



# Disaster Response Curriculum Module for Foundation Social Work Courses

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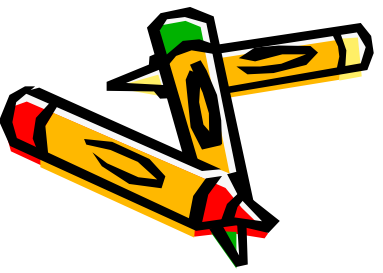




**The need for disaster response knowledge, preparation and effective intervention strategies in social work education continues to see an increase in interest on the part of social work educators, particularly since events like 9/11, the tsunami, disastrous floods, fires, and major hurricanes i.e. Andrew, Ivan, Katrina and Rita.**

**The aim of this presentation is to present a framework for the integration of disaster response knowledge and skills in core foundation undergraduate and graduate level social work courses. A proposed 8 component module for disaster response is discussed across 4 foundation social work courses. Contrasting models of disaster response, namely Social Order and Humanistic Approaches provide the theoretical frameworks for the modules.**

**It is anticipated that the modules can be integrated into foundation social work courses emphasizing micro, mezzo and macro prevention/intervention and service delivery approaches.**



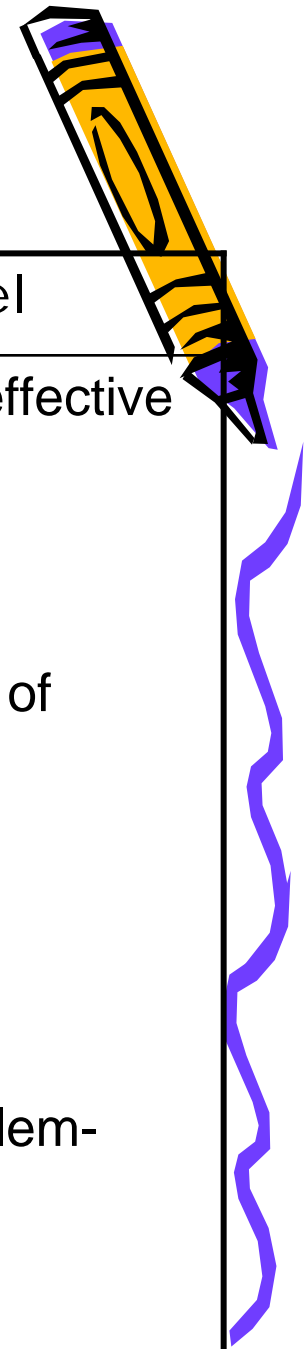
# GOALS OF THE CURRICULUM MODULES

**Goals of the curriculum modules include:**

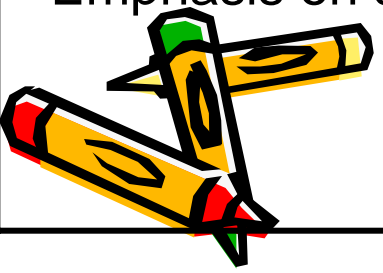
- **advance student's understanding and practice skills with individuals, families, communities and vulnerable populations during and after a disaster**
- **increase student's ability to respond competently in disaster situations in the short and long-term**
- **stimulate student's knowledge and learning through discussion and experiential learning activities**
- **provide opportunities for additional curriculum development in disaster response in advanced practice and research courses**



# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR CURRICULUM MODULES: MODELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY AND INTERVENTION

