

# Behavioral Health is Essential To Health



Prevention Works



Treatment is Effective



People Recover



# Applying Cultural Awareness to Disaster Behavioral Health

August 24, 2011

Presented by Lori McGee, Monica Indart,  
Kermit Crawford, and Almarie Ford







# Welcome to the Webinar

Lori A. McGee, M.A.

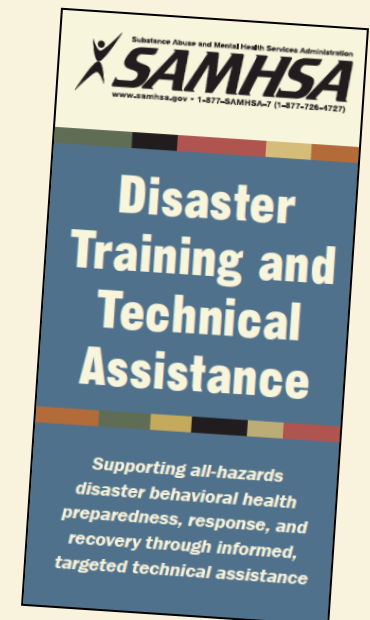
Training and Curriculum Manager

SAMHSA DTAC



# About SAMHSA DTAC

Established by SAMHSA, DTAC supports SAMHSA's efforts to prepare States, Territories, and Tribes to deliver an effective behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse) response to disasters.

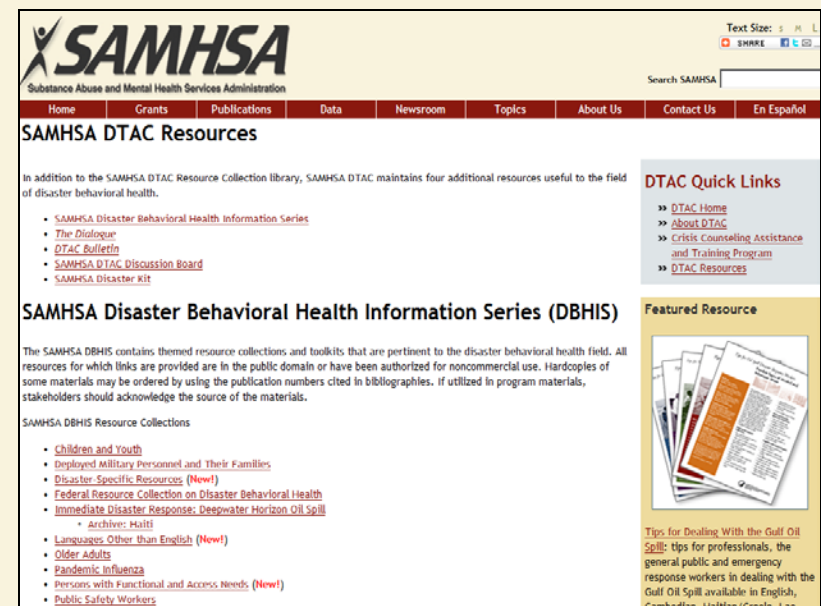


# SAMHSA DTAC Services Include...

- ***Consultation and trainings*** on DBH topics including disaster preparedness and response, acute interventions, promising practices, and special populations
- ***Dedicated training and technical assistance*** for DBH response grants such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training Program (CCP)
- ***Identification and promotion of promising practices*** in disaster preparedness and planning, as well as integration of DBH into the emergency management and public health fields

# SAMHSA DTAC Resources Include...

- The Disaster Behavioral Health Information Series, or DBHIS, which contains themed resources and toolkits on these topics:
  - DBH preparedness and response
  - Specific disasters
  - Specific populations



# SAMHSA DTAC E-Communications

- SAMHSA *DTAC Bulletin*, a monthly newsletter of resources and events. To subscribe, email [DTAC@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:DTAC@samhsa.hhs.gov).
- *The Dialogue*, a quarterly journal of articles written by DBH professionals in the field. To subscribe, visit <http://www.samhsa.gov>, enter your email address in the “Mailing List” box on the right, and select the box for “SAMHSA’s Disaster Technical Assistance newsletter, The Dialogue.”
- SAMHSA DTAC Discussion Board, a place to post resources and ask questions of the field. To subscribe, register at <http://dtac-discussion.samhsa.gov/register.aspx>.

# Contact SAMHSA DTAC

For training and technical assistance inquiries, please access the following resources:

- Toll-free phone: 1-800-308-3515
- Email: [DTAC@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:DTAC@samhsa.hhs.gov)
- Website: <http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac>

Dr. Amy Mack, Project Director  
SAMHSA DTAC  
Phone (direct): 240-744-7090  
Email: [AMack@icfi.com](mailto:AMack@icfi.com)



# Webinar Overview

- The goal of this webinar is to provide information, recommendations, and tools that can be used to assess and strengthen cultural awareness practices in DBH services.
  - Guiding Principles of Cultural Awareness  
(Dr. Monica Indart)
  - Challenges and Interventions  
(Dr. Kermit Crawford)
  - Field Experiences and Lessons Learned  
(Ms. Almarie Ford)

# Webinar Learning Objectives

- To provide guiding principles and recommendations for applying cultural awareness to DBH
- To provide cultural awareness best practices specific to DBH preparedness and response
- To provide tools that can be used to assess and strengthen cultural awareness practices for DBH services



# Guiding Principles for Cultural Awareness

Monica Indart, Psy.D.

