4. Not business as usual: the psychological impact of terrorism and mass casualty on business and organizational behavior

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INTRODUCTION

Terrorism and mass casualty have forced businesses and organizations to react to threat and horror that is well beyond the normal range of business activity. Although organizations are collections of individuals, we must understand both individual and group dynamics if we are to understand the special dynamics of organizations exposed to mass casualty. This is the aim of our chapter, where we shall go beyond the mental health impact of terrorism and mass casualty circumstances to the impact on organizational functioning. We apply Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1988, 1989, 1998), one of the principal theoretical backdrops for the understanding of stress from burnout to traumatic stress, to organizations and organizational behavior following mass casualty.

CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES (COR) THEORY PRINCIPLES

To understand the influence of mass casualty on organizations, we first review the principles of COR theory. COR theory is perhaps the most widely used theory today for an understanding of mass casualty trauma. It is a motivational stress theory based on the tenet that individuals and groups strive to obtain, retain, and protect the things they most value. These valued items or concepts are termed ‘resources’. COR theory predicts that stress will result following the actual loss of resources, threat of loss of resources, or failure to gain resources following considerable
resource investment. COR theory differs from appraisal-based stress theories (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984) in that resources are seen as largely observable and objectively quantifiable, rather than subjectively determined by individuals. COR theory further suggests that the subjective component in resource evaluation does exist, but is secondary to the objective elements, and tends to be shared by people in a common culture, including organizational culture.

COR theory posits several key principles. The first principle is that resource loss is disproportionately more salient than resource gain. Studies have repeatedly shown that when considering the effects of loss and gain, loss has considerably greater influence on behavior (Hobfoll and Lilly, 1993; Wells et al., 1997, 1999; Hobfoll et al., 2006). The second principle of COR theory asserts that people and groups must invest resources in order to retain resources, protect against resource loss, recover from losses, and gain further resources. Thus, those individuals and groups with greater resources are less vulnerable to initial resource loss and more capable of resource gain if resources are depleted. Contrariwise, individuals and groups who lack resources are more vulnerable to resource loss and less capable of resource gain if resources are depleted. Contrariwise, individuals and groups who lack resources are more vulnerable to resource loss and less capable of resource gain (Holahan et al., 1999; Wells et al., 1999; Ennis et al., 2000). This implies not only that people and organizations with resources may be less likely to encounter stressful circumstances that affect psychological and physical well-being (King et al., 1999), but also that those who possess greater resources are likely to be more capable of problem solving in stressful situations and in so doing, be better able to halt resource loss cycles.

In addition, according to COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll and Lilly, 1993), when individuals and groups experience a traumatic event, such as a mass casualty, they are likely to experience a particularly critical and rapid loss of resources. Hence, it is not uncommon for attempts to respond to these losses by investing resources to fall short, particularly at first.

A primary corollary to COR theory postulates that when stress occurs and resources are lost, those lacking resources are especially susceptible to experience resource loss cycles of increasing strength and speed. These individuals and groups then enter into an escalating spiral of losses termed a ‘loss spiral’, particularly if they have few initial resources or where the stress is especially severe or chronic. Thus, after a mass casualty event, preventing or at least limiting the accelerating force of loss spirals is critical to post-trauma recovery.

In this chapter, we revisit the key principles of COR theory in relation to organizations following mass casualty and the organizational behavior that might prove likely in response to a mass casualty event. We begin by focusing on the effects that mass casualty and acts of terror have on individuals
and organizations. Second, we provide ways to best respond in mass casualty situations. We then examine the organizational behavior that may result in response to mass casualty, as there are individual and organizational reactions that are likely to reveal themselves in situations of chaos and unpredictability under threat. Finally, we explore how management and organizations can help offset problems caused by mass casualty and to foster more optimal environments for their employees and organization.

TERRORISM AND POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

Terrorism is defined by the Code of Federal Regulation as ‘the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives’ (Code of Federal Regulation, 2007, Title 28, Section 0.85, paragraph L). The goals of terrorism are based on assumptions that political change can be affected by making the public aware of ideological causes for which the terrorists are working, and forced acquiescence on the part of the public to assuage further terrorist threat (Friedland and Merari, 1985). Terrorist activities are designed to intimidate and induce worry and concern disproportionate to the amount of physical damage they cause (ibid.). Terrorism targets business both directly and indirectly, as upset in the economic realm and of the routine of ‘business as usual’ are two of the primary objectives of terrorism.

