






## Special Considerations of the Older Adult and Disabled During Disasters

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### Learning Objectives

- Discuss the definition of special needs/vulnerable populations
- Explain what is currently being done to assist this population
- Discuss emergency planning techniques for people with diabetes and asthma
- Identify next steps for Community Health Centers

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### Disaster Exercise: *'Be the Disaster'* Anticipate Crises

- According to Webster's Dictionary, **knowledge** is "the fact or condition of knowing something with familiarity gained through **experience** or association."
- Therefore, one woman's hindsight (experience) can be someone else's knowledge.
- We must incorporate emergency planning into our everyday routine without eliciting fear/panic/anxiety.

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## Overview of Emergency Challenges

- Living through an emergency can be the beginning of an enduring challenge for the special needs population within your community.
- Through partnerships with emergency managers and others in the special needs services and support system, you can prepare for, respond to, and recover from all types of emergencies.

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## Introduction to Special Needs Populations

- Responding to and recovering from an emergency is difficult for everyone.
- For people who have extra challenges and barriers to daily living, an emergency can quickly become overwhelming.
- This course focuses on the special needs of older adults and people with disabilities.
- It addresses EP to support individuals of all ages in the community with cognitive, sensory, physical, psychotic, or medical care needs that require assistance.

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## Definition of Special Needs/Vulnerable

- In disaster preparedness and response, the terms "vulnerable" or "special needs" populations are often used to characterize groups whose needs are not fully addressed by traditional service providers.
- People who feel they cannot comfortably or safely access and use the standard resources offered in disaster preparedness, relief and recovery.
- They include but are not limited to those who are physically or mentally disabled (blind, Deaf, hard-of-hearing, cognitive disorders, mobility limitations), limited or non-English speaking, geographically or culturally isolated, medically or chemically dependent, homeless, frail/elderly and children.

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## Statistics

- 1/8 Americans is now over 65.
- By 2040, it is estimated that there will be more than 71 million older Americans.
- By age 80, 74% of us will have some type of disability.
- In US, more than 53 million adults and 5 million children under age 15 have some type of disability related to transportation, work, or self care.
- 10 million Americans with disabilities require daily assistance.

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## Who Are We Protecting?

- Elderly
- Disabled
- High Dx Prevalence
- Pregnant Women
- Homeless
- Children
- Low SES
- Minorities
- Low Education Level
- Non-English Speaking




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## First Problem: The Definition

- No 'one size fits all' definition
- Diversity within Special Needs/Vulnerable
- Too narrow of a definition includes a chance of exclusion
- Too broad of a definition will include everyone
- Need definition that is balanced but will NOT leave anyone behind

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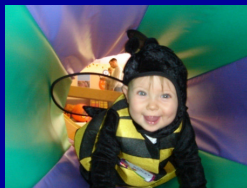
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## Second Problem: The Diversity




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## Third Problem: Self-Classification

- What if I do not consider myself “disabled,” “vulnerable” or “special needs?”




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## Rule of Thumb on Definition

- During a disaster, who enters American Red Cross shelter population?
- Hint: it is not you and I..
- Common threads:
  - lack of social and fiscal safety net
  - Lack of freedom/mobility
- Dependency!!!




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## Resourcefulness

- Special needs populations are very resourceful.
- Unique challenges can impede the ability of a person with special needs to be self-sufficient before, during, and after an emergency.

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## Facing Challenges: Examples

- A person with limited vision or blind may not be able to see posted emergency warnings.
- A person who is hearing-impaired or deaf may not hear emergency warnings.
- A person with a mobility impairment may not be able to exit rapidly or evacuate.
- A person with cognitive impairments or learning disabilities may not understand or be able to follow emergency instructions.

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## Personal Emergency Plans

- The risks associated with barriers and challenges can be reduced through preparedness and emergency planning that promotes self-sufficiency.
- People with special needs are encouraged to develop personal plans for emergencies and not to assume immediate assistance will be available.

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## Role of Special Needs Support System

- Partnering with emergency professionals to promote the inclusion of special needs populations in local emergency planning.
- Educating people with special needs are preparedness and realistic expectations of emergency services.

