

EUROPEAN FEDERATION
OF PSYCHOLOGISTS'
ASSOCIATIONS
EFPA



STANDING COMMITTEE
OF
DISASTER AND CRISIS
PSYCHOLOGY

CONVENOR : NURAY KARANCI

REPORT TO THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY JULY 2011
IN ISTANBUL

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EFPA
 Standing Committee on Disaster, Crisis and Trauma Psychology
 Convener : A. Nuray Karanci
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1. Executive summary :

- Period of Task Force/Standing Committee

Since the General Assembly meeting in Dublin, July 1997, EFPA has had a Task Force or working group on Disaster and Crisis Psychology. After the General assembly in Granada, July 2005 a Standing Committee on Disaster, Crisis and Trauma Psychology was established. The working period of this Standing Committee is from July 2009 to July 2011.

- Scope of work of the SC can be summarised as follows:

In this working period the SC has concentrated its work on facilitating the formation of Disaster, Crisis and Trauma organisations in member associations, in developing guidelines for training and service provision in the area, in collaborating with European Council for dissemination of knowledge on disasters and training programmes.

- Recommendations

The SC believes that it is crucial to have a special structure for disaster, crisis and trauma psychology in each member association. Furthermore, it is important to incorporate training in disaster, crisis and trauma psychology into the undergraduate psychology programmes. The necessity of psychosocial support to all victims of disasters and the necessary arrangements for this within national disaster management systems is an important area to focus upon. It is also vital to be prepared for cross borders disasters and to set a European based network of disaster and crisis psychologists.

2. Introduction

Since the General Assembly meeting in Dublin, July 1997, EFPA has had a Task Force or working group on Disaster and Crisis Psychology. After the General assembly in Granada, July 2005 a Standing Committee on Disaster, Crisis and Trauma Psychology was established. The working period of this Standing Committee (SC) is from July 2009 to July 2011. During this period the SC had four meetings and continued to work on training guidelines for disaster, crises and trauma psychology, guidelines for psychosocial support methods and principles following disasters, focussed on the importance of cross-borders disasters, the formation of disaster, crises and trauma structures in member associations, formation of a list of experts on disaster, crises and trauma psychologists, collaborated with the Council of Europe for the publication of the Lessons Learned from Disasters book and training of psychologists from new EU member states. The SC plans to continue its work on the facilitation of structures for disaster, crises and trauma psychology in member associations, the training of psychologists in countries with lower resources and the guidelines for psychosocial support in cross borders disasters. The SC will continue to hold panels in European Congresses to facilitate the understanding of the field among psychologists.

3. Literature

The past few years have seen a rapid development in the field of disaster and crisis psychology, both in terms of interventions and in preventive work in relation to disaster and crisis situations (Bisson, 2008; Dyregrov, & Yule, 2006; Dyregrov 1997, Dyregrov, Straume & Saari 2009, Saari & Palonen 2007; Reyes & Elhai, 2004; Kowalski & Kalayjian, 2001; Vernberg, Steinberg, Jacobs, Brymer, Watson et al., 2008).

In disasters, the survivors directly exposed to the event are primary psychological victims; however also the people left behind following a death or severe injury - children, parents, other relatives, friends, colleagues, school friends and teachers of the casualties, and those indirectly affected by the disaster are secondary victims. Other victims are eyewitnesses to the incident, rescue staff - firemen, emergency management officials, policemen, ambulance drivers, doctors, nurses - and other health personnel. Those who have caused the accident or incident and people close to them may also be victims. A sudden, unexpected death or even a near death situation (e.g. accidents, bombing, etc) a devastating damage to structures and life-lines of a community and to the disruption of social and business life (e.g. earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, etc) has a strong psychological impact on all those people directly or indirectly exposed to the event. In other words, the entire community can be counted as psychologically exposed and in potential for being affected by the disaster. The guiding principle of early intervention is that support must be provided immediately after the event, mainly during the first three days and continue long after. An active search must identify the victims of the disaster or critical incident. Every psychological victim in any disaster has the right to receive psycho-social support and services (Bonanno, Brewin, Kaniasty & La Greca, 2010; Chatterjee, 2005; Rubonis & Bickman, 1991; Reyes, 2006; Saari, 2005, Sümer, Karanci, Kazak-Berüment & Günes, 2005; Yule, 2006). Based on this need guidelines for delivering empirically validated psychosocial support have been developed (e.g. APA, 2008; IPPHEC, 2009) .

