
Impacts & Consequences of Failed or Delayed Recovery

David Abramson, PhD MPH
National Center for Disaster Preparedness
Columbia University

Hazards Caucus Alliance Congressional Briefing
Washington, DC March 10, 2009

Conceptualizing Recovery

- ❑ Reconstruction: rebuilding physical structures
- ❑ Restoration: re-establishing prior physical & social patterns, return to original condition
- ❑ Rehabilitation: restoring people, not things, and raising them to a higher level than pre-impact
- ❑ Recovery: a process and an outcome

EL Quarantelli, "The Disaster Recovery Process," 1999

Measures of Individual or Household Recovery

- Housing stability
- Economic stability
- Social roles / networks re-established
- Access to civic & institutional resources (schools, health care, transportation, lifelines)
- Mental health

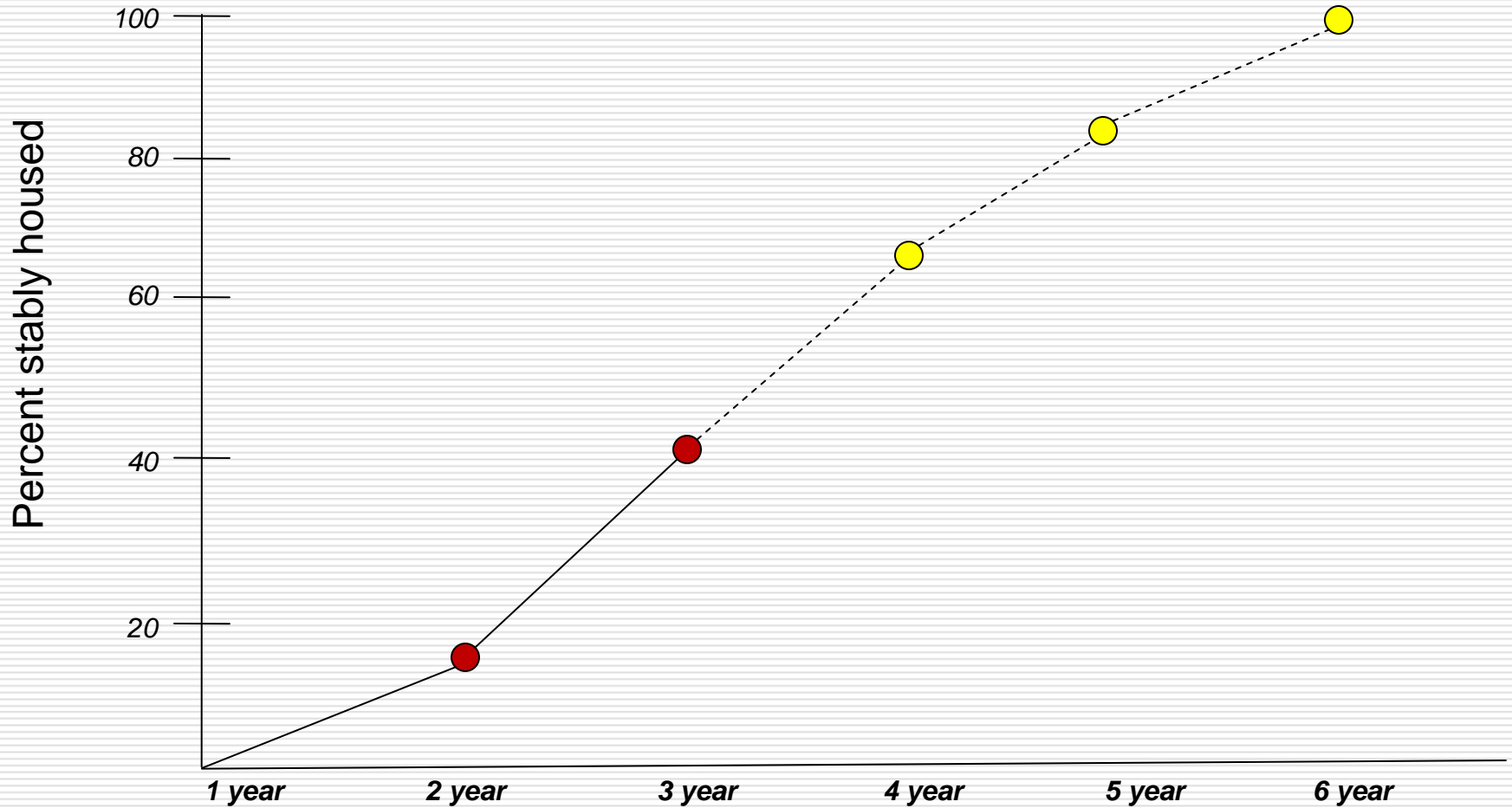
Studying Katrina's Impact: Gulf Coast Child & Family Health Study

- Method: multi-stage cluster sample
- Sample: 1,079 randomly selected LA & MS displaced or greatly impacted households
- Interviewed
 - Baseline – within 1st year after Katrina
 - At 2nd year anniversary
 - At 3rd year anniversary
- Group is representative of 60,000 – 100,000 displaced and greatly impacted Katrina survivors

CAFH Study measures

- ❑ Housing and relocation status
- ❑ Health status (physical + mental health)
- ❑ Access and use of health services
- ❑ Attitudes & behaviors regarding social institutions (justice, health, faith-based)
- ❑ Personal sense of self-efficacy, resilience, and recovery

Projected rate of housing stability among displaced Katrina survivors



Impacts & Consequences

- Unstably housed are...
 - 2.3 times as likely to report mental health disability
 - 1.9 times as likely to report a child with emotional problem
 - 3.1 times as likely to have a poor sense of community
 - 1.8 times as likely to have a child whose academic performance was worse after the hurricane
 - 1.9 times as likely to not have adequate social support
- All of these are equally true of people living in households with incomes below \$20,000 as those above