

# CONVERGE: Advancing Convergence Research Through Training Modules



NSF Award #1635593 and #1841338



Natural Hazards Center



CONVERGE

# Today's Lecture





# Convergence Research

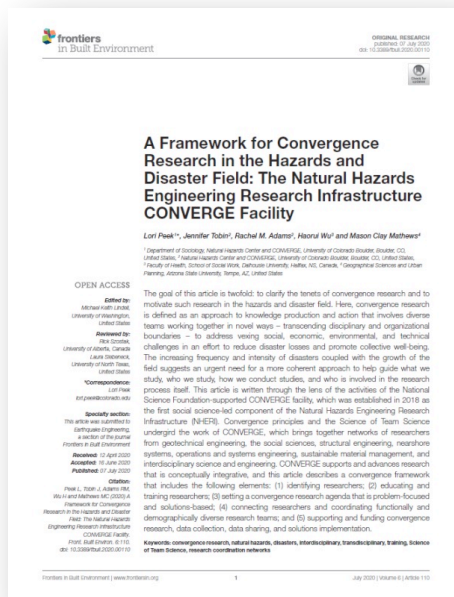
An approach to knowledge production and action that involves diverse teams working together in novel ways—transcending disciplinary and organizational boundaries—to address vexing social, economic, environmental, and technical challenges in an effort to reduce disaster losses and promote collective well-being.



University of Colorado **Boulder**

# CONVERGE

- CONVERGE is a National Science Foundation-funded shared-use facility dedicated to advancing the **ethical conduct** and **scientific rigor** of convergence hazards and disaster research



[converge.colorado.edu](https://converge.colorado.edu)



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CONVERGE Training Modules



# Motivation for CONVERGE Training Modules



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# CONVERGE Training Modules

Free, interactive, online trainings designed for students, early career professionals, and others who are new to hazards and disaster research and practice. They incorporate an all-hazards approach grounded in cutting edge research from the social sciences, public health, engineering, and other disciplines. Each module features:

- Learning objectives
- Lesson plans
- Case studies
- A list of additional resources
- A final quiz worth **one contact hour** of general management training through the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) certification program.



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# Available Training Modules

- Social Vulnerability and Disasters: 5,874 completions
- Disaster Mental Health: 3,323 completions
- Cultural Competence: 2,178 completions
- Broader Ethical Considerations: 1,629 completions

			
<b>Broader Ethical Considerations</b>	<b>Collecting and Sharing Perishable Data</b>	<b>Cultural Competence</b>	<b>Disaster Mental Health</b>
			
<b>Emotionally Challenging Research</b>	<b>Gender-Based Violence in Fieldwork</b>	<b>Indigenous Sovereignty in Disasters</b>	<b>Institutional Review Board Procedures</b>
			
<b>Positionality</b>	<b>Public Health Implications</b>	<b>Reciprocity in Research</b>	<b>Social Vulnerability and Disasters</b>



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# CONVERGE

## Training Modules

Shared Themes



### Foundational Training Module Topics

- Institutional Review Board (IRB) Procedures
- Conducting Emotionally Challenging Research
- Cultural Competence
- Collecting and Sharing Perishable Data
- Social Vulnerability and Disasters
- Disaster Mental Health

### Advanced Training Module Topics

- Broader Ethical Considerations
- Indigenous Sovereignty
- Positionality
- Reciprocity
- Understanding and Ending Gender-Based Violence in Fieldwork
- Public Health Implications of Hazards and Disaster Research



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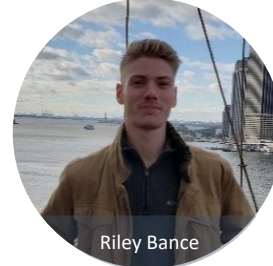