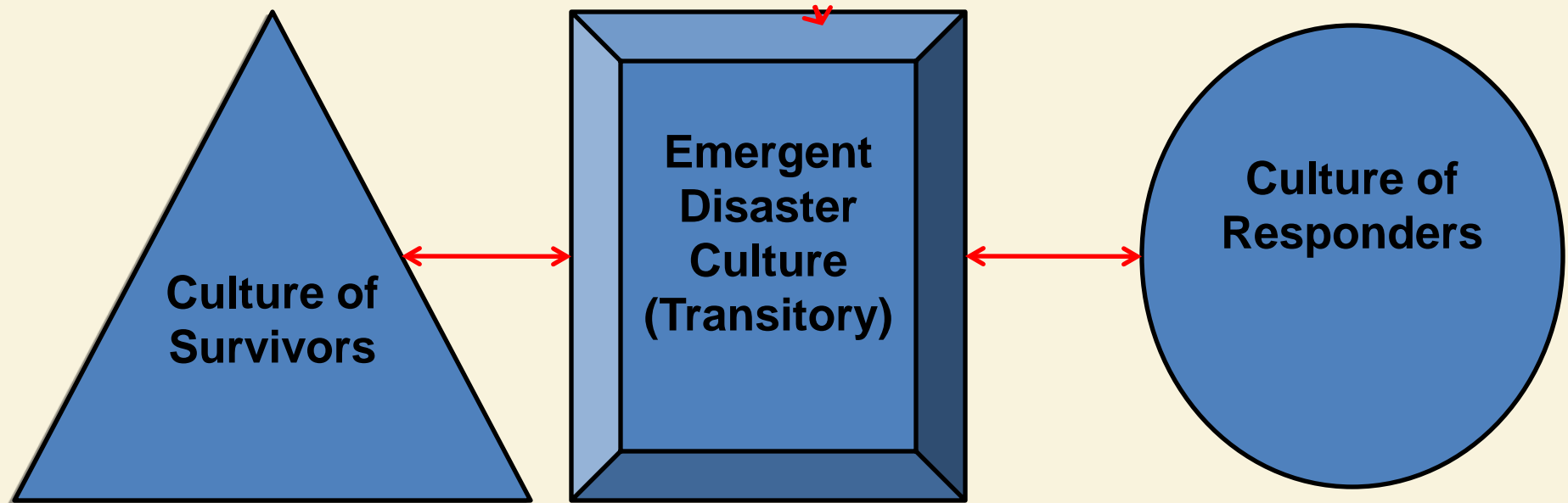
Assistant Professor  
Rutgers University



# Culture and Competence: Rethinking What's in a Name?

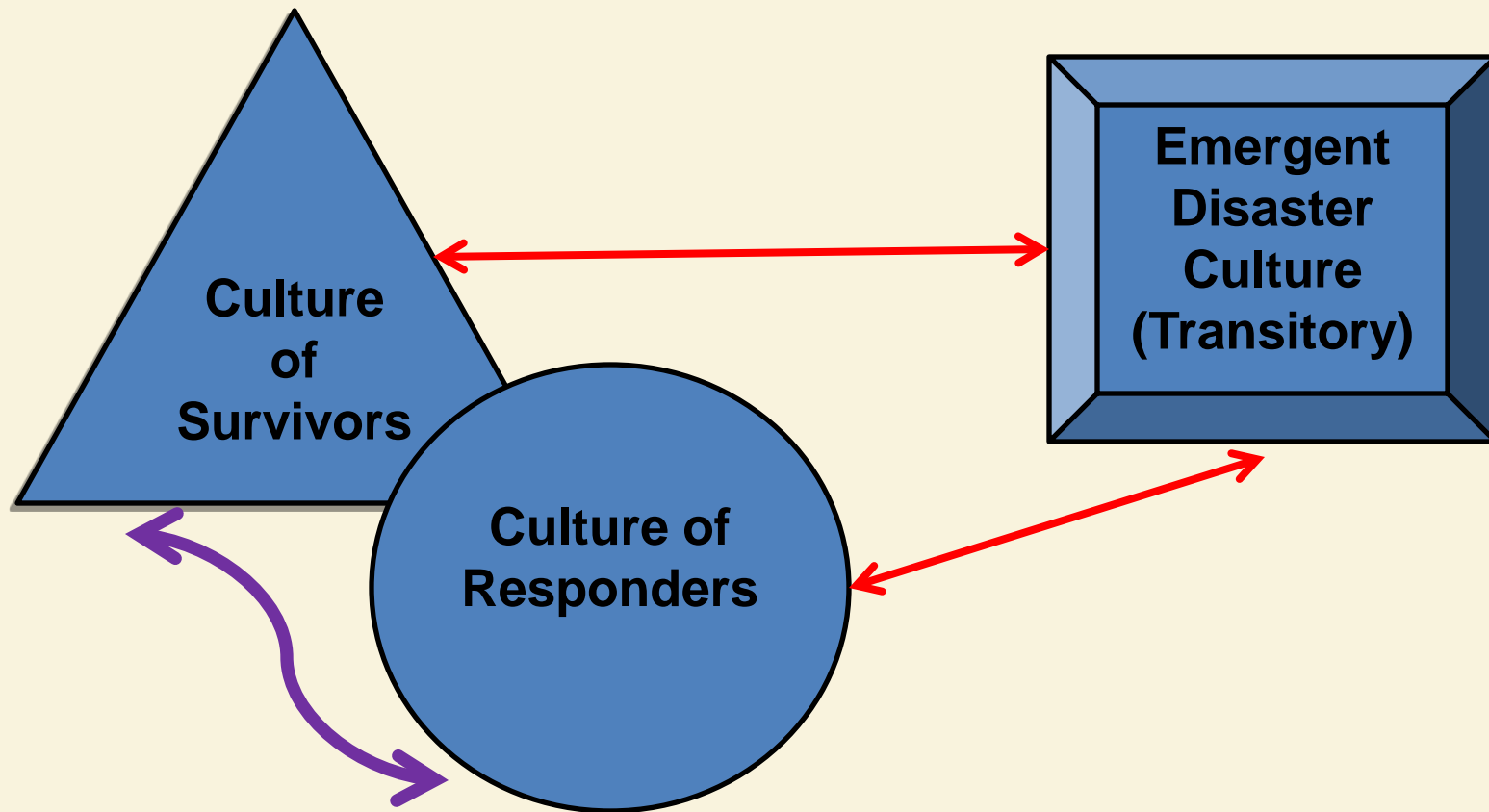
- Can we be “culturally competent”?
- Culture ***and*** competence
- Difference ***and*** diversity
- Similar terms, different experiences
  - Cultural responsiveness
  - Cultural sensitivity
  - ***Cultural awareness*** – emerging preferred term for conveying a universally helpful attitude of *compassionate curiosity*

