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Karen F. Gray, *Healing From The Ground Up: A Story of One Community's Recovery from Natural Disaster*

ABSTRACT

Our climate today is unpredictable; the entire world is experiencing the dramatic, often cataclysmic, effects of climate change. From June 1, 2011 to October, 2011, in just 6 months, the small community of Monson, Massachusetts experienced a tornado, a hurricane and an out of season nor'easter blizzard. This qualitative case study examined what community leaders in Monson did to help the community recover. Participants in this study were people who became known and respected for the relief work they contributed to the town of Monson, during and after the tornado. Six participants were interviewed and asked to respond to a series of open-ended questions.

Five major findings emerged from the narrative data: 1) Towns in Massachusetts should look to improve infrastructure prior to disasters. 2) The participants noted that a crisis in a community affects every member, even if some of those members are not directly affected. 3) In a time of crisis, social networking sites can keep townspeople linked and focused on recovery. 4) Although many victims were eligible for state and federal aid, many failed to take advantage of these benefits because they were misinformed or confused about eligibility. 5) A mental health professional offered community meetings on coping with trauma; however, they were poorly attended and/or responded to; this study participant was concerned that residents felt that to get mental health treatment would be stigmatizing.

The major implication for social work practice born from this study is that social workers should be at the helm of disaster response. Trauma response is a specialized practice and not every social worker is knowledgeable or involved in emergency response. Social work programs need to incorporate disaster relief and preparedness in the curriculum.

**Healing From the Ground Up: A Story of One Community's Recovery from Natural
Disaster**

A project based upon an independent investigation,
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Master of Social Work.

Karen F. Gray

Smith College School for Social Work
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063

2013

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis advisor Jean LaTerz for her constant support and guidance throughout this whole process, without her help and support I could not have finished this project. I would like to thank Debra Carney from the writing center for her support and help in guiding me to become the best writer I can be. I would like to take an opportunity to thank my husband Marc for his encouragement through the writing of this thesis and for his continued love and support throughout the ups and downs of this graduate program. I would like to thank my daughter Cassidy for being the reason why I undertook this incredible journey, without her love, patients and sense of humor, none of this would have been possible, I will forever continue to be your role model, I strive to show you what a woman can accomplish in this world! I would also like to thank my mother for her encouragement and patience. I would also like to thank my fellow Monson community members for inspiring me in so many ways and for showing me how to be “Monson Strong”.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The design of this research was a qualitative case study. This case study presents a detailed description of Monson, damages and needs, pre, during and post tornado. On June 1, 2011 a category EF3 tornado with wind speeds up to 165 mph, according to The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, (NOAA June 1, 2011) hit the small town of Monson Massachusetts. This small western Massachusetts community was not expecting or prepared for such a natural disaster of this magnitude. (See Appendix I for MEMA map of communities with confirmed tornado touchdowns) With three confirmed fatalities, 72 injuries, the tornado headed directly through the center of Monson, “In Monson, widespread damage occurred to commercial and residential buildings...with many homes completely destroyed. The roof of the Monson High School was destroyed. Forested parts of the town experienced nearly complete deforestation” (NOAA, June 1, 2011) In the wake of the tornado, the residents were left without a town hall, a local grocery store, some historical landmarks, two local churches and countless trees. Yet in the midst of this disaster, several community members were able to start a grassroots recovery effort. This grassroots effort utilized the social media that put emergency response into action by the community members themselves. Community leaders stepped up these recovery efforts by providing concrete services such as basic needs, food, shelter, safety, helping people put their lives back in order. To this day the recovery efforts continue.

In my research I found a lot of disaster coverage on fire, flood, earthquake and hurricane but very little specific disaster information from a tornado especially in a residential community outside the perimeter of the tornado alley in mid-Western United States.

The purpose of this proposed community case study is to describe Monson's post recovery process from the June 1, 2011 tornado through the eyes of these community leaders in order to gain a deeper understanding of the healing process as conducted by the leaders of the community for this particular experience in Monson. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) states that,

The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person and environment construct, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, social work's purpose is actualized through its quest for social and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons (CSWE, 2008, p.1)

In addition, the CSWE education policy 2.1.9 states that competent social workers are able to respond to context that shape practice. "Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively" (CSWE, 2008, p.6).

By analyzing the post disaster recovery of the small community of Monson, what can the field of social work learn from this small community that may improve the quality of life for all persons post natural disaster? By analyzing emerging technology sources and practical experience, what can be learned from Monson's disaster response that will help social workers to build disaster resilient communities? Hopefully, the information gathered from these community leaders may help social workers to be better prepared if and when the next disaster strikes.

The Monson case study will examine the experiences of four, possibly five, community leaders who were integral to the disaster response and recovery. Monson is a small community located a few towns away from the Smith College School for Social Work. This small community experienced a devastating natural disaster. Most social workers only get to experience helping of this nature far away from home and for a short time span. The proximity of this disaster provides an opportunity to look at the short term and long term recovery of this small community as it heals and may serve as a guide to building disaster resilient communities in the future. As Miller (2012) states, “People are viewed as being inherently durable and resilient and capable of recovering from disaster, often using their own or local resources” (p. 14) Miller added, “Rebuilding collective capacity relies on the empowerment of local people who know their culture, community, and one another. Local participation in planning and decision making is essential. (p. 15)

The aim of the present study is to critically analyze the actions of the community leaders during the disaster and post disaster in the hope that social workers can become familiar with additional strength based community resilience skills to implement short term strategies that will have a long term effect on communities who experience a natural disaster. According to Duffy (2012), “Social interactions, competencies and interactions improved by ‘community development’ activities form a critical part of the resilience-building triumvirate” (p. 41) The findings will be used for the completion of my master’s thesis, meeting the requirements for graduation from The Smith School for Social Work. The findings and information may possibly be used for publication and presentation.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

The following literature review will focus on previous research pertaining to the study question: “How can social workers assist community leaders in the long term natural disaster recovery process?” The first section will address the impact of global warming and its effect on the weather. The second section will define and describe the various types of natural disasters. The third section will focus on disaster relief and recovery, who may be involved, and the role of a social worker in the recovery efforts. The last section focuses on the town of Monson, specifically, the history of Monson before the tornado, and the post disaster relief and recovery efforts.

Global Warming

Central to this study is an understanding of how weather, climate, climate change, and extreme weather events are related and contribute to global warming, extreme weather events and disaster. These terms are defined below.

For the purpose of this study carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide will collectively be known as *greenhouse gases* and *radiative forcing* will be defined as the “perturbation to the energy balance of the Earth-Atmosphere system” (Houghton et al, 1996, p. 21).

Accord to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *weather* is defined as “the fluctuating state of the atmosphere around us, characterized by temperature, wind, precipitation, clouds and other weather elements.” and *climate* is defined as “the average weather in terms of the mean and its variability over a certain time-span and a certain area” (Houghton et. al, 2001, pg. 788).

Climate change and climate extreme according to the IPCC special report, *Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation or SREX* (2012), are defined as,

A change in the state of the climate that can be identified by changes in the mean and/or variability of its properties and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. Climate change may be due to natural internal processes or external forcings, or to persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or in land use.
(p. 5)

The SREX report also stated:

Climate extreme or extreme weather or climate event is the occurrence of a value of weather or climate variable above or below a threshold value near the upper or lower ends of the range of observed values of the variable. For simplicity, both extreme weather events and extreme climate events are referred to collectively as climate extremes. (p. 5)

The *Summary for Policymakers* in the IPCC full report of 1995 noted that, “Greenhouse gases have continued to increase producing a radiative forcing which is gradually warming the planet and producing other climate changes (p. 3). One of the produced changes is that average sea levels have risen and the quantity of heat in the oceans has increased” (p. 6).

How do humans contribute to all the changes that impact global warming? The IPCC answered in the 2001 full report:

This human influence included the burning of fossil fuels, the combustion of biomass, and the production of greenhouse gases and aerosols which have been an impact upon radiative forcing. Also, changing land use methods (agriculture, irrigation, deforestation, and reforestation) effect the physical and biological properties of the Earth’s surface, and

the growth of cities leads to the formation of urban heat islands with very localized impacts. (p. 102)

Below is a diagram (Figure 1) that describes the impact of the weather, greenhouse gases, weather events, exposure and vulnerability to those events all lead to disaster risk and disaster risk management. It is important to note that greenhouse gases remain in the Earth's atmosphere for a long time, are steadily increasing and have a long-term effect on the radiative forcing of the Earth's atmosphere.

There are inherent risks associated with extreme weather, such as exposure to the extreme weather event and vulnerability. *Vulnerability* or the degree to which someone is predisposed to be adversely affected by the weather event include the elderly, homeless, children, disabled, pregnant, or those who do not have the capability to respond to the extreme weather event or those who are at the mercy of receiving assistance from another member of society to respond. The IPCC report (2012) added that,

Adverse impacts are considered disasters when they produce widespread damage and cause severe alterations in the normal functioning of communities or societies. Climate extremes, exposure, and vulnerability are influenced by a wide range of factors, including anthropogenic climate change, natural climate variability, and socioeconomic development (Figure 1). Disaster risk management and adaptation to climate change focus on reducing exposure and vulnerability and increasing resilience to the potential adverse impacts of climate extremes, even though risks cannot fully be eliminated. (p.4)

Figure 1

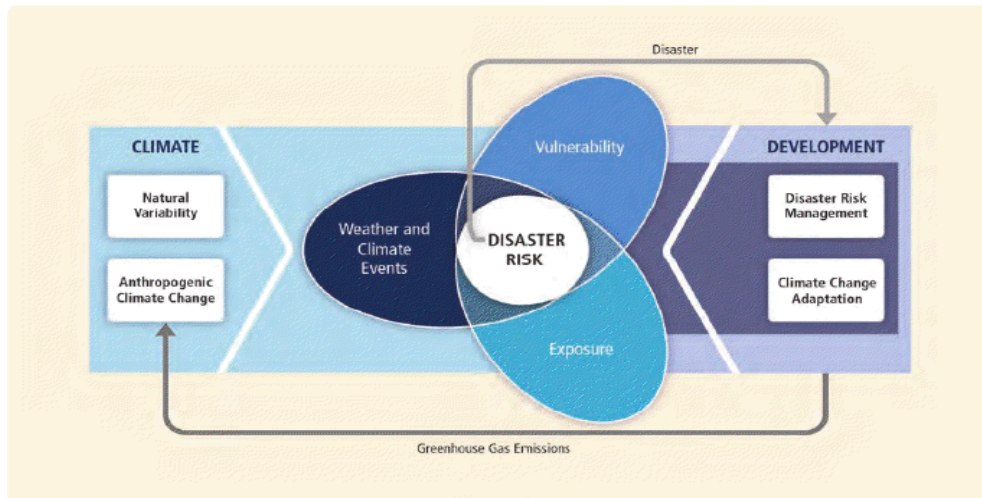


Figure SPM.1 | Illustration of the core concepts of SREX. The report assesses how exposure and vulnerability to weather and climate events determine impacts and the likelihood of disasters (disaster risk). It evaluates the influence of natural climate variability and anthropogenic climate change on climate extremes and other weather and climate events that can contribute to disasters, as well as the exposure and vulnerability of human society and natural ecosystems. It also considers the role of development in trends in exposure and vulnerability, implications for disaster risk, and interactions between disasters and development. The report examines how disaster risk management and adaptation to climate change can reduce exposure and vulnerability to weather and climate events and thus reduce disaster risk, as well as increase resilience to the risks that cannot be eliminated. Other important processes are largely outside the scope of this report, including the influence of development on greenhouse gas emissions and anthropogenic climate change, and the potential for mitigation of anthropogenic climate change. [1.1.2, Figure 1-1]

Global Warming: Changes to the Weather

According to the I.P.C.C's climate change and water technical report VI, "It is very likely that heavy precipitation events will become more frequent. Intensity of precipitation events is projected to increase" (Bates et al, 2008 p. 26). Representative Edward Markey, Chairman of the House Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming, said it best: "Global warming will push weather outside the range of what we used to know as normal." (Global Warming Effects on Extreme Weather, GWEEW, 2008 p. 2).

Global warming is a tale of extremes, it is not enough water, it is too much water. It is Californians battling to protect their homes from drought-filled wildfires; it is Midwest communities sandbagging levees to hold back floodwaters. It is public health officials protecting the elderly from dangerous heat waves; it is water utilities trying to provide

drinking water for a growing population. It is farmers trying to cope with not enough water or too much water. Certainly floods, droughts and heat waves have always occurred. But by loading up the atmosphere with global warming pollution we are loading up Mother Nature's dice for more extreme weather. (GWEEW 2008, p. 1)

In New England, global warming has caused an increase in temperature, "Over the last 35 years, winter temperatures in the Northeast have increased overall by a remarkable 4.4 degrees Fahrenheit" (Global Warming Mountaintop Summit, GWMS, Economic Impacts on New England, 2007 p.1). "To put this in perspective, that is the equivalent of taking a Boston wintertime climate and moving it south to Philadelphia. This is not climate change in the future. This has already happened, and we have seen the impact" (GWMS, Economic Impacts on New England, 2007 p. 22). In a statement by Cameron Wake, an associate professor at the Climate Change Research Center and the Department of Earth Science, University of New Hampshire he noted:

The timing of high spring flows has changed over the last 35 years with our spring runoff occurring much earlier. Ice thaw dates are occurring much earlier in the spring. Lilacs are blooming 4 to 5 days earlier, and sea levels continue to rise, and we see the effects of those in the most recent nor'easter with considerable flooding both in Massachusetts and New Hampshire and Maine. So our climate is changing. That is clear. (GWMS, Economic Impacts on New England, 2007 p. 22)

This climate change is already happening. All one has to do is look outside the window to see its effects. In recent years extreme sea levels have caused flooding, such as Hurricane Sandy or increased cyclone activity such as the Monson tornado. Increased cyclone activity is "likely increase in average tropical cyclone maximum wind speed. Heavy rainfalls associated with

tropical cyclones are likely to increase. Projected sea level rise is expected to further compound tropical cyclone surge impact” (IPCC, Summary for Policymakers, SREX 2012, p.19).

The climate is always changing which makes it difficult to respond to weather related ebbs and flows. What makes responding to weather and climate so challenging is its varying impact from house to house, street to street, town to town and city to city. As with the Monsoon tornado, many areas were demolished while others were left untouched. Resilience, relief and management start with adaptability, preparation and knowledge. According to the IPCC SREX (2012), “Many of the extreme impacts associated with climate change, and their attendant additional risks and opportunities, will inevitably need to be understood and responded to principally at the scale of the individual, the individual household, and the community” (p. 38).

Role of Accurate Weather Forecasting

Accurate weather forecasting and predication is vital to lessen the damage and loss caused by extreme weather events. Notifications such as a storm watch, storm warning, or other extreme weather events, tornado watch/warning, blizzard watch/warning, hurricane watch/warning etc. become vital to people in preparation for such an event. The notification system informs people about weather related information via television, the internet, cellular phone, radio and/or word of mouth. Preparing for such an event can make a critical difference in terms of lives saved and damage reduced. Those who do not have media access are more vulnerable to the harsh effects of the extreme weather event.

Due to extreme fluctuations in the weather systems, there is not a lot of time when it comes to predicting the weather. NOAA states “The current average lead time for tornado warnings is 13 minutes. NOAA Research is working to increase tornado warning lead-times much further” (NOAA-Tornado 101 pg.1) In addition, according to the IPCC, Working Group I

of 1990, “Our ability to predict the weather is limited. The average convective system can be described only for a few hours into the future” (p. 41). This does leave some time for preparation, but not always enough time.

It is important to differentiate between a tornado warning and a tornado watch, NOAA defines a tornado watch as follow: “A tornado watch means tornadoes are possible in your area. Remain alert for approaching storms. The NOAA Storm Prediction Center issues tornado and severe thunderstorm watches.” NOAA defines a tornado warning as, “A tornado Warning means a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar – time to take cover! Your local National Weather Service office issues tornado and server thunderstorm warnings.” Knowing the difference between a tornado watch and a tornado warning can save lives.

