



**St John**

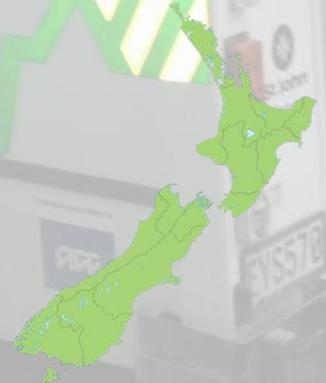
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# The Christchurch Quake

Psychosocial support

*A paramedic perspective*

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# Introduction



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- The earthquake experience
- Psychosocial behaviour
- Psychosocial guidelines
- The Christchurch Quake
  - Short-medium term support
  - Medium-long term support
  - Long term-on-going support



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**The earthquake experience**

# Psychosocial behaviour



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## Immediate aftermath:

- Enhanced arousal
- Rational behaviour
- Maintenance of social structure

# Psychosocial behaviour



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## Medium to long term

- On-going arousal
- Future worry
- Automatic pilot
- Avoidance through recovery
- Acceptance
- Limbo
- Convergence

# Psychosocial support



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## General:

- There is no agreed psychosocial bible
- Pre-disaster functioning, not pre-disaster reality
- No one remains untouched
- Three main components of psychosocial support:
  - **The individual**
  - **Social ecology**
  - **Culture and values**

# Psychosocial support



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## The individual

- Food, water and shelter
- Non-specialised psychosocial support
  - Non-intrusive, listening focus
  - Serves most of the population
  - Reassures victims that what they are feeling is normal
- Specialist psychosocial support
- Support adaption to a new reality

# Psychosocial support



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## Social ecology

- Empowerment and social support
  - Give people a sense of control
  - Communicate the reality of the situation
  - Mobilise social supports
  - Create new social networks
- Manage and allow volunteerism
- Share information
- Community support

# Psychosocial support

## Culture and Values

- Acknowledge community diversity
- Engage ethnic/cultural groups
- Encourage spiritual and religious practices
- Read your audience

# The Christchurch Quake



**“See you at the big one.....”**

- February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2011, 6.3 magnitude
  - 185 dead
  - Thousands injured
- St John rapidly overwhelmed
- Massive scale
- No St John casualties in the physical sense
- Widespread psychosocial disruption



# The Christchurch Quake

(short-medium term support)



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## Individual

- Food, water Shelter
  - Food and water supplied
  - Arranged property repair
  - Welfare fund payments
- Non-specialist psychosocial support
  - Peer support

# The Christchurch Quake

(short-medium term support)



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## Individual

- Specialist psychosocial support
  - Member Assistance Programme (MAP)
  - On site clinical psychologists
- Support adaption to a new reality
  - Collaborative focus on adjusting to the new reality, not returning to the old one

# The Christchurch Quake

(short-medium term support)



## Social Ecology

- Empowerment and social support
  - Social interaction
  - Collegial support
  - Book a bed
  - Time out
  - Community supported programmes
  - Additional staff
- Information sharing
  - Briefing document
  - All members contacted

# The Christchurch Quake

(short-medium term support)



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## Culture and values

- Acknowledge community diversity
  - Tailored support
- Encourage spiritual and religious practices
  - St John chaplains
- Read your audience
  - Help available but non compulsory
  - Allowed latitude to use normal coping mechanisms

# Missed Opportunities

(short-medium term support)



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## Social ecology

- Manage and allow volunteerism
  - Reduced use of ambulance volunteers
  - Reduced/absent overtime
  - Earthquake tourism
- Community support

## Culture and values

- Engage ethnic groups

# The Christchurch Quake

(medium-long term support)



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## Earthquake recovery support programme

- Funded by charitable activity
- Facilitated support and access to professionals
  - insurance advocate, lawyers, engineers & quantity surveyors- to resolve earthquake related claims
- Significant toll on personnel and providers
- Some remain in 'limbo'
- Highly valued support mechanism for personnel
- Long term commitment

# The Christchurch Quake

(long-term and ongoing support)



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## St John business as usual mechanisms

- Peer support
- St John chaplains
- Manager support
- Member assistance programme (MAP)
- Human Resources Team
- Health, Safety and Wellness Team
- St John clinical psychologist

# The Christchurch Quake

## In closing.....

- Three fundamental ingredients to effective psychosocial support:
  1. Support must address the psycho and social aspects of recovery
  2. Measures must encourage acceptance of the changed reality
  3. Measures must reflect research based solutions



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A different challenge.....

11102



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thank you