

edited by **Jane M. Webber**
J. Barry Mascari

Fourth Edition

DISASTER

MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

A Guide to Preparing and Responding



ACAF

American Counseling Association Foundation

6101 Stevenson Avenue, Suite 600 | Alexandria, VA 22304 | www.acafoundation.org

Fourth Edition

DISASTER

MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

A Guide to Preparing and Responding

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AMERICAN COUNSELING ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION

6101 Stevenson Avenue, Suite 600 | Alexandria, VA 22304

Associate Publisher | Carolyn C. Baker

Digital and Print Development Editor | Nancy Driver

Senior Production Manager | Bonny E. Gaston

Copy Editor | Tyler Krupa

Cover and text design by Bonny E. Gaston

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Webber, Jane, editor. | Mascari, J. Barry, editor.

Title: Disaster mental health counseling : a guide to preparing and responding / Jane M. Webber and J. Barry Mascari, editors.

Description: Fourth edition revised. | Alexandria, VA : American Counseling Association Foundation, [2017] | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017003894 | ISBN 9781556203619 (pbk. : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: Disasters—Psychological aspects. | Disaster Victims—Counseling of—United States. | Victims of terrorism—Counseling of—United States. | Crisis intervention (Mental health services)—United States.

Classification: LCC BF789.D5 D565 2017 | DDC 363.34/86—dc23 LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017003894>

*For our colleagues who continue to do unselfish acts that improve the lives of often
anonymous people without asking for recognition or reward.*

*And for our students who energize us with their empathy and compassion, and delight
in seeing our names in print,*

*We are indeed fortunate to love the work we do and do the work we love as servants to
humanity, leaving our legacy to the next generation of counselors.*



Foreword	ix
<i>Charles R. Figley</i>	
Preface	xi
About the Editors	xv
About the Contributors	xvii
Acknowledgments	xix

Section 1 Disaster Mental Health Counseling: Foundations

Chapter 1	
Understanding Disaster Mental Health	3
<i>Jane M. Webber and J. Barry Mascari</i>	
<i>In Our Own Words</i>	
Ground Hero: A Story of Compassion	
Fatigue After September 11	17
<i>Tom Query</i>	
Chapter 2	
Disaster Mental Health Counseling: Skills and Strategies	23
<i>Jane M. Webber, J. Barry Mascari, and Julia K. Runte</i>	
<i>In Our Own Words</i>	
Interventions With Children After the Earthquake in China	39
<i>Emily Zeng</i>	
Chapter 3	
How the Brain and Body Change After a Disaster	45
<i>Carol M. Smith</i>	
<i>In Our Own Words</i>	
Inadvertently Studying Trauma for 35 Years	60
<i>Carol M. Smith</i>	

Evergreen Got Slammed	61
<i>Robert G. Mitchell</i>	
Chapter 4	
Assessing the Needs of Disaster-Affected Persons	63
<i>Jane M. Webber, Mike Dubi, Julia K. Runte,</i> <i>and Mindi Raggi</i>	
<i>In Our Own Words</i>	
A Strange Beginning	76
<i>Mike Dubi</i>	
The Emotional Roller Coaster of Surviving Superstorm Sandy	78
<i>Juneau Mahan Gary</i>	
Chapter 5	
Compassion Fatigue: Our Achilles' Heel	79
<i>J. Eric Gentry, Jane M. Webber, and Anna B. Baranowsky</i>	
<i>In Our Own Words</i>	
Two Decades of Compassion Fatigue Treatment, Prevention, and Resilience	93
<i>J. Eric Gentry</i>	
Confessions of a Trauma Responder	95
<i>Anna B. Baranowsky</i>	
Chapter 6	
Ethics Narratives From Lived Experiences of Disaster and Trauma Counselors	97
<i>Vilia Tarvydas, Lisa Lopez Levers, and Peter R. Teahen</i>	
<i>In Our Own Words</i>	
Evolving	108
<i>Peter R. Teahen</i>	

