## UNIT INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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## UNIT INTRODUCTION

This unit will focus on the human services element in disaster response and how NYC CERT will most likely be deployed in an emergency. Many CERT deployments will also be in coordination with other human services providers, such as the American Red Cross and Salvation Army, and or City agencies such as the Human Resources Administration or the Department for the Aging. The basics of psychological first aid will raise your awareness to the effects of working in a disaster and with survivors. New York City's culturally diverse population requires NYC CERT members to be aware of the differences in working with people from various cultures, some requiring special needs.

## UNIT OBJECTIVES

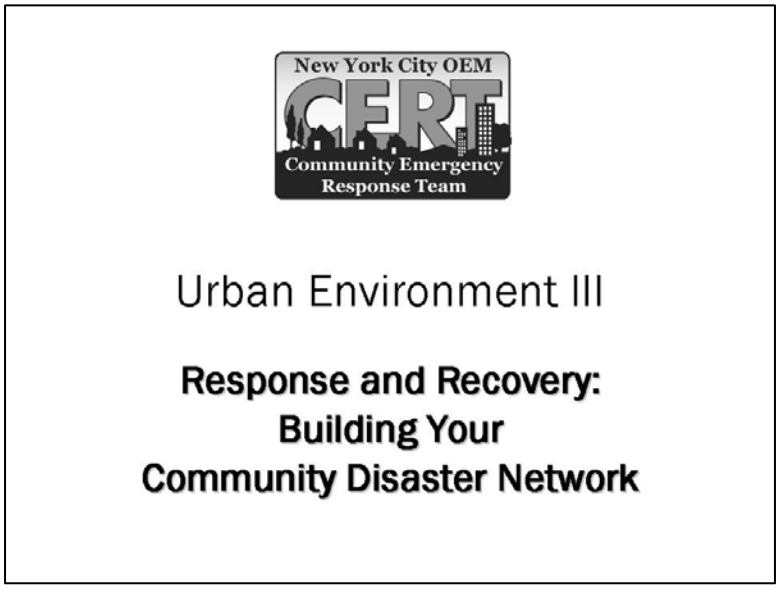
- Understand your community's needs.
- Recognize and work with your community's vulnerability.
- Understand human services roles in a disaster.
- Recognize the psychological effects of a disaster.
- Learn about self care.
- Discuss CERT roles and responsibilities.

## UNIT REVIEW

The last two weeks have exposed you to the risks and hazards of living and working in the urban environment. The preparedness aspect for fires, utility emergencies, and transportation emergencies are the same for natural disasters (hurricanes, coastal flooding, and tornados). New Yorkers need to make plans and put together their Go Bags and stay-at-home kits.

## LOOKING FORWARD

Next week we will start to learn the hands-on medical operations that you and your fellow team members may be deployed to use in the event of an emergency or disaster. The information you learn this week about community vulnerabilities, cultural considerations, and the psychological effects of trauma are directly related to the care you may provide to survivors in your community.




**Key Points**

- The vital role CERTs play in preparing their communities for disasters starts with CDNing.
- Linking community groups and organizations through your CERT will allow for more efficient communication in the event of an emergency or disaster.
- As stated earlier while discussing preparedness in ICS, there is a direct correlation between a community's preparedness and how quickly it recovers.

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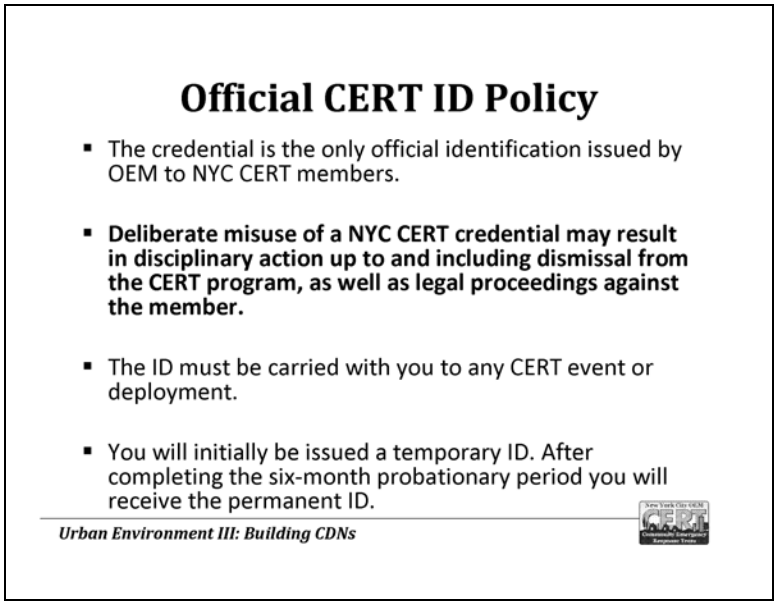


**Key Points**

- The NYC CERT ID card must only be used for CERT activities.

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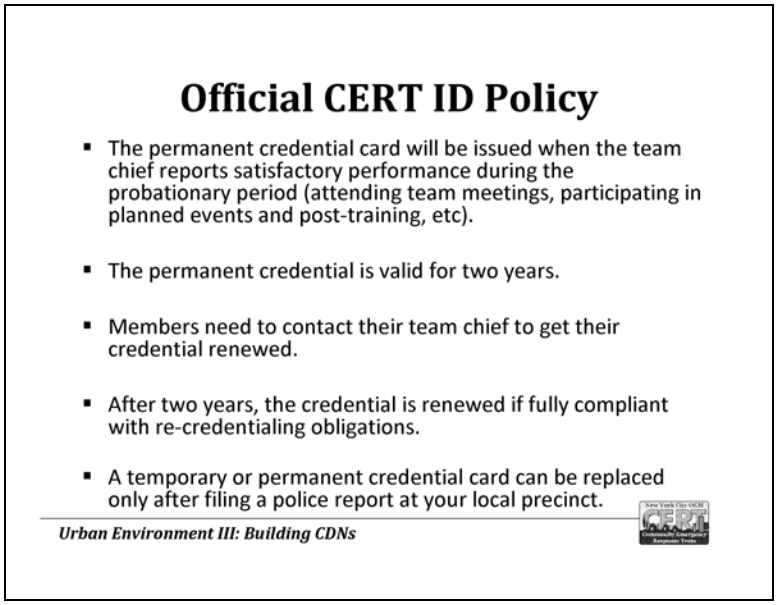


**Key Points**

- Renewal of the NYC CERT ID, and thus active membership in the NYC CERT program, is contingent upon satisfactory activity in the form of team participation and completion of post-training and continuing-education classes.

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## Official CERT ID Policy

- The NYC CERT credential does not allow you to break City, State, or Federal laws.
- You may not present your ID card to anyone outside of the context of a CERT event.
- The NYC CERT ID card allows you to perform only those roles identified in the NYC CERT standard operating procedures. (Appendix F)

*Urban Environment III: Building CDNs*

**Key Points**

- NYC CERT members can perform only those specific roles assigned to CERT while deployed.

