

INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

Safety Nets

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Consent Handbook for Self-Advocates and Support Staff, Cathy Ficker Terrill, Editor. American Association on Mental Retardation, www.aamr.org

Special Populations Fire-Safe Checklist, 301-447-1000, www.usfa.fema.gov/public/factsheets/fswy23.shtm

To report suspected abuse for a person who receives DDA funding, call The Office of Health Care Quality, 410-402-8000. To report suspected abuse for a person who does not receive DDA funding, contact your local Child or Adult Protective Service Department.

Safety planning publications can be downloaded from: www.wcadv.org

For more information on topics discussed in this fact sheet, contact
Service Coordination
Phone: 301-663-8044
www.servicecoordinationinc.org



As the relative of a person with a developmental disability, you know what keeps your family member healthy and safe. You understand that having certain information and skills helps people cope with the demands of life. As a result, you may be concerned about your relative's well-being in some areas. At the same time, you want to encourage continued growth and independence and may be struggling with how to merge these two goals. Depending on your relative's particular needs, review the skills areas listed below. As you assess each area, think about safety nets that could help your family member make safe choices and still allow them as much freedom as possible. What are the skills your family member already has or can learn to take care of him or herself, both in everyday situations and in emergencies? *For each area*, think about whether your relative can do this independently or if support is needed. If support is needed, think about who provides the support in each area; if accommodations, adaptations, or equipment would increase safety; and if everyone who needs to have a copy of their part of the plan for safety, or alternatively if your relative would like to learn to be more independent in an area.

Home:

- Fire safety, including evacuation plan, care and use of equipment such as fire extinguishers and smoke detectors
- Loss of electricity, water, heat, air conditioning
- Answering the door
- Locking of doors and windows at night, carrying house key, being locked out of home
- Use of the phone, including taking messages, use in emergencies, 911, posting of emergency numbers,
- Meal preparation, including use of stove and microwave, following recipes
- Cleanliness of house — discarding trash and old food in a safe way
- Regulation of water temperature
- Winterizing home and snow, ice removal
- Number of landlord, when to call
- Handling mail

These Fact Sheets are designed to provide general information only and are not designed to substitute for the assistance of a Service Coordinator.

Medical:

- First aid
- Follow-up with doctors, including routine care and for emergencies, scheduling appointments, following doctor's orders
- Ordering and taking medications, both routine and prn, over-the-counter medication, handling potential side effects
- Wearing medical alert information as needed
- Use and maintenance of adaptive equipment
- Conditions such as seizures, heart disease, diabetes; special diets
- Health insurance – knowing what it covers and how to contact the insurance company

Financial:

- Money management, including paying bills, savings, budgeting, saving for emergencies, (e.g. loss of job or housemate moves out)
- Purchasing needed items such as food, clothing
- Judging financial scams (e.g., telemarketer asking for bank account numbers or people posing as utility company people to gain access to the home)

Community:

- Traffic safety , including crossing the street and reading traffic signs
- Accessing transportation – reading a bus schedule, calling for a cab
- Communicating pertinent information, carrying an ID card
- When lost – ways to find your way home, who to ask
- Judging possibly dangerous situations – going out at night alone, “hanging with the wrong crowd,” misuse of alcohol
- Assessment of strangers, trusting others with your belongings or personal information
- Communicating discomfort or uneasiness in certain situations or with certain people. For example, feeling threatened by a coworker
- Judgment of potential consequences of decisions, (e.g., quitting a job or doing drugs)
- Safety in interpersonal relationships, (e.g., safe sex, ability not to be exploited)
- Crime prevention

Other possible areas to consider include emergency preparedness in response to natural disasters and acts of terrorism. See www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/disability.pdf