

Feeling Safe, Being Safe

Many individuals and families are unprepared to respond to emergency situations and natural disasters. Public officials promote personal preparedness planning as a best practice measure. ***Feeling Safe, Being Safe*** tools show how to make a personal plan and emergency kit.





The Board Resource Center
Making Complex Ideas Simple™

PO Box 601477, Sacramento, CA 95860

Project funded in part by US Homeland Security Funds
and

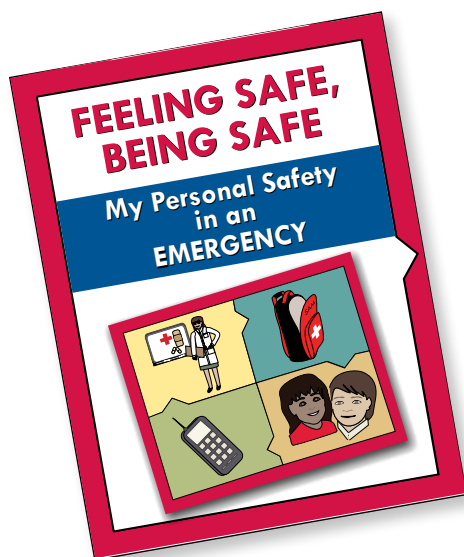
California State Department of Developmental Services
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Project Significance



A wake-up call, a moral summons to act, just the “right” thing to do; it doesn’t matter why. People with disabilities demanded action that was driven by them, for them and about them, because in California the question is not if but when a major emergency will occur. Through the leadership of the

opportunities for persons with disabilities to be viewed not merely as potential victims but as community assets who may assist others in their advanced preparations. Although developed by and for people with disabilities, ***Feeling Safe, Being Safe*** is adaptable across populations

“...Who among us can forget that iconic image of the dead woman in the wheelchair outside the Superdome, covered only in a blanket? That might well have been the very symbol of Katrina’s devastation in New Orleans, the wheelchair—not the woman, who was not visible, but the wheelchair itself...”(Berube 2005)

Department of Developmental Services’ Consumer Advisory Committee, individuals with developmental disabilities, answered the call by developing ***Feeling Safe, Being Safe***, effective, easy-to-use tools that employ a simple learning strategy, **Think–Plan–Do**.

Feeling Safe, Being Safe has served two objectives: enhancing personal emergency preparedness among thousands and creating

because of its remarkable simplicity and an approach that serves not to panic, but empower to be ready and take action when needed.

Carol Risley

Chief, Office of Human Rights and Advocacy
California State Department of Developmental Services



Board
Resource
Center

The Board Resource Center

Making Complex Ideas SimpleSM

The Board Resource Center (BRC) assists organizations to advance leadership through policy-making and service practices that promote the rights of persons with disabilities. BRC has expertise in *Making Complex Ideas SimpleSM* through consultation, training and media that employ “plain language” and accessible informational formats to guarantee broad application by users, particularly individuals with limited reading and/or assimilation skills. These mechanisms empower those who have historically been hard to reach or excluded from participating in traditional information delivery systems.

BRC believes all people are entitled to understandable information on issues important to them, their lives and communities: health, legal rights, government activities, self-protection and consumer

services. BRC’s activities are guided by principles of independent decision-making and participation of all members in community life. What underscores this work is the inclusion of persons who rely on the human service system in the development and dissemination of tools that better assures their exercise of fundamental freedoms.

BRC is committed to *Making Complex Ideas SimpleSM* with media that employs “plain language” and accessible formats to guarantee utility by a broad range of users. Using straightforward principles, we can reach individuals who do not read well or assimilate without difficulty. Through easy-to-use and understandable tools, we empower people who could be excluded from engagement and participation.

With the California State Department of Developmental

Services Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC), BRC collaborated to develop a library of media that includes people with disabilities in the concept development, testing and dissemination phases. Recently, BRC completed an extensive **Leadership Through Personal Change** project aimed at strengthening independence, participation and employability of persons with disabilities throughout California. The team produced numerous curricula, guides and companion videos in accessible formats using a straightforward methodology for widespread utility. Experience gained led the CAC to participate in developing tools to meet a critical need – assisting people to prepare themselves in the event of a major disaster or emergency – by *Feeling Safe, Being Safe*.

