Disaster Preparedness: Public Health Infrastructure and Perspectives on Community Resilience

Dr. Randy Rowel, Interim Chair Behavioral Health Sciences Department
Morgan State University
School of Community Health and Policy

&

Dr. Daniel Barnett,
Johns Hopkins University
School of Public Health
Why Culture Matters Disasters Studies Initiative
Presentation Objectives

- FEMA Private Sector Representative Experience
- Describe National State of Preparedness
- Define Community Resilience and Discuss It’s Practice Implications.
- Ecological Framework for Community Resilience Practice
FEMA Private Sector Representative

- PSR Experience
- PSR Activities
  - HBCU SM Initiative
  - Campus Resilience (C-CERT, Campus Ready Web-site)
  - Explore ICPD data sharing opportunities
- Meetings (HSAAC)
Preparedness in America

- National statistics of reported behaviors on recommended preparedness actions remain largely unchanged since 2007.

- More refined analysis is needed to examine socioeconomic and geographic influences on preparedness.

- Hazard-specific questions should be asked of individuals at risk for those hazards.

Source: FEMA, 2013
Preparedness in America

• Be Informed
  ▪ Nearly half aware of local hazard (up 14%)
  ▪ Those who believed they were at risk took actions
  ▪ Decline in preparedness training

• Make a Plan
  ▪ Slight decline in having a household plan

• Build a Kit
  • Those with update supplies declined

• Get Involved
  • No change in those that support emergency responder organizations (22%) or help in disasters (34%)

Source: FEMA, 2013
Preparedness in America

STAGES OF CHANGE

Pre-comtemplation (21%)

Comtemplation (19%)

Preparation (9%)

Action (15%)

Maintenance (34%%)

Source: FEMA, 2013
Resilient communities can withstand hazards, continue to operate under stress, adapt to adversity, and recover functionality after a crisis.

However, community resilience is not just about disasters.

The term *resilience* describes the continued ability of a person, group, or system to function during and after any sort of stress. A healthy community with a strong economy, commitment to social justice, and strong environmental standards will be able to bounce back better after a disaster; such communities exhibit a greater degree of resilience. Building and maintaining disaster resilience depends on the ability of a community to monitor change and then modify plans and activities appropriately to accommodate the observed change.

The committee finds that private–public collaboration is crucial to the building of networks and trust vital to creating and sustaining healthy, resilient communities.

*National Academy of Sciences, 2011*
FEMA’S Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management

- Understanding and meeting the true needs of the entire affected community.

- Engaging all aspects of the community (public, private, and civic) in both defining those needs and devising ways to meet them.

- Strengthening the assets, institutions, and social processes that work well in communities on a daily basis to improve resilience and emergency management outcomes.
Whole Community Approach

“You are the first responder---until the help arrives.”
Definition of Community

A group of people for whom a domain of interest is relevant. (Etienne Wenger, 1998)

Communities are not only defined by geography. It is also characterized by elements such as (Israel et al, 1994):

1. Membership or sense of identity
2. Common symbol systems (i.e., language, rituals, ceremonies)
3. Shared values and norms
4. Mutual influence (community has influence & are influenced by others)
5. Shared needs and commitment
6. Share emotional connection

Therefore communities can be defined by location, race, ethnicity, age, occupation, interest in particular problems (community preparedness)
What is Community Engagement

The process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 1997, p 9)

The collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity (Carnegie Foundation).
What is Resilience & How is it linked to Community Engagement?

- "Our goal is to ensure a more resilient Nation — one in which individuals, communities, and our economy can adapt to changing conditions as well as withstand and rapidly recover from disruption due to emergencies." – President Obama (2009)

- This effort also aims to create Community Resilience or the continued ability of a person, group, or system to function during and after stress or adapt to adversity.

- Key to the success of the Morgan Community Mile initiative are interdisciplinary partnerships between schools and departments at Morgan; working towards Resiliency. Based on Norris and others (2008)
What is Resilience-Focused Private/Public/Academic/Community Collaboration?

Cooperation between private, public, academic, and community sectors (Quad Sector) to include the full fabric of the community to find solutions to complex problems.
1. **Social Resilience** (Educational equity, age, transportation access, communication capacity, language competency, special needs, health coverage)

2. **Economic Resilience** (housing capital, employment, income equality, single sector employment dependency, business size, health access)

3. **Institutional Resilience** (mitigation, previous disaster experience, etc.)

4. **Infrastructure Resilience** (housing type, shelter capacity, housing needs, etc.)

5. **Community Capital** (social capital-civic, FBO, advocacy, place attachment, etc.)
Disaster Resilience

Community Resilience

Linked
What Does My Journey Tell Me?

- Community organization background
- Non profit and FBO practice experience
- Research experience
  - Cultural appropriateness of prep websites
  - Low income studies in MD and the Southern Black Belt
  - Why Culture Matters: Public Health Preparedness Symposium
  - Guide to Enhance Grassroots Risk Communication Among Low Income Populations.
  - Nat Academies of Science Study
  - Course development for DHS and EMI
  - Johns Hopkins Resiliency Index Project
  - PSR for FEMA (Summer 2013)
Community Resilience Practice

- Operate within the broader definition of community
- Understand community engagement principles can be applied to any type of community
- Create resilient communities increases the likelihood of having disaster resilient communities
- Community Resilience starts where you live, work, and play.
Ecological Framework for Community Resilience Practice

Creating a Culture of Preparedness

- Individual
- Family
- Community
- Societal
Contact Information

Randy Rowel, Associate Professor
Interim Chair, Department of Behavioral Health Sciences and director of Why Culture Matters Disaster Studies Project

Morgan State University
School of Community Health and Policy
4530 Portage Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21239
Office Phone: 443-885-3138
Email: randolph.rowel@morgan.edu
BEFORE STARTING A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EFFORT

1. Be clear about the purposes or **goals of the engagement** effort and the populations and/or communities you want to engage.

2. Become **knowledgeable about the community’s** culture, economic conditions, social networks, political and power structures, norms and values, demographic trends, history, and experience with efforts by outside groups to engage it in various programs. Learn about the community’s perceptions of those initiating the engagement activities.
3. Go to the community, establish relationships, build trust, work with the formal and informal leadership, and seek commitment from community organizations and leaders to create processes for mobilizing the community.

4. Remember and accept that collective self-determination is the responsibility and right of all people in a community. No external entity should assume it can bestow on a community the power to act in its own self-interest. leadership, and seek commitment from community organizations and leaders to create processes for mobilizing the community.
Principles of Community Engagement

FOR ENGAGEMENT TO SUCCEED...

5. Partnering with the community is necessary to **create change** and improve health (establishes horizontal and vertical relations)

6. All aspects of community engagement must **recognize and respect the diversity of the community**. Awareness of the various cultures of a community and other factors affecting diversity must be paramount in planning, designing, and implementing approaches to engaging a community.

7. Community engagement can only be **sustained by identifying and mobilizing community assets and strengths** and by developing the community’s capacity and resources to make decisions and take action.
Recommendations for Morgan Community Engagement Initiatives

- Increase faculty and student awareness about the MCM
- Community Engagement Training for Morgan and community leaders.
- Articulate the vision of the Vice President, Academic Outreach & Engagement
- Clarify the role of the current MCM Steering Committee going forward.
- Apply for Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s Elective Community Engagement Classification