

## **HP 8006: PSYCHOLOGY OF CRISIS STRESS MANAGEMENT**

### **Course Overview and Objectives**

Regardless of one's profession or occupation, the probability of encountering a disaster, critical incident or crisis situation in one's life can no longer be ignored. Disasters of various forms have become realities that people should be prepared to face wherever they work or live in a technological and global environment. The objectives of this module are to provide students with an understanding of how people react, behave or are affected in a disaster, critical incident or personal crisis. It will present some practical knowledge about how an individual or organisation can cope with the traumatic stress that comes with the critical incident or crisis. In addition, the students will be introduced to some concepts of crisis management, psychological resilience and how an emergency response system could be set up or developed in the organisation where he or she may be employed.

By the end of the course, participants would have:

- (a) a clear understanding of the different types of disasters and the nature of a crisis;
- (b) learned the basic concepts of emergency behaviour, stress reactions and post-traumatic symptoms during and after a crisis;
- (c) some concepts of crisis management in responding to a crisis when it arises;
- (d) learned some practical knowledge and techniques of coping with traumatic stress and psychological resilience;
- (e) some ideas of working relationships with colleagues, supervisors and other organisations during a crisis.

### **Course Content:**

Classification of disasters and understanding the nature of critical incidents and crises

- (b) Emergency behaviour and psychological reactions in disasters and crises
- (c) Victims: the circles of vulnerability
- (d) Traumatic stress and leadership performance during crisis
- (e) Mental health issues in disasters: coping with crisis stress and post-traumatic stress disorders; managing grief and bereavement in a crisis
- (f) Psychosocial intervention strategies and emergency response system
- (g) Psychological debriefing
- (h) Psychological resilience
- (i) Helping the helpers: preparing volunteers for crisis and emergency work
- (j) Crisis information management, media relations and crisis communications issues
- (k) Development of crisis stress management doctrines

### **Modes of Teaching and Learning**

- (a) Conceptual lectures & discussion on key crisis stress management topics:
- (b) Case studies: Hotel New World Collapse, North-South Highway Accident, SilkAir MI 185 and SQ 006 Air Crashes with video clips

**Recommended Reading**

- (a) Halpern, James & Tramontin, Mary (2007). *Disaster mental health: theory and practice*. Belmont: Thomson.
- (b) Hodgkinson, P E & Stewart, M. (1998). *Coping with catastrophe, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* London: Routledge.
- (c) Long, F.Y. (2001). Psychological support in civil emergencies: the National Emergency Behaviour Management System of Singapore. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 13, 209 – 214.

**Assessment**

60% final exam, 40% mid term quiz