

PSYCHOLOGY IN SITUATIONS OF CRISIS, EMERGENCY and DISASTER

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HAVANA - CUBA

Dr. Alexis Lorenzo Ruiz is President of the Cuban Psychological Society and of the Cuban Psychology Section for Emergencies and Disasters; funding member and Cuban representative of the Latin American Network of Emergency and Disaster Psychology; and consultant and committee member of the Latin American Center for Disaster Medicine (Centro Latinoamericano de Medicina de Emergencias y Desastres, CLAMED).

He has international experience in this área since 1990. He was funding coordinator of the Psychological Service of the Cuban Programme of bio-psycho-social attention and education for people affected by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. He coordinated the field work and research in Cuba from 2002 to 2007, leading to a legal framework and national policy for mental health in emergency and disaster situations in place since 2008. He was coordinator of the Mental Health Team of the Cuban Medical Brigade that responded to the earthquake in Haiti and has consulted and trained internationally (e.g. Russia, Spain, Mexico, Columbia, Brazil, Ecuador, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Chile) to build response capacity in situations of crisis, emergency and disaster.

At the University of Havana (UH), Dr. Alexis Lorenzo Ruiz will lead a three-day postgraduate course focused on international situations of crisis, emergency and disasters, to facilitate an understanding of human responses and the task of psychologists in these situations. The course will look to the origins of psychology in emergencies and disasters (PED), critically appraise current responses and learnings that need to be taken into account when planning future responses.

The general objective of the course is to develop theory and practice skills in relation to prevention and protection of mental health and the promotion of community resiliency in situations of crisis, emergency and disasters. This will be achieved through four central themes:

- Understanding situations of crisis, emergency and disasters as psycho-social events
- Main psychological difficulties in situations of crisis, emergencies and disasters
- Key supporting and therapeutic practices when working with individuals and groups vulnerable in situations of crisis, emergencies and disasters
- Community resiliency in situations of crisis, emergencies and disasters

A range of teaching methodologies will be employed, including lectures, practical workshops, video-debate, and small-group presentations at the end of the course.

A maximum of 25 participants can register and the fee for the course is £230, payable to UH.