TAFF

Technical Assistance Financing Facility
for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness

Funded by
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GFDRR

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THE WORLD BANK

How to help people with disabilities stay safe in an emergency

A guide for people
who are trained to help others
when something dangerous happens

Plain language version

Official Use Only

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WHO WE ARE

We are 3 organizations who decided to work together to help countries face disasters.

These organizations are:

- **The European Commission**
  This is the office that suggests laws and runs the day-to-day work for the **European Union**.

- **The World Bank**
  This is a big world organization that gives money and other support to poorer countries to help make life better for people.

- **The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery**
  This is an organization that helps poorer countries to prepare for disaster and recover after they happen.

Together, we made a group that is called ‘TAFF’.

TAFF stands for ‘Technical Assistance Financing Facility for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness’.

This is the symbol of our group:

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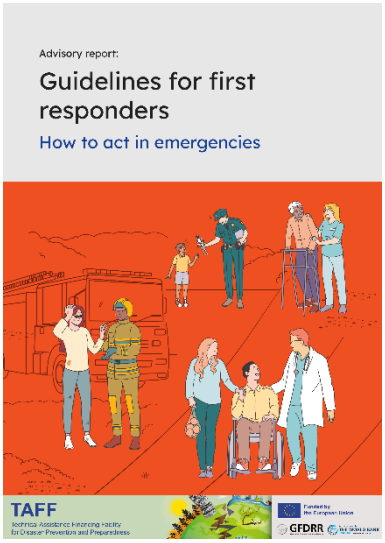
As a group, we work together to help countries:

- Prepare for disasters and risks;
- Share ideas and learn from each other.

WHAT THIS BOOKLET IS ABOUT



We made a guide for ‘first responders’.
These are the people who are trained
to help others during emergencies,
like fires, floods, accidents
and other risky situations.

First responders can be police officers,
firefighters, mountain rescuers, doctors
and other professionals who are the first
to help in an emergency.

With this guide,
we want to help first responders
know how to help people with disabilities
in an emergency.

If you work to help others in emergencies, this guide is for you!

This is a simpler version of this guide.

Some difficult words are written
in **bold black letters**.
You can find out what they mean
at the end of this booklet.

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HOW TO PREPARE BEFORE AN EMERGENCY

To be able to help people with disabilities
when an emergency comes,
you need to prepare yourself in advance.

This way, you can give people with disabilities
the support they need
and respect their rights and choices.

For this to happen, it is important to:

Get to know people

Talk to people with disabilities
and their organizations in your area.
Learn what problems they may face during an emergency
and what can help.
Build connection and trust before an emergency happens.

Treat people with respect

People with disabilities are people with rights
like everyone else.
Do not assume they cannot make their own decisions
because they have a disability.

Make a good first contact

Make sure you approach the person calmly,
explain who you are and make the person feel safe.

Understand that not all disabilities are obvious

Do not assume people do not have a disability
because you cannot see it.
Listen to what the person tells you they need.
Some people carry a card with a sunflower.

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This card is meant to show they have a disability
which is not obvious.

Always ask before helping

People with disabilities know best what they need.
Ask the person: “How would you like me to support you?”

Listen carefully

Give the person your full attention, show you care
and give them time to speak.
Repeat the main points to make sure you understand.

Respect the person’s choices

When possible, offer the person choices,
ask what they prefer, and respect their wishes.

Work together with other services

Work with families, support persons, doctors
and the community.
This way, you can learn from each other
and give better support to person with disabilities.

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WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

For 112 operators

112 operators are the people who answer
when someone calls 112 to ask for help.
112 is the number that everyone in the **European Union**
can call in an emergency.

If you are an 112 operator, you are trained to ask the right questions
and decide which service to send for help.
For example, the police, an ambulance, or firefighters.

What should you always do?

- Communicate calmly and clearly.
  Ask how the person prefers to communicate.
  They might speak, write, use gestures or pictures.

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- Never pretend you have understood.
  If anything is unclear, ask again.

- Keep communicating with the person.
  Tell them what will happen next and what to do while waiting.

- If the person uses an **assistive device**,
  check if they have it with them and if it is still working.

- Ask 1 question at a time and give enough time to the person
  to answer.

