Building Resiliency: Emergency Preparedness and Vulnerable Populations

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Why Prepare?

48% of people do not have an EMERGENCY KIT for their home.
Video: A well planned escape

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DuhZI3oC9xc

Ready New York: What’s Your Plan?
@2014 NYC Emergency Management Department
Vulnerability in Emergencies

• In New Orleans, people aged 60 and older comprised 15 percent of the population prior to Hurricane Katrina, but made up 70 percent of the related deaths.

• A study released in 2008 found that of the 986 people who died as a direct result of Hurricane Katrina, nearly half were aged 75 or older.

• Other significant event:
  – Hurricane Sandy
  – California fires
  – Heat Waves
Elder Vulnerabilities

- Physical or mental impairments
- Medical issues (chronic & temporary)
- Social isolation
- Difficulty self-advocating
- Dietary requirements
- Reduced transportation options
- More likely to suffer from one or more chronic illnesses, including:
  - Hypertension
  - Diabetes
  - Obesity
  - Depression
  - Mobility issues (chronic or temporary)
Growing Elder Population

- According to the 2016 U.S. Census Bureau, there are nearly **51 million** people (15.6%) in the US aged 65 and older.

- The population of individuals aged 65 and older is projected to exceed **73 million** by 2030. That’s an increase of 50%, and more than 20% of the total population.
Who else is vulnerable?

- Adults with access and functional needs
- People with chronic health issues
- Pregnant women
- Children
- Below or near poverty
- Non-English speakers
- People without cars
- People with pets
Social Isolation

• About 28% (14.3 million) of all non-institutionalized older persons in 2018 lived alone. The proportion living alone increases with advanced age. Among women aged 75+, almost half (44%) lived alone.


• According to a 2012 study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, both social isolation and loneliness are associated with a higher risk of mortality in adults aged 52 and older.
How it all started

Hurricane Irene - 2011
Brookline’s Emergency Preparedness Buddies Program

• Who are we? “COACHES”
  – Trained volunteers: Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) & CERT who work with elders to improve preparedness & resiliency on an individual level

• Who we help? “BUDDY”
  – Elders or adults with disabilities most of whom live alone
Brookline’s Emergency Preparedness Buddies Program

• What do we do?
  – Assist elders to better prepare for and respond to emergency situations therefore improving resiliency
  – EP coaches provide preparedness training and supplies to Buddies via a series of one-on-one home visits
  – EP coaches assist Buddies with individual preparedness efforts (FOL, Go Bag prep, 911 Disability Indicator Form...)
  – Coaches contact Buddies before known events, and after known/unknown event

TIME COMMITMENT:
Initially 3-4 hours
Annually 2 hours
# Recruitment, Referrals, & Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COACHES</th>
<th>BUDDIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brookline MRC/CERT members</td>
<td>Elders living alone/socially isolated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Known to Emergency Management Team</td>
<td>Referred by:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Brookline Senior Center/Brookline</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Council on Aging</td>
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<tr>
<td>CORI/SORI checked</td>
<td>• Brookline Housing Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency preparedness training/experience</td>
<td>• Brookline Community Mental Health Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training focused on working with the elderly &amp; those with access and functional needs</td>
<td>• Brookline Food Pantry</td>
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<td>• MA Office of Disability</td>
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<td>• Independent Living Council</td>
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<td>• Visiting Nurses Associations</td>
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<td>• Faith Based Organization</td>
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- Strong backing from Town officials
- Part-time program coordinator (currently 19hrs/week)
The 1 on 1 Buddies Program

PROS
• Individualized and tailored to the specific person’s need
• Modest resources necessary (start-up go bag)
• Continuity of care
• Accountability
• Coaches know their Buddie’s living situation and have access to emergency contacts if needed.

LESSONS LEARNED
• Hard to recruit and match coaches and buddies
• Significant time lag between recruitment and retention
• “Buddies” connotes more than just a few visits
• Supplies must be lightweight and easy to use
The Buddy Village

**PROS**
- Monthly events located in community rooms
- Increases scalability
- Language translations
- Residents meet other residents – Buddy system within building

**LESSONS LEARNED**
- Do they actually take the necessary steps towards preparedness?
- No continuity
- No relationship with the buddies
Emergency Preparedness Buddies Programs

One-on-One
- About 40 coaches trained
- 20+ active coaches
- 18 Buddies enrolled
- 10 EP Buddy “deployments” to date

Buddy Village
- In two years – 2017-2018: 48 events, 6 locations, 425 residents
- Materials & Presentations offered in English and Mandarin Chinese
Moving Forward – Brookline and Beyond

• Faith Based Organizations
• Translations in more languages
• Community outreach
• Neighbors to Neighbors approach
• Help other communities to start similar programs
Program Achievements

• Awards
  – April 2019: National MRC Award: Community Preparedness & Resilience Award

• Presentations:
  – MRC Well Check Webinar, September 2016
  – MEMA 2019 All-Hazards Preparedness Conference June 2019
  – MHOA Emergency Preparedness Annual Conference November 2019
  – Needham Public Health workshops, Fall 2019

• Information Requests:
  – Nationwide
Presenter Contact Information

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