

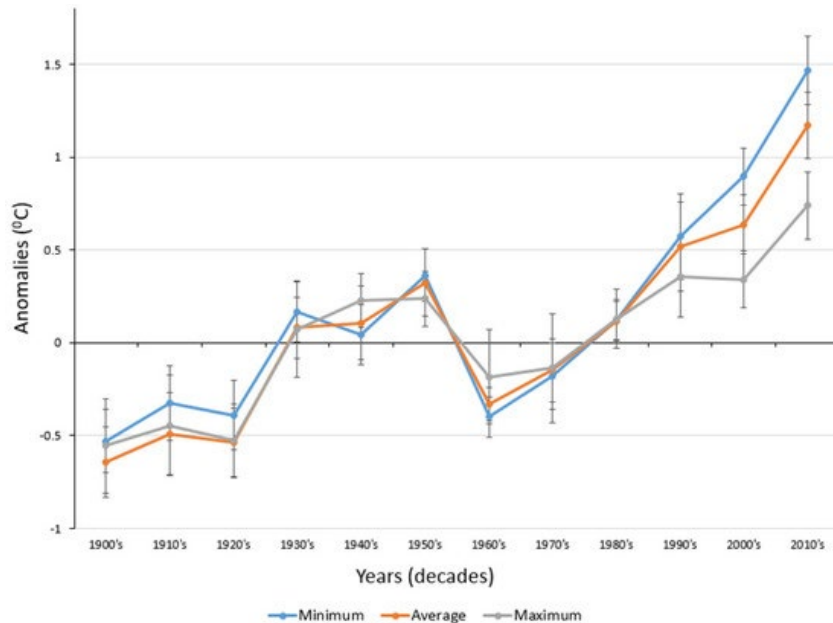
# Emergency Management and People with Disabilities: Are We Prepared?

Carlie DeFelice

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# Climate Change and Its Consequences

- More extreme weather events and increased morbidity and mortality (Ebi et al., 2021).



(Young & Young, 2021)



(Spiegel, 2018)

# Important Terms in Emergency Management

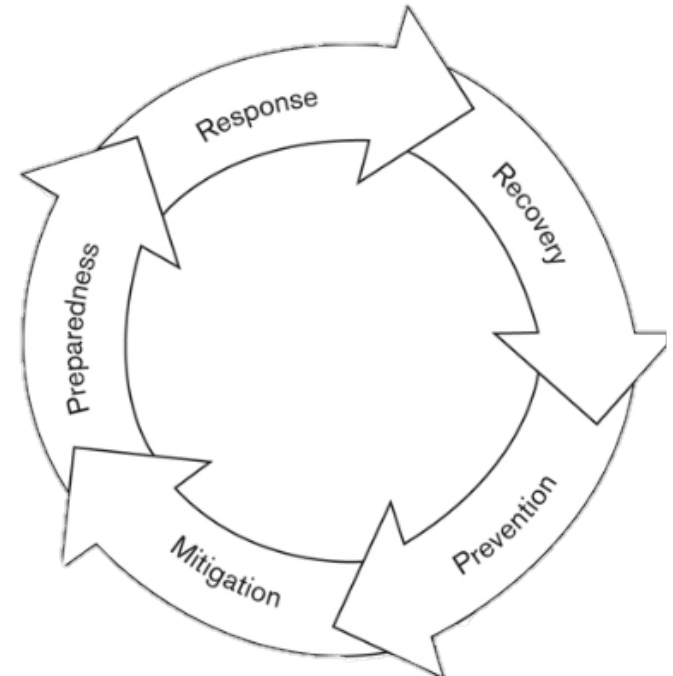
- **Natural Hazard:** a naturally-occurring event that can cause injury or death and destruction of the surrounding environment (Prasad & Francescutti, 2017).



