Fire Safety Solutions for Oklahomans with Disabilities

NANCY TRENCH
MILISSA GOFORTH
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MN5C8taVqql
Facts

• More people die in home fires than in tornadoes in Oklahoma
• More people die in home fires across the United States than in all other disasters combined
• Physical disabilities are a factor in 14% of fire deaths in U.S.
• Death rate is 15 per million population for people with disabilities
• Death rate is 9 per million population
The Oklahoma Program

- FEMA Funded (Assistance to Firefighter Grants)
- Statewide
- No income requirement
- No cost to the consumer
- $400 worth of equipment per household
- Pay trained installers
- Program does not install in licensed facilities
- Program Contact Information should the equipment malfunction
Serving People with Disabilities with Smoke Alarm Installations

• Engage people with disabilities – what do you want to know about home fires and HOW?

• It takes time to develop a true partnership in trustworthiness
  • Once ASL Interpreters began to recommend the program

• All materials in alternate formats, Braille, Audio, Large Print, ASL DVD, HTML, etc.

• If requested always provided paid ASL interpreters
Partnerships

- Home Fire Safety Technical Partner(s)
  - Always inform the local fire department, the level of engagement varies community to community
  - State Fire Marshall
  - State Fire Training Services

- Disability Advocates/Organization
  - Assistive Technology Act program in your state
  - Rehabilitation agency
  - Center for Independent Living
  - Community-based organizations
Building a Partnership for Success

- Research Funding Sources – know the requirements
- Federal and State Agency
- Local Programs
- Foundations and Insurance Providers
- Red Cross
- Create a Compelling Story – Why do People with Disabilities need appropriate equipment
- Plan the Doable
Involve People with Disabilities

- Nothing about Us Without Us – the Disability Partner formed Focus Groups
  - Deaf/Hearing Loss
  - Blind/Low Vision
  - Mobility
  - Cognitive
- Lessons Learned
  - Modify common home fire safety messages - not all messages work for all
  - Created a DVD in ASL
Marketing

• News Release
• Television/Radio Interview
• Websites
• Social Media
• Events
  • Silent Dinners
  • Health Fairs
  • Conference Presentations/Booths
• Satisfied Consumers
Program Components

• Traditional canvassing door-to-door smoke alarm installation does not work to serve people with disabilities
• Application based program
  • It provides programmatic information as to who is served
  • Eligibility determines proof of disability
  • Arrange for home installation appointment
• Formal Agreements with paid trained installers
Trained Installers

- Serving people with disabilities (4 hours)
  - Social Etiquette
  - People First Language
  - Working with ASL Interpreters & service animals
- Smoke Alarm & Alert Equipment Installation (3 hours)
  - The right alarm in the right place makes a difference
  - Bedside alert device set-up and sync
  - Home Safety Messages
Program Evaluation

- Critical to collect both qualitative and quantitative data
  - Change in behavior
  - Satisfaction level
  - Respond to feedback – especially if an alarm malfunctions

- Regular Partner meetings
  - Evaluate timeliness and effectiveness
  - Outreach
  - Installations
  - Changes and improvements
Quality Assurance

• Install Alarms – Giving Away is NOT effective
• One is Not Enough – NFPA Standards
• Install 2 Types of Alarms
  • Photoelectric – smoldering or dense smoke fires
  • Ionization – fast flaming fires
• Prevent Nuisance Alarms – location, location, location
• Replace Old Alarms - Smoke alarms are only functional for 10 years
Fire Deaths Occur at Night

• Smoke alarms save lives because they alert people to a fire
• Smoke alarms are on duty detecting smoke 24/7
• Deadly home fires occur while people are sleeping, so the primary emphasis is: Smoke alarms need to intercept smoke from a fire before the smoke reaches sleeping people
• The smoke alarm must wake people. The standard smoke alarm sound does not wake some people. They need to be alerted with a low frequency sound and a bed shaker (tactile alert)
Install Bedside Alert Devices

• People who are deaf and people who are hard of hearing need an alert device to awake them

• Alert devices are NOT smoke alarms, they listen for the smoke alarm alert sound to activate

• The alert device makes a low frequency sound and a shakes the bed

• Check for the UL or ETL listing
Lifetone & SafeAwake
Smoke Alarm for People Who are Deaf
In the Home

- Installers need to take the time to train the resident(s) on how to operate and test the alarm and alert device
- Discuss and plan to practice the family fire escape
- Provide additional Fire Safety information – How to Prevent a Home Fire
Replicate the Oklahoma Program

- Application
- Home Fire Safety Materials
- 2 Training Program Curriculums
- Follow-up Survey
- 2 DVDs
  - Home Fire Safety for YOU – Presented in American Sign Language
  - Meet Natalea – Retrofit Home Fire Sprinkler System

https://www.ok.gov/abletech/Fire_Safety/index.html
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