On the Road to
WELLNESS
North Dakota Disability Health Project

Promoting the health and wellness of people with disabilities

August 2011 Issue 31

After the Flood

People do not always give much thought to preparing for a disaster, believing that the disaster will not seriously disrupt their lives. Flood waters reached record levels throughout North Dakota in 2011, not only affecting residents living in flooded areas, but also indirectly affecting many people throughout the state. You may have been personally involved or know someone affected by the devastation. Reactions to a disaster vary beyond the obvious destruction that you see everywhere. You need to look after yourself, your family, and friends as you move ahead to the tasks of cleanup and recovery. People with disabilities may require additional services and resources.

Care for Yourself

Discuss your problems. Talk to family and friends to help release tension. Crying is a natural response to a disaster. It is a great way to release pent-up emotions.

Rest and eat well. You need proper rest and nourishment to keep going. When your body is tired and weak, you are more prone to accidents and illness. Stay active, but don't overdo it.

Set a manageable schedule. It may feel like there are a million things to do, but you can't do everything at once. Make a list and do jobs one at a time. Try to return to your pre-disaster routine as quickly as possible. Routines give you something predictable to depend on.

Watch for signs of stress. A body reacts to stress in many different ways.

Warning signs of stress may include:

- Short temper, frequent arguments, irritation
- Greater consumption of alcohol
- Difficulty sleeping, bad dreams
- Aches, pains, stomach problems
- Loss of concentration

To receive this newsletter by email or in an alternative format, call 800-233-1737.

- Feelings of depression

Seek help. If you cannot shake the feeling of sadness or other signs of stress, get help. Special programs and crisis counselors are often available after a disaster because many people need help coping with their situation.

Establish a Personal Support Network. A personal support network can be friends, family members and other relatives, personal attendants, and pre-planned arrangements for assistance with meals and transportation.

Emergency Contact List. Besides your personal support network, your list should include equipment vendors, doctors, pharmacy, utility companies, employers, and transportation providers.

Emergency Documents. Store important documents (e.g., health card, birth, death and marriage certificates, wills, charge and bank account numbers, insurance documents, etc.) in a sealed freezer bag in with your emergency supplies, also place copies in a safety-deposit box.

Supplies to Keep with You at All Times. These items can be carried in a fanny pack or back pack and may include health information, essential medications, signaling device (e.g., whistle, bell, etc.), flashlight on a key ring, and a small battery-operated radio. Other equipment needs to consider may include walkers, canes, wheelchairs, communication devices and other adaptive equipment necessary to function in an emergency.

Plan your Recovery

Get organized with a recovery plan. Planning can help you save time and money. Doing things in the right order will also make you feel better, knowing that you are making progress without wasting effort.

Make sure it is safe to work in your home.

Decide what you can and can't do.

Most importantly, keep talking openly with your family and friends.

Sources:

- *Repairing Your Flooded Home.*. http://www2.redcross.org/static/file_cont333_lang0_150.pdf
- Drum, J.D., Krahn, G.I., Bersani, H (2009). *Disability and Public Health.* Washington, DD: American Public Health Association.

Additional Resources:

- *Red* Cross Mid-Dakota Chapter. http://minotredcross.org/
- Crisis Mental Health Line, call 211 or 1-888-470-6968.

The ND Disability Health Project can provide technical assistance to assist with health promotion, staff training and education, and disability awareness. Contact us at 800.233.1737 or visit our website at www.ndcpd.org/health

NDCPD Minot State University Center of Excellence

North Dakota Disability Health Project

North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities
Minot State University
500 University Ave. W.
Minot, ND 58707
1.800.233.1737
701.858.3580
www.ndcpd.org/health

Project staff :

Brent Askvig
Principal Investigator
701-858-3052
brent.askvig@minotstateu.edu

Kari Schmidt
Program Director
701-858-3048
kari.schmidt@minotstateu.edu

Brenda Munson
Project Coordinator
701-858-4477
brenda.munson@minotstateu.edu

Korie Huettl
Administrative Assistant
701-858-4154
korie.huettl@minotstateu.edu

Vision:

All people in ND have access to information and services they need to maintain good health and wellness. There are no health disparities between people with and without disabilities that are based solely on the presence of a disability.

Pay It Forward.....

Pass this information on to others who may find it helpful.

Health-related information provided in this fact sheet is for informational purposes only and should not replace advice from a medical professional. The ND Disability Health Project is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through a grant (1 u59 DD000278) to the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities at Minot State University. Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the CDC.