EMERGENCY PLANNING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, ACCESS, AND FUNCTIONAL NEEDS: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

FIFTH SYMPOSIUM REPORT

CONTENT

ABOUT

Who We Are

NYC Citizen Corps, part of a nationwide network, is a community readiness program coordinated by NYC Emergency Management (NYCEM). Our program aims to build the capacity of nonprofit and community based organizations by providing tools, training, and a network around citywide preparedness initiatives. Learn more about NYC Citizen Corps and join our network by visiting nyc.gov/citizencorps

Images created by graphic recorders from Kingman Ink[1] are included in this report and display the concepts that were presented during each session at the event.

The Symposium

The symposium is an annual event that provides a forum for community leaders and planners from all sectors to share information, challenges, and recommendations around emergency planning for people with disabilities and others with access or functional needs. People with access and functional needs may include older adults, children, people with limited English proficiency, individuals with health vulnerabilities, and others who may need particular assistance or additional support during an emergency.

The central theme of this year's event, From Theory to Practice, focused on practical ways of integrating emergency preparedness into the operations and daily activities of organizations, and community leaders. Session topics included tailoring communications, community planning, and the role of caregivers.

[1] http://kingmanink.com/

EMERGENCY PLANNING DEVELOPMENTS

The Disability and Access and Functional Needs Symposium is a forum that brings awareness of new developments in emergency planning for people with disabilities in New York City. During the past year there have been there several advancements.
Some highlights include:

→ Newly dedicated staff at NYC Emergency Management to focus on emergency preparedness outreach to people with disabilities, access and functional needs and organizations that work with people with disabilities throughout NYC.

→ Release of the publically available Emergency Shelter Training Video.[2] The video addresses disability training for shelter staff and showcases accommodations that may be available for people with disabilities at NYC shelters, a recommendation that came out of last year's symposium.

→ 30% subscriber increase to the Advance Warning System,[3] which provides emergency messaging for organizations that work with people with disabilities, access and functional needs.

→ Additional amenities to support accessible evacuation centers and shelters, including mobility aids, special medical needs cots, braille signage, refrigerators for medication, and other items.

→ Capability for video relay interpretation (VRI) at evacuation centers to facilitate communication. VRI is a video conferencing technology that allows access to an off-site interpreter to provide real-time American Sign Language interpretation.

→ Newly available emergency information and alerts in multiple languages, including American Sign Language. NYCEM was the recipient of FEMA's 2016 Individual and Community Preparedness Award for Outstanding Inclusive Initiatives in Emergency Management for its Notify NYC[4] program, the City's official source for emergency information.

[2] http://bit.ly/ 2rVfkRG
[3] https://advancewarningsystemnyc.org/
[4] http://nyc.gov/notifynyc

REPORT GOAL
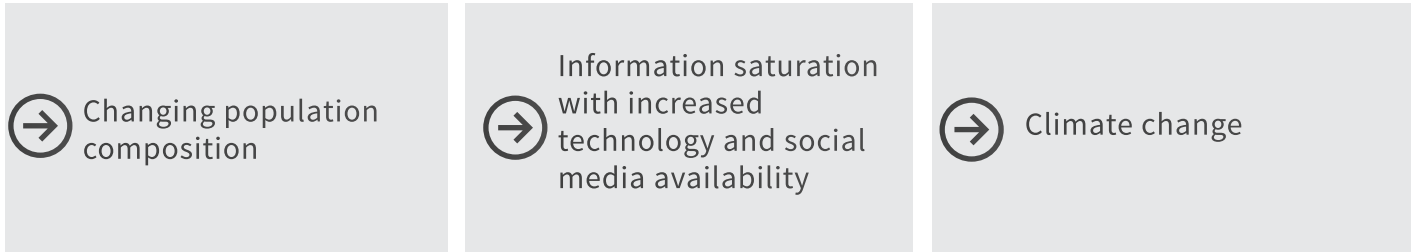

This report captures the ideas, dialogue, and resources that were shared at the 2016 symposium. Use this report as a resource to enhance inclusive emergency planning and preparedness at your organization or in your community.

For more emergency readiness information and resources provided by NYC Emergency Management, please visit nyc.gov/emergencymanagement or call 311 (TTY: 212-504-4115).

During this session, a panel of experts discussed different approaches to emergency risk communication. The panel focused on emerging issues and best practices based on their experiences and research conducted across sectors before, during, and after disasters.

Moderated by: Jonathan Sury, MPH, CPH, Project Director, National Center for Disaster Preparedness, Earth Institute, Columbia University

**David Abramson
PhD, MPH**

Clinical Associate Professor and Director of the Program on Population Impact, Recovery and Resilience, New York University

**Maria Torroella Carney
MD, FACP**

Chief, Division of Geriatric and Palliative Medicine Associate Professor, Hofstra Northwell School of Medicine

**Barbara Ilardi
MPA, CPH**

Director of Health Education and Communications, Putnam County Department of Health

**Jenny Mincin
PhD, MPhil, MPA**

Assistant Professor, SUNY   Empire State College

RISK COMMUNICATIONS

We are in a changing climate of risk communications due to the following factors:

| ⊙→ Changing population composition | ⊙→ Information saturation with increased technology and social media availability | ⊙→ Climate change |

RECOGNIZING ELDER ORPHANS

The rise of what some experts are calling "elder orphans"—older people living in isolation without support networks — presents significant societal impacts. Many older adults have no children, or have children, but are not in contact with them or they are not in their surrounding area. Beyond this, many also may not have neighboring relatives.

