

**Psychosocial Care & Support for Children
& Adolescents
in Disaster Situations**

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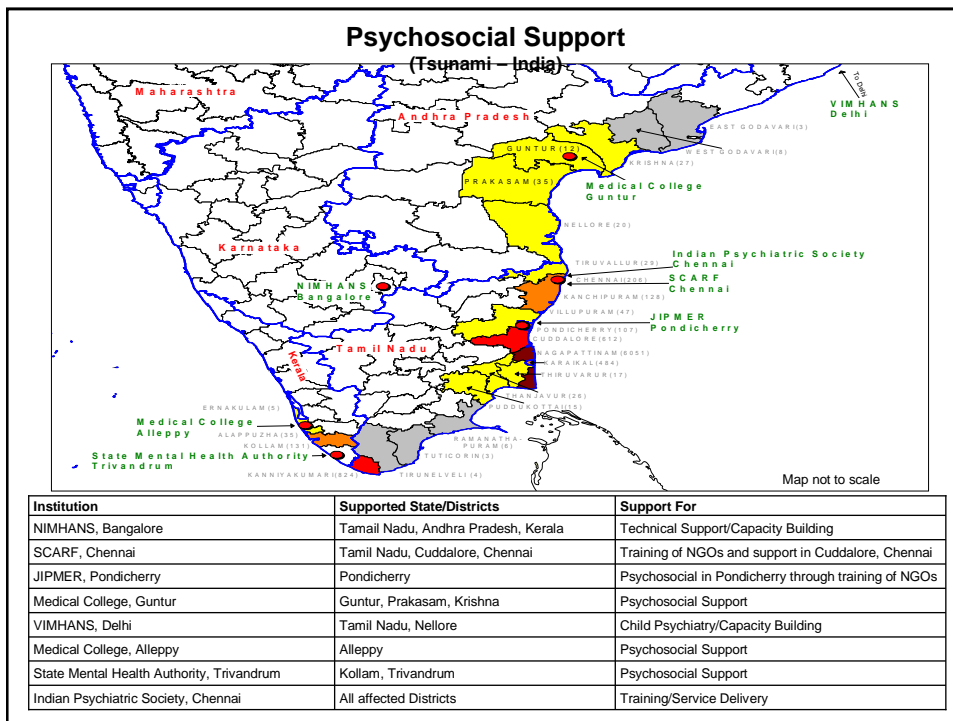
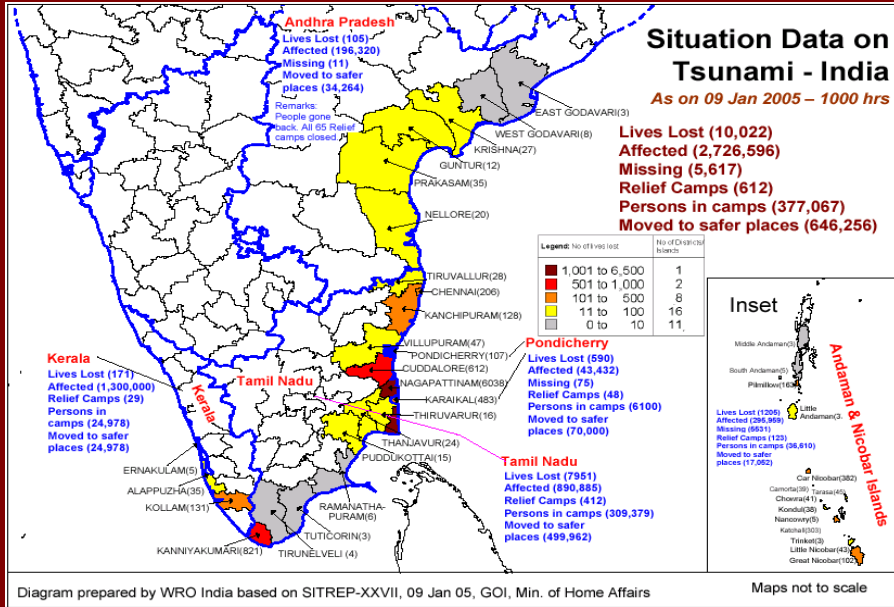
Dr. Sheema Sen Gupta - UNICEF, New Delhi

TSUNAMI - The killer wave





Situation Data on Tsunami - India



“Although difficult to quantify, mental health and psychosocial problems can be associated with any type of disaster and post-disaster setting. The horrors, losses, uncertainties and other stressors associated with disasters can place people at increased risk of various psychiatric and psychological and social problems”

- Sphere Standards

CHILD RESPONSE TO DISASTERS.....