4. Scope of the Standing Committee and the work produced

The rapid development in the field of disaster, crisis and trauma psychology has continued in the working period of the standing committee. Disasters such as bus accidents, airplane crashes, mining accidents, large entertainment event disasters, such as the Love Parade (Germany), natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis and floods, terror events such as bombings and school shootings in Europe have posed great challenges for disaster and crisis psychology. This development has facilitated the promotion of both professional and political interest in the need for psychological support and services for the survivors in many European countries. Another important development has been the cross borders (e.g. tsunami, airplane crash) disasters in which the citizens of one country are exposed to disasters abroad and thus the need for effective psychosocial support provision in these events. In these instances services need to be arranged both in the country where the disaster occurred and also in the home country of the survivors upon their return from the disaster sight and for the relatives of victims awaiting for their loved ones at home country.

Another recently acknowledged area is the need to develop measures of preparedness for psychologists and community members and mitigation activities to reduce the impact

of such hazardous events and to be prepared for them. It has become increasingly important to increase resilience in community members for disasters and traumas and similarly to map out vulnerabilities and improve existing conditions. In conjunction with this state of affairs, the development of guidelines for the delivery of psychosocial support, standards of training for disaster and crisis psychologists and the organization of disaster, trauma and crisis psychologists in each country have gained momentum.

The development in this field is still somewhat uneven in different parts of Europe, depending on local circumstances and actual existence and types of disasters and crisis situations. Also the role of psychologists in this field and their operation within the national disaster management systems varies in different European countries depending on the disaster management systems, structures and legislations.

In the current working period, July 2009 to July 2011, the Standing Committee has 22 members (see appendix 1). That means that the work of the Standing Committee reflects the experiences and work in 22 European countries, which in turn has affected the status and work of disaster and crisis psychology in these countries.

Meetings and work of the Standing Committee, July 2009 to July 2011

The Standing Committee has members from 22 Member Associations and also a member from EFPSA. The participation in the meetings of the standing committee has been generally very high and active. However, some members due to financial restraints of their associations experienced difficulties in attending the meetings. The attendance of members of the Standing Committee has appeared to be so important for the effective continuation of our work that our Committee suggested that there should be a possibility for Member Associations to nominate a substitute member in the case that the member of the Standing Committee is unable to take part in the meeting and work of the Committee. This has been a very fruitful arrangement and has increased the participation in cases where the committee member had other competing duties at the time of the meetings.

The Standing Committee has had four two day meetings during the period covered by this report. In order to have the opportunity to observe the countries of the members of our SC and to contribute to the Disaster and Crisis Psychology work in those countries by the delivery of workshops or conferences the day prior to the SC meeting, the committee meetings were held in different countries. The meeting places have been Amsterdam (Netherlands), Ankara (Turkey), Helsinki (Finland) and Milan (Italy). These meetings have been hosted by the local Psychological Associations and during the meetings the Standing Committee had an opportunity to form contacts with the crisis workers and organisations in these countries and to support and facilitate the efforts of the psychologists in this field. Furthermore, prior to the Ankara meeting, Prof. William Yule, member of our SC delivered a conference in the Middle East Technical University, Ankara, to a large audience of psychology students and psychologists, titled as "Mental Health in Children: Investing in our Future". The conference was received with enthusiasm and has led to the facilitation of interest in the field. Similarly, prior to the Helsinki meeting, Salli Saari, member of our SC, in collaboration with the Psykologianinstituutti, organised a full day symposium on disaster and crisis psychology. Prof. Nuray Karancı, Prof. William Yule and Georg Pieper from the SC delivered presentations. Thus, this gave the SC the opportunity to disseminate and share their knowledge with psychologists and social workers from Finland.

The Standing committee has continued to organise its work by nominating persons in charge of different areas and forming subgroups on essential topics and tasks of the

committee. In this way we feel that the work of the Standing Committee has been fruitful and successful.