Natural Disaster

What is a natural disaster? When thinking about this question the word natural needs to be defined. According to Webster’s dictionary (Webster, 2011), *Natural* is an adjective with eight different meanings. Only four of the eight meanings apply when describing a natural disaster, they are in or produced by nature, being or acting as expected, normal, occurring in the normal course of life. (p.280)

Disaster according to Webster’s dictionary (Webster, 2011) is something that happens suddenly and causes much suffering and loss. (p.124) Webster’s offers a basic definition to the word disaster. But, in all reality; it is much harder to define the word disaster due to its variability, contributing factors, damage and extent of loss, individual vs. societal impact and interruption to functioning. Miller (2012) offers a complex, in-depth, definition of disaster;

A process that encompasses an event, or series of events, affecting multiple people, groups and communities, causing damage, destruction, and loss of life. There is a public

and collective dimension to disaster, as well as individual suffering. The disaster process is socially constructed (at least by some) as being outside of ordinary experience, overwhelming usual individual and collective coping mechanisms, disrupting social relations, and at least temporarily disempowering individuals and communities. (p. 13)

A weather- related natural disaster is often attributed as an act of Mother Nature (or a higher power, some believe). Either way, a natural disaster is caused by forces found in nature. Many may not realize that natural disaster can also have an *anthropogenic* cause or be classified as having “man-made” contributions.

In the *anthropocene* (most recent period in the earth’s history when human activities have a significant global impact on the earth’s climate and ecosystems)...“Most natural disasters are aggravated by anthropogenic activities. Thus, hazards, which are a part of nature, often turn into disasters due to human actions or inactions. For example, severe flooding is often aggravated by deforestation, urbanization, silting, and building in floodplains. Destruction of nature’s natural defenses such as wetland and coastal swamps is responsible for the severe damage by tropical cyclones, apart from ecological damage and loss of biodiversity. Failure to impose building codes and implement earthquake-resistant techniques is mainly responsible for the collapse of buildings and human fatalities even by relatively low intensity earthquakes. Human activities are also responsible for the threat of global climate change and rising sea levels as a result of global warming caused by increased greenhouse gases (GHGs) concentrations in the atmosphere. (Jha, 2009, p 1)

Bates has this to say about the man made contributions,

At the continental scale, it is likely that there has been significant anthropogenic warming

over the past 50 years averaged over each of the continents except Antarctica. For widespread regions, cold days, cold nights and frost have become less frequent, while hot days, hot nights and heatwaves have become more frequent over the past 50 years. (Bates et al. 2008 p.3)

Types of Natural Disaster

Natural disasters can be classified into four major groups: 1) *geophysical disasters*, seismic events related to the motion of the earth's tectonic plates, such as earthquake, volcanic eruption, rock fall, landslide, avalanche and subsidence and tsunamis; 2) *droughts*, not enough water, extreme hot temperature, extreme cold temperature, wildfire, forest fire and insect infestations; 3) *pandemic diseases* distinguished by the global spread of newly-emerging infectious diseases or uncharacteristically virulent strains of well-known foes such as influenza; and 4) *hydro-meteorological disaster*, weather-related events, such as typhoons, cyclones, floods, drought, rain storms, winter storms, hurricanes and wind storms (Disaster classification).

Natural Disaster Damage

Damage according to Webster's dictionary (Webster, 2011) is the loss or harm caused by injury to a person's body or property. The damage and loss caused by a natural disaster is as varied as the natural disaster itself. These include *individual damage*, affecting only one person or thing. *family damage*; affecting a family and its system; *community damage*, affecting many family systems that make up a community; *town damage*, effecting individuals, families, communities and town infrastructure, as well as state, country, continent, and global damage. Vha 2009 writes, "Disasters result in a serious disruption in the functioning of a society and widespread damages to life, property, infrastructure and environment" (p. 13).

For some individuals, their ability to respond to a disaster is compromised. They are at greater risk possibly due to age, disability, pregnancy, socioeconomic status, and/or location. The damage caused by a natural disaster can compound the individual's ability to recover and the damage can become much greater due to the person's increased vulnerability and risk.

According to the IPCC, the definition of *disaster risk management* is the process for designing, implementing, and evaluating strategies, policies, and measures to improve the understanding of disaster risk, foster disaster risk reduction and transfer, and promote continuous improvement in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery practices, with the explicit purpose of increasing human security, wellbeing, quality of life, resilience and sustainable development (IPCC, SREX, summary for policymakers, 2011, p.5).

Disaster Relief and Recovery

When a disaster strikes, whether man-made or natural, many different agencies are among the first responders. Depending on where one lives, many state and local agencies or chapters, are involved and often the first to arrive. And national agencies provide additional resources or help depending on the extent of the damage. Following is a list of major agencies, local and national, that were among the first to respond to the June 1st tornado, in the Monson Community.

The American Red Cross

When the tornado touched down in Western Massachusetts on June 1st 2011, several agencies were immediately able to respond.

The American Red Cross (ARC), a national and international humanitarian agency, with a local chapter, the Pioneer Valley Chapter is located in Springfield Massachusetts. This chapter of the American Red Cross was able to provide shelter, meals, various supplies, and emotional

support to victims of the tornados “Within hours of these disasters, trained workers were on the ground, opening shelters and handing out meals and relief supplies. Blood products were sent in when needed. And Red Cross caseworkers met with families to determine short-term housing options” (ARC, 2011 fiscal year in Review, p. 6).

In 2011 alone, the Red Cross responded to, “nearly 63,000 fires, nearly 2000 floods, more than 520 tornadoes, nearly 330 explosions or other hazardous materials accidents and more than 160 major snow storms” (ARC, 2011 fiscal year in Review pg. 1) Additionally they “deployed more than 200,000 disaster workers, opened approximately 490 shelters, served more than 4 million meals and snacks, provided more than 2 million for cleanup, comfort and relief supplies and provided nearly 95,000 health and mental health contacts” (ARC, 2011 fiscal year in Review, pg. 1).

As of July 6, 2011 the Pioneer Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross posted this update on its Facebook page, “Since the June 1 tornadoes, the Red Cross has provided over 27,000 meals, 130,000 snacks, 5600 overnight stays and over 38,000 bulk items including rakes and tarp to tornado victims” (Facebook, July 6, 2011). The local chapter of the American Red Cross is part of the short-term and long-term recovery of a disaster community.

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency or MEMA is a state agency responsible for coordinating federal, state, local, and private resources in the State of Massachusetts during man made or natural emergencies and disasters: “MEMA ensures the Commonwealth’s ability to rapidly recover from large and small disasters by assessing and mitigating hazards, enhancing preparedness, ensuring effective response, and building the capacity to recover” (MEMA mission).

It is important to note that MEMA responds to any man-made or natural disaster within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Employees of MEMA communicate directly with the cities and towns affected by a natural disaster to obtain a full report of the damages sustained. All the information is then transmitted to the MEMA director who informs the Governor of the extent of the damages. If necessary, the Governor informs the President of the United States at which point the President may or may not declare a State of Emergency or Major Disaster. It is important to note that, in 2011 there were four State of Emergencies and/or Major Disaster's declared for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. According to the MEMA regional coordinator, the four 2011 declarations are the most MEMA has experienced in a single year. MEMA is part of the short-term and long-term recovery of a city or town in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, after about two years the long-term recovery help ends and all paperwork must be submitted.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

The Federal Emergency Management Agency, also known as FEMA, describes their mission as follows: "FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards" (Federal Emergency Management Agency-About the Agency)

FEMA offers short term and long term recovery programs, depending on the type of disaster. Initially, a survivor of the disaster must register/apply for FEMA assistance. Unfortunately, FEMA does not offer a lot of time to do this. In the case of the Monson tornadoes, the FEMA deadline for the survivors to register for state and federal disaster assistance was August 15th, 2011. Only 75 days post disaster. If one does not register with FEMA

for disaster assistance in the time period allotted one is ineligible to receive any services from FEMA. (Federal Aid Programs for State of Massachusetts Disaster Recovery)

The services FEMA offered to the survivors of the June 1st tornado were rental payments for temporary housing: “Initial assistance may be provided for up to three months for homeowners and at least one month for renters” (Federal Aid Programs for State of Massachusetts Disaster Recovery) Grants are provided for home repairs, household replacement items (not covered by insurance), and personal property as well as “medical, dental, funeral, transportation and other serious disaster-related needs not covered by insurance and other federal, state and charitable aid programs” (Federal Aid Programs for State of Massachusetts Disaster Recovery). Unemployment benefits up to 26 weeks, low-interest and small business loans are also included. FEMA also set up a team of short-term Community Relations specialists and a short-term Disaster Recovery Center to help individual affected by the June 1st tornadoes. The Disaster Relations Specialists went door to door and “They meet face-to-face with disaster survivors and explain the FEMA aid process” (FEMA Community Relations Teams in Disaster Area to Help) The Disaster Recovery Center served to connect “disaster applicants with state and federal specialists to help survivors start their recoveries” (Three Disaster Recovery Centers to Close, Others change Hours in Hampden, Worcester Counties.).

FEMA reported the following allocations to those affected by the June 1 tornado as of July 14, 2011: Just over \$5 million in federal assistance has been approved for individuals and business owners. Here is a summary through Wednesday, July 13th of all federal assistance to those who suffered losses due to the June 1 severe storms and tornadoes: There were 3,872 applicants who registered with the Federal Emergency Management Agency for some form of disaster assistance. FEMA has approved \$2,924,260.00 in total housing and personal needs. Of

that amount \$1,604,444.00 has been approved for individuals and Household Program (IHP) expenses, including temporary rental assistance, home repair costs and assistance toward replacing destroyed homes. FEMA approved \$1,319,815.00 in Other Needs Assistance to cover essential disaster-related needs, such as medical and dental expenses, funeral expenses and personal property. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) approved \$2,104,800.00 in loans to homeowners, renters or business owners (Federal Aid for Survivors Tops \$5 Million Since Disaster Was Declared).

Role of Social Workers in Disaster Recovery

When the President of the United States declares a state of emergency or major disaster, federal and state assistance are made available to those affected. However, it goes without saying that people and communities are often operating in chaos or the unknown. Most people are initially in disbelief about what just happened or in shock that something like this happened in their own backyard.

The role of a social worker in a disaster situation becomes vital to the recovery of individual, families, groups, and communities and towns. Social workers need to possess the skills and training to respond to the needs of all affected individuals and families. Each and every disaster is different and no two disasters or the response and recovery will be alike. Thus, social workers need to possess skills that can effectively help across a wide spectrum of situations, especially crisis and disaster response.

Some of the skills social workers use to respond in a disaster focus on 1) making sure the physical needs and safety of the individual are met; 2) providing comfort and support; 3) connecting individuals to additional resources and; 4) helping individuals fill out necessary

paperwork. According to the BHN-Trauma response team Director who is a MSW-LICSW, the role of a social worker during disaster response can look like this:

At first all you do is help get their basic needs met - food, shelter and clothing. Give them a cup of coffee and remind them to eat and maybe sit quietly with them particularly if they have lost someone. During one huge fire in Holyoke where over 100 people lost everything, I folded donated clothes with one of the fire clients. People usually are not worried about their emotional needs at this point but... how do I feed my kids..., where am I going to live... etc. As the days go on people begin to break down... all I can compare it to is when someone close to you dies.... and you are making the arrangements... you kind of have it together but then everyone leaves and you break down.... well the process in a disaster is similar. Then we do a lot of case management- getting disaster clients set up with local services, providing short-term counseling as a lot of times you as the social worker have flown in from somewhere else to help in the disaster. Help people develop or hone their coping skills, help people to see some hope in the future. With the news about Texas and Oklahoma the past few days I am sure that some Springfield residents who were in the path of “our” tornado are having difficulty with re-traumatization and emotions and all sorts of feelings coming up for them now so will need some brief support to get back on track. It is about being with the person where they are and not putting them in a box expecting them to behave like the literature says.

Self-care. Everyone who experiences a disaster is impacted in some way, even the first responders and social workers.[Personally, in any work that I do as a social worker, one of the skills that helps me the most is my ability to take good care of myself. Self-care is one of the most important skills I learned in my social work training. I have seen and heard many

traumatizing experiences and narratives. In order to provide the individuals I work with the utmost quality of care, I need to make sure I am taking good care of myself first.] According to Bledsoe, Moore, Perry and Robinson (2011) “Self-care is vital as students prepare to be practitioners who are not only effective in working with all aspects of the clients’ total selves, but who are themselves healthy. They are not prepared to be good practitioners unless they have first learned to care for themselves” (pg.545)

Building rapport. Social Workers must build rapport. Relationship building often takes time - time not available when responding to a disaster. [In working with individuals I treat them with positive acceptance and warm regard; I treat each person with genuine dignity and respect. I actively listen to their account of the situation and try to identify, define or prioritize the immediate problem as well as reflect what I have heard back to them.] Being a member of the Monson community and a social worker I have used these skills many times in my own experience of community recovery.

Monson, Massachusetts

Monson is a very small community. As of the 2010 census data, Monson consisted of 8,560 community members, up 201 from the 2000 census data of 8,359. (Historical Research-Census information: Massachusetts- Hampden County). Monson has a land area of 44.84 square miles and consists of 28,698 acres (Monson, MA-Facts of Interest). Prior to the June 1st tornado the last natural disaster in Monson was the flood of 1955.

Monson was once a part of Brimfield, and in 1760 the 49 families living in the Monson area of Brimfield petitioned to become their own district, “because their church was far away and the roads were poor” (Newland, 1960, p. 6). And, on April 25, 1760 Monson was made a district of its own: “In 1776 Monson became a town with full powers and an elected representative, and

on June 24, 1776, it voted unanimously in favor of 'Independency.' When the Revolution broke out, Monson spread on its own town records a copy of the Declaration of Independence" (Newland, 1960, p. 8).

It is important to note that, in my research of Monson, I could only find one other natural disaster in the history of Monson and it contained a few pictures from a flood in 1955. No other natural disasters were mentioned in the archives.

The year of 2011 was a tough one for Monson; there were 3 major weather related events. These events took a toll on this small community. I have extensive personal knowledge of the toll these weather events had on the community, as my family and myself are a part of this community.

First was the June 1st tornado. According to the National Weather Service, the forecast that day called for "scattered showers and thunderstorms, mainly after noon. Some of the storms could produce.... "Small hail and gusty winds... partly sunny, with a high near 85... south wind between 6 and 15 mph... chance of precipitation is 50%... new rainfall amounts between a tenth and quarter of an inch, except higher amounts possible in thunderstorms" (High near 85 and possible thunderstorms for Wednesday). A tornado was the last thing anybody was thinking could happen in this community.

The second weather related event was Hurricane Irene on August 28, 2011. Not much time had elapsed after the tornado. Then, this major hurricane blew through the small community. Many people were not prepared or had even begun to recover from the tornado before this next big storm in August. Weakened trees and branches were a major concern after the devastating tornado and according to Girard, Globe Correspondent writes, "Felled tree limbs were not the only source of concern. About 12:30 p.m., an electrical fire flared off Wilbraham

Road after a power line fell, a Monson police officer said. The road was closed in both directions, though there were few cars on the road” (Boston.com, 2011, p.1).

Lastly, a powerful snow storm hit Monson on October 29, 2011. Monson was hammered by at least 14 inches of unexpected snow. The weakened trees from the tornado and hurricane could not hold up, many trees fell on power lines; the power was out for at least a week and, in some remote areas of Monson, it took up to 2 weeks for power to be restored. Meiler 2011 writes in, *Early nor’easter is de-ja vu for Monson Tornado Victims*,

Monson's trick-or-treating was cancelled, according to the Monson town website, which states, “Conditions in neighborhoods, including downed trees and limbs, hanging limbs, power outages and uncleared sidewalks, are too dangerous to allow children and families to trick or treat.” Monson residents aren’t expecting to get their power back for four to five days. Schools in Monson will be closed until Thursday. (p.2)

Post Disaster-Community Driven-Relief and Recovery

As I try to write this section, I would like to admit I am struggling, I do not know where to even begin, as I sit and try to write, I feel blocked, I am asking myself, Where do I start? How to I even begin to describe the post-disaster relief and recovery efforts for myself and my community? These may be the same feelings I experienced the day of the tornado, the hurricane and the October snow storm. So I will begin where a majority of the community began, with the Monson Tornado Watch 2011 Facebook page. According to Lindsay 2010, “Social media sites rank as the fourth most popular source to access emergency information” (p. 287). Listed below Lindsay defines the term social media and gives some of today’s examples;

The term ‘social media’ refers to Internet-based applications that enable people to communicate and share resources and information. Some examples of social media

include blogs, discussion forums, chat rooms, wikis, YouTube Channels, LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Social media can be accessed by computer, smart and cellular phones, and mobile phone text messaging (SMS). The use of social media is an evolving phenomenon. During the past decade, rapid change in communication as a result of new technologies have enabled people to interact and share information through media that were non-existent or widely unavailable as recent as 15 years ago. (p. 288)

Monson Tornado Watch 2011 Facebook page. Before residents took an accurate assessment of the damage they sustained, they stayed huddled in basement, bathrooms, driving or pulled over, on the road. Near or far, most residents had the use of their cellular phones and could look up what was happening in real time to their community on the Tornado Watch Facebook page. Lindsay 2010 states, “Within the last five years social media have played an increasing role in emergencies and disasters. Facebook supports numerous emergency-related organizations.” (p. 288)

People connecting to the Facebook page could find out vital information such as: What sections of town were hit? Does anybody know about or seen a specific person? Where is the shelter? Where can I take a shower? Where can I eat? Where can I charge my phone? What roads are blocked off? People from the community who were at work, or even friends and family from out of the area were able to find out about areas of town or their loved ones. The social media web page helped connect this community in a time of a disaster. One volunteer said this in a post about Monson,

One year ago today I had the pleasure of going to a wonderful town called Monson in their time of need! Not knowing what to expect, I went with an open mind. What I saw was destruction like I had never seen before. What I found was a town united and

STRONG - pulling together in their troubled times. What I got out of it were friends I am proud to call my friends. (Facebook post-from Halfmoon N.Y., July 8, 2012).