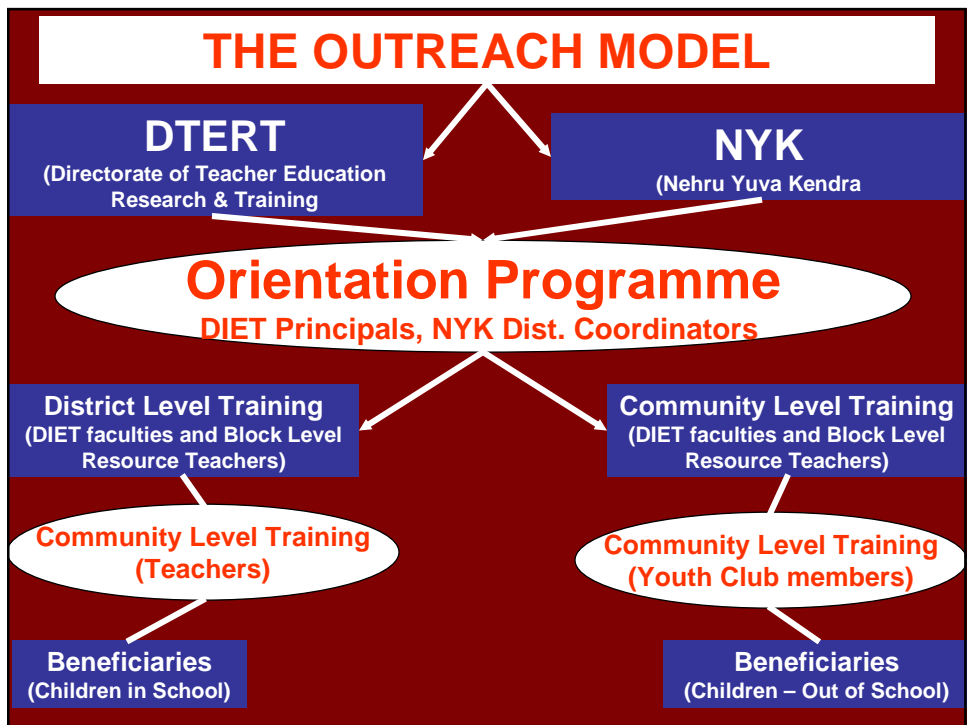
After a disaster, children are most afraid that:

- The event will happen again.
- Someone they know will be injured or killed.
- They will be separated from the family.
- They will be left alone.

Children’s reactions are affected by

- Their age
- Nature of loss they have experienced
- Disruption of daily activities

USUAL RESPONSES TO DISASTERS		
Young Children (0-5 years) ↓ Getting angry Stubborn Nightmares Helplessness Regressive behaviour Irritability Crying Fearful Loss of appetite Sleep disturbance Clinging behaviour	School Going Children (6-12 years) ↓ Feeling sad Body pain Fearful Nightmares Not relating with friends Worrying Regressive behaviour Problems in school, inability to concentrate Feeling guilty Anger and irritability	Adolescents (13 years & above) ↓ Denying the event Aggression Feeling helplessness Being aloof Feeling sad Low concentration Drinking and smoking Sleeplessness Thoughts of revenge Loss of appetite



Rationale for School Teachers as Resource

- Teachers are cognizant of a child's temperament and behaviour patterns.
- Teachers know the 'culture' within each class
- Teachers are experts in providing children with knowledge, more so than psychologists and psychiatrists
- Teachers are familiar with a variety of expressive means beyond rote teaching methods.
- Teachers are well-known to and trusted by the children & families.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- **To accept the reality of the loss**
- **To work through the pain of grief**
- **To adjust to an environment in which the dead person is missing**
- **To emotionally relocate the deceased person and move on in life**

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN DISASTER SITUATIONS



Module for Facilitators and Manual for Service Providers

Developed by

'Expressions'

