



*"Making Work Safer, Healthier & More Productive"*

# Psychosocial Hazards and Disaster Resilience

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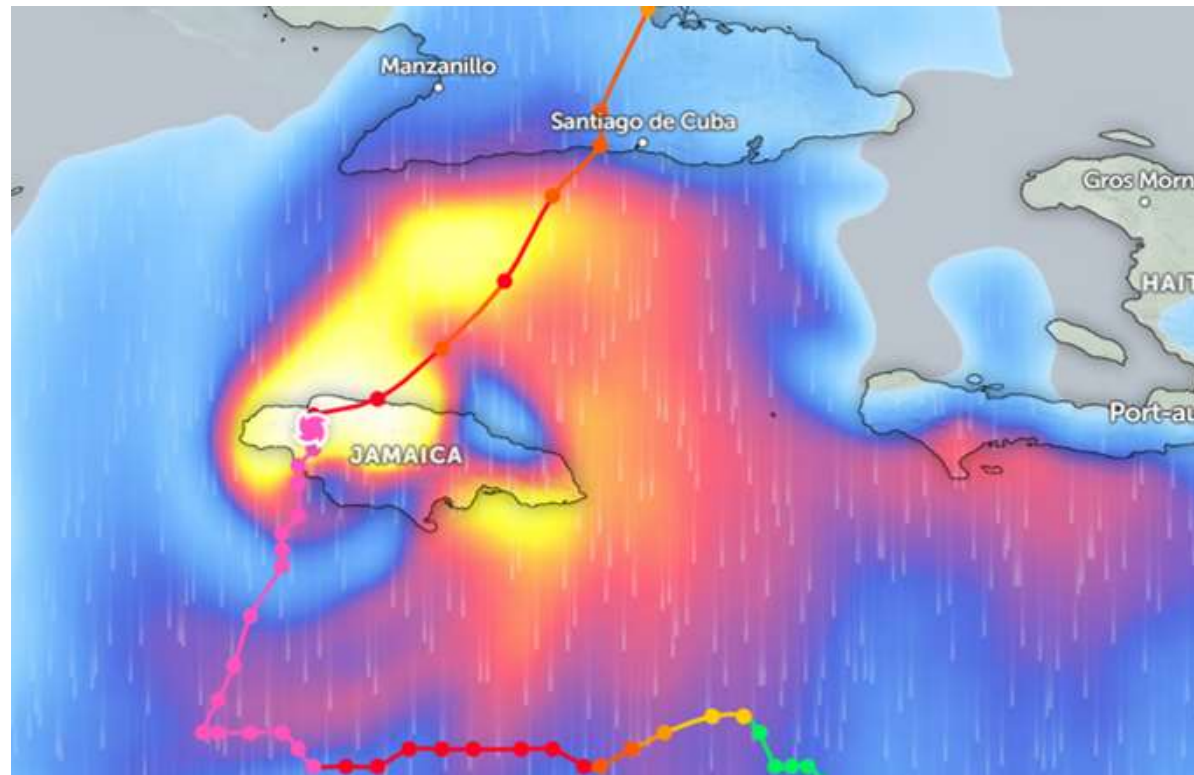
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# Jamaica and the wider Caribbean experience:

- Hurricanes
- Flooding
- Drought
- Landslides
- Earthquakes



# Path of Hurricane Melissa (Category 5)



[www.undp.org/jamaica/...impacts-hurricane-melissa](http://www.undp.org/jamaica/...impacts-hurricane-melissa)

# Melissa makes land fall

- Tuesday October 28, 2025
- First news
  - Black River devastated





# Aftermath of Melissa



November 2025

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# Aftermath of Melissa

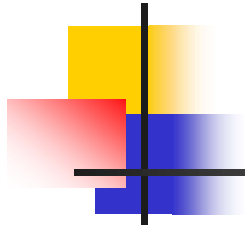


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# Psychosocial Hazard

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- Aspects of work, community life, or crisis environments that affect individuals' psychological and social well-being.
- In disaster contexts, these hazards
  - Increase stress
  - Impair coping mechanisms
  - Heighten long-term vulnerability.