During the period covered by this report, (July 2009- July 2011) the work of the Standing Committee can be divided into seven areas:

1.Strengthening the role of EFPA Member Associations in the field of crisis and disaster work by

- Developing the organisation and status of disaster, crisis and trauma psychology in Member Associations of EFPA

The formation of some kind of organisation in disaster, crisis and trauma psychology in each Member association has continued during this working period. The members of the Standing Committee form the contact person to each Association and to these divisions or special groups. The collection of a national data base of the psychologist with expertise (training, work experience, knowledge of languages) in crisis psychology is still continuing. The standing Committee has made a questionnaire to be used for this purpose in Member Associations (see appendix 1). Some associations have already collected the information, but in most it will be a future task.

- Collecting data on psychologist with expertise in crisis psychology with the aim of forming a network of them in the Association

There has been a request from the Council of Europe for forming a data base of psychologists in European level with names of those psychologists who are ready to do crisis work after disasters. The Standing Committee has discussed and evaluated the need of this kind of data base and concluded that such a list may pose problems, due to different organizational structures in each country and to possible changes in the status of individuals in such lists. There are many problems both in the availability and use of such a data base. In major disasters each country has its own disaster management system and organisation for psychosocial support and services and psychologists should be a part of that organisation. However, we recognize that in case of cross borders disasters there is a need to have some contact persons from each country, who can provide information on disaster and crisis psychologists in that country. It is agreed that it may be fruitful to have the name of the Disaster, Crisis, Trauma SC representative from each member association and the substitute from and a third name from each country. This list is still in the process of being compiled (see Appendix 2).

It can make the status and role of the Psychological Association in the crisis work more important, if the association has its own data base of crisis psychologists and the authorities know how to reach that data base in need for resources in disasters. Therefore, the task of collaborating with national authorities responsible for disaster management is a future task of our members.

2.Dissemination of experiences and lessons learned from disasters and crisis work after different kinds of major disasters in Europe

The SC has members with a broad range of experiences from various different kinds of disasters (e.g. school shooting, tsunami, earthquakes, bombing, mining accidents, air plane crashes, etc). We believe that it is important to evaluate these disaster events within the framework of theories and guidelines for psychological support and to make a synthesis of what is learned from them. This information will be highly valuable for future management and planning of psychosocial support activities. Thus, our SC prepared the Lessons Learned document, having 17 descriptions of major disasters from Europe and their evaluations. The document is published as a book , in English by the Council of Europe (Appendix 3) and a translation to French will be made in the coming period by the Council of Europe. We are planning to follow on with new disaster events and to produce an analysis report which will be placed in our web site. A report on the Elazığ, Turkey earthquake, on the psychological support and state of the survivors following the Schiphol, Turkish airlines crash is available from our web site (Appendix 5 and 6). This work will continue in the coming period.

3.Training of psychologists in crisis, disaster and trauma psychology

The Standing committee has during the working period made initiatives both for the basic training and in specialised training of psychologists.

- Basic training of psychologists in disaster, crisis and trauma psychology

The former Standing Committee has decided on a recommendation to EFPA Member Associations, to have an undergraduate basic course in disaster, crisis and trauma psychology, which every psychologist should receive in their basic training programme. A letter was sent to EFPA Member Associations and they were asked to send it to all universities with psychology departments. The Standing committee strongly believes that every psychologist in Europe needs to know the main principles in disaster and crisis psychology, because other professions and people expect them to be experts in this field. Therefore, having a disaster psychology course in all psychology departments is highly recommended. However, due to the autonomy of universities and in some cases due to shortage of academic staff specialized in this area the efforts are still continuing and will be continued in the future.

The Standing Committee knows that universities have their autonomy and that it is very difficult to affect their study programs, but the aim of increasing the knowledge of psychologists in crisis work is very important and we think that long term work is needed for reaching this aim. The standing Committee has also asked EFPSA and its Member Associations to support this initiative, because usually students are very interested to study crisis and trauma psychology. The SC has developed a guideline for the training in disaster, Crises and trauma Psychology for undergraduate students (Appendix 4).