Studies conducted in the United States following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, and more recently in Israel during the Al Aqsa Intifada, reported that those who are exposed to terrorist attacks are at higher risk of developing PTSD and depression (Schuster et al. 2001; Galea et al., 2002; Schlenker et al., 2002; Silver et al., 2002; Hobfoll et al., 2006; Hall et al., 2007). PTSD is a disorder that may follow extremely stressful or traumatic events that threaten serious injury or death and are significant enough to invoke concomitant feelings of fear, helplessness and horror. PTSD is marked by a distinct symptom picture involving three diagnostic clusters: re-experiencing the traumatic event in thoughts or dreams, avoidance of thoughts and stimuli that remind people of the trauma, and hyperarousal.

In New York, one month following 9/11, a prevalence rate for PTSD of 7.5 percent was found (Galea et al., 2002), with rates jumping to 20 percent for individuals who lived south of Canal Street, near the World Trade Center. Research also demonstrated that although proximity to the epicenter of terrorist attack exacerbates post-traumatic symptomatology (for
example, direct terrorism exposure), individuals living in distant areas from New York City were also affected psychologically (Silver et al., 2002), albeit considerably less severely. Several studies have linked watching television (for example, indirect terrorism exposure) to increases in PTSD symptoms for individuals (Schuster et al., 2001; Silver et al., 2002).

In addition to the development of psychological disorder such as PTSD, trauma has the potential effect of shattering people’s assumptions about the world that may lead to profound changes in their thinking. Janoff-Bulman (1992) suggested that trauma is more likely to have an extreme negative impact if it results in shattered assumptions about people’s view of the world. According to her model, individuals hold three basic assumptions: the benevolence of the world (that is, the world is a good and just place), the meaningfulness of the world (that is, the world is just; people deserve what they get), and a sense of self-worth (that is, belief of oneself as good, just and decent; positive self-evaluation). Traumatic events have the ability to shatter people’s basic assumptions about themselves and their world, thus leaving them vulnerable and more likely to develop post-traumatic distress. Given the overwhelming nature of the disruption to people’s assumptive worldviews, the degree of distress that would result would be a function not only of degree and severity of exposure and individual vulnerability factors such as prior psychological distress or a history of prior trauma exposure (Ozer et al., 2003). Rather, the impact will be associated to a significant degree with the extent that the ‘new reality of terrorism’ results in shattering individuals’ view of themselves and their world. This, too, has special implications for business, as people’s priorities may naturally turn away from business and toward their families, particularly if businesses and organizations do not make particular efforts to support employees and to see them as people who are nested primarily in families, not primarily in work.

**TERROR MANAGEMENT THEORY**

Terror management theory (Greenberg et al., 1986) offers another theoretical foundation for explaining post-trauma alterations in thinking and behavior. The theory, not originally proposed in relation to terrorism, posits that humans are endowed intellectually with the ability to identify the inevitability of their own death and annihilation (Becker, 1973; Greenberg et al., 1986). The knowledge of one’s finitude has the capacity to produce terror and anxiety. Culture lessens this terror through worldviews that ‘consist of humanly constructed beliefs about reality shared by individuals in groups that provide a sense that one is a person of value in a world of
meaning’ (Solomon et al., 2004, p. 17). Individuals are thought to assuage terror by maintaining allegiance to their cultural worldview and gaining enhanced self-esteem through behaviors consonant with the standards of their worldview (Rosenblatt et al., 1989). Hence, following the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001 in the United States, it was clearly evident that people attempted to make meaning following these events by increasing their patriotism and reaffirming their faith in the ‘American Way of Life’ (Pyszczynski et al., 2003). As symbols of national pride and in-group loyalty were widely displayed (for example, displaying American flags), unfortunate events unfolded in which individuals from other countries or different ethnicities, perceived as out-group members, were threatened or attacked (Jacoby, 2001). National-level trauma such as terrorism that specifically attack another’s culture may enhance people’s sense of meaning and attachment to in-group members, but may also yield negative consequences in terms of the potential emergence of increased out-group biases.

Research related to terror management theory has demonstrated the hypothesized defense of cultural worldviews when worldviews become threatened with terrorism. Thus, individuals who are reminded of their own mortality evidence an increase in negative reactions toward members of an out-group who threaten cultural worldviews and positive reactions toward in-group members who support and bolster their worldview (Rosenblatt et al., 1989; McGregor et al., 1998; Simon et al., 1998; Halloran and Kashima, 2004; Hall et al., 2007). Moreover, the distrust of others may generalize to yet others, who are not associated with the threat, as we see with increased dialogue about the threat to US security from Mexicans crossing into the US illegally.

