

Counseling during Covid: Taking Care of Them, Taking Care of You

Program Description

While human service professionals have traditionally experienced high stress and complex work environments, the Covid-19 pandemic has intensified these stressors and added additional challenges to our professional and personal lives. Numerous incidents in local and national media have raised important community issues that need to be addressed while also creating significant discord. Our clients face these issues as well, coming to us for guidance on how to move forward through grief, trauma, and burnout. As we as individuals are challenged, our clients and communities are also facing these unique and profound stresses. Challenge and adversity can make us stronger individually and collectively.

This workshop will focus on community and individual resilience in the face of adversity, with a special focus on provider self-care. Participants in this program will receive information and tools that will address the personal and professional traumatic stress experienced in our current social environments. We will also discuss strategies to build both personal and community resilience in the face of adversity.

Program Objectives

Upon completion of this program, participants will be able to:

1. Identify the types of stress that may be experienced by a human services provider; List potential impacts that critical incidents/traumatic stress, such as the current pandemic, can have upon an individual.
2. Enumerate strategies and interventions that might be used to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic and other critical incidents/traumatic stress.
3. Name opportunities to foster and strengthen both personal and community resilience in the face of adversity.

Target Audience

Behavioral health and human service professionals, community stakeholders, and anyone interested in this topic.

Contact Hours

3.0 hours

Program Agenda

Session One – 90 minutes:

- Overview of Critical Incident/Traumatic Stress
- Critical Incident Stress Reactions
 - Individuals
 - Providers
- Assessing Critical Incident Stress

Break – 15-minute break

Session Two – 90 minutes

- Key Critical Incident Stress Interventions
 - Mitigation
 - Prevention
- Fostering Resilience
 - Individuals
 - Provider
 - Community
- Self-Care
- Practical Exercise/Application

Faculty

Matthew Sullivan served the Town of Chapel Hill in several roles over a 32-year career. His last appointment was as Fire Chief, where he was responsible for Town and Departmental leadership and oversight. As a member of the Town's executive staff, he participated in the development and implementation of the Town's strategic vision. Other positions that Matt held during his career include Emergency Management Coordinator, Interim Director of Planning and Sustainability, Staff Legal Advisor, Interim Police Attorney, Police Crisis Counselor, Narcotics Investigator, Departmental Hostage Negotiator., Community Police Officer, Crime Prevention Officer and DARE Officer. Matt received his undergraduate degree in Political Science from UNC-Chapel Hill in 1989 and Master of Social Work Degree from UNC-Chapel Hill in 1997. He received a Degree in Law from North Carolina Central University in 2006 and is a member of the North Carolina State and Judicial District 15-B Bars. From 1995 to 1999, Matt was appointed Coordinator of Substance Abuse Programs at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In this capacity, he had the responsibility of administering the day-to-day operations of the campus alcohol and other drug treatment and prevention efforts. Much emphasis was also placed on environmental interventions directed to altering campus social norms surrounding dangerous student drinking and life skill development in student athletes. Matt is an adjunct faculty member to the University of North Carolina School of Social Work. He is a certified North Carolina Criminal Justice Instructor and is certified in Critical Incident Stress Management. He previously served as Chair of the Judicial District 15-B Criminal Justice Community Partnership Adult Services Advisory Committee and on the UNC-CH General Alumni Association Board of Directors. He currently serves on the Board of Directors for the NC Governor's Institute (on Substance Abuse) and for the South Orange Rescue Squad. Matt is a recipient of North Carolina's Order of the Long Leaf Pine, the 2019 Chapel Hill Chamber Town and Gown Award, The Chapel Hill Police Department's Herman Stone Award for Community Service, and a Distinguished Alumnus Award from the UNC-School of Social Work. In 1994 he was named Chapel Hill Police Officer of the Year.