

DELAWARE COUNTY

HOUSEHOLD DISASTER

GUIDE

MARCH 2008

PREFACE

Delaware County was devastated by the floods of June 2006. More than 1,100 households were adversely affected and recovery has been not only a challenge for them but for us all. In June 2007 an unusually rare but extremely intense rain storm struck a small portion of a few hills in Delaware County outside of Downsview in the Town of Colchester. In a span of less than 2 hours some 8 inches of rain fell in this area leading to a tsunami B type wall of water that struck roads, houses, cars and people producing results on the same scale as those a year earlier. Delaware County, source of the River that bears its name, provides in excess of 1,000 square miles to the Delaware watershed. Almost all of the remainder of the County is part of the Susquehanna River watershed. In view of Delaware's location and the role it plays as a watershed for two of the Eastern United States' major rivers, the need for preparation for the next emergency is at hand. For individual households, the next emergency may not be water related, it could be a fire, tornado or even an earthquake! As we look back and consider how our world has changed since 9/11, we must be aware that the dangers inherent with disasters may take on many different faces. What they hold for us in common is the fact that our level of preparedness can make the difference between saving and protecting both lives and property that might otherwise be lost and/or more seriously damaged.

The *Household Disaster Guide* is an effort to raise our collective level of preparedness as we seek to apply what we have learned from the June 2006 floods and combine that knowledge with other pertinent information sources. This work has relied on other similar efforts to compile information and references in a useful and easy to apply manner. The *Guide* has been designed to provide a strong basis for understanding that there are two different but related impacts upon families and individuals when a disaster strikes. First, some disasters directly affect our physical health requiring medical treatment and even hospitalization. Second, our mental health is often affected, sometimes even more adversely than our physical health. The potential mental health affects on children, particularly those ten years of age and younger, can be very traumatic capable of triggering long term health issues that require patience, understanding and treatment. We need to have a strong awareness of how each of these health issues can impact us and our families and take strong steps to mitigate the potential of suffering from either of them.

The *Guide* is also our attempt to assist households and individuals that were impacted by the floods in their recovery effort. Implementation of the concepts discussed herein along with use of the strategies is likely to accelerate long term recovery efforts and leave all of us better prepared to face the next disaster. Those of us in the human service community believe that we as professionals gained a valuable insight from these flooding events. We saw many homes and families directly affected that were not in previously identified flood zones. We came to realize that some historic weather patterns that have made large portions of Delaware County susceptible to flooding are no longer reliable and 100 year flood projections can repeat themselves in less than a ten year period. We now see that no Delaware County family can say they are truly protected from a natural disaster, even a flood. Preparation now will be our best defense against the next disaster regardless of which season it occurs in or the specific aspect of nature the disaster emanates from.

This booklet has been prepared by Delaware Support & Services, Inc. and other members of the Delaware County Human Needs Committee (Committee members are listed on p. 43 in the Appendix), organized to assist with all forms of recovery efforts after the floods. The costs of preparation have been underwritten by a grant from the New York State Office of Mental Health through the Delaware County Department of Mental Health.

INTRODUCTION

What exactly is a disaster? A disaster is an occurrence such as a tornado, flood, blizzard, ice storm, chemical spill, pandemic or other situation that causes human suffering or creates human needs that victims cannot alleviate without assistance.

Disasters can occur anytime and anywhere, with or without warning. After the June floods last year, there was serious flooding again in November 2006 that affected some portions of Delaware and a larger area of Broome County. The Town of Colchester disaster just this past month is an example of a very serious type of disaster that struck with almost no advance warning. We can reduce the stress, chaos and cost of disasters by taking deliberate but simple steps to be prepared.

This *Guide* is designed to provide households in Delaware County with both the tools and the resources that will empower them to:

- 1] Prepare for a disaster at home, work or at school.
- 2] Respond effectively to a disaster when they occur.
- 3] Recover from the physical and emotional trauma caused by a disaster.

This *Guide* is filled with information sources that will take you to web sites, give you telephone numbers, provide you with government and agency information as well as other useful resources. By using this *Guide*, individuals and households can acquire a significant amount of knowledge and expand the awareness of the many ways they can prepare and protect family, friends, their home and community.

We urge you to use this *Guide* so you can be ready and be prepared! One thing we all agree on when evaluating Delaware's state of readiness for the next disaster, there will be a next disaster and it will probably come sooner than we think. We hope you will follow Ms. Reagon's suggestion below:

"When I see trouble coming, I go on up ahead to meet it."

Bernice Johnson Reagon

PART I:

GETTING READY

The Basics of Being Prepared

Most of us are not ready for a flood, tornado or other type of disaster whether it be large or small. A common position that most of us occupy is the one which believes that a disaster will not happen to me! Well, disasters do happen and in Delaware County we **expect** them to happen again. We also know that **you** can be prepared!!

Here is your recommended **List of Things to do:**

- 1] Get informed about hazards and emergencies that may affect you and your family.
- 2] Develop an emergency action plan.
- 3] Collect and assemble disaster supplies kits.
- 4] Learn where to seek shelter from all types of hazards.
- 5] Identify the community warning systems and evacuation routes.
- 6] Include in your emergency plan the required information from community and school plans.
- 7] Learn what to do for specific hazards and/or disasters (for example: floods).
- 8] Practice and maintain your plan.

