

Post-Disaster Parenting Support:

Liaising with Parent Consumers to Increase the Reach and Impact of Disaster Recovery Triple P

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Queensland's "summer of sorrow"

- ◉ From December 2010
- ◉ Wide-spread flooding
 - 75% of the State a disaster zone
 - At least 70 towns/200,000 people impacted
 - 35 deaths, 9 missing
 - Damages upwards of \$30 billion

Queensland's "summer of sorrow" (cont'd)

◎ Cyclone Yasi

- Affected areas included Tully, Mission Beach
- 200km/h+ winds, 7m storm surge
- 150 homes destroyed, 650 uninhabitable
- Banana and sugar cane crops devastated

The impact of natural disasters on children and their families

- Parenting contributes to the development of youths' post-disaster problems
- Parenting may change after a disaster
- How a child's family functions in the aftermath is important

Disaster Recovery Triple P

(DRTP; Cobham, McDermott and Sanders, 2011)

- Aims to:
 - Build parents' confidence in managing children's reactions
 - Reduce children's post-disaster emotional/behavioural problems
- 2-hour, psychoeducation seminar
- Part of State's disaster response
 - 40 accredited Triple-P practitioners trained in DRTP
 - 45 seminars across QLD 2011/12

How was DRTP promoted?

- Flyers, posters, school and community newsletters, media releases, website, SMS, letters, letter-box drop, radio, speaking to parents
- To overcome anticipated hurdles...
 - Seminars were held at multiple schools/community centres within a region
 - Different seminar times were offered
 - Free child care
 - BBQ and movie for children while parents attended

What happened?

- Preliminary support for the efficacy and acceptability of DRTP, for parents *who attended*
- But, not many parents attended
 - ~ 319 parents across 45 seminars
- The current study aimed to understand *why*
- With this knowledge, we can work towards increasing the reach of DRTP in future post-disaster scenarios

Method

- 6, 2-hour parent focus groups
- Held across impacted areas of the State
- Various recruitment channels
 - Schools, flood recovery centre, Recovery and Resilience Teams, community services
- Parents completed socio-demographic/exposure items, Preparing for Bad Weather: Parents' Checklist (Sanders, Cobham & McDermott, 2011) and participated in discussion

What sort of questions did we ask?

- What was families' post-disaster experience, and needs over time?
- How did parents think their children were doing?
- Barriers to seeking support?
- Relevance of programs like DRTP?
- How can we improve the uptake?
 - Methods of delivery
 - Ways of promoting

Who were the parents?

- 34 parents & 3 grandparents of school-aged children
- 84% female
- *Mage* 43.16yrs (29-73yrs)
- Yeronga, Graceville, Ipswich, Gatton, Toowoomba and Tully
- 75% “very”-“extremely” impacted

What did parents tell us?

Some preliminary findings

- ◎ Families' disaster experience is ongoing
 - Prolonged and dynamic loss
 - Things rarely get back to "normal"
 - New impacts

What did parents tell us?

- Parents made active efforts to manage their children's disaster experience
- Parents recognised (in hindsight?) that their own reactions were important

What did parents tell us?

◎ Barriers to seeking support

- Nature of children's reactions
- Practical challenges took precedence
- Parents' own vulnerabilities, which
 - Impacted parenting
 - Made parents reluctant to put themselves in any situation in which they could "crumble"
- "She'll be right" and other attitudes, stigma

What did parents tell us?

- Some types of support were helpful
- Others, less so

What did parents tell us?

- Ideas for post-disaster parenting support
- Suggestions for promotion

Future directions and conclusion

◉ Further work

- Continue data analysis

◉ Conclusions and implications

- Parents have conflicting priorities post disaster
- Parents may not be ready to engage with programs (e.g., DRTP) until their needs are met
- Engaging with disaster-impacted families may necessitate more “hands on” approaches

Thank you

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