Catastrophes and Crime: Definitions, Scope, and Response

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I.   Introduction

"The End of the World"

Quite unexpectedly, as Vasserot
The armless ambidextrian was lighting
A match between his great and second toe,
And Ralph the lion was engaged in biting
The neck of Madame Sossman while the drum
Pointed, and Teeny was about to cough
In waltz-time swinging Jocko by the thumb –
Quite unexpectedly the top blew off:

And there, there overhead, there, there hung over
Those thousands of white faces, those dazed eyes,
There in the starless dark, the poise, the hover,
There with vast wings across the cancelled skies,
*   There in the sudden blackness the black pall*
Of nothing, nothing, nothing – nothing at all.

This description by Archibald MacLeish of the outbreak of World War I is illustrative of the traumatic impact of war, disaster, crime, and violence, and of global economic or technological chaos. Lives are shattered and there is a confrontation with meaninglessness and hopelessness. It may be occasioned by death or injury, loss of homes or a secure place to stay, a loss of property or a way of life. Understanding the nature of each kind of event and its human interpretation is critical to the ability to respond and assist those who survive. This paper seeks to clarify definitions that are used in relationship to catastrophes or tragedies and trauma; establish a taxonomy of disaster types; and present thoughts on useful responses to the cognitive or emotional trauma that victims and survivors may face; as well as consider some elements of resiliency of which aid workers should be aware as they respond to traumatized individuals and communities.

II.   Definitions

A. Trauma

"Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life." Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 1993.

- A traumatic event might be described as an event that causes an individual, a community or a nation to perceive the destruction, in whole or part, of a way of life, identity, death or injury.
- Traumatic events are not necessarily traumatizing to everyone who is exposed to them.

Traumatic reactions generate feelings of helplessness, powerlessness, and fear, terror or horror. These feelings may exist for a short or long time and the event(s) may be instantaneous, cumulative or chronic.

B. Individual Trauma

In 1979 Kai Erickson wrote "Individuals may be traumatized when an event causes a 'blow to the psyche that breaks through one's defenses so suddenly and with such force that one cannot respond effectively.' " (*In the Wake of A Flood,* 1979).

While this may be true for some individuals who are the victims of crime, accidents, or some types of disasters, victims of cumulative or chronic traumatic events may experience a psychic demolition that is gradual and sustained. Indeed, as the psyche gradually adapts to each blow with new resources, only to confront another traumatic event, it may find that the original response is less and less effective. That response may change from active resiliency to acceptance of fate, resentment, rebellion or violence. Examples include victims of torture and domestic violence, long-term hostages and survivors of repeated tornadoes or earthquakes.

C. Collective trauma

Communities may be traumatized when an event not only shatters individuals but also causes a "blow to the tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together." (Kai Erickson, *In the Wake of A Flood,* 1979).

War, terrorism, internal conflict, physical displacement and major natural disasters are illustrative of this, but emotional bonds can also be damaged by the impact of individual crimes on a community.

D.   Disaster

The term disaster can be defined as "anything ruinous or distressing that befalls; a sudden or great misfortune or mishap; a calamity." Beverly Raphael, *When Disaster Strikes,* 1986. Terms often used synonymously with disaster are "catastrophe," "tragedy," or "calamity."

The Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters defines it as a "situation or event, which overwhelms local capacity, necessitating a request to national or international assistance;

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an unforeseen and often sudden event that causes great damage, destruction and human suffering".

The International Data Base (*www.census.gov/ipc/www/idb/*) lists natural disasters as having at least one of the following criteria:

- 10 or more people reported killed
- 100 people reported affected
- Declaration of a state of emergency
- Call for international assistance

Other kinds of calamities such as crime and terrorism could meet the numerical standard But government involvement sometimes interferes with declarations of emergency and international assistance   After Cyclone Nargis, relief efforts were slowed for political reasons as Myanmar (Burma) initially resisted aid. Myanmar's ruling party finally accepted aid a few days later. Relief efforts were further interrupted by the fact that only ten days after the cyclone nearby central China was hit by a massive earthquake and it took 87,476 lives. It caused 85 billion dollars in damage was the costliest disaster in Chinese history and third costliest disaster worldwide.