INTERVENTIONS IN RESPONSE TO TERRORISM

In addition to the impact that mass casualty events and terror have on society, there are several ways in which traumatic events influence individuals and business and other organizations and disturb routine functioning. First, the physical, social, and psychological demands of situations involving mass casualty may be overwhelming to people (Hobfoll et al., 2007). Concerns regarding pain, injury or loss of life can consume individuals until they see themselves as out of danger. This concern applies to individuals themselves, but also to their family members, friends and co-workers. Furthermore, structures such as homes, places of employment, and places of worship may have been damaged or destroyed by the mass trauma, further contributing to a state of fear and even chaos if destruction is widespread. The worry and anxiety that likely accompanies the aftermath of a traumatic
event can incapacitate people on both individual and societal levels. With this increased burden, people may feel that their daily activities are simply more demanding than they are able to handle. In response, their reactions will range from quite adequate coping to rather severe dysfunction and withdrawal. This said, even though a majority of individuals will respond adequately (Bonanno, 2004), higher-order functioning and decision making will be widely impaired, with important implications for business.

It is important to recognize that people’s initial reactions should not necessarily be regarded as pathological responses or as indicators of subsequent psychological disorder. Nevertheless, people may experience immense distress and require clinical intervention and major organizational support to decrease psychological symptoms and impairment (Galea et al., 2002).

Second, the devastation of resources can impoverish individuals’ and communities’ capacities to cope with mass casualty and recover from its consequences. This is especially true where individuals or communities already have depleted psycho-social and economic resources that would assist in recovery efforts (Hobfoll, 1998; Hobfoll et al., 2007). For organizations, this vulnerability may spring in part from a history of economic or workplace instability. This is not so much how the company’s stock is doing, but how employees have been treated; so labor unrest, a dissatisfied workforce or infighting, or even a period of rapid growth, may all result in fissures in organizational strength. The ability of companies and individuals alike to be resilient in the face of mass trauma resides, in part, in the amount of various resources that can be devoted to recovery efforts, with organizational support and management and co-worker climate being particularly important.

Third, the loss of territory or sense of safety as a result of mass casualty impacts on individuals and communities as this depleted environment can foster fear and helplessness. Locations within the community that provide structure to daily life, such as places of employment, places of worship and civic centers, may no longer remain, or may be associated with the trauma. This further contributes to the loss of resources and stability that is already being threatened. It is also an aspect of many instances of disaster and mass casualty that ongoing violence, massive failure to provide aid, and secondary losses that follow the initial phase mean that there may be no clear post-trauma phase (ibid.).

Finally, the threat of people’s sense of meaning, integrity and order often have particularly stressful effects on the lives of individuals, business organizations, and the collective society (ibid.). People’s sense of meaning about themselves and the world are often shattered after experiencing a traumatic event. In addition, their sense of justice may be threatened, especially in
situations where people are innocent victims or do not receive the resources and support they need in the aftermath of a traumatic event.

The varied and unpredictable nature of traumatic events, including mass casualty, and their respective aftermath defies any specific guidelines that can be rigidly applied. Rather, we can address a general set of guidelines, while simultaneously highlighting the need for flexibility during intervention and adaptation to the particular situational determinants. These guidelines should be learned and implemented in advance to the extent possible, so that when situations require immediate action, management and business organizations can respond in ways that benefit the individuals who make up their organization and the organization itself. These guidelines can be organized around five principles as follows (ibid.): (i) promote a sense of safety, (ii) promote calming, (iii) promote a sense of self- and collective-efficacy, (iv) promote connectedness and (v) promote hope. We shall explore these intervention guidelines next.

PROMOTE A SENSE OF SAFETY

Following terrorism and mass casualty people must react to the situations that threaten their sense of safety, including their own lives, the lives of family members, friends and co-workers or the items and objects they deeply value (Hobfoll, 1991; Ursano et al., 1994; van der Kolk and McFarlane, 1996; Briere and Elliott, 2000; Basoglu et al., 2005). Interventions that increase both a psychological sense of safety and maximize actual safety have been related to a steady reduction of negative post-trauma reactions (Silver et al., 2002; Ozer et al., 2003). This sense of safety can offer people respite as they begin the recovery process in the post-trauma aftermath. Furthermore, those individuals who are able to re-establish a relative sense of safety have considerably lower risk of developing PTSD in the months following exposure to a traumatic event than those who do not (Grieger et al., 2003). Thus, it is vital that the management of businesses and organizations foster a sense of safety and security among their employees and staff in post-disaster efforts (see Table 4.1). A sense of physical safety can first be implemented in a business setting by utilizing all physical methods of security available, such as use of alarms, security personnel and reintroducing established disaster plans and safety areas.

