dirt and other particles. Boil water for 10 minutes.
  2. Iodine Tablets: Add 1 tablet per quart/liter and wait 20 minutes before drinking.
  3. Bleach: Add 4 drops per quart/liter of water that you have filtered prior. Wait 30 minutes before drinking.
- If possible, make sure you have extra dry and canned **food** that will not spoil. It is a good idea to have enough food for 3 days for everyone in the family. You may also want to have extra food stored for animals.

### **Preparing for a severe storm or flood:**

In addition to the above - if you hear that a storm is heavier than usual monsoon rains or that flooding is likely:

- Clean the **ravines or trenches** around the house (to help drain the rain). Build or reinforce **dams** around your house.
- **Cut off branches** from nearby trees.
- **Remove objects in your yard** that can be lifted and carried by the wind and hit someone (e.g., sheets/laundry, cans/bottles, other trash).



- Make sure **windows and doors** can close securely. Reinforce their strength (e.g., with plastic or wood over windows). Make sure that the roof and walls are as secure as possible (e.g., add more nails).
- **Move valuables to high shelves** in the house, or make a platform that can be pulled by ropes up to the ceiling to store valuables.
- If inside, stay in the middle of the room, away from windows and doors, or unstable walls.
- To prepare for the next monsoon season: plant trees on your property; teach children to swim

### ***'How Do You Prepare?' continued...***

#### **Preparing for an earthquake:**

Earthquakes offer no warning! In order to be prepared follow the steps above, make a plan, and learn what to do during and after an earthquake (described below).

*\*\*The information that follows represents what most disaster experts recommend; however it is best to use your judgment about what to do. Again, the most important thing is to consider your options and have a disaster plan (to be discussed later today)\*\**

#### **If indoors:**

The suggestions for where is the safest place in your home during an earthquake may depend on the construction of your home. Most people advise the following:

- Take **shelter under sturdy furniture** such as a heavy desk or table.
- Take **shelter against an inside wall**. If there isn't a table or desk near you, cover your face and head with your arms and crouch in an inside corner/wall of the building.
- Move away from areas where **glass could shatter** around windows, mirrors, pictures, or where heavy bookcases or other **heavy furniture could fall** over.
- Research has shown that most injuries occur when people inside buildings attempt to move to a different location inside the building or try to leave. Depending on the stability of your house, you may want to stay inside until the shaking stops (in one of the places described above), and it is safe to go outside. On other hand, if your house is unstable, you may want to identify an easily accessible exit that you can use if shaking begins. The most important thing is to consider your options and to have a plan.

#### **If outdoors:**

- Stay there and **move into an open area** away from anything that can drop on you. Move away from buildings, streetlights, and utility wires.
- Once in the open, stay there until the shaking stops. The greatest danger exists directly outside buildings, at exits and alongside exterior walls. Most earthquake-related casualties result from collapsing walls, flying glass, and falling objects.

### **Discussion**

***Thinking about all the different types of disasters we have just discussed, which of these suggestions for preparing did you already know?***

***Which of these things have you already done to prepare?***

***What are some reasons that you have not done these things even if you know it was a good idea?***

***Are these any suggestions that could be modified to better fit the needs of your community?  
What are three things that you can do right now to prepare?***

## **Mental Health Check-In**

**Note to facilitators:** Check in with participants about their level of anxiety/fear and other mental health reactions. Facilitate a relaxation exercise of your choice, e.g., breathing, grounding, body shake, muscle relaxation, monkey mind.

## **Household Level Preparedness**

We just talked about things you can do to prepare for disasters. It is important to have this knowledge, but it is just as important to make a plan with your family about how to use this knowledge most effectively. It can be very difficult to make immediate on-the-spot decisions about what to do in the middle of a disaster. For example, imagine the following scenario:

*An earthquake has just happened, many buildings have fallen, and there are lots of frightened people running around. You are at the market and your husband is at home. You have two kids: your daughter is at school, and your son is playing in the field. You are trying to decide what to do first – should you go to find your daughter or your son, or should you go home? You try to call for your husband but he is too far and phones are not working. Will he go to get your daughter or your son? What if you both go to get your daughter, and no one finds your son? What if you also have a grandmother or grandfather in your home that will need extra help? [Facilitators can provide other examples.]*

In order to avoid having to make these kinds of difficult decisions in the moment, you should make a **plan in advance**. Having a plan would help to sort out what you should do and what your husband should do (e.g., whether you should get your daughter first or your son first) if you were in a situation to the example above.

A household emergency plan can help you to think about your home's vulnerabilities and resources and identify the following:

- The safest and most dangerous places in each room of the house,
- All exits,
- And everyday things in the house that can be used in case of a disaster (e.g., pots to bail water, rope, plastic bags, etc.).

## **Activity: Developing Household Emergency Action Plan**

**Note to facilitators:** Hand out Household Emergency Action Plan worksheets. Divide participants into groups of 4-5 people. Go through each question verbally to ensure participants are clear about what information the questions are asking for. Give examples of vulnerabilities and resources of family members. These vulnerabilities and resources should guide the roles that family members take on in the last section of the form.

In your groups, go over the questions on the household emergency action plan worksheet as though you are a family. Create an action plan for 'your family' using one person's home for the purpose of this

activity. Cover each of the questions on the worksheet. If you come up with new ideas while answering these questions, list them in the 'other' section on the worksheet and prepare to share these with the whole group at the end.

**Note to facilitator:** Review and discuss the activity with the whole group. What did 'your family' decide? What questions are left?

### **Activity: Teamwork** (10 minutes)

For the next 10 minutes we are all going to play a game together.

**Note to facilitators:** Select one game for participants to play. **Try to make it something that encourages participants to trust and listen to each other.** Once you select a game, insert your own explanation into the following instructions. Game examples:

1. "Numbers game" - In this game, the group tries to count to 10 – anyone can call out a number. However, everyone has to start over if two or more people are talking at once! Lesson: Important of listening, giving space for everyone's participation.
2. "Follow the leader" - Participants stand in a circle and one participant is chosen to lead the rest in a series of movements. Another participant has left the circle so does not know who is chosen – when this participant returns he must guess which participant is the "leader". Lesson: It is important to learn from and follow other community members; however, when the community is working well together it can feel as though everyone is equal and there are no leaders at all
3. "Trust fall" - Members of the group fall back with their eyes closed and other members of the group catch them.
4. "Human knot" - Participants hold hands, creating a "knot" and then must untangle themselves.
5. "Puzzle pieces" - Participants are given different puzzle pieces cut out of paper and must work together, trading pieces, in order to complete a full puzzle.