E. Community

A community is formed when a group of individuals are interconnected through emotional, intellectual, spiritual, cultural or physical bonds.

1.   Natural communities

When communities are bound together through time by common attributes, affiliations, activities, experiences, beliefs or values, they are termed "natural" communities. The bonds may be generated by family, geography and environment, vocation and avocation, displacement status, homelessness, economic status, education levels or religious and spiritual commonalities. These bonds are basic ties that assist communities develop a common sense of security or insecurity, history, culture and identity. They also are a basis for defense against outsiders.

2.   Transitory communities

standards as well, although the final two issues involving governmental concerns might interfere with a declaration or a call for assistance. Myanmar (Burma) first refused to ask for assistance or take assistance when it was offered after Cyclone Nargis.

Communities bound together at one point in time by a highly charged emotional event. The event may be positive or negative. The sense of community is generated by the fact that members of the community have all been exposed to the same significant experience.

Traumatic events may spawn such communities (for example, communities formed among the passengers on a plane wreck) and often establish new social connections that may transcend natural communities.

3. Intangible communities

These communities are formed when members feel a connection with political or social values and meanings that transcend natural or transitory communities. The individuals within such communities often share mutual languages, outward appearance and dress, similar tastes in food, music, and the like. "Intangible" communities are most often illustrated through the bonds established by nationality, cultural orientations, or spiritual belief systems.

4. Internet communities

Individuals may identify strongly with other members of a community even though there are may be no physical personal connections but there are communications and common understandings. Recent examples in cyberspace include Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, various listservs, and Twitter as well as accompanying technologies such as cell phones that can bring people together.

The use of the Internet during the recent Iranian protests of their national election was an historic example of how modern communication techniques can create a sense of comradeship and community beyond country borders.

5. Imaginary communities

These communities are made up in the minds of people who perceive affiliation with others based on geographical, ideological, spiritual, or other perceived connections. Sometimes connections are made through media, readings, or music. What is unique about this sense of community is that it is in the eye of the beholder. Hence, it is not a reciprocal relationship.

III. Scope of Catastrophes

It is hard to determine realistically the scope or frequency of worldwide catastrophes. However, the following estimates may be helpful in attempting to understand the devastation that is confronted every year.

- In 2008, 321 disasters killed 235,816 and affected 21.1 million at a cost of $181 billion. (UNISDR 2009/01, www.unisdr.org)   Nine of the top ten countries with the highest number of disaster-related deaths were in Asia. The death to1l in 2008 was three times more than the annual average of 66,812 for 2000-2007 and was mainly caused by two major events: Cyclone Nargis which killed 138,366 people in Myanmar (Burma) and the Sichuan earthquake in China which caused the deaths of 887,476 people.

- "Record number of devastating disasters in 2008*: Worldwatch" June 6, 2009 thaindian.com/newsportal/business/record-number.

The number of devastating natural disasters, those designated as Category 5 based on their financial and human impact, increased to 40 in 2008, the highest number on record, says global green NGO Worldwatch.

- More than one billion people a year are affected by violent crime. Van Dijk, J., Van Kesteren, J., Smit, P. (2007). *Criminal Victimisation in International Perspective.* WOCD: The Hague.

- One in three women worldwide has experienced rape or sexual assault. The World Bank. www.worldbank.org.

- Approximately 40 million children experience child abuse each year. World Health Organization. (2001). Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect: Making the links between human rights and public health. Geneva: World Health Organization.

- The Global Burden of Armed Violence, a 2005 report issued by the *Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development* estimated that there were approximately 490,000 homicides in 2004. http://www.genevadeclaration.org/pdfs/Global-Burden-of-Armed-Violence.pdf

- It is estimated that there are over 5,000 terrorist attacks each year.

  - The Madrid (Spain) train bombing killed 191 people and wounded 1755 in 2004.
  - The Tokyo (Japan) Sarin poison gas attacks killed 12 people and injured 5,000 in 2005.
  - The London (England) rail bombings killed 52 people and injured 500 on July 5, 2005.
  - The Mumbai (India) attacks killed at least 174 people and injured 335 in a three-day siege of hotels November 26-28, 2008.

