

## **THE WHOLE COMMUNITY**

### **Accommodations for people with functional needs during a disaster response**

**Westshore Regional CERT, February 6, 2014**

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#### **Winter weather**

##### **Goal and Objectives**

- Goal: To develop CERT plans for emergency response to disasters in Westshore communities responsive to the needs of all community members
- Objectives:
  - Site an example of a disability related to each of the five categories of access & functional needs
  - Describe service adaptations during a disaster for a person in each category

#### **Flooding**

##### **Agenda**

- Non-discriminatory principles of the law
- Defining functional needs
- Issues related to evacuation and sheltering
- Issues related to medical countermeasures (PODs)
- Etiquette

#### **Wind storms/tornados**

##### **ADA Principles of the Law: Federal civil rights laws mandate integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities.**

- Self-determination – people with functional needs know their own needs; offer choices
- No “one size fits all” – different disabilities, different needs

##### **Non-discrimination Principles of the Law**

- Equal opportunity – same opportunity for recovery services
- Inclusion – include people with functional needs in planning, training, and evaluating programs and services
- Integration – services provided in integrated setting allowing people with functional needs to be with support system
- Physical access – services must be provided in a location that allows access for people with functional needs
- Equal access – people with functional needs must have equal access to programs and services
- Effective communication – information must be available in a format that is accessible and understandable
- Program modifications – services must be changed to allow access
- No charge – people with functional needs may not be charged for the cost of adaptations

**Defining functional needs C-MIST:** Populations whose members may have additional needs before, during, and after an incident in functional areas, including but not limited to:

- Communication
- Medical care
- Independence
- Supervision
- Transportation

##### **Communication**

- Limitations interfering with the receipt of and response to information
- Assistance needed due to limitations of:

- Hearing
- Vision
- Speech
- Cognitive or intellectual capacity
- Limited English proficiency

### **Communication Resources**

- Know your community
- What languages other than English are spoken?
- Modern Language Association (Language Map, then Census data)
- ISpeak Cards
- Interpretation and translation – sign language and foreign language interpreters
  - Avoid using family members
  - Consider high school or college instructors
  - Check with coordinating agency for phone interpretation or in-person interpreter
- Interpreter etiquette
  - Speak to the person, not the interpreter
  - Everything you say will be interpreted
- People who are blind or have limited vision
  - Printed information available in large print
  - Access written information on a computer using a screen reader
  - Computers equipped with JAWS possible available from Cleveland VA (request via lead agency)

### **Medical Care**

- Most people managed at home can be managed in a shelter
- Ideally arrives at shelter with knowledgeable caregiver or can manage own care
- Support of trained medical professionals
- Managing conditions requiring observation and ongoing treatment
- Managing intravenous therapy, tube feeding, and vital signs
- Ideally arriving with necessary supplies
- Dialysis treatment – one pager
- Oxygen administration and/or need of suctioning – oxygen concentrator needs electrical outlet
- Wound management – needs supplies
- Needing power dependent on equipment to sustain life

### **Independence**

- Needs support to be independent in daily activities
  - Consumable medical supplies (e.g. diapers, formula, bandages, ostomy supplies, etc.)
  - Durable medical equipment (e.g. wheelchairs, walkers, scooters, etc.)
  - Service animals
  - Attendants or caregivers
- Reasonable modification to policies, practices, and procedures

### **Service Animals**

- Only two questions may be asked of someone with a service animal and only if it is not obvious why the person needs a service animal
  - “Do you need this animal because of a disability?”
  - What tasks or work has the animal been trained to perform?
- Service animals are allowed in shelters
- Suggest locating owner near an exit; will be expected to “toilet” service animal
- Ensure food and water for service animal; ideally arrives at shelter with usual food

### **Supervision**

- Loss of support of caregivers, family, or friends
- Young children

- Unable to identify themselves
- Lack the cognitive ability to assess the situation and react appropriately
- People with dementia or psychiatric conditions such as schizophrenia or intense anxiety
- Suggestion for unaccompanied young children or adults with dementia: Take a picture of the person daily; may be needed if they wander from shelter

#### **Transportation during an evacuation**

- Needs accessible vehicles (e.g. lift-equipped or vehicles suitable for transporting individuals who use oxygen)
- Cannot drive or no vehicle – needs information about how and where to access mass transportation during an evacuation