The Facebook page also evolved and transitioned as the community started the healing process. As more and more volunteers started to arrive, the Facebook page served as a place to find out what was needed. For example, volunteers worked from 7am to 8pm for the days and weeks after the tornado. Many volunteers were outside cutting trees and cleaning debris. No one thought about sunscreen - water, yes, sunscreen, No! So volunteer coordinators were able to request sunblock on the Facebook page, and it was donated.

On the flip side, piles and piles of clothing were being donated. Coordinators were able to request a “hold” on donating clothing and canned goods. The victims had no place to store these items as they were staying in shelters. People requested all kinds of things on the Facebook site including volunteers to help clean up their yard; volunteers with chainsaws to help cut down trees and branches; where to bring certain items. For some, the Facebook page offered more than just a way to request something; it was a way to feel connected with other survivors, possibly offering a sense of relief. Another person had this to say in a post, “We are all better prepared after seeing the devastation last year. We take these warnings much more seriously than we did May 2011. Because we are wiser! Experience is the greatest teacher.” (Facebook Post-August 8, 2012 from Monson Massachusetts).

Currently, the Facebook page serves as an open group for the Monson community. Monson utilizes the social media page today are: weather alerts; where to turn for help; how to prepare for upcoming weather; where to find local contractors or business professionals; how to help other communities affected by extreme weather events; fundraising; replanting; show of progress; venting frustration; town voting; town planning and how to connect to resources. The

Facebook page is a great post-disaster relief and recovery tool. (For pictures please see Appendix H).

The First Church of Monson. Despite being badly damaged by the tornado, The First Church of Monson still served as a gathering place post tornado. People came to get a hot meal, coordinate resources, pray, find a volunteer and receive food or clothing. The pastor of the church describes his experience:

I was home – 2 Ely Rd – when the tornado hit. My wife and I tried to find a safe place on the first floor. And, when a window was broken, we fled to the basement where we stayed till the banging and noise subsided. We went outside to see the trees strewn all over the place, buildings damaged, and the steeple blown off the church. We walked out into the street along with our neighbors shocked and stunned and checking on each other to make sure everyone was okay. As the two successive waves of weather came, we brought folks who into the basement to shelter. The next day I opened the church for anyone who needed anything and organized a prayer service for that evening. (personal communication, 2013)

The Pastor describes the role of the First Church in the communities' relief and recovery:

We provided approximately 30,000 meals in the month following the tornado. We had clothing donations that were eventually moved to St Patrick's Church. We had a pantry with food and household items until the middle of August. We coordinated volunteers, over 1200 in the first month. When this ended there was a need for coordination of services and that eventually came under First Church again. We were the recipient of a Labor Department grant that allowed us to pay the coordinators of volunteer services until January 2012.

The pastor spoke about the role social workers can play in disaster response and recovery; “The community efforts are the most important part of the recovery. Groups like FEMA, MEMA, and the Red Cross will not lift the community out of the rubble. That happens because a community comes together.” For a current photo as well as a before and after photo of the First Church please see Appendix H.

There is still a lot of healing to be done and relief and recovery efforts continue. The First Church, a landmark building here in Monson, is in the process of rebuilding the steeple. The local pastor still works with members of the community, “Many people still need emotional support.”

The deforestation and the missing steeple are constant reminders of nature’s powerful fury. The local Pastor has this to say about the deforestation and damage, “Each and every day it [deforestation] is an issue for me. I know that that is still the most visible reminder of the tornado...It takes a toll on people who see the unfinished work. I believe it is holding many people back from moving on, because there is not yet closure.”

Conclusion

Our global climate is always fluxuating; there are natural and man-made contributions to the weather climate. These contributions push the weather out of what we know as normal. Extreme weather events are becoming more and more frequent. It is vital to look at the extreme weather events experienced in Monson. What can be learned from this small community that can be utilized? In the next chapter, I will describe the methods I used to begin answering this question.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

The purpose of this community case study was to answer the following question, “How can social workers assist community leaders in the long term natural disaster recovery process?” One reason for this study is to describe the town of Monson’s post recovery process from the June 1, 2011 tornado through the eyes of these community leaders in order to gain a deeper understanding of their healing process. Most studies on this topic have been done by researchers visiting communities that have experienced a disaster. Thus, I decided to see what I could learn from this unique opportunity, since I live in this community and have taken part in its long term recovery process.

The proximity of this disaster provides an opportunity to look at the short term and long term recovery of this small community and may serve as a guide for social workers and other professionals to building disaster resilient communities in the future. The sample for this study was purposive as I selected the participants based on my own knowledge of the Monson community. Participants were seen in face-to-face interviews that were audio recorded and transcribed. I conducted a content analysis for long-term recovery possibilities, themes and possible areas for further discussion.

Characteristics of Participation and Nature of Participation

Participants in this study had to be English-speaking, over the age of 18 and had to have a connection to Monson and/or be viewed as community leaders. A *community leader* as it relates to this study is a person who became socially prominent and respected for the work he or she contributed to the town of Monson, during and after the tornado. The participants were chosen

for their quick response to the disaster, their varied ability to connect to the different populations in Monson; and the number of people in Monson that were affected by their recovery efforts.

In addition to the aforementioned participants, I also interviewed the archivist for the town of Monson because I learned that this person had extensive knowledge of the Monson Community, pre and post tornado. This interview with the archivist was relevant for the purpose of better understanding this small community and collecting additional information about the tornado and disaster relief.

The interviews were audio recorded and participants were required to sign an informed consent at the time of the interview. At the end of the interview, participants were given the opportunity to recommend other potential community leaders who might be interested in participating in the case study.

Recruitment Procedures

As indicated, the study consisted of a purposive sampling of community leaders from the Monson community. I initially contacted people I knew personally and professionally in the Monson community to tell them about my case study and asked them if they would help me develop the study and identify additional participants who met eligibility criteria. Through social networking and attending a training, on the trauma of natural disaster, I selected participants who are acknowledged community leaders by the community itself.

The recruitment process began once I received the approval letter from the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee (Appendix A). The recruitment process consisted my phoning three people already known to me, and whose participation I had already verbally obtained. I sent recruitment letters (Appendix B) to the two additional participants, explaining the nature and purpose of the study and how the findings

would be disseminated. In the event I did not hear back from the participants, I sent a second reminder letter. In an attempt to gain more participants if these persons declined to participate, my plan B was to write a recruitment letter and post it on the Monson Tornado Watch 2011 Facebook page (Appendix C). The page is still active and is an open group, however, I did not need to implement plan B.

Informed Consent Procedures

A copy of the written informed consent (Appendix D), which had to be signed at the time of the interview, was given in hand or emailed to the participant. The informed consent described the voluntary nature of the participation in the study, the participant's right not to answer any particular question(s), and the participant's right to completely withdraw from the study at any time prior to the submission of the study.

At the beginning of the face-to-face interview, participants were given the opportunity to ask any additional questions they might have about the study before being required to sign the informed consent. Participants were given a copy of the informed consent for record-keeping. At the end of the face-to-face interview participants were given the opportunity to add any relevant information they wanted to add and/or suggest additional participants.

Risks and Benefits of Participation

Participants were offered no financial compensation or other material benefit for participating in this case study. Participants may have benefited from having the opportunity to reflect upon their contribution to the Monson community before, during and after the June 1st tornado that hit the Monson Community and their own healing as they had the opportunity to voice their own personal narratives of their experiences. They may have also benefited from the knowledge that they were contributing to a professional body of knowledge.

There were a few potential risks to the participants in the study. One potential risk to the participants may have been the strong feelings that could have emerged from disclosing their narrative of their own personal experience. To meet this potential risk I compiled and distributed to each participant in the informed consent a listing of local mental health and human service resources in the community that could be contacted if the participant experienced this need. (Appendix E)

Protection of Confidentiality

Every precaution was taken to safeguard the confidentiality of the participants and the community members they assisted. However this is a small community and many details have been in the public area for other to connect to an actual name or experience. All identifying personal information was removed from the data. Only the researcher and her advisor have access to the transcribed data. All interview data is being kept in a secure location for three years as required by Federal regulations. After the allotted time all material will be destroyed or remain secure until no longer needed and then will be destroyed. One interview was transcribed by a person other than myself and this person signed a transcriber confidentiality agreement (Appendix F).

Data Collection

Face-to-face interviews lasting no more the one and a half hours were scheduled with each participant in the study. Some participants did find it difficult to make such a long time commitment and asked to have the informed consent and questions emailed ahead of the appointment. The participants were asked a series of open ended questions that focused on their own personal experience, and their relief and recovery efforts, from the June 1st tornado that hit the small community of Monson. Examples of these questions were: What is the role of a social

worker in disaster response? Can you describe how your agency was involved with the June 1st tornado? Can you describe your connection to the Monson community before, during and post disaster? Just to name a few, to see the entire list of questions, used as a guide, please refer to Appendix G.

Data Analysis

For the first step in data analysis, I transcribed the audio files verbatim. Secondly, I organized the responses of the participants and listed their responses under each question. Next, I thoroughly read and re-read all of the participant's responses to get a sense of the participant's priorities and challenges. Information that was tangential to the question was eliminated as it was not relevant. Lastly, I distilled the priorities and challenges into five major findings.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

The purpose of this community case study was to answer the following question, “How can social workers assist community leaders in the long term natural disaster recovery process?” I sought to describe the town of Monson’s post recovery process from the June 1, 2011 tornado through the eyes of these community leaders in order to gain a deeper understanding of their healing process. For this project, I conducted extensive interviews with six individuals who worked directly with the Monson community in their post-recovery process: A Facebook developer, a pastor, the regional coordinator of Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), a local mental health professional working in the community, a housing specialist for a state agency, and an LICSW trauma response director.

Their responses to the interview questions are detailed in this chapter. The responses are organized as follows: demographic information about the study participants, and then community leaders’ responses to the interview questions (Appendix G). These questions were grouped around the following themes: questions about the community, questions about the tornado, questions about the recovery, questions about barriers to the recovery process, and questions for the helping agencies.

There were a number of significant findings from these interviews, but five were central. First, towns in Massachusetts should look to improve infrastructure prior to disasters because there is state aid available to prepare for those disaster at a reimbursement rate of 75%. Secondly, The participants noted that a crisis in a community affects every member, even if some of those members are not directly affected, i.e., in the case of the Monson tornado not

everyone lost a home or property yet everyone endured some degree of trauma. Third, in a time of crisis, social networking sites can keep townspeople linked and focused on recovery.

Fourth, although many victims were eligible for state and federal aid, many failed to take advantage of these benefits because they were misinformed or confused about eligibility. Additionally, many believed that others who had suffered more loss than they were more entitled to receive benefits, not knowing that all were eligible. Finally, a mental health professional offered community meetings on coping with trauma; however, they were poorly attended and/or responded to; this study participant was concerned that residents felt that to get mental health treatment would be stigmatizing.

The Monson archivist was initially going to be involved as a participant, it was told to me that she had extensive knowledge of Monson's history especially knowledge of the town before and after the tornado. After meeting with the archivist at the Monson Library, I discovered she did not have extensive knowledge as previously instructed and this interview was omitted as it was non-productive for the use in this study.

Demographic Information

The sample consisted of six participants; all participants are over the age of 18 and under the age of 60. Four of the participants were women; two of the participants were men. . All participants are English speaking and appear Caucasian, although they were not officially asked to reveal their race specifically.

All participants had direct involvement, either personally or professionally, in the town of Monson's recovery. Two participants were directly affected by the tornado and lived within the community at the time. Four participants were enlisted as a result of working for an agency

directly related to the relief and recovery efforts. And all four of those participants live outside the Monson community.

The MEMA questions were answered primarily by the Regional Manager. Two additional MEMA employees attended the interview with minimal input; these were the Regional Coordinator and the All Hazards Planner/Local Coordinator

After the informed consent was read and signed, as well as an opportunity for participants to ask any questions, and the demographic part of the interview was completed. Participants were asked to answer a series of open-ended questions about their experience of the June 1, 2011 tornado.

The questions are listed in Appendix G, and serve as a guide to the interview, not all questions were asked, not all questions were answered and at times additional questions were asked depending on the material. For example, in one of the responses, MEMA mentioned discrepancies in the initial factual information. In order to gain a better understanding of the initial response, an additional question was asked to MEMA to clarify the discrepancies.

Interviews with Community Leaders

The Community

The first five questions of the interview guide asked participants about the Monson community. Questions focused on the participants' connection, investment, recovery action pre, during and post tornado.

Question 1: Can you describe your connection to the Monson community before, during and post disaster?

Facebook Developer:

Before the disaster, my connection to the Monson community, I was involved in various organizations around town because having six children that are involved in everything, I

was involved in swim team and piano lessons and various sports and involved with the library and Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, so I was out in the community doing various things that related to the children's activities mostly.

The Pastor:

I am the pastor of The First Church of Monson Congregational – United Church of Christ. I have been the pastor here (in Monson) since August 2004.

Mental Health Professional:

I gave 3 talks and I think the attendance at each talk illustrates something important. The first was at the town meeting. I saw my role as educating about natural disasters/trauma and perhaps being able to provide a little nervous system stabilization....if by any chance you want to watch a video of that talk; it was posted on the Monson TV station. The attendance was completely full, but that's because everyone was there to get the factual, service related information from the town leaders; i.e. about trash burning, etc. I was I think the first speaker and I heard from some clients that they heard that some people found it helpful; my experience is that everyone just wanted to get the factual information and what I had to say was irrelevant....and I probably would have felt the same way as a resident. There was a newspaper article about the talk which gave some practical suggestions so maybe that was helpful.

The second talk was a panel discussion of several Griswold clinicians addressing issues: how kids might respond, how people might express their reactions through fighting, drinking, etc. It was *terribly* attended. I don't know if it was because it was billed as a Griswold event (i.e. Mental health....stigma); or because Wing did such a poor job

publicizing it. I say a poor job because (H.B), who was still the coordinator at that time, did not know of the meeting.

The third talk was at the senior center. The response here felt more receptive than the town meeting but that seems straightforward.

Since a natural disaster has such a visible and concrete effect, it might be helpful for community leaders to get some help in knowing it's not just about rebuilding the physical structures, providing shelter, etc.

I guess the only other thing I would say would be to educate community leaders about trauma sequelae a little in that many people can have delayed responses which can be difficult to relate to the tornadoes but if someone in the community is wise to this, it's more likely people might get help.

I know there was some feeling in the community (at least according to my clients, that there was a feeling of "enough already." That might reflect the reality of what people needed, on the other hand, stuff goes underground.

Housing Specialist:

I became involved with the tornado in May of 2012. I was hired as the case manager for the MEMA grant; Monson was one of the towns in my specific area. I was told after, I was hired that the long term recovery groups had been working with MEMA and FEMA since the beginning to hire case managers to assist the families in need. It was almost one year later when the three case managers were hired to assist the families.

Question 2: How much time have you invested in caring for the community, before, during and post recovery?

