

## QUICK START GUIDE: SESSION SEVEN TOPICS

In this session, you can motivate and enable participants to advocate for themselves and others with hearing loss. At the end of the session, you can also provide participants with useful tips and information regarding emergency preparedness.

### Advocate for Yourself and Others

The following topics should be discussed with participants:

- What is an advocate and why is advocacy important?
- What are you advocating for?
- At what level and where will the issue(s) be addressed?
  - Local Community
  - City
  - County
  - National
  - International
  - Private business
  - Governmental
  - Agency or Not-For-Profit
- Who will you need to contact?
- What is the best way to communicate with decision makers?
- How can you be confident, firm, and successful with the issue(s) you are addressing to decision makers?

For more information about self-advocacy, please refer to the section on self-advocacy techniques and information inside the resource library.

### Emergency Preparedness

Dealing with emergency situations, such as floods, fires and earthquakes can be difficult. The challenge can be exacerbated when an individual has a hearing loss. The following topics should be discussed with participants to ensure they are ready to act if an emergency occurs.

- Why is emergency preparedness so important?
  - You and your family could be anywhere when a disaster strikes
  - Emergencies often strike very quickly, without warning
  - It helps to be prepared for emergencies that may occur; this is especially important for people with hearing loss
- What steps do you need to take to be prepared for an emergency?
  - Get informed
  - Make a plan
  - Build a kit
  - Make sure you maintain your plan and kit
- How do you get informed?
  - Think about what hazards might threaten your community, e.g., fires, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, hazardous materials, etc.
  - Find out what community disaster plans are available
- Learn about community warning systems
  - Find out which television stations have emergency alert systems and whether the government has a national weather radio and if so, obtain a pillow vibrator/bed shaker so that you can access the radio if there is a message from the weather radio.
  - Make connections with neighbors and identify at least three people who will contact you in case of an emergency
- Make a plan
  - Talk with family members and friends
  - Find out what escape routes would be best
  - Plan ahead for your pets or service animals
  - Learn about smoke detectors for people with hearing loss, as well as other visual and/or vibrating devices that can alert you to alarms, telephone, doorbell, etc.
  - Store your hearing aids by your bed in a container so that you can access them quickly if there is an emergency. Have appropriate items available, such as batteries, and replace them as needed with newer items
- Maintain your emergency plan and kit
  - Review your plan every six months with friends and family
  - Check your disaster supplies kit every six months and replace any that have expired