Section 2 Disaster and Trauma Response in the Community

Chapter 7	
Responding to Mass Violence and the Pulse Nightclub Massacre	113
<i>Jane M. Webber, Samuel Sanabria, and J. Barry Mascari</i>	
<i>In Our Own Words</i>	
Self-Care and Guilt in the Wake of the Orlando Shooting	127
<i>Samuel Sanabria</i>	
Chapter 8	
Counseling Veterans and Their Families	131
<i>J. Barry Mascari, Jane M. Webber, and Mike Dubi</i>	
<i>In Our Own Words</i>	
Wounds You Cannot See	145
<i>Rachel Oelslager</i>	

Chapter 9		
	Children and Adolescents in Disasters: Promoting Recovery and Resilience	149
	<i>Jennifer Baggerly</i>	
	<i>In Our Own Words</i>	
	Helping Children Heal	164
	<i>Jennifer Baggerly</i>	
Chapter 10		
	Counseling Survivors of Hurricane Katrina	165
	<i>Barbara Herlihy and Angela E. James</i>	
	<i>In Our Own Words</i>	
	Weren't You Scared?	176
	<i>Barbara Herlihy</i>	
	When Are We Going Home?	177
	<i>Angela E. James</i>	
Chapter 11		
	Counseling Refugees	179
	<i>Rachael D. Goodman, Colleen K. Vesely, and Bethany Letiecq</i>	
	<i>In Our Own Words</i>	
	Trauma Counseling as Social Justice	193
	<i>Rachael D. Goodman</i>	
Chapter 12		
	International Deployment and Disaster Mental Health Counselors	195
	<i>Karin Jordan</i>	
	<i>In Our Own Words</i>	
	A Day in the Life of a Relief Worker: Expect the Unexpected	206
	<i>Karin Jordan</i>	
Section 3	Disasters and Mass Violence at Schools and Universities	
Chapter 13		
	School Disaster Mental Health	211
	<i>J. Barry Mascari and Jane M. Webber</i>	
	<i>In Our Own Words</i>	
	I Never Thought I Would Become So Focused on Disaster and Trauma	228
	<i>J. Barry Mascari</i>	
	From Clifton High School: Fifteen Years After September 11	231
	<i>Joel M. Baker</i>	
Chapter 14		
	Disaster Recovery in Newtown: The Intermediate Phase	233
	<i>Deb Del Vecchio-Scully and Melissa Glaser</i>	

	<i>In Our Own Words</i>	
	Reflecting on the Sandy Hook School Shooting	249
	<i>Deb Del Vecchio-Scully</i>	
	Focus on Faith Not Fear	251
	<i>Melissa Glaser</i>	
Chapter 15		
	School Shootings in Perspective	253
	<i>Richard Reyes</i>	
	<i>In Our Own Words</i>	
	Recognizing the Importance of Crisis Intervention	268
	<i>Richard Reyes</i>	
Chapter 16		
	University Disaster Mental Health Response	271
	<i>Gerard Lawson</i>	
	<i>In Our Own Words</i>	
	Prepare for the Worst, Then Do Your Best	285
	<i>Gerard Lawson</i>	
Chapter 17		
	Disaster Mental Health and Trauma Counseling: The Next Decade	287
	<i>J. Barry Mascari and Jane M. Webber</i>	
	<i>In Our Own Words</i>	
	“I Discovered Within Me an Invincible Summer”	295
	<i>Jane M. Webber</i>	
Appendix A		
	Disaster, Trauma, and Crisis Competencies in the 2016 CACREP Standards	297
Appendix B		
	<i>DSM-5</i> Diagnostic Criteria for Acute Stress Disorder and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder	299
Appendix C		
	Mass Trauma Counseling Ethical Guidelines	305
	References	311
	Index	357



Charles R. Figley¹

I live across from the London Avenue Canal in New Orleans, one of the four drainage canals and one of two ruptured (in two places) in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. At least 1,245 people died, with total property damage of more than \$108 billion. The lower parts of the city flooded and left a muddy mess; thousands of folks had homes that marinated in floodwaters for weeks. The disaster was the costliest natural disaster and one of the deadliest in U.S. history; yet, the flooding could have been prevented with proper preparation and maintenance. The same can be said for disaster mental health: Proper preparation and maintenance/training can increase mental health resilience.