### **Discussion:**

***What happened in this exercise? What lessons can we learn from it?***

- Importance of teamwork – Everyone has a role and it is important to leave space for everyone's participation.

### **Community Risk and Resource Maps**

Just as it is important to make a plan with your family, it is also important to make a plan with your neighborhood and community. After all, disasters do not just happen to individuals or families, they happen to whole communities. For the community, planning can take the form of a map.

#### **Importance of Community Mapping and Risk Assessments**

Community maps are used to recognize where vulnerabilities exist in the community (e.g., which areas or groups in the community may be at higher risk for the negative impacts of disaster) and what community resources and strengths can help to protect people in the community. When a disaster

strikes, it is often difficult and takes time for outside groups to provide the help needed, so it is important to identify the resources that can help the community protect itself from vulnerabilities.

### **Activity: Mapping Our Communities**

**Note to facilitators:** Introduce symbols for the following lists of items to participants. If you like, you can note the strength and/or instability of different building types introduced.

**Items:** road, river, house, tree, high ground, low ground, temple, school, hospital, market, community center, other buildings, water tap, transportation options, e.g., motorcycles, community members with special skills or resources (e.g., medical, transport, property in safe places)

Divide participants into groups according to where they live. Ideally, participants who live in the same part of the ward or village should work together. Groups will map their communities using the symbols above.

For the next 15 minutes we are going to do a community mapping activity. First, we would like for you to get into groups with people from your same ward or village. If there are a lot of people from the same area, try to get into a group with the people you live closest to.

For this activity, create a map of your community with your group using the symbols introduced a bit ago. When creating your map, think about:

1. Resources in your community (e.g. open area in case of earthquake, flat secure area on high ground in case of flood, stable buildings, health services, etc.)
2. Vulnerabilities in your community (e.g. low ground, unstable buildings, distance from water supply, lack of adequate nearby medical facilities)
3. Include houses of each of the group members in the map (each participant should draw their own house and surrounding neighbors)
  - a. note resources in the households (e.g., motorcycle, medical skills)
  - b. note vulnerabilities linked to the households(e.g., elderly household member who will need help walking)

Circle safe places and resources in green and circle unsafe places and vulnerabilities in red.

**Note to facilitators:** After 15 minutes, bring the larger group back together. Ask one representative from each group to present and explain their maps. Review the resources and vulnerabilities presented and offer suggestions if important ones are missing. The following questions can be used to stimulate discussion if necessary:

1. Who would you talk with to get information about disaster warnings?
2. Where is a location that is likely to be secure in the case of a flood, landslide, or other disaster? How would you get there?

3. Where can you go now for food/water? In the case of a disaster, where would you go for food/water?
4. Where would you go if you were sick or injured? (e.g., if there is no hospital nearby, are there community members with medical skills? Community members with transportation to help you to get a health post or hospital outside the community?)
5. What tools or equipment would you need in the case of a heavy rain, flood, landslide or other disaster? Where can you find those tools?

### ***Mapping Our Communities continued...***

#### **Discussion**

***What have you learned from this mapping experience?***

***How might you use this activity to help your neighbors before, during, and after a disaster?***

3:00 – 3:45

---

### **Helping Others with Typical Stress Reactions in the Aftermath of Disasters**

Today we have talked a lot about how we can prepare for disasters, and how we might react in the aftermath of a disaster to stay safe – in particular, we just spoke about how community members can support each other to stay safe. There are also important things that community members can do to help to decrease emotional distress experienced by others in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. This approach is called “psychological first aid”, and includes simple but important techniques that everyone can do to help others.

#### **Introduction to Psychological First Aid (PFA)**

*(90 minutes)*

The goals of PFA are:

- providing non-intrusive, practical care and support;
- assessing needs and concerns;
- helping people to address basic needs (for example, food and water, information);
- listening to people, but not pressuring them to talk;
- comforting people and helping them to feel calm;
- helping people connect to information, services and social supports;
- protecting people from further harm.

As important as it is to know what PFA is, it is equally important to understand what PFA is *not*.

PFA is *not*:

- professional counseling;
- pressuring people to tell you their feelings and reactions to an event.

## Discussion:

*When is PFA provided?*

### **Action principles of PFA**

The three basic action principles of PFA are **look, listen and link**.

### **The 8 Core Functions of PFA**

1. **CONTACT & ENGAGEMENT:** Respectful contact with survivors and observation of immediate needs, while being kind, calm, and compassionate.
  - Introduce yourself by name and organization.
  - Approach people respectfully.
  - Ask about immediate needs (such as place to stay, missing family member), and if you can provide help.
  - Help the person feel comfortable. For example, offer water if you can.
  - Listening properly to people you are helping is essential to understanding their situation and needs, to help them to feel calm, and to be able to offer appropriate help. Learn to listen with your:
    - Eyes » giving the person your undivided attention.
    - Ears » truly hearing their concerns.
    - Heart » with caring and showing respect.

## Discussion

*How do you make others feel comfortable or supported in daily life?*

*What type of body language do you display?*

*How do you let other people know you are listening?*

2. **SAFETY & COMFORT:** Enhance immediate and ongoing safety, and provide physical and emotional comfort.
  - Try to keep the person safe, such as keeping them away from broken glass or unlit areas.
  - If a person is in an area that may be dangerous based on the environment (e.g., rising flood waters) help the person relocate to a safer area.
  - If the person is very distressed, try to make sure they are not alone.
  - If a person is showing signs of shock (e.g., difficulty breathing, pale skin, unresponsive to communication) or wanting to hurt themselves, seek immediate medical attention.
  - Offer physical comforts, such as blankets or water.
  - Attend to children who are separated from their parents or caregivers.
  - Help survivors who are involved in body identification, or whose family member or close friend is missing or has died.
3. **STABILIZATION:** Stabilization or calming of those who are emotionally overwhelmed using basic psychological interventions.

- Try to get the person to a location where they can be comfortable, possibly where they can sit or lie down.
- Try to calm agitated people by doing breathing or guided visualization exercises.
- Help the person focus on specific, manageable goals.
- If someone is very distressed, you might use a breathing or grounding technique to help him or her.
- If a person appears extremely agitated, shows a rush of speech, seems to be losing touch with the surroundings, or is experiencing ongoing intense crying, it may be helpful to:
  - Ask the individual to listen to you and look at you.
  - Find out if they know who they are, where they are, and what is happening (ask them what time it is).
  - Ask him/her to describe the surroundings, and say where both of you are.
  - Clarify what has happened and the order of events (without graphic details).