" People are living with chronic illness, with more functional impairments than ever before... When I use the term elder orphan ... it is a term that I would like to be used to highlight someone alone with care-giving needs that does not have the support system around them...They're hiding in plain sight."

-Maria Torroella Carney

Recommendations:

→ Risk messaging must be appropriate, trusted, and actionable. Address longer-term issues in communications in the following ways:

→ **Improve screening** for social support. Clients may say that they have family but there is lack of clarity and certainty as to who assists them, if at all, on a daily basis.

→ **Promote support systems** that link health care delivery, community, and government agencies and organizations to eliminate barriers to service and information.

→ **Create systems** for ongoing social support and communication. Support before, during, and after an emergency should not be a single intervention; rather it should consist of an ongoing relationship among government, community based organizations, and residents.

→ **Adapt communications** to fit the needs and preferences of the audience. For example, service providers may use phone calls to reach those that may not use digital communications.

→ **Raise awareness** of service provider resources. Clientele and community members will look to these resources and providers first after an emergency event. Community-based service providers play a critical role before, during, and after emergencies.

→ Panelist Jennifer Mincin speaking during a session.

PRIORITIZING INDIVIDUAL PREPAREDNESS

There is a misconception of the availability of services and speed at which aid may be accessible during major emergencies. Surveys show 51% of Americans believe help will arrive after a disaster in under an hour, and 65% do not have adequate emergency plans or any emergency plan at all.[5] Many individuals believe that emergency agencies will be available to help them immediately after a major event occurs and are unprepared to help themselves.

Recommendations:

→ **Promote individual preparedness** and community resilience efforts so people will be reliant on their own planning and less reliant on limited resources that can then be targeted to those with most need.

→ **Help manage expectations** by sharing resources on how emergency response and recovery works.

" We need to focus on continuing to bolster the individual preparedness and community preparedness and resilience so government can devote resources to the most vulnerable people during times of disaster."

- Jonathan Sury

[5] February 2016, National Center for Disaster Preparedness, Resilient Children, Resilient Communities Initiative

REACHING HARD-TO-REACH COMMUNITIES

Before, during and after emergencies, it can be difficult to reach people who are vulnerable due to social isolation. Cells and Circles,[6] a communication research study, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, investigates the functionality of a communication platform which enables two-way dialogue between risk communicators and diverse communities. The study focused on people who are homebound or elderly and their caregivers, people living with HIV and AIDS, undocumented immigrants and urban teenagers. Part of the study included identifying a leader – community captain–who would then be responsible for notifying a specified group of people from that community. This structure allowed people to test and practice communication in advance, not only when the emergency is actually happening. The study found that hard-to-reach communities can most easily be reached when one is able to identify a trusted broker within the community through a social connection.

Recommendations:

→ **Foster multiway communication mechanisms** among groups, agencies, and communities.

→ **Identify risk populations,** which are often people operating under the radar. Identify a trusted broker in the community to carry the message.

→ **Bring people together** through informal conversations. They will share solutions with each other, which is an effective alternative to government messaging.

→ **Build and foster relationships** in advance. Relationships among community leaders, organizations, individuals, and agencies are key.
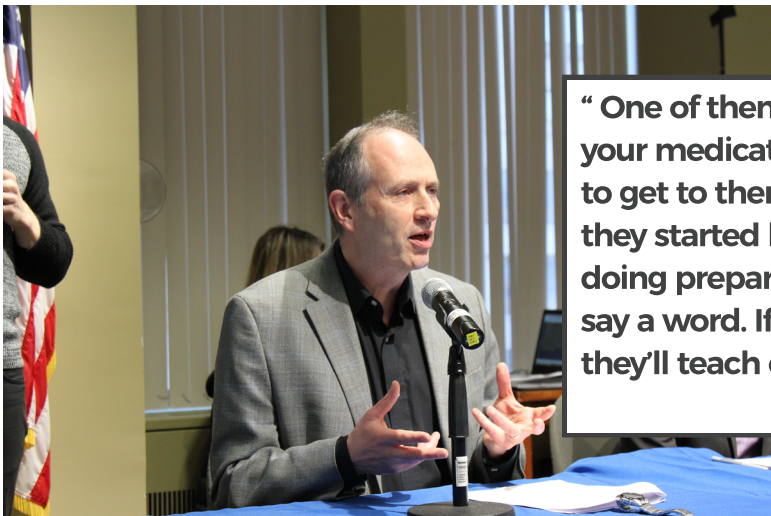

" One of them said to the other, what do you do about your medications because we're not going to be able to get to them if the pharmacies close? On their own they started having the conversation...She started doing preparedness messaging without us having to say a word. If you bring people together a lot of times they'll teach one another."