Facebook Developer:

So before the tornado...Probably at least an hour a day on various different organizations. After the tornado... I couldn't even – I don't even know if I could guess a number on that. I know that between me and L we were covering that Facebook page round the clock for the entire month of June of 2011. She would stay up on it until 1 or 2 in the morning. I would get up at 1 or 2 in the morning and cover that time until I went to work, because I did pick up a job doing the third party monitoring for the actual debris removal, which FEMA requires a third party monitoring company to supervise and do paperwork for that. So I was involved in actually working doing that as a job. From from June 2nd until August pretty much that was all I did other than sleep. Between doing monitoring and any time I wasn't monitoring, I was home helping with a Facebook page or doing – physically helping friends of move stuff or clean up stuff, that entire summer was spent doing that. Yeah, that summer, and then you know in that fall as things calmed down a little bit, and the kids got back to school, I was probably spending a couple of hours a day just on tornado related stuff. In addition to whatever I might have been doing in the community, and at this point I probably spent, probably back to spending an hour a day on just tornado related stuff, whether it be the new town building, the committee, whether it's the tree committee, whether it's monitoring the Facebook page. Since the

tornado, I've gotten involved in SummerFest because that was canceled and I was not on that committee prior to the tornado, but they lost – you know, their entire SummerFest that year because it would have been just a month after, so I had gotten involved in that and that's kind of a new thing I'm doing as the kids have grown, some other things have gotten more involved in that.

The Pastor:

Part of my role as pastor is to offer comfort and support to those who are in the community. This is...it never occupies a large part of my time.... Following the tornado I probably worked more than 120 hours in the first week and 70-80 hours a week for the rest of that month....After that... the time began to diminish and I may have averaged 10-20 hours per week during the rest of the first year. In the second year this has become much less of an issue and the time spent now is intermittent, and more of my time has been spent dealing with the recovery of the church through the reconstruction of the steeple and the repairs to the interior.

Housing Specialist:

I worked as a case manager with this grant until April 2013, almost one year.

Question 3: What prompted you to take action to help the community?

This question was not asked to MEMA, the local Mental Health Professional and the Housing Specialist. This question was not asked of the Housing Specialist as she answered this question in part of question one, as Monson was assigned to her as part of her case management position. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer;

Compassion. Just feeling like it could have been me, how easy it could have been me and how I hoped someone would have helped me or my family. I couldn't just sit home. I just couldn't sit home and do nothing. I just – I knew – the day after the tornado in the morning, I went out to hang out clothes, and even when I talk about it now, I can feel exactly how I felt then. I walked outside and it's June and it's totally green 365 degrees around me and I know other people are walking outside their house and it's just – everything is gone. All the trees are gone. Their house is gone. Their stuff is spread all over the ground. So I couldn't just sit here and do normal. I had to go help. Well, and there were – I'm not sure of the exact number, but I think there were like 70 houses completely destroyed, totaled. I know about 40 of those families, you know, personally – you know, I'm not going to say close friends, but they're friends of my kids or they are people we go to church with. When you know over half of the people who totally lost their house, you know, you just don't sit and do nothing.

The Pastor: There was a need... and we seemed to be called by God to respond.

Question 4: In your perspective how much of an impact does the deforestation of the community have on its members?

This question was not asked to MEMA and the local Mental Health Professional. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer:

I think that is just so demotivating. You know, I think it's a resounding, echoing

sentiment over and over again, we can rebuild the houses, but we can never put back the 100 year old trees. So as much as we'll try to and as I mentioned before, I'm involved in helping marketing the Monson replanting committee. I don't even know what the name of it is officially, you can put new trees up, but you know, we're never – I'm never going to sit under the shade, but future generations will and hopefully Monson will be a treed, quaint community again.

The Pastor:

Each and every day it is an issue for me. I know that that is still the most visible reminder of the tornado...

Housing Specialist:

In the Monson area for many people losing their trees was devastating. The trees provide beauty, shade as well as privacy. The trees also provide homes for many different bird species, and other animals. When I would ask some family members "what was their biggest loss" some answered their trees.

Question 5: When you drive through Monson, especially on Main Street, there is still so much unrepaired visible damage, in your opinion; how much of an effect (both positive and negative) do you think this has on the members of the community every day?

This question was not asked to MEMA and the local Mental Health Professional. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer:

And at this point I found that you kind of get numb to it downtown because you drive through it so often, you don't notice it quite as much, but if you drive to a section – like

just the other day I was driving through Wilbraham in Springfield and you see a section you haven't seen for a while, it more jumps out at you as "this is really ugly," whereas you kind of— your mind has gotten numb to what you're seeing in town day in and day out, now that it's been two years. I mean it's still horrible, but your mind is used to seeing it. It's not as shocking, but it does get shocking when you go to an area you don't haven't seen for a little bit and go, "This is really ugly here with all the trees in." And our town is ugly without all the trees in it too, but your brain somehow adjusts to it.

The Pastor

It takes a toll on people who see the unfinished work. I believe it is holding many people back from moving on, because there is not yet closure.

Housing Specialist:

On the negative side- the remaining damage is a constant reminder of the tornado. On the positive side the community realizes how much progress has been made, and how resilient they are as a community.

The Tornado

The next three questions focus on the participant's experience of the June 1st tornado.

Question 6: Can you describe your experience of the June 1, 2011 tornado?

This question was not asked to the local Mental Health Professional and the Housing Specialist as they were not in the area or directly affected by the June 1st tornado at the time. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer:

Well, I guess the first thing – you know, we knew there was some bad weather coming. Not sure beforehand I knew it was going to be a tornado that severe but all of the kids were here and I was here, and thing I remember is hail. There was a lot of hail happening and all the kids were outside collecting hail. I think there were four or five cameras videotaping hail or taking pictures of the kids collecting hail or taking pictures of the hail itself, and it got really dark, and at that point I said we need to go in, and you know, we were on the laptops or whatever and we went in the basement. We saw our first images of the damage on computer. Someone on a cell phone had taken a picture of the house gone and it was being posted on Facebook and we kept power so we could – all these people who might have had phones that were taking pictures but didn't have power obviously, if the house was gone, we were seeing images from people's cell phone pictures online and that was about the same time we started putting everything on Facebook and we stayed here that night and we did not drive into town. We knew it was going to be a mess down there from the pictures. There were like wires. There were trees everywhere. We knew there was a backup of cars and that type of thing. Dave wasn't in town. He was down in the Springfield area at a dentist appointment and he couldn't get home. He was stuck out; he could not get home until about 1 o'clock. He tried to drive out through Hamden, Wilbraham, all of that was blocked. He was like on the other side of the path, so he couldn't get home until he eventually went, there was one exit getting onto 91. He could get on – he drove up 91, got on the Mass Pike to Palmer and was able to get home that way. He came in at like 1 in the morning. I think his appointment was at, was like at 4 o'clock in the afternoon and whatever, and it took him until 1 o'clock to find a way to get home, because then they didn't have power down

there either. He stopped at a restaurant and he was just waiting until things cleared and then he ended up at Texas Roadhouse. They had their grill running and they just started cooking food because they knew they were going to lose it, and they were just cooking hamburgers and hot dogs on the grill and serving people food that were there, and he was planning to sleep in his car down there if he couldn't get back. He had a sleeping bag with him or something because he hikes a lot, so he was down there. So we couldn't talk to him that much. Cell phones were a little sketchy and he was running out of power on his – but we kept power and had the computers on so we were in touch but I know others weren't – didn't know where kids were. They were coming home from work and – so there were a lot of very scary messages going back and forth.

The Pastor:

I was home – 2 Ely Rd – when the tornado hit. My wife and I tried to find a safe place on the first floor, and when a window was broken, we fled to the basement where we stayed till the banging and noise subsided. We went outside to see the trees strewn all over the place, buildings damaged, and the steeple blown off the church. We walked out into the street along with our neighbors shocked and stunned and checking on each other to make sure everyone was okay. As the two successive waves of weather came we brought folks who were there into the basement to shelter there. The next day I opened the church for anyone who needed anything and organized a prayer service for that evening.

MEMA:

I was here at 4pm and the tones were going off that we...that there was a tornado...so...the amateur radio people were going back and forth and I could hear...all the traffic so I called Westfield dispatch center and said...were you hit by a tornado...no

a severe thunderstorm...but he said I don't think we had a tornado...and in fact that is the first place the tornado touched down...Spring field called me...and we are probably just 4 miles away from Springfield...I left here at about 4:15 and I didn't get to the Springfield EOC until about 5:15 because people were just stopped...and traffic was backed up...it was Tuesday I believe...June 1st...I just couldn't believe it...stopped...stopped cars to look over the bridges to see all the damage that was around they were just absolutely stumped...they were shocked...they didn't know what to do...there were injured people coming out of buildings...as a matter of fact as I was going over the bridge on 91..I thought there was jumpers...there was so many people that were stopped...and it took that long to go 4 miles just because of the traffic...it was unbelievable.... It was so much traffic we even have lights and sirens on our vehicles...there was so much traffic people just didn't move...people were really in shock, And disbelief.

Question 7: What (if anything) do you feel the community learned from the June 1, 2011 tornado that carries forward to future natural disaster events?

This question was not asked to MEMA and the local Mental Health Professional. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer:

Oh, I think absolutely we did and we got to test that out just that fall when we had the snow storm, the ice storm that – in October, the last day of October that shut down the power again for a week in our town and other places. So there was a lot of community cohesiveness. There was people opening their doors to others who needed showers or a

warm place to stay. Those who had power, a lot of them had met through either Facebook or actually just going out and helping their neighbor that they never helped before, but during the tornado, everyone was helping each other afterwards, so certainly when we had that next disaster not only was the government more prepared, the town government, with their emergency procedures being streamlined, immediately people – when that happened, started posting again to the Facebook page, because there were already 2500 members on there that were local one Monson people and it was an immediate place they could turn for help. So that was already set up, more than likely. People didn't have to find it. It was already there. And people have learned so much more about what they should be doing pre-disaster and just doing year round what should be in your house for emergency supplies and equipment and just a whole lot more, they recognize a whole lot more that yes, it can happen here. It's not, you know, we're not immune from stuff happening in our town. You can't say it will never happen in Monson, we'll never have a tornado, because obviously we did.

The Pastor:

I hope the community has put better systems in place, but I think that every disaster is different and must be dealt with as it comes...I do think people in Monson are more aware of potential disasters and take warnings more seriously.

Housing Specialist:

The community has learned what resources will be needed when a natural disaster takes place. They have learned how to work together in the event of another disaster. Also, if homes and structures are damaged, they have learned how to work more efficiently with their insurance companies. Many families had some horrible experiences with contractors because of this they will make better informed decisions with rebuilding/repairing their homes.

Question 8: Given the context of Hurricane Sandy, do you feel the community was better prepared to handle this possible natural disaster?

This question was not asked to the Pastor, MEMA and the local Mental Health Professional. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer:

Oh, absolutely. I think people took it much more seriously. I mean I think there's somewhat a feel in the general public that now because you know it can happen here and it can be so devastating, that what we're hearing through the media and the news is like overly cautious, but those that had houses destroyed, you can't be too cautious, you know? I mean we were blessed that there weren't more people injured or killed after the tornado, you know, specifically in Monson. It was unbelievable that more people weren't hurt. I always kind of rank that up to that hail that happened outside got so many people aware of what was going on because of the time of day it was, it was 4 o'clock, it was light, people started looking at it, they were outside and because of it, you saw how dark it was. If we didn't have that hail as a predecessor to it, I think so many more people would have been caught unaware. So now I would think more people have text message

alerts, more people have emergency radios. They have alerts that come through their laptops and cell phones and their iPods' (sic) and you know, people are taking it just – the whole weather and disaster thing so much more seriously that it can happen and you should pay attention and be aware and prepare.

Housing Specialist:

Yes, the community has learned from the tornado what will need to take place to move forward. They will know to pull together those in the community who were leaders in the recovery process from the tornado. They also know, as a community they will recover and move forward.

The Recovery

Questions 9 through 19 focused on the recovery process. Most participants were actively involved in the relief and recovery of this small community and the questions that follow try to get an idea of how each one of the participants aided this small community.

Question 9: What did you find most helpful to the people of Monson during the time of crisis, post-crisis, today?

This question was not asked to MEMA and the local Mental Health Professional. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer:

I think just knowing that other people really cared for them and would just do anything to help them. I think that's kind of a lost thing in our society today that you know, only maybe your close friends might help you, but you know, it happened. So many people really did step up to the plate and help perfect strangers that have become really good friends now. I mean I know there's people that said, "I never knew my neighbor." And

now they're barbecuing together, sharing bathrooms together, sharing whatever supplies they could find together and it's brought together people that are now going to be lifelong friends over something. So in a way it's almost like a – I want to say a – I don't know what the word is, a re-belief in human compassion and kindness. A rebirth – you know, you just kind of thought that nobody really cares about me individually or my family, other than my family and personal friends, so I think it was kind of like an awakening of, you know, people do really care about other people and are willing to help and will take the time, because we live in a society that's just so busy and it's all about me and self-centered usually, and I think this really was a wakeup call kind of that, you know, people are more important than things are. The house can be rebuilt, but be thankful for the – you know, for the people you have around you and what is really important. So maybe a re-priority of you know, what life is supposed to be about and not taking things for granted.

The Pastor:

The support offered by volunteers made a significant difference for many people during the crisis. The support of community leaders made the process easier for some people. I think that community connections have become the most important thing in the past year as people reach out to each other.....Many divisions formed, and these (groups) made it difficult for people in town. There was a lack of communication between the official town response and the other grass roots responses.

Housing Specialist:

As far as my role as their case manager I had to be upfront and honest with them in through the decision making process with their repair/rebuild. Often times, just being a

sounding board for them to vent their frustrations. Many times just offering psychological first aid was very helpful with building the relationships.

Question 10: What did you find least helpful to the recovery process, during crisis, post-crisis and today?

This question was not asked to the Pastor, MEMA, the Housing Specialist and the local Mental Health Professional. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer:

There's certain organizations and they all have their rules and guidelines and they don't always complement each other or work together well. So if you have Red Cross, United Way, Salvation Army, they each have rules that they help in disaster recovery, but they don't all complement each other so they hit the total need. The community – the Monson community that kind of physically was based out of the First Church, but was all these churches, you know, combined all these people from everywhere, some were not even religious people that just we ended up using physically that building. We were on the ball more with up to date immediate needs and fulfilling them a whole lot faster than some of those organizations were. And people were really more willing – I know through the Facebook page we got requests for where can I send a gift card, or who can I give a gift card to or where can I donate money where I know it will stay in Monson. I don't want to give to this particular nationwide organization because I want to give to Monson because I grew up there or my family lives there or my mother lives there or

whatever the reason might be that they have some connection to Monson itself, they want to make sure funds were sent to Monson, used for Monson recovery, and there was a fund set up at the local Monson Savings Bank for that reason. A whole committee formed to figure out how to distribute and how to do it fairly and there was a whole process with how they got those funds out of there. I don't even know what the final number was for funds that came in. But it was made available to anyone in Monson who had been effected.

Question 11: What types of services and resources did/were you or your agency able to connect the person/family to?

This question was not asked to the local Mental Health Professional. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer:

Well, you know, like Red Cross brought sandwiches and drinks and chips around to various work parties. I think they would have – and I'm not sure which agency would have done it, they would have organized like a food pantry type thing but we had the church was filled with food donations to hand back out long before they were even mobilized. Because individuals in town were bringing stuff in to help other individuals in town, so the church ended up having a food pantry that doesn't normally exist there long before any of those other agencies were in town. We also had which I think they probably would have been instrumental in setting up. We were feeding because not only were individuals bringing food to the church for others to eat, but we started having restaurants calling and wanting to donate food for meals and that became a task that L

worked on is restaurants would contact and say what day can we bring a meal. We'd find out from the church ladies how many meals they needed and some of these restaurants were donating two and 300 meals for supper and that started getting organized in a spreadsheet on what meals came from where and you know what was there for breakfast and whatever. I think Red Cross or the Monson Recovery or Monson Reserve Corps, they were involved in the emergency shelter at the school being open, having your psychology/psychiatrist help available on site, overnight accommodations for cots, showers, that type of stuff, that was all done through either Monson Reserve Corps or Monson emergency management coordinator and Red Cross Salvation – United Way, I'm not sure who was involved in that, but there was a shelter at the church for people to take showers and people slept there. I'm sorry, at the school. At the school, yeah. And because so many people ended up I think bunking I think with other friends, the shelter actually didn't say like in Monson didn't stay open as long as it did in – in like a Springfield area where they needed the civic center and that type of thing because so many people were taking friends in or had other friends to go to and that probably has to do a lot with our Monson demographics versus like a downtown Springfield area.

