

SUPPORT GROUP FOR THE ITALIAN RED CROSS RESCUERS

Dr. L. Pellegrini



BACKGROUND

The idea of creating a support group for rescuers stems from an increasing demand for interventions on personnel who directly intervened to provide assistance to the population stricken in a very short time by earthquake, heavy snow emergency and landslides. Interventions can not neglect the cultural framework in which rescuers operate.

Prevention is based on key concepts such as "the rescuer", "the territory and its risks"; supporting means promoting a community culture of "coping" (adaptation, ability to cope with stress). A thorough knowledge of the territory and of its entire network of organization are essential elements in order to improve the "performance" in the emergency and to assess community needs.

Operating in favor of the personnel in charge of emergencies means enhancing their skills and provide tools that safeguard a passively endured suffering because of psychological and unconscious emotional processes. It's important to remember that the operating environment in which the rescuer operates is characterized by sudden changes and unpredictability, it evokes pain and risk and does not allow the rescuers an organic and adequate adaptation to cope with the emotional aspects related to the stress generated by the event.

Natural disasters and emergencies destabilize the affected area and its inhabitants and undermine the community both from a geological and from a psychological point of view. Those operators who are called upon particularly to help the victims of unpredictable phenomena (earthquakes, floods, floodings, landslides, fires) require adequate preparation. It's this knowledge that drives us to consider a culture attentive both to the rescuer and the needs of emergency victims, and to a better management of the sense of drama, inadequacy, vulnerability and helplessness that they both experience.

METHOD

The group will be composed by 15 rescue workers. The course, led by a psychologist, will be delivered fortnightly, for a total of 8 meetings, each 90 minutes long.

The main topics chosen for the group are as follows:

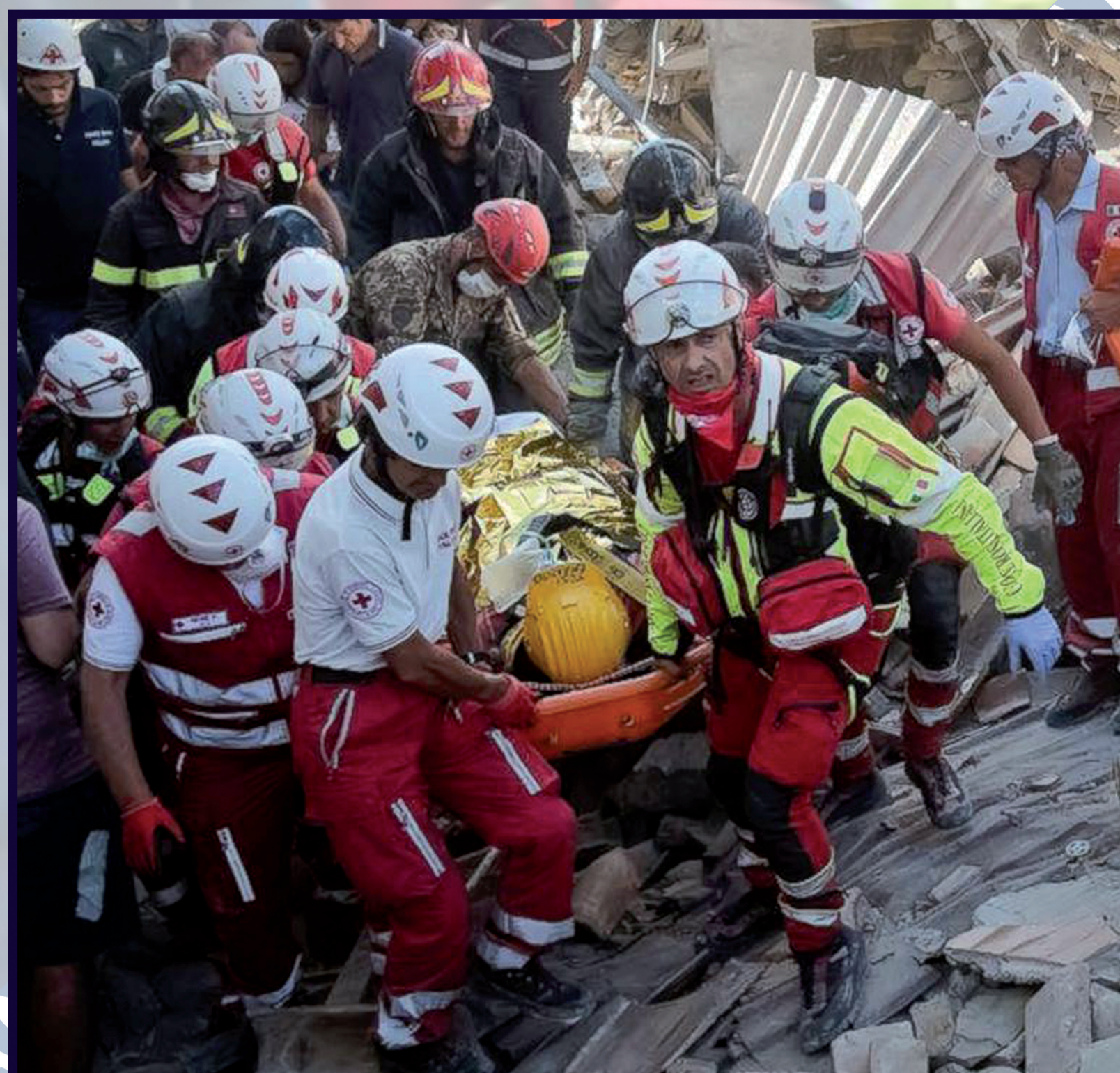
- **control is the problem not the solution**
 - willingness
 - creative impotence
 - acceptance
 - present moment

In addition, in order to take into account the specific needs of all the participants and to customize the meetings, specifically designed questionnaires will be presented during the first meeting and the last one.

EXPECTED RESULTS

First of all, we expect an increase in stress resilience and an enhancement in the coping strategies.

Furthermore, we expect an increase in the self-efficacy, through the comparison and the sharing of the personal experience.



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