Extreme Events Background

• The psychological effects of discontinuous experience.

• Studies of traumatic stress and other indices of adjustment in response to individual and community-level extreme events.
  – Patients with life-threatening illnesses
  – Adults survivors of childhood sexual abuse
  – Those exposed (either directly or indirectly) to the terrorist attacks on 9/11/01
Trajectories of Adaptation Following Adversity

Extreme Event

Growth

Resilience

Impairment

Level of Functioning

Time

(Figure adapted from O’Leary & Ickovics, 1995; see also Butler, Morland, & Leskin, 2007)
Correlates of 9/11-Related Resilience Outcomes

Distress

Well-being

% of Variance

Butler et al., 2009
9/11-Related Growth

PTG Subscales
NP = New Possibilities
RO = Relating to Others
PS = Personal Strength
AL = Appreciation of Life
SC = Spiritual Change

(Butler et al., 2005)
Current/Future
Extreme Events Research

• **Funded Pilot**: To examine the nature of reactions to *anticipated*, rather than previously experienced, traumatic events.

• Identify new factors that may challenge (e.g., perceived threat, dread, anticipated impact of future event) or enhance resilience (e.g., agency, altruism) in response to traumatic experience.

• **Extreme Events collaborations.**