

Bridging EM Practice and Education Through Dialogue:

How Conflict Strengthens Diversity for Our Future

10/20/2020 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Speaker: Susamma Seeley, CEM

Presentation Abstract:

As a CEM specializing in disaster human services, I entered a disaster science PhD program to understand and embrace the complexity of the world and to become the best emergency management professional I could be. Along the way, I learned many lessons about how our practice has evolved and what we should consider doing differently. In spite of the many decades of experience with disasters of all types, we seem to be making the same mistakes, repeatedly. Perhaps it is time to look inward to assess how we can move forward as a profession and how education and awareness plays a role in this growth. In this session, we will explore the tool of dialogue and how it enables conflict and diversity of thought to be strengths instead of obstacles. We will discuss how introspection and insight are the keys to forging new connections and nuanced understanding. This is especially important as we all struggle to find new ways to think about problems and build new relationships to serve our communities.

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Speaker Bio:

Susamma Seeley, a Certified Emergency Manager, is a disaster science and management doctoral student at University of Delaware. She is the United Nations representative for the Malankara Social Service Society, a South Indian NGO with Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Ms. Seeley is also a proud veteran of the U.S. Army. Prior to starting her doctoral studies, she worked with a national faith based organization where she specialized in crisis and disaster human services coordination and had also served as the Chairperson of the New York City and the Missouri State Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NYC VOAD & MO VOAD). Ms. Seeley was a member of the Catholic Charities USA Disaster Assessment and Response Team where she was deployed to many notable disasters including the 2011 Joplin Tornado, and the 2012 New Jersey Super Storm Sandy response. When she deployed on their behalf, she specialized in the integration of the local Catholic Charities disaster operations into the local community's response and recovery.