

Cross-Cultural Behavioral Health Services

ethical issues confronted,
logistical challenges, the
importance of clarification of the
mission, effective translation,
cultural perceptions of death
and death-care, as well as
potential personal challenges
for team members. Suggestions
will be made regarding
preparations for international

Presenters

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Supervisory Mental Health
Specialist, OK-1 DMAT

and direct services to enhance resilience to and recovery from stress, trauma and disasters. She has been providing clinical social work and mental health services for over 30 years in diverse, cross-cultural settings.

emergency response plans to ensure the emotional, psychological, physical and spiritual needs of individuals and families are fully addressed.

Lisa has responded to major disasters such as the 9/11 attack on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, Hurricane Katrina, the Indian Ocean

Marleen Wong

Introduction

Behavioral Objectives:

importance of team member
selection, translators and
mission statement prior to
providing international
behavioral health services.

identify the potential ethical issues associated with provision of behavioral health services in international deployments.

participants will understand
potential personal challenges
faced during international
deployments.

Mission Statement

disaster project is critical.
Volunteers for an international
project may have unrealistic
personal and humanitarian
expectations.

international host organizations
should have input and clarify
their roles, expectations,
support and limitations.

Team Member Selection

personal and professional skills/qualities for international work. Some critical selection criteria include:

Ability to work effectively as a
team member

Ability and willingness to follow
directions under stress

Personal and professional flexibility

Experience in catastrophic, post-disaster settings

Awareness of own strengths and limitations

Ability to manage stress of
working in potentially dangerous
environments

Ability to eat
unfamiliar/uncommon meals

Sense of humor

Translators

members of the team

International host organizations will typically assign translators.

Important considerations include:

Dialect of affected communities

Ability to work effectively as a
team member

Orientation of translators very
critical for success – mission,
teaching materials, interventions

Cultural sensitivity – ask for
guidance from translators

Ethical Issues

seem to be more prominent in international settings due to cultural, religious and legal questions and concerns.

Mental/Behavioral Health Interventions

Informed consent

- Confidentiality
- Treatment of children
- Data collection (Research)

Education/Training

Translation

Length of sessions

Lecture vs. exercises/demonstrations

Setting

should be addressed during
planning) regarding the goals of
the project, sustainability, and
the ability to maintain support
vs. a one-time visit.

Personal Challenges

Linear changes can pose significant personal challenges that may cause questioning of the value of the entire project.

Other personal challenges can
include:

Being different

Food

Extended exposure to
catastrophic destruction and
grief

Family issues

Fear

Religious and political bias

own personal experiences in international post-disaster settings, as time permits.

