

NOTES:

NAME:

DATE:



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**PATH TO
DISASTER
READINESS**



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ALTERNATIVE FORMATS OF THIS DOCUMENT ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

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ASSISTANT'S GUIDE

ASSISTANT'S GUIDE FOR

PATH TO DISASTER READINESS

Please read the following before you begin assisting others to use Path to Disaster Readiness planning booklet.

The *Path to Disaster Readiness* planning booklet provides a framework for an active planning process to help the people you support become better prepared for a disaster. The *Path* is designed to help people with disabilities or other special needs (all sorts of people besides those with a disability may have special needs in a disaster: an elderly couple, a person who doesn't speak English, small children away from their parents, families with very limited resources, and many others). Whoever you work with will benefit if you support them in a regular planning process. The purpose of the process is to engage people in planning and practice, not just to give them information and leave the rest up to them. You can start helping them practice and plan how to shelter at home or evacuate to a different location. Your responsibility is to bring up disaster readiness planning each time you visit, engage the people you assist in conversations about readiness, and ask them to take action to improve their readiness. You don't have to cover everything at once; start with the first segments of the *planning booklet*, and continue on during your next visit. The *Path* will support a long term process of planning.

WHAT TO DO AT EACH STAGE OF PATH TO DISASTER READINESS.

AS YOU BEGIN

Be sure they notice where the path starts and how it runs up and down and across the pages. The red line is there to help you show how the path goes. Everything included in the pictures here is a result of recommendations from emergency planners or people very experienced with special needs. *Path to Disaster Readiness* includes only what is needed to make a good start on disaster readiness planning, but your regular support is crucial if the people you work with are actually going to do anything.

STEP 1: WHAT DISASTERS?



Begin with checking off what events could happen or have happened where the people you assist live. Don't tell them what could happen; ask what they think is likely to happen. This is a way to get them involved in the planning process by discussing what event is likely to occur. They or you can make a check in the box attached to each picture if you and they think it is a threat that is likely to actually happen someday. As part of your conversation, you could also ask if there are other disasters that could happen in this area. You should also explain where it says "flu" it means a widespread flu outbreak or even a deadly pandemic overwhelming normal medical resources.

You don't have to know everything -- you are getting them started on a process of paying attention to what might happen and then taking steps to prepare themselves. Later you can suggest websites or other sources of information about hurricanes or other catastrophic events. If you are interested in getting more information for yourself, you can begin with the web sites listed on the back of the Path. Remember, don't frighten them. Be matter-of-fact about what might happen.

STEP 2: MY CONCERNS



At this point, ask them what their personal concerns are in a disaster. Suggest writing down a list of what they would be concerned about, or write it for them. Don't rush them. Talk with them about how they can prepare to take care of whatever they are concerned about. Don't worry if you think they have left out something you believe is important (like personal safety). What matters here is they have started considering what they care about in a disaster.

If they ask you what you think, respond according to what you know about them. If they were told to remain in their home for a week without power or visitors, what would they need? Could they care for themselves? On the other hand, suppose they had to leave? Do they have their own transportation? Would they need relatives or someone else to drive them? Do they have family and/or friends nearby? Are they active members of an organization (like a church) which has plans to help people in emergencies?

When you have discussed their concerns, or actually produced a list, you can continue to the next step where you and the individual will start to identify practical steps to take to manage those concerns.

STEP 3: PEOPLE WHO CAN HELP



This is a very important step in the planning process. Effective disaster readiness is hard for some individuals to achieve. Individuals should expect they may often need help from others and they should also provide help to others if they can. They need to prepare together with family or with friends, neighbors, and the organizations they belong to. Ask the people you assist if they belong to an advocacy group, faith organization, community or other association. Suggest they try to get these groups to prepare for disasters since responders may be unable to rescue them if conditions get really bad for a large area.

STEP 4: HOW YOU GET INFORMATION AND WARNINGS



These next two sections are all about communication. Many experts say this is the most important part of preparedness and response. This step focuses on getting official information, especially a warning indicating something is happening. Warnings are crucial for people who have difficulty seeing, hearing or understanding such messages on TV or radio. The pictures show the main ways information and warnings are spread. The radio has a handle, or crank. This represents a radio you can crank to recharge the batteries when the power is out. *Note; This set of pictures is followed in the path by a plus sign to show it is closely connected to the next set, which emphasizes ways to stay in touch with people.*

STEP 5: AND STAY IN TOUCH



It is important to emphasize ways to stay in touch with family, friends and organizations which can help. The cell phone is shown because it is a phone you can take with you if you have to leave. The wall phone is shown because it will work without batteries when the power is out. When cell phone towers are overwhelmed with voice messages, text messages may still get through. You should be sure the people you assist practice sending text messages if they have cell phones. If they don't have a cell phone, encourage them to try to get one. People who are deaf use pagers or other text alerting devices to communicate with others.

