

## Lunch & Learn Recap:

- “Who will come to help if/when your area faces a disaster?”
- “Why We Must Be Prepared to Take Care of Our Essential Needs for the First 96 Hours”

January 16, 2025

### Announcements

- Subscribe for Zoom recaps, updates, and invitations for future events.
  - <https://batemanhornecenter.org/outreach/newsletter/>
- Actively Recruiting Clinical Trials: [Bateman Horne Center Research](#)
- Lunch & Learn series is open for presenters. Email [outreach@batemanhornecenter.org](mailto:outreach@batemanhornecenter.org) if you are interested in presenting to the BHC community.

*Comments and questions from participants do not necessarily reflect BHC guidance or endorsement. Lunch & Learn topics are selected by the lived-experience presenter.*

Linda Milne is a disaster preparation specialist who has ME/CFS. She provided the following information for this recap and created extra space between sections to encourage reading rest breaks to avoid worsening symptoms from cognitive exertion. Her blog can be found at: <https://preparetorespond.blogspot.com/>

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You and I, as a group are vulnerable due to our health, but we may also be at risk because of advanced age. And we may have the additional vulnerability of poverty. Any one of these three factors -- health, senior age and living below the poverty line – put us in a category of disproportionate risk for injury or loss of life. That is why we may very well need the help of others. But it is up to us to ask.

**Who Will Help Those of Us Who Will Need It?** Truthfully, it is likely **No One** will get to us in a timely way **Unless** we have arranged for it ahead of time. We do that by

networking with dependable individuals close by *AND* with community and religious groups near us.

We find the individuals to network with who are hiding in plain sight. They are our neighbors – particularly those who are younger and stronger than us. Now, this requires us to connect with them before there is a need and to reveal our vulnerabilities -- specifically our health -- that may prevent us from helping ourselves.

**Networking with Neighbors.** I know it can be done because I have done it.

I contacted three different neighboring households *on my street* – that is key -- and asked them if they would check on my household in the event of any emergency. **They all said YES.** I feel it helped them to say YES, because I have my own essential emergency supplies and would not be dependent upon their family's supplies.

I have told them that if I need to be rescued, I do not expect them to do that, but I would need them to take my name and address to any volunteer Search & Rescue leader set up in our Community Gathering Place.

**Networking with Community.**

Does your community have emergency volunteer groups – like **CERT** -- Community Emergency Response Teams? Or efficient Neighborhood Watch groups? Have you connected and made your needs known? This also could be your answer to Who Will HELP You in the Event of an Emergency?

Some communities offer a Registry. Please use it. But then, please don't count on early intervention to do so. It would be *very unusual* if such a registry would bring responders to your door in the early hours or days of a disaster. Some groups supersede you. Responders must first reach: Hospitals, schools, public buildings, care facilities, etc.

**Networking with Religions.**

Are there prominent **religions in your area**? If you are a member, do they really know the extent to which you would be vulnerable in disaster? If not, I urge you to connect and speak up to the leaders of the congregation or any service group within it. If you are **not a member** of a congregation that should not matter. It is the mission of every religion I know to help anyone nearby in times of community crisis. Member or not. Religious or not.

Introduce yourself now, and **before you need to**, let them know about your concerns and risks. Ask if they will include you in their emergency response efforts by checking on you. Persist until you are sure you will be checked on.

We have plenty of evidence that religious volunteers save lives without regard to whether a person is actively connected to religion. Some of you may have seen TV clips of disaster response volunteers in bright yellow or other colored tee shirts during response efforts – including LA right now.

### **Networking with Religions, cont'd. VOAD**

Those generous people are there representing their religion as part of a national organization called VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster). Its membership includes 78 religious groups, but it also has eight non-profits as members, five large corporations, four government agencies, and three Associate Partners. It is a big deal because of its humanitarian contributions.