Businesses should move quickly to safe surroundings at alternative sites if their primary worksite is damaged or otherwise unsafe. Computers may allow this through networking from remote sites, and meetings can also occur at borrowed, rented, or branch offices. If families are unsafe, employees will be unable to function and often will not even come to work, so it is
## Table 4.1  Five principles for post-disaster or mass casualty responding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Management intervention</th>
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<td><strong>Promote a sense of safety</strong>  Can help to reduce biological and cognitive, aspects of post-traumatic stress reactions</td>
<td>Utilize alarms, security personnel and re-introduce established disaster plans and safety areas  Discourage negative, unhelpful dialogues that catastrophize the event (e.g., pressure-cooker effect)  Provide an accurate and organized voice to help confine threat</td>
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<td><strong>Promote calming</strong>  Calmness can provide a way to restore normalcy and foster improvement of current symptoms</td>
<td>Disseminate accurate information  Provide education about common reactions to trauma  Provide accessibility to cognitive–behavioral therapy approaches  Promote positive emotions through structured activities in the workplace that foster the experience of these emotions  Allow initial post-traumatic distress to occur, and resolve naturally  Do not engage in psychological debriefing</td>
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<td><strong>Promote a sense of self- and collective-efficacy</strong>  Can provide a belief that actions are likely to result in positive outcomes</td>
<td>Remind employees and staff of their efficacy: remind them of a time when they were successful at work, or dealt with difficult circumstances and coped well  Make individuals a part of the decision-making process  Aim to provide the skills and resources needed for people to achieve goals and complete tasks through empowerment</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Promote connectedness</strong>  Social connectedness increases opportunities for knowledge essential to mass casualty or terrorism response. For maximum effectiveness, connectedness should be an ongoing process that predates traumatic event exposure</td>
<td>Incorporate social support in reaching a common goal by sharing reactions to the traumatic experiences, solving problems, providing emotional understanding and support, and normalizing reactions and experiences, and offer suggestions regarding coping  Change the physical structure of offices, meeting rooms and cafeterias to maximize social interaction  Coffee breaks or physical stretching breaks could be implemented at designated times during the day to promote the communication between corporation employees  Increase work projects or team-building exercises that provide additional sources to create a socially supportive environment for employees and staff</td>
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in the best interests of business to support family efforts, including alternative housing, applying pressure to political leaders to provide alternative school sites, and providing safe shelter. For example, for companies with offices abroad in economically undeveloped countries, the office may be the most likely place to be secure from a defense and structural standpoint.

Safety should also be planned in advance through individual and group emergency planning for families. This is especially critical in high-risk areas of the world, but is also quite germane to hospitals and other emergency response organizations. If employees are worried about their families’ safety, they will be unable to perform anywhere near capacity at work. Hence, plans should be made and structured in advance for family and even pets, so that employees know how to proceed, contact their families, and if they cannot contact them, that all possible is likely being done. This includes availability of medicines, food, water, and non-electric (wind-up) radio contact, as well as knowledge of safe structures. As phones often become overloaded and cease to work in minutes following disaster and terrorist attack, and roads can become impassable or closed, advance planning is essential and in the best interests of business and organizations. The extent and nature of the planning should follow the rule of reasonable risk, so flood zones require generators and zones of political unrest require proper safe zones and even means of self-defense. The provision to employees of expert advice provided through management encourages reasonable planning that itself lowers anxiety, as over-reaction can be as undermining to safety and perceived safety as overplanning.

PROMOTE CALMING

Traumatic events often produce feelings of intense emotionality as people enter a state of unpredictability and cope with losses that may have
resulted. Symptoms of anxiety and depression are commonly experienced following terrorism and mass casualty. In fact, some anxiety is a sign of normal and healthy responses required to maintain a sense of safety in a perceived unpredictable environment. Studies of individual trauma reveal that the majority of individuals show symptoms at the outset that, if continued, would be markers of PTSD. Bryant et al. (2003) contend that slightly elevated levels of anxiety or arousal can act as a psychological buffer during the initial stages of the post-trauma aftermath and as such, should not necessarily be cause for alarm. This initial severe reaction is a normal way of responding to a traumatic event, and most individuals return to more manageable levels of emotions within days or weeks after the event. These symptoms can become problematic when they interfere with daily activities and functioning. Daily activities that may be impaired include such functions as sleeping, eating, concentration, cognitive processing, and decision making. Although anxiety and arousal may be adaptive initially, continued states of intense emotionality may lead to other symptoms, such as depression and somatic problems (Harvey and Bryant, 1998; Shalev and Freedman, 2005). Those who do not return to these lower manageable levels of responding are at considerable risk of eventual development of PTSD (McNally et al., 2003; Shalev and Freedman, 2005).

It is critical that following some initial period of responding the initial levels of heightened emotions be reduced in order for employees and personnel to return to a pre-trauma level of functioning. Business management should keep in mind the importance of using an intervention that contains the critical element of calming in response to a traumatic event. One type of intervention that has been proposed as a way to ameliorate symptoms and prevent the development of PTSD is psychological debriefing. Psychological debriefing is a way of allowing individuals who have been exposed to trauma to express their emotionality and cognitions to psychological personnel soon after the event (critical incident stress debriefing: CISD; Mitchell, 1983; Raphael, 1986). Unfortunately, debriefing often enhances arousal in the immediate aftermath of trauma exposure, rather than providing a sense of calm that may foster a more positive recovery. There is compelling research evidence that psychological debriefing is not effective in preventing consequent psychological disorders (McNally et al., 2003) and may exacerbate symptoms (Neria and Solomon, 1999; Bisson et al., 2000). Hence, it is not recommended that management provide brief, structured opportunities for debriefing their employees and staff following mass casualty or terrorism, unless they are matched with an ongoing process whereby individuals can be identified or can self-identify for ongoing counseling and support. It is recommended that accurate information, education about common reactions to trauma, and accessibility to
cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) approaches may provide more effective ways to promote a sense of calmness among employees and staff.