# Cultural Encounters in Disasters





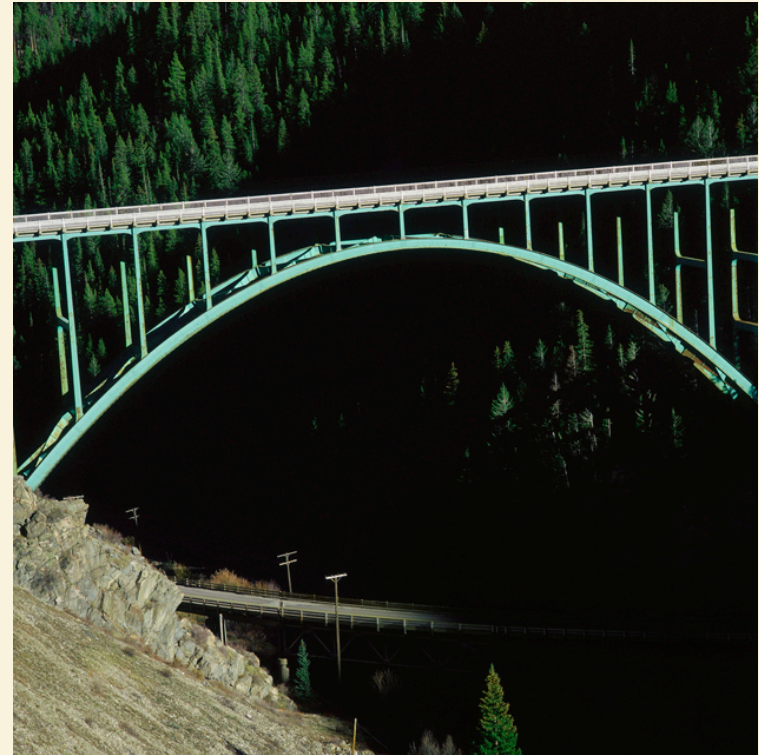
# Cultural Encounters in Disasters



# Culture as a Bridge:

## Understanding Human Experience

- Human experience is based upon two pillars of influence:
  - Biological (what we are born with)
  - Learned (what we acquire)
- Culture is the bridge between these influences, defining how we understand the world.



# Culture as a Foundation:

## Crisis Responsiveness

- ***Responsiveness*** as the core of crisis and disaster response
- Responsiveness implies . . .
  - **Awareness** of difference and diversity
  - **Awareness** of what is experienced as well as what is expressed
  - **Awareness** of individual needs
  - **Awareness** of competencies required to meet these needs



# Culture as a Foundation:

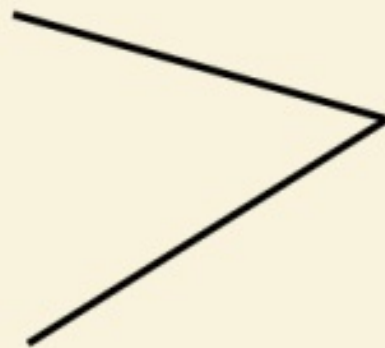
## Crisis Responsiveness

- Culture responsiveness allows us to better understand what is ***expressed*** and listen for what is ***experienced*** so that we can provide what is ***needed***.