This fourth edition builds on lessons from 9/11, Katrina, the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, and other tragedies. In this newly named book, *Disaster Mental Health Counseling: A Guide to Preparing and Responding*, there are original and revised chapters that serve as additional evidence to the first edition published by the American Counseling Association (ACA) Foundation, which remains a classic book critical to practitioners, practitioner educators, and scholars.

Jane M. Webber is a nationally known leader in trauma and disaster education, training, and practice, and she is a seasoned and certified Disaster Response Crisis Counselor in New Jersey—the first such state credential in the country. Dr. Webber served as Associate Editor of the *Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision* (published by the North Atlantic Region Association for Counselor Education and Supervision), ACA North Atlantic Region Chair, and a member of the ACA Governing Council, and she currently serves on the ACA Trauma Interest Network Leadership Board. As ACA Foundation Chair in the aftermath of 9/11, Dr. Webber advocated for creating the groundbreaking ACA Foundation book, *Terrorism, Trauma, and Tragedies: A Counselor's Guide to Preparing and Responding*. She served on the advisory committee that developed trauma-informed education competencies in the 2009 Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) Standards, the first such effort in the world that is now the standard of practice.

¹Charles R. Figley is the Paul Henry Kurzweg, MD chair in Disaster Mental Health, at Tulane University, New Orleans.

J. Barry Mascari is also a nationally known leader in trauma and disaster education, training, and practice. Dr. Mascari was a long-time member of the State of New Jersey's counselor licensing board for 10 years and was chair for 8 years. This experience, together with serving as president of the American Association of State Counseling Boards in 2006–2007, has strengthened his influence on state and national standards. He completed service on the CACREP Board when disaster and trauma response were again included in the 2016 Standards.

In 2009, Webber and Mascari published an article that has been widely read explaining the implications of the new CACREP standards for disaster, trauma, and crisis counseling for counseling professionals. Who knows better? Their conceptualizations in collaboration with dozens of experts have served as an important map to the postmodern era for both understanding trauma in general and recognizing that disasters are separate events leading to individual and mass trauma. Moreover, crisis counseling is based on an understanding of both the context of the crisis that caused the trauma and the application of neurobiological and relational knowledge about traumatic stress and resilience to it.

Webber and Mascari's careers have each spanned more than 45 years, and together they have conducted more than 120 disaster mental health and trauma trainings and workshops across the country. They have consistently advocated for disaster and trauma skills to have a central and pivotal role in counselor training as well as in counseling and mental health professions. In this revised edition, Webber and Mascari continue to promote general guidelines in developing disaster and trauma curricula that they make available to readers on a dedicated website supporting this book. These guidelines are converted to learning objectives for trauma-competent counselors. They emphasize that trauma-informed courses, training, and supervision always start with the following objective: "Understand the principles and purposes of disaster response, trauma counseling, and crisis intervention and their differences." This book carries the reader through the chapters that collectively note the importance of disaster- and trauma-focused ethical guidelines, disaster response organizations, and markers for demonstrating competencies as practitioners (i.e., disaster response, trauma counseling, and crisis intervention). Other topics include networking, interprofessional collaboration with responders, and guidelines for educators preparing to teach this counseling specialty in classes.

This extensively revised and expanded edition integrates principles and new understandings about neurobiology's impact on disaster and trauma to improve resilience and to promote trauma recovery. Webber and Mascari properly apply evidence-based practice to trauma response that is stage and context/hazard specific so that counselors can respond effectively to those individuals affected by mass violence and terrorism. Such a response must be appropriate for vulnerable populations and communities, require multiple options that are the best fit in practice, and connect to local and cultural strengths in response to posttrauma community needs. At the same time, disaster mental health professionals need to care for themselves and fellow trauma workers to build resilience to compassion fatigue and other unwanted consequences of helping others. Webber and Mascari continue to raise trauma awareness by sharing the narratives and lived experiences of therapists and disaster mental health responders. They also prepare for the future by using web-based knowledge and multimedia approaches to teach about the above matters and to disseminate needed information rapidly.

The London Avenue Canal can provide some comfort to those of us living nearby. We can also expect that this book, in its fourth edition, will continue to serve as the critical guide to disaster and trauma education and practice for many years to come. Such a guide will make all of us more resilient to trauma by knowing we are not alone.



