

5th International Conference on

Family Nursing

June 13-15, 2016 Philadelphia, USA

Disaster preparedness education program for elders in the community: The geriatric passport project

Laura Terriquez-Kasey^{1, 2}¹State University of New York, USA²Binghamton University, USA

Over the last half century, the frequency and intensity of tornados, floods and other severe weather events have underscored the need for disaster preparedness, particularly for older adults. Functional limitations, cognitive decline and medical comorbidities such as heart disease and diabetes create additional vulnerabilities, regardless of the type of disaster. Still, elders are capable of self-identifying needs and can be empowered to prepare communication plans, assemble disaster kits and learn how to respond to threats posed by specific disasters. By increasing the level of disaster preparedness through training, many of the health problems faced by elders during a disaster could be alleviated and their overall response improved. Yet despite their abilities and the known benefits of disaster preparedness, disaster education and planning for elders has not been widely implemented. This project hopes to change this in these rural communities. The purpose of the Geriatric Passport Project was to increase the level of disaster preparedness through implementation of a disaster education program among community-dwelling older adults over the age of 55. Recruitment strategies included media, engaging key staff from program sites, and word of mouth. The project used a pre-post reflexive control design. Knowledge about the elements to include in a disaster communication plan increased as did knowledge about items to include in a disaster kit. Notably, self-rated level of stress associated with evacuation to a shelter remained unchanged. Most importantly, the perceived level of disaster preparedness increased, suggesting that those who participated in the Geriatric Passport Project felt more prepared to respond to a disaster as a result of having attended the disaster education program. The Geriatric Passport Project appears to have beneficial effects and the success of the pilot project supports exploring the feasibility of expanding the program to a wider geographic region and conducting a more rigorous evaluation of program effectiveness, efficacy and efficiency.

Biography

Laura Terriquez-Kasey is an Associate Professor at Binghamton University, teaching since 2000. He is currently teaching three courses in Disaster Preparedness Certificate Program for graduate nurses. He has completed his DNP specialization in Geriatrics (2015). He has been an Advanced Practice Nurse in Administration with a sub-specialization in Emergency and Trauma Care. He has served for 14 years with New York DMAT-2 and 20 years in the Army Nurse Corp. He was a Nurse Manager for Emergency services for many years and spent 12 years at Bellevue Hospital as an Emergency Nurse Leader.

kasey@binghamton.edu

Notes: