



Assessing College Students and a Culture of Preparedness for Disasters

Negative events often produce
positive long-term
improvements

Results of Hurricane
Katrina and the 911
disasters forced policy
makers to examine
response time to sudden
events.

*The White House Report on
the Federal Response to
Hurricane Katrina: Lessons
Learned* suggested that
preparedness go beyond
government agencies and
policy makers and include
individuals.

A Culture of Preparedness

Recommendations for Individual Preparedness

Have a discussion with family to discuss how to prepare for a disaster.



**Ask an out-of-state friend to
be the "family contact".**

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Discuss what to do in an evacuation, including planning how to take care of pets.





Have a disaster kit.

**The purpose of our study
was to examine if college
students have adopted a
culture of preparedness for
their personal
preparedness.**

Methods

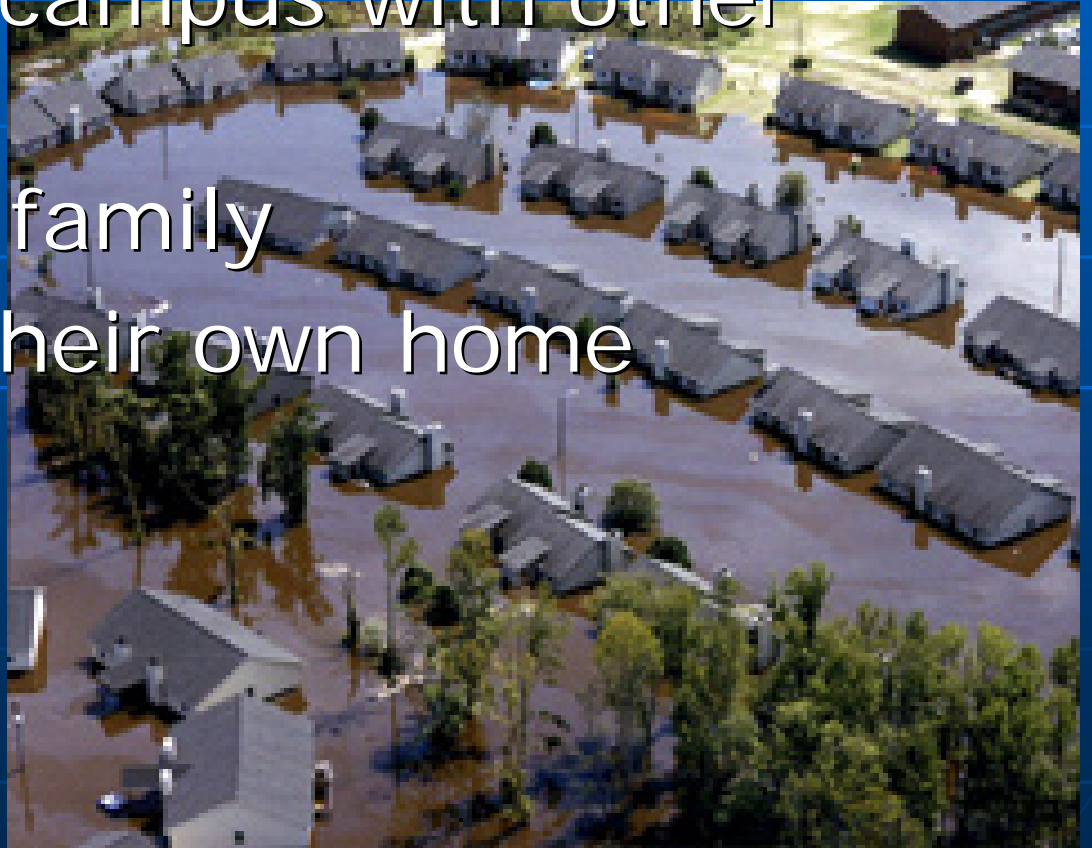
- On line survey offered to students enrolled in a university required course.
- Fall 2006
- Extra credit offered for taking survey and entirely voluntary. Other extra credit options were available
- Survey available for two weeks
- IRB approved

Results

- 1515 usable surveys
- 34%, 66% female
- Ages 16-49 with the mode 18
- 62% freshmen, 26% sophomore, 8% junior, 3% senior
- 75% white, 16% African-American, 10% other

Living Situation

- 62% lived in dorm
- 22% lived off campus with other students
- 5% lived with family
- 11% lived in their own home



Results

Having a discussion with family to discuss how to prepare for a disaster

Yes - 43%

No - 57%



**Asking an out-of-state friend
to be the "family contact".**

Agree 58%

Undecided 16%

Disagree 26%

Discussing what to do in an evacuation, including planning how to take care of pets.



Yes = 20%

No = 80%

Having a formal plan

Yes = 22%

Undecided = 37%

No = 41%

Implications

- College students on their own for the first time
- Need to instill a responsibility for personal preparedness
- Need to instill an awareness of the concept of preparedness as part of being a good citizen
- College campuses need to include students in preparedness efforts at institutional level.
- Transition from adolescent thinking to adult responsibilities.

Lessons Learned

- Our students were not particularly prepared
- Teachable moments (California wildfires, VaTech shooting, annual hurricane season)
- Preparedness is an on-going concept



Preparedness begins with the
individual.

Make a Plan
Develop a Kit
Stay informed!