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MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
Disaster Communications Guidebook



Preparedness & Public Education

*Promoting Emotional Well-Being
When Preparing for Disasters*

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To obtain more information or to request an accommodation or alternate format, please contact:

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NOTES

PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES

HAVE YOU PUT ICE IN YOUR MOBILE PHONE?

Eight out of 10 people do not carry any notification information for the next-of-kin in the event of an emergency. Yet 80% carry a mobile phone, most of whom have it on them all the time. There is no simpler way of letting the authorities or medical care providers know who to contact in an emergency than by using ICE.

ICE stands for “In Case of Emergency” and it allows ambulance crews and police officers to quickly contact a nominated person who can be informed of an emergency. To do this:

- o Type the acronym ICE followed by a contact name (for example, ICE - mom or ICE - David) into the address book of your mobile phone
- o Save their phone number
- o Tell your ICE contact that you have designated them

Putting ICE (In Case of Emergency) along with a name and telephone number will enable the emergency services to contact your family in the event of an emergency.

Follow these hints to get the best out of ICE:

- o Check with the person whose name and number are designated to make sure they agree to be your ICE partner
- o Give a list to your ICE partner of people to contact on your behalf in an emergency - including your place of work – and update it as needed
- o Use numbers for ICE listings that are easy to contact, for example a home number could be useless in an emergency if the person works full time
- o Tell your ICE partner about any medical conditions that could affect your emergency treatment - for example allergies or current medication
- o Make sure if you are under 18, your ICE partner is a parent or guardian authorized to make decisions on your behalf

For more information, go to:

<http://www.icecontact.com/index.html>

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDEBOOK

INTRODUCTION

Since September 11, 2001, much emphasis has been placed on the importance of preparedness for all types of disasters and terrorism. The message was driven home again when Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast in August 2005, leading to the largest evacuation in U.S. history. For both events, the physical damage was historic and the emotional aftermath even greater. Research on these events and others has shown us that most people are resilient and will not experience depression or long-term mental health consequences.

- o Levels of distress are elevated for people affected by any disaster event.
- o Emotional preparedness can reduce the psychological effects of disasters and help individuals, families and communities “weather the storm.”
- o People who have had traumas earlier in their lives or with pre-existing mental health conditions may face greater risk.

PUPROSE

This guide provides preparedness strategies that improve resilience and foster greater coping skills in a disaster event. Incorporating this information into disaster readiness campaigns and programs will help minimize fear and improve emotional well-being in the face of terrorism or catastrophic disasters. The guide’s content can serve as a stand-alone component for developing mental health resilience but is best used by integrating these emotional-preparedness tips as part of a comprehensive approach to disaster readiness. The guide is organized by type of disaster and by population to address unique preparedness strategies for different events and audiences.

PARTNERS IN PREPAREDNESS

The content of this guide is meant to provide a tool for preparedness partners such as:

- o State and local public health, public mental health and emergency management officials;
- o State and local public health, public mental health and emergency management public information officers, public education, and web developers;
- o Voluntary organizations active in disasters;
- o Schools and libraries; and
- o Churches and other community organizations.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDEBOOK

ORGANIZATION OF GUIDE

It is best to prepare for all types of disasters that might affect us. We know our risks for different events vary based upon on the community in which we live. Experts generally recommend that we invest our preparedness efforts in common events that could impact our community as well as catastrophic disasters that affect our lives more. The core preparedness strategies benefit most people for any event, but there are some unique aspects to specific events that are important to mention. The core messages are followed by event-specific messages in alphabetical order as listed below.

- o Agroterrorism
- o Bioterrorism
- o Chemical
- o Incendiary/Explosives
- o Radiological
- o Terrorism

In order to promote effective preparation for an event, it may be important to tailor preparedness messages and guidance to the specific challenges and needs of unique audiences. These audiences may face additional emotional risk due to their role in response efforts or characteristics that require additional planning and accommodations during response efforts. To support comprehensive preparedness for diverse populations and to expand on the core messages that benefit all community members, mental health preparedness messages have been tailored to the needs of the following target audiences:

- o Culturally diverse groups
- o Emergency or first responders
- o Healthcare workers
- o Parents/caregivers of children
- o Seniors and persons with disabilities.

Finally, the guide also provides websites as resources for updated information to address emergency events and target audiences as well as suggested items for emergency kits that address emotional well-being.

PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES

- Spiritual supports and possessions such as:
 - o The Bible, Koran, or other religious writings;
 - o Prayer cards or rosary beads;
 - o Small religious symbols such as figurines, jewelry, or other items with religious significance;
 - o Yoga meditations; and
 - o Inspirational writings.
- A waterproof, sealable plastic bag with current family photos, identification cards and any identifying characteristics or information such as nicknames, medical conditions, and any family “code words” to help a child identify a parent-approved helper.
- “Stress” toys such as squeezable balls, puzzles or games that involve repetitive motion, or other items to help release nervous energy and reduce tension.
- Over the counter pain relievers for headaches or other needs.
- Fact sheets about stress management, relaxation, how to talk to children about disasters and parenting under stress downloaded from resource websites appropriate to individual and family circumstances.
- Pet supplies for recreation and comfort such as:
 - o Small toys;
 - o Brush or grooming supplies;
 - o Pet bed; and
 - o Pet treats.
- Name, identifying information, and special instructions for our pets should we not be able to care for them due to separation during an event.

PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES

- o Promote access to radio (battery-operated), television and internet to provide connection and information.
- o Use headphones for the battery-operated radio or TV to allow one person to monitor the incident so children and others are not frightened by the coverage of the incident.
- o Provide alternatives to continuous TV coverage of the disaster event such as:
 - ✓ Board or card games
 - ✓ Books or storytelling
 - ✓ Exercise
 - ✓ Hobbies such as knitting or cross stitch
 - ✓ Teaching your pet new tricks
 - ✓ Homework or schoolwork that the family can get involved with such as tutoring, projects, or review activities.
- Items to promote sleep, such as:
 - o Comfortable bedding, bean bag chairs, and pillows.
 - o Soothing music or nature sounds.
 - o Books for bedtime stories to children.
- Encourage expressions of feelings.
 - o Artwork
 - o Prayer
 - o Journaling
 - o Storytelling
 - o Role Playing
 - o Use a “feelings” poster to help children identify and express feelings
 - o Worry dolls
- Plan for activities that promote a sense of confidence and contribution.
 - o If phone service is available and safe, call family/neighbors.
 - o If safe to do so, share some of your supplies with neighbors who did not plan as well.
 - o Read over the phone to someone who has sight impairment.
 - o Family prayers or meditations for those injured or ill in the disaster.
 - o Thank you notes as appropriate.

EMOTIONAL PREPAREDNESS MESSAGES

PRE-EVENT MESSAGES

Communication during the pre-event phase should promote awareness, preparedness, and access to helpful information.

