

This training presentation is intended for individuals who will be working at Points of Distribution (PODs) in a mass vaccination operation. It is to serve as an adjunctive training to the POD Orientation that all potential POD staff will take *in advance* of an actual public health emergency. Although specifically developed for POD staff who will be in direct contact with public citizens coming to the POD to receive their medications, *all* POD staff, regardless of their role at the POD, could benefit from this completing this training and are encouraged to do so.



Considering Behavioral Health

This presentation is designed to help you

- Better understand how the behaviors of persons may be affected in a public health emergency
- Be better equipped to respond to others if/when their behaviors are impaired
- Feel better prepared yourself

The overall importance of "considering behavioral health" is directly related to the goal of preparing all POD staff to effectively carry out their unique responsibilities at the POD site. This presentation is designed to help all POD staff better prepare for the "public fear behaviors" that could impact and/or interfere with operations at a POD site.



A Quick Review: What You Already Know...

- A POD is a mass dispensing clinic
- PODs are not "every" day operations
- PODs open to serve the public in response to a public health emergency
- Many PODs may have to open simultaneously across Connecticut

Any person doing this training presentation, whether self-taught or in a live trainer setting, should already have completed the POD Orientation. This review slide highlights only the most basic aspects of the orientation training and also illuminates the *critical context* when the need to open PODs across the state occurs.



And You Also Already Know...

- Every POD worker/volunteer has a specific role and a designated supervisor
- Every one doing their job well helps to:
 - Ensure the POD operates efficiently and effectively
 - Maintain the overall safety of all POD workers and public citizens visiting the POD

For the purposes of this presentation, it is important to remind ourselves that a structure will be in place at the POD to support all POD staff in the execution of their duties while at the same time the responsibility for overall effective and safe operations rests with *all* POD staff.



A Common Goal

Regardless of your role at the POD, you share in common with all others working there the goal of getting the needed medications to your family, friends and community as quickly and safely as possible.

We're all going to be in this together and it will, in fact, be very personal for all of us.

Many of the people POD staff will be serving at the POD site will be the people who matter the most to them...their family members, friends and neighbors and larger community...the emotional stakes will be heightened as a result of that fact.



On Common Ground

- You, other POD workers and citizens reporting to your POD site will all respond in your own unique ways to the impact of this emergency on your lives
- As a result, feelings, attitudes and behaviors of any person at the POD site may be affected

Just as no one is "untouched by a disaster", it is anticipated that no one would be untouched by a public health emergency of the magnitude that would require mass vaccinations sites to be opened.

It is actually safe to say then, that the feelings and attitudes of all persons will be affected by such an event and that, as a result, behaviors may also be affected.

Link, Ursano, 2002



In a Public Health Emergency...

Behavioral health is *not* concerned with feelings or identifying mental disorders.

Behavioral health is concerned with

- The extent to which feelings about the emergency influence individual or collective behaviors and
- Being able to favorably influence optimal and functional individual and collective behaviors

Often when people think about behavioral, or mental, health services they think either about the "touchy, feely", "how do you feel about that" stereotype or they assume that only those individuals with serious mental disorders require behavioral health services.

The function of behavioral health in a *critical response operation* is to influence those pro-social behaviors on the part of victims, responders and the general public that will *support* response operations as opposed to undermine them.

So, for example, it is important to better understand how the presence of persons engaging in agitated or disruptive behavior at the POD site, which is already a stressful and confined environment, can have a contagion effect and quickly and seriously undermine POD operations if not dealt with appropriately.



So That's Why It's Important...

For you to understand behavioral health issues related to working at the POD. The impact of the emergency can potentially affect

- Your ability to do the job
- The ability of other POD workers to do their jobs and/or
- The ability of the public to quickly and efficiently move through the POD

Without knowing the scope of the public health emergency, it is impossible to know the potential impact that POD staff might be struggling to cope with when they are asked to report to the POD.

As the scope of the public health emergency might be very great indeed, it is critical for people to understand that they may be called to the POD while dealing with both individual trauma (stress and/or grief reactions) and/or collective trauma (damage to the social bond and social fabric of the community).

Link, IOM, 2003



The following section of this presentation will focus on the steps that you can take now so *you* are prepared to report to your POD site following a public health emergency.

Based on the premise that one is ill-equipped to help others if they have not yet helped themselves, the following content focuses on the steps that POD staff and volunteers can take *now* so that they have adequately prepared themselves to work at the POD site following a public health emergency.