Each state has a VOAD presence. They show up in force with armies of volunteers. Many of these volunteers are deployed to areas outside their own state at their own expense or the expense of their sponsoring religious organization to help with a disaster response.

It is heart-warming to see Baptists, Catholics, Methodists, Episcopalians, etc., connected by a high purpose, working side-by-side solely for the purpose of helping those who are suffering.

### **Networking with Religions, Cont'd . VOAD 2.**

I am a past chair of VOAD Utah, Region 2 and am a member/supporter of three organizations that are premiere VOAD disaster responders: The Latter Day Saint Charities (LDS) who have sent many pallets of supplies from their World Headquarters west of Salt Lake City; The Churches of Scientology Disaster Response who have brought in thousands of volunteers and are aiding the firefighters; and, the American Red Cross (ARC) whose mission is mass care and shelter. To date (01/16/25) ARC has served 33,000 meals, hosted 6,500 overnight stays and replaced items for evacuees like eyeglasses and medications.

The Southern Baptist Disaster Relief-Send Relief plays a significant part in disaster response. They drive their huge RVs to disaster sites anywhere in the USA. One RV is a mobile kitchen that can churn out 10,000 hot meals a day, another RV is equipped with showers and laundry facilities. When they are not cooking, they are putting their chainsaws to good use or mucking out basements or clearing debris.

**I am emphasizing the part religions play in disaster response so that you will know that Networking with Religion in your area – whether you are a member or not, religious or not -- can be your answer to Who Will Help Me When Disaster Strikes My Locale?**

**We Must Be Prepared to Take Care of Our Own Essential Needs for the first 96 hours -- in a variety of Circumstances** because needs in your area could be so overwhelming that it could take days before anyone gets to you.

There are many disaster possibilities wherever we live. But there are only three responses circumstances you need to consider. **Sheltering at Home; Evacuating by Auto; Evacuating On-Foot.**

In most emergency circumstances, expect loss of power, empty store shelves, and unsafe, even dangerous circumstances at the stores. Thus, it is imperative that you are prepared in advance.

### **Shelter at Home.**

What could be the reasons?

Maybe the emergency has not damaged your home and it is safe if you remain there.

It could be that there is some danger outside the safety of your home: Civil Unrest, or perhaps a chemical spill has contaminated the air as it did a couple of years ago in the Millcreek area.

It could also be that you are mandated to remain at home. There was some of that during COVID. Whatever the reason, for your protection, you must stay in your home.

If YOU are home-bound then everyone else is too -- even those you have networked with to come to your rescue. They will not be able to do so.

You will need to meet your essential needs for at least 96 hours.

### **What are the essentials you would need for 4 days and 4 nights?**

Your medications, any supplements, water – 4 gallons for various uses in case tap water is interrupted or unsafe, food for 12-15 meals (include some food that does not need cooking, like canned meats, protein bars, trail mix, because utilities may be out. Include treats, hygiene items, first aid kit, toilet tissue. A flashlight and batteries will be valuable, maybe essential, as will **a radio** that is either crank or battery-operated to stay informed.

### **Loss of Power.**

You may know this: IF you have no power, consume food from your refrigerator because after 4 hours, it is considered unsafe to eat. If a power outage has lasted 48 hours, you will need to take action to save your frozen food. Do you have a cooler? On

a regular basis keep bags of ice or frozen blocks in your freezer. Use them in your cooler to keep frozen foods like meat, fish and frozen meals from thawing and being wasted.

You may want an alternate cooking source to use when utilities are down. I favor a butane, single burner stove. It is reliable and not very expensive.

Staying in communication with no power is a challenge. Consider buying a power bank and keep it charged so that you can rely on it to charge your phone in order to text. BTW do not expect to use your phone for calling. The lines will be loaded with emergency matters and yours will likely not go through. Texts use less bandwidth and are more likely to be successful. Or at least que up.

