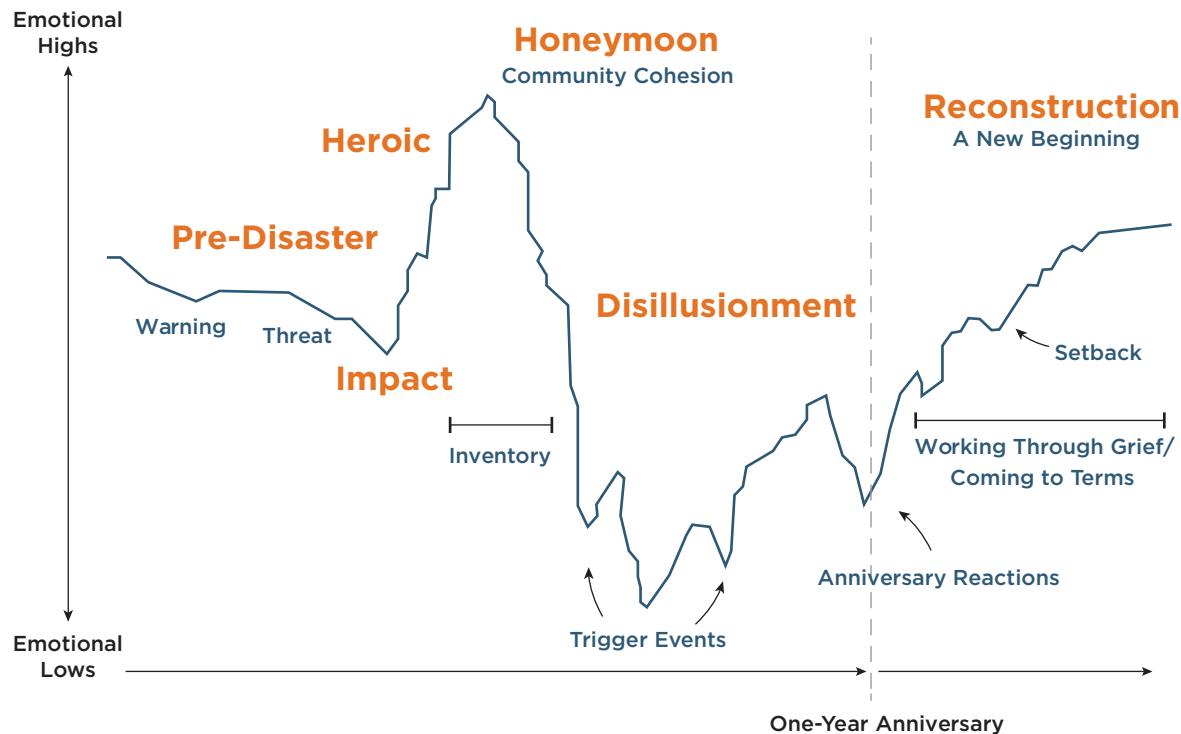




THE PHASES OF DISASTER



Phase 1: Pre-Disaster

Characterized by: fear, uncertainty

Disasters with no warning:

- Can cause feelings of vulnerability and lack of security,
- Fears of future, unpredicted tragedies
- Sense of loss of control
- Sense of loss of ability to protect themselves and their family

Disasters with warning:

- Can cause feelings of guilt
- Self-blame for failure to heed the warnings

Phase 2: Impact

Characterized by: a range of intense emotional reactions

- Slow, low-threat disasters have psychological effects that are different from those of rapid, dangerous disasters
- These reactions can range from shock to overt panic

- Initial confusion and disbelief typically are followed by a focus on self-preservation and family protection

Phase 3: Heroic

Characterized by: high level of activity with low level of productivity

- This phase brings out a sense of altruism
- Many community members exhibit adrenaline-induced rescue behavior
- Risk assessment may be impaired because of this

Phase 4: Honeymoon

Characterized by: dramatic shift in emotion to optimism

- Disaster assistance is readily available
- Community bonding occurs
- Optimism exists that everything will return to normal quickly

Phase 5: Disillusionment

Characterized by: optimism turning to discouragement

- Individuals realize the limits of disaster assistance
- As stress continues to take a toll, negative reactions such as physical exhaustion or substance use may begin to surface
- Increasing gap between need and assistance leads to feelings of abandonment
- Especially as the larger community returns to business as usual, there may be an increased demand for services, as individuals and communities become ready to accept support

Phase 6: Reconstruction

Characterized by: an overall feeling of recovery

- Individuals and communities begin to assume responsibility for rebuilding their lives
- People adjust to a new "normal" while continuing to grieve losses
- The reconstruction phase often begins around the anniversary of the disaster