# Training Module Collaborators



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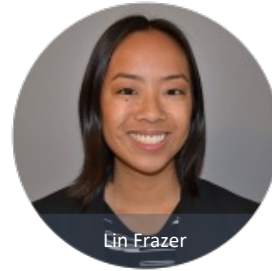
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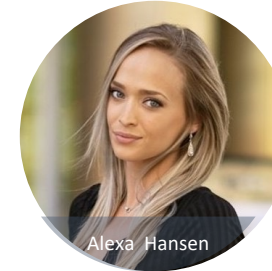
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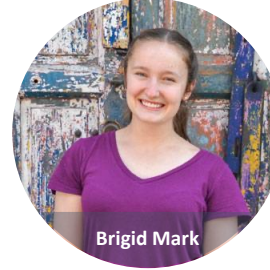
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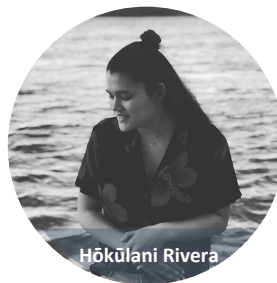
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Villarreal



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Haorui Wu



# Training Module Topics

Broader Ethical Considerations for Hazards and Disaster Researchers

Collecting and Sharing Perishable Data

Conducting Emotionally Challenging Research

Cultural Competence in Hazards and Disaster Research

Disaster Mental Health

Indigenous Sovereignty in Disaster Research

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Procedures and Extreme Events Research

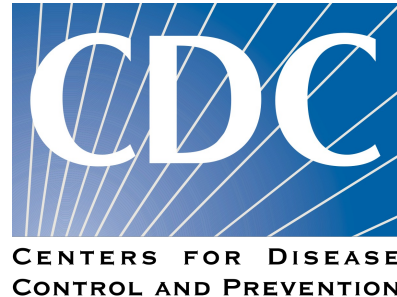
Positionality in Hazards and Disaster Research and Practice

Public Health Implications of Hazards and Disaster Research

Reciprocity in Hazards and Disaster Research

Social Vulnerability and Disasters

Understanding and Ending Gender-Based Violence in Fieldwork



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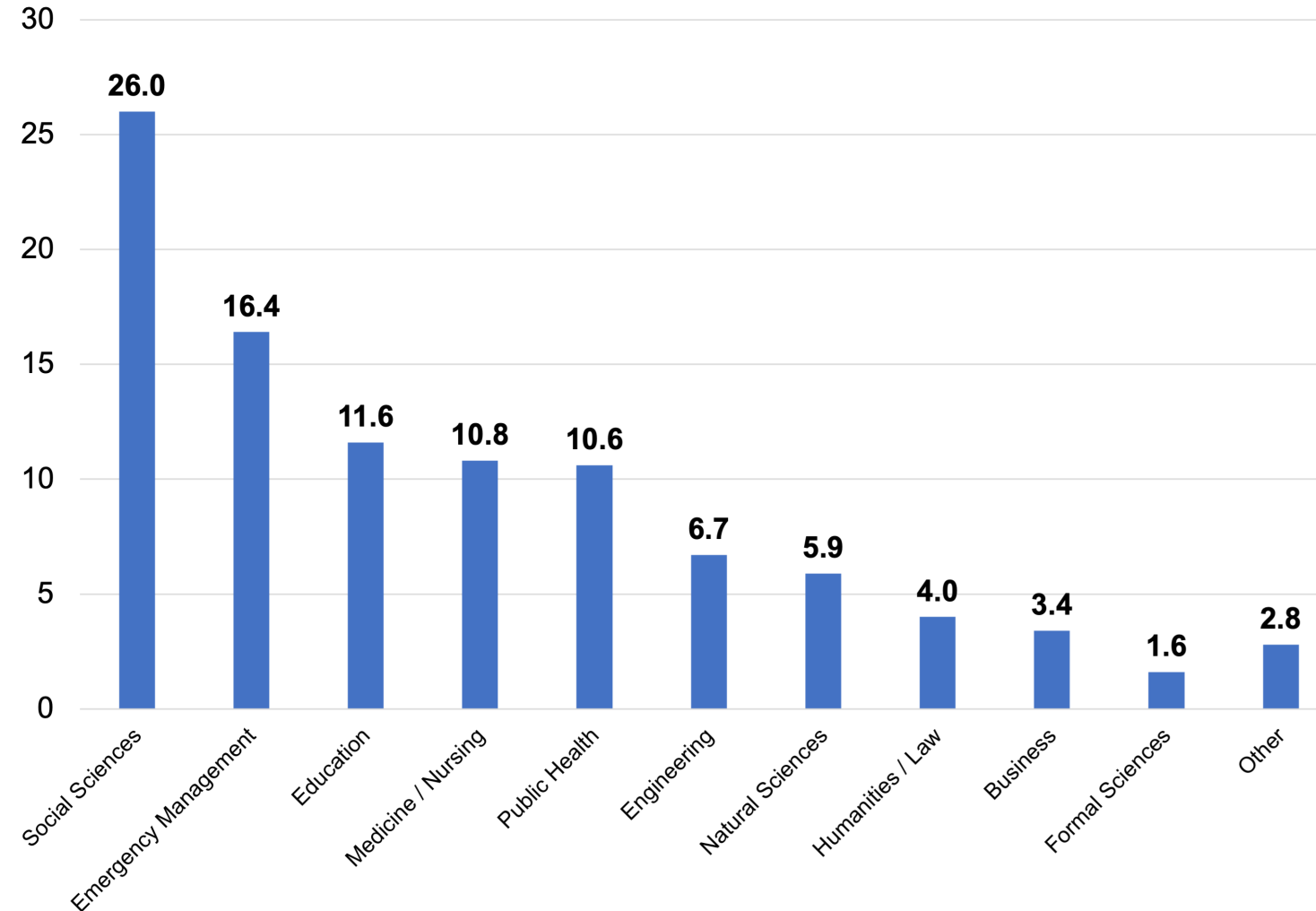


