Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in humanitarian emergencies: what should health sector know and do?

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Three Main objectives

WHO MHPSS work in emergencies

1. To strengthen – through WHE – mental health emergency responses across the organization’s operations

2. Apply early recovery approach to stimulate the initiation of long-term development of sustainable mental health services

3. To fill in key gaps in policy and tools that meet the demands of the field: government, NGOs, WHO and other UN agencies in emergency-affected countries
IASC Guidelines: Inclusive framework: mental health and psychosocial support covers both

Composite definition

- **protecting** or **promoting** psychosocial well-being

and/or

- **preventing** or **treating** mental health conditions.

MH        PS
Basic emotional and practical support to selected individuals or families

Activating social networks
Supportive child-friendly spaces

Advocacy for good humanitarian practice: basic services that are safe, socially appropriate and that protect dignity
ACTION BY THE HEALTH SYSTEM
Sphere Handbook mental health standard: 9 key actions

1. Coordinate MHPSS work across sectors

Reaching agreement on model for coordinating Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

Humanitarian Coordinator / Government leader

Inter-sector Coordination Group

Health sector

Protection sector (with Child protection Sub-sector)

Education and other sectors

MHPSS Cross-sector Technical Working Group (with focal points in each of the sectors and with accountability in sectors, with MHPSS activities as relevant in Appeal chapters under health, protection and education, rather than in a separate Appeal chapter)
2. Ensure interventions are developed on the basis of identified needs and resources.
Sphere Handbook mental health standard: 9 key actions

3. Enable community members including marginalized people to strengthen community self-help and social support

4. Ensure that community workers, including volunteers, as well as staff at health services offer psychological first aid to people in acute distress after exposure to extreme stressors
Promote self help to cope with stressors

Benefit from wide range of translation and adaptations available and disseminate to families with children

Use WHO repository of MHPSS risk communication messages
Sphere Handbook mental health standard: 9 key actions

5. Ensure that there is at least one staff member at every health facility who manages diverse, severe mental health problems in adults and children.
Sphere Handbook mental health standard: 9 key actions

6. Make psychological interventions available when possible for people impaired by prolonged distress
Sphere Handbook mental health standard: 9 key actions

7. Address the safety, basic needs and rights of people with mental health problems in institutions.

8. Minimize harm related to alcohol and drugs
**Sphere Handbook mental health standard: 9 key actions**

9. As part of early recovery, initiate plans to develop a sustainable community mental health system.

- Afghanistan
- Burundi
- Indonesia
- Iraq
- Jordan
- Kosovo
- Somalia
- Sri Lanka
- Timor-Leste
- West Bank and Gaza Strip