



Emergency Preparedness & Employees with Disabilities

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Emergency Preparedness: *Creating Comprehensive, Inclusive Plans*

1. Problem

2. Context

3. Solutions





Emergency Preparedness

Goal

- Comprehensive emergency preparedness plan that accounts for every employee and contingency


Obstacles

- Lack of information, lack of disclosure
 - Privacy laws
 - Stigma
 - Fear/lack of trust

Contingencies & Inclusivity

- Natural disasters
 - Shelter in place procedures
 - Supplies
 - Warning systems
 - Evacuation plans
- First aid, medical emergency
 - Supplies
 - Planning ahead



A photograph of a modern building with a glass and stone facade. The building has a prominent stone pillar and a glass railing. The sky is blue with some clouds.

Context: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- Signed into law 1990 (26 years)
- Comprehensive civil rights legislation prohibiting discrimination
 - Employment
 - School
 - Transportation
 - All places open to the public



ADA Defines Disability

1. Physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity, ***or***
2. Record of such impairment, ***or***
3. Regarded as having such impairment.*

Major Life Activity

The ADA identifies two categories of major life activity – general and bodily functions. Examples:

General Functions

- Caring for oneself
- Performing manual tasks
- Seeing
- Hearing
- Eating
- Sleeping
- Walking
- Standing
- Lifting
- Bending
- Speaking
- Breathing
- Learning
- Reading
- Concentrating
- Thinking
- Communicating
- Working

Bodily Functions

- Functions of the immune system
- Normal cell growth
- The following bodily functions:
 - Digestive
 - Bowel
 - Bladder
 - Neurological
 - Brain
 - Respiratory
 - Circulatory
 - Endocrine
 - Reproductive

Disability and Employment

Population

- 19% in the U.S., or nearly **one in five** people
- 21% worldwide

Employment Rate

- 34% working age PWD employed - 2014 census

Barriers to Employment

- Unconscious/conscious bias; fear, etc.
- However: (a) culture is changing; (b) we may not have accurate numbers.

Barriers to Self-Disclosure

- Example: at OHSU, 3 in 100 employees



Obvious Disabilities

Of 3.06 million surveyed in 2014:

Hearing - 3.6%

Deaf or has serious difficulty hearing

Visual - 2.3 %

Blind or has serious difficulty seeing even with glasses

Cognitive - 5.1%

Serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions due to a physical, mental or emotional condition

Ambulatory - 7.1%

Serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs

Self-Care - 2.7 %

Difficulty dressing or bathing

Independent Living - 5.6%

Difficulty doing errands alone due to a physical, mental or emotional condition

-SOURCE: Erickson, W., Lee, C., von Schrader, S. (2016). Disability Statistics from the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Yang Tan Institute (YTI). Retrieved Nov 07, 2016 from www.disabilitystatistics.org. Study sample of 3.06 million people surveyed.



Disabilities – *roughly one in five people*



Obvious vs. Hidden Disability

Obvious Disability Examples:

- Mobility impairment
- Blindness
- Bending difficulties
- Standing difficulties

Hidden Disability Examples:

- Anxiety, PTSD
- Hearing loss
- Cancer
- Chronic illness/pain

A photograph of a modern building with a glass and stone facade. The building has multiple levels with glass railings and a prominent stone pillar in the foreground. The sky is visible in the background.

Occupational Health and Safety Models

Traditional model

Traditional occupational health and safety programs focus primarily on keeping workers safe from workplace hazards such as injury risks and harmful exposures. More narrow focus.

New model: *Total Worker Health*

Total Worker Health is a program launched by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in 2011 that expands the scope of risk factors to include social, financial and other environmental factors on employee well-being. NIOSH identifies a comprehensive list of relevant issues.

Something is still missing...