Are you prepared with *alternate sources of lighting*? Candles, LED pull-up-to-turn-on, and close-to-turn-off lights with batteries are my choice. You can bring yard solar lamps inside for ambient light, battery or solar lanterns.

### **Dollar Store Emergency Kit.**

If money is tight shop at the Dollar Stores for the basics: water, food, treats, flashlight, batteries, small first aid kit, toilet tissue. IF you have some extra dollars, increase your amount of water and emergency food, or upgrade it. Also, think about a stronger flashlight, or additional night lighting.

### **Evacuate in Your Auto.**

This could occur because of impending hurricanes or out-of-control fire. I recommend you assemble another emergency kit of essentials that you keep in your trunk or cargo at all times. Refer to the list we just went over for Home Sheltering. Also include disposable plates, bowls, cups, plastic utensils, and blankets.

**If scarce resources prevent you from creating this 2nd emergency kit, no problem. Simply store your home kit in your AUTO. If you are Home Sheltering, bring those supplies inside and use them.**

Please create a habit of keeping your gas tank at least half full. Mass evacuation is a lot of sitting on the roadways burning gas and going nowhere. You will need a lot of fuel to even go a short way under such conditions. Cars that are disabled due to running out of gas create a major problem in getting people out of harm's way. Don't be one of those folks.

You may have some advance notice about evacuation. But it is a very stressful time. Decide well ahead of time, when things are calm, what treasures you would want to take with you in evacuation. Make a list of these items and their location so that you can gather them quickly. Better yet, store those most precious things together.

### **Evacuate On-Foot.**

This would most likely occur in response to an earthquake. Or some event where you need to escape the damage to your home. **Does your community or a church in your area have a gathering place for evacuees?** If so, that is your destination. Ahead of time, before need:

Gather another 96-hour kit of essentials in durable bags; pack them in an organized way so you know where your supplies are. Make sure you have food that does not require cooking, **OR** outfit your kit with a cooking source and a pan. In that case you can add soups, stews, ramen noodles, canned veggies. Include a can opener or pack items with removable lids.

And what about sanitation matters – by that I mean toileting? In a major event like an earthquake, the sewer system will be down. What are you going to take with you to the gathering place to meet your toileting needs?

A very basic toileting system is urine bags, gel powder to solidify urine, making it easier to dispose of, toilet paper, and pet poop bags to clean up after yourself.

### **Evacuate on Foot, Cont'd**

Or, you may want a substantial personal toileting system. Mine includes a flip-up privacy tent, a 5-gallon bucket, a toilet seat, thick plastic bags for solid waste, a smaller bucket for urine, and sanitation supplies packaged inside a galvanized garbage can with a tight-fitting lid that will collect my used bags.

Think about sleep? What would you need? Think about personal hygiene products? Think about the season? Is it freezing cold or sweltering hot?

You may notice by now that you are faced with a BIG problem. **How are you going to get this expanding supply of your essentials to a gathering place ON-FOOT? (No autos will be allowed on the roads).**

4 gallons of water @ 8.1/3 lbs. per gallon – a radio, a single burner stove sanitation, sleep, seasonal clothing and whatever else is essential to you?

**The Answer is WHEELS.** You are going to put your packed bags and items into one or more wagons, carts, or dollies.

This gets you and your items to the gathering place. But ONLY if you and someone you have networked with can pull them?

In my case, I can still pull a cart in each hand and my brother or a person in my network could pull one or two carts.

I recommend a more reduced version of an ON-FOOT kit made of one or two stair climber trollies. They are small, lighter weight and their 3-wheel design allows them to be easily pulled up and down stairs. The unit(s) is small enough to be stored in a home closet.

While you couldn't take four-gallon containers of water, a sleeping bag, a single burner stove, or my expanded version of a toileting system, you could adapt. Plastic bottles of water or 4 oz pouches, a yoga mat to sleep on, no stove, and just the basic products for toileting like urine bags, gel powder, and pet poop bags.