# Non-competent Care:

## The Cost of Cultural Non-Awareness

- Cultural awareness is more than a principle of care: it ***defines*** good care.
- What happens when we are *not* culturally aware?
  - Disconnection
  - Disillusionment
  - Distress
  - Dysfunction



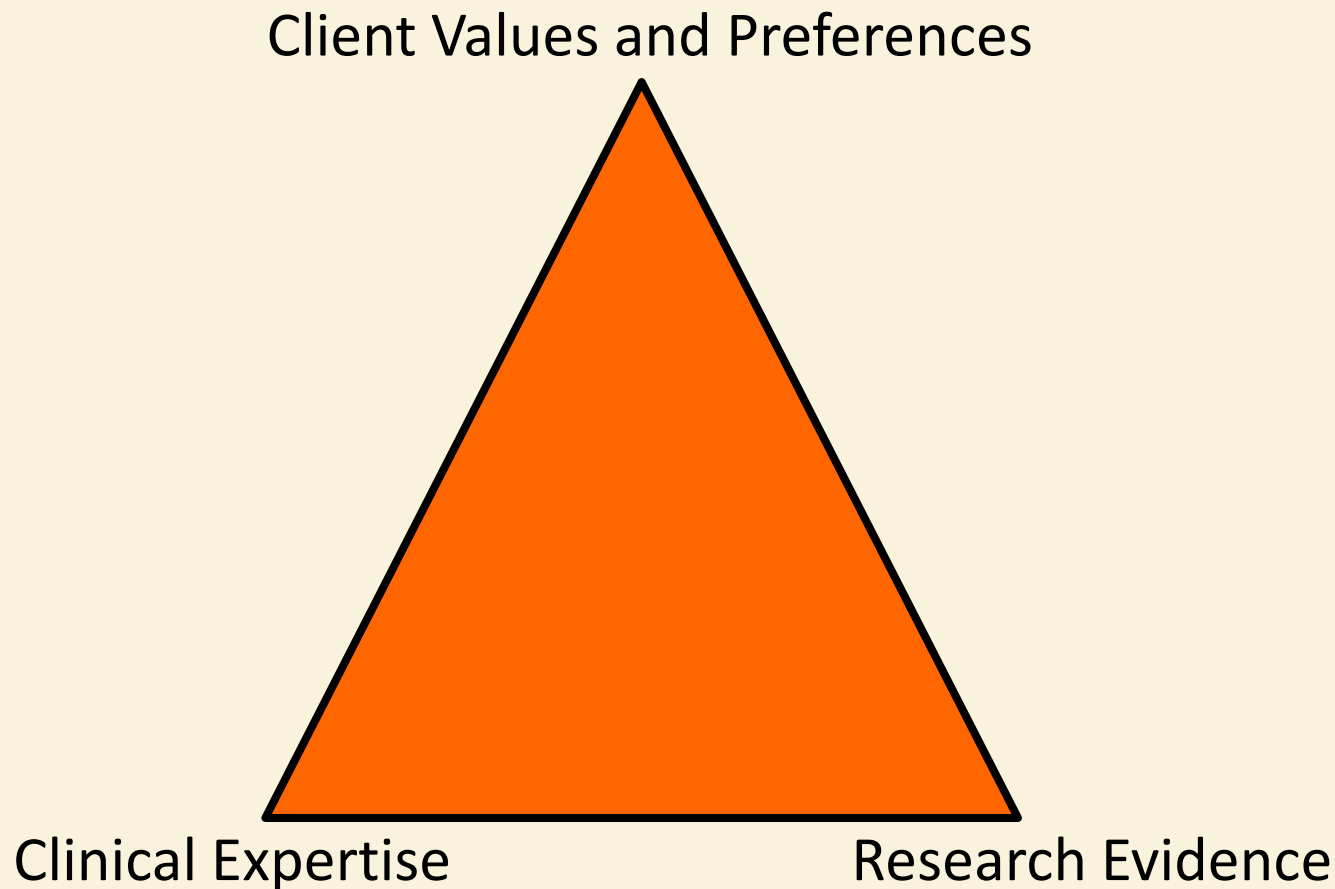
**Experienced  
by both  
disaster  
survivors  
and disaster  
responders**



# What Is Evidence-Based Practice (EBP)?

- Integration of the ***best available research*** with ***clinical expertise*** in the context of ***patient characteristics, CULTURE and preferences*** (APA, 2006)
- Purpose to promote effective practice and enhance public health
  - Development of best practice guidelines
- Focus on outcomes

# The Practice of EBP



# Healing Comes in Many Forms – These Forms Are Rooted in Rich Cultural Traditions . . .



# Culture Awareness:

## Revised Rules for the Road (continued)

- Recognize the importance of culture and diversity.
- Maintain a current profile of the cultural composition of the community.
- Recruit disaster workers who are representative of the community or service area.





# Culture Awareness:

## Revised Rules for the Road (continued)

- Embrace the fact that culture is not just a “buzz word.”
- Get out of your office and get to know the ***people you serve.***
- Develop meaningful relationships with people who may be different from you and your management team.





# Culture Awareness:

## Revised Rules for the Road (continued)

- Provide ongoing cultural competence training to disaster mental health staff.
- Ensure that services are accessible, appropriate, and equitable.
- Recognize the role of help-seeking behaviors, customs and traditions, and natural support networks.



# Culture Awareness:

## Revised Rules for the Road (continued)

- Think outside the box and create activities that allow for a flow of multicultural exchange, focusing on ***fostering awareness***.
- Understand how fairness and justice are critical principles that affect recovery from disasters.
- Promote mutual aid, learning, and reciprocity among communities you serve, and between you and those communities.

# Culture Awareness:

## Revised Rules for the Road (continued)

- Involve as “cultural brokers” community leaders and organizations representing diverse cultural groups.
- Ensure that services and information are culturally and linguistically competent.
- Assess and evaluate the program’s level of cultural competence.



# Culture Awareness:

## Revised Rules for the Road (continued)

- Develop ***real relationships*** with leaders from all communities served.
- Collaborate with cultural community leaders on planning, delivering, evaluating, and disseminating services.
- ***Repeat:*** Collaborate with cultural community leaders on ***all*** aspects of planning, delivering, evaluating and disseminating services.



