



GET PREPARED AND
STAY PREPARED !

Incorporating People with Disabilities in Disaster Volunteer Programs

April 28 & 29, 2007
EAD & Associates, LLC



Incorporating People with Disabilities in Volunteerism

Note: The concepts of incorporation to be outlined are applicable to other groups as well such as cultural/linguistic groups, seniors, neighborhood affinity groups, etc.

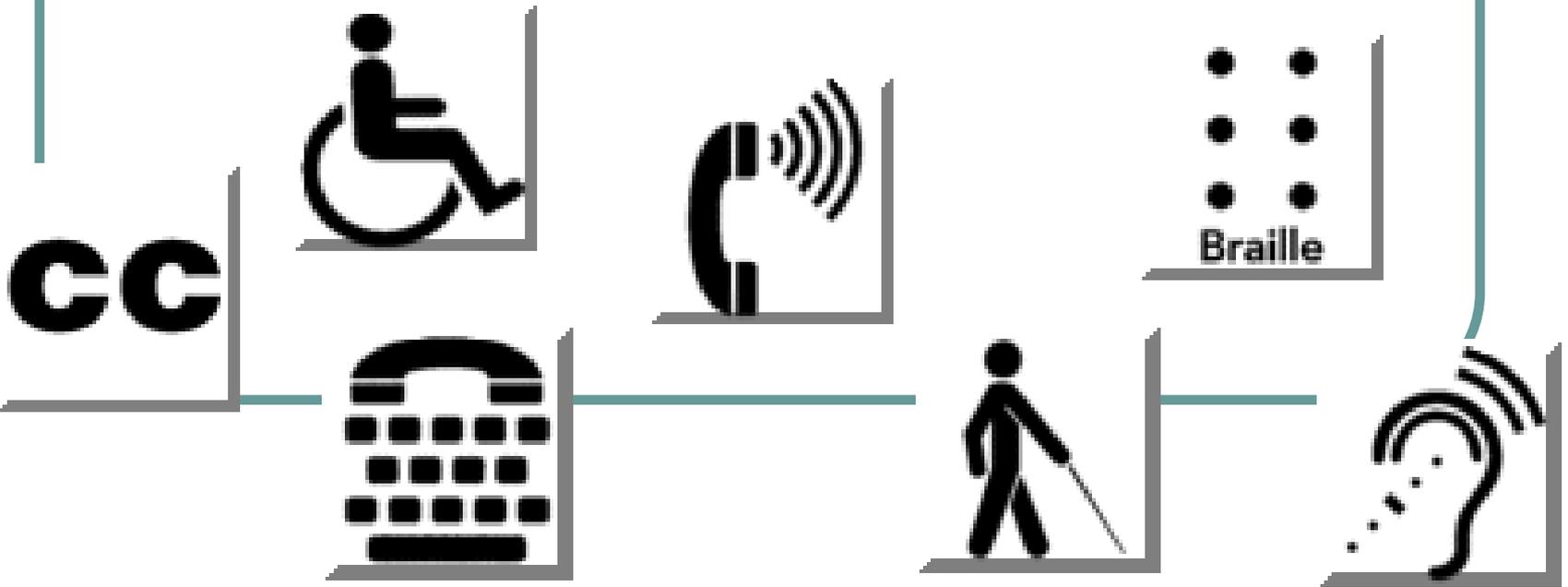
Today's Goals

- To gain an understanding of the following:
 - Disability in the US and NYC
 - Disability issues that arise during disasters
 - Including people with disabilities in volunteerism benefits the individual, organization, and community -- especially in times of disaster.
- Challenge stereotypes and assumptions

Today's Agenda & Format

- **Presentation**
 - Disability Overview
 - Disability Issues and Emergency Management
 - Disability and Volunteerism
- **Panel Discussion**
 - Q&A - Index Cards

Part I: Disability Overview



US Disability Statistics

- 54 million persons make up the disability population in the U.S. (1:5)
 - Over 16 million persons with disabilities are gainfully employed
- Can impact anyone at anytime

Types and Degrees of Disability

- **Types & Degrees of Disability:**
 - **Physical**: Arthritis, Balance, Stamina, Mobility.
 - **Visual**: Low Vision to Total Blindness.
 - **Hearing**: Hearing Loss to Total Deafness.
 - **Cognitive**: Learning, Dyslexia, Mental Retardation, Mental Illness.
 - **Hidden**: Epilepsy, Heart Disease, Cancer, Diabetes, Multiple Sclerosis (and some of those listed above)
 - **Temporary/Episodic**: MS, HIV/AIDS, pregnancy, someone in rehab, etc.