4. **INFORMATION GATHERING:** Gathering information for immediate action or later referral for appropriate care; identify immediate needs and concerns, and gather additional information as appropriate to the situation.

- Identify need for additional services or referral

*Topics to ask about:*

- Nature and severity of experiences;
- Death of a loved one;
- Concerns about the immediate post-disaster circumstances and ongoing threat;
- Separation from or concerns about the safety of loved ones;
- Physical illness and need for medications;
- Losses incurred as a result of the disaster;
- Feelings of guilt or shame;
- Thoughts about causing harm to self or others.

*Example: You've been through lot of difficult things. May I ask you some questions about what you have been through? Where were you during the disaster? Are you worried about anyone missing? Was your home destroyed? Do you need any medications you don't have?*

5. **PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE:** Offering practical help to survivors in addressing immediate needs and concerns. Providing people with needed resources to help themselves can increase their sense of empowerment, hope, and restored dignity.

- Identify the most immediate need(s) (e.g., water, food, medication, information, etc.).
- Act to address the need (e.g., provide assistance looking for missing family members).

6. **SOCIAL SUPPORTS:** Cultivating connection with social supports to help speed recovery. Connect survivors as soon as possible to social support providers, including family members, friends, and community helping resources. These connections can do more than help survivors feel supported and accepted; they can also provide opportunities for survivors to share experiences, share practical information, and problem solve.

- Let survivors know it is okay if they choose not to talk about their experiences.
- Help people find family or friends.
- Discuss the importance of asking for help from family or friends or others.

- Help bring affected people together to help each other. For example, ask people to help complete a task in a shelter or help each other get resources.
- Help keep families together and keep children with their parents and loved ones.

## Discussion

*What are some forms of social support?*

- *Reassurance, physical assistance, hugs, or feeling needed.*

*What are some reasons why a survivor might avoid social support?*

- *Feeling guilty, anger, thinking, “no one can understand what I am going through”.*

*What kinds of social supports (e.g. family, friends, religious figures) would you seek out to make you feel better if you were upset?*

7. **INFORMATION ON COPING:** Providing information on stress reactions and coping to reduce distress and promote adaptive functioning.

A person in distress can feel overwhelmed with worries and fears. Help them to consider their most urgent needs, and how to prioritize and address them. Being able to manage a few issues will give the person a greater sense of control in the situation and strengthen their own ability to cope.

- Ask the person to consider how they coped with difficult situations in the past, and affirm their ability to cope with the current situation.
- Provide basic information about common psychological reactions to traumatic experiences and losses.
- Talk with children about body and emotional reactions.
- Teach simple relaxation techniques.

## Discussion

*Aside from the relaxation and breathing skills we have learned, what are some other positive ways of coping?*

8. **LINK WITH SERVICES:** Linking survivors to collaborative services such as:
- medical services,
  - NGOs,
  - religious leaders or church groups.

## Discussion

*What kind of referral options exist in your community for someone who is distressed?*



## Activity: Counselor Role Play

**Note to facilitators:** Use scenarios below in a role-play activity to communicate do's and don'ts in PFA. One counselor (or a volunteer from the community) should act as a community member who is struggling after a disaster. First, one counselor should act as the "bad PFA provider" and do everything on the "don't" list. Next, he/she should act as the "good PFA provider" and do everything on the "do" list. Do's and Don'ts lists available in TPO's PFA manual.

Do several sets of role plays to communicate the 8 functions of PFA (e.g., #1 contact and engagement, safety and comfort, stabilization; #2 info gathering and practical assistance; #3 social support, coping, and link with services).

### **In the good counselor role play(s), please include the following components:**

Introduce self and ask the community member if it is ok to sit down

Make sure community member is sitting in a safe place (e.g., ask her to sit up off the ground because there is dirty water or broken glass on the ground) and offer water and or a blanket.

Make sure community member has no immediate medical needs.

Help community member to stabilize by briefly teaching breathing technique

Ask about immediate needs and connect community member to services (e.g., if community member is worried about missing family members, call search and rescue team or Red Cross to ask about lists of lost/found people).

Connect community member with a neighbor who will sit with her while the counselor goes to check on missing family members.

Throughout, use good eye contact, listen attentively, and sit at the same level as the community member. Ask for permission to touch the community member before doing so.

Scenario examples (adapt to context):

- **Scenario 1: Earthquake**

An earthquake has severely damaged 80% of houses in a community. You hear a man picking through the rubble of his house muttering, "It's all gone, it's all gone. Everything I own is gone."

- **Scenario 2: Landslide**

A father and his three young children are standing next to their house after a landslide has hit their community. The roof has collapsed and only two walls remain standing. You notice the children are calling for their mother, and the man stands silently with a blank look on his face, not responding to his children or anything around him.

- **Scenario 3: Flood**

A flood has come through your neighborhood. Many neighbors have started emptying out the mud and debris from their homes. You notice a woman sitting on a wet chair outside of her

house. She calls out to you and tells you that since the minute the water began coming into her house she has had a stomachache, headache, and she feels her heart is beating too fast.

### Discussion

*What differences did you notice between the “good” and “bad” role plays?*

*What have you learned about how best to administer PFA?*

### Barriers to Help-Giving

As a reminder, earlier in the training we discussed stigma, help giving and help receiving.

Potential barriers to help-giving may include caste and gender differences.

### Discussion

*What would it be like to give help to or receive help from someone of a different caste?*

*What would you do if you saw someone clearly in need of help who was of a different caste?*

*Would you feel differently about helping a man or a woman? What would it be like to see a man cry or express a need for help?*

*How can we overcome some of these barriers in help-seeking and help-giving?*

3:45 – 4:00

---

### Closing and Review

Today we have talked about many ways to help ourselves and others before, during, and after a disaster. It is important that you take this information home and share it with other family and friends so you can work together to feel and be more prepared. Remember that often people feel less anxiety and worry when they know that they have done things to prepare for an emergency situation. **Please remember to complete your Household Emergency Action Plan with your family** and we will discuss it tomorrow when we meet together for the final time.

### Homework Assignment

Your homework for this evening is to complete the Household Emergency Action Plan worksheet with your families and come prepared to review and discuss it tomorrow.

### Discussion

*You might notice that your family members are not interested in talking about a household emergency action plan. Why might this be?*

- *It could also be that people do not feel that it is important to worry about disasters now. They may believe that a disaster won't happen or that there's nothing that they could do about it anyway. How will you explain the importance of this task to your family and convince them to participate?*

- *Also, it could be that it is stressful to talk about these things. Perhaps they do not want to think about future disasters because they do not want to be reminded of distressing events in past disasters. **How will you make family members feel calm while talking about this?***

### **Debrief/Check-Out**

Share with the group one strategy you will use tonight to help relax after today's training.