*“In a place of knowledge, we are  
all citizens of the world.”*

-Azar Nafisi





# Questions for Dr. Indart?



# Challenges and Interventions

**Kermit Crawford, Ph.D.**

**Associate Professor of Psychiatry**

**Director, Center for Multicultural Mental Health**

**Boston University Medical Campus**



When You Are in Deep Stuff, Look Straight Ahead, Keep Your Mouth Shut and Say Nothing.

## Fox Hunt





# The *Totality* Problem

# Competence

*“A state or quality of being adequate  
or well qualified”*

*FreeDictionary.com*

# Culture

*“The **totality** of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and **all other products of human work and thought**”*



# Culture + Competence

- A state or quality of being adequate or ***well qualified*** to provide effective services across the ***totality*** of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and ***all other products of human work and thought***



# The *Numbers* Problem

# The Big 8 of Diversity

1. Race/Ethnicity
2. Culture
3. Gender
4. Sexual Orientation
5. Social/Economic Classification
6. Age
7. Disability
8. Religion

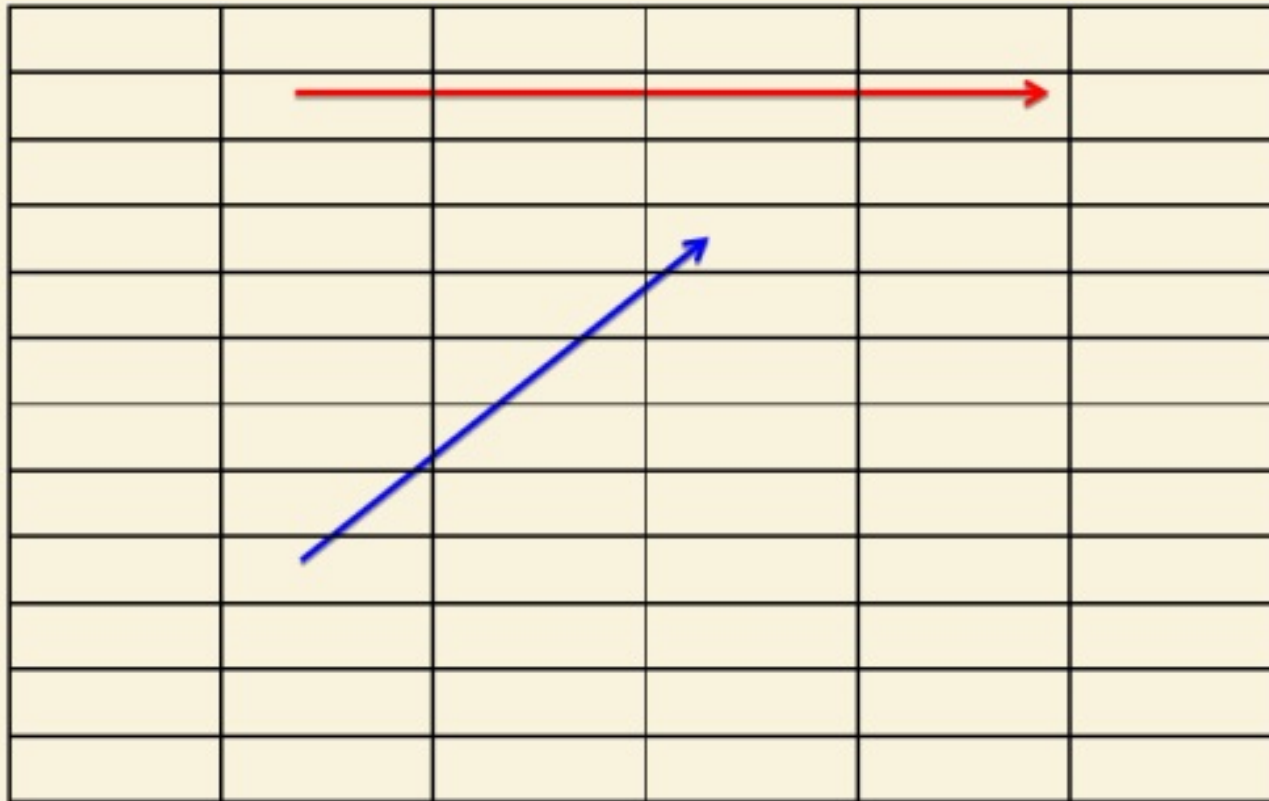
# Permutations for “Big 8”

$$8 \times 7 \times 6 \times 5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 =$$

