Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation

Disaster Planning: Implications for Supervised Visitation Programming

Tornadoes

Pandemics

Lockdowns

Shootings

Hurricanes

Fires & Wildfires

Emergencies

Floods

Disaster Planning: Implications for Supervised Visitation Programming

The Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation has compiled this toolkit to encourage Florida's supervised visitation programs to consider how a disaster could affect the operations, clients, and personnel of the program. It also presents a list of considerations for preparation and response to disasters.

Part 1: What is a Disaster?

Disasters can cause catastrophic loss of life and physical destruction. With the presence of new disasters, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical for social service agencies, including supervised visitation programs, to be prepared for what may happen. During a disaster, things move very quickly and every minute can count. When social service agencies do not have comprehensive disaster plans, clients may be impacted negatively. Lapses in service can cause disruption to family systems that rely on supervised visitation for building strong families. Further, employees can be unsure of their responsibilities during a crisis, creating confusion for the operation of the program.

While not every disaster results in catastrophe, any disaster can have a lasting emotional impact on those involved, including employees, clients, children, and communities. It is crucial to remember that when a disaster strikes, it exacerbates pre-existing trauma-- including individual victimization and the trauma that results from chronic neighborhood violence, poverty, and lack of resources. Following disasters, many communities are left in shock and dealing with emotional distress for months and even years later. Social service programs may experience disruption of services during severe disasters. Some examples of disasters are:

Natural Disasters

- Agricultural diseases and pests
- Damaging winds (tornadoes, etc.)
- Drought and water shortage
- Earthquake
- Emergency disease (pandemic)
- Extreme heat and cold
- Floods and flash floods
- Hurricanes and tropical storms
- Landslides
- Severe storms
- Tornadoes
- Tsunamis
- Wildfire
- Sinkholes

Man-Made and Technological Disasters

- Hazardous materials
- Power outages
- Nuclear power plant
- Radiological emergencies
- Chemical or biological threat
- Cyberattacks
- Mass violence and trauma

Examples of Disasters

Flooding and Flash Floods

One of the most common hazards in the US, flooding is an increasingly occurring disaster. Floods can cause minor damage (power outages, traffic delays, intersection blockage) or major damage to civilization (building damage, death, disruption to essential services). Water can cause many pathogens, diseases, and illnesses wreaking havoc on individuals affected by flooding. Standing water following a flood is a breeding ground for mosquitoes increasing the odds of spreading diseases like Zika and West Nile Virus. Depending on the level of ground erosion caused by flooding groundwater may become contaminated and leave homes without safe drinking water.

When flooding occurs without warning during heavy rains, when dams or levees break, or during a tidal surge, it can be especially dangerous. Rapidly moving water can cause drowning deaths and the destruction of property. People and property (vehicles, outdoor furniture, trees) can easily be swept away and become a danger to those around.

(American Academy of Pediatrics, 2021b)

Hurricanes

Each year, Florida experiences hurricane season. Depending on the severity of the storm areas may experience heavy rainfall, tornadoes, flooding, high winds, and storm surge. Some hurricanes allow for a few days of preparation prior to landfall, while others require immediate evaluation upon development.

Supplies may become diminished as a storm approaches, disrupting an individual's ability to prepare effectively at the last minute. Gas, food, and supplies may be out of stock or have limits as a storm approaches. Last-minute evacuation, without preparation, can lead to individuals forgetting important documents and supplies at home. If individuals are unable to evacuate but are not well-prepared, they may be stranded without life-sustaining supplies like fresh water, non-perishable foods, and appropriate technology (i.e., batteries, radio, flashlights, chargers).

(American Academy of Pediatrics, 2021a)
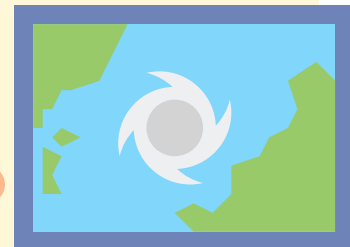
Examples of Disasters

Mass Shootings

Over the past few years, mass shootings have become more frequent in the United States. Mass shootings can occur anywhere at any time, making it difficult to prepare for them. Schools and public shopping centers are common spaces where mass shootings occur. Mass shootings are often defined as shootings that involve the shooting of four or more people in a single incident in a public place, at the same time (Metzl & MacLeish, 2015). There is no single definition of mass shootings, but it often excludes family or crime-related violence.

Individuals involved in the mass shooting (i.e., people who are physically present) may experience traumatic shock following the event or have life-threatening injuries. Those who are not present for the shooting may experience indirect trauma from hearing about it on the news or knowing someone who was directly impacted. As with terrorism, the communities in which mass shootings occur are impacted by fear and anxiety, in addition to the individuals who are injured or killed. Individuals may feel anxiety and apprehension about going into public places, disrupting their ability to participate in day-to-day activities and responsibilities. Additionally, following a school shooting, students may be unable to return to school due to shutdowns or PTSD associated with the physical space. The National Center for PTSD estimates 28% of people who witness a mass shooting develop PTSD and ⅓ develop acute stress disorder (Novotney, 2018).

Due to media, online forums, and social networking, the emotional impact of a traumatic event can spread beyond the community very quickly. This rapid spread can lead to mass trauma and have large-scale impacts on the mental health of an entire state or country.

Cyber Attacks/Hacking

As society becomes more reliant on technology we will see more cyberattacks and hacking. Most governments receive daily threats of cyber-attacks and disruption of usage. It is estimated between 80 and 90 million cyber-related issues annually. Attacks can be minor, only impacting independent computer systems and basic functions, or they can be major, disrupting critical infrastructures such as water, power, and transportation systems.

Attacks can come in a variety of forms including "hacktivism," cyber espionage, state-sponsored attacks, or amateur hacking. While it may seem "amateur" hacking would have little impact, they have the potential to cause utility outages, leak sensitive data, and even cause physical destruction. Unlike physical attacks, cyber hacking can have a massive impact with a simple hacking whereas a physical attack would require extensive power to wield a large impact.

A recent example of a cyber attack that had a tangible effect was the hack of the Colonial Pipeline Co. on April 29, 2021 (Turton & Mehrotra, 2021). After receiving a digital ransom note via a computer in the Colonial's control room, an operations supervisor elected to shut down the pipeline while trying to contain the hack. The hackers made off with 100 gigabytes of data and threatened to leak it unless the ransom was paid. Shortly thereafter, Colonial paid the hackers a $4.4 million ransom. The shutdown of the pipeline resulted in shortages of gas, higher fuel prices, and long lines across gas stations on the East coast of the United States.

https://www.seattle.gov/emergency-management/hazards/cyber-attack-and-disruption

Pandemics

The worldwide pandemic which swept across the entire world left a long-lasting impact on the day-to-day operations of people and their communities. Pandemics occur when a new disease, such as a mutation of influenza spreads across the world. Until treatment and prevention are developed, pandemics can cause mass illness and death. Pandemics are not defined by their growth rate, or how quickly they spread, but rather by the spread itself. Once a disease reaches multiple countries a pandemic is declared.

Early into the pandemic, nearly every business and government entity shut down. Millions were unable to access basic services, due to social distancing guidelines in order to mitigate the spread of the virus. Court systems virtually shut down for months, leaving supervised visitation and custody cases in limbo.

# Impact on Emotional Health and Physical Health

Emotional Health

People who have lived through a disaster may experience emotional distress. Due to the traumatic nature of disasters, many individuals will experience the presence of feelings like anxiety, depression, constant worrying, and general unrest. While some individuals may be able to "bounce back" after experiencing trauma, others may not be able to. Social service agencies can support these victims through resources such as counseling and community resources. Further, social service agencies may be at risk without prevention policies for disaster planning. When a disaster happens these agencies will be at a higher risk for disruption of services and remain unavailable longer.

(Substance Abuse and Mental Health, n.d.)

Physical Impact (Disruption to Services)

Disasters may have an impact that disrupts a parent or guardian's ability to transport a child to in-person visitation with the other parent.

Parents may mitigate disruption through parenting plan provisions that outline how to respond in the event of an emergency while still complying with a court order. See the section on parenting plan provisions for more information.
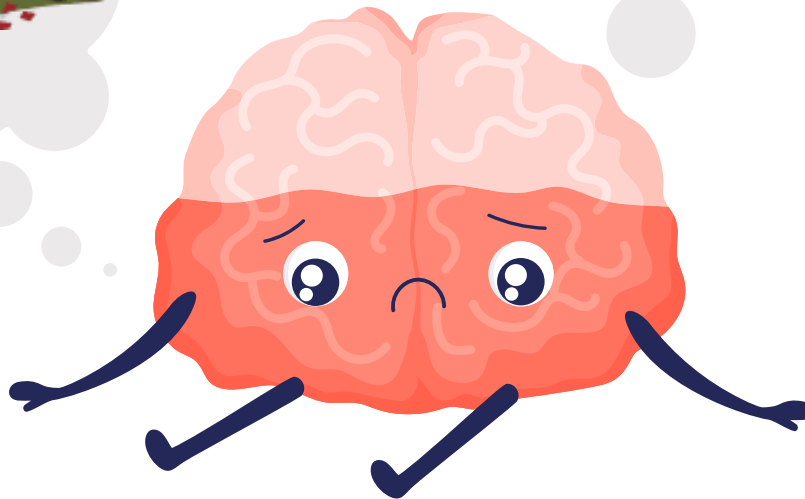
Part 2: Disaster Preparation

We have compiled some examples of other agencies' policies, procedures, and strategies for planning for disasters and reducing the gaps in service during a disaster. Disaster Preparedness can be broken into three parts: planning, responding, and recovering. Each part is important for creating a quick and effective plan which protects employees and the families they serve.