After experiencing a traumatic event, some people catastrophize their situation, which refers to thinking that the situation is a worst-case scenario or believing that the circumstances cannot be remedied in any manner. This pattern of thinking is dangerous in that people begin to believe that they have no control over their situation and see no way of improving their condition. When people reveal thoughts that catastrophize their situation, psychological treatments, such as CBT can be implemented to help reduce these negative, unhealthy thoughts or cognitions. CBT is an efficacious treatment that relies on principles of learning to modify faulty thought patterns people may hold regarding themselves, their capabilities and their circumstances. Because such reactions are so common, newsletters, emails, and group meetings can be instituted in which this pattern is normalized and addressed. Just knowing how common such overreactions are, has a calming effect and can then be paired with relaxation techniques and more rational ways of seeing the problems being faced. This is not to minimize real concerns, but to minimize exaggerated extreme fears.

Another way to foster a sense of calm following mass casualty or terror is to incorporate positive emotions into activities and tasks whenever possible (Fredrickson, 2001; Fredrickson et al., 2003). These positive ways of responding and coping can assist employees and staff to recover from post-trauma reactions and return to their previous level of functioning in the workplace. Tragedy may make humor or expectations of joy inappropriate in some circumstances, but the positive emotions of sharing, caring, and faith are virtually always appropriate.

Encouraging participation in yoga, meditation, and aerobic exercise may further assist in providing a calm environment to facilitate recovery. It may be particularly beneficial if business management can provide opportunities for these experiences in the work environment, but at a minimum can promote the participation in these activities outside of work time. Even simply learning some of the breathing techniques offered through yoga can assist in stress reduction, which is often a component used in CBT for stress reduction and anxiety management. Whether through yoga or jogging, people may feel empowered by having a healthy means to reduce stress and anxiety as well as learn a self-soothing behavior. This aspect can be critical during times when chaos is pervasive and people cannot find a source of serenity in their lives.

The Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction program (MBSR; Kabat-Zinn et al., 1992) borrows from yoga concepts in ways that more individuals may find palatable. The MBSR program combines yoga and meditation to help alleviate symptoms of pain and stress by encouraging a sustained focus on
the present awareness and does so in a way that those who are more Westernized can feel comfortable with. In this regard, Santorelli (1996) made recommendations regarding how to use mindfulness in the workplace and Davidson et al. (2003) demonstrated that MBSR is effective in corporate work settings. In a randomized clinical trial, the researchers showed that workers who took an MBSR course evidenced improvements in immune functioning, emotional processing under stress, and brain functioning. These results potentially offer promise for the recommendation of incorporating yoga, meditation, or the combination in response to mass disaster. Establishing a calm environment in the post-disaster aftermath can be difficult; incorporating positive emotions into activities and tasks as well as encouraging participation in self-soothing exercises such as yoga, meditation and mindfulness can offer serenity in the critical stages following a traumatic event.

PROMOTE A SENSE OF SELF- AND COLLECTIVE-EFFICACY

One of the best-examined constructs in the field of psychology is the importance of people feeling a sense of control over the events in their lives, and in particular, the positive outcomes they experience (Skinner, 1996). One concept related to personal control is self-efficacy, which is the sense that individuals believe that their actions are likely to result in positive outcomes (Bandura, 1997). It is through the self-regulation of thought, emotions, and behavior that self-efficacy is primarily acquired (Carver and Scheier, 1998). This practice of self-regulation allows people to moderate their behavior so that they can optimize their sense of control in a given situation. In addition to self-efficacy, the construct can be extended on a larger scale to collective-efficacy, which is the sense that one identifies with a group that is likely to experience positive outcomes (Antonovsky, 1979; Benight and Bandura, 2004).

