

**Stress management for community level  
workers in disaster rehabilitation services**

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**STRESS OF CLW**

- Disasters leave a trail of consequences
- The rehabilitation and rebuilding work on the other hand stretches over a longer period of time
- Usually taken care of, by CBO's and local NGO'S. Most of the community level workers (CLWs)
- The exposure to traumatic stimuli and the demands of work can cause workers to show signs of emotional and psychological strain (Sekar et al 2002; Dave et al, 2002)

- The magnitude of the emotional impact of the disaster workers usually goes unseen under the enormity of the disaster.
- It is not often that 'disaster planning and training' deals with workers' difficulties.
- Disaster workers go through a series of emotional phases related to their nature of job like Alarm phase, Mobilisation phase, Action phase and Letdown phase (Harsough and Myers, 1985, Walter, 2001; antras foundation 2002)
- mental health professionals have been warning those who work in the disaster or emergency situation that they will be susceptible to wide range of emotional problems directly related to their work with people under stressful conditions
- Studies report that 80-90% of all illnesses are stress related.
- It is also estimated that 7-8 out of every 10 individuals who consult Doctors in General Practice do so because of stress and anxiety related symptoms.

## scope of the study

- It extends to those community level workers involved in disaster rehabilitation services
- active link between the affected population and other caregivers, community level workers who provide wide array of services
- constant and continual exposure and managing of painful expressions of emotions, prolonged contact with the victims, extreme working environment, pressure to meet the dead line, work load, unsatisfied about their job and helplessness makes them vulnerable to their emotional disequilibriu

## Methodology

- 200 community level workers were contacted, all the respondents were working in disaster rehabilitation
- **Purposive sampling based on the INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA**
- Self reporting questionnaire (WHO, 1994), Disability Assessment Schedule by WHO – 12 Item (WHO, 2001), Impact of Events Scale (IES-R) Quality of Life Scale by (WHO ), Source of work stress check list by Powell, (1994) to measure the sources of work stress and Symptom of work related stress check list by (Powell, 1994) to measure the work related stress symptoms.
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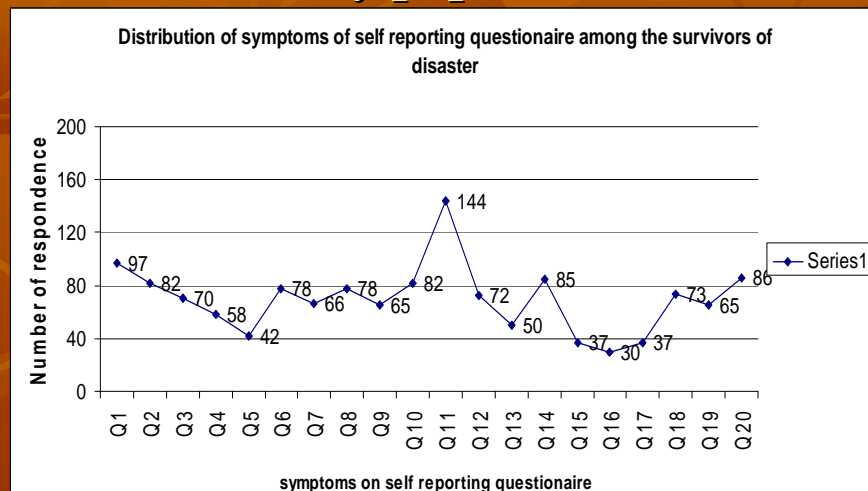
## Results, findings and discussion

- On back details female preponderance was 77%.
- The mean age of the respondents was 33.76
- In respect to education respondents studied up to 10th standard were represented more 51%.
- Majority of the respondents were married
- Higher number (69 %) of the respondents was from nuclear family
- 57.5 % of the respondents were community level workers, 24% were middle level worker like sector supervisors, teachers and 18.5 % of the respondents were from the rank of coordinators, program managers, and lawyers
- 86.5 % of the respondents did not have pervious experience of working in disaster situation
- Previous exposure to PSC / Stress management training only 11% of the respondents had previously attended it.
- 24% of them reported loss due to disaster