Planning

Being prepared at all levels is important to plan for a disaster. Having a good plan ahead of the disaster will make responding to the disaster much easier. Here are some questions to guide your planning:

Developing an Emergency Plan

Ready.gov outlines how to make a plan for preparing for disasters.

1. Put a plan together by discussing the questions below with your family, friends, or household to start your emergency plan.
2. Consider specific needs in your household
3. Fill out a Family Emergency Plan

Parenting Plan Provisions

Parenting plans should include provisions for emergencies, including disasters. In the case of a hurricane or other disaster parenting plans should be able to account for custody arrangements during an emergency. This includes how supervised visitations will be performed when in-person visits are not feasible due to safety. In the appendix we have provided a sample court order which includes a provision allowing supervised visitation to transition to virtual visitation in the event of a disruption. We recommend outlining specific steps each parent would like taken in the event of a disaster.

Parents should have an emergency parenting plan. Emergency parenting plans should include:

- Which parent will have physical residency of the child during an emergency? Will parenting time still be shared? This issue affects supervised visitation programs because they may have to transition to virtual visitation for the parent who has supervised parenting time/visitation.
- How will care be provided to the child(ren)?
- Where will the child(ren) live?
- When will each parent see the child(ren) and how will time be spent?
- How will the cost of care for the child(ren) be divided?
- How and will the parent unable to see the child(ren) due to the emergency be "owed time"? Is the visitation program able to "make up" visits?

Agency Planning

1 Programming

- What are our day-to-day activities and services?
- Who are essential workers?
- What are essential services?
- If the agency offices are rendered unusable, where will the base of operations be? How will staff be notified? How will the new location affect operations?
- How will the agency ensure that critical services and supports (e.g., mental health and physical health, housing) are provided to children and families without interruption? How will the agency respond to the need for additional services and support both during and after the disaster?
- How will the agency assist families and youth involved with child welfare to develop their own disaster plans? How will the agency ensure families providing care to children have the documentation necessary to care for children while displaced (e.g., birth certificates, custody orders placing children in State custody, documentation of authority to make emergency care decisions for the child, health insurance documents)?
- How will the agency's plan incorporate the needs of populations with particular needs, such as immigrants and refugees or children with special needs?

2 Communication

- What are the most effective ways to convey changes during a disaster?
- How can we make our changes known to clients prior to a disaster?
- How can we prepare our clients with our action plan in case of a disaster?
- Which individuals (both internal and external to the agency) and events can activate the disaster plan?
- Who is responsible for specific tasks prior to, during, and after a disaster? What is the chain of command?
- How will agency staff communicate with each other? With families? With other agencies (both in and outside of the agency's jurisdiction)? With the media? What methods (e.g., walkie-talkies, toll-free numbers, 800 MHz radio systems) are available to assist with communication?
- How can regular communications (e.g., mail, e-mail) be rerouted during and after the emergency?

3 Funding
- How will agency operations be funded during a disaster? How will agency staff and contractors receive salaries or reimbursements? How will families receive regular foster care, adoption, or other payments? How can the agency support families' emergency needs?

4 Staff
- How will the agency support staff affected by the disaster (both professionally and personally)? How will the agency help staff develop their own personal disaster plans?
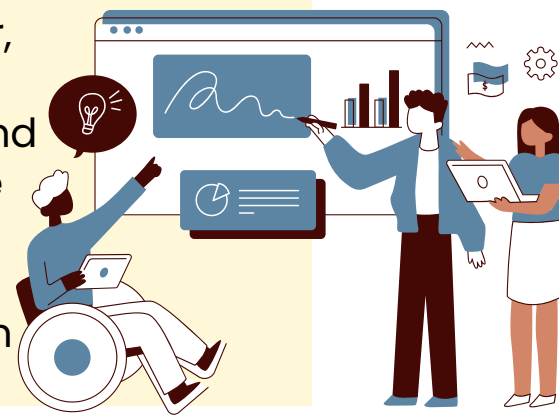
5 Organization
- How can files, including information about how to communicate with or locate resource families, be preserved and accessed? How should recordkeeping continue during and after the disaster? What is the agency's backup data system and where is it located? How will any data system outages affect the use of mobile technology (e.g., tablets for recordkeeping in the field)?
- How is the agency expected to complement and coordinate with other State or other local disaster plans?

(The Child Information Gateway, 2016)

The Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-288) mandates State child welfare agencies to develop disaster plans that include the following:

- Identify, locate, and continue the availability of services for children under State care or supervision who are displaced or adversely affected by a disaster
- Respond, as appropriate, to new child welfare cases in areas adversely affected by a disaster, and provide services in those cases
- Remain in communication with caseworkers and other essential child welfare personnel who are displaced because of a disaster
- Preserve essential program records
- Coordinate services and share information with other States

Part 3: Creating a Business Continuity Plan

Below are essential questions to consider and address when creating a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) to ensure a plan that identifies all risk areas so the organization's structure, operations, employees, and clients' well-being are addressed during and after a disaster.

Business Continuity Assessment Analysis

Systems and Infrastructure

- Is your organization able to operate without any of the following: computers, internet access, digital software, printer, fax machines, digital files, or special equipment (e.g., credit card readers, telecommunication, transportation)?

- Can the organization function without the following: power, gas, water, internet, servers, software, or telecommunication?

- Can you continue your organization's operation and communication without accessing the damaged building or materials?

- Does your organization have an updated directory of emergency rescue resources and government entities to contact in case of emergencies accessible to all departments?

- Does your organization have an established procedure for backing up or copying essential data and documents? If so, how often is this procedure conducted?

- How will your organization maintain recordkeeping during and after the disaster?

- Has your organization identified viable hazards to the operations and clients you serve (e.g., fire, explosion, natural threats, terrorism, workplace violence, pandemic disease, utility outage, mechanical breakdown, cyber attack?

Staff/Clients/Families/Suppliers

- Is your organization able to meet payroll if the business income is interrupted? If yes, how long and what are the methods of payment.

- Is your organization able to maintain effective communication with clients and families? If yes, how so?

- Are your employees able to commute to work?

- Is your organization prepared to transition to a virtual setting?

- Does your organization have a backup facility reserved as a disaster recovery site?

- Does your organization ensure to educate staff and personnel on adequate actions to take during and after an emergency situation (e.g., cyber security hacks, fire, earthquake, tornado, or active shooter drills)?

- Does your organization have supplemental resources and aid to provide to staff and clients during and after disasters (e.g., additional financial assistance, first-aid kits, materials, physical health, or mental health)?

- How will your organization communicate or track clients and families who are displaced or unreachable during a disaster?

Impact on Your Organization

- Is your organization facility easily accessible to the public, clients, and employees (e.g., parking)?

- Is there a recovery communication plan that ensures communication status with employees, clients, partner organizations, and vendors during recovery?

- Can your organization provide resources to clients during recovery efforts to ensure safety and well-being? If so, how?

- How will agency operations be funded during a disaster?

- Can your organization survive losses if closed and/or inaccessible for a period of 3 to 7 days?

Operations

- During recovery, is there an established set of priorities that your organization will focus on? If so, what are your targeted priorities, and is there designated leadership that will address these priorities?

- Are your suppliers and/or partner organizations able to continue operations without resupply of materials or resources?

- Will you still have access to all of your clients after the disaster?

(Federal Alliance for Safe Homes, n.d.)

Resources and Action Steps to Develop a Continuity Plan

1

Business Impact Analysis

- Develop questionnaire
- Conduct workshop to instruct business function and process managers on how to complete the BIA
- Receive completed BIA questionnaire forms
- Review BIA questionnaires
- Conduct follow-up interviews to validate the information and fill any information gaps

2

Recovery Strategies

- Identify and document resource requirements based on BIAs
- Conduct gap analysis to determine gaps between recovery requirements and current capabilities
- Explore recovery strategy options
- Select recovery strategies with management approval
- Implement strategies

3

Plan Development

- Develop plan framework
- Organize recovery teams
- Develop Relocation Plans
- Write business continuity and IT disaster recovery procedures
- Document manual workarounds
- Assemble plan; validate; gain management approval

4

Testing and Exercises

- Develop testing, exercise, and maintenance requirements
- Conduct training for the business continuity team
- Conduct orientation exercises
- Conduct testing and document test results
- Update BCP to incorporate lessons learned from testing and exercises

1 Business Impact Analysis

The questions provided for consideration in the Business Continuity Assessment Analysis will allow your organization to begin the initial steps in creating your Business Continuity Plan (BCP) impact analysis. The impact analysis will enable organizations to identify critical business functions and processes and how the organization will manage and address disruptions caused by disasters and emergencies. When conducting your impact analysis, evaluating potential disasters your organization may be prone to experiencing is essential when assessing. Below are examples of possible types of disasters.