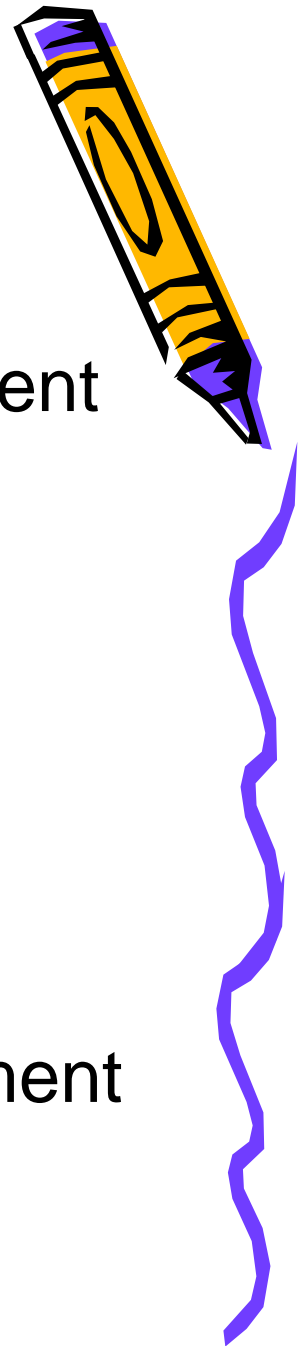


Social Order Model	Humanistic Service Model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emphasis on efficiency</li><li>• Attention to “worthy” or “deserving” for assistance</li><li>• Disorder expected</li><li>• Expectation of individual socially accepted behavioral controls</li><li>• Emphasis on security</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emphasis on efficiency and effective intervention</li><li>• Attentive to sense of moral responsibility and dignity/worth of individual/community</li><li>• Efforts to address expressed individual/community needs</li><li>• Encourage collaborative problem-solving</li></ul> <p>(Green, Gill and Kleiner, 2006)</p>



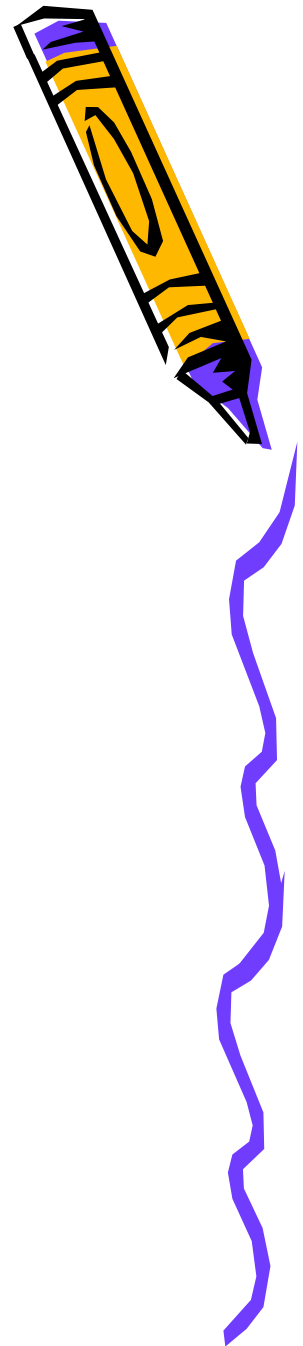
# 9 COMPONENT AREAS FOR CURRICULUM MODULES

- Introduction to Disaster Response
- Communications and Risk Management
- Health/Mental Health
- Housing
- Economic Stability
- Social Support Renegotiated
- Cultural Responsiveness
- Vulnerable Populations
- Needs Assessment – Rapid Assessment Tools