- Make sure the person understands what you say.
  Rephrase your question, if needed.

- Keep communicating with the person until help arrives.

- Stay calm, use simple words, be patient and kind.

- Make sure the emergency team you send for help
  knows about the person's needs.

These are things you should do in every situation.

But different people need different types of support.

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What extra things should you do in different cases?

In case the person has difficulty seeing

- Ask simple questions to confirm where the person is.
  If the person agrees, ask them to use video
  to show you where they are.

- Give clear instructions.
  Do not say “here” or “there”
  as the person cannot see what you mean.

- Ask if they still have and can use their **assistive devices**.

- Keep talking to the person.
  Explain what is happening, what help is coming
  and what they should do while they wait.

In case the person has difficulty hearing

- Ask if the person prefers to communicate
  in writing, gestures, text, or sign language.

- Ask yes or no questions.

- If you use a video call,
  make sure your face and lips are visible.

- Check if the person still has and can use their **assistive devices**,
  like a hearing aid.

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- Never pretend to have understood.
  Ask again if something is not clear, repeat and rephrase as needed.

- Confirm understanding with yes or no questions.

- Ask 1 question at a time.
  Offer a choice of 2 options rather than an open question.

- Give instructions 1 step at a time.
  Confirm each step before moving to the next.

In case the person has difficulty speaking

- Ask how they prefer to communicate.
  They might use writing, gestures, pictures,
  or a communication device.

- Never pretend to have understood.
  Ask again if something is not clear, repeat and rephrase as needed.

- Ask 1 question at a time.

- Avoid rushing them, interrupting or finishing their sentences.

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In case the person is too confused, scared or upset

- Ask short, clear questions.
- Stay calm and show that you care and understand.
- Do not doubt their experiences and feelings. Focus on what support would help them feel safe.
- Ask if they would like someone they trust to take part in the chat.
  This could be a family member, a friend or a support person.

In case the person is upset by sounds or other things around them

- Ask the person to move to a quiet place;
- Ask how they prefer to communicate.
  They might use writing, gestures, pictures, or a communication device.
- Ask 1 question at a time, offer simple choices and give the person time to respond.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep.

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In case the person has difficulty understanding information

- Do not talk to the person as if they were a child.
- Do not doubt their experiences and feelings.
  Focus on what support would help them
  feel safe.
- Ask if they would like someone they trust
  to take part in the chat.
  This could be a family member, a friend or a support person.
- Be patient and check that they understand.
  Ask the person to repeat the steps in their own words.
- Wait for at least 3 seconds after you speak.
  Do not rush, interrupt or finish the person's sentences.

In case the person has difficulty moving

- Ask how they would like to be helped;
- Check if they use a wheelchair
  or other **assistive devices**.
- Ask what help they need
  and how they prefer to be supported.
- Ask where they are and if they can use the exit.

Official Use Only

In case the person needs medicine or special devices to be safe

- Ask about the person's medical needs, treatment, medicine, and special devices.
- Check whether they have the supplies they need;
- Tell the emergency team about any important risks.

Official Use Only

For firefighters and mountain rescuers

Firefighters are the people who come for the rescue
in fires, road accidents, floods, explosions and other emergencies.

If you are a firefighter, you are often the first to reach a person
who cannot leave a building on their own.

If you are a mountain rescue, you are trained to find and help people
who are lost, hurt or in danger in mountains, forests
or other difficult places to reach.

What should you always do?

- Switch off sirens and lights when you get closer to the person.
- Clear the area and make sure the person is safe
  before you do anything else.
- Do not leave the person alone.
- Let the person know what will happen next and ask if they agree.
- Communicate calmly and clearly.
  Ask how the person prefers to communicate.
  They might speak, write, use gestures or pictures.

Official Use Only

- If possible, give the person choices,
  help them make their own decisions and respect their wills.

- Ask the person how you could support them better.

- Look for the person's **Emergency Plan** and **Evacuation Plan**
  or other documents with useful information about the person's needs.
  They may carry these documents in their backpack,
  or have it on their fridge or hallway drawer at home.

- If you are in a group, make sure only 1 of you speak to the person
  to not confuse them.

