

Psychological Response to Mass Casualty Disasters

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Loss of life and acts of Nature



- Blame impacted community
- “God’s Will”
- Warning promotes coping

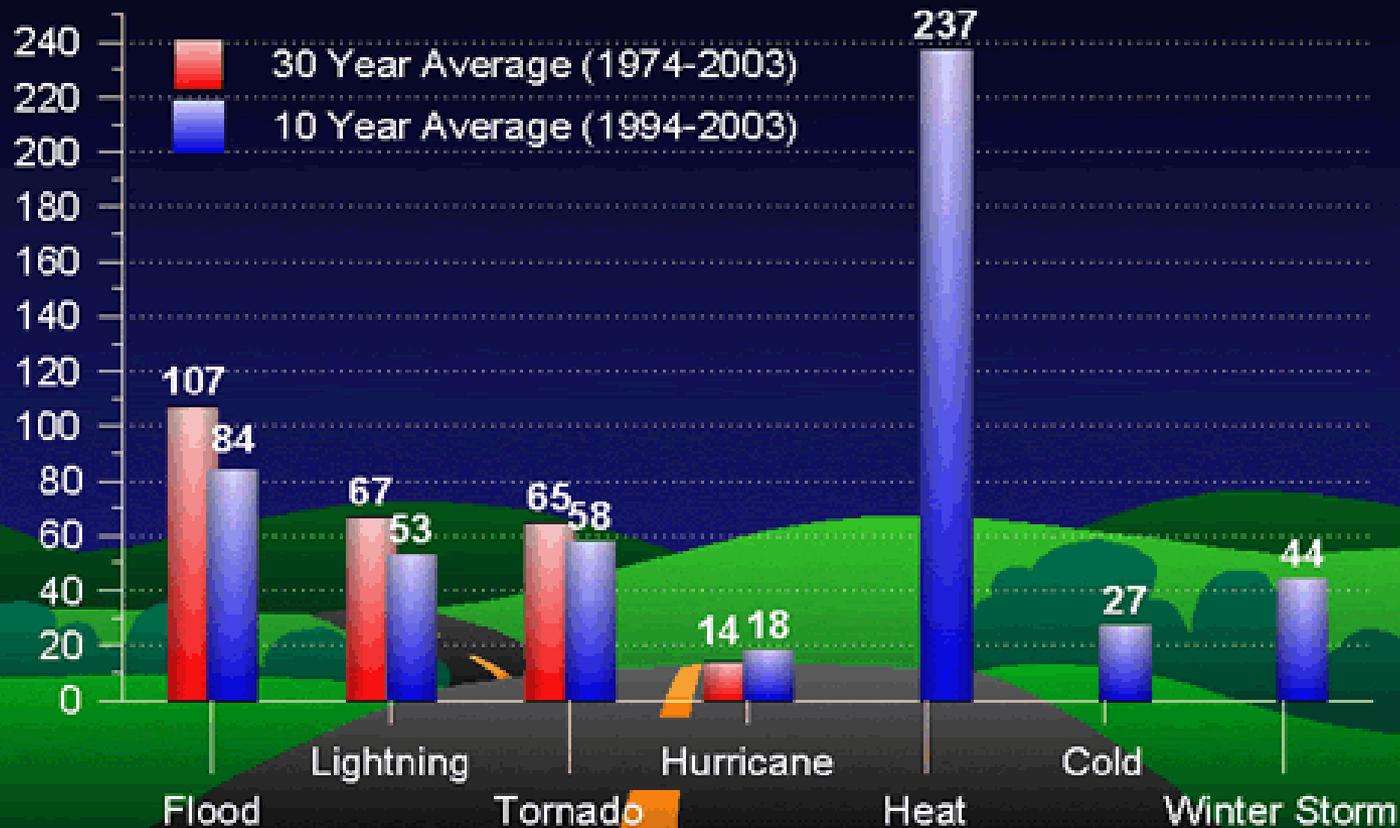
Warning provides reassurance

- Empirical correlation
- Specific action indicated
- Time-limited and seasonal





Weather Fatalities



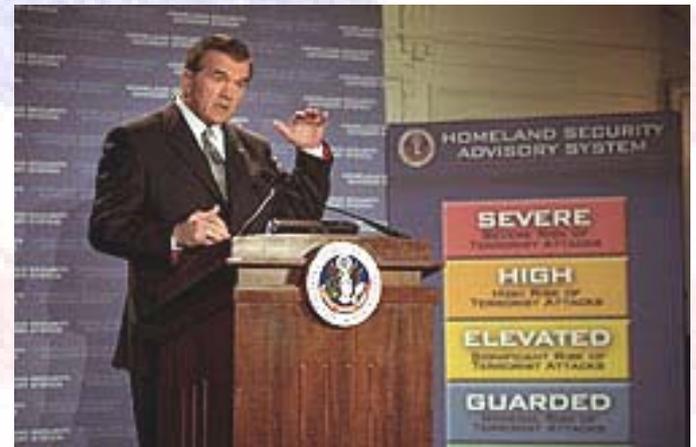
Loss of life and acts of man



- Blame individual(s)
 - Greed
 - Negligence
 - Terrorism
- Warning may increase anxiety

Warning increases apprehension

- Hard to discriminate levels
- Specific action not clear
- Reduction in threat not reassuring
- Current system will be retired in 2012



