Introduction

On December 25, 2012, a tornado hit the midtown area of Mobile, Alabama causing major damage to one of the area’s high schools containing several thousand students. Following this disaster, system-level changes occurred to accommodate students, including relocation to the back lot of a school serving middle schoolers. School mobility can have both positive and negative effects on student achievement (Heinlin & Shinn, 2000). The literature shows inconsistent effects of school mobility, and has related it to socioeconomic status (SES). However, little is known about how family resilience may impact adolescent’s health post-disaster.

Aims & Objectives

The purpose of this study was to assess how students and their families were affected by the tornado and the family processes that promoted resiliency. Understand how resilience differs among family members. Develop a coding system to measure qualitative data in audio/video format.

Methods

Participants

N= 71
30 Families (with an impacted student)
Represented Members
Mother, Father, Daughter-6
Mother, Father, Son-5
Mother, Daughter-12
Mother, Son-5
Father, Daughter-1
Other-1
Ethnicity
Black/African American 60.6%
Caucasian/White 31%
Hispanic/Latino 1.4%
Asian 1.4%
Multiracial 5.6%

Measures

Each family was asked a series of questions that pertained to their experiences with the tornado and how their lives were affected thereafter.

Ex: “What were you doing when the tornado happened?”
“Who in the family had the strongest emotional reaction?”
“What types of changes happened after the tornado?”
“What makes your family resilient? What types of things do you do as a family to bounce back?”
“What can your family do to be more resilient?”

Results

Thematic Analysis-Parental Perspectives

14%: Sad because their child was sad
14%: Felt parents were most affected by the tornado
45%: Indicated family turns to religion, works together as a family or has open communication to help them
71%: Experienced transportation issues
33%: Suffered no direct damage from the tornado

Thematic Analysis-Child Perspectives

43%: Student was the most affected
36%: Student felt like a prisoner
14%: Felt excessive restrictions were implemented on students
24%: Felt high school experience was affected
24%: Felt issues with the temporary classrooms/portables
19%: Felt parents were most affected by the tornado
14%: Felt school experience was affected
19%: Felt excessive restrictions were implemented on students
19%: Felt grades suffered because of changes

Future Directions

Structural Family Systems Rating Scale (SFSR)

SFSR is a family therapy technique that encourages families to interact naturally with three standard tasks in a controlled setting (Szapocznik et al., 1990).

Task 1: Planning the Menu
Task 2: Things others do in the family that please or displease you
Task 3: A family argument
Each task is then measured according to the following dimensions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Flexibility</th>
<th>Resonance</th>
<th>Conflict Resolution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family organization in terms of systems and subsystems. The extent to which family members take charge in directing family interactions. The measure of leadership, subsystem organization, and communication flow.</td>
<td>The family’s ability to change and reorganize in order to meet changing needs or demands. The appropriateness of shift in communication flow, alliances, and subsystem formation in relation to members’ age, nature of interaction, and changing circumstances.</td>
<td>A measure of the permeability of boundaries and differentiation between individuals and subsystems in the family. It is also a measure of the threshold of family members’ sensitivity to one another. This concept encompasses two well known types of family difficulties, enmeshment and disengagement.</td>
<td>The extent to which a family is able to express, confront, and negotiate differences of opinion, disagreements, and conflicts. It is assumed that conflict resolution variables can be viewed along an ordinal dimension ranging from poor to good.</td>
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Future research could examine academic achievement when administering the survey to each participant. Findings have implications for school systems and families post-disaster.

Literature Cited