- Never pretend you have understood.
  Always ask again or rephrase if needed.

- Keep the person's **assistive devices**, medicine
  and other support items with them when possible.

- When you hand over the person to nurses or other professionals,
  tell them about the person's needs.

These are things you should do in every situation.

But different people need different types of support.

Official Use Only

What exra things should you do in different cases?

In case the person has difficulty seeing

- Say your name and who you are before you get closer to the person.
- Ask the person how they want to be guided.
  For example, by holding your elbow.
- If there is a group of people, ask them to form a line one behind the other and hold the shoulder of the person in front.
- Keep the person's **assistive devices** or **assistance animals** with them at all times.
  These can be the person's cane, phone, guide dog.
- Communicate with the person in the way they need.
  Do not depend on written information.
  Instead, read information aloud or use an **assistive device**.

In case the person has difficulty hearing

- Make sure the person sees you getting closer.
- Keep your face and lips visible.
- Ask if the person prefers to communicate in writing, gestures, text or sign language.

Official Use Only

Carry paper and pen or use your phone
to write if needed.

- Let the person know what will happen next and ask if they agree.
- Confirm the person has understood with yes or no questions and thumbs up or down.

In case the person has difficulty speaking

- Ask how they prefer to communicate.
  They might use writing, gestures, pictures or a communication device.
- Confirm the person has understood with yes or no questions and thumbs up or down.
- Give the person time to answer.
  Avoid rushing them, interrupting or finishing their sentences.

In case the person is too confused, scared or upset

- Say your name and role clearly.
  Explain you are there to help.
- Take the person to a quiet place, if possible.
- Do not doubt the person's experiences and feelings.
  Focus on what support would help them feel safe.

Official Use Only

- Never touch the person without asking first.
- Do not corner or block the person.
- Stay calm and try not to show fear if the person gets louder or more upset.
- Offer choices and respect the person's wishes.

In case the person is upset by sounds or other things around them

- Approach slowly at eye level and open hands.
  Say your name and role
  and explain you are there to help.
- Do not use loud sounds, speakers or shouting.
  Move the person to a quiet place if possible.
- If the person wishes,
  get in touch with a person they trust.
  This can be a family member, a friend, a neighbor
  or other support person.
- Ask how they prefer to communicate.
  They might use writing, gestures, pictures
  or a communication device.
- Let the person know what will happen next.
- Ask 1 question at a time and try to offer 2 options.
  Confirm understanding with yes or no.

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- If the person has an **assistance animal**, like a dog,
  do not separate them from their animal.
  Also do not touch or pet the animal.

- Show what tools you will use before you use them.
  Allow the person to observe them and touch them
  if that helps them understand.

- Do not make promises you cannot keep.
  If you say you will be back, be back.

In case the person has difficulty understanding information

- If the person wishes,
  get in touch with a person they trust.
  This can be a family member, a friend,
  a neighbor or other support person.

- Let the person know what will happen next.

- Do not doubt the person's experiences and feelings.
  Focus on what support would help them feel safe.

- Take 1 step at a time.
  Wait for the person to finish this step, before going to the next.

- Carry cards with images to help the person understand
  what you are asking them to do.

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In case the person has difficulty moving

- Check places where the person may be stuck. They may be waving their hands from a window, using a torch, or hanging fabric.
- Ask how the person wants to be supported.
- Ask before you touch the person's wheelchair or other **assistive devices**.
- Do not unplug or move any **assistive device** without the person's permission.
- Do not try to move a person in a wheelchair down the stairs, if you are not trained to do this safely.
- Do not separate the person from their **assistive devices**, if possible.

In case the person needs medicine or special devices to be safe

- Ask about their medical needs, treatment, medicine, and equipment.
  Check whether they have the supplies they need and tell the emergency team about any important risks.
- Do not separate the person from their medical devices.
- If the person wishes, get in touch with a person they trust. This can be a family member, a friend, a neighbor or other support person.

Official Use Only

- Do not try to move a person in a wheelchair down the stairs, if you are not trained to do this safely.

For police officers

Police officers help protect people and keep everyone safe during an emergency.

As a police officer, in an emergency, you may help people leave unsafe places, control traffic, and look for missing people.