– David Abramson

[6] http://bit.ly/ 2qo7uhC
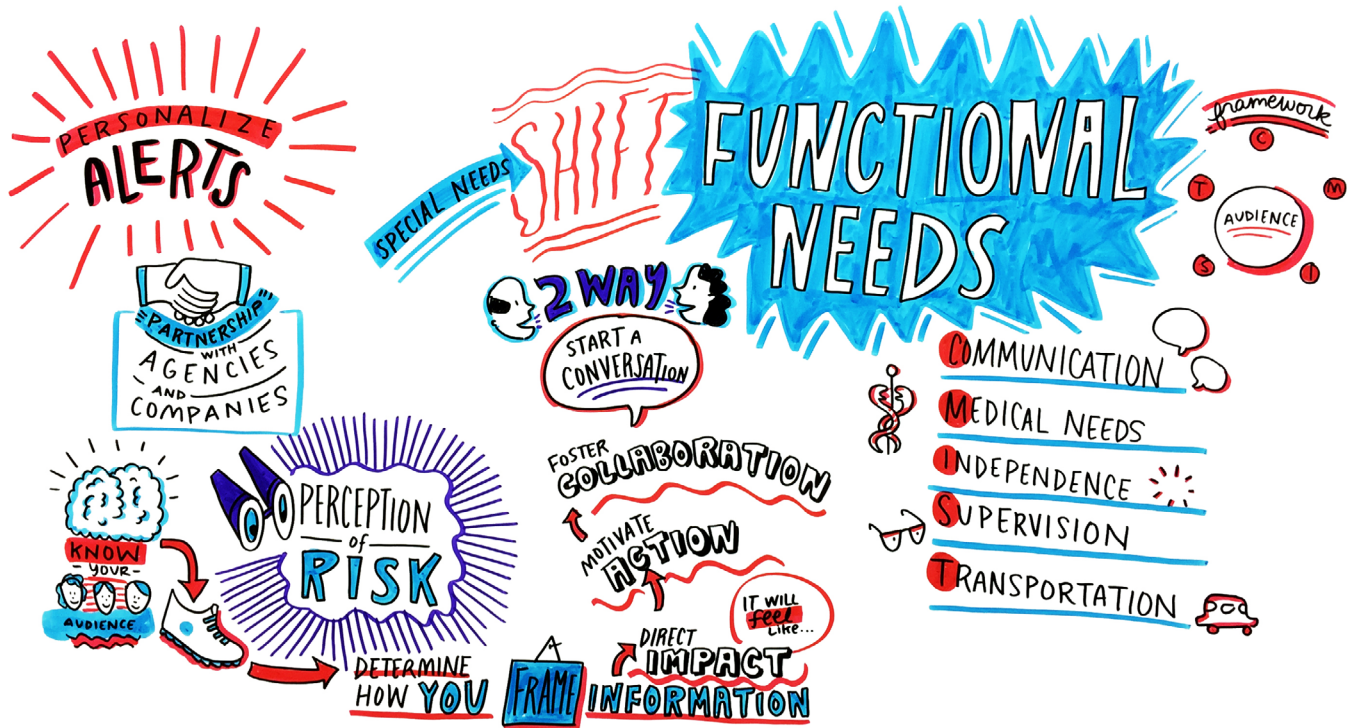
During this session, participants practiced tailoring emergency messages and discussed what may or may not work for different audiences. Using the experiences shared during the Emergency Risk Communications Panel and a sample message from the Advance Warning System,[7] participants also used a framework provided by the National Center for Disaster Preparedness to tailor their messaging.

Moderated by: Christopher Pagnotta, Advanced Warning System Specialist, NYC Emergency Management

Sabine Marx, PhD

Director of Research, National Center for Disaster Preparedness Earth Institute, Columbia University

Jonathan Sury, MPH

Project Director National Center for Disaster Preparedness Earth Institute, Columbia University

AMPLIFYING RELEVANT MESSAGING EFFECTIVELY

During an emergency, it can be challenging for service providers to frame emergency messaging so it is responsive to immediate needs and accurately indicates where resources may be available. Messaging must also be constructed so that recipients are not overwhelmed by the amount and complexity of information. Building community and partnerships with other providers or organizations to share resources and information in their messaging can be a helpful way to provide solutions and actions.

Recommendations:

Highlight and emphasize actions that must be taken to ensure minimal risks in an emergency.

Tap into sense of group affiliation ("we are all in this together"). Receiving information individually compared to in a group set-ting affects uptake, processing, and action.

Use a combination of media styles (social media, email, phone calls) to expand your reach.

Notify **NYC**

Notify NYC is the City of New York's official source for information about emergency events and important City services.

Sign yourself up.

NYC Emergency Management
ADVANCE WARNING SYSTEM

The Advance Warning System is designed to disseminate hazard and emergency information to agencies and organizations that serve people with disabilities or others with access and functional needs throughout New York City.