- War and conflict

  - "More than 740,000 people have died directly or indirectly from armed violence—both conflict and criminal violence—every year in recent years. More than 540,000 of these deaths are violent with the vast majority occurring in non-conflict settings. At least 200,000 people—and perhaps many thousands more—have died each year in conflict zones from non-violent causes (such as malnutrition, dysentery, or other easily preventable diseases) that resulted from the effects of war on populations. Between 2004 and 2007, at least 208,300 violent deaths were recorded in armed conflicts—an average of 52,000 people killed per year. This is a conservative estimate including only *recorded* deaths: the real total may be much higher. The annual economic cost of armed violence in non-conflict settings, in terms of lost productivity due to violent deaths, is USD 95 billion and could reach as high as USD 163 billion." http://www.genevadeclaration.org/pdfs/Global-Burden-of-Armed-Violence.pdf

"The story in the New York Times on January 13, 2008 (entitled: "Across America, Deadly Echoes of Foreign Battles" saddened me. These stories reflect as much upon our social relationship to our veterans as to the psychology underlying the violent actions of combat veterans. Domestic violence results in violent acts by perpetrators of violence. Of course, this is not always true since some individuals have the capacity for hurting others regardless of their environmental context. In the case of the soldiers in the New York Times story, none had had a previous criminal or psychiatric history prior to their current actions.

"Now let us investigate the basic question, "How can the transformation of young men and women (as well as some adolescents) into trained killing machines be reversed once they return to a normal society not at war?"

"Soldiers are trained to kill and are legally allowed to break standard conventional norms in order to resist an "enemy" of this country. The taking away of someone else's life which in many religious circles is considered precious, unique and sacred, is at minimum an instrumental act to achieve a socially condoned outcome. Yet the killing and death of an enemy as well as the enemy's killing of a fellow comrade in arms has to be one of the most disturbing of all human activities. Literally, within the brains of many soldiers these legally sanctioned violent activities are stored as memories that cannot be forgotten. While few soldiers returning home commit violent crimes, in all of the stories presented in the New York Times article you are able to see a glimpse of a soldier's shattered life world (i.e.. all of his/her life experiences to date).

Richard Mollica

- Refugees
  - 42 million people are displaced through the world. 15.7 million refugees exist, 827,000 asylum seekers and 26 million internal displaced persons. "UNHCR Statistical Online Population Data Base, UNHCR, Data extacted 01/12/09

  - While a need for justice often complicates the impact of catastrophes, justice systems are notoriously inadequate in meeting this need.

  "…four billion people live in areas with dysfunctional justice systems – abusive police, entrenched bribery, mismanaged courts." (Power, 2009)

IV. Response

This paper is based on three theoretical and practical foundations for interventions to meet cognitive and emotional needs in the aftermath of catastrophe:

- The motivational/psychological theories on human behavior developed by Abraham Maslow

- An understanding of crisis and trauma reactions

- Theories and concrete applications of crisis intervention, post-trauma counseling, and justice

A. Maslow's Theories

Good mental and spiritual health is necessary for the productive functioning of individuals and is most often achieved when there is a successful integration and balance of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Certain basic needs must be sufficiently satisfied in individuals so that hey can reach an equilibrium in their lives and strive toward reaching their potential. An equilibrium in this schema is not a state of rest or static balance. Indeed, physiologist Hans Selye, maintained that, "Man should not avoid stress any more than he would shun food, love or exercise." A definition of homeostasis should mean coming to an optimum level of activity involving stress but not distress. An analogy might be that for physical health, one should exercise, sometimes to the point of pain but not to the point of injury.

Individual equilibrium may be described as fluctuating activities that maintain relative balance between internal adaptive capacities and external stressors. External stressors may be positive or negative. The positive effects of external stress and the development of internal adaptive capacities help individuals become more resilient as well as have more opportunities to reach their human potentialities.
(Cf. Maslow, Abraham, *Motivation and Personality*, 3rd ed., New York: Harper & Row, 1987, and *Towards a Psychology of Being*, 2nd ed., New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1968)

Maslow constructed what he called a hierarchy of human needs and motivations. See Figure

Maslow's "Basic Hierarchy of Human Needs"

1.

