

The Clearinghouse



The Clearinghouse on Domestic Violence and Disaster was created to ensure that disaster preparedness and response resources are available to domestic violence programs, and to increase disaster responders' knowledge and understanding of the nature and impact of domestic violence. These resources include:

- Model policies and procedures for disaster preparedness and response
- Statewide protocols for forwarding hotlines to the National Domestic Violence Hotline and the New York State Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline
- Best practices, recommendations and guidelines for both domestic violence programs and disaster responders
- Additional disaster related materials from state and federal partners and allies
- Curricula, materials and resources to be utilized in trainings for both domestic violence advocates and disaster responders
- Research articles describing the nexus between disaster and domestic violence
- Brochures and flyers that provide important phone numbers, emergency response partners, etc.
- Resource list of New York State emergency response agencies

To learn more visit:

www.domesticviolenceanddisaster.org

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The Intersection Of Domestic Violence And Disaster

- Natural disasters (such as floods, snowstorms, hurricanes, tornadoes, and earthquakes) and human made disasters (such as war, terrorism, mass-transportation incidents and environmental accidents) are powerful events that have extreme impacts on individuals, families and communities.
- Domestic violence is an ongoing disaster happening on an intimate level.
- Already isolated, financially dependent and with limited social networks, survivors of domestic violence are even more vulnerable when a disaster occurs.
- The environments of survivors of domestic violence become more dangerous and isolation increases as support and local services are overwhelmed.
- During times of disaster, abusers often escalate their tactics by using the dynamics of the disaster against their partner.
- Disasters impact survivors directly, and also impact the systems that support them – these systems include community based networks, domestic violence programs, rape crisis centers, health care systems, courts, and the criminal justice system.
- Domestic violence shelters and non-residential programs also face challenges to sustain the wellbeing and resilience of staff after disasters strike.

The Barriers

Domestic violence will continue post-disaster and often escalates. A few of the barriers that survivors face in the midst of disaster include:

- Lack of access to electricity, water, phone, internet, transportation and roadways create significant communication, health and safety barriers for survivors
- Orders of protection may not be able to be obtained because courts may be closed or damaged and/or law enforcement may also be unable to enforce existing orders of protection because their services are taxed
- Abusive partners may try to regain custody, using the disaster against the custodial parent (i.e., saying the survivor is unfit because they lost their home, keeping the child during visitation and not attempting to reunite, etc.)



- Housing shortages and displaced friends and family may force a survivor to stay with their abusive partner or return to their home if they've already left
- Emergency disaster shelters and support services may be unsafe for survivors due to risk of exposure to their abusers and lack of confidentiality
- A shortage of translators may cause survivors to rely on their partner or children as interpreters, reducing the likelihood they will disclose abuse
- Abusers may take assistive devices used by people with disabilities so that they are forced to stay or can't reach out to rescue crews.

Four Phases Of Emergency Management

1. **Preparedness** is taking action *before* a disaster to ensure that you are ready for the emergency. These actions include developing your plan, training employees, running drills, and pulling together your disaster supplies.
2. **Response** is the action that you take *immediately in response* to the threat, primarily to ensure everyone's safety.
3. **Recovery** is the work of restoring what was damaged or interrupted by the disaster.
4. **Mitigation** involves using lessons learned during the disaster to prevent or lessen the effects of the next emergency or disaster. These actions may help reduce your risk in the future.



Visit www.domesticviolenceanddisaster.org to learn more about the intersection of domestic violence and disaster, the phases of emergency management, critical incident response, fostering resilience among staff at domestic violence programs, and supporting survivors of domestic violence.