

Idaho

3. Disaster & behavioral health

In 2005, we collaborated with the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare to provide disaster behavioral health consultations and trainings for Idaho health care professionals. These trainings were specifically designed to

help health care professionals know how to address the behavioral health consequences of public health emergencies.

Randall Beaton, a University of Washington faculty member affiliated with NWCPHP, designed and delivered these trainings. Using a needs assessment, Beaton tailored his training to each Idaho health district. Depending on what was most relevant to the district, Beaton addressed the psychological effects of disasters and the mental health risks that public health workers face during disasters. He also described how to conduct a psychological needs assessment post-disaster and how “psychological first-aid” can be given.

“Most of the people, most of the time display resilience and continue to function physically and psychologically during a disaster,” Beaton says.



Above, an earthquake causes a major landslide. Photo courtesy Hsio-Ying Lo.



Both photos, Montana Summer Institute, courtesy Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services.

Montana

4. Reflecting local needs

For the past eight years, we have enjoyed a strong collaboration with the public health community in Montana in coordinating the Montana Public Health Summer Institute. The Institute offers short, intensive courses taught by Montana’s public health leaders and practitioners, and faculty from NWCPHP.

At the 2009 Institute, participants could choose courses on leading teams, advocating for public health, and assessing needs. Other Institute courses taught by NWCPHP faculty included public health workforce resiliency, putting preparedness into context, and voluntary accreditation for local health departments.

Montana’s local public health jurisdictions have always played a vital role in determining the curriculum for each year’s Institute. One example from the past has been the valuable collaboration on a public health law course with Joan Miles, a former director of the Lewis and Clark County Health Department and an expert in Montana state law.