

Public health practices to support community psychosocial and mental health response and recovery post-flooding

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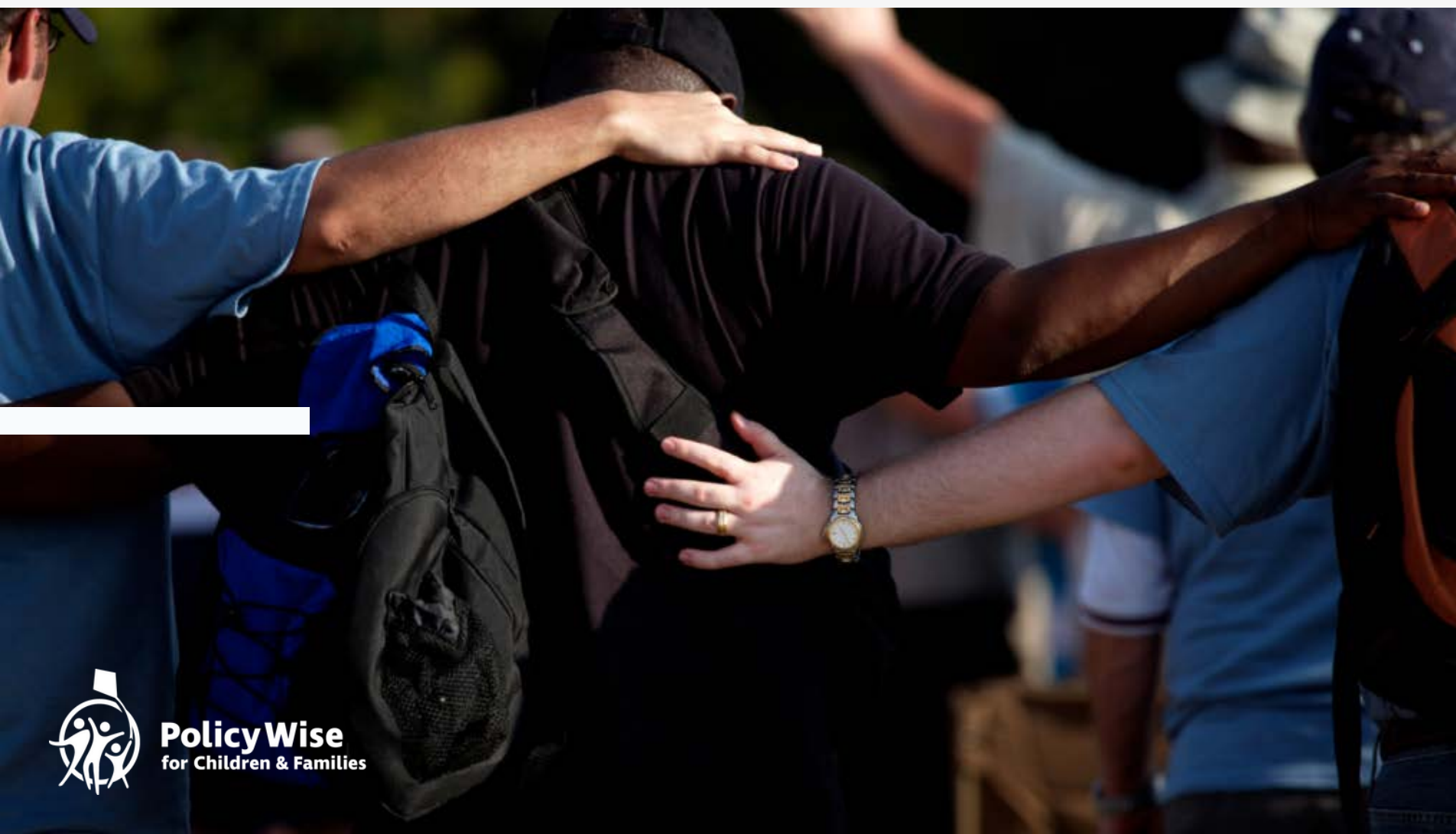
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Land acknowledgement

I WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I LIVE AND WORK
ON TREATY 6 TERRITORY AND THE HOMELANDS OF MÉTIS
NATION OF ALBERTA REGION 4

Flooding

Is the most common climate-related disaster in Canada



Psychosocial and mental health impacts

Are significant and inequitable at the community level

Objective 1

Describe the mental health and psychosocial well-being impacts of flooding, with emphasis on systemically excluded groups.

