

Development of a Community Planning Toolkit to Prepare Vulnerable Populations for Emergencies

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Today's Learning Objectives

- Define vulnerable populations for the purposes of emergency planning
- Identify methodology for identifying community-specific strategies for assisting vulnerable populations in an emergency
- Identify the risk communication needs of vulnerable populations in an emergency
- Identify practical suggestions for risk communication with vulnerable populations in an emergency

Who are vulnerable populations?

“Any individual, group or community whose circumstances create barriers to obtaining or understanding information, or the ability to react as the general population has been requested to proceed during all phases of emergency management.”

- *Iowa Department of Public Health Center for Disaster Operations and Response*



Stage 1: Equity in Preparedness

A Collaborative Symposium for Populations with Special Healthcare Needs was held in Boston, MA, December 6, 2007

Symposium Objectives:

- Identify needs of vulnerable populations in an emergency
- Develop strategies for assisting vulnerable populations in an emergency





110 Participants

- Local public health agents
- First responders: EMS, Fire, Police, Public Health
- Emergency Management
- Local elected officials
- State Dept. of Health
- Community-based organizations (CBOs)
 - Long-term care facilities
 - Group homes
 - Visiting Nurse Associations
 - Community Health Centers
 - Non-profit and social service agencies
- Vulnerable persons

8 Focus Groups



- ❑ Behavioral Health
- ❑ Hard-of-Hearing
- ❑ Homebound
- ❑ Homeless
- ❑ Long-term Care
- ❑ Mobility Impaired
- ❑ Substance Abuse
- ❑ Visually-Impaired



Facilitated Discussion

- Key Issues Brainstorm

“What are the **key issues in emergency planning** to be addressed for _____ population?” (*generate as many issues as possible*)

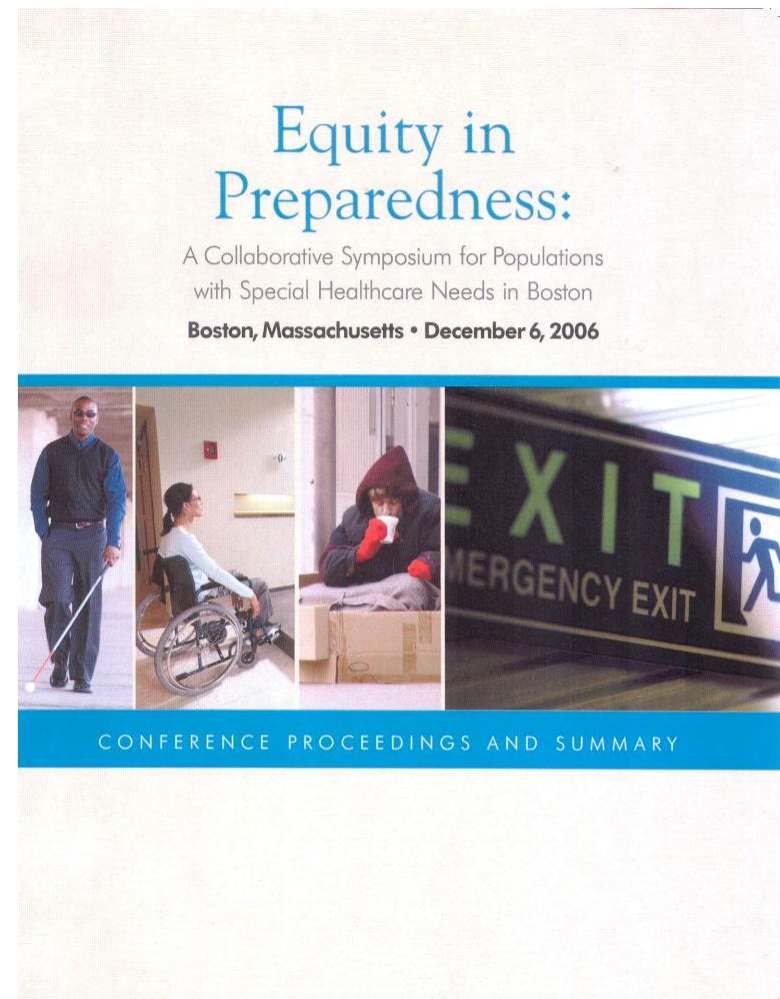
- Barriers Brainstorm

“What are the **barriers to emergency planning** for _____ population?” (*to surface problems and encourage openness to problem-solving*)

