



# Capacity-Building Family Support

## During a Catastrophe

**Catastrophic events, although rare, call for intentional practices to help families meet their basic physical and emotional needs. Family priorities can shift by the hour and the added stress can make troubleshooting on their own more difficult. Try these tips:**

### Focus on helping the family identify their biggest priorities

You may need to help families think through their priorities categorically:

- What is your biggest priority right now?
- How is your family's safety?
- What are you drinking and eating?
- How is your home, power, and property?
- What is your transportation situation?
- What help do you need with animals?

### Focus on formal, informal, and emergency resources

During catastrophic events, special emergency resources may be available that families don't typically use or know about. Often, emergency resources are not immediately available and families must use their informal resources to get immediate needs met. Share what you know about formal and emergency resources and help families think through their informal supports.

- Provide information about formal and emergency resources.
- Who do you know that can help in the meantime?
- How can you and your neighbors work together on this?
- What groups in your area are providing help?
- What can you do to get by while you wait for help to arrive?

### Help families plan strategically

Families may need help thinking about how to balance the use of formal, informal, and emergency resources and supports. Help families prioritize use of resources based on the expected availability of these resources.

- How do you plan to address the immediate priority?
- What will you do when that runs out?
- What can you do to preserve your resources?

### Follow-up frequently

Check on families regularly to learn about their evolving priorities and help link them with new resources. If the resources they planned to use don't work out or are no longer available, help them regroup and make a new plan.

