# The Psychological Effects of Evacuations During Disasters: A Meta-Analysis

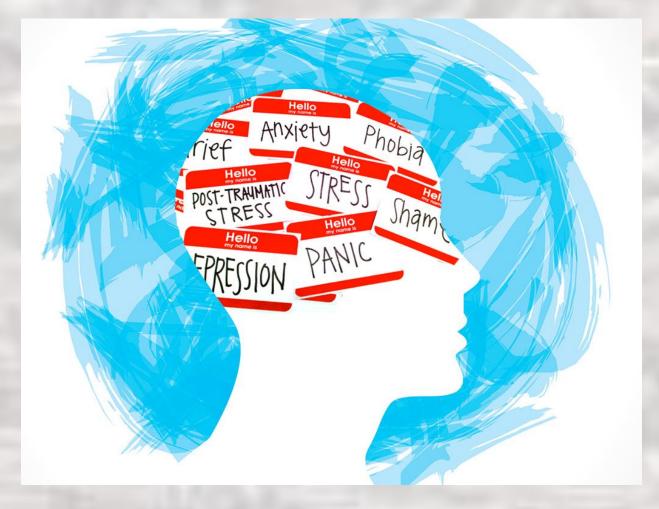
Dr. Sean Graham – IAEM 2025 Annual Conference

# Introduction

Evacuations save lives but may cause significant psychological consequences. Meta-analysis of 10 studies shows higher PTSD, depression, and anxiety in evacuees.

### Methods

Meta-analysis of peer-reviewed studies (2017–2024). Focus: displaced vs. non-displaced populations in hurricanes, floods, and wildfires.



# Recommendations

Pre-position mental health professionals in shelters.

Train staff in trauma-informed communication & psychological first aid.

Expand tele-mental health services, esp. in rural areas.

Develop culturally responsive outreach & family-centered interventions.

Build community-based resilience programs (peer support, schools, churches).

#### Conclusion

Evacuations save lives but create long-term invisible wounds anxiety, depression, trauma. Integrating mental health into disaster management is an ethical imperative.

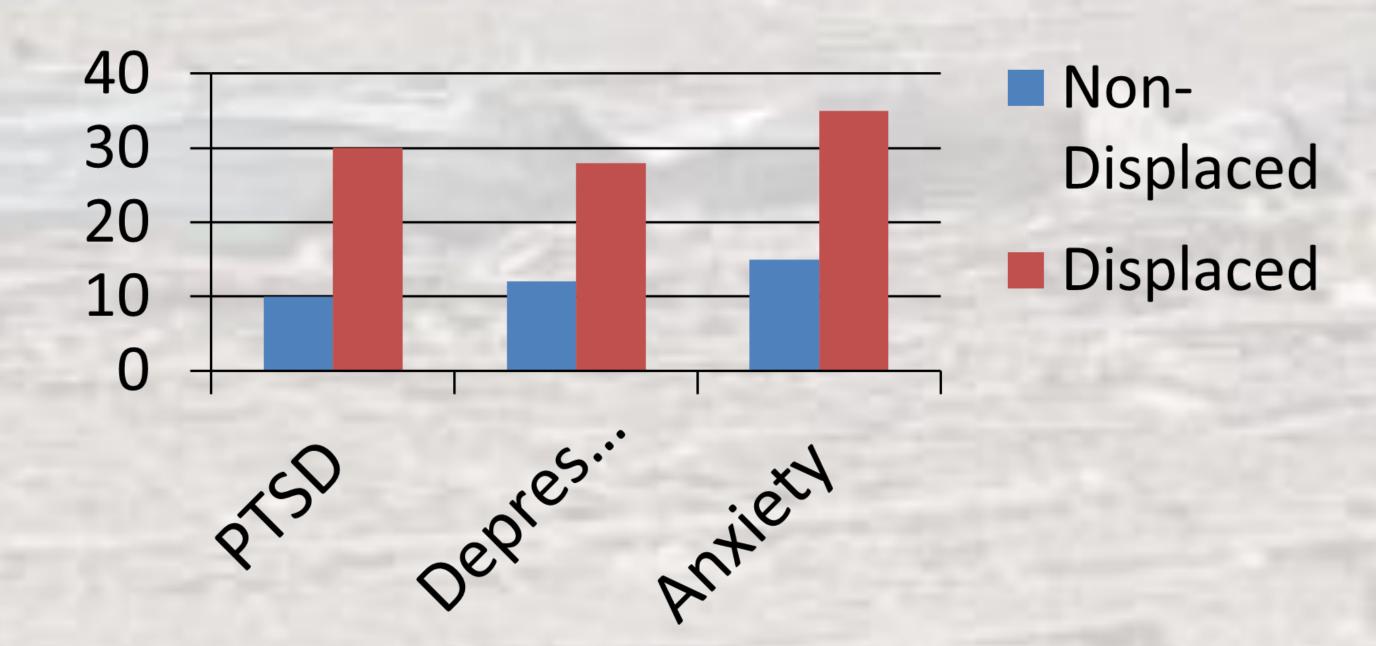
# **Key Findings**

Children: regression, anxiety, bed-wetting, irritability, social withdrawal. Older adults: confusion, helplessness, medical complications (esp. dementia/mobility issues).

General adults: PTSD most prevalent during abrupt/unplanned evacuations. Shelters: crowding, lack of privacy, noise, poor sanitation worsen trauma. Prolonged displacement: family separation, job loss, housing instability compound stress.

# **Implications**

Evacuation is not just logistics it is a public health concern. Psychological impacts can persist long after danger passes. Unequal recovery highlights the need for mental health integration.



#### References