Family Emergency Preparedness for Community Health Workers

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Disasters disrupt hundreds of thousands of lives every year. Each disaster has lasting effects, both to people and property. Disasters can be as small as a house fire or large as a hurricane. You must be prepared to take care of yourself and your family for at least 72 hours before help may arrive.

CHW can help families understand the importance of preparing in advance for emergencies by following the topics covered in this training.
Course Format

This course has been divided into five modules. Each module will fulfill a series of learning objectives that guide you in the mastery of the material.

- Module 1: How to be Informed on Disasters
- Module 2: Developing a Family Plan for Disasters
- Module 3: Assembling a Family Disaster Supply Kit
- Module 4: Sheltering Your Family
- Module 5: Emergency Preparedness Resources
Module 1
How to be Informed about Disasters

In order to be prepared:

• Get informed about hazards and emergencies
• Develop an emergency plan
• Collect and assemble family disaster supply kit
• Learn where to seek shelter from all types of hazards
Continued

- Identify your community warning systems and evacuation routes
- Include in your plan required information from community and school plans
- Learn what to do for specific hazards
- Practice and maintain your plan
Natural Hazards

- Hurricanes
- Thunderstorms
- Lightning
- Tornadoes
- Tsunamis
Natural Hazards continued

- Floods
- Fires, extreme heat
- Earthquakes
- Volcanoes
- Landslides and Debris Flow
- Winter Storms and Extreme Cold
Technological Hazards

- Hazardous Materials Incidents
- Household chemical emergencies
- Nuclear Power Plants
Terrorism

- Explosions
- Biological Threats
- Chemical Threats
- Nuclear Blasts
- Radiological Dispersion Device (RDD)
Warning Systems and Signals

- **Emergency Alert System (EAS):** addresses the entire nation on a national emergency

- **National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio:** a nationwide network of radio stations broadcasting continuous weather information
Evacuating Your Family

Before the Emergency:

- Know warning methods: sirens, media and radio
- Be aware that amount of time for evacuating depends on the hazard
- Check on community, school and workplace emergency evacuation plans
Evacuation Guidelines

• Keep a **full** tank of gas in your car if an evacuation seems likely

• Make **transportation** arrangements if you don’t have a vehicle
During the Evacuation:

- Listen to a battery-powered radio and follow local evacuation instructions
- Leave early enough to avoid being trapped by severe weather
- Be alert for washed-out roads and bridges
- Stay away from downed power lines
Module 2
Developing a Family Plan for Disasters

**Escape routes:**
- Draw a floor plan of your house
- Mark two escape routes for each room
- Post a copy of the drawing

**Meeting Place:**
- Establish a place to meet in the event of an emergency both near the home and outside the immediate area
Continued

Family Communication:
• Complete a contact card for each family member and include it in the family disaster supply kit

Assemble a Family Disaster Supply Kit:
• There are many items that go into a family disaster supply kit. We will cover the items in Module 3 of this training course
Insurance and Vital Records:

- Obtain copies of property, health and life insurance policies
- Make a record of your personal property for insurance purposes
- Store important documents such as insurance policies and deeds in a fire proof box or other safe place
- Keep a small amount of cash to access in case of evacuation
- Contact card
Utility Shut Off & Safety:

Natural Gas

- Learn proper natural gas shut-off from your local gas company
- If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and get out of the house immediately
- Only a qualified professional must turn your gas back on
Continued

Electricity

- Locate your electric circuit box and always shut off all individual circuits before shutting off the main circuit breaker

Water

- Make sure the water is shut off until you hear from authorities that it is safe for drinking
Planning and Managing for Special Needs:

- Register with the office of emergency services or the local fire department for assistance
- Create a network of neighbors, relatives, friends and coworkers to aid you in an emergency
- Keep specialized items ready, including extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, catheters, medications and food
- Keep a list of type and model numbers of the medical devices that you require
Safety Skills:

- Learn first aid and CPR – take a class from your local Red Cross or other organizations that offer this training.

