

Disaster Readiness, Response and Recovery: Home and Family

Summary of significant trends:

Disasters can affect any part of the United States at any time of the year, swiftly and without warning. North Carolina is one of four states most susceptible to natural disasters. In the past 10 years, North Carolina has had disaster declarations related to ice storms, winter storms, hurricanes, tornadoes, and flooding. Unfortunately, most people don't think of a disaster until it is too late; then they suddenly realize how unprepared they are for the enormous changes it makes in their lives. In many disasters, local services and officials become overwhelmed and it takes time for emergency response personnel to reach everyone who needs help. Families that prepare for disasters ahead of time can reduce the fear, confusion and loss that come with disaster.

Along with disaster, there is clean up and recovery time. The period after a disaster is often very difficult for families, at times as devastating as the disaster itself. In some cases individuals are dealing with the damage and/or destruction of their home or property. Individuals react differently to the traumatic and chronic stress of a disaster. The degree to which stress is experienced depends on the duration and intensity of

the stressor. The longer and more intense, the greater the stress factor is likely to be. Some people seem to come through the experience with few problems while others experience fear, denial, and disbelief while moving through the stages to acceptance, reconstruction, and recovery. Families with young children need additional support to manage their stress along with knowing how to respond to child reactions.

Relevance of Trends to County Programs:

The North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service has a responsibility and the opportunity to serve the people of North Carolina to meet state emergency management needs. Family and Consumer Sciences county and state faculty support families by providing relevant consistent education related to readying their families and homes for potential disasters, responding to citizen needs after a disaster has occurred, and offering educational assistance to help families recovery from disaster. Extension's trusted county leadership and innate resourcefulness provides stability during these often chaotic situations.

Sources of Supporting Data:

Federal Emergency Management Agency
www.fema.gov

Division of Emergency Management,
State of North Carolina
<http://www.dem.dcc.state.nc.us/>

North Carolina Cooperative Extension
Disaster Site
<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/disaster/>

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www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/fcs