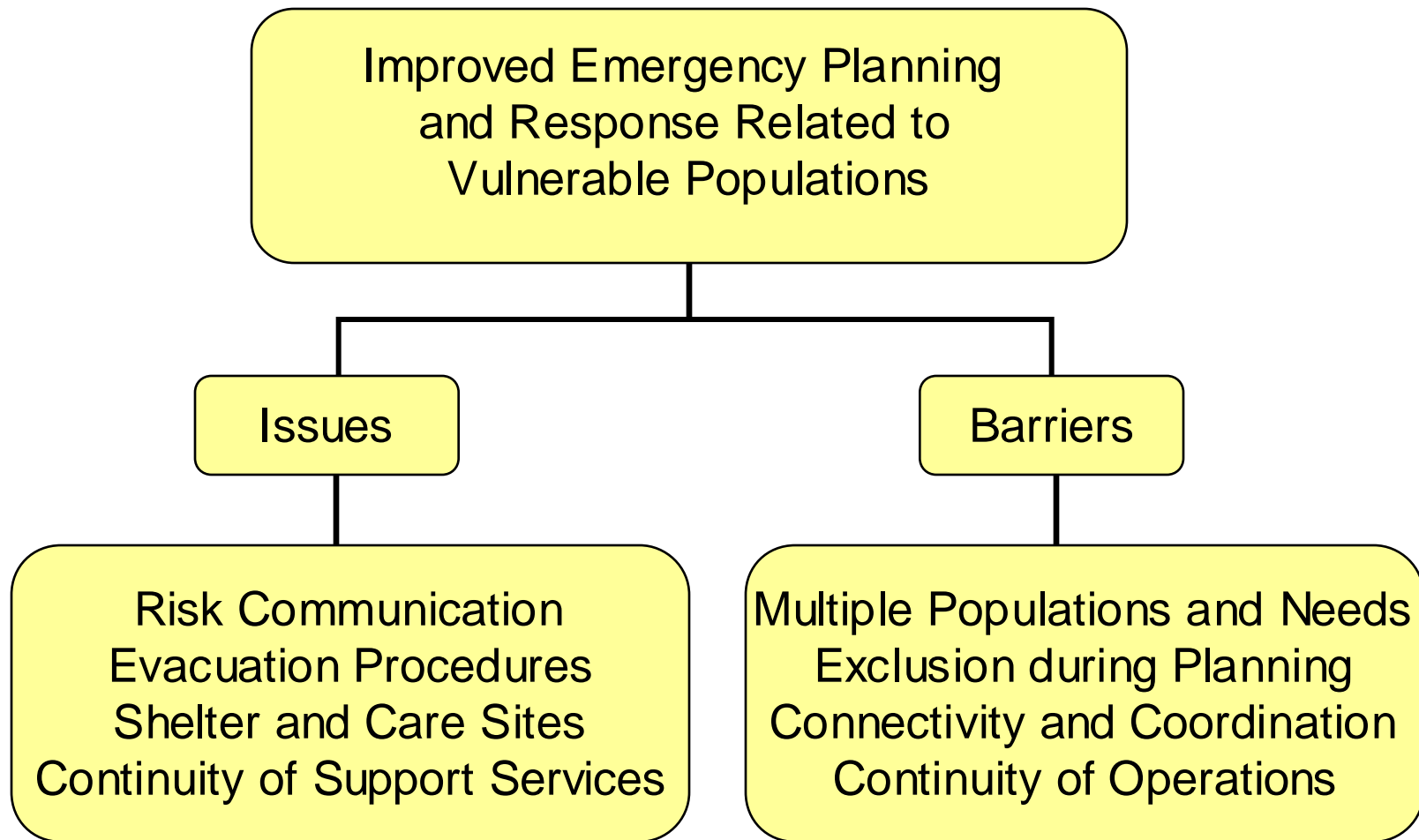
List practical and do-able Action Steps you can take within your agency to improve preparedness for your population

Methodology

- Individual worksheets distributed and reviewed
- Facilitated report-back
- Sheets compiled for after-action report



Results: Logic Model





Stage 2: Survey Development

- Validate issues to be addressed in plans
- Confirm that barriers to planning are contributing factors to emergency issues
- Prioritize action items and identify practical suggestions for vulnerable population preparedness planning



Study Population

- ❑ Government Commissions
- ❑ Representatives of Long-term care facilities and group homes
- ❑ Advocacy groups
- ❑ Community Health Centers
- ❑ Visiting Nurse Associations and home-health services
- ❑ Leaders in emergency planning and response
- ❑ Persons with vulnerabilities
- ❑ Initial focus on Boston

Issue 1: Risk Communication





Risk Communication Conceptual Framework

- Conventional communication mechanisms do not reach vulnerable populations

- Groups employ different modalities of communication - No one-size-fits-all approach

- Vulnerable persons have minimal access to preparedness materials
 - Limited formats of delivery
 - Generalized content is not always applicable

Risk Communication Conceptual Framework Cont.

- ❑ Determine preferred communication modalities
- ❑ Responder trainings on various communication technologies
- ❑ Test emergency messages with focus groups
- ❑ Produce materials in multiple formats (i.e. Braille, large print, discs, tapes, and other assistive technologies)





Item Pool Generation

- Conventional risk communication mechanisms, including television/radio/newspaper announcements, internet, and emergency alert systems, are likely to reach your service population group during an emergency.
- A majority of your service population relies on one of the following assistive communication technologies: TTY, captioning, text-to-voice translation, and Communication Access Realtime Translation Services.



Item Pool Generation Cont.

- To your knowledge, do your community's first responders make personal preparedness and emergency response materials with content specific to persons with disabilities?
- Your service population is likely to take the action recommended by the following persons in your community during an emergency?



Item Pool Generation Cont.

What is the best combination of mechanisms to relay information to your population group during an emergency? (Choose three options.)

- TV announcements
- Radio announcements
- Internet/email
- Door-to-Door announcements
- Neighborhood announcements
- Voluntary registry
- Mail announcements
- Outreach by community organizations
- Community boards
- Newspaper announcements
- Other _____



Item Pool Generation Cont.

- Validity test through a group of persons working with specific populations
- Survey administration via introductory letter and phone call



Next Steps

- ❑ Complete data collection
- ❑ Continue process for other issues and barriers
- ❑ Convene advisory groups composed of vulnerable persons and service providers to review survey results and issue recommendations for planning
- ❑ Development of Community Planning Toolkit

Thank you

For more information or to receive
copies of either the report or survey
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