



Employee Assistance Program Services Newsletter

FALL 2006

Family Planning for an Emergency or Disaster

Preparing for a national or local emergency or disaster is truly not as complicated as it may seem. Having a personal/family preparedness plan will help you organize essential emergency information and store supplies so you will be confidently ready for virtually any event. Most individual and family disaster plans involve a few essential elements such as:

- Having the right supplies on hand.
- Designating a prepared shelter or knowing the location of the nearest suitable one.
- Knowing where to get important information.
- Getting all caregivers and family members "in the loop".
- Including provisions for pets.

Why should I have a plan?

In emergency situations, time is critical. Furthermore, only you or your family members know the specifics of your everyday affairs, so it would be difficult for any person or agency to plan for you without missing important details. We live in a very mobile society and the average individual or family covers many miles every day traveling to and from school, work and other daily activities. It is possible that you may not be with your loved ones should disaster strike. How and where will you rejoin them? Will you require someone's help? Caregivers and school faculties may have other family concerns that may supersede remaining with your children indefinitely. Earthquakes, hurricanes, tornados, or acts of terrorism can occur without warning and, depending on the situation, you and your family may need to either take shelter or evacuate. Ensure everyone has a written list of important contact numbers on hand or stored in mobile phones. Having a plan that everyone is familiar with and can execute will make a difference.

Keep the plan simple

A preparedness plan can be as simple as designating escape routes and a meeting place for family members. More complex plans may involve centralized meeting locations, several evacuation routes and possibly pre-positioned supplies. Whatever your plan may include, it needs to be easily understood and achievable by everyone who has a part in it.

Pay attention to the latest news or forecasts

Preparedness planning is a continual process. We live in a world where any kind of specific information can be accessed almost instantaneously. Staying informed is a critical part of your ability to forecast your needs and make adjustments to your plans.

Anniversary Reactions

As the 5th anniversary of September 11th approaches some people may experience increased feelings of anxiety, fear, or may find they avoid discussion or news reports of the event. This is a type of Post Traumatic Stress referred to as Anniversary Reaction.

Anniversary Reaction can be caused by a memory that is triggered by reminders, but may also appear to surface with no prior warning. The approach of the date itself may be enough to bring on these feelings and responses.

While these feelings are uncomfortable, they are not necessarily a sign of a greater problem. It is important to find people in your life with whom you can discuss your feelings openly. It is healthy to take care of yourself by doing what is comfortable for you. For example, one person may be interested in movies or television programs that recreate events of September 11, 2001; while another finds these upsetting. Neither person is wrong nor is one reaction healthier than the other. Each person is different so are the coping mechanism required.

If you find it difficult to concentrate, sleep or you are more irritable or restless, give us a call at **216.431.4140**. Speaking with an **AssistNOW** counselor can help to put these feelings into perspective.



Stay in place or evacuate?

Unless you or your family are in a burning building, unsafe structure or flood plain, chances are you will need to shelter in place (stay where you are) and await further information from local authorities. Sheltering in place can be at home or at a local shelter such as a school gymnasium. In preparation, you should keep basic supplies on hand such as:

- ⇒ First-aid kit with enough supplies for each person.
- ⇒ Three days supply (one gallon per person, per day) of bottled or contained water.
- ⇒ Three days supplies of non-perishable food.
- ⇒ Special supplies such as bottles, diapers or formula for small children.
- ⇒ Extra supply of required medication.
- ⇒ At least one working flashlight.
- ⇒ Candles, chemical light sticks or other light source.
- ⇒ Battery operated radio w/extra batteries.
- ⇒ Matches or lighter (fire source).
- ⇒ Season-appropriate clothing and footwear for every person.
- ⇒ Bedding supplies (blankets or sleeping bags).
- ⇒ Cell phone w/charger and power adapter for car.

Periodically Review/Update Your Plans and Supplies

It is important to periodically take inventory of emergency supplies and replace items that are no longer fresh or ready for your use. Always ensure your fire extinguishers and smoke detectors have adequate charge remaining. Check the remaining charge on extra batteries and review expiration dates on food items. Replenish any first-aid kit items you have used or which have expired. If contact numbers have changed, update them. Always remember: Planning for an emergency or disaster is an ever-continual process. Stay up to date.

Source: www.disastercenter.com

Smoking Cessation and Gambling Services

Is your company going “smoke free”? Are you tired of spending your money on gas and cigarettes?

Well, we can't do much about the cost of gasoline, but we do offer groups that help you stop smoking. Here is the best part, they can be free to employees and we come right to your job. An AssistNOW trained specialist will come into your workplace and hold a series of 8 groups filled with ideas and support on getting away from smoking or chewing tobacco for good! The group can take place during your lunch hour or right at the end of the day, depending on what your employer wants to set up.

When is playing the lottery no longer “play”?

Have you ever wondered if you spend too much on lottery tickets? Have your friends and family ever commented about how often you buy scratch offs? Do you gamble when you are supposed to be doing something else? Did you ever promise yourself to cut down or even quit, just to find yourself buying more and more? AssistNOW has help and information on problem gambling. To contact us, call **216.431.4140**.

Resiliency of the Human Spirit

A recent Harvard University study reported a higher level of optimism and resiliency among survivors of Hurricane Katrina than expected. Although Katrina survivors continue to report serious physical, financial and mental health problems, most study respondents reported that their experiences had helped them develop a deeper sense of meaning and purpose in their lives. About three quarters said that their experiences with the hurricane made them more spiritual or religious.

The head of the research study stated, “the notion of resilience seems to be at the core of this. We found an extraordinarily high proportion of our sample who said that -- despite the understandable sadness of all they had lost and anxiety about the uncertainties of the future -- they felt closer to their loved ones, felt connected to community, felt more religious and had purpose and meaning in life.”

If you are having problems coping with the aftermath of a traumatic event in your life, call AssistNOW at **216.431.4140** or **1.800.840.4654** for help.

Source: Adapted from MSN Health, Fitness - Mental Health



Remember,
for confidential assistance call:

AssistNOW
The EAP Division of
Recovery Resources
216.431.4140
1.800.840.4654