

CITIZEN RESOURCE
GUIDE
TO DISASTERS

2005 BUTLER COUNTY



PROJECT PENNSYLVANIA
DISASTER RECOVERY

Endorsements

We find this Resource Guide to be a very useful tool for the citizens of Butler County in preparing for and responding to disaster.

When all citizens are prepared, our country and our county are stronger.

We endorse this booklet and encourage the reader to share this valuable information with family and friends.

In closing, we also wish to thank the Butler County Flood Relief Project for their efforts in compiling this Resource Guide.

Endorsed by:

BUTLER COUNTY MH/MR/D&A

**BUTLER COUNTY EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT AGENCY**

**BUTLER COUNTY CHAPTER OF THE
AMERICAN RED CROSS**

BUTLER COUNTY UNITED WAY

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FEMA, PEMA, Pennsylvania Office of Mental Health & Substance Abuse,
Butler County MH/MR/D&A and the Center for Community Resources**

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TO DISASTERS

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Preface

The Floods of September 2004 disrupted lives and destroyed property throughout the Commonwealth. Despite the magnitude of this natural disaster, the citizens of Pennsylvania responded with courage and compassion to alleviate suffering and to expedite recovery. Communities came together, organizations pooled resources and individuals acted selflessly to counteract nature's excesses. While much was lost, important lessons were learned.

Life in the post-9/11 world has made us all much more aware of dangers and disasters. In response, an important step we can take as organizations charged with helping families and community members is to assist disaster victims in their recovery efforts. Through the Commonwealth and Butler County's response and recovery efforts, impacted families' physical and emotional health can be restored and our communities can remain cohesive.

The *Citizen Resource Guide* gathers information from a myriad of disciplines and presents the information in a user-friendly, easily applied manner. Compiled through the collaborative efforts of the Project Pennsylvania Disaster Recovery partners, the *Guide* is the road map and reference tool for a healthy, pro-active and confidence-building exercise in responsible citizenship.

Pennsylvanians are proud, strong and resilient. The Floods of September 2004 reminded us of our vulnerability – the *Citizen Resource Guide to Disasters* reminds us of our many strengths.

To assist all those individuals impacted by the Hurricane Ivan disaster in their recovery effort, I recommend the implementation of the concepts and strategies outlined in the *Citizen Resource Guide to Disasters*.

Good luck and stay safe.

Jane Bishop
Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disaster Coordinator
April 2005

INTRODUCTION

Definition: A disaster is an occurrence such as a tornado, flood, blizzard, chemical spill, 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. As citizens, we can reduce the stress, chaos and cost of disasters by taking some simple steps to **BE PREPARED**.

This booklet is designed to provide the citizens of Butler County with the **tools** and **resources** to empower them to:

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

The **CITIZEN RESOURCE GUIDE TO DISASTERS** is filled with web sites, telephone numbers, government and agency information and other resources. By using the Guide, citizens will gain an amazing amount of knowledge and will become aware of the many ways they can prepare and protect their family, home and community. **USE THIS RESOURCE GUIDE!**

“Don’t start to dig your well when your house is on fire”.
Spanish proverb

PART ONE



BASIC PREPAREDNESS

PART ONE:

BASIC PREPAREDNESS

Are you ready for any type of disaster, large or small, that you and your family may experience? Most of us must honestly answer; NO! It is quite normal to believe that a disaster will not happen to you.

Disasters do happen here and YOU can be prepared!

Recommendations a.k.a. **Things to Do List**

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 (Example; floods).
8. Practice and maintain your plan.

How to complete my **Things to Do List**:

1. **Read this book** and use the resources in this book.
2. **Sit down with your family** and write down a plan of action. Assign everyone a task with a deadline. Get every family member involved and excited. Meet regularly (Example; once a week over dinner) to review progress. **Celebrate success!**
3. **Know your community!** At least once a month, plan a family outing to learn more about the resources closest to you. **Idea:** Visit your municipal office and ask about the local Emergency Management Agency (EMA).
4. **Do your homework!** Contact the American Red Cross and ask for a copy of *Your Family Disaster Plan*. Contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and request a copy of *Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness*. Use the Resource List in Part 2 of this booklet for web pages and telephone numbers. **Act Now!**
5. **Talk** with your neighbors, school officials, workplace colleagues, and members of your faith. Share your information and encourage other members of your community to **BE READY AND BE PREPARED**.
6. **Take time to look at your mental and physical health and well being**. Understand the signs of stress and the methods you use to cope with stress. In a disaster, trauma and stress will increase. Learn and practice stress-reducing activities such as Deep Breathing. (See Part 4 for info and tips)