*40,320 ways the BIG 8 can be combined*

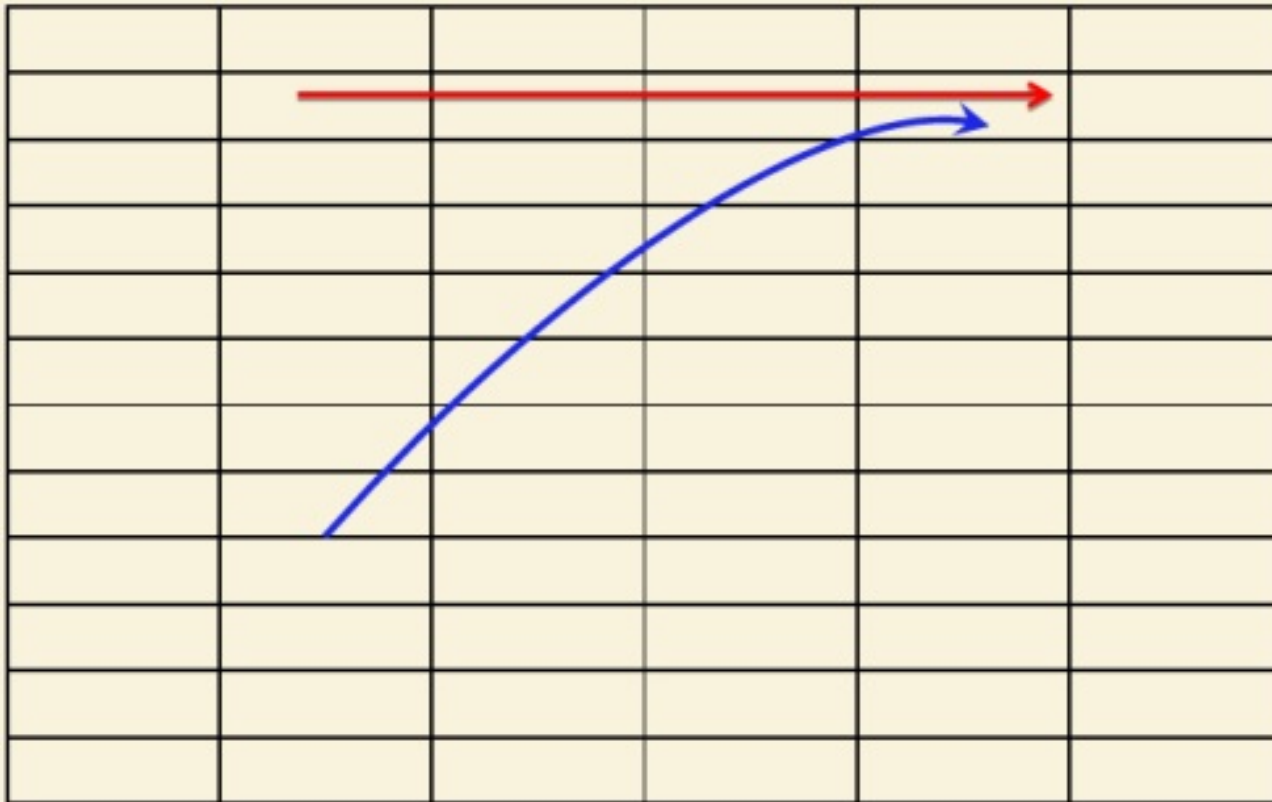
# The ***Idealization*** Problem

# Cultural Competence





# Cultural Competence (continued)





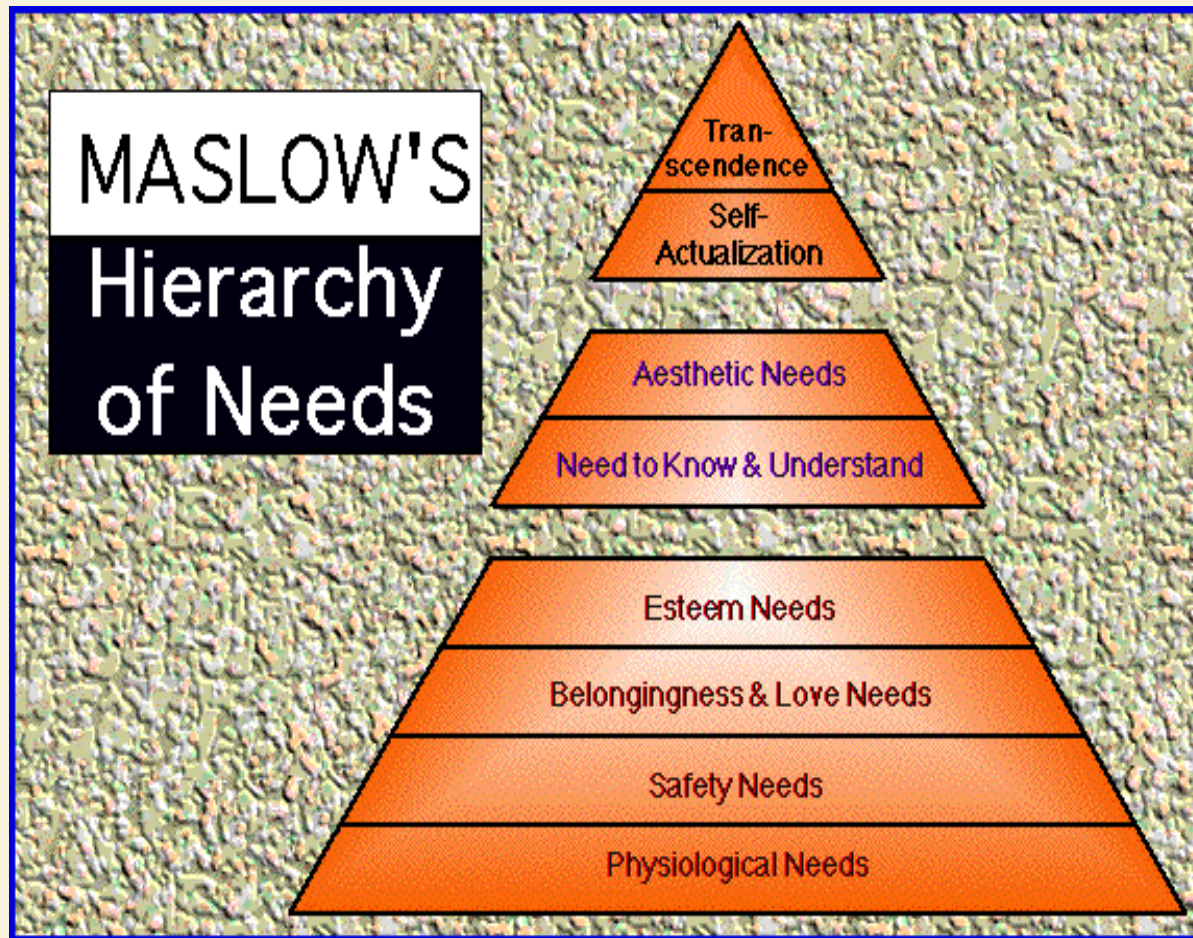
Now why  
am I here  
again?#@!

