

NYDIS MANUAL FOR NEW YORK CITY RELIGIOUS LEADERS:

Spiritual Care and Mental Health for Disaster Response and Recovery

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Acknowledgements

This manual is the culmination of effort by many key leaders, past and present in the New York City religious and mental health communities. It represents decades of clinical and congregational experience that has been focused by the vulnerabilities found and the best practices results of our collective response to the relief and recovery efforts following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and subsequent disasters that have impacted this great city. To that end, we owe a debt of gratitude to the many thousands of volunteer disaster chaplains and the clergy and religious leaders who care for the people of this City who informed this work.

In particular, we would like to extend our thanks to the Rev. Susan Lockwood and to Rabbi Zahara Davidowitz-Farkas for their contributions and editorial leadership in gathering the authors and preparing the initial drafts of this manual. We would also like to thank the Rev. Julie Taylor for her work as the initial project manager for this manual, and we thank all three for their wisdom and their help with the genesis of this project.

Additionally, we thank all the authors who have generously given of their experience of disaster response and for their willingness to share their knowledge with others.

It is with our deepest gratitude and admiration that we thank the Rev. Stephen Harding for being the Editor of this manual. His insights and his ability to bring the contents together in a cohesive and comprehensive manner will make your using it more user-friendly and ultimately more helpful when you need it most.

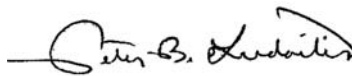
We thank Carole Erger-Fass of BugDesign for her graphic artistry and the clarity of the layout. We also thank Heather Glick for the photos that are throughout this manual.

Finally, we also wish to acknowledge and thank you, the reader, and all those persons of faith who have and who will come forward to help others in times of great need. It is in this spirit of coming together to help others that this manual is presented to you.

Bless you for all that you do and for being ready to help,



The Rev. Dr. Martha Jacobs, BCC
President, Board of Directors



Peter B. Gudaitis, M.Div.
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About NYDIS and Statement of Inclusivity

New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS) is a 501(c)(3) faith-based federation of disaster service organizations and philanthropies that work in partnership to provide disaster readiness, response, and recovery services for New York City. NYDIS' mission is to coordinate, develop, and support these disaster services to mitigate, prepare for, and respond to all hazards — both natural and human-caused. NYDIS and its members provide secular disaster human services to faith communities and individuals alike, regardless of membership or religious affiliation. NYDIS also trains, credentials and deploys disaster chaplains and spiritual care workers from its member agencies.

In times of crisis, NYDIS convenes its leadership with government agencies and local, state, and national disaster management organizations. These partnerships facilitate the delivery of services, resources, and information to religious communities, under-served victims, and impacted communities.

NYDIS regularly partners with the American Red Cross, FEMA, the Human Services Council, the NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, the NYC Office of Emergency Management (OEM) as well as NYC and NY State VOADs to communicate with the NYDIS membership and all other interested religious communities on emergency management matters and to coordinate disaster advocacy, disaster chaplaincy, mitigation education, preparedness training of religious leaders, and relief and recovery programs. It is through this faith-based, cooperative initiative that our member and participating faith communities can prepare themselves and the public at a grass-roots level.

This manual for religious leaders is the result of a six year journey since September 11, 2001. Since that terrorist attack, New York City has experienced plane crashes, anthrax attacks, some of the aftermath of hurricanes Rita and Katrina, other storms, horrific fires, transit strikes, and various other events that have impacted our City. This manual is the culmination of experience from many people; each chapter reflects the lessons learned from things having gone badly as well as from success.

Each individual chapter is written from its author(s)' own point of view and own faith tradition(s). Every effort has been made to use inclusive language that is respectful to all traditions throughout this manual. However, we have also tried to be faithful to each author(s)' original work, and we have tried to maintain a balance between each of these needs. Please understand, where we fall short of this ideal, that *we intend this guide to be helpful for all and that members of all faiths, traditions, and beliefs are welcome and included as our readers.*

Contributors

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Introduction

BY THE REVEREND STEPHEN HARDING, BCC, STM

While certain houses of worship and religious leaders in New York City had done good work in the field of disaster response before the World Trade Center attacks, the landscape for communities of faith and houses of worship changed forever in New York City after September 11, 2001. Because of the enormous role that imams, pastors, priests, rabbis, anyone with a responsibility for a house of worship played in the recovery effort, the needs of our City called each religious leader to a new level of disaster response.

Worshipping communities, too, faced a new challenge of responding and, as individual members of a house of worship, faced a new array of difficult decisions regarding individual safety. Going to help; caring for the families;

listening; and then preparedness and planning were the watchwords of the day once the recovery effort was concluded.

The challenges of those times are still with us, and the need to remain vigilant and prepare for the next disaster has not gone away. This manual was developed by New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS) to help you do several things as individual leaders of houses of worship:

- Prepare yourself and the members of your worshipping community by developing a disaster plan **in advance**;
- Help you identify the phases of disaster so that you know where you are as things are going on around you;
- Provide you with information about preparation and your role as religious leaders in all phases of disaster;
- Provide you with information and resources that you can call on and use if you need them; and
- Help you to start thinking about what you would do if a disaster happened to your own house of worship or in your community.