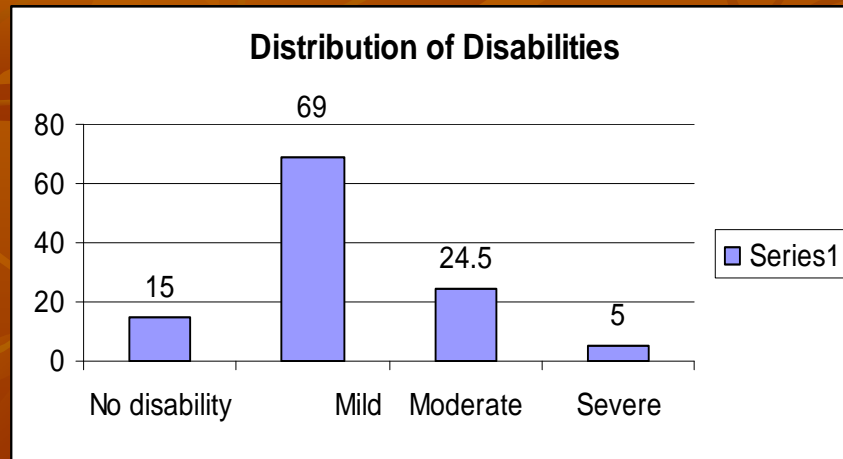
## PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS

- mean SRQ of the respondents was found to be 6.98. 37% of the respondents reported to fulfilled the criteria of probable cases
- Respondents reported Difficulty in enjoying daily activities, Having head ache, Easily tired, Not able to play any useful part in life and Poor appetite, Crying more than usual, Feel nervous, tense or worried, Trouble in thinking clearly, Sleeping poorly

## Distribution of SRQ items across the study population



## Level of social disability

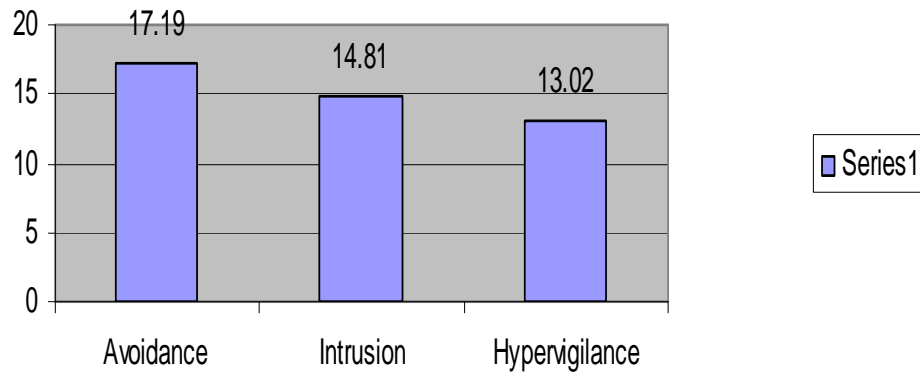


## SOCIAL DISABILITY

- mean percentage of disability was found to be 21.09
- mean scores of global assessment of disability in last one month found number of disability present was 6.27 days
- The mean number of days totally unable to do usual activities were 6.26 days.
- mean number of usual activities had to be reduced was 3 days.
- Difficulty in taking care of house hold responsibilities
- Difficulty in learning new things
- Difficulty in joining community activities 46 %
- Emotionally affected

## IMPACT OF EVENTS

Distribution of IES



## IMPACT OF EVENTS

- 'picture about it propped into my mind' 'I avoided things letting my self upset when I thought about it' 'I tried not to think about it'. 'I had trouble feeling asleep. I stayed away from reminders about it.
- Various avoidance incident were reported by the community level worker due to their work where deliberately avoiding talking about the riots, work and their experience. In the office "when somebody debating or discussing about the riots, "court verdicts on the perpetrators" and "government response to the riots", when some body is making a comment on riots in spite of having lot of feeling on the issue they had delicately avoid that they don't want to remember it"
- In the hyper vigilance domain respondents reported that they had trouble in falling asleep The fear of being attacked, fear about the safety of the family members.
- Tension of being watched and monitored had increased their fear about their safety. The respondents reported fearful of sounds, crowd assembling suddenly, and sound of crackers. Incidents like Sporting events between two countries had increased their arousal