Preparing to Serve

To best prepare for your work at the POD, it is first important to think about

- Your uniquely individual circumstances
 - Your decision to work at a POD
 - Your family's agreement with that decision
 - Your family's preparedness plans

It is one thing to agree to be a POD staff person "theoretically" and something else entirely to pull yourself away from your family if a public health emergency that may threaten the well-being of your loved ones has just occurred.

Those persons taking a leadership role in mass dispensing planning and operations across the state need to know if/when the day comes that people are called to report to POD sites, those people have prepared themselves sufficiently in advance and will indeed report to duty.

This section of the presentation essentially recommends to people the steps they need take to properly prepare to serve.



Your Decision to Work at a POD

Whether recruited as a POD volunteer or already on an "official" payroll

- You understand the potential physical and emotional challenges of working at a POD
 - Your personal risk
 - Your personal responsibilities
- You have confidence in your own resilience

Better to consider now the potential physical and emotional challenges that might be encountered when working at a POD site then to slam into fears about those same challenges in the days following the public health emergency and let those fears inform your decision about whether or not to report to the POD.

Each individual has to determine for him/herself the interaction between risks and responsibilities as well as their self knowledge regarding their ability to "bounce back" when confronted with prior life challenges.

Link ~ New Orleans police department

Link~ SARS and hospital personnel



Considering POD Challenges

Even with all of current planning and preparation, POD workers will potentially encounter

- High stress, long hours
- Unfamiliar circumstances/coworkers
- Chaos in the work environment
- Uncertain/changing work expectations

As is usually the case, the more an individual knows in advance what will be expected of them, the better able they will be to carry out those expectations with minimal stress to themselves.

To be well prepared, POD staff need to

- Know what will be expected of them at the POD
- Understand and be clear on what their potential role(s) will be at the POD

All POD staff should take advantage of all pre-event training opportunities and be particularly encouraged to participate in POD drills and/or exercises.



Assessing Your Personal Risk

Your personal risk is higher if you have any

- Personal trauma history
- Chronic physical illness
- History of psychological disorders
- Recent major life stressors

All potential POD staff should carefully and *honestly* consider the physical and emotional risks to themselves prior to committing to work at a POD site. These considerations should include thinking through the risks the individual is willing to take based on their personal, medical and psychological history and an understanding that their personal risk is higher following any major life stressors such as loss of a loved one, divorce, etc.



Assuming Personal Responsibility

You are assuming personal responsibility for your decision to work at the POD by

- Considering the challenges
- Honestly assessing your personal risk
- Discussing this with your loved ones and reaching agreement in advance regarding
 - Your commitment to report as requested to the POD site during a public health emergency
 - Your personal risk "ceiling"

By taking the steps of considering the challenges and honestly assessing your personal risk you are assuming personal responsibility for your decision. The final step in assuming personal responsibility for your decision is in understanding that it may have repercussions in the lives of your loved ones (for example, leaving them at home without you in a public health emergency to report to the POD).

Therefore, the final step in assuming personal responsibility is discussing this with your loved ones, considering with them the potential adverse consequences to you and to them and reaching agreement regarding the level of risk you should take and any other conditions regarding a possible deployment to a POD site.

(Depending on your circumstances, you may also need to have a similar discussion with your employer.)



Capacity for Resilience

Your capacity for adapting to the stressors of working at the POD is greater if you

- Typically adapt easily following adversity
- Have a positive view of self
- Have good problem-solving skills
- Have good communication skills
- Are typically able to manage strong feelings and impulses

Link to more information about resilience and how to promote resiliency.