# Psychosocial Hazards in Disasters

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- **Traumatic Exposure**

- Witnessing injury, death, destruction, or severe loss
- Experiencing life-threatening events such as hurricanes, earthquakes, fires, or floods

- **Loss and Grief**

- Loss of family, home, possessions, livelihood, or community structure
- Displacement or forced relocation





# Psychosocial Hazards in Disasters

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- **Uncertainty and Lack of Control**

- Not knowing when help will come
- Fear of aftershocks, additional storms, or secondary hazards

- **Social Disruption**

- Breakdown of family support systems.
- Community fragmentation and overcrowded shelters



# Psychosocial Hazards in Disasters

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- **Economic Stressors**
  - Job loss, income instability, rising expenses.
  - Limited access to essential services
- **Work-Related Psychosocial Stress (for responders)**
  - Exposure to repeated trauma
  - Long hours, exhaustion, low resources
  - “Helper fatigue” or burnout

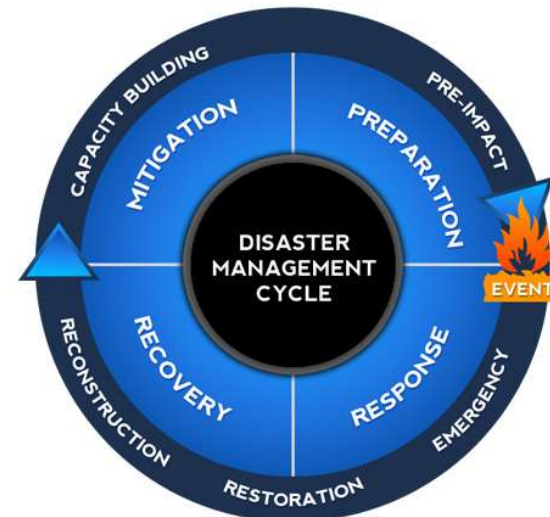
# Effects of Psychosocial Hazards



- Anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Sleep disorders, irritability, substance use
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Breakdown of social relationships
- Reduced productivity and coping capacity

# Disaster Resilience

- Ability of individuals, communities, and societies to withstand, adapt to, and recover from disasters
- Not just physical preparedness—**psychosocial strength** is equally critical





# Dimensions of Disaster Resilience

## ■ Psychological Resilience

- Capacity to manage stress, maintain hope, and recover emotionally
- Includes coping skills, optimism, and spiritual grounding

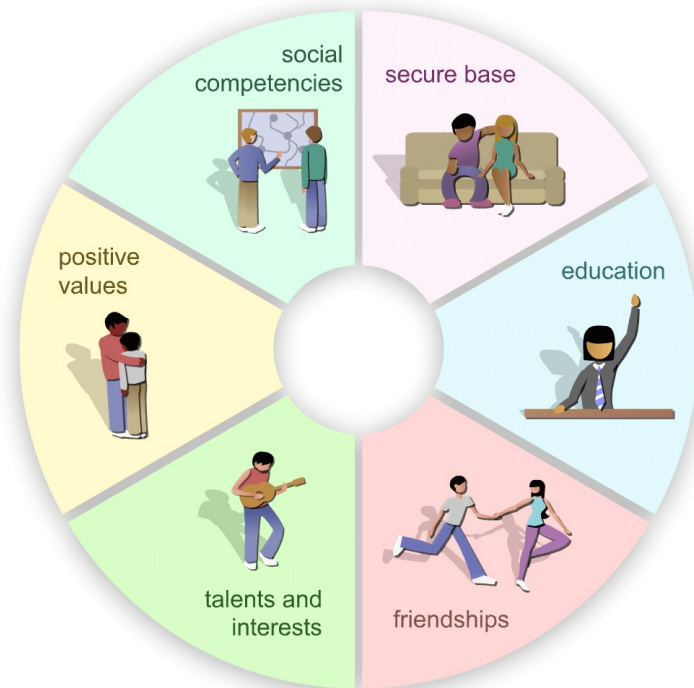


# Dimensions of Disaster Resilience

## ■ Social Resilience

- Strong networks of trust, cooperation, communication, and mutual aid
- Communities recover faster when social bonds are strong

## Assessing Resilience



# Dimensions of Disaster Resilience

## ■ Economic Resilience

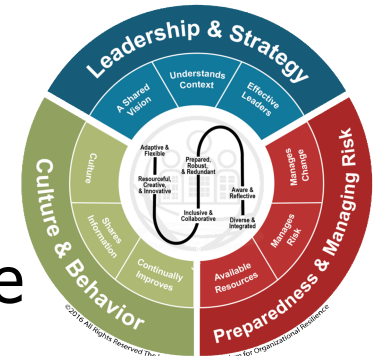
- Ability to absorb financial shocks, access resources, and rebuild livelihoods

