

# BRSS TACS

Bringing Recovery Supports to Scale

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER STRATEGY

## TIP SHEET 4

### Disaster Preparedness Tips for Individuals with Mental Illness or Substance Use Disorder and Their Families

*Most of us don't like to think about the possibility of fires, floods, hurricanes, or other disasters damaging our communities or our homes. However, there are a few simple steps we can take to protect ourselves and our loved ones from disaster, and most of them are inexpensive or free. This tip sheet helps prepare you for the actions and materials you may need during or after a disaster strikes.*

## Forms and Emergency Supply Checklists to Guide Your Disaster Planning



### Medication

- A two-week supply of prescription medication
- Plastic bags to store medications and protect them from water damage
- Medical documents, including:
  - Doctors' phone numbers
  - Health insurance cards
  - Prescription cards
  - A list of medication names
  - Strength, dosage and levels, form, and regimen for each medication, including admission date and take-home privileges for those receiving medication-assisted treatment
- Photo id
- Medication containers of currently prescribed medications, even if empty
- Written scripts, if applicable
- packaging labels that contain refill information
- Payment receipts that contain medication information
- Smartcard, if applicable



### First Aid Kit

- Sterile, adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- Safety pins
- Cleaning agent/soap
- Latex gloves (2 pairs)
- Sunscreen
- Gauze pads of varying sizes
- Scissors
- Adhesive tape
- Tweezers
- Moistened towelettes
- Antiseptic and burn ointments
- Rubbing alcohol
- Thermometer
- Tongue blades
- Non-prescription drugs
- Medicine dropper
- Hand sanitizer



### Personal Products/ Clothing

- Toilet paper, paper towels
- Personal hygiene products
- Menstrual products
- Extra eye glasses, if needed
- Liquid detergent and soap
- Plastic garbage bags
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Disinfectant
- Household chlorine bleach
- Facial tissues
- Two changes of clothing for each person
- Footwear, including sturdy shoes
- Rain gear
- Blanket and sleeping bag
- Hats and gloves
- Sunglasses



### Calming Box

Include comfort items such as headphones or ear plugs for those who are overwhelmed by loud noise. Include fidgets, books, games, cards, puzzles, toys that don't need batteries, favorite stuffed animal or blanket, stress ball, and scented oils.

## Evacuation

- Stock up and leave your home with a three-day supply of water for each person. You will need one gallon of water per person, per day. Stock up on water so you have enough for one gallon of water per person, per day.
- Make sure you have water for the car ride.

## Shelter-in-Place

- Store water in large plastic containers. Avoid containers that may break, such as glass.
- Keep as much ice as you can in your freezer.
- Purchase coolers with several days of cooling ability.
- Use one cooler for essentials, such as medications, formula, compresses, and food. Use another cooler for ice only.
- To store water that will not be used for drinking, clean and bleach the bathtub, then fill it with water. Keep shower curtains closed with new liner next to the tub to reduce contamination. This water can be used for purposes, including cleaning, and for flushing the toilet.

## Tools and Emergency Supplies

- Battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Spare keys to your house and car
- Cash in case ATMs and banks are not operating
- Paper cups, plates, and plastic utensils
- Non-electric (manual) can opener, utility knife
- Pliers, screwdriver, hammer, crowbar, assorted nails, and wood screws
- Shut-off wrench to turn off household gas and water
- Duct tape
- Compass
- Aluminum foil
- Paper, pencil, and pens
- Needles and thread
- Whistle
- Heavy cotton or hemp rope
- Disposable dust masks
- Plastic sheeting
- Cell phone charger

## Food

- Store a three-to seven-day supply of non-perishable food that doesn't need refrigeration (in case you don't have electricity) or extensive preparation
- Pack foods that are compact and light
- Include food items such as canned fruit, dried fruit, nuts, canned vegetables, and breakfast bars

## Vehicle

- Make sure your vehicle is filled up with gas so that you are prepared to evacuate if needed
- Keep several blankets in your car
- Keep jumper cables and instructions for their use
- Keep a red cloth to use as a flag
- Plug in a car phone charger
- Calming box
- Include comfort items such as headphones or ear plugs for those who are overwhelmed by loud noise. Include fidgets, books, games, cards, puzzles, toys that don't need batteries, favorite stuffed animal or blanket, stress ball, and scented oils

## Pets

- Keep at least a two-week supply of pet food on hand, along with a manual can opener if packing canned pet food
- Store medications in a waterproof container
- Keep a cat litter box, litter, litter scoop, and garbage bags on hand
- Make sure to have a sturdy leash
- Pack a collar for each of your pets
- Note that pets are only allowed in designated pet-friendly evaluation shelters
- Pack a flat pet crate (with foldable bowls for feeding) to reduce space use
- Make sure vaccines are up to date and that your pet is microchipped

## Family Communication Plan

It is important to have a communication plan in place for your family and loved ones in an emergency or disaster. This plan should be reviewed regularly so everyone, including and especially children, knows what is expected. If it is possible for you/your family, it is best if everyone, including children, carry a cell phone, at least during times when an emergency or disaster is expected, even if they are the most inexpensive phones available.

