



Towards an understanding of how Ebola and Ebola Response affected Liberia

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Why EVD Crisis Affectedness?



- NGOs support “highly affected” groups
 - How is this defined?
 - Which support makes sense?
- Need for understanding and evidence
 - For helpful programming
 - For avoiding harm doing

Methodology



- Various mixed method Surveys / Interviews
 - 41 community & ETU workers
 - 167 heads of household under quarantine
 - 67 Heads of households with children who were directly affected
 - 47 community members in Bong
 - 16 persons from highly affected community
- Observations, informal encounters, reflections

During Ebola Times in Communities

EVD

- People got sick
- People died / survived
- Everywhere: danger



- Fear
- Despair
- helplessness
- Grief
- Staying away from others

EVD response

- NO caring for the sick !
- NO proper burials!
- NO touching!
- Restricted movement
- Destruction of property

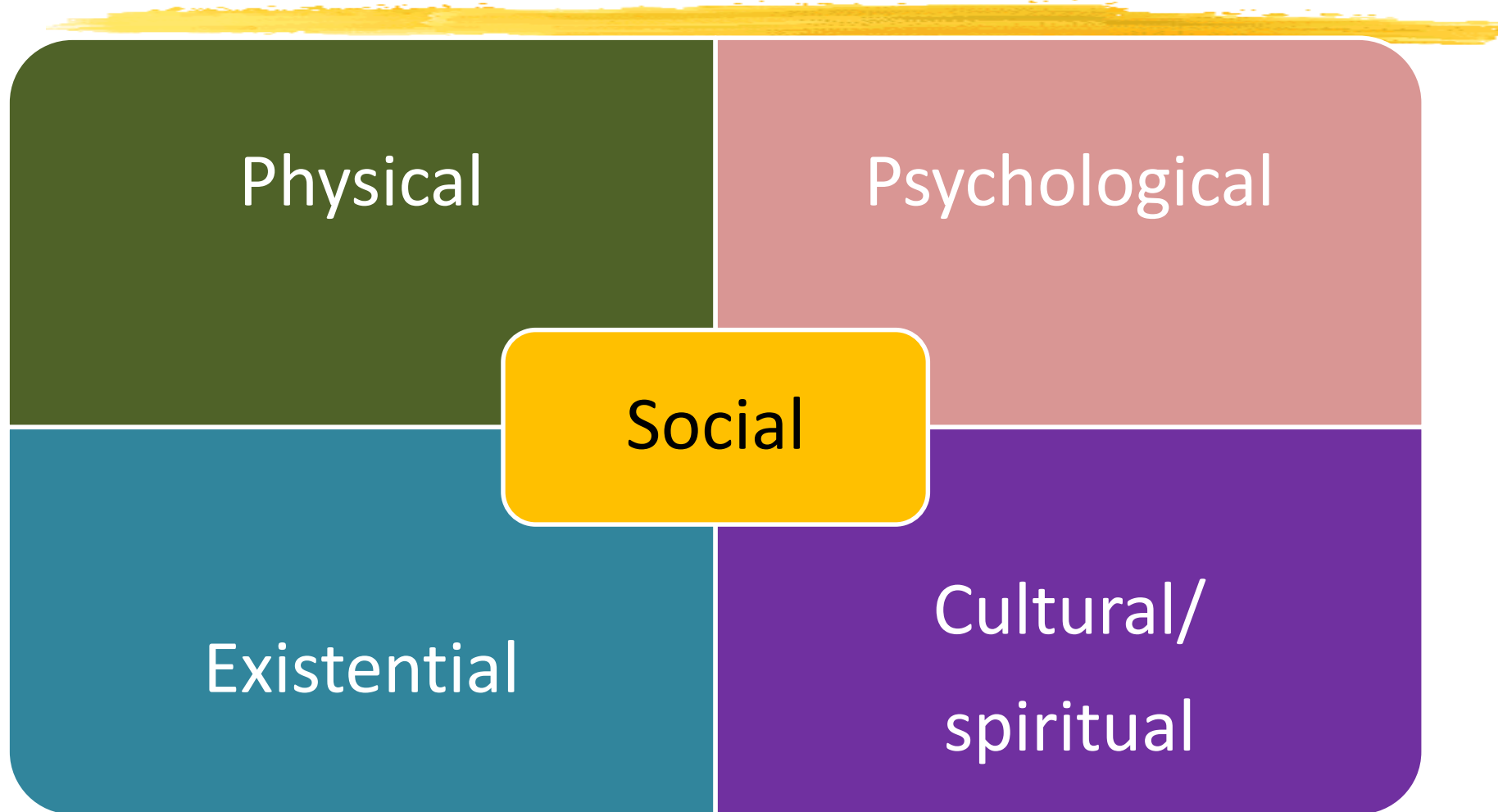


- Shame, Guilt
- Norms-violating behavior
- Anger, Blame, Conflict
- Social disconnect
- Loss of income/property

Associations with “Ebola”

Association with Ebola	Frequency	Percentage
Bad sickness	25	27.5
Death	16	17.6
Division	10	11.0
Fear	9	9.9
Bad feeling	8	9.0
Hatred	4	4.4
Frustration	4	4.4
Worries	4	4.4
Cureless disease	3	3.3
Anger	2	2.2

