



MOOC 2

Psych.E.In. MOOC 2

Unit 6

Good practice 3

Emergency Management after an Earthquake: The Case of Amatrice in Italy

Instructions for the students

The following case study can be used in your classroom to practice emergency management in a complex scenario.

Instructions for the students: Read the text, review the details of the case study, work in subgroups to answer the questions and prepare your management action plan for the plenary discussion.

You have 90 minutes:

- 15 minutes to read the paper.
- 10 minutes to see the video.
- 30 minutes to answer the questions individually or in subgroups.
- 35 minutes for plenary discussion.

Background Scenario Description

On 24th August 2016, a 6.0 magnitude earthquake hit the provinces of Rieti, Ascoli Piceno and Perugia, killing 299 people and leaving 388 people injured. This event came to be known as "the Amatrice earthquake".

For several months, earthquakes, avalanches and hydrogeological risk put a strain on national and local authorities.

Everyone in the community was affected by those events, losing at least a dear person or their home and personal belongings. The reactions of broken families were difficult to control.

The economic consequences for some families were devastating too, especially in the area around the town of Amatrice, where only few activities remained open. However, the population showed a strong attachment to their land and a great desire to start over.

Losing homes and personal belongings, plus having to move into substitute housing, generated temporary disorientation. The loss of important points of reference caused confusion and distress. This undermined any potential planning for the future and accompanied a sense of emptiness and anger about what happened.

You are contacted by Amatrice institutions after the earthquake as a psychological emergency facilitator, since local rescuers have operated non-stop for over 36 hours and the authorities decide to request for external help. You are the leader coordinator of a Voluntary Psychological Association operating in crisis events. Your Association specializes in providing frontline outreaching interventions and trauma-focused interventions to traumatized victims. Considering your competences, you could also be asked to support rescuers in order to prevent vicarious trauma.

Click on the link to watch the video for further details provided by dr. Giada Maslovaric,
Associazione per l'EMDR Italia facilitator

<https://youtu.be/m6xeJzoE-y4>

Methods, resources and obstacles:

The Association you lead has operated in crisis events for more than 20 years and includes psychologists and psychotherapists trained in trauma-focused interventions.

The psychological team is composed of a group of 15 psychologists and three psychiatrists trained in trauma-focused interventions.

Your Association is contacted by local authorities in order to help the population affected by the earthquake and to support local rescue teams in guaranteeing a more effective service to the population of Amatrice.

You have few resources available to support your team; the main concerns are about the lack of information and time, the limited budget, and the placement and management of the resources available.

Objectives:

The nature of the event makes it necessary to create a response plan based on reliable information and protocols. The intervention must be global and should include the management of activities focused on local victims' needs and the management of the teams that provide psychological assistance.

Your interventions have to concentrate on:

- External Coordination: coordinate your Association with other authorities involved in the emergency promoting multiagency coordination.
- Internal Coordination: assign roles and tasks to your team members according to their specific skills.
- External Communication: implement an external communication plan collaborating with other jurisdictions and agencies.
- Internal Communication: strengthen the dialogue between all levels of your agency and team using appropriate tools.
- Problem solving: define risks and hazards in order to manage short-term and long-term impacts of the crisis.
- Decision making: make necessary decisions in a situation where there is a lack of time and information.
- Leadership: set clear priorities and objectives for your team members, assign roles and tasks, define methods and tools to accomplish goals.
- Team building: provide professional guidance for a multi-professional team.
- Team caring: foster group cohesion and social support.

Answer the following questions:

External Coordination

- How would you develop the intervention plan? What would the targets of intervention be?

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- Which stakeholders would you involve?

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Internal Coordination

- Which type of intervention do you propose as the leading coordinator of your Agency?

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- Which role do you establish within your group? How do you reinforce roles and functions?

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External Communication

- How would you set up a network for medium to long-term referrals?

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- Which communication tools/methods would you use to communicate bad news?

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Internal Communication

- How would you develop a communication plan?

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- Which tools would you use to verify the reliability of the information?

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Problem Solving

- How would you manage the limited budget? And the lack of time and resources?

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- Where would you implement the intervention? What kind of setting would you use?

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Decision Making

- What critical issues might be revealed by a need analysis?

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- What factors must you consider when selecting an alternative? What are the key decision points?

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Leadership

- How can you protect, preserve and help team members cope with stress?

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- How would you welcome psychologists that come back from the field? What interventions would you activate to take care of your team?

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Team Building

- Which conflict management strategies can you use?

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- Which roles and tasks can you establish within your group?

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Team Caring

- In a situation that imposes levels of security that are not easy to maintain, what interventions can you consider for the support of your group?

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- How would you prepare the psychologists leaving for Amatrice to ensure continuity of work despite the shifts?

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