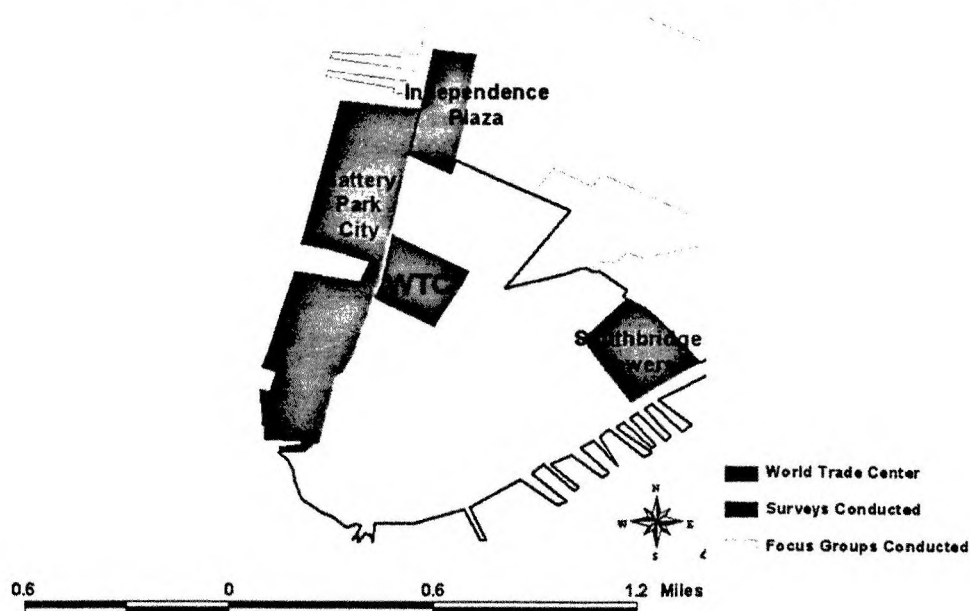


A COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF LOWER MANHATTAN FOLLOWING THE WORLD TRADE CENTER ATTACK

In the aftermath of the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center (WTC), the New York City Department of Health (NYCDOH) in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), conducted an assessment to identify current unmet needs regarding the physical and mental health of residents living in the immediate area surrounding the WTC. The project was designed to gather information to help us determine how to best respond to the needs of the community.

A door-to-door survey of a representative sample of residents living in Battery Park City, Southbridge Towers and Independence Plaza took place at the end of October 2001. A total of 414 interviews were completed. In addition, focus groups were conducted with other area residents of lower Manhattan. The findings from the needs assessment identified a number of issues and potential areas for intervention.

Areas Selected for Door-to-Door Survey



KEY FINDINGS

- About 50% of those surveyed continued to experience physical symptoms likely to be related to the attack on the WTC, such as nose, throat and eye irritations. These symptoms are consistent with what one would expect from the on-going exposure to smoke released from the fires burning at the WTC site.
- Many residents of lower Manhattan have on-going concerns about the air quality and its potential effect on health.
- Many residents need further information and assistance regarding proper household cleaning procedures for the dust and debris from the WTC site.
- Almost 40% of those interviewed reported symptoms suggestive of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), indicating a potential for thousands of people in lower Manhattan who could benefit from supportive counseling.
- Less than a third of those interviewed have received any supportive counseling, and of those at high risk for PTSD, about 40% have received supportive counseling.
- Many residents do not have access to or are not aware of the availability of mental health services.

RESPONSE

Based on the findings from this assessment, the NYCDOH has developed a response to include the following elements:

- **OUTREACH:** The NYCDOH is conducting intensive outreach to neighborhoods in lower Manhattan to provide information and improve communication between residents and the City government.
- **AIR QUALITY:** The NYCDOH is providing ongoing information and recommendations to the community regarding the health effects of exposure to the dust, debris and smoke from the WTC site, including proper cleaning methods and ways to improve indoor air quality.
- **MENTAL HEALTH:** The NYC Department of Mental Health's Project Liberty is providing outreach, crisis counseling and public education services to persons affected by the WTC disaster.

If you have any questions about this project, or would like a copy of the full report, contact Community HealthWorks at (212) 341-9811. All other inquiries, please call the NYCDOH call center at 1-877-NYCDOH-7.