Your communication plan for your family will include designated places for family members to meet as part of your emergency plan.

### Meeting Places

**Select two meeting places:** One place if you need to leave home in an emergency and another place outside of your neighborhood if you can't get back to your home when an emergency happens.

**Meeting place #1** \_\_\_\_\_

**Meeting place #2** \_\_\_\_\_

### Out-of-Town Contact Person

**Select an out-of-town contact person:** Select a person out of town to serve as your point person. Make sure each person in your plan has the contact person's name, phone number, and email address.

**Contact person's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Code Word

It is possible that you may be separated from children or other family members during an emergency/disaster and you may be unable to physically get to the designated meeting places. For instance, you may be separated from your children and unable to meet them at the designated place. You should designate a trusted person to go to the meeting place for you and care for your children until you are able to reconnect. Keep in mind that, during an emergency or disaster, that designated person may be unavailable. Have a code word that you can give to someone who is able to meet with your children, so that, even if your children don't know the person, they will know it is safe to go with them.

**Code word:** \_\_\_\_\_

# National Resources

## 1. **Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA)** (<https://www.fema.gov>)

FEMA, with their vision of “A Nation Prepared,” helps America prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from disasters. FEMA maintains a focus on assisting people before, during, and after disasters. As FEMA continues to support and collaborate with stakeholders, the agency’s focus is building and developing a culture of preparedness across the country and unifying all levels of community and government into an integrated approach to emergency management.

### **Contact information for disaster survivors:**

- Phone: 800-621-3362 (711 or Video Relay Service Available)
- TTY: 800-462-7585

## 2. **Ready.gov** ([www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov))

Ready is a national public service campaign designed to educate and empower the American people to prepare for, respond to, and mitigate emergencies, including natural and man-made disasters. The goal of the campaign is to promote preparedness through public involvement.

Ready and its Spanish language version, Listo, ask individuals to do four key things: (1) stay informed about the different types of emergencies that could occur and their appropriate responses (2) make a family emergency plan (3) build an emergency supply kit, and (4) get involved in their community by taking action to prepare for emergencies.

## 3. **Red Cross** ([www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org))

Red Cross volunteers and staff work to deliver vital services—from providing relief and support to those in crisis, to helping you be prepared to respond in emergencies. From small house fires to multi-state natural disasters, the American Red Cross goes wherever they’re needed, so people can have clean water, safe shelter, and hot meals when they need them most.

**Contact information:** Contact the Restoring Family Links national helpline at 1-844-782-9441

## 4. **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)** (<https://www.ready.gov/community-emergency-response-team>)

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program educates volunteers about disaster preparedness for the hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. CERT offers a consistent, nationwide approach to volunteer training and organization that professional responders can rely on during disaster situations, which allows them to focus on more complex tasks. CERT builds and enhances the capabilities to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

CERT trains volunteers to prepare for the types of disasters that their community may face. Through hands-on practice and realistic exercises, CERT members

- learn how to safely respond to manmade and natural hazards.
- help organize basic disaster response.
- promote preparedness by hosting and participating in community events.

To learn how you can register for CERT or find a program near you, please contact your local emergency manager or FEMA at [FEMA-Prepare@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FEMA-Prepare@fema.dhs.gov)

## 5. **Disaster Information Management Research Center (DIMRC)** (<https://disasterinfo.nlm.nih.gov>)

The core purpose of DIMRC is to develop and provide access to health information resources and technology for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. DIMRC’s intent is to connect people to quality disaster health information and foster a culture of community resiliency.

## 6. **CDC Emergency Preparedness and Response** (<https://www.emergency.cdc.gov>)

## 7. **SAMHSA's Efforts for Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery** (<https://www.samhsa.gov/disaster-preparedness/samhsas-efforts>)

SAMHSA coordinates behavioral health resources to help responders and communities prepare, respond, and recover from disasters.

### Contact Information

- **Disaster Distress HelpLine:** Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.
- **National HelpLine:** 1-800-662-HELP (4357). This service provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations.
- **National Suicide Prevention LifeLine:** 1-800-273-8255
- **211 Local Emergency Information:** Dial 2-1-1 to access a free and confidential referral service. You'll find programs that can assist with housing, access to health care, food, and other services.

## 8. **Disaster Assistance Improvement Program (DAIP)** (<https://www.disasterassistance.gov>)

DAIP's mission is to provide disaster survivors with information, support, services, and a means to access and apply for disaster assistance through joint data-sharing efforts between federal, tribal, state, local, and private sector partners.

