

Social Work Response to the Emotional/Spiritual Care at Times of a Disaster

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Goals for today's discussion

- Over view of a disaster
 - Types of disaster
 - How Disaster Response is organized
- Social Work Roles
 - Original Event
 - Search and Rescue
 - Long Term Response
 - Community Response
- Emotional/spiritual Responses



Over View of a Disaster

Ellor, J. and Dolan, S. (2016) Lessons Learned from Disaster: Behavioral Health for Social Workers and Congregations, *Social Work and Christianity*, Vol. 43, No. 1, 103-126.



Disasters in the United States



Tornados
Hurricanes
Pandemic
Dirty Bombs
Earth Quakes
Major floods and fires



The Wall Street Journal, Thursday, January 14, 2010 Vol. CCLV # 11

Unknown (2005). Hurricane Katrina Disaster Pictures Retrieved January 23, 2009, 2009, from <http://www.funonthenet.in/content/view/166/31/>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/dirtybomb/>
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/photo_gallery/343362.stm



April 17, 2013, **West Texas** as seen from Dallas,
TX. 2.3 on the Richter Scale





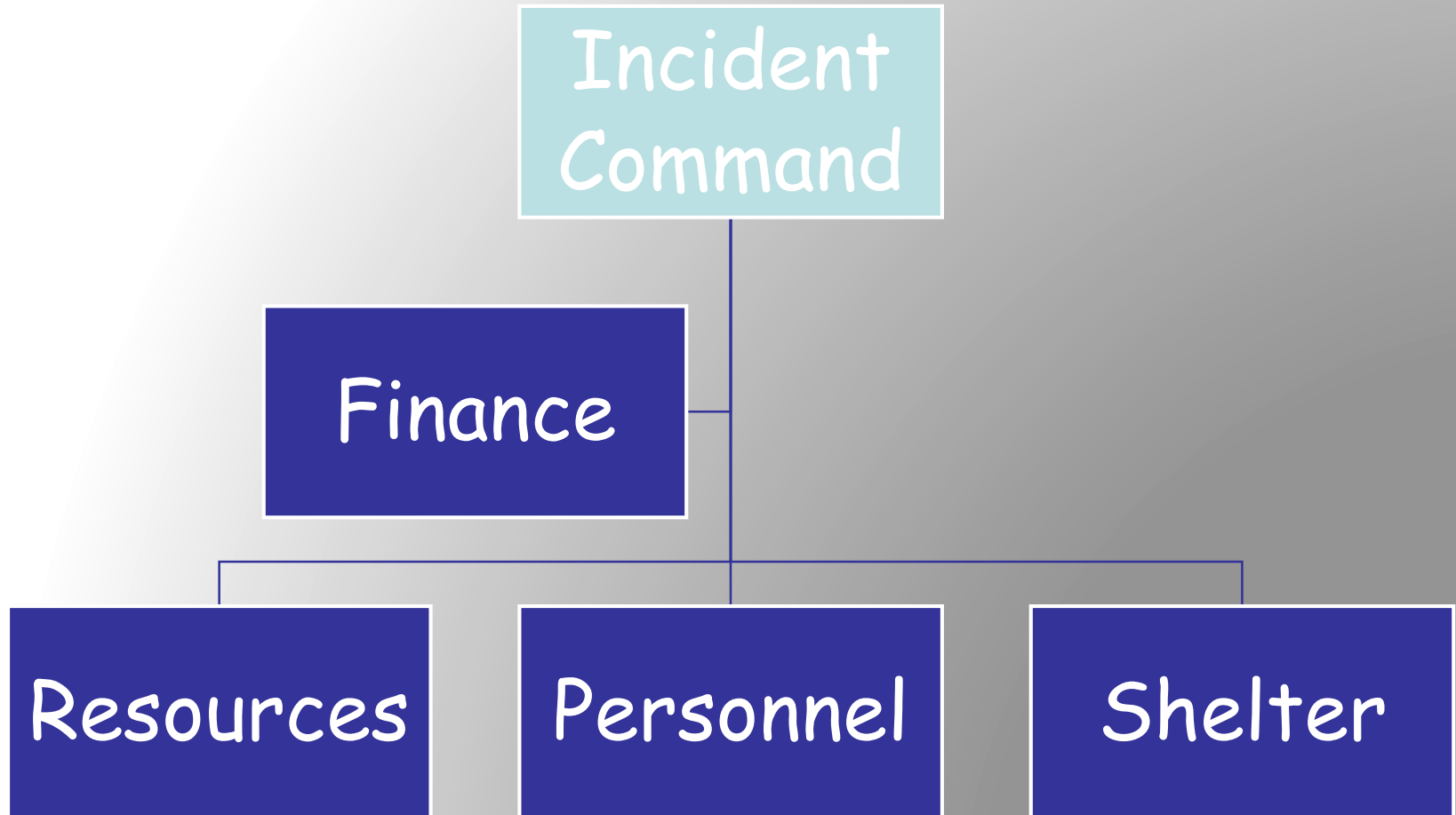
**All Disasters
are LOCAL**

National Incident Management System (NIMS)

- There are six (6) components included in NIMS:
- Command and Management.
- Preparedness.
- Resource Management.
- Communications and Information Management.
- Supporting Technologies.
- Ongoing Management and Maintenance.