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## Objectives

- Identify the special needs of older patients during disasters
- Develop emergency management strategies related to the care of the older patient
- Discuss ways to prepare for geriatric admissions during disasters

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## Hazard Analysis

- Natural or manmade hazards create vulnerabilities and risks to people, homes, businesses, neighborhoods, and communities.
- It is important to be aware of and identify the hazards that are most likely occur in your community.

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## Types of Hazards

- A hazard is a possible source of danger that can adversely change your day-to-day existence by creating vulnerabilities and risks to people, homes, businesses, neighborhoods, and communities.
- Vulnerabilities can isolate people due to communication loss, creation of travel barriers and the creation of homelessness.
- Hazards can be natural or manmade.

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## Natural Disasters

- Earthquakes
- Extreme heat
- Fires
- Floods
- Hurricanes
- Landslides
- Thunderstorms
- Tornadoes
- Tsunamis
- Volcanoes
- Winter storms or extreme cold

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## Man-Made Disasters

- Mass casualties
- Destruction of property
- Chemical or biological dangers
- Trauma
- Hazardous materials incidents
- Nuclear incidents
- Power outages
- Terrorism

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## Potential Impact Questions

- How frequent does the hazard occur?
- How severe is the hazard?
- Where is the hazards likely to occur?
- How large an area will it affect?
- How long will it last?
- What time of year does it occur?
- How much warning time is there?
- Who will be affected?
- How will special needs populations be impacted?

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## Vulnerabilities

- The consequences of and damages from hazards to buildings, neighborhoods, and communities, can create unique challenges for people with special needs.

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## Buildings

- Damage to homes, offices, and other buildings can create obstacles for evacuating during or returning after an emergency.
- The structure of a building can be compromised making it unsafe and difficult to maneuver within the building.

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## Neighborhoods/Communities

- Hazards can have potentially devastating social and economic impacts on neighborhoods and communities.
- Residents may have to travel a long distance for groceries, medical care, banking, or for other necessities.
- Accessible transportation may not be available.
- Roads may be closed and special needs populations may have difficulty getting around.

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## Contact Emergency Management

- Your State or local Emergency Manager is a key resource when discussing the history of which hazards have impacted your community in recent years and which hazards pose the greatest risk for your community.

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## Role of Emergency Management

- When a hazard threatens or strikes a jurisdiction, the elected leadership in that jurisdiction is responsible for ensuring that necessary and appropriate actions are taken to protect people and property from the consequences of emergencies and disasters.
- Special needs populations must be accounted for in this process.
- The gov't is expected to marshal its resources, channel the efforts of voluntary agencies and private enterprise in the community, and solicit assistance from outside of the jurisdiction if necessary.

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## 5 Phases of Emergency Management

- Prevention: taking actions to avoid or stop an incident from occurring.
- Preparedness: building the emergency management function to respond effectively to and recover from hazards.
- Response: conducting emergency operations to save lives and protect property.
- Recovery: rebuilding communities, returning to normal life, and protecting against future hazards.
- Mitigation: taking sustained actions to reduce or eliminate risks to people and property.

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## Emergency Planning Process

- Successful emergency planning process is a continual process that includes 4 steps:
- Analyze hazards to identify those that threaten your community
- Develop a basic all-hazard plan and implementing instructions
- Test and evaluate the plan through training and exercises
- Maintain the plan to keep it current with changing needs and requirements

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## Develop an All-Hazard Plan

- The centerpiece of emergency management is an all-hazard emergency management plan, commonly referred to as an Emergency Operation Plan (EOP).
- By creating one plan that encompasses all hazards, you will be prepared for whatever happens in the future.

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## EOP

- An EOP is a document that describes that describes how emergencies will be managed to protect people and property within jurisdictions, businesses, organizations, schools, hospitals, etc.
- Each EOP must reflect what that entity will do to protect itself from hazards with the resources it has or can obtain.

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## EOP: State and Local

- FEMA provides State and local jurisdictions with guidance on the components of emergency management plans.
- An EOP also includes functional annexes, hazard-specific appendices, standard operating procedures, and checklists.

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## EOP: Business & Industry Guidance

- FEMA also provides guidance to the business and industry community on the components of an emergency management plan and how to create and maintain a comprehensive emergency management program.