In the 8 years since the publication of the third edition of *Terrorism, Trauma, and Tragedies: A Counselor's Guide to Preparing and Responding*, the landscape of disaster has rapidly changed. While parts of the country experienced repeated natural disasters by devastating storms, fires, and floods, other places were in shock from intentional and often random shootings that inflicted enormous suffering, injuries, and deaths.

Advances in disaster mental health (DMH) counseling have unified what was a patchwork of well-meaning compassionate practices into a distinct counseling specialty with a formal body of knowledge, standards, and protocols. Since 9/11, milestones in the development of DMH counseling include the standardization of training and responding by the Federal Emergency Management Agency; the infusion of disaster, trauma, and crisis competencies in the 2009 Standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP); and the expanded role for counselors in DMH preparation, response, and recovery at the local, state, national, and international levels. To emphasize this comprehensive proactive approach to preparation and response, we have revised the title of the fourth edition to *Disaster Mental Health Counseling: A Guide to Preparing and Responding*.

The original book published in 2002 provided urgently needed resources for counselors in the aftermath of 9/11. In the second edition in 2005, we continued to provide information and practices for the long-term recovery after the terrorist attacks. The third edition in 2010 added lessons learned after Hurricane Katrina and the tragedies at Virginia Tech and other universities.

In this fourth edition, we have revised and expanded the book to achieve four major goals. First, with the collaboration of 27 contributors, we have developed a graduate counseling textbook and resource of current DMH and trauma knowledge and practice that addresses the CACREP 2016 Standards for graduate training. Second, we provide practical DMH skills and strategies for counselors and mental health professionals working in a range of settings: agencies, schools, universities, private practice, and international deployment. Third, we have created a compendium of state-of-the art information, research, resources, and practices

in DMH counseling for professional development and training. Fourth, we have shared the learned experiences of responders in the field that reflect the expanding professional scope and roles of DMH and trauma counselors. The fourth edition continues to infuse an experiential approach that blends DMH and trauma concepts and practices with the practicality that has been this book's signature. Each chapter includes case studies and questions for discussion.

At the end of each chapter, we present brief personal stories called "In Our Own Words" that are free of the constraints of formal writing and research. These narratives and essays in the authors' own voice reflect their journeys through disasters, traumatic events, and real-world experiences. In addition, new and updated chapters by internationally recognized clinicians, trainers, and responders working in the field add a contemporary global perspective that addresses refugees and complex humanitarian crises.

We will also have two companion resources available to instructors in winter 2017: (1) a dedicated website to access chapter outlines, test questions, and resources, and (2) a curriculum guide for use in addressing the 2016 CACREP Standards. For further information, contact the editors at disastermhc@gmail.com.

SECTION 1: DISASTER MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING: FOUNDATIONS

In Chapter 1, "Understanding Disaster Mental Health," we (Jane M. Webber and J. Barry Mascari) describe the importance of DMH as a counseling specialty and define disaster stages of recovery and roles of DMH responders. In Chapter 2, "Disaster Mental Health Counseling: Skills and Strategies," we (Jane M. Webber and J. Barry Mascari) and Julia K. Runte explain the differences between traditional clinical mental health counseling and DMH counseling, and we describe psychological first aid and crisis counseling, with a focus on somatic techniques for stabilization. In Chapter 3, Carol M. Smith describes "How the Brain and Body Change After a Disaster," providing both a scientific and practical understanding and application to somatic treatments. In Chapter 4, I (Jane M. Webber)—with Mike Dubi, Julia K. Runte, and Mindi Raggi—offer methods for "Assessing the Needs of Disaster-Affected Persons," focusing on psychological first aid and PsySTART, the American Red Cross All Hazards Color System. We address criteria for acute stress disorder and posttraumatic stress disorder as well as intermediate and long-term interventions. In Chapter 5, "Compassion Fatigue: Our Achilles' Heel," J. Eric Gentry, Anna B. Baranowsky, and I (Jane M. Webber) examine the negative impact on DMH counselors who work with trauma- and disaster-affected persons, and we present a model for compassion fatigue recovery. We also describe the positive effects of resilience and the potential for posttraumatic growth. In Chapter 6, "Ethics Narratives From Lived Experiences of Disaster and Trauma Counselors," Vilia Tarvydas, Lisa Lopez Levers, and Peter R. Teahen develop disaster-focused ethical standards and illustrate applications through personal narratives of lived experiences in humanitarian crises.