3 KEY Messages:

Coping and Confidence, Communication, Connection and Self-Reliance

For more information, visit the Department of Mental Health (DMH) website at www.dmh.mo.gov or call toll-free 1-800/364-9687

ALL AUDIENCES, ALL EVENTS

COPING AND CONFIDENCE

- Preparedness is the foundation for resilience. Families and communities built upon natural supports and strengths will cope and recover more quickly and with better results. Resilience is illustrated by strong individuals, families and communities who:
 - o Communicate their needs and emotions.
 - o Share common interests and activities that are healthy and meaningful.
 - o Are concerned about the safety and well-being of family, friends, neighbors and community.
 - o Have strong ties to natural supports such as their faith community, workplace, civic or other interest groups.
 - o Are confident in their coping skills.
- Being prepared and confident to deal with any disaster or critical event reduces stress and enhances coping.
 - o As we observe news events of disasters throughout the U.S. and around the world, or watch action movies depicting terrorist threats or natural disasters, it is helpful if we think how we would respond to such an event in our own communities. Thinking through such events in advance may help us cope better if we experience a disaster in our lives.
 - o Planning for unusual events makes us better prepared for common events like snowstorms and power outages.
 - o We can also use this information to create and improve personal/family/ community disaster plans.

EMOTIONAL PREPAREDNESS MESSAGES

- Events may occur requiring us to “shelter-in-place” or to evacuate to a safer location.
 - Be prepared with emergency supplies for either scenario. Some items are important for survival while others may assist in our emotional recovery. *(A list of items that promote calm, comfort, and support are listed on page 47)*
 - Having access (as realistic) to a phone, e-mail or text messaging helps us to stay informed and keep in touch with loved ones; such connections can reduce stress.
- Gathering essential items in advance and building our coping skills will offer peace of mind if disaster strikes our community. Building an emergency kit is practical.
 - Kits should address basic and special needs in an emergency. *(Suggested contents are listed on numerous websites; see Website Resources on page 45.)*
 - Organize medical supplies and information. The Centers for Disease Control has created a web page called “Keep It With You” for this purpose. You may find it at: <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/katrina/kiwy.asp>
 - Consider keepsakes, valuables and mementos. Safeguard these items in safety deposit boxes or other secure site as appropriate. Identify small sentimental items such as photos or journals to take with us.
- Stay informed. Know work, school and community disaster plans and processes.
 - Invite local law enforcement and fire department representatives to provide tips & training on preparedness, planning and drills.
 - Participate in and take drills seriously. Offer feedback on improvements to those in charge and use any lessons learned for our own preparedness efforts.
- It is important we plan for getting medical assistance if we are injured or ill. Remember, hospitals closest to an event may be overwhelmed. Identify alternate hospital(s) in advance of an event and know various routes to get to each one.
- To protect ourselves and our families, we should know how to turn off HVAC, gas, water and electricity to our homes.

PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES

EMERGENCY KITS THAT PROMOTE EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Since responders may not be able to reach us for a period of time, planning for self-reliance during an emergency provides a foundation for community preparedness.

Supply lists for emergency kits typically focus on important safety and survival contents. However, it is also important to consider emotional well-being during stressful activities such as sheltering in place or evacuation. Few of the many lists available on the web address emergency kits to promote calm, reduce stress, and nurture human relationships. The following list is designed to help us cope better during difficult times.

Recognizing the limits of storage and always recognizing that physical safety must come first, consider adding the following items to emergency kits:

- Comfort items such as family pictures, favorite possessions, family bible or rosary, pacifiers or “blankies” for small children.
- Recreational items such as books, games, puzzles, and art supplies.
- Paper and writing instruments for personal journals of feelings, events, important information, and communications.
- Telephone or other communication tools to verify family safety and location for extended family and family in travel status or away from home during an event.
- Favorite foods and “treats” to supplement the supply of shelf stable food.
- Responders may not be able to reach us for a period of time. To assist with passage of time and ease boredom, use strategies to give everyone things to anticipate or look forward to such as:
 - Pack small gift-wrapped, age-appropriate toys and treats for kids to open at designated intervals.
 - Plan your family’s next vacation or outing.
 - Plan an upcoming birthday party.

PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES	
TOPIC (Alphabetical Order)	WEBSITES
FIRST RESPONDERS/ CRISIS RESPONDERS (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coping Information www.bt.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/ www.centerforthestudyoftraumaticstress.org/factsheets.shtml#disaster
GENERAL PREPAREDNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) Ready in 3 www.dhss.mo.gov/ready_in_3 The American Red Cross www.redcross.org Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) www.fema.gov Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) www.dmh.mo.gov Missouri State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) www.sema.dps.mo.gov/semapage.htm The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) www.ready.gov
INCENDIARY/ EXPLOSIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) www.fema.gov The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) www.ready.gov
MEDICAL INFORMATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Keep It With You forms. www.by.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricane/katrina/kiwy.asp
RADIOLOGICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) www.fema.gov The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) www.ready.gov
TERRORISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) www.fema.gov The Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) www.samhsa.gov The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) www.ready.gov

EMOTIONAL PREPAREDNESS MESSAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for animals to ensure their safety and survival. None of us wants to face the stress of abandoning or losing our pets because we did not plan for their evacuation and care. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public shelters may not allow pets so prepare emergency supplies for pets and contingency placement in advance. Have available a pet carrier or leash and harness to transport distressed dogs and cats. Livestock require alternate care plans as well. Talk to a veterinarian or local animal shelter about emergency options that may be available locally. As practical, we should store a change of clothing/shoes, medications for one week, and other identified items at our office and/or in the trunk of our car. We should determine a back-up transportation plan in case we are stranded at work, while shopping or in another community place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the local public transportation system, including emergency procedures and routes. Identify family, friends and coworkers living in or near our neighborhoods who can assist us in traveling to/from emergency shelters/school/work and vice versa. Balance preparedness efforts. If concern about disasters interferes with daily routines, important relationships, or makes us fearful, we may need to talk to someone to put things in perspective.
<p>COMMUNICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying reliable information before a crisis and accessing these resources during an event is important. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress and urgency during an event reduce the time to make decisions. The more informed choices we can make before an emergency occurs, the better we can take care of ourselves. Identify the most reliable local and national media sources of emergency information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preset AM, FM and satellite radio stations. Download and bookmark information from key websites. Know how to access emergency information through our cell phones, or electronic handheld devices.

EMOTIONAL PREPAREDNESS MESSAGES

- Communication plans help us cope in emergencies because we know those we love are safe.
 - Because local communication systems are often overloaded or damaged during an event, it may be easier to call out-of-state than across town.
 - Mobile phone text messaging may continue to work while cellular towers are down.
 - Identify a relative or friend who lives out-of-state to serve as our family’s key contact.
 - Instruct family members to check in with our out-of-state key contact for a family census and updates on the emergency event. This is especially important if our family is separated by the event.
 - First responders suggest having more than one entry titled ICE (In Case of Emergency) (see page 50) in our cell phones so that emergency personnel can contact this designated person.

CONNECTION & SELF-RELIANCE

- Family and support systems are important in emergencies:
 - Be aware of persons with disabilities, seniors and other special populations in the community who might need our assistance as neighbors due to the lack of nearby family.
 - Encourage leaders in our faith community to be involved in preparedness efforts.
- Healthy routines help us cope in our everyday lives and are especially helpful in emergency situations.
- Personal strength relies on mind, body and spirit. Finding a healthy balance helps us to withstand difficult times.
- Contributing activities are important to our sense of connectedness and community. Find ways to help prepare our communities to survive and prosper in the face of disaster.
 - Affiliate as a volunteer with organizations active in a disaster and get trained.
 - Support organizations active in disasters between disasters so they are ready when needed.

PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES

TOPIC (Alphabetical Order)	WEBSITES
ELDERLY AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services www.dhss.mo.gov • American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) www.aarp.org • American Foundation for the Blind www.afb.org • Easter Seals (s.a.f.e.t.y First program) www.easter-seals.org • Missouri Agrability https://fsb.missouri.edu/agrability/new/ The site describes extension services and resources available to help persons with disabilities remain in agriculture • National Organization for the Deaf www.nad.org • National Organization on Disability www.nod.org/emergency
EMERGENCY KIT CONTENTS FOR PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) Ready in 3 www.dhss.mo.gov/ready_in_3 • The American Redcross www.redcross.org. • The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) www.ready.gov
FIRST RESPONDERS/ CRISIS RESPONDERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological First Aid: A Guide for Emergency and Disaster Response Workers http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/media/ken/pdf/katrina/Psychological.pdf • A Guide to Managing Stress in Crisis Response Professions. http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/SMA-4113/default.asp • Tips for First Responders: Possible Alcohol and Substance Abuse Indicators http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/disasterrelief/pubs/first.asp

PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES	
TOPIC (Alphabetical Order)	WEBSITES
BIOEVENTS (Continued)	www.centerforthestudyoftraumaticstress.org/factsheets.shtml#disaster
CHEMICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) www.bt.cdc.gov Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) www.fema.gov The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) www.ready.gov The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) http://yosemite.epa.gov/oswer/ceppoweb.nsf/content/index.html
CHILDREN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The American Red Cross www.redcross.org Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)—FEMA for Kids www.fema.gov/kids National Child Traumatic Stress Network www.nctsnetwork.org The Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Tips for talking about traumatic events www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/cmhs/TraumaticEvents/tips.asp
COMMUNICATION PLANS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The American Red Cross www.redcross.org. The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) www.ready.gov
DISASTER PLANS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) Ready in 3 www.dhss.mo.gov/Ready_in_3/ The American Red Cross www.redcross.org. The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) www.ready.gov

EMOTIONAL PREPAREDNESS MESSAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice sheltering-in-place with your pets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animals may feel stressed when their routines are disrupted. Barking dogs or cats that won't eat can be stressful for caregivers. Identify comfort items and rituals that will reduce stress for both pets and owners. Keep identifying information on the pet, if the pet does not have a microchip, during sheltering-in-place or evacuation in case separated during an event.

EVENT-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

PRE-EVENT MESSAGES

Communication during the pre-event phase should promote awareness, preparedness, and access to helpful information.

3 KEY Messages:

Coping and Confidence, Communication, Connection and Self-Reliance

AGROTERRORISM

COPING & CONFIDENCE

- Commit to being prepared. Because we are not familiar with agricultural or animal health emergencies in the U.S., we need to be prepared to quickly follow instructions given by authorities regarding:
 - o Food consumption and preparation, including monitoring of consumption by our children;
 - o Travel within areas affected by the emergency; and
 - o Economic and lifestyle changes due to the type of emergency.
- Preparedness efforts for agroterrorism may also prepare us for a response to the avian flu.
- If living in a rural or agricultural area, ask about local plans for agricultural emergencies. Become familiar with:
 - o Travel restrictions
 - o Reporting requirements
 - o Cleaning clothes and transportation vehicles to prevent the spread of contamination.
 - o Quarantine measures.
- In extended periods of travel restriction, having more than three days worth of food may be important. Also have access to things that bring pleasure to us such as favorite snacks, games and other treats. Such items may ease our tension and stress.
- Discuss strategies with our family regarding recalls on food. Educate them on food choices and consumption when we are not available to guide the choices.

PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES

TOPIC (Alphabetical Order)

WEBSITES

AGROTERRORISM

SAFETY AND PREPAREDNESS

- www.foodsafety.gov Gateway to government food safety resources.
- Food and Drug Administration (FDA). www.fda.gov
- Missouri Department of Agriculture www.mda.mo.gov
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) www.usda.gov

COPING INFORMATION

- AgriWellness, Inc www.agriwellness.org
- University of Missouri Cooperative Extension <http://extension.missouri.edu/main/family/index.shtml>
An index of articles that address strong farm families and programs to help farm families cope.
- Missouri Agrability <https://fsb.missouri.edu/agrability/new/>
The site describes extension services and resources available to help persons with disabilities.

ANIMALS AND PETS

- The American Red Cross www.redcross.org
- The Humane Society of the United States. www.hsus.org

BIOEVENTS

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.bt.cdc.gov
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) www.fema.gov
- The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) www.ready.gov
- Coping Information www.bt.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/

PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES

WEBSITES BY TOPIC

(All Websites Last Accessed May, 2006)

The following listing has been provided as a resource for helping the public be more prepared for disaster events being confident in our own readiness promotes resilience. Links to coping information that addresses mental health and well-being are identified. Please note that:

- Any opinions or positions expressed in materials included in the toolkit do not represent the policy or position of the state of Missouri.
- Inclusion in this listing does not constitute endorsement of any book, product, or publication by the state of Missouri or any of its departments.
- Although efforts were made to include as much relevant material as possible, the listing does not contain all of the resources available in web, print, or electronic media on this topic. Omission of other information or resources is not intentional.
- All attempts have been made to properly attribute any materials included; any copies or use of these materials should respect all copyright laws and should include proper attribution.
- The listed weblinks provide health, emergency management, and disaster mental health resources and reference materials. The Department of Mental Health does not, however, take any legal responsibility for the accuracy of the information provided on these sites.

EVENT-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

“substitutes” or “alternatives” to any favorite foods that may no longer be available for consumption. For example, substitute soy milk for dairy milk; turkey or veggie burgers for hamburgers.

COMMUNICATION

- Stay informed. Human nature makes us more afraid of those things that are unfamiliar. Learning about potential agro-terrorism and the perpetrators’ desire to scare us and negatively impact our economy will help us to make healthy choices.
- Know local resources.
 - o University Extension resources may be important for making food choices.
 - o Be aware of the possibility of destructive rumors and identify sources of good information.

CONNECTION & SELF-RELIANCE

- Act responsibly. Unfounded fears over food production can affect our local economy; we should lead our lives normally knowing that we will be informed if a threat really does exist.
- We can use unfounded scares or hoaxes to educate our families about ways to protect ourselves.

EVENT-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

PRE-EVENT MESSAGES

Communication during the pre-event phase should promote awareness, preparedness, and access to helpful information.

3 KEY Messages:

Coping and Confidence, Communication, Connection and Self-Reliance

BIOTERRORISM

COPING & CONFIDENCE

- Prepare appropriately. It is important that we find a balance between preparedness and living our lives in a normal healthy way.
 - o Understand the threat levels and appropriate responses.
 - o Listen to authorities regarding reasonable precautions based on the level of risk.
 - o Be prepared to increase precautions if the risk level changes.
- Think about what we might add to our home emergency kits if any family members are ill when public authorities advise us to:
 - o Shelter-in-place for some period of time.
 - o Avoid public areas or gatherings due to contagious illness.
 - o Comply with a quarantine in our homes or neighborhood.
 - o Also consider including:
 - Contact information for doctors & pharmacists.
 - A list of pre-existing medical conditions and current medications for each family member.
 - Identification for all family members.
 - A notepad to keep information about symptoms such as fever, fluid intake and other information.
- Social distancing and removal from daily routines is often stressful. To prepare for our sheltering-in-place or limited public interaction during an event investigate ways to use webcams, videoconferencing, e-mail, instant messaging and other communications as alternatives to face-to-face contact.

