

RESISTANCE, RESILIENCE, AND RECOVERY FROM DISASTERS

Perspectives from Southeast Asia

Edited by Regina M. Hechanova
and Lynn C. Waelde

COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENT
AND DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

VOLUME 21

**RESISTANCE, RESILIENCE, AND
RECOVERY FROM DISASTERS**

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RISK MANAGEMENT VOLUME 21

**RESISTANCE, RESILIENCE, AND
RECOVERY FROM DISASTERS:
PERSPECTIVES FROM
SOUTHEAST ASIA**

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ENDORSEMENTS

Crises and catastrophes are on the rise, becoming more the rule than the exception. Thus, a volume devoted to issues of resistance, resilience, and recovery could not be timelier or more important. Hechanova's and Waelde's insightful work should be required reading for leaders, scholars, and community members globally looking for culturally sound and effective evidence-based intervention frameworks.

Kathleen M. Sutcliffe
Bloomberg Distinguished Professor, Johns Hopkins
University and co-author of *Still Not Safe: Patient Safety and
the Middle Managing of American Medicine*

Thoughtful and sensitive. The book does not only offer keen ideas about mental health and psychosocial support in times of disaster, it also gives us a deeper appreciation of the concepts of resistance, resilience, and recovery from disasters that is specific to the context that is Southeast Asia. In the midst of the global pandemic we are currently facing, this book gives us valuable insights as to how we can ensue collective resilience among our people in Southeast Asia and move forward in a way that is fit to the context of our new normal. What I appreciate most about the book is that it's giving a space for one of those groups that is often neglected in times of disaster — the disaster responders.

Marshalee J. Baquiano,
PhD University of the Philippines Visayas

Disasters have profoundly affected the evolution of human cultures through known history, and no region has felt these effects more than Southeast Asia (SEA). This volume provides a concise and unique resource for understanding how stress-resistance in the face of disaster, resilience to its most acute effects, and longer-term adaptive recovery are entwined with the cultural ecologies of those affected. These are perhaps the most fundamentally important distinctions for understanding how we can accurately anticipate and respond effectively to the mental health and psychosocial support needs of communities and organizations across SEA impacted by such catastrophic events. I recommend this book as a practical and scholarly resource for informing culturally sensitive studies and humanitarian interventions in general, and especially in SEA context.

Gil Reyes, Ph.D.
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Trauma Psychology

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PREFACE

As of this writing, more than a quarter of a million people are in evacuation shelters as a result of Taal Volcano in the Philippines, which explosively erupted just days ago ([National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, 2020](#)). Since then, the region has experienced more than 900 volcanic earthquakes, raising the prospect of volcanic tsunamis. The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) has posted an Alert Level 4 for Taal, meaning that a hazardous eruption is possible within hours to days ([PHIVOLCS, 2020](#)). The area is covered in feet of volcanic ash, obliterating homes, livelihoods, and communities.

It is now clear that human-induced climate change affects the likelihood and severity of many types of natural disasters ([National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016](#)). The reality of climate change and its relationship to increased risk of natural disasters means that disaster preparedness and response must be a priority, as this elevated risk is associated with increasing vulnerabilities worldwide ([Van Aalst, 2006](#)). Much work already documents that climate change and disaster have deleterious effects on mental health, particularly for those who are impoverished and marginalized ([Hayes, Blashki, Wiseman, Burke, & Reifels, 2018](#)). Thus, disaster preparedness and response must address mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), that is, interventions that can address the range of severity of disaster stress sequelae from normative responses to more severe and lasting psychopathological outcomes. The chapters in this volume document that Southeast Asia is particularly vulnerable to disasters of all kinds, which exact a terrible toll of suffering and destruction.

