

IDRIM Virtual Workshop 2020

COVID-19 IMPACTS ON MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF 'CAREGIVERS': THE BRAZILIAN CHALLENGING CONTEXT

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IMPLICATIONS

Postdoctoral Studies in Geography Department, Northumbria University, UK (2019/2020)

Mental Health and Wellbeing of Disaster Responders

PhD Research – Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Psychology Institute (2011-2015)

*Socio-Environmental Vulnerabilities and Psychosocial Strategies
With Subjects in Situation of Environmental Disasters*

Psychomotor Therapist & Consultant (1999-2020)

OBJECTIVE

- To reflect on issues related to the mental health and wellbeing of Professionals and Volunteers working in extreme situations and disasters - '*caregivers*'
- COVID-19 Frontline Workers/Volunteers
- Psychosocial strategies/policies/actions as relevant preventative support
'caretakers' and *'caregivers'*

BACKGROUND - Brazil

- Emotional and physiological overload;
- Most of academic researches – focus on ‘caretakers’ support;
- Lack of methodologies/practical actions - mental health and wellbeing of ‘caregivers’;
- High stress levels, compassion fatigue and secondary trauma

Background - Brazil

- Impacts:
 - Beyond physical infection;
 - Social engagement at work and family;
 - Quality of work and self-care;
 - Material and immaterial vulnerabilities

Need of relevant public policies - physical and psycho-emotional protection

Material x Immaterial

- Contamination possibility; long working hours; lack of protection equipment; death of family members/working personnel
- Emotional pain; stigma; helplessness feelings; depression; anxiety; compassion fatigue

Disaster Context in Brazil

- Floods/Landslides (2008-2012) = 1.4 millions of homeless people in 1.543 districts and 27 cities (Rio de Janeiro state);
- **Mariana, 2015** = a burst dam released millions of tonnes of toxic mud and caused destruction across 500km from Minas Gerais state to Atlantic Ocean;
- **Brumadinho 2019** = the collapse of another dam, 65 dead, 280 missing (Minas Gerais state);
- COVID-19 – 4.627.780 confirmed cases, 139.065 deaths;
around 257.000 health professionals infected (ANS, 2020)
(Total population estimated at 210 million inhabitants in 2019)

Landslides/Floods Rio de Janeiro (2010-2012)



Mariana Dam Disaster (2015)



Brumadinho (Minas Gerais, 2019)

Dam Collapsed



COVID19 – Nurses Protest in Brasilia (May, 2020)



Disasters Context in Brazil

Multiple TRAUMAS – Daily uncertainties

EXCLUSION (risk areas)

DISSOCIATED subjects

Fragmented TERRITORY (material and immaterial);

**Trauma affects: biological, psychological, social, geographic,
cultural, social, cultural dimensions**

+

Cognitive functions/speech resources are reduced = survival?

EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH

- Social and Historical context influences the process of vulnerability

X

- Psychosocial support = Self-regulation = Environmental reorientation = inner/external resources = experience learned during crisis = resilience (Levine, 2012)

Challenges for Professionals

“Testifying any kind of human massacre, especially if we are dealing with it continuously, has its own price and is frequently as traumatic as experiencing it directly” (Peter Levine, 1999)

- Professional challenge = access his own resilience, while taking care of others;
- Work with his own coherence, territory and limits;
- Professional Emotional Support= early work for their self-regulation

Challenges for those working with Disasters:



Recognition of their own vulnerability + limits

Finding early support for dealing with traumatic situations (psychosocial first aids, resources);
Vicarious trauma/Compassion Fatigue; Potentiality as caregivers and Vulnerability as Humans

THANK YOU FOR THE ATTENTION!

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