OIL SPILL
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Disclaimer: This transcript begins with the first mention of the topic and introductions.

STEVEN: Good evening, my name is Steve Picou. I'm an environmental sociologist who studies disasters. I've been studying disasters for 30 years. I'm a professor at South Alabama. For the last 21 years, I have been studying the community impacts of the Exxon Valdez oil spill up in Alaska. I've actually lived over two years in Prince William Sound from 1991 to about 2002. I returned in 2004, 2006, 2008. I currently have a grant; all my research is independent funded by the National Science Foundation in the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. We're still studying the community impacts. My next survey will be in 2012. 2009, we found very significant problems for, what I would say, a significant minority of the people in Prince William Sound. Then I can elaborate on the empirical findings later. This is a real challenge to the integrity, the maintenance of heritage and the preservation of our coastal communities.

JOHN: My name John Hosey. I'm with the Mississippi Coast Interfaith Disaster Task Force. Our organization, first of all, has been around since '79 when Frederick came ashore. Our responses through the years have been to go to recovery mode, help recovery happen and then, usually within three years, go back into hibernation and go about our business and find another job. Katrina, as you well know, and the impacts from Mobile, Alabama, all the way through Louisiana and all points in between created significant mental health issues, mental health shortages for one thing. There were not enough clinicians. There were not enough professional psychologists. There were not enough medical doctors. Many of these were displaced, so we began to put together a collaborative or primary mental health collaborative for the Mississippi Gulf Coast to identify people on the Coast, professionals and other people in the industry of primary health and mental health to develop a plan, so that if there was another Katrina or another major disaster, that we would have community-based mental health services, crisis intervention through trained professionals, and then the reason that we got involved is because we realized that a lot of people during a crisis are doing a disaster after following a disaster. One of the first places that they turn is the church. Through surveys and research that we did, we found that a lot of pastors felt

overwhelmed and especially in some of the underserved or vulnerable communities. The pastors did not have the resources or the education to deal with this. Over the last several years and with the help of people like Steven, Dr. Picou, and other people on the Coast, we host conferences annually to deal with this issue. We do trainings on a regular basis and crisis intervention. I have myself about 21 years in crisis intervention, both working on the community level but in the fire department and other areas. I will say that one of the best things that can happen to a community following a crisis or a disaster is to have trained professionals or trained lay people or trained individuals that are able to do some of the things like Steven is talking about, develop a peer-listening group or to develop a service to a community to offer mental health services because we have found that if you don't do that, the longer-term impacts and the more possibilities of post traumatic stress and other things happening, they will happen if you don't intervene. When the oil spill situation came about, we began to look at ways that we could prepare, so that's primarily why I'm here tonight. We're also working on another summit for June 30th on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and hopefully expand that to a regional conference sometime in September to deal with, not just mental health, but the economy and ecology issues as well.

SUSAN: Hi, I'm Susan Wingard with the Baldwin County Extension Office. I'm a county extension coordinator, and I do educational programs throughout Baldwin County. One of my areas is Family and Child Development. Some of the issues that we have dealt with in the past have been some of the training for childcare providers, caregivers that work with children related to effects of stress on children.

(0:05:48.7)
SANDRA: Dr. Picou, I'm Sandra Price from Presbyterian Disaster Systems. My special interest is more certainly community-wide, do you have experience and research about what the faith communities can do, not just for their congregations, but for the larger communities? We really honor the mental health profession for sure, but what can the faith communities do in disaster particularly like this?

STEVEN: Thank you for your question. What we found in Alaska, which is probably the template that I'll discuss from tonight, was that initially just like what's going on right now, we had angry fishermen in ***[0:06:40.1 inaudible]***, you had Exxon telling

everyone, "We'll make you whole again." The same words. You had fishermen who were being interviewed, the anger would turn into sobbing, choked-up tears. Right now, we're in what I would call the hyper-anger phase. People are uncertain, they're worried that they don't know what's going on, but they're going 90 miles an hour moving everywhere. Right now is a time where there can be very little done on a community level, the family level or the individual level except for the possibility, Sunday services for the pastor or priest to have the congregation pray and think about being resilient for what's coming on in the future. It's one spot that will probably be well attended initially. However over time in Alaska, we found that every community has what I would call a social capital. That reflects trust, that reflects all the social networks, the family networks. That also reflects people's own self confidence and then most important, agency. People want to participate. They want to go to the fair. They want to run for the school boards, etcetera. I'm sad to say that in Alaska, starting about the third year, the social capital and the communities just dissipated. People were facing severe economic hardships. They self-isolated as a coping mechanism, which is the worst thing you can do if you're depressed or you have PTSD symptoms. We had our first suicide in 1993. The mayor of the community, one of the communities we were studying, committed suicide and left a note blaming the spill. Immediately after that, we had three more over the next two years. Two were fishermen, one was an Alaskan native -- he two high-risk groups in Alaska. But these little communities, 2,500 people, no roads, native villages of 80 to 100 people, right? You can get them under the microscope and look. We did an intervention program in1996. In that intervention program, we did outreach to clergy, and we did outreach to the local law enforcement, we did outreach to teachers because the teachers, the clergy and the law enforcement were point people that saw the problems boiling through their congregations or in the classroom in terms of domestic violence calls and public intoxication, DUIs and things like that. The clergy, and John is a real expert at this, is really important. In my survey of 2,548 people along the Mississippi Gulf Coast and in Louisiana following Katrina, we looked at this loss of social capital. This is obviously an important thing. I got the percentage right here, 72% of the people had extreme or strong trust in faith-based organizations. In fact, faith-based organizations were the only variable that we found where people said, faith-based organizations have helped my community recover. Everyone else, local government, FEMA, state government, insurance companies, Road