Figure 1

1. The foundation of the hierarchy is survival or physiological needs. These are based on the surrounding environment. The available resources will determine survival, relationships, and cultures, and often are the genesis of conflict. Survival is dependent on maintenance of bodily functioning. Individuals need warmth, shelter, oxygen, food, and water, and regeneration of energy.

2. Safety and security addresses expanded needs of survival. They provide individuals and communities with the ability to live without a constant threat to existence. Indeed, the sense of safety and security should minimize or mitigate fear of unknowns, fear of death or injury or fear for the lives of others who are loved. In a safe and secure environment, individuals would only rarely consider seriously the possibility that they might die at any time. Maslow identifies the following elements that characterize the sense of safety and security: freedom from fear, anxiety, chaos; and structure, order, law, and limits. I would suggest that the need for safety responds to immediate or chronic fears of imminent danger. Security addresses ongoing concerns of laws, rights and responsibilities, moral order and equity. The first calls for protection and the second for justice or fairness within a cultural or spiritual scheme.

3. Maslow describes the next level of need in terms of the ability to successfully complete "activities of daily living". I interpret this as rational cognitive functioning which includes the ability to initiate and sustain everyday life. It is the capacity to think of the past, present and future. What do I want to do today? What did I do in yesterday that will help me today? What do I want to do tomorrow based on what I did yesterday and what I will do today? And, amidst those questions, the cognitive function relies upon both old and new experiences that inform any final action or decision. Hence the human organism is preprogrammed for constant learning, adaptation and response.

4. A need for being loved and loving seems fundamental to human beings. Love, its more intense sibling, passion, and its antithesis, hate, is the foundation for relationships, ideologies and spiritual orientation. Love fosters affection, sympathy, compassion and empathy. This foundation is developed through contact with the environment, family, friends and communities. Belongingness is dependent upon acceptance by others within culturally-framed values, an understanding and recognition of socially accepted behaviors, and an integration of values and behaviors into mutually prescribed standards within a community.

5. Self esteem should be distinguished from self-satisfaction. A sense of self-satisfaction may come from having fun (in a benign fashion) or "putting something over on someone else" (in a more malevolent context). It is fleeting and momentary. Self esteem is based on one's perception of intrinsic value in one's own life and the lives of others. Once individuals have a sense of the parameters of belonging, they begin to measure themselves against the social and cultural precepts that prevail.

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6. Self esteem is developed in terms of external cultural norms as well as internal values. Internally based values are dependent upon mastery of personal goals tempered by the near-universal values of independence (freedom), justice (fairness) and morality (respect for others). Such esteem will be weighed according to cultural norms but will be monitored by individual definitions. Cognitive and emotional dissonance can be found when a person is conflicted in his or her decisions because of outside forces. Self-esteem is dependent on meaning. Meaning is often used synonymously with purpose. It is not the same. Meaning is a more cosmic, existential and infinite concept, while purpose implies a concrete goal that can be pursued with action. Meaning is the umbrella under which purposes exist.

7. Self-actualization. Maslow defines self-actualization as a time when the "powers" of an individual work together in an intensely efficient and enjoyable way. He or she is able to reach their "peak performance." The person is more fully functioning, creative, and independent of more primitive needs. It is critical to understanding Maslow's perspective that self-actualization is not a constant state but is episodic. The self-actualizing individual is one in whom episodes of actualization occur more often and with greater intensity than in others. Maslow refers to especially creative people, profoundly religious people, or people experiencing great insights as examples of those who are self-actualizing, although he makes it clear that anyone performing at his or her best is in a self-actualizing mode. It is also clear that Maslow, in his later writings, includes concern for other people in the actualizing self. One is not to be selfish with goals but recognize the impact of community on those goals and reciprocate with awareness and action on behalf of the whole.

While Maslow's theories are described in a hierarchy of needs, it is emphasized that the growth process is not linear. The hierarchy is not to be interpreted as a serial progression through different needs but a dynamic interaction of internal and environmental factors that can move forwards or backwards and is never complete. One does not have to have each need fully satisfied before addressing other needs in the hierarchy. The hierarchy is not separable; it is holistic and represents an integration of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs that is reminiscent of Eastern philosophies.