**Sing group song or slogan to close the group.**



Day 3

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

---

### **Overview**

- *Welcome, icebreaker, and homework review*
- *Helping Extremely Vulnerable Groups*
- *Bringing It All Together When Disaster Strikes*
- *Post-Intervention Measures and Satisfaction Survey*
- *Certificate Ceremony*

10:00 – 10:30

---

**Welcome – sing group song or slogan to open the group**

### **Activity: Peeling the Onion**

*(20 minutes)*

**Note to facilitators:** In advance, create a ball of paper, each sheet wrapped around the next, with one question written on each piece of paper about the material covered during the previous two days of training (as well as fun instructions such as “sing a song” or “dance for 1 minute”). This will be used to facilitate review and conversation among the group.

This ball is made of paper, each sheet wrapped around the next. On each sheet is a question or a set of instructions. We are going to throw this ball around from one person to the next. The person throwing should say the name of the person they are throwing to. The person catching the ball should answer the next question from the outer most sheet of paper and can get help from the group when desired!

### **Homework Review**

*(10 minutes)*

### **Discussion**

***How was the experience of creating a household emergency action plan with your family?***

***Was your family willing to participate?***

***What were the biggest challenges you had when doing this assignment? Why might family members want to avoid talking about disasters?***

**Note to facilitator:** If participants were not successful in talking to family members, ask other participants (who were successful) to make suggestions about how to try again tonight, e.g., explain the importance of the task, teach a calming exercises to decrease stress while talking about disasters.

## Helping Extremely Vulnerable Groups

Today we will talk about two groups that are especially vulnerable after disasters: Children and people with mental health problems that seriously affect their functioning. Other vulnerable groups likely also exist in your community and we can also think about the needs of each of these groups and how to help them.

### Helping Children with Stress Reactions in the Aftermath of Disasters

*(30 minutes)*

We know most of you have children in your lives – your children or grandchildren, nephews, nieces, little brothers or sisters, or neighbors. Like you, your children have survived frightening disasters. It is important to know what kinds of reactions children may have to disasters and how to help when it is needed.

Kids may react in all sorts of ways after experiencing a disaster. None of their reactions are “wrong” reactions. The most important thing to consider is whether a child is displaying behaviors that are *different* from their typical behaviors (the way they acted before the disaster). You know your child best and are the best person to identify whether behaviors are normal or not for your child.

#### Discussion:

***Can you think of different behaviors you have noticed in children following the earthquakes (or other disasters)?***

***Note to facilitators:*** Elicit responses from participants and write a list on the white board. Fill in other items from this list if not mentioned.

- **Fear that a disaster will happen again.**
- **Jumpiness when they hear loud noises or otherwise feel unsafe.**
- **Trouble sleeping, including nightmares/bad dreams.**
- **Mood swings: happiness one minute; sadness and crying the next minute.**
- **Regression – acting younger than they are. This can include clinginess (hanging onto caregivers most or all of the time) and avoidance of being alone.**
- **Spending more time on their own, isolated from others.**
- **Being very timid, well-behaved.**
- **Being more aggressive, getting in fights and other trouble. Being disobedient – not listening to adults or following instructions.**
- **Wanting to talk about disasters or other traumatic events a lot.**
- **Being very quiet, including avoiding talking about traumatic events.**
- **Trouble concentrating and learning new things, being distracted. Difficulty in school.**
- **Reduced or increased appetite.**

The future of Nepal depends on its children – it’s important to help them to be as healthy as possible. Sometimes parents feel guilty about not being able to provide as many things for their children as they

would like (e.g., food, new clothes, toys, expensive education). This can be especially true after a disaster, when it is common to face extra financial difficulties. Does anyone here feel this way?

Keep in mind that some of the most important things that you can give to your children are not clothes or toys, but rather your time, attention, and support. You can teach them how to survive hard times by demonstrating how to cope well when difficult events happen. This is incredibly meaningful, even when you can't provide material things, and lessons about survival and coping can benefit children throughout their lives.

Here are some ideas of how to help kids:

### **1. Take care of yourself**

You are a role model for your kids. Your mood and behaviors have an enormous influence on them. If you are calm and hopeful, they will feel calm and hopeful, too. This means you must improve your own psychological state first; even if you don't feel motivated to improve your mental health for your own sake, you should consider doing so for the children around you.

- **Discussion:** have you ever heard of the "chain or cycle of anger and violence" - husband beats wife, wife beats children, and children beat pets -? When this occurs adults need to break this chain in order to protect children. This means keeping yourself safe and managing your anger so that you can cope with it in a positive way.

### **2. Spend supportive, loving time with your children**

Be calm and patient; try not to yell or be aggressive with your child. Don't beat them. Children may get frightened more easily, and it is your job to help them feel safe. Tell them often how much you love and care about them. Do special activities with each child. Touch and hug your kids as much as possible. Physical contact, including the feel of an adult's skin, helps kids feel safer. This is especially important at bedtime. Holding your child and telling her a story can help her feel safe enough to sleep.

### **3. Talk to kids**

Talk to kids about their feelings and their thoughts about disasters they have experienced and resulting changes at home, school, with friends, family, etc. Let them know that it is okay to have the feelings that they are having and that they can talk to you and ask you questions. Be honest and clear in answering kids' questions. It is best to find a quiet place for this conversation. Plan to discuss things more than once. You might have to ask kids many times before they feel like talking. Some kids may not want to talk about the event, and that's okay, too. Let them know that you are there to talk if they want to.

Sometimes people think it is better to not talk to children about upsetting things. The reality is children often know a lot about what is going on anyway and may be afraid to talk about it because they think it will upset the adults. In fact, they may be trying to protect the adults in their lives by hiding their own distressing thoughts and feelings. This can make them feel alone with their problems. Often, children will feel better if they can talk freely and ask questions to the adults in their lives.

However, do avoid telling scary stories in the presence of children more than necessary, and avoid scary TV and movies.

#### **4. Keep routines**

A disaster can cause things to be very different from life before. But as much as possible, it is good to maintain a routine for your kids. Keep stable times for going to bed, waking-up, meals, chores, play times, etc. Let children go to school. Set rules and high expectations, still remembering that there will be challenges along the way. Give your children opportunities to be helpful.

