

Disaster Health Information Training: Results from Initial Survey of Students

National Library of Medicine

Specialized Information Services

Disaster Information Management Research Center

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OBJECTIVE

Does training affect librarians' willingness to participate in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery activities in their workplace and communities? Does training increase self-assessed confidence and skills?

METHODS

As part of a disaster information curriculum, 6 CE courses were offered live online and in a classroom from Sept 2011 to Sept 2012 for a total of 14 classes. The 6 courses are also archived and available online. From Aug-Oct 2012, all students were sent an online survey on their attitudes about and participation in disaster-related activities.

- 58% completed the survey sent to 284 students
- Most respondents had completed only one class
 - 60% completed the *Disaster Health Info Sources* class
 - 73% took at least one class online
- 90% are librarians/library staff
 - 66% are medical, hospital or academic librarians
 - 16% other librarians/library staff
 - 8% library students or recent grads
- 8% are disaster/health workers
- 2% indicate "other"
- 46% had disaster-related training from another source PRIOR to these classes (Most popular: American Red Cross)

RESULTS

Respondents' participation in disaster-related activities

Already doing (top 5):

1. Providing disaster information services within my institution
2. Part of disaster planning for parent institution
3. Fostering partnerships: library and organizations active in disasters
4. Using training to advance/change my career
5. Volunteering with CERT, American Red Cross or similar

Planning or considering (top 5):

1. Fostering partnerships: library and organizations active in disasters
2. Providing disaster information services within my institution
3. Supporting information needs of academic programs on disaster/emergency management
4. Providing disaster information services to community
5. Part of disaster planning for parent institution

Training contributed a great deal to (top 5):

1. Interest in additional training
2. Understanding of the roles that libraries and librarians can play in disasters
3. Awareness of information needs during disaster preparedness, response, recovery
4. Willingness to advocate for a "disaster information specialist" role in disaster management
5. Knowledge of the organization and infrastructure of government disaster response

Interest in PROVIDING training

Future instructors for the disaster classes?

17% yes 28% not sure

44% are interested in developing new training materials for (in priority order):

1. Librarians and library staff
2. Responders and health providers
3. General public

Would like to learn more about info needs of (top 5):

1. Librarians and library staff
2. Hospital administrators and clinical staff
3. Public health workers
4. Local responders
5. Response teams

Interest in MLA Disaster Information Specialization certificate

- 53% (87) plan to complete 15 hours for BASIC certificate
- 30% (49) plan to complete an additional 12 hours for ADVANCED certificate

As of April 2013, MLA (Medical Library Association) reports awarding 10 Basic certificates and 10 Advanced.

RESULTS

Top 3 new course topics:

1. "Just what I need, just in time." Actionable info to decision-makers
2. Promoting libraries and library services to the disaster workforce
3. Mobile devices and disasters, apps for disaster health information

Are you pre-arranging for the library to be used as a facility for supporting disaster response? Examples: as an emergency operations center; distribution center for food, water, medications; emergency shelter

3% already doing this

14% planning to do this | 28% may consider

54% no plans or not applicable

Survey limitations:

•Self-selection bias: those most interested in the topic were probably the most likely to respond. 46% had previous disaster-related training which demonstrates prior interest in disaster and emergency topics. 44% were already involved in suggested disaster-related activities.

•Due to contract constraints, surveys were sent to many students very soon after they completed a course, thus students had little time to reflect on or use training.

OUTCOMES

The results are a great **benchmark of activities and attitudes** of the first students taking Disaster Information Specialization courses.

Survey results **closely match the goals** of the specialization curriculum.

The survey yielded **hundreds of comments** that NLM/DIMRC is using to improve current courses, select topics of interest for future courses, learn about ways people are using this training and the activities they intend to pursue, and assess people's interest in providing instruction and developing training materials on disaster information topics.

Next step: Survey students for 2012-13 to compare with 2011-12 cohort.