COMMUNICATION

- Information will be complicated during an event. Preparedness is important because there is more time to ask questions before something happens than during a crisis.
- Human nature makes us more afraid of those things that are unfamiliar.

CONNECTION & SELF-RELIANCE

- Access information. If you have e-mail, register with emergency response groups for free emergency notification alerts by e-mail. Early warning can be important in keeping us safe in a disaster situation. A free e-mail alert service is available by registering at <http://www.emergencyemail.org/> and is especially helpful for those with hearing impairment or who are not accessing radio or television coverage.
- Keep a well-stocked emergency supply kit in a portable container such as luggage on wheels or backpack. Include:
 - o Basic supplies such as food, water, flashlights, blankets, batteries, and battery-powered radio;
 - o Necessary medications for at least three days (seven days if feasible) including a cooler for medicine that may spoil if it gets too warm;
 - o A list of all medications, extra prescriptions, health history information, insurance cards, and phone numbers for hospitals and health care providers; and
 - o A cell phone or health alert call device.
- Practice emergency plans regularly. If you may not be able to instruct someone during a rescue or response due to language issues or wearing a mask, place checklists near medical or assistive equipment to help utilize or operate as necessary. Post emergency instructions if necessary.
- Identify the names of service animals and commands to help a responder with rescue and utilize the service animal in an event.
- Many disability groups have developed preparedness guidances for people with temporary or long-term mobility or other disabilities. Internet resources are provided at the end of this document.

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

- o Plan for tools or assistance for a safe emergency exit, especially if the home has security hardware on windows and doors.
- o Obtain a generator or be prepared to address the manual operation of garage doors or security gates should electricity be out.

COMMUNICATION

- If we receive in-home assistance of any kind, discuss emergency preparedness with home health or personal care staff.
 - o Ask them what plans are in place if an emergency would interfere with their scheduled home visits. Make sure there is a back-up plan for all types of emergencies.
 - o Educate helpers regarding assistance needs. Be assertive in developing oral and written instructions.
 - o Ask for their assistance in building a kit, accessing and storing any needed medical or first aid supplies, and doing other preparatory activities to make us safer in any emergency situation.
- Reach out to family, friends and caregivers prior to emergencies:
 - o Create plans to join or host family/neighbors to shelter or evacuate together, if safe to do so.
 - o Plan with more than one person; emergencies may limit who can help us when a disaster occurs.
 - o If family or friends live far away or are unable to reach us quickly in an emergency, discuss preparations with other support systems such as church, home health agency, the local senior center, casemanager, physician, or other caregivers.
 - o Putting plans in writing as part of a routine service plan review is a good idea and promotes regular updates.
- Especially for those of us who live alone, arrange for someone to check on us when an event occurs. Before something happens, tell them:
 - o If we take sleep or other sedating medications so that they ensure we hear the alerts.
 - o Where we plan to shelter in an emergency.

EVENT-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

- Take time to learn about how to protect ourselves and our families if an epidemic occurs. Stay informed.
 - o Know the public health authority's recommendations regarding prevention and treatment of diseases that may affect the community.
 - o Identify a trusted local source for preparedness information and news. Use that information to make healthy choices during an emergency.
- Pay attention to the news in other countries about health concerns like SARS or avian flu.
 - o Consider how to prepare our family if we were planning to travel to a country with that illness.
 - o Use those ideas to prepare at home.

CONNECTION & SELF-RELIANCE

- Act responsibly. Follow any preventive guidance given by public health authorities related to vaccination or avoiding contagious disease.
- Report any suspicious behavior related to water safety, food safety or spread of communicable disease.
- Know what to expect. If exposed to a biological agent, we may be required to be decontaminated for our health and safety.
 - o Decontamination may involve removing contaminated clothing in a non-private setting.
 - o The team conducting the decontamination will be in special safety suits with masks and equipment. It will make it difficult to communicate with them. They may guide people through physical touch that may be rough. Watch what is happening in front of us and follow instructions to minimize the need to push or pull people through the decontamination process.
 - o In the interest of time, emergency responders or emergency medical staff may disregard personal concerns about modesty and comfort in the interest of rapid decontamination. We may need to remind ourselves it is for our benefit and may save our lives.
 - o Having an extra change of clothes at work or in the car can be a great comfort if decontamination is required and responders advise us to discard clothing.
 - o Get information before leaving the area about risks and warning signs for our own health and that of our family. Take written information or obtain a phone number or website for additional information. Ask what follow-up actions should be taken.
 - o Be prepared to help others as needed.

EVENT-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

PRE-EVENT MESSAGES

Communication during the pre-event phase should promote awareness, preparedness, and access to helpful information.

3 KEY Messages:

Coping and Confidence, Communication, Connection and Self-Reliance

CHEMICAL

COPING & CONFIDENCE

- Human nature makes us more afraid of those things that are unfamiliar. Take the time to learn about chemicals that may be present at our workplace, in our homes and in our neighborhoods.
- Learn about chemical risks in our neighborhoods and do more preparation if living near:
 - Railroad shipping stations or lines.
 - Interstate highways.
 - Trucking operations.
 - Chemical plants, manufacturing or industrial operations that use chemicals or hazardous materials.
- Knowing how to shut off heating or air conditioning systems can limit circulation of outside air into our home or workplace.
- Buying gas masks or expensive equipment is unlikely to be helpful in an event because:
 - Fit is critically important. Such items are generally not adequate for protection unless custom fitting is done.
 - Improperly fitted or improperly used masks can suffocate the wearer, especially young children.
 - Much of the equipment is designed to be hazard-specific and would only be effective for certain chemicals.
 - Protective equipment has a shelf-life and much of the equipment available on the internet, in surplus stores or other venues may be outdated or ineffective.
 - If we feel we must have something, the barrier protection of a dust mask or a handkerchief over our mouth may offer some protection at a much lower price.

- To increase warning time and facilitate evacuation, obtain specialized adaptive warning systems or assistive devices or services.
 - Test and maintain warning systems to ensure they function correctly.
 - Practice escape routes to ensure they are negotiable.
 - Consider making pre-arrangements for transportation if evacuation is recommended.
 - Contact the local fire department to obtain decals that designate homes or rooms where individuals may require special assistance in emergencies.
 - Register with the local utilities if power is necessary to support any medical equipment or other assistive devices. Such registries help to determine priorities for restoring power grids.
- Plan now for service animals.
 - Create an emergency kit for service animals with food, water, medication and other items as needed.
 - Federal law allows service animals into shelters. Be prepared to explain this to staff.
 - Note that service animal owners are responsible to care for companion animals while at the shelter.
- Make arrangements for pets. Have pet carriers and emergency supplies handy.
 - Consider having pet harnesses that rattle. In an emergency this will help in locating the person in need or the pet.
 - Shelters usually don't take pets. Contact the veterinarian or animal shelter for other local emergency options.
- Add items to emergency kits unique to age and disability needs such as:
 - Communication devices or picture boards.
 - Batteries for hearing aids.
 - Durable power of attorney or medical decision maker documentation and contact information.
- Be aware. When selecting or remodeling homes:
 - Identify any barriers in the home that would create difficulties in emergencies.
 - Make necessary accommodations to assure safety in emergency situations.
 - Plan for tools or assistance for a safe emergency exit,

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

- Conduct preparedness planning as part of any service plan with a formal personal care provider.
- Reach out to adult children as part of their support network.
- Identify community partners such as senior centers, independent resource centers, and home health agencies.
- Older adults may prefer paper documents and face-to-face guidance as opposed to website resources.

