

PRACTICAL INFORMATION ON GERIATRIC CRISIS PLANNING

Preparing Your Geriatric Facility For a Crisis:

Taking action now can save lives, prevent injury, and minimize property damage in the moments of a crisis. If you do not have a crisis plan in place, it is time to develop one. If you have one, review, practice, and update your plan. This information is designed to assist geriatric facilities and communities in either situation. Although every facility's needs and circumstances are different, these checklists provide general guidance that can be adapted as appropriate to each facility's circumstances.

If you would like additional and more detailed information on how to prepare for a crisis, you can go to the following crisis information web sites:

- www.ready.gov/america/getakit/seniors.html
- www.nod.org/resources/PDFS/epiguide2005.pdf
- www.redcross.org/services/disaster

Mitigation and Prevention:

The goal of mitigation is to decrease the need for response as opposed to simply increasing response capability.

- Connect with community emergency responders to identify local hazards.
- Review the last safety audit to examine buildings and grounds.
- Encourage staff to provide input and feedback during crisis planning process.
- Review incident data.
- Assess how the facility addresses problems and how this may impact your vulnerability to certain crises.

Preparedness:

Good planning will facilitate a rapid, coordinated, effective response when a crisis occurs.

- Determine what crisis plans exist in the facility and community.
- Identify all stakeholders involved in crisis planning.
- Develop procedures for communicating with staff, residents, families, and the media.
- Establish procedures to account for residents during a crisis.
- Gather information about the facility and the area, such as maps and the location of utility shutoffs.
- Identify the necessary equipment that needs to be assembled to assist staff in a crisis.

Response:

A crisis is the time to follow the crisis plan and make use of your preparations.

- Determine if a crisis is occurring.
- Identify the type of crisis that is occurring and determine the appropriate response.
- Activate the incident management system.
- Ascertain whether an evacuation, reverse evacuation, lockdown, or shelter-in-place needs to be implemented.
- Maintain communication among all relevant staff at officially designated locations.
- Establish what information needs to be communicated to staff, residents, families, and the community.
- Monitor how emergency first aid is being administered to the injured.
- Decide if more equipment and supplies are needed.

Recovery:

During recovery, return to normal functioning and restore the infrastructure as quickly as possible.

- Restore the physical facility, as well as the community.
- Monitor how staff are assessing residents for the emotional impact of the crisis.
- Identify what follow-up interventions are available to residents, staff, families, and first responders.
- Assess activities that address the crisis (i.e.: guided discussion, sharing stories, etc.).
- Allocate appropriate time for recovery.
- Plan how anniversaries of events will be commemorated.
- Capture “lessons learned” and incorporate them into revisions and trainings.