Background

The Consumer Advisory Committee was established in 1992 to advise the California Department of Developmental Services on policies, programs and regulations affecting persons with disabilities in California. With facilitation support from BRC, the CAC is guided by these beliefs:

- People want to have a voice.
- People want to live in the community using natural support.
- People want information provided to them in ways they can understand.
- People want to live their life, their way.

The CAC has significant experience developing easy to use and understandable advocacy tools and media which provide insight into legal rights and proven strategies for living more independently within their respective communities.



Consumer Advisory Committee members.

Working with BRC, the CAC completed its intensive three-year **Leadership Through Personal Change** project and developed 15 practical videos and guides to further equip themselves and provide direction for others with disabilities to advance personal, peer and professional leadership.

CAC members acquired practical publishing experience, built community connections, created tools in accessible formats,

conducted training, tested materials statewide with various audiences and collected feedback from 2,400 advocates. These competencies propelled the CAC forward to produce a peer-guided model for emergency planning and preparedness, ***Feeling Safe, Being Safe***. The CAC's goal is to train and distribute the tools to 240,000 people served by the California State Department of Developmental Services.



Motivated by their growing concerns over natural disasters and major emergencies, the CAC addressed the necessity to create a mechanism for raising awareness and demonstrating thoughtful preparedness that could be shared with their peers, family, friends, neighbors and community support agencies.

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services estimates 70 percent of Californians are

unprepared for a natural disaster or terrorist attack. As a population, individuals with disabilities are often more vulnerable and least likely to be prepared for a disaster, compared to other groups.

"People should not rely solely on government or others; they need to be prepared themselves."

ANSI-Homeland Security Standards Panel Report – Standardization for Emergency Communications; April 2008

Recognizing this fact, the CAC took charge by insisting they were in the best position to identify their abilities and what they needed to support themselves to be prepared.

Feeling Safe, Being Safe is the result of a commitment to assist all people with disabilities to take charge of their own well-being and personal preparedness by creating tools and training that could be readily understood and used effectively in their homes.

Because of the historic lack of attention to individuals with disabilities before and during a disaster, the CAC produced ***Feeling Safe, Being Safe*** so more individuals can think about what makes them feel safe, create a plan, and put it into action. Thus: **Think-Plan-Do.**

Feeling Safe, Being Safe Description



DONALD ROBERTS
Chair,
DDS CAC 2004

“People with disabilities can take care of themselves and help others if they have information in a way they understand. Many of us are not able to read very well, but if information is provided so we can understand it using with plain words and pictures we can take charge and also help others too. When people understand what is said or written, they have power to run their lives. “



With the success of numerous advocacy publications and media and the **Leadership Through Personal Change** project, the CAC with facilitation support from BRC developed an innovative peer-centered preparedness approach, **Feeling Safe, Being Safe**.

The intent was to create and disseminate effective multi-media tools that enhanced independence and equal access to self-directed planning while meeting objectives of a US Department of Homeland Security-funded disaster preparedness project. The CAC committed its members to helping others across the state create safer environments by being better prepared in their homes and communities.

Feeling Safe, Being Safe Goals

- Approach preparedness planning from “being safe” perspective rather than fear.

- Increase the number of persons with disabilities who have emergency preparedness plans, preparations and emergency kits in their homes.
- Availability of accessible, easy-to-use teaching/learning tools and approaches for peer instruction and demonstration across a range of abilities.



- Provide easy-to-understand tools for community emergency volunteers to use with seniors and other populations.



SAM DURBIN
DDS CAC Chair

“You can’t be safe until you feel safe.”

Individuals with disabilities were actively engaged throughout the creation and dissemination phases of *Feeling Safe, Being Safe* to ensure wide and successful usability. The CAC participated in the development of the concept, narration, acting sequences, script and storyline of the DVD. They also guided the design and content of the preparation DVD, Worksheet and Magnet for first responders with guidance from an emergency expert at DDS.

