

ADAPTATION OF A DISASTER MENTAL HEALTH PREPAREDNESS TRAINING MODEL FOR BLACK COMMUNITIES IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

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Providing timely and accessible mental health services in the immediate aftermath of disasters remains a major challenge in under-resourced minority communities. We postulated that in black communities, successful strategies would require training both clinical providers and community leaders to collaboratively plan for and deliver culturally responsive disaster mental health services. We aimed to: 1) adapt an evidence-based, disaster mental health training model for black community leaders and clinical providers in under-resourced areas at risk of natural disasters, and 2) evaluate a train-the-trainer (TTT) model for building culturally-appropriate local mental health response capacity. We developed a core curriculum package based on a training needs assessment and resource review and then culturally tailored audience-specific workshop materials after pilot testing in eastern North Carolina.

Pilot test participants included 13 community leaders and 10 clinical provider attending workshops facilitated by 3 mental health professionals. Evaluations indicated the workshop components were culturally relevant and post-test knowledge scores were generally higher among clinical providers. Process evaluation results have led to expanded content, a community planning session at 3 months, a refresher skills-building workshop at 6 months, training of trainers in facilitation skills, and tailoring of exercises to specific subpopulations. Field-testing with repeated outcome evaluation is underway in 8 culturally distinct coastal Carolina communities.

Local relevance is critical to training acceptability and recruitment requires significant input from local community stakeholders. Evaluation of collaborative community engagement efforts and outcome evaluation will allow us to determine if this model is scalable and effective for under-resourced black community settings.