The Pastor:

We provided approximately 30,000 meals in the month following the tornado. We had clothing donations that were eventually moved to St. Patrick's Church. We had a pantry with food and household items until the middle of August. We coordinated volunteers, over 1200 in the first month. When this ended there was a need for coordination of services and that eventually came under First Church again. We were the recipient of a Labor Department grant that allowed us to pay the coordinators of volunteer services

until January 2012. This was eventually turned over to Long Term Recovery

MEMA:

That becomes part of the problem...why that becomes part of the problem is a city or town...should have a group of public safety officials...this is an EOC...we have an EOC...I will show it to you afterwards...it is called an Emergency operations center...if you are impacted by something...I will use Springfield for example...they did an outstanding job...the mayor was incredible there...mayor Cerno as soon as they were hit...he called his DPW, he called his police chief, fire chief...all his department heads into his EOC...his emergency operations center...and said... ok as department heads what do you need? What do we need to do...they have an emergency team...that's what cities and towns have to start to get to...is...they need a team to respond to an EOC. Some cities and town...don't even have an EOC...you don't need a fancy room...it can be a room just like this...but a room where you get everybody together...to say this is what I need...get your decision makers in one room...so that everybody knows what is going on...see what happens is...if you don't have that one room and you are not all together in the same place...you're the town manager of Monson, you're the town manager, you're the fire chief...he is off in this part of town...you have four people requesting the same assets...or you can make one decision and it is all coordinated... And to have a plan...the best part is to have a plan in advance...don't spring that on me as the DPW or fire chief...have a plan...to give you a real good example...the town of Lanesboro...which is...how many people in Lanesboro...7000 tops...they have a new town administrator there...I don't know where he comes from...it doesn't really matter where he came from...Wellfleet I believe...on a quarterly basis...he pulls all of these decision

makers...together and has planning meeting...Bruce attends those meetings...so the state is there...all his department heads are there... and they make them go through exercises...they make them go through drills...they practice all this stuff...that is what makes a better community...you need to plan and practice...everybody looks at the terrible situation in Boston...but how well it went... on the response side...that could not have gone any better...you could have lost many more lives...but that is because they plan and they practice for these things...they know what they are doing...and you don't have to be a big city...the fire chief is expected to be there, police chief, DPW, you name it they are all there at this meeting on a quarterly basis...and plan for events and know what capabilities they have and what resources they have

Housing Specialist:

The organization I worked for was able to provide housing services, household goods, furniture. Also, we were able assist through the grant, families with their unmet tornado needs. Some of these needs were: debris removal, chimney repair, electrical, mold removal, major repair on a family's property with a drainage issue- to name a few.

Question 12: What is your perspective on what the Government did to help the community? What more could they have done or should they have done?

This question was not asked to MEMA, the local Mental Health Professional and the Housing Specialist. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer:

Well, like anything else, we are a small government. We have one town administrator. You know, other than some flooding in the past and you know, it affecting a couple of houses and a road being closed temporary, Monson hasn't obviously ever had a disaster

on this scale in any our lifetimes, so it was new to anyone who was in administration locally. Federally, I think people misunderstand what FEMA is about. I think they think they're the – I don't think the general public kind of understands FEMA as being the person that come in and rescue everyone and helps everyone and their money more goes to the town recovering. So it's removing the big debris. It's paying – helping offset the cost to remove the debris and get the infrastructure working. FEMA is not – like doesn't really help the individual like people think they do. FEMA doesn't bring in food, you know. I mean they can in some circumstances, but they're more – there's just a misunderstanding of what FEMA does and what MEMA does and you know FEMA does some like for uninsured homeowner's and whatever, but there's so many rules and red tape to it or whatever, so I think in general unless you've ever been involved in a disaster, you just think FEMA comes in and cleans up and helps everything and put everything back how it was before, and that's not the case. There's limited FEMA money and it's for the big stuff. And so I think people initially get angry that things aren't fixed like they had anticipated because they think FEMA has all this money and they're the knight on the white horse coming in to rescue after every disaster. Well, we have so many disasters now, there's not money to fix everything. You have to make choices on what's going to be fixed, and they're more helping the local government recover.

The Pastor:

The local government did an excellent job dealing with the emergency. The funding from outside seems to have been too limited to handle all the needs of the community...

Question 13: What do you feel the role of advancing technology played in the recovery process?

This question was not asked to MEMA, the local Mental Health Professional and the Housing Specialist. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer:

I think it helped because the majority of people in Monson did not have power but they did have cell phone coverage and although some phone call messages weren't going through, text messages were going through, people could look at their Facebook and see and could post on Facebook. That was about the only thing that they could do that was getting through. We were able to communicate information that they wouldn't have been able to get, so we were trying to track the best information we could and answer questions that were there. We were able to kind of say what roads it hit. We knew by various people that posted – you know, we're fine here, nothing happened here, you know. We got hit here. We have no power here, so we're able to say, you know, Wade Road there's damage on. We've heard from someone and we were able to put information up like that. Yeah, they were able – those without power were able to access – they were able to access information through Facebook that directly related to Monson. I mean we were pointing to specific roads. So and so just posted they're fine on Wales

Road and as soon as this hit news, you started having people overnight that was a relative that might have lived in New York or New Hampshire or something that had someone in town and they'd say does anyone on here know is so and so all right. I think they live on this street, or my cousin lives here. Do you know if that road was affected?

And this happened, you know, for the first 24, 36 hours, even longer, because the individuals were so busy with not having a house, not having power, their own safety. I know people were trudging in and out of – you know, I mean it was like a jungle gym of tree trunks to get in and out of anyplace. It wasn't like you could just walk out of anyplace. It was like hiking up over tree trunks to get anywhere that we were able to post what we could. Some we knew specifically. You know, I know one of them, like I said, "yeah, I just saw her on a newscast, so I know she's healthy and okay, but I know her street got hit, you know, but she was just on the news."

The Pastor:

The use of technology made a huge difference in the coordination of the relief effort. The (O.N) sisters made a huge contribution in this area and have now started Recovers.org to help other communities manage similar disaster responses.

Question 14: Are you still working with tornado survivors today?

The Mental Health Professional did not have a response for this question. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer:

When people are looking for a certain contractor or who did your driveway or who did

your roof, or who did your landscaping, because there are some people who are just getting back in their houses now, so they haven't even started yard work or landscaping work so they're asking, you know, what experiences did you have and this is something that obviously technology is still playing a role because you can get on social media, you can get on e-mail and you can ask other people who are involved and they're more than willing to share. "I had really good luck with this guy. Oh, he did a great job. He did what was promised, or you know, I didn't have such good luck with this guy, try this guy," and people were pretty honest about helping each other out.

And the other thing of course, in a community like Monson is a lot of people are trying to keep the names of local contractors out there because some of those local contractors had their own houses destroyed. So they need the business so they can keep their livelihood going, or they lost – you know, there's people that lost their businesses in town, so you want to support them the best you can and so kind of the "keep local," your business, if it's possible.

The Pastor:

Yes...Only when needed, mostly for emotional support...Many people still need emotional support.

MEMA:

No we don't... we stopped the end of January...we did a close out for the state side of things...(K.G.) was our lead for this agency of who did all the outreach with the cities

and towns for long term recovery...I know May 15th the final federal grant ends ...close to 2 year mark...they had federal monies...it was a pilot program...she can give you more details on the grants we did run...we are out of the long term recovery piece of it...we did it for a year and a half...almost 2 years...there is no other state funding...they start to go their own ways

Housing Specialist:

I no longer work with the tornado survivor's today, but I do check in with several families as they are still not in their homes.

Question 15: What do you see as the next step in the recovery process for the Monson Community?

The Pastor, MEMA, the housing specialist and the local Mental Health Professional did not have a response for this question. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer:

Well, I think the biggest step that people are looking for and waiting for is because the town went and did an override vote to rebuild the town hall instead of renovating it with the little bit of insurance money we would have gotten for that. They – I think the next biggest step or milestone is going to be the demolition of the town hall building, which will be coming up probably within a couple of weeks, will be the start of it. It's going to take eight weeks to do it. But I think that's – that's going to be obviously because it's such a big building and it's in the center of town, I think that's the next biggest thing, and then of course, we're coming into spring, so there's going to be more activities on, you know, planting, because that's going to be, I think, a continuous rebuilding effort for

years to come will be – because you just can't put in 100 year old trees, so I think there will be an effort along the way to get trees at cost to provide to homeowners that have been victimized and then even in our public way, you know, our sidewalk areas that are considered public ways of replanting trees. And as some people say, it's the ultimate gift to plant a tree that you'll never sit in its shade.

Question 16: Is there anything about the Monson recovery process you would like to add?

The Housing Specialist, MEMA and the local Mental Health Professional did not have a response for this question. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer:

Well, with everything, there's a lot of politics involved and sometimes that can be really frustrating. You know there's red tape that happens, there's rules and regulations that happen, that would take kind of forever and be very time-consuming to try to explain that to everybody why certain things are done. You know, an example would be some of the stuff that's happening with the new town hall building the committee's aware of, but there are mandates when you put in new police stations. There are certain things that have to happen. It doesn't matter whether, you know, it's going to cost X number of dollars, you have to have this type of holding cell with this type of handicap accessible, this type of access for both male, female and child. There's rules and regulations state and federal that have to be followed that cost a lot of money and you have to do it. You don't have a choice when you're building a new building, those are the laws and you

have to – and that’s the way like – the reason why a lot of things are happening on the building that common sense might not – might tell you why are we bothering to do this, but it’s because there are rules and regulations that have to be followed when you do a new construction like that in – and unfortunately sometimes they cost more money and you would like to see something else happen instead or you think it would be more useful for the town to have more of this than that, but because of rules and regulations, state and federal has to be that way.

The Pastor:

It will be good to see more of the physical damage repaired.

Question 17: What do you feel is your greatest contribution to the recovery process?

This question was not asked to MEMA and the local Mental Health Professional. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer:

I want to say even prior to the tornado, my personality and the raising of my children with the personality that you just give back. That’s what you’re supposed to do. So, you know, all of my kids and myself and even my husband who is, you know, although hasn’t physically been in town, but has been supporting the efforts of the other family members, myself, L, Paul, Peter, physically out there doing work, Teresa as well, everyone contributing. I think that’s just – that’s what you do. You help other people.

The Pastor:

Being present and responding to the physical needs of the community, and also offering hope and encouragement.

Housing Specialist:

Through my work with the families and accessing the needed funds for their recovery; these families were able to feel whole again and move forward. I think also just being available to offer kind words, encouragement, empowerment, and support was a blessing not just for them but for me as well.

Question 18: What do you feel you could have done differently?

This question was not asked to MEMA, the local Mental Health Professional and the Housing Specialist. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer:

Probably about a thousand things different. You know, if something happened again, we the – the – all the little learning curves or mistakes that happened things that happened such as you know, someone coming down to the church and getting a refrigerator or a freezer or whatever it was that they weren't even a victim and they got away with taking something that was meant for a victim. There were all little things like that that, you know, we weren't given a manual before this happened to disaster recovery but if we ever did it again or you ever lived through it again, I mean it's like anything else in life, you become who you are because of your experiences. Certainly if we ever went through this again, we'd do things so much differently and you'd be prepared differently.

You know, people in Monson now have a different set of emergency preparations and supplies on hand that we didn't have before, so certain things wouldn't happen, you know. Now when any weather comes through, people automatically through social media start popping up, make sure you turn your freezer to its coldest setting and your refrigerator to its coldest setting so it holds one. So there's all these little hints like that, don't be making phone calls during a disaster, use your texting, because it uses less bandwidth so more people can get calls through. So there are a thousand little things like that that through experience that we've learned to do things differently.

The Pastor:

I think today we might have begun the response in a more directed way. With what we know today and the available resources we would have hit the ground running.

Question 19: What do you think social workers or the social work field can learn from your efforts in the community?

This question was not asked to MEMA and the local Mental Health Professional. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer:

We did – I mean we dealt with some – I specifically dealt with some social workers when we had items donated that were from an organization that was more geared towards children with special needs. We were giving some sensory bags and that was something like through the church itself. The volunteers there wouldn't have known who those would specifically benefit, whereas like the school counselors knew better who might

need these sensory comfort bags. So we did shift those resources to someone who could distribute them that knew the value of these bags, because they were sent in for – they were geared towards children in different – you know, they had all sorts of different sensory things in them that the child could handle and feel and be comforted by that maybe the general population of children wouldn't need, but some children either with special needs or special needs due to the disaster and post-disaster stress could benefit from and that's something the general just volunteers helping wouldn't have known the benefit or the value of.

The Pastor:

The community efforts are the most important part of the recovery. Groups like FEMA, MEMA, and the Red Cross will not lift the community out of the rubble that happens because a community comes together.

Housing Specialist:

I think the important thing to remember and recognize is that everyone recovers differently, and they have different attitudes towards what took place. As social workers you have to be prepared to meet people where they are at, and work from there. This sometimes requires patience, diligence, empathy and understanding.

The Social Worker's Role in Long-term Recovery

Question 20: How can social workers assist community leaders in the long-term natural disaster recovery process?

This question was only asked to the participants who worked directly in the Mental Health field. The Facebook Developer, The Pastor and MEMA were not asked. The additional responses are as follows;

Mental Health Professional:

One of the reasons I was asked to participate in giving talks is that I am one of a couple of clinicians here with some sophistication in trauma, particularly having trained in one of the two current models which address trauma and the nervous system. I say this because I think that bottom line, increasingly, the trauma community is knowing and treating natural disasters as a form of trauma and that's my perspective. If I play this out in an ideal world, I would think that one way to support community leaders is to consider them in one respect as "first responders." It's my understanding that increasingly first responders are being supported in working through their "vicarious traumatization." The reason I think community leaders could benefit from being considered in this way is because, on a very important level, they are being asked to rise above their own experience of the natural disaster in order to respond to others. This potentially creates a form of stress which then can prolong their own recovery. One current view of trauma recovery is that the old model of CISD is not helpful, in that telling and retelling the story wires it more deeply into the brain; community responders are hearing over and over again about other's experience and potentially, overloading their own nervous systems in a narrative, verbal unhelpful way.

Housing Specialist:

Social workers should have a good idea of what community resources are available ie...housing services, financial assistance, food, clothing, and emotional support and

counseling skills. Many people will need help with filling out different applications, where to find needed information.

Barriers to the Recovery Process

The next 8 questions focused on Barriers to the recovery process. I was looking to gain a better understanding of what kinds of obstacles arise as the healing process begins.

Question 21: Did you hear about, from your members or from personal experience yourself, blocks/barriers to resources/recovery process?

This question was not asked to MEMA and the local Mental Health Professional. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer:

Well, there were certainly limitations on what structured organizations did or didn't do and who they would help. People had different expectations about what Red Cross does after a disaster. I think some people were disappointed that they initially might have showed up with clothes and then after that they just provide sandwich meat or that's what – you know, lunch meat, so I think things were a little upset by some of the organizations and what their expectations prior to the disaster were and what reality was. Some of the blocks and barriers had to do even within our own community were some people who ended up getting involved and helping out when some egos got involved about who held what position and who was supposed to do this or supposed to do that or what their official role was but when some just general volunteers did some stuff that would have fallen under their purview that we already had it done and set up prior to them even

getting around in town, I think some people were bent out of shape about that, and so there was some barriers about you know, whether it was individual people who were volunteers, feelings getting hurt or organizations getting hurt and saying, oh, well, you don't need our help because you already have it done, well, we still need help, we're just – people just started pitching in and doing stuff but there was over and still to this day there is some power struggles and ego issues that have made it so certain individuals might have gotten more help or less help because of who they might have known or don't know, or who was a squeaky wheel asking for more help and other people who might have been sitting back going, well, this person is completely without their house totally destroyed needs it more than me when I just have broken windows and gutters that don't work and you know, my roof that needs to be repaired, so some of it was individuals just thinking other people needed help more than them and didn't realize there was help available to them that they were entitled to, but there's certainly been some various different organizations that formed and got involved, volunteer groups and whatever that started kind of, you know, having a little bit of ego issues on why people were helping or not helping. Some of it was whether the victims were asking for help or not or whether they even knew to ask for help and some of it had to do with who in town had the resources and who they were connecting with or who they were willing to connect with, whether they were willing to connect broadly to everyone or whether they

were communicating just you know, with those that they personally knew or whether they were widespread communicating with everyone that this resource is available and sharing that information. So in anything else, knowledge is power and some people were withholding the power by withholding information or sharing it limitedly with who they chose to or not. That people would say, oh, well, they only got it because they knew so and so, or you know that – perceiving that there were people that were only getting certain help because they are friends with so and so or not, so there was definitely some of that going on. I mean I think that happens in general in life. You happen to be sitting next to the right person at some meeting, you find out some information in conversation and you are able to act on, you know, whether it's a scholarship or grant that's available or whatever, but a person that wasn't at that meeting not sitting next to that particular person who mentioned it wouldn't have a clue about it.

