Emergency Management
Disability Awareness Training

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Recovery · Preparedness · Response · Planning

EMS, Emergency Response and Persons with
Disabilities and Access and Functional Needs
Finger Lakes Regional Training Center
December 7, 2021

INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS A THREAT TO JUSTICE EVERYWHERE. WE ARE
CAUGHT IN AN INESCAPABLE NETWORK OF MUTUALITY, TIED IN
A SINGLE GARMENT OF DESTINY. WHATEVER AFFECTS
ONE DIRECTLY, AFFECTS ALL INDIRECTLY.

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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Richard DeVylder – "Nobody's coming"

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Self-Preservation

- Cognitive ability to do so
- Physical limitations that challenge that
- Ignore or actually put themselves in harm's way

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The Right to be Rescued

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Benilda Caixeta 7/31/54–8/29/05

Unable to evacuate before or during hurricane Katrina, Benilda told her friend the water was rushing into her home just before her phone went dead. Her body and her wheelchair were found floating inside her home several days later.

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The Right to be Rescued – Adrien Weibgen

Few people would argue directly that PWDs deserve less assistance during times of disaster. But the systemic exclusion of PWDs from disaster plans, coupled with arguments that it may be impossible to meet the needs of all people during times of disaster, suggests a widespread, if tacit, endorsement of the notion that it is fine to value lives differently when push comes to shove. Due to widespread prejudice, "[h]istorically, even those with moderately limiting disabilities have been viewed with pity and discomfort rather than as fully functioning human beings worth 'saving.'"[21]

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The Right to be Rescued - continued

Such beliefs have already influenced a variety of emergency policies and raised the death tolls of PWDs during disastrous events.[22] During Hurricane Katrina, for instance, "[t]he infirm elderly, poor, and disabled were the most likely to die."[23] Despite the known vulnerabilities of PWDs and other marginalized groups, one study found that fewer than a quarter of the emergency operation plans of numerous county and city governments across the United States address in depth the needs of the most vulnerable population groups

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Currently, people with disabilities are 2-4 times more likely to be critically or fatally injured in a disaster. Despite this, effective response efforts and support focused on people with disabilities, older adults and others who also have access and functional needs are lacking

Source: Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies

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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."

Source: Canadian Association of Independent Living Centre **www.cailc.ca**

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Inclusion

A term used by people with disabilities and other disability rights advocates. All people should freely, openly, and without pity accommodate any person with a disability without restrictions or limitations of any kind.

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Cultural Awareness & Diversity

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Culture
- Gender
- Generational
- Sexual Orientation
- Disability
- Intersectionality

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Racism – The King Center

Racism – prejudice, apartheid, ethnic conflict, anti-Semitism, sexism, colonialism, homophobia, ageism, discrimination against disabled groups, stereotypes…

"Racism is a philosophy based on a contempt for life. It is the arrogant assertion that one race is the center of value and object of devotion, before which other races must kneel in submission. It is the absurd dogma that one race is responsible for all the progress of history and alone can assure the progress of the future.

Racism is total estrangement. It separates not only bodies, but minds and spirits. Inevitably it descends to inflicting spiritual and physical homicide upon the out-group."

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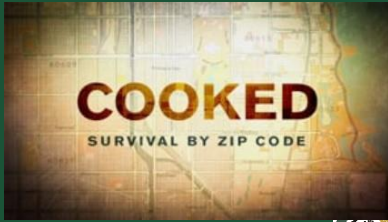
"LGBTQ people at higher risk during disasters"

"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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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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Emergency Preparedness

Main objectives:

1. The needs of people with disabilities are adequately addressed PRIOR to an emergency
2. Ensure that people with disabilities are INCLUDED in the planning process
3. Identifying WHO you are responding to and where they are located

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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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Working With People With Disabilities

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Common Miscues

- Separating service animals from their owners
- Not allowing evacuation chairs in hallways
- Not involving the disability community in the planning process
- Whether individuals with disabilities should evacuate immediately or wait for first/emergency responders
- Not recognizing non-obvious/invisible disabilities

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What might an individual need?

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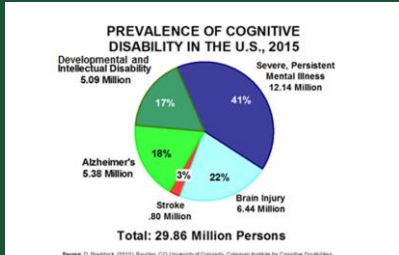5. Transportation
6. Other health/medical needs

Emergency Prepared
Checklist

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Durable Medical Equipment/Assistive Technology/Adaptive Equipment

Transfer Board

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Disability Numbers

- Intellectual disability: 2-3% of population (7M)
- Cerebral palsy: 1.1 M Americans
- 5.3M with Traumatic Brain Injury
- 7.6M Americans with visual impairment
- 28M with hearing loss
- 5.7M with Alzheimer's disease
- Stroke: 7M survivors
- 3.2M wheelchair users
- 30.6M have difficulty walking
- Autism: 1 in 59 children

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

Developmental and Intellectual Disability 5.09 Million — 17%

Severe, Persistent Mental Illness 12.14 Million — 41%

Alzheimer's 5.38 Million — 18%

Stroke .80 Million — 3%

Brain Injury 6.44 Million — 22%

Total: 29.86 Million Persons

Source: D. Braddock (2015) Boulder, CO: University of Colorado, Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities

Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

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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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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 Definition

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

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Dispelling the Myths of Cerebral Palsy

I have Cerebral Palsy

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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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First Responder Guide

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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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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

NYS TRAID

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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 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.

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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Amherst Bee

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Town Board approves $60,000 to improve handicapped accessibility

"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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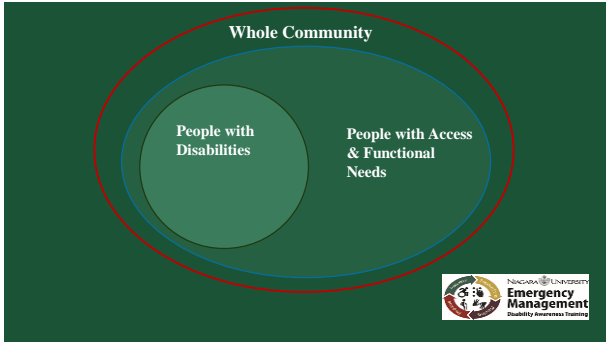**frdat.niagara.edu**

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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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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COVID-19 Revelations

No one was prepared for this

Again, disability lives lost rank at the top

Congregate Care not considered in planning

Personal Protective Equipment needs caught everyone off guard

Shelter in Place took on a new meaning

Food supplies, delivery and assistance now an agenda item in EM

Medical services/Hospitals

Developmental Disability Services interruptions, challenges

Plan of Action – People with Disabilities

Recovery is **in** the planning and preparedness phases

Address PPE needs on-going. Stock, don't hoard. Educate on use

Identify systems of support, especially those living independently

Essential needs identified; 1:1 therapies, Behavioral supports, advocates, medical needs

Transportation aligned with needs

Information sharing; DD service providers-Family members/other

Testing sites/Points of Distribution; accessible, accommodating

START a Core Advisory Group

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- Website: 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

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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, 1959

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