NIMS Call Out

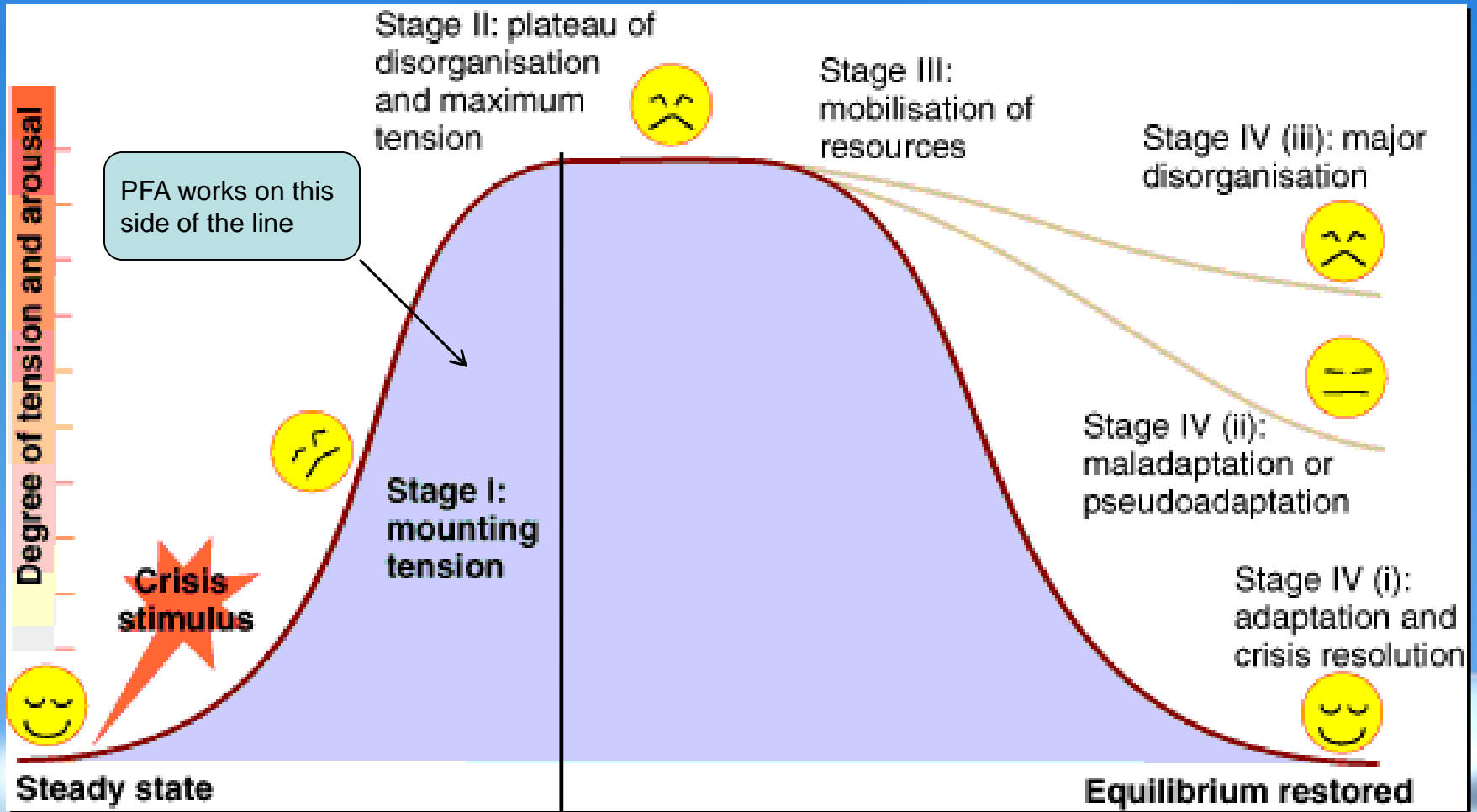


Emotional Challenges



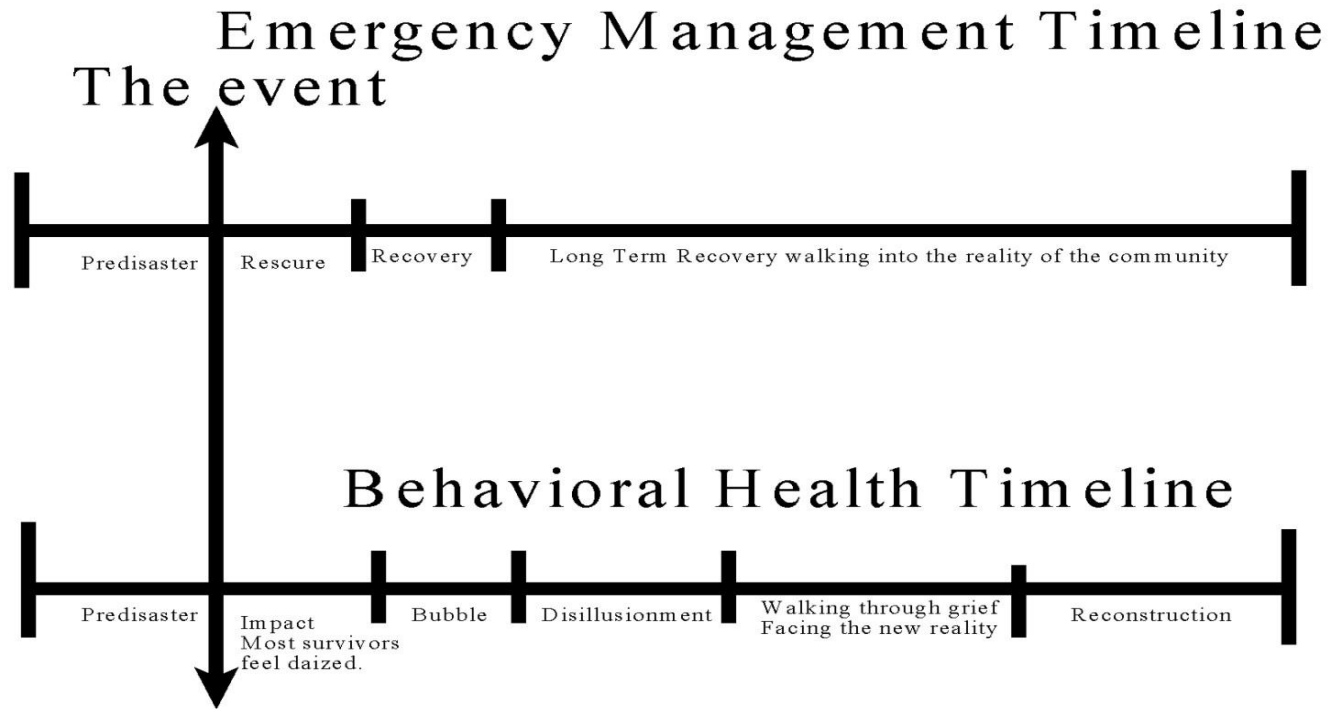
Adapted from: Ursano, R. J., Fullerton, C. S., Weisaeth, L., & Raphael, B. (2007). Individual and Community Responses to Disasters. In R. J. Ursano, C. S. Fullerton, L. Weisaeth & B. Raphael (Eds.), *Textbook of Disaster Psychiatry*. New York: Cambridge University Press. P.9