The Comprehensive Life Skills Education & School Mental Health Programme

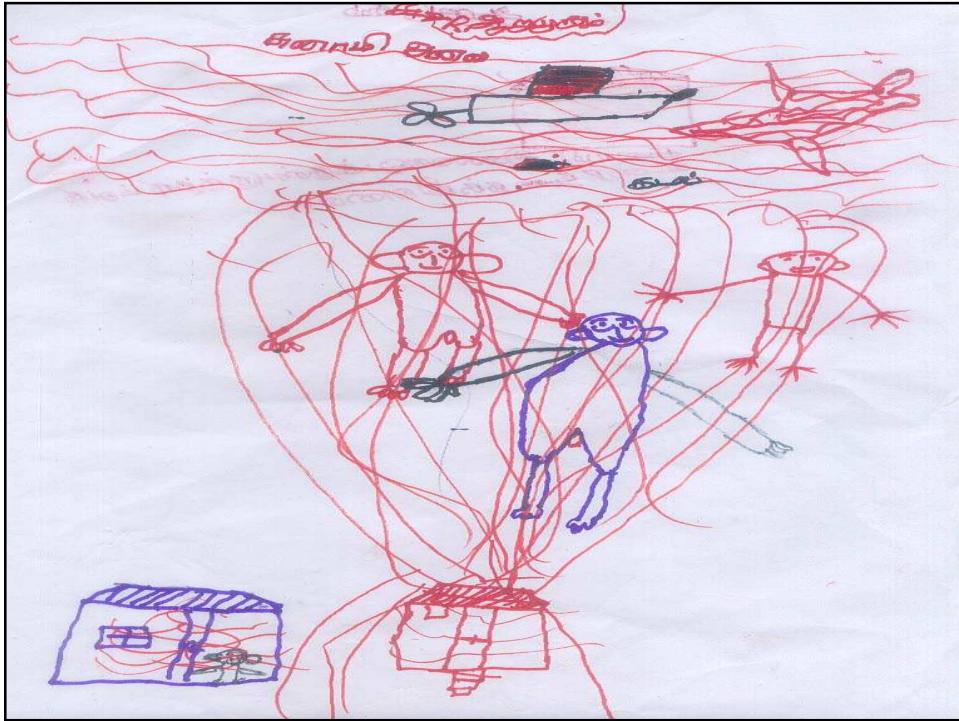
Child Development & Adolescent Health Centre, VIMHANS, New Delhi

Inputs from : **UNICEF** New Delhi & Chennai

Supported by : **World Health Organization (WHO)** India Country Office, New Delhi

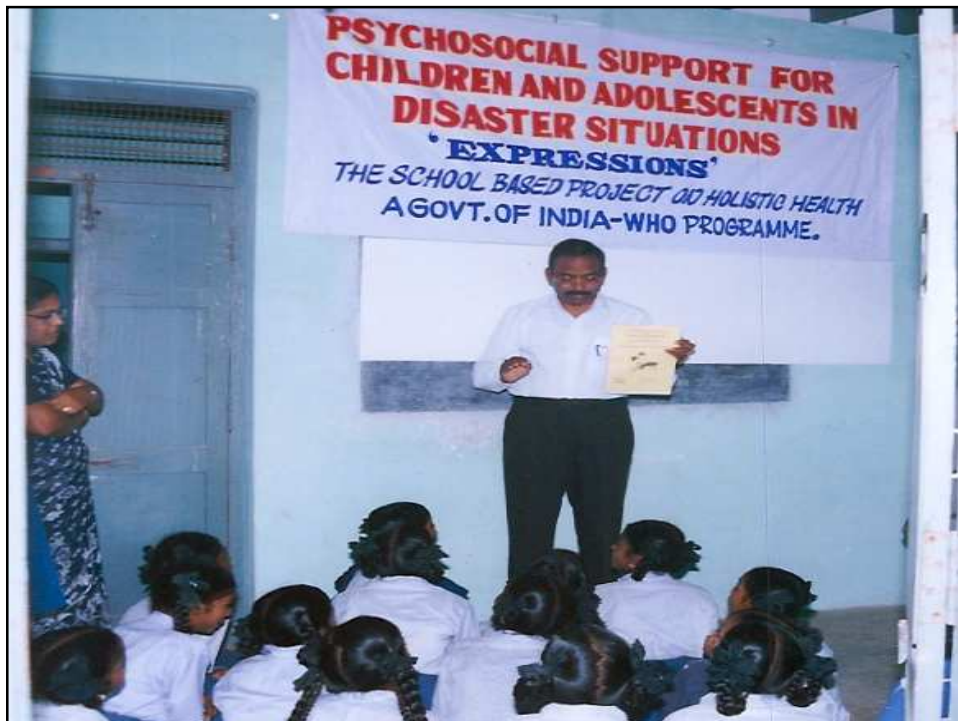
Training of Resource People

- Understanding the effect of disaster on children & adolescents.
- The Helping Process
- Flag signs: identification and referral for mental health services.
- Conducting classroom activities
- Enhancing effective communication with focus on listening skills
- Record keeping

