

RECOVERING FROM HURRICANE MELISSA



**Presenter: Robert C. Teelucksingh
Snr. Consultant/Director
Tee Luck Singh & Associates Ltd.**

Leading Through Crisis – Managing Post-Hurricane Stress & Trauma in the Workplace

Recognizing signs of PTSD, vicarious trauma, and burnout in managers and staff.



Introduction

- We are all aware of the statistics, as it relates to hurricane Melissa
- What I am going to do is discuss the stages of recovery, after impact, and how it relates to your organization and employees.



What is PTSD

- Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that develops in response to experiencing or witnessing a distressing event involving the threat of death or extreme bodily harm.
- Psychology Today

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder PTSD

- Natural Disasters as a Type of Trauma
- Natural disasters are one of the often overlooked, but psychologically (and physically, financially, socially) devastating types of trauma.

Elyssa Barbush Ph, Trauma & Hope

Symptoms of PTSD

- Bad Dreams or Reliving the event (flashbacks)
- Irritability (Emotional Outbursts)
- Problems Concentrating on (tasks or conversations)
- Avoidance (People / Socializing/ group activities)
- Hypervigilance (always on edge, over-reacting)
- Not wanting to discuss the event / always discussing the event
- Shared Anxiety

Recovery Plan

Risk Assessment:

- Evaluating the hazards potentially facing the organization
 - Lack of services (Supply Chain)
 - Inaccessibility – to Employees / Clients/ Facilities
 - Environmental Hazards
 - Information Systems

Recovery Plan

Business Impact:

- Assessing the risk in key organizational aspects such as:
- Finance
- Operations
- Business Reputation

Recovery Plan

Developing & Continuing Recovery Objectives:

- Conduct a business impact analysis, to identify time-sensitive or critical business functions, and processes and the resources that support them.
- Identify, document, and implement how to recover critical business functions and processes.
- Organize a business continuity team, and compile a business continuity plan to manage the business disruption.
- Conduct training for the business continuity team as well as testing and exercises to evaluate recovery strategies and the plan.

Recovery Plan

Building Communication and Notification Strategies

- Following a disaster in the community, it is in the best interest of the business, to communicate with all employees.
- Employee information, typically compiled in a human resource information system, includes home addresses and telephone numbers.
- Consider asking for additional information including home email addresses and cellular telephone numbers (for text messaging/SMS). Also, request the name and contact information of a family member or friend, who can be reached in an emergency.
- The confidentiality of this information should be protected and only be available to authorized users who are operating from their office, emergency operations center or alternate business facility.

Recovery Plan

Employee Assistance & Support

- Many employers have employee assistance plans (EAP) and providers.
- Services include access to professionals, who can assist employees to deal with the emotional impacts of a disaster.
- Employers can also arrange for services from professionals within the community.
- Reach out to public officials and mental health providers, within the community, to identify services that may be available to employees.

Employee Data Base

Get Information on:

- Current location, if living separately from family, as well as, their location
- Dependents / Children/ Parents/ Grandparents
- Special Needs –
 - Physically Challenged
 - Mentally Challenged
 - Home or Institutional Care
 - Support System – Family Members / Care Givers
 - Employee Demographics – Location

Recovery Plan

Roles & Responsibilities

- Designating people for specific tasks
- Specifying duties associated with each task
- Based on position or Skill sets
- **Exception**
 - Availability
 - Family Commitments
 - Location – Accessibility
 - PTSD (Current/ History)

Recovery Plan

Training

- Training is essential, to ensure that everyone knows what to do, when there is an emergency, or disruption of business operations.
- Everyone needs training to become familiar with protective actions for life safety (e.g., evacuation, shelter, shelter-in-place and lockdown).
- Sheltering and lockdown drills should also be conducted.
- Employees should receive training, to become familiar with safety, building security, information security and other loss prevention programs.

TEST & EXERCISES

Test & Exercises

- **Pointers:**
 - Train personnel; clarify roles and responsibilities
 - Reinforce knowledge of procedures, facilities, systems and equipment
 - Improve individual performance, as well as, organizational coordination and communication
 - Evaluate policies, plans, procedures and the knowledge and skills of team members
 - Reveal weaknesses and resource gaps
 - Comply with local laws, codes and regulations
 - Gain recognition for the emergency management and business continuity program

Strategies for coping with PTSD

- Avoid prolonged exposure to Impact Zone (TWEL)
- Limit the employee time in the Impact Zone (Monitor the Signs)
- Grounding Technique – Having a Object / Word/ Action/ as a coping mechanism
- Breathing Exercises – to help relax the body and mind to avoid hyperventilation
- Muscle Relaxation – Use various screeching techniques to relax your muscles
- Social Support – Have support groups or individuals to reassure the person of the situation and of necessary guidance.

Strategies for coping with PTSD

Trauma-informed Supervisors

- **Safety** – Ensure safety of the individual throughout the organization and access to PTSD services.
- **Trust** – Organizational policy and procedures should be transparent and always provide accurate and truthful information
- **Peer Support / Self Help** – Enable employees to feel valued, recognise their strengths, develop skills and innovative thinking.
- **Collaboration**- Ensure empowerment, a voice and choice, while working in collaboration with mutually agreed Goals.

Strategies for coping with PTSD

Self Care for Leaders

- Leaders dealing with trauma involves not just recognizing PTSD Symptoms in employees but in your selves. But recognizing it is not enough, you need to deal with it.
- **Set Boundaries** – Establish clear boundaries for your time and energy, to prevent being overwhelmed
- **Pace yourself** – Avoid overcommitting and create a daily schedule with reasonable time lines and objectives
- **Maintain a work life balance** – Make time for activities, outside of work, to help recharge and maintain perspective
- **Seek Professional help**

YOUR QUESTIONS





Robert C Teelucksingh (ARM)

Sr. Consultant / Director

Tee Luck Singh & Associates Limited

Occupational Safety And Health / Risk Management Services

St James, Port of Spain

Trinidad

1(868) 682-7233

robert@teelucksinghltd.com