Stages of a Crisis



Rosen, A. (1997). Crisis management in the community. *The Medical Journal of Australia*, 167, 633-638.

ICS and Behavioral Health Timelines



3 Key Phases

- Original Event
- Search and Rescue
- Long Term Response

Original Event

- Small or large, each event is unique
- Each event requires different players
- Often the first to respond are
 - Police
 - Fire
 - EMS
 - Emergency Response Communications
- Average age of a first responder in Texas is 38, some what older in volunteer departments.



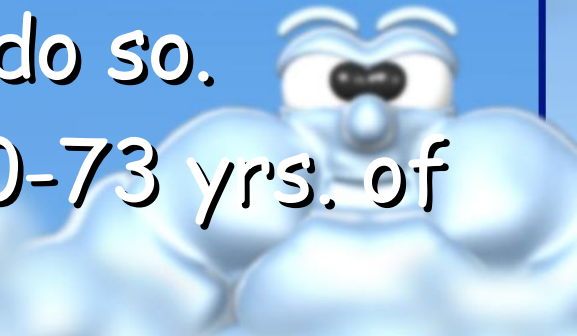
Search and Rescue

- Often involve the same players
- In larger events, can also include
- County and State assets
 - Volunteer groups include
 - CERT Teams
 - Fire Corp Team
 - Medical Reserve Corp. Teams



Long Term Response

- Most areas depend on volunteer groups almost exclusively
- Religious denominational teams
- Voluntary groups
- Red Cross and Salvation Army are often first to respond and may have a state contract or FEMA support to do so.
- Average age of a volunteer, 70-73 yrs. of age.



Social Work Roles

At times of a Disaster



Rule 1



Do NOT be an SUV



Join a Bus!



Original Event/Search and Recovery

- Join a CISM Team
 - Requires Critical Incident Stress Management training
- Join a PFA Team
 - Requires Psychological First Aid training
- Prepare Agencies and Churches to support
 - Their own members
 - To support the community
- Assist community safety efforts



Long Term Recovery

- Trauma and Grief Counseling
 - 1:1
 - Groups
- First Responder Counseling
- Community Organization
 - Community assets
 - Religious groups
- Long Term Recovery Leadership

Community Response

- Organize Recovery
 - Assessment of damages
 - Emotional/spiritual
 - Physical
 - Identification of Assets
 - Local
 - Out of area and national
 - Monitor withdrawal of First Responders replaced by volunteer agencies.



