

People with Disabilities and Emergency Management in York Region

Presentation to York Region Accessibility
Advisory Committee

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Agenda

- ❑ Background
- ❑ Focus Groups
- ❑ Best Practices
- ❑ Progress to Date
- ❑ Next Steps

Background

- ❑ **April 29, 2009**
York Region Emergency Management
Presentation to YRAAC.
- ❑ **Summer 2009**
Researched best practices.
- ❑ **Fall 2009 – current**
Today's presentation.



Focus Groups

- ❑ The purpose of the Focus Groups was:
 - 1) To collect the concerns of people with disabilities regarding Emergency Management
 - 2) Suggest *Go-Forward items* that would address these concerns
- ❑ Participants:
 - ❖ YRAAC Members
 - ❖ First Responders (Fire, EMS, Police)
 - ❖ Community Partners (i.e. Canadian Hearing Society and York Support Services)
- ❑ Outside Facilitator



Focus Group One

January 26, 2010

- ❑ Great participation
- ❑ Collect over 500 comments/concerns
- ❑ Discussion focused on 4 categories
 1. Preparedness
 2. Evacuation
 3. Communication
 4. Afterward and Recovery
- ❑ Anticipated next steps



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Focus Group One

January 26, 2010

Sample Comments

"Need extra supplies on hand i.e. medication"

"Can't pack quickly or wrong stuff"

"Where do I go?"

"Transportation and safety of home afterward"

"How do I leave?"

"Sharing self information with others"



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Best Practices

U.S. National Council on Disability (2009):

- promote collaboration between emergency management and disability organizations, agencies and advocates
- include people with disabilities in training exercises

B.C. Coalition of People with Disabilities (2008):

- include service providers in all phases of emergency planning, training and community outreach

Nobody Left Behind: Disaster Preparedness for Persons with Mobility Impairments (2007):

- include people with disabilities in the local planning process

Canadian Red Cross Emergency Management and High-risk Populations Project (2007):

- engage high-risk organizations in local emergency exercises and training

American National Organization on Disability's Emergency Preparedness Initiative program (2001):

- partner with people with disabilities



Focus Group Two

February 23, 2010

- ☐ Great participation
- ☐ Presented common themes with best practices identified by participating in first session
- ☐ Sought feedback for Go-Forward items
- ☐ Agreement on action plan



Focus Group Two

February 23, 2010

Suggested Themes

1. Enhanced Emergency Management Education for people with disabilities
2. Exercise Design and Planning
3. Exercise Observation
4. Sharing Focus Group Information



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Progress

Annual Emergency Exercise - Design

YRAAC members participate in planning process (February – May 2010)



York Region Accessibility Plan (Seven)

Changing Attitudes and Raising Awareness (2010)



Public Education Partnership with Community Support Agencies

Children's Treatment Network of Simcoe York – Parent Fair (May 18, 2010)



Accessibility Championship Awards

Canadian Hearing Society recognized YR Emergency Management (May 19, 2010)



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Progress

Annual Emergency Exercise - Observation

YRAAC members observe Emergency Exercise (May 31, 2010)



EMO Guides for People with Disabilities Distributed

EP Week, municipal displays, home shows, festivals
(May 3-7, June 5, 6, 12, 19, 2010)



Focus Group Summary

Sharing Focus Group information with Emergency Management
community partners (imminent)



Next Steps

Enhanced Emergency Management Preparedness and Education for People With Disabilities

- Draft Personal Support Brochure
- YR Preparedness Guide People with Disabilities information included in future revisions
- Community Outreach

On-going Emergency Exercise Involvement

- Design, observation, feedback

Conclusion

- ❑ Excellent participation and feedback from YRAAC
- ❑ Progress made
- ❑ Keep moving forward