SENIORS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

PRE-EVENT MESSAGES

Communication during the pre-event phase should promote preparedness, awareness, and access to helpful information.

3 Key Messages:

Coping and Confidence, Communication, Connection and Self-Reliance

COPING & CONFIDENCE

- Develop a personal plan that fits unique circumstances, particularly in terms of mobility, sensory disabilities and communication.
 - o Be familiar with routine stress management principles and strategies.
 - o Identify what has worked well for people in the past.
 - o Adapt strategies consistent with the limitation of age and endurance such as modified exercise routines.
- Know the locations of pre-determined general and special needs shelters.
 - o Ask local emergency officials if the shelter is accessible and can accommodate special needs.
 - o People with more serious needs may be directed to use the nearest “special needs” shelter where medical issues can receive appropriate attention.
 - o If these shelters cannot meet these needs, identify a local nursing home or hospital that has back-up power and work with them in advance on an agreement to evacuate there for temporary shelter.

EVENT-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

- If we are required to shelter-in-place at home or work for an extended period of time, consider adding to our emergency kits or supply items that would promote a sense of routine or comfort such as:
 - o Snack foods or treats.
 - o Favorite pastimes or family mementoes such as photos and scrapbooks.
 - o Books, card games, crayons, board games, CD players, handheld computer games, and other recreational activities that help pass the time for adults and kids.
 - o Headphones for the battery-operated radio to allow one person to monitor the incident so children and others are not frightened by the coverage of the incident.
 - o Pillows, blankets, sleeping bags or beanbag chairs, and comfort items (such as stuffed animals or pacifiers).

COMMUNICATION

- See All Audiences, All Events

CONNECTION & SELF-RELIANCE

- Know what to expect. If exposed to a chemical agent, we may be required to be decontaminated for our health and safety.
 - o Decontamination may involve removing contaminated clothing in a non-private setting.
 - o The team conducting the decontamination will be in special safety suits with masks and equipment. It will make it difficult to communicate with them. They may guide people through physical touch that may be rough. Watch what is happening in front of us and follow instructions to minimize the need to push or pull people through the decontamination process.
 - o In the interest of time, emergency responders or emergency medical staff may disregard personal concerns about modesty and comfort in the interest of rapid decontamination. We may need to remind ourselves it is for our benefit and may save our lives.
 - o Having an extra change of clothes at work or in the car can be a great comfort if decontamination is required and responders advise us to discard clothing.
 - o Get information before leaving the area about risks and warning signs for our own health and that of our family. Take written information or obtain a phone number or website for additional information. Ask what follow-up actions should be taken.
 - o Be prepared to help others as needed.

EVENT-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

PRE-EVENT MESSAGES

Communication during the pre-event phase should promote awareness, preparedness, and access to helpful information.

3 KEY Messages:

Coping and Confidence, Communication, Connection and Self-Reliance

INCENDIARY/EXPLOSIVES

COPING & CONFIDENCE

- Take reasonable precautions.
 - o Remember, security systems as well as mail screening and delivery procedures are used daily in our workplace to ensure employee and public safety.
 - o Always screen mail and deliveries before opening.
 - o Never accept or agree to deliver a package from an unknown person.
 - o Take extra precautions in or near locations of large and visible public gatherings (sports venues, political conventions, corporate annual meetings), or events that relate to controversial public policy (animal rights, abortion, environment), especially if violence has occurred in the past.
 - o Lock the car, take inventory on return for any changes in appearance and do not get in if there is evidence of tampering.

COMMUNICATION

- Report any suspicious behavior or abandoned packages in public areas to law enforcement by dialing 911.
 - o Persons dressed in bulky, oversized clothing which may be seasonably inappropriate.
 - o Backpacks, suitcases, briefcases, etc. left in public areas, lobbies, garages, elevators, etc.

CONNECTION & SELF-RELIANCE

- Connect with local resources. Get training from local law enforcement, emergency management, postal service and others on:
 - o Appropriate preparedness information/actions
 - o Suspicious package detection
 - o Threat levels
- In our workplace or school, practice state-of-the-art search and evacuation procedures in the case of bomb threats to increase deterrence and minimize our risk of injuries from secondary devices.

AUDIENCE SPECIFIC MESSAGES

SENIORS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Introduction

KEY CONCEPTS

- Studies show that older adults typically fare well after disasters because they have developed good coping skills based on life experiences. However, the following can impact their stress levels in recovering from a disaster:¹
 - o The extent of their losses and whether they have had repeated losses prior to or as part of the disaster.
 - o Their personal health and access to health care.
 - o Financial resources.
 - o Family and personal support.
 - o Threat to independent living.
- In addition seniors are less likely to:
 - o Respond to warnings.
 - o Evacuate.
 - o Acknowledge hazards.
 - o Seek medical care.
 - o Use resources.
 - o Wait in line.
- Persons with disabilities may:
 - o Use communication devices
 - o Depend on accessible transportation to get to work, doctor's appointments, or to other places in the community.
 - o Receive medical treatments (e.g. dialysis) on a regular basis.
 - o Need assistance with personal care.
 - o Rely on electrically dependent equipment or other durable equipment.
 - o Use mobility aids such as a walker, cane, or a wheelchair.
 - o Have a service animal.

KEY STRATEGIES

- Work with local nursing homes, senior services, and home health care agencies to ensure adequate preparedness planning is in place and practiced at those facilities.

(Footnotes)

¹ Adapted from Center for Disaster Epidemiology & Emergency Preparedness (DEEP Center) Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine at the University of Miami

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

- Pre-adolescents and teens typically turn to their peers for support. Encourage preparedness discussions with friends and families. Provide trusted resources.
- Encourage older children to volunteer in community preparedness activities.
- Rehearse safety measures to be used in future disasters.

EVENT-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

PRE-EVENT MESSAGES

Communication during the pre-event phase should promote awareness, preparedness, and access to helpful information.

3 KEY Messages:

Coping and Confidence, Communication, Connection and Self-Reliance

RADIOLOGICAL

COPING & CONFIDENCE

- Acknowledge and alleviate fears.
 - o Radiological events are frightening to us because of our fears regarding nuclear bombs causing radiation sickness or cancer.
 - o It may be reassuring to know that a dirty bomb is unlikely to cause radiation sickness or cancer.
- Our past experience suggests there is nothing we can do to protect ourselves and that may be true in a nuclear attack. However we can take steps to protect ourselves and our families from exposure to releases of radiation from scenarios such as a nuclear reactor or medical waste accident.
 - o There is benefit to filtering the air and limiting exposure to the contaminant. Add to emergency supplies a handkerchief or other lightweight material to cover our nose and mouth. Carry one in the event of a radiation release.
 - o At home, know how to shut off the HVAC system to prevent circulation of contaminated air.
 - o Time, distance and shielding can help protect us.

