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One of the most important roles of local government is to protect their citizenry from harm, including helping people prepare for and respond to emergencies. Making local government emergency preparedness and response programs accessible to people with disabilities is a critical part of this responsibility. Making these programs accessible is also required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990

US DOJ Civil Rights Division, Disability Rights section

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Federal law mandates that emergency planning, preparedness, response and recovery **must** include appropriate and accurate content that address people with disabilities and access and functional needs.

This is explicitly built into the ADA and expanded upon in the Post-Katrina Act.



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### Course Objectives

- Define access and functional needs and disabilities
- EMS interface with emergency planning, preparedness, response, and recovery
- Identify appropriate resources to assist in planning for, and with, adults and children with disabilities and others with access and functional needs
- Identify the essentiality of inclusive practices
- Understand disabilities as it pertains to emergency planning, preparedness, response, and recovery
- The Americans with Disabilities Act and Emergency Management



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## Disability Awareness

Disability awareness helps “to remove barriers so that responsible, self-sufficient people with disabilities can assume risks, make choices and contribute as they wish... this is a vision in which we all win.”



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## Barriers

NO ONE CONSCIOUSLY ERECTS BARRIERS SO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND ACCESS NEEDS CAN BE EXCLUDED

- Attitudinal
- Communication
- Physical
- Policy
- Programmatic
- Social
- Transportation



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## Accessibility as a fundamental right

**Universal accessibility** was born from a need to eliminate the barriers found in much of our environment. These barriers still impede a large group of people from carrying out simple tasks independently.

This can be defined as “the conditions for easy access that would allow any individual (even those whose mobility, communicative ability, or understanding is reduced) to access and enjoy a place, product, or service, and to do so freely and independently”

Source: David E. Cedeno - InSist



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## Universal Accessibility

This difficult task involves social transformation; a reconfiguration of an environment eagerly seeking change, as well as *new actions and strategies*.

Promoting and working for universal accessibility means **acknowledging** the rights of people affected by the various barriers imposed by the environment, and the advantages that accessibility offers to everyone, regardless of their situation.

Source: David E. Cedeno - InSist



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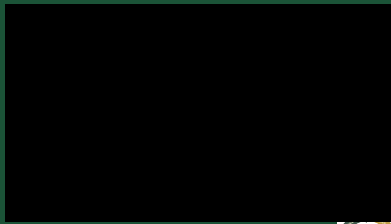
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## David



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## Intensity of Extreme Weather and Disasters

- In 2017-18, there were 27 catastrophic disasters with over \$1B each in damage
- 47M people were impacted by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, 12M were people with disabilities

Source: FEMA, CDC



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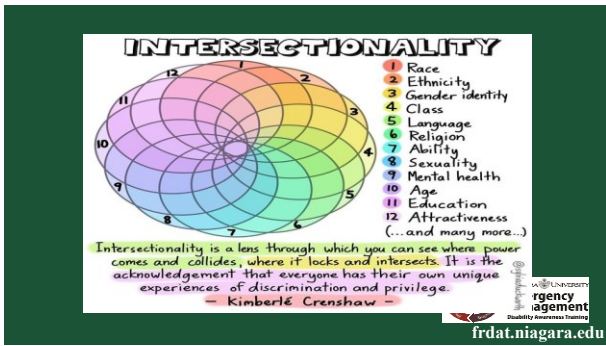
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### "LGBTQ people at higher risk during disasters"

"There are individuals and families who are particularly vulnerable to disasters," the report says. "Age, financial insecurity, pregnancy, and identification with a historically disadvantaged group—including minorities and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ+) community—are all factors that can increase vulnerability."

The report notes that LGBTQ people "have historically been socially repressed and excluded." Research has shown that after a disaster, LGBTQ people are more likely to be socially isolated and face disrespect or harassment in settings such as emergency shelters.

FEMA urges emergency managers to "plan for the whole community, including those with civil rights protections," and to "quickly restore social safety nets after a disaster."

