

## **Dr. Suzanne Horsley**

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### **Competitive Division - Academic**

#### The Intersection of Disaster Communication and Mental Health

Repeated disaster response experiences play a toll on disaster communicators, and while there are more resources available today to support their mental health needs, there has been little investigation into the down-the-line effects on the communities they serve. This presentation shares findings from focus groups and in-depth interviews conducted with leaders and communicators in emergency management and response organizations to learn more about the emotional and mental health challenges from repeated trauma exposure on this particular group of emergency workers who are often the public face of their organizations during disasters. In addition, in some situations, they do not receive the same level of care and consideration for their mental health needs as traditional first response and emergency management staff. The study also shares strategies communicators use to support their communities' emotional and mental health needs during all phases of disaster planning and subsequent commemorations

**Presentation Theme:** This presentation provides findings from research about the intersection of disaster communication and mental health.

**Collaborators, Advisor(s) and Department(s) that assisted with this research:** Daphne Cain, Ph.D., LCSW

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