Home program, no. Only about 15% to 20% trust in them. There's a critical role. However, just as John noted, the clergy, the teachers and the police, law enforcement are going to be overwhelmed. Now, of course, in Cordova, they have about 14 students and their senior class, they have 14 to 18. We were dealing with 20 teachers. A lot of churches in that little town. There were 10 churches and they range from Russian Orthodox to Southern Baptist to Catholic, etcetera. The law enforcement, we have one dispatcher, a chief and three police officers, but you could work with those. Now, the problem that we're dealing with here is the increase population density that we're going to have to deal with. The greater variety of occupations because in Alaska, commercial fishermen and Alaska natives, the fishermen were economically linked just as our shrimpers are. The Alaska natives were spiritually linked to Prince William Sound, and they were devastated. "The day the water died" is the way they expressed the spill. They had no trust in the quality of their subsistence harvest. They were scared to death. This one told me two years after the spill, he said, I wake up in the morning, they live right there collecting razor clams right in their front yard. It's their front yard, the south. He says, when I look out and I see these people in moon suits collecting samples. He said, and they expect me to eat them? (Chuckle) This is not the first time the white man has lied to us. (Chuckle) I don't trust them. That's the important thing, the lack and loss of trust. You can hear it in these other sessions. You probably heard it the general session. Who trusts the EPA? Five days after 9/11, they said everything was clear. Come on down, go back to work. We have almost 750,000 people right now who are on a medical list for respiratory problems, etcetera.

JOHN: Many of you were here during Katrina, you realized that the recovery didn't happen without faith-based organizations. It would never had happened, not just the resources that were developed but with the on-the-grounds people that are already here, citizens that live here, church members that care, churches that open their doors and pantries and clothes closets. Many congregations now, I serve for many years in intercity church in Phoenix, Arizona, as a crisis counselor. I stayed busy every day, 10 to 12 hours a day, doing counseling, helping people find resources. That were going through the normal hazards and hardships of life. With this situation, one of things that's a little bit different, Steven, you can correct me if I'm wrong, is with the hurricane, we have 72 hours warning typically when we know where it's going to make landfall. Maybe a little bit more and a little less. It comes ashore,

we hunker down or we evacuate. We come back and hunker down is a Southern term by the way. We come back, and we cut the trees, we pull out our chainsaws, get to know neighbors again and things. The resiliency there is strong and recovery happens. Katrina has tested resiliency quite a bit because of such a long-term recovery that's not complete by the way. We still have 5,000 plus and just in Mississippi alone, we're still struggling to get out of grandma's house, to find their own home again or older people that lost everything they have and couldn't afford to rebuild. They found themselves living in an economy apartment somewhere. There's a lot of things that are still on people's minds from Katrina and this is a secondary trauma to them. This trauma is so different because who knows when it's going to come, who knows what the extent of the disaster will be. You can sense the anxiety. If you heard some of the comments in the general session, people agitated. Like Steven said, this is the beginning, but a lot of the impact that we're going to deal with, if you're a mental health professional or if you have an interest in crisis intervention and that thing, a lot of these things are going to occur much later down the line, when jobs become more difficult, if they do. I'm praying that the best thing happens, and the oil evaporates, but we have to be realistic and we have to plan for the worst. When we think of the worst, we're thinking of 30 years, perhaps longer. We don't even know that answer yet because we don't know when the oil is going to stop flowing and what the impacts are going to be on the fisheries and the estuaries and all the other places on the Coast. I grew up on the Gulf Coast. I fished there most of my life. A lump comes in my throat now even as I tell you about it because I love now taking my grandchildren down to the beach to feed the seagulls, the fishes and to do the things.. well, the way I feel, just multiply that by thousands of other people. Loss of jobs, my sister works in tourism. I've got brothers that work, have businesses on the Coast. The impacts are not just 72 hours. In seven years, it may be much worse than that. We have a long-term thing. The people that will follow behind us, I don't think 30 years for me, I hope that I'm retired by then…We have to prepare people now. If you're in the mental health profession or if you're a clergy member or if you're in a community, you're the person they turn to for help or whatever it may be, now is the time to really work on building those networks, building the collaborative in your own communities, finding out who the professionals... We have a representative here from Mobile that can give you resources. Right now, as you can tell by the size of this room and the attendance here, people aren't interested about mental health, because they don't realize it yet.