> *...most members of our society who are normal are partially satisfied in all their basic needs and partially unsatisfied in all their basic needs at the same time.*
> – Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, 1987

B.   Adaptive capacities and stressors

The following potential adaptive capacities are critical to individuals. They represent personal attributes and characteristics that are most often used to adapt to external and environmental stimuli. If people are adequately satisfied in a majority of their physiological needs, they can focus more effort on addressing safety and security needs. In doing so, having

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the ability to understand and mobilize their emotional capacity will increase their coping capacities in dealing with threats to that security. The key capacities for utilizing the social and ecological environment around us are: physical health; physical abilities; emotional flexibility and control; cognitive abilities; education/experience; ability to assess and access others for support; connection with meaning and purposefulness; and resiliency

Key stressors in life can be found in: relationships (family, friends, workplace, others); resources (financial, land, environment, and productivity); health (illness and death); and crisis and trauma.

V. Crisis and Trauma

A.   Crisis Reactions

Crisis occurs when one is presented with a situation or experience not ordinarily confronted. When the crisis is experienced as a threat to plans for a future, physical integrity, or normal parameters of individual or community equilibrium, it's marked by the following characteristics.

- Loss of control and powerlessness

- Shock, disbelief and denial

- Regression

And a cataclysm of emotions

- Fear or terror

- Anger, fury or outrage

- Confusion and frustration

- Guilt and self-blame

- Shame or humiliation

- Grief or sorrow

And a struggle for a new equilibrium

B.   Trauma reactions

1. Trauma reactions are overwhelming convulsions of a shattered reality.
2. They injure or destroy a person's capacity to adapt.

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3. They add to existing stress factors through internal and external crises.
4. They are based on the perception of threat
   a. Trauma is precipitated by a crisis in response to the threat of danger to an individual or community.
   b. Threat is perceived on a continuum of safety to danger. Threats are perceived based on learned cognitions or emotional or sensory memories.
   c. Danger may be experienced in terms of:

     - Physical integrity – bodily danger or danger to extensions of the body, for example, danger to homes, animals or personal belongings.
     - Physical integrity and lives of loved ones.
     - Mental integrity – cognitive involvement in choice of exposure, understanding of context, acceptance of causal relationships or circumstances.
     - Emotional integrity – internal resistance to one's feelings and the imposition of external controls.
     - Spiritual integrity – a challenge to one's faith and beliefs.
     - Community integration – external pressure from others to comply with those who exert pressure on human rights may fracture communities. Danger is perceived when the community is not seen as supportive of support for potential victims and is abusive of victims of violence and abuse.

   d. Experiences or perceptions of threat or danger may be categorized into four types of traumatic stressor events. (Wilson, J.P., "The Need for an Integrative Theory of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder", 1994) They have been described as the following.

     - Type I: unanticipated single events beyond the range of normal daily stress (murder, suicide, accidents)
     - Type II: enduring and repetitive events (chronic abuse)
     - Type III: compounding effects of low-level, insidious stressor events (failures to have basic needs satisfied, chaotic environments experienced as normal)
     - Type IV: alterations in a person's basic relation to the environment (technological disasters)

Each type may cause variations in the pattern of traumatic reactions and their manifestations.

C. Chronology and context of threat or harm

Chronological accountings before, during and after a traumatic event help define it and are the key organizing features in understanding the story or narrative of the event and its impact. Chronologies are objective and subjective time-lines with analyses of the known patterns of disasters, as well the possible emotional and cognitive interpretations as perceived by individual experiences.

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The context of the events includes the following elements.

- Sensory exposures: sight, sounds, smells, taste, tactile involvements, kinesthesia and proprioception
- Spatial dimensions of the event and individuals' involvement
- Roles played by victims and community members in reacting and responding to the event

D. Trauma is exacerbated by the extent of social disruption and the potential for reoccurrence.

Social disruption after catastrophe is measured by the impact of the tragedy on the infrastructure of the community, including the fragmentation of emotional ties between community members. The infrastructure is made up of the physical resources available and accessible to meet survival, safety and security, and to meet the needs of love and belongingness. The impact of a traumatic event is affected by the interpretation of individuals and communities as to their safety in the future and the meaning of the event.