Bandura (1977) contends that there are task-specific self-efficacies that relate to distinct skills. One of these domains is trauma-related self-efficacy, which is the perceived ability to regulate disturbing emotions and to solve problems in the areas of property restoration, relocation, personal relationships, job retraining, resource acquisition and other trauma-related tasks (Benight et al., 1999, 2000). Consistent with this theory, interventions focused on prevention of burnout in the workforce (Freedy and Hobfoll, 1994) have been applied to victims of trauma (Resick et al., 2002) and are based on the idea that people need to feel that they have the necessary skills and abilities to overcome risk and solve problems that arise. In the
workforce, employees need to believe that they are capable of attaining goals, and the collective organization can attain positive outcomes. It should also be stressed that typically, most people were living normal and functional lives prior to the disaster or mass trauma, thus management can focus more on reminding employees and staff of their efficacy, rather than building efficacy where there was little or none originally. In addition, management can assign work responsibilities that foster a sense of self- and collective-efficacy to facilitate recovery in the post-trauma aftermath work environment.

It should be recognized that self-efficacy does not occur in isolation, but rather requires successful associates with whom to collaborate and solve large-scale problems that are beyond the reach of any individual (for example, large-scale work projects; Hobfoll et al., 2007). This is particularly important in the work environment, where collaboration is often imperative. Thus, management can aim to provide tasks that are manageable for employees and are likely to have a positive outcome to foster both self- and collective-efficacy. It may be necessary to give more suitable tasks immediately in the post-disaster aftermath so that employees can regain their sense of efficacy before moving on to more complicated work projects. Encouraging group work may also be helpful as individuals can each contribute their strengths and get assistance with their weaknesses.

Hobfoll et al. (1990) emphasized that following mass trauma, people are likely to construe the challenges of disaster and recovery as one overwhelming, unsolvable problem. In these particular structured activities it is important to assist and guide individuals to divide the problem into separate, manageable units. This problem-solving approach will increase a sense of control, provide opportunities to create preliminary gains, and decrease the genuine problems people are facing in the post-disaster recovery (Baum et al., 1993). This approach has been shown to be associated with a positive self-concept, less depression and anxiety, and vocational adjustment, providing an intervention with implications for the business workplace. In the workplace, management can break down larger tasks into smaller units and divide these tasks among groups. Even within groups, assignments can be separated into more concrete tasks. By dividing job responsibilities, people feel productive when they are able to reach a goal successfully and can re-establish worked productivity following disaster.

Research on disasters and trauma has shown the importance of resources in coping with a traumatic event. Unfortunately, those who lose the most personal, social, and economic resources are the most affected by mass trauma (Galea et al., 2002; Neria et al., 2006). Therefore, those individuals who have been exposed to trauma and lost resources not only have to recover from the trauma itself, but also lack the resources they need to aid in this recovery. On the other hand, research shows that individuals who
are able to maintain their resources have the best capability to recover (Norris and Kaniasty, 1996; Benight and Bandura, 2004). Hence, another consideration related to self- and collective-efficacy is that resources are needed for empowerment and that advocating control of power over the situation without the requisite resource can actually be disempowering (Rappaport, 1981). Businesses and organizations can help individuals rebuild resources, and make the collective resources of the group more available to employees. This must be wide-ranging and might include such diverse tasks as help with funeral or medical arrangements, help with clearing debris, and short-term loans on the instrumental level. It may also include sharing contacts, networks, and problem-solving ideas, as those most affected will be least likely to be fully functioning on these levels.

When attempting to meet the demands of a post-trauma work environment, management can aim to identify and then provide the skills and resources needed for people to achieve goals and complete tasks. These skills may be taught specifically through workshops or seminars and practiced by those in attendance to foster a sense of self- and collective-efficacy. In this way, management is also modeling self- and collective-efficacy, by responding well to the unusual, troubling, and high demand environment. Due to the unpracticed nature of mass trauma, as well as the unbalanced distribution of resources in society, there is a need to assess the relationship between these factors on the individual, organizational or societal levels when intervening after a traumatic event (Hobfoll et al., 2007).

**PROMOTE CONNECTEDNESS**

Social support has been well established as an important factor in recovering from stress and trauma (Vaux, 1998; Norris et al., 2002). Social support can include such supportive activities as providing and receiving emotional support and understanding, problem solving, and normalizing experiences (Ruzek, 2006). This social connection facilitates opportunities to share knowledge, which as previously discussed, is important in the aftermath of mass casualty or terrorism (for example, ‘What roads are closed?’ ‘Which buildings are safe?’). Social relationships also facilitate coping situations such as sharing reactions to the traumatic event, solving problems, providing emotional understanding and support, and normalizing reactions. This, in turn, can lead to sense of community-efficacy that can aid in personal and organizational recovery after trauma (Benight and Bandura, 2004).