Objective 2

Identify community-level practices and contextual factors to mitigate the mental health and psychosocial well-being impacts of flooding.

What we did



Collaborated with
the NCCEH



Engaged a pan-
Canadian advisory
committee



Reviewed academic and
practice-based sources



Interviewed key
informants

November 2022

Post-flooding community-level psychosocial impacts and priorities in Canada: A preliminary report

By Nicole Glenn and Maxine Myre, PolicyWise for Children and Families
In partnership with the National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health



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A guide to post-flooding community-level psychosocial response and recovery in Canada

By Maxine Myre and Nicole Glenn, PolicyWise for Children and Families
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Impacts

WHAT WE FOUND

Flooding has short-term and long-term psychosocial and mental health impacts

Flooding worsens psychosocial and mental health inequities



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LONG TERM IMPACTS

When we're talking about pretty large catastrophes affecting the community, we need to think about a five-year or ten-year plan.

KEY INFORMANT

Practices



WHAT WE FOUND

Relationships are foundational to all psychosocial recovery-oriented practices

What can public health professionals and leaders do?

- Identify and leverage existing relationships
- Advocate for and allocate resources to create and maintain relationships

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RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY

You're going to have to work with the community for a long time. So, think about all of your decisions, actions, and communication, not only for today, tomorrow, and next week, but as setting the basis for a long-term relationship.

KEY INFORMANT

Practices

Practices to support psychosocial recovery after a flood

1. Centring community leadership
2. Strengthening community connections
3. Centring reconciliation and Indigenous views of well-being
4. Prioritizing and supporting responder well-being
5. Collaborating and coordinating between public health, other sectors, and external agencies
6. Communicating and engaging with community
7. Gathering and sharing insights, stories, and lessons learned



Practices

1 Centring community leadership

- Convening community leaders
- Listening to youth voices
- Supporting local action



Practices

2 Strengthening community connections

- Taking a strength-based approach
- Gathering as a community
- Creating and rebuilding gathering spaces
- Coordinating volunteers
- Building local community capacity



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STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH

We're really adopting an empowering and asset-based approach. We don't try to see people as a bunch of problems and risk factors, but rather to see them as potential and strengths and resources and assets to the community.

KEY INFORMANT

Practices

3 Centring reconciliation and Indigenous views of well-being

- Partnering with Indigenous communities, knowledge keepers, and Elders in decision making
- Recognizing that every Indigenous community is unique
- Integrating Indigenous views of well-being



Practices

4 Prioritizing and supporting responder well-being

- Training responders
- Working in teams
- Providing supports and implementing processes at a leadership level



Practices

5 Collaborating and coordinating between public health, other sectors, and external agencies

- Connecting and integrating across sectors
 - Primary care
 - Housing and basic needs
 - Education
 - Arts, culture, and recreation
 - Infrastructure and transportation
 - Charitable, faith-based, and community organizations
- Providing systems navigation support



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ARTS & CULTURE

What we found is that we need to diversify the range of activities so that everybody can find a way to get connected with an initiative or activity.