#### **5. Talk to kids about your Household Emergency Action Plan**

It is common for children to worry about future disasters. Letting them know that there is a plan and making sure they know what to do can reduce fear and anxiety and make them feel safer. Share the family emergency plan and give them roles and responsibilities!

#### **6. Be patient and keep things hopeful**

Try to identify some positive aspects of things in your lives to share with your kids. Talk about things you are thankful for in your lives. Encourage children to maintain hope and to keep trying, even when things feel difficult.

**Note to facilitators:** Tell story about a hopeful mouse and explain that parents can share this story with their children.

#### **“A Hopeful Mouse”**

Once there was a mouse who fell in a deep container of milk (or yogurt). He swam and swam but no one knew where he was, so no one came to rescue him. Even though he worried that his situation might be hopeless, he didn't give up swimming...until finally the milk began to get firm under his feet. All of his swimming had churned the milk into butter! Once the milk had had all turned to butter, he was easily able to climb out of the container. What can we learn from this story?

#### **7. Practice relaxation exercises**

Practice relaxation exercises with your child to help him or her feel calm. Teach synchronized respiration. Put your hand on the child's abdomen and breathe at the same time. Teach the slow breathing technique that we learned the first day.

#### **Activity: Butterfly Hug (Hug of Love)**

*(10 minutes)*

Now we will learn another technique that you can use for yourself and your children to calm the body and mind. It's called the butterfly hug (hug of love).

Close your eyes and use the deep breathing that we have learned. Put your hands on your shoulders as if hugging yourself.

Think of a happy event. It might be a relaxing time, for example at a picnic spot. It could be an experience that really happened, or something imaginary. Take a minute to picture this event clearly in your head. Imagine that you are really there and observe the environment around you. Notice what you see, hear, smell, and feel. Focus on what happens in your body when you think about this place – are you becoming more relaxed?



When you feel safe, peaceful and calm, slowly start tapping on your shoulders. Left, right, left, right, left, right (6-8 breaths). You can continue as long as you want.

### **Activity: Role Play Teaching a Child Coping Skills**

*(10 minutes)*

Let's practice how you might teach these skills to a child. Work with another person and pretend that one of you is the child and the other is the adult (*E.g., teach breathing, body shake, butterfly hug/hug of love and other techniques and games*).

11:15 – 11:25

---

### **10 Minute Break**

11:25 – 11:40

---

## **Helping Those with Mental Health Issues that Seriously Affect Functioning in the Aftermath of Disasters**

### **Mental Health First Aid in Disaster Context**

*(25 minutes)*

The first day of this training we talked about common “mild” to “moderate” mental health reactions that people may have related to trauma and stress associated with disasters. Yesterday, we talked about Psychological First Aid techniques you can use to help people in your community having these kinds of reactions, especially immediately after a disaster. As we mentioned, many survivors of disasters will not develop serious mental health problems or long-term difficulties. However, in some cases people will develop mental health conditions that seriously affect their functioning over the long-term and can benefit from ongoing help.

This section of the training will provide you with a better understanding of symptoms of longer-term, “moderate” to “severe” mental health problems. You are not expected to be able to diagnose specific mental health disorders following this training, rather to be able to recognize symptoms and to provide aid and referrals as possible. People with such symptoms will benefit from your compassionate response. You can make a big difference by interacting with them in a respectful way and encouraging others to do the same. However, they may also need more help than you can provide – and therefore will benefit from a referral to a specialized mental health provider or hospital.

### **Severe Mental Health Symptoms**

Severe mental health symptoms significantly interfere with life so that one is **not able to function** - to take care of themselves or others, work, or have successful relationships.

**Note to facilitators:** Following each condition, ask the group, “What other symptoms do you think might be common in persons with \_\_\_\_\_?”

### **Anxiety**

- Feelings of panic, fear, uneasiness, worries, including that something bad will happen to you (e.g., so severe that one is afraid to leave the house)

### **Depression**

- Feeling sad, discouraged, hopeless; lack of energy (e.g., so severe that one cannot get out of bed)

### **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**

- Intrusive memories, flashbacks, nightmares
- Feeling constantly alert and on guard
- Avoiding things that cause fear or remind one of upsetting memories

### **Psychosis**

- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there)
- Delusions (persistent beliefs in things that are not true), including paranoia (beliefs that other people are trying to hurt you)
- Disorganized (confusing, hard to follow) thought and speech

11:50

---

## **Resiliency and Hope**

Hope is a “resource” that can reduce your risk of being overwhelmed by disasters, stress, and trauma. It is an extremely important part of resilience. As we have discussed, trauma and stress can sometimes cause feelings of hopelessness. People may feel that there is no way that things can get better and no reason to continue trying. It is understandable to feel this way sometimes. Yet, most often people find the strength to continue trying every day. They manage to find hope and make meaning in even the worst situations.

### **Discussion**

*Have you ever felt this way?*

*What do you do to feel hopeful?*

Some research indicates that practicing your religion is good for mental health and for disaster preparedness. This is true no matter what your religion is – Hindu, Christian, Buddhist or Muslim.

### **Discussion**

*What religious practices have you engaged in that have made you feel better or encouraged you to stay safe during disasters?*

There are some religious beliefs that seem to interfere with good mental health and disaster preparedness. For example, if one believes it is their fate to suffer and that they have no way to change

this, then they are likely to be unhappy and unlikely to do things to try to change their future, like prepare for disasters.

### **Other Things People Do To Find Hope**

**Take comfort in family, friends, and neighbors** – Think about their importance in your life and consider how much they love and depend on you. Think about people you trust and can share your life and stories with.

**Accept some things that you cannot change; change other things that are under your control.** There is a mantra that captures this idea:

*Grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change;  
courage to change the things I can;  
and wisdom to know the difference.*

**Note to facilitators:** Add other mantras that communicate similar ideas about needing to accept some things and change other things as appropriate for the context.

In Haiti, since the 2010 earthquake, there has been some research about people who were displaced from their homes and living in tent camps, but who were doing very well psychologically. It was found that one of the main things contributing to the positive psychological state of these people is that they were able to both accept some things (those out of their control) and work to change other things (those in their control). This is a great skill, but it is still very difficult to figure out which things in your life to accept and which to change.

### **Discussion**

**Think about the things in your life that are out of your control. These are the things that you have to “accept”.**

- **What are some examples of things to accept? What might help you to accept these things?**
- **What things in your life are controllable that you can take steps to work on now?**  
(Example: disaster preparedness)

### **Help others**

Often survivors of disaster say that helping or sharing with others makes them feel better. Helping can be many things: providing money, food, information, or just spending time and talking. Engaging in social action to try to change things in your community is another positive way to respond following a disaster.