Demographics of Disability

- **Statistics – Did You Know That...?**
 - There are more than 1.5 Million wheelchair users
 - 4 Million people require mobility aids
 - 8 Million Americans have limited vision
 - 130,000 are totally blind
 - 28 Million Americans have hearing loss
 - 500,000 are completely deaf
 - More than 7 Million people have mental retardation

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act provides civil rights protection to persons with disabilities similar to those provided to persons on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age and religion.

It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in employment, transportation, State and Local Government services, telecommunications, and in the goods and services provided by businesses.

Statistics- People 65 years & older

- Persons 65 years and older account for 12.7% of the population in this country
 - In 2000 that was ~ 34.7 million people (1:7)
 - By 2030 that number will increase to 64.9 million people (1:5)
- With age is an increased overlap with the disability community

NYC Demographics

- NYC – 2,414,000 people with a disability
 - Sensory: 560,000
 - Mobility: 1,517,000
 - Cognitive: 818,000
- Persons over 60 years of age in NYC is ~ 1.25 million according to 2000 Census data
 - In the last decade the NYC population over 85 increased 18.7%
 - The population over 60 in NYC represents ~ 40% of the total senior population in NYS

Part II: Disability Issues and Disasters



Disability issues during Disasters

- People with disabilities are often impacted by disasters disproportionately to people without disabilities. Some issues include:
 - Interruption of continuum of care
 - Delay in equipment/supply delivery/repair
 - New geography
 - Transportation issues
 - Effective communication issues
 - Identification of post-disaster needs impacting their disability
 - Employment

Inclusive Emergency Planning

- Integrate disability issues into all phases of emergency management* (Jim story)
- Include people with disabilities in all phases of emergency management
- If PwD are not taken into account before an emergency, the issues will likely not be addressed properly during a disaster, and this will have a huge impact on the entire community after the event.

Examples of Disability Issues: Sheltering

- Accessible Shelter Facilities
- Medical supplies and equipment
- Medication
- Generators, Back-up power supplies
- Skilled Staffing
- Communication
- Service Animals
- Privacy concerns
- Support Networks

Examples of disabilities Issues: Outreach

- Truly “receiving” the information (receiving, processing, action step)
- Identify those marginalized in community
- Realize barriers to action*

Inclusion practices in disasters

- Be *ABILITY* focused
- Not all disabilities are the same
- Don't rely on the old paternalistic view that people with SN always *need* help but use an inclusion model that promotes dignity and cooperation before, during & after a disaster
- Do not assume capabilities or limitations

Part III: Disability and Volunteerism



Inclusion practices in disaster volunteer programs

- Take a moment to consider:
 - Does your organization recognize the importance of including people with disabilities in volunteer programs?
 - Is your organization willing to make accommodations to allow people with disabilities to participate in a meaningful way?
 - Do you have volunteers who are people with disabilities? Why or why not?

Common Barriers to Volunteer Participation

- Access to facility, meeting rooms, bathrooms, etc.
- Access to information, application process, interview, etc.
- Identification of appropriate jobs/tasks that meet needs of individual and organization
- Communication of instructions, roles, training, etc. (lack of using multiple modes)
- Attitude and assumptions towards disability community

Example: Application Process

- This is an example of how a volunteer application process can be made more accessible:
 - Keep the layout simple and if possible, in several forms such as audiotape, Braille, CD, e-mail and large print.
 - Have someone willing and able to help people fill out your application form.
 - Include a section where the applicant can ask for any additional support that they may need such as parking space, guide dog requirements, large screen for a computer and so on.
 - Include a section on the need for disclosure of any disability as some volunteers may wish to keep this information private.
 - Have a rigorous privacy policy

Other Inclusive Practices

- Use Inclusive Language
- Offer information and instructions with:
 - Alternate format option
 - Interpreters
 - Plain language

(consider universalism again)

- Supply TTY, induction loop systems, large computer screens, dictation software, adapted keyboards, or Braille (when available/when possible)

Other Inclusive Practices

- Offer flexible volunteering hours
- Work directly with disability organizations
- Advertise in publications/websites that are targeted at people with disabilities
- Clearly state in materials that your program welcome volunteers who are people with disabilities

Benefits of an Inclusive Approach

- Creative solutions
- New visions and perspectives
- Subject matter experts
- Knowledge & experience
- Non-traditional resources
- Identify & address disaster “unmet” needs appropriately
- A volunteer program that reflects the diversity of the community
- Increased awareness of disability and its implications, leading to improvements in communication and project and program design.

Action Steps

- Make this information relevant and applicable to your organization
- Find ways to better integrate disabilities into volunteer programs
- Find ways to engage the disability community directly in your volunteer program

Resources

A list of recommended websites and reports has been included in the attendee package. This list is not exhaustive but rather offers you good starting points should you wish to further consider this subject.

Thank you!!



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Discussion with Panelists

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