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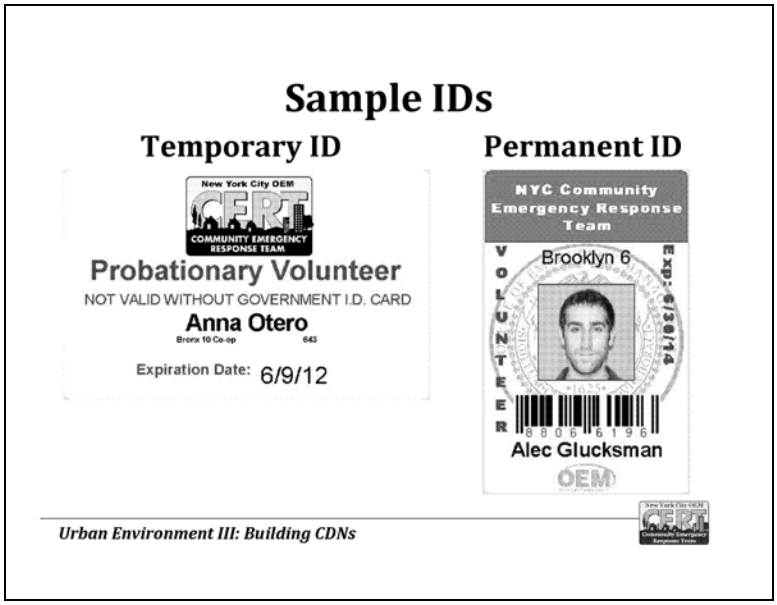


**Key Points**

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## Unit Objectives

- Learn how to build and strengthen your Community Disaster Network (CDN).
- Understand human services roles in a disaster.
- Recognize and work with your community's vulnerabilities.
- Recognize the psychological effects of a disaster.
- Learn about self care.
- Discuss what you and your team will do.
- Participate in knowledge applications.

Urban Environment III: Building Community Disaster Networks

**Key Points**

- By the end of this unit you should be able to:
  - Begin your work in building your Community Disaster Network (CDN);
  - Understand what roles CERT may play as part of the human services response;
  - Begin to recognize the unique vulnerabilities of your community with respect to disasters;
  - Understand the basic psychology of disasters and trauma; and
  - Raise your awareness on how to take care of yourself as a CERT.

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## The C in CERT stands for…

**Who knows your community better than you?**

You are the expert about the neighborhood in which you live. You know the people, the businesses, the best places to park, where to get a good bite to eat, and the quickest way to get through traffic.

HOW IS THIS INFORMATION USEFUL?

*Urban Environment III: Building CDNs*

**Key Points**

- Let's start with you.
- Who do you know? What community groups do you belong to? What house of worship do you attend? What schools do your children attend? Where do you buy your groceries?

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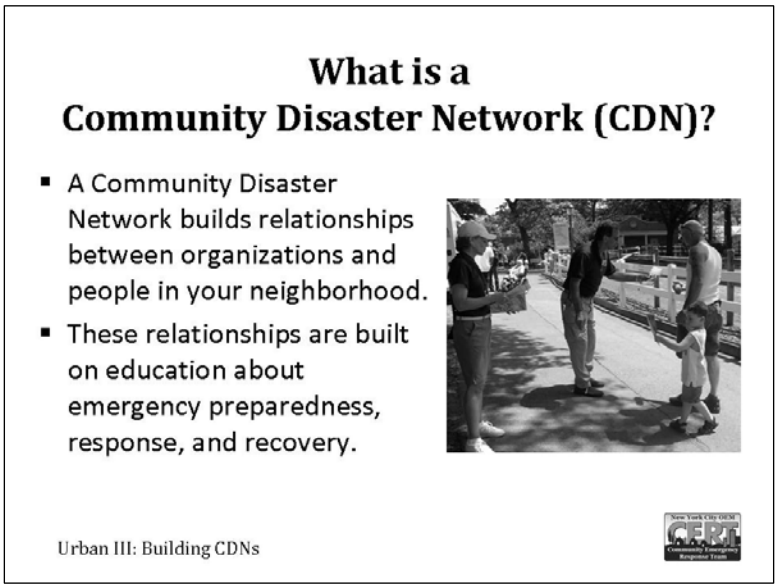


**Key Points**

- Start keeping a record of contacts for each of the places you know in your community. Make sure they know you are a member of CERT, what you can do, and what knowledge you possess about emergency preparedness.
- Your CDN will be the framework for all preparedness, response, and recovery activities.

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## Why is it important to build a CDN?

- In the event of an emergency or disaster, you need to understand the vulnerabilities and resources in your community.
- This network can help you communicate important emergency information widely and to people who need it most.

*"You shouldn't be exchanging business cards at the site of an emergency or disaster."*

Urban Environment III: Building Community Disaster Networks

**Key Points**

- The time to build these important relationships is before something happens in your community.
- Use the time wisely to discover the unique and vulnerable aspects of your neighborhood and community. Relationships and building trust take time to grow.

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## How to build your CDN.

- Go out - knock on doors and introduce CERT. Talk about what CERT is and how you are a resource in your community.

- *Examples of potential network partners:*
  - NYPD Precincts- Community Affairs Unit
  - FDNY Engine Companies and Firehouses
  - Senior Centers
  - After-School Programs
  - Faith-Based Contacts (Houses of Worship and Community Centers)
  - Block and Tenant Associations
  - Business Improvements Districts
  - Civic Associations/Clubs

Urban Environment III: Building Community Disaster Networks

**Key Points**

- Building your CDN is a grassroots operation.
- In order to build these relationships, you need to have face-to-face contact with each and every group in your CDN.
- The green CERT shirts and vests need to be visible in your community as often as possible, so fellow residents know who you are and that you are an asset to their neighborhood.
- This is a good time to talk about Ready New York as well.

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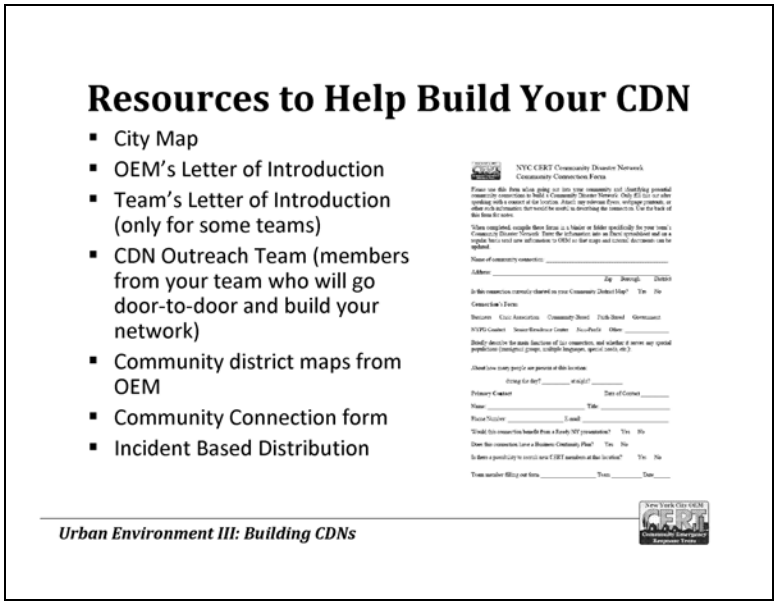


## Key Points

- There are materials to help systemize outreach and community information.
- City Map is available to all NYC residents on the City's web page (www.nyc.gov/citymap).
- Each team has a letter of introduction and support from the Commissioner of NYC OEM.
- Your CERT may choose to form an outreach team to begin building your CDN.
- Each team is supplied with a large community district map to plot CDN partners.