## QUALITY OF LIFE

- The domain wise mean quality of life scores reported higher mean score in physical (66.75) and social quality of life domains (66.62).
- physical pain, enjoying your life, opportunity for leisure, 'less money feelings such as blue mood despair, anxiety and depression.
- Younger respondents reported poor quality of life
- Minority community respondents reported low quality of life.
- Organization's with 3- 5 years of experience reported better quality of life

## Symptom of stress of the Community Level Workers

- CLW's had number of symptoms of stress due to disaster rehabilitation work – change in routines, loss of interest in sex, catch colds and virus frequently, drink tea, coffee more than usual, feel depleted spiritually, emotionally and physically.
- Frequent moodiness, irritability, impatience was reported more often and 'Little or no enthusiasm for job'
- higher age group reported lower symptoms of stress.
- In relation to marital status there is no difference observed. In the aspect of religion both Hindu and Muslim respondents score were similar.
- Regarding place of residence there is difference observed among the affected and non affected areas. In the item income of the respondents, respondents with lower income had more symptoms of stress and respondents with higher income reported less stress symptoms.
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## Sources of stress of the Community Level Workers

- 'Too much work to do and do not have enough time',
- Mostly work during lunch, at home on weekends
- Too much work to do a good job,
- Never get compliments or rewards for work well done.
- Feel over qualified for the job demands.
- Don't understand how performance is evaluated
- younger age respondents reported more stress
- lower education more stress sources
- married respondents had more stress
- Religion wise sources of stress were noticed to be almost equal
- High sources of stress observed among the grass root workers
- Significant difference was observed in the income ( $p < .003$ ), where the low income respondents found to have higher level of stress sources
- Organisation with less than 2 years of experience had more sources of stress
- Significant difference observed in respondents experience ( $p < .000$ ) where the respondents with 3-5 years of experience reported higher sources of stress
- high level of sources of stress was reported among those who did not attend the psychosocial care training.

## IMPLICATIONS...

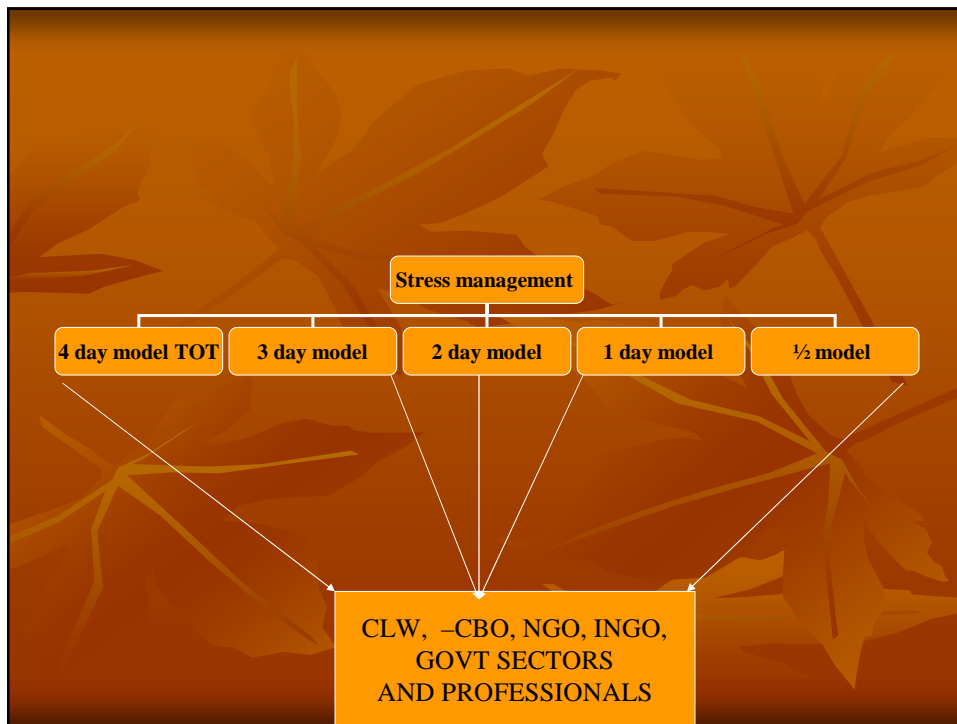
1. Disaster work is inherently stressful.
2. Stress takes a toll on community level workers – Individual, familial, occupational and social spheres life.
3. Secondary trauma
4. CLW Staff stress adversely affects the intervention as well as organizational mandate.