Completing the Things to do List:

- 1] Read this booklet and use the resources in this book.
- 2] Sit down with your family and write down a plan of action. Give everyone a task with a deadline. Get each family member involved and excited. Have regular meetings and review your progress.
- 3] Do you know your County and local community? Plan family visits to your village and/or town hall. See Delaware=s Emergency Services Department in Delhi at the Public Safety Building on Phoebe Lane.
- 4] Read and study these two disaster classics: Contact the American Red Cross and ask for a copy of ***Your Family Disaster Plan*** or go to their website listed in Part 5 on page 30. Contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and request a copy of their booklet, ***Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness*** or go to their web site also listed in Part 2 on page 14.
- 5] Discuss your disaster preparation efforts with neighbors, friends, school officials and colleagues from work. Share your ideas and information and encourage these other members of your community to prepare also.
- 6] Look at yourself, how do you feel? What is the status of your health, both physical and mental? Acquaint yourself with the signs of stress and the methods for reducing stress and coping with it effectively. The effects of trauma and stress will increase significantly during a disaster. Learn to use stress-reducing activities such as deep breathing (refer to Part 4 for more information and tips).

Highlights of Family Disaster Plans

- 1] Escape Routes - Every member of your household must know what to do in case of a fire or any other life-threatening event that occurs while in the home. We recommend that you have two different routes that can be used as an escape route from each room in the house. It is important that each household member understand how and when to leave the house as well as where to meet once outside.
- 2] Family Communications - Your family may or may not be together during a disaster. Know how you will communicate with each other in different situations. Complete a contact card with each household member and have each member keep their card with them in a wallet, purse, backpack or similar carrying case. It is recommended that the card include an out of area phone number.
- 3] Utility Safety & Shut-offs - All responsible household members should have the basic knowledge where utilities enter the house and how each can be shut-off. Electricity, gas and water utilities each have a shut-off. Teach all responsible household members how to shut-off each utility and have the necessary tools close at hand. We recommend that after a disaster has struck that you not turn back on your utilities yourself but that you get a professional to do so.
- 4] Vital Household Records - Important personal and family papers should be kept safe and stored in a manner they will survive a disaster including use of a bank safe deposit box for deeds, wills, passports, birth certificates and related papers. Make sure you include insurance policies in these papers. It will also help with claims and documentation if you have a video or current photos of your house and its possessions. The use of an inventory of home possessions can be very helpful. Copies of important papers should be kept in disaster supplies kits. A small amount of cash or travelers checks in the disaster supplies kit can also be helpful.

- 5] Get Ready Your Own Disaster Supplies Kits - Develop your own Kits from suggestions by the experts; Go to the American Red Cross and get a copy of ***Your Family Disaster Plan*** or go online **Ready.gov** and look for the ***Resolve to be Ready*** icon. Download the free family emergency plan template today. Have a disaster supplies kit in your home and carry a smaller one in your vehicles.

- 6] What About Your Pets? - Make sure your plan includes your pets. It will be helpful if you have located a pet shelter or kennel that will be able to receive your pet. Keep your veterinary records and other important documents in a safe place B we recommend you place copies in your disaster supplies kit. It will also be helpful if you identify area motels that will allow pets. Keep in mind that many emergency shelters can not or will not admit pets. It will help if you have pet carrier and leash handy. For larger animals, see the section “Guidelines for Large Animals” located on page 30 of FEMA’s ***Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness.***

- 7] Safety Skills - We strongly recommend that you learn first aid and CPR. Contact your local American Red Cross chapter for a course schedule. It is very helpful if you repeat the course twice a year to stay sharp. We strongly recommend you retain a fire extinguisher in your home and learn how to use it.

PART TWO: DELAWARE COUNTY RESOURCE LIST

When a Disaster Strikes You Need Information

Listen to Your Radio for News and Instructions

If you lose power at your home, use your battery powered radio. Make sure you have extra batteries!

Delaware Radio Stations:

WCDO (1490 AM, 101 FM)
DHI (100.3 FM)
WDLA (1270 AM, 92.1 FM)
WDOS (730 AM)
WIYN (94.7 FM)
WKXZ (94 FM)
WSKG (91.7 FM)
WSRK (103.9 FM)
WZOZ (103.1 FM)
WGY (810 AM)

For Emergency Needs

Contact:

Delaware County Chapter
American Red Cross
(607) 785-7207

DELAWARE COUNTY FLOOD RELIEF PROJECT
RESOURCE LIST

EMERGENCY SERVICES:

9-1-1 B 24 HOUR/7 DAYS/WEEK RESPONSE

A.O. Fox Hospital, Oneonta, NY (607) 432-2000
Chenango Memorial Hospital, Norwich, NY (607) 337-4111
Cooperstown Medical Transport (607) 547-9714
Delaware County Public Information Line 1-800-520-6024
New York State Police. (607) 561-7400

DISASTER RELIEF SERVICES:

American Red Cross (607) 561-2643 or (607) 785-7207
FEMA 1- 800-621-3362 (Hearing/Speech Impaired ONLY) 1- 800-462-7585
Salvation Army (607) 432-5960
Delaware County Public Health; Disease Prevention & Protection; Food Safety;
Pandemic Flu (607) 746-3166
New York State Department of Health - District Office (Oneonta); (607) 432-3911
Food Safety, Water
Delaware County Emergency Services – 746-9600

SERVICES FOR OLDER AMERICANS:

Delaware Area Office for the Aging (607) 746-6333
Delaware County Public Health Nursing (607) 746-3166
Delaware County Senior Meals (Meals on Wheels) (607) 563-2212
Senior Bus Transportation (607) 746-6333
Senior Non-Emergency Health Related Transportation (607) 746-6333

HOUSING:

Delaware Opportunities Homeowners Grant Specify To June Flood. Melanie Davis
(607) 746-1650
Delaware Opportunities - Small Necessary Items. Deb Eisenberg (607) 746-1600
Delaware Opportunities Weatherization (607) 746-1690
Habitat For Humanity (607) 563-2433
Home Energy Assistance Program (Heap) (607) 746-1615, Seniors (607) 746-6333
Homeless and Homeless Prevention (607) 746-1665
New York State Attorney General Office 1-800-771-7755
Office Of Housing And Development (Hud) (607) 746-1650 (Qualified Assistance)

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL:

Child Care Resource/ Referral Service - Delaware Opportunities (607) 746-1620
Consumer Affairs (607) 721-8771
Dept. Of Environmental Protection (518) 357-2234
Delaware County Drug & Alcohol (607) 865-7656
Internal Revenue Service 1- 800-829-1040
Delaware County Mental Health Department; Adult Services (607) 865-6522;
Family & Children Services (607) 865-8255
M.I. Bassett Hospital Crisis Intervention Center, Cooperstown 1-877-369-6699
National Flood Insurance Program 1-800-720-1090
Social Security Administration 1-800-772-1213
Voice/TTY 1-800-829-4059
US Small Business Administration 1-800-659-2955
Delaware County Department of Social Services (607) 746-2325

LEGAL SERVICES:

Bureau of Consumer Frauds and Protection 1-800-771-7755
Division of Vital Records www.health.state.ny.us
Domestic Relations B Sheriffs Department (607)746-2336
District Attorney=s Office (607)746-3557
Legal Services of Mid-New York (315)732-2131
Legal Aid Society of Central New York (315)475-3127
NYS Bar Association 1-800-342-3661
Office for the Aging (607)746-6333
US Dept of Health & Human Services 1-877-696-6775

OTHER RESOURCES:

Alcoholics Anonymous. (607)732-5983
Delaware Opportunities B transportation (607)746-6944
Meals on Wheels (Senior Meals) 607)746-6333
NYS Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired 1-866-871-3000

FAMILY CONTACT NUMBERS:

PART III:
INFORMATION FOR PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
&
INFORMATION FOR PET OWNERS

People with special needs include a wide variety of individuals who live, work and worship in our communities. This broad grouping can include persons with mental, physical and/or cognitive disabilities such as blindness, loss of hearing, intellectual impairment or mobility limitations. People with medically related needs such as persons with diabetes, individuals with seizure disorders and an ever-increasing group of senior citizens who experience Alzheimer's and other memory related disorders also have certain **special disaster-related needs**. Culturally-based uniqueness can also present certain challenges that can influence disaster readiness and response. Persons with English as a second language may also have "special needs" as well as persons who do not drive an automobile. Single mothers and persons with special dietary needs may also fall under this category of community members with special needs. The point is, **within every community there are persons with unique and special needs** that must be accommodated during an emergency. Every family and community needs to be aware of those members who, either through disability, limited mobility, cultural distinctions and/or other unique situations, may require special planning considerations. Here are some things to think about: (Excerpt from "Talking About Disaster: Guide For Standard Messages", National Disaster Education Coalition, Washington D.C.)

- 1. Create a network of relatives, friends and co-workers to assist in an emergency.** This network should have knowledge of the "special needs" of the person(s) and have developed an action plan.
- 2. Maintain a list of important items and store the list with the Disaster Supplies Kit.** Examples: hearing aid batteries, current prescription names, doses, and sources, doctor's name and number.
- 3. Contact your local emergency management office and register.** In doing so, first responders will be better prepared to assist when the time come.

4. Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to identify your special need. These may save your life if you are in need of medical attention and unable to communicate.

5. Know the location and availability of MORE THAN ONE facility if you are dependent on a dialysis machine or other life- sustaining equipment or treatment. There may be other people requiring equipment or the facility may have been affected by the disaster.

6. If you have a severe speech, language or hearing disability:

- a. When you dial 9-1-1 (or your local emergency number), tap the space bar to indicate a TDD call.
- b. Store a writing pad and pencils to communicate with others.
- c. Keep a flashlight handy to signal your whereabouts and for illumination to aid in communication.
- d. Remind friends and neighbors that you cannot completely hear warnings and ask them to be your source of emergency information.
- e. If you have a service animal i.e. hearing aid dog, store extra food, water and supplies, be aware that the dog may become confused or disoriented during a disaster.

7. If you use a wheelchair:

- a. Show friends how to operate your wheelchair or help you transfer out of your chair so they can move you quickly if necessary.
- b. If you use a power wheelchair, make sure friends know the size of your wheelchair, in case it has to be transported, and know where to get a battery, if necessary.
- c. Inquire about emergency equipment that would make it easier for others to help you get out if you live or work in a high-rise building and might have to evacuate via a stairwell.

8. Listen to the advice of local officials. It is important to respect the recommendations of the first responders i.e. firemen. They will put their lives at risk to save you! **Remember - “special needs” require special planning. Even if your special need is temporary i.e. a broken leg and using a wheelchair.**

INFORMATION FOR PET OWNERS

Know in advance how to care for your pets during a disaster.

1. Take your pets with you if you evacuate.
2. Plan in advance where you will go if you evacuate.
3. Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check their policies on accepting pets.
4. Ask friends, relatives, or others outside your area if they could shelter your animals.
5. Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter your animals in an emergency.
6. Keep a list of “pet friendly” places, including their telephone numbers, with other disaster information and supplies.
7. Carry pets in a sturdy carrier.
8. Have identification, collar, leash and proof of vaccinations for all pets.
9. Assemble a portable pet disaster supplies kit.
10. Have a current photo of your pets in case they get lost.
11. Create a plan in case you are not at home during an emergency.
12. Contact your local EMA, humane society and animal control agency and ask about sheltering options and emergency animal shelters.
13. Learn pet first aid and keep your pet first aid kit up to date.