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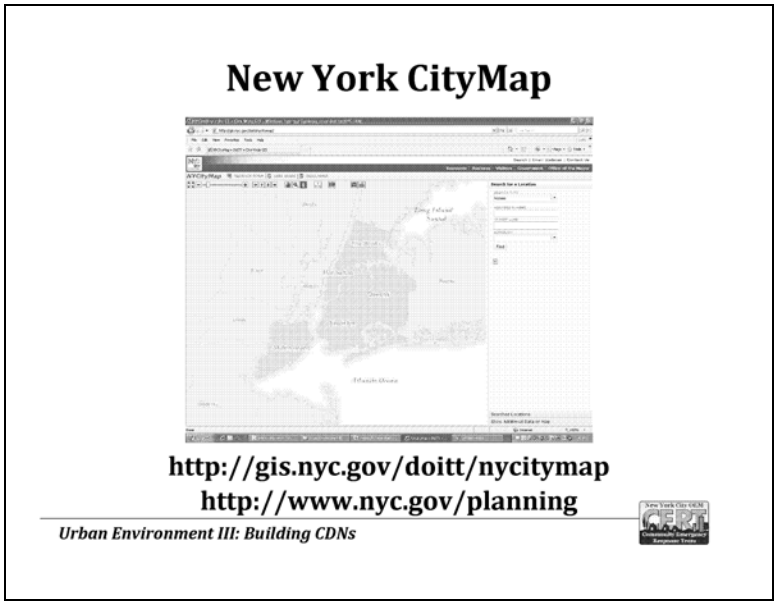


**Key Points**

- City Map is a tool that can provide specific information about your block, neighborhood, and community.
- Maps have two purposes: 1) Team use – map outreach location, RNY.
  2) Help OEM update and maintain its information.
- By entering a specific address, you can find out building and property information, nearby schools, the closest subway entrances, and more.
- Log onto **nyc.gov/citymap** to try it out!

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**Key Points**

- Providing human services is one aspect of any response to an emergency or disaster.
- Many of the identified roles CERT may play are in the field of human services.
- The Human Services Unit at OEM is active in preparedness, response, and recovery roles.
- There are three main operations in disaster human services:
    - Assistance centers;
    - Sheltering, food, and supplies distribution; and
    - Assisting with special needs populations.

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## What is Human Services?

Human Services Mission:

- To address the human element in response and recovery operations

AND

- Focus on the individuals and families who are impacted and affected by disasters.

*Urban Environment III: Building CDNs*

**Key Points**

- Human services address the personal side of a disaster, including individuals' loss of loved ones, crisis counseling, recovery loans, food stamps, disaster unemployment, legal services, and support to populations with special needs.

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**Key Points**

- Human services partners in NYC include:
  - American Red Cross (www.nyredcross.org)
  - Citizen Corps Council (www.NYC.gov/citizencorps)
  - The Mayor's Community Affairs Unit (www.NYC.gov/cau)
  - City Department for the Aging (www.NYC.gov/aging)
  - FEMA (www.FEMA.gov)
  - Medical Reserve Corps (www.medicalreserve.org)
  - New York Cares (www.NYCares.org)
  - The Salvation Army (www.salvationarmy-newyork.org)
  - NYC Service (www.nyservice.org )
  - There are other partners, depending on the disaster. Many of these partners meet regularly as part of the NYC Citizen Corps Council.

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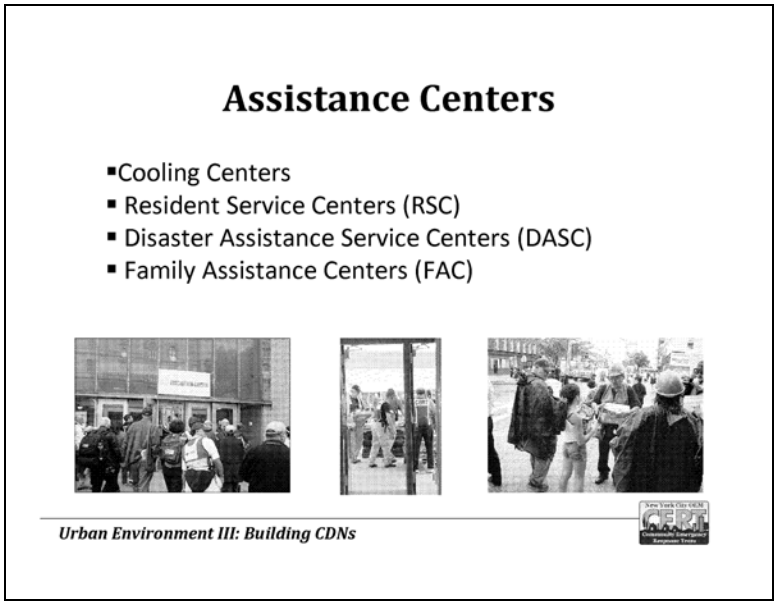
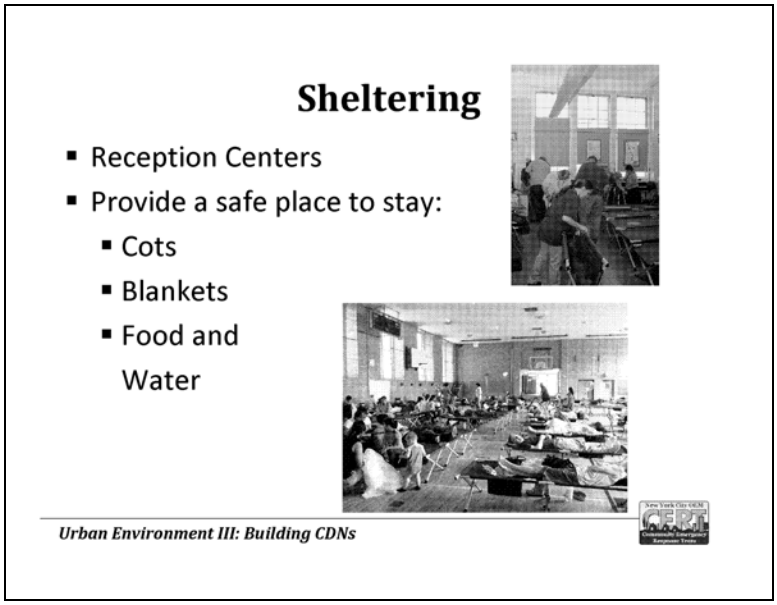



