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PREPARING TO PREPARE



ACTIVITY 1: JOURNAL TWO WEEKS OF A DISASTER SCENARIO



Goal: Journal how you think you'd feel and respond to situations you may face for two weeks following a disaster.

The following scenario offers daily journaling prompts to help you start thinking about how you might better prepare for situations. As you review the prompts, record your responses in your chosen journal format. Take time to address improvements you've noted as necessary to *Be 2 Weeks Ready*.

THE SCENARIO

A catastrophic earthquake happens at 3 a.m. You're awakened by shaking, just as your cell phone gets a Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) telling you an earthquake has occurred and advising you to take immediate protective actions. The earthquake has caused major damage across your community. Many roads are blocked and you and your neighbors are without power and water. Bookshelves have fallen over and emptied on the floor, and heavy pictures have been knocked off their hooks, some falling onto nearby beds. Food has been dumped from unlatched kitchen cupboards, and the pathways to exits are cluttered with debris. You're concerned about the structural safety of your place and the safety of those living with you and in your community.



JOURNAL IT

When you felt shaking or were alerted by your cell phone app...

- Did you and those in your household take protective actions, such as *Drop, Cover and Hold On*? Take some time to practice.
- Were tall bookcases and heavy overhead objects secured to the wall to keep them from toppling over or becoming dislodged? If not, secure them.
- Were your cupboards latched? If not, secure them.
- Does each room have two exits and does everyone know where to meet up outside after the shaking has stopped? Take some time to practice.
- Did you and your household act quickly, not so quickly, or not at all? Journal and talk about it.



Day 1

You're concerned about natural gas leaks and breaks in the water lines in your place.

- Do you or any other adults in the household know where the power, gas, and water valves are and how to shut them off?

Journal and talk about it.



Day 2

The children are thirsty.

- How did you offer drinks? Did you ration the amount per person?
- How were you prepared? How could you be better prepared?

Journal and talk about it.



Day 3

Your household has consumed about 1/3 of the easy-to-eat food, such as granola, jerky and fruit.

- Do you have enough food for your household to eat for two weeks?
- How were you prepared? How could you be better prepared?
- How could you lessen the children's fears about too little food?

Journal and talk about it.



Day 4

Worries arise about ensuring that human, animal, food and consumer product waste is properly contained.

- Does your household know about the two-bucket pee/poo system?
- Who is responsible for the collection and disposal of pet waste?
- How do you address everyone's discomfort about going to the bathroom while others are nearby?
- How did you consider those with mobility challenges, such as people who use wheelchairs and walkers?

Journal and talk about it.



Day 5

Grandma needs her twice-weekly prescription.

- Does grandma have two weeks of medications on hand?
- Do you know how to reach the pharmacist during emergencies?

Journal and talk about it.



Day 6

People are getting tired of eating unheated food.

- Do you know how to cook without traditional power sources (electric stove, natural gas)?
- What backyard supplies do you have for outdoor or camp cooking?
- How do you feel about your degree of preparedness so far?

Journal and talk about it.

Day 7

Dark clouds are rolling in and rain is approaching.

- Do you have tent supplies and sleeping bags or warm blankets for everyone?
- What other things do you have on hand that could be used to offer shelter from the rain?
- How can you make sleeping outside adventurous for children?
- How will you provide outdoor shelter to those who use wheelchairs?

Journal and talk about it.



Day 8

One of the children cut themselves on broken glass.

- Do you know how to clean and bandage a wound?
- Do you have the proper supplies?
- How can you help the injured child feel safe?

Journal and talk about it.



Day 9

Your household is craving fresh food.

- Do you or one of your neighbors have a vegetable garden or fruit trees?
- Can you barter with your neighbor for something they need?
- Are you comfortable asking neighbors living close by for help?

Journal and talk about it.



Day 10

Aunt Bea lives a few towns away and you can't get to her. English isn't her primary language, and she will need to rely on neighbors as well as her faith community.

