

Emergency Preparedness For

# **PEOPLE WHO HAVE MENTAL HEALTH DISABILITIES**



## COMMUNICATION . . .

Think through what a rescuer might need to know about you and be prepared to say it briefly. You may also consider pre-programming messages into communication devices, laminating a communication board for emergency situations, or keep laminated, pre-printed communication cards with you. Practice how to communicate your needs, for example:

- “I have a psychiatric disability. In an emergency or under stress, I may become confused and not make any sense. Help me find a quiet area and I should be fine in approximately 10 or 15 minutes.”
- “I have a panic disorder. If I panic, give me one green pill (name of medication) located in my (purse, wallet, pocket, etc.)”
- “I take (name of medication and color of pill) every (frequency).”

## REACTIONS . . .

- Many emotional reactions may occur or become more severe during and after a disaster. Think through the types of reactions you may have and plan strategies for coping with these reactions and how to inform first responders or American Red Cross personnel. ·
- Discuss coping skills with family, friends, and support service providers.
- Include pertinent information in your emergency supply kit.

## TREATMENT INSTRUCTIONS . . .

In a disaster, you may be injured and need medical assistance or be hospitalized. You should keep any instructions for your care and treatment with you at all times. Include a copy of your Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care so that the person you have chosen may assist, advocate, and intervene on your behalf.