PART FOUR: **DISASTER REACTIONS & STRESS MANAGEMENT**

Understanding stress and how it can affect us as well as our children is an essential part of being prepared to cope effectively with the impact that disasters often bring into our lives.

Natural disasters such as tornados, or man-made tragedies such as bombings, can leave children feeling frightened, confused, and insecure.

Whether a child has personally experienced trauma or has merely seen the event on television or heard it discussed by adults, **it is important for parents and teachers to be informed and ready to help if reactions to stress begin to occur.**

Children respond to trauma in many different ways. Some may have reactions very soon after the event; others may seem to be doing fine for weeks or months, and then begin to show worrisome behaviors.

Preschool Age

Children from one to five years in age find it particularly hard to adjust to change and loss. In addition, these youngsters have not yet developed their own coping skills, so they must depend on parents, family members, and teachers to help them through difficult times.

Very young children may regress to an earlier behavioral stage after a traumatic event. For example, preschoolers may resume thumb sucking or bedwetting or may become afraid of strangers, animals, darkness, or “monsters.” They may cling to a parent or teacher or become very attached to a place where they feel safe.

Changes in eating and sleeping habits are common, as are unexplainable aches and pains. Other symptoms to watch for are disobedience, hyperactivity, speech difficulties, and aggressive or withdrawn behavior. Preschoolers may tell exaggerated stories about the traumatic event or may speak of it over and over.

Early Childhood

Children aged five to eleven may have some of the same reactions as younger boys and girls. In addition, they may withdraw from play groups and friends, compete more for the attention of parents, fear going to school, allow school performance to drop, become aggressive, or find it hard to concentrate. These children may also return to “more childish” behaviors; for example, they may ask to be fed or dressed.

Adolescence

Children twelve to fourteen are likely to have vague physical complaints when under stress and may abandon chores, school work, and other responsibilities they previously handled. While on the one hand they may compete vigorously for attention from parents and teachers, they may also withdraw, resist authority, become disruptive at home or in the classroom, or even begin to experiment with high-risk behaviors such as drinking or drug abuse. These young people are at a developmental stage in which the opinions of others are very important. They need to be thought of as “normal” by their friends and are less concerned about relating well with adults or participating in recreation or family activities they once enjoyed.

In later adolescence, teens may experience feelings of helplessness and guilt because they are unable to assume full adult responsibilities as the community responds to the disaster.

Older teens may also deny the extent of their emotional reactions to the traumatic event.

How to Help

Reassurance is the key to helping children through a traumatic time. Very young children need a lot of cuddling, as well as verbal support. Answer questions about the disaster honestly, but don't dwell on frightening details or allow the subject to dominate family or classroom time indefinitely.

Try to maintain a normal household or classroom routine and encourage children to participate in recreational activity. Reduce your expectations temporarily about performance in school or at home, perhaps by substituting less demanding responsibilities for normal chores.

The *Caring for Every Child's Mental Health Campaign* offers these pointers for parents and other caregivers:

- **Encourage children to ask questions.** Listen to what they say. Provide comfort and assurance that address their specific fears. Its okay to admit you can't answer all of their questions.
- **Talk on their level.** Communicate with your children in a way they can understand. Don't get too technical or complicated.
- **Be honest.** Tell them exactly what has happened. For example, don't say that someone who has died has "gone to sleep;" children may become afraid of going to bed.
- **Find out what frightens them.** Encourage your children to talk about fears they may have. They may worry that someone will harm them at school or that someone will try to hurt you.
- **Focus on the positive.** Reinforce the fact that most people are kind and caring. Remind your child of the heroic actions taken by ordinary people to help victims of tragedy.
- **Pay attention.** Your children's play and drawings may give you a glimpse into their questions or concerns. Ask them to tell you what is going on in the game or the picture. It's an opportunity to clarify any misconceptions, answer questions and give reassurance.
- **Develop a plan.** Establish a family emergency plan for the future, such as a meeting place where everyone should gather if something unexpected happens in your family or neighborhood. It can help you and your child feel safer.

If you are concerned about your child's reaction to stress or trauma, call your physician or a community mental health center.

**To learn more about children's mental health:
Call toll-free: 1.800.789.2647**

(TDD): 301.443.9006

Web site: www.mentalhealth.samsha.gov/child
Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services
for Children and Their Families Program
Child, Adolescent and Family Branch
Center for Mental Health Services
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Finally, acknowledge that you, too, may have reactions associated with the traumatic event, and take steps to promote your own physical and emotional healing.

Anniversary Reactions to a Traumatic Event: The Recovery Process Continues

As the anniversary of a disaster or traumatic event approaches, many survivors report a return of restlessness and fear. Psychological literature calls it the **anniversary reaction** and defines it as an individual's response to unresolved grief resulting from significant losses. **The anniversary reaction can involve several days or even weeks of anxiety, anger, nightmares, flashbacks, depression, or fear.**

On a more positive note, the **anniversary of a disaster or traumatic event also can provide an opportunity for emotional healing.** Individuals can make significant progress in working through the natural grieving process by recognizing, acknowledging, and paying attention to the feelings and issues that surface during their anniversary reaction. These feelings and issues can help individuals develop perspective on the event and figure out where it fits in their hearts, minds, and lives.