- Have you and Aunt Bea tested your out-of-area contacts?
- Does Aunt Bea know how to contact others in her faith community?
- Have you and Aunt Bea met neighbors living close to her?
- Is Aunt Bea prepared to *Be 2 Weeks Ready* as much as possible?

Journal and talk about it.



Day 11

You are unsure about which preserved foods are still safe to eat, especially since one of the jars of canned tomatoes didn't "pop" when opened and the food in the jar smells sour.

- Do you know proper food canning and preservation methods?
- Do you know how to tell if canned food is still safe to eat?
- It's been 10 days since the earthquake. How are you feeling?
- How has your level of preparedness contributed to those feelings?

Journal and talk about it.



Day 12

You are running low on water stored in gallon jugs.

- Do you know what other clean water sources may be available in and around your place?
- Do you know how to access and treat them to be safe for drinking and cooking?

Journal and talk about it.





Day 13

Food waste is piling up and smelling bad. You are concerned it may attract insects, rodents, or even larger animals, such as coyotes and bears.

- Do you know how to compost food waste?
- Do you have adequate supplies to contain household waste (not from humans or pets) and deter animals?

Journal and talk about it.

Day 14

You hear more vehicles around your place, which suggests roads may be increasingly passable for emergency vehicles. You start to think about recovery from the earthquake and what your insurance company will cover.



- Have you documented your belongings with a written, digital or photographic record?
- Do you have homeowners insurance, renters insurance, earthquake insurance and flood insurance?
- Do you have adequate coverage?
- Do you know how to reach your insurance agent, community services (such as American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Goodwill Industries, faith-based groups), FEMA and local emergency management agencies?

Journal and talk about it.



ACTIVITY 2: TRACK YOUR FOOD AND WATER FOR TWO WEEKS



Goal: Create a tool you can use to start planning what you need to be as self-sufficient as possible for two weeks.



Eating healthy foods promotes and improves the body's readiness for disasters. Eating healthy doesn't have to be expensive and you don't have to be a gourmet chef to buy, share and prepare good food that can be stored and preserved to enlarge your *2 Weeks Ready* food stash. (See Unit 3: Food Plan and Unit 4: Water Plan for ideas on how to affordably build your *2 Weeks Ready* food and water stashes.)

Think about how you can maintain or improve your health through what you eat and drink, then journal it! Write down what each person and pet eats and drinks every day over a two-week period. Tracking this information will

help you make your Food and Water Plans to help you *Be 2 Weeks Ready*. Here's an example:



YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD

As you complete this activity, take time to think and journal about what you eat.

- What do you and those you live with, including animals, eat?
- Where do you purchase or get your food?
- What would you do if those food sources were unavailable?
- Can you grow, preserve and store your own food?
- Where do you currently store food in your place?
- Where can you creatively store extra food and water?
- What kind of long-term foods do you typically have on hand?
- What kind of dietary restrictions do you and those in your household have?
- Do you have non-perishable comfort foods that can be stored long-term or rotated through your pantry, such as chocolate, hard candy and beverages (that don't need refrigeration)?
- How might you eat differently following a disaster?
- What are your favorite foods and beverages (the things that comfort you)?
- How might you adapt your favorite recipes, especially without electricity or natural gas?
- What new cooking methods would you like to try?

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH WATER

As you complete this activity, take time to think and journal about your water consumption.

- How much water do you and those you live with, including animals, drink daily?
- Do you have extra water stored for your household, including animals?
- Where would you store enough water for your household to last for two weeks?
- Can you create more storage space for water, such as under beds, in closets or as a makeshift piece of furniture (inside boxes on which you place a TV or use as a table)?
- Do you currently know how to create clean, drinkable water from the water in and around your place and neighborhood?
- Do you know what water is safe to drink and what isn't?
- How would you boil water if you had no indoor electricity or natural gas?

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH WASTE

Think about and journal how to prepare for and deal with food, human and animal waste.