What should you always do?

- Switch off sirens and lights when you get closer to the person.
- Clear the area and make sure the person is safe before you do anything else.

Official Use Only

- Always communicate directly with the person.
  Ask them what support they need.
- Do not leave the person alone.
- If possible, give the person choices, help them make
  their own decisions and respect their wills.
- Give the person time to reply.
- Do not touch or move the person without asking them first.
- Keep the person's **assistive devices**, medicine
  and other support items with them when possible.
- When you hand over the person to nurses or other professionals,
  tell them about the person's needs.

These are things you should do in every situation.

But different people need different types of support.

What exra things should you do in different cases?

In case the person has difficulty seeing

- Ask the person how they want to be guided.
  For example, by holding your elbow.
- If there is a group of people, ask them
  to form a line one behind the other,
  and hold the shoulder of the person in front.

Official Use Only

- Keep the person's **assistive devices** and **assistance animals** with them at all times.
  This can be the person's cane, phone, guide dog.

- Communicate with the person in the way they need.
  Do not depend on written information.
  Instead, read information aloud or use an **assistive device**.

In case the person has difficulty hearing

- Make sure the person sees you approaching.
  Keep your face and lips visible.

- Ask if the person prefers to communicate in writing, gestures, text or sign language.
  Carry paper and pen or use your phone to write if needed.

- Let the person know what will happen next and ask if they agree.

- Confirm the person has understood with yes or no questions and thumbs up or down.

In case the person has difficulty speaking

- Ask how they prefer to communicate.
  They might use writing, gestures, pictures or a communication device.

- Let the person know what will happen next and ask if they agree.

Official Use Only

- Confirm the person has understood with yes or no questions and thumbs up or down.

- Ask 1 question at a time and give the person time to answer. Avoid rushing them, interrupting or finishing their sentences.

In case the person is too confused, scared or upset

- Watch the person from far and allow them to see you are there, before you walk closer to them.

- Say your name and role clearly. Explain you are there to help.

- Take the person to a quiet place, if possible.

- Do not doubt the person's experiences and feelings. Focus on what support would help them feel safe.

- Never touch the person without asking first.

- Do not corner or block the person.

- Stay calm and try not to show fear if the person gets louder or more upset.

- Offer choices and respect the person's wishes.

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In case the person is upset by sounds or other things around them

- Do not use loud sounds, speakers or shouting.
  Move the person to a quiet place if possible.
- Look for the person in all possible hiding places.
  For example, under the bed or in closets.
- If possible, ask help from the person's family, friends or support persons.
  They may know what helps the person calm down and feel safe.
- Approach the person slowly at eye level and open hands.
  Say your name and role and explain you are there to help.
- Ask how they prefer to communicate.
  They might use writing, gestures, pictures or a communication device.
- Ask 1 question at a time and try to offer 2 options.
  Confirm understanding with yes or no.
- Let the person know what will happen next.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep.
  If you say you will be back, be back.
- Allow the person to do things that calm them down.
  Like rocking or holding their favorite object.
- If the person has an **assistance animal**, like a dog, do not separate them from their animal.
  Also do not touch or pet the animal.

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- Make sure the person does not get lost.
  Do not leave the person alone.

In case the person has difficulty understanding information

- Say your name and role and explain
  you are there to help.
- Look for the person's family or support person.
- Address the person by name
  and say "we" and "together"
  to make the person understand you are a team.
- Do not speak to an adult person as if they were a child.
- Ask the person to explain what happened in their own words.
- Wait for at least 3 seconds before you rephrase
  or repeat your question.
  Avoid interrupting or finishing the person's sentences.
- Take 1 step at a time. Wait for the person to finish this step
  before going to the next.
- Carry cards with images to help the person understand
  what you are asking them to do.

Official Use Only

In case the person has difficulty moving

- Do not move the person without asking them first.
- Do not unplug or move any **assistive device** without the person's permission.
- If you cannot help the person alone, ask for help from other services, like firefighters. Wait with the person and tell them that help is on the way.
- If the person's **assistive device** is lost or damaged, try to find another one for the person as soon as possible.

