Disaster Health Information Training: Results from Initial Survey of Students

**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**

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

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

**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.