Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in crisis situation
What happens usually during and after emergencies?

- Existing formal/informal care for severe mental conditions collapse.
- \( \uparrow \) incidence of social problems, distress and common mental disorders (e.g. mood and anxiety disorders)
- Enormous interest in addressing mental health/psychosocial issues.
- In the immediate aftermath, risk of numerous ill-conceived mental health/psychosocial initiatives.
### Summary Table on Generic WHO Projections after Disaster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>BEFORE DISASTER 12-month prevalence</th>
<th>AFTER DISASTER 12-month prevalence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Severe mental disorders</td>
<td>2-3%</td>
<td>3-4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Psychosis, severe depression, severely disabling form of anxiety disorder)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate or mild mental disorders</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20% (reduces to 15% with natural recovery)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Mild and moderate forms of depression and anxiety disorders, including PTSD)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe or moderate psychological distress (No disorder)</td>
<td>No estimate</td>
<td>30-50% (reduces to unknown extent with natural recovery)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None or mild psychological distress</td>
<td>No estimate</td>
<td>20-40% (may resolve over time)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dr Shekhar Saxena, Mental Health department
Mental health and psychosocial support after emergencies: Target mix of support at district-level

- Self and family care
- Social interventions (family tracing and reunification, education, safe space for play, facilitating grieving rituals and community self-help, economic support, etc)
- Informal support from community resources (teachers, traditional healers, leaders, volunteers, etc)
- Care and support through primary health care and social services
- Community mental health services

Adapted from: WHO (2003), UNICEF (2005), among others

Dr Shekhar Saxena, Mental Health department
WHO Actions

Country-level (eg. Post-Tsunami)
- Advice to governments and collaborating agencies
- Assessment, planning and coordination (across sectors and levels of pyramid)
- Assistance to MoH in building/strengthening district-level community mental health services

Normative-level
- Initiator and co-chair of IASC Task Force to develop inter-agency, inter-sectoral, operational guidance on mental health and psychosocial support in crises