In case the person needs medicine or special devices to be safe

- Ask the person what help they need and if you need to know something important about their devices or medicines. Ask about their medical needs, treatment, medicine and equipment.
- Do not move the person's wheelchair or other **assistive devices** without asking first.
- Do not unplug or move a device without knowing what it does.
- If the person wishes, get in touch with a person they trust. This can be a family member, a friend, a neighbor or other support person.

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- If you cannot help the person alone,
  ask for help from other services, like firefighters.
  Wait with the person and tell them that help is on the way.

- When you hand over the person to nurses or other professionals,
  tell them about the person’s needs.

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For medical assistance personnel

Medical assistance personnel are people, such as doctors and ambulance staff who help people who are sick or injured.

To help a person during an emergency, you need to know what medicine the person takes and other important information about their health.

What should you always do?

- Communicate calmly and clearly.
  Ask how the person prefers to communicate.
  They might speak, write, use gestures or pictures.

- If possible, give the person choices, help them make their own decisions and respect their wills.

- Keep the person's **assistive devices**, medicine and other support items with them when possible.

- When you hand over the person to other nurses or professionals, tell them about the person's needs.

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These are things you should do in every situation.

But different people need different types of support.

What exra things should you do in different cases?

In case the person has difficulty seeing

- Say your name and who you are
  before you get closer to the person.

- Keep the person's **assistive devices** and
  assistance animal with them at all times.
  These can be the person's cane, phone
  or guide dog.

- Ask the person how they want to be guided.
  For example, by holding your elbow.

- If you move the person to a new place, help them orient in it.
  For example, you can say where the exits are
  and if there are other people around.

- Let the person know when you leave, who will replace you
  and what will happen next.

- Communicate with the person in the way they need.
  Do not depend on written information.
  Instead, read information aloud, print it in Braille
  or use an **assistive device**.

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In case the person has difficulty hearing

- Ask if the person prefers to communicate in writing, gestures, text, or sign language. Carry paper and pen or use your phone to write if needed.
- If the person agrees, get in touch with their support persons. These can be family, friends, neighbors or professionals whose job is to offer the person support.
- Check the person's **Emergency Plan** or other documents with useful information about the person's condition and needs.
- Keep your face and lips visible when you communicate with the person.
- Let the person know what will happen next and ask if they agree.
- Confirm the person has understood with yes or no questions and thumbs up or down.

In case the person has difficulty speaking

- Ask how they prefer to communicate. They might use writing, gestures, pictures or a communication device.
- If the person agrees, get in touch with their support persons.

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These can be family, friends, neighbors or professionals whose job is to offer the person support.

- Check the person's **Emergency Plan** or other documents with useful information about the person's condition and needs.

- Let the person know what will happen next and ask if they agree. Confirm the person has understood with yes or no questions and thumbs up or down.

- Keep your face and lips visible when you communicate with the person.

In case the person is too confused, scared or upset

- Check how the person is feeling and if they need medicine or other types of support to calm down.
  Explain you are there to help.

- Tell the person what you will do next and do not touch them without permission.

- Do not take the person's phone away and do not cut their communication with family, friends or support persons.

- Offer choices and respect the person's wishes.

- Stay calm and try not to show fear, if the person gets louder or more upset.

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- Do not corner or block the person.

In case the person is upset by sounds or other things around them

- Do not use loud sounds, speakers or shouting.
  Move the person to a quiet place if possible.

- If the person wishes, get in touch with a person they trust.
  This can be a family member, a friend, a neighbor or other support person.

- Ask how they prefer to communicate.
  They might use writing, gestures, pictures or a communication device.

- Communicate slowly, calmly and clearly.
  Give time to the person to reply.
  Repeat or rephrase your questions, if needed.

- Ask 1 question at a time and try to offer 2 options.
  Confirm understanding with yes or no.

- Let the person know what will happen next.

- Do not make promises you cannot keep.
  If you say you will be back, be back.

- Allow the person to do things that calm them down.
  Like rocking or holding their favorite object.

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- Show what tools you will use before you use them.
  Allow the person to observe them and touch them
  if that helps them understand.

- Look for signs that the person may be harming themselves.
  For example, if the person eats things that are not food,
  if they have something in their mouth,
  and other signs that the person is in danger.

