

## MOOC 1

### Learning Unit 6



### Chapter 3. Supporting the Staff Tips (ii)

#### **Supporting the Staff: Psychological impact on staff during emergencies**

- Emergency services personnel might become emotionally overwhelmed working in a traumatic situation, especially during complex disaster. Most common emotional reactions are shock, numb, guilt, helplessness, together with worries about colleagues and fear of future incidents
- The emotional impact can differ depending on the severity and the typology of the event. For example, anger is a more common feeling in human provoked disasters than in natural catastrophes. Identification with the victims or finding parallels with personal and/or family history, increases a sense of feeling traumatized
- In order to avoid exposure to further emotional burden, some personnel become detached from the traumatic situation. Exceeding humor and chatting with colleagues may be a sign of this avoiding behavior. Repetitiveness of media coverage of the incident might cause major emotional burden. Everyday life stressors and multiple different stressors might have a cumulative effect increasing distress at work
- Sometimes, working during disaster emergency might enhance compassion and emotional understanding of the other, and reintegrate appreciation of life. At a group level, a staff team might become more emotional bonded, cohesive, synergic and sympathetic between each other