Sign up your organization.

Sign up for NotifyNYC by calling 311 or visiting nyc.gov/notifynyc

Sign up for AWS by visiting advancewarningsystemnyc.org

Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities Commissioner Victor Calise offers opening remarks .

Use specific and detailed headers in emails; make sure the message is clear via email communication.

Include a concise synopsis at the beginning of emails. By adding a synopsis, or break-down of the main points addressed in the attached information or links in the email, people are more likely to open email and read at least the information that is relevant to their specific organization's needs.

The worksheet on the following page can help you consider whether your message is:

Relevant and Attention Grabbing: Get your audience's attention and bring the message close to home by linking to past experience, while not being overly alarmist.

Cooperation / Collaboration Oriented: Tap into group affiliation and cooperation by using words and phrases that trigger group identity and concern for others. Find message formats that encourage collaboration and opportunities for two-way communication if possible.

Actionable: Motivate action by breaking down the message into steps appropriate for your audience.

Addressing Communication, Medical, Independence, Supervision and Transportation Needs (C- MIST): Does it address functional needs?

The following worksheet was shared at during this breakout session:

TAILORING COMMUNICATIONS WORKSHEET

Will your audience be able to relate to this message? [RELATABILITY]	
Think about your audience, who needs to receive the alert? Who is your audience? Do you have one homogeneous audience, or are the recipients a very diverse group, subsets of people? *For this exercise think about the most vulnerable person and address the message to them. How much would you have to tailor this message to make it appropriate for them?*	*Fill in your answers here:*
Cross out anything that it irrelevant to your organization and audience and that they won't be able to relate to.	
Circle/mark the parts of the message that are relevant to your organization and audience and which would make them better relate to this warning.	
Does the message grab attention? [ATTENTION]	
What in the current messages would get your audience's attention?	
What would you need to add/change to get your audience's attention?	

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NYC Emergency Management

Does the message motivate action?	[ACTION]
Are there actionable items in the current message that are appropriate for your audience? What are they?	
What other instructions does your audience need? *Think about what they can do given the sudden onset of the event?*	

Does it foster cooperation, collaboration, community?	[COOPERATION]
Does the current message call for the community to work together, to care for each other? What/which words do so in particular?	
What other words/phrases could you use to encourage people to take care of each other in this situation?	
What message format(s) or distribution medium would foster or trigger a collaborative spirit (e.g., flyer, social media, door-to-door, phone tree)?	
Does the message include an opportunity or method for asking questions to encourage 2-way communication? Should it?	

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Does it address the C-MIST functional needs categories? [C-MIST]		
Category	Addressed? YES/NO (How?)	What would you add to address this functional need?
Communication		
Medical		
Independence		
Supervision		
Transportation		

Checklist

➢ Is your message **relatable**?

➢ Does it grab **attention**?

➢ Does it motivate **action**?

➢ Does it foster **cooperation, collaboration,** and **community** building?

➢ Does it address the **C-MIST** categories (Communication, Medical Needs, Independence, Supervision, Transportation)?

RELATABILITY | ATTENTION | ACTION | COOPERATION | C-MIST

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NYC Emergency Management

What emergency planning efforts are happening at the community level for people with disabilities? In this session panelists shared their work with coalition building, community-check in systems, and integrating people with disabilities in community emergency planning. Participants also shared their ideas and experiences.

Moderated by: Emily Accamando, Deputy Director for Community Engagement, NYC Emergency Management

Aran Baker

Initiative Leader,
Red Hook Check-In

Ronald J. Don

Customer Relations
Coordinator,
Carrier C.A.R.E.S.
United States Postal
Service

Jacqlene Moran

Community Engagement
Specialist,
Post Emergency
Canvassing Operation,
NYC Department of Health
and Mental Hygiene

POST EMERGENCY CANVASSING OPERATION (P.E.C.O.)

What is it? PECO is a Department of Health and Mental Hygiene-led door-to-door canvassing operation staffed by City staff and volunteers, meant to rapidly survey populations post-disaster to determine critical needs and refer those needs to partners for resolution.

Who does it affect? The operation facilitates equal access to services that the City provides, post-emergency, such as food, water, medical care, and transportation assistance, for individuals who are unable or who have difficulty accessing those services. It also includes identifying people who need to leave their home after an emergency and cannot do so independently.

When is it used? It is intended for events that significantly disrupt power, water, and/or heat for more than 5,000 households for an expected period of more than 48 hours. The City will look to PECO when initial outreach efforts via messaging, service providers, and partnerships are insufficient or impossible (e.g. telecommunications are down).

Recommendations:

Incorporate different community needs into planning: Consider how information will be shared, how to use data to inform activities and what roles community members can play.

Gather information throughout the process. Work with current partners through a "listening tour" to understand what kind of knowledge or resources partners may be able to leverage.

Create or identify a hub. This is a place where partners can meet to plan and integrate the needs on the ground into operations.