Noteworthy to CAC members was the realization that nearly 25 percent of adults in the United States, with and without disabilities, have difficulty reading basic signs and labels. Readability data from DDS states that nearly 60 percent of those served over fourteen years of age have difficulty reading beyond simple sentences.

The CAC used “plain language” and presented information in a positive welcoming format creating an experience where people would be interested in taking charge and being active participants in their own planning. The CAC reviewed existing emergency preparedness tools and observed that many showed people in crisis and fearful. Members wanted their new materials to communicate confidence and planning that lead to being safe.

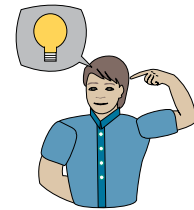
The objective of using “plain language” is to ensure the intended audience can easily understand and use the information. To ensure accuracy and comprehension, the CAC tested its materials with intended users throughout California at conferences, advocacy meetings and community trainings.

Decision Making Using Think–Plan–Do

A simple learning and planning approach was tested among Californians with a range of disabilities and service providers. The CAC learned this easy-to-use strategy had application for other purposes, in both personal and professional development. **Think–Plan–Do**, the new strategy was incorporated in *Feeling Safe, Being Safe* tools.

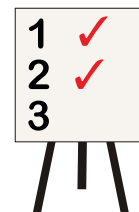
When information is accessible to people with cognitive disabilities, it is accessible to all.

Think



Think about what you want to accomplish

Plan



Identify specific steps

Do



Carry out the plan



In 2006 the CAC began discussion about natural disasters in the aftermath of occurrences both within and outside California that demonstrated the unfortunate consequences of the lack of preparedness by people faced with community emergencies. Members shared personal fears and worries about not knowing what to do and how to be better prepared in their homes. Common expressions revealed a collective dependence on “staff” and support people who were seen as primary rescuers in the case of emergencies. Numerous members did not know neighbors or feel connected to their communities.

Soon after, a presentation on a new emergency preparedness DVD by a regional developmental services agency prompted CAC members to insist on developing a user-friendly tool that would not be “fear-based,” as they described, but would use their **Think–Plan–Do** learning process to help more people feel confident in their abilities to be prepared. Discussions about the topic and examination of other preparedness materials continued at quarterly meetings throughout the year. During these reviews, CAC members discovered the significance of personal connections to their neighborhoods and communities that could provide support when putting together preparedness plans. They discovered they could become supports for others as they became prepared.

Wanting to create an emergency preparation instrument that would have broad application, the CAC agreed that building community connections would be the platform on which to create their new tools. With funding from Homeland Security they were ready to begin the development phase.

In 2007 at their quarterly meetings the CAC began a dialogue about the name and approach of the emergency preparedness project, affirming the positive with *Feeling Safe, Being Safe*, and its self-determined methodology expressed in **Think–Plan–Do**.

Next the CAC consulted with a DDS emergency preparedness expert for guidance about essential information that needed to be included in preparedness tools. They reviewed more tools distributed in California and nationally. Members then established an ad hoc group that focused on creating instructional materials, tools to make use of in one's home and a "how to" video demonstrating *Feeling Safe, Being Safe*. A prototype worksheet, magnet and instructional DVD were introduced.

After considerable review, the CAC chose to design an easy-to-use Worksheet that would contain essential information about the person and would be kept with a personalized emergency kit. In addition they chose to develop a large brightly colored magnet for first responders that could be posted on a refrigerator. The CAC felt it essential that all tools have the following characteristics: Be easy to understand, use brightly colored, large size, and have a positive approach using everyday language with simple illustrations.



Feeling Safe, Being Safe Development



Feeling Safe, Being Safe field test session.

During the development phase, the CAC, their peers and facilitators tested draft **Feeling Safe, Being Safe** materials to ensure effectiveness of methods and validity of accessible formats to better accommodate diverse audiences and end-users.

The tools were tested with more than 1,000 people at conferences and advocacy group meetings throughout California. Effectiveness was strengthened by analysis of collected data and the final products reflected input from community members, a DDS emergency

preparedness expert and CAC requirements.