Organization of Emotional and Spiritual Response

- Offer "Just - in -time training to expand local assets for long term impact support.
- Identify and organize volunteers.
 - For clean up and other response.
 - For emotional/spiritual support
- Work with denominational leaders to map a theoretical support response

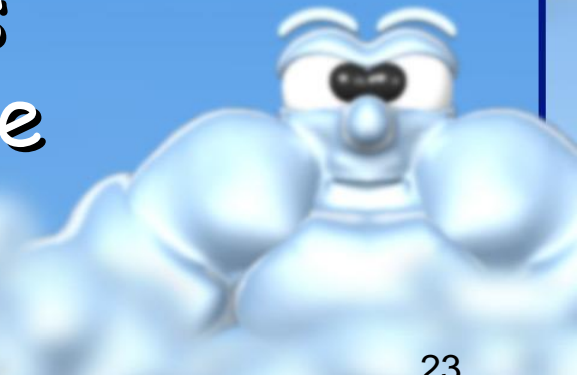


Emotional Spiritual Response



Scope of involvement

- Religion and Spirituality as coping mechanisms for stress
- The role of religious congregations for emotional recovery after a disaster
 - For individuals
 - For the community
- The role of national religious organizations as a part of the Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD)



NOTE

- VOAD Groups and Chaplaincy Ethics, along with the Baylor School of Social Work and Department of Psychology and Neuroscience agree:
 - There is NO place for proselyting during disaster response.
 - VOAD groups all sign a pledge that this will not happen or be initiated by their membership.
 - MRC is also in agreement with this as a governmental group.



Elephant in the room



The Whole Person

- ❖ Physical
- ❖ Social
- ❖ Emotional
- ❖ Spiritual
- ❖ Real issue isn't to identify the parts, it is to figure out how they come together



Each Dimension is in relationship with the others

- . Ellison³⁴⁷ notes, "The spiritual dimension does not exist in isolation from our psyche and soma, but provides an integrative force."

- Ellison, C. W. 1983. Spiritual Well-Being: Conceptualization and Measurement. *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 11 (4):332.



Connection Points

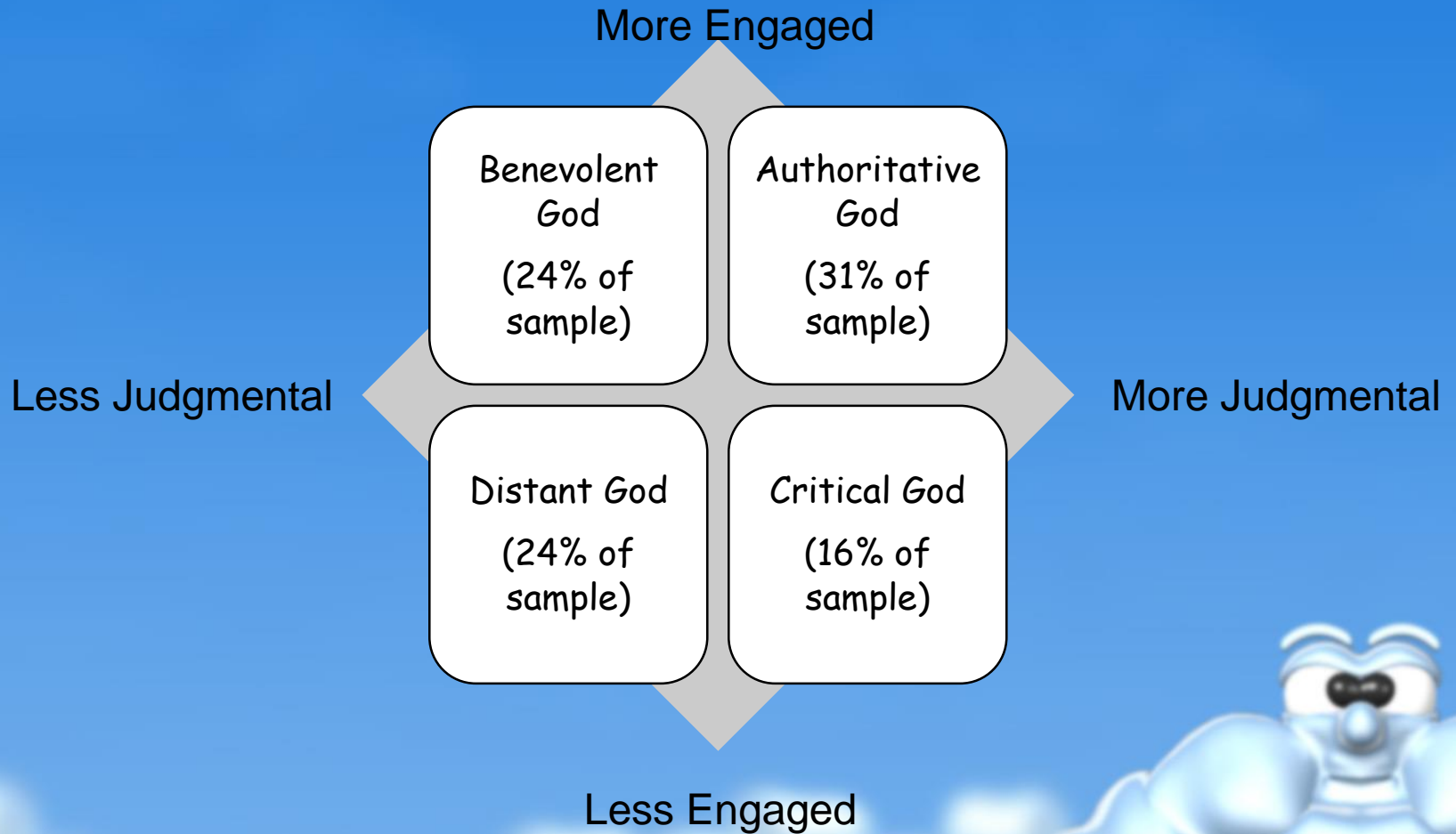
- Religion, Stress and Coping
- Impact on Optimism, and Hope
- On Depression and Anxiety
- Social Support
- Mortality
- Health Behaviors
- Religion and Immunity