**Key Points**

- Cooling Centers:
  - Community centers (NYCHA, senior centers, libraries, etc.) that extend their hours during extreme heat.
- Resident Service Centers:
  - Are opened to offer services when a building is evacuated or a vacate order is issued.
  - Are centralized locations for affected residents to receive information or assistance.
- Disaster Assistance Service Centers (DASC):
  - Are temporary operations where people who have been economically impacted by a disaster may go to a centralized location and receive information and assistance from the government, private, and non-profit partners.
- Family Assistance Center (FAC):
  - Are opened following an incident with 10 or more fatalities. The primary objective of a FAC is to manage casualty and mortuary information, provide mental health support, and address the basic needs of victims' family and friends.




**Key Points**

- Different types of shelters are opened for different types of emergencies.
- There are no permanent shelter locations; they are opened as needed.
- The City of New York has specific evacuation centers that are predetermined for coastal storm emergencies and can be found on OEM's website (www.NYC.gov/oem) or by calling 311.
- At the time of an emergency, officials carefully decide where shelters should be opened.
- Shelters provide a safe place for individuals and families in the event of an emergency.

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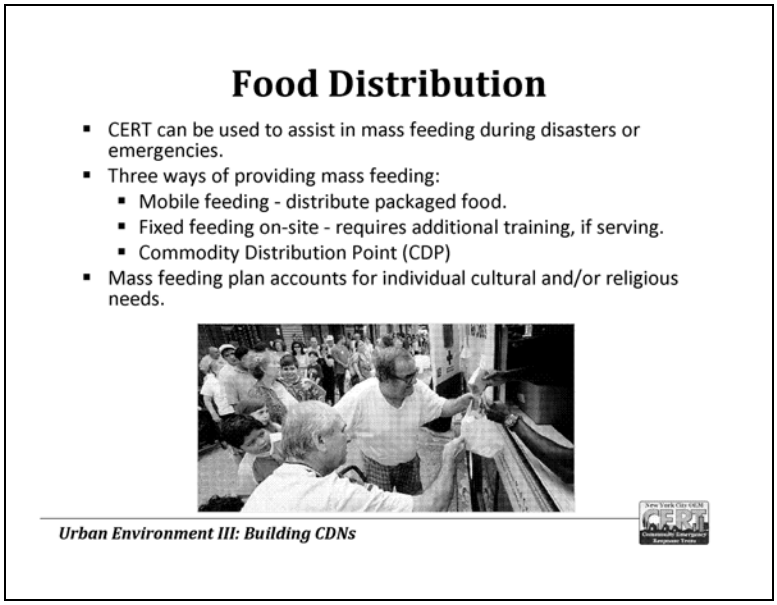


**Key Points**

- Mass Feeding:
  - Small disasters: food will be provided by fast food or local restaurants.
  - Medium disasters: food will be provided by small kitchens as well as fast food or local restaurants.
  - Large disasters: Food will be provided using the same as above, as well as large institutional kitchens.
- A Commodity Distribution Point (CDP) is a temporary site that has been established by the City to provide life-sustaining commodities to the public. CERT members may be deployed to work at CDPs.
- Individual cultural and religious needs will be taken into account.

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## Distribution of Relief Supplies

- Comfort kits
  - soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrush
- Clean-up kits
  - mop, broom, bucket and bleach
- Bottled water and snacks

*Urban Environment III: Building CDNs*

**Key Points**

- These are examples of supplies that may be available in shelters or distributed by human services partners after an emergency.
- Many of these are also items that are commonly found in Go Bags.
- Please Note: These items may or may not fit your specific needs due to cultural, religious or medical reasons.
- Take time to prepare yourself now so you will not have to rely on others.

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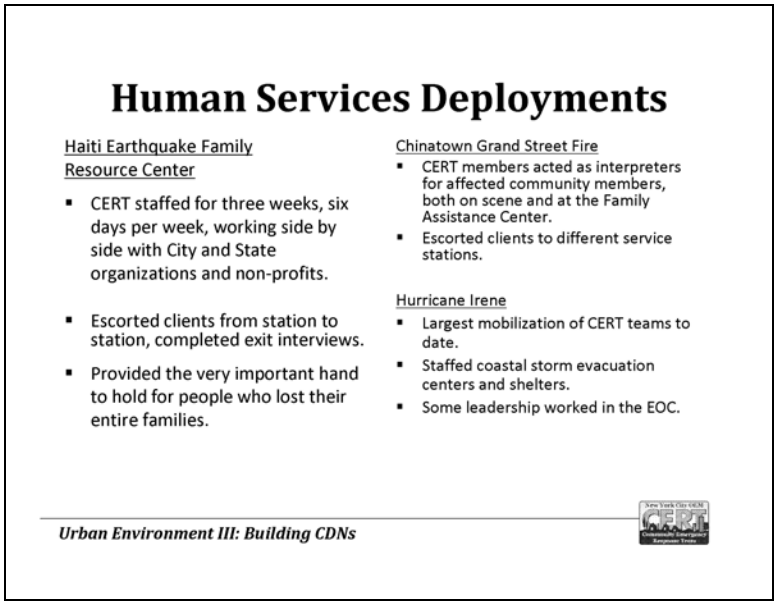


**Key Points**

- Possible CERT roles are being written into most plans by NYC OEM.
- When a specific plan is activated, OEM will canvas CERT teams to assess their availability and deploy them based on need.

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**Key Points**

- What aspects of your everyday life make you more vulnerable to the effects of an emergency?
- Think of your community. Are there hazards that make it more vulnerable to the effects of a disaster than other parts of the city?
- What people or things in your community are more vulnerable to a disaster?

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**Key Points**

- Factors that increase New York City's vulnerability include:
  - Natural and/or geographic factors (coastline, flood zones);
  - Infrastructure (subway, bridges, tunnels, electricity, steam, housing, etc.); and
  - Social (age, income, language, special needs, population density).
- Vulnerabilities can compound if they overlap; if communities or people have more than one.
- What are some vulnerabilities that members of your community might have that are missing from this list?