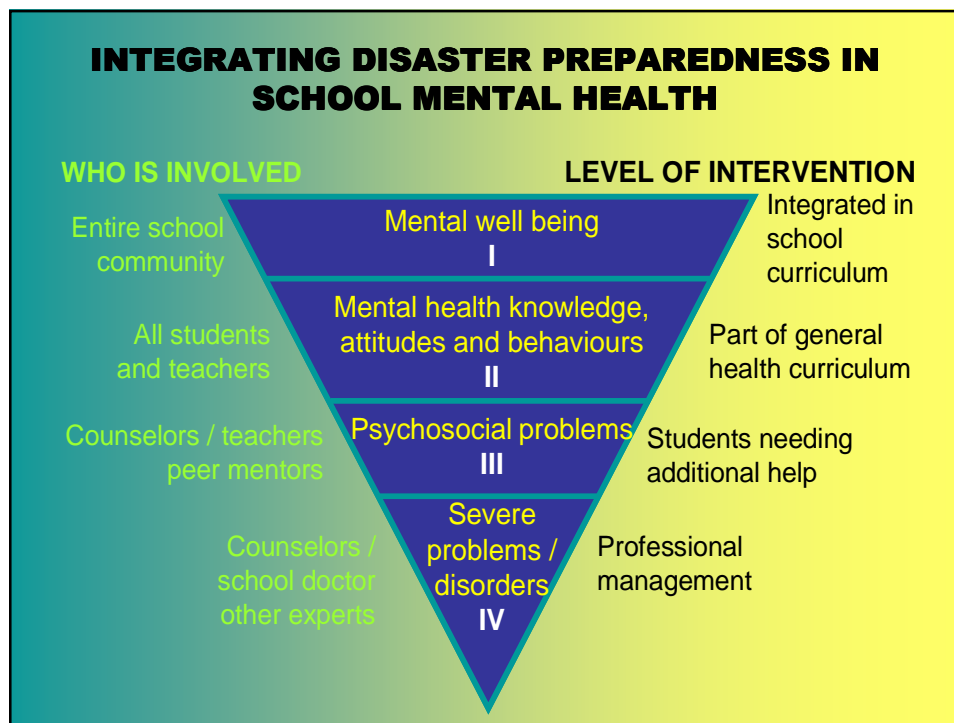


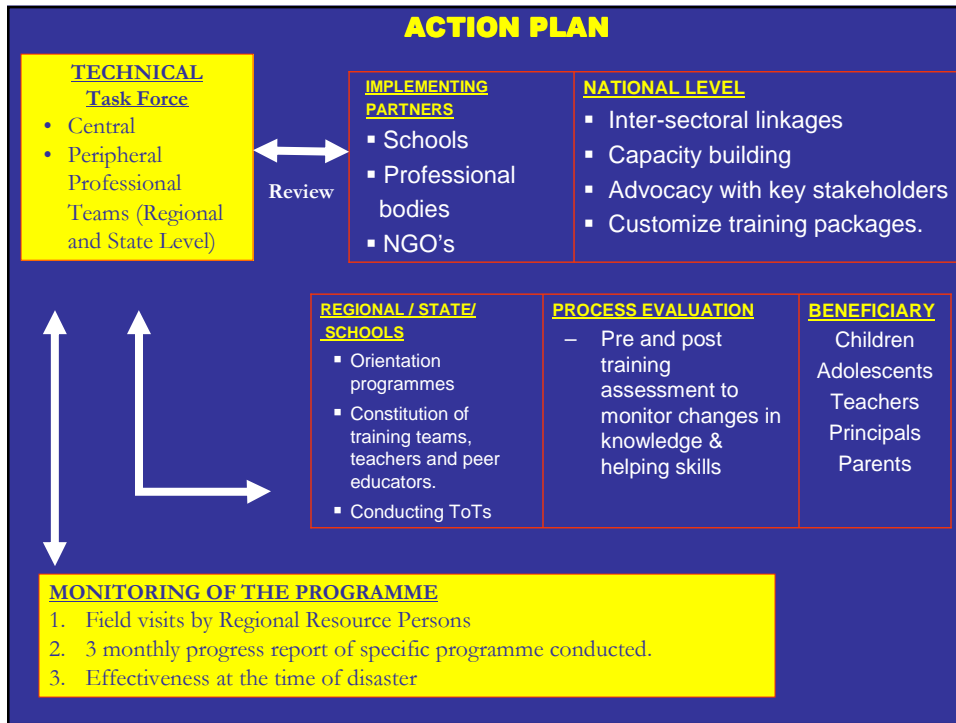
Activities for Adolescents

- **Group discussions, brainstorming & ventilation. Focus areas:**
 - Learning to deal with loss and sadness
 - Developing group cohesion by sharing hopes & fears
 - Learning to cope with anger
 - Education about high risk behaviours (alcohol & substance abuse).



Recommendations





Tsunami's will keep coming. It is the way of nature. We have to accept them. And keep learning to be prepared and deal with them

Stories of Survival (Documentary)
HistoryChannel.com – 20 Jan 2005