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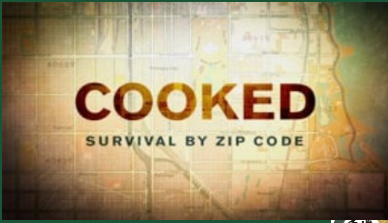
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**Chicago Fire**



**COOKED**  
SURVIVAL BY ZIP CODE



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**US Health and Human Services  
Cultural Competency**

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services; Provide effective, equitable, understandable, and respectful quality care and services that are responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy, and other communication needs

Cultural Competency Program for Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response

Research shows that cultural minority groups suffer disproportionately during every phase of a disaster. This e-learning program will equip you with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to best serve all individuals, regardless of cultural or linguistic background.



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**Disability Definition**

Any physical or mental condition that substantially limits one or more major life activities:

- Caring for oneself
- Performing manual tasks
- Walking
- Seeing
- Hearing
- Speaking
- Breathing
- Learning
- Working
- Sitting
- Standing
- Lifting
- Reaching



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## Disability Numbers

- Intellectual disability: 2-3% of population (7M)
- Cerebral palsy: 1.1 M Americans
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing 28M Americans
- 7.6M Americans with visual impairment
- Stroke: 7M survivors
- 7M+ Americans with dementia
- 3.2M wheelchair users
- 30.6M have difficulty walking
- 733,400 residents in Residential Care facilities
- Autism: 1 in 44 children (5.4M)



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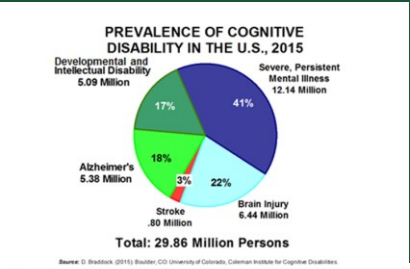
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## PREVALENCE OF COGNITIVE DISABILITY IN THE U.S., 2015



Category	Number of Persons	Percentage
Severe, Persistent Mental Illness	12.14 Million	41%
Brain Injury	6.44 Million	22%
Alzheimer's	5.33 Million	18%
Developmental and Intellectual Disability	5.09 Million	17%
Stroke	.80 Million	3%
Other	0.30 Million	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29.86 Million</b>	<b>Persons</b>

Source: © Bradstock (2015). Source: CDC University of Colorado, Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities.

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## Disability Definition

- Emotional Disability/Mental Health challenges
- Physical Disabilities
- Learning Disabilities
- Cognitive Disabilities
- Sensory Disabilities
- Developmental Disabilities




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### Disability Definition – Expanded

Intent of an expanded definition is to include the broadest group of people who benefit from physical, communication, and program access. This includes people who:

- Have functional needs
- May or may not meet civil rights laws definitions
- Are part of other 60 plus diverse and sometimes conflicting definitions of disability



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### Access & Functional Needs

Actions, services, accommodations, and programmatic, architectural and communication modifications that a covered entity must undertake or provide to individuals with disabilities.



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### Access & Functional Needs

- Individuals who are from diverse cultures, races, and nations of origin
- Individuals who can't read, have limited English proficiency, or are non-English speaking
- Older adults with and without disabilities
- Children with and without disabilities
- Individuals who have economical or transportation needs



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### Access & Functional Needs

- Women who are pregnant
- Individuals who have chronic medical conditions
- Those with pharmacological dependencies
- Social, advocacy, and service organizations
- Individuals with disabilities



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### Emergency Management Planning & Collaboration

- EM/FD identifies sites that house/serve IWDs
- EM/FD makes contact with service provider administration and reviewed their disaster plan
- EM has identified shelters to ensure they are accessible and can serve IWDs
- EM reviews plans annually
- Individuals in the community are identified
- Transportation is accessible
- Communication is effective



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### What might an individual need?

- 1. Durable medical equipment
- 2. Medications
- 3. Adaptive equipment
- 4. Assistive technology
- 5. Transportation
- 6. Other health/medical needs




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### Adaptive Equipment

To Assist people with Activities of Daily Living(ADLs)

ADLs INCLUDE:

- Bathing
- Dining
- Dressing
- Grooming
- Using the Restroom



Using Equipment in the Home

Source: Developmental Disabilities Administration




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### Assistive Technology

Assistive technology (AT) is any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.