Identify leaders in the community: The community liason role will help inform and guide the operation to the specific needs of their neighborhood.

RED HOOK CHECK-IN

What is it? Red Hook Check-in is an initiative that aims to connect residents who may need assistance to their neighbors and needed resources in times of crisis. The initiative also seeks to strengthen social cohesion and climate change knowledge at the local level. Red Hook Check-in focuses on building relationships throughout the year that can be leveraged in times of emergency. The project grew out of a medical relief effort during Hurricane Sandy and is still in development.

Who does it affect? The project is designed to connect people with disabilities, seniors, and/or medically fragile residents with a neighborhood support system, local and citywide services, and first response.

When is it used? Red Hook Check-in can be used during emergencies and also creates another layer of support throughout the year. Note the initiative is still in development phase.

Recommendations:

→ **Remember** that those who may need help during an emergency are not necessarily clients of a service provider. Consider the needs of people who would need support if elevators were not working, for example. As mentioned in the Risk Communications discussion, also consider elder orphans, older people living in isolation without support networks.

→ **Build networks and connect programs** and organizations during non-emergency times. This is key to identifying who may benefit most from a check-in program.

→ **Understand program limitations.** Red Hook Check-in does not provide medical care; rather the program provides connection to other services.

→ Panelists discuss their experiences planning for the whole community before, during, and after emergencies.

CARRIER ALERT REPORTING EMERGENCY SERVICES (C.A.R.E.S.)

What is it? C.A.R.E.S. is an initiative that trains postal carriers to recognize and report potential individual or community health and safety needs or concerns year-round. The United States Postal Service works closely with the New York City Department for the Aging and Human Resources Administration so that carriers can call 311 to report specific community needs they may encounter along their postal route. This pilot program was launched in several boroughs of New York City in April 2016 with hope to make it a nationwide program.

Who does it affect? Carriers can now report dangerous or hazardous conditions they may encounter along their route. This can help alert New York City agencies to potential medical, health and safety needs.

When is it used? Carriers should call 311 if they suspect there is a health and safety concern or need along their postal route. Carriers understand their participation is voluntary, and it is up to the carrier to choose to participate; though 98% of carriers have chosen to do so.

Recommendations:

Align roles of community members with skills. This program was designed based on the idea that sometimes the only human contact someone may have for days is with his or her mail carrier.

Train. In this case, training thousands of carriers on what to look for is a challenge though training carriers to train each other has been effective.

Determine a need and understand what volunteers are and are not qualified to do. It is important to maintain the mail carrier's role while also providing the ablility to report a safety-related need.

Manage expectations. While there is strong participation from carriers, community members must understand that there are limits to the extent that carriers can respond to individual needs.
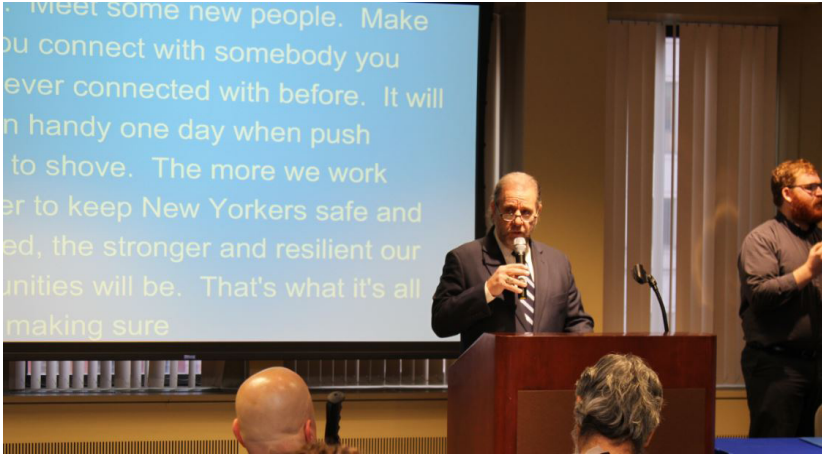
NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito speaks at the symposium.

Sign language interpreter with a participant at the symposium.