Phases of Recovery for the Impacted Community



Heroic Phase



- No mass panic
- Little regard for self-preservation

Phases of Recovery for the Impacted Community

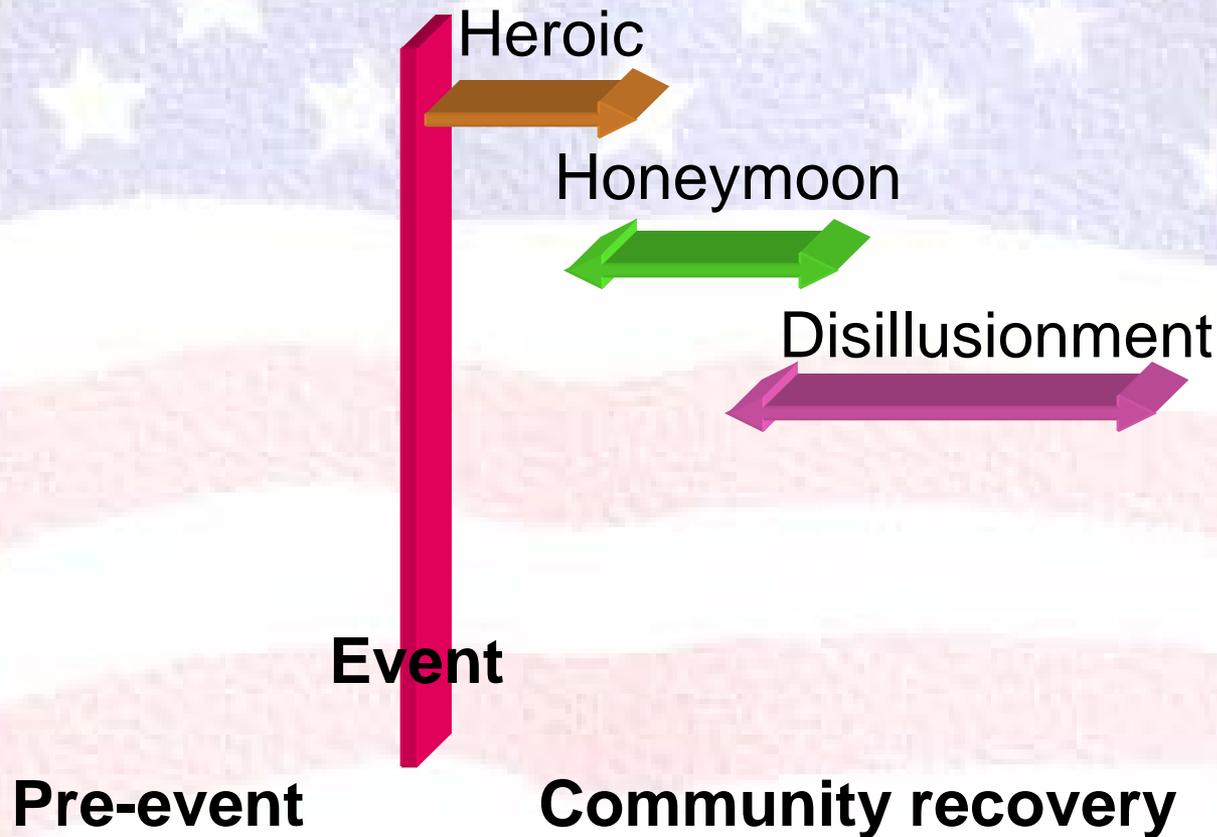


Honeymoon Phase

- Strong sense of community
- Tolerance of inconvenience



Phases of Recovery for the Impacted Community



Disillusionment Phase