# CONVERGE

## Training Modules: Use and Impact

- **13,770** Training Module Registrants
- **17,305** Successfully Completed Modules
  - 78% Students
  - 68% Emerging Researchers

% Completions by Discipline



# CONVERGE Training Modules: Use and Impact

We evaluated Training Module impacts in the following articles:

Adams, R. M., Evans, C., Wolkin, A., Thomas, T. & Peek, L. (2022). **Social vulnerability and disasters: Development and evaluation of a CONVERGE Training Module for researchers and practitioners.** *Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal*, 31(6), 13-29.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/DPM-04-2021-0131>

Evans, C., Adams, R. M., & Peek, L. (2021). **Incorporating mental health research into disaster risk reduction: An online training module for researchers and practitioners.** *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(3), 1244.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18031244>

Our results demonstrated a significant increase in **knowledge, skills, and attitudes** – especially among **students, early career researchers, and members of historically underrepresented groups**



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# Training Module Publications

To learn more about the CONVERGE Training Modules and the process we used to develop and evaluate them, please see the following article:

Adams, R. M., Evans, C. M., & Peek, L. (2023). **CONVERGE Training Modules: A free online educational tool for hazards and disaster researchers and practitioners.** *Frontiers in Built Environment*, 9.

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fbuil.2023.1096204>

[converge.colorado.edu/category/publications/](https://converge.colorado.edu/category/publications/)



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# Additional Training Module Publications

doi:10.1111/ehp.12992

## Defining, collecting, and sharing perishable disaster data

Rachel M. Adams Research Associate, Natural Hazards Center, University of Colorado Boulder, United States, Candace M. Evans Doctoral Candidate, Department of Sociology, and Graduate Research Assistant, Natural Hazards Center, University of Colorado Boulder, United States, and Lori Peek Professor, Department of Sociology, and Director, Natural Hazards Center, University of Colorado Boulder, United States

Researchers across disciplines have long sought to collect 'perishable data' in the context of disasters. Yet, this data type is neither consistently defined nor discussed in specific detail in the literature. To address this gap, this paper defines perishable data and provides guidance on ways to improve both how it is collected and shared. Here, perishable data is conceptualized as highly transient data that may degrade in quality, be irrevocably altered, or be permanently lost if not gathered soon after it is generated. Perishable data may include ephemeral information that must be collected to characterize pre-existing hazardous conditions, near-miss events, actual disasters, and longer-term recovery processes. This data may need to be gathered at multiple points in time across varying geographic scales to accurately characterize exposures, susceptibility to harm, or coping capacity. The paper considers ethical and logistical challenges and discusses opportunities to advance equitable perishable data collection and dissemination.

**Keywords:** data collection, data publication, perishable data, quick response, reconnaissance, research ethics, research coordination

## Introduction

The rapid collection of data immediately prior to, during, and in the direct aftermath of a disaster is a cornerstone of the multidisciplinary field of hazards and disaster studies (Tierney, 2019). Yet, to date, very little has been written about what is often referred to as 'perishable data', including what distinguishes it and what challenges are associated with its collection and dissemination.