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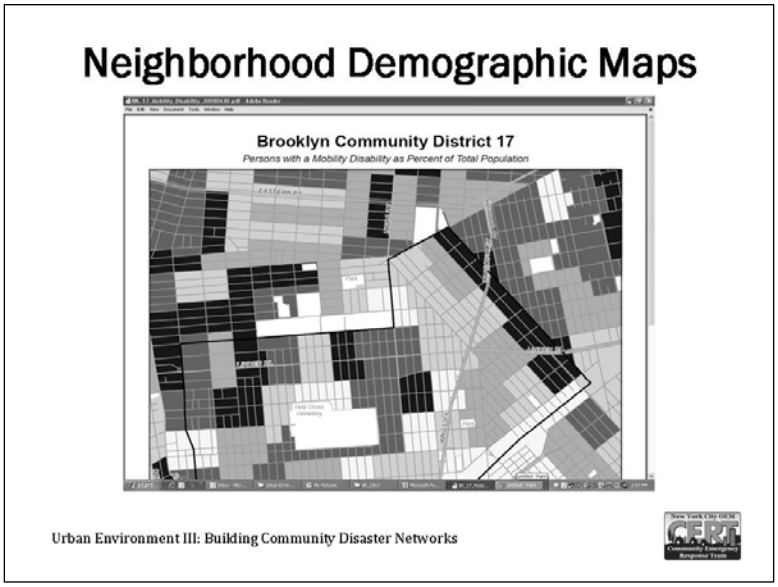


**Key Points**

- Census data can help you better understand your community.
- Census data is put into maps of:
  - People with a mobility disability
  - People living alone who are 65 years and older
  - Major languages spoken other than English
  - People living below the poverty level
  - Linguistically isolated households
  - Hurricane evacuation zones
  - Foreign-born persons
  - Population density
- Go to www.nyc.gov/planning to access more demographic information.

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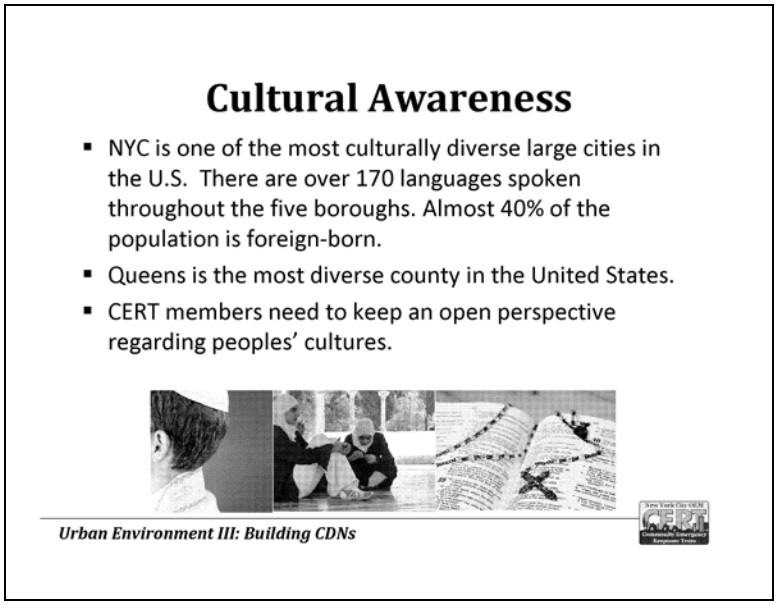


**Key Points**

- The human services role puts you face-to-face with the survivors you are helping.
- As a CERT member, you will come into contact with different people, each needing different things.
- Do you have language and/or cultural knowledge that you can offer?
- For more information about cultural and emergencies visit www.diversitypreparedness.org.

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## Cultural Considerations

- Some people you come in contact with may view aid as negative or as a violation of their personal beliefs.
- Keeping a level head and a non-confrontational attitude is key.
- One of our goals is to do the greatest good for the greatest number of people. If someone refuses your help, inform your section leader, and move on to another person who may need assistance.

Urban Environment III: Building Community Disaster Networks

**Key Points**

- Remember that each person will react to an emergency or disaster in a different way.
- Each person's individual reaction, compounded by personal beliefs and values may make your role in CERT easier or more challenging.
- Your job is to help. If someone does not want your help, move to another individual who does.
- The first responders will be able to serve those CERT does not.

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## Helping those with Special Needs

- People may have different types (or a combination) of disabilities or special needs, including:
  - Hearing loss
  - Vision loss
  - Physical or developmental disability
  - Use a wheelchair, cane or other aid device
  - "Invisible" disabilities and special needs

*Urban Environment III: Building CDNs*

**Key Points**

- The National Response Framework has identified special needs as:
  - Individuals who before, during, and after an incident may have additional needs in one or more of the following functional areas: maintaining independence, communication, transportation, supervision, and medical care.
- Think about what it means to someone with a special need when it comes to preparing for, responding to, and recovering from a disaster.

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## General Tips for Communicating with Individuals with Disabilities

- If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen to or ask for instructions.
- Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use common expressions such as "See you later," or "Walk over here," that seem to relate to a person's disability.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions when you're unsure of what to do. "What can I do to help you?"

Urban Environment III: Building Community Disaster Networks

**Key Points**

- Be aware that not all disabilities are visible!
- For more information, please see resources at the end of this unit. A list of helpful phrases is provided that will help guide you when working with special needs survivors.

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## Things to Remember

- Always treat each individual with dignity, respect and courtesy.
- Understand each person's individual needs. Disaster situations may be more difficult for a person with a disability.
- Offer assistance but do not insist or be offended if your offer is not accepted.
- Everyone reacts to stress in a different way.
- Relax.

Urban Environment III: Building Community Disaster Networks

**Key Points**

- As a member of NYC CERT you are an ambassador of the City of New York.
- Whether you are assisting survivors at a resident assistance center, attending a post-training class in your borough with other members, or participating in a citywide exercise, your CERT ID and gear identifies you as a resource and asset of NYC.
- Be helpful and proud!

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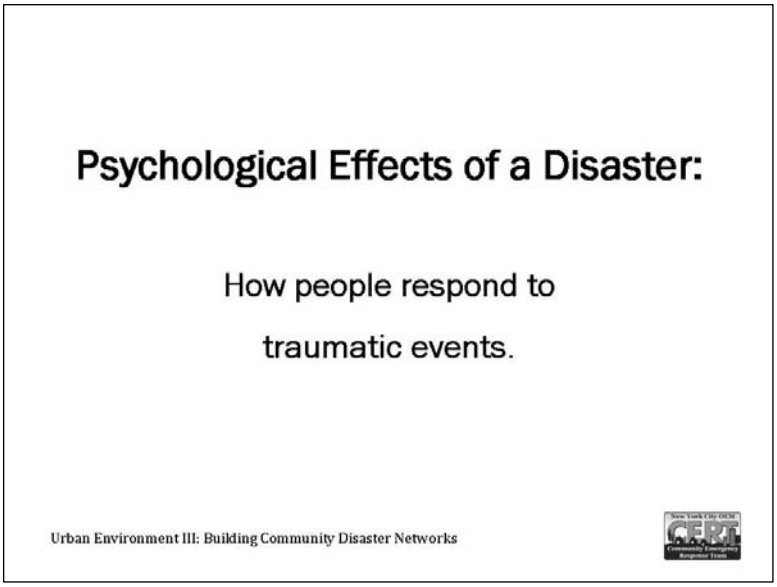


**Key Points**

- Almost all people exposed to a traumatic event will show stress reactions or symptoms of stress in the immediate and/or short-term aftermath of a disaster.
- You may be affected as a member of CERT as you respond to assist your neighbors and friends.
- You may be affected as a resident of the community or of New York City.

