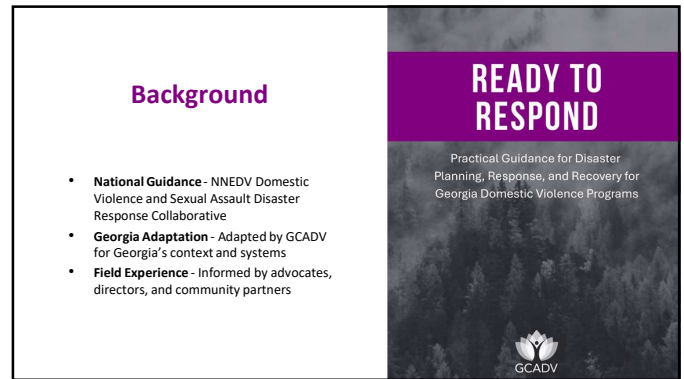
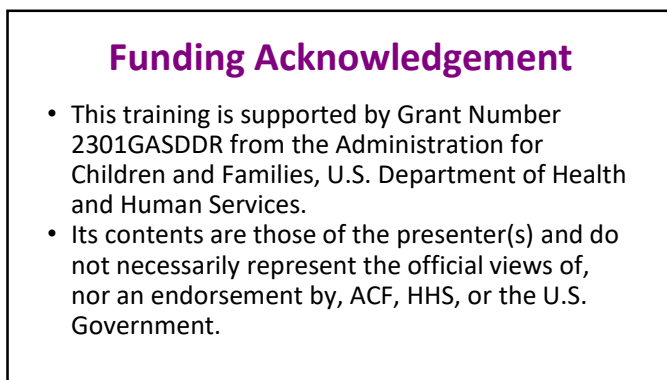




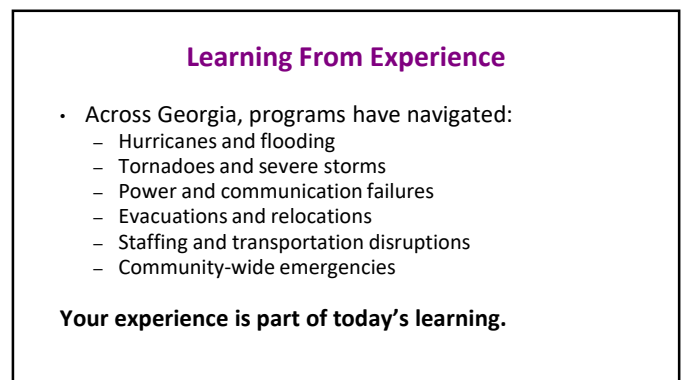
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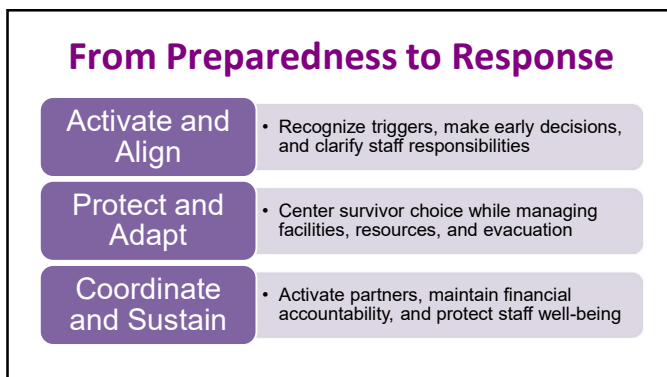
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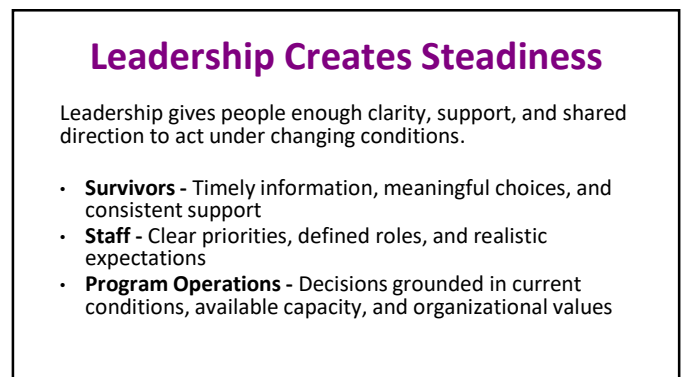
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6

