



Johns Hopkins Public Health Preparedness Programs

January 2010

Dear Prospective Partner:

The *Johns Hopkins Preparedness and Emergency Response Research Center* would like to invite you to participate in a unique training and research program for faith communities and local health departments to engage in practice-based activities designed to strengthen the ability of communities to respond to the mental health 'surge' that often accompanies public health emergencies.

Faith communities have long been dedicated to community service and supporting and aiding their members and surrounding communities in times of spiritual need. In recent years, these efforts have been expanded as faith communities have widely offered their service and aid in response to large-scale emergencies. Now, more than ever there is a renewed appreciation for the critical role that faith communities provide to the overall response and recovery efforts during times of crisis. It is with this appreciation that we seek to further engage faith communities and local health departments.

We plan to engage faith communities and local health departments to better understand the facilitators and barriers associated with preparedness and response activities, including:

- Conducting and/or engaging in training to improve response skills and knowledge
- Creating comprehensive preparedness plans
- Willingness to volunteer during times of emergency
- Developing partnerships to improve response efforts

Our goal is to develop a practical model for planning and response that enhances the capabilities, competence, and coordination of mental health preparedness.

Through participation in this research program, participants will benefit from direct access to training programs and technical assistance workshops that will aid faith communities in their efforts to plan for, respond to, and recover from a variety of public health emergencies. Furthermore, participants will be able to provide critical input and feedback that will serve in the creation of a model that can be used across the country.

On behalf of my colleagues at Johns Hopkins, we look forward to the potential opportunity to collaborate with you on this exciting initiative.

Sincerely,

Lee McCabe, PhD

Program FAQs

What is the History of this Research?

A series of Health Resource Services Administration/State of Maryland-funded training and technical assistance projects involving Christian-, Jewish, and Muslim faith based organizations (FBOs) has enabled us to conclude that an exceptional potential for effective preparedness planning lies in collaborations involving FBOs, working in partnership with local health department (LHDs) and supported by faculty of academic health centers (AHCs). Our experience with these projects, to date, is that the potential for productive collaboration is enhanced when the indigenous wisdom of FBOs and the specialized knowledge of LHDs is combined and shepherded by appropriately qualified faculty of AHCs. Specifically, three pilot projects have shown the promise of specialized protocols for *motivational preparedness training* [MPT] and *guided preparedness planning* [GPP] to influence community willingness and capacity to participate in coordinated emergency preparedness and response efforts.

What Are the Plans for the Current Research Project?

In September 2008, the Johns Hopkins Preparedness and Emergency Response Research Center (JH~PERRC) was established and funded by a 5-year grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to engage in a systems-based approach to researching the capacity of public health, with an emphasis on mental health, to prepare for and respond to a variety of emergencies.

The current project utilizes the Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology, which engages study participants in the design, presentation of results, and practical implications of the findings. We plan to engage a variety of members from FBOs around the region in the five phases of the research plan.

TRAINING and RESEARCH

GOALS

To study innovative approaches to training participants in Psychological First Aid (PFA) strategies and community mental health planning.

To engage participants in the design, development, presentation of results, and practical implementation of the research findings.

To establish sustainable and documented emergency response partnerships.

To create a framework that is practical, scalable, and portable for use by FBOs and LHDs across the country.

Program FAQs

How Will I Be Able to Contribute as Part of the PAR?

Our philosophy for this research project is to engage participants in all facets of the research. We are committed to developing relationships that allow for exchange of ideas and feedback, sharing of resources...(see p 174 of ivory tower article)

How Much Time Is Required of Me/My FBO Members?

The amount of time required of you and other community members depends on your level of participation. The following is a description which assumes participation in both Motivational Preparedness Training (MPT), Guided Preparedness Planning (GPP), and Technical Assistance workshops (TA).

MPT is structured as a one-day training session from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm. The purpose of the training is to provide participants with an introduction to the field of disaster mental health and the problem of behavioral health surge during times of emergency.

The training covers such topics as *Disaster Mental Health Surge; Characteristics of the Effective Helper; Psychological First Aid: The Skills; and Barriers to Effectiveness in the Field*. The training day involves the presentation of slides, lecture material, discussion, small group exercises, and evaluation methods.

GPP is also structured as a one-day training session titled *How to Create a Community Disaster Plan*. The purpose of this session is to provide an introduction to community disaster planning, including the content of a basic plan. Typically, the initial training day is 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, and involves lecture, discussion, and focused exercises to initiate the disaster planning process (on behalf of your community) using a structured workbook.

Ordinarily, there are two follow-up Technical Assistance (TA) sessions, 2 ½ to 3 hrs in length, where members of your local health department and the Johns Hopkins Preparedness Programs meet in workshop format with you and two or three other representatives of your faith community to guide you in efforts to complete the plans begun on the first day of training.

While not all those who attend MPT will be required/appropriate to attend the GPP and TA sessions, all those who plan to attend the GPP and TA sessions will be required to attend MPT.