- Understand that the person may show pain in different ways
  than you are used to.
  Check for changes in the way they behave or act.

In case the person has difficulty understanding information

- If the person wishes,
  get in touch with a person they trust.
  This can be a family member, a friend,
  a neighbor or other support person.

- Address the person by name, and say “we”
  and “together” to make the person understand you are a team.

- Ask the person to explain what happened in their own words.

- Use short and clear sentences.
  Wait for at least 3 seconds before you rephrase
  or repeat your question.
  Avoid interrupting or finishing the person’s sentences.

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- Show what tools you will use before you use them. Allow the person to observe them and touch them if that helps them understand.

- Carry cards with images to help the person understand what you are asking them to do.

In case the person has difficulty moving

- Ask about the person's condition before you touch or move them.

- Ask if the person's **assistive device** needs electricity or battery before you decide what to do next.

- Do not unplug or move any **assistive device** without the person's permission.

- Do not try to move a person in a wheelchair down the stairs, if you are not trained to do this safely.

- If you move the person to a new place, make sure this place is suitable for the person's needs.

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In case the person needs medicine or special devices to be safe

- Ask about their medical needs, treatment, medicine, and doctors before you try to move them.

- If the person wishes, get in touch with a person they trust. This can be a family member, a friend, a neighbor or other support person.

- Do not try to move a person in a wheelchair down the stairs, if you are not trained to do this safely.

- If you move the person to a new place, make sure this place can support the person's needs and that the staff of this place is aware of the person's condition.

- If you move the person, make sure their medicine and **assistive devices** go with them.

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For social workers

Social workers are trained people who help others when they have problems or need support.

If you are a social worker, in an emergency, you can help people find a safe place to stay, contact their family, and get the medicine and support they need.

What should you always do?

- Communicate directly with the person and ask how you can support them best.
  Check if they have any **assistive devices** or **assistance animals**.

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- Help the person to understand information
  and make their own choices.
  Respect the person's wishes.

- Look for the person's **Emergency Plan** or other documents
  with useful information about the person's needs.

- Contact the person's family, friends of other support persons
  to let them know about the situation.

- Check if the person is registered on a list that keeps track of people
  who are at higher risk in an emergency.
  If not, explain that they can do this for free.

- Never leave the person alone.

- Help the person get in touch with their family and support persons
  after the emergency.

- When you hand over the person to other professionals to help them,
  tell them about the person's needs.

These are things you should do in every situation.

But different people need different types of support.

Official Use Only

What exra things should you do in different cases?

In case the person has difficulty seeing

- Ask the person how they want to be guided.
  For example, by holding your elbow.
- If you move the person to a new space,
  help them orient in it.
  For example, you can say where the exits are
  and if there are other people around.
- Let the person know when you leave,
  who will replace you and what will happen next.
- Help the person find or replace their **assistive devices**.
- If the person lost their **assistance animal** during the emergency,
  help them find it and be together again.
- Communicate with the person in the way they need.
  Do not depend on written information.
  Instead, read information aloud or use an **assistive device**.

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In case the person has difficulty hearing

- Make sure the person sees you getting closer.
  Keep your face and lips visible.
- Ask if the person prefers to communicate
  in writing, gestures, text, or sign language.
  Carry paper and pen or use your phone to write
  if needed.
- If the person uses sign language, try to find a sign language interpreter.
- Let the person know what will happen next and ask if they agree.
- Never turn your back on the person.
  Tell them when you leave, who will replace you
  and what will happen next.

In case the person has difficulty speaking

- Ask how they prefer to communicate.
  They might use writing, gestures, pictures
  or a communication device.
  Carry paper and pen or use your phone
  to write if needed.
- Help the person get back any **assistive devices**
  they lost during the emergency.

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- If the person wishes, get in touch with a person they trust. This can be a family member, a friend, a neighbor or other support person.
- Look for the person's **Emergency Plan** or other documents with useful information about the person's needs.
- If the person uses sign language, try to find a sign language interpreter.
- Confirm the person has understood with yes or no questions and thumbs up or down.
- Never turn your back on the person. Tell them when you leave, who will replace you and what will happen next.

