



TRANSCRIPT FROM EVENT: Getting Real II

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Section: Inclusion of People with Disabilities into CERT (Boyce)

>> I'm going to try and cover a little bit more about the whole community aspect of community emergency response teams. Can you hear me okay? Do I need to do this? Bring it up closer, a little bit closer, okay. How's that? Is that a little better? Okay, I can do this. All right. We're going to be setting the stage, the training stage; I've got three photographs up here. The first one is that of demonstrating a flood scenario. Actually, this is something that has happened in natural real world situations. The second photograph is showing a couple of community emergency response team volunteers practicing putting on a stabilizing device made of cardboard on an injured actor who pretends to have a leg injury. And the third photograph is of a paramedic who's opening up a medical kit crouched down beside a patient that's on a gurney. And there is an AED defibrillator between the patient's legs, secured there. So this just demonstrates some of the things that the CERT program will try to address. So whenever you're gathering the people together in the whole community, you need to have a purpose for that particular training. They need to understand the concept of what it is they're trying to do. And you can train people, not necessarily on hands on; you can also do it as a tabletop exercise. For example, you can write up a scenario and have the people actually walk through what a plan would be, how they would respond. And as far as including people with disabilities, that has never really been a question in Orange County. People call up and they say, I want CERT training. They get it. We don't ask if they have a disability or not. They just show up for the training. My emergency manager has just left to go over to Hillsborough County, but Preston Cook, at the time that I started the program, was very good about just anybody who wants it, they show up, we've got the time, let's do it. And we try to train people in their neighborhoods, an actual situation that they would live in day to day. We do faith-based groups, we do workplace employees, we try to train at least 10 people, 15 is ideal, because we train the concept of everybody being prepared and everybody having a particular position on the team. Think of it as a sports analogy if you would. Not everybody is the quarterback. Not everybody is going to do the fire suppression. Not everybody is going to be the tight end. Not everybody is going to be the coach on the sidelines, being the incident commander, but everybody has a position on the team, and we teach the concept of community emergency response teams as everybody having a place and a purpose and their contribution that they can make. Here I'm showing a photograph of a caregiver handing the fire extinguisher to Nikki Hugues -- she is blind, deaf, and is a wheelchair user, and that's what the photograph is of. I wasn't even thinking about it that day. It was just, she's part of team, we're teaching fire suppression, and Nikki, you're going to hold the fire extinguisher, and we used a live flame so she could actually feel and negotiate where that fire was. She was terrified. I was just ignorant and didn't realize what a hazard that was, but I included her anyway.



[Inaudible audience comment] Excuse me? You didn't see my picture? Oh, excuse me, there you go. You see Nikki Hugues sitting there in her wheelchair, and she's holding the fire extinguisher, and she did put out the flames by herself. Her caregiver, of course, was nearby. And I do stress trying to include the caregivers if somebody with a disability has someone they've chosen that they trust and communicates with them on a regular basis. More than likely that caregiver is going to be with them with they respond to a disaster, so include them. The training objectives are very important. We try to identify the roles and responsibilities for the particular community preparedness. We describe the types of hazards that affect a community. In other words, we teach people how to do a vulnerability assessment. Coming from the emergency management arena, that's the first thing we do, is what are you the most vulnerable to. We include how to undertake personal and organization awareness actions. As someone mentioned earlier in the audience, they prepare every day. You plan extra how to get here, to and from places, access, so you would do the same thing if you were planning for an emergency. There are many functions for emergency response teams, and these are usually described in the training. But there are other things that they do besides just respond. They want to lessen the impact of the disasters. They're critical in that they are the whole community, and that they can take steps in preparing the rest of the community. As my previous speaker before me, Ms. Carter, mentioned, we teach the one, the one goes out and teaches 15, the 15 teach 30, it goes on and on, so you have it exponentiated through the community. The whole community not only includes people with disabilities and people without disabilities, it includes the government, community leaders, and the public. So let's consider what each of these parts of the whole really do. The government, it insures that there are adequate skills and resources through efficient distribution of the revenue and appropriate training opportunities. Okay, that's government speak for everybody has access to getting training. The government has the responsibility to provide services to protect and assist citizens and to provide everyone, including people with disabilities, access to emergency training such as community emergency response teams. They are responsibility for making sure that your fire rescuers, the First Responders, are trained appropriately. They're constantly being trained. They're not sitting there watching television, as we'd like to think, waiting for the next fire. Every day they're working on putting on all that equipment, how quickly they can do it. About the hoses. They go out and they check their hydrants, the pressures. There's things going on constantly. So the community emergency response team may spend 20 and 21 hours, maybe 32 hours, as in the case of Orange County, in getting their training, but the government is responsible for making sure their First Responders are constantly being trained and ready to go at a moment's notice. We also make sure that there's access to that emergency training. The Emergency Operations Plan, that's important for the government to make sure there is an operations plan in place, and by law, they need to have an emergency manager that's been assigned to be responsible for a comprehensive emergency management plan. As Mr. Fugate was talking about this morning, we need to include the people with disabilities into that