- Training for trainers: Guided training of psychologists in disaster, crisis and trauma psychology in Eastern European countries funded by Council of Europe, Euro-Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement

The development in the field of disaster, crisis and trauma psychology varies a lot in European countries. There are countries that lack knowledge and training, which also means that the survivors of disasters do not get appropriate help. One project the Standing Committee has worked actively with is an international training project; Training for trainers: Guided training of psychologists in disaster, crisis and trauma

psychology in Eastern European countries. The aim in this training was to choose countries where there is need for such training and then invite at least two delegates from each country to the training.

The first training workshop, supported by the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement (“the Council of Europe”) was held in Vienna, Austria between 30th of August - 3rd of September. 11 trainers from Bulgaria, Ukraine, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, and Slovakia participated. The aims of the training were

- to support interested Eastern European countries in enriching their capacities in psycho-traumatology, disaster and crisis psychology and special interventions like CISM
- to offer more special training (children, acute trauma, etc) specialties later that are seen to be needed
- to offer experience in building up meaningful and practical structures based on the national needs and backgrounds
- to prepare these experts to continue the training with new colleagues within their countries so that the training skills will be disseminated

The program has started with a four and a half days initial training in Vienne, 30th of August - 3rd of September. The programme will continue to be given twice a year for three days for the coming two years to reinforce and deepen learning and to give feedback on implementations in each country. Support (mentoring, consulting) concerning strategies to set up standards and concepts (as the members of the SC did by exchanging with each other) will also be provided.

The training team will be composed of a group of psychologists from the EFPA Standing Committee on Disaster and Crisis Psychology with broad experience either in similar trainings in other countries, in building up structures (organizational psychology knowledge combined with disaster and crisis psychology or in special fields of disaster and crisis psychology). For the basic workshop Atle Dyregrov, Eva Munker-Kramer, Nuray Karanci and Jana Malikova were the trainers. If needed experts from outside the SC will be recruited.

The first workshop was received very well by the trainees, all of whom expressed positive views on the value of this training for their future work in the field. The arrangements for the second workshop has been finalised.

4. Collaboration projects with Council of Europe and European Union

- Collaboration with Council of Europe

The convener of the EFPA Standing Committee on Disaster and Crisis Psychology, Nuray Karanci and the Executive Secretary Eladio Fernandez-Galliano from Euro-Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement held a meeting on 21 January 2010 in Strasbourg to discuss future collaboration areas and EFPA’s contribution in planning and producing psychosocial support and services in the aftermath of disasters and crisis and basic training of trainers programme for Eastern European countries. An agreement on the publication of the

Lessons Learned document prepared by our SC in English language and the translation of the document into French was reached. Furthermore, support for the training of trainers program from eastern European countries was confirmed.

As a result of the meeting some concrete agreements were made:

- 1) The Lessons Learned document, having 17 descriptions of major disasters from Europe and their evaluations prepared by the members of the SC was published in English (2011) and a translation to French will be made.
 - 2) The “Training for trainers: Guided training of psychologists in disaster, crisis and trauma psychology in Eastern European countries” by EFPA Standing Committee on disaster, crisis and trauma psychology will be supported. The first training took place in August, 2010 in Vienna. Further training will be held in September 2011.
 - 3) The EFPA Standing Committee on disaster, crisis and trauma psychology proposed to form a review team that can give an evaluation and consultation in post disaster psychosocial support in various countries if needed. The support of such a review team may reflect problems due to each country having autonomy of their needs and structures. Therefore, rather than having a review team, it was agreed to prepare a list of experts from each member association so that if need arises they will be contacted by the Euro-Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement. Such a list is in the process of being compiled.
 - 4) The web site of the Euro-Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement will give a link to the web site of EFPA Standing Committee on disaster, crisis and trauma psychology.
- Taking part in the consortium for FP7-EU proposals

The SC members are taking active part in the development of projects in the field of disaster ,crisis and trauma psychology (e.g. enhancing crisis response abilities of the public; Resilience in Europe against disasters, which has been provided granting).

