

Disaster Spiritual Care and Counselling in the Dutch Crisis Organisation: Development of a Practical Tool to Stimulate Optimal Coordination and Resource Utilisation.

Michel Dückers, Ruurd Ganzevoort, Maarten Hoejenbos, José Netten, Magda Rooze, Hessel Zondag

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Internationally, disasters and crises confront societies with loss and trauma. Disaster spiritual care and counselling (DSCC) – by e.g. imams, ministers, pandits, pastors, rabbis – fulfils a unique role in providing comfort and search for meaning. Still, its contribution in the aftermath deserves attention. The Dutch Ministry of Safety and Justice funded the development of a broad DSCC-preparation-support tool. The development was based on 1) findings and frameworks from literature on disaster spiritual care, spiritual counselling, psychosocial support, and disaster and crisis management; 2) experiences in the Netherlands, Germany and the United States. Shape and content of the tool were determined in dialogue with an expert group and the Dutch DSCC-network. The process resulted in a DSCC-manual with practical information on relevant topics for DSCC-providers: their roles and tasks, approaches, necessary competencies, available resources, cooperation with partners, coordination of volunteers, rituals in the public domain, characteristics of the Dutch crisis organisation, care for affected victims and helpers, and self-care. The manual includes a preparation-checklist to ease implementation. Optimal coordination and resource utilisation require linkages between the organisation of each DSCC-group (synergy) and the formal crisis organisation (command). Cooperation is vital.