The last picture, showing people meeting, refers to an important planning step often forgotten. Arrange a place to meet in case all communication is out. It is good to have fall-back locations, in case the first meeting place is not reachable or is in a dangerous place. It is also good to have an out of state person to contact -- sometimes local calls or messaging is impossible, but calls out of state may go through. Advice about communication is available on the web or through the resources listed on the Path.

STEP 6: WHAT YOU NEED TO SHELTER AT HOME AND IF YOU HAVE TO EVACUATE



These two sections are about equipment, supplies, and identification which can make a big difference if people have to shelter in place or evacuate. The main point is what the people you assist do with these supplies, not just having them. People have to practice using a "Go-Kit" for it to do them the most good. They have to keep track of food, water, and other supplies, and use and replace them as necessary. Just as an unpracticed plan does little good, some ignored supplies in a closet do not make one ready for a disaster.

For both evacuating your home and sheltering at home, the food, water, medications, flashlight, first aid kit, and other supplies are very useful. When you need to evacuate it is important to take money or credit cards, picture ID, other legal papers, prescriptions and medical insurance cards, service animal or pet supplies, and a cell phone and charger. When leaving they should also leave behind a note saying where they are going or giving

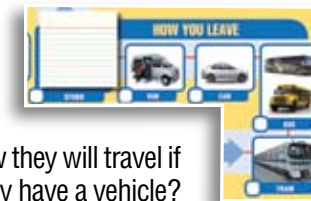
other information to those who might come looking for them.

There are many lists of such supplies available online, but they have to be adapted to the needs of the people you work with. For example, a gallon of water a day per person is recommended for sheltering in place. Gallon bottles are easier to store for sheltering at home, but still may be difficult for some people to manage. General advice has to be adapted to the individual's needs.

Getting supplies together is a good task to suggest to people. If they don't have much money, ask them to get and store a few items at a time. Urge them to keep talking with family or friends about getting and using such supplies. Remind them to talk to people in an organization they belong to about supplies and equipment. For example, maybe another member of their faith-based organization will donate these items. Perhaps the church, mosque, or synagogue can get a discount and buy a crank radio or other items for members of the congregation. If the organization gets involved in disaster readiness planning, particular questions about supplies can be handled as the planning goes along.

STEP 7: HOW YOU LEAVE

Notice the path continues along the bottom of the next page and then climbs up to the top of the page. This section is meant to help you discuss how they will travel if they have to leave. Do they drive? Do they have a vehicle? Do they regularly leave town? Do they know more than one way out in case roads are blocked? Can their faith organization or other group provide transportation if needed? Does the organization practice doing that? Does it have its own bus? Remember the people you assist should actually practice leaving town, if possible. Be sure to advise them in an actual disaster they may have to follow directions and routes given to them by the authorities.

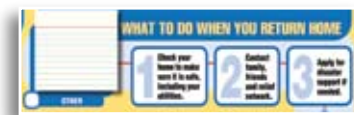


STEP 8: WHERE YOU GO



Most public shelters only operate for a few hours or days before they are closed and people are returned to their home or intermediate shelters like hotels or rental units if their home is not safe. Sometimes people shelter with family or friends. With advance readiness, people can avoid going to public shelters, instead staying with family or friends. For some people with special needs, a public shelter may be inconvenient, uncomfortable, or may not meet their medical needs -- especially if they have to stay there longer than a day. Help the people you assist plan and practice in advance.

STEP 9: WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU RETURN HOME



When people come back after evacuating from their home, they should check the building for damage and be especially cautious around gas and power lines. It is best to have utility service workers turn on the gas, water and electric power if these have been turned off. After the people you assist have returned home they should contact their family, friends and support networks to let them know they are back and where they can be contacted. Finally, after they have evaluated their home for damage, they should contact their insurance company and apply for disaster assistance if needed.