SECTION 2: DISASTER AND TRAUMA RESPONSE IN THE COMMUNITY

In this section, we focus on DMH counseling with several populations. In Chapter 7, we (Jane M. Webber and J. Barry Mascari) and Samuel Sanabria address the growing DMH response to mass bombings and shootings in "Responding to Mass

Violence and the Pulse Nightclub Massacre.” In Chapter 8, we (J. Barry Mascari and Jane M. Webber) and Mike Dubi focus on “Counseling Veterans and Their Families” during stages of deployment, with a focus on reintegration. We address the critical role of civilian counselors working with veterans—especially National Guard and Reserve members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and experiencing multiple deployments. In Chapter 9, Jennifer Baggerly presents developmentally appropriate interventions after disasters for “Children and Adolescents in Disasters: Promoting Recovery and Resilience.” In Chapter 10, “Counseling Survivors of Hurricane Katrina,” Barbara Herlihy and Angela E. James continue to chronicle long-term disaster and trauma recovery through the experiences of four survivors in New Orleans.

In Chapter 11, Rachael D. Goodman, Colleen K. Vesely, and Bethany Letiecq examine the multiple issues and needs of “Counseling Refugees” and follow the stories of two women who experienced the traumatic impact of war and political conflict through violence, trauma, separation from family and home, physical injury, and sexual abuse. In Chapter 12, “International Deployment and Disaster Mental Health Counselors,” Karin Jordan outlines the DMH hierarchy of needs and describes stages and challenges of international disaster response in the context of the tsunami response in Sri Lanka.

SECTION 3: DISASTERS AND MASS VIOLENCE AT SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

In Chapter 13, we (J. Barry Mascari and Jane M. Webber) develop the evolving role of counselors in “School Disaster Mental Health” as they engage in comprehensive planning, prevention, and response to natural disasters and human-caused violence. With more school shootings occurring in recent years, two new chapters specifically address this topic. In Chapter 14, Deb Del Vecchio-Scully and Melissa Glaser chronicle “Disaster Recovery in Newtown: The Intermediate Phase,” examining multilevel family and community interventions after the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School. In Chapter 15, Richard Reyes chronicles and analyzes from a law enforcement perspective the proliferation of school violence in “School Shootings in Perspective.” In Chapter 16, Gerard Lawson describes the development of crisis and long-term response with a focus on the shooting at Virginia Tech in “University Disaster Mental Health Response,” offering lessons learned for preparation, crisis intervention, and recovery in higher education settings. In Chapter 17, “Disaster Mental Health and Trauma Counseling: The Next Decade,” we (J. Barry Mascari and Jane M. Webber) provide our perspective on the importance of integrating DMH and trauma counseling practice because DMH cannot be adequately addressed without understanding the impact of trauma. As this specialty continues to grow, we offer recommendations for future development.

IN OUR OWN WORDS

At the end of each chapter, we honor counselors’ personal stories and their journeys as disaster and trauma counselors through “In Our Own Words.” In the tradition of the first three editions, the fourth edition gives testimony to the commitment of counselors in responding to disasters and tragic events and their lived experience. In Section 1 after Chapter 1, Tom Query reflects on compassion fatigue in “Ground Hero: A Story of Compassion Fatigue After September 11th.” After

Chapter 2, Emily Zeng updates her experiences in her native province in “Interventions With Children After the Earthquake in China.” After Chapter 3, Carol M. Smith describes “Inadvertently Studying Trauma for 35 Years,” and Robert G. Mitchell shares his first-hand account of the tornado’s impact in “Evergreen Got Slammed.” After Chapter 4, Mike Dubi describes his career direction in “A Strange Beginning,” and Juneau Mahan Gary describes “The Emotional Roller Coaster of Surviving Superstorm Sandy.” After Chapter 5, J. Eric Gentry and Anna B. Baranowsky chronicle their professional journeys in “Two Decades of Compassion Fatigue Treatment, Prevention, and Resilience” and “Confessions of a Trauma Responder,” respectively. After Chapter 6, Peter R. Teahen reflects on “Evolving.”

