



MHPSS Bulletin

November-December

A bulletin to connect people, networks, and organizations across British Columbia, fostering the sharing of resources and building knowledge in the field of mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings. Past issues of the bulletin and recordings of Lunch and Learn webinars will be available on our website using the button below.

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Education & Learning Opportunities

New! Public Online Course (Free) by Provincial Psychosocial Services

- [Eco-Anxiety and Climate Distress](#): Learn about ecological/ environmental stress and distress, how it affects you and your community
- [Getting Through Tough Days](#): Learn about how stress affects you and practical ways that can help you get through those particularly tough days.

All courses and trainings listed in this Bulletin are voluntary and intended to provide additional learning opportunities. They do not replace or fulfill any mandatory training

requirements set by an organization.

Lunch and Learn Webinar

November 19 at Noon-1pm

Raymond Lafond: Social Work Consultant, Health Canada Emergency Services

Raymond Lafond spent 20 years as a Social Work Consultant for Health Canada's Emergency Services Division. Raymond specializes in researching and writing comprehensive disaster psychosocial response guides and plans, training psychosocial responders and providing response strategies when disasters strike.

Over his career, he has delivered on-site consultation, support and training to psychosocial teams in the following disasters and traumatic events: the Barrie and Southwestern Ontario Tornadoes (1985), the Perth-Andover Floods (1987, 1993), the St-Basile-le-Grand PCB Fire (1988), the Dryden Air Crash (1989), the Essex County Flood (1989), the Hagersville Tire Fire (1990), the Mohawk Crisis (1990), the Gakhal Family Massacre (1996), the Great Ice Storm of 1998, the Swiss Air Crash (1998), the Eastern Ontario Tornadoes (2019) and the Covid-19 response for the City of Ottawa.

In 1999, he organized, coordinated, and managed the delivery of psychosocial services to the 10,000 Kosovar Refugees accommodated at 7 Reception Sites in Ontario, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. Raymond will present an overview of the history of psychosocial services in Canada, sharing personal experiences and key lessons learned.

Please register in advance but feel free to share the invitation. This session will be recorded and sent out to registrants as well as hosted on our [website's education page](#) which also contains past bulletins and past Lunch and Learn recordings.

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/ba6a44b7-8d0b-4c75-a4a3-16ab583ef483@31f660a5-192a-4db3-92ba-ca424f1b259e>

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Email Nikki to get added directly to the distribution list for all future webinar invitations edu.pps@phsa.ca

Engaging and Useful Links to Explore

Resources in British Columbia

- Check out the recently released [British Columbia Disaster and Climate Risk and Resilience Assessment \(DCRRA\)](#). The DCRRA is accompanied by an explanatory story map, summary for policymakers, executive summary and overview, as well as the interactive B.C. Hazard Insights Tool.
- This is an excellent research and literature resource. Access to the articles is not necessarily free but it does provide an excellent overview of the breath of available research. [Natural Hazards Center](#) || [Hazards and Disaster Journals](#)
- Check out upcoming and past webinars hosted by the **Mental Health and Climate Change Alliance (MHCCA)** at <https://mhcca.ca/webinars> . The site also includes a range of helpful resources including insightful publications <https://mhcca.ca/publications>

Abstract: The Role of Community Connection in the Practice of Trauma-informed Emergency Management

We would like to thank Dr. Kati Corlew for the October 29 Lunch and Learn. Below is the abstract for her paper. The paper in its entirety can be read by [clicking here](#).

Trauma-informed practice in emergency management can aid professionals in addressing inequity and building trusting relationships with vulnerable and marginalized communities. As the field of emergency management begins to utilize principles of trauma-informed practice used by adjacent fields, it is useful to explore the benefits of cultivating a strong and positive psychological sense of community (PSOC) with engaged community partners, particularly those who have past experience with structural or systemic inequity, prejudice, and/or discrimination. Crafting trauma-

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informed policies and activities at every point in the emergency management cycle, practiced in active collaboration with community members, will help build a trusted community connection that can lead to smoother response and recovery efforts with communities that have historically struggled with equitable access.

This paper reviews the elements of a strong, positive PSOC and principles of trauma-informed practice as they can be applied by emergency managers. These principles can further be applied to internal agency policies to support emergency managers who may themselves also experience trauma or burnout in the course of their careers.

Key words: inequity, marginalization, vulnerability, emergency management cycle, trauma, trauma-informed practice

- [Link to recorded presentation](#)
- [Link to slides](#)

Social Sector Activation Guide: Working Together in an Emergency

Author: Kristi Rintoul, United Way

As climate-related disasters such as wildfires and floods become increasingly common in British Columbia, communities continue to demonstrate their strength and resilience through collective action. The [Social Sector Activation Guide](#), developed by United Way British Columbia (UWBC) in collaboration with local partners, offers a framework to better coordinate non-profit agencies, Indigenous organizations, and government sectors during emergency events. The goal is clear: to enhance the collective community response by ensuring localized, wrap-around supports for evacuees and those returning home.

Since 2017, UWBC has been on the ground supporting communities affected by climate and social disasters. Through this work, one lesson stands out—the local social sector is an untapped asset in emergency response. Those working in charities, outreach, and frontline social services are naturally inclined to help, but without clear systems and coordination, that goodwill can unintentionally add to the chaos of a crisis. The Social

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Sector Activation Guide addresses this challenge by providing a simple three-step tool to help communities plan ahead so the social sector can mobilize effectively alongside emergency services when disaster strikes.

When a community is evacuated, nearby host communities play a critical role in offering shelter, food, and other immediate supports through Emergency Support Services (ESS). However, not all needs end at food and shelter. Many evacuees arrive carrying emotional distress, cultural considerations, or health concerns that require more than basic assistance. The Social Sector Activation Guide helps communities prepare to meet these psychosocial and mental health needs, drawing on local assets such as Indigenous wellness teams, mental health providers, and community agencies to deliver compassionate, inclusive, and culturally informed care.

By strengthening collaboration between emergency services, health authorities, and social sector partners, the Social Sector Activation Guide helps build more connected, resilient communities. It ensures that when emergencies occur, responders are not working in isolation but as part of an integrated network—one that recognizes the full humanity of evacuees and supports their recovery on every level: physical, emotional, and social.

For additional information and inquiries related to the Social Sector Activation Guide, please contact Kristi Rintoul, Director of Community Impact & Investment, United Way British Columbia at kristir@uwbc.ca.

Definitions

Psychosocial: The term 'psychosocial' refers to the dynamic relationship between the psychological dimension of a person and the social dimension of a person. The *psychological* dimension includes the internal, emotional and thought processes, feelings and reactions, and the *social* dimension includes relationships, family and community network, social values and cultural practices. 'Psychosocial support' refers to the actions that address both psychological and social needs of individuals, families and communities. (Psychosocial interventions. A Handbook, page 25.)

The title "MHPSS" in this bulletin refers to a broad approach to mental health and psychosocial support in emergencies. It does not signify the endorsement or inclusion

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of specific services or organizations.

Provincial Psychosocial Services

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