

Attachment S. Emergency Response Focus Group

Emergency Response Agencies - Focus Group Interview Guide

Form Approved

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INTRODUCTION

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is _____ . I work at the Center for Public Health Readiness and Communication at Drexel University and I am working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and colleagues at Drexel to understand the disaster communication needs of families with children and youth who have special health needs, and of children and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders. The goal of this project is to develop guidelines for emergency response agencies, as well as health care and other providers including communication tools to facilitate communication with these high-risk communities during emergencies. Our focus is on families with children and adolescents who have a range of physical and cognitive challenges, including dependence on assistive technology, chronic medication dependence, behavioral challenges, as well as Autism Spectrum Disorders. We plan to test these tools and guidelines at the end of the project with affected populations, emergency response agencies and health care and social service providers; to be sure they meet your needs and improve your capacity for communicating with these vulnerable groups.

This focus group convenes representatives from a number of government and non-government emergency response and public safety agencies. In addition to this group, we'll be convening similar discussions with health care and social service providers for CYSHCN and individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders, and we are conducting at least 50 interviews with families and individuals in these communities. We want to learn how you communicate with them, identify any best practices you currently employ, as learn of any communication challenges or needs that we can redress with this study.

This session should take no more than 90 minutes. I will be taping the discussion because I don't want to miss any of your comments. Although I will be taking some notes during the session, I can't possibly write fast enough to get it all down. Because we're on tape, please be sure to speak up so that we don't miss your comments.

All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your interview responses will only be shared with research team members and we will ensure that any information we include in our report does not identify you as the respondent. Remember, you don't have to talk about anything you don't want to and you may leave the conversation at any time.

Attachment S. Emergency Response Focus Group

Are there any questions about what I have just explained?

Focus Group Interview Guide - Emergency Response and Public Safety Agencies

General Questions - Demographics of Participants

To get started, please introduce yourselves. I'd like to get a sense of where each of you works and your job in the organization. No information that identifies either you or your agency will be included in our summary or final report. (Ask participants to say name, organization/agency affiliation, job title.)

Note: In focus group, have everyone answer first question - short answer)

I. Perceptions of needs/challenges for families with CYSCHN and Individuals with ASD during emergencies

1. What are the greatest concerns you have in disasters for families with children and youth with special health care needs? Specifically:
 - a. Families with children with access/mobility challenges
 - b. Families with children with Assistive Technology/Utility dependence
 - c. Families with children with chronic medical conditions
2. What concerns do you have for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders?
 - a. Families with children with Intellectual/Developmental disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorders
3. What do you think they need to know in order to avoid a severe health outcome?

II. Risk Communication Practices for At-Risk or Vulnerable Populations

4. How do you communicate with at-risk or vulnerable populations in general about disasters?
(Prompt: ask about channels, content, preferred sources.)
 - a. Preparedness messages before an incident?
 - b. During an incident?
 - c. Following an incident?

Attachment S. Emergency Response Focus Group

5. How do you target content for children, specifically? Children with special health care needs?
(Prompt: *who is your target audience, what channels do you use?*)
6. How do you assess the needs of families with CYSHCN (including ASDs) during disasters?
(Prompt: *If don't do this, why not?*)?
7. How do you know what information they need?
8. How would you like families with CYSCHN, including Autism Spectrum Disorders, to receive information during emergencies? To communicate with you?
9. How does (or *would* if not a current practice) understanding their needs in a disaster influence your communications to them?
10. How do you use social media?
 - a. Which channels?
 - b. Is your use 'bi-directional (e.g., do you receive information as well as convey it)
 - c. When do you use it?
 - d. How do you use social media to communicate with at-risk populations?
11. How do you work with community partners to communicate with families who have children with special health care needs? With individuals who have Autism Spectrum Disorders?
 - a. Who are they?
 - b. What is needed to further these partnerships?
12. Do you have experience working with health care and/or other providers to communicate with families with children with special health care needs during emergencies?
13. How do you communicate with the health care community during emergencies? (Prompt: *ask about receiving information and pushing information.*)
14. Can you share a success story about how your agency's communication efforts resulted in a good outcome for families with CYSCHN or ASDs? Or a failure story that can teach us something about how emergency response agencies should relate to them?
15. Is there anything more you would like to add?

END OF FOCUS GROUP

I'll be analyzing the information you and others gave me and we'll be summarizing our findings and developing recommendations and communication tools for the organizations and health care providers to help them communicate during emergencies with families with special health care needs. We'll also

Attachment S. Emergency Response Focus Group

be testing these tools and messages at the end of the project with response agencies, providers, as well as families from our target audiences, to be sure we get feedback from people who need information the most during emergencies and disasters.

Thank you for your time.