

Creating a Disaster Preparedness Plan – An Example of the Basics

From the resource “The Disaster Timeline: A Church-Eye View.”

Our research on the phases of a disaster informs this action plan example:

RESCUE: The dam has burst, and the flooding is actively happening. People are being evacuated, and roads are impassable.

The disaster team members all have cell phone service. *Check in and begin mobilization plans.*

RELIEF: Two days have passed. The roads are passable, and people can access the church buildings. Electricity is on at the church, though it is still out in many parts of the area. The church buildings also have running water. News reports indicate that people are without electricity, gas and water. They can’t charge phones, get hot meals, take a hot shower, do laundry or clean their flood-damaged items.

The Disaster Committee is meeting and exploring these questions:

- In addition to those we know of, how do we determine the additional needs in our congregation and community?
- Based on the response assets we have already identified, what will we deploy to respond to these needs?

RECOVERY: It’s about three weeks after the disaster. Your team is meeting again to assess the church’s response and to anticipate next steps.

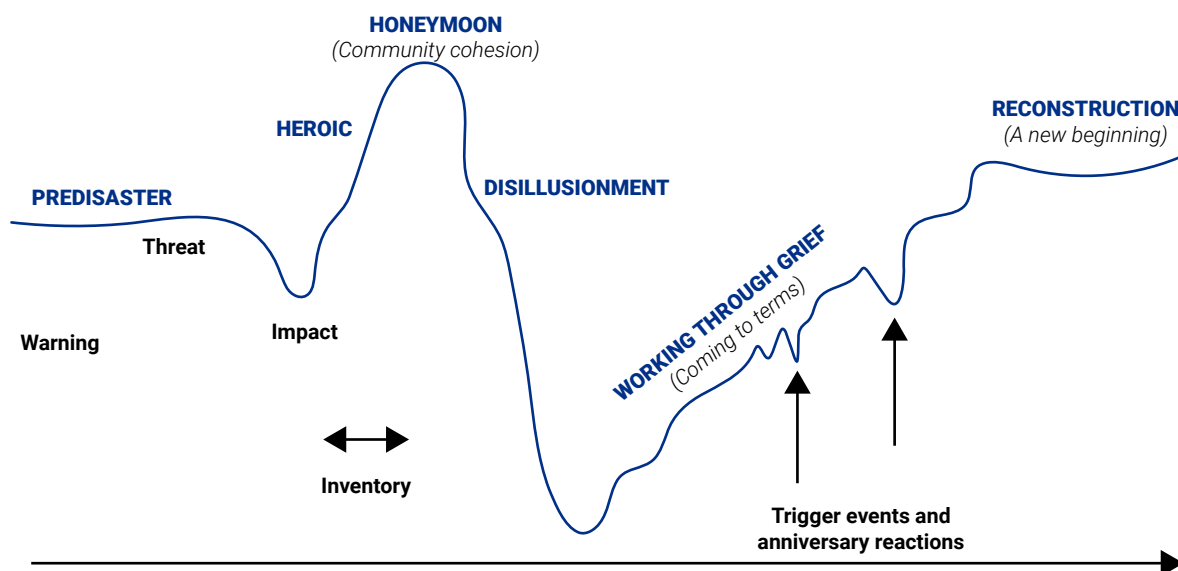
Your team meets to ask the questions again as the situation evolves:

- In addition to those we know, how do we determine the additional needs in our congregation and community?
- Based on the response assets we have already identified, what will we deploy to respond to these needs?

LONG-TERM RECOVERY: Three months have passed. You can tell that many people are tired of the stress and just want to move on. People in the hardest-hit parts of town are still in temporary housing. Families whose parents had to miss work are struggling financially to catch up. Families without a financial cushion are unable to pay bills, etc. Some people are having trouble with insurance companies. Some are on public assistance for the first time. Financial donations are waning, and the disaster is no longer in the national media.

**Your committee meets to evaluate what you've been doing and what you should be working on now.
Your team meets to ask the questions again as the situation evolves:**

- In addition to those we know, how do we determine the additional needs in our congregation and community?
- Based on the response assets we have already identified, what will we deploy to respond to these needs?



UNDERSTANDING THE DIAGRAM

Written by the Rev. Canon Carl Andrews and Archdeacon Russ Oechsel

Disasters take an emotional toll on each person to varying degrees, whether directly or indirectly affected. The journey is not always linear, and in fact, often, phases of the emotional life cycle of a disaster repeat or last longer than one might originally think. Immediately after the impact of an event, there are heroic efforts (rescues, etc.) during a period called the honeymoon phase. This is also a time of community cohesion. Normally, following this period, there is an emotional crash characterized by disillusionment and perhaps a feeling of abandonment. From that low place, one starts working through the grief, coupled with the difficulties of applying for benefits, filing insurance claims, etc.

When there are anniversaries or trigger events, such as a new storm, negative emotions return, often accompanied by another wave of hopelessness. The length of the cycle can take up to five years or more. Keep in mind the psychiatrist Elisabeth Kubler-Ross's five stages of grief (denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance) as this grief period superimposes itself onto the disillusionment stage as well. People may return to their low place for a time, then start climbing again to the new normal, defined as reconstruction, or a new beginning.

In the elongated emotional life cycle of a disaster, most appropriately associated with events such as pandemics, the honeymoon stage will peak earlier with some community cohesion or joint confusion caused by misunderstanding the pandemic or misinformation. The period of disillusionment and the time spent working through the grief stage become elongated. It can take months or longer, depending on the availability of treatments or vaccines, the ability to contain the spread and the mortality rate. The grief stage will likely be longer, with more depression and anger than with natural disasters. It could take 20-25 years to reach the reconstruction stage after a pandemic. An electronic version of this resource can be found on our website [here](#).



Demonstration of the resilient gardening techniques to have a good harvest in Sri Lanka, supported by the Anglican Diocese of Colombo and Episcopal Relief & Development.