Starting Reflection

Think about a disaster, emergency, or another highly uncertain situation:

- Who helped create a sense of steadiness?
- What did they do that was helpful?
- What quality or action would you want to carry into your own leadership?

Share one word or brief phrase in the chat.

7



8

Why Activation Matters

- Early actions shape the entire response
- Waiting too long can narrow options and increase confusion
- Clear leadership reduces uncertainty

9

Recognizing Activation Triggers

Examples

- Severe weather warnings
- Evacuation orders
- Facility damage
- Utility failures
- Significant staffing shortages
- On-the-ground conditions
- Changes in partner/community capacity

10

What Happens at Activation?

When You Activate:

1. Confirm decision-making authority
2. Notify and mobilize staff
3. Monitor conditions continuously
4. Begin documenting decisions
5. Assess shelter-in-place/evacuation options
6. Evaluate what support you can realistically provide

11

Leadership Responsibilities During Activation

- Assess available information
- Determine operational status
- Communicate decisions
- Assign responsibilities
- Begin documentation
- Reassess frequently
- Consult others when possible

12

Decision-Making During Crisis

Leadership decisions should be:

- Timely
- Grounded in available information
- Survivor-centered
- Trauma-informed
- Documented
- Revisited as conditions change

13

When There Is No Perfect Option

Ask:

- What do we know?
- What is still uncertain?
- What matters most in the next 24 hours?
- What option causes the least harm?
- What is our actual staff and organizational capacity?
- When will we reassess?

14

Using the Disaster Response Log

Appendix M: Disaster Response Log

- Record major decisions
- Track actions taken
- Capture evolving conditions
- Support future review

Date/Time	Decision/Action	Trigger/Event	Person(s) Responsible	Notes
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15

Key Takeaway

- **You do not need perfect information. You need enough information to make the safest decision available.**
- Pivoting is not failure to follow the plan. Sometimes pivoting is the plan.

"No matter how prepared you are, you will always have to make hard choices amid disaster. Be ready to pivot, using your creativity to develop realistic plans and respond to what's unfolding right in front of you." — Jessica Nunan, Caminar Latino

16

Appendices M, N, O

Appendix M: Disaster Response Log
Supports real-time documentation of major decisions, actions, changing conditions, and observations during disaster response and recovery.

Appendix N: Emergency Decision-Making Matrix
Provides a structured process for weighing conditions, risks, capacity, and survivor needs when making high-stakes shelter-in-place or evacuation decisions.

Appendix O: Tiered Evacuation Assistance & Service Eligibility Framework
Helps programs determine realistic levels of evacuation and disaster support based on survivor needs and available organizational capacity.

17

18

Emergency Staff Briefing

Establish a shared understanding of:

- Current conditions and anticipated risks
- Shelter-in-place or evacuation status
- Immediate priorities
- Staff roles and coverage
- Survivor communication
- Facility and supply readiness
- Staff needs and emerging barriers

19

Staff Roles and Backup Coverage

For each emergency responsibility:

- Identify a primary and backup staff person
- Define what the role includes
- Confirm authority to make decisions
- Document assignments
- Keep assignments accessible
- Reassign responsibilities as capacity changes

Who takes over if the primary person becomes unavailable?

