



Release No. 20-08-19
August 18, 2020

Contact: Sarah Marshall, Office of
External Affairs

Disaster Behavioral Health Curriculum Guide Released
Includes a Special Resource Section on COVID-19

Bethesda, Md. – New guidance for use by behavioral health providers, policy makers and community leaders in the wake of disasters has just been released by the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.

The “Curriculum Recommendations for Disaster Health Professionals Disaster Behavioral Health (Second Edition)” was developed by USU’s National Center for Disaster Medicine and Public Health and Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress to provide a framework for future disaster behavioral health curricula. The document offers guidance for behavioral health providers and others seeking to better evaluate the impact of disasters on humans and to develop more positive outcomes. It also provides resources in the wake of disasters -- that range from hurricanes, earthquakes and other natural destructive events to mass shootings and civil unrest – that can have an adverse effect on individuals and local populations, especially in the area of mental health. The guide is divided into two sections: disaster behavioral health topics and disaster behavioral health resources, and provides a ready resource for information needed during a disaster response. It also includes a section devoted to COVID-19 resources.

“Most disaster behavioral health training received by health care professionals occurs outside of the traditional college or university after graduation. The intent of this document is to provide a framework for developing curricula with support in the form of verifiable resources,” said Dr. Thomas Kirsch, NCDMPH director.

In 2014, the two USU centers formulated an initial guidance document that offered a framework for future disaster behavioral health curricula. The document provided recommendations and resources for potential educational content to be included. Recently, the centers revised this guidance document, forming an August 2020 edition, which further leverages knowledge from specialists at both centers, who are experts in disasters and disaster-related events and behaviors.

“This newly revised August 2020 edition has been considerably enhanced with the addition of hyperlinks to free access material throughout, and includes an additional section with resources dedicated to the COVID-19 pandemic,” stated USPHS Capt. (Dr.) Joshua Morganstein, CSTS assistant director.

“Curriculum Recommendations for Disaster Health Professionals Disaster Behavioral Health (Second Edition)” is available at: <https://www.cstsonline.org/education-and-training/training-programs> and

<https://www.usuhs.edu/ncdmph/research-education/curriculum-recommendations/behavioral-health-curriculum>.

* * *

About the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences:

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, founded by an act of Congress in 1972, is the nation's federal health sciences university and the academic heart of the Military Health System. USU students are primarily active duty uniformed officers in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Public Health Service who receive specialized education in tropical and infectious diseases, TBI and PTSD, disaster response and humanitarian assistance, global health, and acute trauma care. USU also has graduate programs in oral biology, biomedical sciences and public health committed to excellence in research. The University's research program covers a wide range of areas important to both the military and public health. For more information about USU and its programs, visit www.usuhs.edu.

About USU's Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress

The Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences is uniquely positioned to respond to DoD mission-relevant activities and issues, as well as to educate regional and national stakeholders in government, industry, healthcare, public health, and academia on mitigating the effects of disaster and trauma in the civilian community to foster human continuity and community and national resilience. For more information, visit: www.cstsonline.org.

About USU's National Center for Disaster Medicine and Public Health

The National Center for Disaster Medicine and Public Health at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences was established under the Homeland Security Presidential Directive 21 (HSPD 21) to be "...an academic center of excellence in disaster medicine and public health..." The Center is a collaboration of five Federal agencies: Department of Defense, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Transportation, and Department of Veterans Affairs. The unique structure and position makes the Center especially suited to meet our nation's critical disaster preparedness mission. For more information, visit: www.usuhs.edu/ncdmph.