5. Contributions of the Standing Committee on disaster, crisis and trauma psychology in the 12th European Congress in Istanbul, July 2011

The Standing Committee has been invited to arrange a symposium on disaster and crisis psychology in the 12th European Congress in Istanbul. In the SC meetings we have discussed this and decided to deliver two symposiums, one on the role of Psychology Associations and psychologists in post disaster psychosocial support (convener: Nuray karanci) , and the second on the work and experiences from the tsunami disaster, (convener: Salli Saari) which were both accepted and scheduled.

6. Web-page of the Standing Committee on disaster, crisis and trauma psychology

During the working period, the Standing Committee has continued to develop its own web-page as a part of the web-page of EFPA. This has meant a lot of work and Atle Dyregrov

and later Marc Stein, who took the responsibility of the web-page, have dedicated great effort to producing the page. Important information on disaster, crisis and trauma can now be accessed from this site. Material relevant for each EFPA member state is provided in the web page. (e.g. <http://disaster.efpa.eu/recent-reports/08-03-2010-turkey/>; <http://disaster.efpa.eu/resources-for-the-public>)

7. Collaboration with other organisations

During the working period firstly due to having meetings in different countries we collaborated and exchanged ideas with the psychology associations of host countries. In Amsterdam, Dr. Rein Baneke, President of the Dutch Psychological Association gave a briefing about the state and developments of psychology. Furthermore, Leonie Hoijsink gave a presentation on “Developing guidelines for the psychosocial care for uniformed responders (police, rescue workers etc)” a project conducted by Impact. Similarly in Ankara, Turkey, Dr. Emre Özgen, Vice-President of Turkish Psychological Association, gave a presentation on the roles and structure of psychology association in Turkey. In Helsinki, Tuomo Tikkanen, president of Finnish psychological Association gave a briefing.

The Standing Committee on disaster, crisis and trauma psychology took part in the consortium developing the proposal for the European Project UEPPI-NET, which unfortunately failed to receive support.

The Standing Committee in its meetings has discussed of collaboration with various organisations in the crisis field, such as International Red Cross, WHO, TENTS etc.

5. Analysis and synopsis

The need for psychosocial support and the necessity for collaboration and the development of guidelines for assessment and support based on empirically validated knowledge has gained momentum in the working period. In accordance, the SC has worked on the development of collaborations, networks and guidelines for the training and provision of psychosocial support. Furthermore, the SC collaborated with the Council of Europe in offering training to psychologists from Eastern European countries. This training program will continue to be delivered in the coming period.

Psychologists are recognized as having important roles in advising civil emergency personnel in planning (and taking decisions under extreme stress), as well as in immediate, short- and long-term interventions to mitigate any psychological effects on survivors, emergency responders and their families. The standing Committee, from an early stage, realized that much of what came to be termed “psycho-social” help would continue to be delivered by volunteers and professionals other than psychologists, but it saw the need for such personnel to have adequate access to the latest psychological knowledge and skills. Thus, it is essential to develop the capacity for psychosocial support both among psychologists and also in other groups who are likely to deliver such services in the post-disaster phases. In order to achieve this we recommend that each member organization has a network and structure for disaster, crisis and trauma psychology, to be organised and prepared for disasters. These structures can enhance the capacity of psychologists and other groups through ongoing training programs based on empirically validated psychosocial support principles and methods.

Also the role of psychologists in this field and their operation within the national disaster management systems vary in different European countries depending on the disaster

management systems, structures, and legislations. Creating a European wide network of crisis and disaster psychology begins with knowledge about the different systems and procedures, as ultimately this will make it possible to bridge the gap. Members of the Standing Committee have been very active in their associations in their own country and internationally. Lessons learned in different disasters and terrorist attacks are reported and shared by a book report on lessons learned from various disasters in the EFPA member countries has been published by the Council of Europe in 2010 (Council of Europe, 2010).

6. Proposal for a common EFPA position

The SC believes that it is crucial to have a special structure for disaster, crisis and trauma psychology in each member association. Furthermore, it is important to incorporate training in disaster, crisis and trauma psychology into the undergraduate psychology programmes. The necessity of psychosocial support to all victims of disasters and the necessary arrangements for this within national disaster management systems is an important area to focus upon.

