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COMPETITIVE DIVISION – GRADUATE STUDENT

Haunted by Ike: Severe Trauma, Damage to Sentimental Possessions, Collective Efficacy, and Gender as Predictors of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) following Hurricane Ike

This study quantitatively examined factors related to natural disaster survivors developing a presumptive diagnosis of acute post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) using the Galveston Bay Recovery Study Wave 1 Data (openly sourced from the University of Michigan ICSPR). This study contributes to the mental health literature following natural disasters and adds to previous studies that looked at PTSD outcomes after natural, technological, and conflict events. Those who experienced severe hurricane-related severe trauma, damage or loss in sentimental possessions including photos or pets, and/or lived in a community with lower social efficacy, had an increased odd of developing a presumptive diagnosis of PTSD, even when controlling for gender, age, marital status, education, income, and respondent having children. There were no significant relationships found between pre-Ike related stress and hurricane-related exposures, an inconsistent finding within the mental health literature. These findings suggest the need to normalize psychological first aid and mental health care in emergency response activities, survey survivors during the disaster response and recovery phase to assess personal damage levels beyond the physical home, and encourage community organizations to plan activities and community events that build or enhance community cohesion.

poPresentation Theme: Academic student research

List of Collaborators, Advisors, and Departments: Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice, Disaster Research Center