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Function instead of feeling?! VIOS - cognitive model of psychological assistance at times of disaster and emergency

The purpose of this workshop is to present a working model that helps the therapist to provide a fast and focused psychological first help to the citizen at the scene of disaster and emergency. In the recent years, I found myself working in an increasingly dangerous environment, taking quick decisions and detect necessary actions for the patient in the field, and often place myself in actual danger, or mentally and physically. My desire to work in the heat of disaster occurrence encourages me to try many tools that have helped me at the therapeutic level; some tools were adopted and some of them were built by the needs on the field. I based this model on my experience and my work in Israel - with security and civil institutions, Liberia - working with mental health and social workers after the Ebola crisis and civil war and Ecuador by working with citizens, therapists and security institutions after the earthquake. As a therapist specializing in grief and bereavement which operates mainly on the cognitive approach, I felt confident to reach the surface and take action. And then I realized that I should adapt the tools to the rapid rhythm and changing realities on the field. Therefore, I decided to build a formula of tools that will help the therapist in the field and maximize the opportunity (sometimes is unique) to assist people affected by the disaster. I found that a combination of several steps can make a difference for the patient to cope the new reality which includes: 1) Ventilation: exploring the traumatic event. 2) Information: get focused on the narrative and find a way to organize the information. 3) Organization: reorganization of the trauma and build a new i.e. re-conceptualize. 4) Self-care: search for an initial solution and creating a toolbox for coping and adaptation the new reality. In conclusion, emergencies and disasters happen suddenly. They invite the patient to readjust to the new unwanted and forced reality. On the other hand, they invite and challenge the therapist to address the problem targeted in a rapid way to help, adjust and normalize this new reality. In my view, this model may help bridge that gap.



Biography

Einat kaufman is an Cognitive Psychotherapist, expert in trauma, grief and bereavement (Master in psychology, Psy candidates in psychology). She works in a private clinic as a therapist and a counselling to security forces at the government of Israel. Take part in several missions as first aid psychosocial all over the world after disasters.

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