KEY INFORMANT

Practices

6 Communicating and engaging with community

- Providing timely information and addressing community concerns
- Engaging in accessible and equitable communication
- Improving awareness of resources and supports
- Engaging with community informally



Practices

7 Gathering and sharing insights, stories, and lessons learned

- Using data to understand, adapt, and advocate
- Partnering for data collection and analysis
- Applying data collection methods that are minimally invasive, community-based, and culturally responsive
- Sharing lessons broadly and accessibly
- Using data to plan and heal

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KNOWLEDGE SHARING

The hope is that with each time we provide this knowledge and we share this experience, that it sticks and creates a change or positive impact for people.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER

Challenges and opportunities



WHAT WE FOUND

System level challenges influence the effectiveness of community level practices

Challenges and opportunities are intertwined

Challenges and opportunities

- **Overlapping disaster phases**

Preparedness, response, and recovery overlap and involve long term planning

- **Knowledge sharing**

Learning from prior events, other communities, and different types of disasters and crises

- **Community-based relationships**

It takes time and energy to develop and maintain relationships

- **Funding**

Inconsistent and inadequate for long-term recovery

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FUNDING CYCLES

We're at a point where a lot of our grant funding has ended. So, my team is shrunk down again. And at some point they'll say: “How come you're not ready for the next one?” but if you have to re-establish connections within communities, you're starting all over again.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER

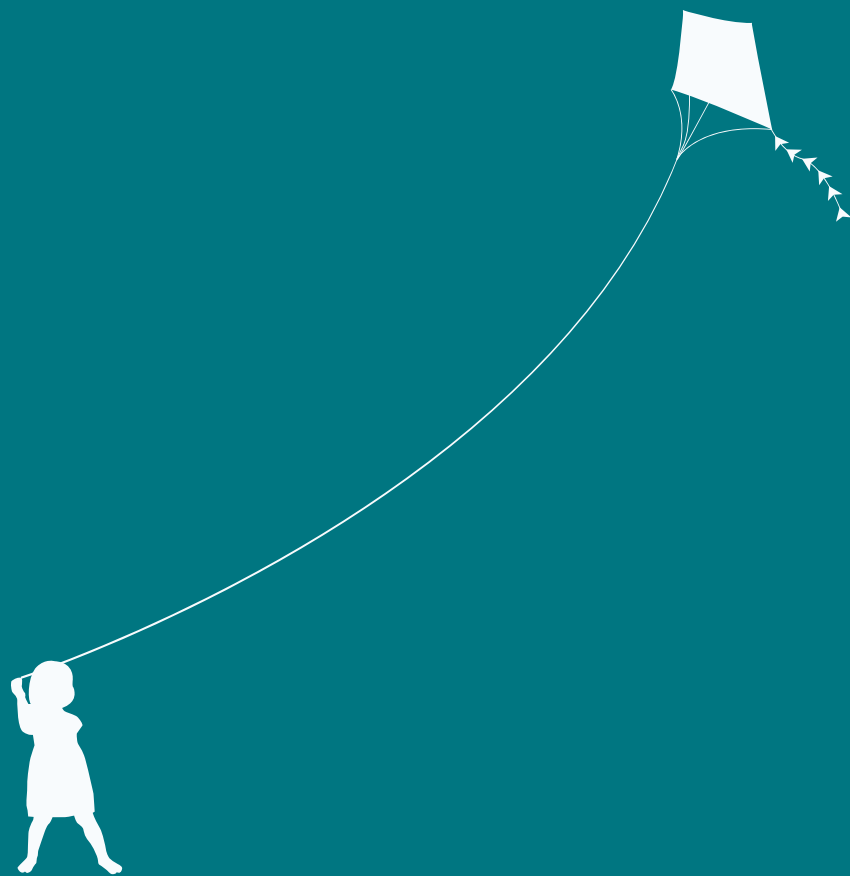
Concluding thoughts

Reimagine, extend, adapt

Climate events are on the rise and communities may face concurrent and/or repeated events

Flooding impacts child, family, and community psychosocial well-being

Strong relationships facilitate preparedness and recovery-oriented actions



Thank you

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Guy Choquet - Canadian Red Cross

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Panel discussion



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