In Section 2, after Chapter 7, Samuel Sanabria shares his reactions as a responder in “Self-Care and Guilt in the Wake of the Orlando Shooting.” After Chapter 8, mental health counselor Rachel Oelslager shares the tragic death of her veteran husband in “Wounds You Cannot See.” After Chapter 9, Jennifer Baggerly describes her journey in “Helping Children Heal.” After Chapter 10, Barbara Herlihy and Angela E. James present their own survival experiences in New Orleans in “Weren’t You Scared?” and “When Are We Going Home?,” respectively. After Chapter 11, Rachael D. Goodman reflects on “Trauma Counseling as Social Justice.” After Chapter 12, Karin Jordan describes her DMH experiences abroad and their personal impact in “A Day in the Life of a Relief Worker: Expect the Unexpected.”

In Section 3, after Chapter 13, I (J. Barry Mascari) chronicle my professional career path in “I Never Thought I Would Become So Focused on Disaster and Trauma,” and Joel M. Baker updates his reflection on “From Clifton High School: Fifteen Years After September 11” about the death and legacy of his brother-in-law. In Chapter 14, Deb Del Vecchio-Scully and Melissa Glaser share their reactions in “Reflecting on the Sandy Hook School Shooting” and “Focus on Faith Not Fear,” respectively. After Chapter 15, Richard Reyes describes his experiences as a police officer and his commitment to “Recognizing the Importance of Crisis Intervention,” and after Chapter 16, Gerard Lawson reflects on his own experiences and reactions at Virginia Tech in “Prepare for the Worst, Then Do Your Best.” After Chapter 17, I (Jane M. Webber) share my professional and personal counseling journey in “I Discovered Within Me an Invincible Summer.”

MOVING FORWARD

Since 2009, CACREP has provided standards for disaster and trauma response for counseling programs and continues to confirm the importance of disaster and trauma preparation for counselor trainees in the 2016 Standards. This fourth edition gathered evidence of these developments that have significantly raised the level of DMH counseling, knowledge, and best practices for counseling professionals and for the people we serve. As we continue to share in this important DMH counseling project, we welcome your thoughts and suggestions (send e-mails to jmascari@kean.edu and jwebber@kean.edu).

—Jane M. Webber and J. Barry Mascari



Jane M. Webber, PhD, LPC, DRCC, and **J. Barry Mascari, EdD, LPC, LCADC, DRCC**, hold New Jersey Disaster Response Crisis Counselor Certification and serve on New Jersey's disaster mental health response team. Together, they are leaders in disaster mental health and trauma counseling training and practice and popular national presenters who have delivered more than 250 national, international, and state workshops and conference sessions. They are accomplished writers (together and individually), publishing groundbreaking articles such as "CACREP [Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs] Accreditation: A Solution to Counselor Identity and License Portability Problems"; "Critical Issues in Implementing the New CACREP Standards for Disaster, Trauma, and Crisis Counseling"; "Moving Forward: Issues in Trauma Response and Treatment"; "Salting the Slippery Slope: What Licensing Violations Tell Us About Preventing Dangerous Ethical Situations"; and "Lessons Learned, The Best Laid Plans: Will They Work in a Real Crisis?" They are editors of the third edition of the American Counseling Association (ACA) Foundation book *Terrorism, Trauma, and Tragedies: A Counselor's Guide to Preparing and Responding* and primary authors of the *New Jersey School Counselor Initiative: A Framework for Developing Your Comprehensive School Counseling Program*, sharing the 1992 American School Counselor Association Writer/Researcher of the Year for the first edition. They authored the *NJSCA School Counselor Evaluation Model*, the first professional association model approved by the New Jersey Department of Education. Drs. Webber and Mascari have been quoted on disaster and trauma issue in the national media, recently in *Counseling Today* and *CNN Online*, as well as on National Public Radio. Together they anchored the ACA's full-day learning institute on disaster response and have championed bringing disaster and trauma skills to school and mental health counselors. In addition to being long-time professional colleagues, Jane and Barry are married and have four children—combined.