E. Trauma and the Brain

To understand trauma's dimensions, it is important to have some understanding of brain functioning, memory processing, and how traumatic events change ordinary functioning and processing to alter reactions, behaviors, and attitudes. As research and knowledge about brain functions increase, better information has developed on how to assist victims and survivors in processing traumatic events.

Traumatic thinking is based on the ability of the brain to associate a given event with threat and danger through emotional and cognitive reactions. Threat triggers a physical response (normally one of fight, flight, submission or accommodation). The physical response is often disconnected based on one's physical abilities. Thus, someone who has clear vision may see an event as dominant. Another, with clear kinesthetic sense, may respond with motion. Still another may hear a loud noise. These are quite confusing at the time and in memory. Trauma may also have an effect on physical coordination due to its impact on the cerebellum. Victims may be unable to control their physical response as the trauma interferes with the sense of balance and motor coordination.

Threat and danger causes cognitive disorganization which interferes with the ability to understand what happened, what is going on, and what happens next. Due to the physical, mental and emotional chaos, victims are left with an inability to interpret the event or discover meaning in it.

F. Effects of secondary traumas and re-experiencing the event
   1. The re-experiencing of the event can cause a pendulum effect in the process of regaining a healthy equilibrium. Survivors may make progress towards integration of

the trauma into their lives only to be thrown back into crisis, needing reassurances through outside interventions.

2. Secondary traumas have been called "second injuries." They are usually caused by external forces that have been activated by the original trauma. Common sources of secondary traumas are social institutions such as the justice system or the media, care giving professionals such as the clergy or health and mental health professionals, colleagues in schools or workplaces, and the reactions of families and friends.

3. Re-experiencing the event due to traumatic memories can be as traumatic as the first experience. Each time such re-experiencing happens, it reinforces the memory of the event and the traumatic reactions associated with it.

VI. Crisis and Trauma Interventions

Crisis and trauma interventions as described in this text seek to outline useful methods to help victims to rebuild adaptive capacities, decrease stressors, and reduce symptoms of trauma. Their potential impact can be seen in the following review in terms of Maslow's Hierarchy. It should be remembered that the stages of response are not discrete. While each set of needs ranging from physiological or survival needs to self-actualizing needs must be satisfied to some degree before the next set of needs is significantly engaged, need satisfaction is dynamic and overlapping. And while some basic needs may not be fully met, other needs are or can be addressed. So while efforts to provide physical rescue are primary after a disaster, they are accompanied by efforts to address needs primarily targeted by crisis intervention. When physical rescue has been accomplished and crisis intervention becomes primary, that intervention may be accompanied by needs associated with post-trauma counseling or self-development.

A.   Physical rescue

Emergency response focuses on physical survival needs of individuals and communities.

Emergency response seeks to reduce acute traumatic stressors by providing medical care for the injured and shelter, food and water, or clothing for the displaced. It should address temporary protections against additional threats or trauma impacts. It begins the effort of rebuilding individual adaptive capacities of well-being, community infrastructure and networks of resources.

B.   Crisis intervention

If physical rescue has been accomplished, safety and security issues become concerns for mental and emotional freedom from fears and terrors associated with the event. Establishing parameters of safety helps defuse fear and chaos, and creates defenses against additional intrusions. Critical factors in these efforts are establishment of physical order through acknowledgment of physical competencies; the re-establishment of routines, structure and moral order; the reliance on spiritual beliefs; the establishment of more permanent protections; and reinstituting a sense and system of justice and fairness. While the latter may not seem as important in natural or environmental disasters, the issues of survival guilt and the "why me?" syndrome inherently involve justice and fairness. Obviously, in human-caused tragedies, justice and fairness are central.

To assist individuals and communities begin to understand the pattern of trauma reactions, and to recognize the human commonality of that pattern, there is a compelling reason to help people formulate the stories of their experiences. These stories should be framed in terms of the context and chronology of their trauma exposure. This reduces their confusion and begins the process of rebuilding cognitive and emotional adaptive capacities. It is important to understand that when people begin to reconstruct the narratives of what happened, they often re-experience the event. If they become over-stimulated in that effort, a significant intervention is momentary distraction from the event through recall of more positive events in the past or the present or even in thinking of the future.