Three key concepts guide the considerations of disaster mental health presented in this volume: resistance, resilience, and recovery, as described in the Johns Hopkins model. Resistance is a form of psychological immunity to developing manifestations of distress and dysfunction following disasters. Resilience refers to the capacity to effectively rebound from distress and dysfunction that occurs as a result of disaster. Recovery refers to the capacity to restore adaptive functioning following distress, impairment, and dysfunction that occur as a result of a disaster ([Kaminsky, McCabe, Langlieb, & Everly, 2007](#)). Addressing these three capacities of resistance, resilience, and recovery requires a solid evidence base to guide effective planning and practice that has been informed by all levels – from the individual to the population – and is grounded in knowledge about applications that are culturally appropriate.

The chapters in this volume address ways to enhance resistance, resilience, and recovery using leadership models and MHPSS interventions that are developed and implemented using a whole community approach that is grounded in and guided by cultural considerations. Because much work about disaster planning

and recovery is based on work done in Western cultures, in the first chapter, we address cultural considerations for MHPSS in Southeast Asia. Part II addresses leadership and organizational models for MPHSS. The powerful role of different forms of education to reduce disaster vulnerabilities is reviewed in Chapter 2 authored by Roman Hoffmann and Daniela Blecha. In Chapter 3, Mendiola Teng-Calleja, Pinky Rose Sabile, and Angelique Pearl Virtue Villasanta review ways to structure workplace organization to enhance employee and organizational resilience in the face of disasters. In Chapter 4, Elirozz Carlie Labaria, Avegale Acosta, and Charlotte Kendra Gotangco explain how the disaster planning process, including prevention, mitigation, and preparedness efforts, can be integrated with mental health efforts.

Part III of this volume reviews different forms of MHPSS support interventions as they have been applied in Southeast Asian countries. In Chapter 5, Jason O. Manaois, Chantal Ellis S. Tabo-Corpuz, and Andrew G. Heise review psychological first aid and its application in SEA. The next two chapters address specific disaster intervention approaches, namely, mindfulness and art therapy. In Chapter 6, Adriana Panting, Andrew G. Heise, Ma. Regina M. Hechanova, and Lynn C. Waelde review the rationale, cultural adaptations, and evidence base for integrating mindfulness and meditation into MHPSS. In Chapter 7, J. Sedfrey S. Santiago discusses art therapy as a way to allow expression of disaster stress experiences and provide a pathway to financial support for disaster survivors, using the Banglos fisherfolk as an illustration. Disaster responders bear heavy stress exposure burdens. In Chapter 8, Johnrev Guilaran and Hong An Nguyen describe MHPSS interventions for disaster responders themselves. The last chapter of Section II, Chapter 9, authored by Grant J. Rich and Skultip (Jill) Sirikantraporn, addresses posttraumatic growth as an outcome of disaster exposure. In the final chapter in Section IV, Chapter 10, we summarize the challenges and prospects for promoting resistance, resilience, and recovery in SEA.

The chapters in this volume address both the vulnerabilities and protective factors in SEA, highlighting the extent to which geography, poverty, and lack of resources, capability, and evidence-based disaster interventions make SEA populations more vulnerable to disasters and their negative outcomes. On the other hand, the strong sense of family, community, and spirituality appear to be protective factors. The chapters also highlight gaps in MHPSS responses and the need for rigor in examining the impact of interventions.

The idea for this volume developed from our collaboration to develop disaster MHPSS programs for the Philippines following Typhoon Haiyan. We are grateful to our collaborators in that initial effort from Ateneo de Manila University, the Psychological Association of the Philippines, and University of the Philippines Visayas Tacloban College. The funding for the original project that brought us all together was provided by Ateneo de Manila University and Palo Alto University. We also wish to acknowledge the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center Residency Program that funded the initial conceptualization of this book project. We thank Alicia N. Torres for providing editorial assistance in the preparation of this book.

In a region that is constantly challenged by disasters, we hope to highlight how important it is to understand cultures and the possible ways in which the world can learn from Southeast Asia. We hope to encourage further research and translation into disaster mental health practice.

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