They're worried about their jobs and their fisheries and those things and that's normal. Seven years, come back, this room is going to be full. People are going to be seeking solutions for broken marriages, suicides, drug addiction on the increase. When people are getting paid $5,000 a month to stay home or maybe $5,000 a month to take their boat out once a day, they lose that sense of who they are and the pride that they have. It's important for us to keep in mind the role of faith-based groups, not just faith-based groups, but community, non-government organizations, faith-based like United Way other people, Salvation Army, Red Cross, these are the long-term partners in this long-term battle.

(0:18:52.4)
MODERATOR: Another question, do you have a question? No go ahead, yes.

(0:19:03.9)
DAVID: Good evening, my name is David Sam. I work for Boat People SOS. It's a non-profit organization. We have 16 national branches, and we have one in Bayou La Batre and Biloxi. I just wanted to ask the panel, we work with a very vulnerable community. Most of them have been through five, six traumas throughout their lifetimes. They were in the Vietnam War, they lost their homes, livelihoods. They were raided and had traumas on the boats coming over to the U.S. Once they came to the U.S., they were put in refugee camps and went through more traumas. Now, they're finally getting by, and then Katrina hits. Now, they're feeling vulnerable again because first, they don't speak English and they feel they're being left out of the loop. They lost all their livelihoods, and they don't know what to do. Now, we have this oil spill where they have no control over when they can go back to work. After Katrina, a month later, you can go back shucking oysters and going back to catching shrimp. Now with the oil spill, when they go back to work, in the Asian communities, the men are the head of the household, those men have lost their identity now. They feel weak, they feel vulnerable. A lot of them turn to violence, rage problems. What would you think would be the best way for an organization like mine to help break into community, break down the walls where they don't want the outside world to know what's going on inside their homes and maybe try stem some of violence or anything that can happen from this oil spill?

STEVEN: There's a direct parallel with the Alaska Native Communities. Alaska natives suffered in boarding schools. They were stripped of their language, stripped of their culture. They have past

experiences of trauma. When the spill hit, it devastated them. There were many similar types of responses, particularly, alcohol abuse. The native village of Tatitlek, four months after the Exxon Valdez oil spill, a colleague of mine got permission to go there and he wanted to just do some interviews. Sociologists, we always conduct interviews. He could not find anyone between the ages of 15 and 80 sober enough to interview. The entire village was maxed-out drunk. There was concern about the children and the Alaska Department of Mental Health was even thinking about doing a lifeline -- going in there and rescuing the children, taking them out. However, Alaska natives are sovereign. It's very hard to go into a village unless they allow you to land your plane or dock your boat. You do have a very vulnerable population. Most important is the language issue. We have materials developed and you can access these materials. It's free to the public. Go to pwsrcac.org. This website is the website of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. I've worked closely with them since 1995. They funded a program that was developed that included educational outreach, it included peer listener training and included a talking circle for the Alaska native, Eyak Village in Cordova. One of the things that I would suggest, if there is some traditions that allow people to come together, whether it's eating, whether it's some form of prayer, those kinds of activities should be encouraged because the talking circle really had a very positive effect on Eyak Village, Chignik Bay Village and the village of Tatitlek because people came from all over for that. If you can ground a kind of a building of solidarity and cultural consciousness and pride in some type of traditional activity, that would be the first thing I would recommend. Second, the Vietnamese in Bayou La Batre have been marginalized by this event because now they're not going out to the boats, they're not talking to the non-Vietnamese captain. No one is doing anything, but venting right now. They should be encouraged to participate in any kind of research activity that comes to the community so their voice is heard. I cannot underestimate this. Certainly, there's a language barrier. If they're good researchers, they'll translate the surveys into Vietnamese and have people in that community being the liaisons between the researchers and the community. Let's be candid, this is not the second shoe dropping for your community. It's like the ninth shoe dropping. Those groups, people and families that have had, you know, Katrina destroyed from Bayou La Batre all the way to the city of New Orleans, that was … and I'll elaborate. I can talk all night. The university professor never gets out of the lecture mode. A natural disaster, people generally quit