Types of Disasters

(Capacity Building Center for States, 2021)

Natural Disasters	Human-Caused Disasters	Medical Disasters
- Hurricanes - Tornadoes - Floods - Droughts - Tsunamis - Volcanic eruptions - Fires - Extreme temperatures - Winter/ice storms - Earthquakes - Landslides	- Terrorist attacks - Technological disruption (e.g., widespread electronic equipment breakdown, hacking, network disruptions, or electrical power outages) - War or armed conflict - Disruptions to critical community systems (e.g., water disruptions or contamination) - Workplace violence	Pandemic or epidemic outbreaks (e.g., swine, flu, Ebola, COVID-19)

2 Recovery Strategies

Recovery strategies allow managers and the organization's leadership teams to identify viable options and gaps that need to be addressed before a disaster strikes. Below is a resource titled The Business Continuity Resource Requirements Worksheet that allows organizations to identify resources needed to continue operations and recovery strategies.

https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/business-continuity-resource-worksheet.pdf

3 Plan Development

After your organization has identified viable resources, create a business continuity plan (BCP) that includes detailed procedures and logistical execution of how all recovery strategies will be implemented.

The template below demonstrates an example of a business continuity plan that your organization can utilize to organize and mobilize team member roles and responsibilities during and after a disaster occurs.
https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/business-continuity-plan.pdf
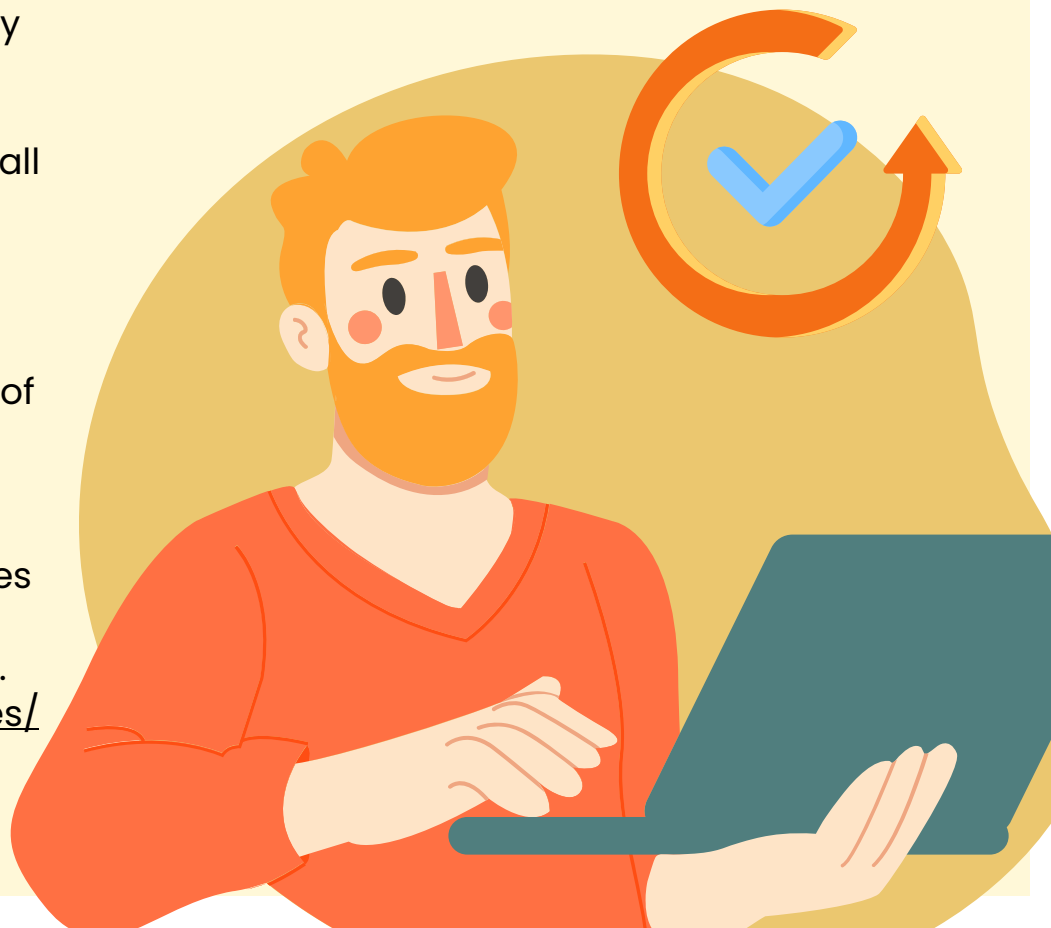
Additional Resources to Develop a Business Continuity Plan

Business Guide:

This source form the U.S Small Business Administration provides information on how businesses can prepare for disaster by providing toolkits and checklist guides to begin effective safety planning.

https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/manage-your-business/prepare-emergencies

Disaster Planning for Child Welfare Agencies:

This factsheet provides child welfare agencies with tools and information on developing a disaster plan that addresses important issues such as initiation, accountability, location, funding, communication, reunification, and family preparedness.

https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/disasterplanning.pdf

Planning Considerations for Organizations in Reconstituting Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic:

This source provides organizations with planning considerations and appropriate measures to take when addressing COVID-19 in the workplace.

https://www.fema.gov/press-release/20210318/planning-considerations-organizations-reconstituting-operations-during-covid

Active Shooter Response Guide:

This guide created by the U.S Department of Homeland Security provides instructions on how to respond to an active shooter emergency as well as a guide on how to train and integrate staff into an Emergency Action Plan (EAP).

https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active_shooter_booklet.pdf

4 Testing and Evaluation

Incorporating testing and evaluation methods into your business continuity plan is essential to prepare your organization's team to respond effectively to emergencies.

Planning is an ongoing effort and your BCP should be evaluated and updated on a regular basis.

Your organization can evaluate the effectiveness of your plan by

✔ Conducting quarterly emergency drills.

✔ Having workshops and seminars that inform employees of procedures and plans.

✔ Tabletop exercises where team members discuss their roles during emergency situations.

Systems and Infrastructure

Ensuring that your organization can effectively restore applications, hardware, and pertinent data to ensure adequate recovery plans is essential when developing your business continuity assessment. Below are communication and IT recovery strategies your organization can employ to ensure operations during and after a disaster.

Data:

- Add a cloud or offsite data backup solution.
- Store data on a separate drive.
- Place computers on higher ground to prevent flooding damage.
- Have an emergency contact list with employees, significant clients, and partner organization's information. Ensure to have offsite printed copies that have been shared with all personnel and are updated consistently.
- Practice the 3-2-1 rule. Make three copies of your backup, two are local but stored on different devices, and one copy is stored offsite.
- Establish an offsite location where operations can be continued, and recovery data is stored in physical media if an internet connection is unavailable.

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) provides telecommunication priority services to subscribers to alleviate communication processing times when landlines are occupied during an emergency. For more information or the steps to enroll, use the resource provided below.
https://www.cisa.gov/enroll-pts

Communication:

- Have accessible two-way radio communication in the office that can be utilized during a disaster, toll-free numbers, or 800 MHz radio systems. Ensure to share preferred emergency communication methods with all that engage with your organization.
- Prepare telecommunication actions to redirect client calls to a second call center of a voice messaging system that communicates the organization is experiencing a temporary crisis.
- Establish a crisis communications team that will collect and share information with others on the team or community.
- Your organization should consider having varying modes of communication such as satellite phones, agency-owned laptops, and tablets, GPS devices, & landline telephones
- Enroll your organization to have access to priority telecommunication services during an emergency.

Staff/Clients/Families/Suppliers

Creating a business continuity plan that addresses all individuals in your organization is essential to establish a plan that protects your employee's and staff's physical, financial, and psychological well-being. The resource below provides information on how agency providers can help adults and children learn healthy coping skills after a disaster.

https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/coping-after-disaster-trauma

Staff:
- Incorporate disaster communications into onboarding and team meetings
- Implement essential personnel that will continue work onsite
- Create alternative work schedules in times of emergency
- Implement transportation services for employees
- Have alternative worksite or telecommunication arrangements to continue operations (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom, or Zoom)
- Continuously backup payroll software and data after every day.
- Establish a distribution center for employees to pick up hardcopy paychecks
- Consider implications for employee compensation during emergencies.
- Ensure your organization's Human Resource team and management is knowledgeable on leave policies and compensation during emergencies
- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- Unemployment benefits policies
- Hazard pay

Clients and Families:
- Provide essential hotline contact information before emergencies occur that families and clients can use in case of a disaster
- Equip clients with culturally sensitive resources and coping strategies to utilize during and after a disaster
- Put together emergency kits that can be distributed to families
- The organization must ensure that they are updating clients on disaster planning procedures to maintain contact and communication
- Provide necessary training and resources to clients that demonstrate how clients can use alternative modes of communication to receive their service
- Prepare and train families on how to use technological systems and software and provide the tools such as laptop devices or internet services when needed
- Coordinate disaster planning with families, youth, and stakeholders.
- When developing your agency's disaster plan, include parents or youth representatives on the disaster planning team

Impact on Your Organization

Understanding the implications of a disaster on your organization's accessibility to the public and employees, changes in finances, and general operations are vital to consider when developing your business continuity plan.

https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/coping-after-disaster-trauma

Accessibility:
- Plan for alternative accessibility and entrance into the organization facility that may be impacted by the disaster.
- Prepare your property for damage before the disaster (e.g., putting up tarps or boarding up openings and windows).
- Prepare and share emergency exit routes with all employees and clients.
- Develop a plan that addresses the needs of employees with disabilities.
- Develop a support network of several employees without disabilities who are willing to assist employees with disabilities in an emergency (U.S Department of Labor, n.d).

