

Firefighter/EMS Disability Awareness Training



PURPOSE: Disability awareness training has tailored a presentation for emergency responders designed for firefighters and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel. It brings together education on disabilities while enhancing sensitivity. The presentation includes definitions, etiquette and interaction skills, the disabled perspective, challenging behaviors, and current trends and topics, all relevant to first responders.

TEACHING STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES:

Disability awareness incorporates sensitivity training so the audience can empathize with the injustices individuals with disabilities face. Videos, extensive materials and resources, federal guidelines, and current best practices will highlight the content and allow for attendees to best respond and interact with all citizens in their community.

RELATION & IMPACT TO FIRE/EMS: The ability to respond appropriately to emergency situations that involve individuals with disabilities has challenged the field for years. High profile events have exposed the lack of training and preparedness in responding to this need. This training addresses every area of response to individuals with disabilities including, but not limited to, characteristics of individuals with disabilities, challenges faced and how to overcome them, federal guidelines (to include the American with Disabilities Act), and supports provided, access and functional needs registry and community proactive approaches, emergency preparedness defined and how to implement, municipality emergency services role, identifying and working with service providers, outreach and fire safety planning, and the latest initiatives and programs.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS:

- NYS Office of Fire Prevention & Control
- Town of Amherst Emergency Management
- NYS Emergency Management Association
- NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities—Office of Safety & Security
- Fire Association of the State of New York
- NYS Association of Fire Chiefs
- NYS Department of Health—EMS
- NYS EMS Council

Fee for service:

Consultation
Half day presentation
Full day presentation
Train the Trainer

****Contact us for pricing****

COURSE CONTENT:

- Disabilities defined specific to first responders needs
- Emergency preparedness and federal guidelines
- Service provision and supports and how to develop collaborative relationships
- Challenging behaviors and responsiveness
- Municipality role and responsibility
- Progressive approaches to addressing emergency situations
- Proper etiquette and interactions skills
- Access and functional needs
- Fire Safety Planner and outreach
- American Sign Language specific to first responders
- Durable Medical Equipment, Assistive Technology
- Community resources and networks
- Current trends and topics

LEARNER OUTCOMES:

- Disabilities they will encounter and how to appropriately respond
- Will be able to better understand the challenges they face and how to address them effectively
- Emergency preparedness that will allow for proactive response in the township or community being served will be emphasized
- The ability to understand characteristics of individuals across all disability spectrums will be provided throughout the session

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Video presentations specific to emergency situations and individuals with disabilities with a breakdown and open discussion allow for all questions to be answered
- An extensive amount of materials specific to first responders is provided

For more information, please visit us on the Web at frdat.niagara.edu

Project Director Biography



David Whalen founded Disability Awareness Training in 2004. He specializes in training law enforcement, emergency responders, human service providers, public/private/school transportation, corporations and businesses, places of worship and educators.

Mr. Whalen worked for 17 years serving adults with developmental disabilities before working with low-income, medically frail seniors in a Managed Long Term Care program. He served as President of the NYS Association of Day Service Providers. He also sat on the Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day committee for 18 years.

Dave is currently the Chair of the Town of Amherst's Committee on Disabilities, President of Williamsville CSD Special Education Parent Teacher Students Association (SEPTSA) and is a CSE Parent representative for Williamsville CSD and the State of New York. He is past Chair of the Board of Directors of the Parent Network of WNY and an active member of the Diocese of Buffalo's Disability Action Team. In 2010, he was appointed by the Board of Regents to serve on the NYS Independent Living Council (NYSILC) and recently co-founded Access Buffalo. In September 2010, he received, in collaboration with Niagara University, a NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council grant to develop disability awareness training for First Responders. In November 2014, the state of Arkansas funded the same program. He currently sits on the NYS Office of Emergency Management human services committee and chairs NYSILC's emergency preparedness committee. He was appointed to the Erie County Disability Advisory Board and has served on it since 2010. Also, he accepted an invitation to join the International Association of Chiefs of Police focus group—*Mental Health of Arrestees and How Impacts Our Officers* and sat on their Civil Rights Committee at the October 2015 conference.

He has a BA in Psychology and a MS in Education in Community Counseling from St. Bonaventure University, where he serves as the Buffalo Alumni chapter President.

Dave and his wife Sandy live in Williamsville and are proud parents of their twins David and Rachel. David and Rachel were born 11 weeks premature, from that David has cerebral palsy and seizure disorder. He is currently a senior at Williamsville South while Rachel is a freshman at Cornell University.

Program Background

Beginning in September 2010, the New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council funded a five-year \$750,000 grant to Niagara University to develop curriculum for the training of police officers, firefighters, emergency medical services, 911 dispatchers, and other first responders in the state of New York. Although some states have some versions of this program, no state has developed a fully comprehensive program.

NU collaborated with New York State fire associations and the NYS Department of Health, to include the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services council, in development of a training end product for firefighters and EMTs. NU has also partnered with the Center for Healthcare Education to create an online training for EMS.



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