

DEFINITION: Identifying needs and helping people get through the system

VOLUNTEER NEEDS: Intelligent people who like to help in a very practical way; people who have a sense of justice and will work for the needs of deserving people; people who will not take “No” for an answer and will FIND an answer; a social worker or case worker kind of job, but one that almost anyone can do who is willing to learn the system.

THE PROBLEM: There are many resources, but the system gets bogged down in red tape; people don’t know what help is available and don’t have any idea of how to get it; they find the paper work and logistics totally confusing; they can find themselves going back and forth between agencies and getting nowhere. This is great frustration for people who are already in crisis.

THE ANSWER: People who are willing to learn the system; learn the agencies, learn what resources are available and who is eligible; people who are willing to give direction or, if need be, to take someone by the hand and see to it that they get the help needed. It may be as simple (?) as helping people fill out FEMA forms, or as complex as solving a multitude of interrelated problems.

EXAMPLE: It is one week after the hurricane has struck. A woman has a stack of pictures showing her rented house totally demolished, she has a stack of prescriptions for herself (she was supposed to have surgery, but didn’t get it because the hurricane struck) and for two of her three children who have special needs. Her husband’s job has put them up in a hotel for a week, but that is now up. He is no longer working, but is home with the three children (remember that two of these are special needs children) because the daycare is demolished, and his wife is in great pain and no longer able to care for the children. The wife has repeatedly been on the phone with the Red Cross, FEMA, and the Governor’s office trying to get help with housing and money for prescriptions. So far she has received nothing. Add to this that school is supposed to start and the children’s clothes and everything else that they own is gone. She is distraught, in pain, and desperate. What do you do?

FURTHER TRAINING: The FEMA Process

Also do research on the FEMA web site- It’s FULL of information

www.CommunityArise.com/Classroom.htm - Study the Disaster Case Management module