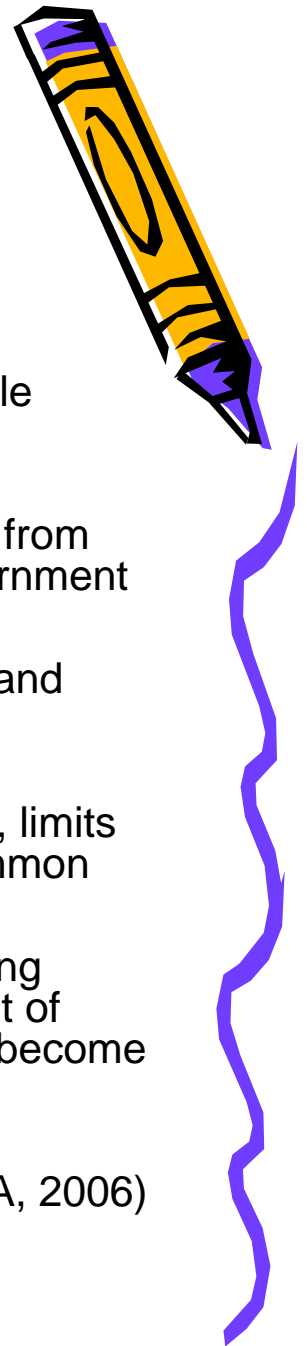


# GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE MODULES

- **Modules Framework:**
  1. General Goal
  2. Specific Objectives
  3. Disaster Content Integration
  4. Discussion
  5. Experiential Learning Activities



# DISASTER RESPONSE PHASES



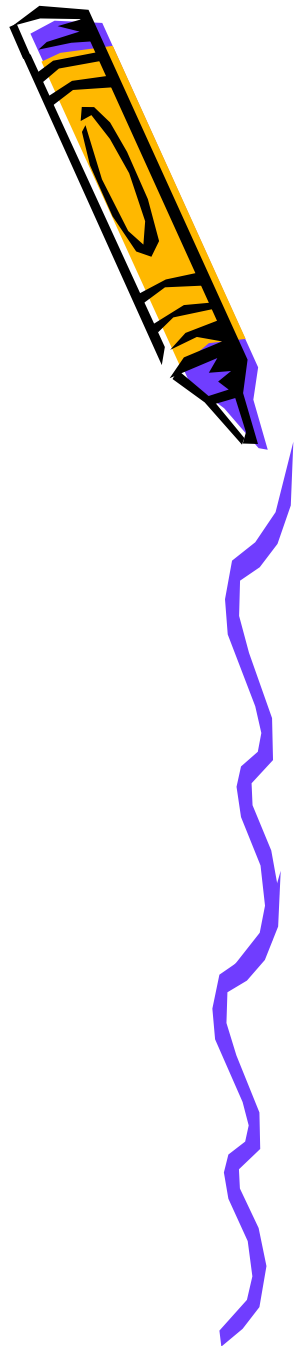
- **Phase I:** Warning Phase – pre-disaster (MITIGATION)
- **Phase II:** Impact Phase – disaster strikes
- **Phase III:** Rescue or Heroic Phase – rescue, survival, evacuation, people working together to save lives
- **Phase IV:** Remedy or Honeymoon Phase - optimism, lots of initial help from individuals, volunteer organizations, faith-based organizations and government
- **Phase V:** Inventory Phase – Survivors begin to recognize limits of help and assess future
- **Phase VI:** Disillusionment Phase – Survivors recognize reality of losses, limits of outside relief, and increased levels of stress and stress reactions common
- **Phase VII:** Reconstruction/Recovery Phase – Can last for years; involving structural rebuilding, integration of life changes and ongoing assessment of post-disaster future and pre-disaster losses; housing and loss recovery become major issues for the individual and community

(SAMHSA, 2006)



# FOUNDATION UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE COURSES

- Human Behavior and the Social Environment
- Foundations of Social Work Practice With Diverse Populations
- Children and Families at Risk
- Field Practicum





# HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH MODULE

- **Goal:** Provide relevant information that gives students a basic service and intervention foundation when assessing mental health and health related needs of affected individuals and communities.
- **Objective 1:** Increase student's knowledge and understanding of psychological responses to traumatic events.
- **Objective 2:** Improve student's ability to assess mental and physical health needs at various stages of disaster response.
- **Objective 3:** Improve student's ability to apply knowledge and skills relevant to mental and physical health responses to disastrous events