In case the person is too confused, scared or upset

- Do not doubt the person's experiences and feelings. Focus on what support would help them feel safe.
- Give options, when possible.
- Show care by offering a blanket or water.
- Stay calm and try not to show fear if the person gets louder or more upset.
- Do not corner or block the person.

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- Check how the person is feeling and if they need medicine or other types of support to calm down.
  Explain you are there to help.
  Give the person some water or a blanket.

- Get in touch with the person's family and support persons.

- Do not leave the person alone.

- Check if the person needs food, a safe place to stay or other type of support.

In case the person is upset by sounds or other things around them

- Move the person to a quiet place if possible.

- Ask how they prefer to communicate.
  They might use writing, gestures, pictures or a communication device.

- Communicate slowly, calmly and clearly.
  Give the person enough time to understand and reply.
  Repeat or rephrase your question if needed.

- Ask 1 question at a time and try to offer 2 options.
  Confirm understanding with yes or no.

- Let the person know what will happen next.

- Do not make promises you cannot keep.
  If you say you will be back, be back.

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- Help the person reach their support persons and return to their routine and familiar places.

- If the person's **assistive device** is lost or damaged, try to find another one for the person as soon as possible.

- Make sure the person continues to get support after the emergency.

In case the person has difficulty understanding information

- Address the person by nameand say "we" and "together" to make the person understand you are a team.

- Do not speak to an adult person as if they were a child.

- Ask the person to explain what happened in their own words.

- Wait for at least 3 seconds before you rephrase or repeat your question.
  Avoid interrupting or finishing the person's sentences.

- Get in touch with the person's support persons.
  This can be a family member, a friend, a neighbor or paid professionals.
  They can give you useful information about the person's needs.

- Carry cards with images to help the person understand what you are asking them to do.

- Make sure the person continues to get support after the emergency.

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In case the person has difficulty moving

- If the person's **assistive device** is lost or damaged, try to find another one for the person as soon as possible.
- If you move the person to a new place, make sure this place is suitable for the person's needs.
- Help the person get back together with their support persons. These can be family members, friends, or paid professionals.
- Make sure the person continues to get support after the emergency.

In case the person needs medicine or special devices to be safe

- Make sure the person can continue getting their medicine and treatment.
- When you hand over the person to nurses or other professionals, make sure they know about the person's needs.
- If you move the person to a new place, make sure this place is suitable for the person's needs.
- If the person's **assistive device** is lost or damaged, try to find another one for the person as soon as possible.
- Help the person get back together with their support persons. These can be family members, friends or paid professionals.

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- Make sure the person continues to get support after the emergency.

WHAT TO DO AFTER AN EMERGENCY

- **Make sure that the person continues receiving support**
  Before you leave, make sure the person has their medicine, **assistive devices** and support they need.
  Help the person reunite with their families and support persons.
  Make sure children are handed over to a trusted adult.

- **Tell the next helper what the person needs**
  Make sure the next helper has all the important information about the person.
  For example:

  - How the person prefers to communicate.
  - What help and support they need.
  - What medicine or medical care they need.
  - What **assistive device** or **assistance animal** they have.
  - Who their family and support persons are.
  - If the person has an **emergency plan**.
  - What help they have already received and what needs to be done next.

- **Take good care of yourself**
  Helping people during emergencies can be stressful.
  It is important to look after yourself, eat well, sleep enough and take breaks.
  It is also important to spend time with family and friends and share your feelings with people you trust.

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- **Ask for help**

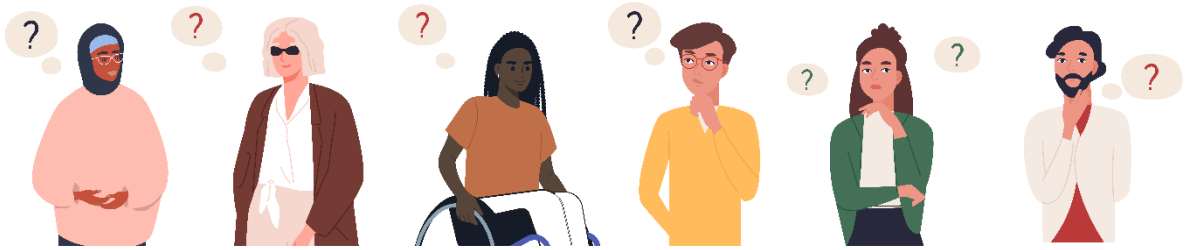
  Do not be afraid or ashamed to ask for help, if you continue:

  - Feeling tired, worried, or angry;
  - Having trouble sleeping or eating;
  - Finding it hard to think clearly or make decisions;
  - Feeling alone;
  - Drinking alcohol to relax.