## ■ Institutional Resilience

- Effective emergency systems, health services, governance, and leadership

## ■ Physical/Environmental Resilience

- Infrastructure, safe buildings, and preparedness strategies that reduce exposure to hazards



# Strategies for Strengthening Disaster Resilience



## ■ Individual-Level Strategies

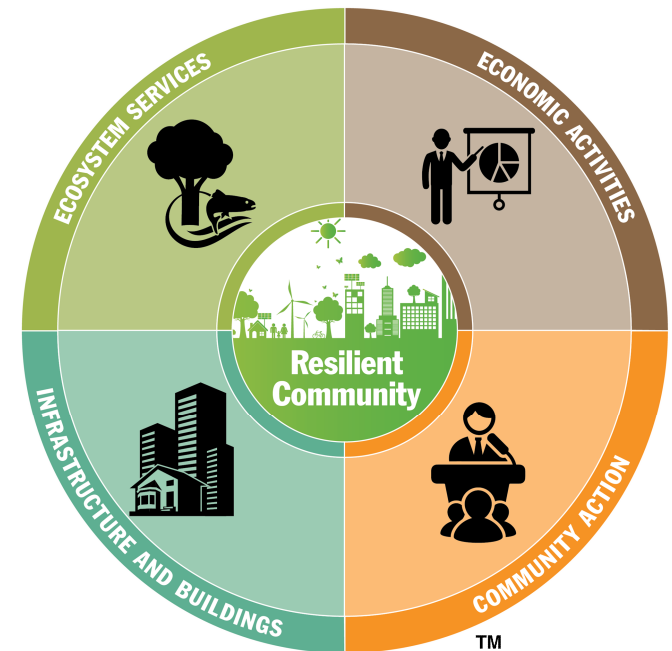
- Stress management and coping skills
- Mental health education
- Building spiritual or personal meaning systems
- Knowledge of hazards and preparedness training



# Strategies for Strengthening Disaster Resilience

## ■ Community-Level Strategies

- Strong communication channels
- Community emergency plans and drills
- Support groups and safe spaces
- Cultural and faith-based support networks





# Strategies for Strengthening Disaster Resilience

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- **Organizational and Government Strategies**
  - Integrating mental health into disaster response
  - Providing psychosocial first aid
  - Ensuring continuity of essential services
  - Training responders in trauma-informed care
  - Policies supporting vulnerable populations (children, elderly, disabled)

# Psychosocial First-Aid (PFA)

- Approach to support people in crisis by addressing their psychological and emotional needs in a way similar to physical first-aid for injuries.





# Psychosocial First-Aid (PFA)

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- Focuses on
  - Creating a sense of safety and calm
  - Making sure basic needs are met
  - Connecting people with social and community resources to build resilience and prevent further distress.
- **NOT THERAPY**, but a set of skills to help stabilize the situation and facilitate recovery in the immediate aftermath of a traumatic event or crisis



# PFA Strategy

- **LOOK** for
  - Information on what has happened and is happening
  - Who needs help
  - Safety and security risks
  - Physical injuries
  - Immediate basic and practical needs
  - Emotional reactions



# PFA Strategy

- **LISTEN** (refers to how the helper)
  - Approaches someone
  - Introduces oneself
  - Pays attention and listens actively
  - Accepts others' feelings
  - Calms the person in distress
  - Asks about needs and concerns
  - Helps the person(s) in distress find solutions to their immediate needs and problems



# PFA Strategy



- **LINK** is helping people
  - Access information
  - Connect with loved ones and social support
  - Tackle practical problems
  - Access services and other help

# Resilience Strengths in Jamaica



- **BLACK** in Jamaican Flag (original meaning)
  - *Hardship overcome and to be faced*
- Strong church and faith networks
- Community cohesion
- Music, culture, and shared identity
- National emergency systems (e.g., ODPEM)
- Growing mental health awareness
- Diaspora support





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# Conclusion

- Disaster resilience is a holistic, ongoing commitment to protecting human dignity, mental health, and organisational well-being.

- **TOGETHER WE CAN**





# Rebuilding Lives, Restoring Hope - [supportjamaica.gov.jm](https://supportjamaica.gov.jm)





# THE END



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## THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION



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