The resource below provides a template for organizations to conceptualize operational changes during a disaster or emergency and quantify the operational changes in financial terms.
https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/business-impact-analysis-worksheet.pdf

Crisis Communication:
- Ensure that the secondary or alternate methods of communication are compatible with the communication systems of partner organizations and agencies.
- Plan pre-scripted crisis communication messages that address a variety of scenarios and can be used with stakeholders in case of an emergency. Consider the specific needs of each audience (e.g., employees, government regulators, elected officials, management, neighbors in the community, and news media).

Financial Considerations:
- Identify disasters that your organization's geographical location is prone to and plan the financial impacts of disasters into an annual budget.
- Consider financial assistance loans through the Small Business Administration.
- Create a reserve disaster fund.
- Utilize direct deposits to allow for continued payments if the mail system is down.

Operations

Developing a disaster plan for your agency that incorporates logistics and strategic plans to maintain operations and systems will ensure that your organization can preserve program services and information to clients and the community.

Logistics:

- Collaborate with stakeholders and partner agencies to develop outreach initiatives to use during disaster response.
- Ensure that your operation and disaster plan correlate with federal, state, and local regulations.
- Designate essential roles during disasters by creating an emergency operations plan (EOP) which will be incorporated into your overall disaster plan.
- Define the roles of employees within your agency to oversee the continuation of operations.
- Create policies that address the degree of impact of your employers, which allow for consideration of needs and adequate responses. A disaster will impact employees differently:
- Severely affected employees who have lost family members, homes, or are impacted by illness.
- Employees who experience a loss of transportation or energy.
- Employees who are not directly impacted.

(Society for Human Resource Management, 2017).

Part 4: Responding

How agencies respond to a disaster can determine their ability to respond long-term and whether or not it is effective. Having a quick and efficient plan is critical for employees and families.

Agencies can follow declared disasters as the Federal Emergency Management Agency

https://www.fema.gov/disaster/declarations

https://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu1886/files/2018-12/Safety_eBook.pdf

- How will the agency be able to track children or families who are forced to evacuate or are otherwise displaced or unreachable? What services or supports can the agency offer?
- How will the agency respond to and communicate with children and families who were affected by a disaster in another service area and were relocated or displaced within the agency's jurisdiction?
- How will the agency respond to and communicate with children and families from its service area who are relocated or displaced to another jurisdiction?
- How will the agency support or track children and families in placements under the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (both those placed within the agency's service area or those from the service area who are placed in another State)?

Family Responses to Crisis

Children, parents, and workers can face emotional strains after critical or traumatic family events. A crisis may negatively impact those involved by causing long-lasting harmful effects.

Four Elements Found in a Crisis

1. Experiencing a distressing situation
2. Having difficulty coping with the adverse events
3. Displaying a consistent problem in meeting essential family responsibilities
4. Lacking support resources

Psychological Effects of Crisis

After facing a crisis, people may experience a variety of psychological effects. The psychological effects need to be studied and interpreted before screening for mental illnesses. Individuals experience the following:

- Difficulty thinking clearly;
- Dwelling on meaningless activities
- Expressing hostility or numbness
- Impulsiveness
- Dependence on others
- Feeling incompetent

(Head Start, 2018; Better Health Channel,2021)
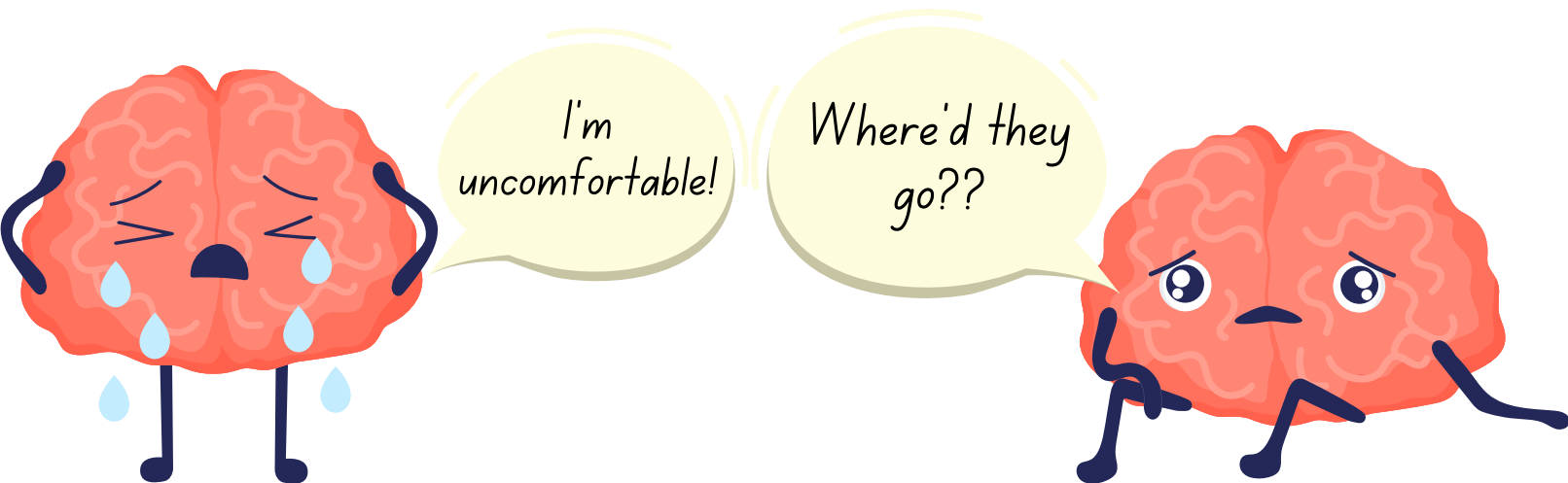
AFTER A CRISIS

Common Stress Reactions in Children & Youth After a Crisis

Age Range	Common Regressive Reactions	Common Physiological Reactions	Common Emotional & Behavioral Reactions
1-5 Years	• Bedwetting in a child who was toilet trained prior to crisis • Thumb-sucking • Increased fear of the dark	• Loss of appetite • Overeating • Digestive issues	• Nervousness • Separation anxiety • Irritability and disobedience
6-11 Years	• Clinginess with parents and caregivers • Crying or whimpering • Requests to be fed or dressed	• Headaches • Complaints of hearing or visual issues • Sleep disturbances	• School phobia • Social withdrawal • Irritability and disobedience

I'm uncomfortable!

Where'd they go??

Age Range	Common Regressive Reactions	Common Physiological Reactions	Common Emotional & Behavioral Reactions
12-14 Years	• Competing for attention • Failure to do chores or normal expectations	• Headaches • Complaints of vague pains or aches • Overeating or loss of appetite • Skin problems • Sleep disturbances	• Loss of interest in activities • Poor school performance • Disruptive behavior • Resistance to authority
15-18 Years (SAMHSA, 2018)	• Decline in previous responsible behaviors • Resurgence of past behaviors	• Headaches • Sleep disturbances • Digestive problems • Vague physical complaint	• Increase or decrease physical activity • Depression • Isolation • Antisocial behavior

# Common Stress Reactions in Parents After a Crisis

Like children, parents face similar difficulties following a crisis and may often engage in risky behaviors to help them cope. Common psychological and behavioral reactions include:

- Difficulty falling or staying asleep·Increased irritability and mood fluctuations
- Depression
- Increased hyperactivity
- Feeling numb
- Feeling exhausted frequently
- Undereating or overeating
- Trouble concentrating
- Confusion
- Social withdrawal
- Headaches, stomachaches, and other physical pains
- Misusing alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or prescription medications

(Morganstein, 2019)

Common Stress Reactions in Child Welfare Workers After a Crisis

To support children and families, child welfare workers often face the vivid recounting of critical events. In essence, workers become indirectly exposed to trauma by hearing victims recount their experiences. Common stress reactions among child welfare workers are the following:

- Increased fatigue or lethargy
- Social withdrawal
- Having intrusive thoughts or images of the critical event
- Reduced productivity or motivation
- Physical or emotional illnesses
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Sleep disturbances such as insomnia or nightmares
- Despair
- Increased irritability or anxiety
- Avoidance of people or activities
- Persistent anger or sadness
- Excessive vigilance

(Siegfried, 2008)
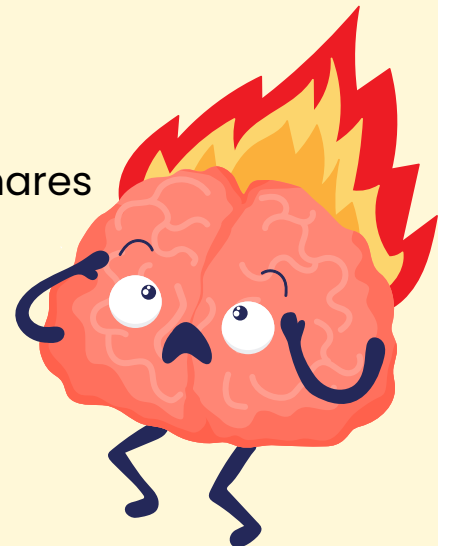
Reactions to Critical Events

Members will react to adverse events within each family dynamic in varying ways. If family members are unwilling to understand each other's experiences, other problems can result. Regardless of if individuals cannot understand each other's experience, being aware of common responses and their effects on family dynamics may help those involved better cope in the long run. Below are common reactions to crisis:

- Continuously feeling as if being on "high alert" or "on watch" for anything that can happen.
- Feeling emotionally numb.
- Feeling extremely tired or drained.
- Easily upset or emotional.
- Becoming overly protective of family and friends.
- Consistently feeling stressed and/or anxious.
- Becoming overly fearful of a place due to "what might happen."

