



# The Worcester Institute on Loss and Trauma 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference



*When Tragedy Happens:*

*Understanding Acute Trauma and Psychological First Aid*

September 17, 2014



## Valerie Cole, Ph.D.

Senior Associate, Disaster Mental Health  
American Red Cross

### Keynote Presenter: “Holistic Care for Disaster Stress”

Valerie Cole is a clinical psychologist who is responsible for operations support for national disasters, which includes developing and implementing the policies and procedures of the disaster mental health activity for its 5,000 volunteers.

Dr. Cole is also tasked with coordinating the updates for the “American Red Cross Disaster Mental Health Handbook” and the revised “Foundations of Disaster Mental Health (DMH)” training in her position as senior associate. She was previously in private practice and was also an associate professor of psychology at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, N.Y. Cole was the Red Cross chapter DMH lead in Rochester, N.Y. for several years and then the state DMH lead for New York State for two years.

Dr. Cole assisted in developing and implementing the New York State Office of Mental Health and Department of Public Health training, “Disaster Mental Health: A Critical Response.” She has written curricula on provisions of disaster mental health services related to substance abuse and mental illness during disasters and has been published on the topics of social support and recruitment and retention of volunteers.