Considering this gap in the literature, the goal of this paper is twofold: (i) to clarify the attributes of perishable data; and (ii) to offer recommendations to improve how it is collected and shared. We begin with an overview of how the collection of perishable data has been approached in the hazards and disaster field by both researchers and funders. We then review available literature to synthesize and advance a definition that encompasses the distinctive qualities of perishable data. In our search for available definitions of perishable data, we reviewed relevant peer-reviewed and grey literature from the past 50 years and read more than 300 reports of studies funded through the Natural Hazards

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The current issue and full text archive of this journal is available on Emerald insight at: <https://www.emerald.com/insight/0883-3562.htm>

## Social vulnerability and disasters: development and evaluation of a CONVERGE training module for researchers and practitioners

Social vulnerability and disasters

13

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – Social vulnerability in the context of disaster management refers to the sociodemographic characteristics of a population and the physical, social, economic, and environmental factors that increase their susceptibility to adverse disaster outcomes and capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist, and recover from disaster events. Because disasters do not impact people equally, researchers, public health practitioners, and emergency managers need training to meet the complex needs of vulnerable populations. **Design/methodology/approach** – To address gaps in current education, the CONVERGE initiative, headquartered at the Natural Hazards Center at the University of Colorado Boulder, developed the Social Vulnerability and Disasters Training Module. This free online course draws on decades of research to examine the factors that influence social vulnerability to disasters. Examples of studies and evidence-based programs are included to illustrate common methods for studying social vulnerability and ways that research can guide practice. To evaluate the module, all trainees completed a pre- and post-training questionnaire. **Findings** – Between July 2019 and September 2021, 1,069 people completed the module. Wilcoxon signed rank tests demonstrated a significant perceived increase in self-rated knowledge, skills, and attitudes (RSA). Students, members of historically underrepresented populations, and those new to or less experienced in the field, had the greatest perceived increase.

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## Technical Note



ASCE

## Cultural Competence for Hazards and Disaster Researchers: Framework and Training Module

Haorui Wu, Ph.D.<sup>1</sup>; Lori Peek, Ph.D.<sup>2</sup>; Mason Clay Mathews, Ph.D.<sup>3</sup>; and Nicole Mattson<sup>4</sup>

**Abstract:** Although the need for cultural competence among healthcare service providers and other practitioners has long been recognized, there has been much less focus on this concept in the field of hazards and disaster research. To help fill this gap, this technical note offers a definitional framework for building cultural competence among hazards and disaster researchers and describes a training module that assists with developing such competency. Drawing on the extant literature, this article conceptualizes *cultural competence* in hazards and disaster research as an ongoing process that contributes to an understanding of the cultural attributes of affected individuals, households, communities, and societies that researchers are attempting to characterize. The four-step process presented here helps researchers move from cultural awareness to cultural knowledge to cultural sensitivity, and ultimately, to cultural competence. This ongoing practice requires reflexivity, respect, and humility. The time and effort involved in developing cultural competence can promote ethical research, improve the research experience for participants, enrich the quality of the data collected, and enhance the overall quality of knowledge creation and mobilization. **DOI:** 10.1061/(ASCE)NH.1527-6996.0000536. This work is made available under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

**Author keywords:** Cultural awareness; Cultural knowledge; Cultural sensitivity; Cultural competence; Hazards and disaster researchers; Training and education; Workforce development.

## Introduction: Closing the "Culture Gap" in Hazards and Disaster Research

In the early 1960s, Moore (1964) developed the concept of "disaster subculture" to describe the adjustments that survivors make in response to disasters. Yet, despite its significance in shaping the social world, culture has remained largely overlooked and undertheorized in hazards and disaster research (Oliver-Smith and Hoffman 2002; Burton 2010; Browne 2015). Moreover, culture remains underutilized as an explanatory variable in the field (VanLandingham 2017). This neglect of culture as a factor to be studied in disasters has had severe consequences for research and practice, negating from one-dimensional research designs to stalled recovery efforts (Hoffman 2013; Browne 2015).

