

Immediate Psychological Intervention

The psychological impact of catastrophic and traumatizing events is usually long term and costly. Studies have shown that severe stress reactions to traumatizing events can be prevented or reduced by early psychological intervention – the earlier, the better. Thus, the lack of immediate intervention may lead to long lasting or irreversible psychological damage.

Any form of psychological intervention can be characterized by Responsiveness, Trust and Assessment. Immediate Psychological Intervention is a special form of crisis intervention provided during the first 24 hours following a disaster. It is highly responsive and although it may overlap with other types of treatment such as short-term and long-term intervention, it is the basic stage necessary for later types of intervention. Actually, it may set the foundation for these later forms of treatment. In addition to its responsiveness, in its timing and non-intrusive manner, it promotes trust between therapist, afflicted individual and community. By the assessment of initial needs and resources, it also provides crucial information for all agents of intervention involved.

In sum, Immediate Psychological Intervention following a catastrophic event is an essential stage in the overall process of psychological treatment following a disaster.

Terms: Psychological First-Aid' Emergency Psychology