

An Intruder: Cyclone Idai and Post Disaster Coping Strategies Utilized by Adolescent Survivors



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Climate change has been identified as one of the leading threats to human health in Southern Africa. Climate change-induced natural disasters often leave behind a trail of destruction characterized by multidimensional losses such as loss of infrastructure, physical health, and psychological health. Adolescents are among the most vulnerable groups during and after a natural disaster. This article presents findings of a research whose aim was to establish cyclone Idai-related losses and post disaster coping strategies among adolescent survivors. Based on qualitative data collected from 15 participants in the Odzi community of Manicaland Province in Zimbabwe, the article reveals that participants experienced diverse disaster-related losses, such as loss of independence and sense of control over their lives and general life satisfaction. The study notes that the impact of disaster-related losses had a toll on adolescents' psychological, social, and physical well-being. From the study, it is established that in the aftermath of natural disasters, adolescents adopted two-pronged coping strategies, namely, personal coping strategies that include positive thinking and self-talk, and the utilization of social support such as instrumental and counseling support. This study suggests, among other recommendations, school-based trainings to equip adolescents with personal coping strategies.

Biography:

Innocent Sifelani is a state certified Educational Psychologist and is currently a Psychology lecturer at Manicaland State University of Applied Sciences in Zimbabwe. Apart from his teaching obligation, some of his roles as a practicing psychologist include, but not limited to; conducting psycho-educational assessments, education related individual and group counseling and psycho-education. Additionally, he has had a decade of experience as a full time practicing Educational Psychologist in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. Innocent's research interests are: mental health, child and adolescent well-being, Educational psychology, Community psychology, climate change and psychology.