20

Mixed Work Environments

Remote staff

- Secure access to files and communication tools
- Clear confidentiality expectations
- Updated contacts and check-in schedules
- Defined responsibilities and supervision

On-site staff

- Rotating shifts and scheduled rest
- Food, water, hygiene supplies, and quiet space
- Access to leadership and real-time updates
- Flexibility for family or pet needs when feasible

21

A Reliable Communication Rhythm

Clarify:

- Who provides official updates
- When staff can expect updates
- Which tools the team will use
- What happens if a tool fails
- Where decisions and updates are documented

Use familiar systems. Keep messages clear and repeat important information.

22

Staff Well-Being During Response

Build support into daily operations:

- Include emotional well-being in team check-ins
- Use peer or buddy support
- Hold brief debriefs after intense moments
- Encourage rest, hydration, and breaks
- Model boundaries and calm regulation
- Adjust responsibilities when staff capacity changes

23

From the Field

“My staff are like my family. When a disaster is approaching, we’re serving survivors while also worrying about our own homes, our children, our pets, and everyone we love. It’s a lot to carry at once. Give yourself grace, and give your staff grace. We can lead well and care deeply — and acknowledge that we’re whole people moving through the same crisis together.”
— Aimee Hall, SafeHomes of Augusta

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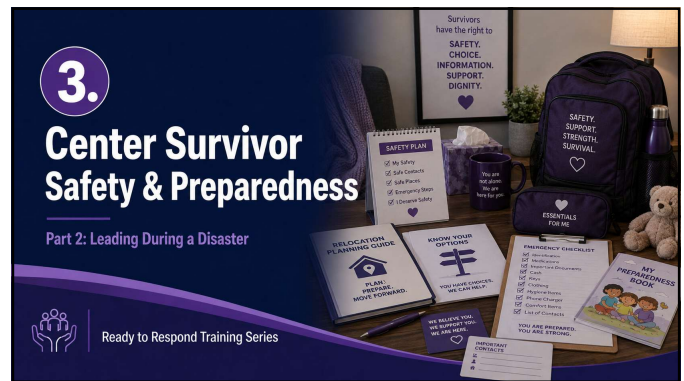
Appendix P

Appendix P: Emergency Staff Meeting Agenda

- Situation and risk updates
- Shelter and survivor needs
- Roles and coverage
- Communication and logistics
- Staff support
- Immediate actions and next update



25



26

Survivor Autonomy, Safety, and Dignity Remain Central

Disasters change circumstances. They do not suspend survivor-centered practice.

27

Safety Planning During Disaster

Consider:

- Transportation limitations
- Communication disruptions
- Medical and accessibility needs
- Children/dependents/pets
- Shelter accessibility
- Increased isolation
- Safety concerns related to public shelters or responders

28

Survivor Preparedness

With consent, programs can support survivors by:

- Co-creating individual disaster plans
- Identifying transportation and destination options
- Preparing needed documents/medications/go-bags
- Planning for children, dependents, and pets
- Identifying safe ways to reconnect

29

Supporting Children & Teens

Disasters affect children differently. Programs should consider:

- Developmental needs
- Emotional responses
- Routine disruption
- Family communication
- Age-appropriate information
- Comfort items
- Opportunities for questions

30

Safety Does Not Eliminate Choice

- Offer clear information
- Explain risks and options
- Avoid pressure or coercion
- Respect informed survivor decisions
- Continue support even when the survivor chooses differently than staff recommend

31

What If The Survivor Chooses Differently?

A survivor does not want to evacuate to the location staff recommend.

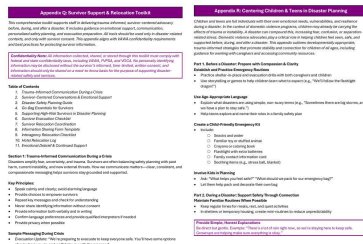
- What information do they need?
- What choices can we preserve?
- What might make the proposed destination feel unsafe?
- How do we continue supporting them without coercion?

32

Appendices Q & R

Appendix Q: Survivor Support & Relocation Toolkit
Provides survivor-centered tools for evacuation and relocation planning, including scripts, checklists, and considerations for survivors facing elevated risk.