Social support can offer a positive impact on the psychological health of individuals; however, at times, in the post-trauma aftermath, this typically
positive aspect of social support can actually hinder a sense of safety in work environments. When comprehensive information about mass trauma is unavailable, which is a common occurrence following disasters and mass violence, people have a tendency to share anecdotes, gossip or ‘horror stories’ about the traumatic event. Hobfoll and London (1986) defined this phenomenon as the ‘pressure-cooker’ effect. While the people who are sharing this information are likely doing so to provide and acquire support in the post-trauma aftermath, research has actually shown that the more people are involved with, or exposed to this type of social ‘support’, the more they are likely to experience psychological distress (ibid.). What often occurs is that the very individuals whom other people seek out for support are likely to be the most vulnerable to the pressure-cooker effect as people turn to them to cope and in doing so, share their own experiences and interpretations to fill in the gaps in their knowledge. As a result, interventions should limit the number of rumors and anecdotes that are shared regarding the trauma if doing so increases psychological discomfort (Hobfoll et al., 2007). This can be especially important in the workplace as employees seek social support by talking to others about their experiences in the face of a lack of understanding. It is critical to point out that sharing traumatic experiences by itself may not be harmful, but in the context of lacking information it may be detrimental as ‘worse-case scenarios’ are used to fill in gaps in knowledge. Business leaders can aim to reduce the pressure-cooker effect by providing the most accurate and complete information they are able to provide. In addition, they can also strive to be aware of gossip or rumors that promote distress and concern among employees and personnel. Business leaders must provide, to the best that they are able, an accurate, organized voice to help confine threat, and in so doing increase the perception of safety and security where there is no serious threat at hand (Shalev and Freedman, 2005).

Although too much of this social connectedness can lead to the pressure-cooker effect, social relationships can facilitate recovery as long as individuals do not find them too demanding. While little empirical research on how to translate this to intervention exists (Hobfoll et al., 2007) recommendations can be offered based on what is known about social relationships. In a workplace setting, changing the physical structure of offices, meeting rooms and cafeterias could be done so as to maximize social interaction among those who work in the organization. Coffee breaks or physical stretching breaks could be implemented at designated times during the day to promote communication between corporation employees. Furthermore, increasing work projects or team-building exercises may provide additional sources of creating a socially supportive environment for employees and staff. Social connection is a valuable asset in the
post-trauma aftermath. As long as people do not find these relationships particularly demanding, the social support they provide and receive can assist in recovery efforts following a traumatic event. If business management implements a structured time for social interaction aimed at support-building, individuals can foster their own recovery by increasing their social resource reservoir.

Finally, following such traumatic circumstances, the border between family and work becomes blurred physically and psychologically. The human attachments become paramount instead. If business fails to recognize this, employees will lose their commitment to the workplace, even if they may comply in the short run. In contrast, a workplace committed to the employees and their families will achieve a heightened sense of loyalty and commitment to the company mission that will be longlasting.

PROMOTE HOPE

The final principle of providing intervention after mass casualty is supported by research indicating the importance of sustaining hope in the aftermath of a traumatic event. It has been shown that individuals who retain optimism (Carver and Scheier, 1987) are likely to have more favorable outcomes after experiencing mass trauma because they are able to still look forward to their future and feel that it will consist of positive outcomes. A shattered worldview (Janoff-Bulman, 1992) and a sense of a fore-shortened future (American Psychiatric Association, 1994) often result after experiencing a traumatic event and can lead people to feel hopeless about themselves and their situation. Furthermore, because mass trauma is not an event that people are usually prepared for, it surpasses their acquired coping skills and can make them feel powerless (Hobfoll et al., 2007). It is here that intervention with a focus on encouraging hope can most benefit individuals, society and corporations.

Similar to the principle of promoting connectedness, instilling hope in the workforce may require creativity on the part of management. One way of promoting a sense of hope would be to establish a unified voice of hope and optimism regarding the future of the corporation. It is important not to instill a sense of false hope, but rather to encourage focusing on the positive aspects and directions that may need to take place after mass trauma. Management can provide specific ways of responding after a traumatic event, so that employees can be aware that a plan is in place and that they can be hopeful about future outcomes. Inspiring hope and optimism as much as possible during the post-trauma aftermath will offer an intervention that will prompt recovery on both an individual and a corporate level.
THE EFFECT OF TRAUMA ON BUSINESS ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

In addition to mental health issues, which themselves affect business culture and activity, mass casualty impacts on people’s basic sense of belief in a just world. This shattering of basic assumptions about the world can reverberate throughout an organization. Seeing the world as a threatening place, may lead to defensiveness in business and relations with others. Terrorism disrupts the belief in the continuity of life, thereby attenuating organizations’ belief in the probability of continued prosperity. In this sense, fear of repeated terrorist actions and the increase in the perception of threat of such events may cause individuals to enact the very decline in business that they fear. The stock market decline during the three years following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks is an example of this perceived threat. It is also to a large extent the result of overreaction on the part of business leaders, such that they created a self-fulfilling prophecy of decline.