- How much toilet paper is used in one week by your household? (Double that amount to determine what you'll need for two weeks.)
- Do you have a safe-disposal alternative to using your in-home toilet facilities?
- Do you know about Phlush's two-bucket system that uses two large buckets with lids? (See Unit 5: Waste and Hygiene Plan.)
- Do you know the commercial reuse of plastic buckets for food is illegal? Supermarkets, restaurants and bakeries often give them away for free! Where could you ask locally about these free giveaway items?
- Do you have safety plans for dealing with human, food and animal waste?

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FIRST-AID SUPPLIES, MEDICATIONS AND DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

Journal about how to prepare for injuries, prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, and use of durable medical equipment and assistive devices.

ASSESS YOUR FIRST-AID SUPPLIES AND SKILLS

Have any items expired?
What is on-hand now? List it.

Do you or anyone who lives with you have first aid, CPR or wilderness first-aid training?

Have they ever used this training? Track it. Journal about it.



PRESCRIPTIONS

List current prescriptions and how often they're filled.

How much is used daily and by whom? Track it.

Do you know how to reach your pharmacist?

Do you know how to ensure medications are water resistant?



ASSISTIVE DEVICES

Do you or anyone in your place use assistive devices?

Do any of those devices require power?

Do you have battery or generator back-up capacity?

Do you know how to reach your supplier?

YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT “ROUGHING IT”

It’s okay if outdoor adventures don’t appeal to everyone. While some like to retreat to the comforts of a cozy hotel room, others enjoy sleeping under the stars. Journal how you feel about “roughing it” outdoors for two weeks and determine if you have the supplies to be comfortable and safe. How do you feel about being able to safely shelter indoors, even without power and water?

- If you’ve camped before, what gear did you use? A tent? Camp stove? Sleeping bag? If you didn’t have these things, what could you use to camp for two weeks? Do you have any extra blankets?
- If you don’t have or can’t afford camping gear, could you gather a few large tarps and rope? Do you have access to a charcoal or propane grill, wood, fire pit or chiminea that can be used outdoors? How can you use these to cook food to eat for two weeks without power?
- Do you have warm clothing meant for cold weather? If you can’t afford to buy new, where could you go to find second-hand clothes inexpensively, or who might donate them to you?
- Do you and those in your household have clothing you no longer need that you can share with others? Consider a clothing swap among neighbors, especially those with children who quickly outgrow clothing or get bored with their own stuff!
- If you own a home, was it built according to earthquake safety standards, or has it been seismically retrofitted to withstand earthquake shaking? If you live in an apartment building, do you know if it meets earthquake codes? If you live in a manufactured home, is it secured with tie-downs to withstand shaking and high winds?
- Do you know where your power, water, and natural gas shut-off valves are and how to close them?



ACTIVITY 3: WORDS TO YOUR FUTURE SELF



Goal: Write your future self some advice and say, “You can do this!”

Any disaster can be scary and difficult. You’re taking great steps forward, so take a few moments to write your future self some advice and encouragement using the following prompts to help.



Day 1: It’s the first day of a disaster. The great news is you’re *2 Weeks Ready*, so write your future self a quick note to put in your go-kit so it’s there as a bit of encouragement when things get tough.

- What might you need to read as the shaking stops and the power is out?
- How can you help calm yourself (and others) as you settle in for some time without utilities and power?
- Share a great insight you’ve had while working through these activities, or write down some funny jokes to bring a smile to your face or someone else’s.
- Write yourself a thank-you note for being *2 Weeks Ready* and remind yourself you’re more prepared than you think.

Day 3: It’s been 72 hours since the shaking stopped and the power went out, and you’re doing well. You’ve checked in with loved ones, friends and neighbors. Most of your support network is *2 Weeks Ready*, which is great news because you’re able to take care of most of your needs.

First, congratulate yourself and your household for putting in the hard work it took to get ready. Now, remind your future self that you’re doing the absolute best you can with this difficult process, then ask yourself some important questions:

- How are you feeling? This is new. Give yourself some understanding and be kind.
- Are there any things you can improve or change given what’s available to you?
- How can you offer self-care and show support to others? Who can you ask for support?
- Write how you’d answer those questions or just write the questions themselves to remind yourself of what you can and can’t do. It’s going to be okay.

