

Self-Determination, Self-Advocacy and Emergency Preparedness

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Introduction

As a Self-Advocate, adult with Autism and Special Education Teacher for teens and young adults with moderate to severe neurodevelopmental disabilities, I feel that it is critical to teach self-advocacy skills and to prepare students, their families and caregivers to be prepared in case of an emergency.

Through my youth, I was taught not only to understand my differences, but also to participate in mainstream society and to make a positive impact in my community. I also enjoy training First Responders in understanding these differences as this knowledge provides for better outcomes in the event of emergencies where First Responders are called. I was taught to utilize each and every skill that I have to be of good assistance to the community in which I live, as well as other communities near and far. The goals of my work are to assist individuals with social difficulties to make friends, feel more confident, and to become more independent.

Personal experience with bullying and physical threats have led me on a personal journey to train in the martial arts so as to protect myself and others. Through this journey and guidance by fellow students and mentors, I co-authored a training on emergency preparedness in collaboration with another student in my LEND cohort. This interactive presentation teaches various techniques and maneuvers via hands-on training. This is another way to improve the outcomes for people with disabilities and other community members.

Social Determination, Self-Advocacy

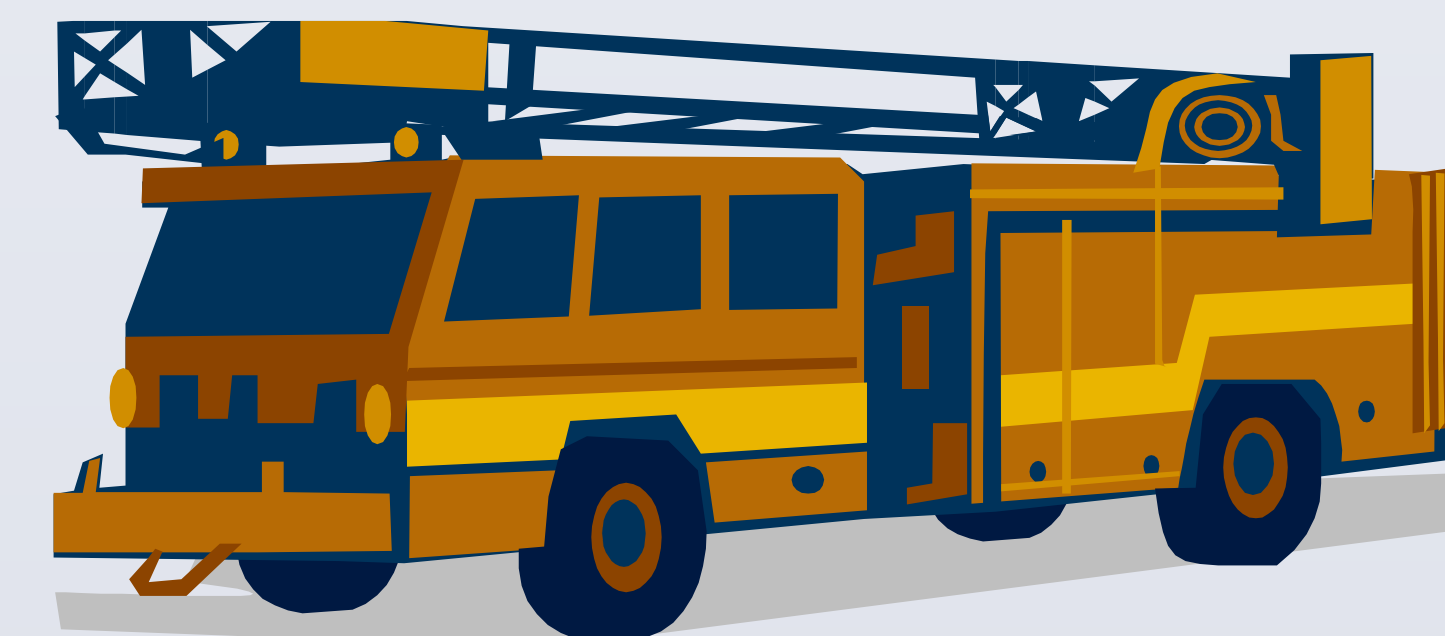
- Social Skills learning process during different stages of school
- Different milestones by age
- Social difficulties
- Professional Experiences
- Challenges and Solutions

First Responder Training

Rationale: To Promote Safety for All

Training Objectives:

- ☐ Recognize characteristics of someone on the autism spectrum (ASD)
- ☐ Be able to interact with someone who has autism
- ☐ Recognize signs of medical distress, especially when one is unable to communicate
- ☐ Be able to Interact with caregivers
- ☐ Important information to gather about the situation
- ☐ How to Identify threats versus non-threats
- ☐ Understand perceptions of First Responders by those with Disabilities
- ☐ Identify what actions First Responders can take to keep the situation safe for all involved
- ☐ Identify actions that persons with disabilities can take to keep the situation safe
- ☐ Understand the Homeowners Awareness Program



Emergency Preparedness



Training Objectives:

- **Understanding different types of emergencies**
 - Natural Disasters
 - Home Invasion
 - Medical Emergencies
 - Bioterrorism
 - Chemical Emergencies
 - Mass Casualties
- **Information for People with Disabilities**
 - Why Prepare?
 - What you need to do
- **Information for Managers, Providers, Service & Caregivers**

Conclusions

- Inclusion of persons with disabilities when making strategic plans for emergency situations leads to better awareness.
- Emerging best practices for local emergency manages, professionals, Social and Rehabilitation services, and other health professionals
- Analyze needs and form meaningful partnerships with community members

For more Information and list of Resources contact:
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