The development phase consisted of:

- CAC review of existing preparedness tools and approaches.
- Preparing prototype materials.
- Testing the materials, reviewing responses.
- Revising and re-testing.

Elements used in development:

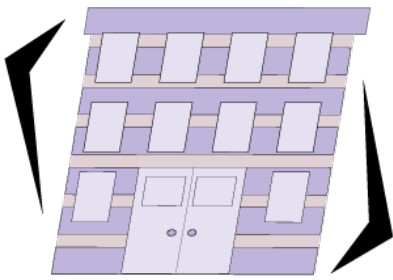
- Examine the purpose, intended audience, user needs and culture.
- Select content, organize, write, design, test, revise and re-test.
- Emphasize plain language — make every word count.
- Use of useful innovative design that serves the end user.

The Feeling Safe, Being Safe goal is to create effective emergency planning and preparation tools that increase personal safety and community connections.

After the successful development of the *Feeling Safe, Being Safe* tools, DDS printed 240,000 planning packets for distribution. Priority was given to persons with a disability who live independently in the community and providers that serve them.

Project Outcomes

- Availability of accessible, self-guided emergency planning and preparation tools.

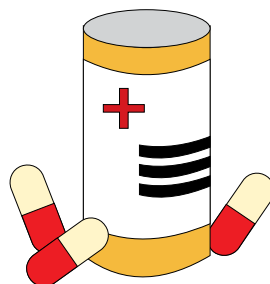


DISASTERS

- Californians with disabilities developed their own personal emergency preparedness plans.
- Increased neighborhood relations as integral to personal safety planning.

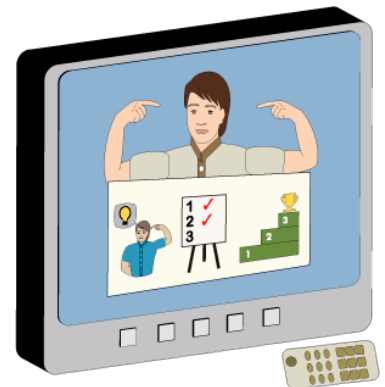
User Outcomes

- Communicate and make decisions about planning and preparing for an emergency.
- Identify vital medical and personal information for First Responders.
- Mentor others on emergency preparedness using the Worksheet and Magnet.
- Provide professional trainings as DDS Certified *Feeling Safe, Being Safe* trainers.



Design and Dissemination Outcomes

- Accessible formats developed by and for persons with disabilities.



- Sequential multi-media training curricula and instructional approach.
- Expanded outreach to urban, suburban, rural communities.

Feeling Safe, Being Safe DVD

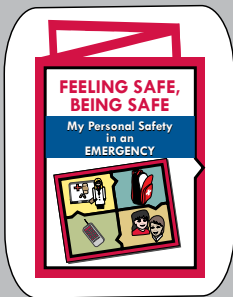
The *Feeling Safe, Being Safe* DVD features the CAC Chairperson who talks about why it is important to be prepared and

demonstrates how to use the *Feeling Safe, Being Safe* tools in a step-by-step format. Viewers watch and learn how to create a personal plan using these materials and put together an emergency kit.

This DVD employs **Think–Plan–Do**, the CAC's signature learning strategy. The examples and suggestions offered encourage individuals to learn about and use their community resources and agencies and most importantly reach out for assistance from neighbors, if needed.

The DVD is available for viewing on the internet. DDS and BRC are available sites for viewing. There are two versions of the DVD; with and without closed captions.

FEELING SAFE, BEING SAFE Emergency Preparedness Train-the-Trainer



Produced by **The Board Resource Center, Inc.**

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Department of Developmental Services

<http://dds.ca.gov/ConsumerCorner/Publications.cfm>

Board Resource Center

www.brcenter.org/library

Feeling Safe, Being Safe Worksheet

The Worksheet consists of six easy-to-complete pages with graphically illustrated emergency information and questions. The completed Worksheet becomes the emergency plan and lists personal items that should be included in an emergency kit.

