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Emergency Preparedness for Individuals with Access and Functional Needs (AFNs)

Project Summary: To examine **Health District Emergency Preparedness Plans** related to persons with access and functional needs (AFNs), identify gaps, and recommend potential improvements. **Plans will be tested** during Fauquier County's Full Scale Exercise (FSE), designed to practice reunification after a school shooting **by focusing on the process for parents and students with AFNs.**

Project Details

Background

An access or functional need (AFN) refers to more than the traditional definition of disability. Understanding these needs is an important part of emergency planning and aims to ensure an equitable response to a variety of emergency situations. Recognizing that emergencies are inherently disabling is also a key part of planning and preparedness. Limited opportunities to practice/execute plans can lead to gaps in care during an actual emergency response. AFNs include language barriers, lack of reliable transportation, single parenting, etc., as well as physical, emotional, or intellectual disabilities. It is estimated that over half of the population experiences an AFN.

Goals & Activities

- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the emergency plans for the specified population
- Maintain communications with organizations for information and resource sharing
- Ensure accommodation of any access or functional need
- Provide information and resources to parents
- Support DSS in plan execution

Challenges

- Limited number of Disabled exercise actors
- Unrealistic aspects of the exercise & real-world vs. simulated needs

Lessons Learned

- Understanding your role and speaking up is vital
- Practicing is the best way for us to prepare

Outcomes & Key Takeaways

- Improved AFN language in emergency plans
- Better understanding of the ways AFN's impact emergency response
- Increased knowledge of the Disabled community and their needs in emergency situations
- Knowing who to talk to is a big part of the job
- Maintaining connections benefits both you and the communities you serve
- Access needs are always changing
- Be dedicated to problem solving

Additional Activities

- EH Site Inspections
- District Epi Shadowing
- VOPEX @ Orange EOC
- Community Events
- NVERS Ebola TTX
- Stop the Bleed Training
- Revive! Trainings
- Meetings with Community Partners
- Lake Anna STEC Meetings
- Observation of Hanover EAC
- Revive! Train the Trainer
- Senior Center Visits (Created Healthy Vision Bingo)
- Respiratory Fit Test Train the Trainer
- Clinic Observations (WIC, Immunizations, & STI)

Program Experiences

Site Photos



Rapid Revive! training at Culpeper Juneteenth



Madison Senior Center Healthy Vision Bingo



Hanover County's EAC Dress Rehearsal



Fauquier County's Full Scale Exercise



Respiratory Fit Test Train the Trainer



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