(Prasad & Francescutti, 2017)

# What is Emergency Management?

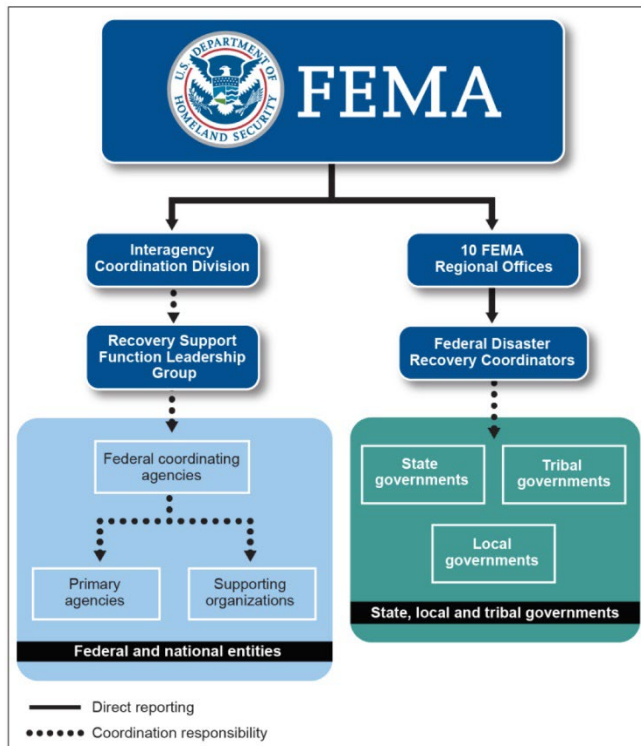
- **Emergency management:** The repetitive process of planning for and responding to events to lessen the potential impacts of hazards and/or disasters (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction [UNDRR], 2017).



(Gostin & Wiley, 2016, p. 392)

# Structure of National/Statewide Responses

Figure 3: Organizational Structure of Entities Responsible for the National Disaster Recovery Framework's Implementation



Source: GAO analysis of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) information. | GAO-16-476

**National Incident Management System (NIMS)**

**National Response Framework (NRF)**  
Prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery

**State Frameworks**

**Regional Frameworks**

**Municipal Frameworks**

(United States Department of Homeland Security [US DHS], 2019)

# Emergency Management and People with Disabilities (PWD)

- PWD have been excluded from emergency preparedness and management planning

processes (National Council on Disability, 2009; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction [UNDRR], 2014).

- **Can impact:**

- Mortality rates
- Longer displacement
- Ability to access necessary supports

(Lindsay et al., 2023; Morales, 2024; Twigg et al., 2011)



(Administration for Community Living, 2015)

# Research Question

For New England (NE) states with publicly available emergency management frameworks, how do they plan to meet the needs of people with disabilities?

# Methods

## Exploratory review of statewide emergency management plans across New England (NE):

1. Identification of statewide plan
2. Review of all sections relevant to **community lifelines**
  - a) “Safety and Security; Food, Water, Shelter; Health and Medical; Energy (Power & Fuel); Communications; Transportation; and Hazardous Material” (US DHS, 2019)
3. Search for relevant terms
  - a) “Disability”, “access”, “functional needs”, and “special needs”
4. Record information into master spreadsheet
  - a) Departmental responsibilities, Emergency Support Functions (ESF) responsibilities, inclusion of disability-related organizations, and differentiation between PWD and access and functional needs (AFN).



# Overall Results

- **5** NE state plans identified.
- **3 (60%)** states included disability-related departments/organizations into state plans.
- **3 (60%)** states addressed at least 4 community lifelines.
- **3 (60%)** states outlined specific departmental responsibilities to address community lifelines.
- **5 (100%)** states outlined at least 1 ESF group to address community lifelines.

# Results: Part One

**Table 1.**

*Available Statewide Emergency Management Plans*

State	Parent Department	Subdivision for Emergency Management	Name of Management Plan
Connecticut	Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection (DESPP)	Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS)	State Response Framework (SRP)
Maine	Department of Defense, Veterans, and Emergency Management	Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)	Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)
Massachusetts	Executive Office of Public Safety and Security	Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)	Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)
New Hampshire	Department of Safety	Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM)	State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP)
Vermont	Department of Public Safety	Vermont Emergency Management	State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP)