Community
Emergency
Planning in NYC

A Toolkit for Community Leaders
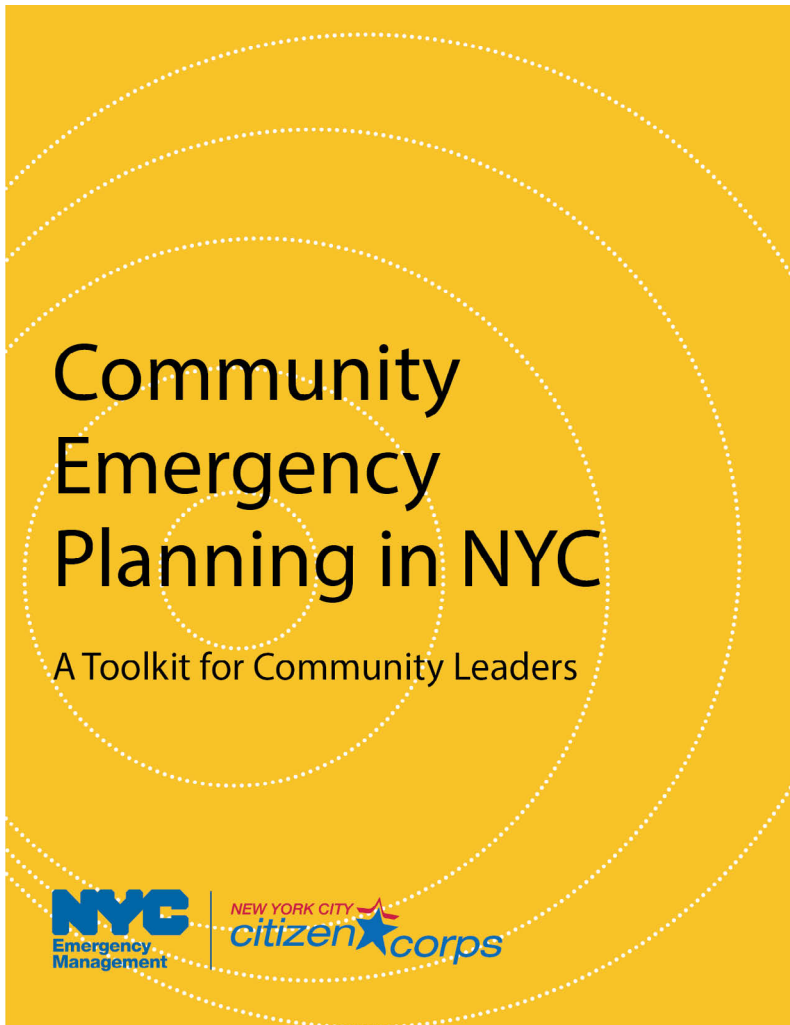
RESOURCE:
COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLANNING

NYC Citizen Corps has recently released a Community Emergency Planning Toolkit, focused on building community resilience. The toolkit shares how New York City plans for hazards and offers guidance for making a community based plan. It can be accessed online [here][8] and by visiting nyc.gov/citizencorps.

How do we coordinate these disparate programs?

One way is through events like the symposium.

Get connected by joining the Citizen Corps network.[9]

[8] http://on.nyc.gov/2qkB7ko
[9] http://on.nyc.gov/23yje0h

Caregivers of people with disabilities discussed how to put Ready New York materials and other planning guides into action. Presenters and participants discussed how they leverage existing tools to incorporate emergency planning with their loved ones and/or clients.

Moderated by: Iskra Gencheva, Deputy Director of Community Education and Language Access, NYC Emergency Management

Connie Lam

Director of Initiative for Women with Disabilities, NYU Medical Center

Lori Podvesker

M.S. Ed. Senior Manager of Disability and Education Policy, INCLUDEnyc

Recommendations:

→ **Join networks** to share advice and resources: Parent networks and online caregiver groups are helpful for engaging with other parents who have similar experiences with children with disabilities.

→ **Introduce** your loved one to surrounding community members: Parents should consider introducing their child to faculty, crossing guards, and even store owners in neighboring shops near the child's school so members of the community can help the child or alert authorities in the event of an emergency. Doing this ahead of time, at the beginning of every school year, can be an important preparedness action.

→ **Have a script or tool** that guides your loved one through conversations about emergency preparedness. This conversation can be difficult and stressful to both the caregiver and his or her loved one so having tools or guides that can walk them through actions or useful information to remember is helpful.

→ **Consider Identifiers** – Ensure your children or loved ones have an identification card with them. This can include basic contact information but also any special considerations. This can help first responders and others identify them and consider their needs in the event of an emergency.

Take a look at the community planning section of this report for resources including NYC Emergency Management's Community Emergency Planning Toolkit.[10]

