Psychological First Aid

Micky M. Sharma, Psy.D.
Executive Director
Counseling & Student Development Center
Agenda

- Impact of Traumatic Events on a Campus Community
- Defining Psychological First Aid
- Use of Psychological First Aid on College Campuses
- Open Discussion
Traumatic Events

• Violence on Campus
  – University of Alabama, Huntsville 2010
  – Northern Illinois University 2008
  – Virginia Tech 2007

• Other Traumatic Events

• Impact on your Campus
Population Exposure Model

Psychological First Aid

• Definition

• Primary objectives
  - “Respect for individual variation”

• When utilized

• What it is *not*

• Who can provide this
Skill Set needed

1. Rapid assessment
2. Shift from ‘conventional practice’
3. Provide outreach
4. Tailor services to the context/culture
5. Ability to handle intense reactions
6. Provide clear information
7. Can stabilize person in distress
8. Recognize own need for self care

Watson (2008)
Eight Core Actions

1. Contact & Engagement
2. Provide safety and comfort
3. Stabilization → calming
4. Information gathering
5. Offer practical assistance
6. Connect to social support
7. Provide education and resources
8. Link to services and referrals

NCTSN/NCPTSD (2006)
Practical Application

- Northern Illinois University
  - Meetings for Faculty & Staff
  - Counselors in the classrooms
    - One counselor in each class for 2 days

- Positive Results

- “Unanticipated” Difficulties
Questions and Discussion