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### Partnering with the Emergency Management Community (Special Needs)

- Developing, maintaining, and practicing emergency plans
- Partnering with emergency professionals to promote the inclusion of special needs populations in local emergency planning, and to receive input on your plan.
- Educating people with special needs on self preparedness and realistic expectations of emergency services.

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### Developing Personal Support Networks

- Another important aspect of building partnerships is creating a personal support network.
- Personal support networks help persons with special needs prepare for and cope with an emergency. The network can consist of family, friends, relatives, neighbors, roommates, and co-workers.

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### Developing Personal Support Networks (con't)

- The network should consist of people who;
- Are trusted
- Could check to see if assistance is needed
- Are aware of capabilities and needs
- Can offer help within minutes

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## Benefits of Planning

- Proactively pursuing emergency plans and building partnerships can reduce the effect of hazards.
- At the time of an emergency, it is too late to try and establish a plan or set up a course of action.
- PLANNING SAVES LIVES!!!!

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## Key Considerations for Your Plan

- Emergency plans must be complete but as simple as possible.
- Little things become big things at the time of an emergency.
- Extra time may be needed for people with special needs.
- Special needs can arise as a direct result of an emergency and may not be preidentified.
- Redundancy in services is important in planning.

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## ‘What If’ Questions

- What if your building has to close temporarily due to damage and your clients are scattered?
- What if your staff can't get to work because of snow or debris in roads?
- What if you need to purchase plywood, tarps, and other materials to secure your building?
- How will you pay for unexpected costs?

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## Additional Considerations

- Internal Resources
  - Personnel, equipment, facilities, organizational capabilities, backup systems, and client lists/addresses
- Critical Services/Operations
  - Company products and services, lifeline services, vital and functioning resources
- External Resources
  - Local emergency management services, fire, police, hospitals, EMS, CBOs, utilities, transportation, and vendors

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## Writing the Plan

- First, second, and final drafts
- Review, update, and version control
- Coordinating exercises to test the plan
- Printing and distribution

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## Identify Challenges and Prioritize Activities

- Determine specific goals and milestones.
- Make a list of tasks to be performed and by whom and when.
- Determine how you will address the problem areas and resource shortfalls that identified in the vulnerability analysis.

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## Coordinate with Outside Organizations

- Meet periodically with local gov't agencies and community orgs.
- Determine State and local requirements for reporting emergencies and incorporate them into your procedures.
- Determine protocols for coordination with outside agencies.

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## Review, Conduct Training and Revise

- Distribute the final draft to group members for review.
- Revise as needed.
- Conduct an exercise based on plan.
- Based on this discussion, identify areas of confusion and overlap and modify the plan accordingly.

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## Finalize and Distribute Plan

- Once approved, distribute the final plan to:
  - Chief executive and senior managers
  - Key members of the org's emergency response team (ICS team)
  - Community emergency response agencies
- Conduct a formal audit of the entire plan at least once a year.

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## Test and Evaluate the Plan

- Orientation and educational sessions
- Tabletop or full-scale exercise
- Walk-through, functional, and evacuation drills

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## Considerations

- Who will be trained?
- Who will do the training?
- What training activities will be used?
- When and where will each session take place?
- How the session will be evaluated and documented?

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## Training Activities

- Orientation and educational sessions: regularly scheduled discussion sessions to provide information, answer questions, and identify needs and concerns.
- Tabletop exercise: conference room setting to discuss responsibilities in a scenario. Cost-Effective.
- Walk-Through Drills: actually perform duties. Involves more people than a tabletop.

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## Training Activities (con't)

- Functional Drills: test specific functions.
- Evacuation Drills: walk the evacuation route and revise plans based on notes.
- Full-Scale: a real-life emergency situation is simulated as closely as possible.
- After action reports: capture weaknesses that came to light during drill and exercises so that weaknesses can become part of measured improvements and solutions.