7. Implications for EFPA Member Associations

Implications for EFPA Member Associations

- 1) The Standing Committee emphasizes the importance of actions of Member Associations in the field of disaster and crisis psychology. The proposal of the Standing Committee still is that every Member Association takes the initiative to set up some special organisation for those psychologists working in the field of disaster and crisis psychology. This organisation can be a division or a subgroup in the association. The Standing Committee wish to establish contact to all these organisations to ensure that over time there will be access to a number of contacts in each state that may be easily mobilised in the event of disaster. This would be the end product in producing a network of psychologists in Europe to be used in cross-border crisis and disaster situations.
- 2) The Standing Committee on Disaster, Crisis and Trauma Psychology strongly advises that as many as possible, but at least the largest Member Associations, nominate a delegate (and also a substitute for him/her) to the future committee. This is important for effective work of the Standing Committee.
- 3) The Standing Committee recommends that each Member Association ensures that every psychologist has basic knowledge in disaster, crisis and trauma psychology. Thus, having a course in disaster psychology at the undergraduate level in psychology departments is highly recommended. Furthermore, training programs in disaster and crisis psychology in each member country to a wide group of psychologists and other professional groups involved in disaster work and non-governmental voluntary organisations is highly recommended.
- 4) Since disaster management is conducted within an organizational framework in each country, it is advisable for psychologists to build a collaborative network with other professionals in order to ensure smooth and timely mitigation, preparedness and response actions.

8. Future tasks of EFPA

- 1) To facilitate the formation of a division or unit of Disaster, Crisis and Trauma Psychology in all member associations

- 2) To ensure the continuity of the work of the Standing Committee
- 3) To support the Standing Committee in the collaboration with the Council of Europe and European Union.
- 4) To allocate appropriate resources for the work and activities of the Standing Committee
- 5) To support the understanding that psychosocial support is an essential part of post-disaster planning
- 6) To collaborate with disaster management agencies and political institutions to establish an empirically supported set of procedures for post-disaster planning encompassing psychosocial support for victims.

9. Conclusions

In this working period the SC has concentrated its work on facilitating the formation of Disaster, Crisis and Trauma organisations in member associations, in developing guidelines for training and service provision in the area, in collaborating with European Council for dissemination of knowledge on disasters and training programmes. It is of vital importance to ensure the continuity of this work and to disseminate information generated to relevant authorities in Europe dealing with disasters. Psychologists need to take more active part in the pre-disaster planning phase to ensure that empirically supported information is integrated into emergency plans.

Annex

The members of the EFPA Standing Committee on Disaster, Crisis and Trauma Psychology

Bernard Caruana, EC Liaison
 Nuray Karanci, Turkey ,Convenor
 Magda Rooze, Vice Convener, Netherlands
 Eva Muenker-Kramer, Austria
 Zoran Simic, Croatia
 Stelios Georgiades, Cyprus
 Jana Malikova, Czech Republic
 Anders Korsgaard Christensen, Denmark
 Salli Saari, Finland
 Dominique Szepielak, France
 Georg Pieper, Germany
 Vassiliki Boukouvala, Greece
 Isabel Fernandez, Italy
 Nida Zemaitiene, Lithuania
 Marc Stein, Luxembourg
 Marianna Straume, Norway
 Nubbia Reggini, San Marino
 Hana Scibranyova, Slovakia
 Robert Masten, Slovenia
 Ingeborg Porcar Becker, Spain

Eva Håkanson, Sweden
Katharina Lyner, Switzerland
William Yule, United Kingdom
Ingrid Blessom, EFPSA

Appendix

Appendix 1. Questionnaire for obtaining information on disaster, crisis and trauma psychologists in each member association

Appendix 2. List of experts from member associations

Appendix 3. Lessons Learned book

Appendix 4. Basic training in Disaster, Crisis and Trauma Psychology

Appendix 5. Report of Turkish psychologists working in Schiphol Turkish airplane crash

Appendix 6. Report of Impact on the Schiphol Turkish airplane crash

Appendix 7. Quality Standards for training in Disaster, Crisis and Trauma Psychology

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