The Coalescence of Behavioral Health & Environmental Health
How often do community members tell you they are stressed or worried about environmental contamination?
What is Stress?

• **Stress** – a feeling of strain or pressure.

• **Psychological Stress** – emotional and physiological reactions experienced when someone judges a situation to be beyond their ability to cope.

• **Psychosocial stressors** – factors which can cause stress in social settings are: personality types, education, socioeconomic status among other things.
What are Natural and Technological Disasters?

**Natural**
- Hurricanes
- Earthquakes
- Tornadoes
- Wildfire
- Tsunamis
- Floods
- Blizzards
- Droughts
- Extreme Heat
- Windstorms

**Technological**
- Oil Spills
- Industrial Fires
- Nuclear Material Accidents
- Hazardous Material Exposures (e.g., PFAS, Arsenic)
Uncertain risks to health from potential or documented exposures

Invisibility of exposures

Latency of health effects

Feelings of alienation from others

Community turmoil over the degree of threat posed by exposure

Concerns over economic loss

Feelings of loss of control over daily life

Frustration over the lengthy clean-up process

Frustration of dealing with bureaucratic agencies

Frustration of being accused of “overreacting”
Superfund Sites on the National Priorities List

Superfund sites with the Hazard Ranking System, which scores sites from 0 to 100, based on potential risk to human health or the environment. Sites with scores of 28.5 or greater are listed on the National Priorities List. These sites are also eligible for Superfund-financed remediation. The number of Superfund sites to be cleaned up these sites has declined over the years. The number of sites on the list declined by 37% from 1999 to 2013.
Top Priority: MDEQ investigates dangerous gas in Grand Rapids

Michigan residents concerned after dioxin found in several private wells

Cleanup of Michigan’s largest Superfund site, begun in 1998, could take 7 more years

Toxic chemical foam plume found at National Guard base in Alpena

PFAS hot spots found at Grand Haven school, nearby fire department

Do not eat: Hunters advised to avoid deer meat around Michigan marsh

Enbridge is still cleaning up three years after Kalamazoo River oil spill

Metro Detroit auto supplier is a source of PFAS pollution in Huron River

PFAS found in Parchment system, residents told to stop using the water

Contaminated water still plagues lakeside community in Michigan

Arsenic in Orchardview soil worries residents
Pathway Toward a Robust Psychosocial Response

1. Build Relationships with Local, State, & Federal Stakeholders
2. Provide Training to Behavioral & Environmental Health Professionals
3. Conduct in-depth research into resource/data gaps & identify best practices
4. Plan, Design, & Support Data Collection Methods & Community-Based Response Efforts
Build Relationships with Local, State, & Federal Stakeholders

Local & Community Partnerships
- Kalamazoo Community Mental Health and the Association for Community Mental Health
- Regional Crisis Centers
- Local Public Health Officials

State Partnerships & Interagency Collaborations
- MDHHS: Behavioral Health Administration, Population Health, and Division of Environmental Health
- Regional Health Coalitions

Federal Partnerships
- Center for Disease Control (CDC) & Agency for Toxic Substance Registry (ATSDR)
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIHM)
Training for Environmental Health Professionals
Training to Behavioral Health Professionals

- **Setting:** Regional, In-Person, Lecture/Activities
- **Speakers:** Environmental Toxicologists, Community Engagement Specialists, Behavioral Health Specialists, & Health Educators
- **Evaluation:** Pre/Post Test, CE Survey, & Post-Training Follow-Up

**Training Objectives**

- Gain an understanding of environmental contaminants
- Become aware of response resources available to the public to assist with mitigating potential exposure
- Gain knowledge of potential emotional and behavioral impacts
- Identify early community interventions to address emotional and behavioral impacts
Environmental Contamination
Response Training for Behavioral Health Practitioners

Training brought to you by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services with assistance from the Community Mental Health Association

September 11, 2019
Fetter Center
2251 Business Ct., Kalamazoo, MI
9:00 am – 4:00 pm
Check-in and networking, 8:30 am
The workshop is free. However, registration is required as space is limited.
Continental breakfast and lunch provided.
Questions: Contact Lakesia Powell-Dixon at 517-284-1272 or Powell-Dixon@cmhs.org

Workshop Objectives
Gain an understanding of environmental contaminants including PTAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances).
Recognize that psychological stress is a normal reaction to an abnormal situation.
Identify early community interventions to address emotional and behavioral impacts.
Be aware of Michigan’s response to PTAS and resources available to the public.