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overall plan, not just use them as an annex or an afterthought or a Band-Aid application. And in Orange County, we try to include the people with disabilities in the planning process, as well. We have government officials that also have disabilities, and they come to the table and take training. They also plan to set forth the minds of authority, and it clearly outlines who's responsible for what specific emergency procedures. You wouldn't necessarily want a sheriff deputy going in and putting out the fire, you want someone who is a fire responder doing so. You wouldn't want a paramedic directing traffic when you have someone else that could be doing the traffic evacuations. Emergency Operations Plan, or the EOP, also identifies the appropriate personnel, the type of equipment needed, the facilities available and the supplies available and any other resources for an emergency. In other words, your government is working every day identifying where the public shelters are going to be, where the points of distribution are going to be, who's going to man those, where are we going to use our community emergency response team volunteers, that's all part of emergency operations plan. Community leaders have a responsibility. As you heard from Ms. Carter earlier, she is a community leader. She's actually an elected official on her fire district's commission. In Orange County, we try to have community leaders in our faith-based organizations. We have a lot of theme parks. Those community leaders come to the table and are part of emergency operations planning. The public. We try to reach out to the public, not just with the community emergency response team training, but also with learning what sort of alerts we have. There is a text messaging service that Orange County provides called ocalert.net, and anyone with a disability that uses text messaging is able to go online, of course, it's free, and type in ocalert.net. Sometimes we do get Orange County citizens from California and Virginia, but that's okay, we'll let them know there's a tornado in Winter Park. The public can give feedback to our community. That's who we try to listen to, the vulnerabilities and some possible solutions. So contacting the Emergency Management Office in Orange County, we're there 24/7, actually. I'm on the duty as of last week, but this week I'm off duty because I'm here visiting with you, but there's somebody that will answer the phone and answer any emergency preparedness questions you may have. We also with help you got on the Special Needs Registry List, and those are the people that get notified first and foremost if they need assistance. We believe in not only a push communications, we want a pull communications. We want people to tell us what it is that we need to be doing to help them in their situation. So feedback is extremely important in building the whole community resiliency. The goal of Citizen Corps, Citizen Corps is a national program that community emergency response teams are just a part of. Community emergency response teams are just one of the training possibilities. Citizen Corps also offers such a thing as Medical Reserve Core, Neighborhood Watch, Citizens on Patrol, or Volunteers on Patrol. They are usually part of the local emergency operations plan, and they effectively reflect the whole community, because they come from all diversities, all cultures, all languages. They really represent what Orange County, Florida is supposed to look like, and that's what the Citizen Corps Council does in Orange County. And I'm recommending and hoping that each and every one of you in this room know how to get in touch with your Citizen Corps. Get in touch with your Emergency Management Office. It was striking to me that