The Pastor:

Yes...The town at times tried to get us to stop what we were doing, the Medical Reserve Coordinator tried to get us to stop offering volunteer services. Other organizations tried to work in competition rather than in partnership with us, which made it more difficult than it needed to be.

Housing Specialist:

There were some people who were experiencing PTSD as a result of the tornado. Some also, had mental health issues prior which were exasperated due to the tornado. There

were some people who were “stuck” in the victim role, and as a result were not making very helpful decisions.

Question 22: Did anyone report any problems to you; such as not receiving intended resources? If yes; what types of problems did people report to you?

This question was not asked to MEMA and the local Mental Health Professional. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer:

Within the Facebook group itself, there were some issues on that that we had to resolve. We had some individuals, mostly just one that we had to ban from the group, so we had to close the group so that only – that anyone joining me and L had to approve. Since then actually we’ve had – there was a second person we had to add to the “delete” list because they were trying market products on there for profit. You know, when people see you have a large group on social media they think, oh, well, with one post I can put up that, you know, I’m selling tops or shoes or discounted clothes or furniture or whatever, and that was not what the group was meant to be, so we do and continue to monitor the group so it strictly stays recovery, because it still has – it’s sort of become a group where people want to post where is (?) in Monson, and so other groups have formed on Facebook that now deal with that, there’s a Monson Speak for where you want to complain, there’s a Monson Communication Center when you want to put just general information out. The PTA has a group that’s kids related types questions, like (?) time

type thing, so we have had to monitor, delete, whether it be profanity or someone trying to market something for profit off of that. Just the various – just various issues on how much red tape there is in the paperwork that the – you know, what the value of the house actually was. You know, it depended on what their coverage was. I never sat down with anyone specifically and went over line by line and discussed their insurance issues, but in general there were a lot of complaints about what insurance covered or didn't cover, the paperwork involved, the delays involved that really got people in a depressed mode that they couldn't move forward because it was out of their control. They couldn't move forward without knowing financially how they could move forward, whether they could rebuild or whether they had to wait and you know, produce extra income so they could add to whatever their insurance settlement was to physically build what they needed to build. Of course, there's demolition costs, if you totally lost your house and you've got a foundation or half a floor left that's all ripped apart, you have to take care of that. You have to put stuff in storage, find temporary living, insurance for temporary living, temporary vehicles, new vehicles – medical issues for those that got injured or hurt, that type of thing.

The Pastor:

YES! Many people had trouble with insurance companies not wanting to pay for what was needed. In some cases clearing a lot (of land) for new building was not sufficiently covered, in some cases there were people who had to fight with insurance to get enough

to complete the work, in some cases they were left with insufficient funds and had to find other ways to complete the work. Some of them had their work completed by volunteers. The church dealt with this with the parsonage and the church building....The process can be time consuming, and confusing....In most cases the local officials were responsive and helpful....There were many gaps, but this is because the level of need was so great

Housing Specialist:

Some people had misconceptions about the roles in which the government organizations play in natural disasters. FEMA does not assist those who have adequate homeowners insurance (this is one example). Some people thought FEMA assisted where their homeowners insurance did not.

Question 23: Did anyone report problems with their insurance? If yes, what types of problems did people report to you?

This question was not asked to the Pastor, MEMA and the local Mental Health Professional. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer:

Well, I think everyone's insurance claims and help were all different and individual. It depended on what coverage they had, who their adjuster was. If they hired a public – what's the word for it? There's a word for – that you hire to help you with your insurance claims, its public something and they take like ten percent of your proceeds or something like that but they can help you get more – you know, they know the insurance industry and whatever. Some people chose to do that. Some people hired attorneys, it kind of depended on how complicated your situation was, who owned the property, how

much damage it was, whether it was your principal residence or whether it was a rental property, because there were rental properties that were damaged that had three or four tenants in it, you know, some of them didn't have renters insurance, so they walk away from a tornado with all their belongings gone, no home and no financial bonus. You know, so – they had to start over, so I think that – I mean as many people who were affected, I think that's as many different insurance issues as there were.

Housing Specialist:

Yes, many people had many issues with their insurance companies. Some people thought they had plenty of insurance on their homes, not taking into account the depreciation value of their household items. Some people had inadequate insurance which did not cover all the structural damage to their homes. Some people had no homeowners insurance. There are several families I was working with who are still not living in their homes, due to their insurance issues.

Question 24: Did you notice or did anyone report insurance inequities to you?

The Facebook developer, MEMA, the mental health professional and the housing specialist did not respond to this question. The Pastor's response is as follows;

The Pastor:

Yes, many families contacted the commissioner of insurance in the Boston area for assistance with their insurance claims.

Question 25: When thinking about help from the government, did you notice or did anyone report difficulty in receiving assistance?

The Pastor, MEMA, the mental health professional and the housing specialist did not respond to this question. The Facebook developer's response is as follows;

Facebook Developer:

Well, because our town hall and police station were damaged, I think it was initially they were so busy trying to get themselves back acclimated to working again, there wasn't a delay although it was in disaster, so how do you tell everyone it was in disaster mode, but I'm – I know there were some issues with statutes and zoning with like temporary trailers and stuff like that that had to be looked at. I think our selectman and town administrator were fairly just about what they needed to do, but there were some rules on the books that they had to abide by and until those bylaws were changed, I know there was some to do about a temporary trailer being on, you know, the property of someone who is not a victim but was put on their parents property or something so they would have room on their property to rebuild, but it does have to go through steps of planning for permits and the rules and regulations that are in place and some of those rules and regulations did not accommodate disaster situations so things had to be changed. But again, you had to wait for meetings for things to be changed officially so that certain things could happen that were legal. The town was taking steps. Yeah, and they were aware of it but certain things happened. I know there was a trailer that was put somewhere and immediately, you know, someone what after them saying you can't have the trailer there. You have to immediately remove it. You know, and people

probably didn't even know they needed to check out if there could be a trailer put there.

You know, it was just – no one got rules and regulations on what you do after a tornado hits town, so there were some road bumps – speed bumps in the road that needed to be worked out and initially if you were personally involved, some of it probably ticked you off, Because you thought it was unfair but there are rules and regulations and laws and by laws in place for property and zoning and they have to be abided by or changed and change takes time sometimes for the legal procedures to happen.

Question 26: When thinking about the local government did you notice or did anyone report difficulty with the local government? What kinds of problems were reported?

The Facebook developer, MEMA, the mental health professional and the housing specialist did not respond to this question. The Pastor's response is as follows;

The Pastor:

As, I mentioned previously people had misconceptions about just how much the government can do, particularly financial assistance from FEMA. The most a family can receive from FEMA is \$30,200.00 this is not a lot of money. People only receive this max grant if they have no homeowners insurance or inadequate insurance.

Question 27: In your opinion; did you notice any gaps in the recovery process from any outside or inside resource?

The mental health professional, MEMA and the Pastor did not respond to this question. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer:

Well, there's definitely gaps in insurance that some people had with replacing what they

had. I know there's many houses that aren't rebuilt because what their insurance settlement is will not afford them to rebuild what they had or anything close to it that would work for what their family needs, so I know there were insurance gaps. There were gaps in certainly some of the older houses to be able to historically preserve things because it's very expensive to do it. There's debate on whether the town hall should be – you know, should have been renovated versus being torn down because of historical stuff, but there just isn't money to put a 100 year old building back into serviceable, you know, as it stands now. You know a historical brick and mason building, it just can't be replaced that same morning. Certainly, you can't put 100 year old trees back up. That just can't happen. From like our schoolchildren point of view, I think the schools did a fairly good job at doing it. My children weren't immediately impacted, but they were impacted obviously, because their friends were impacted and the town they drive through is impacted, so I think in that you can't underestimate how it impacts those that weren't directly hit because they are impacted because of the – I like to call it the ripple effect when you throw a stone in the pond and the ripples go out and you don't know who exactly and how and when it's going to touch the various people as it spreads out but it does, so I think the schools did what they could – the best they could to accommodate those needs, but I know it certainly still affects my children. I know mine are affected. Whether they're affected and changed because of what they were involved

in their activities afterwards or whether they are expressed – have been changed because of the trauma that they went through or that they saw their friends go through, that's something they'll never get over. It'll always be part of them now. So I don't know if there is ever full recovery to that issue. I mean you've always been changed by it. No one in Monson will ever be the same. There will always be a gap, and for some people that's probably a good thing. For some people, it made them better or changed them to the better or changed them to be more grateful for life and living and living in the moment and that type of thing. So I don't know if that answered your question.

The Housing Specialist:

Like I said earlier, I was told after, I was hired that the long term recovery groups had been working with MEMA and FEMA since the beginning to hire case managers to assist the families in need. It was almost one year later when the three case managers were hired to assist the families. That is a long time, and It should also be noted this work with the MEMA grant was a pilot program- so it was a learning process all around.

Question 28: Is there anything you would like to add-that you think might be helpful to this study?

The mental health professional, MEMA and the housing specialist did not have a response to this question. The additional responses are as follows;

Facebook Developer:

I don't – I mean from my – for my family and my children, I think it's an experience that there has been so much growth to them personally, to their character to who they will become, who they – because they weren't immediately hit, but they were able to help out

and see how disastrous life can actually be. So I think for us, you know, moving forward on a positive note, you can't – it almost felt like you couldn't get any worse. You know, it was really bad, so you can only get better, move forward. If you want to call it a kick in the pants on reality and being compassionate because of something bad that's happened, that they wouldn't have had if their life just kind of went along ho-hum with nothing really bad ever happening, you know, they've had first-hand experience. I mean you see the news and you see this stuff happening and you don't – even people today will say, oh, is Monson all better? They have no clue we're talking about years and years and years of recovery. It's not something that can be rebuilt and fixed in six months or a year or five years or even ten years. You know, it's a process – it's a continuous process. And I don't think outsiders who have never been so closely touched by disaster have any clue on how horrific and how long term it is.

The Pastor:

First Church is not an agency in the traditional sense, but we are a part of the community, called to love our neighbors. When the time came that people needed help, we did what we could. We would do the same again if the need arose. We serve individuals and families. We have no social workers on staff... per say... just one clergy person and a variety of people willing to serve others.

Questions for Helping Agencies

The next set of questions is for helping agencies. All the participants can be viewed from the standpoint of a helping agency, and in many cases were, however, the next set of questions were specific to MEMA, the mental health professional and the housing specialist.

Question 1: Can you describe how the agency was involved with the June 1st tornado?

MEMA:

We are the lead agency in coordinating the resources that communities need...in the case of monsoon as you know their town hall got hit...their police station got hit...so we coordinated getting them a mobile communication vehicle so they could get their 911 running...we also within an hour to two...we had staff members in every one of the 11 cities and towns that were hit...we had a staff member there...I'd say two hours is a fair estimate...so working with the city officials...we had a MEMA person there so we could coordinate resources...what every they needed...what every they were requesting...that way we...Jeff was in Sturbridge 15 minutes after the hurricane came through I even beat the police chief...volunteer pool...donations management personal...tree crews...regional law enforcement from Worcester county even helped elevate some of the...so we really left it to the community and what their needs were...so in the case of monsoon...I think (T.B.) was there....he started...Monson was greatly impacted...I do remember the communication vehicle to get their 911 up and running.

Mental Health Professional:

The hospital was contacted by (H.B) to see if someone could come talk about “natural disasters” at one of the first town meetings. I volunteered.

Housing Specialist:

HAP Housing was the fiduciary agent for the MEMA grant. I was hired, the long term recovery groups had been working with MEMA and FEMA since the beginning to hire case managers to assist the families in need. It was almost one year later when the three case managers were hired to assist the families. That is a long time, and It should also be

noted this work with the MEMA grant was a pilot program- so it was a learning process all around.

Question 2: What did the agency learn or change as a result of the June 1st tornado?

MEMA:

There was two women who invented a computer program for donations management...two young women...two college kids...their program is incredible to manage donations...that came out of the tornado...that is a whole program that came out of the tornado...this program can control all the donation management which can be overwhelming at times...all of a sudden everybody wants to donate socks...they did a great job with that...people know that with their local officials people have to be realistic with what they are requesting as well...some cities and towns...some not all...are starting to do the planning we are talking about and starting to be prepared....and Southbridge and Sturbridge are much better now than they were a few years ago....It woke them up and cities and towns now are using federal and state grant money to purchase emergency supplies...yeah...like cots and blankets stuff like that....like you just indicated...it can happen in Monson...it happens everywhere...it happens in other towns...like Monson...people are now aware that they are vulnerable and people are spending their money a little more wisely....

Mental Health Professional:

To be honest, not much that I know of. Wing Hospital as a whole has beefed up its own Emergency Preparedness Protocols, but that's all that I know/see. There was some discussion about getting prepared to help children returning to school in the fall, and some discussion about contacting Responders and Experts in states with more experience

with tornadoes, but as far as I know, none of that happened. Given the world of health care today, what's not urgent often falls off the radar screen.

Housing Specialist:

The agency was involved with the disaster before it became the fiduciary agent for the MEMA grant. HAP Housing had been one of the first organizations to respond to the tornado survivors in the Springfield area. The organization received monetary assistance from the state to assist with housing needs, household and furniture needs as well. This money was for all the towns in the 39 mile path of the tornado.

Question 3: Can you describe what types of disasters the agency responds to?

The mental health professional did not have a response to this question. The additional responses are as follows;

MEMA:

Anything man made or natural...

So a bomb...hurricane...tornado...snow storm...anything weather related...

Housing Specialist:

The organization will respond to disasters when there is a housing crisis.

Question 4: Can you describe how the agency is notified of a disaster?

The mental health professional did not have a response to this question. The additional responses are as follows;

MEMA:

Sure...in regards to that disaster...that day...I had the day off...I was in a golf tournament to be honest with you...starting around 2 o clock we were getting notification from national weather service that they had concerns about the barometric pressure

systems...things that I truly don't understand but they were concerned that we could get some really terrible weather coming in...there was a slight possibility for tornados coming in so I was communicating everything back and forth with headquarters...that where...everything goes into headquarters first...that is in Framingham...and then once the tornado hit that day...we obviously everybody knew...we were getting calls from cities and towns...as I said to you originally we were getting calls from Amherst, Wendell...they were saying they were hit too...but they were actually never hit with a tornado...communities were communicate back and forth with us...we were open here because everybody left...we were back open here within 15 minutes...4:15/4:20 we opened this office back up...we were communicating directly at that point...I got here around 4:30 and that is when I was speaking with the state director and saying...he suggested getting people in the communities and that's what we did...immediately...so communicating with our cities and towns we have a very good relationship with our cities and towns...we are fortunate...(J.Z) is a regional planner and (B.A) is a local coordinator...so we are in our communities...(J.Z) is Worcester and (B.A) is Hampden/Hampshire...so they are in their communities working with their EMD's, police chiefs, fire chiefs, DPW on a regular basis, we have already built that relationship with them...they know to reach out to us and we know to reach out to them...we know who to call...we have a contact book...with everybody's contact numbers...chief elected official...police chief, fire chief, DPW...even mayor, public works...we have their cell phone numbers we have everything...so we can communicate very easily with them.

Housing Specialist:

If there is a housing crisis the state will communicate directly with the organization.

Question 5: Can you describe how the agency responds to a disaster?

The mental health professional did not have a response to this question. The additional responses are as follows;

MEMA:

We give a full report to the governor. He gives it to the president...this governor we have been very fortunate for...he has been a great supporter of us...he has been a great partner...we are very fortunate...he has been here for everything...I can possibly think we have been impacted by...he has been in this office several time...he has also been to the communities...he has been outstanding...as a matter of fact he was reading books to children in Monson last summer....that is how the process goes from our boss...the state director, he briefs the governor...the governor then feeds the information to the president...