AT can be low-tech: communication boards made of cardboard or fuzzy felt.

AT can be high-tech: special-purpose computers.

AT can be hardware: prosthetics, mounting systems, and positioning devices.

AT can be computer hardware: special switches, keyboards, and pointing devices.

AT can be computer software: screen readers and communication programs.

AT can be inclusive or specialized learning materials and curriculum aids.

AT can be specialized curricular software.

AT can be much more—electronic devices, wheelchairs, walkers, braces, educational software, power lifts, pencil holders, eye-gaze and head trackers, and much more

Source: Assistive Technology Industry Association




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### Durable Medical Equipment (DME)

- Can withstand repeated use
- Primarily and customarily used to serve a medical or supportive purpose
- Generally, not useful to a person in the absence of an illness, injury or disabling condition



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### Durable Medical Equipment (DME) /Assistive Technology (AT) /Adaptive Equipment



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## Disabilities and Emergency Preparedness

- Mental Health Disorders
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities
- Low vision/Blind
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Physical Disabilities
- Dementia
- Acquired/Traumatic Brain Injury




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## What is personal preparedness?

- Recognizes they have a disability that will need additional attention and assistance
- Has critical information readily available
- Establishes a support network
- Has personal needs ready to go




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## Network of Supports

Who can you count on? Who counts on you?

- Assess your capabilities
- Teach people *how to* assist you and how your devices operate
- Identify members of your support network
- Meet with your network members
- Some individuals may need assistance in establishing their network
- "Carry with you" supplies at all times




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### Personal Support Network

- List of family, friends, neighbors and others who will check on you and assist, if necessary. NEVER depend on one person
- Be up front about their limitations; family commitments, physical stamina, availability
- Share copies of your evacuation/disaster plan with them
- Make arrangements for them to check on you immediately
- Show them where you keep your supplies
- Teach them how to use adaptive and durable medical equipment
- Advance warnings; determine what they can do
- Practice your plan with them




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### Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities




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### To Go Kits

- Carry-on-you; essential items with you all the time
- Grab-and-go; easy to carry, items you cannot do without, small and light
- Home; water, food, first aid, clothing, tools, bedding, emergency supplies and items specific to your disability
- Bedside; if unable to get to other parts of the home
- Car; if the need arises to evacuate the area and you are not home




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### Backpack Essentials



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### Technology Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities

[Pass It On Center](#)

[United States Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication](#)

[National Assistive Technology Act Technical Assistance and Training \(AT3\) Center](#)

[Assistive Technology Partnership](#)

[NYS Justice Center TRAUD Program](#)

[Regional Center for Independent Living](#)



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### Ready Apps

- Emergency alerts and notifications
- Your family emergency plan
- Emergency services and shelters
- Evacuation maps and routes
- Valuable preparedness info

[The Ready Niagara App](#)

[The Erie County NY ReadyErie App](#)



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## Disaster Readiness Planner

Program from the Inclusive Preparedness Center whereby you work on a plan *with* the individual(s) with a disability.



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## Four Elements of Evacuation Information

- Notification (What is an Emergency?)
- Way Finding (Where is the Way Out?)
- Use of the Way (Can I get out by myself, or do I need help?)
  - Self
  - Self with device
  - Self with assistance
- Assistance (What kind of assistance might I need?)



