Following the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico, a tri-state consortium was developed to survey the state’s mental health needs and to improve disaster-related research. The tri-state consortium was funded by State Emergency Response Grants (SERG) received in a partnership between university and government agencies in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Tri-state activities were designed to utilize the expertise and resources of each state while meeting the specific informational needs identified by each affected state and SAMHSA. The tri-state consortium not only improved the understanding of current mental health needs in the Gulf Coast, but also disseminated information which will inform future disaster preparedness and mental health response activities.

**AFFECTED AREAS**

**STATE TEAMS**

**Louisiana**

- Howard J. Osofsky, M.D., Ph.D. – Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center
- Joy Osofsky, Ph.D. – Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center
- Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry, and Public Health
- Anthony Speier, PhD – Louisiana Public Health Department
- Assistant Secretary for the Office of Behavioral Health

**Alabama**

- Jennifer Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Ph.D. – University of South Alabama
- Professor of Psychology, Director Coastal Resource and Resiliency Center
- Aquanetta Knight, Mattie Kahn, and Paige Rucker – Alabama Department of Mental Health and Project Rebound

**Mississippi**

- Timothy A. Rehner, Ph.D. – University of Southern Mississippi, School of Social Work
- Scott Sumrall, M.S. – Mississippi Department of Mental Health

**LESIONS LEARNED**

- There is a continued need for technological development, which will allow real time data collection through web-based downloads.
- Ongoing cooperation is necessary to get multi-state utilization of equivalent data collection methodologies and assessment tools.
- Participation by all three states allowed for a more comprehensive Gulf-wide picture of mental health symptoms and needs.

**SERG ACTIVITIES**

- Direct psychosocial data collection
  - Schools
  - Individuals at community-wide events
  - Random-digit dialed telephone survey
- Community and regional level indicators
- Mental health providers submitted data
- Secondary data compilation