Disrupted Family Dynamics

Adverse events, along with the varying reactions within family members, may cause the following:

- Parents may feel unsure about how to support their children after the crisis.
- Communication may struggle as parents, children, and workers cope with the critical event.
- Children don't want to attend school.
- Parents don't want to attend school.
- Household responsibilities are missed, such as irregular mealtimes, chores are neglected, or recreation is neglected.
- Usual household responsibilities are disrupted. Children may assume responsibilities like cooking for the family, parents may find it challenging to complete tasks, or children may become overly attached.

(Administration for Children & Families, 2018)

Supporting Families Post a Critical Event

Child welfare professionals can assist and support families in the following ways:

Continuously advocates for the expansion of workforce knowledge on the behavioral and emotional effects of critical events on families.

Addresses the potential primary and secondary traumatic risk factors within the workforce.

Connections with agencies that represent children and families

Partners with federal and state systems that interact with children and families

Advocates to maximize safety measures for children and families physical and psychological well-being.

Conducts routine screenings for trauma-related needs of children and families.

Delivers and connects children and families to support services that encourage resilience, healing, and well-being.

Understands parents'/caregiver's trauma responses and connect them with support services to promote family well-being, resilience, and healing.

(Bartlett et al., 2022)

Validating Feelings

Validating these feelings can help family members know they are not acting irrationally or that they are not alone. Ways to validate individual responses to a disaster may include:

- "Everyone who sees or experiences a disaster is affected by it in some way."
- "It is normal to feel anxious about your own safety and that of your family and close friends."
- Profound sadness, grief, and anger are normal reactions to an abnormal event."
- "Acknowledging your feelings helps you recover."
- "Focusing on your strengths and abilities helps you heal."
- "Accepting help from community programs and resources is healthy."
- "Everyone has different needs and different ways of coping."
- "It is common to want to strike back at people who have caused great pain."

(Coping with Disaster, 2020)

"Focusing on your strengths and abilities helps you heal."

"It is normal to feel anxious about your own safety and that of your family and close friends."
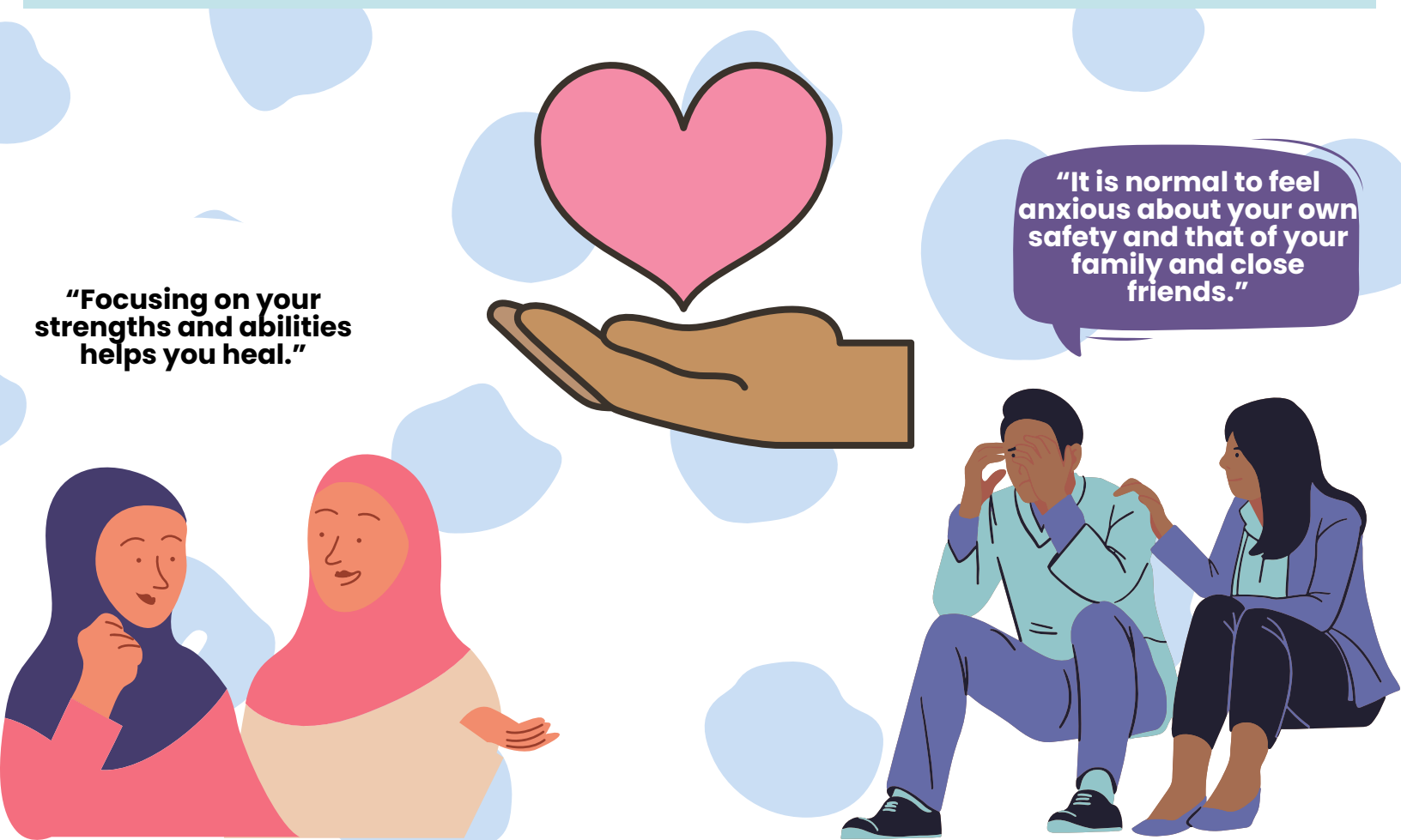
Coping Techniques and Tips

Supervised visitation workers can present family members with tips and techniques on how to cope with the immediate feelings that are present after a disaster has occurred. Some tips for coping that supervised visitation workers can use for their clients and themselves include the following:

- <u>Take care of your body</u>- Try to eat healthy meals, exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep. Avoid drugs and alcohol.
- <u>Connect with others</u>- Share your concerns and how you're feeling with friends or family.
- <u>Take breaks</u>- Make time to unwind, take deep breaths and remind yourself that strong feelings will fade.
- <u>Stay informed</u>- Be aware of false information after a disaster has occurred
- <u>Avoid too much exposure to news</u>- Take mental breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories.
- <u>Seek help when needed</u>- If distress impacts daily activities for several weeks, talk to a clergy member, counselor, or doctor. You may also contact SAMHSA helpline at 1-800-985-5990
- <u>Establish or reestablish routines</u>- This includes eating meals at regular times, sleeping and waking on a regular cycle. This can also include building positive hobbies or activities to incorporate into your day, so you have something to look forward to during distressing times.
- <u>Give yourself time to adjust</u>- Allow yourself to mourn and be patient with changes in emotional state
- <u>Communicate your experience</u>- Express your feelings through conversations with friends, family, keeping a close journal, or engaging in a creative activity such as drawing.
- <u>Avoid making major life decisions</u>- Important decisions are already stressful in nature, and it could be more challenging to handle that task when you are recovering from a disaster.

(American Psychological Association, 2013; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019)

COPING TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

Stay informed

Avoid making major life decisions

Take breaks

Give yourself time to adjust

Avoid too much exposure to news

Seek help when needed

Connect with others

Communicate your experience

Establish or reestablish routines

Take care of your body

Additional Approaches to Stress Management

Supervised visitation workers can use the approaches of self-awareness, management of workload, balanced lifestyle, stress-reduction techniques, and effective supervision and training in order to help families and themselves manage their reactions to disasters.

- One way that individuals can practice self-awareness is it might help to remember the anagram HALT to help recognize that you need to stop whenever you are:
    - Hungry
    - Angry
    - Lonely
    - Tired

- Several ways to address stress reduction include:
    - Expect, seek, and accept peer support
    - Commit to implementing self-care

(SAMHSA, 2022)

Avoid injury

Time to stretch

Health is wealth

Get moving!

Take care of your body

Reach out for support

It's okay to ask for help

Psychological First Aid (PFA)

Psychological first aid is similar to medical first aid in which the techniques can be performed by minimally trained professionals within the affected community.

Within the techniques of psychological first aid, workers must assess for the following:
1. Dangers to self and others
2. Disoriented to time/place/person
3. Death of family member(s) in disaster
4. Direct threat to life because of disaster
5. Disaster related significant physical injury to self or family members
6. Delayed relief/evacuation
7. Missing family member(s)
8. Past history of mental illness and substance use

The principle components of psychological first aid include:
- Getting in touch with survivors
- Protection from further threat and distress
- Immediate physical care
- Helping to locate family members
- Sharing the experience (not forced)
- Normalization or validation of the emotions
- Facilitating a sense of being in control
- Linking survivors with sources of support and resources
- Identifying those who need further help and referral

(Math et al., 2015)

PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID 8 CORE ACTIONS

1

CONTACT AND ENGAGEMENT

Initiate contact in a non-intrusive, compassionate, & helpful manner

2

SAFETY AND COMFORT

Enhance immediate safety and provide physical and emotional comfort

3

STABILIZATION (IF NEEDED)

Calm and orient emotionally overwhelmed or disoriented survivors

4

INFORMATION GATHERING ON CURRENT NEEDS AND CONCERNS

Identify current needs & concerns, gather additional information & tailor PFA interventions.