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## Emergency Communications

- The emergency alert system: 'This is a test of the emergency broadcast system—this is only a test'
- EAS: President Truman established the first national alerting system, which later became the Emergency Broadcast System (EBS).
- The EBS was designed to provide the President with a means to address the American people in the event of a national emergency.
- In 1994, the FCC replaced the EBS with the EAS.
  - NWS and FEMA

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## EAS

- President, national, State and local authorities with the ability to give emergency information to the general public via broadcast stations, cable, and wireless cable systems.
- System has a fail safe mechanism.
- Disseminate emergency information as quickly as possible to the people who need it.

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## Purpose of Warnings and Emergency Communications

- Warnings and emergency communications are used to:
- Notify the public that a potential danger exists and relay actions that citizens need to take.
- Access to warnings is important during all phases of an emergency.

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## Before...

- Advisories about possible or imminent natural hazards
- Announcements on emergency prevention, preparedness, and mitigation activities.

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## During...

- Warning of a threat.
- Status of an ongoing threat.
- Instructions on preventative actions.
- Instructions on protective actions.

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### After...

- Notices from local officials and emergency management.
- Locations of Disaster Recovery Centers.
- FEMA Teleregistraton number.
- Volunteer agency information.

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### Warning Terminology

- A complete warning or alert needs:
- Where the event is or will be
- How imminent the event is
- Anticipated severity of the event
- Probability that the event will occur
- Appropriate basic response actions

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### National Weather Service

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Weather Service is THE SOLE United States official voice for issuing warnings during life-threatening weather situations.

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## Warning Systems

- Effective warning systems should reach, in a timely fashion, every person at risk who needs to and wants to be warned, no matter what they are doing or where they are located.
- Gov't-owned: NOAA, local sirens, email and paging systems, reverse 911
- Privately-owned: Radio, TV, pagers, telephones, the Internet, and printed media

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## Accessible Emergency Communications and Services

- All citizens have the right to receive warnings and emergency information and to contact and access emergency services.
- Communication barriers may exist that include not being able to hear, see, or understand emergency information.
- It is critical that emergency plans include strategies for overcoming communication barriers and addressing the accessibility of emergency warnings, communications, and services.

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## Adapting Existing Warning Systems

- NOAA Weather Radios
- Special needs populations can receive alerts via lights, alarms, pagers, vibrators, bed-shakers, personal computers, text printers, and other such devices.
- Large print and Braille versions

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## Using Alternative Modes of Communication

- Teletypewriters (TTY)
- Telecommunications Display Devices (TDD)
- Text-to-Speech (TTS) and speech reader applications
- Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS)

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## What is Needed? Special Needs Registry

1. Advanced registration
  - State or County driven
  - Register online or by phone
  - Central database linked to Police, OEM, EMS, Etc.
2. 'Just in Time' registration
  - Assist those who did not pre-register

Transportation Needed!!!!

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## Developing Special Needs Registries

- Consider partnering with local emergency management to develop a special needs registry.
- Special needs registries involve people, who meet specified criteria, voluntarily listing themselves so that local emergency authorities are aware of their presence.
- Special needs registries can be used for pre-emergency outreach, alerting citizens of impending emergencies, assisting in evacuations, or providing emergency services, such as transportation or healthcare during a disaster.

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## Issues Related to Special Needs Registries

- Issues related to special needs registries that must be considered include privacy, criteria for inclusion, ownership, maintenance, and funding.
- Not all people with disabilities will register.
- Some people may not wish to be identified as special needs or disabled.

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## Broward County, Florida Registration or Roundup

- Elderly population
- Advanced Special Needs Registry
- EMS transports registered disabled to Hurricane Shelters
- Police transport homeless and high-risk areas (mobile homes)
- Some accuse County of dumping them (homeless cannot bring personal belongings and disabled transported with records)




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## New Jersey Special Needs Advisory Panel (NJSNAP)

- NJSNAP identifies issues affecting members of New Jersey's special needs population in their emergency preparedness, and issues affecting emergency management personnel as they prepare to assist individuals with special needs.
- NJSNAP is also tasked with making recommendations, developing solutions, drafting proposed legislation, formulating memos of understanding, and devising programs to address identified issues as directed by NJOEM.