When researchers enter communities that are at risk of or recently affected by disasters, it is crucial that they remain aware of their cultural surroundings and recognize that their own cultural worldviews, perspectives, and beliefs shape who they study,

what they study, and how they conduct research (Goodman and West-Oluntz 2009; Kaitch et al. 2020; Wu 2021). Furthermore, dramatic cultural changes—such as movements for racial justice at one end of the spectrum or shifts toward authoritarian and anti-democratic regimes at the other end—can profoundly influence the contexts in which disaster researchers do their work (Cruz et al. 2020; Shuang 2020). Culture matters in hazards and disaster research. But contradictory forces have long complicated the efforts of hazards and disaster researchers to develop cultural competency. On the one hand, perishable disaster data must be collected quickly before it disappears (Warman et al. 2020). On the other hand, the process of understanding a community's culture and subcultures as well as building rapport and trust with residents is usually slow (Alamiz 2017). In addition, disaster researchers, like researchers of other service topics, often engage with people experiencing or recalling some of the worst moments of their lives. Researchers lacking cultural competence who appear suddenly seeking sensitive information and then vanish once they have acquired it may be seen as unsavory disaster voyeurs or as unethical practitioners betraying professional obligations (Galliard and Peek 2019; Tierney 2019).

There is a need for additional guidance to help close the culture gap in hazards and disaster research. As a start, this technical note proposes a framework and describes a training module designed to address the unique challenges facing hazards and disaster researchers working in cross-cultural settings. We argue that building cultural competence—including understanding what it is and how to cultivate it—can ultimately promote more just and ethical research, improve the research experience of participants, enrich the quality of the data collected, and enhance the overall quality of the study.

## Defining Culture and Cultural Competence

Culture has long been of interest to social and behavioral scientists. Early efforts conceptualized culture as a set of customary beliefs,

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Nat. Hazards Rev.

Nat. Hazards Rev., 2022, 23(1), 06021005



International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health



## Article

## Incorporating Mental Health Research into Disaster Risk Reduction: An Online Training Module for the Hazards and Disaster Workforce

Candace M. Evans<sup>1,\*</sup>, Rachel M. Adams<sup>2</sup> and Lori Peek<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Correspondence: candace.evans@colorado.edu; Tel.: +1-720-487-2915

**Abstract:** There is an expansive and growing body of literature that examines the mental health consequences of disasters and large-scale emergencies. There is a need, however, for more explicit incorporation of mental health research into disaster risk reduction practice. Training and education programs can serve as a bridge to connect academic mental health research and the work of disaster risk reduction practitioners. This article describes the development and evaluation of one such intervention, the CONVERGE Disaster Mental Health Training Module, which provides users from diverse academic and professional backgrounds with foundational knowledge on disaster mental health risk factors, mental health outcomes, and psychosocial well-being research. Moreover, the module helps bridge the gap between research and practice by describing methods used to study disaster mental health, showcasing examples of evidence-based programs and tools, and providing recommendations for future research. Since its initial release on 8 October 2019, 317 trainees from 12 countries have completed the Disaster Mental Health Training Module. All trainees completed a pre- and post-training questionnaire regarding their disaster mental health knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Wilcoxon Signed Rank tests demonstrated a significant increase in all three measures after completion of the training module. Students, emerging researchers or practitioners, and trainees with a high school/GED education level experienced the greatest benefit from the module, with Kruskal–Wallis results indicating significant differences in changes in knowledge and skills across the groups. This evaluation research highlights the effectiveness of the Disaster Mental Health Training Module in increasing knowledge, skills, and attitudes among trainees. This article concludes with a discussion of how this training can support workforce development and ultimately contribute to broader disaster risk reduction efforts.