Program FAQs

What Is Entailed In the Training?

| Training Name | Overview | Time | Topics Covered |
|--|--|--|---|
| Motivational Preparedness Training (MPT) | Preparedness training with the potential both to raise concern about, and instill confidence in planning for/responding to the mental health impacts of public health emergencies. | One-day training session composed of three, 2 hour modules. Held at regional locations on mutually agreed upon dates/times. | Introduction to Disasters and Population Mental Health Basics of Psychological First Aid (PFA) PFA and Planning for Vulnerable Populations All-Hazards spectrum Table Top Exercise |
| Guided Preparedness Planning (GPP) | Joint planning sessions between FBO leaders and LHD coordinators to permit the type of complementary information exchange and synergism that would not be possible with individual planning. | One-day training session. Held at regional locations on mutually agreed upon dates/times. | Formatting Your Plan using the DHMH guidelines for: Background Assumptions Roles and Responsibilities Operations and Response Risk Communication Preparedness Tools and Resources Appendices |

Who Should be Identified From My FBO to Participate?

It will be most beneficial for FBOs to identify participants that may already have a role in planning and/or preparedness efforts. Other appropriate options might be those with a professional background that supports these efforts, or those with a leadership role within the organization.

Do the Identified Trainees Have to Attend All of the Trainings?

Ideally, those that you identify should be willing/able to attend all phases of the project -- MPT, GPP, and TA. That being said, we appreciate that you may have some members

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who are only suited for the MPT session (those that want to play a role in volunteering during times of emergency or crisis), but may not be as well-suited for the planning aspects of the program that are included in the GPP and TA sessions. Therefore, you may identify participants who might only attend the MPT session; however, those who are appropriate for the planning aspects of the program will also be required to attend MPT as well.

When and Where Will the Trainings Take Place?

MPT is scheduled for March 13, 2010, from 9:00 am – 4:30 pm at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge, Maryland. Check-in and breakfast will begin at 8:15 am.

GPP will be held on May 15, 2010, from 9:00 am – 4:30 pm at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge, Maryland. Check-in and breakfast will begin at 8:15 am.

TA sessions will be scheduled at a later date and held in county specific locations for each of the participating FBOs.

What Are the Expectations of the FBO?

An important responsibility of the FBO is to be sure that designated participants -- clergy members or laity -- fully understand and accept their role as a representative of their faith community. This role acceptance is absolutely vital in the GPP phase of the program. A key point for “role induction” of all planning participants is to understand that, while they may not have authority for *ultimate* plan-content decisions, they will have been authorized to provide input about plan content -- to be accepted as is, or possibly revised at higher administrative levels, if appropriate.

How Does Participation Benefit My Organization/Community?

Historically, faith communities have been extraordinarily responsive in the aftermath of public health emergencies and disasters by providing tangible material resources, such as food, clothing, and shelter, as well as human services, such as prayer leadership, death notification, and general fellowship. However, FBOs are rarely incorporated into formal preparedness and response operations of government, nor are members optimally trained to provide pastoral crisis-intervention or effective psychological first aid (PFA) services for trauma survivors. This program not only is an opportunity for individual FBO members to be trained in PFA skills but also for such training to qualify participants as paraprofessional members of the Maryland Professional Volunteer Corps. Additionally, organizational leadership will have an opportunity to participate directly, or through designees, in collaborative meetings with your LHD leadership to develop formal disaster preparedness plans for their communities -- plans that will encompass roles and responsibilities; resource shortages and surpluses; and critical contact-, communication-, and other important information.

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How Does My Organization Sign Up To Participate?

The enclosed form should be completed and submitted to the Johns Hopkins Public Health Preparedness Programs no later than February 15, 2010. Forms can be faxed to 443-287-7075. Questions? Please contact Natalie Semon at nsemon@jhsph.edu or 410-614-3274.

Participation Commitment Form

If you are interested in participation in our research and training project, please complete this form and return to the Johns Hopkins Public Health Preparedness Programs office no later than February 15, 2010.

Please provide us with information about your Faith Based Organization:

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|---|--|
| Faith Based Organization Name: | |
| Street: | |
| City, State, Zip: | |
| County: | |
| Phone Number: | |
| Faith Based Organization Main Contact Person: | |
| Main Contact Person E-mail Address: | |

You are invited to identify up to four (4) participants to attend the MPT, GPP, and Technical Assistance sessions. Please confirm that these individuals will be available to attend on your organization's behalf.

| | |
|--|---|
| Name of Trainee #1: | |
| Role of Trainee in your Faith Based Organization (e.g., clergy, laity, committee member, etc): | |
| Email Address: | |
| Phone Number: | |
| Training Sessions: | <input type="checkbox"/> MPT <input type="checkbox"/> MPT, GPP, and TA |

| | |
|--|---|
| Name of Trainee #2: | |
| Role of Trainee in your Faith Based Organization (e.g., clergy, laity, committee member, etc): | |
| Email Address: | |
| Phone Number: | |
| Training Sessions: | <input type="checkbox"/> MPT <input type="checkbox"/> MPT, GPP, and TA |

Participation Commitment Form

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|--|---|
| Name of Trainee #3: | |
| Role of Trainee in your Faith Based Organization (e.g., clergy, laity, committee member, etc): | |
| Email Address: | |
| Phone Number: | |
| Training Sessions: | <input type="checkbox"/> MPT <input type="checkbox"/> MPT, GPP, and TA |

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|--|---|
| Name of Trainee #4: | |
| Role of Trainee in your Faith Based Organization (e.g., clergy, laity, committee member, etc): | |
| Email Address: | |
| Phone Number: | |
| Training Sessions: | <input type="checkbox"/> MPT <input type="checkbox"/> MPT, GPP, and TA |