Register online: https://bit.ly/2Tflyw3F Registration closes September 6, 2019

Continuing Education Credits
Social Workers: This course qualifies for a maximum of 4 Continuing Education Hours. The Community Mental Health Association is an approved provider with the Michigan Social Work Continuing Education Collaborative.
Approval Provider Number: MCEC-062818
Certificate Awarded: At the conclusion of this training, turn in your Certificate of Attendance form to the CMHA Staff to be approved. You will turn in the top sheet and retain the bottom sheet, which serves as your certificate. No other certificates will be given.
Certificate Issued By: Christina Ward, Director of Education & Training; ward@cmhs.org or 517-374-6848
Evaluation/Feedback: There will be an opportunity for each participant to complete an evaluation of the course and the instructor. If you have any issues with the way in which this conference was conducted or other problems, you may note that on your evaluation or you may contact CMHAM at 517-374-6840 or through our website at www.cmhs.org for resolution.
Pilot Testing: Environmental Contamination Response Training for Behavioral Health Professionals

ROUNGLY 12 PARTICIPANTS FROM KCMH

ACQUIRED INVALUABLE FEEDBACK ON THE TRAINING

NEXT STEPS ARE...
Conduct in-depth research into resource/data gaps & identify best practices
Plan, Design, & Support Data Collection Methods & Community-Based Response Efforts

Actions will be dependent upon findings and conversations with federal and community partners
But what can you do right now to start making an impact?
Tips: DO...

• Acknowledge that stress and worry are normal responses to potential chemical exposures.
• Work in partnership with the community
• Provide practical assistance
• Help the person/community be prepared for the long-term nature of the situation
• Have response staff get trained in Psychological First Aid
Coping with the stress that environmental contamination can cause

Environmental contamination in your community can disrupt life as usual. Feeling stress is a normal reaction to this unusual situation. This fact sheet discusses some reasons people feel stress about environmental contamination, what you can do to support your health if you feel stress, and who to contact if you need help dealing with stress.

Environmental contamination can cause stress for several reasons.
- You may feel unsafe at home.
- You may worry that your home and neighborhood are unsafe.
- You may fear for your children's health. If you have little or no control over possible harmful exposures, you may feel you can't protect your children from harm.
- You may feel uncertain about your present and future health. It's often not easy to spot or measure health effects from exposure to environmental contaminants. Sometimes people exposed to contaminants don't show health problems until years later. Sometimes exposure is at levels that will not cause harm. You may feel like you can't protect your health or gain closure because of these uncertainties.
- Your family and community may have conflicts. Family and community members may disagree about how serious the environmental contamination is and what to do about it.
- You may feel frustrated by the long investigations. Investigating environmental exposure and health risks, as well as cleaning up contaminated areas, can take years. Waiting can be stressful, especially if you are worried about your family's health.
- You may lose trust in government, community leaders, organizations, and businesses. You may lose trust in people or organizations that caused the problem or could have prevented it. You may also worry that you are not getting the information you need to protect your health.
- You may have financial concerns. If you are a property owner, you may fear that environmental contamination will lower your property value.

Stress is your body's natural reaction to any kind of threat that disrupts life as usual. While not all stress is bad, ongoing stress can lead to mental and physical health effects.

Cómo enfrentar el estrés que puede causar la contaminación ambiental

La contaminación ambiental en su comunidad puede alterar la forma en que está acostumbrado a vivir. Sentir estrés es una reacción normal ante esta situación insusual. Esta hoja informativa analiza algunas de las razones por las cuales las personas se sienten estresadas por la contaminación ambiental, qué se puede hacer por la salud si se siente estresado y a quién contactar si necesita ayuda para enfrentar el estrés.

La contaminación ambiental puede causar estrés por varios motivos.
- Se puede sentir inseguro en su propia casa. Es posible que le preocupe que su casa y el vecindario sean inseguros.
- Se puede tener por la salud de los hijos. Si tiene muy poco o nada de control ante las posibles exposiciones perjudiciales, quizás sienta que no puede proteger a sus hijos de que sufran algún daño.
- Se puede tener incertidumbre con respecto a la salud actual y futura. Con frecuencia no es fácil determinar o medir los efectos que la exposición a contaminantes ambientales provoca en la salud. A veces las personas que están expuestas a contaminantes no muestran problemas de salud por varios años. A veces la exposición es a un nivel que no causa daños. Es posible que sienta que no puede proteger su salud o darle un cierto grado de seguridad.
- Su familia y la comunidad pueden estar en desacuerdo. Quizás los miembros de la familia y los de la comunidad no estén de acuerdo sobre la seriedad de la contaminación ambiental y qué hacer al respecto.
- Se puede sentir frustrado por la larga duración de la investigación. Investigar la exposición ambiental y los riesgos para la salud, así como también la limpieza de los áreas contaminadas, puede llevar años. La espera puede resultar estresante, especialmente si le preocupan la seguridad de su salud y la de su familia.
- Quizás pierda la confianza en el gobierno, los líderes comunitarios, las organizaciones y las empresas. Puede perder la confianza en las personas o organizaciones que causaron el problema o que no hicieron nada al respecto. Tal vez se preocupe, al mismo tiempo, de que no esté recibiendo la información necesaria para proteger su salud.
- Puede tener preocupaciones económicas. Si es el dueño de una propiedad, es posible que teme que la contaminación ambiental reduzca su valor.
Tips: Don’t..

• Compare stress and exposure-related health risks
• Talk about stress with a person who is angry
• Diagnose mental health issues
Continuing Conversations & Identifying Resources

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CAN YOU THINK OF A COMMUNITY OR SITE WHERE ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINATION HAS CAUSED STRESS? IF SO, WHAT DID THE RESPONSE LOOK LIKE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL?