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Miners' Rescue Story Compels Americans, Offer Lessons



WNED News (2010-10-14)



BUFFALO (WNED) - Concerns have been expressed regarding the mental well-being of the 33 Chilean miners who spent over two months trapped 2200 feet beneath the earth until they were rescued this week.

Officials say the miners will be offered counseling, but observers may be surprised at their collective "resilience."

UB professor of psychology, Michael Poulin, notes how a social structure established by the miners during their entrapment could ease their transition and lessen the prospects of mental health issues.

During a conversation with WNED News, Poulin said the miners' collective trauma may "pale to the amount of resilience they have shown."

Their story grabbed the attention of the world, which reflects humanity's attachment to "redemption stories," says Poulin.

These are the tales of people who face adversity before reaching a happy conclusion and, according to Poulin, Americans appear especially compelled to these stories.

Citing the work of Dan McAdams at Northwestern University, Poulin says such redemption stories reflect the great American narrative which trumpets the spirit of immigrants who overcame obstacles to build a new nation.

Adding another hopeful note, Poulin says the event offers valuable lessons, as well.

Observing the miners' resourcefulness in surviving "can give everybody a lot of faith in their own ability to cope with stressful events."

Click the play button above to hear more from WNED's interview with Michael Poulin.

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