blaming God in two weeks and come back to build their community. You can't sue God, but this thing, this man-made or what we call a technological disaster, has a principal responsible party. This is something that, it was preventable, it should have never happened. Hurricanes are part of our landscape. It's a characteristic of the Gulf Coast. This thing is something that you can point a finger at, and then the finger-pointing expands. They want to talk to the Coast Guard. That's another finger pointing. Then they're going to want to talk to EPA. Then they wanna to talk to FDA. Then they wanna to talk to fisheries and wildlife. Then all of a sudden, there are as many principal responsible parties out there to point fingers at and so the anger gets incredibly broad. We call it the corrosive community. Warning, threat, impact, blame and this cycle goes on and on. For a natural disaster, it's warning, threat, impact, rescue, inventory, restoration and recovery. For technological disasters, people get caught in that warning, threat, impact, blame. Warning, threat, impact, blame. I've seen people and Prince William Sound fishermen that stayed maximum hyper-angry for six or seven years. If you want to see a person age, become self-medicating constantly and become physically ill, you can't stay mad forever. You just can't. What I would recommend right now, if at all you could, we need to tell these people, take 30 minutes a day, turn the damn TV off with that thing going gurgling oil. Go sit down with your children and your wife. Eat a bowl of ice cream. Talk about anything but the spill. People need to start doing that right now. Hugs not shrugs. They need to hug one another, they need to stick together. If you can do it, take that downtime at least 30 minutes or longer every day because if you don't, you're going to lose it. It's what happened in Alaska. You can talk to people up there that say, we didn't stick together. We got mad at one another because spillionaires got their boats leased. Some people didn't get their boats leased. I saw sons that hated their fathers because the father got the boat leased and they didn't get their boat leased. Brother against brother, cousin against cousin. In a town this small, everybody's related there. (Chuckle) Everybody. Anyway, that would be my recommendation for a very vulnerable community, and please keep in touch.

JOHN: It is David, right? David, I know a Tau ***[sic]*** in who is in Biloxi. She is with Steps Coalition, works at Steps. She has asked me what they can do with the community, and many of the community leaders that are there. In East Biloxi, I can speak about. I cannot speak about Bayou La Batre or Mobile. We are in the process of trying to include them in the conversation, make their input

important, because it is important. The next summit that we are going to put together in June, June 30th, at USM Campus in Long Beach, we are going to have that community represented. It is very important what you were saying is to make sure that each community, and not just a bit of each community, African-American community, Hispanic community, that they are all represented there, that they have some kind of value added to that process. What they have to say and do is important. Also, some of the leaders, and I know the Asian community a little but I am not an expert on it, is that with the men predominantly leading and the role of the Asian-American in the community of being pride, prideful of who they are and stuff, mental health is a bad word and you cannot say "you need mental health work." I wish that they had not called this session mental health because it really should not be called that. It is community building. It is what it is. It is a process of community building and community resilience, mental health is one of those things but it does not have to be called mental health. (Chuckle) We are not necessarily dealing with mental illnesses right away. I would encourage some of the leaders from that community to become trained in just doing crisis intervention in their own language and being able to understand the cycle of a crisis, understand why people are grieving in the community. Dr. Picou said have these open forums within your own community, whether be it at a church or where it may be, so that people can get together and voice their concerns, but also let go of it there instead of let go of it at home, or let go of it at the bar, or at the casino. We have enough around Biloxi, I know, to get in trouble on a regular basis. If you did not have a lot of time on your hands and a little bit of money in your pocket, probably initially from what I have read in other research, initially the impact is actually going to have a positive effect on the economy because of the money that is poured into the economy. Once that money is gone, and once those opportunities are gone, people are going to be left empty handed. Preparing people now is the key issue. However that preparedness looks for community, you would know better than I would. I know Tau is working with me and other people. We really want you to represent your community and tell us what you need, as opposed to coming to you and say, hey you need this new program and that. It may not be what you need at all. It maybe that you can create something yourself to help deal with that crisis as it comes about.

FEMALE: Certainly, there are a number of resources and agencies that are ready and willing I believe, to assist, but many times services and

other things that Megan will maybe want to mention that may be available. It is important for you to be aware of some of those resources that may be available, so if there are needs where other agencies can become involved or other educational programs will gladly, collaboratively work with you when they are identified.

MEGAN: Hi. I am Megan Griggs with AltaPointe Health Systems. We formerly used to be called Mobile Mental Health. We have a wide variety of outpatient services, psychiatric services, as well as substance abuse programs. We do have in-patient psychiatric services. We recently, because of Katrina, did open up an office down in Bayou La Batre, which is actually ***[0:34:08.4 inaudible]***, I am sorry, by ***[0:34:10.0 inaudible]***, yes and it's a stigma. One of the reasons we changed our name was to get out of the mental health statement. Again, like I said, it is AltaPointe Health Systems, but we are providing services from age four all the way up to 100. Like I said, typically, psychiatric services, counseling. Again, as he has mentioned, any service that you find that you are needing from us, we are more than willing to provide. And because there is a stigma with mental health, if you may not want to go to the Bayou La Batre office, we do have several other locations throughout Mobile. I will be glad to give you my information if you have a need for that