**My favorite and most versatile 96-hour Kit is wearable.** A sports vest and cargo pants because they have lots of pockets that allow me to have supplies of water pouches, food bars, and other items in my other kits. I also wear a money belt next to my body for valuables and a grommet belt around my waist from which I hang a radio, a good first aid kit and a hygiene kit, high-quality mask, safety goggles, sterile gloves, and extra eyeglasses. In addition, I include a cross-over body purse (bag) that fits snugly to me in which I have my phone, chargers and power bank. I have adapted to small versions of everything. This allows me to move about and help others.

### **You Can Make One Kit Work for all Three Response Conditions.**

I've been gathering emergency supplies for many years, so I have multiple kits. But you can make one kit work for **Home, Auto & On-Foot Evacuation**.

Because pre-packing a kit onto wheels is the most daunting preparation, I suggest storing your one kit on **Wheels** -- either carts, if you can pull, or one or two stair climbers, so you would be at-the-ready to leave quickly.

The wheel kit can be taken apart easily, and the contents used In Home or placed in your Evacuation Auto. **ONE KIT CAN WORK FOR IT ALL.**

### **Suggestions and Sources**

For more suggestions and sources about items for an Emergency Kit, please visit my BLOG: [PrepareToRespond.blogspot.com](http://PrepareToRespond.blogspot.com). I have been writing articles since 2015, (with plenty of time gaps).

On the home page, look to the right side and find the heading **Blog Archives**. Click on the 1st line, **2025**, to see this presentation laid out in short segments. If you click on **2024 (15)** you will find another series of short articles (collectively a Utah Commission of Aging presentation) that give instruction, suggestions and purchasing sources you may like.

Visit [BeReady.Utah.gov](http://BeReady.Utah.gov). (Most states have a BeReady website.) Utah material is on their YouTube.Com channel. Some of their articles are long. They also offer videos and a BUZZ series of 39 single topics (+/-90 seconds).

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## Participant Comments from the Chat

- “I recently attended a session with a Red Cross mass disaster manager. He said that locations for shelters are never announced in advance. They are only determined once the disaster happens. Which makes it extra important to have a radio - because that's how you will find out where to go.”
- “I am prepared for sheltering at home- I have a plastic tub with 1 week of food (all is food I could eat cold and only needs heating, not cooking), recyclable dishes and utensils, and I have two flats of bottled water, which should last me about 5 days. I also have a tent, some heat packs, a sleeping bag, battery operated lamps, and other items I'd need for lighting and staying warm in power outages. (You can set up a tent indoors to conserve heat in cold climates)”
- “In cold climates, water stored in cars will freeze. Water from stores will likely burst the bottle. Instead, pour out 1/4 of the water and put the lid back on.”
- “There are some lovely disability-centered guides out there from places like Australia, Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies, Alaska, New Hampshire, etc. I am sharing Alaska's here because I really like their section on creating a personal support network for disaster prep (pg. 32). [Get Ready! Alaska's Emergency Preparedness Toolkit for People with Disabilities](#)”
- “I have a newer doc I need to get online, but page 21 here has those resources mentioned [Don't Worry- Get Ready! Workbook and Slides.pdf - Google Drive](#)”
- <https://collaborating4inclusion.org/pcep/>
- “Some evacuation supplies I keep in my evac bag: earplugs, eye mask, small pack of melatonin, bar shampoo. I'm planning to get a small yoga type towel which could be blanket, pillow, or towel as needed. I also want a dry bag so I could keep important stuff on me even when showering/bathing in an evacuation center setting (to avoid theft).”
- “Also, 1 month prescription meds, important docs on a memory stick, change of socks & undies. There's more but these are small/light items that I think would make a big difference in making evacuation settings more endurable.”