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## The Value of Partnerships

- Diverse population requires diverse solutions
- Must be a joint effort to take care of special needs/vulnerable populations
- Multiple stakeholders across disaster continuum




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## Establishing Notification and Call-Down Systems

- Advocacy groups, service providers, and disability organizations play a vital role in establishing notification and call-down systems.
- Information may be transmitted by telephone, e-mail, list serve, or neighbor to neighbor.
- An effective, well designed communication tree has lines of communication that go up and down and can multiply outreach and response capabilities.

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## Working with Emergency Managers and the Media

- Provide information in Braille, large fonts, or on audio-cassette for those with visual impairments.
- Provide information simply and repeat it often for those with cognitive or learning disabilities.
- Include TTY/TDD numbers, when available, for the deaf.
- Post information on an accessible web site.
- Use open captioning and/or interpreters.

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## Evacuation Concerns

- Prepare before an emergency by learning about evacuation barriers, evacuation options, and by making evacuation plans that address persons with disabilities is the best way to be ready in case an evacuation is necessary.

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## Definition of Evacuation

- Evacuation is the physical removal of a person from a potentially dangerous situation to another relatively safe location.
- Fires and floods cause the most evacuations.

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## Evacuation Planning

- All citizens have the right to access emergency services and actively participate in emergency evacuations.
- It is critical that evacuation plans include strategies for overcoming barriers and addressing the accessibility of emergency procedures.
- The first step in evacuation planning is to prepare an evacuation plan.
- For special needs population, emergency plans should answer the question: How will people with mobility limitations, sensory limitations, and cognitive disabilities quickly evacuate during emergencies?

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## Requirements for Accessibility

- Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines:
- Accessible means to exit
- Areas for rescue assistance
- Evacuation elevators
- Alarms
- Signage

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## Evacuation Plans at All Levels

- Personal, Organizational, Workplace, and Community levels should address:
- Notification of evacuation
- Identification of persons requiring evacuation assistance
- Barriers to evacuation
- Regular practice and drills
- Evacuation options and procedures
- Post-Evacuation issues, such as returning home and transfer home

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## Special Needs Evacuation

- May need more time
- Need earlier notice
- Local emergency managers need to a plan and modes of transportation for SN population.
- SN need to be involved in all aspects of evacuation planning.
- It is important to access capabilities, limitations, and needs to determine what type of evacuation assistance will be required in an emergency.

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## Barriers to Evacuation

- Physical barriers: restrict ability to get to, into, around, out of facilities (curb, steps, wheelchairs)
- Communication barriers: restrict access to signs, exit routes, communication devices.
- Cognitive, learning and emotional barriers: restrict the ability to stay calm, make decisions.
- Program barriers: restrict access to participation in emergency planning.
- Transportation barriers: restrict access to appropriate, reliable transportation.
- Economic barriers: restrict access to services (food, housing, evacuation).

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## Additional Barriers

- Security measures put in place following a disaster can create barriers for people with special needs by:
- Blocking areas, which prevents travel through or around a building or neighborhood (wheelchair, 02, service animal)
- Separating a person from his/her assistance device
- Requiring a person with limited mobility to stand for a wand examination

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## Regular Practice and Drills

- Practicing evacuation plans and procedures is very important and should include people with disabilities.
- 3 types of activities:
- Walk through procedures
- Announce drills
- Surprise drills

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## Walk Through Procedures

- Walk through procedures can be used to practice evacuation techniques, methods of transferring in and out of evacuation devices, carrying techniques, use of evacuation devices, and use of two-way communication systems in areas of rescue.
- Report safety hazards, familiarize service animals, and equipment uses.

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## Announced Drills

- Keeps employees prepared.
- Multiagency
- After each drill, gather management and participants to evaluate the effectiveness of the drill.
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the plan.
- Communicating emergency information to people with vision or hearing disabilities.

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## Surprised Drills

- Surprise drills should be used infrequently.
- 2-3 times a year.
- Realistic situations.
- Performance of surprise drills should also be evaluated and feedback given to all participants.
- Typically, revisions and updates to evacuation plans need to be made after these evaluations.

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## Evacuation Devices

- Evacuation devices can assist in the transport of persons with special needs down stairways and out of buildings that may be under threat of a hazard.

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## Evacuation Assistance

- Whether a special need is permanent or temporary, each person should be consulted about their specific needs and how best to provide assistance.