LEE: My name is Lee Yokel, and I am the environmental education coordinator for five-state Alliance, called the Gulf of Mexico Alliance. We have been putting together a list of online resources, and we circulate it regularly. In the early days, there was the vacuum of knowledge of what is going on and what is happening, so we begin to compile that for the five Gulf states, where we could find it. What I am asking from you all are those online resources that seems to be where people are going today to find information for educational sort of things for teachers, coping, teaching children, how to address children, because they are going to be coming back to school in a couple of months and it would be nice to provide that, as well as the coping resources and where can people go online to learn things. I have your website already that you mentioned, but other things like that would be really useful that we could continue to build on that and provide it to Sea Grant for their ongoing website.

JOHN: I will speak to that real quickly. Our organization, actually, is working on that mini-grant with Sea Grant. Tracie is our administrator for the grant and we are actually supposed to be

dealing with coastal hazards. We all predicted that it would be dealing with hurricanes, or perhaps flooding or tornadoes. Now, we know that there are very few pamphlets out there on preparing for the oil spill or cleaning up oil off your back porch or something like that. I am also with VOAD, which is Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters. South Mississippi has a VOAD, and we also have state VOAD and Alabama has VOAD. Most states do as a national organization, as voluntary organizations active in disaster. What we have started doing in South Mississippi VOAD, we saw the need to develop a communication tool to help people who are not only partners with VOAD, but community leaders and universities that we work with another people. We developed these resources. I was doing the update and prepare it once every day. I got to work Steven, what you were saying about turning the TV off. I had literally started wanting to self-medicate after pulling that information off. Looking at it constantly, I am trying to put it in a digest so that it could be shared, but it is a resource and that it is not all of our information, its links, pictures, opportunities for services, opportunities for volunteering, SBA information. Anyway, if you go to smvoad.com, that is our website, but we have links there to the other agencies. We are working on permission for Alabama and Louisiana. We are working, trying to, on the VOAD work as partnerships across Florida through Louisiana, at this point, to develop a policy statement based on VOAD. When you say VOAD, you tell them about organizations like Red Cross and many others, faith-based groups and other organizations. Universities are sometimes involved. We are hoping that some of the unanswered questions that we have ourselves about teaching preparedness and teaching about operating within communities, multi-cultural approaches to helping people. Even a lot of counselors, that are licensed counselors, are very lacked in their skills in multi-cultural. It is important. There is a lot of things to do. What we are trying to do is to get ahead of the game. I do not know if we are going to be able to or not, but we are going to try. I had blond hair two weeks ago, I promise you and weighed 160 pounds (Chuckle). There is a lot of things that need to be done on self-care, as well, because you get wrapped up in helping people and before you know it, you are the one that is needing the life preserver. There is a lot of things to handle and a lot of resources as you develop resources, I will put your link on the websites as well. Steven is on there, I believe, already. We continue to compile these documents, but it is great service to have.

STEVEN: There is the stevenpicou.com, which has articles, book chapters, and published works for 20 years of research and left along with the Katrina research, if people want to read about the empirical work that we did. I feel very proud of that 20 years of research despite the fact that Exxon chased me all over the place. I beat them in federal court down here. Judge Cassidy was the presiding magistrate. They wanted all my data. They wanted names and address and phone numbers of everybody I interviewed. That was obviously going to be used to harass people I've promised confidentiality, too. They got beaten. They did not get it. That was another principle. On rcac.org. On that website, you will find a user-friendly guide to recovery from technological disasters. This is a very simple, straightforward guide that people can use in all communities that gives you information on the program we developed, what you have to do, developing an incident command system in your own community, processing information, providing accurate information to the members of the community, etcetera. If you really want to get into, the appendix, which is about 600 pages, is also there with all the materials that we develop. You can also email and request a peer-listener training program DVD, which I made. We did the first perilous program in 1996. That was two days. We did a 4- to 6-hour version in 2000 and now, I went back up there in 2008. We got a shorter 2-½ hour version. The thing is, is that this is a marathon. This is not a 100-meter dash. I live in Orange Beach. I have studied the stuff up in the last up to 21 years, then I looked out my front door, and 300 yards away is Gulf of Mexico, and I go, oh my God, that monster's comin' here. Maybe, it won't be as bad. It is hard for me to look you in the eye and say it won't. I think it is going to be heck of a lot worse. What is the challenge? The challenge is to maintain the community, social capital, maintain your community integrity. I have gone up to Cordova in 1994. I had six new mental health directors. The new mental health director rolled in every year and they only had three staff, but over that six-year period, like 12 staff rotated through. When I landed at Wilburs Mud Hole Airport, took the cab into the reluctant Fisherman Inn, got my room. There was a note there from the new mental health director saying, I would like to have you over for breakfast tomorrow morning. I really need to talk to you. I have heard about your research. I was sure I went over to his cabin at 7:30 the next morning and there he was, cookin' up the eggs. There with reindeer sausage and that kitchen smelled so good. "Come on in." We met one another for the first time. He put my plate on the table. He looked me right in the eye and said, "What in the hell is wrong with the people in this community? What is going

