

Transcript

00:00:01 Speaker 1

Welcome to Independent Perspectives, a Public Affairs presentation of Western New York Independent Living.

00:00:06 Speaker 1

Our guest today is Frank Cammarata, Executive Director of the Erie County Office for the Disabled, and I'm your host, Ernie Churchwell.

00:00:14 Speaker 1

Welcome to the program, Frank.

00:00:16 Speaker 2

Thank you very much, Ernie.

00:00:18 Speaker 2

It's great to have, it's great to be participating with you again.

00:00:21 Speaker 1

We appreciate you being with us.

00:00:24 Speaker 1

And some basic questions.

00:00:25 Speaker 1

How do Western New York winters uniquely impact people with disabilities, and what challenges do you see most often during severe weather?

00:00:33 Speaker 2

I think the two greatest challenges that people with disabilities face in our community are really mobility and communication, and making sure that they understand what is going on in our community with regard to the potential severity of storms.

00:00:53 Speaker 1

All right, what are the most important practices you recommend for winter preparedness, especially for people who rely on mobility aids, medication, medical equipment, or personal care services?

00:01:04 Speaker 2

The most important thing that everyone can do is to be prepared all the time, not just in winter.

00:01:12 Speaker 2

Making sure that you have a preparedness kit

00:01:16 Speaker 2

on you at all times, whether it be at home, at work, in your vehicle.

00:01:20 Speaker 2

It could be on your mobility device, so making sure that you are prepared at all times with medication, et cetera.

00:01:29 Speaker 1

What should be included in this emergency kit and are the disability-specific items people should be sure to pack.

00:01:35 Speaker 2

There are certainly disability-specific items.

00:01:38 Speaker 2

It depends upon the person and their disability, and they're the ones

00:01:43 Speaker 2

that know what they specifically need.

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They take specific medications.

00:01:47 Speaker 2

They need to make sure they have specific medications.

00:01:50 Speaker 2

But other items include cell phone, cell phone charger, flashlight, food, water, hand warmers, solar or crank radio, first aid kit, specific communication devices, maybe a manual can opener, and cash, Ernie.

00:02:10 Speaker 2

Cash is king.

00:02:13 Speaker 1

How can individuals with disabilities plan ahead for things like power outages or communication barriers during major storms?

00:02:21 Speaker 2

And again, kind of going back to my answer before, it's not necessarily about planning ahead, it's about always being prepared, making sure that you are prepared.

00:02:32 Speaker 2

for any eventuality, for any emergency.

00:02:34 Speaker 2

It's called situational, we refer to it as situational awareness.

00:02:38 Speaker 2

Making sure that you know if there's a storm coming or, you know, if something is going to happen in our community.

00:02:45 Speaker 2

Obviously, there are events, you know, sometimes a tornado might hit and you don't know that's happening, but we do have some warning, you know, but it's all about situational awareness.

00:02:57 Speaker 1

Terrific.

00:02:58 Speaker 1

Well,

00:03:00 Speaker 1

Although we do still have some time left, I'm sure people will have some questions.

00:03:06 Speaker 1

Where can they go to get more information or assistance to help them stay safe through the winter months?

00:03:12 Speaker 2

There are a wide variety of resources out there.

00:03:17 Speaker 2

Number one, since it's Erie County, we have a Ready Erie app, which is free.

00:03:23 Speaker 2

Load it onto your cell phone.

00:03:24 Speaker 2

There's ready.gov through the federal government, there's FEMA.gov.

00:03:29 Speaker 2

There is the American Red Cross.

00:03:31 Speaker 2

There's the New York State Emergency Citizens Preparedness Corps.

00:03:36 Speaker 2

You know, so there's a lot of resources out there.

00:03:39 Speaker 1

Well, it sounds like you could connect people with a lot of those resources, and it might be handy to have one number that they can call that would direct them to those different places.

00:03:51 Speaker 1

What number would you recommend?

00:03:54 Speaker 2

Feel free to call our office at 716-858-6215

00:03:58 Speaker 2

and we're happy to help in any way we can.

00:04:03 Speaker 1

Thanks so much for sharing your information with us, Frank, and you have a safe and pleasant winter.

00:04:10 Speaker 2

You too, Ernie.

00:04:12 Speaker 2

Stay warm.

00:04:13 Speaker 2

Stay safe.

00:04:16 Speaker 1

Today has been Frank Camerata, Executive Director of the Erie County Office for the Disabled.

00:04:23 Speaker 1

This has been Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of Western New York independent living, and I've been your host, Ernie Churchwell.