Appendix R: Centering Children & Teens in Disaster Planning
Offers guidance and practical tools for developmentally appropriate communication, preparation, and support for children and teens during disasters.



33



34

Prepare the Facility Early

Begin when a credible threat emerges

- Secure outdoor objects and vulnerable entrances
- Protect records, electronics, and equipment
- Clear drains, gutters, and entryways
- Charge communication tools and backup lighting
- Prepare vehicles, generators, water, and cooling supplies
- Adjust preparations to the type of emergency

Do not wait until conditions become dangerous to begin.

35

Maintain a Real-Time Headcount

Track:

- Everyone currently on site
- Arrival and departure times
- Staff and resident locations
- Changes during shift transitions
- Transportation or evacuation assignments

Protect confidentiality. Keep the record accessible during evacuation.

36



43

Evacuation Is a Trauma-Informed Intervention

It requires:

- Choice and consent
- Clear communication
- Confidentiality
- Transportation
- Safe destination planning
- Continued support

44

Key Considerations

- Timing
- Survivor choice
- Destination safety/accessibility
- Children/pets/medications
- Staff presence/support
- Transportation/confidentiality

45

Maintaining Confidentiality

Leadership should evaluate:

- Who knows the destination?
- What information does the destination require?
- Is survivor information being shared unnecessarily?
- Is transportation identifiable?
- How will staff communicate across multiple locations?

46

Relocation Options Vary by Survivor

- **Peer DV programs** – Specialized confidentiality and survivor support
- **Hotels/motels** – Privacy, accessibility, and clear staff support
- **Survivor-identified locations** – Places the survivor already understands and trusts
- **Community shelters** – Only when privacy and safety can be supported

47

Coordinating Relocation

- Receiving organizations
- Community partners
- Emergency management
- Clarify what will be available at destination
- Determine on-site vs remote staff support

48

Key Takeaway

Evacuation is not simply moving people. It is balancing urgency, survivor autonomy, confidentiality, trust, access, and logistics.

49



50

Partnerships Extend Program Capacity

Strong partnerships support:

- Reliable information
- Shelter and transportation options
- Access to supplies and specialized services
- Additional staff or advocacy support
- Coordinated problem-solving when conditions change

51

Existing Agreement During Response

- Confirm current contacts
- Review MOUs and informal agreements
- Clarify what each partner can provide now
- Adjust logistics and timelines
- Reaffirm confidentiality and survivor protections
- Document changes to the original agreement

52

Real-Time Partner Communication

Share updates about:

- Shelter availability and evacuation status
- Transportation needs
- Supply shortages
- Current and anticipated capacity
- Changes that affect existing agreements

Participate in VOAD, COAD, GEMA, or emergency operations calls when appropriate.

53

Resource Sharing When Capacity Is Limited

Programs may share:

- Shelter or transportation capacity
- Staff, interpreters, or legal advocates
- Food, hygiene supplies, and infant supplies
- Radios, backup phones, or medical equipment

Document:

- Who provided and received the resource
- What was exchanged
- When and how it was delivered
- The purpose and acceptance of the exchange

54

Different Systems, Different Responsibility

Partners may differ in:

- Timelines and definitions of urgency
- Confidentiality practices
- Information requirements
- Decision-making structures
- Understanding of domestic violence risk
- Before sharing information, ask:

What does this partner need to know to perform its role safely?

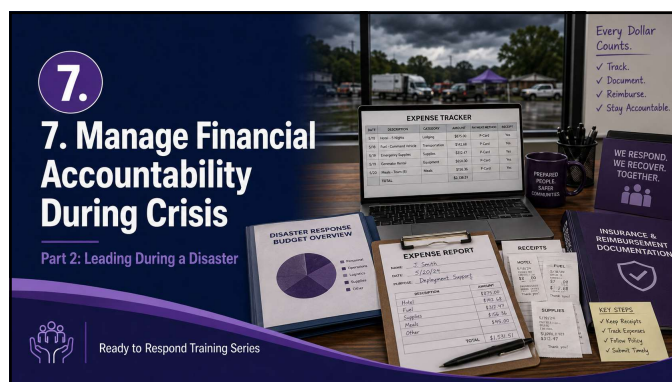
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Domestic Violence Expertise in Disaster Response