-SOURCE: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/totalhealth.html>



Issues Relevant to Advancing Worker Well-being Through Total Worker Health[®]

Control of Hazards and Exposures

- Chemicals
- Physical Agents
- Biological Agents
- Psychosocial Factors
- Human Factors
- Risk Assessment and Risk Management

Organization of Work

- Fatigue and Stress Prevention
- Work Intensification Prevention
- Safe Staffing
- Overtime Management
- Healthier Shift Work
- Reduction of Risks from Long Work Hours
- Flexible Work Arrangements
- Adequate Meal and Rest Breaks

Built Environment Supports

- Healthy Air Quality
- Access to Healthy, Affordable Food Options
- Safe and Clean Restroom Facilities
- Safe, Clean and Equipped Eating Facilities
- Safe Access to the Workplace
- Environments Designed to Accommodate Worker Diversity

Leadership

- Shared Commitment to Safety, Health, and Well-Being
- Supportive Managers, Supervisors, and Executives
- Responsible Business Decision-Making
- Meaningful Work and Engagement
- Worker Recognition and Respect

Compensation and Benefits

- Adequate Wages and Prevention of Wage Theft
- Equitable Performance Appraisals and Promotion
- Work-Life Programs
- Paid Time Off (Sick, Vacation, Caregiving)
- Disability Insurance (Short- & Long-Term)
- Workers' Compensation Benefits
- Affordable, Comprehensive Healthcare and Life Insurance
- Prevention of Cost Shifting between Payers (Workers' Compensation, Health Insurance)
- Retirement Planning and Benefits
- Chronic Disease Prevention and Disease Management
- Access to Confidential, Quality Healthcare Services
- Career and Skills Development

Community Supports

- Healthy Community Design
- Safe, Healthy and Affordable Housing Options
- Safe and Clean Environment (Air and Water Quality, Noise Levels, Tobacco-Free Policies)
- Access to Safe Green Spaces and Non-Motorized Pathways
- Access to Affordable, Quality Healthcare and Well-Being Resources

Changing Workforce Demographics

- Multigenerational and Diverse Workforce
- Aging Workforce and Older Workers
- Vulnerable Worker Populations
- Workers with Disabilities
- Occupational Health Disparities
- Increasing Number of Small Employers
- Global and Multinational Workforce

Policy Issues

- Health Information Privacy
- Reasonable Accommodations
- Return-to-Work
- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Family and Medical Leave
- Elimination of Bullying, Violence, Harassment, and Discrimination
- Prevention of Stressful Job Monitoring Practices
- Worker-Centered Organizational Policies
- Promoting Productive Aging

New Employment Patterns

- Contracting and Subcontracting
- Precarious and Contingent Employment
- Multi-Employer Worksites
- Organizational Restructuring, Downsizing and Mergers
- Financial and Job Security

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To Recap...

- Inclusive emergency preparedness plan needed.
- Roughly 1 in 5 people have a disability.
- Unknown number on any given team.
- Lack of needed information for safety planning.
- Current occupational health & safety models missing many PWD.

So... How do you gather the needed data for your comprehensive plan?

Privacy vs. Safety



Privacy

- Law
- Employer can't ask
- PHI



Safety

- Disclosure

Start on the First Day

Typical Orientation:

- Entry
- Facilities
- Workspace
- Introductions

Add:

- Location of emergency plan guide, first aid/safety materials & supplies
- Emergency exits

Safety vs. Privacy



Safety

- Requires disclosure
- *Trust*
- *Culture*



Privacy

- Law

Person with an Obvious Disability





Creating a Safety Plan - *PWOD*

Have a plan in place

Buddy(s) system

- Evacuation device

Inclusive alarms

- Flashing
- Audible
- Vibration

Safe rooms

Refuge areas

Person with a Hidden Disability





Creating a Safety Plan - *PWHD*

Have a plan in place

Culture of trust

- including safety
- begins on day one

Buddy(s) system

Inclusive alarms

Staff meetings

Practice/drills

Safe rooms

Refuge areas

Debrief

- ❑ From day one: culture of trust, emphasizing safety for all.
- ❑ Equal consideration given to safe exit as safe access.
- ❑ Prioritize evacuation plans, include redundant responsibilities.
- ❑ Easily accessible plan in multiple formats. Everyone knows where it is.
- ❑ Safety is reinforced consistently:
 - ✓ staff meetings
 - ✓ office memos
 - ✓ projects
 - ✓ trainings

Questions?





Thank You.

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