## Resources from this Session

- How to register for the State of Texas STEAR Registry By: Joy Addison.  
Description: The State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry (STEAR) is an important resource designed to help individuals with disabilities or medical conditions that may require additional assistance during an emergency, such as natural disasters or other crises. Link to this article:  
<https://www.click2houston.com/news/local/2025/01/17/how-to-register-for-the-state-of-texas-stear-registry/>

### Crisis Resources

- Dial 988
  - [What Happens When You Call 988?](#) (Article)
- Dial 911
- [Crisis Text Line](#)
- [Crisis resource page](#) (BHC)

### Support Groups (alphabetical order)

#### Lived-Experience Support Groups

- BHC Support Group 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday at 1 pm MST
  - <https://batemanhornecenter.org/events/>
- Black COVID-19 Survivors
  - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/bcsalliance/>
- CFS/ME Friends
  - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CFSMEFRIENDS>
- Health Stories Collaborative Creative Meetups
  - <https://www.healthstorycollaborative.org/creativemeetups>
- International ME Support Chat
  - 11am-1pm EST/ 5 -7pm GMT / 3-5am Melbourne time & 9-11pm EST/ 3-5am GMT/ 2-4pm Melbourne time
  - <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84362703704?pwd=bfKmegaCLNhS6KwOUve7fkcsQjs7sB.1>
- Invisible Youth Support Group
  - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/invisibleyouthgroup>

- Long Hauler Advocacy Project
  - <https://www.longhauler-advocacy.org/support-us>
- Long COVID Families
  - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/4345929175466216>
- Massachusetts ME and FM Association Small Group Chats
  - <https://www.massmecfs.org/>
- #MEAction Living w/ME Support Group
  - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/211058135999671>
- #MEAction Long COVID Group
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/205703087068863> #MEAction Seniors Connect
  - [https://www.facebook.com/groups/391269901334695/?ref=pages\\_profile\\_groups\\_tab&source\\_id=1408335399448862](https://www.facebook.com/groups/391269901334695/?ref=pages_profile_groups_tab&source_id=1408335399448862)
- #MEAction Pillow Crafters (Group Crafting Sessions)
  - <https://www.meaction.net/pillow-crafters/>
- #MEAction Additional Groups
  - <https://www.meaction.net/groups/>
- ME/CFS Social Group
  - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1202428297198122>
- ME/CFS phone support group
  - Occurs on Saturday nights at 8pm, EST.
  - Call: 609-746-1155. Punch in: 915110#. Group is open to all.
- State Specific Long Hauler Facebook Groups
  - <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1vMNCrONg1oTy5QPzajNUJffu0gk4eBR4o585NosVgsk/edit#gid=0>
- Surviving with ME
  - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/695317212152964>
- The Mighty Group Directory
  - <https://themighty.com/groupdirectory/>
- The Yarrow Collective's Alternative to Suicide group is a weekly Zoom meeting. It's a free resource for folks who are struggling that is nonclinical peer support. They also have chronic illness and disability support groups.
  - <https://www.yarrowcollective.org/>

## Caregiver Support

- [Caregiver Wisdom](#) is an online venture to support chronic illness caregivers. [Current free offerings](#) include: a [monthly support group](#), a [free online community](#) that's off of social media, and [a blog](#) with helpful posts.
- A support group for partner caregivers (please note all caregivers are welcome) takes place the first Sunday of each month at **12 p.m. PT / 3 p.m. ET**. Focuses on monthly topics and has small breakout rooms for closer community connection. To be added to the email list, contact Kim at [kim.mecfs@gmail.com](mailto:kim.mecfs@gmail.com).
- #MEAction's support group for all family caregivers takes place the third Saturday of each month at 12:30 p.m. PT / 3:30 p.m. ET. To be added to the email list, contact Denise at [caregiver@meaction.net](mailto:caregiver@meaction.net).
- If you are on Facebook, [#MEAction has a Facebook group for caregivers](#)  
If you are on Discord, Nia has started a [channel for ME/Long COVID caregivers](#).