Quilt



View of God



The Authoritative God

- "Americans who believe in a God who is both engaged in the world and judgmental
- "God is involved in World Affairs and can be quite wrathful."
- Believers in an Authoritative God are most likely to imagine God as a literal father- humanlike, make, and commanding in appearance.
- Have a strong conviction that God judges human behavior and sometimes acts on that judgment.
- God allows bad things to happen to those who displease him."

Benevolent God

- “Believers see God’s handiwork everywhere. But they are less likely to think that God judges and punishes human behavior.
- Rather God is mainly a force for good in the world and is less willing to condemn individuals. Whether sinners or saints, we are all free to call on the Benevolent God to answer our prayers in times of need.
- This is the “foot prints in the sand” image of God.”

The Critical God

- “God is highly judgmental but simultaneously disengaged with the world. It is the lack of earthly intervention that distinguishes the critical God from the authoritative God.
- Never the less, a critical God still observes the world with a judicious eye and sometimes views the current state of the world unfavorably.
- God’s displeasure will be felt in another life, but the divine justice will not be meted out in this world.”

Distant God

- "God may not be paying much attention to us mere mortals.
- Church attendance and prayer might be not only fruitless endeavors but also reflections of our own inflated self importance.
- A distant God does not require offerings or praise and does not respond directly to our personal wants or desires.
- God is however, a force for good in the world in general."
- This image of God is one whose work is largely as a creator, relying of the systems found in the world to sustain it.



Theodicy - Why do bad things happen to good people?

