ZERO DEGREES OF SEPARATION
THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS

- Economic Stability
- Health & Healthcare
- Neighborhood & Environment
- Social & Community Context
- Education
Environmental Trauma: Strengthening a Community through Action

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING/ENGAGEMENT
CASE STUDY: FLINT, MICHIGAN WATER CRISIS

PRESENTERS: ROBERT BROWN
Poll: Which type of setting best describes where you provide services?

- Community-based organization
- Hospital – outpatient
- Hospital – inpatient
- School/educational facility based program
- Residential facility
- Individual or group private practice
- Government based organizations
- Criminal Justice System
- Other
What is trauma?

“Experiences or situations that are emotionally painful and distressing, and that overwhelm people’s ability to cope, leaving them powerless.”

Center for Nonviolence and Social Justice

“Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life.”

Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*
What is Environmental Trauma?

- Factors that are outside ourselves
- “What constitutes a trauma then is not entirely dependent on the nature of the event but also on the personal and social interpretation of the event and the responses of the affected person, their family and community, as well as the wider society” (Kirmayer et al, 2010)
- Environmental trauma can be triggered by feelings of neglect, helplessness, and loss from observed and felt conflict in the social and physical environment that has negative health implications for a person, family, or community (American Counseling Association, 2011).
- Stress reactions as a result of human-caused disasters may persist longer than natural disasters (Solomon & Green, 1992).
Question for Audience

In a man-made disaster like the water crisis in Flint, what do you think creates trauma?
Description of the Flint Water Crisis

Timeline and Events

Timeline

- November 2011 – Emergency Financial Manager assumes unilateral control of Flint City government
- April 2103 – Emergency Manager signs agreement to stop buying water from Detroit and join the Karegnondi Water Authority
- April 2014 – Detroit stops selling water to Flint; switch to Flint River is made
- May 2014 – Residents begin complaining about the water.
Timeline

- October 2014 – GM switches to township (Detroit) water
- January 2015 – High levels of Trihalomethanes found in Flint water
- January 2015 – City Council calls for a return to Detroit water,
- June 2015 – Federal judge denies injunction to reconnect to Detroit water.
- August 2015 – Genesee Circuit Court Judge issues emergency injunction to reconnect to Detroit water.
Timeline

- September 2015 – Dr. Marc Edwards claims that corrosiveness of Flint water is causing lead to leach into water.
- September 2015 – Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha releases studying showing dangerous levels of lead in Flint children
- September 2015 - State continues to say water is ok
- October 2015 – County Health Department declares a public health emergency
- October 2015 – State puts plan in place to switch back to Detroit water
Timeline

‣ January 2016 – Governor & President declare states of emergency
‣ January 2016 – Free bottled water distribution begins and is still continuing
‣ March 2016 – Governor appointed panel concludes that the State of Michigan is fundamentally accountable for the Flint Water Crisis
Effects/Issues of the Flint Water Crisis

Individual effects/issues:
› daily lives
› individual mental health

Community effects/issues:
› community mental health
› trust
› local economy and businesses
› churches, organizations, institutions
› disenfranchisement
How do you think you heal from environmental trauma like the Flint Water Crisis?
Healing

- What we currently know about health and well being:
  - Children
  - Parent
  - Adult/Senior
  - Community

- What we are doing in Flint to address our Water Crisis trauma
  - Short term, long term
    - Existing programs
    - New programs or efforts
How should you help with manmade environmental trauma? What do you think would be helpful?
Engaging Community

‣ How our community has come together

‣ The struggle to get there
Question for Audience

› What can you do to avoid a similar tragedy like Flint in the future?
Q&A
Upcoming Events

What’s Food Got to Do with it? Food Insecurity and Mental Health
February 2, 2017; 12-1PM

Shattering Wall Series:
Sexual Violence, Assault, and Abuse Overview
February 17, 2017; 1-2PM

Visit our website to register:
http://ctacny.org
Contact us at
CTAC.info@nyu.edu