in Hurricane Katrina, the after action report, after everything was said and done, they had 150 health care facilities, or assisted living facilities, and 33 of those knew how to get in touch with their emergency management office. I thought that was very revealing. So you need to engage the whole community. I'm not sure who is in the audience, if you're just strictly volunteers or if you're emergency managers, but you are a member of a community. Somehow, you fit into either the government, the leadership role, or as part of the public. There are types of disasters that the emergency managers look at. There are the natural, technological, and the intentional. I have on the screen a photograph of a natural disaster, which is a flood. You see some people walking around in the flood. I certainly hope they have the proper protection and equipment on. I hope they're protecting their feet, because we find a lot of times that our volunteers mean well, they'll go out and endanger themselves and they end up becoming a survivor as well as a responder. So the part of the community emergency response team training, any preparedness training, is that you protect yourself first. Linda mentioned earlier about having a buddy system. We recommend having your caregiver with you. There's another photograph of a technological scenario. It's of a nuclear plant near a power plant, power lines, it's very hazy, that could be something that could instantly happen. You don't plan it. Where are you, what are you going to do, what's your plan? The third photograph is of the Murray Building, the Federal building that was destroyed in Oklahoma. Some of the key disaster elements, though, can be similar, no matter what three categories it may come in. They're relatively unexpected. We didn't plan the evacuation practice this morning, did we. We had an idea of what to do, but it was unexpected. Sometimes the emergency personnel are overwhelmed, so we don't necessarily want the citizens roaming the streets and coming out there to help us right away. But we will need them later down the line, a few days later after everything calms down and the media leaves, that's when the emergency personnel need the citizens to step forward and help the most. That's why we recommend that you have a 72-hour preparedness kit, some way of keeping your medications fresh for 72 hours, because usually it's going to take that long for emergency personnel to come in. There's a thing called the Local Hazard Vulnerability Assessment, or a Gap Assessment, that every government does for every community. That's a requirement from Homeland Security, it's common sense, it's something that you can do personally, and we include our CERT teams in identifying some of the disasters that may occur. We cover these in our training. We also look at historical impacts. In your community, you know which streets will flood first. So have that in your plan. What will you do? The results of damage to the infrastructure. The police know what they're going to do, they're going to take care of public safety, firefighters have their job, the EMS personnel, that's the Emergency Medical Services. EMS can stand for a lot of things, we refer to it as so many other things, but it's Emergency Medical Services, and that's your 911. When you call 911, that service, that system kicks into play, and it's usually for people that are not breathing or their bleeding to death. There are lower priorities that the citizens, the people that are part community emergency response teams, can help in. Community emergency response teams assist in taking care of the manageable things that endanger themselves. So if you can help yourself before helping others, that's a major deal. That



helps a lot. Some of the hazards that you might find are listed on the screen. We talk about home and workplace preparedness. I have a photograph of a neighborhood where all the garages are secured down and locked up. People had to evacuate for maybe a tornado watch is coming, a hurricane, whatever. The center photograph is of items that are in a preparedness kit that everyone has, you just may not have it all gathered into one place. Oh, excuse me. There I am. I've been corrected. The center picture, it shows some of the things that you have on hand already, but it would be great if you them in one place in a plastic tub or something, something on wheels that you can push out the door with you or grab quickly. And some of the items you would have would be a First Aid kit, some cash, even it it's just 20 bucks, because the ATM machines, if power is out, may not be working, or they be overdrawn. A handheld radio, a can opener. We talked about having the three days of food supply on hand. Be sure you can open the stuff and use it. Bottles of water, hand sanitizer, things of that sort. And extra medications if you need them. Batteries, backup things. The contributions may become the very strategy needed to remain, regain normalcy as quickly as possible. So know your local hazards, alerts, and warning systems; address specific needs for yourself. People with disabilities and people that you know at work and in your neighborhood, that's what community is all about, the whole community. Don't leave anybody out. Teach people with disabilities the protected actions that anyone would need to know. Teach them the protected action of deciding when to stay or change shelter locations, how to protect themselves and others from debris. And two other protective actions that can prevent illness are the removal of contaminants and how to best practice good hygiene when water is scarce and there's exposure to infections. These are just examples of some of the things that we can teach in the community emergency response teams. Sheltering. That's a big decision. It's the first thing people decide on during a disaster. So speak to how to shelter in place, requiring sealing out the contaminant. Prepare to shelter in place by identifying an internal room, and be prepared to stay there for several hours. Store enough supplies for an extended stay. Mass care or community shelters may become an option; however, be prepared to take along your own personal disaster supply kit. If you're having to be assisted with evacuations, we teach our people with disabilities to keep it to a cubic foot requirement, because we want to be able to put everybody on the bus and make sure we can get their wheelchairs, if you're a wheelchair user. It's tragic to see some people being evacuated, we think we're helping them, but we leave all the things that they need to get back to normalcy back in their quarters. So developing a disaster plan is the first thing as part of your preparedness. And you plan a plan for yourself as well as your community. Remember to include everyone in sharing ideas. That's why we have community meetings where we actually meet every Tuesday with our board of County Commissioners. And anyone with a disability can come to the board, fill out a little blue card and talk about any concerns they have in our community regarding access to training, access to preparedness planning, evacuations, because Orange County is actually a host county. We welcome in people from neighboring counties that are evacuating from the coastline, because we seem to be where it's high and dry, if Florida has such a place, in the center, so people do tend to come to us. Escape planning. You