The contributors to this manual all have experience in responding to disasters. Some worked as part of the recovery effort for the World Trade Center and/or other disasters; others have extensive experience in working with relief organizations; still others are therapists; others teach; and all write from the experience of 'having been there.' These chapters are the things they have done and that have worked for them.



While no one can prepare for a specific disaster, this manual will help you to be ready for whatever comes. The language of the American Red Cross is that 'all disasters are local'. That is, all disasters happen in a specific location and they happen to people in that location; the level of response will vary depending on circumstance, and for that reason, **our definition of disaster refers to "any situation that overwhelms the community's ability to respond"** (Beinin, 1985)¹.

Houses of worship and religious leaders are integral parts of their communities, and as such, have an important role and function in responding to a disaster. September 11, 2001 is seared into our memories, and as a City, the attack on the World Trade Center may be the benchmark of disaster for which to prepare.

However, in looking at the events that have affected our City over the last one hundred years, the recurring events that affect neighborhood communities and houses of worship are:

- Fire
- Shootings
- Shootings in which children have been killed
- Mass Transportation Incidents: subway, train, and ferry crashes; strikes; etc.
- Power Outages and Blackouts
- Aviation disasters: Helicopter and airplane crashes
- Flooding and the threat of flooding due to storms
- September 11, 2001
- First bombing of the World Trade Center (1993)
- Influenza (1918)

Most of the items on this list are local; some affect everyone; and the large events are huge in terms of the nature of the event, the response from the City, and the recovery from them.

Therefore, after taking New York City's history into consideration, we present the following list of disasters that we are likely to face in our neighborhoods and for which we should plan:

Disasters that we are likely to face in our neighborhoods			
Natural	Man-Made	Threats	Potential Events
Earthquake	Civil Unrest	Biological	Disruption in Water Supply
Fire	Mass Transportation Incidents	Chemical	Drought
Flooding	Power Outages	Explosive	Viral Epidemic
Hurricane	Shootings	Nuclear	(Avian Flu, SARS)
Storms		Radiological	Storm Surge
Tornado		Terrorist Attack	

Our intent with this manual is to provide an outline of preparation at the local house of worship level so that you, the religious leader, will have a sense of the overall likely response to an event; how you and the members of your worshipping community may be able to help; the demands that may be made of you and your members; chapters on spiritual care for yourself and for others; guidelines for mental health; and strategies to enable you, in your capacity as a religious leader, to continue to provide care for yourself, the members of your worshipping community, and your neighborhood community in the event of a disaster.

The internal structure of this manual's content follows the phases of a disaster: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. That is, material relating to mitigation and preparedness is found toward the beginning, material on response is in the middle, and material relating to recovery is toward the end.

Most chapters in this manual are organized into four parts:

- A narrative description of the chapter topic;
- Guidelines and Interventions for religious leaders (action plan) intended for reference and concrete interventions in the various phases of a disaster as events unfold;
- A resource section that provides websites and articles related to the material in each chapter;
- An appendix that provides more detailed information or a specific document for that chapter.

We have provided a Reference Section that contains a Glossary of Emotional States; Age-Specific Reactions and Interventions; New York City Government Response; Primary National Volunteer Response Organizations; New York City Disaster Response Agencies and Organizations; Incident Command System; New York State Government Response to Disaster; and the Federal Response to Disaster.



Some final thoughts: We live in one of the most religiously and spiritually diverse cities in the world. *In responding to any disaster in New York City, we are most likely going to be working with persons whose beliefs are different from our own. It is essential that each person's belief is accepted, respected, and supported without judgment or question and without proselytisation.* This is especially true in working with the victims and their families. They can be extremely vulnerable, and they will need your support of their belief system at that time.

In responding to any disaster, one does not respond as an individual, but as part of a team. Religious leaders are rarely in charge at a disaster site or support facilities. Our role is to provide religious and spiritual support to the victims, victims' families, our community, and (sometimes) first responders, in the manner that is most helpful to them.

Perhaps the most important thing in all this is to know what you would do if the disaster happened in your house of worship. The second most important thing would be to have communicated your plan to the members of your worshipping community and have gotten them to be a part of it.

The manual can be read sequentially or for specific information as it is needed. Each chapter stands alone in its own right and can be read separately for its content. We hope that this guide will be helpful to you as you and your members plan what you would do in a disaster. We thank you for your courage in responding to the need to prepare for disaster and for your compassion in responding to those in need.

For further information about disaster response, please contact any of the disaster response agencies or contact NYDIS, 22 Cortlandt St., 20th Floor, New York, NY 10007, 212.669.6100, info@nydis.org.

¹ Beinin, L. (1985). Medical Consequences of Natural Disasters. Springer-Verlag, Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, Tokyo, in Planning for the Emergency Medical Service Response to Chemical Disaster Jiri Pokorny, Vladimir Dolezal and Erik K. Noji, in Methods for Assessing and Reducing Injury from Chemical Accidents, Edited by Philippe Bourdeau and Gareth Green @ 1989 SCOPE. Published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd, taken from http://globalecology.stanford.edu/DGE/CIWDGE/SCOPE%20Books%20Web%20Archive/SCOPE%2040/SCOPE_40_2.8_Pokorny_189-210.pdf.