# LEARNING ACTIVITY: Children and Families At Risk Course

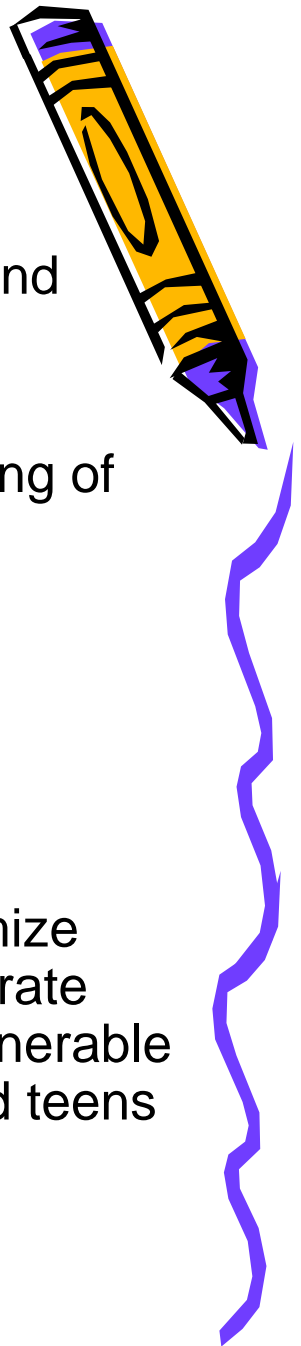
- **Discussion Content: Mental Health**
  1. Key concepts – psychological first aid
  2. Survivor's needs and reactions
  3. Do's and Don'ts
  4. Problem Solving
  5. Initial mental health coping responses
  6. Long-term coping responses
  7. Psycho-social responses by risk groups – children, teens, adults, older adults, first responders and government workers
- **Experiential Activity:** Case study of twelve year old African American girl from working class family. The case study presents the child's coping response 3 weeks after Hurricane Katrina and 9 months later. The child had to relocate 600 miles from home just after the storm. She has been living with her aunt since the storm. She has had no contact with friends from her community, and has not seen her parents since the storm. She has begun to exhibit a number of behavioral problems at school and home.

Students are asked to respond to a series of questions that allow them to apply coping and response knowledge and skills needed to assess and intervene effectively in the above stated circumstance at 3 weeks and nine months.



# COMMUNICATIONS/RISK MANAGEMENT MODULE

- **Goal:** To provide general communications risk knowledge and skills to be applied during situations of disastrous events
- **Objective 1:** Improve student's knowledge and understanding of communications risk when disaster response is required.
- **Objective 2:** Increase student's ability to work with various communications entities in an effort to conduct effective information dissemination.
- **Objective 3:** Increase student's ability to identify and maximize appropriate resources that can assist with and provide accurate information. Particular emphasis on communication with vulnerable groups, i.e. ethnic populations, isolated groups, children and teens



# LEARNING ACTIVITY: HBSE

## Course

- **Discussion Content: Communications Risk Management**
  1. General questions regarding communications and groups most likely to experience lack of needed information pre and post disaster.
  2. Information dissemination – cultural and location considerations pre and post disaster
  3. Assessing environments and determining appropriate information to disseminate
  4. **It's okay if you don't know** – learning to identify appropriate resources that can assist you with obtaining and disseminating adequate and correct information
- **Experiential Learning Activity:** Student's are given a handout with the following heuristic-

Crisis + heightened public emotions + limited access to facts + rumor, gossip, speculation, assumption, and inference = unstable information environment.

