

Feasibility of Disaster Mental Health Preparedness Training for Black Communities

Danielle J Laborde, PhD, MPH, BS; Kathryn Magruder, PhD, MPH; Joanne Caye, PhD; Theodore Parrish, PhD, MPH

Submitted to: Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness.

Objectives: To test the feasibility of developing evidence-based, mental health training to build capacity to respond to natural disasters in black communities and the adaptation of a TTT model for black community leaders and clinical providers in distressed areas at risk of natural disasters.

Methods: A core curriculum was developed based on a training needs assessment and resource review. Participants were recruited using network sampling in eastern North Carolina. The core curriculum was tested for usability, revised, and then pilot-tested among five mental health providers. Three were trained to lead one-day workshops tailored for black community leaders and clinical providers. Process data were collected and workshop participants completed post-training knowledge tests, evaluation forms, and debriefing focus groups.

Results: Ten providers and 13 community leaders pilot-tested the training. Post-test knowledge scores were generally higher among clinical providers. Perceived effectiveness of training was higher among CBO leaders than clinical providers. Evaluations indicated the workshop components were culturally relevant and well-received by all participants. We identified ways to facilitate recruitment, provide optional e-learning, evaluate effectiveness, and extend trainer support in future field trials.

Conclusion: The curriculum and TTT model provide culturally-competent disaster mental health preparedness training for black communities.