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MISSING PERSONS COMMUNITY ACTION TOOLKIT

Objective of the Toolkit: The purpose of the MMDR Missing Persons Community Action Toolkit is to aid families through the process of locating a missing relative, how to work with law enforcement, mobilize a community search/rescue with emergency management agencies, and to improve communication between all the involved parties. The ultimate goal is to bring our relatives home!

Creation of this toolkit was done with community input and in partnership with:



COALITION to STOP
VIOLENCE AGAINST
NATIVE WOMEN



MMIWWHOISMISSING

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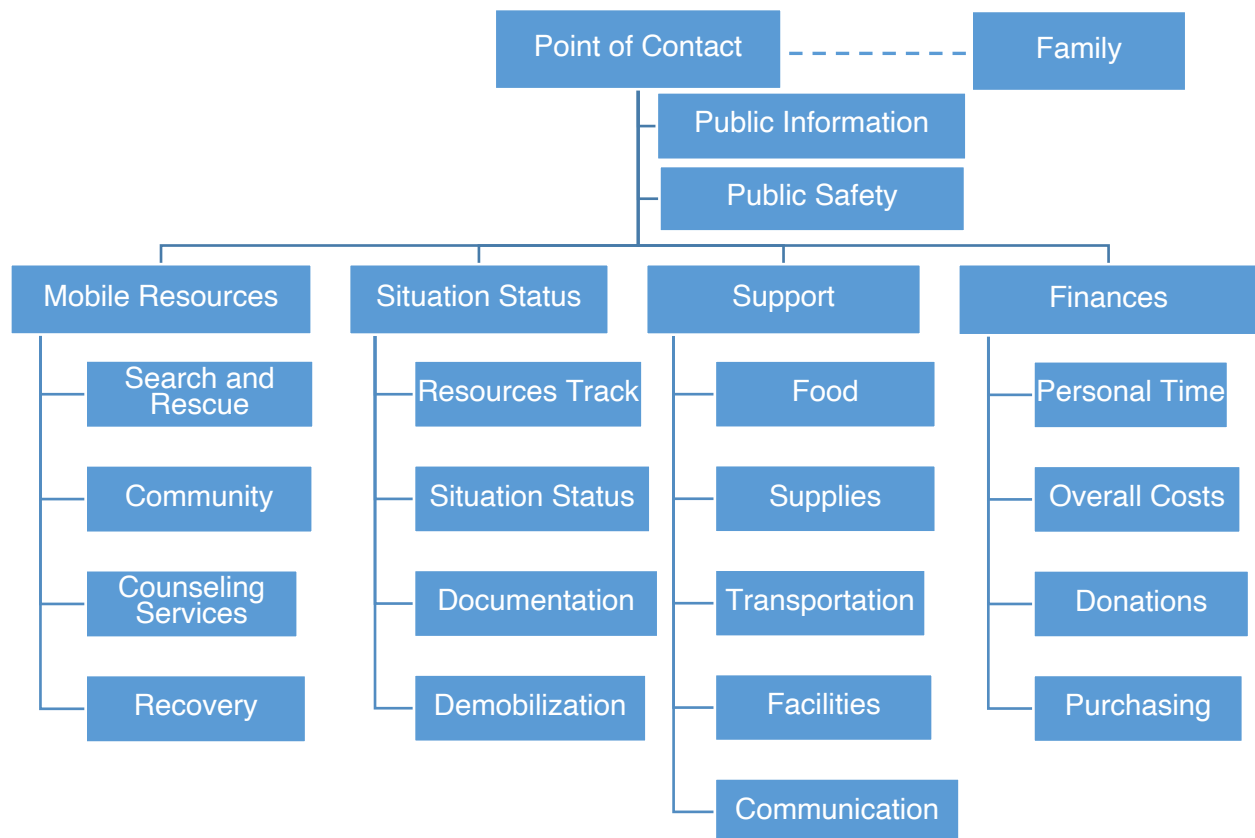
If the case does not qualify for a search and rescue and friends and family would like to mobilize...