5

PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE

Offer practical help to survivors in addressing immediate needs and concerns

6

CONNECTION WITH SOCIAL SUPPORTS

Help establish brief or ongoing contacts with primary support persons & other sources of support

7

INFORMATION ON COPING

Provide information about stress reactions & coping to reduce distress & promote adaptive functioning

8

LINKAGE WITH COLLABORATIVE SERVICES

Link survivors with available services needed at the time or in the future

Helping Kids Cope with Disasters

Disasters can leave children feeling frightened, confused, and insecure. It is important for supervised visitation workers to support parents in being informed and ready to help manage a child's reactions to stress. It is essential to recognize risk factors and vulnerability in children, as well as understand how to handle the situation.

Recognize Risk Factors and Vulnerabilities
There are three major risk factors to keep an eye out for among children after a disaster.

These are as follows:
- Direct exposure to the disaster
- Loss and grief
- On-going stress from the secondary effects of a disaster

Actions and Tips

Parents and adults can make disasters less traumatic for children by taking steps to manage their own stress and feelings. Workers can educate parents on ways to help reassure children in the following ways:

- Engage and involve the children in preparing a family disaster plan
- Personal contact: hug and touch your children
- Calmly provide factual information
- Encourage children to talk about their feelings
- Spend extra time with children, such as at bedtime
- Praise and recognize responsible behavior
- Understand that children will have a range of emotions and reactions

Follow the SAFETY acronym:

Safety first- Allow your child to feel safe with you
Allow expression of feelings
Follow your child's lead
Enable your child to tell the story of what happened during and after
Ties- Reconnect with supportive people, community, culture, and rituals
Your child needs you

Resources and Handouts for Stress Management

- Compassion fatigue wallet card: A way for staff to keep track of their own behavioral health needs (DOC | 17KB)
- Mini Relaxation Exercises: A Quick Fix in Stressful Moments (DOC | 28KB)
- Breathing Retraining—Adults (DOC | 48KB)
- "Dial Down" Exercise (DOC | 117KB)
- Healthy Coping Strategies Checklist (DOC | 27KB)
- Pleasant Activities Scheduling (DOC | 36KB)
- Tips for Better Sleep (DOC | 23KB)

(SAMHSA, 2022)

Recovering

After a disaster, agencies begin the work of recovering from the disaster. For minor disasters, they may not be required to make any alterations. However, for severe disasters, there may be functions of their agency that have been directly impacted.

https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/disasterplanning.pdf

- How can the agency assist children and families who have been separated during a disaster?
- How will the agency identify and locate these children and families?

Examples of Things to Say and Do

THINGS TO SAY

"After a disaster like this, lots of people keep thinking 'What could I have done differently?' or 'I should have been able to do something.' That doesn't mean they were at fault."

"That was a scary dream. Let's think about some good things you can dream about and I'll rub your back until you fall asleep."

"I know other kids said that more tornadoes are coming, but we are now in a safe place."

"'You're drawing a lot of pictures of what happened. Did you know that many children do that?"

"It might help to draw about how you would like your school to be rebuilt to make it safer."

"When scary things happen, people have strong feelings, like being mad at everyone or being very sad. Would you like to sit here with a blanket until you're feeling better?"

"How about if we take a walk? Sometimes getting our bodies moving helps with strong feelings."

"I know you didn't mean to slam that door. It must be hard to feel so angry."

(Coping with Disaster, 2020; Ippen et al., 2005; National Child Traumatic Stress Network, n.d.)

THINGS TO DO

Help the child identify projects that would allow them to feel they are helping.

Make sure the child gets enough sleep, is eating well, drinks enough water, and is getting exercise.

Create a "worry box" where the child can write their worries and place them in a box. Set a time to go over and problem-solve the worries.

Continue to answer questions that children have and reassure them that they are safe.

Clarify any misunderstandings that the child has.

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APPENDIX

- **Zoom instructions for parents**
  - https://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu1886/files/Zoom%20Instructions%20for%20Parents.pdf
- **Zoom instructions for monitors**
  - https://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu1886/files/Zoom%20Instructions%20for%20Monitors.pdf
- **Virtual Visitation Activity Ideas**
  - https://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu1886/files/documents/Virtual%20Visitation%20Ideas.pdf
- **Sample court order for supervised visitation in dependency cases**
- **Agency directory template**
- **Family disaster plan template**
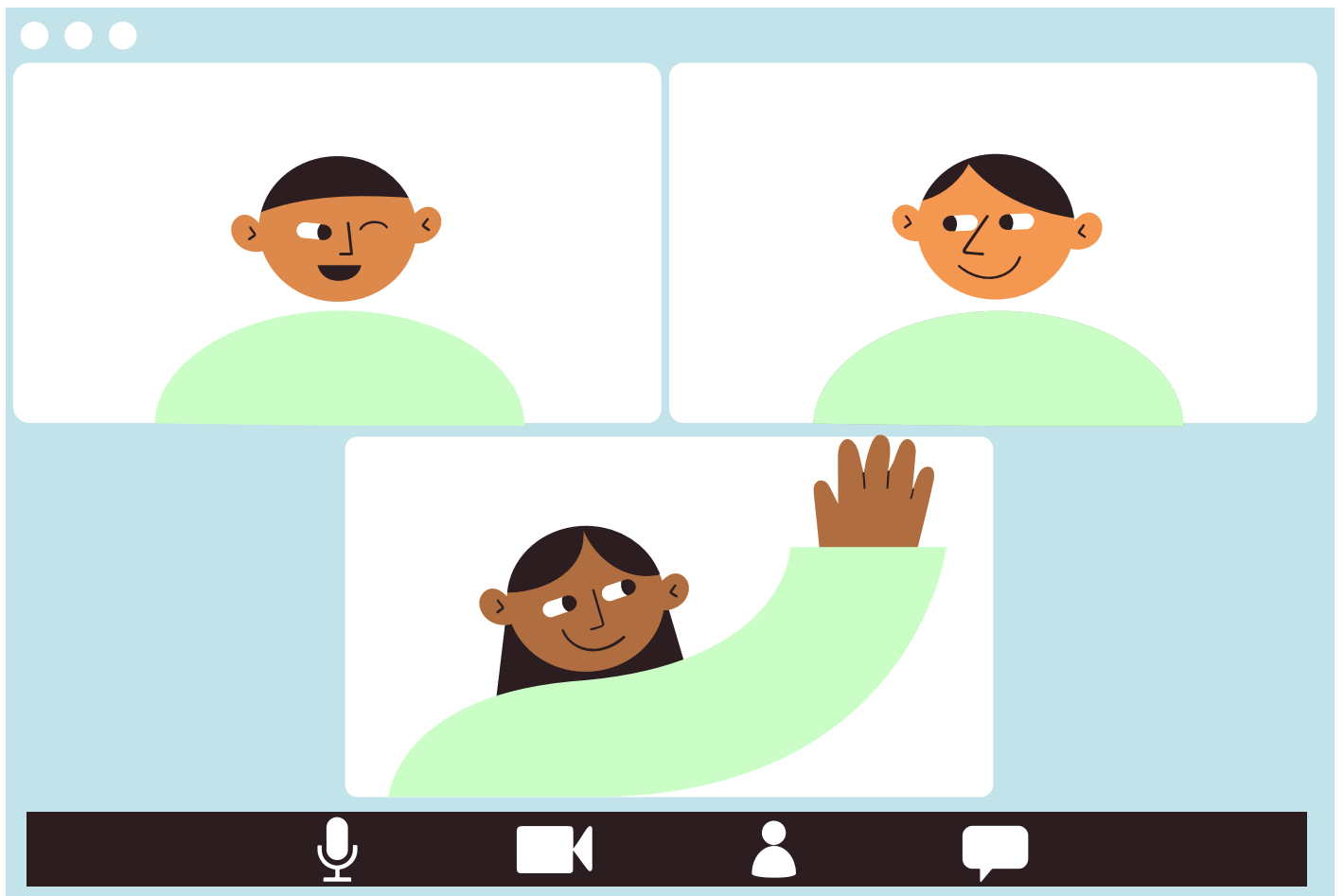
# Using Zoom for a virtual visit for parent and child interactions

The general description below is offered by the Clearinghouse to discuss with your local experts and team. There is currently no research to dictate what is best practice for virtual visits. (updated 4-1-2020)

Steps to Prepare

1. All parties must thoroughly familiarize themselves with Zoom (or some other online platform) in order to conduct a virtual visit. Several test-runs should be attempted before any real visit.
2. The visitation program should consider purchasing a subscription. The versions offered for free do not have all the same features as the subscription. For example: the option to record visits is only offered on the purchased version of the application in Zoom.
3. Supervisors must let the visiting parents and custodial parents know they are being recorded before the visit begins.
4. The visitation program staff must be familiar with the risks in each case.
5. The staff must also be thoroughly trained in safety issues.
6. The visitation program must conduct an intake interview with the custodial parent and visiting parent to ensure parents know how to connect to Zoom and understand its limitations as well as to agree to all of the safety restrictions established by the program.
7. Visits in the morning before 10:30 and after 5:30 may be clearer and have less electronic glitches caused by a crowded internet.
8. The monitor should have a plan for the visit, depending on the child's age and any special issues. Generally, younger children will have shorter attention spans. So they can have more frequent visits.