There is no universal truth to any traumatic event, and hence no experience can be dismissed; there are individual truths from an emotional and cognitive perspective. These truths should be validated even as misunderstandings are clarified.

Finally, crisis intervention should seek to help survivors understand what they can or can't expect from their future. This involves education for survivors concerning how they might plan for additional traumas, secondary traumas and ongoing emotional reactions. It should seek to provide a roadmap towards social functioning. It should focus on the innate strengths and resiliencies of the human spirit.

Crisis intervention ideally helps to reduce acute stress caused by trauma's impact by expressing emotional reactions; restoring the dominance of cognitive functioning over those reactions; containing overstimulation; and facilitating the restoration of community/social institutions and support. It can enhance adaptive capacities by providing opportunities for survivors to begin to interpret the trauma event and search for meaning within it.

C. Post-trauma counseling

Post-trauma counseling builds on the foundation of crisis intervention by assisting survivors in recalling previous positive learning experiences drawn from similar traumatic events and acquainting them with new education on issues relating to the event and its aftermath.

Many survivors find the process of mental or physical review of their actions and reactions during a traumatic event to continue to be helpful in organizing their own narratives as well as in preparing for ongoing trauma-related issues. In cases where survivors will be involved in justice systems following the event, rehearsal of what might happen in the system is also widely seen as advantageous. Such reviews and rehearsals should be prepared for and monitored by a trained support person. Care should be taken again to avoid overstimulation and participation should be voluntary.

Social advocacy can be an effective way for survivors to address problems that arise due to the traumatic event and its aftermath or factors that contributed to the causation or consequences of the event. Both activism and advocacy help to reconstruct a sense of love and belongingness in community activities as well as to intellectual growth. Establishing or re-establishing spiritual

connections or developing a sense of meaning surrounding the event can provide the foundation for the ultimate integration of the event into individual or community life including the recognition of hope and transcendence of the event itself. This may become the springboard for self-actualizing activities.

Most people internalize a spiritual dimension in their feelings and their thoughts. They may believe their connections relate to nature, ancestors, theism or deism. But spirituality enables them not only to relate to their peers and culture but also to thoughts on death and what happens in the hereafter. It provides meaning to their lives and consolation when they feel despair. Interventions should focus on individual and community understandings of the spiritual dimensions of life.

> The spiritual dimension of life refers to the essential core of values and the animating force within human beings. It is the source of connection between people, animals, environment, and the stars. For some people, their spiritual essence may relate to a belief in God or Gods. For some, religious principles guide their understanding of spirituality.
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> All religions teach us to help people whenever we can. All religions teach us to play fair and not to hit or kill or steal or cheat. All religions teach us we should be forgiving and cut people some slack when they mess up, because someday we will mess up too. All religions teach us to love our families, to respect our parents and to make new families when we grow up. Religions all over the world teach the same right way to live. Spiritual beliefs combine concepts of philosophy or theology that seek to explain being (existence), nothingness (nonexistence), relationships, time and eternity, space and infinity, life, death, and afterlife. Spiritual beliefs are most often determined by culture.

D. Justice and Fairness: Their Place in Interventions
(See: A.J. W. Taylor (ed.) *Justice as a Basic Human Need.*)

In examining the role of justice and fairness as interventions, I view the two as interchangeable in terms of ideal outcomes but somewhat ambiguous in terms of implementation. This is largely due to the fact that justice is often confused with the idea of "rule of law." If the law is based on critical elements of human rights and responsibilities (such as freedom of expression balanced with consequent limitations imposed by respect for human dignity; freedom from want balanced by resource scarcity; or personal security balanced with community security), it is perhaps reasonable to think that justice would be served by the rule of law. However, if the law is used to encourage or tolerate discrimination, abuse of power or torture, for example, following the rule of law can hardly be considered justice. Some further definitions and questions are in order. Following the definitions, I will discuss how a merger of these ideas can help to explain how justice and fairness can become therapeutic when responding to victims.