Most importantly, it communicates vital information about the person so community emergency volunteers have necessary medical details that ensure safety and how to provide adequate support. Instructions on how to complete the Worksheet are described in the DVD. The Worksheet is available in Spanish and English on the DDS website Consumer Corner.

It is best to complete the Worksheet with a support person.

PERSONAL SAFETY
IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ME

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

My Name _____
Health Insurance _____
CARD NUMBER _____

HEALTH/MEDICAL INFORMATION:

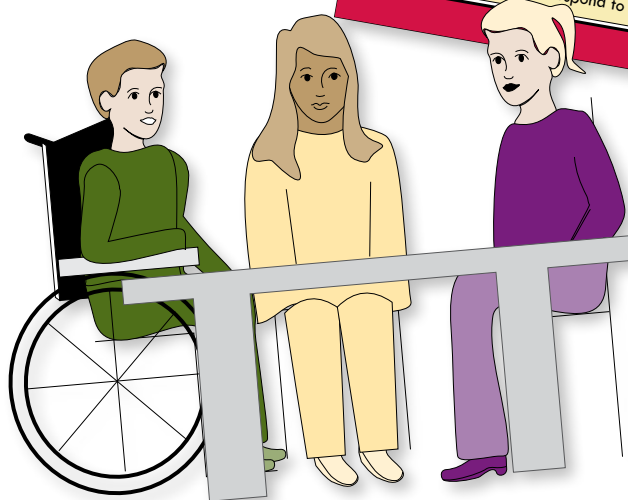
My Meds _____
My Doctor _____
Information about my disability _____

IMPORTANT THINGS I USE:








☐ Glasses ☐ Hearing aides
☐ Wheelchair ☐ Walker
☐ Service animal ☐ Other _____


COMMUNICATION:

My way of talking _____
Best way to talk to me _____
Best way to assist me _____
How I respond to stress _____



Feeling Safe, Being Safe Magnet

PERSONAL SAFETY		SAFE AT HOME	
<p>I am _____</p> <p>My meds _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Important things I use _____</p> <p>_____</p>		<p>My kit is located:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	
<p>911 Regional Center</p> <p>NAME _____ # _____</p> <p>EMERGENCY INFORMATION</p> <p> Radio _____</p> <p> TV _____</p>		<p>My Neighbor</p> <p>NAME _____ # _____</p>	
		<p>Friend/Family</p> <p>NAME _____ # _____</p>	
<p>COMMUNITY RESOURCES</p>		<p>PEOPLE WHO CARE</p>	