All visiting parents should be provided with help to engage their child during the visit time. This includes suggested activities, games, etc. to use when the visiting parent needs assistance. The Clearinghouse has created multiple handouts by age group to provide to parents. Talk to the visiting parent about this. At first, the visiting parent may reject such assistance. But as time goes by, it may become difficult for her/him to come up with things to talk about.

Steps to Prepare Continued

1. Among the features that need to be enabled and disabled, supervisory staff should be aware of the following
a. Turn off the screen sharing
b. Turn off chat function
c. Turn on the control that allows the monitor/supervisor to put either party on hold during the visit. This allows the monitor to speak directly and privately to only one party.
d. If either party needs to speak to the supervisor directly, the supervisor can use the "HOLD" option to speak to whomever they need in a private manner.
e. Turn off sharing of phone numbers, locations and IP addresses for all parties participating.
f. Custodial and visiting parents are to join the video through an email link sent to them separately, as to prevent the sharing of the parties' information between them.
g. Child (with assistance of custodian) joins 5 or 10 minutes before the dictated time to allow the custodial parents to prepare the electronics and the child.
h. After the child and custodial parents have joined, the supervisor sends the link to the visiting party.
i. Supervisor can change their background so neither party can see where they are.
j. If the visiting parties have any safety concerns they can change their backgrounds as well.
k. Backgrounds can be changed by all parties while using their mobile phone, laptop or desktop computer.
l. Supervisor needs to remain vigilant and listen to everything being said and watch the visit.
m. If parent needs to be redirected the monitor/supervisor can mute the parents to prevent the child from hearing them.
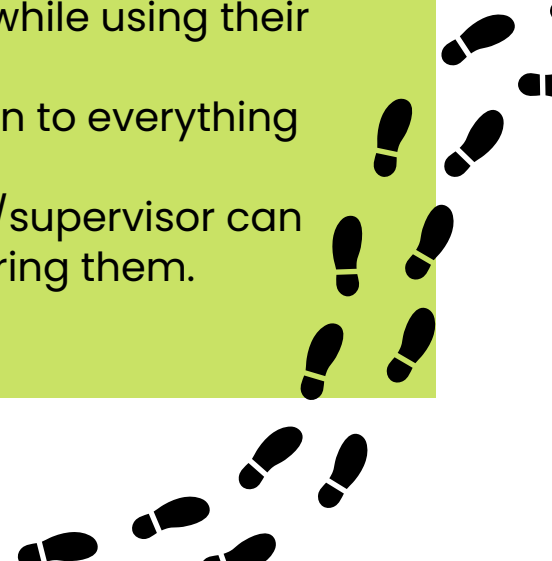
Other Considerations

- Custodial parents and supervisors will have more control during the Zoom visits than during in-person visits. For example, supervisors and custodial parents will be able to hear what the child and parents are saying.
- Custodial parents can be asked to allow the child to wear headphones (earphones) which can prevent the custodial parents from hearing what the visiting party is saying.
- There is no way to prevent parents from taking screenshots of the child or using the features on their cell phone to record the audio portion of the visit. However, you can make it clear to the parents that it is prohibited.

Orientation information

1. Programs can tell custodial parents that children cannot move around the house because the environment has to be controlled. Same with the visiting parent. That is up to the program.
2. Both parents must be informed that no other person can be part of the chats OR on the screen.

Procedure: Before visit, Monitor sends link to custodial – custodian sets up visit – monitor then sends link to connect visiting parent – visit is closely monitored – monitor disconnects call at end of visit.

The reason the link is sent at the last minute to the visitor is to keep the visitor from hearing the custodian preparing the visit

Ground Rules for Parents in Virtual Visits

1. Be on time. We promise to start and end the visits according to the times scheduled. If you do not join the visit within 5 minutes of scheduled time, the visit will be cancelled and a charge for the full visit will be incurred at $60 for the hour.

2. Be considerate. Be considerate of the other parent's privacy of their home. The parent who is currently with the child should have the child/children in a room with no distractions.

3. Earbuds. Child/children will wear earbuds or headphones during the visit (optional)

4. Be prepared. Be prepared to interact with your child. Have multiple activities to do together virtually. Please have these activities already planned before the visit. The Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation has a list of suggestions that can be found online. (See attachments)

5. When you are the visiting parent: Do not multitask. Stay mentally and physically present. It is easy to get distracted on a virtual visit, but our objective is important and we need your full attention in order for you to remain child focused and to meet the goals of the visit. Eating is also a distraction, so please eat before or after the visit. Remember, you are in this visit because of a court order.

6. It is the parent's responsibility to keep the visit going. Although the Supervision Specialist can assist the parent, it is not the responsibility of the Supervision Specialist to interact with the child and keep the child's attention.

7. Choose a quiet location: Background noise disrupts the visit and might prevent us from hearing the information that we need. Choose a quiet location – away from pets, other people or any distractions etc. Turn off the TV and any music.

8. Nobody else in visit. Please remember that no one else can be present while you are participating in the court ordered virtual visit. The same rule is listed in the contract. No one else may be in the visit unless they are named in the court order or are PRE APPROVED by the visitation program's administrative office.

9. No driving or walking around or laying down. Your safety is important to us. You cannot be distracted while in a visit. This includes laying down in bed or on a couch. No Call Waiting. If using your cellphone, please disable your "Call Waiting" feature. The clicking noise you hear on your phone when another call comes in can also be heard by the Supervision Specialist and will be distracting.

10. Do not put this visit call on "Hold". If your hold feature plays background music [and many do] and you leave the conference to answer another line or talk to someone else, the hold music will play and will disrupt the visit. Please do not take another call or we will have to end the visit.

11. All visits may be recorded by the program. The Supervision Specialist will document as usual, providing an objective "picture" of what happens in the visit as well as record audio for our files. Neither parent may record audio or video, or take screenshots during these virtual visits.

12. Supervision Specialist may terminate visits at any time.

FAMILY DISASTER PLAN

Name: _____Date: _____

It is recommended that every employee of the judicial branch have a personalized Family Disaster Plan. Families can - and do - cope with disaster by preparing in advance and working together as a team. Follow the steps listed in this document to create your family's disaster plan. Knowing what to do is your best protection and your responsibility.

4 STEPS OF SAFETY

1. Find Out What Can Happen To You

- Contact your local emergency management or civil defense office and American Red Cross chapter – be prepared to take notes:
  - LOCAL OFFICE:
  - ENTER TELEPHONE NUMBER HERE:
  - Emergency Management Office
  American Red Cross Chapter
  FEMA Region IV Office (serving FL)
  (770) 220-5224
- Ask what types of disasters are most likely to happen. Request information on how to prepare for each.
- Learn about your community's warning signals: what they sound like and what you should do when you hear them.
- Ask about animal care after disaster. Animals may not be allowed inside emergency shelters due to health regulations.
- Find out how to help elderly or disabled persons, if needed.
- Next, find out about the disaster plans at your workplace, your children's school or daycare center and other places where your family spends time.

FAMILY DISASTER PLAN

2. Create a Disaster Plan

- Meet with your family and discuss why you need to prepare for disaster. Explain the dangers of fire, severe weather and other disasters to children. Plan to share responsibilities and work together as a team.
- Discuss the types of disasters that are most likely to happen. Explain what to do in each case.
- Pick two places to meet: Right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire. Outside your neighborhood, in case you can't return home. Everyone must know the address and phone number.
- Ask an out-of-state friend to be your "family contact." After a disaster, it is often easier to call long distance. Other family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know your contact's phone number.
- Discuss what to do in an evacuation.
- Plan how to take care of your pets.

3. Complete This Checklist

- Post emergency telephone numbers by phones (fire, police, ambulance, etc.).
- Teach children how and when to call 911 or your local Emergency Medical Services number for emergency help.
- Show each family member how and when to turn off the water, gas and electricity at the main switches.
- Check if you have adequate insurance coverage.
- Teach each family member how to use the fire extinguisher (ABC type), and show them where it's kept.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms.
- Conduct a home hazard hunt.
- Stock emergency supplies and assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit.
- Take a Red Cross first aid and CPR class.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Find two ways out of each room.
- Find the safe spots in your home for each type of disaster.