It is important to note that **not all** survivors of a disaster or traumatic event experience an anniversary reaction. Those who do, however, may be troubled because they did not expect and do not understand their reaction. For these individuals, knowing what to expect in advance may be helpful. **Common anniversary reactions among survivors of a disaster or traumatic event include:**

- **Memories, Dreams, Thoughts, and Feelings:** Individuals may replay memories, thoughts, and feelings about the event, which they can't turn off. They may see repeated images and scenes associated with the trauma or relive the event over and over. They may have recurring dreams or nightmares. These reactions may be as vivid on the anniversary as they were at the actual time of the disaster or traumatic event.
- **Grief and Sadness:** Individuals may experience grief and sadness related to the loss of income, employment, a home, or a loved one. Even people who have moved to new homes often feel a sense of loss on the anniversary. Those who were forced to relocate to another community may experience intense homesickness for their old neighborhoods.
- **Fear and Anxiety:** Fear and anxiety may resurface around the time of the anniversary, leading to jumpiness, startled responses, and vigilance about safety. These feelings may be particularly strong for individuals who are still working through the grieving process.
- **Frustration, Anger, and Guilt:** The anniversary may reawaken frustration and anger about the disaster or traumatic event. Survivors may be reminded of the possessions, homes, or loved ones they lost; the time taken away from their lives; the frustrations with bureaucratic aspects of the recovery process; and the slow process of rebuilding and healing. Individuals may also experience guilt about survival. These feelings may be particularly strong for individuals who are not fully recovered financially and emotionally.
- **Avoidance:** Some survivors try to protect themselves from experiencing an anniversary reaction by avoiding reminders of the event and attempting to treat the anniversary as just an ordinary day. Even for these people, it can be helpful to learn about common reactions that they or their loved ones may encounter, so they are not surprised if reactions occur.
- **Remembrance:** Many survivors welcome the cleansing tears, commemoration, and fellowship that the anniversary of the event offers. They see it as a time to honor the memory of what they have lost. They might light a candle, share favorite memories and stories, or attend a worship service.

- **Reflection:** The reflection brought about by the anniversary of a disaster or traumatic event is often a turning point in the recovery process. It is an opportunity for people to look back over the past year, recognize how far they have come, and give themselves credit for the challenges they surmounted. It is a time for survivors to look inward and to recognize and appreciate the courage, stamina, endurance, and resourcefulness that they and their loved ones showed during the recovery process. It is a time for people to look around and pause to appreciate the family members, friends, and others who supported them through the healing process. It is also a time when most people can look forward with a renewed sense of hope and purpose.

Although these thoughts, feelings, and reactions can be very upsetting, it helps to understand that it is **normal to have strong reactions to a disaster or traumatic event and its devastation many months later**. Recovery from a disaster or traumatic event takes time, and it requires rebuilding on many levels - physically, emotionally, and spiritually. However, with patience, understanding, and support from family members and friends, **you can emerge from a disaster or traumatic event stronger than before**.

If you are still having trouble coping, ask for help. Consult a counselor or mental health professional. In the workplace, you may be able to get assistance from your human resources department or your company's Employee Assistance Program.

Things to Remember When Trying to Understand Disaster Events

- No one who sees a disaster is untouched by it.
- It is normal to feel anxious about you and your family's safety.
- Profound sadness, grief, and anger are normal reactions to an abnormal event.

- Acknowledging our feelings helps us recover.
- Focusing on our strengths and abilities will help you to heal.
- Accepting help from community programs and resources is healthy.
- We have different needs and different ways of coping.
- It is common to want to strike back at people who have caused great pain. However, nothing good is accomplished by hateful language or actions.

Signs that Adults Need Stress Management Assistance

- Difficulty communicating thoughts
- Difficulty sleeping
- Difficulty maintaining balance
- Easily frustrated
- Increase use of drugs/alcohol
- Limited attention span
- Poor work performance
- Headaches/stomach problems
- Tunnel vision/muffled hearing
- Colds or flu-like symptoms
- Disorientation or confusion
- Difficulty concentrating
- Reluctance to leave home
- Depression, sadness
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Mood-swings
- Crying easily
- Overwhelming guilt and self-doubt
- Fear of crowds, strangers, or being alone

Ways to Ease the Stress

- Talk with someone about your feelings anger, sorrow, and other emotions-- even though it may be difficult.
- Don't hold yourself responsible for the disastrous event or be frustrated because you feel that you cannot help directly in the rescue work.
- Take steps to promote your own physical and emotional healing by staying active in your daily life patterns or by adjusting them. This healthy outlook will help yourself and your family. (i.e. healthy eating, rest, exercise, relaxation, meditation.)
- Maintain a normal household and daily routine, limiting demanding responsibilities of yourself and your family.
- Spend time with family and friends.
- Participate in memorials, rituals, and use of symbols as a way to express feelings.
- Use existing supports groups of family, friends, and church.
- Establish a family emergency plan. Feeling that there is something that you can do is very comforting.

When to Seek Help:

- ***If self help strategies are not helping or you find that you are using drugs/alcohol in order to cope, you may wish to seek outside or professional assistance with your stress symptoms.***

Managing the Stress in Your Life

Goals of Stress Management

Management of day-to-day stress (as well as high intensity stressors such as natural disasters) requires attention to three important areas of your life: self-care, realistic expectations of self and others, and the ability to prioritize. While your ability to maintain your usual level of functioning will decline when under high levels of stress, developing good habits during less stressful periods will go a long way towards helping you to cope during peak times.

The goal of stress management is to provide your body with periods of time to recover from the effects of the chemicals that flow through your blood vessels when you are under stress. Without this rest, your body will remain in a state of heightened arousal and you will eventually display some combination of the **following symptoms:**

Physical Signs - Exhaustion, loss of energy, gastrointestinal upsets, hypochondriac complaints, increase or decrease in appetite, sleep disturbances, tremors, rashes, headaches, changes in heart rate and blood pressure, chest pain.

