PSYC 656: Disaster Mental Health

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Course Number: PSYC 656  
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Semester: Summer 2017  
Class Meetings: Online

Welcome!

It is my pleasure to welcome you to PSYC 656: Disaster Mental Health online! My name is Dr. Amanda (Mandy) Reed and I will be your instructor this semester. I am excited to bring this course to you online, and hope that this will be an enriching experience.

I will introduce myself at the first lecture, but will briefly describe my background here. I first became interested in disaster mental health while participating through the ambulance service in Vermillion in a mock mass casualty incident to which the Disaster Mental Health Institute was also invited. I became interested in the concept because of my experiences in emergency services and shortly afterward entered graduate school at USD for clinical psychology with a specialization in disaster mental health and a major focus on traumatic stress. Presently I work at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital in behavioral health and continue to work as a paramedic on the local ambulance service. I look forward to contributing to disaster mental health awareness and education through this course.

PSYC 656 is intended to provide a foundation in disaster mental health, including the stress associated with disaster, traumatic stress, American Red Cross Disaster Mental Health Services, an introduction to community-based psychological first aid, and a review of the international standards for the provision of psychological support in emergency situations. Some of the topics that are discussed may include graphic descriptions with troubling details. If you are particularly sensitive to these topics, please carefully consider before starting this course.

The course is delivered entirely online using a learning management platform known as Desire2Learn (D2L). The technology of the course is designed to consider the needs of the students who take this course in many different parts of the world. Therefore, slides will be presented in a form that can be downloaded easily, even using slow internet connections. The lecture material will be in an mp3 or mp4 format, so it can easily be downloaded and played on a computer or mp3/mp4 player as the slides are viewed on a computer. In addition, each student will complete readings independently, and you will be required to post your thoughts on the readings and lectures to share with other students. Other students will comment on your thoughts, and you will comment on theirs. This will enable equal participation by class members anywhere in the world, regardless of time zone.

Finally, the course requires a real-world disaster preparedness project, working with a community to prepare a functional disaster mental health plan. This can be done individually or as a group.
Required Textbook Material:

- McCarroll, J.E., Vineburgh, N.T., & Ursano, R.J. (Eds.) *Disaster, Disease, and Distress*. Bethesda MD: Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress, Uniformed Services University for the Health Sciences. This book is available without charge electronically at http://www.cstsonline.org/resources/resource-master-list/disaster-disease-and-distress-resources-to-promote-psychological-health-and-resilience-in-military-and-civilian-communities. This is a book of fact sheets produced by what I consider to be the leading research team in the field. The fact sheets are all evidence-based. Assigned readings will be indicated in the syllabus as **MVU pages**.
- ARC 3077-4A (Red Cross participant’s workbook for Disaster Mental Health Services. Available on D2L)
- The OVC Providing Relief to Families After a Mass Fatality (Available on D2L)
- The DOJ's "After the Attack: Psychological Consequences of Terrorism" (Available on D2L)
- Jacobs & Meyer’s chapter on Psychological First Aid (Available on D2L)
- The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial support in Emergency Settings (Available on D2L)
- The Report of the DMH Subcommittee to the National Biodefense Science Board (Available on D2L)
- You will also be required to explore materials on the U.S. National Child Traumatic Stress Network and the U.S. National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder websites.
- Lisa Brown’s (2016) Older Adults And People With Disabilities (Available On D2L)
- Beth Boyd’s (2016) Community-Based Psychological First Aid With Marginalized Communities (Available On D2L)
- Randy Quevillon’s (2016) Community-Based Psychological First Aid With Rural Communities (Available On D2L)
- Curriculum Recommendations for Disaster Health Professionals Disaster Behavioral Health (Available on D2L)

There may also be supplemental “handouts” provided for individual weeks.

Technology Requirements

The University of South Dakota has established minimum technology requirements for participation in online courses. These are outlined under the “Technology Support and Requirements” section in the CE Online Orientation document (http://www.usd.edu/-
In general, a typical week in this course will be sequenced as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day of Week</th>
<th>Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Read assigned material and listen to lectures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>By 11:59 p.m. CT submit reflection paper on lectures and readings to the D2L Dropbox.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Post your initial discussion of the readings for the week by 11:59 CT.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Respond to at least four of your group's posts by 11:59 p.m. CT Sunday.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Continue discussion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Continue discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Continue discussion. (Have discussion posts read by 11:59 p.m.)</td>
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General Course Requirements and Expectations

This is a three-credit graduate course. This course was designed with a similar format and time commitment to that of a face-to-face three credit hour course on campus and will likely require 12 hours per week of your time. You will be required to read the assigned material for the week, download the lecture files, view the slides and listen to the lectures, post a discussion of the readings and lecture, and comment on other postings in the group discussion, and submit a reflection paper by the end of Sunday each week.

**IMPORTANT:** This is not a self-paced correspondence-like course. You will be required to perform weekly activities—and given points based on your performance. **Expect to spend 8-12 hours per week working on the course. You will need to submit assignments or check in to the D2L website 3-4 times per week.**

You will also be required to work with a real-world community in developing a disaster mental health preparedness plan by the end of the semester.

Getting Started

First, you should familiarize yourself with the CE Online Orientation, which can be found at the following URL: [http://www.usd.edu/~media/files/usd-online/online-orientation-guide.ashx?la=en](http://www.usd.edu/~media/files/usd-online/online-orientation-guide.ashx?la=en). It contains important information on accessing USD’s resources online.

Next, you will want to access the course in Desire2Learn (D2L). This can be done via the student portal, or directly via [https://d2l.sdbor.edu/](https://d2l.sdbor.edu/). Note that you may not be able to access the course until May 15, 2017.

Once in the course, you should do the following:
1. Orient yourself to the course components: News, Content (where all lectures and readings will reside), Assessments (where the Dropboxes to turn in assignments are located), Communications (where the Discussions are located), etc. Make sure you have **thoroughly** read the syllabus.
2. Post an introduction of yourself in the Introductory Discussion under the Communications Discuss tab.
3. Read through the items under “Getting Started,” on the top, left-hand side of the course homepage.
4. I would encourage you to try to download any of the online readings for the first week. If you have any problems, please report them to immediately.

**Contacting Me**

If you need to contact me, please do so via the email address at the top of the page rather than over D2L email. I will do my best to respond to your requests within 24 hours.

Again, welcome to the course. I look forward to meeting you and I hope you will learn a great deal about disaster mental health.

Sincerely,

Amanda (Mandy) Reed, Ph.D.
Adjunct Professor