Programs can help response partners:

- Understand domestic violence dynamics and confidentiality
- Recognize when standard practices may increase risk
- Address barriers affecting marginalized survivors
- Improve shelter, transportation, and communication practices
- Include survivor safety in community disaster planning

56



57

Financial Decisions Continue During Disaster

Leadership must balance:

- Urgency
- Documentation
- Accountability
- Move quickly without abandoning accountability

58

Emergency Spending in Practice

A program must immediately pay for hotel rooms, transportation, food, and additional staff coverage.

Leadership should know:

- Who can authorize emergency spending?
- What approval thresholds apply?
- What documentation is possible if normal systems are unavailable?
- Which funding source or cost code should be used?
- Who will maintain the financial record?

59

Document What You Can

Track:

- Emergency purchases
- Hotels/transportation
- Staff time/mileage
- Contracts/vendors
- Approvals
- Funding sources

60

Prepare for Recovery Funding

Good documentation supports:

- Insurance claims
- FEMA processes
- Grant opportunities
- Funder reporting
- Audit/reimbursement documentation

61



62

Emotional Safety During Response

For survivors and staff:

- Name and normalize distress
- Communicate calmly and clearly
- Protect opportunities for rest and support
- Create quiet or lower-stimulation spaces
- Model emotional regulation and realistic boundaries
- Adjust expectations as conditions change

"This is hard. It is okay to feel overwhelmed."

63

Flexible, Practical Staff Support

- Add staff or expand coverage when possible
- Rotate shifts and protect sleep
- Provide food, water, hygiene supplies, and rest areas
- Adjust roles and schedules as capacity changes
- Accommodate dependents or pets when feasible
- Consider hazard pay, stipends, or additional leave

Staff capacity is a safety consideration.

64

Stress and Trauma Responses

Survivors may experience:

- Withdrawal or shutdown
- Agitation
- Confusion
- Difficulty processing information
- Delayed decision-making

Staff may experience:

- Exhaustion
- Irritability or withdrawal
- Difficulty concentrating
- Reduced decision-making capacity
- Increased mistakes

65

Choice, Consistency, and Grounding

Support survivors by:

- Using simple language and a calm tone
- Repeating information verbally and in writing
- Offering choices whenever possible
- Allowing time to pause before decisions
- Providing grounding tools and calmer spaces

Support staff by:

- Offering flexibility in roles and schedules
- Involving staff in routines and coverage plans
- Avoiding unnecessary disruptions
- Communicating changes early

66

Brief Debriefs During Response

During or shortly after an intense event:

- Keep participation voluntary
- Name what happened and what remains uncertain
- Ask what staff are carrying and what they need
- Identify immediate coverage or workload changes
- Connect staff with additional support
- Schedule follow-up

67

Well-Being in the Response Plan

Build emotional support into:

- Shelter-in-place and evacuation protocols
- Staff briefings and shift changes
- Survivor communication and safety planning
- Staffing and coverage decisions
- Recovery debriefs and follow-up

Staff support resources:

- Disaster Distress Helpline
- Psychological First Aid resources
- Employee assistance or counseling
- Peer support
- Disaster responder stress resources

68

Closing Reflection

- Where would your organization need greater clarity during an active disaster?
- What is one conversation your response team should have before the next disaster?

69

Key Takeaway

Effective disaster leadership creates enough clarity, choice, and support for people to make grounded decisions as conditions change.

70

Looking Ahead

Thank you for the work you're doing!

Next: Recovering from a Disaster on September 25

- Stabilizing staff
- Assessing damage
- Restoring services in phases
- Reconnecting with survivors
- Financial and administrative recovery
- Community advocacy
- Learning from what happened

71