



HRSA

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Health Resources and Services Administration

Communication and Human Behavior in Evacuations

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Definition of Disaster

- “A sudden calamitous event bringing out great damage, loss, or destruction”.

Source: Webster's Dictionary

Songer (1999) definition includes events that need external assistance.


Examples: Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustave, Ike, and Hannah, Tsunami, and California fires.

Statistics

- 56% of people with disabilities do not know whom to contact about emergency plans in their community. Source: (Harris Poll-2004)
- 61% of persons with disabilities have not made plans to quickly and safely evacuate their homes. Source: (Harris Poll-2004)
- 50% of individuals 50 or older state they need assistance from someone outside of their household to evacuate in the event of a disaster. Source: (AARP, 2008)

Demographics of Aging

- Fastest Growing Population
 - An older adult: a person who is over 65 years of age
 - Young-old: 65 - 74 years of age
 - Aged: 75 – 84 years of age
 - Oldest-old: \geq 85 years of age
- U.S. Census Bureau forecasts by 2030, older adults will account for 20% of the nation's population.



Factors Impacting Older Adults Ability to Evacuate

■ Physical Limitations

Deteriorating Physical Ability

Co-Morbid Chronic Conditions

■ Psychological Factors

Fear

Inadequate Preparation

Perception of Event



Pre-determinants of Older Adults Willingness to Evacuate

- Gender
- Level of Education
- Marital Status
- Race

Methods of Communication

- Audiotape\ CD
- CD-Rom
- E-mail
- Fax
- Letters
- Manuals
- Media
- Meeting
- Memos
- One-to-One
- Phone
- Radio
- TV
- Verbal
- Videoconference
- Videotape
- Written



Communication Strategies

- One-on-one communication
- Repeated Messages
- Collaborations with Social Service Networks and Faith-Based Organizations
- Townhall Meetings



Questions/Answers

Contact Information

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Thank you for your time and
attention!