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# UNIT 12: CERT BASIC TRAINING

## UNIT 7 REVIEW

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In this unit you will review the following information about *CERT Basic Training* Unit 7:

- **Unit Purpose**
- **Unit Objectives**
- **Key Points to Be Made in the Unit**
- **Training Videos Relevant to the Unit**
- **The Hands-on Activities in the Unit and How to Conduct Them Correctly**
- **How This Unit Connects to the Other Units**

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## T-T-T UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit reviews the content and activities in *CERT Basic Training* Unit 7. It also looks at how Unit 7 connects to the other units in the *CERT Basic Training* course.

## UNIT 7 PURPOSE

The purpose of *CERT Basic Training* Unit 7 is:

- To examine the psychological impact of a disaster on survivors and rescuers
- To discuss how to provide psychological first aid
- To discuss what CERT members can do individually and as part of a CERT

## UNIT 7 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Unit 7 learning objectives are:

1. To describe the post-disaster emotional environment
2. To describe the steps that rescuers can take to relieve their own stressors and those of disaster survivors

## UNIT 7 KEY TOPICS

In this unit, the instructor needs to do the following:

- Give a brief overview of the unit and the material that will be covered
- Demystify the topic as this information is useful and applicable to everyone
- Set boundaries for what is expected. CERT members identify problems but they do not manage them
- Emphasize the importance of listening
- Emphasize that CERT members should take care of themselves first

## TRAINING VIDEOS FOR UNIT 7

If time permits, the 43-minute video *CERT Training: Disaster Psychology* (or portions of it) is recommended for this unit. The video describes the physical, emotional, and psychological reactions to a disaster and techniques for CERT members to take care of themselves and assist others in coping with the stress. The video is available for download at the National CERT Web site <http://www.fema.gov/cert>.

**Please note that the video should not be used in place of teaching the unit.**

## HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES IN UNIT 7

There are no hands-on activities in this unit.

### TIPS FOR TEACHING UNIT 7

- The topics covered in Unit 7 may be a challenge for instructors and some participants.
  - Some participants may not feel comfortable with the more personal nature of the topics.
  - Other participants may want to share too much about a personally stressful experience during the discussion.
  - Participants may not have considered that disaster psychology would relate to their work as CERT responders.
- The instructor needs to emphasize that techniques for handling their own emotional stress during a disaster are important for CERT members. Traumatic emotional stress can take a CERT out of action more quickly than physical injury. “Rescuer safety” means physical safety and psychological safety. This is another skill set in the CERT member’s tool box.
- Stick to the materials, which are purposefully limited. CERT members are not trained to, nor should they attempt to, provide counseling or therapy to others. The instructor should be clear that providing emotional assistance to other CERT members and to survivors is “field expedient.” (CERT members who are also professional counselors may choose to assist their CERTs with those skills.)
- The instructor must model the compassion that he or she is trying to teach.
- Instructors should emphasize that practice sessions can never fully simulate the situations that CERT members will face in an actual disaster.

### TIPS FOR TEACHING UNIT 7 (CONTINUED)

- Before the session, consult with local authorities about what CERTs should do with the body if someone dies.
- Remind participants about what they can and can't promise.
  - For example, don't tell someone everything will be okay. This promise cannot be kept.
  - Instead, CERT members should use the phrase, "We're going to do the best that we can." This is more effective, believable, and reassuring. It is a promise that can be kept.
- Before the session, determine if and how a critical incident stress debriefing (CISD) team would be available to CERT members if they need that kind of assistance.

### HOW UNIT 7 CONNECTS TO OTHER *CERT BASIC TRAINING* UNITS

If CERT members are suffering from trauma stress, they cannot be effective members of the CERT. The information in this unit affects how well they can carry out the skills taught in the *Basic Training* course.

### T-T-T UNIT SUMMARY

This unit has provided information on *CERT Basic Training* Unit 7.

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