[10] http://on.nyc.gov/2qkB7ko
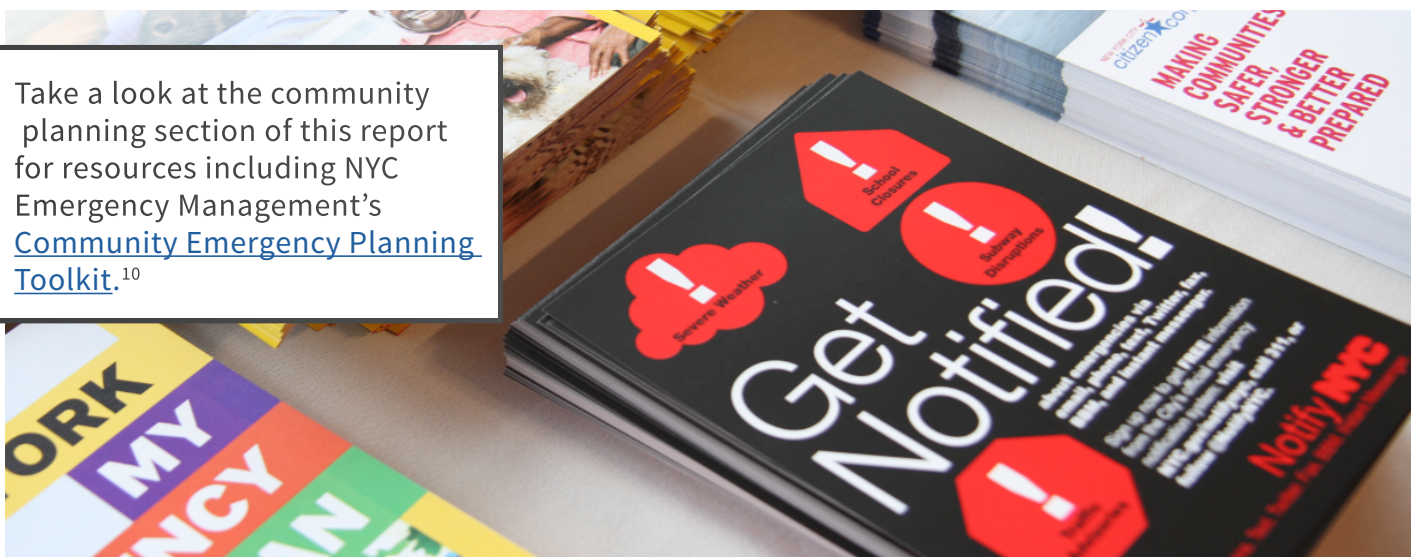
Recommendations For Organizations:

→ **Host** a Ready New York presentation (See nyc.gov/readynewyork) and reach out at a later date to those who attended to follow up on their individual preparedness planning efforts.

→ **Schedule designated workshops** to finish completing the My Emergency Plan Workbook[11] together. Make sure participants complete the plan, register for Notify NYC,[12] pack a Go Bag and help them if they need assistance.

→ **Conduct surveys** to assess what steps staff or clients have taken to prepare. Share helpful tips and ideas with the group.

→ **Encourage staff** to assist clients in building a go bag.

→ **Build relationships** with staff and share tools, such as Ready New York materials[13] to further educate and prepare clients adequately.

[11] http://on.nyc.gov/2fyd652
[12] http://nyc.gov/notifynyc
[13] http://on.nyc.gov/1JK01zT

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RISK COMMUNICATIONS

LINKING HEALTHCARE + GOV'T AGENCIES

COMMUNITY LIVING

SCREENING

PROGRAM EVALUATION

DOCUMENT

LEARN

TESTING

INTEGRATION

INNOVATION

BETTER PLANNING

BUILD DATA

REACH DURING CRISIS

COMMUNITY

#DAFN 2016

HOW TO IDENTIFY?

COMMON CALLS FIRE DEPT

PUTNAM COUNTY

AWARENESS

NO ONE PREPARED

3 PILLS AHEAD!!

PARTNER WITH ACADEMICS

ELDER ORPHAN

MORE DISABILITIES LIVING ALONE

22.6% @ RISK of Population

COOP PLANNING

ASSESSMENT WE WERE GOING TO BE THERE! (NO MATTER WHAT)