COMMUNICATION

- Plan for sheltering-in-place.
- Consider adding items to our personal emergency and go-kits that promote a sense of routine or comfort if required to shelter-in-place at home or the workplace for an extended period of time.

EVENT-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

- o Snack foods or treats.
- o Books, card games, crayons, board games, CD players, handheld computer games, videos, books on tape and other recreational activities that help pass the time for all ages.
- o Headphones for the battery-operated radio. This allows one person to monitor the incident so children and others are not frightened by the media coverage of the incident.
- o Pillows, blankets, sleeping bags or beanbag chairs, and comfort items such as stuffed animals, pacifiers, etc.

CONNECTION & SELF-RELIANCE

- Know what to expect. If exposed to a radiological agent, we may be required to be decontaminated for our health and safety.
 - o Decontamination may involve removing contaminated clothing in a non-private setting.
 - o The team conducting the decontamination will be in special safety suits with masks and equipment. It will make it difficult to communicate with them. They may guide people through physical touch that may be rough. Watch what is happening in front of us and follow instructions to minimize the need to push or pull people through the decontamination process.
 - o In the interest of time, emergency responders or emergency medical staff may disregard personal concerns about modesty and comfort in the interest of rapid decontamination. We may need to remind ourselves it is for our benefit and may save our lives.
 - o Having an extra change of clothes at work or in the car can be a great comfort if decontamination is required and responders advise us to discard clothing.
 - o Get information before leaving the area about risks and warning signs for our own health and that of our family. Take written information or obtain a phone number or website for additional information. Ask what follow-up actions should be taken.
 - o Be prepared to help others as needed.

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

- Seeing a counselor does not mean that a child is “mentally ill” or that caregivers have failed to support him or her. Following a trauma, many adults and children have found that it is helpful to talk with a counselor who has specialized training in post-traumatic reactions and can help them understand and deal with how they are feeling.
- A young child’s imagination can intensify existing fears. We must take children’s fears seriously, reassuring them and giving them age-appropriate information.
- Teaching young children emergency preparedness can be made into a fun event including visiting with emergency responders, learning the sounds of warning signals (i.e. fire alarms, warning devices) and practicing how to respond at home or in public places.
- Helping children pick out a special toy, stuffed animal, or game to put in the family’s emergency kit lets them feel a part of preparations.
- An easy way to help children learn about disaster preparedness is to obtain videos and other resources from the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services at www.dhss.mo.gov/Ready_in_3 and coloring books and story books from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, www.fema.gov/kids or the American Red Cross, www.redcross.org/pubs/dspubs/childmatls.html
- As parents we should make a communication plan with our adolescents/teenagers so when an emergency occurs, we will know how to contact each other. Having our teens carry cards in their billfolds/purses with important phone numbers (i.e., an out-of-state relative for all to call) or making ICE entries in their cell phone directories will give them a sense of security in knowing what to do. Obtain a family plan template from the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services at www.dhss.mo.gov/Ready_in_3

CONNECTION & SELF-RELIANCE

- If we have children with special needs, we need to plan accordingly. For example, supply extra medicines to the school nurse or provide for other special needs that they may have if separated from us for an extended period of time.

AUDIENCE SPECIFIC MESSAGES

COMMUNICATION

- Preparedness includes knowing when to seek professional help¹.
 - o Children are amazingly flexible, even though they can be deeply affected by trauma or losses. Recognizing how children may react to stressful situations assists parents and caregivers in finding trusted professionals to assist our children when expertise is needed.
 - o Sometimes a child can be helped by a counselor who can provide a safe place to talk about what happened and their feelings.
- Getting professional help is a good idea if a child shows any of the following changes for longer than three months following the trauma:
 - o Behavior or academic problems at school.
 - o Angry outbursts.
 - o Withdrawal from usual social activities or play with other children.
 - o Frequent nightmares or other sleep disturbances.
 - o Physical problems such as nausea, headaches, weight gain or loss.
 - o Intense anxiety or avoidance behavior that is triggered by reminders of the event.
 - o Depression or a sense of hopelessness about life or the future.
 - o Alcohol or drug use problems.
 - o Dangerous risk-taking behavior.
 - o Continued worry about the event as a primary focus in life.
- Certain events may make a child more vulnerable to having difficulty. A traumatic event can reactivate the emotions associated with previous traumas, which can be overpowering. Carefully observe children who have experienced a recent loss such as:
 - o A divorce;
 - o Serious illness or death of someone close to them;
 - o A move to a new neighborhood or school; and
 - o Other losses or upsetting events.

(Footnotes)

¹ Adapted from the American Red Cross website www.redcross.org

EVENT-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

PRE-EVENT MESSAGES

Communication during the pre-event phase should promote awareness, preparedness, and access to helpful information.

3 KEY Messages

Coping and Confidence, Communication, Connection and Self-Reliance

TERRORISM

COPING & CONFIDENCE

- Preparedness is extremely important for terrorist events. Because they occur without warning and are meant to disrupt our lives and cause fear, planning should be a priority recognizing that:
 - o Preparing and talking about terrorism can be stressful for us, even when an incident has not yet happened.
 - o It is harder to prepare for events that have no warning.
 - o Thinking about intentional violent acts shakes our sense of safety and security.
 - o Preparing requires us to think on our feet since we do not know what to expect.
 - o It is tempting not to prepare at all because we would like to believe it could never happen to us or it could never happen in our community.
 - o We can expect to be more frightened by things that are unfamiliar, that violate our sense of how the world should be, cause disfigurement or death, or target children.
- Preparing for the worst possible event can make us more prepared for day-to-day risks like a medical emergency or a car accident. It may even save lives!

COMMUNICATION

- Within the immediate area of a terrorist event, we will need to rely on police, fire, and other officials for instructions.
- Balance preparedness and the freedom to live life without fear. If preparedness efforts interfere with our daily routines or important relationships, we should talk to someone (friend, relative, pastor/priest/spiritual leader, counselor/mental health professional, etc.) to put the situation in perspective.

EVENT-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

- We should prepare to limit television viewing that involves violent images. Consider print and radio media alternatives to avoid further anxiety and trauma.

CONNECTION & SELF-RELIANCE

- Be prepared to do without services we normally depend on—electricity, telephone, natural gas, gasoline pumps, cash registers, ATMs, and Internet transactions.
- Just as we do when flying, learn where emergency exits are located in buildings we frequent. Plan how to get out in the event of an emergency.
- Be prepared to help others in need.
- Be prepared to evacuate quickly by:
 - o Carrying any identification or keys on your person or nearby.
 - o Making phone calls to family after you have left the site.

AUDIENCE SPECIFIC MESSAGES

- Promote open communication at school, day care and other provider settings.
- Ensure appropriately trained adults familiar to the children are available to talk to them following an event.

PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN

PRE-EVENT MESSAGES

Communication during the pre-event phase should promote awareness, preparedness, and access to helpful information.