Dimensions of EVD crisis impact

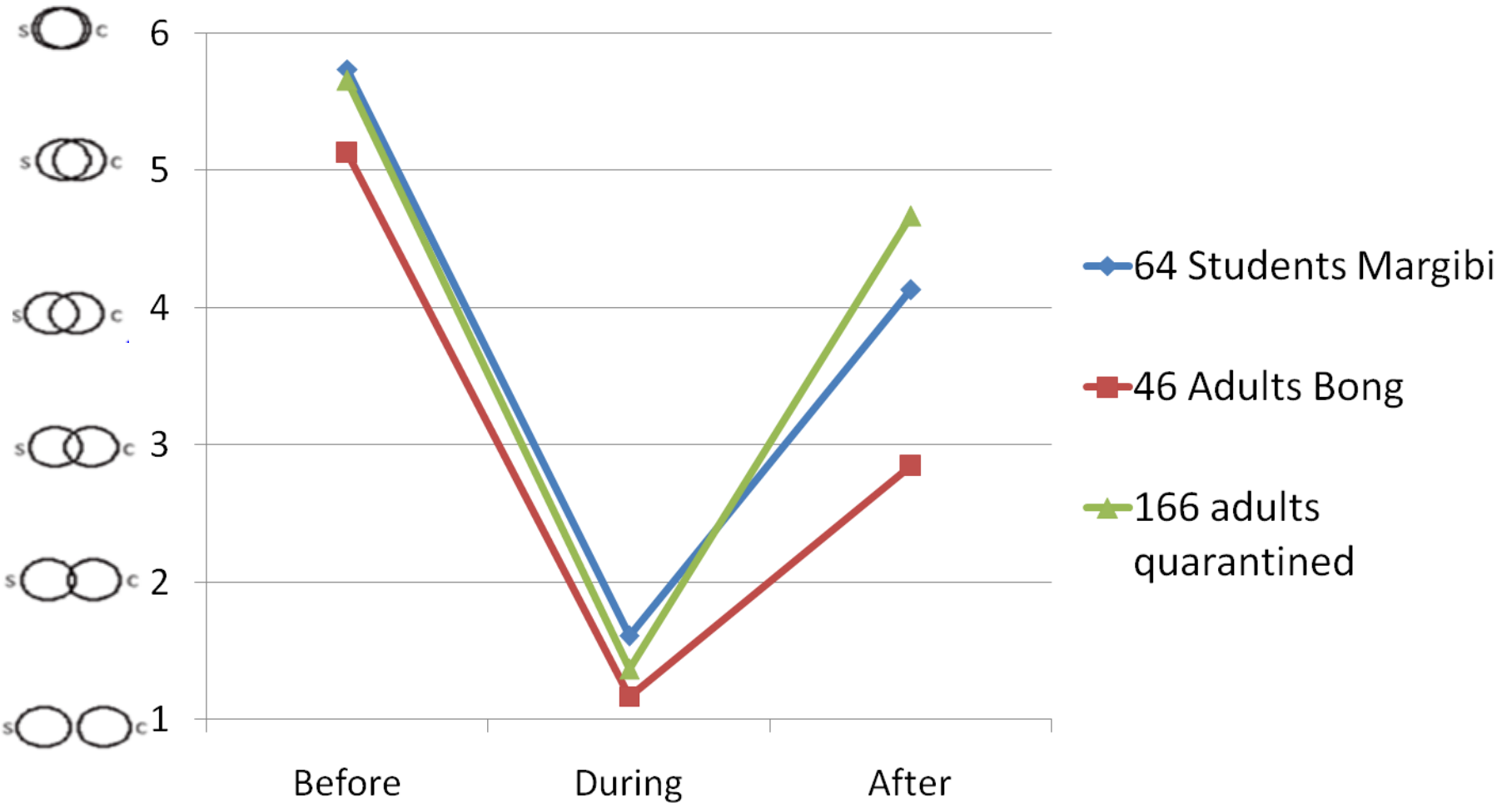


EVD crisis affectedness

Group	Physical			Social		Psych.		Existential		NGO help
	EVD	sick/ no care	Restri cted	Exclu ded	Social dista nce	Fear	Night mare s	No educ ation	Inco me Loss	
Infected ETU	X	X	X	X	X	X	?	X	X	X
Infected com	X	X	X	X	X	X	?	X	X	-
Family in community	-	X	X	X	X	X	?	X	X	(X)
Family elsewhere	-	X	-	-	X	X	?	X	X	-
Community affected	-	X	X	X	X	X	?	X	X	-
Community Elsewhere	-	(x)	-	-	x	X	?	X	(x)	-

Is past or present more relevant?

Connection Self and Community



Blaming persons for having...



- **Called ambulance**

“community dwellers gave address when they started getting sick. Up to now the family members are not talking with them, because they had called.”

- **Not helped sick person**

“health workers said they felt the friends were not given good treatment by the co-workers”

- **killed/sacrificed persons**

“ambulance drivers, sprayers, they put chemicals in it, and killed the patients”

- **brought Ebola to family/community**

“Her little sister is number one enemy, ...was the cause for the family to perish”

Blaming for infecting others

47 community members in Bong



- 32 feel towards those who infected others :
bad feelings (24) anger (6) blame (2) rejection (2)
- 60.5%: almost all/many people they know blame someone for infecting others
- 42 (89.4 %): people are angry with someone who has brought Ebola to their communities.
- 6 (12.8%) thought those who blame others will NOT come to forgiveness

Conclusions – Need for research



- Most persons in Liberia have been affected by the Ebola crisis
 - on physical, psychological, existential, spiritual and social dimension