on? You got to tell me. I have never seen a community so divided, so hostile, and so fragmented and as many people with serious problems that do not want to be treated." Well, Five hours later, I left the cabin, and we had talked. But, this was only six years after the spill. We'd only had three to four suicides in town at that point. Anyway, it's a tough road, but you got to preserve the community. You got to preserve yourself. You got to take time out. For those people who are working, mental health people, they need to take care of themselves, but for people who volunteer, who are hugging, who are listening to people vent, who are doing this, you got to take care of yourselves, too. You really do. All of the volunteer groups, the faith-based groups, people who have participated in that, you've got to take that hour a day. Go play with the kids, go talk to your wife. I do not know, maybe buy her a box of candy or something. Just get away from it, because it just eats you up. Like I said, it is a marathon. It is not a 100-meter dash, and we haven't even gone 10 meters as of today.

MODERATOR: Do you have a comment?

SUSAN: I have a comment, Lee. The extension offices in the southern region are identifying some resources. They have put together task force. I will gladly send that to you and to Sea Grant once those who have been identified, that would be better.

JOHN: Dr. Picou (Laughter). I was going to talk a little bit. I do not want to sound critical of anybody because I do not want you all to take it this way, but I heard we were quoted in a newspaper in Biloxi, not long ago.. We did a conference. Basically, our community wellness conference, but it deals with a lot of mental health issues. There was someone that made the comment, why do we need mental health services? People, get over it. People just need to get on with their lives and get over it. I want to speak to that for just a moment because resilient people take trauma and disaster differently. Some people do just get over it, move on and they are strong, but because you are able to do that, that does not mean everybody else does. Sometimes, that attitude of "just pray more" or "just have more faith" or "just read the Bible more" or even "just get over it," sends a message to the community that what you are feeling is often legitimate, but also there is shame involved in feeling frustrated or angry. You are going to have people potentially, and I am not trying to scare anybody, but long-term potentially, you could have people who have been in the shrimping industry, fishing industry, and tourism industry their entire life and the generations as far

back as they know, and were are looking forward to passing that along to their children's children. That may or may not be a possibility anymore. A man that has a shrimp boat, and I could imagine how much one of those would cost, or a charter boat or he earns his living, taking people on tours. I have been on a few myself. They must make a good living because it is pretty expensive to do that, but that income is going to be gone. That pickup truck and that house that they were able to pay for, all of a sudden, is a burden. I do not care how strong a man you are, if you cannot take care of your family, or lady, when you have children at home and you used to bring home a lot of money from your job, and you are no longer doing that, that weighs heavy on people. People react differently to it. Some people react violently to it. Some people self-medicate. Some people go to the casino. Some people get involved. Some people become a part of the solution and find things to do with their energy in their lives. I think it is up to professionals and community to help point people in the direction of positive ways to deal with the stress. Not that we're not going to get mad. I just got married last week. I have not gotten mad at my wife yet, and I hope I don't because she could hurt me, I think, probably. It is normal to get angry. It is normal to be upset. It is normal to express yourself, to even to have tears. I have cried over this oil spill thing. It is normal to feel that way. As much as we can communicate to society, to the communities, that all these feelings are normal, but you must do something about it. If you do not, some people that were already traumatized severely by it would develop post-traumatic stress disorder or at least symptomatic post-traumatic stress. They will not feel like it is okay to seek help. It is important to keep communicating in their circles that it is okay to feel the way you are feeling and that there is help if you need help. Please do not write in newspapers or tell your people or your church or whatever, "Oh, just get over it." Be strong. Have faith. People with great faith have great problems that sometimes cause great distress. We need to normalize that as much as possible and to make it okay to come see a counselor.