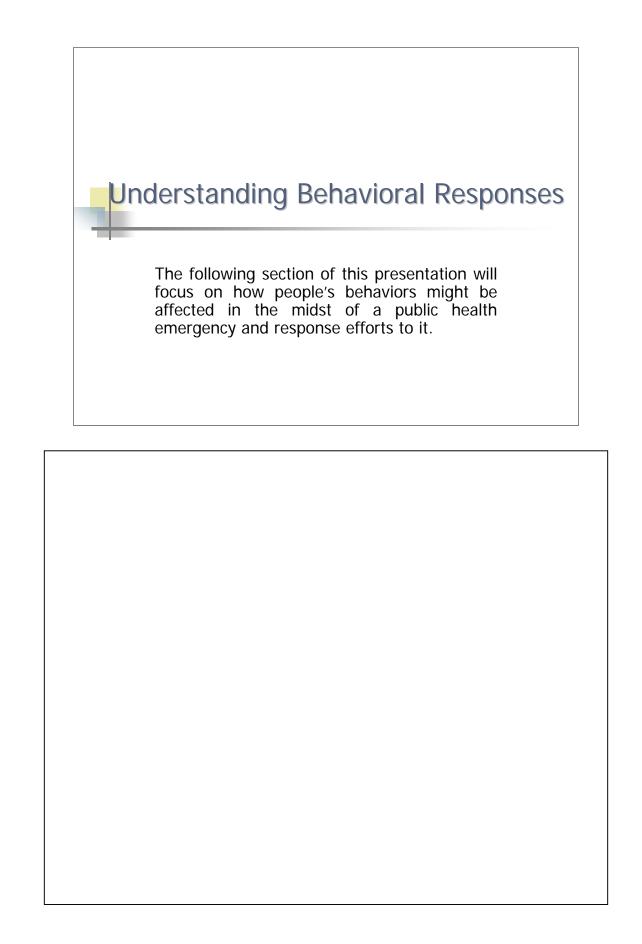


Your Family's Preparedness Plan

- Work together to define a preparedness plan that meets your family's unique needs and, then
- Practice, practice, practice

There are many resources available to help families in developing their preparedness plans, for example:

www.dph.state.ct.us/bt/ready/preparedness12pg.pdf www.ready.gov/america/_downloads/family_communications_plan.pdf





Common Reactions to Common Experiences

As human beings we share in common our typical reactions to common experiences, for example

- Laughter when we're amused
- Tears when we're sad
- Fight, flight or fright when we're angry or afraid

It is important to remember that we share common reactions to common experiences because it reinforces the fact that in the days and weeks following a public health emergency we will "all be sharing a common experience" and therefore all be impacted by it. The reactions that we share in common extend as well to major critical incidents.



Public Health Emergency!!!

A public health emergency that requires POD's to be opened is likely to be experienced by all of us as a frightening event. When our well-being, possibly our very survival, is threatened we feel worried and afraid. Whether due to a naturally occurring event, the result of a technological accident or an act of terrorism, the need to open POD's in response to the emergency will be stressful.

Expand on using the concept of normal reactions to abnormal situations.

Link to further information about stress reactions following naturally occurring and accidental critical incidents.

Link to further information about stress reactions following terrorism events.



Stress in the PODs

- What behaviors can you expect during a time and in a setting that will be stressful for everyone?
- What will those behaviors "look" like from public citizens reporting to the POD?
- What will you be able to do to get people to do what they need to do?

The answers to these questions will provide POD staff with important information for them to carry out their responsibilities at the POD and to be most effective with the public citizens who come to the POD to receive their medications.



The Role of Risk Communication

Hopefully, due to effective public education/ risk communication efforts, the public citizens coming to the POD will already understand that their ongoing safety will be assured once they receive their needed medications. Although feeling the stress of the experience, this understanding will motivate them to engage in behaviors that will best facilitate this.

Everyone will be demanding information about risk and asking questions like:

Am I safe? Are my loved ones safe? What should I do?

Effective risk communication messaging should provide them with answers to these questions and help in preparing them to function optimally at the POD site.



Behavioral Continuum at the POD

People have varying capacities to cope with stress. At the POD, you will likely see

- Most people presenting with "optimal" behaviors
- Some people presenting with "challenging" behaviors
- Fewer people presenting with "complex" behaviors

The behavioral terminology used on this and the following slides is expressly for the purpose of classifying and describing behaviors that are likely to be seen in a mass vaccination operation in response to a public health emergency. In that context, the behaviors are classified as optimal, challenging and complex in direct relation to how different types of behaviors will either enhance or deter from the goals of the mass vaccination operation.



- Patience with the process at the POD
 - When standing in line
 - When asked to complete needed paperwork
- Ability to follow instructions
- Ability to provide needed information with minimal assistance
- Cooperative with those around them
- Cordial to those around them
- Moving as quickly through the process as possible and being on their way

Individuals who are able to cope relatively successfully with the stress of the situation will do what they need to do to move efficiently through the POD, receive their needed medications and move out of the POD. This is not to suggest that these individuals are not having a stress response to the situation but rather that they have the internal resources to actively cope with their stress response so that it does not interfere with or impair their behavior at the POD.

In other words, these folks are experiencing the range of feelings we would expect people to be feeling in a public health emergency, to include, but not be limited to feelings like: fear, anxiety, worry, sadness, grief or confusion. Because of their ability to cope with these types of feelings, they will not present any unique challenges to POD staff.



