COUNSELOR PERCEPTIONS OF POST-HURRICANE CRISIS COUNSELING COMPETENCE

Faculty Research Presentations
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ORDER OF PRESENTATION

- Objectives
- Conceptual Framework
- Summary of Research
- Discussion
- Questions and Answers
PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this exploratory study is:

1. to assess counselors’ readiness to serve survivors of disaster, and
2. recommend content for a multicultural mental health training model for counselors who are first-responders following natural disasters.
OBJECTIVES

- Identify triage methodology providers used for providing first response mental health service after hurricanes Katrina and Rita
- Determine the counselors’ perceptions of their competency
- Recommend content for a multicultural mental health training model for counselors who are first-responders following natural disasters
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Most counselors have received little training in crisis counseling.

There is a need for potential responders to have preparation in multicultural crisis counseling.
SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

Subjects
- 222 members of the American Counseling Association residing in the SE region of the United States
  - 74.1% Female, 25.9% Male
  - 79.7% Caucasian, 11.7% African American, 8.6% Other

Method
- Digital Survey
SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

- Data Analysis
  - Quantitative/Qualitative Mixed Method
    - SPSS Statistical Package
      - Descriptive Statistics
      - Correlation
    - Content Analysis
RESULTS

- Counselors perceive themselves as competent, regardless of age, gender, years of practice, years since completion of training, and ethnicity.

- Data do not support a significant correlation between the socio-cultural variables and perceptions of competency.
RESULTS

- Counselors Said: All crises are not the same.
  
  “Not all crisis counseling should be considered equal - counselors that were effective at Katrina may not have been effective with college students at Virginia Tech - crisis counselors should not be considered jack of all trades when it comes to population demographics and type of crisis.”

  “Flexibility is the key. I do not believe any one particular theory or style of counseling works with those impacted by disasters.”
RESULTS

Counselors Said:

- As a community based counselor in a clinic I see a varied population that often suffer long-term trauma symptoms. This work speaks to the benefit of early work for trauma victims after the trauma incident.

- Counseling services must be available to the survivors. Needs are not always immediate, vary by the individual and often end too soon. All counselors should have some training in this area BEFORE a crisis occurs.
LIMITATIONS ON FINDINGS

- The study’s participants represent geographic homogeneity
- Validity: sample too small to generalize
- May be differences between responders and nonresponders
IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Further research is planned with larger sample
- Low response rate; survey methodology will be assessed to determine if response rate will increase with mail vs. digital survey
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Thank You!