**Keywords:** disasters; disaster risk reduction; disaster mental health; psychosocial well-being; risk factors; training; education; workforce development

## 1. Introduction

Disasters disrupt entire communities and cause widespread destruction, injury, and displacement. Such traumatic experiences can overwhelm regular coping capacity and available resources, contributing to adverse mental health outcomes among adults as well as children [1–3]. Decades of research on the mental health aspects of disaster indicate that the specific nature of acute, as well as chronic, outcomes is shaped by a number of individual- and societal-level characteristics and conditions that exist before, during, and after disaster [3]. For example, people experiencing poverty, residents of developing countries, children, and middle-aged adults are all at increased risk for adverse mental health outcomes in disaster [3,4,5–8]. Developing a skilled workforce that is trained to understand and respond to the root causes and complex consequences of disasters

Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 2021, 18, 1344. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18031344>

<https://www.mdpi.com/journal/ijerph>















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# Annotated Bibliographies

We offer annotated bibliographies that summarize the various readings that informed the development of the CONVERGE Training Modules. If you have a reading to contribute as a shared resource for our broader community, please contact us at [converge@colorado.edu](mailto:converge@colorado.edu).

-  [CONVERGE Cultural Competence Annotated Bibliography](#)
-  [CONVERGE Disaster Mental Health Annotated Bibliography](#)
-  [CONVERGE Emotionally Challenging Research Annotated Bibliography](#)
-  [CONVERGE Ethics and Disaster Research Annotated Bibliography](#)
-  [CONVERGE Gender-Based Violence in Fieldwork Annotated Bibliography](#)
-  [CONVERGE Indigenous Sovereignty in Disasters Annotated Bibliography](#)
-  [CONVERGE Institutional Review Board Annotated Bibliography](#)
-  [CONVERGE Perishable Data Annotated Bibliography](#)
-  [CONVERGE Positionality in Hazards and Disaster Research and Practice Annotated Bibliography](#)
-  [CONVERGE Public Health and Disaster Research Annotated Bibliography](#)
-  [CONVERGE Reciprocity in Research Annotated Bibliography](#)
-  [CONVERGE Social Vulnerability and Disasters Annotated Bibliography](#)

[converge.colorado.edu/resources/training-modules/annotated-bibliographies/](https://converge.colorado.edu/resources/training-modules/annotated-bibliographies/)



CONVERGE TRAINING MODULES  
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

**CONVERGE Ethics and Disaster Research Annotated Bibliography**

This annotated bibliography includes resources focused on the ethical conduct of hazards and disaster research. This bibliography is meant to support those interested in learning more about the ethical conduct of research and to complement the [CONVERGE Broader Ethical Considerations for Hazards and Disaster Researchers Training Module](#). These references were compiled through searching Web of Science, PubMed, and Google Scholar databases. If you identify missing references, please send them to [converge@colorado.edu](mailto:converge@colorado.edu), and we will add them to the list.

**Citation**

Agee, J. (2009). Developing qualitative research questions: A reflective process. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 22(4), 431-447. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390902736512>

**Abstract**

The reflective and interrogative processes required for developing effective qualitative research questions can give shape and direction to a study in ways that are often underestimated. Good research questions do not necessarily produce good research, but poorly conceived or constructed questions will likely create problems that affect all subsequent stages of a study. In qualitative studies, the ongoing process of questioning is an integral part of understanding the unfolding lives and perspectives of others. This article addresses both the development of initial research questions and how the processes of generating and refining questions are critical to the shaping of a qualitative study.

**Citation**

Baker, L. R., & Cormier, L. A. (2014). *Disasters and vulnerable populations: Evidence-based practice for the helping professions*. Springer Publishing Company.


**Abstract**

Vulnerable populations such as children, older adults, and people with disabilities are disproportionately affected by large-scale disasters. This hands-on resource for students and professionals in social work, counseling, nursing, mental health, and other helping professions encompasses the best and most current evidence-based interventions for effectively responding to the needs of vulnerable populations following disasters. Using an all-hazards perspective, the book provides dedicated sections containing population-

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CONVERGE TRAINING MODULES | ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY SERIES

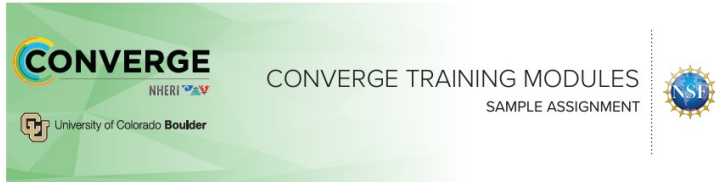
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# Assignment Bank