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## Trauma

- A serious injury or shock to the body, as from violence or an accident, OR
- An emotional wound or shock that creates substantial, lasting damage to the psychological development of a person, OR
- An event or situation that causes great distress and disruption.

Urban Environment III: Building Community Disaster Networks

**Key Points**

- What different types of loss might happen in the event of an emergency or disaster?
- How may that affect you? Your family? Your community?
- How might your sense of safety and security be threatened?
- It is important to remember that everyone responds to stress in a different way.

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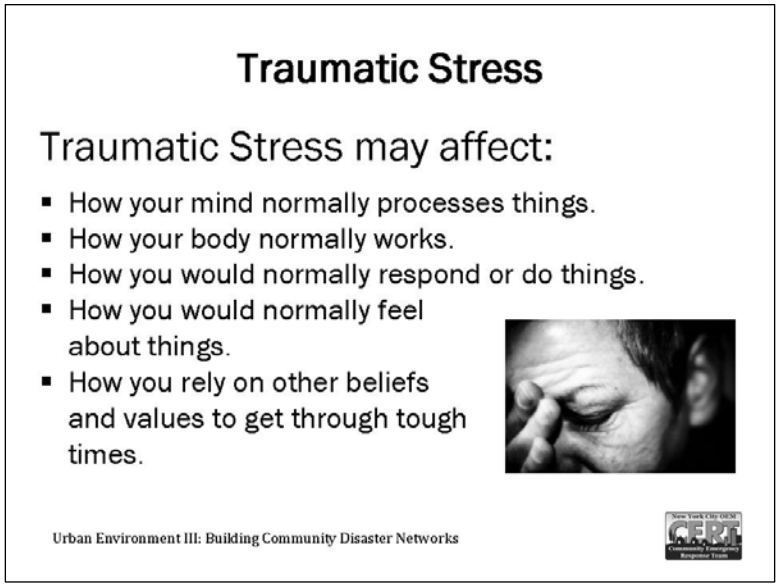


**Key Points**

- Stress may cause someone to change how they react to things. Stress can affect how you and your body normally functions:
  - Cognitively (how your mind thinks and processes things);
  - Physically (how your body normally works);
  - Behaviorally (how you may respond to things);
  - Emotionally (how you may feel about things); and/or
  - Spiritually (what beliefs and values you may hold).
- When something traumatic happens, a person may react in a certain way without even knowing it.
- An emergency or disaster may trigger someone's memory of a past traumatic event, therefore compounding his or her reaction.

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**Key Points**

- Some individuals may have persistent stress reactions, or they may have symptoms which may worsen over time.
- Reactions will differ based on the individual's perception of the event. Someone who is living in a house destroyed by a tornado may have very different reactions or symptoms than the first responders who assist them.
- If someone continues to have strong reactions or symptoms six months or more following an event, professional mental health services may be needed.
- For mental health referrals at any time, call LIFENET (a Mental Health Association of NYC program), seven days a week, 24 hours a day, 1-800-LIFENET (543-3638); 1-877-AYUDESE (1-877-298-3373) in Spanish; 1-877-990-8585 for Korean and Chinese callers. People who speak other languages may call 311.
- What other reactions can you think of?

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## What Those Affected Need

What can CERT provide when you encounter someone who has been affected by a disaster?

- Listen and show empathy.
- Ask "What do you need?"
- Help those affected to connect with their natural support systems (family, friends, faith institutions).

Urban Environment III: Building Community Disaster Networks

**Key Points**

- Once your team is deployed in a human services role, you will meet and help survivors directly affected by an emergency or disaster.
- Listen to their needs, offer them assistance within the scope of your training, and assist them on their way to recovery.
- You role is to provide general, immediate, concrete, and emotional support. You do NOT provide formal mental health intervention: that will be provided by professionals.
- Non-mental health professionals may provide psychological first aid, a tool that may stabilize a survivor.
- The goal of on-scene psychological intervention on the part of CERT members should be to stabilize the incident scene by stabilizing individuals.

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## What is Empathy?

- Empathy is NOT sympathy.
  - Empathy is understanding what the person has been through and what he or she is feeling.
  - Sympathy is sharing those feelings with someone.
- In the event of a tragedy, sympathy will wear you down. Empathy allows you to work with those affected in a healthy way.

Urban Environment III: Building Community Disaster Networks

**Key Points**

- Not everyone has empathy or is capable of providing empathy to others.
- If you are feeling frustrated in your CERT role and need to change to another role, let your supervisor and team chief know.

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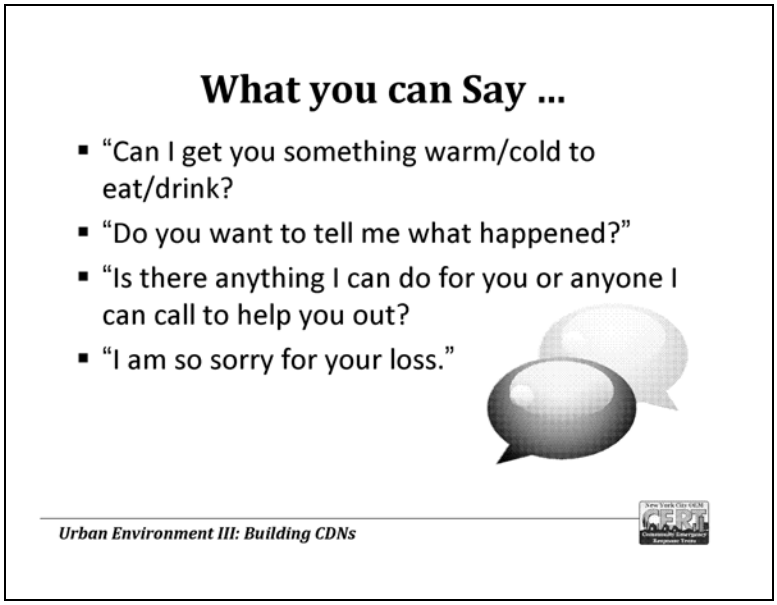


**Key Points**

- By saying the right things, you can promote:
  - Safety
  - A sense of calm
  - Connectedness
  - A sense of hope
  - Self-efficacy (how someone's beliefs about their own capabilities produce positive effects/outcomes)
- When in doubt of what to say just ask what you can do.