 Use Indelible Marker

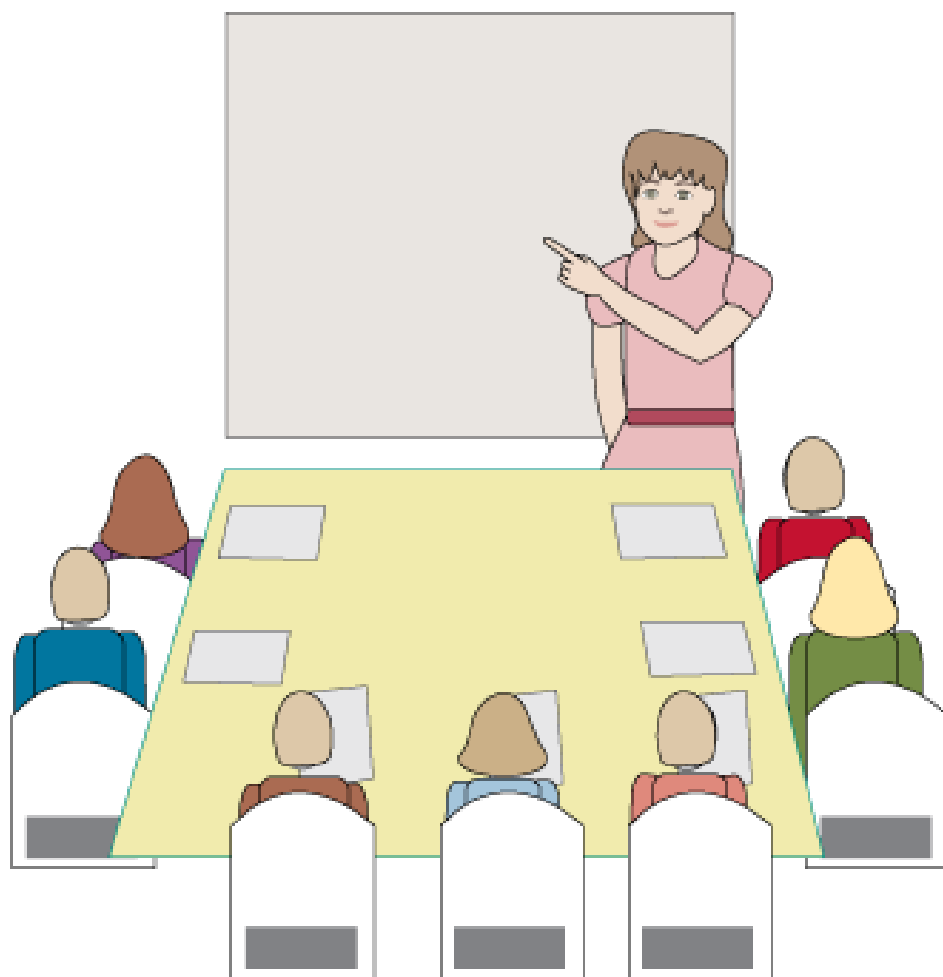
After a person has finished the Worksheet, the Magnet is completed and posted in a prominent location for First Responders' easy recognition. Support people and neighbors will know vital information about the person and find it easy to access in an emergency.

Posting the Magnet's highlighted information will save valuable time and attention during a disaster or emergency. Instructions on how to complete the Magnet are described in the DVD.

The successful *Feeling Safe, Being Safe* project led DDS and BRC to implement a distribution plan so people with disabilities and their families living in urban, suburban and rural communities throughout the state have access to these tools.

During 2009, community groups, leading case management organizations and family support groups statewide provided a series of workshops that reached thousands of people with disabilities, case workers and volunteers across California. These trainings and conference demonstrations distributed more than 14,000 *Feeling Safe, Being Safe* planning packets. In one month more than 650 volunteers and service providers were trained in the use of the tools. Each participant took responsibility for working with 25 individuals, resulting in additional distribution of 16,000 planning packets.

Feeling Safe, Being Safe has been featured at numerous state and national conferences. The



states of Hawaii, Oregon and Minnesota have adapted some or all of the tools for their states' emergency preparedness needs.

Feeling Safe, Being Safe was also introduced to the World Bank in Washington DC for replication in

developing countries. Military families stationed in California were also introduced to the planning tool to be utilized while on base or when deployed.

In total, DDS will be distributing 240,000 planning packets.

Peer Training



Feeling Safe, Being Safe Train-the-Trainer.

Given the success of ***Feeling Safe, Being Safe*** DDS offered persons with disabilities an opportunity to be a Peer-to-Peer/Professional trainer. Applicants attended intensive hands-on training sessions to become certified to teach the use of the tools. The BRC developed the Train-the-Trainer curriculum based on adult learning principles. Curricula

standards included professional preparation, instructional sequencing, subject mastery, post training requirements and personal preparedness.

BRC also created a companion Train-the-Trainer DVD that features the CAC Chair as narrator. The DVD guides trainees through a rigorous series of activities based

on **Think–Plan–Do**.

Consistent with the CAC philosophy “leader as example,” all trainees were required to be prepared in their own home for an emergency prior to certification and leading future training sessions.

Each Certified Trainer was assigned to conduct trainings in their communities to build a professional

network for expanded outreach and establish themselves as Emergency Mentors. Subsequently, trainers conducted sessions with peers, service providers, emergency personnel and state employees.

DDS certified 30 peer trainers, many of whom have developed their own emergency preparedness micro-consulting businesses.