3 KEY Messages

Coping and Confidence, Communication, Connection and Self-Reliance

COPING & CONFIDENCE

- Upsetting situations happen to all of us sooner or later. We must build confidence in children for the future and boost their ability to live normal lives beyond these time periods.
- Healthy routines are important to children’s well-being before, during and after a disaster.
- Answer disaster questions as honestly as possible in an age-appropriate way. Don’t be afraid to say, “I don’t know.”
- Be truthful with young children when reassuring them that they are safe before, during and after an event.
- Involving school-age children in preparing an emergency kit while talking to them in age-appropriate ways about different kinds of disasters helps them understand what could happen and what to do.
- Resilience is built on many life skills. We can build our children’s ability to handle difficult times by teaching them how to:
 - o Make friends and help others;
 - o Develop healthy habits;
 - o Re-focus when they are worried;
 - o Set and achieve goals;
 - o Problem-solve; and
 - o Look hopefully to the future when things don’t go well.

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN

Introduction

KEY CONCEPTS¹

- Children cope best when parents and other adults in their lives cope well. Preparing ahead of time will help us all cope better through an emergency.
- Children’s responses to the event vary by age, developmental level, life experience and coping skills.
- Children who have experienced other traumas in life are more at risk.
- We can help children by limiting their access to media coverage on disasters. Viewing excessive coverage may increase stress.
- Children respond to stress differently than adults and may:
 - o Blame themselves for the disaster.
 - o Not understand the cause and effect of the disaster event or the event itself.
 - o Reenact the trauma in play or art projects.
 - o Exhibit changes in behavior such as regressing or acting out.
- Routines are important for children. Keep school, sports and extracurricular activities open if safe to do so.

KEY STRATEGIES

- Parents should work with caregivers, schools, day care providers, Scout and sport teams leaders, etc. to ensure disaster preparedness in all areas of our children’s lives.
- Use appropriate, child-tested counseling and talking methods and strategies.
- Separation is a concern for all children. Keep families together when safe and possible.
- Provide age-appropriate information.
- Prepare a waterproof, sealable plastic bag with current family photos for each family member including identification cards and any identifying characteristics or information such as nicknames, medical conditions, and any family “code words” to help a child identify a parent-approved helper.

(Footnotes)

¹ Adapted from Center for Disaster Epidemiology & Emergency Preparedness (DEEP Center) Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine at the University of Miami

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

CULTURALLY DIVERSE GROUPS

Introduction

All community members benefit from learning concrete tips and ideas to keep their families safe and informed. Advance efforts promoting resilience, providing disaster preparedness education, and emotional skill-building are important strategies for community well-being. Research shows that some groups are more vulnerable and that culturally diverse groups are at higher risks after disasters. Outreach to and inclusion of diverse cultural populations is extremely important when planning and preparing for disasters.

KEY CONCEPTS

- Cultural community responders must be engaged in planning and preparedness.
 - o Ensure involvement by key cultural brokers and partners to assist with outreach.
 - o Work closely with language and cultural-specific media outlets.
- If an event affects any cultural group or minority, authorities must be prepared to tailor messages for diverse audiences. These messages should:
 - o Be translated in multiple languages consistent with the cultural profile of the community.
 - o Identify resources consistent with the group’s needs.
 - o Be adapted to the cultural practices of the group, particularly as they relate to help-seeking, healing, coping with loss, grief and death.

KEY STRATEGIES

- Identify the cultural communities in our neighborhoods and involve cultural leaders/brokers in planning and outreach. Use input from diverse groups to shape preparedness work in these communities.
- Translation/interpretation services will be needed when responding to any event.
 - o Volunteers from the diverse communities may be enlisted to assist as needed.
 - o If possible, translation/interpretation volunteers should be identified, pre-screened and linked with local emergency responder and human services groups.

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

- o For events that qualify for federal assistance, the Missouri Department of Mental Health will include translation/interpretation services in funding requests to the federal crisis counseling programs.
- Host community preparedness forums and coordinate with the informal and formal leaders in the local cultural community. Be sure to:
 - o Build trust and adapt services to be culturally respectful and responsive.
 - o Translate relevant written and oral communications before, during and after disasters. Include materials regarding warning systems and emergency preparedness. Use international symbols as applicable.
 - o Request that emergency responders have someone on each shift who speaks the common languages spoken in the community served. This includes persons delivering crisis counseling and other mental health services.
 - o Identify key media serving the cultural community, particularly those operating in the native languages, and include them as part of the emergency notification system.
 - o Request that the weather segment of local news be captioned.
 - o Link with groups who can provide funding or resources to build emergency kits for those unable to afford them.
- Educate diverse communities about local hazards that may be unfamiliar to those from other countries and practice responses to those hazards.
 - o Practice at different times of the day to consider how the response might be different.
 - o Include children in the drills.
- Work with landlords and employers to promote and support emergency readiness activities with tenants and the workforce.
 - o Installation of smoke or carbon monoxide detectors in housing.
 - o Emergency drills at work.
 - o Offer first aid and CPR courses on site with the American Red Cross or local hospital.

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

- Use relaxation techniques.
- Develop and maintain healthy relationships
- Planning must incorporate accommodations and services specially designed for special populations whose psychological needs and support needs may differ from the general population.
 - o Considerations should include developmental differences in coping skills based on age and cognitive ability (Mental Retardation (MR), Developmental Disabilities (DD), stroke, and Traumatic Brain Injury).
 - o Language, culture and immigration status affect the ability to seek and utilize available medical and mental health services.
 - o Refugees are at high risk for adverse mental health impact due to histories of trauma in their native countries.
- Work with an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) if available at your workplace or other resource for emotional support at work to assure the availability of a supportive counselor or advisor if needed.
 - o Have a clear process to identify at-risk individuals and refer appropriately.
 - o Manage referrals and support confidentially, respectfully and recognize it as a normal reaction to an overwhelming situation.
 - o Individuals with past trauma or mental health conditions may be candidates for preventive interventions rather than waiting for indications of need for referral.

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

COMMUNICATION

- Health care response to disasters can be emotionally draining and stressful. Practicing stress management and self-care strategies and providing in-service seminars on these topics prepare health care workers for intense emergency situations. Share and discuss methods such as:
 - o Keeping routines as normal and healthy as possible.
 - o Using exercise, sleep, meditation or prayer, and relaxation to cope with the stress.
 - o Writing down thoughts and feelings in a journal.
 - o Taking breaks that help rejuvenate and rebuild energy and stamina.
 - o Avoiding alcohol, drugs, and caffeine.
- Communicate to team members that if anyone feels overwhelmed by the nature of the event, they should take a break and seek out their supervisor for some relief and respite.
- Practice compartmentalization and other strategies to minimize over-identification with victims and their families that can interfere with emotional well-being and ability to cope.
- As a supervisor of health care workers, make assignments carefully based on experience, training, and past performance to minimize likelihood of adverse emotional reactions.
 - o Learn about your staff and stressors in their lives that may affect their response.
 - o During exercises, identify who works well together and promote emotional well-being as an important principle in response readiness.

CONNECTION & SELF-RELIANCE

- Including family in planning and preparedness can be important to help them and us cope with the stress of a mass casualty event. Their emotional well-being is important for them and helps us cope better as well.
 - o Participate in exercises to test the mental health components of a response plan.
 - o Practice stress management principles for self-care and in our family life.
 - Get regular exercise and good nutrition.
 - Establish sleep routines.