Behavioral Signs - Excessive fatigue, difficulties in expressing yourself verbally or in writing, hyperactivity.

Emotional Signs - Depression, irritability, anxiety, easily over-react emotionally to benign situations, excessive rage reactions, isolation

Cognitive Signs - Mental confusion or slowing of thought, inability to make decisions, inability to prioritize tasks, loss of ability to evaluate your own level of functioning, decreased math skills, decreased memory and attention span.

Self-Care:

Self-Care includes maintaining a healthy diet, eating regular meals, getting enough sleep, exercising, recreation, practicing good hygiene, and avoiding the use of alcohol and other drugs to either relax or keep going (including monitoring your caffeine intake which can exacerbate your level of stress). In addition, the following can be helpful:

- Journaling
- Meditation, Guided Relaxation tapes
- Taking vacations -- even a short weekend trip away from it all
- Taking regular breaks at work (away from stressful situations)
- Sports activities -- as participant or spectator
- Exploring nature
- Talking with a friend, family member, co-worker or therapist
- Trying something you've always wanted to but haven't
- Doing something you use to enjoy, but stopped doing
- Be creative.

Setting Realistic Expectations of Self and Others:

This skill is extremely important and requires developing an understanding of yours and others' limitations while keeping the stress management needs of all in mind. Maintaining unrealistic expectations leads to unnecessary self-recriminations and resentments toward others. Actively lowering your expectations (to a more reasonable level given the situation) may be difficult at first, but the rewards will be noticeable in the lessening of your stress level and friction/conflicts with others.

Prioritizing:

During stressful times, our ability to think clearly diminishes and along with it goes our ability to prioritize. However, if you develop your skill in setting priorities during periods of less stress, it will become second nature too you and this will help when you are overwhelmed. This skill also builds on and depends on your ability to set realistic goals.

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Send questions or comments to hopefull@earthlink.net

WRITE YOUR STRESS MANAGEMENT PLAN HERE:

PART FIVE: CONTACT NUMBERS & WEB PAGES OUTSIDE OF DELAWARE COUNTY

Federal Government Sites and Numbers

Be Ready Campaign

The *Ready* Campaign is designed to educate and empower Americans to prepare for and respond to emergencies, including natural disasters and potential terrorist attacks.

www.ready.gov 800-BE-READY 800-237-3239

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

This site is intended to increase the nation's ability to prepare for and respond to public health emergencies.

www.cdc.gov 800-311-3435

Citizen Corps

Citizen Corps was created to help coordinate volunteer activities that will make our communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to any emergency situation.

www.citizencorps.gov

Department of Health and Human Services

The Department of Health and Human Services is the principal agency for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves.

www.hhs.gov 877-696-6775

Department of Homeland Security

The National Strategy for Homeland Security and the Homeland Security Act of 2002 served to mobilize and organize our nation to secure the homeland from terrorist attacks.

www.dhs.gov 202-282-8000

Department of Justice

To enforce the law and to ensure fair and impartial administration of justice for all Americans.

www.justice.gov 202-514-2000

Department of Veterans Affairs

Our goal is to provide excellence in patient care, veterans' benefits and customer satisfaction.

www.va.gov 800-827-1000

Environmental Protection Agency

The mission of the Environmental Protection Agency is to protect human health and the environment. Since 1970, EPA has been working for a cleaner, healthier environment for the American people.

www.epa.gov 202-272-0167

Federal Emergency Management Agency

To reduce the loss of life and property and protect the Nation from all hazards, including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters, by leading and supporting the Nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation.

www.fema.gov 202-566-1600

Housing and Urban Development

To increase home ownership, support community development and increase access to affordable housing free from discrimination.

www.hud.gov 800-669-9777

Internal Revenue Service

Provide America's taxpayers top quality service by helping them understand and meet their tax responsibilities and by applying the tax law with integrity and fairness to all.

www.irs.gov 800-829-1040

National Flood Insurance Program

Everyone is at risk for a flood. Prepare, participate, protect is their motto to becoming more aware of dangers and steps to take after a flood occurs.

www.FloodSmart.gov 800-720-1090

National Mental Health Information Center

The National Mental Health Information Center was developed for users of mental health services and their families, the general public, policy makers, providers, and the media.

www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/ 800-789-2647

National Weather Service

Experts at the NOAA Climate Prediction Center are projecting a 75 percent chance that the Atlantic Hurricane Season will be above normal this year - showing the ongoing active hurricane era remains strong.

www.nws.noaa.gov 412-262-1591

Social Security Administration

We pay retirement, disability and survivors benefits to workers and their families and administer the Supplemental Security Income program. We also issue Social Security numbers.

www.ssa.gov 800-772-1213

U.S. Department of Agriculture

We provide leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, and related issues based on sound public policy, the best available science, and efficient management.

www.usda.gov 800-221-5689

U.S. Postal Service

It operates in a businesslike way and delivers hundreds of millions of messages each day to more than 141 million homes and businesses.

www.usps.gov 1-800-ASK-USPS 1-800-275-8777

U.S. Fire Administration

The mission of the USFA is to reduce life and economic losses due to fire and related emergencies, through leadership, advocacy, coordination and support.

www.usfa.fema.gov 301-447-1000

U.S. Postal Service

It operates in a businesslike way and delivers hundreds of millions of messages each day to more than 141 million homes and businesses.