DDS is concerned that thousands of families and individuals with disabilities living in rural communities and hard to reach areas of the state do not have access to the trainings conducted in major cities. To ensure safety for all Californians' served by DDS, the BRC-CAC team is launching an Internet-based training and distribution project to reach this population.

Feeling Safe, Being Safe has been shown to be innovative both by its development and its efficient use of time and funding. DDS analyzed the cost and benefit of providing a multi-level approach to distribution. Analysis revealed an Internet-based training approach had numerous advantages over funding significant statewide on-site trainings. Advantages include: engagement of community grass roots nonprofit organizations, community-specific emergency preparedness, cultural sensitivity, increased community partnerships,

alliance building and networking opportunities for agencies. The team concluded a webcast platform is an effective means to maximize dissemination, increase

community connections and ensure safety during a disaster. Anticipated trainings and distribution of planning packets is estimated at 125,000.

PEOPLE WHO CARE
IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN AN EMERGENCY

SOMEONE WHO LIVES CLOSE:

Neighbor _____ # _____

Apt. Manager _____ # _____

Family/Friend _____ # _____

OTHER IMPORTANT CONTACTS:

Support Staff _____ # _____

Program _____ # _____

Regional Center _____ # _____

COMMUNITY RESOURCES
WHO TO CALL FOR EMERGENCY INFORMATION

911 _____

Office of Emergency Services _____

Fire # _____ Police # _____

WHERE TO GET INFORMATION TO BE SAFE IN AN EMERGENCY:

Radio Station _____

TV Station _____

Next Steps



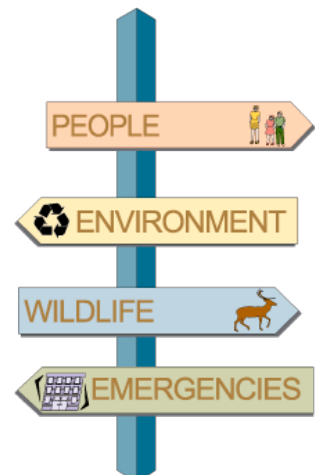
DDS and statewide emergency planners recognize the critical importance of all people being prepared for when, not if, a natural disaster or major emergency will occur. ***Feeling Safe, Being Safe*** is acknowledged as an approach and tool that can support people with disabilities to be prepared.

Using data from prior US natural disasters, DDS and BRC identified additional areas to study for future expansion of planning and preparedness.

- Training of emergency shelter volunteers on accommodation and inclusion of people with disabilities.
- Distribution and training on ***Feeling Safe, Being Safe*** for community volunteers and service providers.
- Increase engagement of people with disabilities in neighborhood and community networks of

everyday life that can provide support during a disaster.

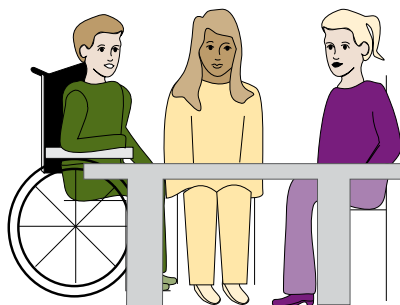
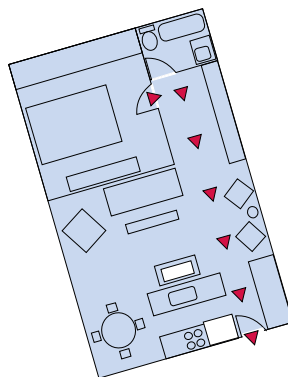
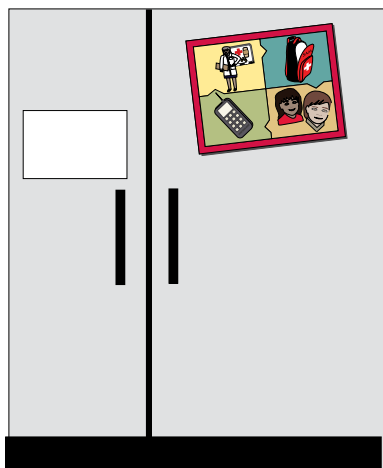
- Develop an Internet television series featuring people with disabilities interviewing peers about emergency preparation and successful recovery along with ways to create community connections that can ensure personal safety.
- Develop ***Feeling Safe, Being Safe*** tools in multiple languages and adapt for other populations such as seniors.
- Development of specific emergency situations (hurricanes, earthquakes, Tsunami, etc.).