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## Evacuation Routes

- Alarms are accessible to all workers or visitors in the building.
- Evacuation routes are accessible and evacuation devices are in place and employees are trained in their use.
- Evacuation routes and exits are well lit and clearly marked visually and in Braille.
- Emergency lighting is installed in case of a power outage.
- Evacuation routes are clear and unobstructed at all times.

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## Community Evacuation

- Exiting from homes and buildings
- Providing alternate destinations that can accommodate special needs
- Providing appropriate, reliable, and accessible transportation support and alternate evacuation routes
- Bringing special equipment and service animals

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## Transfer Trauma

- Evacuations can be confusing and disorientating for everyone.
- A person who is already feeling vulnerable due to health, sensory, mobility, and cognitive changes may be at risk of experiencing transfer trauma.
- Transfer trauma is more likely to occur with the elderly, people with medical conditions, and people with mental illnesses.
- You can support people with special needs by providing verbal reassurance and information to help orient them to new surroundings.

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## Returning Home After the Evacuation

- Evacuation plans need to go beyond evacuating from a building and address how people will get back home.
- The emergency may impact local transportation systems, cause roads to close, or make maneuvering roads and sidewalks difficult.

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## Sheltering

- The most ideal shelter in an emergency is one's own home.
- Temporary shelters are opened for those who cannot safely remain in their homes due to an emergency.
- Shelters have many inconveniences and do not always adequately accommodate persons with special needs.

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## What is Sheltering?

- When emergencies or disasters occur, people will be directed to seek safe refuge.
- Sheltering is often the most critical element in protecting yourself and others in times of disasters.
- Sheltering can be either short or long term depending on the emergency.
- Sheltering may be in place or seeking refuge outside the affected area.

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## Sheltering-In-Place

- Remaining where you are during an emergency
- Little time to react to disaster
- Short-Term or long-term
- Need emergency supplies when sheltering in place

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## Safe Rooms

- Safe rooms, a form of sheltering-in-place, are a protective measure against hazards particularly tornadoes, hurricanes, and high winds.
- Several forms:
  - An interior room away from windows, doors, and outside walls.
  - An underground space created beneath the floor, such as a cellar or basement.
  - A room specifically designed and constructed as shelter space.

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## Shelters Outside of Affected Areas

- Family member or friend's house...etc.
- Public shelter "a lifeboat—not a cruise"
  - General population (pre-identified, building standards, trained staff)
  - Shelters of last resort (not pre-assigned, limited facilities)
  - Special Needs shelters
    - People who require special accommodations, medical assistance, or observation

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## Shelter Planning

- Emergency Management: work closely with the special needs support system to address accessibility and accommodation in shelter plans.
- Special Needs Organizations: develop shelter plans that cover transportation, sheltering-in-place, or providing care to clients in a shelter.
- Individuals: Plan for what they may need to bring to a shelter or how they can make a stay in a shelter more comfortable.

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## Advocate for Accommodations

- Persons with special needs who seek refuge in a shelter need to be strong self-advocates.
- Advocates and persons with special needs can offer to provide valuable guidance to emergency management on how to make shelters accessible and livable for the special needs populations.

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## Getting to Shelters

- When transportation assistance is needed by individuals with special needs, some jurisdictions are able to provide transportation to special needs shelters.
- When transportation assistance is not needed, transportation is the responsibility of the individual.

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## Service Animals & Assistance Devices

- A person with a disability should NEVER be separated from his or her service animal.
- Persons with disabilities should not be separated from any type of assistive device in a shelter.
- Shelter staff should be educated on working with people with disabilities.

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### Your Mission: Create a Dog Tag "Aurora's Tag"

- ID tag on collar reads:
  - Aurora
  - 954.975.7550  
(home/land line)




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### Is That Sufficient?




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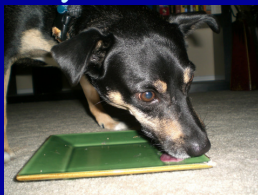
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### ID Needs More Information & Redundancy

- Aurora Ferrigno-Muccio
- Full Address
- Mobile Number
- Vet's Number
- While initial tag was adequate, it would not be helpful during a disaster.




