experienced, both personally and professionally. We need to figure out how to process what we've experienced through this trauma.

Since its founding soon after the attacks of September 11, 2001, the Institute for Disaster Mental Health (DMH) at SUNY New Paltz has been dedicated to providing education and research on disaster mental health. The Institute is committed to advancing the understanding and treatment of mental health issues that arise in response to disasters, and it serves as a resource for mental health professionals, researchers, and policymakers.

The Institute is housed in Science Hall on the campus of SUNY New Paltz and offers a range of programs and services, including a disaster mental health training program, research opportunities, and continuing education credits for mental health practitioners.

The Institute is led by a team of experts in disaster mental health, including Rachel Kaul, a licensed clinical social worker, and Sarah Siviy, a psychologist. The team works to disseminate insights from disasters, including the September 11 attacks, and to ensure that mental health professionals are equipped to respond to future disasters.

During COVID-19 and Beyond: Examining the Well-Being of Disaster Mental Health Workers

In order to better understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on disaster mental health workers, the Institute conducted a survey of these workers. The survey revealed that many workers are struggling with stress and anxiety due to their extreme dedication to their work, and that some have even received treatment for mental health issues.

The survey also found that many workers are experiencing burnout, including compassion fatigue, which is a common problem in the field of disaster mental health. The Institute is committed to supporting these workers and providing them with the resources they need to cope with the challenges they face.

For more information, please visit the Institute for Disaster Mental Health at SUNY New Paltz. The Institute offers a range of resources and services, including training programs, research opportunities, and continuing education credits for mental health practitioners.

Sources:

- "COVID-19 Pandemic and Workers' Well-Being: A Robust Webcast Series" (September 2020)
- "COVID-19 Pandemic and Workers' Well-Being: A Research Brief" (September 2020)
- "COVID-19 Pandemic and Workers' Well-Being: A Team Assessment Activity" (September 2020)
- "COVID-19 Pandemic and Workers' Well-Being: A Website and Resource Center" (September 2020)
- "COVID-19 Pandemic and Workers' Well-Being: A Staying in Touch" (September 2020)

Team Assessment Activity: Stop, Continue, Start

As they discussed the essential need to make meaning out of difficult experiences, the presenters identified five main categories, each including a list of items that have contributed to burnout.

1. Workplace:
   - Limited behavioral health options to support staff
   - Employees in high-risk categories
   - Availability of PPE/vaccines

2. Preparedness:
   - Access to family support services (childcare/eldercare)
   - Increased personal and family needs

3. Response:
   - Risk of exposure
   - Increased personal and family needs

4. Recovery:
   - Limited behavioral health options to support staff
   - Use of informal buddy system

5. Personal:
   - Stress due to personal challenges
   - Stress due to other personal challenges

The presenters identified five warning signs of compassion fatigue and burnout, including:

- High levels of stress and anxiety
- Difficulty disconnecting from the job
- Difficulty focusing on the present
- Difficulty connecting with colleagues
- Difficulty remembering past events

The Institute encourages supervisors to regularly "take a pulse" on the reaction of staff and to consider a formal buddy system. Simple practices like a brief daily check-in to see how everyone is doing can help.

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