Feeling Safe, Being Safe is an effective planning and preparation approach for all people. Thousands of people who have used the tools expressed increased comfort and willingness to talk about emergencies and how they will take care of themselves. Californians who have used the tools indicate **Feeling Safe, Being Safe** has encouraged them to share discoveries and emergency preparations with family and neighbors. The tool, approach and process have provided opportunities for people to explore neighborhood relationships and be counted on as a prepared community member.

Good tips from the Consumer Advisory Committee.

- Have someone help you fill out your magnet and worksheet and gather items needed for an emergency kit.
- Practice your emergency evacuation.
- Tell people about your emergency plan.

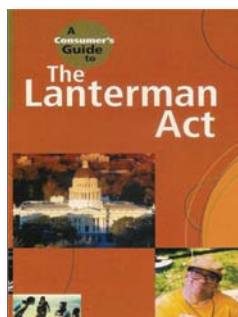


“Being safe means I know how to take care of myself and not be afraid. If I create a plan to help me feel safe, I will be prepared and not have to worry.

I will be calm and be able to follow the steps to take care of myself in an emergency.”

CAC Products and Publications

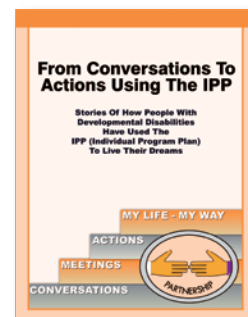
All CAC publications and media are available for download from the DDS website www.dds.ca.gov/consumercorner/home.cfm and from the Board Resource Center www.brcenter.org



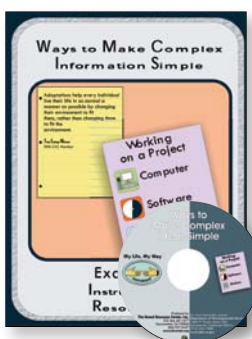
How the California law works for people with developmental disabilities.



A conversation with 400 Californians about what life is like for them.



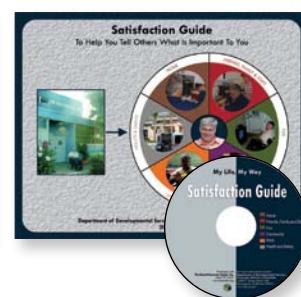
Stories about 20 people who used their IPPs to improve their lives.



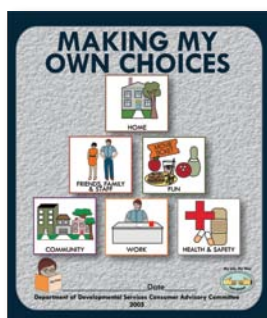
CD Rom on how to make information accessible. Includes 160 graphics.



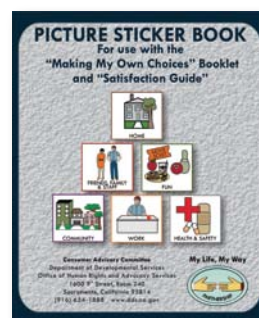
Suggestions for conducting interviews so people feel comfortable.



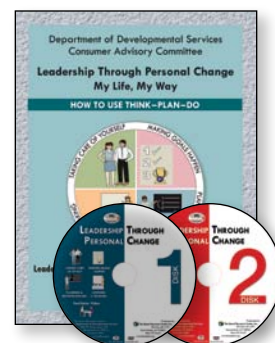
A Guide & DVD about Dan. The Guide is a workbook for people to identify personal preferences.



An IPP planning tool that helps people identify what is important to them.



A companion to Making My Own Choices. People can express their choices using graphics.



15 videos and guides using Think—Plan—Do to develop personal and professional goals and plans. Includes a facilitation video.



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