  If these feelings do not go away after a while, you can see a professional who can help you feel better.

  Your workplace should make it easy and safe for you to ask for help.

- **Learn from what happened**

  After an emergency, think about what went well and what could be better.
  Ask yourself:

  - Did I have the right knowledge and tools to help?
  - Did the person understand what I said?
  - Did I ask permission before helping?
  - Did the person get the support they needed?
  - Was the person treated with respect?
  - What could we do better next time?

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Talk with your team, listen to people with disabilities
and share what you learned.
This will help everyone to help people better next time.

EXTRA TOOLS FOR YOU

How to speak to and about people with disabilities

- Remember that people with disabilities are people with rights like everyone else.
- Use kind words that do not hurt or upset people.
- Do not use rude or unkind words like “crazy”, “retarded” or “slow”.
- Speak directly to the person and listen to them.
- Adapt the way you communicate to every person’s needs. Some people may need you to speak slowly, write things down, use gestures or give them more time to think and reply.

How to calm a person down

In an emergency, a person may feel stressed, scared or confused.

Slow breathing helps them calm down and get back to the present moment.

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Here are 2 exercises you can use to help them calm down:

- **Exercise 1: The 5 breaths**
  This exercise is best for adults and older children.
  Ask the person to:

  - Close their eyes, if they are ok with that.
  - Take a deep breath in.
  - Breathe out slowly.
  - Repeat 5 times, breathing out a bit longer each time.

- **Exercise 2: The candle and the flower**
  This exercise is best for younger children.
  Ask the child to:

  - Close their eyes, if they are ok with that.
  - Hold both hands out in front of them.
  - Imagine a lovely flower in one hand
    and a small candle in the other.
  - Breathe in slowly through the nose to smell the flower.
  - Breathe out slowly towards the other hand to blow out the candle.
  - Repeat until they feel calmer.

How to help yourself stay calm

It is important to look after yourself, too.
When you feel calm, you can help others feel calm and safe too.

Breathing exercises against stress

Here are 5 examples of videos
with breathing exercises you can try

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when you feel stressed.
These exercises can help you calm down
and focus on what is happening around you right now.

1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_iDaIAPrGo
2. phttps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a7uQXDkxEtM
3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7u5-YBgmQ4
4. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bibn6Y7vCk
5. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHkXvPq2pQE

Videos about feelings and mental health

Here are 5 examples of videos that can help you
deal with feelings like sadness, anger, fear
and loneliness:

1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7J_VKqB3hc
2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nO6JIoGILP8
3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EUA5siagejA
4. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouVM_5-8I9A
5. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOibW5LXt3w

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Explanation of difficult words

Assistance animals

Assistance animals are specially trained animals that help people with disabilities and other people in their daily lives.

For example, a guide dog that helps a blind person to find their way.

Assistive devices

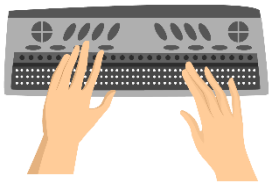
Assistive devices are things that can help people with disabilities and other people to do things that would be hard or impossible otherwise.

For example:

- Wheelchairs that people who cannot walk use to get about.

- Hearing aids that people who do not hear well use to hear better.

- Braille keyboards that blind people use to type.



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European Union

The European Union is a group of 27 countries in Europe.
These countries work together to make things better for their people.

Personal emergency plan

A personal emergency plan is a plan
that explains how to help someone stay safe
during an emergency.

It can say what help they need,
how they communicate, and who to contact.

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Personal evacuation plan

A personal evacuation plan helps a person plan how to leave their home safely during an emergency.

It says who can help the person and how to reach the nearest shelters.

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