- Community fragments
- Sense of entitlement
- Acting out

Phases of Recovery for the Impacted Community



Reconstruction Phase



- Community redefined
- Capacity enhanced
- Pockets of vulnerability

Phases of Response for Emergency Services Responders

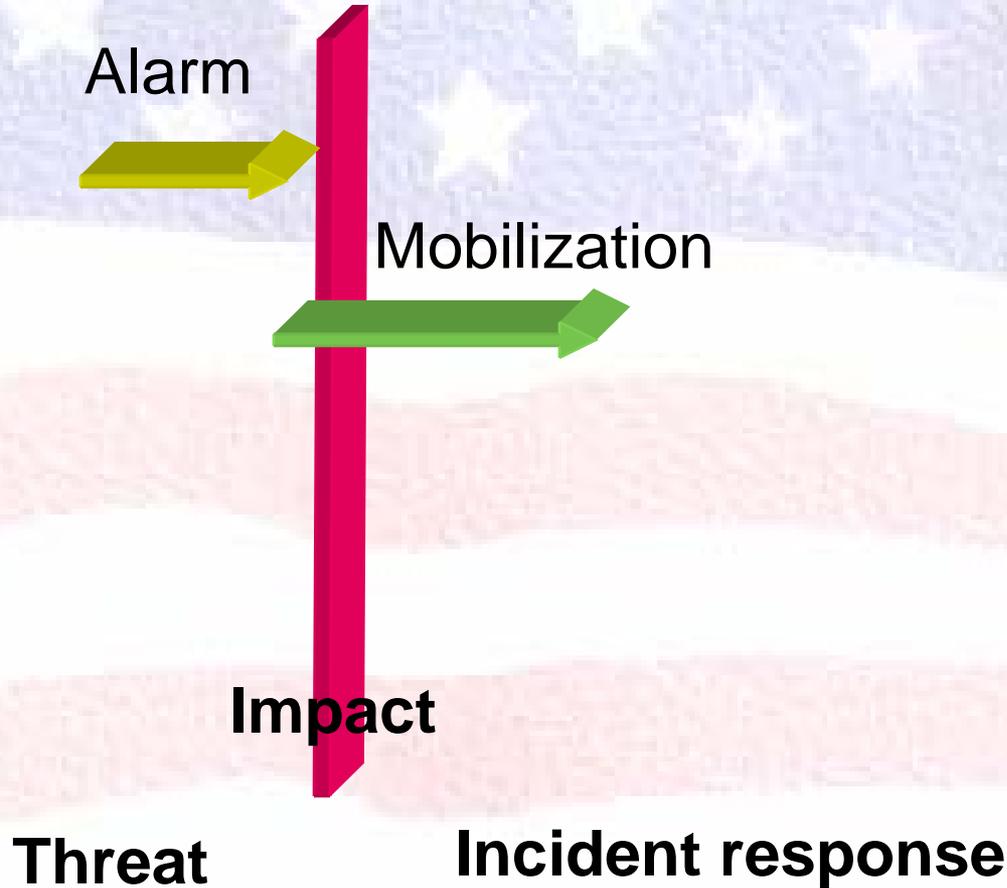


Alarm Phase



- Prepare for the worst and hope for the best
- “Hurry up and wait”