 - how many have recovered?
 - how many need support for recovery?
- Social (Re)Connection might be crucial for recovery
- For psychosocial support, current needs should be considered, not the artificial category “survivor”



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Positive Impact of Ebola & Response



- Focus on what matters most: people
- Volunteering
- Caring
- Hand washing
- Support from abroad: Liberia is not alone
- Work and career opportunities in EVD response

Psychological




- Forgetting, lack of concentration
- Avoidance
- Not able to work
- Crying a lot
- Pain in the body
- Sadness, Anger, Despair
- people “dying in their hearts”
- Identity problems

Existential



- Economic
 - Loss of Bread winner / children to take care of old
 - Loss of crops/income
- Education
 - 7 months break
 - Lack of money to continue
- Living space
 - Excluded from community/neighbourhood
 - Orphaned children moving in
- Break down of health facilities

Cultural / Spiritual



- Disconnect with the dead – unsatisfied spirits
- Loss of faith / increased faith
- Norm changes for greetings / burials?
- Self blame for not respecting the dead

- Changes in social structure/ power dynamics

Social



- Conflicts / Blaming
- Lack of social support
- Envy
- Change in social structure
- Changed way of interacting
- More distance
- Exclusion
- Broken relationships

Physical



- Persons who died are not there
- Post-Ebola syndrome: problems with eyes, concentration, hearing, joints...
- Untreated sicknesses: health system
- Teenage pregnancies
- Psychosomatic problems (Pain), people “dying in their hearts”