# Additional Resources to Help You Before, During, and After a Disaster

## Evacuation Resources

- [Red Cross's search tool to find an open shelter in your area](https://www.redcross.org/get-help/disaster-relief-and-recovery-services/find-an-open-shelter.html) (<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/disaster-relief-and-recovery-services/find-an-open-shelter.html>)
- For more information on evacuation, [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov/evacuating-yourself-and-your-family) has prepared a comprehensive guide for you and your family (<https://www.ready.gov/evacuating-yourself-and-your-family>)

## Shelter-in-Place Resources

- [How to Cope With Sheltering in Place](https://store.samhsa.gov/product/SMA14-4893.html) (<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/SMA14-4893.html>)
- [American Red Cross Shelter-in-Place Checklist](https://www.readyrating.org/Resource-Center/All-Resources/shelter-in-place-supplies-checklist) (<https://www.readyrating.org/Resource-Center/All-Resources/shelter-in-place-supplies-checklist>)

## Medication Resources

- [Emergency Preparedness – Keeping Medications Safe](https://www.readyrating.org/Resource-Center/All-Resources/shelter-in-place-supplies-checklist) (<https://www.readyrating.org/Resource-Center/All-Resources/shelter-in-place-supplies-checklist>)
- [How to Get Your Prescriptions During an Emergency](https://www.consumerreports.org/emergency-preparedness/how-to-get-your-prescriptions-during-an-emergency) (<https://www.consumerreports.org/emergency-preparedness/how-to-get-your-prescriptions-during-an-emergency>)
- [Medicare: Getting prescriptions in disaster or emergency](https://www.medicare.gov/what-medicare-covers/getting-prescriptions-in-disaster-or-emergency) (<https://www.medicare.gov/what-medicare-covers/getting-prescriptions-in-disaster-or-emergency>)
- [A Review of State Emergency Prescription Refill Protocols](https://www.healthcareready.org/blog/state-emergency-refills) (<https://www.healthcareready.org/blog/state-emergency-refills>)

## Planning Resources

- [Create Your Family Emergency Communication Plan \(FEMA\)](https://www.healthcareready.org/blog/state-emergency-refills) (<https://www.healthcareready.org/blog/state-emergency-refills>)
- [Family Communication Plan Template \(FEMA and Ready.gov\)](https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/0e3ef555f66e22ab832e284f826c2e9e/FEMA_plan_parent_508_071513.pdf) ([https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/0e3ef555f66e22ab832e284f826c2e9e/FEMA\\_plan\\_parent\\_508\\_071513.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/0e3ef555f66e22ab832e284f826c2e9e/FEMA_plan_parent_508_071513.pdf))
- [Emergency Supply List \(FEMA\)](https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1390846764394dc08e309debe561d866b05ac84daf1ee/checklist_2014.pdf) ([https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1390846764394dc08e309debe561d866b05ac84daf1ee/checklist\\_2014.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1390846764394dc08e309debe561d866b05ac84daf1ee/checklist_2014.pdf))

- [Family Disaster Plan \(American Red Cross\)](https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/atg/PDF_s/Preparedness___Disaster_Recovery/General_Preparedness___Recovery/Home/ARC_Family_Disaster_Plan_Template_r083012.pdf#) (https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/atg/PDF\_s/Preparedness\_\_\_Disaster\_Recovery/General\_Preparedness\_\_\_Recovery/Home/ARC\_Family\_Disaster\_Plan\_Template\_r083012.pdf#)
- [The National Weather Service](https://www.weather.gov/) (https://www.weather.gov/)
- [Capacity-Building Toolkit for including Aging & Disability Networks in Emergency Planning](https://www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/Capacity-Building-Toolkit-for-Aging-and-Disability-Networks-2-5-19.pdf) (https://www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/Capacity-Building-Toolkit-for-Aging-and-Disability-Networks-2-5-19.pdf)

## Parent Resources

- [Center for Parent Information & Resources](https://www.parentcenterhub.org) (https://www.parentcenterhub.org)
- [Helping Children Cope with Disaster \(FEMA and American Red Cross\)](https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/atg/PDF_s/Preparedness___Disaster_Recovery/General_Preparedness___Recovery/Emotional/Helping_children_cope_with_disaster_-_English.pdf) (https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/atg/PDF\_s/Preparedness\_\_\_Disaster\_Recovery/General\_Preparedness\_\_\_Recovery/Emotional/Helping\_children\_cope\_with\_disaster\_-\_English.pdf)
- [Family-to-Family Health Information Centers](http://familyvoices.org/ncfpp/f2fs/) (http://familyvoices.org/ncfpp/f2fs/)

## Food Stamp Resource

- [Food Assistance in Disaster Situations \(USDA\)](https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/food-assistance-disaster-situations) (https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/food-assistance-disaster-situations)

## Recovery Resources

- [Behavioral Health Locator \(SAMHSA\)](https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/) (https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/)

*Please note that the links to the resources below may have been changed or removed since this tool was originally published. If they are no longer working, please use the corresponding reference information to search for alternative links using your browser.*

*The external resources listed in the Disaster Readiness Training for Peer-run and Family-run Organizations provide additional information that is consistent with the intended purpose of a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Web site. HHS cannot attest to the accuracy of information provided by these links. Linking to a non-HHS.gov Web site or listing an organization or resource does not constitute an endorsement by HHS or any of its employees of the sponsors or the information and products presented on the Web site. Please be aware that HHS.gov's privacy protection may not be available at the external link.*

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