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## MARC Personal Preparedness Inventory

- Communications; getting info about hazards and communicating with others
- Equipment; DME and assistive devices
- Food and Supplies; special dietary needs and preference, important supplies not in your kit
- Lodging; alternate places to stay, assistance needs in a shelter
- Medications; prescription and over-the-counter meds



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### Personal Preparedness Inventory - continued

- Medical Treatments; regular medical treatment/procedures received
- People; family, friends, physicians, care assistants, translators
- Pets; pet supplies and possible care providers
- Service Animals; supplies, vet contact info
- Transportation; alternate providers



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### 211

- Access for information on local health and human services
- Food, shelter, clothing, disabilities, pregnancy, employment, substance abuse, mental health
- Confidential – Multi-Lingual – Local Services
- Dial 211 or 888-696-9211
- <https://211nys.org/>



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### Access and Functional Needs Registry

Acquisition of necessary information on local population

Used for:

- Notification of evacuation
- Prioritization of evacuation
- Disability-specific needs awareness
- Pre-assigned transportation and shelters
- Pre-allocated scarce resources
- Pre-admission to hospitals

Cons: lengthy data gathering process, constant updating, possible legal issues, never fully complete, sense of "false" hope



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### "My experience tells me if we wait and plan for people with disabilities after we write the basic plan, we fail."



Craig Fugate  
 FEMA Administrator  
 Washington, DC August 4, 2009 –  
 testifying before the Senate Ad hoc  
 committee on Disaster Recovery



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### Litigation re: planning for People with Disabilities and Access and Functional Needs

Issues across lawsuits

- Building Evacuation
- Accessible Transportation
- Shelters and Evacuation Centers
- Power Outages
- Communications
- Recovery



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### Brooklyn Center for Independence vs Bloomberg

1. The failure of the evacuation plans to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities with respect to high-rise evacuation and accessible transportation
2. The failure of the shelter plans to require that the shelter system be sufficiently accessible
3. The failure of NYC to have a plan for ensuring that people with disabilities are able to access the services provided by the City after an emergency
4. The failure of plans to provide for accessible communications
5. The failure of NYC's outreach and education program to provide PWDs the same opportunity as others to develop a personal emergency plan
6. NYC's lack of sufficient plans to provide PWDs information about the existence and location of accessible services in an emergency



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### NYC Lawsuit

“Unfortunately, despite the obvious importance of accounting for the unique needs of individuals with disabilities in planning emergencies, New York City’s emergency plans, like many state and local emergency plans throughout the nation, fail to do so.”



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### DOJ Guidance to State/Local Governments

The Americans with Disabilities Act and other laws apply in:

- Preparation
- Notification
- Evacuation and transportation
- Sheltering
- First aid and medical services
- Temporary lodging and housing
- Transition back to the community
- Clean up
- Other emergency and disaster-related programs, services, and activities

No State or local government, or its contractors, in providing services may, by law, policy, or contract, provide services below those standards without violating federal law.



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## Universal Design

Differs from *accessible* design

Adapt a "standard" environment until it becomes "usable by most"

UD specifically seeks to create environments which most easily provide the maximum degree of ease [and enjoyment] of use to the widest possible variety of potential users.



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"There are small projects, and there are large ones, and each one will bring the Town of Amherst closer to being fully accessible for all residents and visitors.

During its Feb. 2 meeting, the Town Board approved Board Member Shelly Schratz's resolution that calls for \$60,144 of town funds to be used to address issues on the handicapped accessibility list. The list has been reviewed by the Amherst Committee on Disabilities, Chairman Dave Whalen said. Since the committee inception, this list has been its top priority.

Whalen said the committee will continue to review town buildings and facilities for additional deficiencies.

"We are going to continue until all buildings are accessible," he said, adding that one of the committee's purposes is to have a strategic plan with a set of goals and objectives that the town can then build from.



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## Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

As a municipal employee you are covered under Title II of the ADA and you have responsibilities you must understand and adhere to.

Failure to do so will expose your entire municipality to complaints and possible citations under the Department of Justice (DOJ).