Day 7: You’re now one week in. Acknowledge that this is tough, tiring and getting very boring. There’s no TV, the cooking is getting difficult and everyone is getting impatient. Take a step back and recognize that you and your support network have hit a massive milestone – you’ve survived seven days post-disaster. Say thank you to yourself and others and dig into what might come next. You may start to see some additional first responders and community support in your area. How could you help them help those you care about?

List what you might need help with to keep you and your family supported. Have you touched base with those you care about? Have you touched base with yourself – are you feeling strong? How might you approach the next few days as more support arrives? How do you and your community keep moving forward as you recover from this disaster?

Post-disaster: The power’s back on! Celebrate – you made it! There’s certainly still a lot to do, but your power, heat and water are working. You’ve filled your belly, and things are beginning to get back to the way they were. As you wrap up this journaling exercise, ask yourself these questions:

- What might I do to become more prepared next time?
- How might I help those I care about to do the same?
- Now that the worst is over, has my perception of my community (and my household) changed in any way? If so, why and how?

ACTIVITY 4: PRACTICE MINDFULNESS TO BUILD PREPAREDNESS



Goal: Build preparedness by creating inner calm.

Feeling safe is especially challenging during uncertain times, including immediately after a disaster when your normal daily living has been significantly interrupted. Increasing your inner calm can help create a safe place within yourself. Being prepared brings greater peace of mind and thereby contributes to your inner calm.

Practicing mindfulness is a free, portable way to increase your inner calm. Mindfulness means being fully present, aware of where you are and what you’re doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around you. Being mindful can help you walk through both good times and bad, including during a disaster. Mindfulness can build preparedness.

Try the mindfulness tips below to ease your stress on the spot!

MINDFULNESS TIPS

HOW TO EASE YOUR STRESS ON THE SPOT

<h4>Stop</h4> <p>Interrupt your thoughts with the prompt “stop” and pause whatever you are doing in that moment.</p>	<h4>Take a Breath</h4> <p>Notice your breathing for a second. Breathe in slowly through the nose, expand your belly, and exhale slowly through your nose.</p>	<h4>Observe</h4> <p>Notice your thoughts, feelings and even bodily responses. What thoughts do you notice? What emotions arose? How does your body feel? Try to sit with whatever you find without judgment for a few moments.</p>	<h4>Proceed</h4> <p>Thoughtfully consider how you’d like to respond. What’s one thing you can focus on right now? What’s your number-one priority at this moment? Narrow down your focus and take it one small step at a time.</p>
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YOU GOT THIS!



ADDITIONAL BOOK RESOURCES FOR MINDFULNESS

- *The Mind of the Leader: How to Lead Yourself, Your People, and Your Organization for Extraordinary Results* by Rasmus Hougaard and Jacqueline Carter (2018)
- *The Mindful Day: Practical Ways to Find Focus, Calm, and Joy From Morning to Evening* by Laurie J. Cameron (2018)
- *A Still Quiet Place: A Mindfulness Program for Teaching Children and Adolescents to Ease Stress and Difficult Emotions* by Amy Saltzman MD and Saki Santorelli EdD MA (2014)
- *Mindfulness Skills for Kids & Teens* by Debra Burdick (2014)
- *Breathe, Chill: A Handy Book of Games and Techniques Introducing Breathing, Meditation and Relaxation to Kids and Teens* by Lisa Roberts (2014)
- *The Mindful Child: How to Help Your Kid Manage Stress and Become Happier, Kinder, and More Compassionate* by Susan Kaiser Greenland (2010)
- *Child's Mind: Mindfulness Practices to Help Our Children Be More Focused, Calm and Relaxed* by Christopher Willard (2010)
- *Mindful Eating: A Guide to Rediscovering a Healthy and Joyful Relationship with Food* by Jan Chozen Bays (2009)
- *Mindful Movements: Ten Exercises for Well-Being* by Thich Nhat Hanh (2008)