A stitch in time saves nine – Benjamin Franklin

Important Points: Family Disaster Plans

- 1. Escape Routes** – Every member of your family must know what to do in case of a fire or any other life-threatening event that occurs while at home. Map and post two escape routes from each room in your house. Make sure everyone understands how and when to leave the house and 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 family member and have each family member keep their card with them in a wallet, purse, backpack, etc. ***Include an out of area phone number on contact card.**
- 3. Utility Shut-Off and Safety** - Know how to shut off the utilities that enter your home – water, natural gas and/or electric. Teach all responsible members of the household how to turn off the utilities and keep the necessary tools close to the shut-off valves. **Get a professional** to turn utilities back on!
- 4. Insurance and Vital Records** – Review existing insurance policies and purchase policies for uncovered areas i.e. flood insurance. Inventory home possessions – make lists, take photos/videos, store data in a safe location i.e. safe deposit box. Keep all important documents like deeds, insurance policies, etc. in a safe location away from your home. Keep copies of important documents in your disaster supplies kit. Keep a small amount of cash or travelers checks in your disaster supplies kit in case of evacuation.
- 5. Assemble Disaster Supplies Kits** – Ask yourself – If we had to leave this house this very minute, **are we prepared?** Go to the American Red Cross and get for 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 each of your vehicles.

Be ready when a disaster strikes.

6. **Don't Forget about the Pets** - Plan for the disaster needs of your pets. Identify a local pet shelter or kennel that could receive your pet.
Keep veterinary records with other important documents in a safe place – have copies in your disaster supplies kit. Identify area motels that will allow pets – not all emergency shelters admit pets. Have a pet carrier and leash handy. For larger animals, see “Guidelines for Large Animals” on page 30 of FEMA’s *Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness*.
7. **Safety Skills** - Learn First Aid and CPR. Contact your local American Red Cross chapter for a course schedule. Repeat the course twice a year to stay sharp. Learn how to use a fire extinguisher and where it is kept in your home. **Be smart** – learn this stuff – it could save your life or the life of a loved one.

Your local Red Cross Chapter can help!

Butler County Chapter of the American Red Cross
724-283-2810

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Are You Ready? An In-Depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness
1-800-BE-READY

PART TWO:



BUTLER COUNTY RESOURCE LIST

WHEN A DISASTER STRIKES

For Information

LISTEN TO YOUR RADIO FOR NEWS AND INSTRUCTIONS

**If the power goes out, use your battery
powered radio.**

Keep extra batteries on hand

Weather Band/Pgh.: 162.550

Weather Band/Parker: 162.425

Butler Stations:

WLER/FM: 97.7 WISR/AM: 680 WBUT/AM: 1050

Pittsburgh: KDKA/AM 1020

For Emergency Needs

Contact:

Butler County Chapter

American Red Cross

724-283 2810

BUTLER COUNTY FLOOD RELIEF PROJECT

RESOURCE LIST

EMERGENCY SERVICES:

9-1-1 – 24 HOUR/7 DAYS/WEEK RESPONSE also 724-287-7769

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY RESOURCES (24 HOUR) 1- 800-292-3866

BUTLER HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM 724-284-4545

BUTLER AMBULANCE SERVICE-(24 HOUR)-724-283-4383 or 724-282-9595

VOICe (Victim Outreach Intervention Center) (24 HOUR) 1- 800-400-8551

PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE- (24 HOUR) 724-284-8100

DISASTER RELIEF SERVICES:

AMERICAN RED CROSS 724-283-2810

FEMA 1- 800-621-3362 - (Hearing/Speech Impaired ONLY 1- 800-462-7585)

BUTLER COUNTY FLOOD RELIEF PROJECT 724-431-0097 (Short term project)

SALVATION ARMY 724-287-5532

SERVICES FOR OLDER AMERICANS:

BUTLER AREA AGENCY ON AGING 724-282-3008 or 1- 888-367-2434

VISITING NURSES ASSOCIATION (VNA) 724-282-6806

BUTLER COUNTY SENIOR CENTERS 724-283-9002

HOUSING:

BUTLER COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY 724-287-6797

CATHOLIC CHARITIES 724-287-4011

PROJECT H.O.P.E 724-431-0097

LIGHTHOUSE 724-586-5554

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL:

NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM 1-800-720-1090

BUTLER COUNTY INFORMATION/ REFERRAL 724-285-2264 or 1- 800-944-1449

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION 1-800-772-1213

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE 1- 800-829-1040 VOICE/TTY 1-800-829-4059

CHILD CARE RESOURCE/ REFERRAL SERVICE 724-287-9431 or 1- 888-864-1654

US SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION 1-800-659-2955

PA STATE INSURANCE DEPARTMENT CONSUMER AFFAIRS 1-877-881-6388

MENTAL HEALTH- MENTAL RETARDATION-DRUG & ALCOHOL 724-284-5114

PA DEPT.OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION 1-800-541-2050

LEGAL SERVICES:

DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE 724-284-5222

DOMESTIC RELATIONS 724-284-5181

NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL SERVICES 724-282-3888

PENNSYLVANIA BAR ASSOCIATION 1- 800-932-0311

DISABILITIES LAW PROJECT 412-391-5225

BUREAU OF CONSUMER PROTECTION 412-565-5394

US DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES 724-282-7274

DIVISION OF VITAL RECORDS 412-656-3100

PART THREE



INFORMATION FOR POPULATION WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

**(INCLUDING TIPS FOR PET
OWNERS)**

PART THREE:

Information for Populations with Special Needs **(Including Tips 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. The Old Order Amish, for instance, may not use electricity and may require an adapted communication strategy. 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,

Be Prepared!

TIPS 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 AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

PART FOUR:

IV. DISASTER REACTIONS AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

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. It’s 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.samhsa.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 each 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
- Increased 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

PART FIVE



IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS AND WEB PAGES OUTSIDE OF BUTLER COUNTY

PART FIVE:

IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS AND WEB PAGES OUTSIDE OF BUTLER COUNTY

Federal Government Sites and Numbers		
Be Ready Campaign	www.ready.gov	800-BE-READY
Citizen Corps	www.citizencorps.gov	
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	www.cdc.gov	800-311-3435
Department of Homeland Security	www.dhs.gov	202-282-8000
Environmental Protection Agency	www.epa.gov	202-272-0167
Federal Emergency Management Agency	www.fema.gov	202-566-1600
National Weather Service	www.nws.noaa.gov	412-262-1591
U.S. Fire Administration	www.usfa.fema.gov	301-447-1000
U.S. Postal Service	www.usps.gov	800-275-8777
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture	www.usda.gov	800-221-5689
Internal Revenue Service	www.irs.gov	800-829-1040
Department of Justice	www.justice.gov	202-514-2000
Dept. of Health and Human Services	www.hhs.gov	877-696-6775
National Flood Insurance Program	www.FloodSmart.gov	800-720-1090
U.S. Small Business Administration	www.sba.gov	800-659-2955
Social Security Administration	www.ssa.gov	800-772-1213
Housing and Urban Development	www.hud.gov	800-669-9777
Department of Veterans Affairs	www.va.gov	800-827-1000
National Mental Health Information Center	www.samsha.gov	

Pennsylvania Government Agencies		
PA Emergency Management Agency	www.pema.state.pa.us	717-651-2001
PA Department of Agriculture	www.agriculture.state.pa.us	717-787-4737
PA Insurance Department	www.insurance.state.pa.us	877-881-6388
Department of Public Welfare	www.dpw.state.pa.us	888-565-9435
Dept. of Community & Economic Development	www.inventpa.com	800-379-7448
Dept. of Labor and Industry	www.dli.state.pa.us	717-787-5279
Dept. of Environmental Protection	www.dep.state.pa.us	800-541-2050
Dept. of Revenue (tax information)	www.revenue.state.pa.us	888-PATAXES
Dept. of Transportation	www.dot.state.pa.us	800-932-4600
Attorney General	www.attorneygeneral.gov	717-787-3391
PA Division of Vital Statistics	www.health.state.pa.us/vitalrecords	412-656-3100

Non-Governmental Sites		
American Red Cross	www.redcross.org	866-GET-INFO
Institute for Business and Home Safety	www.ibhs.org	813-286-3400
National Fire Protection Association	www.nfpa.org	617-770-3000
National Safety Compliance	www.osha-safety-training.net	800-922-7233
The Pan American Health Organization	www.disaster-info.net/SUMA	202-974-3520
National Disaster Education Coalition	www.disastereducation.org	
National Salvation Army Headquarters	www.salvationarmyusa.org	
Humane Society of America	www.hsus.org	301-258-3103

****For Persons with Medicare: Call 1-800-MEDICARE****