"Challenging" Behaviors

- Impatience with the process at the POD
 - Although conforming, not wanting to wait in line
 - "Inconvenienced" by the paperwork
- Some level of difficulty following instructions
- Some level of difficulty providing information
- Non-communicative or unfriendly with those around them unless spoken to first
- Slowing the process down for self, and possibly others, due to their difficulties

Individuals who are experiencing more difficulty in coping successfully with the stress of the situation will be likely to demonstrate that through their behavior at the POD. These people, like the "optimal" group, are also interested in getting what they need to remain safe, they are just having more difficulty with the task at hand because they are less able to deal with their feelings *and* deal with the experience of being at the POD.

These folks are also experiencing the range of feelings we would expect people to be feeling in a public health emergency, to include, but not be limited to feelings like: fear, anxiety, worry, sadness, grief or confusion *and* their outward *behavior* reflecting those feelings, or some aspect of it like:

- Anxiety about having to wait ones turn
- •Lack of focus or concentration
- •Confusion about what to do or when to do it
- Tearfulness
- •Isolating from others who are nearby

will present some unique challenges to POD staff.



"Complex" Behaviors

- Heightened level of difficulty with the POD process
- Selfishly making unreasonable demands for special treatment/privileges
- Interfering with the ability of others to move through the process
- Worst case: Disruptive to the operation of the POD

Individuals who are experiencing the most difficulty in coping successfully with the stress of the situation will also demonstrate that through their behavior at the POD. These people also are interested in getting what they need to remain safe, they are just having the most difficulty with the task at hand because they are less able to deal with their feelings *and* deal with the experience of being at the POD.

These folks are also experiencing the range of feelings we would expect people to be feeling in a public health emergency, to include, but not be limited to feelings like: fear, anxiety, worry, sadness, grief or confusion *and* their outward *behavior* reflecting those feelings, or some aspect of it like:

- •Refusal to wait ones turn or complete required forms
- •Agitated, angry or hostile behavior towards POD staff and other citizens
- •Sarcasm, uncooperative or "brittle" behavior towards others

will present the most unique challenges to POD staff.

The most extreme or "worst case" complex behaviors are those which are highly agitated and combative.



What Can You Do?

All public citizens, regardless of who they are or how they are coping, will be best served by POD staff who

- Are mindful of the stress people are experiencing
- Endeavor to provide clear, concise and consistent information regarding
 - The emergency (to the extent possible at the POD)
 - The medical countermeasures being employed to ensure people's medical safety
 - Instructions for moving through the POD

In responding to the needs of people in any disaster/emergency situation, it is important to remember that providing them with information is more comforting to them than providing them with counseling (Barbera, 2004).

Understanding this can facilitate smoother operations at a POD site even within the limits for information-giving due to the fact that the overall mission of the POD operation requires moving people through the process and quickly and efficiently as possible.



What Else Can You Do?

- Remember that persons who exhibit challenging or complex behaviors want the same outcome as everyone else
- You can potentially help them achieve that outcome when you use
 - Common Sense
 - Common Courtesy

All PODs will have professionally trained behavioral health providers working as psychosocial support people within the POD operation. Those POD staff who are not professionally trained in providing behavioral health services do need to know what they can do to assist persons with challenging and complex behaviors. Understanding how to use the basic tools of common sense and common courtesy can be extremely effective.



Use Common Sense

- Know the challenging/complex behaviors to look for so you know them when you see them
- Understand the likely reasons for these behaviors so you can respond accordingly
- Don't judge people if their behavior doesn't meet with your expectations
- Remember, you don't need to have all the answers, so when necessary...
- ...Refer to psychosocial support staff or public safety staff

The goal in dealing with people presenting with challenging or complex behaviors is to reduce their distress or stress level so that they will do what you want them to do to receive their medications and leave the POD.

When you use common sense approaches, you increase the likelihood of being able to effectively address their underlying issue (e.g., fear) and decreasing their arousal. For example, someone who is initially refusing to complete a required form may readily accept your offer to help them complete the form because in so doing you reduce their fear.

When feeling in "over your head" with any person at the POD site, POD workers need to have a clear understanding of the procedures for accessing either a psychosocial support person or a public safety staff person.

Finally, individuals whose behavior is highly agitated or combative need to be separated and contained in order to decrease the possibility of "fear contagion" throughout the POD site.