## IMPLICATIONS....

- There are no quick fixes to reduction of stress except working on damage limitation strategies
- one cannot eliminate stress but can only learn to manage it
- Understanding and recognizing is the first step to reduce the stress.
- Identifying sources of stress in present situation
- Applying stress management timely
- Addressing burnout issues

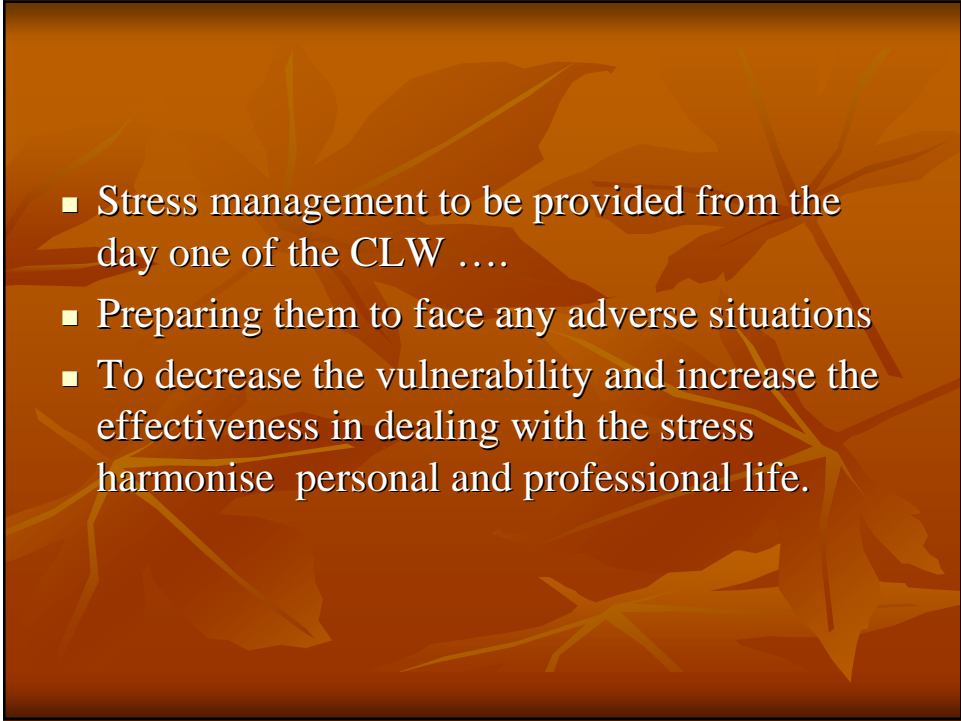
## STRESS MANAGEMENT

- This program would address the stress factors of the field staff and to de stress them
- To come out with a uniform stress management module while training the community people
- No one is with out stress in their life
- Prevention and promotion
- Three C's: Commitment, Control, Challenge



## TOPICS COVERED

- Sharing of experience
- Concept of stress
- Understanding stress – Reactions and symptoms
- Family life cycle, Job stress and coping mechanism
- Time management, assertiveness training, team work. Roles and multi tasking
- Self care aspects, debriefing, co counseling and peer support. Relaxation techniques – Practicable methods

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- Stress management to be provided from the day one of the CLW ....
  - Preparing them to face any adverse situations
  - To decrease the vulnerability and increase the effectiveness in dealing with the stress harmonise personal and professional life.