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Raising the Beer Flag: Bonding and Bridging Social Capital Among Disaster Response Volunteers as Protective Factors Against the Post-Deployment Blues

The United States has been built upon a philosophy of volunteerism and community altruism. As environmental hazards become more frequent and severe due to climate change, the impact on people and communities is becoming more apparent, requiring the skills and resources that National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster possess. Although philanthropic activities following disasters have become predictable and often expected, little research has examined the transition of these volunteers from their disaster zone back-home. This project seeks to answer the following questions: How do short-term disaster response volunteers' transition from high-stress response fieldwork back to pre-deployment life? This study conducted 24 in-depth qualitative interviews short-term disaster volunteers from Team Rubicon using a phenomenological approach. The understanding of the reentry and transition experience of disaster volunteers is critical to create or enhance current nonprofit debriefing programs, wellness activities, and volunteer resources consistent with peer-reviewed research. This study will add to the existing body of knowledge within emergency and nonprofit management to inform future planning, outreach, and policy change.

Presentation Theme: Nonprofit Management, Volunteer Management, Disaster Response and Recovery

Collaborators, Advisor(s) and Department(s) that assisted with this research:

Graduate Thesis Committee: Tricia Wachtendorf, Sarah DeYoung, and Anne Bowler; Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice & The Disaster Research Center

Funding: None