www.usps.gov 1-800-ASK-USPS 1-800-275-8777

U.S. Small Business Administration

An independent agency of the federal government to aid, counsel, assist and protect the interests of small business concerns, to preserve free competitive enterprise and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of our nation.

www.sba.gov 800-659-2955

New York Government Agencies

NY Attorney General

As Attorney General, Cuomo is the highest ranking law enforcement officer for the State, responsible for representing New York and its residents in legal matters. Cuomo has a long record of fighting for justice and championing government reform.

www.oag.state.ny.us 1-800-771-7755

Or (For the hearing impaired) 1-800-788-9898

NY Department of Agriculture

Our mission is to foster a competitive food and agriculture industry that benefits producers and consumers alike.

www.agmkt.state.ny.us

NY Department of Environmental Conservation

DEC implements and enforces legislative mandates to protect the public health and safety, which are the fundamental source of the department's powers.

www.dec.ny.gov 518-402-8013

NY Department of Labor

Supports the economic interests of the people and businesses in New York State. We connect people to jobs, assist the unemployed, develop workplace skills, and protect the public and the workforce.

www.labor.state.ny.us 518-457-9000 or 1-800-HIRE-992

NY Department of Transportation

To ensure those who live, work and travel in New York State have a safe and environmentally sound transportation system.

www.nysdot.gov 607-721-8118

NY Emergency Management Agency

To protect the lives and property of the citizens of New York State from threats posed by natural or man-made events.

www.semo.state.ny.us 518-292-2270

NY Insurance Department

The Insurance Department is responsible for supervising and regulating all insurance business in New York State.

www.ins.state.ny.us 1-800-342-3736

NYS Department of Health

To prevent the occurrences of transmission of diseases curable by vaccination. Also to inform NYS about array of health related issues and programs.

www.health.state.ny.us 1-866-881-2809

NYS Department of Taxation & Finance

Collect tax revenue and provide associated services in support of government services in New York State.

www.tax.state.ny.us Check website for array of contact numbers.

NYS Office of Children & Family Services

Promotes the well-being of our communities by setting and enforcing policies, building partnerships, and funding.

www.ocfs.state.ny.us 518-473-7793

NYS Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance

To promote greater self-sufficiency of the State's residents through the efficient delivery of temporary and transitional assistance, disability assistance, and the collection of child support.

www.otda.state.ny.us

Child Support Enforcement: 1-800-846-0773

HEAP or Food Stamps: 1-800-342-3009

Non Government Sites & Numbers

2006 New York Flood Helping Handbook

This handbook provides an overview of some of the issues that you may face and resources available to you, as a result of the 2006 New York Flood and ensuing damage.

www.firstcallforhelp.info/2006%20NY%20Flood%20Helping%20Handbook..pdf

A Helping Handbook by Morrison and Foerster

This handbook covers the following areas: housing assistance, health relation services, social services, insurance, unemployment assistance, small business and farm assistance, and legal service referral and disaster assistance contact information.

<http://www.mofo.com/about/NewYorkFlood.html>

American Red Cross

Red Cross disaster relief focuses on meeting people's immediate emergency disaster-caused needs. When a disaster threatens or strikes, the Red Cross provides shelter, food, and health and mental health services to address basic human needs.

www.redcross.org 866-GET-INFO 866-438-4636

Clean Up of Flooded Homes

A field guide for cleaning up and creating a healthy home after a flood.

www.firstcallforhelp.info/flood_cleanup_guide.pdf

Humane Society of America

The HSUS Disaster Services program serves communities throughout the year with [training](#), [planning assistance](#) and speakers to help develop local capabilities.

www.hsus.org 301-258-3103

Institute for Business and Home Safety

To reduce the social and economic effects of natural disasters and other property losses by conducting research and advocating improved construction, maintenance and preparation practices.

www.ibhs.org 813-286-3400

Medicare (or persons on it)

Medical and financial assistance to elderly dependent on medicine.

www.medicare.gov 1-800-MEDICARE 1-800-633-2273

Mold Protection

The causes, health risks, and steps to carry out to prevent growing mold and how to deal with it if it occurs.

www.firstcallforhelp.info/CDC%20Mold%20Protection.pdf

800-CDC-INFO 800-232-4636

National Disaster Education Coalition

Collection of links to help you navigate and get information on disaster relief.

www.disastereducation.org

National Fire Protection Association

To reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing and advocating consensus [codes](#), [standards](#), [research](#), [training](#), and [education](#).

www.nfpa.org 617-770-3000

National Safety Compliance

Provides community with tools such as video, games, and catalogs to better equip the youth and members to respond to emergency situations and stay safe.

www.osha-safetytraining.net 877-922-7233

National Salvation Army Headquarters

Christian faith based organization that assists internationally with disaster relief needs.

www.salvationarmyusa.org 845-620-7200

Re-entering a Flooded Home

A disaster safety guide on procedures and precautions to take when re-entering a flooded home.

www.firstcallforhelp.info/CDC%20Reenter%20Flooded%20Home.pdf

No-cost energy services for Income qualified people

Instructions for completing the EmPower New York Application.

www.firstcallforhelp.info/EmPowerNewYorkApplication.pdf

1-800-263-0960

Restoring a Heating System after a Flood

Find out what to do if your heating system has been damaged by a flood.

www.firstcallforhelp.info/CCE%20heating%20system%20restoration.pdf

DISASTER SUPPLIES 5 MONTH CALENDAR

This Disaster Supplies Calendar is intended to help you prepare for disasters before they happen. Using the calendar, you can assemble a disaster supplies kit in small steps over a five-month period. Check off items you gather each week. ****Remember to change and replace perishable supplies (such as food and water) every six months.****

WEEK 1

GROCERY STORE:

- 1 gallon water*
- 1 large can juice*
- jar peanut butter
- 1 can meat*
- Hand-operated can opener
- Permanent marking pen

Also, pet food, diapers, and baby food, if needed.

