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# Reaching Vulnerable Populations: Integrating Preparedness Education into Routine Client Contacts

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❖ Thurston County Public Health & Social Services Department ❖

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# VPP Team

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- ❖ Vulnerable Populations Project
- ❖ Collaborative, cross-division project
  - ◆ Public Health Emergency Preparedness
  - ◆ Health Education
  - ◆ Assessment & Evaluation
- ❖ Internal planning and implementation
- ❖ Stakeholder check-in



# Emphasis

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## ❖ Population:

- ◆ Improve emergency (disaster) preparedness of those least likely to be prepared in our community

## ❖ Organization:

- ◆ Enhance ability of existing service providers to offer preparedness education during routine client contacts



# Main Steps

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## Partners

1. Letter of Participation  
(formal expression of leadership support)
2. Action Plan (thinking it through)
3. Staff Training (readiness, not expertise)
4. Receive Materials (kits and handouts)
5. Client Education

# Considerations

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- ❖ Use of staff time
- ❖ Additional work on the part of staff
- ❖ Time limitations during client interaction
- ❖ Concerns over kit storage and distribution
- ❖ Whether disaster preparedness would be valued
- ❖ Concerns over long-term agency responsibility for preparedness activities
- ❖ Ability of agency to implement in a short time frame



# Bottom Line

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- ❖ How difficult would it be to get community-based agencies to agree to:
  - ◆ Set aside time to have a sizable number of staff attend a 45 minute training (at one place and time)
  - ◆ Allow those staff to provide 5 minutes of preparedness education directly to clients
    - ◆ Stick to the script, 3 basic messages using handout
    - ◆ Provide a disaster kit

# Prioritize (who)

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## ❖ Scope:

- ◆ 6<sup>th</sup> largest county with 249,800 residents
- ◆ About 57,400 residents low income or living in poverty
- ◆ About 12,800 have a health problem that require use of special equipment
- ◆ Nearly 28,500 families with children

## ❖ Focus:

- ◆ Families with children age 0 to 9



# Population Criteria

- ❖ A sizable component of the county's population.
- ❖ Be less prepared for a disaster when compared to others as shown by data and/or scientific literature.
- ❖ Perceive themselves as being less prepared for a disaster when compared to others.
- ❖ Currently served by multiple, diverse agencies and programs in the county.



# Point of Contact (where)

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- ❖ Local community-based agencies with routine contact with vulnerable population:
  - ◆ Provide services one-on-one or in group setting.
  - ◆ Sizeable client base.
  - ◆ Staff who are not experts in topic, but credible-trusted sources of information/education
  - ◆ Provide health related services or value health.
  - ◆ Willing to provide letter agreeing to partnership and basic expectations.

# Delivery Method (how)

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## ❖ Staff with:

- ◆ Established relationships
- ◆ Trusted by client
- ◆ Credible source for education/information

## ❖ Using in-person conversation (5 min)

- ◆ Guided by handout
- ◆ Quick overview of basic disaster kit



# Multiplier

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- ❖ 4 partner programs:
  - ◆ Family Planning Program
  - ◆ Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program
  - ◆ Sound to Harbor Head Start/ECEAP (8 sites)
  - ◆ Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program



# And then...

- ❖ Trained key staff from the programs:
  - ◆ 6 employees (Family Planning Program)
  - ◆ 12 employees (Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program)
  - ◆ 79 employees (Sound to Harbor Head Start/ECEAP)
  - ◆ 10 employees (Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program)
- ❖ Total = 107 employees

# And then...

- ❖ Staff provide service to clients:
  - ◆ 40 families (Family Planning Program)
  - ◆ 212 families (Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program)
  - ◆ 509 families (Sound to Harbor Head Start/ECEAP)
  - ◆ 1,239 families (Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program)
- ❖ Total = 2,000 families



# Staff Training Results

- ❖ Prior to today's training, how familiar were you with the topic of disaster preparedness in general?
  - ◆ Very familiar (22%)
- ❖ How confident are you that you can set aside time during a client visit to provide disaster preparedness education?
  - ◆ Very confident (63%)
- ❖ How likely is it that your clients will see the education or disaster kit as helpful to them?
  - ◆ Very likely (76%)



# Staff Motivators

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- ❖ Knowing they are helping those who data/science shows most need it
- ❖ Client reaction to kit (tangible item)
- ❖ Manageable burden on client (information, time, \$)
- ❖ Being prepared does matter



# Handout Lessons

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- ❖ Essential - impacted staff view of ability to deliver education (cheat sheet)
- ❖ Limited message formula is best
  - ◆ 3 x 3 was appreciated
- ❖ One page says 'this is manageable'
- ❖ Pictures matter
- ❖ Alternative languages are important to staff



# Lessons

- ❖ The pitch
  - ◆ Built around realistic understanding of program barriers
  - ◆ Preparedness expertise not needed
  - ◆ Clear, time limited expectations for staff/agency
- ❖ Key messages of higher importance
- ❖ Tangible object valued, but does not have to be a kit
- ❖ Turnkey is possible
  - ◆ Task checklist (action plan)
  - ◆ Cheat sheet (handout)
- ❖ Rewarding to program staff, appreciated by clients



# VPP Contacts

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