Threats to people’s belief in the meaningfulness of the world can undermine the very nature of the work for which they are engaged. In some cases, experiencing trauma has the ability to evoke existential questions about the meaning and futility of life (Yalom, 1980). A crisis of purpose can ensue wherein individuals may question their usefulness and engage in a reorientation of their beliefs. If coping following trauma is difficult, and despair ensues, individuals’ sense of self-worth may become affected. The confluence of these factors all represents threats to the integrity and purpose of business, and can function to undermine an organization.

Substantial research has demonstrated that as people are reminded of their mortality (called terror management, although it actually was not related to terrorism), they become more supportive of in-group members and aggressive toward out-group members (Rosenblatt et al., 1989; McGregor et al., 1998; Simon et al., 1998; Halloran and Kashima, 2004; Hall et al., 2008). Translated to the business sector, individuals may become less willing to partner with those whom they believe to be unlike themselves. Although relationships with individuals within the workplace may not be strained if they are all from the same country of origin, relationships between individuals from diverse cultures and countries of origin would likely become adversarial. But, this may also extend to people in other departments in the same organization, if business has not fostered true common identity. This can affect business both from an internal standpoint with increased stress in the workplace, and externally as openness to conduct business with those perceived as out-group members could suffer.

COR theory suggests that people strive to protect and maintain resources that they value, and therefore, threats to the loss of valued
resources may motivate individuals and organizations to respond defensively to mass casualty and terrorism events (see Table 4.2). Defensiveness can take the form of becoming unduly risk averse, and this could limit the potential for business growth. For example, if an organization moves to avoid risk and preserve capital and other resources, lucrative business opportunities may be missed. Contrariwise, businesses may become more

Table 4.2 Theoretical predictions of the effect of disaster or mass casualty on managerial decision making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological theory</th>
<th>Effect on decision making</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shattered assumptions</td>
<td>Lack of faith in the probability of continued prosperity may lead to inaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Existential questions about the meaning and futility of life may lead to a lack of initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of self-worth can lead to feelings of despair and depression which undermine self-efficacy and goal-directed agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beliefs that the world is a dangerous place can lead to a ‘bunker’ mentality whereby opportunities are seen as threatening and not acted upon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terror management</td>
<td>A shift in orientation can lead to supportive decisions that affect in-group members and aggressive impulses toward out-group members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of willingness to partner and collaborate with individuals who are unlike themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business relationships between individuals from diverse cultures and countries of origin may be seen as threatening and therefore avoidance of these groups may develop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infighting may occur within an organization if business has not fostered true common identity. This can lead to alienation in the workplace, and bullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decisions may neglect important input from team members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation of resources</td>
<td>Defensive reactions to preserve valued resources may limit research and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decisions may be based on risk aversion and not sound business practices</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Individuals may decide to limit business expansion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Increase in aggressive business approaches in attempts to procure more valuable resources, disregarding potential consequences (e.g., Tragedy of the Commons)</td>
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aggressive in their approach and may make attempts to procure more valuable resources, disregarding potential consequences. This is illustrated by the parable of the Tragedy of the Commons. Where finite common resources exist under conditions of threat, people will try to garner those resources, depleting the common pool. Since for many organizations, management is relying on this common pool of resources, such overuse of common resources could prove disastrous. In contrast to the defense posture organizations can institute following terrorism exposure, encouraging individuals and organizations to focus on goal-directed behavior, thereby establishing a future orientation, may lessen symptoms of psychological distress (Holman and Silver, 2005).

OVERVIEW

We have outlined the effects of mass casualty and terrorism circumstances on individuals as well as business corporations, provided guidelines for interventions following disaster and offered typical ways that business leaders may respond following terrorism. Although each traumatic event brings with it unique aspects, there are common principles that can be used when implementing interventions following the event. Promoting a sense of safety, calming, self- and collective-efficacy, connectedness, and hope can provide the best possible environment to facilitate recovery and re-establish pre-trauma levels of business functioning. It should also be kept in mind that resources play a vital role following traumatic events. Without the resources to offset losses that result following a traumatic event, little recovery can be expected. In the aftermath of a terrorist attack, people, including business management, may tend to act in particular ways in response to the event. Assumptions of the world and working environment may be threatened for both management and the workforce following a terrorist attack. In addition, as shown by terror management theory, individuals may find others who are different from them to be a source of threat and may be less likely to work collaboratively with co-workers. With awareness of these potential behavioral pitfalls, they can be stopped and more adaptive ways of responding can be employed.

Terrorism and mass casualty events breed chaos and unpredictability in society and business organizations. The devastation created from traumatic events can present extreme challenges to business performance and operations. However, investing available resources in recovery efforts will help foster a durable work environment. Traumatic events will continue to push the boundaries of human coping efforts as they present new situations that require novel ways of responding. As we learn more through scientific
research and experience, more specific guidelines can be offered to provide optimal ways of returning to pre-trauma levels of functioning for individuals, society and businesses alike.

REFERENCES