WEEK 2

HARDWARE STORE:

- Heavy cotton or hemp rope
- Matches in water container
- 2 flashlights with batteries
- Duct tape

Also, a leash or carrier for your pet.

WEEK 3

GROCERY STORE:

- 1 gallon water*
- Feminine hygiene supplies
- 1 can meat*
- 1 can fruit*
- Laxative
- Aspirin or non-aspirin
- Paper and pencil
- Pain reliever
- Map of the area

Also, 1 gallon of water for each pet.

WEEK 4

HARDWARE STORE:

- Patch kit and can of seal-in-air product for the tires of mobility aids
- Signal flare
- Compass

Also, extra medications or prescriptions marked "emergency use."

WEEK 5

GROCERY STORE:

- 1 gallon water*
- 2 rolls toilet paper
- 1 can meat*
- Extra toothbrush
- 1 can fruit*
- Travel size tooth paste
- 1 can vegetables*

Also, special food for special diets, if needed.

WEEK 6

FIRST AID SUPPLIES:

- Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- Latex gloves
- Sunscreen
- Safety pins
- Gauze pads
- Adhesive tape
- Roller bandages

Also, extra hearing aid batteries, if needed.

WEEK 7

GROCERY STORE:

- 1 gallon water*
- 1 can vegetables*
- 1 can soup*
- Sewing kit
- 1 can fruit*
- Disinfectant

Also, extra plastic baby bottles, formula, and diapers, if needed.

WEEK 8

FIRST AID SUPPLIES:

- Scissors
- Disposable wipes
- Tweezers
- Needles
- Thermometer
- Petroleum jelly
- Liquid antibacterial hand soap
- 2 tongue blades

Also, extra eyeglasses, if needed.

WEEK 9

GROCERY STORE:

- 1 can soup*
- 1 box heavy-duty garbage bags
- Liquid dish soap
- Household bleach
- Antacid

Also, saline solution and a contact lens case, if needed.

WEEK 10

HARDWARE STORE:

- Battery-powered radio
- Waterproof portable plastic container for important papers
- Wrench(es) needed to turn off utilities

WEEK 11

GROCERY STORE:

- 1 large can juice*
- 1 box quick energy snacks
- Large plastic food bags
- 3 rolls paper towels
- Medicine dropper

WEEK 12

ANIMAL CARE STORE:

- Extra harness, leash, ID tags, and food for your pets
- Litter/pan
- Extra water

VETERINARIAN:

- Obtain current vaccinations and medical records of your animal(s)
- Medications

WEEK 13

HARDWARE STORE:

- Perforated metal tape (sometimes called plumber's tape or strap iron)
- Whistle
- Pliers
- Screwdriver
- Hammer
- Crow bar

WEEK 14

GROCERY STORE:

- 1 can fruit*
- package paper
- 1 can meat*
- Cups
- 1 can vegetables*
- 1 package eating utensils

WEEK 15

HARDWARE STORE:

- Extra flashlight batteries
- extra battery for portable radio
- Assorted nails
- Wood screws
- Labels for your equipment and supplies
- Large contractor trash bags

WEEK 16

GROCERY STORE:

- 1 can meat*
- 1 box quick energy snacks
- 1 can vegetables*
- 1 box facial tissue
- Dried fruit/nuts

WEEK 17

GROCERY STORE:

- 1 box graham crackers
- Plastic containers with lids
- Dry cereal

FIRST AID SUPPLIES:

- Antidiarrheal medicine
- Antiseptic
- Rubbing alcohol

WEEK 18

HARDWARE STORE:

- "Child proof" latches or other fasteners for your cupboards
- Plastic bucket with tight lid

WEEK 19

GROCERY STORE:

- 1 box quick-energy snacks
- Plastic wrap
- Aluminum foil
- Comfort foods (such as cookies, candy bars)

Also denture care items, if needed.

WEEK 20

HARDWARE STORE:

- Camping or utility knife
- Work gloves
- Safety goggles
- Disposable dust masks

SPECIALTY STORE:

- Get an extra battery for motorized mobility aids Information provided by:

Appendix

Delaware County Human Needs Committee Members

County Agencies:

- Office for the Aging
- Emergency Services
- Mental Health
- Public Health
- Social Services
- Delaware Opportunities
- United Way of Delaware & Otsego
- Delaware County Planning
- Delaware Support & Services

Community Agencies:

- Countryside Care Center
- Colchester Community United Methodist Church
- American Red Cross
- Hancock Baptist Church
- Cornell Cooperative Extension
- (Walton) Assembly of God
- (Walton) United Methodist Volunteers in Mission
- Walton First United Methodist Church
- Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley
- United Way First Call For Help
- Project Recovery
- (Walton) Church World Service
- Humane Society
- Legal Aid Services of Mid New York
- (Walton) Reformed Press
- (Walton) Rock Hill UMC
- (Walton) New Hope Community Church
- Council of Community Services of NY
- (Walton) First Congregational Church
- Mental Health Association of Southern Tier
- (Walton) 1st Baptist
- Salvation Army
- United Way of Sidney
- Regional Office of Mental Health
- Catskill Center for Independence
- Habitat for Humanity
- Specialist Council of Community Services
- Office of Employment & Training
- USDA Rural Development
- (Walton) Wethersfield UMC