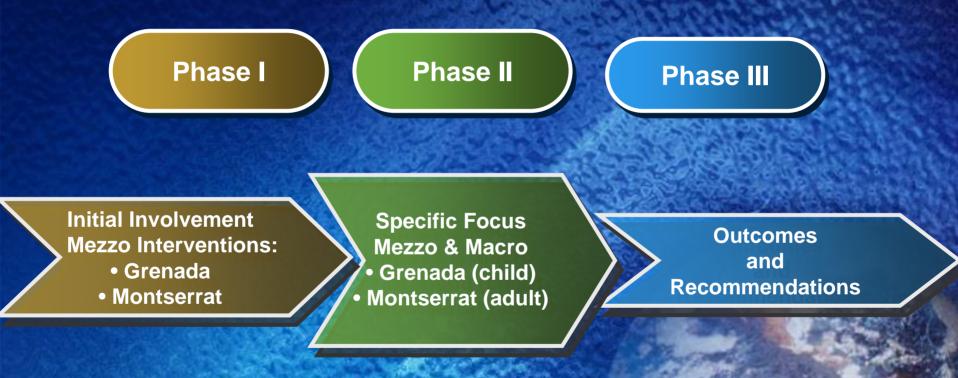# Social Workers Respond to Disasters in the Caribbean: Parameters, Process and Outcomes Based on Strengths and Resiliency

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Presentation Overview:
Phases of Involvement

Phase I

Phase II

Phase III

Initial Involvement Mezzo Interventions:
- Grenada
- Montserrat

Specific Focus Mezzo & Macro
- Grenada (child)
- Montserrat (adult)

Outcomes and Recommendations

Phase I: Mezzo Interventions

GRENADA: Hurricane Ivan

- Initial assignment: Presentation on post traumatic stress in children following disaster
- Assessment of disaster related presenting problems (post traumatic stress in children and adults; related factors)
- Trainings in children's homes (5); strengths-based
- Goals: To identify behavioral problems in children and adult caregivers relating to PTSD; provide educational information on PTSD following disaster; suggest culturally relevant behavioral interventions

Phase I (cont'd.)

- MONTSERRAT: Volcano Eruption
- 3-day workshop and follow-up focus groups
- Focus on grief and loss; strengths
- Goals: to identify both physical and symbolic losses; identify types of grief reactions; identifying coping mechanisms.

GRENADA

- Child focused, strengths based interventions
  - Initial assessment of trauma in children; related factors in adult caregivers
  - Themes observed: irrational behavior; fear of separation from parents/caregivers; fear of sudden environmental changes;
- Adult focused, strengths-based interventions
  - Two disasters: natural and man-made
  - Confusion; fear of the future (economics; jobs; political circumstances, etc.)
  - Emphasis on positive coping skills

Phase II: Child-Focused Interventions

MEZZO Interventions (Grenada):

- Education of staff/professionals on how PTSD is manifested in children
- Work with staff/professionals on identifying strengths in children; developing methods of dealing w/ behavioral problems (focus on strengths)
- Formation of committee to facilitate communication and coordination among children's homes
- MACRO: follow-up report to Ministry

Phase II: Adult Focused Interventions

MEZZO Interventions (Montserrat)

- Educational information on grief & loss; sharing and supporting exercises within group focusing on strengths and resiliency

- Focus groups: sharing and supporting

- Development of research project

MACRO:

- Follow-up report to government

Outcomes & Recommendations

GRENADA

- Identification and emphasis on individual and collective strengths
- Educational outcomes: more empathy on part of caregivers; development and implementation of behavioral interventions focusing on strengths
- Political outcomes: formal and informal collaborations among child care providers; report to ministry
- Increased awareness among professional community of effects of disaster on children.
- Long-term planning regarding education and training programs
- Institutional and staff preparation for disasters

MONTSERRAT: Research Outcomes

- Beneficial outcomes of disaster (e.g., increased coping skills; enhanced sense of self-efficacy; increased psychological growth and resiliency).

- Helpful forms of religious beliefs: most effective and consistent coping behavior

- High level of protective and resiliency factors (social support; high quality of life and income; high educational status; successful mastery of past disasters; sense of mission; learned resourcefulness)

Recommendations:
Social Work Education

- SW curricula should incorporate disaster response content at all levels (micro, mezzo, and macro).
- SW views and interventions in disasters/crisis need to address issues on a long term continuum with primary focus on strengths and resiliency.
- CI models need to focus on:
  - resiliency and strengths (micro, mezzo and macro)
  - collective and ecological losses (macro)
  - redevelopment planning and policies, to include citizen participation (macro)

Recommendations (cont'd.)

- SW understanding of importance of religious and spiritual values of Caribbean people in dealing with crisis.

- SW understanding of the uniqueness and diversity of Caribbean cultures in disaster response.

- Incorporation of knowledge regarding social work advocacy skills for change across a variety of systems