Housing Specialist:

The organization will provide housing assistance to those in need. With the MEMA grant for example, families and individuals were provided with a stipend apartment for one year and then provided with assistance to try and locate adequate housing once the stipend was over.

Question 6: Can you describe the populations the agency serves during a response? Such as individual, family, community, town, state...etc?

The mental health professional and MEMA did not have a response to this question. The housing specialist's response is as follows;

Housing Specialist:

The organization will respond to individuals, families and their community, as well as communities in their service area such as Hamden County.

Question 7: Can you describe with as much detail as possible what kinds of things you do when you respond to a disaster?

The mental health professional did not have a response to this question. The additional responses are as follows;

MEMA:

We coordinate...we bring in the federal government...FEMA in to make sure there is monies available for housing for a short period of time at least...until they can get back on their feet...so we coordinating agency...that's our role...we will find what the community or what the situation needs and bring it...FEMA, State resources...

Housing Specialist:

The organization will provide housing assistance to those in need. With the MEMA grant for example, families and individuals were provided with a stipend apartment for one year and then provided with assistance to try and locate adequate housing once the stipend was over.

Question 8: you have any social workers employed at your agency? If so...can you tell me what is their role during a disaster? After a disaster?

The mental health professional did not have a response to this question. The additional responses are as follows;

MEMA:

No...I would not say so...its funny you bring that up...especially about the tornado we talked about that...we have one person out of the headquarters that handles the individual assistance JW...and she is not a social worker...

Housing Specialist:

There are people employed at the organization who have a MSW. Because the organization is strictly to assist with housing needs this is what takes place. There are several different programs through HAP to assist families and individuals with establishing short term or long term housing needs. There is a program in place to help people with purchasing their first home.

Question 9: Can you describe how long the agency stays involved? Ie...immediate response...weekly check in..monthly...etc.

The mental health professional and the housing specialist did not have a response to this question. The MEMA's response is as follows;

MEMA:

Long term recovery jumped in right away once the federal government stepped in ...once we got the declaration from the President...he gave a presidential declaration FEMA came in and we were a part of the team with FEMA...so (K.G) worked with FEMA on the individual assistance side.. it's called the IA side...there is a PA side Public assistance and a IA side...individual assistance...part of grants for FEMA...individual side is what (K.G.) worked on and there were individual groups...Springfield had a group...Monson had a group...Brimfield had a group and she worked with these people in their community to build up funds...to build up grants...to work on grants...volunteer pools to help people clean their yards up...that was all

coordinated between FEMA/MEMA and the community...that went on for about a year and a half... The PA side is roads, bridges, infrastructure for your cities and town...they get 75% back on a dollar...so if they spent...a million dollars they get 750,000 thousand dollars back...to help rebuild the infrastructure that was damaged.....no they don't even get that long...after the storm...FEMA will reach out to the DPW, EMD and town officials...and say ok show us your damages....tell us what your damages are...they drive around the town...with the community officials...it is really the community's responsibility to tell either the state or the federal government what damage they have...we don't know the town as well as anybody in the city or town...so that city or town official will let us know what they have for damages. They total up the damages between the city or town along with state and federal officials will total up the figures...again using a million dollars just to make it easy...if you have 1 million in damages you get 750,000 thousand dollars back from the federal government...and in this case what ended up happening...the other 25% is the responsibility to the city or town...at times state government can jump in

Additional Questions:

This question was asked to MEMA in response to some information disclosed about the Emergency Management Director position in cities and towns.

How would a community know what (funds) they are allowed to get...do you have a list?

MEMA:

Well...there is a list, and these guys work...on a regular basis...take B for an example...on a regular basis B works with the town EMD (Emergency Management Director) he is in Monson, once every two months...we are working with that EMD to build up programs. There is a whole list...they get a notification...we have a new round

of grant money coming out...sometime in the middle of May...were going to be saying in the beginning of May this is the new grant money...this is what you are allowed or entitled to...we do a briefing here on May 14th or 15th whatever day it is...we do a briefing with the cities and towns...they are expected...I use that word expected because some of them don't come to the meeting...and they should come to the meeting and learn about the grant and learn about the monies...and what they can spend their money on...and there are deadlines to do that...we hold a...our communication with the cities and towns is a broadcast email that we send them about all notifications coming up, EMD meetings, we do quarterly EMD meetings with the cities and town officials...it's just if they show up or not...And do I understand that small cities and towns can't afford to have a full time EMD...or even a part-time emergency management director...absolutely...but cities and town have to take this and...all the stuff you see all over the country...not just here in Massachusetts...Texas wildfires...what happened in Boston...you need to start taking Emergency Management very serious...and some towns are not taking it serious...we have 161 towns...from Worcester west...that covers this office...and if we have an EMD meeting if we get 60%...would you guys say that is a fair number? That's a good average...if we get 60% to show up...we are doing alright...So roughly 90 or so...show up for this very important meeting...That and the snow briefings...we just got a new declaration...the last storm that came through the DPW and EMD should be showing up to that...this is a lot of times...free money...free money...mitigation funds...now there is a ton of money...millions...we are talking millions...like millions of dollars...20... 30 million dollars' worth of mitigation money...that these cities and town can apply for...yes there is paperwork for it...you

can't expect to get a million dollars without any paperwork...to fix existing structures to make them better...so Monson...so any town...but there is a huge pot of money coming out and briefing coming out starting in May...June 4th briefing...DPW...any town official really...to come to the briefing and learn how to apply for...we have people here that will walk you through the process...help you with the paperwork...the biggest problem is the burden of responsibility...falls on the chief elected officials to follow up and we notify them and for those cities and towns that are continually negligent we hear in this office feel...that it is because it is a part time job for them...and they are overwhelmed with what they have to do and they just select or are selective on what they pick and choose on...I mean...how can they leave away free money....Um...it's not just small towns....we have cities and town...the city that I live in...the mayor has pushed the DPW person to come to this hazard mitigation money time and time again...and out to lunch...where can you get...what is the reimbursement on that...on hazard mitigation funds...its 75/25 on that...again if you are a town with a million dollar project...a road wash out...you have to put in new catch basis...potholes...they will pay 75 percent of that and the town only has to pick up 25 percent of that...any one of the towns that was impacted by the tornado would be definitely a priority...a stronger look at...these grants are competitive...but still because if they were impacted by the storms if they need a catch basis...coverts... Whatever because they were destroyed in the storm they would get priority and the sad part about it is...if they don't come and get this money...sooner or later...they are going to have to deal with whatever problem they have in their town and they are going to have to pay for it all themselves...and what they are saying even if its 75/25 at that point, if you have a million dollars project you are going to get 750,000

thousand dollars back what they are saying is...I don't have the balance to pay our share...but later on...they will whined up paying for the whole cost at some point...In addition:

Cities and towns get an emergency planning grant...every year...it depends on the size of your town...but it can go anywhere from \$2000 to up to \$75,000 for like the city of Boston or someplace like that...there is an allotment of money they can use to build up their emergency supplies...things they can use for their emergency management program...I think J.Z. is right...this event has really made them think...we must really use this money wisely...

This question was asked to the trauma response director at a non-profit helping agency whose headquarters is in Springfield, Massachusetts. The director is a MSW-LICSW and was asked to answer just this one question. I hoped to give the reader a better understanding of the role of a social worker in disaster response, as the previous participants did not effectively touch on this subject in the above interview guide.

What is the role of a social worker in disaster response? And how does the role change over time, what kinds of things do social workers do immediately vs. long term?

LICSW Trauma Response Director:

At first all you do is help get their basic needs met, food, shelter and clothing, give them a cup of coffee, reminding them to eat and maybe sit quietly with them particularly if they have lost someone. During one huge fire in Holyoke where over 100 people lost everything I folded donated clothes with one of the fire clients. People usually are not worried about their emotional needs at this point but... how do I feed my kids..., where am I going to live... etc. As the days go on people begin to break down... all I can

compare it to is when someone close to you dies.... and you are making the arrangements... you kind of have it together but then everyone leaves and you break down.... well the process in a disaster is similar. Then we do a lot of case management-getting disaster clients set up with local services, providing short-term counseling as a lot of times you as the social worker have flown in from somewhere else to help in the disaster. Help people develop or hone their coping skills, help people to see some hope in the future. With the news about Texas and Oklahoma the past few days I am sure that some Springfield residents who were in the path of “our” tornado are having difficulty with re-traumatization and emotions and all sorts of feelings coming up for them now so will need some brief support to get back on track. It is about being with the person where they are and not putting them in a box expecting them to behave like the literature says.

Summary

The participants in this study provided rich and extensive data about Monson’s response to a catastrophic tornado and the community’s recovery from it. These participants provided me with an opportunity to study disaster response and recovery in a local setting, both short and long-term. As the world grapples with climate change, we are likely to experience more disasters such as the Monson tornado in areas and settings where residents are unprepared and unexpecting.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

It should be noted that Monson is unique in that the damaging effects of the June 1st tornado were compounded by Hurricane Irene in August of 2011 and an out of season Nor'easter blizzard in October 2011. In only a short period of time, this community started recovery, then had to stop, started recovery again, and had to stop, started recovery again, stopped and recovery started again. Multiple natural disasters like this can compound and delay a community's ability to recover. The findings should be viewed in the context of a triple disaster as opposed to just the recovery from a single isolated natural disaster.

The discussion section is organized into several sub-sections. The sub-sections are as follows: findings compared to the literature; implications for social work practice; limitations and biases; and lastly, recommendations for future research.

Findings Compared to the Literature

I started this community case study primarily out of my concern about the current global climate, which according to Bates et al, (2012) is not predicted to get much better, and this fact must be considered in the context of this discussion. According to the IPCC,

It is virtually certain that increases in the frequency and magnitude of warm daily temperature extremes and decreases in cold extremes will occur in the 21st century at the global scale. It is very likely that the length, frequency, and/or intensity of warm spells or heat waves will increase over most land areas. Based on the A1B and A2 emissions scenarios, a 1-in-20 year hottest day is likely to become a 1-in-2 year event by the end of the 21st century in most regions. (p. 13)

Preparedness: With the global climate expected to get worse, one of the most important findings from this study is that cities and towns in Massachusetts have the opportunity to be proactive, to hire an Emergency Management Director, EMD, to organize and plan an EOC, or Emergency Operations Center and to improve infrastructure, prior to a natural disaster. No literature was found that addressed the importance of establishing an Emergency Operations Center or an Emergency Management director on the community level and according to the IPCC, “Data on disasters and disaster risk reduction are lacking at the local level, which can constrain improvements in local vulnerability reduction. There are few examples of national disaster risk management systems and associated risk management measures explicitly integrating knowledge of and uncertainties in projected changes in exposure, vulnerability, and climate extremes” (SREX 2012, p. 10).

According to MEMA, towns are increasingly working with smaller budgets; there is state aid available to help prepare for disaster at a reimbursement rate of 75%. This researcher found, through the interview with MEMA, that a hazard mitigation fund exists that totals in the millions of dollars by the state to help cities and towns build a solid infrastructure prior to any type disaster. It should be noted that many cities and towns do not take advantage of this hazard mitigation fund. Yet, according to MEMA, there is grant money available. Yes, there is paperwork, but according to MEMA, most cities and town do not take emergency management seriously and that is the biggest problem to overcome. Each city and town is required to have an Emergency Management Director, or EMD. The EMD is expected to go to briefings and meetings; the responsibility falls on the chief elected official to make sure the EMD is in attendance. The MEMA representatives’ from this study, state that there is low turnout at the briefings and meetings. MEMA believes that one contributing factor is that there is not enough

money in a town's budget to hire an EMD and often the position becomes voluntary. Hiring an EMD should be a priority and attendance at the MEMA briefings and meeting should be mandatory and expected.

In addition, each city and town should set up an EOC or Emergency Operations Center and a location should be determined. In the event of an emergency, cities and towns should have all the public safety officials and department heads in one location. Having all the decision makers in one room coordinates resources and services and prevents wasting time, resources and duplicating efforts. MEMA stated there is money available, in the form of an emergency planning grant to help offset the cost: "Cities and towns get an emergency planning grant...every year...it depends on the size of your town...but it can go anywhere from \$2000 to up to \$75,000". This grant is to help with the planning of emergency response, holding a meeting, or even purchasing emergency management supplies, because many cities and towns do not have the proper organization in place. This grant money also goes underutilized, according to MEMA.

Primary and secondary trauma: The second most relevant finding is that the participants noted that a crisis in a community affects every member, even if some of those members are not directly affected. In the case of the Monson tornado, not everyone lost a home or property, yet everyone endured some degree of trauma and ongoing trauma living within the devastated community.

Within the field of social work, this would be called vicarious traumatization. There is much literature in the field of social work on vicarious traumatization for professionals and first responders; however there is no specific literature that exists on the vicarious traumatization of the community members themselves. No literature exists specifically on the long term effects of

vicarious traumatization on the community members living in a deforested, devastated community.

What I can say I have learned from this study is that community members have become numb and demotivated as a result of seeing devastation and deforestation on a daily basis. The Facebook developer, who was not directly hit by the tornado, had this to say: “I think that is just so demotivating. You know, I think it’s a resounding, echoing sentiment over and over again, we can rebuild the houses, but we can never put back the 100 year old trees.” And this was her response to driving through downtown Monson: “At this point I found that you kind of get numb to it downtown because you drive through it so often.” The Pastor of the local church makes a valid point when he states: “It takes a toll on people who see the unfinished work. I believe it is holding many people back from moving on, because there is not yet closure.”

Social networking: Third, in a time of crisis, social networking sites can keep townspeople linked and focused on recovery. Literature exists on this topic supports the finding of this study. According to Lindsay, “Social media sites rank as the fourth most popular source to access emergency information.” (2010, p. 287). In the Monson community, Facebook was the choice of social media sites.

Advancing technology can be a useful tool in helping to design a community specific way to start healing and recovery. No two towns are alike and what helps one community may not help another. In the case of the Monson tornado, social media websites proved a useful tool to the healing and recovery efforts of the community members themselves. Social media tools or applications were available to most residents through their cell phones, and even though they did not have electricity, many had the use of their cell phones. The Facebook developer had this to say about the role advancing technology played in Monson, “I think it helped because the

majority of people in Monson did not have power but they did have cell phone coverage and although some phone call messages weren't going through, text messages were going through, people could look at their Facebook and see and could post on Facebook.”

Advocacy: Fourth, although many victims were eligible for state and federal aid, many failed to take advantage of these benefits because they were misinformed or confused about eligibility. Specific literature does not exist on this finding. Lindsay (2010) suggests that it is time for emergency response agencies make a change, “The use of social media for recovery purposes has generally been limited to providing preparedness and readiness information to individuals and communities.” (p. 291)

Additionally, many in Monson believed that others who had suffered more loss than they were more entitled to receive benefits, not knowing that all were eligible to apply. The Facebook developer states many members of the community were confused about who does what in the recovery process:

...and still to this day there is some power struggles and ego issues that have made it so certain individuals might have gotten more help or less help because of who they might have known or don't know, or who was a squeaky wheel asking for more help and other people who might have been sitting back going, well, this person is completely without their house totally destroyed needs it more than me when I just have broken windows and gutters that don't work and you know, my roof that needs to be repaired, so some of it was individuals just thinking other people needed help more than them and didn't realize there was help available to them that they were entitled to.

Lindsay 2010 suggests FEMA adopts social media for use with recovery,

Social media could however, play a role in recovery: if FEMA adopted social media use for recovery, the agency could provide information concerning what types of individual assistance is available to individuals and households, including how to apply for assistance, announcing application deadlines and providing information and links to other agencies and organizations that provide recovery assistance. (p. 291-292)

In the case of Monson this would have been helpful and might serve to clear up a lot of misconceptions and/or misinformation.

Community meetings: Finally, a mental health professional offered community meetings on coping with trauma; however, they were poorly attended and/or responded to; this study participant was concerned that residents felt that to get mental health treatment would be stigmatizing. No specific literature exists on the stigma of receiving mental health services during and post disaster; some literature exists for combat veterans, soldiers and leadership with in the armed forces. However, nothing was found to support the finding on the community level. The local mental health professional had this to say on educating the Monson community about trauma:

The second talk was a panel discussion of several Griswold clinicians addressing issues: how kids might respond, how people might express their reactions through fighting, drinking, etc. It was *terribly* attended. I don't know if it was because it was billed as a Griswold event (i.e. Mental health....stigma); or because Wing did such a poor job publicizing it. I say a poor job because (H.B), who was still the coordinator at that time, did not know of the meeting.