# Results: Part Two

**Table 2.**

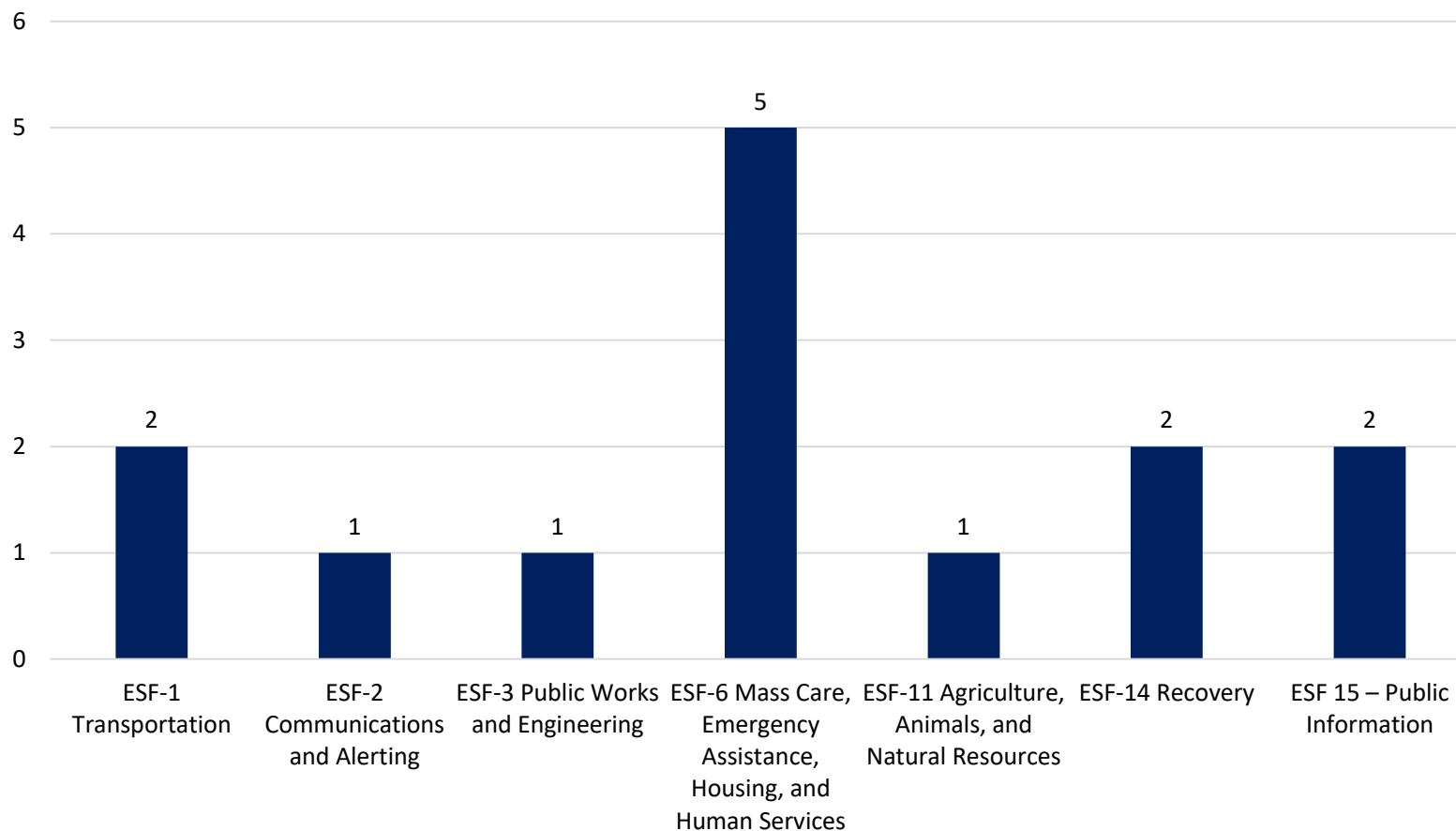
*Departmental Responsibilities in Supporting Community Lifelines for PWD*

State	Departments Involved	Departmental Community Lifelines
Connecticut	Department of Correction (DOC)	Transportation
	Department of Aging and Disability Services	Transportation
	State Emergency Operations Center	Communication
	Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)	Transportation
Maine	Department of Public Safety: Fire Marshal's Office	Safety and security
	Department of Labor	Communication
Massachusetts	Massachusetts Office on Disability	Communication
	Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC)	Food, Water, Shelter

