

# VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES DISASTER

Lori Chorpenning, RN, MS

Instructor

University of Portland

# Vulnerable Communities

What are Vulnerable communities?

Used to be called “Special Needs”

disabilities

mental illness

non-English speakers

children

elderly

other listings

# 2000 Census Data

Most typical population-

- o People with disabilities including mental illness
- o Non-English speaking
- o Children <15 years old
- o People > 65 years old

Accounts for 141 million people

49.99% of the population

Does not include institutionalized populations

# abilities

*a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual (ADA)*

Long term vs short term

# Functional Limitations

Mobility issues

Weight issues

Pregnancy

Short term vs long term

Transportation issues

Medical equipment issues

Medication issues

# Communication issues

Non-English speaking

Don't speak English well

Can't hear or see well or at all

Cognition issues

# Children

## First stage–

- o Fright
- o Disbelief
- o Denial
- o Grief
- o Feelings of relief

## Second stage–

- o Developmental regression
- o Emotional distress
- o Aggressive behavior

## Regress to earlier stage

- Thumb sucking
- Bedwetting
- Being afraid of strangers
- Being afraid of the dark
- Cling to the “safe”



## Same reactions as younger children

- Withdraw from friends
- Compete for more attention
- Fear going to school
- Become aggressive
- Hard to concentrate

# Adolescence

2-14

- Vague physical complaints
- Avoid chores, schoolwork
- Compete for attention
- Resist authority
- Become disruptive

Later ages

- Feelings of helplessness
- Feelings of guilt
- Denial

derly

Medications

Evacuation

Community/experiences

# References

“Tips for Talking to Children After a Disaster” Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration– 2008

“Psychosocial Implications of Disaster or Terrorism on Children: A Guide for the Pediatrician” Pediatrics Vol 116 No 3 September 2005

“Moving Beyond “Special Needs”” Journal of Disability Policy Studies Vol 17 No 4 2007

“Tips for First Responders” 4<sup>th</sup> Ed.

<http://cdd.unm.edu/dhpd/images/Fourth%20Edition.pdf>

Retrieved September 20, 2012