Implications for Social Work Practice

How can social workers assist community leaders in the long term natural disaster recovery process? Currently, disaster response is a specialized practice and not every social worker is knowledgeable about what to do during and after a natural disaster. Social workers should be at the helm of disaster response. Social work programs need to incorporate disaster relief and preparedness in the curriculum. Syllabi on psychocapacity building in response to disasters, such as the one designed by Joshua Miller from the Smith College School for Social Work, can be worked into the social work curriculum.

What I learned from this study is that very few social workers were involved in the healing and recovery process outside of the initial relief efforts. This is unfortunate. Outside of the director of the trauma response team, none of the community leaders in the study were social workers, and had little to no interaction with professional social workers. Social workers should be working directly with community leaders to aid and support long-term recovery. No professional, licensed social workers were involved long term from the lead agencies, and in addition the representative from MEMA and HAP were not professional social workers. Most of the credit for the long term relief and recovery can be given to untrained volunteers. Even the local mental health professional that volunteered is not a social worker but a PhD.

Who better to understand the context, diversity and complexity of a community than a social worker? Yet, for this case study, especially given the context of disaster after disaster, the community leaders most helping with the healing and recovery efforts had little to no interaction with a professional social worker. Could this be an additional factor that compounds the healing for this small community?

Social workers could be more involved as community leaders themselves, in their own communities, as part of their clinical practice. Social workers could hold important positions within their own community structure. Social workers possess the skills to help organize and coordinate resources, to help connect people, as well as the skills for planning disaster response, these and many more skills can be utilized in the rebuilding of a community.

Social workers could be involved in the long-term healing of a community. Social workers possess the skills to help community leaders and members, many of whom do not know or realize they are directly affected. Social workers can help people to transition into the healing process, as well as the ability to help those struggling over ego issues or power struggles as indicated in the participant's responses. It is my opinion too much of the social work training is focused on the short-term disaster response.

In the next 10 years, more and more social workers will embrace technology and become more prone to use technology and social media as part of their practice. In terms of disaster response that will go a long way in terms of communicating with groups of people more efficiently and effectively.

Social workers need to prioritize disaster response. Professional development and disaster training should be a top priority for all professional social workers.

Limitations and Biases

There are limitations and biases that need to be identified. The community leaders who were interviewed were not typical community residents. As a resident of Monson, I have a personal bias as a community member, I was also affected by the natural disasters in this community, and I am not a neutral outsider. Since I am a resident, I see most of these people in other contexts. I have personal contact with the participants as a resident and as a member in the

community. For this reason, it is possible the community leaders may have revealed more information than they would have to an outsider. Within the Monson community I am not viewed as a professional social worker as I am still in school pursuing my graduate studies.

Recommendations for Future Research

I have included the rich and extensive narrative data in the findings of this study. This information is included in full as a starting point for anyone who would like to research this topic further. That being said, a neutral outsider may find details I was not able to find, as I am a member of the Monson Community.

What follows are those recommendations which I believe would make the greatest contribution to future research. I must add it would also be prudent if the current and future governmental administrations made global warming and its impacts on the environment a top priority.

One recommendation for future research is that social workers need to stay current and utilize professional development, disaster preparation and advancing technology classes and skills. With more and more extreme weather events predicted, more professional development and disaster preparation will become critical.

Although Monson's recovery was compounded by two additional natural disasters just after the tornado, it may be useful to conduct other case studies, on the local level, where social workers were at the helm of the relief and recovery efforts. Future studies could indicate if having a social worker at the helm, pre and post disaster, helps to improve the community's long term resiliency.

According to the IPCC, "Data on disasters and disaster risk reduction are lacking at the local level, which can constrain improvements in local vulnerability reduction." (SREX 2012, p.

10) No literature currently exists on the importance of establishing an Emergency Operations Center in a community. Similar literature exists studying the role of an Emergency Operations Center for a school, for law-enforcement, for the CDC and for the fire department. Future studies could look to see if there are any social workers acting as Emergency Management Directors and what they do. What is their disaster risk reduction plan?

Future studies might look to gather more information about the role of vicarious traumatization in the recovery efforts within a devastated community? No information is available that has investigated the ways in which mental health professionals work with community leaders and residents long term post disaster. Future studies could look at the impact repeated exposure to the devastated, deforested community adds to the lives of the community leaders and members, and the effect of inclement weather on the community, especially the youngest most vulnerable members of the community.

Future studies might look at ways social workers can help people to attend informative meeting or groups within a devastated community. No literature currently exists examining the role of stigma in receiving mental health services post disaster on a community. Currently, similar literature exists studying soldiers and veterans.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there is a lot of work to be done. We have just started to scratch the surface on disaster awareness; it can happen in any community. It might be time to shift from educating on disaster readiness to concrete disaster planning, and to the long term recovery of individuals, families and communities.

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Appendix A
Human Subject Review Approval
Letter



School for Social Work
Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063
T (413) 585-7950 F (413) 585-7994

February 5, 2013

Karen Gray

Dear Karen,

You did a very nice job on your revisions. Your project is now approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee.

Please note the following requirements:

Consent Forms: All subjects should be given a copy of the consent form.

Maintaining Data: You must retain all data and other documents for at least three (3) years past completion of the research activity.

In addition, these requirements may also be applicable:

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), please submit these changes to the Committee.

Renewal: You are required to apply for renewal of approval every year for as long as the study is active.

Completion: You are required to notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee when your study is completed (data collection finished). This requirement is met by completion of the thesis project during the Third Summer.

Good luck with your very interesting study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Marsha Kline Pruett Ph.D.' with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Marsha Kline Pruett, M.S., Ph.D., M.S.L.
Vice Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Jean LaTerz, Research Advisor

Appendix B
Recruitment Letter

Dear _____

My name is Karen Gray; I am in the process of writing my thesis on Monson's recovery from the June 1, 2011 tornado. The project is titled Healing from the Ground Up: A Story of One Community's Recovery from a Natural Disaster.

Your name has come to me from the social networking within my community or I know you personally. Will you please help me by completing a face-to-face interview, aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the disaster recovery process?

The interview should take between 1 ½ to two hours and would be scheduled at a date; time and place most convenient for you. If you choose to participate please complete the bottom portion of this letter and mail it back to me in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. If you agree to participate in my study, I will call you at the number you provide to confirm the date and time.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Karen Gray

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

MSW student

Smith College School for Social Work

Northampton, MA 01063

Yes ___ I agree to participate in the face to face interview

No ___ I do not agree to participate in the face to face interview

If yes, address of place most convenient to conduct the interview _____

First choice; date and time _____

Second choice; date and time _____

Third choice; date and time _____

Name _____

Best number to reach you at; _____

Best time to call; _____

Appendix C
Facebook Post

My name is Karen Gray; I am a graduate level Social Work student at Smith College School for Social Work in Northampton MA. I am looking to interview community leaders; a *community leader* as it relates to this study is a person who became socially prominent and respected for the work they contributed to the town of Monson, during and after the tornado, who helped in the Monson Tornado Recovery Process. If you are interested or know anyone who may be interested please privately message me @ Kfgray@smith.edu or reply to this post. Thank You.

Appendix D
Informed Consent Form

Dear Participant,

My name is Karen Gray; I am a member of the Monson community and a graduate student at the Smith College School for Social Work. I am conducting a research project to explore Monson's post recovery process from the June 1, 2011 tornado through the eyes of community leaders. A *community leader* as it relates to this study is a person who became socially prominent and respected for the work they contributed to the town of Monson, during and after the tornado. The community leaders all speak English, they are all over the age of 18 and all have a connection to Monson, Massachusetts

The purpose is to gain a deeper understanding of the healing process as conducted by the leaders of the community for this particular experience in Monson. This research will be presented as a thesis and may be used in possible future presentations, publications and dissertations. The inclusion criteria for the purpose of this study are a community leader with a role in helping members of the community, English speaking and over the age of 18.

Your participation in my study is voluntary. I am asking you to participate in a face-to-face interview. You may refuse to answer any or all of the questions. The interview will start by asking your connection to the Monson Community before, during and post tornado. You will then be asked a series of open-ended questions about your experience. The interview should take approximately 90 minutes to two hours. The interview will be audio recorded and I will be transcribing the interviews. My thesis advisor will have access to the data after the interviews have been de- identified.

Participation in this study may bring up distressing feelings in regards to your experience of the Monson tornado. If you feel that you would like additional support at any point during your involvement in the interview or following your participation, I have provided a list of mental health resources at the end of this letter you may use at your convenience.

Although there is no financial benefit to participating in this study, your responses to the interview will allow you to share your personal and unique perspective on your experience. It is my hope that your response will provide valuable insight to social workers and the social work profession on healing from a natural disaster.

Your anonymity and confidentiality are not protected in this study. Your responses will be available to my research advisor and me. Monson is a small community; please do not include the name of or any identifying information about specific members of the Monson community. The contents of the interviews will not be confidential. The information will be in the public domain and accessible to the community, and other people can possibly figure out who the participants are. All data will be kept in a secure, password protected, location for a period of three years as required by Federal guidelines. After that time if the data are no longer needed for research purposes it will be destroyed. If it is needed for research purposes, the data will be continued to be kept secured for as long as it is needed and when it is no longer needed it will be destroyed.

If you choose to participate, you may withdraw from the interview at any point and you may choose not to answer any or all of the questions by saying, I prefer not to answer. Once the interview has been conducted, there is still time for you to withdraw. You can withdraw up to April 1, 2013 at which point the results of the project will be written.

If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this study, you can contact me at (XXX XXXXXXXX or Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee at (413) 585-7974.

Thank you for your interest in the study,

BY CHECKING NEXT TO "I AGREE" BELOW AND SIGNING YOUR NAME, YOU ARE INDICATING THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE INFORMATION ABOVE AND THAT YOU HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, YOUR PARTICIPATION, AND YOUR RIGHTS AND THAT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

*YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMED CONSENT FOR YOUR RECORDS

_____ I AGREE THAT MY NAME CAN BE USED IN THE STUDY

_____ I DO NOT AGREE TO USE MY NAME, BUT I DO WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY. I UNDERSTAND MY PARTICIPATION AND THE INFORMATION I PROVIDE MAY BE IDENTIFIABLE TO OTHERS.

PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE

DATE

Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

Thank you for your participation!

Sincerely,

Karen Gray

MSW student

Appendix E

List of Referral Sources

Griswold Behavioral Health Center
40 Wright Street Palmer, MA 01069
413-283-7651 (apx. 4 miles)

The Carson Center at Valley Human Services
96 South Street
Ware, MA 01082
413-967-6241 (apx. 9 miles)

CHD Outpatient Behavioral Health Services
369 Pine Street
Springfield, MA 01105 (apx. 12 miles)

American Psychological Association Disaster Response Network
750 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002
800-374-2721 or 202-336-5898 or <http://www.apa.org/practice/dmindex.html>

Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20472
800-621-3362 or <http://www.fema.gov/hazard/index/shtm>

Appendix F

VOLUNTEER OR PROFESSIONAL TRANSCRIBER'S ASSURANCE OF RESEARCH CONFIDENTIALITY

This thesis project is firmly committed to the principle that research confidentiality must be protected and to all of the ethics, values, and practical requirements for participant protection laid down by federal guidelines and by the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee. In the service of this commitment:

All volunteer and professional transcribers for this project shall sign this assurance of confidentiality.

A volunteer or professional transcriber should be aware that the identity of participants in research studies is confidential information, as are identifying information about participants and individual responses to questions. The organizations participating in the study, the geographical location of the study, and the method of participant recruitment, the subject matter of the study, and the hypotheses being tested are also confidential information. Specific research findings and conclusions are also usually confidential until they have been published or presented in public.

The researcher for this project, Karen Gray, shall be responsible for ensuring that all volunteer or professional transcribers handling data are instructed on procedures for keeping the data secure and maintaining all of the information in and about the study in confidence, and that they have signed this pledge. At the end of the project, all materials shall be returned to the investigator for secure storage in accordance with federal guidelines.

PLEDGE I hereby certify that I will maintain the confidentiality of all of the information from all studies with which I have involvement. I will not discuss, disclose, disseminate, or provide access to such information, except directly to the researcher, Karen Gray, for this project. I understand that violation of this pledge is sufficient grounds for disciplinary action, including termination of professional or volunteer services with the project, and may make me subject to criminal or civil penalties. I give my personal pledge that I shall abide by this assurance of confidentiality.

Signature _____ Date:

Signature _____ Date:

Appendix G Interview Guide

The Community;

1. Can you describe your connection to the Monson community before, during and post disaster?
2. How much time have you invested in caring for the community, before, during and post recovery?
3. What prompted you to take action to help the community?
4. In your perspective how much of an impact does the deforestation of the community have on its members?
5. When you drive through Monson, especially on Main Street, there is still so much unrepaired visible damage, in your opinion; how much of an effect (both positive and negative) do you think this has on the members of the community every day?

The Tornado;

6. Can you describe your experience of the June 1, 2011 tornado?
7. What (if anything) do you feel the community learned from the June 1, 2011 tornado that carries forward to future natural disaster events?
8. Given the context of Hurricane Sandy, do you feel the community was better prepared to handle this possible natural disaster?

The Recovery;

9. What did you find most helpful to the people of Monson during the time of crisis, post-crisis, today?
10. What did you find least helpful to the recovery process, during crisis, post-crisis and today?
11. What types of services and resources did/were you or your agency able to connect the person/family to?
12. What is your perspective on what the Government did to help the community? What more could they have done or should they have done?
13. What do you feel the role of advancing technology played in the recovery process?
14. Are you still working with tornado survivors today?
15. What do you see as the next step in the recovery process for the Monson Community?
16. Is there anything about the Monson recovery process you would like to add?
17. What do you feel is your greatest contribution to the recovery process?
18. What do you feel you could have done differently?
19. What do you think social workers or the social work field can learn from your efforts in the community?

How can social workers assist community leaders in the long-term natural disaster recovery process?

Barriers to the Recovery process;

20. Did you hear about, from your members or from personal experience yourself, blocks/barriers to resources/recovery process?
21. Did anyone report any problems to you; such as not receiving intended resources? If yes; what types of problems did people report to you?
22. Did anyone report problems with their insurance? If yes, what times of problems did people report to you?

23. Did you notice or did anyone report insurance inequities to you?
24. When thinking about help from the government, did you notice or did anyone report difficulty in receiving assistance?
25. When thinking about the local government did you notice or did anyone report difficulty with the local government? What kinds of problems were reported?
26. In your opinion; did you notice any gaps in the recovery process from any outside or inside resource?
27. Is there anything you would like to add-that you think might be helpful to this study?

Questions for the Monson Archivist;

1. From a historical perspective, can you please describe how the Town of Monson was settled?
2. As far as you know have there been any other extreme weather events in Monson's history, such as a tornado, hurricane, drought, etc.
3. If yes, can you describe the impact the weather event had on the community at the time of the weather event?
4. Can you please describe the Monson community in the months, years before the tornado?
5. Historically, what are the effects of the Monson tornado on the community?

Questions for a helping agency

Can you describe how the agency was involved with the June 1st tornado?

What did the agency learn or change as a result of the June 1st tornado?

Can you describe what types of disasters the agency responds to?

Can you describe how the agency is notified of a disaster?

Can you describe how the agency responds to a disaster?

Can you describe the populations the agency serves during a response? Such as individual, family, community, town, state...etc?

Can you describe with as much detail as possible what kinds of things you do when you respond to a disaster?

Do you have any social workers employed at your agency? If so...can you tell me what is their role during a disaster? After a disaster?

Can you describe how long the agency stays involved? Ie...immediate response...weekly check in..monthly...etc.

Appendix H

Facebook Photos



Facebook photo The First Church of Monson-before the tornado



Facebook photo-The First Church of Monson-after the tornado



Facebook photo-The first Church of Monson as of March 2013



Facebook photo-Downtown Monson, just after the tornado



Facebook photo-Just after the tornado-damage to the only grocery store in Monson



Facebook photo-Picture of the devastation just after the June 1st tornado

Appendix I

Map from MEMA

Indicating Communities with Confirmed Tornado Touchdowns.