FAMILY DISASTER PLAN

4. Practice and Maintain Your Plan

- Quiz your kids every six months so they remember what to do.
- Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills.
- Replace stored water every three months and stored food every six months.
- Test and recharge your fire extinguisher according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Test your smoke detectors monthly and change the batteries at least once a year.
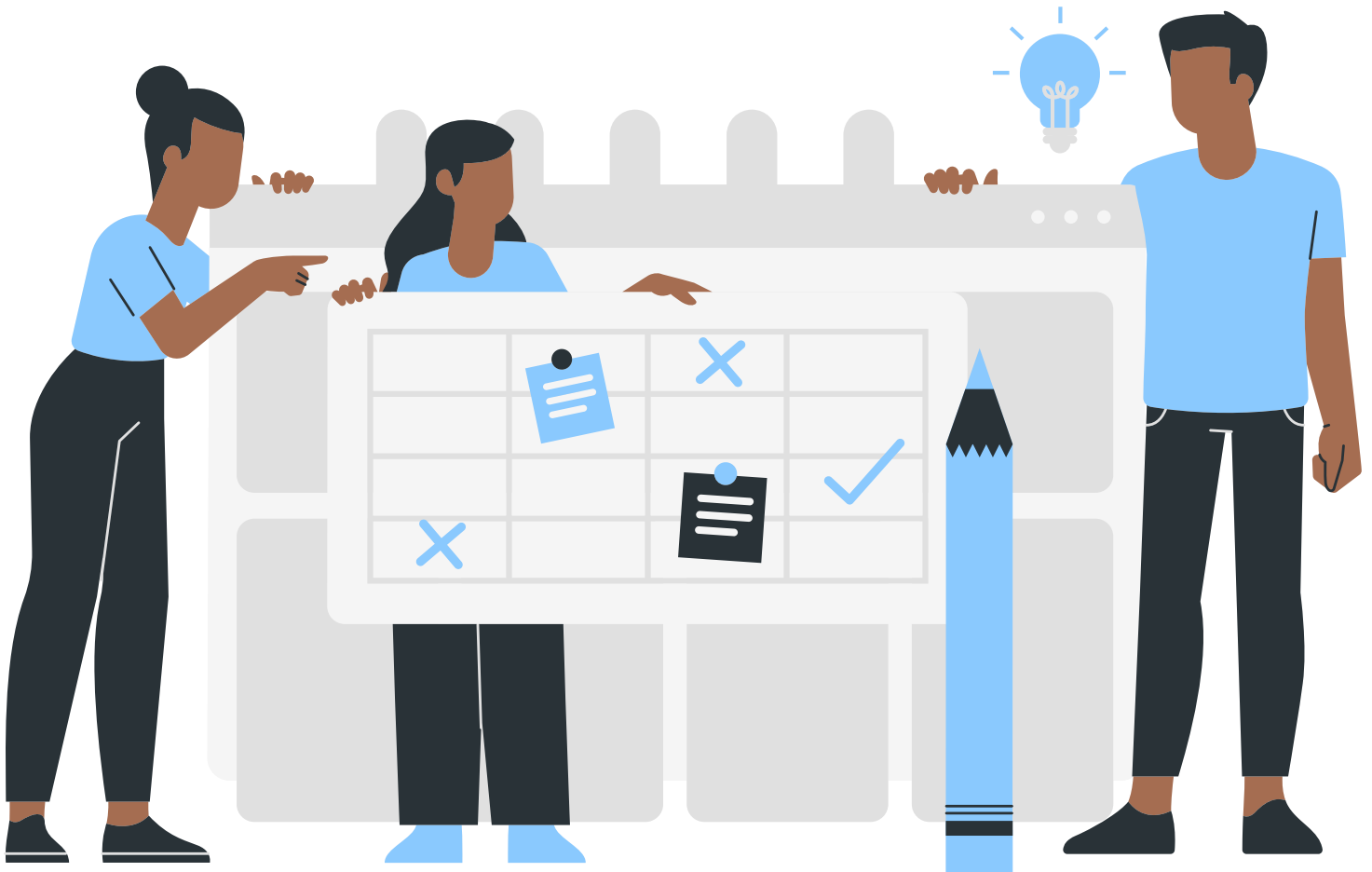
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Learn how to protect yourself and cope with disaster by planning ahead. Take these things into consideration when preparing your Family Disaster Plan.

Emergency Supplies

Keep enough supplies in your home to meet your needs for at least three days. Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit with items you may need in an evacuation. Store these supplies in sturdy, easy-to-carry containers such as backpacks, duffle bags, or covered trash containers.

Include:

A three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day) and food that won't spoil.

One change of clothing and footwear per person, and one blanket or sleeping bag per person.

A first aid kit that includes your family's prescription medications.

Emergency tools including a battery-powered radio, flashlight, and plenty of extra batteries.

An extra set of car keys and a credit card, cash, or traveler's checks.

Sanitation supplies.

Special items for infants, elderly or disabled family members.

An extra pair of glasses.

Keep important family documents in a waterproof container. Keep a smaller kit in the trunk of your car.

Vehicles with full gas tanks.

Pet care items.

Duct tape and plastic sheeting.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Evacuation Plan

Evacuate immediately if told to do so.

Listen to your battery-powered radio and follow the instructions of local emergency officials.

Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes.

Take your family disaster supplies kit.

Lock your home.

Use travel routes specified by local authorities--don't use shortcuts because certain areas may be impassable or dangerous.

If you're sure you have time:

Shut off water, gas and electricity before leaving, if instructed to do so.

Post a note telling others when you left and where you are going.

Make arrangements for your pets.

Home Hazard Hunt

During a disaster, ordinary objects in you home can cause injury or damage.Anything that can move, fall, break or cause a fire is a home hazard. For example, a hot water heater or a bookshelf can fall. Inspect your home at least once a year and fix potential hazards. Contact your local fire department to learn about home fire hazards.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Utilities

Locate the main electric fuse box, water service main, and natural gas main. Learn how and when to turn these utilities off. Teach all responsible family members. Keep necessary tools near gas and water shut-off valves.

Remember, turn off the utilities only if you suspect the lines are damaged or if you are instructed to do so. If you turn the gas off, you will need a professional to turn it back on.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Working with neighbors can save lives and property. Meet with your neighbors to plan how the neighborhood could work together after a disaster until help arrives. If you're a member of a neighborhood organization, such as a home association or crime watch group, introduce disaster preparedness as a new activity. Know your neighbors' special skills (e.g., medical, technical) and consider how you could help neighbors who have special needs, such as disabled and elderly persons. Make plans for childcare in case parents can't get home.

Have a Pet Plan

Make arrangements for your pets as part of your household disaster planning. If you must evacuate your home, it's always best to take your pets with you. For health and space reasons, pets will not be allowed in public emergency shelters. If, as a last resort, you have to leave your pets behind, make sure you have a plan to ensure their care. Contact your local animal shelter, humane society, veterinarian, or emergency management office for information on caring for pets in an emergency.

 Find out if there will be any shelters set-up to take pets in an emergency. Also, see if your veterinarian will accept your pet in an emergency.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

IF DISASTER STRIKES

Remain calm and patient. Put your plan into action.

CHECK FOR INJURIES

Give first aid and get help for seriously injured people.

LISTEN TO YOUR BATTERY POWERED RADIO
FOR NEWS INSTRUCTIONS

Evacuate, if advised to do so. Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes.

CHECK FOR DAMAGE IN YOUR HOME

Use flashlights. Do not light matches or turn on electrical switches, if you suspect damage.

Sniff for gas leaks, starting at the water heater. If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open windows, and get everyone outside quickly.

Shut off any other damaged utilities. (You will need a professional to turn gas back on.)

Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline, and other flammable liquids immediately.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
REMEMBER TO...

Confine or secure your pets.

Call your family contact--do not use the telephone again unless it is a life-threatening emergency.

Check on your neighbors, especially elderly or disabled persons.

Make sure you have an adequate water supply in case service is cut off.

Stay away from downed power lines.

The contents of this document were taken from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Community and Family Preparedness Program and the American Red Cross Community Disaster Education Program. For more information call your local American Red Cross Chapter and by calling FEMA at 1-800-480-2520, or writing: FEMA, P.O. Box 2012, Jessup, MD 20794-2012. Publications are also available on the World Wide Web at FEMA's Web site: http://www.fema.gov and American Red Cross Web site: http://www.redcross.org

EMPLOYEE EMERGENCY RECOVERY GUIDE

All employees should complete this form. This Recovery Guide is designed to provide information that will assist an assist the employee to stabilize their basic needs following an emergency.

Insurance Information

Health Insurance:	Policy Number:	Telephone Number:
Primary Care Physician:	Address:	Telephone Number:
Disability Insurance:	Policy Number:	Telephone Number:
Life Insurance:	Policy Number:	Telephone Number:
Other Insurance:	Policy Number:	Telephone Number:
Home Owner's Insurance:	Policy Number:	Telephone Number:
Vehicle Insurance:	Policy Number:	Telephone Number:

Employer Information

Employee Assistance Program:	**Address:**	**Telephone Number:**
Emergency Coordinating Officer:	**Address:**	**Telephone Number:**
Emergency Hotline:	**Address:**	**Telephone Number:**

Community Services and Emergency Management Agencies

American Red Cross:	**Address:**	**Telephone Number:**
County Emergency Management Office:	**Address:**	**Telephone Number:**
Florida Emergency Management Office and Agency:	**Address:**	**Telephone Number:**
Other Agencies:	**Address:**	**Telephone Number:**

Credit Card and Financial Information

Financial Institution:	Account Number:	Telephone Number:
Financial Institution:	Account Number:	Telephone Number:
Credit Union:	Account Number:	Telephone Number:
Mortgage Company:	Account Number:	Telephone Number:
Credit Card Companies:	Account Number:	Telephone Number:

Emergency Plan Form
Out-of-State Contacts

Name:	Address:	Telephone Number:

Local Contacts

Name:	Address:	Telephone Number:

Nearest Relative

Name:	Address:	Telephone Number:

Emergency Plan Form
Family Work Numbers

Spouse:	Parent:	Other:

Emergency Telephone Numbers

Name:	Address:	Telephone Number:
Police:		
Fire:		
Hospital:		

Family Physicians

Name:	Address:	Telephone Number:

Reunion Locations

Outside of your home:		
Other location if you cannot return home:		