- Learn how to use a fire extinguisher. Be sure that everyone in the family knows where the fire extinguisher is kept in the house and how to use it.
Caring for Animals:

- Identify shelters that are available
- Ensure your pet has proper identification and up-to-date veterinarian records
- Gather pet supplies
  - Pet carrier, cage and trailer for large animals
  - Leash, food and medications
- Evacuate large animals whenever possible and map out routes in advance
Practice and Maintain Your Plan:

- Ask your family questions about meeting places and safety rules
- Conduct drills
- Test fire alarms
- Create and maintain a family disaster supply kit
Module 3
Family Disaster Supply Kit

Assembling a Family Disaster Supply Kit:

- Water – Store at least 1 gallon/person/day
- Food – 3 day supply
  - Avoid foods that make you thirsty
  - Stock foods that do not require refrigeration or cooking
  - Include a manual can opener
- Battery-powered radio, television and flashlight with extra batteries
Continued

• First aid kit and manual
• Sanitation and hygiene items (hand sanitizer)
• Matches in waterproof container
• Whistle
• Extra clothing
• Kitchen accessories and cooking utensils
• Photocopies of credit and ID cards
Continued

- Cash and coins
- Special needs items, such as prescription medications
- Items for infants or other items to meet your unique family needs
Storing Kit locations:

- Home – supplies for 3 days in designated place
- Work – food & water in container, comfortable shoes
- Car – food, water, first aid, flares and jumper cable
Maintaining Kit:

- Keep canned foods in dry place
- Store boxed food in tightly closed containers
- Throw out any cans that become swollen, dented or corroded
- Change stored food and water supplies every 6 months
- Update kit to fit family needs
- Keep items in airtight plastic bags and put entire kit in 1 or 2 easy-to-carry containers
Taking Shelter:

- Taking shelter is critical in times of disaster. As you select a shelter, consider the hazard and choose a safe place that you would be willing to stay for several days if needed. If you must evacuate, consider the following shelter options outside of your local area:
  - Stay with friends or relatives
  - Seek commercial lodging
  - Stay in a mass care facility
Shelter in Place:

“Shelter in place,” means for you to remain inside your home, workplace or school and protect yourself there. This would most likely happen in case of tornado, flood conditions, chemical or radiation accident or attack.

- Go inside your home or the nearest building
- Close all windows, doors and turn off all ventilation systems
- Don’t use the phone, except for emergency messages
• Turn on your radio or television to an emergency alert station. Keep listening until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate.
Shelter in your vehicle:

- Pull over to the side of the road. Stop your vehicle in the safest place possible
- Turn off the engine
- Close windows and vents
- Seal the heating and air conditioning vents with duct tape or anything else you may have available
Continued

• Listen to the radio periodically for updated advice and instructions
• Stay where you are until you are told it is safe to get back on the road
Managing Water:

- Allow people to drink according to their needs
- Never ration water unless ordered to do so by authorities
- Drink water that you know is not contaminated
- Do not drink carbonated beverages instead of drinking water as they can cause dehydration
Water Treatment Methods:

- Boiling
  - Safest way to treat water is to boil for 3 minutes

- Chlorination (bleach)
  - Add 16 drops per gallon (4 drops per quart)
  - Let stand for 30 minutes before drinking
  - Use *regular* bleach only
Managing Food Supplies:

• Keep food in covered containers
• Keep cooking and eating utensils clean
• Keep garbage in closed containers and dispose outside, burying garbage if necessary

• Discard any food that has
  o Come into contact with contaminated floodwater
  o Been at room temperature for two hours or more
  o An unusual odor, color or texture
Alternative Cooking Sources:

- Candle warmers
- Fondue pots
- Fireplace
- When using canned food, wash, open, remove label and heat in can
- Charcoal grill or camp stove use outside only
Module 5 - Resources

- **Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)**
  [http://www.texasprepares.org](http://www.texasprepares.org)
  This website lists items for a Disaster Supply Kit

- **Texas Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN)**
  [http://texashelp.tamu.edu](http://texashelp.tamu.edu)
  This website contains information for preparing for the unexpected

- **Centers for Disease Control (CDC)**
  [http://www.bt.cdc.gov/preparedness](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/preparedness)
  This website contains information regarding preparedness
continued

- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**
  [http://www.fema.gov/areyouready](http://www.fema.gov/areyouready)
  [http://ready.gov](http://ready.gov)
  [http://www.citizencorps.gov](http://www.citizencorps.gov)
  These websites contain information with a guide called “Why Prepare” and a list of items essential for a readiness kit. This link contains links to posters, brochures and sample emergency plans for business to use to develop emergency plans and ready-made forms to use to prepare.

- **Red Cross**
  [http://www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)
  This website contains information on how to shelter in place, emergency preparedness for people with special needs and getting trained for CPR and First aid
Credits

“Adapted from materials provided by the USA Center for Rural Public Health Preparedness at the Texas A&M Health Science Center School of Rural Public Health supported by Grant/Cooperative Agreement Number 5U90TP624250. Contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC.”