Economic Justice

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Justice should be founded on balancing human resources with environmental resources in a manner that would prevent marginalization of populations and avoid exploitation, for example, colonization and corruption. This is an acknowledgement that the majority of the world is deprived of resource security. It recognizes the fact of scarce resources and over-population often spurs conflict and that resolution must depend upon economic realities.

Cultural Justice

Justice should not be based on cultural domination by one community over the other. All cultures should be treated equally in terms of respect for traditions, spiritual beliefs, human rights and dignity. This does not imply cultural relativism. Culture in today's world must pursue both integrative features consistent with human rights as well as adherence to tradition in arts, non-oppressive political structure (not politics) and the evolution of language and ideas.

Participatory Justice

Justice should be founded on the concept of universal participation for those it serves. That participation is based on rights of information, access, association, assemblage, freedom of expression and impartial decision-making by those who may be in power.

Social Justice

Justice should be based on equality and equity. Equality is the process of giving one the same basic human rights as another and an opportunity to accomplish them. Equity relates to fairness in the access to needed resources. Both equality and equity depend upon community values.

Legal Justice

I refer to this in the context of criminal and civil justice. Legal justice often focuses on criminal law in Anglo-Saxon laws. The result has been an adversarial system. Some systems, notably the French (Norman) have integrated laws that include victim involvement in participatory justice with the law. Others, notably Anglo-Saxon, have relied upon the concept of rule of law due to the Magna Charta. Perhaps the most important aspect of this rule is that "no man is above the law" and that there should be impartiality in decision-making. The latter is difficult if impossible to achieve but it can be used as a standard in preventing discrimination and oppression, if applied.

In the United States there is a common presumption that a "rule of law applies."   But this can become confusing when the law is interpreted and can change from statutory or constitutional law to one deem more accurate due to "precedence." Precedence is usually based on court interpretation of a law over time.

Restorative Justice

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Justice should be founded on an understanding of human relationships. Disasters often destroy that relationship either through the impact of environmental catastrophes, economic calamities or the direct attack on such relationships through crime, terrorism and abuse of power.

The first priority is to restore a balance of power after the relationship. That means victims need to recover power, both as individuals and communities.

From that it would follow, that participation of all is called for in decision making – an offender, victim and community.

Victim Justice

Justice should be founded in legal terms on a balance of power between a victim and his or her offender in a criminal court system. Outcomes of such a system would be based on participatory and informational rights for the victim and the alleged offender. It should aspire to giving all parties the right to be heard; it should give victims recompense for losses; and it should seek to provide offenders with a return to society, should they seek it.

Justice as a Whole

These ideas of justice are suggested because each one can help to provide victims after environmental, human and economic disasters with hope for reconciliation with their lives. Economic justice would seek to provide victims with some remuneration; cultural justice would help define identities and preserve traditional beliefs; participatory justice would give victims a voice in how they go on to their futures; social justice calls for community understandings about values; legal justice provides structure for decision making; restorative justice calls for all participants to be involved in decision making; and victim justice provides a scope for ensuring that everyone is considered fairly.

The value of considering all aspects of justice during an intervention is three-fold. First, it can restore a sense of hope for victims – there can be a light at the end of the tunnel of despair. Second, in looking to the future, there may be practical steps that can be taken to meet basic needs such as physical resources and safety and security. Third, acknowledging the importance of culture and community can integrate issues of love and belongingness. That integration establishes a basis for self-esteem and self-actualization. The more victims have a sense of justice, the more they have a sense of hope.

VIII. Conclusion

This paper was developed in order to address confusing issues in victimology, traumatology and catastrophes. It is an open acknowledgement of change and impermanence since all definitions and scope statements are fluid – the world and ideas change everyday.

Archibald MacLeish looked into the dark and wrote,

> *There in the sudden blackness the black pall*

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Of nothing, nothing, nothing – nothing at all.

But, if we try to change, we can dream of a future for a better world and better ideas.

"**Without accepting the fact that everything changes, we cannot find perfect composure. But unfortunately, although it is true, it is difficult for us to accept it. Because we cannot accept the truth of transience, we suffer.**"
Shunryu Suzuki