- Source: Unknown
 - Response: God did not create the pain, but is wading every step with you
- Source: God
 - Response: God's justice will cleanse and repair to bring us back to God
- Source: Natural Systems
 - Response: God set the systems of the world in motion, but they have been corrupted by humanity
- Source: God and humanity
 - "It happens" (Forest Gump)
 - All justice will level out after death



Four Reliable Aspects of Religion and Spirituality

- Prayer helps
- People use their beliefs in coping, particularly with tragedy
- Ritual as comfort in times of pain
- Community Support come from "Faith Based" Community Services



Connection Points

- Religion, Stress and Coping
- Impact on Optimism, and Hope
- On Depression and Anxiety
- Social Support
- Mortality
- Health Behaviors
- Religion and Immunity



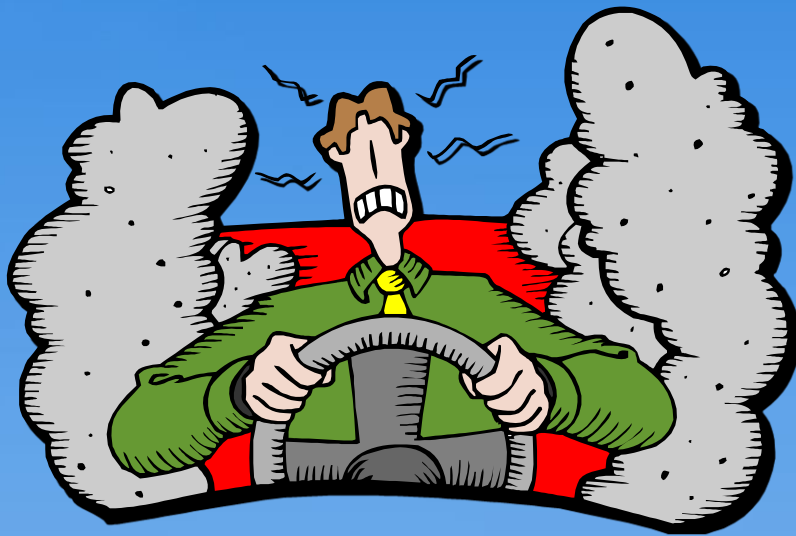
Coping Defined

- "Coping refers to efforts to master conditions of harm, threat, or challenge when a routine or automatic response is not readily available."

Menet, A. and R. S. Lazarus (1977). Stress and Coping: An Anthology. New York, Columbia University Press.



Coping



- Most common mechanism involving religion is reframing
- 3 natural Mechanisms
 - A system of beliefs & Mental attitudes
 - Increased social support
 - Focus on others (transcendence)



Coping Mechanisms

- Intellectualism/rationalization
- Symptom Conversion
- Planning
- Restraint
- Reframing
- Use of social support
- Acceptance
- Use of humor
- Denial: Keeping negative events from conscious awareness
- Sublimation: Aggressive impulses are diverted into prosocial behaviors
- Projection: Attributing to someone else one's own thoughts or feelings.
- Displacement: Deflecting feelings from their original target to someone else
- Reaction formation: Unacceptable wishes or impulses are transformed into their opposite



Mechanisms for Optimism & Hope

- Positive Hymns
- Positive Theologies pervasive within congregation
- Prayer in times of trouble (We are never alone)
- The concept of a loving, forgiving Devine partner in life



The Congregation

- Clergy play the role in the informal social service system as a "role related Helper.
- Churches are Informal gap filling services

• Eller, J. W., & Coates, R. B. (1986). Examining the Role of the Church and Aging. In M. Hendrickson (Ed.), *The Role of the Church in Aging*. Binghamton: The Haworth Press.



Social Support

- Congregational Care giving
- Congregational support for families
- Congregational Information and Referral
- Clergy most likely turned to in times of crisis



In the Community

- Churches provide many hands who care
- Churches can provide expertise from their congregation
- Churches can connect with their denominations for resources for the community



VOAD

- At the point of the disaster
 - Can provide spiritual care for at least their own members if not the community
 - Can provide shelter or places for events in their buildings
- Are a large part of long term recovery
 - Provide work groups from all over the country
 - Provide leadership and many hands to rebuild
 - Provide financial and other resources
 - In short, the VOAD groups are a large part of long term recovery

Thank you for the Gift of your time

Thank You