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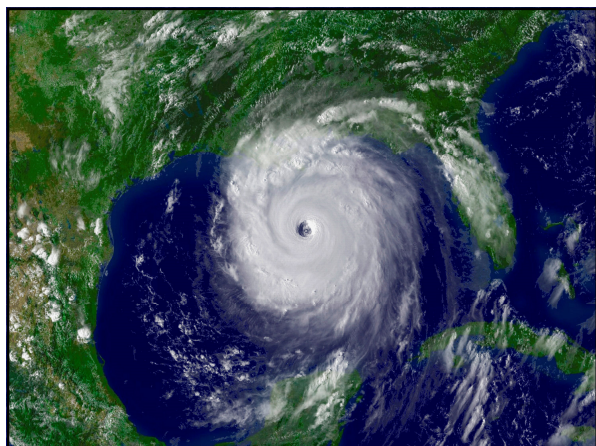
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### Real Life Implications: Hurricane Katrina

- Of the more than 1,300+ people who died because of Hurricane Katrina, more than 70% were over age 60.
- New Orleans has one of the largest diabetic populations in South
  - People fled without shoes
  - Medicare allows only one pair per year
  - Many patients with diabetes developed wounds (skin ulcers to limb amputations)

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### Vulnerability

- Hurricane Katrina
  - 74% of deaths were adults > 60 years
  - 50% of deaths >75 years
- Older patients comprised less than 12% of the New Orleans population

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## Vulnerability

- EF-5 Tornado Joplin, MO
  - More than a third of those who died were 65 or older
  - “232 Still Missing in Joplin 4 Days After Tornado – Nearly Half Are Seniors”

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## New York 9/11

- Many homebound frail elderly affected
  - Isolated in high rise apartments
  - No access to services (caregivers, meals, pharmacy deliveries)
  - Found by others after extended periods up to a week
  - Community service providers unable to access client information on computers

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## Why are Older Patients so Vulnerable?

- More susceptible to injury and subsequent illness related to the disaster
  - Physiologic changes of aging

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## Why are Older Patients so Vulnerable?

- Increased co-morbidity burden
  - Less physiologic reserve
  - More potential to decompensate under stress
  - Loss of medications
  - Loss of continuity of care

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### Why are Older Patients so Vulnerable?

- Pre-existing physical impairments
  - Relocating away from dangerous environment
  - Relocating to shelter or medical facility
  - Loss of assistive devices

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### Why are Older Patients so Vulnerable?

- Cognitive Impairment
  - Large proportion undiagnosed/unrecognized
  - Impaired comprehension and decision making
  - Increased potential to decompensate
  - Risk of abuse
    - Financial predators

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### Why are Older Patients so Vulnerable?

**We are not prepared to deal with the unique needs of older patients in disaster settings**

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"When I was a boy of fourteen,  
my father was so ignorant I could  
hardly stand to have the old man  
around. But when I got to be  
twenty-one, I was astonished at  
how much the old man had  
learned in seven years."

*Mark Twain*

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## Katrina: The Houston Astrodome

" HE WHO IS PREPARED HAS WON HALF THE BATTLE "




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## Houston Astrodome

- Sheltered large number of evacuees
- Provisions for food, clothing, medical services, access to social services, and additional assistance
  - Medical clinic on-site

So what was the problem?

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## What Went Wrong?

- “Provide the resource and they will come if they need it”

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## What Went Wrong?




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## What Went Wrong?




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## Problems

- Older adults with impairments unable to seek resources
  - Many were alone without family to advocate for them

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## Problems

- No comprehensive registration or tracking process for evacuees
  - Who is in the shelter and what are there needs?
  - Created “first found first served” environment without regard to severity of need

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## Problems

- No mechanism to identify those in need of ADL assistance
- No mechanism to identify those in need of medical care
  - Services readily available on site

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## Problems

- Lack of expertise in dealing with geriatric specific problems

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## Special Needs/Vulnerable Populations

- High risk of mortality/morbidity during disaster due to mobility, transportation, social network, and illness (O2 dependent) issues.



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## Hurricane Wilma, October 2005 Example #1

- No electricity
- No working phone
- No automobile
- No generator
- You are geographically isolated
- Your family member enters into diabetic stupor
- What do you do?