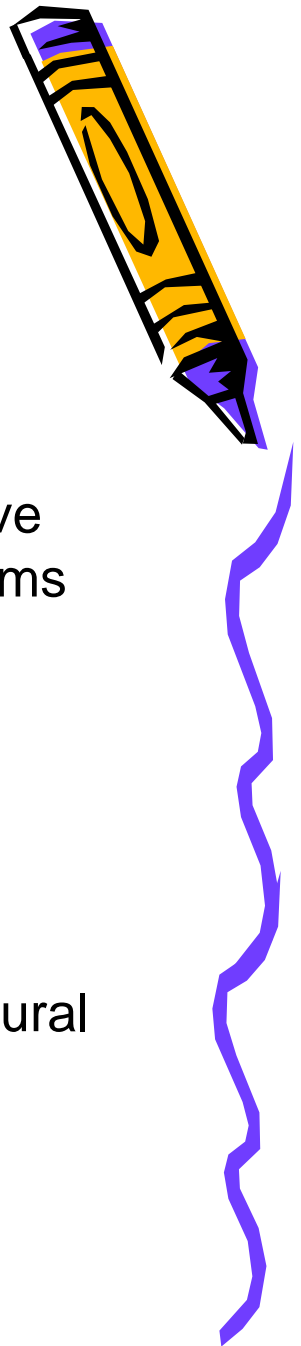
In a group context, student's are asked to provide examples and solutions in situations where the following heuristic is played out. Particular attention is given to populations at risk such as elderly, people with disabilities, ethnic groups were English is not their first language, and the poor.

(SAMHSA, 2002)



# CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS MODULE

- **Goal:** Provide a general understanding of culture and its influence in disaster response.
- **Objective 1:** Students will be able to define culture and have general understanding of cultural identities and value systems impacting service delivery and intervention.
- **Objective 2:** Increase student's ability to apply a culturally responsive service model pre-post disastrous events.
- **Objective 3:** Improve student's understanding of cross-cultural dynamics impacting response

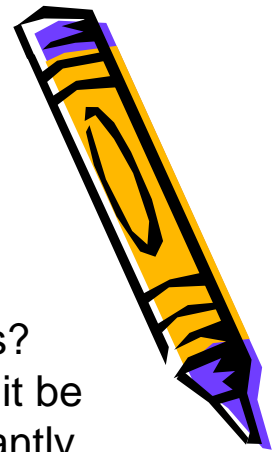


# LEARNING ACTIVITY: Practice with Diverse Populations Course

- **Discussion Content: Cultural Responsiveness**

1. What is cultural competence and is it possible to deliver culturally competent services and interventions when a disastrous event occurs?
2. What is cultural sensitivity or cultural responsiveness and how can it be used to engage populations where cultural values and norms significantly impact their response to traumatic and/or disastrous events?
3. How can cultural strengths be used in problem solving during disaster response?

- **Experiential Learning Activity:** Student's are given a case example that presents a Vietnamese family who refuses to leave the family boat. The boat is lodged on top of a number of other boats as a result of a typhoon. The father refuses to the leave the shrimping boat. This has been his family's only means of financial support. His wife is pregnant and due any day. She refuses to leave her husband behind. There is great concern that the pile of boats will collapse under this family resulting in significant injury and/or death. The father is a devout Buddhist and has been known to do a lot of handy work free of charge at the local Buddhist Temple. He also has a number of friends in the community, but refuses to talk with any relief workers. Using a problem solving framework, students are asked to provide an appropriate intervention strategy that considers the cultural values, social networks and coping responses of this father.



