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Flooding and Mental Health interventions for vulnerable groups

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Issue/Problem: The UK is increasingly vulnerable to flooding due to climate change, which significantly affects mental health. Vulnerable populations are disproportionately impacted, experiencing stress, anxiety, and other severe mental health issues, requiring effective intervention strategies.

Description of the problem: The UK's third Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) highlights flooding as a key challenge, with mental health impacts representing a major health burden. Effective interventions are crucial for these communities.

Results: UKHSA's flooding and mental health guidance is incorporated into flooding and health advice documents for the public and frontline responders. It includes assessment and support strategies

for health and social care staff, emergency responders, and local authorities. It focuses on those most at risk and promotes a phased approach to care-from immediate safety and shelter to long-term psychological support. This strategy accommodates the prolonged nature of mental health recovery, requiring adaptable and sustained interventions.

Lessons: Addressing the mental health impacts of flooding demands a comprehensive, multi-phase strategy that adapts to the evolving needs of affected populations. Early intervention and long-term support are vital to mitigate the extensive psychosocial damage.

Key messages:

- Flooding severely affects mental health, necessitating structured, long-term interventions.
- Flexible support strategies that evolve over time are crucial for effective recovery, ensuring that interventions meet the changing needs of those impacted by flooding.