TASK FORCE

AGENCY PLAN FOR EMPLOYEES

INDIVIDUAL FAMILY

GAME PLAN

MESSAGING

TEST

BREAK STIGMAS

LIFESPAN 2x in 100 YRS

CLIMATE CHANGE

TECH

NEED TO FOLLOW UP WITH AGENCIES

CELL

2 WAY PROCESS

CIRCLE

CONNECT BEFORE DISASTER HAPPENS

A-C-T-I-O-N-A-B-L-E

*FASTEST GROWING POPULATION

OLDER POPULATION

HOW TO CONNECT TO AND

SPECIFIC RISK COMMUNITIES

HEARD

EMERGENCY KITS
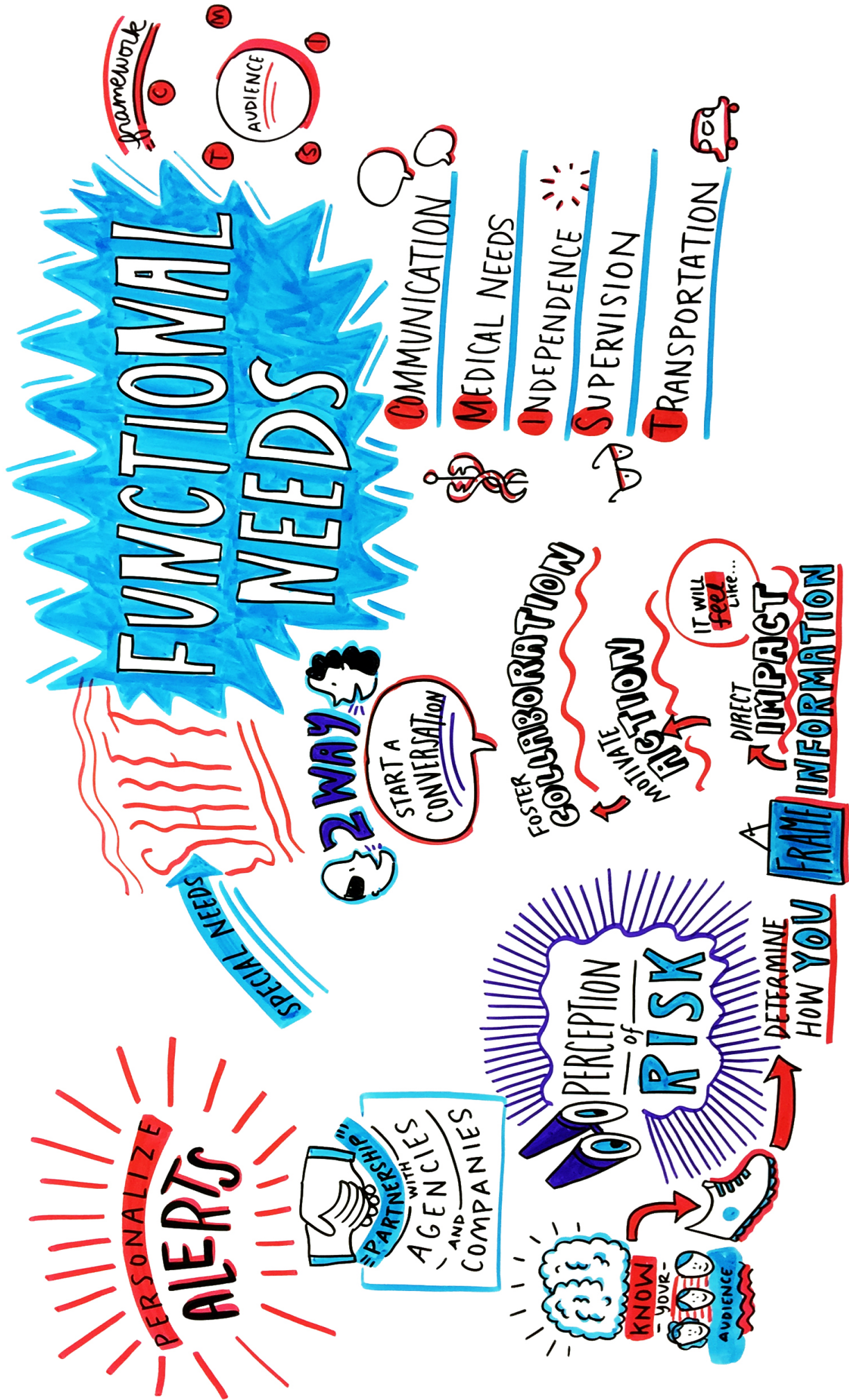
GOV'T

PREPARE PEOPLE

COMMUNICATE

for PREPAREDNESS

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kingman ink j.com
NIKKI KURT

NYC Emergency Management

NEW YORK CITY citizen corps

COMMUNITY PLANNING

CHECK OUT

OEM COMMUNITY PLANNING TOOLKIT — WE'RE SENDING a LINK to all who REGISTERED

ENGAGE with PROGRAM directors to be HEARD

ADDRESS the CRACKS

NEIGHBORS — trying to make it a little lighthearted — So SUPPORT is ALREADY IN PLACE

REMEMBER: SENIORS are ELIGIBLE, get info thru centers... WHAT ABOUT younger DISABLED PEOPLE?!

MAIL CARRIERS can help be eyes

CRITICAL INFO / CHECKLISTS / PRESCRIPTIONS

STAY BAG

Can they FULFILL NEEDS themselves?

CONNECT & REFER — MEDICAL / FOOD / TRANSPORT

SURVEY TEAMS — PECO

STEPS after CONTACT

CHECK-IN: Day to Day SUPPORT

STAKEHOLDER MAPPING: • WHO & WHAT DO WE CALL ON for support?

REDHOOK CHECKIN.ORG

NEED A LARGER & integrated SYSTEM

INTERVIEWS & WORKSHOPS w/ SENIORS

STRENGTHEN SOCIAL COHESION

NEIGHBORS are often our FIRST RESPONDERS

we can notice!

TRAINING was a CHALLENGE

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

TOOK 2 YEARS OF DIALOGUE!

LIST

REPORT NEEDS — REPORT they SEE (via) 311

CONNECT to HELP

RED HOOK CHECK-IN

PARSONS SERVICE DESIGN

CHECK-IN PROGRAM

PANELISTS

PECO

RAPID CANVASING in EMERGENCIES

USPS — MAIL CARRIER PROGRAM: empowering them to REPORT NEEDS

MAIL CARRIERS

"CARRIERS CARE"

VOLUNTARY PROGRAM, HAD to educate

ON A LISTENING TOUR

WHAT are their needs?

BUILD TRUST

AFFECTION for COMMUNITY

BRINGING PEOPLE IN

BUILD the MODEL — iterate — Replicate

UNION REPS

LEVERAGE STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

TRIGGERED by 48H OUTAGES

RED HOOK CHECK-IN

NYC Health

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

NEW YORK CITY citizen corps

NYC Emergency Management