STEVEN: What you have to remember that after a natural disaster, like Katrina, everyone agrees that (a) the disaster happened, (b) you are a victim and (c) you need help. People from all over the countries, through Red Cross, everybody agrees. Now, what is going to happen with this technological disaster? It is going to become contested. Think about that, contested. You are going to be called a whiner. You are going to be called someone who committed fraud against BP. You are going to be told, essentially, that your claim is

not legitimate. You are going to be treated like a person who is trying to get something out nothing., You're standing in line to get your money from the litigation. By the way, in the lives of the people, the fishermen and the Alaskan natives, 20 years before they got a dime. 6,000 plaintiffs died, 7,500 plaintiffs went bankrupt, and the divorces were astronomical. Just about every fisherman that I knew in the town of Cordova got a divorce. I would ask them. I come back every year, oh my God. You got a divorce? You were married for 32 years. Hey Ross, do you think it is because of the spill? Nah, No. In denial. This thing is so big. It sucks you up. It sucks your community up. It invades the social fabric. It becomes hideous. It is the first thing you think about when you wake up in the morning. It's gonna be the last thing you think about when you go to sleep at night. It is not going to be like Katrina, where you come back from five to six months at most and you can start rebuilding. This thing is going to go on and on and on. My point is, if you understand that, and we are not the only people, locally, in Bayou La Batre, in Louisiana, along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, we are not the only people that have been impacted by these kinds of things. Before, Exxon Valdez, there was the Amoco Cadiz off the coast of Spain. It took 16 years to get that one straightened out. Remember Love Canal? Hooker Chemical? It took 16 years before those people got their value of their homes and got that mess cleaned up. Three Mile Island? Research shows that 10 years after Three Mile Island, people were having very serious problems. Very serious problems. So, look at your neighbor. Hug your neighbor. Be careful as to what you say. Another thing you don't want to say, is do not tell them I know how you feel. No, you do not know how they feel. You never will, and they do not know how you feel either. Those kind of cliché responses. Get together, take that time out, understand that you are facing a long, hard road. Understand that only you, and John made a real, good point, try to move yourself from the role of I'm-a-victim to the role of I-am-going-to-help. I am going to be a helper in this community. There are two different roles. Victims generally find themselves locked up in a room. In Cordova, when we first went to that town, the bars, and this is a little town 2,500 people, no roads to it. You get there by flying in, if the weather allows you or you take eight-hour ferry ride to it. When we first went there in '89 and '90, right after the spill, the bars are like pubs. People are in the bars at nine in the morning, drinking coffee, playing checkers. It is just a place where everybody goes. In 1993, four years after the spill, there is not one person in the bar except the bartender. Whoops! Four new liquor stores popped up in the town.

One even had a drive-through window. Then, the Cordova Family Resource Center was created. Why? To provide shelter for battered women. Whether they are going to the bars and talking to your buddies and your relatives, and talking about all the salmon you caught. When the herring fishery went in 93, it has never come back. All of the other ecological damages that came over time. What did people do? I do not want to go to a bar because everybody is going to be griping and mumbling and talking about the spill. I am just going to pick my gallon of rum, I am going to go home, and I am going to get smushed. There is your context for domestic violence. We know that whole pattern. See, this is a corrosive pattern. The whole pattern changed. Rather than having that social capital where people come together and share their community, their shrimp festival, people come out there. The Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo, we may not have it this year. See, that is the time for people to come together and share. Then, people start isolating. The worst thing you can do if you are depressed, is to stay in your room. It only makes it worse. The more you consume the booze, the more you start thinking about doing things to harm yourself. Okay. So, you got to get out. You got to get around. In our peer listening training, which help people, if you think -- peer listeners are not therapists. But we say -- if you think you got somebody who is having a problem, oh, go by the house and help him cut the grass, help her wash her clothes, or go to movies, go rent a movie, do something that gets people out and connected.

(0:57:14.2)
SANDRA: Back to my concern about what churches can do. Oh, this is so very helpful, but I remember hearing you say that the one thing that can help right now is what happens in churches Sunday morning. Do you know of resources that help preachers preach in this kind of a crisis?

STEVEN: In Orange Beach I go to St. Thomas by the Sea. Do you know that Father Jim, five weeks ago, directed his whole sermon about the spill after it had been out for two weeks? I could see people kinda squirming a little bit because he touched a chord. He asked everyone to pray, and he told everyone that, if you need to talk to me, call me any time. The simplest thing would be to reach out as a pastor and maybe tell people that were all concerned. There are certain people who are more vulnerable than others.

(0:58:16.2)

SANDRA: Of course.

STEVEN: If you work at a post office in Orange Beach or Port ***[0:58:22.9 inaudible]***, you do not have a problem. You will get your check. But if you are fisherman, you work in tourism, etcetera, etcetera, and this thing starts squeezing you, you are going to have a problem. So, it's important for those people who have kind of a, how do you call it, independent income from the beach and from the Gulf. These are people that could really be enlisted to help because they are not going to be feeling it. In Cordova, our teachers, they saw their kids were banging off the walls and were trying to... it usually never happened in this little town. When we talked to them, even the same for the law enforcement, we said, when you go into that house for domestic violence, you got your procedures. We are not telling you to change your procedures. You go through your procedures as you have been trained, but remember, these are not two drunk, broke fishermen beating one another up. These are two victims of the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

JOHN: Also, Sandra, I would say that sometimes, the role of the churches, as you all know, is so much broader than just what happens on Sunday morning and what is spoken from the pulpit or lectern, or whichever denomination you might be from. It is important. I am thinking almost every denomination or every faith group, there is leadership in the church that reacts to the crisis or reacts to the disaster.