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want to inform everybody what your plan is so that they'll know where to go and look for you. Practice that plan. Make sure you can turn around and get the wheelchair through the door, that you're not going to stumble over something that's in your way. Even people that don't have disabilities need to practice their evacuation plans. Mitigation is part of preparing for a disaster, it's just a way of reducing the loss of life and property. Any activity that prevents an emergency or reduces hazards is considered mitigation. Flood insurance in flood hazard areas, think about that. There's non-structural hazard mitigation. Get involved. I'm kind of speeding up a little bit, because I think I am running out of time. I wanted to get down to some of the nitty-gritty things of it in the CERT disaster response. We learn all these techniques. I think Linda covered that pretty well, but this is the important one here. This slide, if you don't see any other, is demonstrating the organization of government, the whole community, having the government agency liaison for your community emergency response team. Get to know who they are, let them get to know who you are. Talk to them, share what's going on. There is a certain span of control and authority that is set out by the Emergency Operations Plan that we discussed earlier. A person with a disability should have access to training at every level. And here is a photograph of some of the personal protective equipment that is given out to you. It's to protect your eyes, your breathing, and your feet. There's a helmet, goggles, N95 mask, gloves, sturdy shoes, or work boots. That's the standard. Now here we successfully have included some of your community emergency response team members. The first photograph is of someone putting out a fire with an extinguisher. The second photograph is of a [inaudible] scenario where they're pulling out a mannequin that's not a live person. They're practicing with a dummy at the moment, but they're trying to extricate the dummy from underneath some fallen debris. And then there's a gentleman who's giving out bottles of water. These are all things that a community emergency response team member is capable of doing, and that's what we try to train them to do. There are some other roles that they can do that's not necessarily a disaster-related thing. It can be part of the mitigation, sharing the information. Here I'm demonstrating some community emergency response team volunteers at a booth at a community meeting. The Good Samaritan Law, Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 and other relevant state statutes will protect your volunteers, so if you're a government official, that's something to keep in mind that if your members are probably trained, you can use them. Some other additional CERT training includes the AEDs, community relations, cardiopulmonary resuscitation skills, debris removal, traffic control, special needs concerns. Inclusive planning, bring them to the table. When we have exercises, we have a lot of meetings to plan for those exercises, so we want to share with all participants by bringing the people with disabilities to the planning table. Then we include them in the training, not only as the Responders, but they can also be the survivor actors. We let them switch roles and do both. We include them in the exercise. We have to sometimes take them out before the exercise and practice. Here I have a scene where we took someone in a wheelchair, went the evacuation route to see if it was accessible for him. I have several members that had their equipment with them. If you'll notice, there's one lady, she's in a white hat. There's a reason for that. She is one of the caregivers. And the person that she takes care of may get separated from



her, and they require her services. Or there may be someone else that becomes injured or something, and we need to know which is the caregiver so we can contact her, you know, identify her quickly. We always include the caregivers. We put them to work. Here's a planner that has a disability, but he's actually writing down the notes of the plan. He's the brains of the operation, if you will. And here we have a caregiver identified in a yellow helmet assisting an actress. She's wounded, but the actual community emergency response team member is responding to her. Can you really identify what his disability is? That's another thing, we do try to be discreet. There's no reason to discriminate for any reason at all. Only the caregiver knows what it is that this person may need to be assisted with. We include children. This particular child is an actor that is part of our exercise, but he had come to the planning meetings, so we were including his thoughts into what sort of a scenario would be best. And he thought up the idea of being someone who's not only a child, but they don't speak, and he needed a translator, someone with American sign language, and we were able to team him up with the lady in the white hat. Practice the communications. We include our people with disabilities in all aspects: the planning, the training, the exercises. Here we have a gentleman, he is seeing impaired, but yet he's using the radios, he's keeping in touch with everyone, communicating what's going on. Here we have the caregiver demonstrating the, putting out the fire with the professional responder standing nearby, and the person that's actually been trained is standing behind the caregivers, they're demonstrating what to do, and they'll each have a practice at it. So include your professional responders in the training, because that way they can see the capabilities of the volunteers. Practice safely. Here we have everybody using the proper equipment, the proper style in extricating someone. That's a real live human being they have in their people mover as they're carrying them across a field. It makes it very realistic. And at the end of the day, include them in the media. Let them tell their story. Here we have a wheelchair user talking to the camera crew about what he's learned during the exercise. Now I'm open for questions, and I think I still have a minute, right? Yes.

[Inaudible audience question] Oh, I love that term. I've been doing that and didn't realize it. Yes, we sometimes have to bring a team together that's not really in the same neighborhood or whatever, just for the training, and then they go out.