You might be surprised about how much you already know about how to help others. Later today we will do an activity in which you can practice using what you’ve learned to help others. You can help by providing them with information that you’ve learned here, and by providing psychological support.

### **Create a meaningful and purposeful life, and appreciate areas of growth**

Sometimes after a disaster people feel they do not have a sense of purpose to live for. Being unable to find a satisfying job or being unable to provide for one's family as well as one would like can make this feeling stronger. However, having some skills that you can use to help others is a good way to create a sense of purpose in your life. Other ways are to connect to your family and friends and your religion. Some people find that the value they place on their family and friends and their religiosity becomes stronger after disasters and other traumatic events. People may choose to appreciate their lives more and not take things for granted after surviving disasters. They may become closer to others, even those of different castes and religions.

### **Discussion**

***Are there any areas in which you feel that you have grown or changed for the better after a disaster?***

Note: Although there are some medical explanations for such symptoms, many people also associate seeing or hearing things with a religious experience.

### **Discussion**

***Sometimes these kinds of symptoms are referred to as "brain-mind" problems. What do people think about causes and prognosis for these symptoms?***

***Note to facilitators:*** This is another opportunity to discuss stigma with the group.

***Often people experiencing mental health symptoms, especially psychosis, will benefit from being referred to a mental health specialist. For example, medication can be very useful in stopping or minimizing hallucinations and paranoia.***

***What types of referral resources exist in this community or nearby? Where do people go for help?***

- Local help-seeking may include: traditional and religious healing practices (if people believe there are spiritual causes such as witchcraft, possession by spirits), mental health and psychosocial workers (for heart-mind problems), psychiatrists (for brain-mind problems), or physicians (for physical problems).
- TPO and the MHPSS cluster also have a list of good referral options (we will hand these out). TPO hotline: 16600102005

There are some situations when it is definitely appropriate and important to provide referrals to medical or other providers as well. Some examples include:

- If a child or elderly person is being abused,
- If domestic violence is occurring (e.g., a woman is being beaten by her husband/boyfriend or mother-in-law or other family member),
- If someone has been sexually assaulted,
- If a person wants to kill or hurt themselves,
- If a person wants to kill or hurt someone else.

If you or anyone you know has any of these problems, please come talk to one of the counselors at a break or at the end of the day.

11:40 – 11:50

---

**Teamwork Ice-breaker II (10 minutes):** A second game of your choice – try to make it something that helps participants to trust each other and **listen to each other** (choose from list on page ....).

### Discussion

*What happened in this exercise? What lessons can we learn from it?*

### Activity: Tree of Hope Exercise

Now we are going to draw our ‘future tree’ or ‘tree of hope.’ Please take a large sheet of paper and some pens. I will explain each part of the tree and ask you to draw it. We will have the ground, roots, trunk, branches, leaves and maybe even fruit of the tree. You can also put in a background for your tree such as a forest, sky or other things. **The tree represents you and your hope for the future – as you would like things to be.**

- Start by drawing the **roots** of your tree...What are your roots? What has given you a strong foundation to grow from? Your culture, community, family?
- Now please draw the **trunk** of your tree...How can you make it strong and healthy? The trunk represents your strengths - the qualities that you have inside that help you to grow – your skills and knowledge, beliefs, religion perhaps - What are your strengths? Have you learned more about your strengths as a result of surviving the earthquake?
- Next please draw the **branches** of your tree...Growing up towards the sunlight. Now draw the **leaves** on your tree and if you would like, the **fruit**. Your leaves and fruits are your goals, hopes, and dreams for the future – for yourself and your family. How will you help these leaves and fruits to grow? What steps will you take?
- Think about the things a tree needs to grow – **sun, water, good soil**. Add these to your picture. Consider, what are the things and who are in the people in your life that are helping you to grow?
- *Wrap-up* – Please take a moment to consider your ‘future’ tree. You can draw anything else you like, or add words. Would you like to represent your friends and family in your drawing if you haven’t done so already? Are there things that give you hope that you can include in your drawing?

**Note to facilitators:** Break into smaller groups for sharing. Remind participants to provide feedback and support after each member shares their tree.

For those of you comfortable doing so we will share our tree drawings. Please describe a bit about your tree. Please feel free to make comments about each other’s’ trees - what do you like? What questions do you have?

- How does this tree represent your hope for the future?
- What steps can you take now to work towards achieving this ‘future tree’/‘tree of hope’? Please share one important goal and share one action you can take TODAY to achieve that goal.

### **Making a forest**

Just as we are part of families and communities, our trees together make a forest. What do you think/feel when you see this forest?

**Note to facilitators:** Help participants hang their trees together on the wall or on a sheet.

Possible topics to discuss:

- Each individual tree is different but together they create a beautiful and powerful image. Different trees provide different kinds of fruit, wood, etc., so that together can satisfy all needs. How can the community work together, with each individual bringing his/her strengths to the table?
- Trees in forests protect each other from winds and storm – making it harder for any tree to fall down. How can we support and protect each other in this community?
- Seeds from some trees help other trees to grow. How can we inspire each other in this community?

1:00 – 2:00

---

**Lunch**

2:00 – 2:30

---

### **Psychological Preparedness**

It is possible to increase the likelihood that you will react well during and after a disaster. This is called developing “psychological preparedness”.

#### **Discussion**

***Consider past floods in this area. Do you remember people in the community who you felt were particularly calm, organized, and focused during and after the flooding? If so, were they more or less helpful than people who were anxious, disorganized, or irritable? When people are calm during a disaster, they are more likely to be able to help themselves and others.***

There are some ways to increase the likelihood that you will be calm and focused during a disaster – that you will be “psychologically prepared”. Some ways to increase psychological preparedness are to:

- Increase your knowledge about what to do in a disaster,
- Practice functioning under stress.

You have already done the first 2 of these points during the last two days and today we will continue by doing some activities designed to give you practice functioning under stress. Keep in mind that you do have past experience staying calm under pressure. For example, taking a penalty kick in football, taking exams, helping sick or hurt people. What are some other examples?

## Strategies to remain calm and collected under stress

**Note to facilitators:** Make sure to spend sufficient time on the issue of psychological preparedness and reviewing strategies below.