Jane M. Webber, PhD, LPC, DRCC, is a Lecturer in the Counselor Education Department at Kean University (Union, NJ) and is a New Jersey Licensed Professional Counselor. She was a member of the ACA Task Force for Crisis Response

Planning and served on the Advisory Committee for Emergency Preparedness for the 2009 CACREP Standards. Dr. Webber was Guest Editor of the Traumatology Special Section of the *Journal of Counseling & Development* (Summer 2017) and was primary author of the *Journal of Counseling & Development* article "Traumatology Trends: A Content Analysis of Three Counseling Journals 1994–2014." As ACA Foundation Chair during September 11, 2001, she advocated for the ACA Foundation publication *Terrorism, Trauma, and Tragedies: Counselor's Guide to Preparing and Responding*, and she coedited the second and third editions.

Dr. Webber is a former Chair of the ACA Foundation, North Atlantic Region; International Committee; Human Rights Committee; and the Public Awareness and Support Committee, as well as a member of the Governing Council. She was a National Assembly Delegate of the National Association for College Admissions Counseling, National Membership Chair, and Member of the Bylaws Committee. She is a life member of Chi Sigma Iota.

Dr. Webber is former President of the New Jersey Counseling Association, the New Jersey Association for College Admission Counseling, the New Jersey Association of Counselor Educators and Supervisors, and the New Jersey Association for Specialists in Group Work. She worked for more than 35 years as a college counselor, school counselor, school counseling supervisor, and private practitioner. She has published numerous articles and chapters on disaster mental health, trauma counseling, sand tray therapy, and school counseling—including "Integrating Sand Therapy Into Trauma Counseling: Historical Influences"—and she coauthored "Healing Trauma Through Humanistic Connection" in the award-winning book *Humanistic Perspectives on Contemporary Counseling Issues*.



J. Barry Mascari, EdD, LPC, LCADC, DRCC, is Chair of the Counselor Education Department at Kean University (Union, NJ) and is a New Jersey Licensed Professional Counselor and Licensed Clinical Alcohol and Drug Counselor. He has more than 30 years of counseling-related experience in schools and outpatient treatment, and he participated in the development of the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) student assistance counselor certification. He was a member and Chair of the New Jersey Professional Counselor Examiners Committee (the state licensing board) for 10 years and a former President of the American Association of State Counseling Boards (AASCB), New Jersey Counseling Association, and New Jersey Mental Health Counselors Association. With Dr. Ed Stroh and Nancy Marie Bride, he lobbied for licensure in New Jersey for 20 years and coauthored the licensure bill that was finally passed in 1993.

Dr. Mascari is considered the "father" of 20/20: *The Future of Counseling*, a collaborative initiative between AASCB and ACA that resulted in the common definition of counseling. He was among the founders of the New Jersey Council on Divorce and Family Mediation, and he coauthored the seminal work *Family Mediation: An Idea Whose Time Has Come*. He has appeared on numerous radio and television shows, including the *Sally Show*, *Soap Talk*, *48 Hours on Crack Street*, *Straight Talk*, the WNET special *Teens in Turmoil*, and National Public Radio. Dr. Mascari was a NJDOE trainer for Intervention and Referral Service and continues to host trainings at Kean University for New Jersey school districts. More information can be found at <https://sites.google.com/a/kean.edu/j-barry-mascari/>.



About the Contributors

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The fourth revised edition has been the collaboration of 27 authors, and we thank all who have contributed to this edition. We are grateful to those pioneers whose work has guided our journey and our stories, especially Janina Fisher, Babette Rothschild, Tom Query, Steve Crimando, Charles R. Figley, Eliana Gil, and Bessel van der Kolk.

This book would not be possible without the vision and commitment of the American Counseling Association Foundation and its response to the needs of counselors after September 11, 2001. We have been privileged to work with Carolyn Baker and Nancy Driver of the American Counseling Association and express our thanks for their patience and direction. We are especially appreciative of the ongoing support and assistance of Carol Gernat, whose advice and direction have kept us on track. We also thank our daughter Julia K. Runte for her discerning research and editing, and her optimism. We are grateful to Bobby Kitzinger and Rebekah Pender, our colleagues at Kean University, for their encouragement and cappuccino conferences during these semesters of teaching and writing. Finally, we thank all our adult children for their support and tolerance for our almost constant work on this project.