[Inaudible audience question] Thank you for pointing that out. We do train in teams. We train in teams so that everybody knows the different pieces. Everybody knows what the fire guy is doing. They know what the planning, the operations, so people can -- look, I have the structural chart up on the board now, and that's part of emergency operations plan. You have a span of control, the line of authority, and that's what we teach to our community emergency response team players, volunteers. That they may not necessarily be doing everything that's on the team, but they're going to understand



what the other team members are doing; what the fire firefighters are doing, what the sheriff is doing, what the Sheriff's Office is doing, what the Health Department is doing. What the emergency managers are doing. And their part is going to be in the community, in their neighborhood, in their household, in their office, wherever they're located. You sort of serve where you stand. But we do train to the whole concept of the whole community. So no one is excluded. Well, we don't even use that term. If you notice, I did not even use that term. We do not use that term at all. We do want them to know how to contact us. We want to know how to contact them. We want to know what their skills are. So if I get really tired, I'm exhausted and I need to take bottles of water out to someone who is out in Bithlo at the end of the county, I know who I can call and say, would you go to 7-11 and pick up some water, take it to this person. So I do use my volunteers, but I use them because I know what their skill set is, what their levels are. Thank you, that was a good question. Yes, sir. Yes, sir [inaudible]. Oh, yes, absolutely. We did our ADA, I did the ADA board, the accessibility access, the ADA board that was some of the photographs. Nikki Hugues, she's on that. And her caregiver is actually the County's ADA Coordinator. So we did that without even thinking about. They just came to us and said, we want this. I did the Community for Independent Living, their whole staff has been trained in this, and they also train the people that they assist. Yes, sir.

[Inaudible audience question] Exactly. And actually --

[Inaudible comment] Yes, we do. As a matter of fact, ready.gov is what we use. We also go to the citizencorps.gov. They have the training, and if I had had Internet access, I would have shown you some of the videos that we use in our training. And they also have the closed captioning availability, and they come in Spanish. It's free. As Linda likes to say, it's free, and it's at ready.gov or citizencorps.gov. I put up some direct links that are on the CD. I have a CD that I brought, and it also has in there samples of liability waivers, because coming from the emergency management sector, it's something we do have consider when we're training our civilians. We are your public servants, yes, you do have access to the training, yes, but we want you to realize, that yes, you could possibly pop out your eye with your goggles when you're putting them on. I did have a student do that. He didn't pop out his eye, but he did injure himself. So I had him sign a liability form that you will not do stupid things while I'm trying to train you to do smart things. I have a sample of that on my CD, and it's also in Spanish. You have just never know. That's why some communities do hesitate with the training. It's not so much that it's a person with a disability, it's a person that is in a litigious society, so we have to think about that. But, well, any other questions? Yes, ma'am.



[Inaudible audience question]

>> Hello. That the government is required to provide access to emergency training. Is that an actual legal mandate in Florida?

>> It is for us, yes. In Orange County -- it is for the State of Florida. Yes, under Jeb Bush, he really wanted everybody to be included. Animal service users, all that. He was a very forward thinking gentleman, so I can't speak for the other states, but yes.

[Inaudible audience question]

>> Oh, we do. Yeah, that's my job. That's what I do. I come up with the funding to buy the equipment that I provide. I go out and I do presentations all the time. I kind of stuck to my notes a lot today because I didn't want to miss any important information. But that's vital that you get your government involved and let them know that you do have access to the training. Yes.

>> Hi, thank you both for your presentations. I'm curious about the earlier agenda. In the first couple of slides you were talking about, you teach the CERT team's disaster psychology. I'm just curious about that, and does that mean like, you deal with the post-traumatic, or do you deal with the cultural shift. As that lady earlier was talking about that you have to discuss the cultural shift with --

>> On the psychology, we talk about what you are going to see as a disaster worker. What you are going to see, because if you've never seen it, like some people go into the emergency room, they see blood, they faint, well, I want to tell you right up, you will see this, this, and this, so you are prepared. So that afterwards we come back in and have an after session and talk about what you experienced, because of the fact we don't want it to go back, because you maybe doing it for day in and day out for three, four, six, eight, weeks.



>> And to add to that, I'm a crisis communications person, I've been trained in that. So I speak to taking care of your buddy, and keeping an eye on them, making sure they're hydrated, that you're hydrated. Also, realize that the people that you're responding to, it depends on where they're at emotionally, what disasters they have survived before. I've found personally that people with disabilities are more resilient, they already have a plan, they are the toughest, they are the ones who teach me. And I usually approach them with, and I train my community emergency response team members this: You ask them, how can I help. And you don't blame God, and you don't make promises, and all that. So we do talk about it for about three hours, some of the crisis scenarios we actually, in Orange County have a drill at the end of the course where we'll practice that. I'll have cards that I'll pass out and we'll play the scenario. But yes, we do talk about disaster psychology.