



MOOC 1 – Learning Unit 5

Chapter 5 - Methods

GOOD PRACTICES

Title: Good practices for intervention to parents in case of wildfires

This is a description of a disaster that occurred in Greece.

Disaster: massive wildfires of Peloponnese and Southern Evia, 2007. According to official data: 65 dead, 6.000 homeless, 147 burned villages, 1.500 burned houses, 1.710 buildings were completely destroyed, and 1.250 buildings were severely damaged. Also, 268.834 hectares of land and tens of thousands of animals were burnt, a huge ecological disaster.

The Association of Greek Psychologists (AGP) from the first moment cooperated voluntarily with the Greek Ministry of Health. The AGP intervened with a hot-line of psychological support for the victims of the fires. The hot-line was included in the Plan of the National Center for Health Operations of the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity.

Due to the massive nature of this disaster, many organizations (volunteers, NGO, etc.) have also provided help in different settings, and also in the community.



In this kind of situation, one of the most important matters is the need for support and information of the parents towards their attitude with children, who, in the aftermath of the disaster, are constantly exposed to images and narratives about the catastrophic event and become particularly vulnerable.

You, as a first-line psychologist, have to advise parents in order to guide them how to act with their children, in daily life in the aftermath of the disaster.

Some good practices are described below:

1. Reduction of children's exposure to pictures and stories about the event, through mass media, such as broadcast news: radio and television, internet: live news streaming, news blogs, news videos and online newspapers. Also, paper magazines and newspapers. Avoidance of detailed descriptions of the disaster in presence of the children.
2. Effort to avoid overwhelming them with your own feelings about the disaster.
3. Allow children to ask questions, in order to be aware of what they understand from what is happening, what they are afraid of and what their needs are. Answer only to what they ask you.
4. Promotion of information that will create a sense of safety: description of the assistance provided by national agencies, institutions, organisations, and efforts made by first responders and other rescuers for the people in the affected areas.
5. Maintenance of routine and daily routine, helping children feeling safe.

Further suggestions:

- *Wildfire Safety Tips | Save the Children*