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

- Invite emergency responders to health fairs and other cultural activities to promote familiarity and trust as well as to provide public education about emergency response.
- Educate emergency management and other responders regarding help-seeking behaviors in diverse cultures.

CULTURALLY DIVERSE GROUPS

PRE-EVENT MESSAGES

Communication during the pre-event phase should promote awareness, preparedness, and access to helpful information.

3 KEY Messages:

Coping and Confidence, Communication, Connection and Self-Reliance

COPING & CONFIDENCE

- Using and recognizing universal signage and emblems that can warn of disaster and indicate what protective actions to take will help make all of the community safer.
- Prepare now to be a partner in emotional recovery. Sometimes we are most comfortable showing our feelings with others who share our cultural background and language. Get training as a volunteer for disaster response or learn psychological first aid to help others in our community.
- If we speak other languages or want to work with people affected by a disaster or emergency, we may be able to get training to help people get through difficult times.
 - o Contact our local mental health center and ask them how to become a crisis counselor.
 - o There are roles for a variety of volunteers. We do not need to be a mental health professional to help.
 - o Volunteers will be screened and must meet certain requirements to be a crisis counselor and for general assignments.

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

COMMUNICATION

- Preparedness information is available in multiple languages and we will translate materials as appropriate for emotional and physical readiness.
- If it is not available in your language, ask for it or help translate the information.

CONNECTION & SELF-RELIANCE

- Prepare by identifying natural community supports such as churches and faith-based programs, cultural centers, etc.
- Telephone support to family outside the impacted community might be an important resource in large-scale disasters.
 - o Even far away family in other countries can be an emotional support through phone or internet contact.
 - o Far away family will be worried if they see news coverage of an event that affects a place their family lives.

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

- Integrate coping and self-care skill building into training for professional health care organizations, associations, professional registration entities, pharmaceutical companies and academic centers to educate their members and staff.
 - o Provide continuing education tie-ins and credits (CEUs).
 - o Partner with state and local public health authorities to reach their workforce.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

PRE-EVENT MESSAGES

Communication during the pre-event phase should promote awareness, preparedness, and access to helpful information.

3 KEY Messages:

Coping and Confidence, Communication, Connection and Self-Reliance

COPING & CONFIDENCE

- Planning for ways to meet the emotional needs of disaster victims, first responders, families of those affected and the general public is an important activity for emergency medical technicians (EMTs), hospitals, emergency departments, and primary care.
 - o Integrate mental health assessment into triage and medical assessment.
 - o Identify mental health resources that can be called upon in an emergency situation to assist those in need.
 - o Designate a private space adjacent to the Emergency Department (ED) to address emotional needs.
 - o Incorporate family tracking and family reunification as an important component of response for persons in distress after a disaster.
- Get appropriate training for medical and social work staff in:
 - o Psychological first aid, FEMA crisis counseling, or other disaster mental health principles.
 - o Managing grief reactions.
 - o Indicators of need for referral and appropriate resources for referral.
 - o Stress management strategies.

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Introduction

Following the events of September 11, 2001, and the ongoing threat of bio-events such as the pandemic flu, health care workers have become front-line in disaster response.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Planning for the emotional aftermath of a variety of disasters is an important benchmark of readiness for health care organizations and their employees.
- Integration of psychological first aid principles into medical care is the best strategy for meeting the needs of patients.
- Psychological preparedness is just as important as building an emergency kit:
 - o No person who experiences a disaster is untouched by it.
 - o Different disaster events have different and unique mental health planning considerations associated with them.
 - o Disaster events can result in a surge in demands on the health care system that includes emotional casualties as well as people with physical injuries. Experts estimate that the rate of emotional casualties in traumatic events is 4 to 10 times greater than physical casualties.
- Planning for mental health needs and supports can be invaluable in a large scale natural disaster or terrorist event.
- Preparedness for large-scale events can also be of benefit in responding to more common events such as fatality motor vehicle accidents or industrial accidents.
- Self-care is important for health care workers prior to and during an event for ensuring recovery.

KEY STRATEGIES

- Incorporate emotional preparedness information into in-service training.
- Create and distribute training packets on coping skills and self-care during surges in demand specific events such as pandemic flu or an explosion.

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

EMERGENCY FIRST RESPONDERS

Introduction

Traditional first responders¹ include fire departments, law enforcement agencies, emergency medical technicians (EMTs) including mental health workers and others at the forefront of disaster response and recovery.

KEY CONCEPTS

- Responding to disasters, especially those with mass casualties or fatalities, can be emotionally draining and stressful.
- Understand these special considerations when working with first responders²:
 - o Culture of not seeking help
 - o High performance expectations
 - o Delay in seeking help
 - o Preference for talking to peers
 - o Stigma of seeking mental health support
 - o Concern over “fitness for duty”

KEY STRATEGIES

- Offer first responders pre-event training on:
 - o Psychological first aid
 - o Stress management
 - o Incorporating mental health messaging into their work
 - o Resilience principles and practices
- Encourage first responders to develop family preparedness plans.
- Work with peer-to-peer support programs.

(Footnotes)

¹ Be aware that other groups may become first responders by default, depending on the event. Examples include members of the media, teachers and school staff, colleagues and co-workers, health care workers, postal workers, housekeeping and maintenance, etc.

² Adapted from Center for Disaster Epidemiology & Emergency Preparedness (DEEP Center) Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine at the University of Miami

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

EMERGENCY FIRST RESPONDERS

PRE-EVENT MESSAGES

Communication during the pre-event phase should promote awareness, preparedness, and access to helpful information.

3 Key Messages: Coping and Confidence, Communication, Connection and Self-Reliance

COPING & CONFIDENCE

- Stress management and practicing self-care strategies are critical for emergency responders due to the chronic stress of the job. Encourage:
 - o Regular exercise
 - o Healthy sleep routines and relaxation such as meditation, prayer, or deep breathing
 - o Journaling
 - o Peer support
 - o Self talk using cognitive behavior techniques
 - o Relapse prevention

- In order to effectively help others and promote adaptive behavior in a response, understanding emotional and human behavior can increase public compliance and reduce stress. Get appropriate training to be aware of and understand:
 - o Psychological first aid, FEMA crisis counseling, or other disaster mental health principles in a disaster.
 - o Grief reactions.
 - o Convergence phenomena near the site.
 - o Indicators of need for referral and appropriate resources for referral.
 - o Stress management strategies.

- It is important for first responders to develop family preparedness plans. Our family's safety and emotional well-being is important for them and helps us to cope better as well.

AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

COMMUNICATION

- First Responder organizations should have the following in place and communicated to their teams prior to any event:
 - o Effective leadership and management
 - o Clear chain of command, roles and responsibilities, and standard operating procedures.
 - o Peer support groups services

- First responders need to know what to expect.
 - o No person who experiences a disaster is untouched by it and all disaster events have unique mental health considerations.
 - o Disaster events can result in a surge in demand that includes emotional casualties as well as people with physical injuries. Experts estimate that the rate of emotional casualties is four to ten times greater than physical casualties.

CONNECTION & SELF-RELIANCE

- Including family in preparedness planning can be important to help them and us cope with the stress of a disaster.

- Accessing an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for skill-building can be a helpful preventive strategy to keep families emotionally prepared for disaster response efforts.