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### **Rebuilding Lives After a Disaster**

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Workshop Learning Objectives:

By the end of the workshop, attendees will:

1. Appreciate the magnitude of devastation that can be experienced by individuals recovering from a major disaster.
2. Understand the possible roles of OT in disaster recovery at both the individual and community levels.
3. Possess the beginning of an "OT Disaster Toolbox" that can be used with individuals who have experienced severe losses.

Occupational therapy has a role in rebuilding lives after a disaster. The complexity of a disaster can result in dysfunction in all areas of occupation. The greater the magnitude of the disaster, the greater can be the collective dysfunction in a multitude of systems.

Occupational therapy is positioned to help clients at the level of the individual on up to the level of the community. This is due to their understanding of the interactions of the personal, social, occupational, and environment realms of peoples lives, and how devastation can impact these systems.

Following a major disaster, daily habits and routines are disrupted, neighborhoods are ripped apart, and communities are in shambles. The psychological, physical, and spiritual toll on people's lives can feel insurmountable. However, occupational therapists are able to both zoom into the small corners of ones life and see the need to brush ones teeth, or braid a child's hair. They can also zoom out to the needs of an entire community, like shelter for masses of affected people and their transport to safety.

When addressing the needs of individuals post-disaster, occupational therapists can intervene using the shared interests of those affected, familiar rituals, and daily routines adapted to the disrupted environment. They can also encourage verbal and non-verbal expression as ways of meaning making through the "new stories" that are just beginning.

During this workshop, information and activities will be shared that the presenters have actually used during their disaster recovery experiences, that can be applied to all individuals who have experienced severe loss. Participatory activities will also be provided to give attendees the opportunity to develop their own disaster intervention tools.

Maximum number of attendees: Approximately 60