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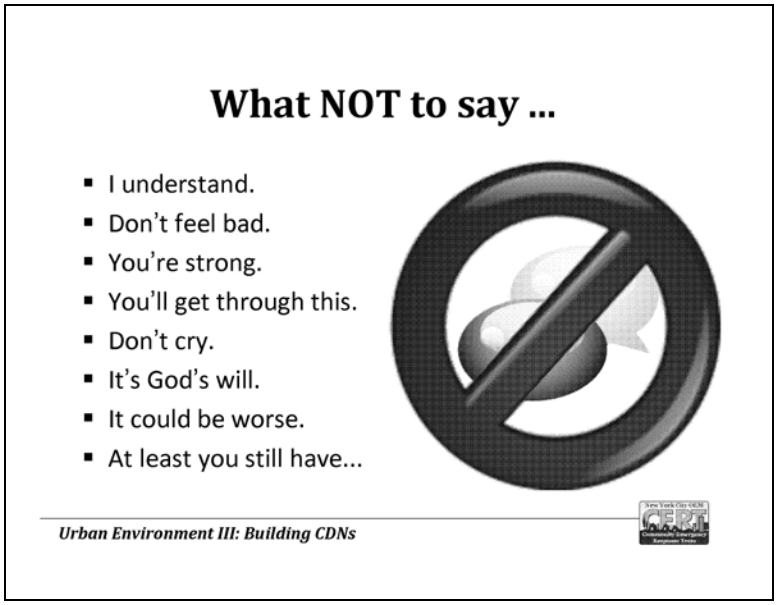


**Key Points**

- Your role is to provide empathy and show understanding of the other person's feelings, not to judge.
- By being careful what you say, you can avoid making someone feel worse.

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## How will I learn how to do this?

- Education: post-training opportunities are offered by NYC CERT.
- Talk to other CERT members and ask questions during team meetings.
- Doing some of the leg work yourself. Find out the answers by doing some homework.

*Urban Environment III: Building CDNs*

**Key Points**

- NYC CERT offers post-training to active, credentialed members throughout the year. While these courses are designed to enhance your for role as a CERT member, they will also count for credits towards re-credentialing (refer to your SOPs).
- Always be open-minded and willing to learn new things.
- Check out resources on-line or in your local NYC public library.

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## NYC CERT Post-Training Opportunities

- Citizen Corps Council trainings and conferences
- Cultural Awareness
- Community Outreach
- Communicating with the Disabled
- Coastal Storm Shelter Training

*Urban Environment III: Building CDNs*

**Key Points**

- Through the NYC CERT program you can continue your training.
- Every year the NYC Citizen Corps Council hosts a disaster volunteer conference. Past themes have included: Enhancing Cross-Cultural Communication, Preparing to Respond, and Leadership and Cross-agency Collaboration.
- NYC CERT partners with other agencies and organizations to offer courses in psychological first aid, utility awareness, communication with the disabled, and more.

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**Key Points**

- Taking care of yourself as a CERT member will allow you to do your job in an effective and healthy way.
- As you help survivors of an emergency or disaster, do not forget to look after your own team members to make sure everyone is looking after themselves in a positive way. This can be before, during, and after a response.

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## Why is self care important for you?

Being a CERT volunteer can be Stressful,

*THEREFORE*

- To do the best job you can you must monitor and care for your own physical and mental well-being.
- Team members must also look out for one another.

*Urban Environment III: Building CDNs*

**Key Points**

- Being a volunteer in a response and recovery role may be stressful.
- You must perform your responsibilities safely and effectively so you can monitor and care for your own physical and mental well-being.

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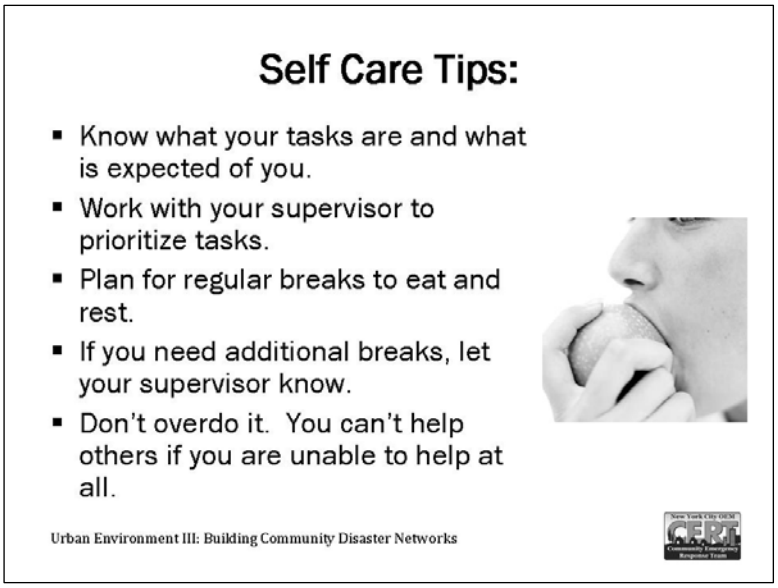


**Key Points**

- Open communication with your team chief and fellow team members will help with self care.
- Eight hours during an emergency is very different from that of a normal eight hour day. Everybody needs a break; emergencies are exhausting.
- You can't help others if you are exhausted or distracted.

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## Stress Busters

- Get enough sleep.
- Exercise.
- Eat a balanced diet.
- Balance work, play, and rest.
- Connect with others.
- Use spiritual resources.
- Laugh!
- Allow yourself to receive as well as give: remember that your identity is broader than that of a helper.

*Urban Environment III: Building CDNs*

**Key Points**

- Take time to take care of yourself.
- Know what stress relief techniques work for you and try to incorporate them into your daily routines.
- By preparing yourself now, your ability to cope will be much higher during an emergency.

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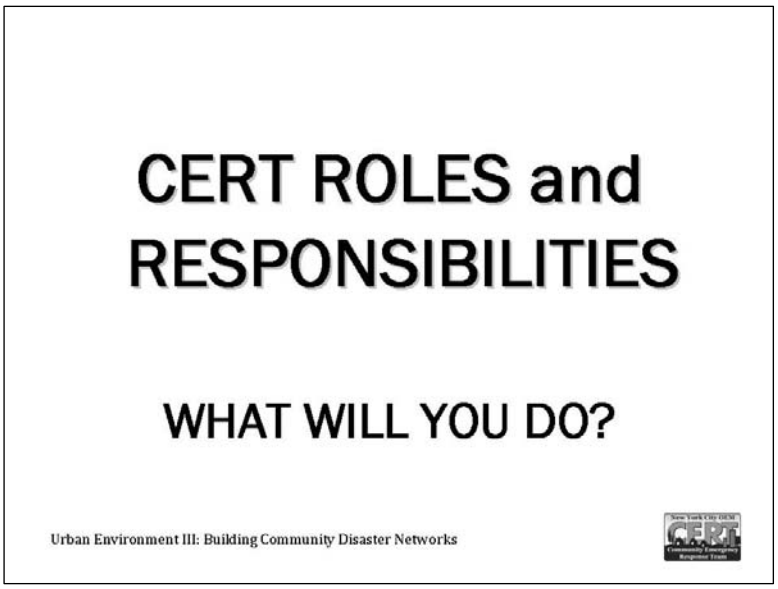


**Key Points**

- What human services roles might CERT be asked to provide in the event of an emergency or disaster?
- How can you plan for these roles with your team?
- How will your CDN make these roles easier?