Use Common Courtesy

- Treat everyone with respect and consideration
- Reach out to lend additional support and assistance to those who need it
- Listen carefully, try to connect with people "where they are" in the context of the POD
- Provide honest, straightforward answers, options or information
- Remember, all people want reassurance that they and their loved ones will be safe

We all have experience with how we feel and how we are likely to respond to others when they treat us with courtesy, respect and consideration. For many of the people presenting with challenging or complex behaviors at the POD, using simple, direct and problem-solving approaches in combination with a courteous presence will accomplish the desired outcome behaviors from those individuals.

Courteous acts of human kindness reduce stress by

- helping people who are frightened feel safer
- helping people who are intimidated feel better connected and supported and
- •Helping people who are feeling hopeless find hope.



Psychological First Aid (PFA)

The following slides present the principles and core actions of "Psychological First Aid". Psychological First Aid is a consensus-based model developed for disaster behavioral health workers. Because the core actions are so well-grounded in common sense approaches to people in distress, excerpts are included in this presentation.

Link to the full text of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and the National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, <u>Psychological First Aid: Field Operations Guide.</u>, September, 2005



Key Principles of PFA

- Assume competence
- Recognize cultural context
- Respect a variety of coping responses
- Build on individual/family strengths
- Support existing community services

These principles underscore the importance of having:

- •A strengths-based perspective
- •Cultural competency
- •Comfort with another's use of ritual and spirituality in times of crisis
- •Ability to practice effectively in non-traditional settings
- •As well as:
- •The importance of creative services
- •The importance of concrete services



PFA: Core Actions

- Contact & Engagement: Respond to or initiate contacts with others in a non-intrusive, compassionate and helpful manner
- Safety and Comfort: Enhance immediate and ongoing safety, and provide emotional comfort
- Stabilization: Calm and orient emotionallyoverwhelmed and/or distraught individuals
- Information Gathering: Identify immediate needs
 & concerns

The initial task with many people demonstrating some level of difficulty at the POD may be determining their need for contact and their coping style and then trying to establish rapport based on that assessment.

People will generally respond in a positive way to genuine, active interest and respectful human kindness...as simple as introducing self and asking how you might be of assistance

Compassionate concern compassionate hovering....

Enhance sense of predictability, control, comfort,

Provide simple and accurate information

Mobilize support for most distressed

Reduce physiological arousal

Remain present and available...focusing on manageable thoughts and feelings and goals that address person's most immediate concerns

Flexible, practical and empowering

Reassure and provide supportive/active listening



- Practical Assistance: Offer practical help in addressing immediate needs and concerns
- Connection with social supports: Help establish brief contacts with support persons
- Information on Coping: Provide information about stress reactions and coping to reduce distress and promote adaptive functioning
- Linkage with collaborative services: Link people with needed services

Problem Solving activities...coordinating/linking...POD can be confusing/distressing...assistance can mitigate feelings of helplessness, anger

Act to address needs...advocate

Reduces isolation, alienation, fosters hope and promotes healing... may need to encourage people to access supports...clarify opportunities for support seeking and support giving...enhance access to supports

Normalizing feelings and recovery while educating...basic info regarding reactions to trauma and traumatic loss and basic info of coping.....warning signs for seeking help

To promote and facilitate continuity in helping relationships....



The Core Goals

The "core goals" of psychological first aid are to promote

- Safety
- Calm
- Connectedness
- Self-Efficacy
- Health

Reaching for these core goals will help you achieve the ultimate POD goal of "pills into people"

Link to SAMHSA brochure "Psychological First Aid: A Guide for Emergency and Disaster Response Workers"

Link to SAMHSA online publications http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/browse.asp





...And Your Fellow POD Staff

You and your POD co-workers are not immune to the stressors of the emergency or the potential stressors at the POD. Be aware of the behaviors that signal when you or a co-worker need a break from the action and then take action to protect yourself or your co-worker...go to your immediate supervisor and report your observations.

Need to clarify the exact procedure for this if not going to own supervisor and insert it here.

Behaviors that Signal Worker Distress

- Difficulties with task/role performance
 - Errors in performance of task duties
 - Inability to problem-solve
 - Inability to concentrate
 - Role Confusion
- Difficulties with interpersonal interactions
 - Inability to communicate effectively with others
 - Impatience with others
 - Agitated, angry and/or tearful behaviors

These examples of worker distress are as important for every POD staff person to recognize if it relates to their own on-duty behavior as it is important for them to identify these behaviors in their co-workers. In either case, they must also be prepared to take immediate protective action.