(0:59:53.3)
STEVEN: I would say that churches, and I can help you with some of those resources later. I do not have the answer as far as sermons go, but faith groups can activate what they would normally activate for hurricane and tweak it little bit to deal with some of the community issues that may be needed. One of the things...somebody brought this up not too long ago. They were talking about the number of new children that may come into the daycare situation. Why? Because mothers who were able to stay at home or mothers who had a different sort income lost that income and they had to find another job and they needed daycare services. To be creative and to be careful to listen to the community about what the needs are in that community whether it be Vietnamese community in the local church there and what can they do to respond. I think as far as the clergy members go, those who actually speak to the people, is constantly being encouragingly realistic. In other words, to admit

that there is a problem but to continue hope and working towards the solution. As positive as you can be about the situation. Yes, it is a bad situation. Yes, it may be 50 years long, but we are going to work now to determine the future for our grandchildren and our children's children whatever it may be. All hope is not lost. For some people they feel that way and I can understand that. We need to constantly not get false hope, but to promote that there are avenues that can lead people to deal with the emotional issues and the spiritual issues. Actually, you have given me the idea to develop sermon outlines perhaps for people to use on a Sunday morning to help address fears and anxiety as it relates to a technological disaster.

(1:02:19.3)
AUDIENCE: On our website, PCUSA.org, we have prayers and liturgy and sermon helps and that kind of thing**.** I was just wondering if there might be additional ones. Anybody can use those.

(1:02:38.0)
JOHN: One thing I think this whole situation is that we are learning about technological disasters as it is happening as opposed to being prepared for something like this, which the hurricane is here now and we preach and we preach and we preach or we teach or we promote hurricane preparedness. Have a plan, that kind of thing, and most people do not do that. I do not know exactly how to prepare people for this kind of disaster outside of what we have discussing and trying to use the community grass roots type-people, SOS boat people, the steps coalitions, the faith-based groups. The people that do the teaching to the community that are key gatekeepers for their community. They need to be the ones to create solutions and to help find solutions for that community. I would preach that over and over again. Sometimes we become so bent on finding a solution that we package something and we offer it to every community the same way. It does not work for every community the same way. The economic hardships and stuff are gonna to come, maybe out of this new industry will come. Maybe out of these new things will happen, but we have to deal with it. We do not have no choice. You can either stick your head in the mud or you can be a part of the solution. The solution for your community whatever it may be, I know that you do great work in Mississippi. The PDA does great work there. Tornadoes just wiped out a large portion of Central Mississippi several hundred miles of damage and then the floods in Nashville. There is never a shortage of disaster. There is always a shortage of people to respond to it in

such a way that everybody, every community is addressed and all their needs are hopefully met. So, I don't know, there may be some other questions or comments that you have. Steven might have something else to say or Susan.

(1:04:45.5)
STEVEN: I would just second your insight that there is no silver bullet. Now, the materials that you can go access are flexible enough where can modify them according to your own unique characteristics of your community. Your unique needs, , etcetera, etcetera. They are kinda open and flexible. When I was doing work up in Alaska, one of the things we kept telling people when we went back up there we report to them what we were finding and it was kinda like, well, I had one fisherman tell me. "Well, you know, when you quit coming up here, I will know that this thing is over." (Laughter). The thing was that we reported back to them and then finally we had the opportunity to work with them on an equal status basis just like...you got to do this and you will do well. No, that does not work. We work with community leaders on an equal status basis. They participated in developing all these project materials. When you look at those project materials, it is not Dr. Picou's stuff. Not even close. It was Dr. Picou working with, and listening to and responding to and listening to the people in that community. What they knew would work to help them out because they knew the social problems that they had better than anyone. We got a heads=up on this with those materials. We told them that...if this happens again, all this we are doing will help other people. They have been down here. There have been people down here from Alaska that I worked with over the last four weeks. They have been to New Orleans. They have been to Port Fourchon***[1:06:57.1 inaudible].*** They have been to Mississippi Gulf Coast. They have been all over, I think they are healthy and, they have recovered because they are ready to come help you, and they are here.

(1:07:14.7)
JOHN: If you have not got the chance to look at Dr. Picou's materials. You really need to look at it. It is great stuff and it is born out of community listening. It is not just peer-to-peer listening, but it is actually out of and created from them listening to the community, and it is something that you could adapt. You could take it to the Vietnamese community. You could take to the white community. Whatever it may be. Different socio-economic groups that respond differently...it is adaptable. It is very adaptable. Any other

questions? We can leave early. I have not had dinner yet.
(Laughter)

END OF AUDIO.