

Gaualofa: Tsunami Impact and Samoan Grief Recovery

Authors : Byron Malaela Sotiata Seiuli

Abstract : When a disaster strike, the resultant impact and devastation forces many people, particularly those directly affected, to re-examine the core dimensions of life that do not come from other life events. The way people respond to and try give meaning to their experiences resultant from the ruptures of trauma remains vital in grief recovery. On 29 October 2009, an earthquake of 8.3 magnitudes generated a galulolo (tsunami) wave that destroyed parts of American Samoa, Tonga and Samoa (previously Western Samoa). Aside from the physical and natural devastation, many people lost their lives and their livelihood. For health professionals who were called upon to provide psychosocial support, this calamity provided an ideal setting to examine and explore how those directly impacted recovered from the calamity. The experiences of a Samoan couple, Fia and Ola, becomes the key focus of this article, one that situates their mourning patterns and recovery journey in the context of Samoan culture. Examining grief from this perspective creates a cultural space to extend indigenous understanding on the complexities of grieving and customarily responses of Samoan people, like this couple, to disaster recovery.

Keywords : Fa'asamoa, galulolo, tsunami disaster, trauma and grief recovery, pacific psychology

Conference Title : ICCCP 2017 : International Conference on Clinical and Counseling Psychology

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : December 18-19, 2017