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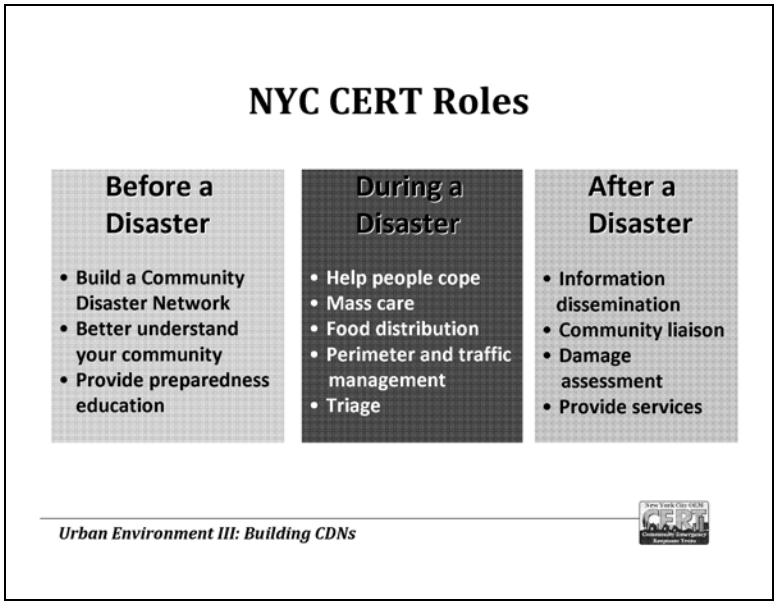


**Key Points**

Before a disaster CERT members can:

- Play an invaluable role in preparing themselves, their families, neighbors, co-workers, and communities for emergencies.
- Organize neighborhood preparedness activities, including Ready NY presentations.
- Build a network which can help prepare and educate their community on disasters.
- Disseminate information and provide education on building disaster plans.

During a disaster CERT can:

- Help address mass care needs in their community.
- Help identify and reduce the psychological affects of emergencies for themselves, their teams and those they help.
- Assist with mass care (sheltering, food, clothing, etc.)
- Assist with psychological and physical care.

After a disaster CERT can:

- Provide vital recovery information to and from their community.
- Help identify their community's needs and relay this information to OEM.
- Assist with recovery services.

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## LESSONS LEARNED

- How to start and build your CDN
- Understand the Human services role in preparedness, response, and recovery
- Recognize and understand your community's vulnerabilities
- Recognize the psychological effects of a disaster
- Learn about self-care

## NYC CERT IN ACTION

- NYC CERT members participated in OEM's Faith-based Disaster Conferences in 2008. This was a great beginning to building their CDNs.
- On New Year's Eve 2008, CERTs were put on stand-by to staff RACs near Times Square due to the extreme winter weather for the million revelers.
- In summer 2008, CERTs were deployed in Sunset Park and Bay Ridge, Brooklyn to assist local businesses during a July heat wave. Teams delivered dry ice to area grocers and store owners.

## COMMUNITY AWARENESS

- What lessons were learned in this unit that you might bring to your community?

- What is a message learned this week that you might stress during a Ready NY presentation?

## PREPARING FOR YOUR FINAL WEEK

It is possible you may encounter some "live" survivors during your disaster simulation. Think about what you may say to help someone you may be asked to help. Prepare yourself. Make a plan.

## EVALUATION

Please fill out the evaluation for Unit 4 in the back of the binder. When completed, please hand in to your OEM Liaison.

## UNIT RESOURCES

**Tips for Communicating with People with Disabilities:**

- As a general rule, you will never offend or confuse by **using "person-first" language**. For example:
  - "A man who is blind won the lotto."
  - "Susan, who uses a wheelchair, entered the room."
  - "Mr. Smith has mental retardation and works for the hospital."

- **Do not put the person's disability before their name** (e.g., "a blind woman" rather than "a woman who is blind").

- It is better to say "people with disabilities" than "disabled people" or, worse yet, "the disabled."

- **Speak directly to the individual**, not their interpreter, spouse, assistant, etc.

- **Ask, don't assume**. Ask if you can assist, and if so, how to best assist.

**The information above is from the National Organization on Disability's site www.nod.org in its media section. There is some good, basic information on this site as well as links to other information.**

**Actions: General Tips for Communicating with People with Disabilities**

- When introduced to a person with a disability, it is appropriate to offer to shake hands. People with limited hand use or who wear an artificial limb can usually shake hands. (Shaking hands with the left hand is an acceptable greeting.)
- If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen to or ask for instructions.
- Treat adults as adults. Address people who have disabilities by their first names only when extending the same familiarity to all others.
- Relax. Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use common expressions such as "See you later," or "Did you hear about that?" that seem to relate to a person's disability.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions when you're unsure of what to do.

**Words:**

| **Affirmative Phrases** | **Negative Phrases** |
|---|---|
| person with an intellectual, cognitive, developmental disability | retarded; mentally defective |
| person who is blind, person who is visually impaired | the blind |
| person with a disability | the disabled; handicapped |
| person who is deaf | the deaf; deaf and dumb |
| person who is hard of hearing | suffers a hearing loss |
| person who has multiple sclerosis | afflicted by MS |
| person with cerebral palsy | CP victim |
| person with epilepsy, person with seizure disorder | epileptic |
| person who uses a wheelchair | confined or restricted to a wheelchair |
| person who has muscular dystrophy | stricken by MD |
| person with a physical disability, physically disabled | crippled; lame; deformed |
| unable to speak, uses synthetic speech | dumb; mute |
| person with psychiatric disability | crazy; nuts |
| person who is successful, productive | has overcome his/her disability; is courageous (when it implies the person has courage because of having a disability) |

**The general tips and affirmative/negative phrases to the left are from the Office of Disability Employment Policy.**
**http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/comucate.htm**

The site features a good and easy to use guide that provides information on the following specific topics:

- Tips for Communicating with Individuals Who are Blind or Visually Impaired
- Tips for Communicating with Individuals Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- Tips for Communicating with Individuals with Mobility Impairments
- Tips for Communicating with Individuals with Speech Impairments
- Tips for Communicating with Individuals with Cognitive Disabilities

For more information:
**Guidelines for Reporting & Writing About People with Disabilities**
http://www.lsi.ku.edu/lsi/internal/guidelines.html - The Life Span Institute at the University of Kansas: This guide is more comprehensive and specific, yet still very easy to use; includes an alphabetical listing of appropriate terminology