- **Slow breathing** – Breathing properly can help you calm your body so that you feel more in control. Practice breathing in non-stressful situations so that it comes naturally at more stressful times.
- **Grounding** – Sometimes in moments of high stress, people get overwhelmed with worries (e.g., our house is damaged, where will we stay? Is my mom ok? Where will I get money?). In an emergency, it is important to stay focused on the present moment and the actions you need to take now. Use the grounding technique you learned earlier.
- **Planning** – When you feel more centered, focus on the things that need to be done now - one small thing at a time, so that tasks are more manageable. Make a plan: First I will do this. Then I will do that. It may help to write your plan down. What are some examples of small steps that people may need to take during a disaster?
- **Self-talk and encouragement** – Remind yourself that you have knowledge and skills. Encourage yourself. Do not get mired in regrets or guilt. You are doing the best you can. What are some positive things that you can say to yourself?

2:30 – 4:00

---

## Bringing it All Together When Disaster Strikes

### Activity: Mini-Simulation

*(60 minutes)*

In order to practice the skills we have learned over the last three days and our ability to stay calm in a stressful situation, we are now going to all participate together in a short simulation of a natural disaster simulation, a somewhat extended roleplay.

### Introduction *(10 minutes)*

First, let's briefly review key points you will need to remember for the simulation:

- Remember to use psychological preparedness skills to stay calm
- Consider knowledge about disaster preparedness strategies and household and community planning
- Consider knowledge of common trauma and stress reactions during and after disasters in adults and children, as well as more severe mental health problems (in adults)
- Consider PFA skills and knowledge of referrals for those who need them

- Relaxation and other coping skills
- Consider cultural and religious beliefs

**Note to facilitators:** Divide participants into 4 groups and assign each group a scenario. These scenarios can be adapted to fit with common situations and priorities for training in different communities. Assign each member a role in the scenario—either a victim or a helper (there can be multiple community members trying to help). If there are not enough roles in the scenario, create more.

### **Mini-Simulation continued...**

**Note to facilitators:** When appropriate, you can step into the scenario and participate. You should not overpower the assistance of the other group members, but rather add a variety of behaviors to the scenario to help participants use the skills listed above.

### **Present the natural disaster scenario**

#### **Stage 1: Before the disaster:**

The weather report predicts that a very big monsoon storm is coming in a few days. Everyone is preparing except for one man. He says that it won't matter if he prepares or not, because it is God's will whether he lives or dies and he has no control. His wife died in the last monsoon season and he was unable to help her, so he thinks God may be punishing him for his sins. Besides, he says that even if he was to prepare, he wouldn't know what to do anyway. His adult son is trying to get him to prepare by strengthening his house and storing his important documents, but he is frustrated by his father's refusal and has started yelling at him.

#### **Stage 2: During the disaster:**

As a result of the storm, there is severe flooding and the community is being evacuated, but a woman says that she feels too scared and nervous to move. She is very anxious, can't relax, has trembling feet, and her heart is pounding. She is staying in her house with her two small children instead of moving, as she fears that something bad will happen to them if they leave.

#### **Stage 3: Immediately after the disaster:**

Following the storm, the community has suffered significant damage and some people have been wounded. A man is looking for his young son and can't find him. He seems confused and is walking in circles. His wife is sitting on the ground and can't stop shaking and crying.

#### **Stage 4: Following the disaster:**

A few weeks after the storm, the community is starting to rebuild. Some adults and children have been acting differently. A woman is complaining that ever since the flood, she has had a stomachache and feels that her heart is beating too fast. She is also worried about her family. Her husband seems angry and has been drinking a lot of alcohol. One of her children is constantly clinging to her and crying. Her other child has been getting into trouble and fighting with his friends.

**Note to facilitators:** Within each group, assign roles for the men, women and children. Tell these actors to only reveal a few details and to allow the group to investigate by talking with them in order to discover the big picture. Have the rest of the group discuss and choose other community member



roles. Ask the participants to use their training to engage the man and woman while acting within their community roles. Ask them to consider their goals for talking to them, and perhaps suggest that the community members create a plan for how to help the people in each stage.

### **Role Play** (30 minutes)

#### **Debrief** (20 minutes)

Discuss why characters in the scenario acted the way they did. Focus on ways characters interact with each other, not on specific disaster-related decisions (such as where they evacuated to).

- What did you do to support people in this scenario?
- How did you apply things you have learned during this 3-day training?
- What were some elements from the training that were missed, but might have been helpful to use?
- What will you take away from this exercise that can help you in a real disaster?

Congratulations to everyone, we've now reached the end of the training and each of you have taken a great opportunity to learn new skills. Our hope for your participation in this training is that you will take these skills and use them to help protect yourselves, your families and your communities through preparedness and response to natural disasters.

Before we wrap up our day with celebrations, we first ask that each of you help by providing feedback through a satisfaction survey for the training. We would really appreciate feedback from each of you as it will help us to improve the experience of others participating in this training in the future.

**Note to facilitators:** Hand out satisfaction survey forms and explain. Read each question aloud so that participants who cannot read can follow along.

### **Group Celebration**

(30 minutes)

**Note to facilitators:** The celebration can be conducted according to the desires of the facilitators and participations. Please see below for some suggestions.

- Bring all participants together into one room. Ask them to bring their "trees of hope" and to put them together on one wall to create a community-wide forest. Discuss what they feel when they see the full community forest.
- Thank participants for their engagement and share some impressions about the experience of working with them. Discuss participant impressions of the trainings – perhaps ask one man and one woman to speak on behalf of participants.
- Certificate ceremony – hand out certificates and gifts if available (e.g., disaster supply kits).

- Share contact and referral information.
- Dessert and singing/dancing. End with group song/slogan!

## Day 1 Handout

### Helping Yourself and Others in the Aftermath of Disasters

#### Common mental health reactions to stress and trauma

##### Body (physical)

- Trembling
- Jumpy
- Shaky
- Fast heart rate
- Fast and shallow breathing
- Feeling hot, flushed
- Dizziness
- Muscle tension and clenching
- Pain, especially in the head, back, and stomach
- Trouble sleeping
- Decreased or increased appetite

##### Mind (thoughts and emotions)

- Feeling depressed, hopeless
- Sadness, grief
- Anxiety, nervousness
- Fear
- Trouble concentrating
- Anger, irritability
- Memories, flashbacks
- Nightmares
- Worries and racing thoughts
- Guilt
- Avoiding thinking about events (e.g., disasters)
- Quick mood changes

#### Coping and Help-Seeking Strategies

- Deep Breathing
- Butterfly Hug (Hug of love)
- Body Shakeout
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Leaves on a Stream
- Singing, dancing, playing games
- Doing exercise, sports, and stretching
- Asking for help from friends and family
- Sharing with people you trust
- Helping others
- Religious practice
- Accepting unchangeable things and taking action on things one can change

#### What do you do to relieve stress?

## Day 2 Handout

---

### Disaster Preparedness and Intervention

Sometimes we have warnings before a disaster (like a storm, hurricane, or flood) that allow us to quickly prepare, and other times there may not be any warning (like an earthquake). Here is a list of things you can do to prepare for any disaster so that you can be ready with or without an early warning.