**Course:** EHC 344: Emergency Preparedness  
**Description:** 3 credits, undergraduate level course on emergency preparedness  
**Instructor:** Adam C. Sutkus, Adjunct Lecturer, State University of New York at Albany, College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security, and Cybersecurity  
**Email:** [asutkus@albany.edu](mailto:asutkus@albany.edu)  
**Session:** Spring 2024  
**Due:** April 7, 2024

## SOCIAL VULNERABILITY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TRAINING MODULE ASSIGNMENT

**Overview:**  
The Natural Hazards Center at the University of Colorado Boulder offers several free online trainings through their National Science Foundation-funded CONVERGE facility. For this assignment, you will complete the [CONVERGE Social Vulnerability and Disasters Training Module](#). While this training is largely focused on this topic as it relates to conducting research, the issues and strategies discussed in this module are relevant to the practice of emergency management as well. You will, undoubtedly, notice many connections to the course material.

The Social Vulnerability module should take you about 45 to 60 minutes to complete. Once you have passed the quiz at the end of the module, you will be able to download a PDF completion certificate. *You must upload this PDF file into the Brightspace learning management system in order to complete the assignment and receive credit.*

### Instructions:

1. Go to the [CONVERGE website](#).
2. Click on 'Resources' and select 'Training Modules'.
3. If you have not already done so for this class, you will need to first sign up and create a free account to access the modules. If you have previously created an account, just click 'Log in'.
  - To create an account: Click 'Register Here'. Follow the instructions on the screen to register, and then log in using your credentials.
4. Select 'Social Vulnerability' training module.
5. At the close of the module, you will have the opportunity to take a 10-question quiz. If you get 8 out of 10 questions correct, you will receive a certificate of completion for the CONVERGE Social Vulnerability and Disasters Training Module. *Upload your certificate of completion to the Brightspace learning management system for this course.*

**Evaluation Criteria:** Students who complete the training module and upload their certificate into the learning management system by **April 7, 2024** will receive **10/10 points** for this assignment.

This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF Award #1941338). Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the NSF.

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The Assignment Bank contains assignments from a range of courses that have integrated the CONVERGE Training Modules into the learning curriculum. We currently offer assignments for:

- Undergraduate courses
- Graduate courses
- Research labs

[converge.colorado.edu/resources/training-modules/assignment-bank/](https://converge.colorado.edu/resources/training-modules/assignment-bank/)

## CONVERGE Training Modules Assignment Bank

This page contains sample assignments from a range of courses that have integrated the CONVERGE Training Modules into the learning curriculum. Please click on the title below for the full text of the assignments. If you have an assignment to contribute as a shared resource for our broader community, please contact us at [converge@colorado.edu](mailto:converge@colorado.edu).



### Undergraduate Course Assignments

- ▢ [Create a Training Module Assignment](#)
- ▢ [Cultural Competence Training Module Assignment](#)
- ▢ [Disaster Health Research Assignment](#)
- ▢ [Pandemic Diaries Project](#)
- ▢ [Reciprocity Training Module Assignment: Exploring Connections Between Yourself and the Living World](#)
- ▢ [Research Methods Training Module Assignment: Exploring the IRB And Research Ethics](#)
- ▢ [Social Dimensions of Natural Hazards Training Module Assignment](#)
- ▢ [Social Inequalities in Health Training Module Assignment](#)
- ▢ [Social Vulnerability Training Module Assignment](#)
- ▢ [Social Vulnerability and Disasters Training Module Assignment](#)
- ▢ [Social Vulnerability and Emergency Preparedness](#)
- ▢ [Social Vulnerability and Engineering Training Module Assignment](#)
- ▢ [Social Vulnerability and Warning Systems Training Module Assignment](#)
- ▢ [Understanding Mental Health as Public Health Assignment](#)

### Graduate Course Assignments

- ▢ [Disaster Mental Health Training Module Assignment](#)
- ▢ [Human and Social Factors of Disaster Training Module and Tabletop Exercise](#)
- ▢ [Research Design and Methods Training Module Assignment](#)

### Undergraduate and Graduate Course Assignments

- ▢ [Disasters and Public Health Assignment](#)
- ▢ [Puerto Rico Resiliency Lab Training Module Assignment](#)

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# Acknowledgements

CONVERGE Training Modules are supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF Award #1841338) with supplemental funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the NSF, CDC, or USGS.





# THANK YOU



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