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## Hurricane Wilma, October 2005

## Example #2

- No electricity
- No working phone
- No generator
- No automobile
- Pharmacies have been closed for 3 days
- Family member runs out of asthma medication and is experiencing breathing distress
- What do you do?




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## Solutions

- Gerontological professionals recognized these problems and self-organized
  - Rapid screening process developed to identify problems and triage to assistance
  - Resulted in the SWiFT tool

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## Solutions

- SWiFT tool
  - Seniors Without Families Triage
  - Administered by a two person team
    - social worker with physician or nurse
  - Triage to one of three levels

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Name:		DOB:	
DO YOU HAVE FAMILY OR FRIENDS WITH YOU HERE?		Y	N
Level 1: Health/Mental Health Priorities		Confirmed? Y N	
<p>A. Do you have any of the following medical problems:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Diabetes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Heart disease</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N High blood pressure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Memory</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p> <p>Note:</p> <p>B. Do you take medicine? <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N</p> <p>C. Do you have your medicine? <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N</p> <p>If "No", treat as Level 1</p> <p>E. Name 3 ordinary items and have them repeat them, for example, "apple, table, penny."</p>		<p>C. Do you need someone to help you with:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Walking</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Eating</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Bathing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Dressing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Toileting</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Medication administration</p> <p>Any checks, treat as Level 1</p> <p>D. Do you use something to help you get around:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Cane</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Walker</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Wheel chair</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Bath Bench</p>	
GOES TO SOCIAL WORK BROTHERS MEDICAL CLINIC		G. Ask them to repeat the three items you previously mentioned.	
D. Where are you right now?		F. What year is it?	
If senior cannot or does not answer correctly treat as Level 1		If senior cannot/does not answer correctly treat as Level 1	
Level 2: Case Management Needs		C. Income/Entitlements	
IS REFERRED TO A CASE MANAGER		<p>Are you on:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Medicare</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Medicaid</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N SSI</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Social Security</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Food Stamps</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N VA Benefits</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Section 8 housing funds</p> <p>Do you have your documents?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	
Level 3: Only needs to be linked to family or friends		B. Names: _____	
DIRECTED TO RED CROSS VOLUNTEER		Relationship: _____	
		Location: _____	
		WHERE IS THE SENIOR LOCATED?	

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## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- The goal of this program is to move frail seniors who do not have family or friends to advocate for them to a more suitable environment than the current shelter.
- We do not want to separate families; therefore, we must confirm by asking the senior who is mentally intact or the Red Cross or other collateral sources.
- The tool is to be employed by social service professionals, nurses, nurse practitioners or physicians.
- If you are in the shelter, please attach a map of the shelter and circle the senior's location, and work with existing procedures of the shelter.
- If there is any doubt about the medical condition, senior should be referred to a medical professional.

**Please circle on the form one of the following levels:**

Level 1 – Senior requires placement in a more suitable facility, such as a nursing home, personal care home, or assisted living.

Level 2 – Senior needs case management assistance to have needs met. Will refer to local agency for help.

Level 3 – Senior needs to be directed to appropriate Red Cross Services.

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# SWiFT

- Required “fine tuning” the infrastructure to accommodate the needs of the program
  - Establishing a communication network within the existing network
  - Developing an “after the fact” registration process
  - Identifying available resources and facilities for linkage of care

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## SWiFT

- Older individuals identified and linked to appropriate services
- Worked with the Red Cross to record all patient dispositions
- Color coded wrist bands given for categorization
  - Shows who has been assessed

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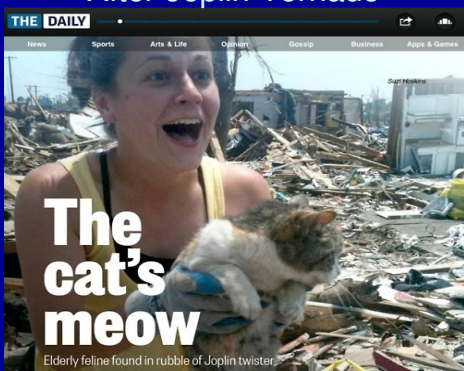
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## "Elderly Cat Found Alive Weeks After Joplin Tornado"



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