- Listen to the radio/watch TV and follow instructions. Talk to neighbors and community leaders to gain and give information.
- Make and review your family emergency plan with all family members and your community plan with neighbors (remember you made these plans during the training). Discuss the plan with children regularly.
- Prepare a disaster kit.
  - You could include: candles, matches, flashlight, batteries, bleach, water purification tablets, a clean bottle for water. First aid supplies such as alcohol rubs, band-aids, heavy plastic bags, bucket for waste. Protect your kit in plastic and store in high, dry location. *What else do you think you should include?*
- Store extra drinking water. This is extremely important because a person can't survive more than a few days without drinking water.
- Store extra food that will not spoil (it is a good idea to have enough food for at least 3 days for everyone in the family). Consider food for animals, too.
- Protect important documents by placing them in plastic bags and store them in a high place.
- Make sure you have extra medications, especially if anyone in your family takes medication for a chronic condition. Keep in a plastic bag.
- Secure dwelling from wind or rain or make it stronger in some way to withstand a heavy rain or flood.
- Prepare for floods: raise furniture off the floor (e.g. raised mattress), dig a canal, or consider how to redirect water from your home, etc.

## Questions to Discuss with People in Your Family and Community *Before* a Disaster

1. Who would you talk with to get information about disaster warnings?
2. Where can you go for food/water?
3. Where would you go if you were sick or injured?
4. What emergency tools or equipment would you need in the case of a storm/flood/other disaster? Where can you find those tools?
5. Where is a location/safe shelter that is likely to be secure in the case of a storm/flood/other disaster? How would you get there?
6. What areas in the house/community are at high risk? At low risk?

## Helping Others with Typical Stress Reactions in the Aftermath of Disasters

### Psychological First Aid (PFA)

PFA describes a humane, supportive response to a fellow human being who is suffering and who may need support. PFA involves the following themes:

- »» Providing non-intrusive practical care and support;
- »» Assessing needs and concerns;
- »» Helping people to address basic needs (for example, food and water, information);
- »» Listening to people, but not pressuring them to talk;
- »» Comforting people and helping them to feel calm;
- »» Helping people connect to information, services and social supports;
- »» Protecting people from further harm.

### PFA emphasizes key factors that seem to be most helpful to people's long-term recovery:

- »» Feeling safe, connected to others, calm and hopeful;
- »» Having access to social, physical and emotional support;
- »» Feeling able to help themselves, as individuals and communities.

### PFA emphasizes three key actions when engaging with people who have recently experienced an adverse event:

#### Look

- »» Check for safety;
- »» Check for people with obvious urgent basic needs;
- »» Check for people with serious distress reactions.

#### Listen

- »» Approach people who may need support;
- »» Ask about people's needs and concerns;
- »» Listen to people, and help them to feel calm.

#### Link

- »» Help people address basic needs and access services;
- »» Help people cope with problems;
- »» Give information;
- »» Connect people with loved ones and social support.

**PFA is based upon 8 Core Principles:**

1. **CONTACT & ENGAGEMENT:** Respectful contact with survivors and observation of immediate needs;
2. **SAFETY & COMFORT:** Restoring a sense of safety to reduce distress and providing emotional and physical comforts away from trauma;
3. **STABILIZATION:** Stabilization or calming of those who are emotionally overwhelmed using basic psychological interventions;
4. **INFO GATHERING:** Gathering information for immediate action or later referral for appropriate care;
5. **PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE:** Planning practical assistance - survivors with favorable outcomes are characterized by optimism, confidence and resources and psychological care can help to foster these;
6. **SOCIAL SUPPORTS:** Cultivating connection with social supports to help speed recovery;
7. **INFO ON COPING:** Providing information on psychological reactions and coping strategies; and,
8. **LINK WITH SERVICES:** Linking survivors to collaborative services then or in the future.

**Note:** Some people will need much more than PFA alone. Know your limits and ask for help from others who can provide medical or other assistance to save lives. Remember, you must first take care of yourself in order to help others.

*Information above collected from WHO PFA Field Guide 2011; NCTSN Field Operations Guide, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Red Cross PFA Participant Workbook, 2006.*

## Day 3 Handout

### Helping People with Mental Health Symptoms

#### How to Help Adults with Mental Health Symptoms

- Recognize mental health symptoms and share your mental health knowledge with others.
- Share information about typical stress reactions after a disaster with others.
- Offer compassion and support: find out how they are doing; ask how you can help (review PFA handout).
- Help to link them with family, friends, a religious person, or other supports.
- Possibly help them find a doctor or mental health specialist to see if they need medication, counseling or other supports to manage their symptoms, especially if they are suicidal or homicidal, experiencing/perpetrating abuse, or experiencing upsetting hallucinations or delusions.
- Discourage others from making fun of people with mental health symptoms.

#### How to Help Children with Mental Health Symptoms

- Take care of yourself so you can have the strength to take care of your kids.
- Spend time with your children.
- Touch and hug your kids as much as possible.
- Talk to kids about their experiences and feelings.
- Keep a routine for your kids.
- Talk to kids about your family's emergency action plan.
- Be patient and hopeful.
- Do relaxation exercises with your child.

#### Teach a Child Deep Breathing Relaxation

1. "Let's practice a different way of breathing that can help calm our bodies down."
2. "Put one hand on your stomach, like this" [*demonstrate*].
3. "Now we are going to breathe in through our noses. Imagine you are smelling a flower. When we breathe in, we are going to fill up with a lot of air and our stomachs are going to stick out like this" [*demonstrate*].
4. "Then, we will breathe out through our mouths. Imagine you are blowing out a candle. When we breathe out, our stomachs are going to suck in and up like this" [*demonstrate*].
5. "We are going to breathe in really slowly while I count to three. I'm also going to count to three while we breathe out really slowly."
6. "Let's try it together. Great job!"

#### Ways to Make a Game of It:

- Blow bubbles with chewing gum.
- Blow paper wads or cotton balls across the table.
- Tell a story where the child helps you imitate a character that is taking deep breaths.

*National Child Traumatic Stress Network National Center for PTSD*