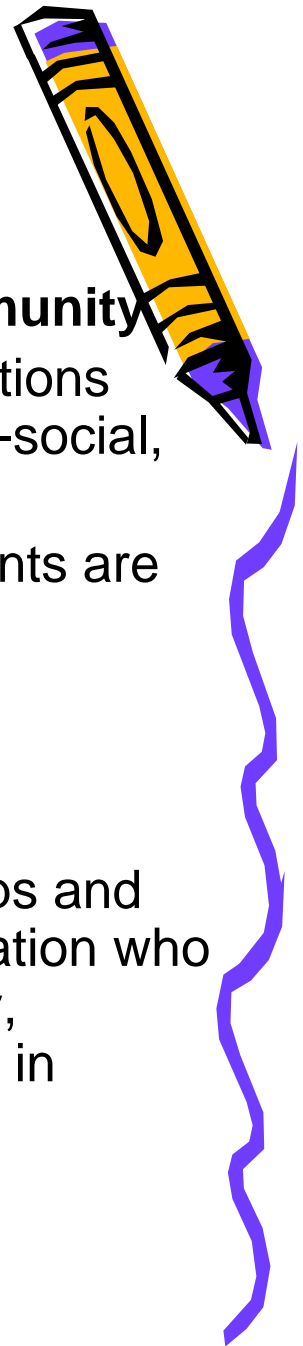
# NEEDS AND ASSESSMENT MODULE

- **Goal:** Provide a general orientation of needs assessment and available resources in communities impacted by a disastrous event. A community-based emergency response orientation provides the framework for assessment.
- **Objective 1:** Students will be able to apply knowledge of emergency response specific to initial and ongoing assessment of needs, i.e. security, transportation/mobility, disease potential, environmental hazards, communication networks/risk, aid assistance, data collection/analysis, general and individual community response.
- **Objective 2:** Students will be able to develop an emergency disaster response plan in an agency context.
- **Objective 3:** Increase student's ability to assess needs and use a RAT to assist with general and specific community emergency response needs.



# LEARNING ACTIVITY: Field Practicum Experience

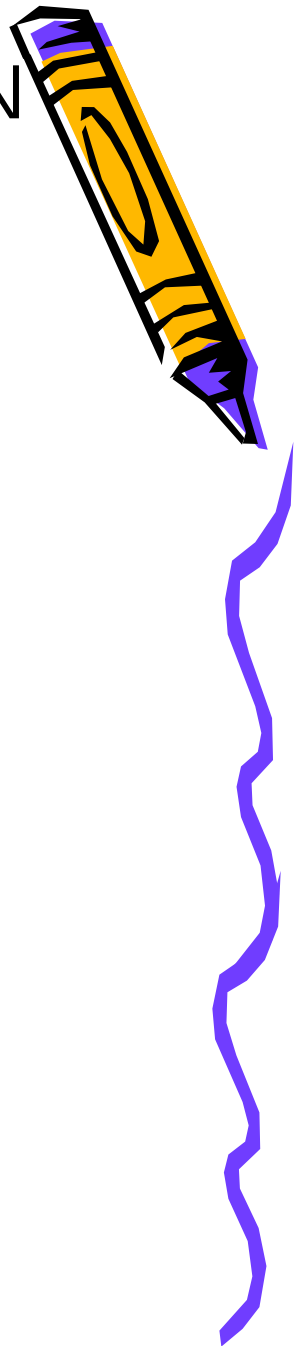
- **Discussion Content: Needs and Assessment in the Community**
  1. How are Rapid Assessment Tools (RAT) used? What questions should we be asking regarding environmental, health, psycho-social, and economic needs in response to a disaster?
  2. Consider components of an RAT. Which of these components are social workers most likely to engage?
  3. How can needs of a community be determined, particularly psychosocial needs, using an RAT?
- **Experiential Learning Activity:** Students are placed in groups and asked to develop a disaster response plan for a local organization who provides services to children and families. In a second activity, students are asked to compare and evaluate 2 different RATs in response to a man-made disaster.





# RECOMMENDATIONS: CONSIDERATION FOR ADDITIONAL MODULES

- Rural communities
- International communities and global response
- Participation in mitigation, decision making, policy formation and advocacy
- Capacity building and sustainable disaster planning and management



# FINAL THOUGHTS

- “When you talk about helping, it can mean a lot of different things when you consider context and experience. It’s good to help, but helping should be efficient, swift, empathetic, empowering and responsive to needs. The real story of helping is often told long after the disaster has occurred.”

Mary Gates, LSW, Director of Senior Services, Gulfport , MS



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**If you are interested in the full curriculum, please contact me individually at [mobee98@hotmail.com](mailto:mobee98@hotmail.com) or [sng4@pitt.edu](mailto:sng4@pitt.edu) and I will get a copy to you.**