Link to materials on stress and task performance



- Maintain a healthy lifestyle
 - Healthy diet, sufficient exercise and sleep
 - Balance work and leisure
- Educate yourself about stress
 - Causes of stress
 - Signs of stress
- Practice stress reduction techniques
- Know your own limits
- •Strive to eat a balanced, healthy diet incorporating any unique dietary requirements you might have based on your age, weight and/or general physical health
- •Develop and follow a regular exercise regimen that is challenging but not excessive
- •Provide your body with sufficient time for rest and recuperative sleep.

Balance the quality of your daily experiences, the responsibilities of employment and family obligations are ideally managed in a way to allow sufficient time for recreation, relaxation and reflection.

Educate yourself about **stress**. We are all unique and therefore may handle stressors differently but those experiences that **cause** us stress aren't so different, a *few* examples:

- •Even when we are the ones to initiate the change (e.g., changing jobs), the uncertainty and loss of the familiar which comes with major, and minor, life changes brings stress
- •Personal relationships can bring us great joy and cause us much stress
- •Loss, conflict and circumstances beyond our control are stressors for us all.

Educate yourself about the **signs** of stress in your body, some you might recognize include: difficulty sleeping, changes in appetite, irritability, depression, headaches, worry.

Learn **stress reduction** techniques and practice them! The most important technique is the ability to know your own limits and be able to set limits to reduce your stress.

Add links.

http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/tips/disaster.pdf



Self Care: At the POD

To the extent that you can, try to

- "Check-in" regularly with your supervisor during your shift
- Rotate your work assignments
- Pair up with co-workers for task completion
- Take regular breaks away from the action
- Limit your "on duty" time

Even if you don't feel the need, it's a good idea to check in regularly with your supervisor so that someone else besides yourself is routinely checking your "barometer", it doesn't need to take more than a couple of minutes but can be very helpful to you in the long run.

Incorporating some variety into your work at the POD if at all possible and working alongside a co-worker can help to alleviate, or at least vary, some of the stress you might be experiencing.

Similarly, routine breaks during your shift are important (and easy to lose sight of, if you're not vigilant about it) as is setting appropriate limits to the number of hours and./or frequency of your shifts.



While at the POD, You Can Also...

- Set up an informal buddy system with coworker(s)
- During your breaks, take time to check in w/family and/or social supports
- Pay attention to your own reactions
- Pay attention to your own needs
- Communicate your needs to your supervisor

Knowing that a "buddy" is looking out for you, and you for your buddy, can help you feel a sense of solidarity with and connection to at least one other person in a work setting where hundreds of people are moving about...think of Alice in Wonderland "People come and go so quickly here". Even though you may "forget" to take your own break, chances are good you won't forget to tell your buddy it is time for his...and he is just as likely to do the same for you.

If at all possible, check in with your family/loved ones...you all will benefit from a brief contact so that they can be assured that you're doing okay and you can be assured that they are as well.

This is an important time to be self aware and assertive!! Ultimately, you are responsible to ensure your own well-being...you can't serve others at the POD if you are not first serving your own physical and psychological interests.



Self Care After the Event

- Defuse after each work shift at the POD
 - The POD may offer defusing sessions, if they do, take advantage of them
 - If you aren't able to take advantage of formal defusing sessions, talk informally with co-workers about your shared experiences
- Rest, nourish and pace yourself
- Expect and express ongoing feelings about the your experiences
- Use counseling assistance if you feel the need

Defusing sessions are extremely important because like most disaster work, working at a POD site is likely to be a combination of negative and positive experiences leaving you feeling and grappling with a combination of profound feelings.

Sharing your experience with others can help you to clarify these feelings and stay focused on your goal of helping others. Go even if you feel you have not been effected - often hearing other people talk about their experiences is helpful.

Eat well, rest well in the days following the event, maintain as normal a routine as possible but take several days to decompress.

You can also talk to families, friends and coworkers: Talk about your feelings as they arise in order to process what you have seen and done and be a good listener for others without taking on what others are feeling. Remember, it's often normal to want to talk about the experience but also normal for some not to want to hear about it.

If you begin to have difficulties over time which you believe are related to your experience working at the POD site, seek counseling assistance.



Behavioral Health Resources

- CTRP
 - www.ctrp.org
- DTAC
 - www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/dtac/
- SAMHSA
 - www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov
- FEMA
 - www.Fema.gov