#### **Evacuating people with functional needs**

- Recognize hazard
- Identify vulnerable population
- Develop plan
- Communicate plan to community residents
- Provide resources for evacuation
- Identify an evacuation center – Red Cross or community

#### **Characteristics of Evacuation**

- Hazard characteristics
  - Magnitude
  - Intensity
  - Speed of onset
  - Duration
  - Impact on community
  - Adapted from FEMA G358
- Scope of Evacuation
  - How many people
  - Time available
  - Time and distance of travel to areas of safety
  - ***How many people needed specialized transportation***

#### **Issues related to evacuation**

- Communication/notification
  - What languages other than English are spoken in your community? For people with LEP, what is their capacity to speak and understand English?
  - Other communication needs in your community
  - Community should use multiple ways to communicate (audible, visual, etc.)
- Transportation during evacuation
  - How would a person needing specialized transportation make a request?
  - How would the person be matched with the appropriate vehicle?
  - What transportation resources are available in your community?
  - How will the time of day or the day of the week affect availability of transport?
  - Other options?

#### **Sheltering: Red Cross is the lead agency for sheltering in Cuyahoga County**

- Red Cross has shelter equipment, trained volunteers, MOUs with vendors, etc.
- Red Cross maintains a list of potential shelters in the area
  - Potential shelter sites are surveyed every three years
  - Potential shelter sites surveyed within the past two years have been evaluated by Red Cross guidelines consistent with ADA
- Services within shelter

- People with functional needs should be accommodated in a general population shelter
- People with urgent medical needs should be managed in a hospital
- Some communities use special needs shelters or medical shelters
- Accessible for people with wheelchairs and other mobility equipment
- Access to electrical outlets – usually along outer walls
- Accessible cots
  - Increased weight capacity
  - Easy to transfer from wheelchair
  - Side rails
- Accessible restrooms
  - Space to maneuver a wheelchair
  - Toilet risers
- Menus to accommodate medically prescribed diets
- Access to refrigeration for medication storage
- Access to refrigeration for snacks and other foods consistent with medically prescribed diet
- Signage in graphic form
- Accommodations allowing families to remain together
- Communication Adaptations; people with LEP may need
  - Interpreter for registration and other situations
  - Assistance with forms completion
  - Information printed in native language
- People with limited vision or who are blind may need
  - Assistance orienting to shelter
  - Assistance with forms completion
  - Transportation to appointments or to return home
  - Assistive technology replacements
- People who are deaf may need
  - An ASL interpreter
  - Assistance understanding shelter announcements
  - Access to TTY system
  - Assistive technology replacements
- People with developmental disabilities may need
  - Patience while they express needs
  - Presence of usual caregiver

#### **Recovery services**

- All people should have equal access to recovery services
- Adaptations may be necessary
- If returning to their home, repairs should ensure access is equal to previous level
- If not returning to their home, locate housing that accommodates their needs

#### **Issues related to PODs**

- Communication
  - Notification in various forms – most likely to come from local health department
  - Educational materials available in languages reflected by populations served; MLA language map
  - Interpreters as needed
- Transportation to POD
- Functional needs area
- Consider delivery to congregate living facilities/senior apartment buildings, etc.

## Using an Interpreter

- When to use an interpreter
  - For people with LEP
  - For people who are deaf
  - Especially for complex information and/or when confidentiality is an issue
  - Ask them!
  - Avoid using family and friends – use a professional interpreter if possible, in person or by phone
- How to request an interpreter (PH Liaison)
- Interpreter etiquette
  - If using a sign language interpreter, position yourself so the light is hitting your face
  - Speak to the person, not the interpreter
  - Everything you say will be interpreted

## Etiquette

- Ask before you help
- Be sensitive about physical contact
- Speak directly to the person with the disability
- Don't make assumptions
- Respond graciously to requests
- Put the person first

## Training sessions for volunteers

- Offered for CERT, MRC, and Red Cross volunteers
- Introduction to functional needs/etiquette
- People who are blind and people who are deaf
- People with developmental disabilities\*
- People with mental health diagnoses\*
- People with renal failure (dialysis)\*
- Refugees and immigrants
- People with diabetes\*
- People with respiratory diseases\*
- Children in disasters\*
- People with dementia\*

*Note: \* indicates courses available on CCBH website*

**Recommended reading – Good Kings, Bad Kings by Susan Nussbaum**