Environmental Justice: Inclusive Emergency Preparedness for Persons With Disabilities

Liz Treston
City Council Vice President
Long Beach NY

Carol Myers
Occupational Therapists for Environmental Action
Sandy and Me
A Tale of Riding Out the Storm in Long Beach, NY

Hon. Elizabeth M. Treston, M.A./SLP
Days before Sandy NOT thinking to Prepare. Why?
No where was there a game plan for Sandy.
October 28th

Photos of To Go Bag (L) father and son making sandbags for their home
3 p.m. high tide. 
Lulled into a false sense of safety. 

Photo of street filling with water from bay in LBNY.
Storm Surge.
After the Water Pulled Back
No heat, no electric.
After evacuation Access needs fail.
Inaccessible after facilities
Everything Becomes FEMA to a Disaster Survivor
Government is overwhelmed. Where do “victims” go for help?
Sandy contractors targeted

Displaced victims of fraud are urged to file complaints

NASSAU COUNTY

By CAROLINE ROMETTE

Nassau County Executive Laura Curran and Legis. Dublin Ford (D-Green Beach) urge the public to file complaints against fraud by superstorm Sandy contractors.

"We are here today to urge you not to negotiate contracts in your presents," said the county executive.

One Nassau resident who was taken advantage of by a licenced or unlicensed contractor said they are not alone.

"We are asking all county water users to file complaints with the county's Office of Consumer Affairs," said Curran.

Long Beach homeowner Lisa

Trotter, 57, said she is the victim of a contractor who is delayed with repairs to her rental property because of red tape and liens placed on the property.

More protections for consumers are needed, Trotter said. "I appreciate the politicians stepping up, but it's time for the industry to be regulated."
“Disasters are always inclusive. Response and recovery are not, --- unless we plan for it.” (i)

(i)June Isaacson Kailes, MSW, Harris Family Center for Disability and Health

Policy at Western University of the Health Sciences.

Thanks for Listening!
• Environmental Justice: Inclusive Emergency Preparedness for the Persons with Disabilities

• Carol Myers, OTR, MA
A Few Sobering Facts About Inequities

- In 2019, more than 41 million U.S. adults were living with a disability. United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 2023

- Warnings and other important messages are lacking for people with disabilities (low vision, blindness, hearing loss, or mobility issues) to plan for extreme weather events. EPA, 2023
Housing units occupied by people with disabilities are more likely to be in neighborhoods with higher crime rates and higher risks of extreme weather, including floods, hurricanes, tornadoes and extreme heat. Community Living Policy, 2020.

People with disabilities often become institutionalized during and after a disaster and may not return home. U.S. Census Bureau, 2022.

Children with disabilities and their families are at a higher risk of injury or death in emergency situations than families that do not include children with disabilities. Flanagan SK, Sterman JJ, Merighi JR, Batty R., 2020

“Newly” disabled clients never think like someone with a disability, encounter new mobility and other issues, are unsure of resources, and assume technology will always work.
Discrepancies in existing essential services such as accessible transportation systems, housing, and healthcare options increase the hardship for people with disabilities to evacuate safely. National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), 2021
Person-Centered Emergency Preparedness (C-PEC) Workbook

A Brief Overview

An inclusive approach for people with disabilities to tailor emergency preparedness planning to their individual support needs.
-Centred Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP) Capability Wheel
ed with permission (www.collaborating4inclusion.org)
4 Steps to Increase Emergency Preparedness

Step 1 **Identify** your strengths and support needs in daily life

Step 2 **Know** your level of emergency preparedness and disaster risk

Step 3 **Plan** for how you will manage your support needs in an emergency

Step 4 **Communicate** your plan with people in your support network. Through collaboration, address gaps.
### Perceived Preparedness for a Disaster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>Stage 4</th>
<th>Stage 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am NOT prepared, and I do not intend to prepare in the next year. ▲</td>
<td>I am NOT prepared, but I intend to start preparing in the next year. ●</td>
<td>I am NOT prepared, but I intend to get prepared in the next six months. ■</td>
<td>I have been prepared for LESS than a year. *</td>
<td>I have been prepared for MORE than a year. †</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People with Disabilities</th>
<th>12%▲</th>
<th>18%●</th>
<th>18%■</th>
<th>19%*</th>
<th>33%†</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People without Disabilities</td>
<td>10%▲</td>
<td>17%●</td>
<td>21%■</td>
<td>18%*</td>
<td>34%†</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- I am **NOT prepared** for a disaster
- I am **prepared** for a disaster
ADVOCACY

❑ The Real Emergency Access for Aging and Disability Inclusion (REAADI) for Disasters

❑ The Disaster Medicaid Relief Act (DMRA)
Conclusion…
People with disability often navigate every day in inaccessible environments. They develop individual strategies for optimizing their strengths, managing their support needs and adapting to changing situations. These are strengths that people with disability bring to emergency preparedness.
References & Resources

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 2023 Climate Change and the Health of People with Disabilities https://www.epa.gov/climateimpacts/climate-change-and-health-people-disabilities


READDI & DRMFA Act https://reaadi.com/reaadi-drma/

The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies https://disasterstrategies.org/disaster-resources/
References & Resources


United Spinal Association Ready to Roll https://unitedspinal.org/ready-to-roll/


Video Emergency Preparedness for All https://vimeo.com/89664822


www.colaborating4inclusion.org