

SENIORS AND EMERGENCIES: creating change by building bridges between gerontology and emergency management

Division of Aging and Seniors, Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)

GOAL

To ensure the needs and potential contributions of seniors are integrated into all phases of emergency management. This requires that governments, emergency planners and responders and the community at large—including older people—identify and integrate “age-responsive” actions in planning for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies.

THE ISSUES

- ◆ Some seniors are more vulnerable owing to diminished physical capacities and social supports.
- ◆ Lack of recognition of the contributions seniors make, for example as community leaders, volunteers, and providers of essential support to their families before, during, and after emergencies.
- ◆ Older persons’ needs are generally not included in emergency planning and humanitarian aid programs, leading to marginalization.

SIGNS OF CHANGE / IMPACT

- ◆ New networks and linkages: since 2005, the emergency management and gerontology sectors have collaborated to share knowledge and expertise.
- ◆ New projects and the inclusion of seniors in emergency management.
- ◆ Knowledge development and exchange.



- ◆ Policy developments.



- ◆ Tools / Publications.



NEXT STEPS

- ◆ Identify opportunities to advance action through working groups and other networks.
- ◆ Collaborative policy and program development.
- ◆ Sharing tools and resources to enhance community and seniors resiliency.
- ◆ Strengthen links with the voluntary sector, public health networks, emergency managers and the gerontology sector.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT— HOW TO BECOME INVOLVED

- ◆ Participation in Steering Committees and Working Groups coordinated by the Division of Aging and Seniors, PHAC.
- ◆ Information sharing.
- ◆ Research/knowledge and curriculum development.

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