Reach out to a local community organization or business who would be able to volunteer a space to setup up a Community Command Post. This could be at a chapter house, church, local business, etc.

Determine the roles of the volunteers:

- **Community Command Post Coordinator(s):** These volunteers would be the point of contact for the search. It is recommended to obtain a prepaid phone that is dedicated to the search so the point of contact does not need to give out their own personal information. It is also recommended that they create a separate **Communication Log** dedicated to only the search as information comes in. This person can also serve as the media and public relations person, as well as accepting donations for the search party.
- **Community Search Facilitator(s):** these volunteers are in charge of mobilizing the search and create search groups. They should also create a strategy for the search and keep track of the GRID search. They should also ensure the safety of search volunteers with regular check-ins and ensure all searchers are accounted for at the end of the search.
- **Search Volunteers:** Help to physically search the area for the missing person. Some volunteers could also help with calling places the missing person may be (hospitals, shelters, etc.) and documenting.

Missing Person
Draft Organizational Structure



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Self-Care after a Traumatic Experience – Things to do:

- Don't isolate yourself. Seek support from others, family, friends, or adult children. If that does not feel like an option, you could also try going to a support group. Navajo Nation Department of Behavioral and Mental Health Services (DBMHS)
- Seek professional help. Trained professionals can provide you specific help in these circumstances. It is okay to speak to someone to guide you through this time.
- Face the problem/trauma: don't avoid what you experienced
- Exercise both indoors and outdoors. Time in the sun is important, it provides your body with vitamins and improves mood.
- Eat healthy. It is important to make sure you are eating a balanced meal of fruits, vegetables, and healthy proteins. It is also vital to drink lots of water and stay hydrated.
- Pay attention to your body. Cry if you need to, sleep if you are tired. Your body and mind will feel better and function better if you fulfill your needs.
- Get involved in an activity or project. It can help you channel your feelings or take your mind off of things for a little while. This can be as simple as painting a rock, doing art, reading, taking a walk, or volunteering.
- Set reminders for yourself. Keep a calendar of important events.
- Ask for support from others, especially if you are feeling overwhelmed. They may also find comfort in being there for you.
- Check in with yourself. Ask yourself: How am I doing?

If I am feeling bad...

-**Physically:** Am I eating properly and staying hydrated? Have I been resorting to self-harm or using substances to cope?

-**Psychologically:** Am I depressed? Am I talking about things out of the ordinary, particularly death? Have I been allowing myself time to cry and feel my emotions? Have I been avoiding the problem or lying about the situation? Can I utilize my support network, social media, or a professional to talk about these issues and feelings?

- **Socially:** Am I avoiding my friends or family? Are my behavior patterns changing? During this time, you may find yourself being alone more. Are you ok with that?

-**Spiritually:** Am I avoiding this? Do I need to pray about this? Engaging in ceremonial and religious practices may be helpful for some and may help you be around a supportive community.

- Meditate or pray if you feel comfortable doing so. For example, you could set a goal of meditating for ten minutes or doing a breathing exercise. Here is an example:
 1. Relax your neck and shoulders.
 2. Keeping your mouth closed, inhale slowly through your nose for 2 counts.
 3. Pucker or purse your lips as though you were going to whistle.
 4. Exhale slowly by blowing air through your pursed lips for a count of 4.
- Visit with a spiritual practitioner or counselor. Read scripture, attend church or spiritual activities if that is something you are comfortable with.
- Spend time focusing on something you enjoy
- Maintain a journal. This does not need to be specifically about the incident. Write down what you enjoy, give yourself goals, write down what you feel, recognize your needs and do a self-assessment. You can draw a picture or color, which may be helpful for children affected by this event.
- Give yourself time to heal. Establish a healthy routine, manage negativity, and regain control. You have just experienced something no one should experience. Take time for yourself.

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