??



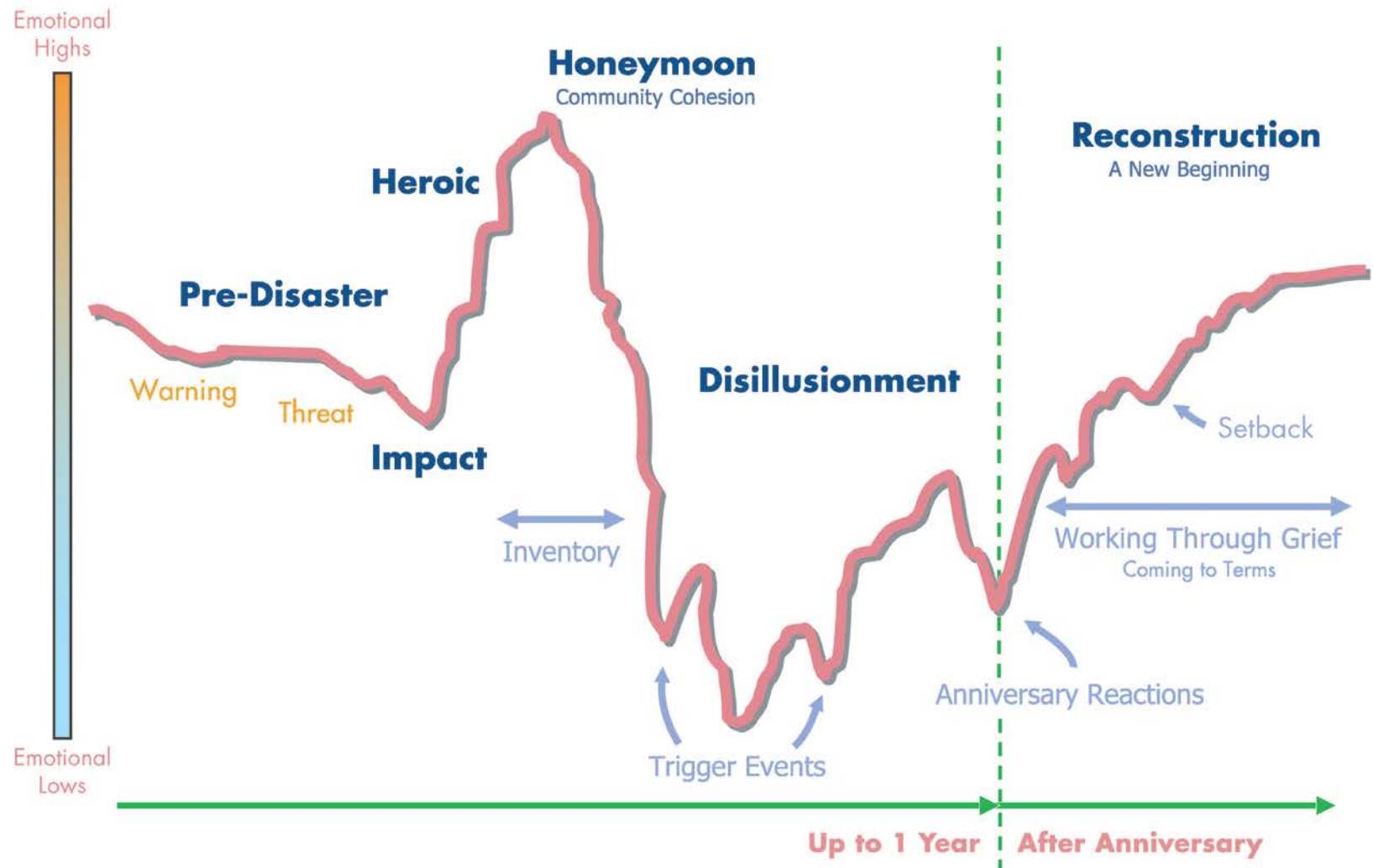


# Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



# Phases of Disaster

## Collective Reactions



# Psychological First Aid

- Safety and security
- Emotional stability
- Information
- Reconnecting to natural helping systems



# Skills for Psychological Recovery

- Gathering information and prioritizing assistance
- Building problem-solving skills
- Promoting positive activities
- Managing reactions
- Promoting helpful thinking
- Rebuilding healthy social connections

# Recommendations for Enhanced Effectiveness

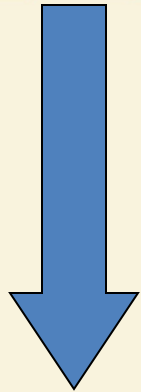
Perhaps . . .

