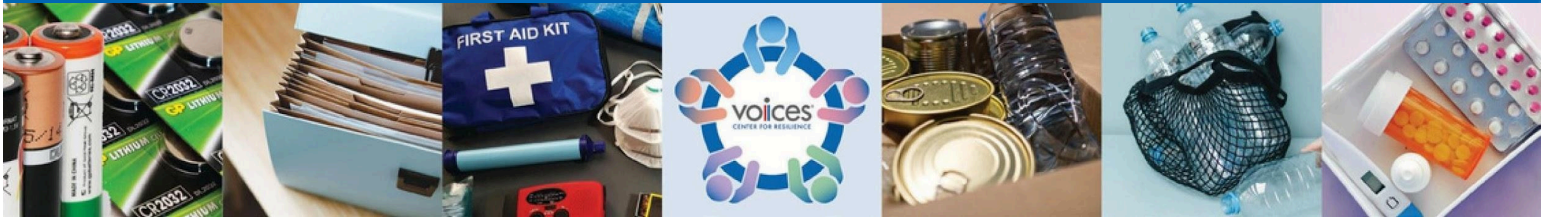


ARE YOU PREPARED?



PTSD and Preparedness

Emergency preparedness, such as having a defined emergency plan or undergoing task-specific training, serves as a strong psychological buffer. It significantly mitigates post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) severity by fostering a sense of agency, reducing the helplessness experienced during trauma, and improving overall stress processing.

The Protective Effects of Preparedness

- **Buffered Stress Response:** Pre-deployment or pre-disaster training significantly decreases the severity of post-traumatic stress symptoms.
- **Increased Self-Efficacy:** Knowing what to do and having resources set aside gives individuals a cognitive anchor, preventing the brain from slipping into an uncontrollable state of panic during a crisis.
- **Resilience in Responders:** For first responders and veterans, robust mission preparedness acts as a psychological shield, reducing the negative mental impact of subsequent exposure to trauma.

The Complications of PTSD on Preparedness

While training protects against PTSD, existing PTSD can hinder an individual's ability to prepare for future crises.

- **Avoidance Behaviors:** A hallmark symptom of PTSD is avoiding things that trigger memories of the traumatic event. This can extend to avoiding emergency planning, safety drills, or news alerts about severe weather.
- **Hyperarousal and Fatigue:** The continuous physical and mental toll of PTSD often leaves individuals depleted, making it far harder to engage in proactive planning and physical preparedness.

From 9/11 to today, VOICES helps families and communities heal after tragedy.

Voices Center for Resilience provides long-term support and resources that promote mental health care and wellness for victims' families, responders, and survivors, and assists communities preparing for and recovering from traumatic events.

Voices Center for Resilience, formerly Voices of September 11th, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

For information, resources,
or to register for VOICES
programs and events,
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Managing Trauma and Fostering Resilience

For individuals working to overcome trauma while building a safer future, experts recommend integrating mental health care with practical safety planning:

- **Seek Integrated Support:** Psychological interventions that combine trauma recovery with practical disaster readiness have been shown to drastically improve both mental health symptoms and protective behaviors.
- **Re-establish Routine:** After an acute incident, safely returning to normal daily activities and physical activity lowers the risk of chronic PTSD.
- **Professional Help:** Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) and Prolonged Exposure (PE) therapy are highly effective gold-standard treatments to help process the root trauma and break cycles of avoidance.

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