Phases of Response for Emergency Services Responders

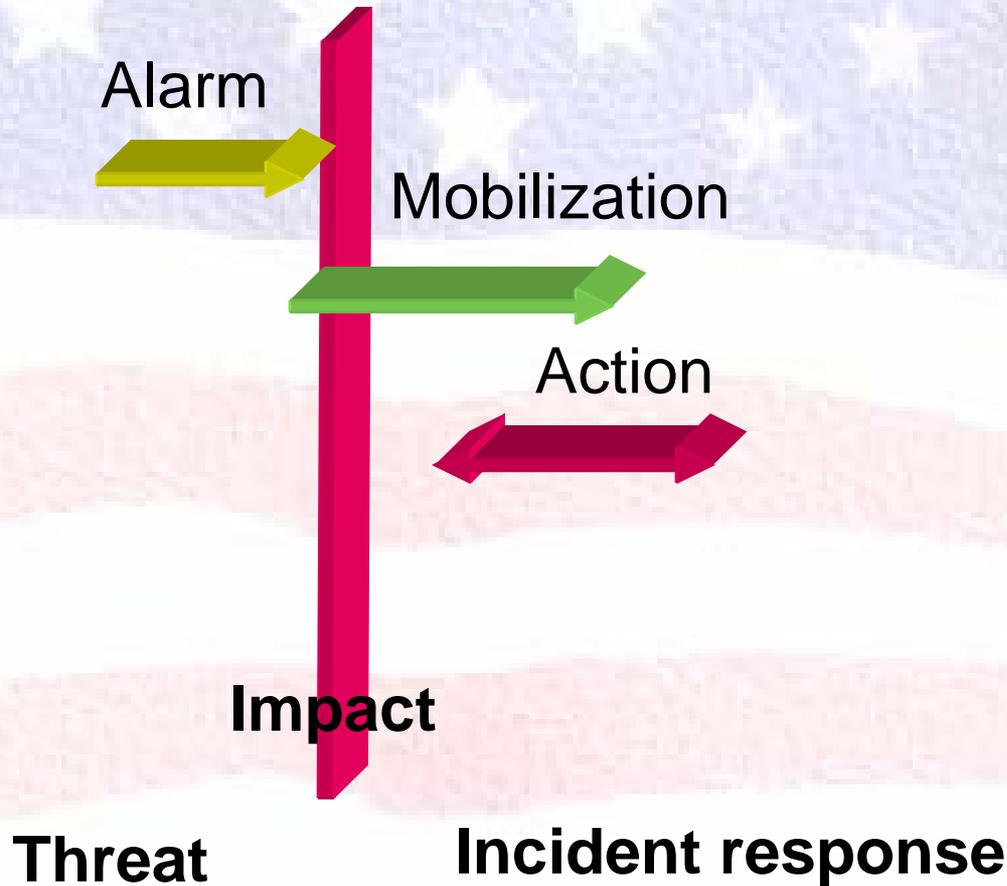


Mobilization Phase

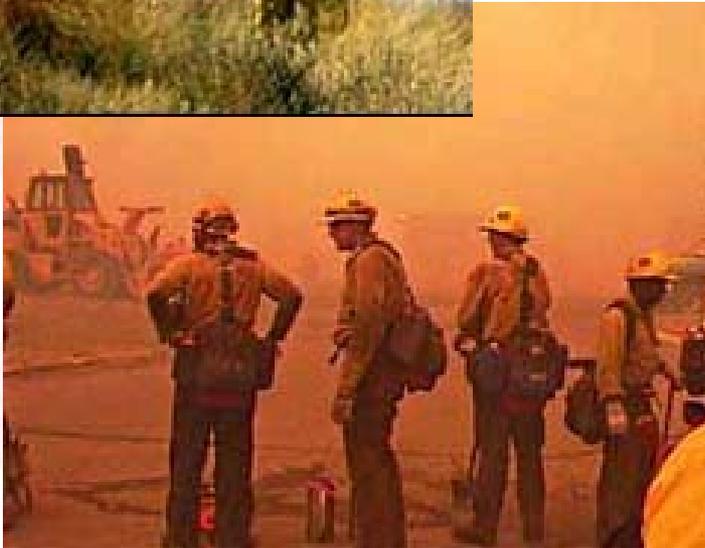


- Separation from familiar
- Anticipatory anxiety
- Self doubt

Phases of Response for Emergency Services Responders

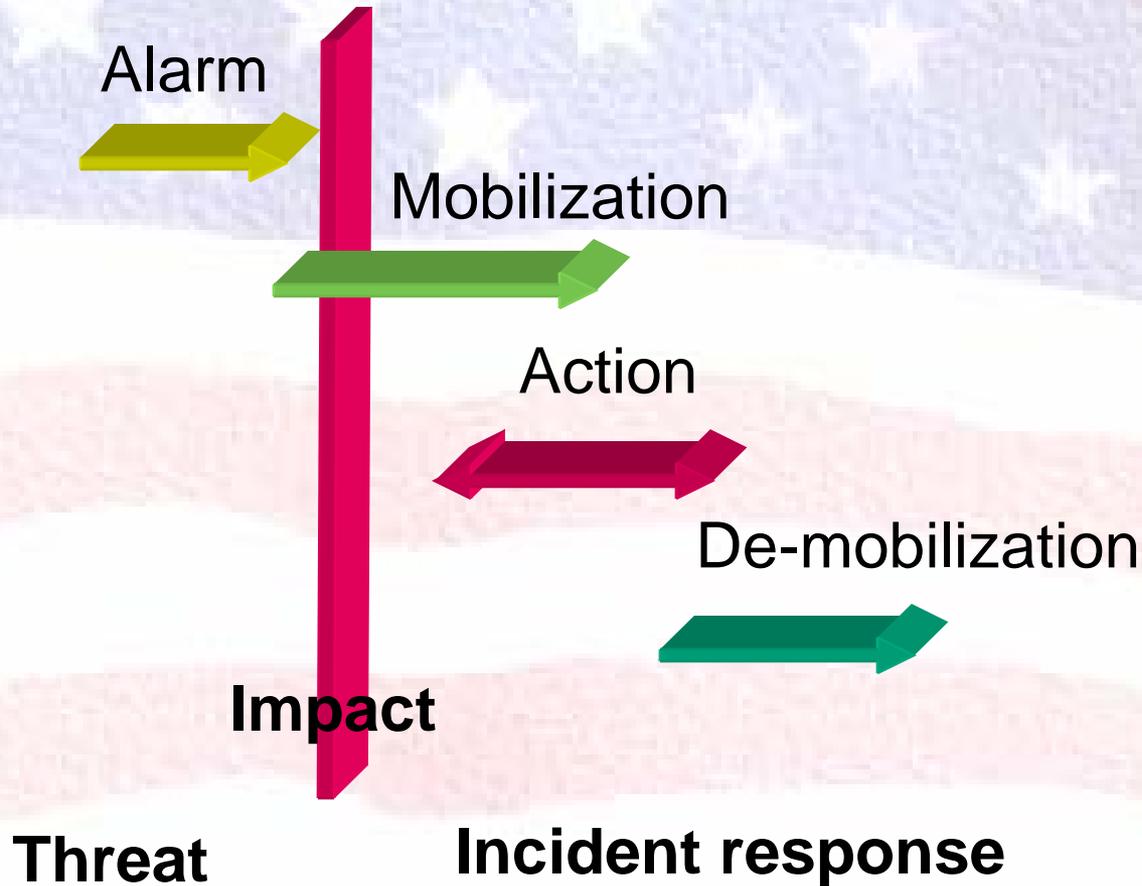


Action Phase



- Fear of:
 - Not doing the job came to do
 - Letting others down
 - Injury & death

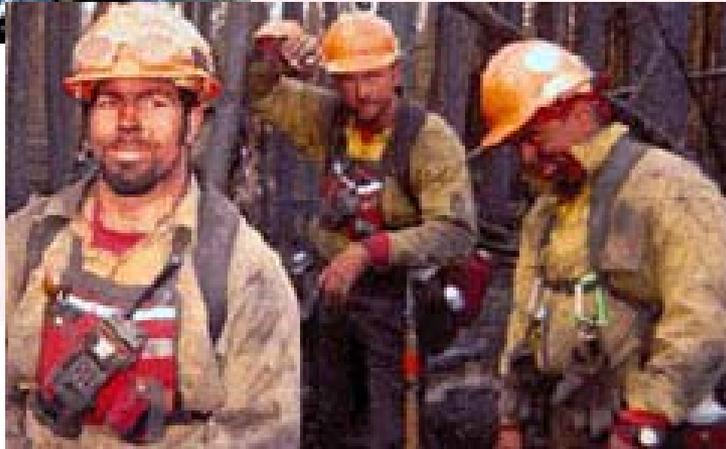
Phases of Response for Emergency Services Responders



Demobilization phase



- Reintegration issues
- Survivor guilt



Phases of Response/Recovery *compared*

Community



Responders



Psychological risk factors



- Physical proximity
- Emotional proximity
- Degree of relationship
- History of trauma/loss
- Co-morbid disabilities
- Socioeconomic resources

Gradient of impact of mass casualty incident



- Injured *
- Families of casualties
- First responders
- Special teams
- Relief volunteers
- Media
- Community

Psychological risk factors for responders



- Exposure to large loss of life
- Loss of children
- Death of first responders/peers

Psychological risk factors for responders (continued)



- Protracted recovery
- Unsuccessful recovery
- Intense media exposure
- Dangerous surroundings

Conclusions

- Warning provide comfort when they are tied to empirical collaboration and specific action
- Community response to disasters differ from the responders responses
- Responder demobilization is often during a low-point in the community recovery
- Proximity, however defined, is the greatest risk factor for psychological distress post disaster