***An inter-cultural and intra-cultural  
perspective in DBH response***

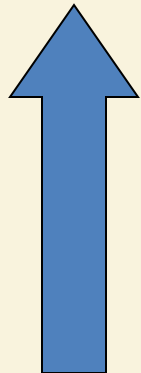
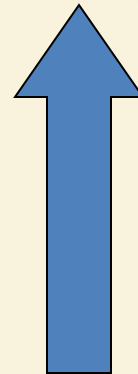
# Suggested Considerations

- Think about what you . . .
  - Want to do
  - Are doing and the results
  - Consider “doing nothing”

# Inter- and Intra-cultural Perspectives



Understanding “self,”  
resistance, and biases



Understanding of the “*other*,”  
*the dynamics of interactions*, the context  
and dynamics of *building a relationship*

# Inter- and Intra-cultural Perspectives (continued)

- ***Awareness*** (Openness to becoming aware; always one more question to be asked)
- ***Knowledge*** (Knowing own biases and preferences; dynamics of difference; dynamics of recovery; influence of contextual variables; content knowledge base)

# Content Capabilities

- Skills (Building ability-based skills and knowledge are fundamental to good DBHR practice.)
  - Authenticity
  - Self-awareness and self-reflection
  - Active listening
  - Attentiveness
  - Sensitivity
  - Positive engagement
  - Responsiveness
  - Warmth
  - Caring
  - Positive regard



# Principles of Inter- and Intra-cultural Perspectives

- Values – justice, equity, beneficence . . .
- Humility – we don't know what we don't know we don't know
- Respect – attitude of gratitude and acceptance
- Commitment – seeking out ways to optimize and integrate cross-cultural experience and knowledge to help; *curiosity*



**Do one brave thing today... then run like hell!**

# Questions for Dr. Crawford?



# Field Experiences and Lessons Learned

Almarie Ford, M.S.W., LCSW

Mental Health Program Director

Louisiana Office of Behavioral Health/  
System of Care Section



# Use of Cultural Awareness Values and Principles in Efforts

- Disaster workers collaborate and network with survivors' communities to engage them in self-determination by:
  - Helping to develop community capacity
  - Matching the disaster workforce to the cultural makeup of the environment to help achieve local support and engage survivors
  - Providing assertive outreach to community centers to help address early needs of survivors and help them accept their transition community
  - Informing transition communities of the cultures of survivors residing in them and of their needs

# Specific Culturally Aware Projects and Events for Survivors

- Specific support groups primarily for survivors
  - Stress management groups
  - Two that were named (coffee break and juice groups)
  - Group crisis counseling
  - Public education groups
- Community events used to reach some survivors
  - Community fairs
  - Festivals
  - Other community celebrations
  - Interventions (boost and protect naturally occurring social supports; build social skills and mutual support)

# Disaster Workers Engagement With Individual Survivors

- Implementation of cultural and linguistically competent individualized services to help people cope with:
  - Living arrangements with relatives or in extremely rural areas in trailers, etc.
  - Lack of public transportation in rural areas to go to grocery or drug stores or to local organizations to access resources
  - Lack of some food and spices in grocery stores in transition communities that are staples in the survivors' diets
  - Lack of support systems because of separation from relatives and friends
  - Youth school adjustment issues



# Key Lessons Learned

- Issues of the community: Disaster workers use cultural awareness to educate and empower survivors to help emotional recovery
  - Awareness of the need to shift areas of emphasis based on culture as survivors' needs change during each phase of recovery
  - Establishment of culturally appropriate social networks and partnerships for survivors as well as interventions and referrals in transition communities (include culturally appropriate mental health and substance abuse services – faith healers, etc.)
  - Recognition of ordinary citizens' acts of kindness (unsung heroes) with whom various survivor communities identify

# Key Lessons Learned (continued)

- Issues of involved agencies
  - Priority outreach to provide special programming for staff who are survivors
  - Need for staff with specialized training around the issues faced by priority populations as well as general staff training and development regarding responsiveness to phases of recovery
  - Coordination and collaboration with all other agencies
  - Reemergence and stabilization of the public and private sector infrastructure with the assistance of outside experts and consultants
  - Need to build ongoing preparedness in recovery planning, implementation and evaluation

# Key Lessons Learned (continued)

- Issues of Disaster Workers
  - Survivors working with survivors who have their own stress related to their losses must be more culturally aware of emotional, financial, and other needs of the population receiving services
  - Disaster program administrators/managers need cultural awareness of the disaster survivors who are workers and their extreme vulnerability to emotional problems and compassion fatigue

# Key Lessons Learned (continued)

- Families, individuals, and those with special needs
  - Help urban residents adjust to long-term placement in rural areas
  - Use strategies that are culturally accepted by minority communities
  - Help survivors close old non-viable options by providing new ones

# Questions for Ms. Ford?



# Questions for the Other Speakers?

# Contact SAMHSA DTAC

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# Contact Speakers

For follow up questions, please contact:

Dr. Monica Indart

[mjindart@aol.com](mailto:mjindart@aol.com)

Dr. Kermit Crawford

[Kermit.Crawford@bmc.org](mailto:Kermit.Crawford@bmc.org)

Ms. Almarie Ford

[alford1@cox.net](mailto:alford1@cox.net)

Thank You