# Results: Part Three

**Figure 1.**

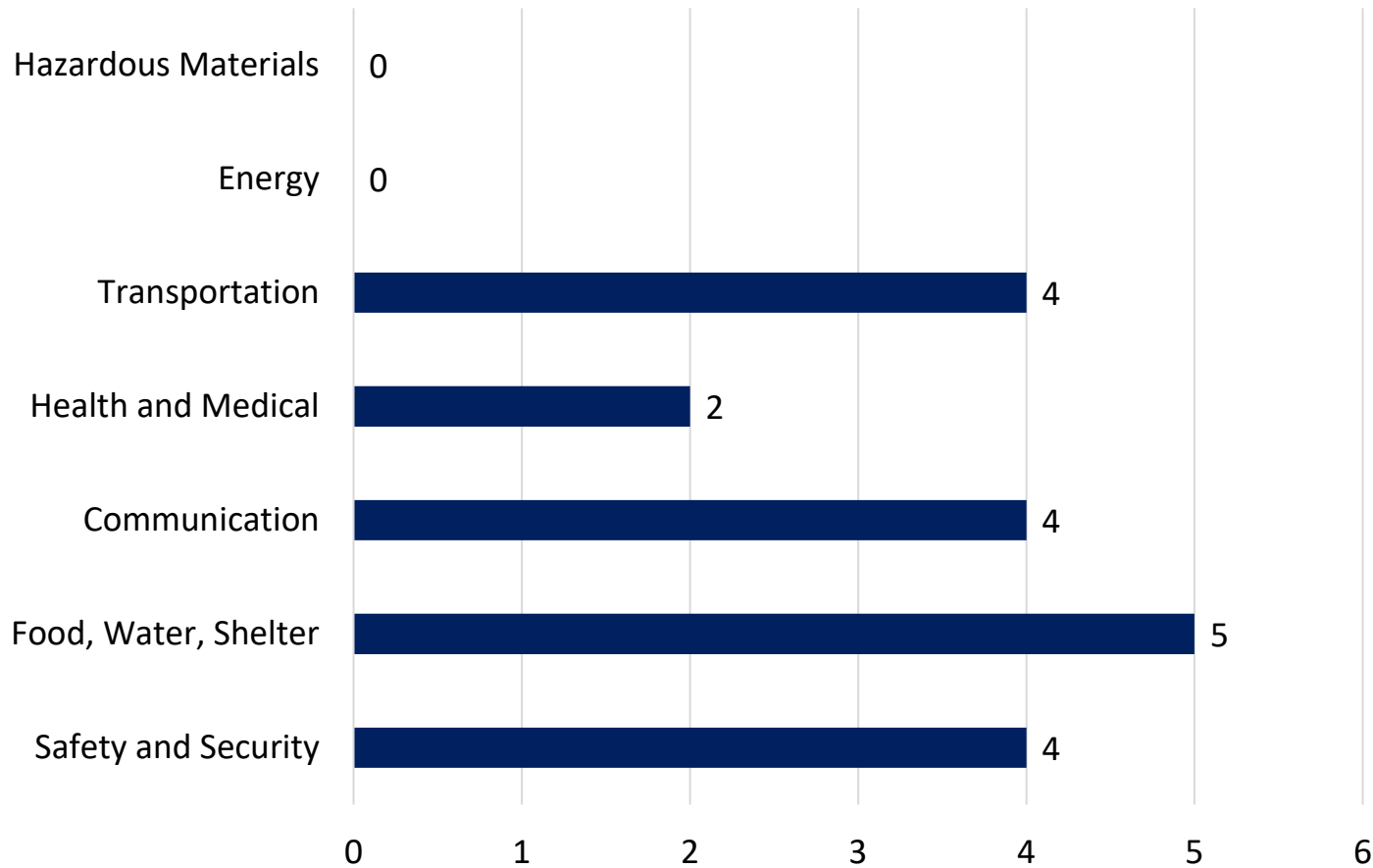
*Frequency of ESFs Included Across New England States (n=5)*



# Results: Part Four

**Figure 2.**

*Frequency of Community Lifelines Addressed Across New England States (n=5)*



# Supporting PWD Throughout Emergencies Across NE

- There is a lack of standardization of inclusion of PWD across statewide plans.
- The 7 community lifelines are currently not being addressed in NE statewide planning efforts.
- The national response framework utilized across NE states does not seem to specifically address methods to ensure community lifeline access for PWD across all domains.

# Conclusions and Future Implications

- PWD needs may not be met during and after emergency events.
- Response efforts are not standardized for meeting the needs of PWD and AFN communities.
- **Future work includes:**
  - Assessing the effectiveness of state/national response frameworks in support PWD during emergency events.
  - Identifying ways to include PWD in emergency planning efforts.
  - Additional research to identify more effective planning structures.

Thank You!

Questions?



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