ADA Center # 1-800-949-4232



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## Project Civic Access

Fact Sheet

Cities and Counties (and towns and villages): Solving Common ADA Problems

Toolkit for State and Local Governments

[Project Civic Access](#)



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Whole Community

People with Disabilities

People with Access & Functional Needs



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## Collaborative Partnerships



- In order to achieve that, we need to have a collaboration



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## Whole Community Includes

- Individuals and families, including those with access and functional needs
- Businesses
- Faith-based and community organizations
- Nonprofit groups
- Schools and academia
- Media outlets
- All levels of government, including state, local, tribal, territorial, and federal partners

The phrase "whole community" appears a lot in preparedness materials, as it is one of the guiding principles. It means two things:

- Involving people in the development of national preparedness documents.
- Ensuring their roles and responsibilities are reflected in the content of the materials




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## Whole Community Planning

- Looks beyond traditional government-centric approach to emergency planning.
- Aims to dispel old thinking that government can solve challenges on its own.
- Engages and leverages community partner resources.
- Expands government reach.




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## Checklist for Integrating IWDs and Access and Functional Needs

- ✓ Planning: community partners, Disability Integration Advisor/AFN Tech Specialist
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Sheltering
- ✓ Evacuation, transportation
- ✓ Recovery
- ✓ Training, exercises, personal preparedness




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### Inclusive Planning

- Individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs are at the table
- Emergency planning councils/committees have representation
- Plans are all-inclusive; no annexes, no holes



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### Active Participation

- All accessibility reviews are conducted WITH individuals; shelter, recovery center, websites, etc
- Emergency Operation Centers (EOC) have a person(s) that can address matters and questions
- Disability advocacy organizations are assigned to address outreach, provide resources and information
- Exercises always include individuals
- Equipment and Assistive technology have the approval of individuals



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### Emergency Planning Topics

- Effective Communication; modes, notification
- Sheltering; accessibility, in-place
- Transportation
- Personal Care Assistance
- Media



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### CMIST

- Communication
- Maintaining Health
- Independence
- Safety, Support, self-determination
- Transportation



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### Communication

Individuals who use sign language, have limited English proficiency (LEP), or have limited ability to speak, see, hear, or understand

People with communication needs may have limited ability to hear announcements, see signs, understand messages, or verbalize concerns



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### Maintaining Health

Individuals who require specific medications, supplies, services, durable medical equipment, electricity for life-maintaining equipment, breastfeeding, infant and childcare, nutrition, etc.

Early identification and planning for access and functional needs can help to reduce the negative impacts of a disaster on individuals' health, including the following;

- Managing chronic health conditions
- Minimizing preventable medical conditions
- Avoiding worsening health status



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### Independence

Individuals who function independently with assistance from mobility devices or assistive technology, vision and communication aids, service animals, etc.

Independence is the outcome of ensuring that a person's access and functional needs are addressed as long as they are not separated from their devices, assistive technology, service animals, etc.



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### Safety, Support, self-determination

Some individuals may become separated from their caregivers and need additional care assistance, experience higher levels of distress and need support for anxiety, psychological, or behavioral health needs, OR require trauma-informed approach or support for personal safety.

Early identification and planning for access and functional needs can help reduce the negative impacts of a disaster on a person's well-being. Some will require care assistance, find difficulty in coping, have difficulty understanding or remembering.



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### Transportation

Individuals lack access to personal transportation or are unable to drive due to decreased or impaired mobility that may come with age and/or disability, temporary conditions, injury or legal restriction.

Disaster can significantly reduce transportation options, inhibiting individuals from accessing services, staying connected, seeking safe shelter, etc. Disaster planning requires coordination with mass transit and accessible transportation providers.



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**Niagara University  
Disability Awareness Training**

- Website: [frdat.niagara.edu](http://frdat.niagara.edu) – links, community resources, training info
- COVID-19 Resource section/newsletters
- Office phone: 716-286-7355
- One stop disability information center
- Also offer law enforcement, firefighter, emergency medical services, and 9-1-1 telecommunicators training

[frdat.niagara.edu](http://frdat.niagara.edu)

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MAKE A CAREER OF HUMANITY. COMMIT YOURSELF TO THE NOBLE  
STRUGGLE FOR EQUAL RIGHTS. YOU WILL MAKE A GREATER  
PERSON OF YOURSELF, A GREATER NATION OF YOUR  
COUNTRY, AND A FINER WORLD TO LIVE IN.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, 1859

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